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THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

8th December 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Executive Committee will be held as a Hybrid Meeting Via MS Teams and in the Abraham Derby Room at the General Offices, Ebbw Vale (if you would like to attend this meeting live via Microsoft Teams please contact committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk) on **Wednesday, 15th December, 2021 at 10.00 am.**

Yours faithfully

Michelle Morris
Managing Director

AGENDA

Pages

1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

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

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

2. APOLOGIES

To receive.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND
DISPENSATIONS**

To receive.

MINUTES

4. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 7 - 22

To consider the Minutes of the Executive Committee held on 10th November, 2021.

DECISION ITEMS - CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS

**5. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME –
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To receive the report.

6. GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS 27 - 28

To consider the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

**7. MINUTES OF THE GRANTS WORKING GROUP -
17TH NOVEMBER 2021 29 - 32**

To consider the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

**8. THE CALCULATION OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE
FOR THE YEAR 2022/23 33 - 42**

To consider the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

**DECISION ITEMS –
REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS**

9. EBBW VALE PLACEMAKING PLAN 43 - 84

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.

10. **REGIONAL APPROACH TO EMPLOYABILITY** 85 - 106
- To consider the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.

MONITORING ITEMS - CORPORATE SERVICES

11. **COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING (JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021)** 107 - 120
- To consider the report of the Chief Officer Commercial and Customer.
12. **COMMERCIAL STRATEGY QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING (JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021)** 121 - 134
- To consider the report of the Chief Officer Commercial and Customer.
13. **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - 2021/2022, FORECAST OUTTURN TO 31ST MARCH 2022 (AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2021)** 135 - 162
- To consider the report of the Chief Officer Resources.
14. **CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, FORECAST FOR 2021/2022 FINANCIAL YEAR (AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2021)** 163 - 184
- To consider the report of the Chief Officer Resources.
15. **USE OF GENERAL AND EARMARKED RESERVES 2021/2022** 185 - 198
- To consider the report of the Chief Officer Resources.
16. **BRIDGING THE GAP (BTG) PROGRAMME 2021/2022 – PROGRESS UPDATE JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2021** 199 - 218
- To consider the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

17. **PROGRESS REPORT CONTRACTS OVER £500K** 219 - 228
- To consider the report of the Corporate Director
Regeneration and Community Services.

MONITORING ITEMS - ENVIRONMENT

18. **BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE
FORWARD PLAN (2019-2022) 2020/21
ANNUAL REPORT** 229 - 276

To consider the report of the Corporate Director
Regeneration and Community Services.

19. **CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT –
SERVICE UPDATE** 277 - 290

To consider the report of the Corporate Director
Regeneration and Community Services.

20. **ANIMAL HEALTH, WELFARE & LICENSING
SERVICE COLLABORATION –
POWYS CC PARTNERSHIP – ACTIVITIES &
UPDATE REPORT – OCTOBER 2021** 291 - 316

To consider the report of the Corporate Director
Regeneration and Community Services.

**MONITORING ITEMS –
REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

21. **ENERGY PROSPECTUS ANNUAL REVIEW** 317 - 342

To consider the report of the Corporate Director
Regeneration and Community Services.

22. **NET ZERO REPORTING, CLIMATE ASSEMBLY
RESPONSE AND PROGRESSING TRANSITIONS** 343 - 400

To consider the report of the Managing Director.

MONITORING ITEMS - EDUCATION

23. **MANAGEMENT OF PUPIL PLACES AND THE SCHOOL ESTATE 2020/21** 401 - 448

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education.

24. **EDUCATION DIRECTORATE – ALN REFORM UPDATE** 449 - 614

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education.

MONITORING ITEM - SOCIAL SERVICES

25. **REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP UPDATE** 615 - 622

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Social Services.

EXEMPT ITEM

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

DECISION ITEM - CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS

26. **CCTV DELIVERY MODEL PROPOSALS** 623 - 628

To consider the report of the Chief Officer Commercial and Customer and Chief Officer Resources (SIRO CCTV).

To: Councillor N. Daniels (Chair)
Councillor J. Collins
Councillor D. Davies
Councillor J. Mason
Councillor J. Wilkins

All other Members (for information)
Manager Director
Chief Officers

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 10TH NOVEMBER, 2021

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

**PRESENT: Leader of the Council/
Executive Member – Corporate Services
Councillor N. Daniels**

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

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

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

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

**WITH: Managing Director
Corporate Director Social Services
Corporate Director Education
Chief Officer Resources
Chief Officer Commercial and Customer
Head of Community Services
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
Communications Officer**

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest and dispensations raised.</p>	
	<p><u>MINUTES</u></p>	
No. 4	<p><u>EXECUTIVE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd September, 2021.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEMS – CORPORATE SERVICES</u></p>	
No. 5	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 10TH NOVEMBER, 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Leader of the Council.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	

No. 6

GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS

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

The following additional grants were received since the publication of the report:-

ABERTILLERY

Abertillery Ward - Councillor N. Daniels

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
| 2. | Chillax | £100 |

Abertillery Ward - Councillor J. Holt

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
|----|--------------------|--------|

Abertillery Ward - Councillor M. Cook

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
|----|--------------------|--------|

Cwmtillery Ward - Councillor T. Sharrem

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
|----|--------------------|--------|

Cwmtillery Ward - Councillor J. Wilkins

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
|----|--------------------|--------|

Cwmtillery Ward - Councillor M. Day

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
|----|--------------------|--------|

Llanhilleth Ward - Councillor H. McCarthy

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
|----|--------------------|--------|

Llanhilleth Ward - Councillor J. Collins

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
| 2. | Brynithel Senior Citizens | £200 |

Llanhilleth Ward - Councillor N. Parsons

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
| 2. | Wyndham Vowles Community Centre | £100 |

Six Bells Ward - Councillor D. Hancock

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
|----|--------------------|--------|

Six Bells Ward - Councillor M. Holland

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
| 2. | Six Bells Tenants & Residents | £300 |

BRYNMAWR

Brynmawr Ward - Councillor J. Hill

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £62 |
| 2. | Friends of North Ebbw Fach Interact | £150 |
| 3. | Serving Veterans Association of Blaenau Gwent | £150 |

Brynmawr Ward - Councillor L. Elias

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £62 |
| 2. | Brynmawr Town Centre Partnership Xmas Lights | £100 |
| 3. | St. Mary's Roman Catholic School | £50 |
| 4. | Blaen y Cwm School | £50 |

Brynmawr Ward - Councillor W. Hodgins

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £62 |
|----|--------------------|-----|

EBBW VALE

Badminton Ward - Councillor G. Paulsen

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £45 |
|----|--------------------|-----|

Badminton Ward - Councillor C. Meredith

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £45 |
|----|--------------------|-----|

Beaufort Ward - Councillor G. Thomas & S. Healy

1. Remembrance Parade £82.50

Ebbw Vale North - Councillor D. Davies, P. Edwards & R. Summers

1. Remembrance Parade £135

Ebbw Vale South - Councillor J. Millard & K. Pritchard

1. Remembrance Parade £90

Rassau Ward - Councillor G. Davies

1. Remembrance Parade £41.25

Rassau Ward - Councillor D. Wilshire

1. Remembrance Parade £41.25
2. Ebbw Vale Male Voice Choir £100
3. RTB Football Club £150
4. Hospice of the Valleys £75

NANTYGLO & BLAINA

Nantyglo Ward - Councillor P. Baldwin

1. Remembrance Parade £72.25

Nantyglo Ward - Councillor J. Mason & K. Rowson

1. Remembrance Parade £144.50

Blaina Ward - Councillor J. P. Morgan

1. Remembrance Parade £72.25
2. Blaina & District Cricket Club £500

Blaina Ward - Councillor L. Winnett

1. Remembrance Parade £72.25

Blaina Ward - Councillor G. Collier

1. Remembrance Parade £72.25

RESOLVED accordingly.

FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.

No. 7

UPDATE ON UK RESETTLEMENT AND ASYLUM SEEKER DISPERSAL SCHEMES

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial and Customer.

The Chief Officer Commercial and Customer spoke to the report which provided an update on participation supporting the UK Resettlement scheme. The Chief Officer noted the recent addition which included supporting the resettlement of Afghan Nationals and advised that the report also sought agreement for the participation in the Home Office Widening Asylum Seeker Dispersal Scheme.

The Chief Officer further highlighted the work done to date working with lead officers and partners as detailed in the report.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the report which demonstrated the Council's commitment in supporting people who seek sanctuary in Blaenau Gwent. The Leader referred to the work undertaken by the Chief Officer along with other officers and the Working Group which had been active for a number of years. The Working Group identified good external partnership working and was chaired by the Executive Member for Social Services. The Executive Member for Education also played a key role in the Working Group and the Leader wished to acknowledge the excellent work achieved by the Working Group, particularly the aforementioned Executive Members.

	<p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the progress made in participation with the UK resettlement, including most recently the Afghan resettlement programme be noted. The proposal to participate in the Widening Asylum Seeker Dispersal Scheme as a pilot be agreed (option 1).</p> <p>The Chief Officer Commercial and Customer left the meeting at this juncture.</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEM – SOCIAL SERVICES MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A BLAENAU GWENT MY SUPPORT TEAM (MYST)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Children’s Services.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Social Services advised that the report outlined the proposal and business case to develop a Blaenau Gwent My Support Team (MyST) instead of the current joint MyST with Monmouthshire. The Corporate Director noted that Monmouthshire had now agreed their stand-alone Team via their democratic process.</p> <p>The Corporate Director spoke to the report and provided an overview of the actual savings and cost avoidance the MyST have achieved during 2019/2020 and 2020/2021. The Corporate Director further highlighted the costs of a full Blaenau Gwent team as detailed in the report and advised that this had been based on the forecast that Monmouthshire had provided for the joint Blaenau Gwent Monmouthshire Team for 2021/2022.</p> <p>Further key points were reported in relation to the financial benefits of the preventative work undertaken by Social Services along with anticipated savings estimated to be achieved by an establishment of a BG MyST.</p> <p>The Executive Member for Social Services welcomed and sought support from the Executive to develop a Team which had far reaching benefits for the children and families of Blaenau Gwent. The work undertaken brought children back into the Borough and placed Social Services at the heart of our communities now and in the future.</p>	

The Executive Member noted the success of the partnership working between Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire which was a credit to all the dedicated staff involved. The Executive Member was confident that a stand-alone Team for Blaenau Gwent would continue to recognise benefits for our children and families in Blaenau Gwent.

In conclusion, the Executive Member wished to thank everyone involved for their work over the last two years.

The Leader of the Council supported the comments raised by the Executive Member and felt that the work undertaken in this area by the Corporate Director and the Executive Member was remarkable. The Leader felt it was paramount that Blaenau Gwent continued with this work and looked forward to seeing the positive work in the coming months and years.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the positive work MyST have undertaken be noted and the development of a Blaenau Gwent MyST be supported (option 1).

DECISION ITEM - ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

No. 9 SECTION 19 FLOOD INVESTIGATION REPORT, LLANHILLETH

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community Services.

The Head of Community Services advised that the report presented the S19 Flood Investigation Report for Llanhilleth following the flooding that occurred in Meadow Street and Railway Street during the 15th and 16th February 2020. The Officer spoke to the report and provided a detailed an overview of the key findings from the S19 Flood Investigation Report for Llanhilleth and referred the Executive to the full report which was detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

The Head of Community Services further informed the Executive of the key actions from S19 Flood Investigation Report.

	<p>The Executive Member for Environment noted the report which investigated the flooding incident which affected a significant amount of homes in the Llanhilleth Ward. The Executive Member stated that the report was very factual, however it could not recognise the human and community impact the flooding had on families in the area. The Executive Member added that the work would be ongoing and updates would be reported as part of the Annual Flood Management Plan to both Scrutiny and Executive in due course.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted along with the Section 19 Flood Investigation Report, Llanhilleth and agreed to publish the report in accordance with the FWMA 2010 legislation (option 1).</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEM – EDUCATION MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 10</p>	<p><u>MUTUAL INVESTMENT MODEL (MIM) 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS WELSH EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP – THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the execution, delivery and performance of a supplemental agreement to the WEP Strategic Partnering Agreement dated 30th September 2020 (the “Deed of Adherence”) be agreed and from the date of execution of the Deed of Adherence to give effect to and be bound by the terms of the WEP Strategic Partnering Agreement dated 30th September 2020 as a party to it, to facilitate the delivery of a range of infrastructure services and the delivery of education and community facilities; (b) the terms of the Deed of Adherence and the WEP Strategic Partnering Agreement dated 30th September 2020 at Appendix A and B of this report be approved and summarised in Appendix 1 and 2 of this report so as to give effect to recommendation (a), subject to recommendation (c) below; (c) it was noted that the Corporate Director of Education shall complete the Deed of Adherence for execution and was approved to complete all information gaps; 	

	<p>(d) it was noted that the Deed of Adherence shall be executed as a deed and attested in accordance with in accordance with Section 12.5 of the Council’s Constitution of the Constitution; and,</p> <p>(e) it was approved (i) the appointment of the Service Manager - Education Transformation and Business Change as ‘Participant Representative’ to sit on the Strategic Partnering Board (SPB) for the purposes of Clause 12 (<i>Parties’ Representatives</i>) of the WEP Strategic Partnering Agreement; and (ii) the name, address and contact details for the purposes of Clause 40 (<i>Notices</i>) of the WEP Strategic Partnering Agreement; and</p> <p>(f) it was noted that in agreeing to enter into the Deed of Adherence it was not being asked during this meeting to decide to proceed with any Project, and that any decision to proceed with a Project would be considered separately and reported back to Cabinet in future report(s) for decision.</p>	
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS – ENVIRONMENT</u></p>	
<p>No. 11</p>	<p><u>COMMUNITY SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and information contained therein be noted (option 1).</p>	
<p>No. 12</p>	<p><u>WASTE AND RECYCLING PERFORMANCE 2020-21</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Neighbourhood Services.</p> <p>The Head of Community Services outlined the report and provided an overview of the waste and recycling performance outcomes for 2020/2021. The Head of Community Services noted that the Welsh Government statutory recycling targets had been achieved and the Council had maintained success for the current year in exceeding the target of 64%.</p>	

The Head of Community Services felt that this had been achieved due to the hard work and dedication of the frontline staff, officers and wardens who worked in partnership with WRAP and with support from the Communications Team, Performance Team, Senior Management, the Elected Leadership and most importantly the residents of Blaenau Gwent. The Head of Community Services stated that this had been one of the most difficult years in recent history and was therefore thankful for the support to maintain collections throughout the pandemic.

The Head of Community Services further added that the Local Authority continued to face financial penalties from the Welsh Government if the Council failed to achieve the statutory recycling targets, however at present Quarters 1 and 2 were exceeding targets.

The Executive Member for Environment and the Leader of the Council echoed the comments raised by the Officer and wished to extend thanks to all involved. The Leader of the Council added that it was also important to acknowledge the participation of the majority of the public in the Council's waste and recycling services. If the Council did not meet the targets set by Welsh Government the fines would have a significant effect on the Council's budget and services provided.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (option 1).

MONITORING ITEMS – CORPORATE SERVICES

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES
OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES 2020/2021**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (option 1).

<p>No. 14</p>	<p><u>REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - 2021/2022, FORECAST OUTTURN TO 31ST MARCH 2022 (AS AT 30TH JUNE 2021)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report which detailed the forecast financial outturn position across all portfolios for the financial year 2021/2022 as forecast at 30th June 202 and outlined the key points as contained in the report.</p> <p>The Leader of the Council advised that the report identified the positive strides made over the last 3-4 years on the Council's budget. The Leader added that although in recent years the Council had been criticised for their low level of reserves, these were now being built to an acceptable level and our budgets are in a more favourable position.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Members provided appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report; and (b) approved the virements detailed in paragraphs 5.1.4 to and 5.1.7. 	
<p>No. 15</p>	<p><u>CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, FORECAST FOR 2021/2022 FINANCIAL YEAR (AS AT 30TH JUNE 2021)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources advised that the report provided the Executive with an overview of each Portfolio's actual and forecast capital expenditure against funding approvals for the 2021/2022 financial year as at the 30th June 2021. The Chief Officer further spoke to the report and provided an overview of the information contained therein.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Members provided appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report. (b) Members continued to support appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council. (c) Members noted the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding. 	

<p>No. 16</p>	<p><u>BRIDGING THE GAP (BTG) PROGRAMME 2021/2022 - PROGRESS UPDATE APRIL TO JUNE 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources noted that the report provided an update on the progress made in terms of the Strategic Business Reviews during the period April to June 2021. The Chief Officer Resources further outlined the key points in relation to Budget Gaps (surplus) per MTF5 (March 2021), latest estimated achievements, and the Remaining Budget Gaps following application of BtG Opportunities.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive provided appropriate challenge to the Bridging the Gap programme (option 1).</p>	
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS – EDUCATION</u></p>	
<p>No. 17</p>	<p><u>EDUCATION DIRECTORATE – RECOVERY AND RENEWAL PLAN</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the joint report of the Corporate Director Education, Head of School Improvement and Inclusion and Service Manager - Education Transformation and Business Change.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, associated documentation and proposed course of action (option 1).</p>	
<p>No. 18</p>	<p><u>IMPROVING SCHOOLS PROGRAMME 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Education advised that the report provided an overview on the Blaenau Gwent Improving Schools Programme, in line with national changes to school evaluation, improvement and accountability. The report also covered the pilot of the new regional approach 2021-2022. The Corporate Director referred to the new arrangements in place to support schools and gave an overview of the level of support provided which resulted in positive progress made in schools.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and information contained therein be noted.</p>	

No. 19	<p><u>PUPIL EXCLUSIONS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information therein be noted (option 1).</p>	
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEM – REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS</u></p>	
No. 20	<p><u>HYBRID UNITS AND HWB BOCS – PERFORMANCE MONITORING</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager – Business and Regeneration.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information therein be noted (option 1).</p>	
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEM - SOCIAL SERVICES</u></p>	
No. 21	<p><u>CHILDREN AND COMMUNITIES GRANT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Children’s Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the progress made to date on the Children and Communities grant was considered; and (b) it be noted that the CCG Steering Group continued to oversee and implement the delivery programme and provides an annual report on progress to scrutiny, executive and the new local arrangements to replace the Public Service Board. 	

No. 22

CARE INSPECTORATE WALES (CIW) ASSURANCE CHECK 2021:
BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
SOCIAL SERVICES

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

The Corporate Director Social Services advised that the report presented the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Assurance check summary as identified in their letter dated the 11th June 2021 which was attached at Appendix 1. The Corporate Director added that the purpose of the assurance check was to review how well the Local Authority's Social Services continued to help and support adults and children with a focus on safety and well-being.

The Corporate Director referred to the questions asked by CIW and reported the responses provided along with areas which need improvement.

The Executive Member for Social Services was pleased that the CIW recognised the hard work and commitment of Blaenau Gwent's Team. The Executive Member stated that the last 18 months had been difficult, however the Team remained focused on service users and their families' specific situation.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the comprehensive and honest report provided by the Corporate Director and wished to pass on thanks on behalf of the Executive to the Team who work tirelessly to support families in Blaenau Gwent their level of work and commitment was recognised.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information detailed within the CIW Assurance letter be noted (option 1).

**MONITORING ITEM –
REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

No. 24 **SILENT VALLEY WASTE SERVICES LTD
PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to report of the Service Manager Neighbourhood Services.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information which contained details relating to the business/financial affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted. (Option 1).

Agenda Item 5

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **15th December 2021**

Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme – 19th January 2022**

Portfolio Holder: **All Portfolio Holders**

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

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
X	x	30.11.21				15.12.21		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present the Executive Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 19th January 2022.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Executive Work Programme is a key aspect of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and supports the requirements of the Constitution.
 - 2.2 The topics set out in the Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's Corporate Plan, corporate documents and supporting business plans.
 - 2.3 All Scrutiny Committees and the Council Forward Work Programmes have been aligned to the Executive Forward Work Programme.
 - 2.4 As the document is fluid there is flexibility to allow for regular review between the Chair and the Committee.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 **Option 1**
To agree the Forward Work Programme as presented for the Meeting on 19th January 2022.
 - 3.2 **Option 2**
To suggest any amendments prior to agreeing the Forward Work Programme.

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Executive Committee Forward Work Programme

Executive Meeting Date: Wednesday 19th January 2022

Report Submission Deadline Date to Liz Thomas: Tuesday 14th December 2021

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

Decision: 2 items
Monitoring:
Information:

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
DECISION ITEMS				
Portfolio: Leader / Corporate Services				
Grants to Organisations	Approval To agree the Grants to Organisations.	Rhian Daly	N/A	N/A
Portfolio: Education				
Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) Monitoring existing plan and draft 10-year plan <i>Please note report and Plan will need to be translated to Welsh by the Directorate.</i>	Decision Members to consider performance against the Education Directorate's current WESP (2012 -20); and to approve the BG 10-year WESP following consultation, prior to submission to WG in January 2022.	Claire Gardner	Education and Learning – 30.11.21	N/A

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REPORT SUBJECT: GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS – 15th Dec 2021

REPORT AUTHOR: RHIAN HAYDEN

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

ABERTILLERY

Abertillery Ward - Councillor J. Holt

- | | | |
|----|---|--------|
| 1. | Ebbw Fach Choir | £100 |
| 2. | Royal British Legion – Abertillery Branch | £81.75 |

Cwmtillery Ward - Councillor T. Sharrem

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|--------|
| 1. | Old Tylerans RFC | £120 |
| 2. | Abertillery Belles FC | £120 |
| 3. | Abertillery Cricket Club | £120 |
| 4. | Abertillery Excelsiors FC | £120 |
| 5. | Abertillery Excelsiors Junior FC | £120 |
| 6. | Abertillery Bluebirds FC | £120 |
| 7. | Abertillery Netball | £120 |
| 8. | Chillax | £100 |
| 9. | Bishop Street Allotments | £100 |
| 10. | Blaentillery Allotments | £100 |
| 11. | Wyndham Vowles Community Centre | £46.75 |
| 12. | Abertillery BG RFC | £120 |
| 13. | St Pauls Church | £100 |
| 14. | St Pauls Church Hall | £100 |
| 15. | Blaenau Gwent Methodist Church | £100 |
| 16. | Blaenau Gwent Baptist Church | £100 |
| 17. | Abertillery Ladies Darts | £100 |

Llanhilleth Ward - Councillor J. Collins

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|------|
| 1. | Sofrydd Community Centre | £200 |
|----|--------------------------|------|

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|------|
| 2. | Sofrydd Community Youth Club | £200 |
| 3. | Sofrydd Senior Citizens | £200 |

Llanhilleth Ward - Councillor N. Parsons

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 1. | Brynithel Welfare & Community Centre | £250 |
| 2. | Ebbw Vale Air Training Corps | £50 |
| 3. | Llanhilleth Tenants & Residents Association | £250 |

EBBW VALE

Badminton Ward - Councillor G. Paulsen

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|-----|
| 1. | Ebbw Vale Air Training Corps | £50 |
|----|------------------------------|-----|

Ebbw Vale Rassau Ward - Councillors D. Wilkshire

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|------|
| 1. | Ebbw Vale Cricket Club | £50 |
| 2. | Ebbw Vale Netball | £150 |
| 3. | Rhos y Fedwen | £150 |

Ebbw Vale South Ward - Councillors J. Millard and K. Pritchard

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Ebbw Vale Air Training Corps | £200 |
|----|------------------------------|------|

NANTYGLO & BLAINA

Blaina Ward - Councillor L. Winnett

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|--------|
| 1. | Blaina Cricket Club | £94.10 |
|----|---------------------|--------|

Blaina Ward - Councillors J. Mason & K. Rowson

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|--------|
| 1. | Coedcae Interact | £55.92 |
| 2. | Nantyglo Football Club | £100 |

CHIEF OFFICER RESOURCES

EXECUTIVE – FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & STRATEGY

Report of Meeting held 17th November 2021 (Executive 15th December 2021)

PRESENT : **Executive Member – Resources**
Councillor N Daniels (CHAIR)

Councillors L. Parsons
G. Thomas
R. Summers
L. Winnett
G. L. Davies
K. Pritchard
G. Paulsen
J. Morgan

WITH : Rhian Daly – Business Partner - Finance
John Griffin – Senior Finance Officer

APOLOGIES: Councillor Lyn Elias

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting of the Grants Working Group.

The Group agreed a consistent approach, (and grant amount) be undertaken across the various applicant groups unless a lower amount had been requested by an organisation.

WELSH CHURCH FUND

Details of the applications received were submitted, whereupon it was

RESOLVED to recommend that the following Grants be made:-

Bethel Methodist Church, Beaufort	£500.00
Bethel Presbyterian Church, Beaufort Hill	£500.00
Bethania Congregational Church, Tredegar	£500.00
Blaenau Gwent Methodist Church, Abertillery	£582.05

Calvary Baptist Church, Brynmawr	£582.05
Central Baptist Church Tredegar	£582.05
Christ Church, Ebbw Vale	£582.05
Cwm Celyn Methodist Church, Blaina	£500.00
Ebenezer Baptist Church, Abertillery	£250.00
Ebenezer Welsh Congregational Church, Tredegar	£582.05
Garnlydan Presbyterian Church, Ebbw Vale	£582.05
Hermon Cemetery Trust	£582.05
Holy Trinity and St. Anne's Church, Nantyglo	£400.00
Horeb Chapel Trefil	£582.05
Libanus Presbyterian Church, Brynmawr	£582.05
Providence Baptist Church, Ebbw Vale	£582.05
Sardis Chapel Trefil	£582.05
St David's Church, Beaufort	£582.05
Tirzah Baptist Church, Ebbw Vale	£582.05
Trinity Spiritualist Church, Tredegar	£582.05
Tyllwyn Methodist Church, Ebbw Vale	£582.05
Zion Methodist Church, Beaufort Hill	£582.05
Zion Miners Chapel, Llanhilleth	£250.00
Raglan Terrace WOAP	£250.00
Waunlwyd OAP Association	£250.00
Winchestown OAP Association	£250.00
Brynithel Welfare and Community Centre	£250.00
Brynithel Community Centre Coffee Morning Section	£250.00
Beaufort Tenants & Residents Association	£582.05
Llanhilleth Tenants & Residents Association	£250.00
Sirhowy Community Centre Ltd	£250.00
Wanllwyd Youth & Community Centre	£250.00
Wyndham Vowles Community Centre	£250.00
Ystrad Deri Community Centre	£250.00
Abertillery & District Museum Society	£582.05
Brynmawr & District Museum Society	£582.05
Ebbw Vale Works Museum	£582.05
Llanhilleth Heritage Society	£209.00
Adam Street Allotments	£250.00
Bethesda Parents and Toddlers	£250.00
Central Baptist Church Tredegar Mother & Toddlers	£250.00
Community Hope Project	£250.00
Friends of Bedwellty Park	£250.00
St. Georges Luncheon Club	£250.00
Tredegar & St. James Mothers Union	£200.00
Friends of St Illtyds, Llanhilleth	£250.00
Kings Arms	£250.00

TK's and Community Group, Ebbw Vale	£250.00
Abertillery Workingmen's Institute	£250.00
Beaufort Hearts / Calonnau Cendl	£250.00
Gwent Area Association of the Welsh Pony & Cob Society	£250.00
Heads of the Valleys Astronomical Society	£250.00
Knit and Natter, Llanhilleth	£250.00
Mens Den	£250.00
Pentref Tyleri CBC	£250.00
Rassau & Beaufort Royal British Legion	£250.00
The Salvation Army	£250.00
Sirhowy Hill Woodlands CIC	£250.00
Tredegar Camera Club	£250.00
Tredegar Twinning Association	£250.00
Abertillery Amateur Dramatic & Musical Society	£250.00
Beaufort Male Choir	£250.00
Brynmawr Musical Theatre Company	£250.00
Ffin Dance, Ebbw Vale	£250.00
Kidz R Us, Tredegar	£250.00
KLA Dance Studios	£250.00
Showstoppers	£250.00
Toppers School of Dance and Drama	£250.00
Tredegar Community Band	£250.00
Tredegar Orpheus Male Voice Choir	£250.00

The following applications were also declined, as it was felt that they should be supported via the Members Special Levy Grants:

Abertillery Belles FC

The Chair thereupon thanked Members and Officers for attending and declared the meeting closed.

RMD

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Agenda Item 8

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 01.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **15th December 2021**
Report Subject: **The Calculation of the Council Tax Base for the year 2022/23**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member
Corporate Services**
Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer - Resources**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
18.11.21		30.11.21				15.12.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To set the Council Tax Base for the financial year 2022/23

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The Council is statutorily required to calculate the Council Tax Base for each financial year.

2.2 The Council Tax Base is a measure of the Authority's tax-raising capacity. It is expressed in terms of the number of Band D equivalent dwellings taking account of exemptions, reductions for disabilities and discounts.

2.3 The Council's Tax Base is calculated by applying the formula **A x B**, where

A is the total of the "relevant amounts" for 2022/2023 for each of the valuation bands contained in the Council's valuation list and Band A*, and

B is the Council's estimated collection rate for the year.

The "relevant amounts" for the financial year beginning on 1st April, 2022, for a valuation band, are based on the dwellings shown in the valuation list for the Authority as at 31st October, 2021, and is found by applying the formula,

$$(H-(I \times E) + J) \times \frac{F}{G}$$

Where

H Is the number of chargeable dwellings in the valuation band and Band A*;

I Is the number of estimated discounts payable in respect of such dwellings;

E Is the appropriate percentage (25% in 2022/2023);

J Is the amount of adjustments in respect of the chargeable dwellings or discounts;

F Is the proportionate number of dwellings in that band: and

G Is the proportionate number applicable in respect of the Band D dwellings

2.4 The Council Tax Base for the current year, 2021/2022, was set at 20,794.09.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 That the Executive Committee approves the Council Tax base calculation for 2022/23 as detailed in Appendix 1 tables 1 to 6, and that the council tax base for tax setting purposes be 20,876.86.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the**

4.1 **Council Priorities**

The report is linked to and instrumental in the budget strategy for the financial year 2022/23.

4.2 **Statutory Responsibilities**

The calculation must comply with: -

- a) The Local Government Finance Act , 1992,
- b) The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (Wales) Regulations, 1995,
- c) The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) and Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulation 2004.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Financial**

Option 1

The Council Tax base determines the Councils ability to raise revenue through Council Tax.

5.2 **Risk**

Option 1

Failure to set the Council Tax base correctly can restrict the Council's ability to enforce the collection of Council Tax.

5.3 **Human Resources**

There are no direct staff implications to this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

The coronavirus pandemic has had a significant effect on council tax collection rates across Wales, and whilst these have started to improve, they are still being monitored by s151 officers and Welsh Government, in order to consider the volatility of household incomes. Similarly, in Blaenau Gwent, whilst we are seeing a slight improvement on last year's collection, at this time, I consider it prudent to estimate the in-year collection for 2022/2023 at 95%.

6.2 ***Involvement***

The Community Council's within the Blaenau Gwent area will be informed of their appropriate council tax base for 2022/23.

6.3 ***Thinking for the Long term***

The council tax base calculation is an annual calculation based on reference to the dwellings within a local authority area on the 31st October of the preceding year.

6.4 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Each individual local authority must calculate their relevant council tax base.

6.5 ***Integration (across service areas)***

Not applicable to this report.

6.6 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

Not applicable to this report.

6.7a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment.***

Not applicable to this report.

6.8b. ***Equality Impact Assessment***

Not applicable to this report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The Revenue section will continue monitoring collection performance to inform future years calculations.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1

DE

15th November 2021

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TABLE 1

ABERTILLERY & LLANHILLETH

Band	H	I	E	(IxE)	Net of Discount H (IxE)	J	(F/G)	Relevant Amounts
A*	9	3	25.00%	0.75	8.25	0	5/9 = 0.555556	4.58
A	5,503	2,509	25.00%	627.25	4875.75	0	6/9 = 0.666667	3250.50
B	1,583	493	25.00%	123.25	1459.75	0	7/9 = 0.777778	1135.36
C	249	62	25.00%	15.50	233.50	0	8/9 = 0.888889	207.56
D	179	53	25.00%	13.25	165.75	0	9/9 = 1.000000	165.75
E	77	15	25.00%	3.75	73.25	0	11/9 = 1.222222	89.53
F	27	4	25.00%	1.00	26.00	0	13/9 = 1.444444	37.56
G	4	2	25.00%	0.50	3.50	0	15/9 = 1.666667	5.83
H	1	2	25.00%	0.50	0.50	0	18/9 = 2.000000	1.00
I	1	2	25.00%	0.50	0.50	0	21/9 = 2.333333	1.17
Total =	7,633	3,145		786.25	6,846.75	0		4,898.84

A = 4,898.84
 B = 95.00%
 A X B = 4,653.90

TABLE 2

BRYNMAWR

Band	H	I	E	(IxE)	Net of Discount H-(IxE)	J	(F/G)	Relevant Amounts
A*	2	2	25.00%	0.50	1.50	0	5/9 = 0.555556	0.83
A	1,139	620	25.00%	155.00	984.00	0	6/9 = 0.666667	656.00
B	888	331	25.00%	82.75	805.25	0	7/9 = 0.777778	626.31
C	303	86	25.00%	21.50	281.50	0	8/9 = 0.888889	250.22
D	169	39	25.00%	9.75	159.25	0	9/9 = 1.000000	159.25
E	54	11	25.00%	2.75	51.25	0	11/9 = 1.222222	62.64
F	22	5	25.00%	1.25	20.75	0	13/9 = 1.444444	29.97
G	2	0	25.00%	0.00	2.00	0	15/9 = 1.666667	3.33
H	5	10	25.00%	2.50	2.50	0	18/9 = 2.000000	5.00
I	0	0	25.00%	0.00	0.00	0	21/9 = 2.333333	0.00
Total =	2,584	1,104		276.00	2,308.00	0		1793.55

A = 1,793.55
 B = 95.00%
 A X B = 1,703.87

TABLE 3

EBBW VALE , BEAUFORT & CWM

Band	H	I	E	(IxE)	Net of Discount H (IxE)	J	(F/G)	Relevant Amounts
A*	19	10	25.00%	2.50	16.50	0	5/9 = 0.555556	9.17
A	5,918	2,652	25.00%	663.00	5255.00	0	6/9 = 0.666667	3503.34
B	2,517	829	25.00%	207.25	2309.75	0	7/9 = 0.777778	1796.47
C	1,024	280	25.00%	70.00	954.00	0	8/9 = 0.888889	848.00
D	728	165	25.00%	41.25	686.75	0	9/9 = 1.000000	686.75
E	319	70	25.00%	17.50	301.50	0	11/9 = 1.222222	368.50
F	130	21	25.00%	5.25	124.75	0	13/9 = 1.444444	180.19
G	15	2	25.00%	0.50	14.50	0	15/9 = 1.666667	24.17
H	4	6	25.00%	1.50	2.50	0	18/9 = 2.000000	5.00
I	3	2	25.00%	0.50	2.50	0	21/9 = 2.333333	5.83
Total =	10,677	4,037		1009.25	9,667.75	0		7,427.42

A = 7,427.42
 B = 95.00%
 A X B = 7,056.05

TABLE 4

NANTYGLO & BLAINA

Band	H	I	E	(IxE)	Net of Discount H-(IxE)	J	(F/G)	Relevant Amounts
A*	9	2	25.00%	0.50	8.50	0	5/9 = 0.555556	4.72
A	2,430	1,067	25.00%	266.75	2163.25	0	6/9 = 0.666667	1442.17
B	1,108	363	25.00%	90.75	1017.25	0	7/9 = 0.777778	791.19
C	251	78	25.00%	19.50	231.50	0	8/9 = 0.888889	205.78
D	212	44	25.00%	11.00	201.00	0	9/9 = 1.000000	201.00
E	153	26	25.00%	6.50	146.50	0	11/9 = 1.222222	179.06
F	15	2	25.00%	0.50	14.50	0	13/9 = 1.444444	20.94
G	8	1	25.00%	0.25	7.75	0	15/9 = 1.666667	12.92
H	2	2	25.00%	0.50	1.50	0	18/9 = 2.000000	3.00
I	0	0	25.00%	0.00	0.00	0	21/9 = 2.333333	0.00
Total =	4,188	1,585		396.25	3,791.75	0		2,860.78

A = 2,860.78
 B = 95.00%
 A X B = 2,717.74

TABLE 5

TREDEGAR

Band	H	I	E	(IxE)	Net of Discount H-(IxE)	J	(F/G)	Relevant Amounts
A*	17	13	25.00%	3.25	13.75	0	5/9 = 0.555556	7.64
A	3,723	1,831	25.00%	457.75	3265.25	0	6/9 = 0.666667	2176.83
B	1,826	632	25.00%	158.00	1668.00	0	7/9 = 0.777778	1297.33
C	785	248	25.00%	62.00	723.00	0	8/9 = 0.888889	642.67
D	389	75	25.00%	18.75	370.25	0	9/9 = 1.000000	370.25
E	231	47	25.00%	11.75	219.25	0	11/9 = 1.222222	267.97
F	129	17	25.00%	4.25	124.75	0	13/9 = 1.444444	180.19
G	29	4	25.00%	1.00	28.00	0	15/9 = 1.666667	46.67
H	2	4	25.00%	1.00	1.00	0	18/9 = 2.000000	2.00
I	2	2	25.00%	0.50	1.50	0	21/9 = 2.333333	3.50
Total =	7,133	2,873		718.25	6,414.75	0		4,995.05

A = 4,995.05
 B = 95.00%
 A X B = 4,745.30

TABLE 6

AUTHORITY TOTALS

Band	H	I	E	(IxE)	Net of Discount H-(IxE)	J	(F/G)	Relevant Amounts
A*	56	30	25.00%	7.50	48.50	0	5/9 = 0.555556	26.94
A	18,713	8,679	25.00%	2169.75	16543.25	0	6/9 = 0.666667	11028.84
B	7,922	2648	25.00%	662.00	7260.00	0	7/9 = 0.777778	5646.67
C	2,612	754	25.00%	188.50	2423.50	0	8/9 = 0.888889	2154.22
D	1,677	376	25.00%	94.00	1583.00	0	9/9 = 1.000000	1583.00
E	834	169	25.00%	42.25	791.75	0	11/9 = 1.222222	967.69
F	323	49	25.00%	12.25	310.75	0	13/9 = 1.444444	448.86
G	58	9	25.00%	2.25	55.75	0	15/9 = 1.666667	92.92
H	14	24	25.00%	6.00	8.00	0	18/9 = 2.000000	16.00
I	6	6	25.00%	1.50	4.50	0	21/9 = 2.333333	10.50
Total =	32,215	12,744		3186.00	29,029.00	0		21,975.64

A = 21,975.64
 B = 95.00%
 A X B = 20,876.86

Agenda Item 9

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 01.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **15th December 2021**
Report Subject: **Ebbw Vale Placemaking Plan**
Portfolio Holder: **Councillor D Davies, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development**
Report Submitted by: **Richard Crook, Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
16.11.21	18.11.21	30.11.21			8.12.21	15.12.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To present and seek approval of the Ebbw Vale Placemaking Plan from the Executive Committee.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1. As one of five towns across Blaenau Gwent, Ebbw Vale like all towns faces significant challenges as a result of a shift to online retailing and the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Many of our regeneration focus on the town in the past has looked at how the town could be refurbished and updated.
- 2.2. Whilst we will still seek to carry out refurbishment of properties in need of attention we must also take a step back and reconsider the spaces and properties in and around our town centre. In Wales placemaking is a statutory requirement of the planning system. We will therefore take a placemaking approach to deliver sustainable development and provide solutions and investment that addresses the needs of Ebbw Vale.
- 2.3. To provide a background to our current work we will first consider historic regeneration projects. In 2002, the multi-storey car park was renovated and a steel and glass canopy was installed along the southern end of one side of Bethcar Street.
- 2.4. In recent years, the town benefitted from EU convergence funding and under the 2010-2015 programme works included streetscape works, new bus and taxi rank, community space and sculpture at Bank Square and refurbishment of 29 properties throughout the town.
- 2.5. In 2020, the Council were awarded funding by Welsh Government from the Transforming Towns programme for development studies towards the costs of

commissioning consultants The Urbanists to develop a Placemaking Plan for Ebbw Vale.

- 2.6. After a competitive tendering exercise the Contract to deliver the placemaking plan was awarded to The Urbanists.
- 2.7. The work undertaken by the Urbanists has been delivered in two parts:
 - i. **Deliverable 1: Placemaking Plan**
A public facing, overarching strategic vision that identifies priority areas for action within the study area.
 - ii. **Deliverable 2: Delivery Plan**
An internally focused, 'detailed delivery plan' that utilises an appropriate methodology for the detailed analysis of the study area sites and puts forward 'evidenced based' recommendations on preferred development/redevelopment options for the Council to take forward.
- 2.8. This report presents the first of their deliverables the Placemaking Plan and overall strategic vision that identifies our core ambitions for the Town. This will then be followed in early 2022 with the proposed Delivery Plan.
- 2.9. The aims of placemaking are outlined within the Placemaking Guide (Placemaking Wales, 2020). The way places are planned, designed, developed and managed has the potential to positively shape where and how people will live, work, socialise move about and engage. Placemaking is ensuring that each new development or intervention contributes positively to creating or enhancing environments. It places people at the heart of the process and results in places that are vibrant, have a clear identity and where people can develop a sense of belonging.
- 2.10. The primary purpose of the Placemaking Plan for Ebbw Vale is to inform and influence future strategic decision making for regeneration activity within the town and act as an evidence base to support the Council with future external funding options and support development of the replacement Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 2.11. The placemaking plan study area includes the town centre, the northern area of The Works, the Civic Centre site and Eugene Cross Park. The plan aims to provide a new vision for Ebbw Vale and identifies the type of projects and investment that we want to attract to the town. All the proposals within the plan are 'people centred' with each focussed on improving experiences of the town.
- 2.12. Like many towns across the UK, Ebbw Vale in recent years has faced extremely challenging times. Along with the continued increase in online shopping, the town has faced one of the most significant and challenging periods for our economy during the Covid-19 pandemic. It has exacerbated challenges already being faced as a result of town centre decline and we need to look at how we can refocus and reinvent the town centre spaces.

2.13. The overall vision of the Ebbw Vale Placemaking Plan is:

“We want Ebbw Vale to be a smart, resilient and sustainable town that is a great place to work, have a business, live and visit.”

2.14. Delivery of our vision shall be done by exploiting three opportunity areas for Ebbw Vale Town:

- i. Connect the town with the locality and destinations
- ii. Build on the area’s green legacy
- iii. Exploit tech and digital investment opportunities

2.15. Within the draft Ebbw Vale Placemaking Plan six core ambitions have been identified to support us in transforming the town and delivering upon our vision. these are:

1. Establish the high street as a ‘test-bed’ for new business and entrepreneurs, but also cultivate an environment of growth for existing businesses.
2. Create a series of new entrance spaces into the town centre that open up the high street, enhance the retail environment, green the centre and create new space for homes, work spaces and leisure uses.
3. Revitalise connections between the town centre and The Works to give pedestrians greater choice, reliability and quality.
4. Transform The Works into a vibrant and active destination; a place of arrival, culture, learning, working and living.
5. Establish Eugene Cross Park as a regionally renowned sporting destination that caters for specialist, elite and community teams and improve its connections to the town centre and The Works.
6. Transform the Civic Centre site into an exemplary neighbourhood of modern homes in a green sustainable setting.

2.16. Taking forward these ambitions, the plan identifies a series of intervention areas and high level actions including:

1. **Northern Gateway** – new entrance space from the north prioritising pedestrians, new green space and redevelopment of key buildings to create an attractive and engaging townscape.
2. **Eastern Gateway** – new entrance from the southern end of the town with an improved pedestrian environment, better public realm which opens the entrance to the town and connects the centre to The Works. Redevelopment of key blocks to offer a greater mix of viable uses in the centre.
3. **Town Centre Core** – restored buildings and shopfronts that include a diverse mix of uses that include retail businesses, workspaces, incubator and tester units for ‘start-ups’, leisure uses, homes and live/work spaces.

4. **The Works** – new landmark entrance to Ebbw Vale by rail with new terminus building and station square development to provide new civic and cultural and outdoor event spaces. Enhanced pedestrian connections to the town centre.
 5. **A4046 Corridor** – an enhanced active travel environment with space for cycle lanes, planting and priority pedestrian crossings to connect the town centre and The Works. Improved integration of the bus station and taxi rank into Bethcar Street and treatment of rear properties.
 6. **Civic Centre Site** – new green neighbourhood with energy efficient homes and new active travel corridors that provide access to the town centre, The Works and Eugene Cross Park.
 7. **Eugene Cross Park** – to create a modern sports and community destination with training and all weather facilities, enhanced active travel and vehicle connections.
- 2.17. The projects listed above are predominantly physical regeneration projects. Non-physical projects are not included in the intervention areas, but they are pivotal for the success of the town centre and are also included within the Placemaking Plan.
- 2.18. Each of the interventions are discussed in sections 2.19 to 2.34 of this report. They consider the issues for each of the intervention areas and then potential opportunities/projects to address these issues. More detailed information is contained within the Placemaking document that has been included as background paper to this report (**Appendix One**).

Town Centre Core

- 2.19. Main issues within the Town Centre Core are discussed on page 30 of the Placemaking Plan (**Appendix One**).
- 2.20. Projects that could be delivered within the overall town centre core include:
- Creation of flexible commercial units that can be used for ‘test trading’.
 - Restoration and refurbishment of building facades and shop fronts to enhance town centre character.
 - Rationalise street furniture and ensure maintenance measures are in place to maintain retained furniture.
 - Establishment of a Local Development Order to provide greater flexibility for changes of use that complement the town centre and will help increase activity and footfall.
 - Promote the town centre as a ‘pilot project’ to test the benefits of freezing or reducing business rates for town centre businesses.
 - Develop an online digital presence for the town centre that promotes the town and its businesses and provides a means for retailers to trade online.

- 2.21. Greening town spaces have well documented benefits on peoples physical and mental well-being as well as environmental benefits. Urban green spaces can provide:
- greater levels of social activity,
 - improved health and well-being,
 - decarbonisation and tackling climate change
 - improved air quality
 - reduce flood risk and better manage water quality
- 2.22. Whilst it will be important to include more green space, it will also be essential that this is designed in ways that require low levels of management and maintenance (see examples on page 12 of **Appendix One**). It will also be necessary to ensure that suitable resourcing from a people and financial perspective are put in place by the Council to ensure that these areas are maintained and not allowed to become overgrown or fall into disrepair.

Northern Gateway

- 2.23. Main issues within the northern gateway are discussed on page 32 of the Placemaking Plan (**Appendix One**).
- 2.24. Projects that could be delivered within the Northern Gateway of the town include:
- Creation of an improved pedestrian entrance into the town centre by simplifying the A4046 junctions serving Market Street, Libanus Road, Market Square and James Street to prioritise pedestrian movement.
 - Redevelop key development plots to create a landmark visual entrance into the town centre, deliver a greater mix of uses and revitalise the street scene.
 - Creation of a green public open space on Market Square to provide a green core that softens the town centre street scene.
 - Integrate new commercial development into the town centre.

Eastern Gateway

- 2.25. Main issues within the eastern gateway are discussed on page 34 of the Placemaking Plan (**Appendix One**).
- 2.26. Potential projects that could be delivered within the Eastern Gateway of the town include:
- Future redevelopment of the police station to include green space and improve west/east pedestrian movement and enhance views of the town centre from the A4046.
 - Open the southern façade of the old bank building so commercial activity could spill out onto Old Bank Square.
 - Repurpose “The Walk” shopping centre to include a mix of uses and spaces that prioritise pedestrians and open up access to the high street from the east of the centre and The Works.

- Redevelopment of vacant development plots to create a southern landmark for the town centre and diversify uses in the town.
- Reduce the vehicle dominated design of the walk by improving pedestrian connections.
- Consider the requirement for signalisation of the junction connecting The Walk and A4046.

A4046 Corridor

2.27. Main issues within the A4046 Corridor are discussed on page 36 of the Placemaking Plan (**Appendix One**).

2.28. Potential projects that could be delivered on the A4046 corridor include:

- Reduce the design speed of the A4046 as it passes through the Town Centre and prioritise movement of pedestrians, including wider west /east movement between the town centre and The Works.
- Targeted treatment of the rear of properties on Bethcar Street and Market Street to reduce the viability of poor quality backs.
- Include wider pavement, enhanced pedestrian crossing, removal of barriers and street clutter.
- Integrate the bus station into Bethcar Street via targeted removal of poor quality structures and infrastructure to improve pedestrian connections and create views to the high street and new northern gateway.

The Works

2.29. Main issues within The Works are discussed on page 38 of the Placemaking Plan (**Appendix One**). These include poor wayfinding and sense of arrival, lack of pedestrian access to the town centre through ramp/stairs and a lack of activities and footfall away from the education and public sector buildings.

2.30. Potential projects that could be delivered at The Works include:

- New development on Station Square to include floor space for new uses such as a multi-functional cultural venue, café/restaurants and active frontages onto the public spaces.
- Upgrading the existing train station terminal building to create more of an experience when approaching Ebbw Vale by train.
- General Offices extension would build upon the modern extension constructed in 2010 to accommodate Gwent Archives.
- Regeneration of the public space to create safe, attractive and active spaces through integration of green infrastructure, wayfinding system and signature lighting.

Eugene Cross Park

- 2.31. Main issues within Eugene Cross Park are discussed on page 42 of the Placemaking Plan (**Appendix One**).
- 2.32. Potential projects that could be delivered within the Eugene Cross Park site include:
- Provision of dynamic multi-purpose sports and community facility that provides a new entrance to the park and integrates the River Centre.
 - Enhance existing vehicle access into the middle of the Park from Newchurch Road to improve access to the facilities.
 - Create a 4G training facility with parking and indoor changing facilities.

Civic Centre Site

- 2.33. Main issues within Civic Centre Site are discussed on page 49 of the Placemaking Plan (Appendix One).
- 2.34. Potential projects that could be delivered within the Civic Centre site include:
- Residential development of the Civic Centre site and adjacent land to create a vibrant green neighbourhood with a mix of modern energy efficient homes.
 - Integrate the existing health centre and residential development to create a wellness village.
 - Establish an active travel corridor that connects the Civic Centre site and the town centre to enable residents to move easily and quickly to the town centre.
 - Enhance pedestrian connections from the Civic Centre site to Eugene Cross Park and The Works.
- 2.35. In addition to the above, the Civic Centre site presents an opportunity to develop a net zero carbon homes site and this would mirror Council aspirations for decarbonisation.

Town Centre Wide Projects and Digital Interventions

- 2.36. Town centre wide projects that apply to the whole study area could include:
- Consolidated town centre signage to reduce clutter while clearly signposting attractions, parking and highway requirements.
 - Expand on the existing programme of events to develop a consistent calendar of activity that includes heritage, food, music and recreation.
 - Work with existing businesses to improve diversity of retail and hospitality offer within the town centre.
 - 5G connectivity throughout the town centre with 5G classroom at The Works site.

- Create a digital high street through development of an app that allows interaction with Ebbw Vale and provides access to local businesses.

Transport and Movement Strategy

- 2.37. An appraisal of current transport options and the development of additional or alternative proposals was included within the commission and have followed the WELTAG process.
- 2.38. One of the key areas around transport and movement would be to remove redundant road infrastructure along the A4046 and to provide a safe and attractive active travel corridor for pedestrians and cyclists. Connecting it to the existing 466 cycle route.
- 2.39. Section 5 (page 48) of the Placemaking Plan in **Appendix One** discusses our transport and movement strategy in greater detail and explores areas including improving cycle routes, bike parking provision and better integration of bus and taxi services into the town centre.
- 2.40. We will look to enhance existing pedestrian connections between The Works and the town centre and create a welcoming and functional train gateway to the town with new terminal station, high-quality public realm and improved wayfinding.
- 2.41. The potential interventions are by no means exhaustive and will need to be updated as new opportunities emerge. Further detail around the issues and opportunities is contained within **Appendix One**.

Stakeholder Engagement

- 2.42. As a result of COVID-19 engagement has been undertaken with key stakeholders via online workshops. Engagement with business stakeholders was done using one to one telephone discussions.

- 2.43. Stakeholder engagement is being undertaken in three stages:



- 2.44. Stakeholders that have formed part of the engagement for Stages A and B included:

- The Council (Officers and Elected Members)
- Welsh Government
- Key Landowners
- Local Businesses
- Eugene Cross Park Stakeholders
- Design Commission for Wales
- Transport for Wales

- Coleg Gwent
- Ebbw Fawr Learning Community
- Aneurin Leisure Trust

- 2.45. The initial engagement has supported the assessment of issues and opportunities that face Ebbw Vale Town. Pages 14-17 of **Appendix One** provide details of the issues and opportunities that were identified by the Urbanists along with stakeholder feedback on these and any other issues / opportunities that were identified.
- 2.46. Wider public engagement is also to be undertaken and will be used to support development of the delivery plan which will support this placemaking plan.

Decarbonisation

- 2.47. The Council has set a target for the Local Authority to become net zero by 2030. Mirroring this ambition there is a commitment towards supporting the borough of Blaenau Gwent to become net zero. The projects that emerge from the Placemaking Plan offer an opportunity to support further decarbonisation across Blaenau Gwent.
- 2.48. Green urban areas can be used to offset carbon emissions of businesses that operate within the town. They can also help improve overall air quality.
- 2.49. New build and refurbishment projects can be used to deliver buildings that have a lower carbon impact. This can include using local supply chains to reduce travel of materials, energy efficient lighting and appliances.
- 2.50. Transport and movement projects can also support decarbonisation. Improved active travel routes alongside multi-modal transport systems and wayfinding can assist with reducing dependence upon car travel within the Town Centre.

3. Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 This report will be considered by the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 8th December 2021, and any feedback will be provided verbally to the Executive.
- 3.1. The options contained within this report relate only to the approval of the overall vision and series of core ambitions contained within the Placemaking Plan in Appendix One. Future reports will be submitted in relation to the delivery plan and details of potential projects to be developed and implemented in order for us to achieve our overall vision.

Option 1 – Do Nothing

- 3.2. Note the contents of the Placemaking Plan and take no further action. Without Council endorsement of the projects contained within the plan it is unlikely that we would be successful in securing Welsh Government Transforming Towns money for redevelopment/refurbishment of the Town.

Option 2 – Endorse the Placemaking Plan

- 3.3. Agree the Ebbw Vale Placemaking Plan, its vision and core ambitions for the future. This will enable us to finalise the draft of the delivery plan and steps towards implementation of the projects that will be contained within it.

Preferred Option

- 3.4. The preferred option is Option Two. This will enable the projects that will support achievement of the core ambitions to be brought forward as part of the Delivery Plan. Such projects are likely to be eligible to apply for funding through the Transforming Towns funding.
- 3.5. Projects which show a strategic vision and delivery approach that are supported by Placemaking Plans will be more positively received by potential funders such as the Welsh Government than ad-hoc projects which don't consider overall impact upon the area.
- 3.6. A placemaking approach will be taken for all towns across Blaenau Gwent. Work is already underway on the Tredegar and this will be closely followed by Abertillery and Brynmawr. Work to develop a placemaking plan for Blaina is expected to commence in early 2022.

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

Future Wales – The National Plan 2040

- 4.1. Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 is the national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing national priorities through the planning system. As the national development framework, Future Wales is the highest tier of development plan and focused on challenges at a national scale.
- 4.2. Policy 2 of the plan is Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking. The aspirations of Future Wales are an opportunity to regenerate our towns. The plan sets out the policy for a strategic placemaking approach and principles to help shape urban growth and regeneration.
- 4.3. Policy 3 of the plan is Supporting Urban Growth and Regeneration – Public Sector Leadership. This policy highlights the role the public sector can play in assembling land and enabling development to realise aspirations.
- 4.4. It also supports delivery of the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan:
 - Safe and friendly communities;
 - To look after and protect the environment;
 - To forge new pathways to prosperity; and

- To encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the places that they live, learn, work and play
- 4.5. The Town Centre strategy will seek to ensure that our town centres are safe and friendly communities for our residents and visitors to shop within. This will include projects to maintain and enhance the local environment, increase business occupancy and create an environment in our town centres that encourages our residents to spend time there for work, learning and leisure.
- 4.6. The report supports the following Corporate Plan priorities:
- To protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities;
 - To support a fairer sustainable economy and community; and
 - An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities.
- 4.7. Town Centres are one of the key themes identifies for the Regeneration and Community Services which support delivery of the priority areas identified in the Council's Corporate Plan 2018/22.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

- 5.1. Option 1 – there would be no financial implications associated with option one of this report.
- 5.2. Option 2 – there would be no immediate budgetary implications as a result of endorsing the Ebbw Vale Placemaking Plan. There would however be medium and long term capital and revenue implications associated with taking forward the emerging projects that will form the Delivery Plan.
- 5.3. In the medium to long term taking forward Option 2 will result in future development and implementation costs. It is likely that development costs such as surveys, feasibility studies would be eligible under the Transforming Towns programme (subject to a successful application) but this would only be for up to 50% of the eligible costs and there would be a need for the Council to identify suitable revenue match funding for the remaining 50%.
- 5.4. Implementation costs are also likely to be eligible for capital funding under the Transforming Towns programme (subject to successful application) but this would only be able to cover up to 80% of these costs and the Council would need to identify capital match funding for the remaining 20%.
- 5.5. Further detail on development and implementation costs will be included within the Delivery Plan which will be presented for approval in early 2022.
- 5.6. The future maintenance cost implications will be incorporated into the project proposals when they are presented for approval. All project proposals will be

developed to limit maintenance liabilities for the Council and this will be included in the proposals along with proposals to establish a maintenance budget.

Risk including Mitigating Actions

- 5.7. Option 1 – if no further action is taken there is risk that sites will remain undeveloped or fall into disrepair.
- 5.8. Option 1 – footfall within the town centre associated with retail has been severely hit with the increase in online shopping and enforced lockdowns as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Key to recovery will be intervention that supports repurposing and reinventing our town centres. This would not happen if option 1 is chosen and then we would have a further risk of deterioration in footfall.
- 5.9. Option 2 – further work to develop / implement projects that will achieve the core ambitions would require revenue and capital funding. Such funding is likely to be eligible for application under the Transforming Towns programme but there is a requirement to identify a suitable source of match funding to fully meet the costs.

Legal

- 5.10. There are no direct legal implications for any of the options considered within this report. The report seeks endorsement of a Vision and set of ambitions that set out our approach to future regeneration of Ebbw Vale Town Centre.
- 5.11. Legal implications associated with project delivery will be explored as part of the delivery plan.

Human Resources

- 5.12. Staff within Regeneration and Development are leading the preparatory work and working across other service areas within the Council where required.

6. Supporting Evidence

Performance Information and Data

- 6.1. A health check of the study area was carried out in January 2021. The health check identified key issues within the town:
 - Retail is suffering with a number of empty units creating ‘holes’ in the high street.
 - Lack of night-time and leisure economy with residents travelling to Cardiff, Abergavenny and Brynmawr.
 - Retail units are generally small and less well suited to modern requirements.
 - The commercial premises on Bethcar Street and Market Street stretch longer than the number of retail units and active uses can support and therefore ‘fades out’ in the north and south.

- Car dominated retail in the south undermines activity on Bethcar Street.
- Development opportunities at The Works site are currently divorced from the Town Centre.

Expected outcome for the public

- 6.2. Some of the sites included within the study area are no longer fit for purpose or underutilised. The Placemaking Plan seeks to identify these sites and identify alternative uses or opportunities for refurbishment or redevelopment.
- 6.3. Active travel routes between the town and sites such as the works need improvement. Improved active travel will provide greater accessibility for residents and visitors to move within the area.

Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)

- 6.4. Initial engagement was undertaken with the stakeholders to understand how the town works currently and what ambitions there are for the future. The initial phase of engagement included fact finding and this was used to identify the issues and opportunities discussed within the Placemaking Plan (**Appendix One**).
- 6.5. As a result of COVID-19 much of the engagement has been undertaken with stakeholders via online workshops or by one-to-one telephone discussions.

Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)

- 6.6. The Placemaking plan sets a vision and series of core ambitions that are aimed at planning for the long term future of the Town Centre.

Preventative focus

- 6.7. Taking forward the outcomes of the placemaking plan will ensure that areas of the town that are in need of attention are protected and enhanced in the future.

Collaboration / partnership working

- 6.8. Many of the projects that will be identified to deliver on our core ambitions for Ebbw Vale Town Centre will require collaborative approaches to delivery. This will be developed further alongside stakeholders subject to endorsement of this report and the delivery plan.
- 6.9. In September 2021, the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee endorsed proposals to establish a partnership delivery approach towards town centre regeneration and to set up an advisory group to help steer progress in the future. This was subsequently agreed by the Executive Committee and work will now begin on identifying the membership of the group together with setting up the first meeting to agree their terms of reference.

Integration(across service areas)

- 6.10. As outlined above, initial consultation has been undertaken across service areas within the Council. This includes service areas such as highways, housing, planning and education.

Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions

- 6.11. Blaenau Gwent declared a Climate Emergency in 2020 and as a Council we have committed towards achievement of net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Creating high quality green spaces in the town centre will help with decarbonisation and offsetting carbon emissions. It will also help improve air quality.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1. Progress will be reported through the Regeneration and Development business plan.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix One - Ebbw Vale Town Centre Placemaking Plan*

EBBW VALE TOWN

PLACEMAKING PLAN

November 2021

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Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

SYNOPSIS
EBBW VALE PLACEMAKING PLAN VISION

This placemaking plan provides a Vision for Ebbw Vale town that sets a clear direction to work towards in the short, medium and long term. The plan will guide the future planning of the town, attract investment and shape future development and place enhancements.

The placemaking plan includes analysis of the current physical conditions and socio-economic trends of Ebbw Vale. This marks the baseline that the placemaking plan is responding to. It also describes the stakeholder engagement that was undertaken to prepare the baseline.

The plan then outlines the core spatial ambitions that underpin the vision for Ebbw Vale town, identifies the areas of the town that will be subject to investment and finally, describes the key projects that will help deliver transformation by 2035.

We want Ebbw Vale to thrive as a local place for its residents and businesses. If we can achieve this the town will also become a place that others visit and new businesses want to invest in.

In delivering the vision we want to embrace three key opportunity areas for the town:



1. CONNECTING THE LOCALITY



2. GREEN LEGACY



3. DIGITAL & TECH INVESTMENT

- Better connect the town with the assets that surround it.
- Create a '20-minute' neighbourhood where key destinations are highly accessible and strengthen each other.
- Improve Active Travel connections and public transport facilities.

- Extensive tree and SuDS planting to build upon Ebbw Vale's innovative green legacy.
- Create high quality green places that connect the centre to Ebbw Vale's natural backdrop.

- Embrace the digital and technological revolution with world-class connectivity.
- Help deliver the Tech Valleys agenda.
- Create an environment where new businesses can thrive and existing businesses are supported to grow.

SYNOPSIS
EBBW VALE PLACEMAKING PLAN CORE AMBITIONS

TO HELP DELIVER THE VISION FOR EBBW VALE TOWN WE HAVE IDENTIFIED SIX CORE AMBITIONS THAT WILL HELP US TO FRAME FUTURE PROJECTS AND GUIDE INVESTMENT INTO THE TOWN ...



1.

Establish the high street as a 'test-bed' for new business and **entrepreneurs**, but also cultivate **an environment of growth for existing businesses.**

3.

Revitalise the **connections between the town centre and The Works** to give pedestrians & cyclists greater choice, reliability and quality.



2.

Create a series of new entrance spaces into the town centre that **open up the high street**, enhance the retail environment, green the centre and create space for new homes, work spaces and leisure uses.



4.

Transform The Works into a vibrant and active destination; a place of arrival, culture, learning, working and living



5.

Establish **Eugene Cross Park as a regionally renowned sporting destination** that caters for specialist, elite and community teams and improve its connections to the town centre and The Works.



6.

Transform the Civic Centre site and it's environs into an **exemplary neighbourhood** of modern homes in a green sustainable setting.

WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?

PLACEMAKING IDENTIFIES AND USES LOCAL COMMUNITY ASSETS, INSPIRATION, AND POTENTIAL, WITH THE INTENTION OF **CREATING PUBLIC SPACES THAT PROMOTE PEOPLE'S HEALTH, HAPPINESS, AND WELL-BEING.**

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This placemaking plan has been prepared for Ebbw Vale by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and Welsh Government as part of the Transforming Towns programme. It sets out the ambitions for the town, its role within the Capital City Region, and offers how to implement the Welsh Government's 'Town Centres First' policy.

Ebbw Vale has a strategic location at the northern part of the Capital City Region, approximately 30 miles north of Cardiff and 20 miles north of Newport. It is located strategically on the A465 (Heads of the Valleys) corridor and is connected by the railway.

Connectivity is and will continue to be transformed through the South Wales Metro and investment in greener transport. This will make it easier for people to access employment opportunities anywhere in the Capital City Region and encourage businesses to locate and invest across the region. Ebbw Vale can benefit from this, and with the right investment has a bright future. This placemaking plan has been provided to communicate our vision for Ebbw Vale and identifies the interventions and investment we want to attract to unlock the town's potential and ensure that it is a key economic, social and cultural centre for the Capital City Region.

Like all towns Ebbw Vale is facing stark challenges. The shift towards online retailing has been constant over the past 10 years, and this has now accelerated due to COVID-19. To combat this, town centres need to be re-purposed into diverse and liveable destinations that offer great experiences. This placemaking plan explains how we will help Ebbw Vale make this transition.



Ebbw Vale Town Railway Station



1.0 INTRODUCTION

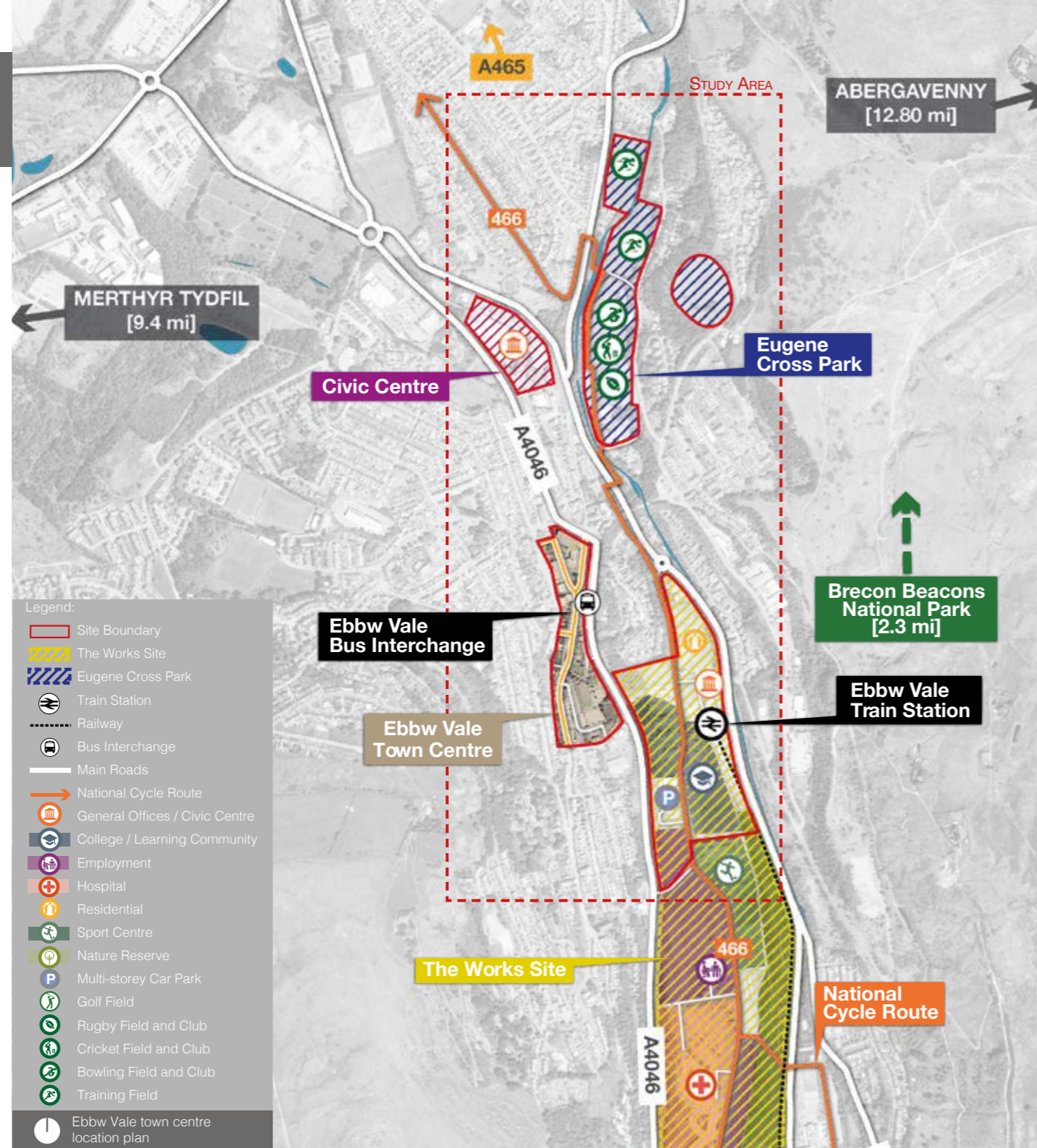
1.2 THE PLACEMAKING PLAN AREA

The placemaking plan includes the town centre, the northern area of The Works, the Civic Centre and Eugene Cross Park. An overview of each is below:

The Town Centre stretches along Bethcar Street, Market Street and James Street. It is home to a diverse community of independent retailers and businesses. The centre townscape is characterised by 2/3-storey buildings that include a series of distinctive heritage buildings. The public realm in the centre is good quality and provides plenty of space for pedestrians. There is an opportunity to create a series of distinctive green streets and public spaces.

The centre is highly accessible by car from the A4046 and there is a plentiful supply of car parking spaces. The highway infrastructure surrounding the town could be enhanced to improve the pedestrian environment and to encourage active travel into the town. A bus station and taxi rank are located directly in the centre and rail access is provided from Ebbw Vale railway station located on The Works.

The Works was formerly the Ebbw Vale steelworks site, and has a rich 200 year heritage. Following the closure of Steelworks in 2002, the 21 hectare site was transformed into an exemplary public service destination that now includes a college, school, hospital, leisure centre, homes, employment space, rail infrastructure and nature reserve. The northern area of The Works includes Ebbw Vale railway station, the General Offices, Coleg Gwent, Ebbw Fawr Learning Community, Ebbw Vale Sports Centre and the Box Park. Undeveloped sites provide an opportunity to attract further investment to the site.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

There is a significant level change between The Works and the town centre, which has partly been overcome by a funicular rail connection. There is a need to further enhance west-east pedestrian connections between The Works and the town centre. The national cycle route 466 passes through the site and connects it to Eugene Cross Park to the north. This offers the opportunity to establish a high-quality active travel corridor.

Eugene Cross Park: Eugene Cross Park is a 8.6 hectare sports and recreational ground located north of the town centre and The Works. The Park is home to Ebbw Vale R.F.C., Ebbw Vale C.C. and RTB Ebbw Vale B.C. Each club has playing facilities, clubhouses and spectator space, and there are two training pitches. A public right of way (also national cycle route 466) passes through the Park following the alignment of the Afon Ebwy. The River Centre Learning Community is located adjacent to the Park, but lets space from the Ebbw Vale R.F.C. in the Park. There is an opportunity to transform the area into a sporting, community and education destination that can support both grass-root clubs and organisations and cater for elite teams. Eugene Cross Park Sports Ltd has been set up to achieve this.

The Civic Centre is located to the west of Eugene Cross Park. The site comprises the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale Job Centre and former Ebbw Vale Leisure Centre which is now vacant. The site provides a key opportunity to create an exemplary green residential neighbourhood with strong active travel links to the town centre and wider local area.



Ebbw Vale Train Station



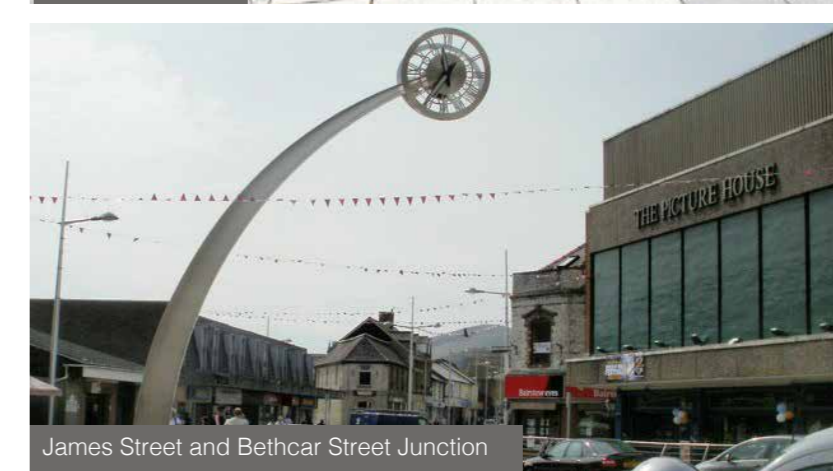
Dragon sculpture at Bethcar Street



General Offices



Funicular



James Street and Bethcar Street Junction



Ebbw Vale Town Centre

1.3 WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?



1.4 WHAT IS THE EBBW VALE PLACEMAKING PLAN?



1.5 WHY THE PLACEMAKING PLAN?



“The way places are planned, designed, developed and managed has the potential to positively shape where and how people will live, work, socialise, move about and engage. Placemaking is ensuring that each new development or intervention contributes positively to creating or enhancing environments within which people, communities, businesses and nature can thrive. (Placemaking Guide, Placemaking Wales, 2020, DCfW).

Placemaking is a requirement in Wales and is the means to deliver sustainable development as required by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act, Planning Policy Wales and the Placemaking Wales Charter .

The placemaking plan provides a new vision for Ebbw Vale town and identifies the type of projects and investment that we want to attract. The plan is unique to Ebbw Vale and responds directly to the bespoke issues and opportunities present in the town. It does not seek to copy what has been done elsewhere. All the proposals of the plan are ‘people centred’ with each focussed on improving the experience of those that live in the town, work in the town and visit the town. The plan is the means to establish a sustainable future for the town that addresses the current issues and needs, while delivering a enhanced place and opportunities for future generations.

Like all town centres across the UK, Ebbw Vale has faced a series of significant challenges in recent years. First by the emergence of edge of settlement retail developments, then by the seismic increase in online purchasing, and most recently by the COVID-19 pandemic. The placemaking plan responds to the Welsh Government’s Town Centres First policy, offering a strategy to arrest further decline and help to re-purpose the town into a destination that people want to visit.

The plan will also ensure we deliver investment and change sustainably and appropriately as required by the national legislation and planning policy.



Ebbw Vale town centre on Market Day, a thriving place

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.6 TRANSFORMING TOWNS AND TACTICAL URBANISM

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how we operate and has presented new challenges for many aspects of our economy and society. This include the vitality of towns across the UK. As we recover from the pandemic we must be mindful of the behavioural changes that have occurred during the pandemic and help Ebbw Vale town and its businesses become resilient to future challenges.

We can do this by working with businesses to help them bounce back, but also by attracting investment into the town that can create a better town centre environment for businesses and visitors, and also diversify the uses in the town so it becomes a place for leisure and work and to live. The placemaking plan will be the means for us to achieve this transformation.

While the placemaking plan is a long-term plan, and some projects and changes will take time to deliver, there are also short-term measures that we can start to pursue through the placemaking plan to build back better.

For example, we can adapt our streets to create external spaces for food and beverage retailers to use in the event of future social distancing restrictions. We can also utilise tactical urbanism, in the form of temporary parklets, planters, public art and seating areas, to create safe meeting and social spaces. Such spaces could become long-term assets for the town and create interest and a reason to visit.

There is also an opportunity to create new flexible work spaces for those that are unable to access office facilities. COVID-19 has placed pressures on the working lives of many people who have been unable to access the offices of employers and have instead been restricted to home-working. While for many the 'home-working' arrangement marks a significant improvement, for others it poses challenges to mental health and wellbeing and reduces social activity. To address this, there is an opportunity to deliver flexible workspaces in the town that can serve the wider residential population. Such spaces would have the added benefit of increasing footfall into the town centre.

Finally, COVID-19 has resulted in record rises in online retailing. This has forced businesses to consider how they get their goods and services to customers, with many local retailers embracing delivery services, click & collect, and online retailing. Many of the town's businesses have sought to explore these opportunities and through the placemaking plan further support can be provided to enable businesses to develop capacity in this area, and market and sell products and service digitally.



Precedent image: covered outdoor seating



Precedent image: Re-purposed parking space



Precedent image: Cafe occupying existing urban space

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.7 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

To create a placemaking plan that captures the distinctive character of Ebbw Vale and the local expertise of the people that live and work there, comprehensive engagement has been undertaken during the preparation of the placemaking plan.

The engagement was undertaken to find out about how the town works, what are the key ambitions for it, and what type of interventions and change would people like to see happen.

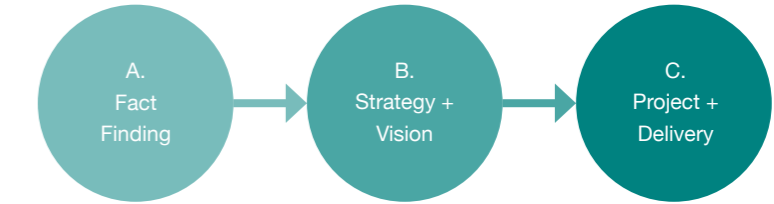
As a result of COVID-19 engagement has been undertaken with key stakeholders via online workshops. The key groups are identified opposite.

Wider public engagement is also to be undertaken and will inform the delivery of the projects that come forward through the placemaking plan.

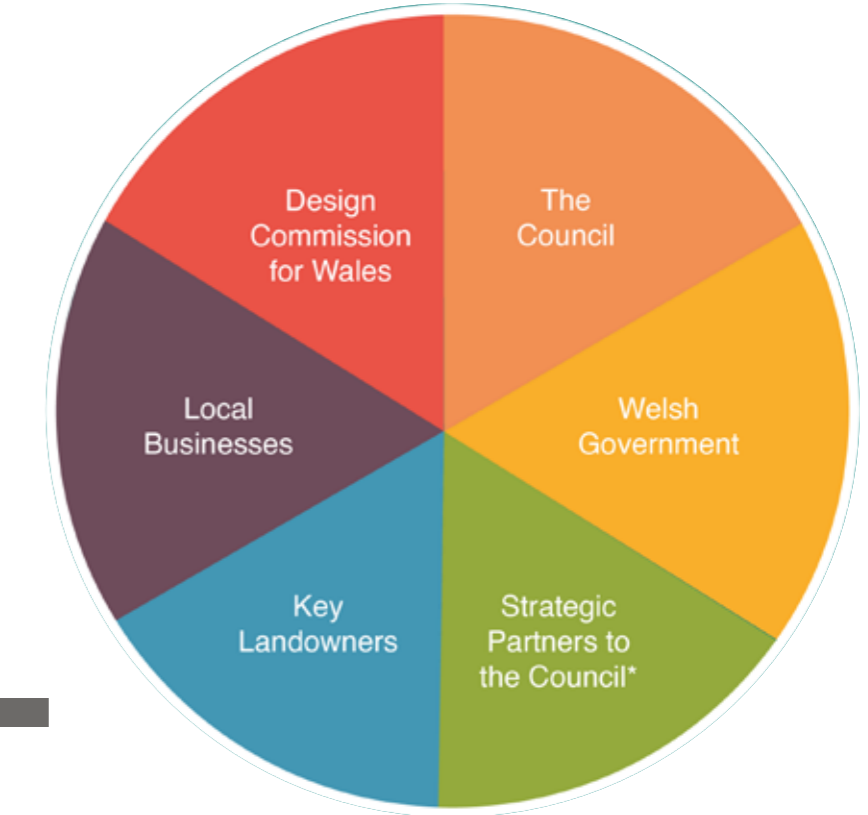
A summary of the key feedback that was provided by stakeholders is presented in the following section (Ebbw Vale Today).

* Strategic Partners:

Transport for Wales, Tech Valleys, Coleg Gwent, Ebbw Fawr Learning Community, Eugene Cross Park Sports Ltd, Ebbw Vale Cricket Club and Aneurin Leisure Trust.



Engagement stages



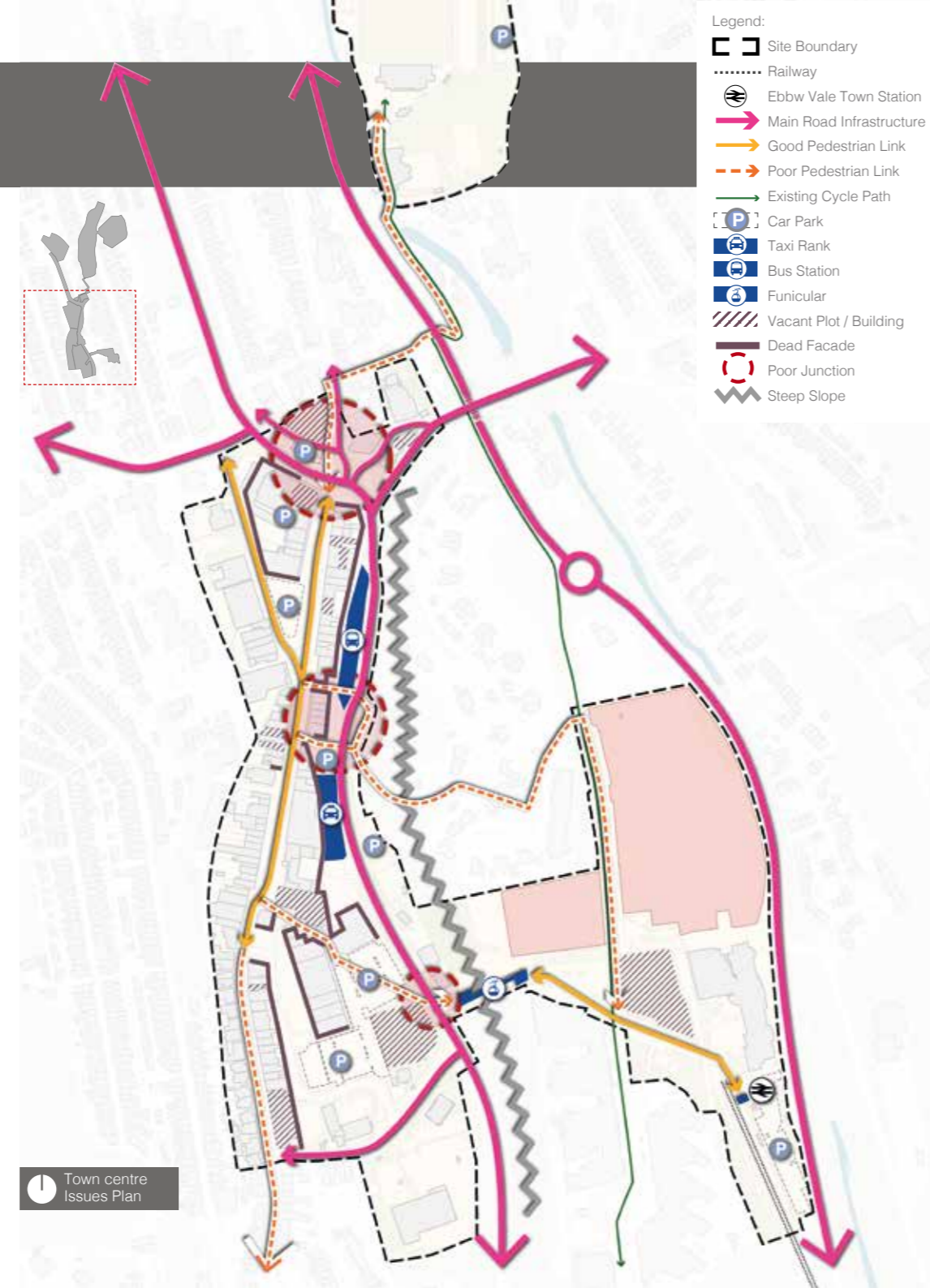
Engagement partners

2.0 EBBW VALE TODAY

To identify the issues and opportunities that Ebbw Vale town currently faces a physical place review of the town has been undertaken along with initial engagement with key stakeholders. A summary of the key findings is presented below.

2.1 THE ISSUES FACING EBBW VALE

- The multi-storey car park and associated block is of poor visual quality and has three blank edges. The structure fails to address the public realm and gives a poor first impression of the town centre when approached from the north.
- The quality of the 'northern gateway' is further eroded by redundant road infrastructure and surface parking.
- The town centre lacks high quality green open space suitable for social gathering.
- The A4046 and topography act as barriers to movement in an east-west direction, creating significant impediment to walking connections to the railway station, leisure and education facilities located at The Works site.
- The A4046 is a vehicle dominated route which combined with large areas of hard standing, and unsightly backs and service areas for shops, creates a poor pedestrian environment.
- The bus station, despite being centrally located is not visible from Bethcar Street, therefore undermining legibility and way-finding.
- The funicular railway does not function around the clock, and does not have steps as an alternative route. The alternative walking route between east and west is both illegible and circuitous.
- The railway station building lacks adequate weather protection, and is generally understated as an arrival point to the town.
- The area surrounding the railway station and General Offices lack activity beyond school hours.
- The high street would benefit from the improvement of the quality of shop fronts and buildings façades.
- Lack of variety and choice in night time economy.
- Urban form in the south east of the town centre is fragmented and vehicle dominated, providing a poor pedestrian environment and southern gateway.
- Eugene Cross park's facilities are in need of upgrades and walking connections to the town need improving.



Town centre Issues Plan

2.0 EBBW VALE TODAY



Eugene Cross Park & Civic Centre Issues Plan

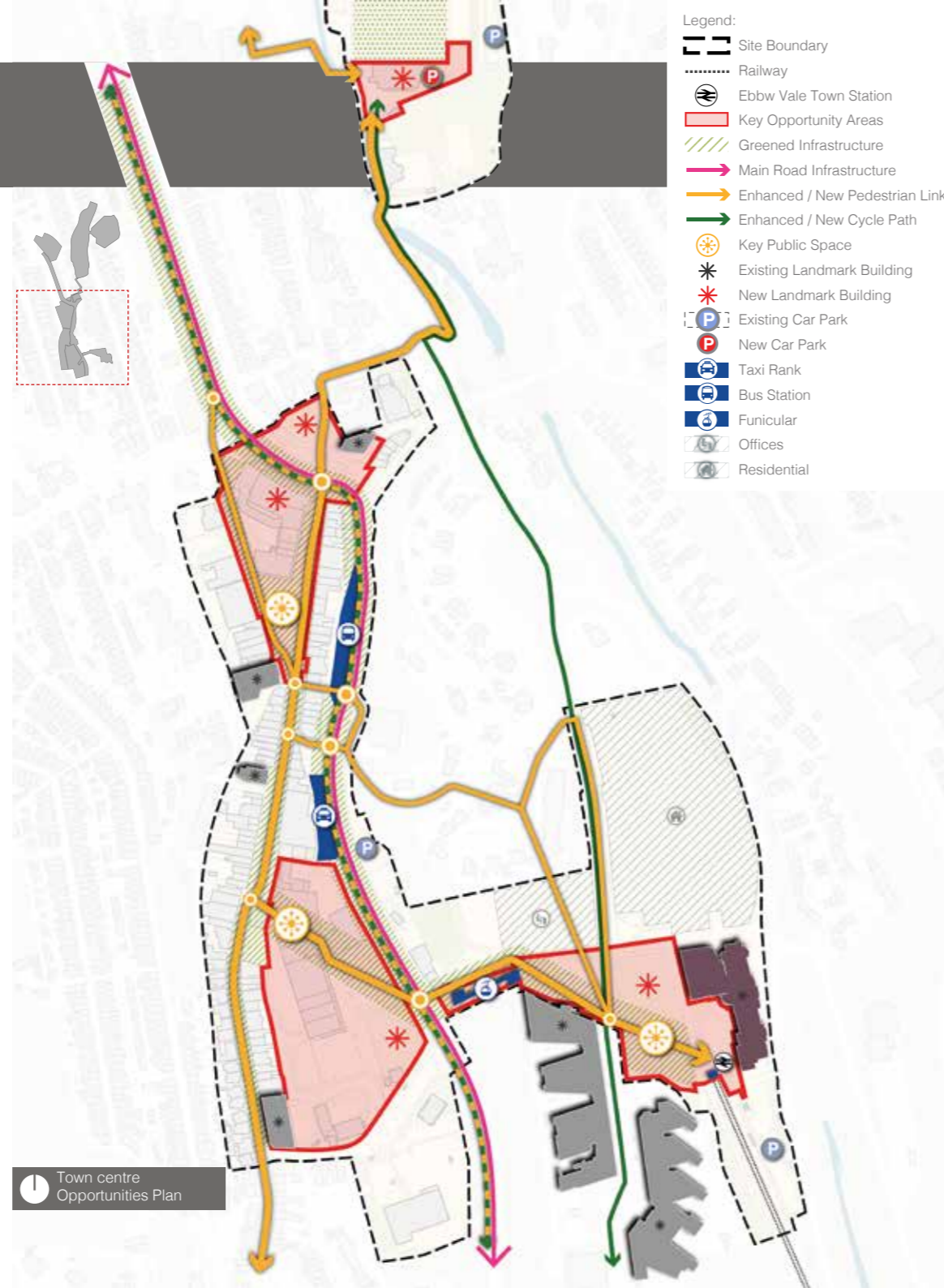
2.2 STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK ON KEY ISSUES

- Movement**
- Physical pedestrian connections between the Works and the town centre need to be improved. Signage also needs to be enhanced.
 - Population is due to increase in Ebbw Vale and opportunities to improve active travel should be considered.
 - There are key access points to the town centre that are susceptible to congestion.
 - A coordinated approach to parking requirements are required to provide sufficient capacity without the infrastructure dominating.
- Green Infrastructure**
- The slope between the town centre and The Works contributes green infrastructure, but affected by Ash die-back and requires management/species diversification.
 - Opportunities for planting on-street could be limited due to street services
- Use and Activities**
- Consider the future role of town centres, encourage more start up businesses in the town.
 - Residential development in the centre should be done in the right way.
 - The commercial future of the multi-storey complex is unclear and requires management.
- Public Open Spaces**
- Long-term use of the police station needs to be considered.
 - The town centre uses are not attractive to students and young people.
 - Public spaces at The Works are not well utilised, as they are exposed, shady and poorly maintained. Maintenance and countering anti-social behaviour should be a key consideration for all design proposals.
 - The multi-storey at the top end of the town is no longer fit for purpose and physically detracts from the town centre.
 - There is limited space to create a terminus rail station building to create a landmark entrance without impacting on the existing parking. Consider synergies with the Station Square to create canopy, cafés and active frontage.
- Eugene Cross Park**
- Parking and access are limited
 - Overall utilisation of the site is poor, and the overlap between the cricket and rugby pitch can be problematic
 - The Ebbw Vale R.F.C. clubhouse is outdated and not functional.
 - There are no changing facilities at the northern end of the Park.
 - The northern pitches drain poorly and lighting is limited.

2.0 EBBW VALE TODAY

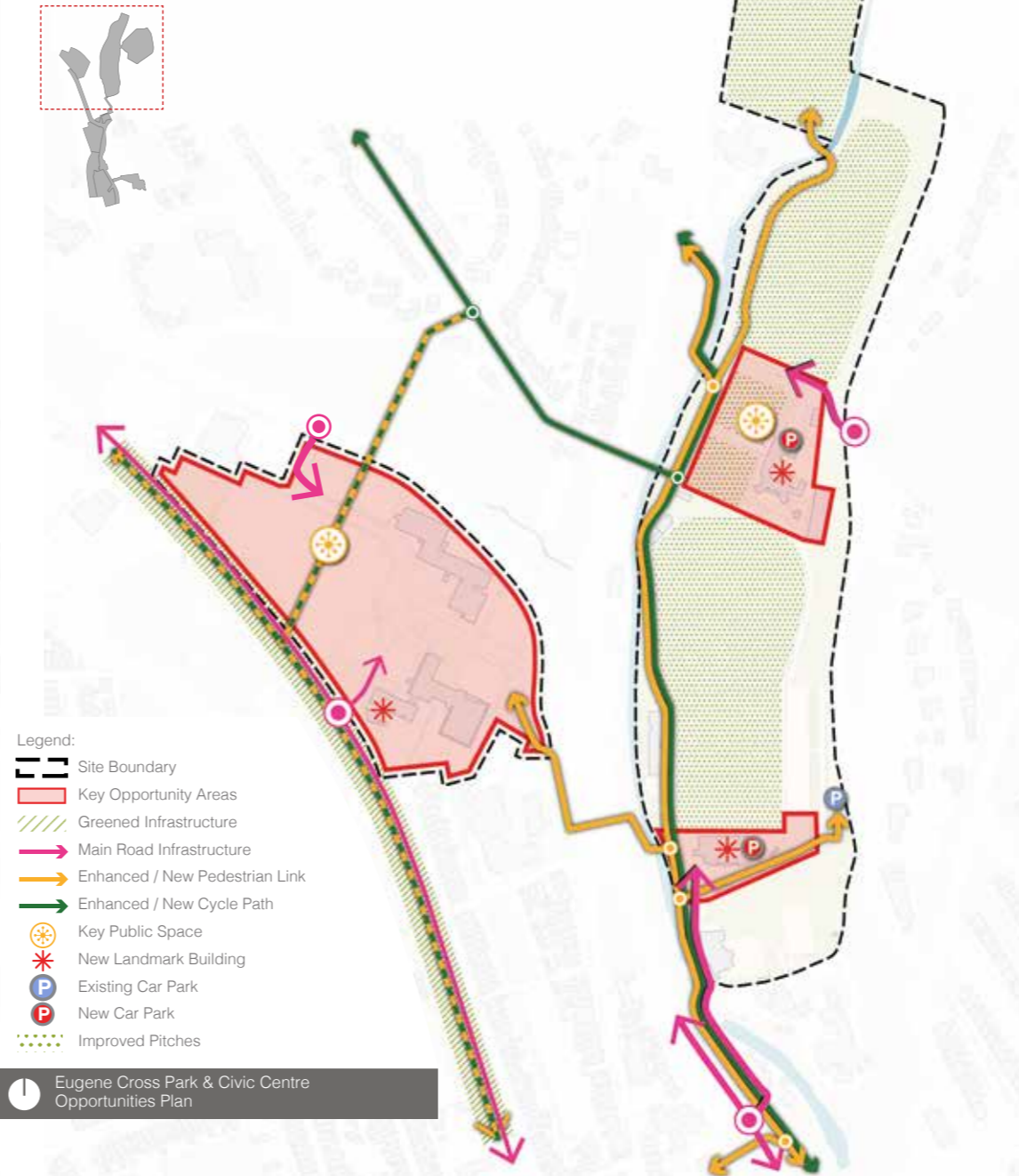
2.3 THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EBBW VALE

- Create a strong West-East movement corridor through the town.
- Create another pedestrian connection to bridge the slope between the town centre and The Works.
- Improve the legibility and safety of West-East and North-South pedestrian and cycle connections.
- Improve connections to Eugene Cross Park and the Ebbw Vale Sport Centre from the town centre and public transport nodes.
- Create a positive street environment for the A4046, which has active frontage; safe and comfortable foot and cycleways and convenient crossing points.
- Create clear visual links to the town centre from the bus station and the A4046.
- Create active frontage and attractive edges to the A4046.
- Create a series of high quality public open spaces, that draw on the character of the surrounding buildings and activities.
- Improve poor quality buildings and shop-fronts.
- Create an appropriate setting for key character, landmark and listed buildings.
- Diversify town centre uses to provide a broader mix of uses that create a more vibrant and active town centre.
- Create a new northern gateway that considers the renewal of the multi-storey car park and the associated development block and James Street car park.
- Create a vibrant, attractive and rail gateway; with a series of high quality public open spaces and uses that connect the town to the railway station and enable the area to become a destination in its own right.
- Deliver a new railway terminus building that creates a landmark entrance.
- 'Green' the town centre, by introducing new planting and SuDS
- Replace and/or rejuvenate the built facilities and Eugene Cross Park.
- Unlock the development opportunity provided by the Civic Centre.



Town centre Opportunities Plan

2.0 EBBW VALE TODAY



Eugene Cross Park & Civic Centre Opportunities Plan

2.4 STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK ON KEY OPPORTUNITIES

Movement

- Improve the pedestrian crossings on the A4046 and improve the pedestrian links through The Walk and to The Works.

Green Infrastructure

- Central Valley improvements are an asset to the town, connections to the reserve should be considered.
- The 'green lung' in the centre of the study area should be retained and enhanced.

Use and Activity

- Work with town centre businesses and help them to diversify and thrive. There are good examples of businesses that are doing well, demonstrating demand for local retail.
- A series of flexible commercial spaces could be established in the town centre to create an opportunity to introduce and trial new uses and create new business opportunities.
- Create more start up spaces for homeworkers and entrepreneurs in the town centre, since Box Park units have been received well. Ebbw Vale library is also being pioneered as work space.
- Introduce more residential uses in the town centre to diversify uses.

Development Opportunities

- Create a vibrant, destination space that is a focus for hospitality uses and community events.
- Some food retail on The Works should be considered for the College and rail commuters.
- Welsh Government will invest £100m over 10 years to create 1,500-plus jobs. Transforming Towns has offered a range of interventions across Ebbw Vale, including Box Park and enhanced 5G coverage.
- There is an identified opportunity for Ebbw Vale to use the Tech Valley proposals to diversify uses within the town centre.
- The College is likely to grow its curriculum in the coming years which would require new premises close to the current College building. There is potential to accommodate this within the town centre to increase footfall and expenditure in the town centre.

Eugene Cross Park

- Establish a diverse facility to be used by multiple sport clubs from grass roots sports to professional clubs. Eugene Cross Park Sports Ltd has been set up to deliver this vision.
- There is an ambition to transform the facility into a key social hub, not solely a sports facility, while complementing the town centre offer.

2.0 EBBW VALE TODAY

To understand the commercial and economic constraints and opportunities that need to be considered in order to effectively deliver investment to Ebbw Vale we have examined the regional and local property market. The issues and opportunities identified are summarised below.

2.6 COMMERCIAL PROPERTY CONSTRAINTS

- The past 12 months has been one of the most turbulent and challenging periods for the UK economy with retail, leisure and hospitality businesses being some of the most seriously hit businesses by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Online shopping has grown exponentially. Already accounting for 19% of all retail expenditure in 2019, total e-spending reached 28% for 2020.
- Local spending power limited since 20% of the resident population are on benefits; and gross weekly full time pay is 16% lower than the Wales average and nearly a quarter less than the GB average.
- Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, average footfall was declining steadily by around 5% year-on-year between 2015 and 2019; with shopping centres, retail parks and High Street venues all seeing an impact.
- Vacancy rate expected to increase with Local Data Company recorded a UK-wide net reduction of -7,834 occupied retail units in H1 2020, with the greatest number of closures in 'comparison' retail
- Completion of the Heads of Valleys road will make out-of-town retail including Cyfartha Park and Trago Mills; and leisure facilities at Abergavenny more accessible.
- There is currently only limited office-based employment in Ebbw Vale with no bespoke office park.
- Town centre 'leisure' offer appears to have declined over the last decade, and in contrast to national trends which has generally seen the rise of the "coffee-shop" and other leisure services within town centres.

Resulting fundamental structural change in the retail and leisure sector has huge consequences for the role and function of our town centres..

Some of the trends and impacts as follows:

- Town Centre retail dominance is over – a much broader social mix of activities is needed within town centres.
- Rising consumer focus on "convenience" – especially in terms of accessibility of places, response to 'click & collect' and same day delivery response from on-line retailers.
- Downward value of the retail asset class



Generally low vacancy rate across the town



Uncertain long term future for some key retailers



National bank closures impact on High Street

2.0 EBBW VALE TODAY

2.7 COMMERCIAL PROPERTY OPPORTUNITIES

Looking forward, some of the key drivers considered vital to future success of places include:

Local Employment Prospects

- Much of the strategic employment growth is directed to either The Works (3.5ha) or the Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor (Rhyd y Blew 13.2ha & Bryn Serth 10 ha). Successful delivery of these proposals, especially new employment growth will help reinforce and strengthen the economic vitality of Ebbw Vale town centre, provided efficient and sustainable connectivity between the sites is also realised and maintained.
- The procurement of new enterprise floorspace is, we suggest, one of the priority actions for a town centre redevelopment as it would bring in young, entrepreneurial businesses that should grow and establish themselves in the town. In addition to directly generating new employment and investment, increased footfall can only assist existing retailers and nurture new retail and leisure operators.
- The attraction of high value-added businesses in digital, life sciences, creative and tech is a clear target of the Tech Town Centre initiative. However, there is a growth of local services and small businesses in the foundational economy and this entrepreneurial spirit should be nurtured and encouraged. This will require cost-effective 'easy in, easy out' floorspace, with low rents, no business rates (under SBRR threshold) and, importantly, high-capacity digital connectivity. There are a large number of vacant shops and accommodation in the upper floors above shops could readily be exploited in this regard.

Demographic Trends

- Changing demographics (both population size and age structure) will present towns with different demands in terms of access, movement and the overall sense of place. As the primary settlement, Ebbw Vale is expected to deliver some 45% of planned housing growth (some 952 units)

Connected Communities

- The value of thinking and acting locally has increased during the enforced lock-down period with many people re-assessing their traditional journey to work and reconsidering local accessibility of services, entertainment, leisure and shopping activities. This in turn perhaps creates more demand for housing within walking distance of town centres.
- This is evidenced in the rise of the 20-minute city idea whilst people are also seeking more flexible space within their homes. Resilient digital connectivity in our homes is also now paramount in purchasing decisions.

Experiential Environments

- Consumer behaviour has moved away from shopping as the main event to demanding wider experiences and enjoyment of "places". Whilst potentially halted during the pandemic, this trend is expected to resume with town centres needing to offer a broader mix of activities and cultural events whilst also creating safer environments for stronger social connections.

Digital and Mobile Technology

- Town centres must adapt and respond to the demands of technology and find ways to interact more effectively with consumers of the future; especially if looking to attract younger consumers.

Importance of Space & Safety

- The Covid-19 pandemic has undoubtedly made people re-evaluate their surroundings and homes and it is clear a premium is placed on access to green spaces – both in the wider countryside and within our urban areas. Creation of effective, safe and attractive public spaces is paramount in designing successful places for the future. Thinking around personal space and impact on people density is evolving with more space required for each person whether they are resting or moving. This may lead to a desire for wider footpaths and more space for outdoor seating. Places that deliver a stronger sense of personal safety are likely to create a competitive advantage.

Climate Change Demands

- Consumer responses to climate change is leading pressure to buy local, reduce the need to travel and cut unnecessary packaging. Something especially highlighted during the pandemic with local traders and independents seen as "going the extra mile" to help. The e-retail sector will be quick to respond to these challenges, with movement on packaging and investment in electric vehicles for distribution.

Our vision for Ebbw Vale town is simple; we want it to thrive as a local place for its residents and businesses. If we can achieve this Ebbw Vale will also become a place that others want to visit and new businesses want to invest in.

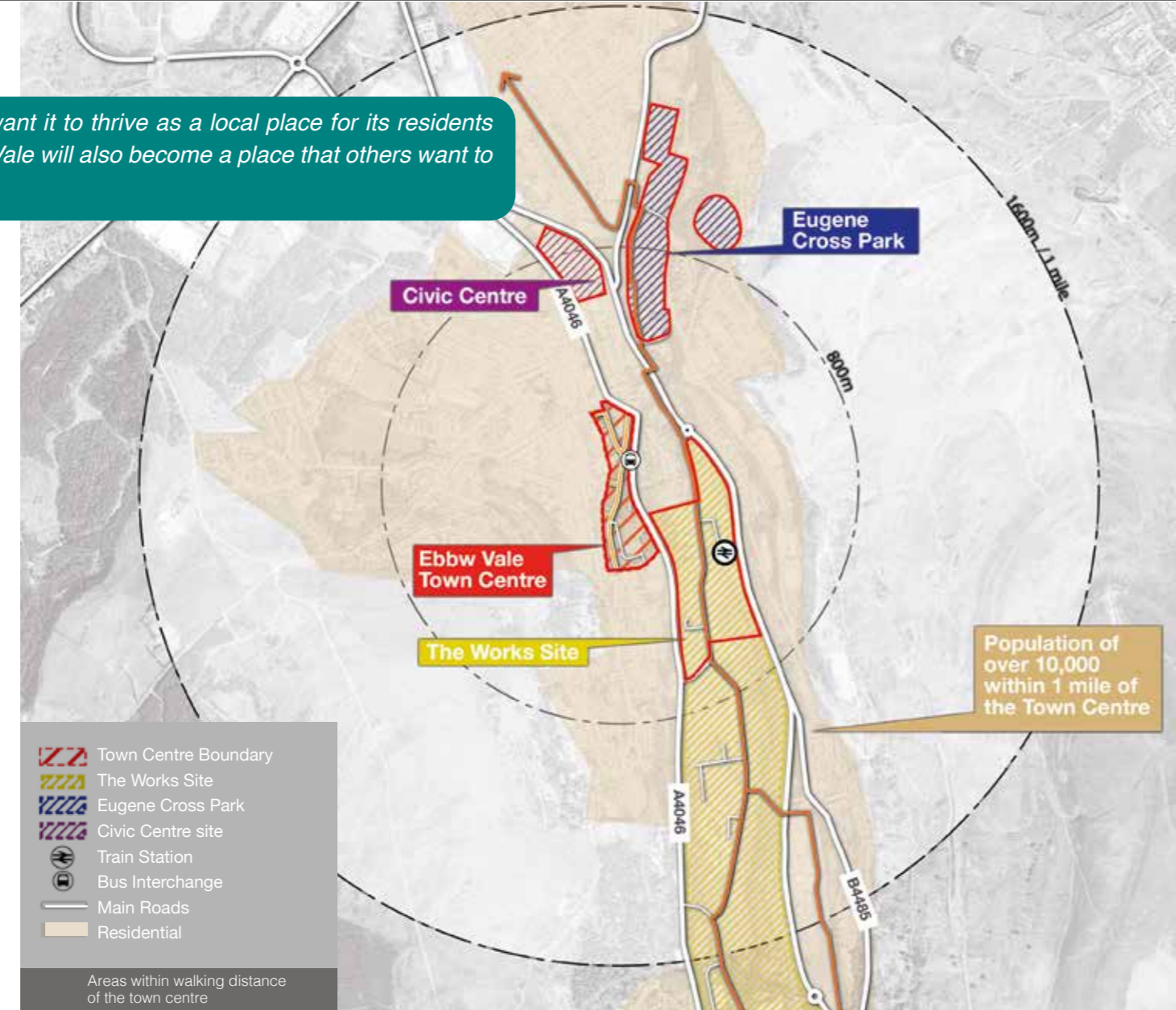
3.1 UNDERSTANDING THE VISION

To achieve our vision and transform the town after the Covid-19 pandemic, we need to put the 'Town Centres First' policy into action, and the placemaking plan provides the means to do this.

In delivering our vision we also want to exploit three key opportunity areas for Ebbw Vale town:

1. **Connect the town with the locality and destinations.**
2. **Build on the area's green legacy.**
3. **Exploit tech and digital investment opportunities.**

Further detail on each of these opportunity areas that can be delivered through the placemaking plan follows.



1. CONNECTING THE LOCALITY

- Better connect the town with the assets that surround it.
- Create a '20-minute' neighbourhood where key destinations are highly accessible and strengthen each other.
- Improve Active Travel connections and public transport facilities.

3.2 A 20-MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The Covid-19 pandemic requirements to stay local, and work from home has led to people rediscovering their local centres. The 20-minute neighbourhood concept embraces this, with people living and working in their local centres, enjoying open spaces close to home, and accessing all the goods and services for everyday life conveniently on foot or cycle.

The town's catchment is extensive and includes a number of key sites like The Works, Eugene Cross Park and the Civic Centre. If we can better connect the town with these area and the wider settlement via high quality active travel routes and good public transport we can ensure that the town and the surrounding area works together as one to increase vitality.

In addition to the physical connections creating a mosaic of diverse uses, in the town centre is also critical to encourage more people into the town. Introducing more residential uses and creating new types of workspace and leisure use in the town will help to create round the clock activity that will breathe life back into the centre. While making the town cleaner, greener and more inviting and enhancing its distinctive features would create a unique experience-based offer that cannot be bought online.

Finally, uses in the surrounding destinations need to complement the town centre offer. Ebbw Vale is undergoing extensive housing growth that can increase the vitality of the town. Complementary investment into the key sites of the The Works, Eugene Cross Park and Civic Centre site can further strengthen the town centre while also rejuvenating each site.

Key Facts:

- 45% of planned housing growth to be accommodated in Ebbw Vale
- Rail frequency to be increased to half hourly service
- Anywhere in Ebbw Vale can be reached in 20 minutes on an electric bike or public transport.



2. GREEN LEGACY

- Extensive tree and SuDS planting to build upon Ebbw Vale's innovative green legacy.
- Create high quality green places that connect the centre to Ebbw Vale's natural backdrop.

3.3 A GREEN AND HEALTHY TOWN

Greening town spaces have well-documented multi-faceted benefits on people's physical and mental wellbeing, as well as environmental benefits. Urban green spaces provide:

- Greater levels of social activity.
- Stronger neighbourhood relationships.
- Greater levels of physical activity.
- Improved health and wellbeing.
- De-carbonisation and tackling climate change.
- Improved air quality.
- Reduce flood risk and better manage water quality.
- Create new habitat and improve biodiversity.

Blaenau Gwent has outstanding natural assets, and a rugged backdrop visible from anywhere in the town. Moreover, Ebbw Vales Garden Festival at it's peak attracted over 2 million visitors to Ebbw Vale and provided the town with a national reputation and rich green legacy.

New green park spaces, vertical greening and street planting could be incorporated to unlock the numerous and health and environmental benefits and mark a new chapter in the town's innovative green legacy.

Key Facts:

- The Blaenau Gwent We Want study, part of the 2017 Blaenau Gwent well-being assessment found that (36%) identified the natural environment as what is special about the area
- Parks, vertical greening and street planting could be incorporated to bring the town's green character right into the centre



3. DIGITAL & TECH INVESTMENT

- Embrace the digital and technological revolution with world-class connectivity.
- Help deliver the Tech Valleys agenda.
- Create an environment where new businesses can thrive and existing

3.4 EMBRACING THE 4TH REVOLUTION

Not since the onset of the industrial revolution has technology been poised to play such a transformational role in the lives of consumers and operation of businesses. Preparing for this technological revolution that is upon us now is essential.

Increasing reliance on technology, including: cloud computing; digital interactions; artificial intelligence and 'Internet of Things' has changed patterns of working.

The future workplace has begun to look radically different as employers respond to a growing requirement for a work-health balance. While the town centre will grow importance in delivering social connections, community and personal experience.

There is the potential for a whole range of different types of business accommodation to thrive in the town centre, including small suites and co-working space for small companies and start ups.

There is a need to re-calibrate the town centre so they are resilient to change. The Tech Valley's policy which applies to Blaenau Gwent creates the opportunity to diversify uses within Ebbw Vale's town centre.

Key Facts:

- Welsh Government's Tech Valleys is committed to creating a new tech-cluster in Ebbw Vale
- £100m Tech Valleys programme offers a mixture of 5G technology, a new campus for cyber testing & innovative new business space

“The Fourth Industrial Revolution will be the most disruptive period any of us has ever known, as we continue to witness a blurring of the real world with the technological world.” Grimsey Review 2 (2018).

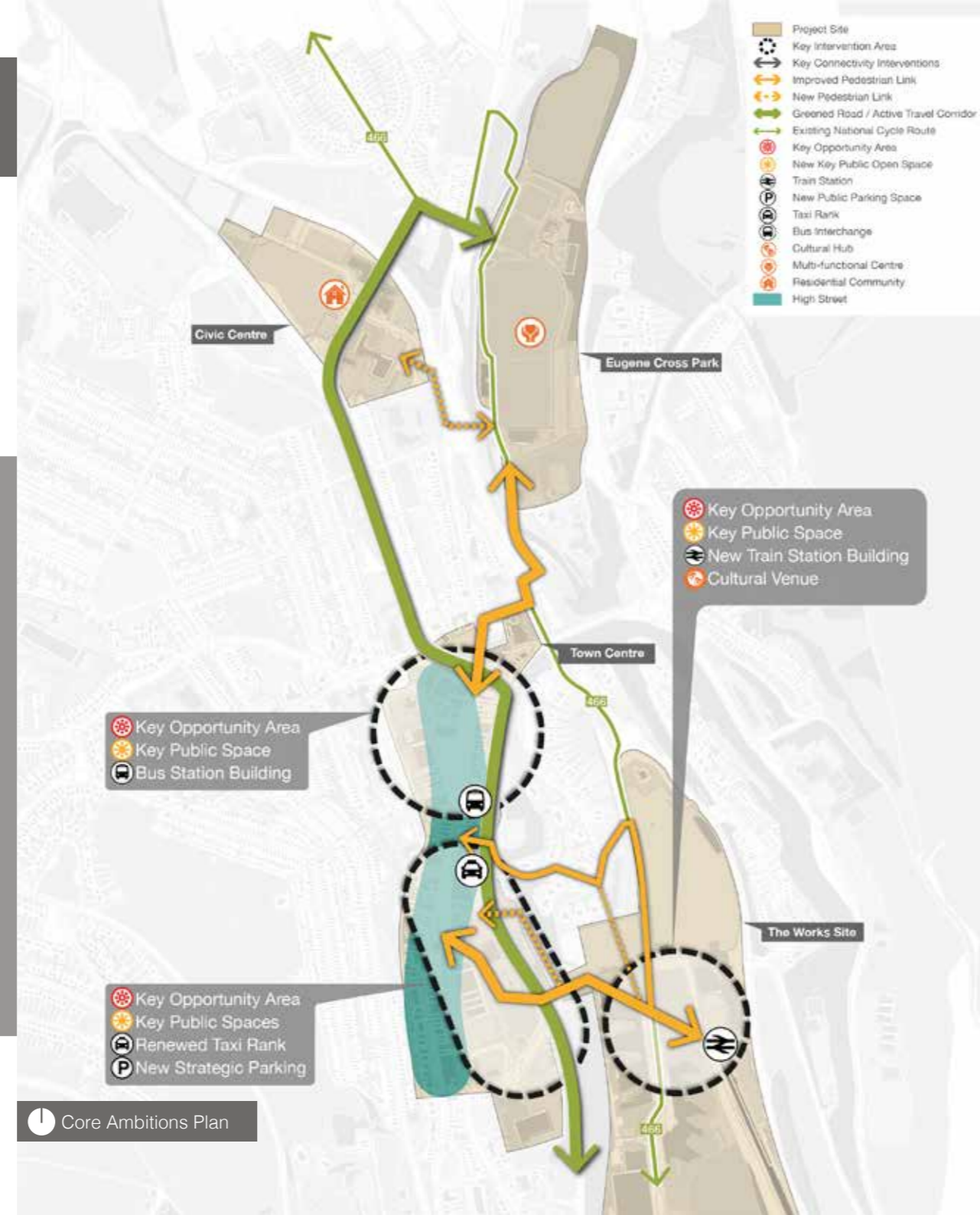
3.0 EBBW VALE IN 2035

3.5 THE CORE AMBITIONS FOR EBBW VALE

To help us deliver our vision for Ebbw Vale town we have identified six core ambitions that the **placemaking plan must deliver upon**. These respond to the key issues and opportunities identified through the place analysis and stakeholder engagement and if achieved will deliver the vision.

The six core ambitions will guide the type of projects and investment that we will pursue through the placemaking plan and explain the type of changes that we will deliver over the plan period. They will provide strategic direction over the placemaking plan period.

Our core ambitions for Ebbw Vale town follow.



3.0 EBBW VALE IN 2035



1. Establish the high street as a 'test-bed' for new business and **entrepreneurs** but also cultivate **an environment of growth for existing businesses**.



2. Create a series of new entrance spaces into the town centre that **open up the high street**, enhance the retail environment, green the centre and create space for new homes, work spaces and leisure uses.



3. Revitalise the **connections between the town centre and The Works** to give pedestrians and cyclist greater choice, reliability and quality.



4. **Transform The Works into a vibrant and active destination**; a place of arrival, culture, learning, working and living.



5. Establish **Eugene Cross Park as a regionally renowned sporting destination** that caters for specialist, elite and community teams and improve its connections to the town centre and The Works.



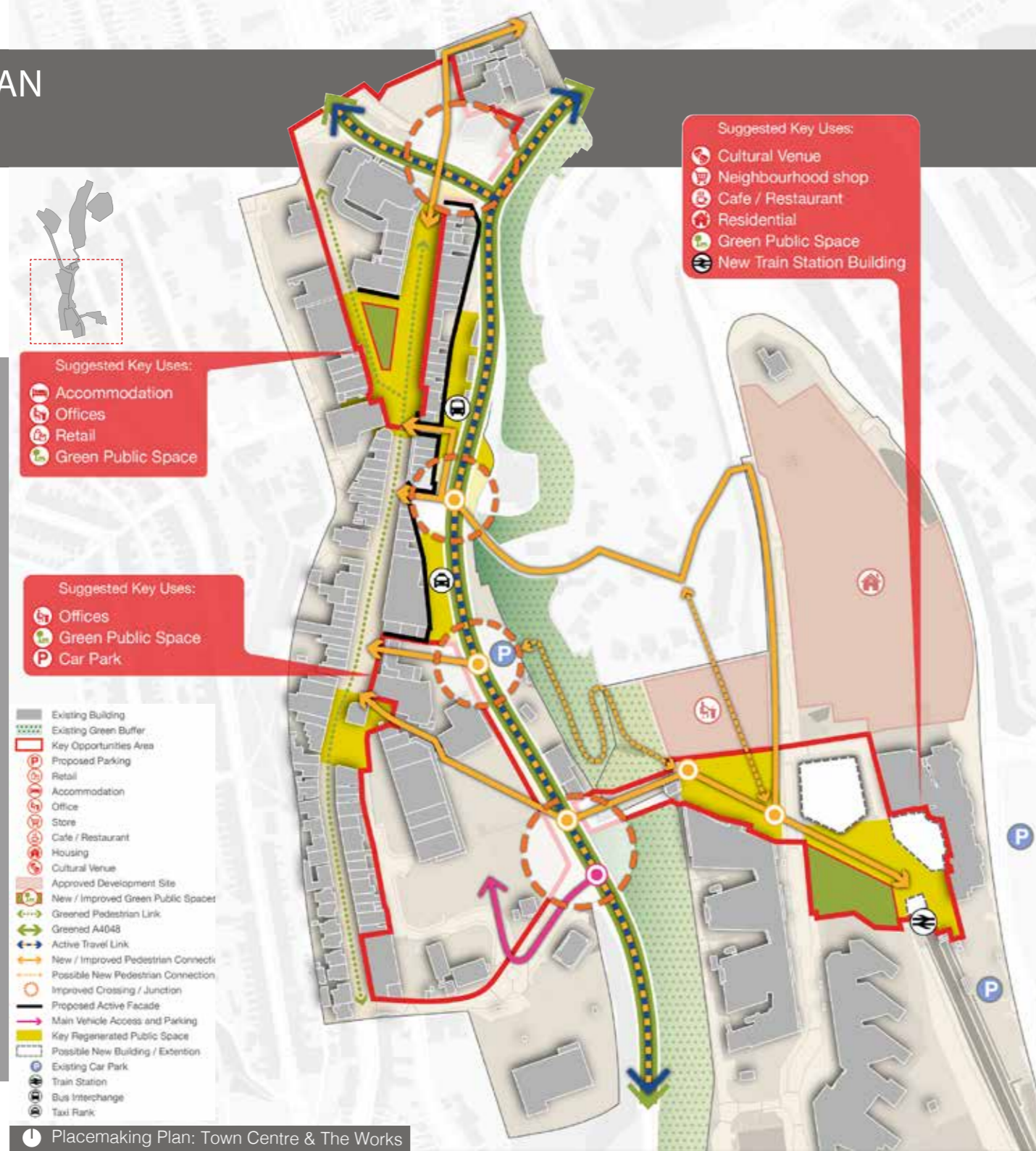
6. Transform the Civic Centre site into an **exemplary neighbourhood** of modern homes in a green sustainable setting.

4.0 THE PLACEMAKING PLAN

4.1 THE PLACEMAKING PLAN STRATEGY

To explain how we can deliver our core ambitions for Ebbw Vale Town we have prepared a placemaking strategy. This is visualised below and shows the key areas we want to change and projects we want to pursue. The key outcomes of following this strategy would be:

- New northern and eastern gateways into the town centre that enhance the pedestrian environment and deliver new commercial uses that diversify the centre.
- A more diverse high street on Bethcar Street, James Street and Market Street with new homes, work spaces and leisure uses alongside retail businesses.
- A series of green streets and spaces that can be utilised by local people and businesses and support biodiversity.
- A restored townscape that includes modern architecture and heritage buildings and shop fronts.
- Enhanced active travel routes that better connect the town and its wider settlement.
- A greater sense of arrival to the town by train and transformation of The Works into a diverse destination that complements and strengthens the town centre.
- Transformation of Eugene Cross Park into exemplary sports and community facility and the Civic Centre into a green neighbourhood.



4.0 THE PLACEMAKING PLAN

In addition to the physical projects and interventions that we intend to make, there are a series of non-physical interventions. While these cannot be shown visually on a strategy they are essential to the success of Ebbw Vale town. Such measures include developing a digital presence for the town, strengthening the quality of WI-FI coverage, creating a favourable commercial environment for businesses to survive and grow and establishing a regular series of events and initiatives that raise interest in the town as a destination and increase visitors. Each of these has been built into the placemaking plan and further detail is provided later in the document.



Through the analysis we have identified a series of unique intervention areas in the town and surrounding area where projects and investment can be focussed to deliver the placemaking strategy. The focus for each of these areas is identified below, with the following analysis demonstrating the type of investment and projects we intend to deliver in each area.

4.2 INTERVENTION AREAS

Northern Gateway

A new entrance space from the north where pedestrians are prioritised, new green space is created for everyday enjoyment and local events, and key buildings are redeveloped to create an attractive and engaging townscape that enhances the street-scene.

Eastern Gateway

A new entrance to the town from the east that delivers an improved pedestrian environment, better public realm that opens up the entrance to the town centre and connects the centre to The Works. Redevelopment of key blocks to offer a greater mix of viable uses in the centre.

Town Centre Core

Restored buildings and shop fronts in a green street setting. Diverse mix of uses that include vibrant retail businesses, workspaces, incubator and tester units for 'start-ups', leisure uses, homes and live/work spaces.

The Works

New landmark entrance to Ebbw Vale by rail with new terminus building and Station Square development to provide new civic and cultural space and outdoor event spaces. Enhanced pedestrian connections to the town centre.

A4046 Corridor

An enhanced active travel environment with space for cycle lanes, planting and priority pedestrian crossings to connect the town centre and The Works. Better integration of the bus station and taxi rank into Bethcar Street and treatment of rear properties.

Civic Centre

A new green neighbourhood with modern energy efficient homes and new active travel corridors that provide access to the town centre, The Works and Eugene Cross Park.

Eugene Cross Park

A modern sports and community destination with a new indoor training facility and community hub, all-weather outdoor training pitches and enhanced active travel and vehicle connections.



Project Intervention Areas

Non physical projects are not included in the intervention areas, but they are pivotal for the success of the town centre and are included in the following analysis.



Glamorgan Archive at the General Offices

4.3 THE TOWN CENTRE CORE

Main Issues

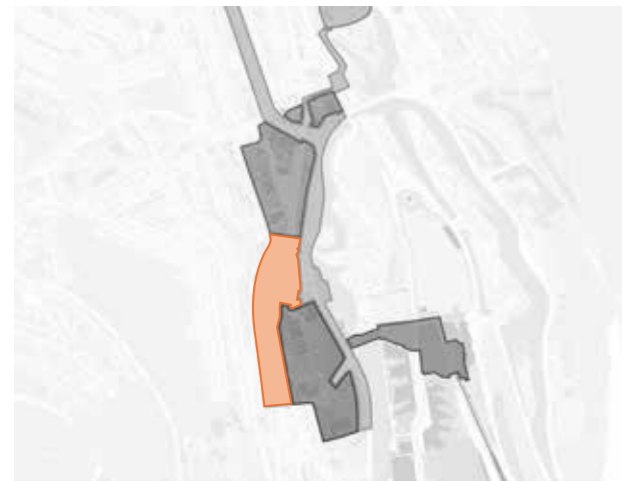
- Lack of high quality public spaces for outdoor socialising and events.
- Lack of greenery and park spaces.
- Lack of public space activation and "spill-out" spaces.
- Extended retail zone, with building vacancy affecting footfall and creating unattractive / inactive spaces.
- Overall quality of the retail offer needs improvement.
- Lack of commercial space, which would offer lunchtime trade.
- Under-utilisation of upper storeys.



Northern entrance to Bethcar Street.



Public space in front of the library.



The Walk access to Bethcar Street.



View of Bethcar Street looking south.

Re-enliven the town centre core by focusing upon visitor experience, creating a unique place with a mix of independent retail and hospitality. Delivering change will rely on a mix of place based projects: uplifting quality of the built fabric and shop fronts, creating character areas around new and reinvigorated public open spaces, and activity based proposals: condensing the retail zone, supporting & enabling new uses, and embracing technology.



Potential Projects

- Create a series of flexible commercial units that can be utilised by emerging businesses to test and grow their business.
- Deliver 'live-work' units in the town centre and identify targeted opportunities to create new homes above commercial premises that can cater for a range of needs (including and ageing population and young people), diversify town centre uses and increase activity beyond retail hours.
- Create a series of 'spill-out' spaces for existing cafe / coffee shop retailers.
- Restore and refurbish building façades and shop fronts to enhance the character of the town centre. Key priority to be given to batches of properties facing onto key public spaces.
- Green the street-scene through targeted tree planting, SuDS and vertical green infrastructure. New planting to connect to strategic greening interventions delivered as part of the northern and eastern gateways (refer below) and frame spill out spaces created for retailers. Ongoing maintenance to inform specification.
- Rationalise street furniture and ensure appropriate maintenance measures are in place to maintain the retained furniture.
- Create a regular programme of events and temporary placemaking to create interest and drive foot fall into the town.
- Establish a Local Development Order to provide greater flexibility for changes of use that would complement the town centre and help increase activity and footfall.
- Promote the town centre as a 'pilot project' to test the benefits of freezing or reducing business rates for town centre businesses.
- Nurture strong local leadership (via establishment of a BID or Chamber of Commerce) that can organise the growth and diversification of the town centre offer from the 'grass roots' up.
- Provide high-speed network coverage in the town centre to enable businesses to trade but also encourage visitors and flexible workers to stay in the town.
- Develop an online digital presence for the town centre that promotes the town and its businesses and provides a means for retailers to trade online.

Fulfilled core ambitions:



Establish the high street as a "test-bed" for new business and entrepreneurs but also cultivate an environment of growth for existing businesses.

4.4 NORTHERN GATEWAY

Main Issues

- The gateway is dominated by surface and multi-storey car park, and redundant road infrastructure, creating an unattractive entrance to the town centre.
- The main public space (Market Square) enclosed between Market Street and James Street is used as car park, precluding the use of the space for social gathering and events, temporary markets, and events.
- With the exception of two mature trees, there is no greenery.
- Inconsistent use of materials and need to rationalise street furniture.
- Dead / inactive façades onto public spaces.



Northern gateway, complex junction arrangement.



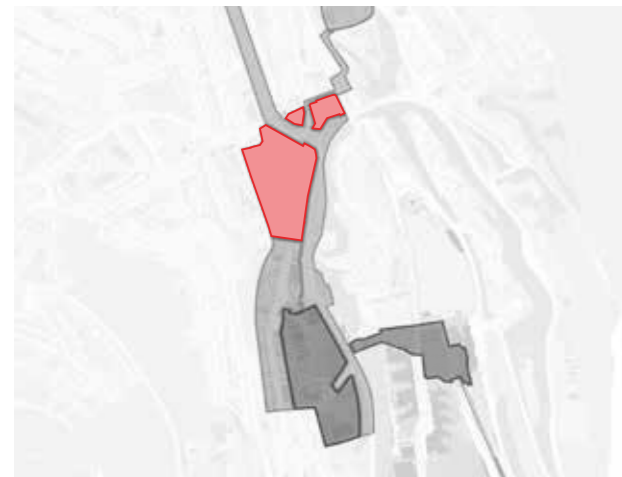
Northern gateway, multi-phase crossing.



Market Square.



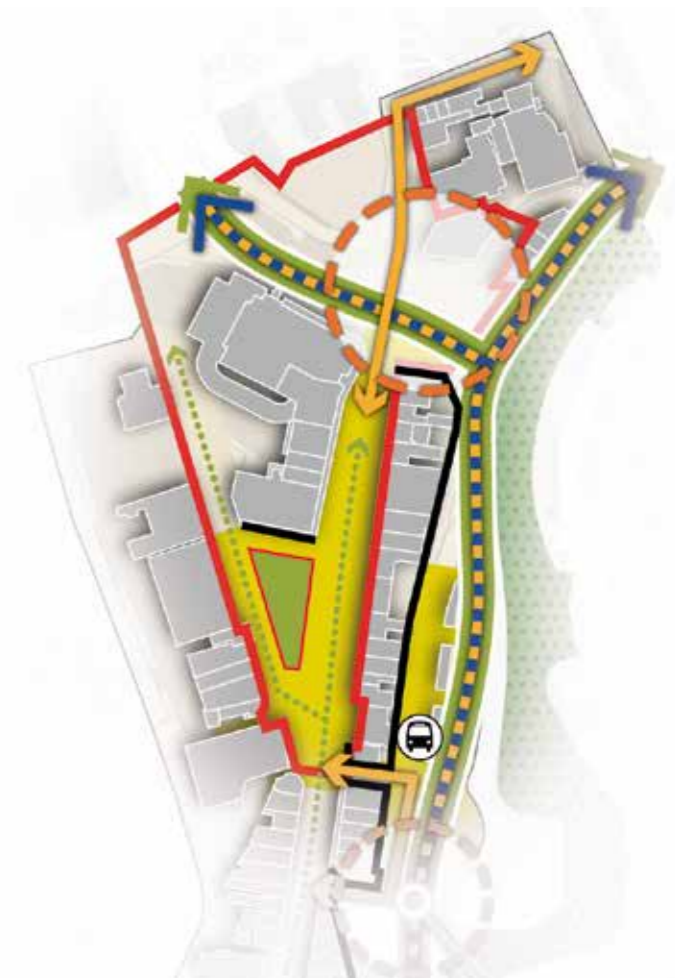
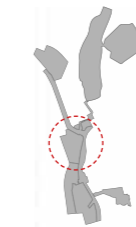
James Street looking towards Market Square.



The proposals seek to create a usable and beautiful green open space that acts as an anchor for community life, alongside street redesign that improves pedestrian connectivity and legibility. The space & accompanying introduction of active and interesting frontages will be the catalyst for strategic projects to create a distinctive and attractive landmark building that defines the Northern Gateway.

Potential Projects

- Create an improved pedestrian entrance into the town centre by simplifying the A4046 junctions serving Market Street, Libanus Road, Market Square and James Street to prioritise pedestrian movement, improve driver legibility, create a greener environment and unlock commercial development opportunities.
- Redevelop key development plots to create a landmark visual entrance into the town centre, deliver a greater mix of uses (including residential, retail and work space) and revitalise the street scene.
- Create a green public open space on Market Square to provide a green core to the town centre that can soften the town centre street scene, integrate new commercial development into the town centre, create a setting for music/theatre events and businesses and provide residents and visitors with an everyday social space.



Fulfilled core ambitions:



Establish the high street as a 'test-bed' for new business and **entrepreneurs** but also cultivate **an environment of growth for existing businesses.**



Create a series of new entrance spaces into the town centre that **open up the high street**, enhance the retail environment, green the centre and create space for new homes, work spaces and leisure uses.

4.5 EASTERN GATEWAY

Main Issues

- The gateway is characterised by an empty lot at the south east corner and by extensive car parking.
- Lack of sense of arrival and weak pedestrian accessibility.
- Poor legibility and pedestrian environment, with ill defined links to both the Town Centre and The Works.
- Lack of green public spaces and amenities.
- Changing retail habits mean the long term future of this type of retail development should be considered.
- Existing pattern of development lacks synergy with the town centre.



Pedestrian link to the town centre is poorly overlooked.



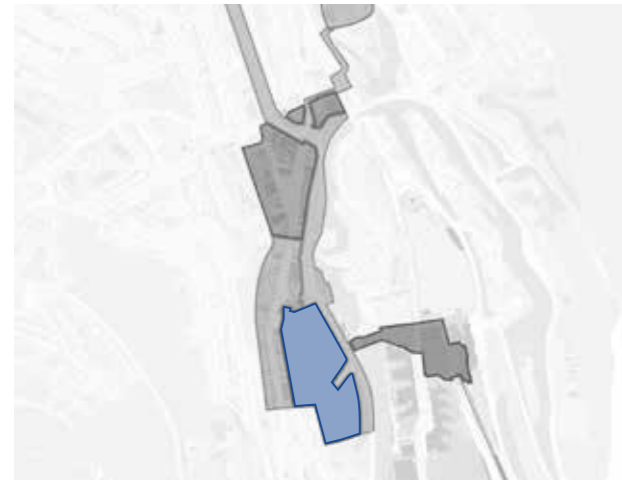
Path that connects The Works to the town centre is overgrown.



The pedestrian link that crosses Iceland and Argos parking.



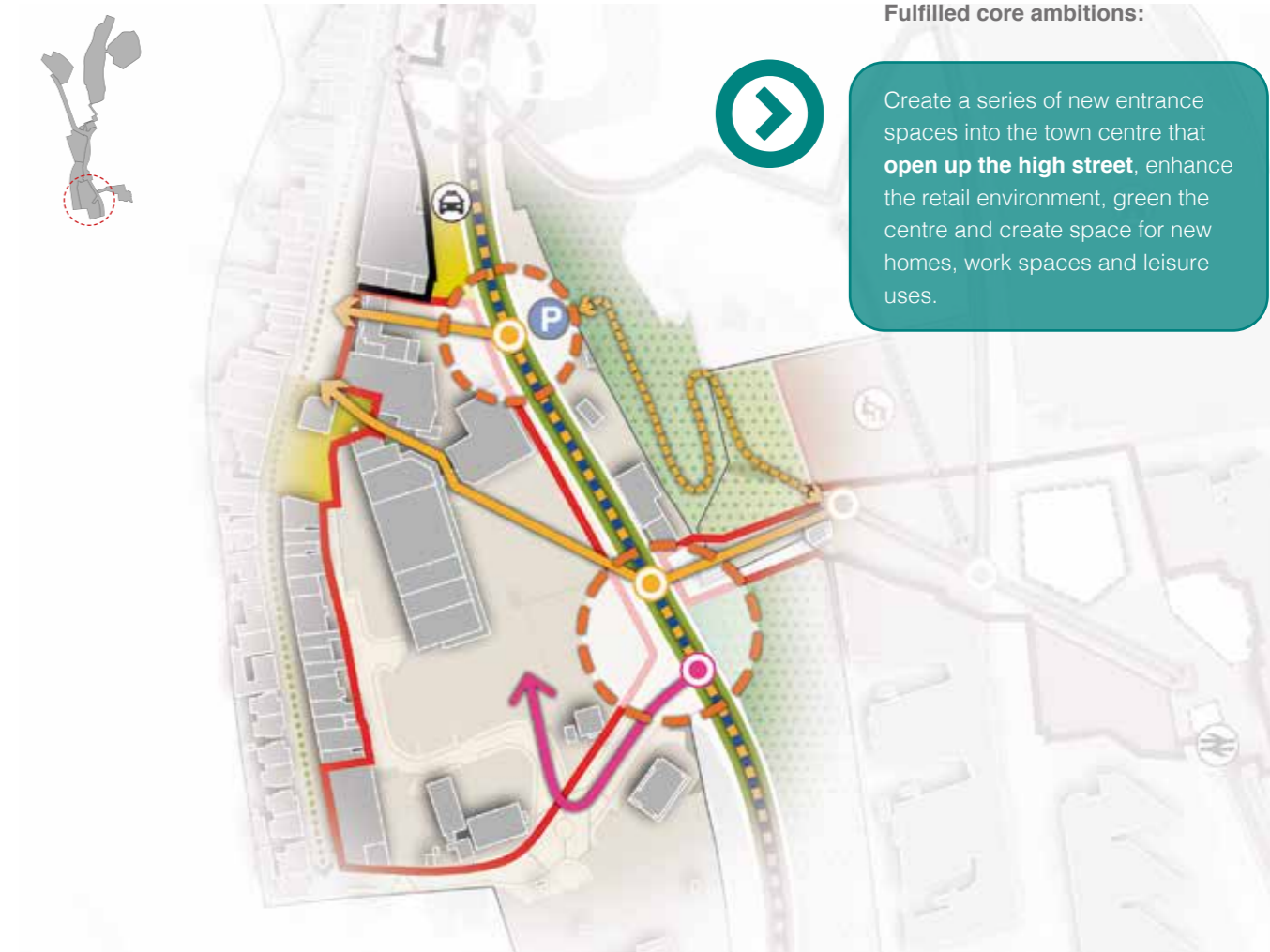
Ebbw Vale Police Station, Bethcar Street entrance.



Creating an attractive, well defined entrance to the town from the south, an improved public realm, and establishes visible connections to the Town Centre and the Works. Re-imagining this area will include redevelopment of key development blocks to create a diverse range of uses, including a high quality public open space, cafe/restaurant, consolidated retail uses, and new workspaces.

Potential Projects

- Redevelopment of the former Police Station and adjacent buildings to diversify uses and increase high street activity.
- Future redevelopment of the Police Station site to include landscape features space that can become a green heart at the town centre for use by residents and visitors. New green space to improve west/east pedestrian movement and enhance views of the town centre from the A4046.
- Open the southern facade of the old bank building so that commercial activity has the opportunity to spill out onto the Old Bank Square.
- Re-purpose The Walk shopping centre to include a mix of uses and create an external environment that is green, prioritises pedestrians and opens up access to the high street from the east of the centre and The Works.
- Provide electric charging points in The Walk car park and establish as a flexible town centre car park to encourage prolonged visits into the centre.
- Redevelopment of vacant development plot to create a southern landmark for the town centre and diversify uses in the town. New development to improve pedestrian connectivity between the town centre and The Works.
- Reduce the vehicle dominated design of The Walk by improving pedestrian connections.
- Consider the requirement for signalisation of the junction connecting The Walk and A4046.



Fulfilled core ambitions:

Create a series of new entrance spaces into the town centre that **open up the high street**, enhance the retail environment, green the centre and create space for new homes, work spaces and leisure uses.

4.6 A4046 CORRIDOR

Main Issues

- Redundant and hard road infrastructure, creates a poor and unpleasant pedestrian and cyclist environment. This is also accentuated by the complete lack of active façades along the road.
- Unsightly service areas and rears of properties dominate the street scene.
- Poor junctions and crossing provides a bad pedestrian connectivity.
- The bus station is badly integrated into the town centre.
- Taxi rank design is inefficient and unattractive.



Redesign of the whole street corridor to create a safer, more inviting environment for pedestrians and cyclists. The project introduces cycle lanes, safe and convenient crossings, new green infrastructure and sustainable water management. Better integration of the bus station and taxi rank and the town are also proposed.



Potential Projects

- Reduce the design speed of the A4046 as it passes through the town centre area and prioritise the movement of pedestrians, including west / east movement between the town centre and The Works. To include wider pavements, enhanced pedestrian crossings at strategic connections between the town centre, reduced carriage and painted central reservations, removal of barriers and street clutter, targeted planting.
- Designate a traffic free cycle route that connects to Eugene Cross Park and the Civic Centre and interfaces with existing and proposed active travel corridors.
- Targeted treatment of the rear of properties on Bethcar Street and Market Street to reduce the visibility of poor quality backs and the presence of service and storage areas to create better views of the town centre and a better pedestrian and visitor environment.
- Integrate the bus station into Bethcar Street via targeted removal of structures, street furniture and infrastructure to improve pedestrian connections and create views into the high street and new northern gateway.
- Improve pedestrian movements through the bus station by replacing existing barriers to movement (notably on the pedestrian island) and instilling natural traffic calming measures that correspond to the wider treatment of the A4046.
- Reconfigure the taxi waiting area to a 'pull in' from the A4046 to reduce the space given over to vehicle waiting areas and create opportunities to enhance pedestrian connections into the high street and activate the adjacent unit for commercial activity.
- Green the existing car park to the east of the A4046 and equip with electric charging points.

Fulfilled core ambitions:



Create a series of new entrance spaces into the town centre that **open up the high street**, enhance the retail environment, green the centre and create space for new homes, work spaces and leisure uses.



Revitalise the **connections between the town centre and The Works** to give pedestrians and cyclists greater choice, reliability and quality.

4.7 THE WORKS

Main Issues

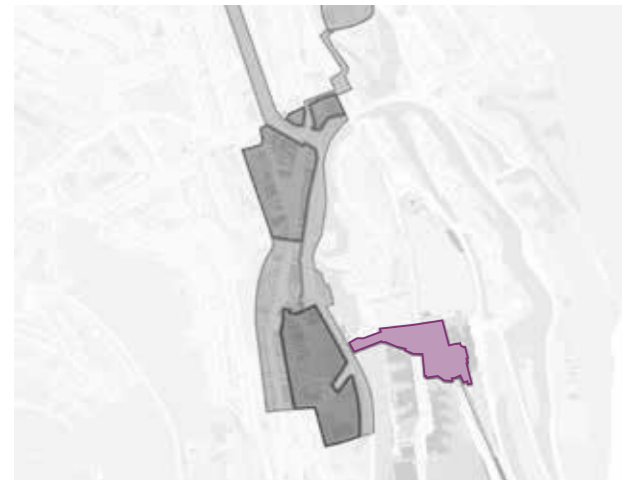
- Poor way-finding and sense of arrival.
- Small train station.
- Undeveloped sites provide a poor sense of enclosure and surveillance.
- Lack of activities, footfall and surveillance encourage anti-social behaviour.
- Underused green space and lack of good quality public space able to accommodate events and social gatherings.
- Lack of direct pedestrian access to the town centre through ramp / stairs.



Ebbw Vale Town Station.



General Offices building and the new annex.



Station square empty plot.



The funicular that connects the Works site to the town centre.

Redevelopment of Station Square to create a new outdoor event space, a heritage-led expansion of the General Offices, and improved pedestrian connections to the Town Centre. A new landmark railway terminus building will improve passenger waiting and offer a better sense of arrival.



Fulfilled core ambitions:



Transform The Works into a vibrant and active destination: a place of arrival, culture, learning, working and living.



Revitalise the **connections between the town centre and The Works** to give pedestrians and cyclists greater choice, reliability and quality.

Potential Projects

- New railway station terminus to create a sense of arrival to Ebbw Vale and improve the passenger waiting experience.
- Heritage-led expansion of General Offices to accommodate the growing use of the building for civic and democratic purposes, with event space to add to the sense of arrival.
- Redevelopment of Station Square to provide a new cafe / restaurant and mixed use development with multi-use landscaped outdoor space.
- New landscaped square for outdoor events and to provide a 'day-to-day' work and learning space. Signature lighting to create a distinctive night-time entrance.
- Enhance the existing pedestrian connection between The Works and town centre with enhanced signage and lighting and explore opportunities to make the route more direct.
- New direct pedestrian connection that connects The Works and town centre via The Works Box Park.

Station Square and the General Offices

Station Square is the rail gateway to the town and represents a key place to design a high quality sense of arrival and place, while also creating a local destination. There is an opportunity to redevelop the vacant site on Station Square, a new Railway Station building, a possible heritage led extension to the General Offices building to respond to the increased use of the facility and high quality public spaces and routes.

New commercial uses delivered in the Square must be appropriate to the setting provided by the General Offices, education uses and new box park and complement the vitality of the town centre. The design of new development should be sensitive to the listed General Offices with appropriate scale and massing and an high quality architectural approach that utilises complementary materials.

- a1 New building uses to be defined, but could include cafe / restaurant, work space, cultural venue and residential.
- b1 New railway terminal building including covered outdoor waiting area bike racks and rentals to support active travel.
- c1 Sensitive extension to General Offices.
- d1 Easy to maintain green infrastructure & rain gardens.
- d2 Attractive and hard wearing hard landscape.
- d3 Enclosed outdoor rooms act as spill-out spaces.
- d4 Street furniture to for socialising and recreation. Signature lighting to reinforce places and routes.
- d5 Legible way-finding system.

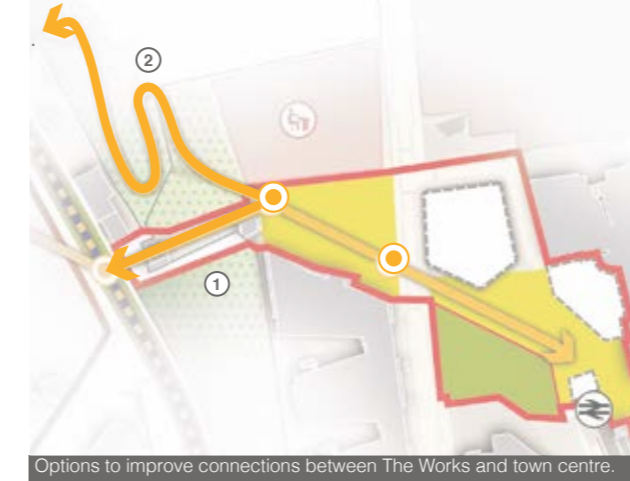


Station Square sketch visual.

West-East Pedestrian Movement

Increasing the connectivity between The Works and the town centre it is fundamental to improve accessibility, support active travel and attract visitors and businesses into Ebbw Vale. The existing funicular rail line marks a significant investment but alternative options are required to provide connectivity beyond its operational hours.

As a minimum the existing pedestrian routes between The Works and the town centre need to be enhanced, with better way-finding, lighting and surface treatments. There is also a need, to explore providing a more direct route. The topography between The Works and town centre is the key constraint to delivering this with a sharp change of approximately 25m. Two options have been identified that need to be investigated: the first a plaza and stepped structure aside the existing funicular (1), the second a ramped access that would run through the green corridor and provide access to the car park on the A4046 (2).



Options to improve connections between The Works and town centre.



Station Square: New development to be sensitive to the setting.



Station Square: Easily maintained spaces for interaction and socialising.



Station Square: Development can diversify The Works and create activity.

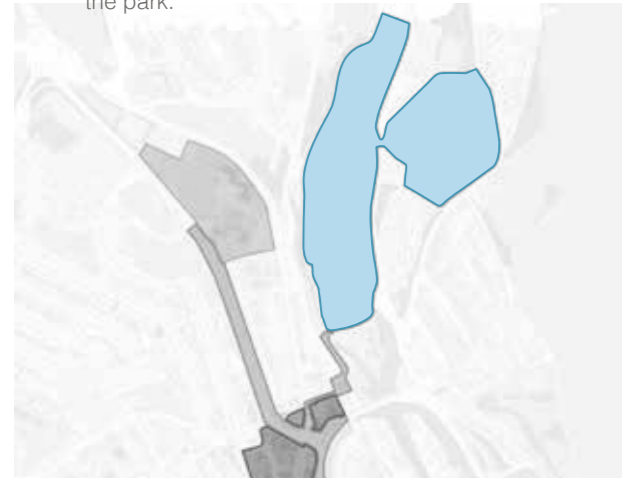


Movement: Stepped access featuring planting and a water feature.

4.8 EUGENE CROSS PARK

Main Issues

- Poor accessibility.
- Lack of parking space.
- Obsolete buildings provides poor energy performance structures and poor facilities.
- Rugby and Cricket field overlap.
- Lack of a communal facility and of public sport provisions.
- Poor drainage affects the quality and playability of sport pitches.
- The Afon Ebwy River is visually disconnected from the existing pedestrian and cycle paths that run across the park.



Southern access to Eugene Cross Park



Rugby Club House.

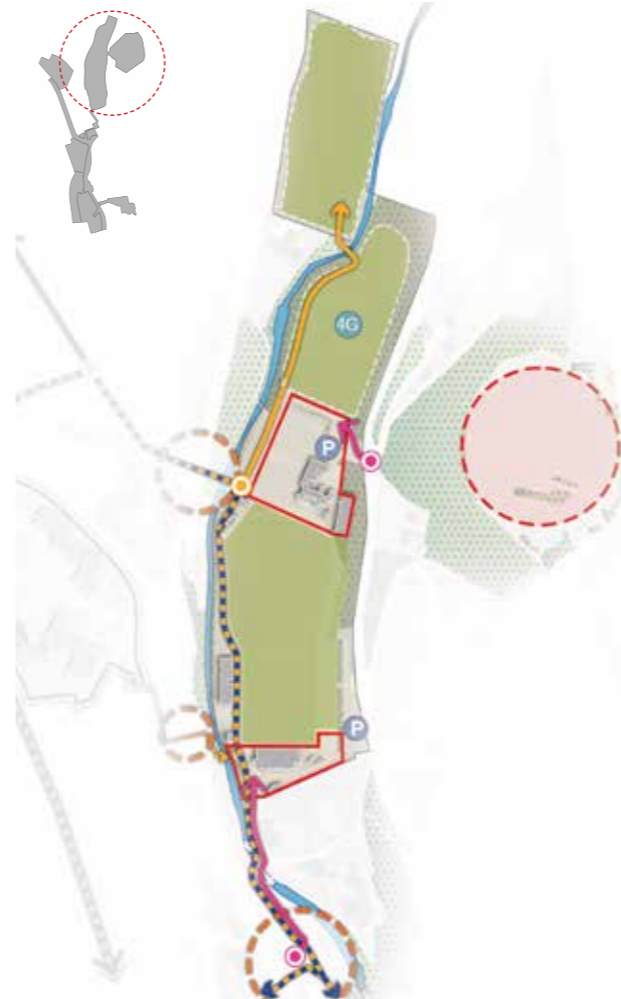


Afon Ebwy River.



Eastern access.

A multi-purpose Sports and Community Campus at Eugene Cross Park with renewed and reconfigured sports pitches and associated facilities. Improved vehicular access on site, and new training facilities will improve utilisation of the site. Enhanced connections to the riverside walk and the wider active travel network.



Potential Projects

- Enhancement of Ebbw Vale R.F.C. clubhouse and ground infrastructure to create a new southern entrance to the Park.
- Enhancement of Ebbw Vale Cricket Club and RTB Ebbw Vale Bowls Cub facilities to create a renewed heart to the Park.
- Provision of dynamic indoor multi-purpose sports and community facility on the northern playing fields with associated parking areas.
- 4G training pitches on the northern playing fields with indoor changing and storage facilities.
- Enhance the existing vehicle access into the middle of the Park from Newchurch Road to improve access to the 4G training facility, Cricket Club and Bowls Club.
- Provide a new vehicle access from the west of the Park to serve the indoor facility and 4G training pitches.
- Enhancement of existing right of way through the Park into an attractive riverside walk with outdoor exercise facilities and which connects to wider active travel links to the town centre and wider settlement.
- Enhance the key pedestrian and cyclist routes from Eugene Cross Park to the town centre, Civic Centre and The Works to encourage visits by foot and bike. To include better lighting, hard landscape treatments, planting to soften the journey and cycle lanes.

Fulfilled core ambitions:



Establish **Eugene Cross Park as a regionally renowned sporting destination** that caters for specialist, elite and community teams and improve its connections to the town centre and The Works.

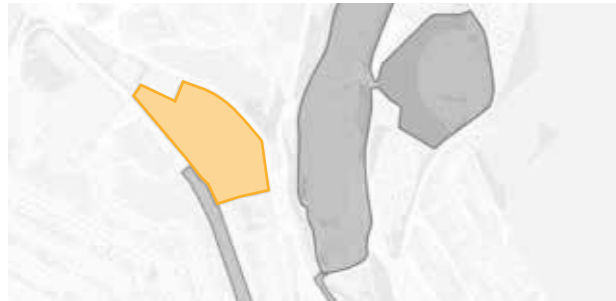


Precedent image: Pitches marked for multiple uses.

4.9 CIVIC CENTRE

Main Issues

- Civic Centre and former leisure centre buildings are vacant.
- Vehicle and road infrastructure dominant environment.
- Poor pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the town centre and Eugene Cross Park.
- Lack of public spaces and amenities.



Former leisure centre site



South east boundary with buffer planting



Department of Work and Pension's Job Centre building



Council Building and car park to the South

Potential Projects

- Residential redevelopment of the Civic Centre site and adjacent land to create a vibrant green neighbourhood with a mix of modern energy efficient homes.
- Integrate the existing health centre and residential development to create a wellness village.
- Establish an active travel corridor that connects the Civic Centre site with the town centre to enable residents to move easily and quickly to the town centre. Active travel route to continue north to wider residential development being delivered in the Northern Corridor growth area.
- Enhance pedestrian connections from the Civic Centre site to Eugene Cross Park and The Works.

Fulfilled core ambitions:



Transform the Civic Centre site into an **exemplary neighbourhood** of modern homes in a green sustainable setting.

The civic centre site is proposed for redevelopment, to create sustainably located homes within easy reach of the town centre and Eugene Cross Park.



Precedent: Mixed use scheme with residential and health/community uses.



Precedent: Contemporary homes that respond to Welsh vernacular.

4.10 TOWN WIDE PROJECTS

There are a number of projects that apply to the whole placemaking plan and a critical to its successful delivery. These projects, summarised below, are equally pivotal for the success of the town centre.

- Establish better cycle routes & cycle parking throughout the town centre to serve leisure and commuter cyclists.
- Incorporate bike hire facilities in key areas throughout the town centre. Include electric bike hire to address level change throughout the town.
- Reinforce signage from the Ebbw Vale Town Railway Station and The Works to the town centre.
- Consolidate town centre signage to reduce clutter while clearly signposting attractions and parking and highway requirements.
- Coordinated lighting throughout the town to enhance the sense of place of key buildings and key spaces in each of the key intervention areas.
- Expand on the existing programme of events to develop a consistent calendar of activity that includes heritage, food, music and recreation.
- Work with existing businesses to improve the diversity of retail and hospitality offer within the town centre.
- Deliver improved frequency of rail service, including later evening train services with integrated ticketing.

DIGITAL INTERVENTIONS

- 5G connectivity throughout the town centre with 5G classroom at the Works site.
- Create a digital high street through development of an app that allows interaction with Ebbw Vale and provides access to local businesses.
- Establish a brand and marketing strategy for the town, that consistently promotes the leisure, tourism and retail offer that is available in the town and wider region.
- Create or link to existing digital resources (online maps/council website/app) to aid way-finding for the cycle and walking opportunities through the town.

Fulfilled core ambitions:



Establish the high street as a 'test-bed' for new business and **entrepreneurs** but also cultivate **an environment of growth for existing businesses.**



Safe separate foot-way, with street trees and rain gardens

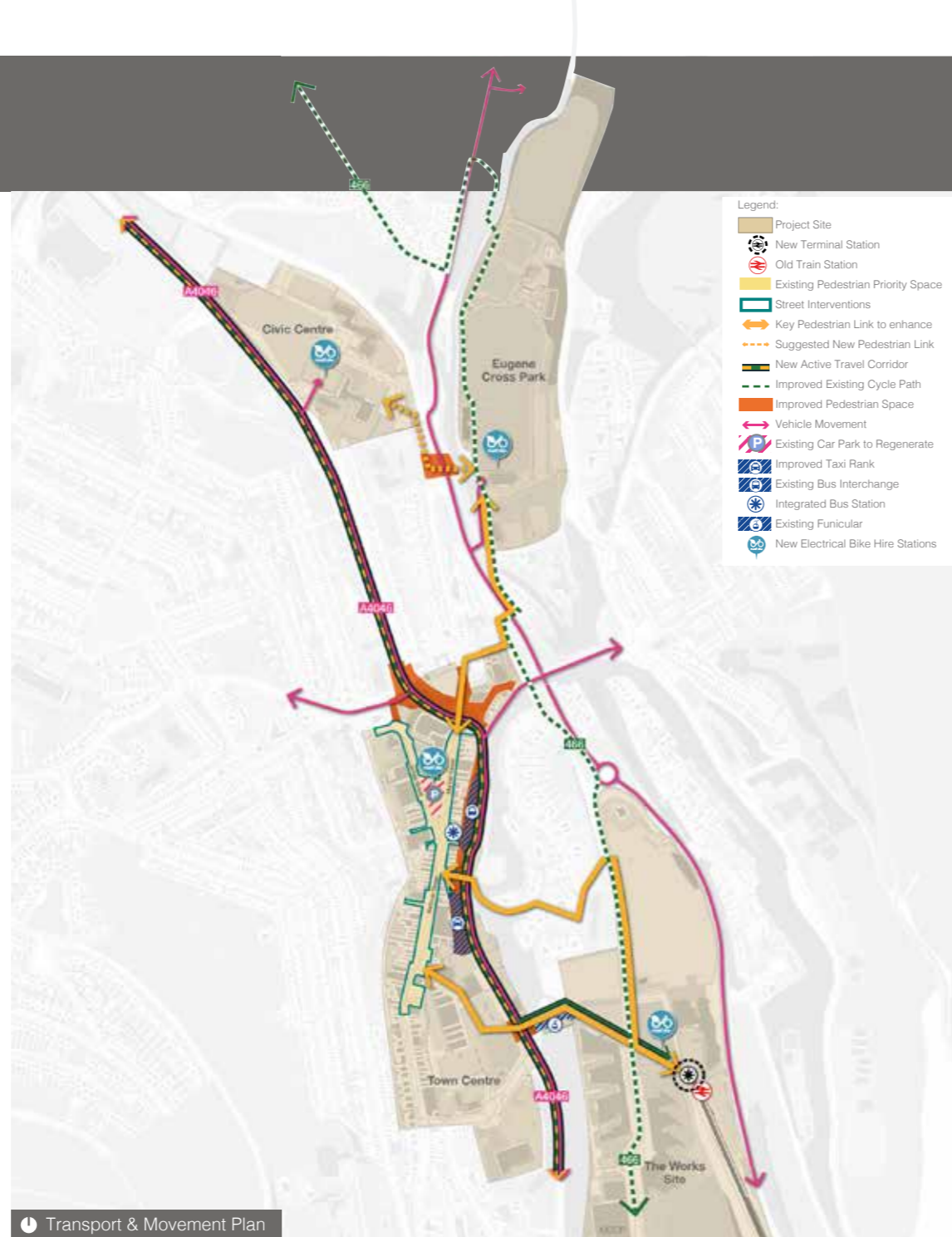


Walking route south through The Works and wildlife park with backdrop of Ebbw Vale's green landscape.

5.0 TRANSPORT & MOVEMENT STRATEGY

Given that the placemaking plan has opportunities to deliver investment and projects in different areas of the town and locality, excellent connections and active travel infrastructure are critical. Our strategy for connecting the placemaking plan area is described below.

- Remove redundant road infrastructure along the A4046 to provide a safe and attractive active travel corridor for pedestrians and cyclists. Connect it to the existing 466 National Cycle Route.
- Connect the new active travel corridor on the A4046 to the existing 466 National Cycle Route.
- Improve existing cycle routes into the surrounding settlement, increase bike parking provision and introduce rental bike service across the town. Electrical bikes to be considered to provide fair accessibility to nearby residential communities.
- Better integrate the bus station into the town centre.
- Better integrate taxi rank into the town centre.
- Regenerate Market Street surface car park into a green public space, while providing flexibility to retain the area for parking.
- Implement an attractive and clear way-finding system.
- Provide an alternative pedestrian connection alongside the existing funicular to improve west/east connectivity.
- Enhance the existing pedestrian connection between The Works and town centre with signage, lighting and surface treatments.
- Create a welcoming and functional train gateway to the town with a new terminal station; high quality public realm; improved way-finding.
- Incentivise rail passengers to utilise the Ebbw Vale Parkway Station and its park and ride to address congestion at Ebbw Vale Town station.

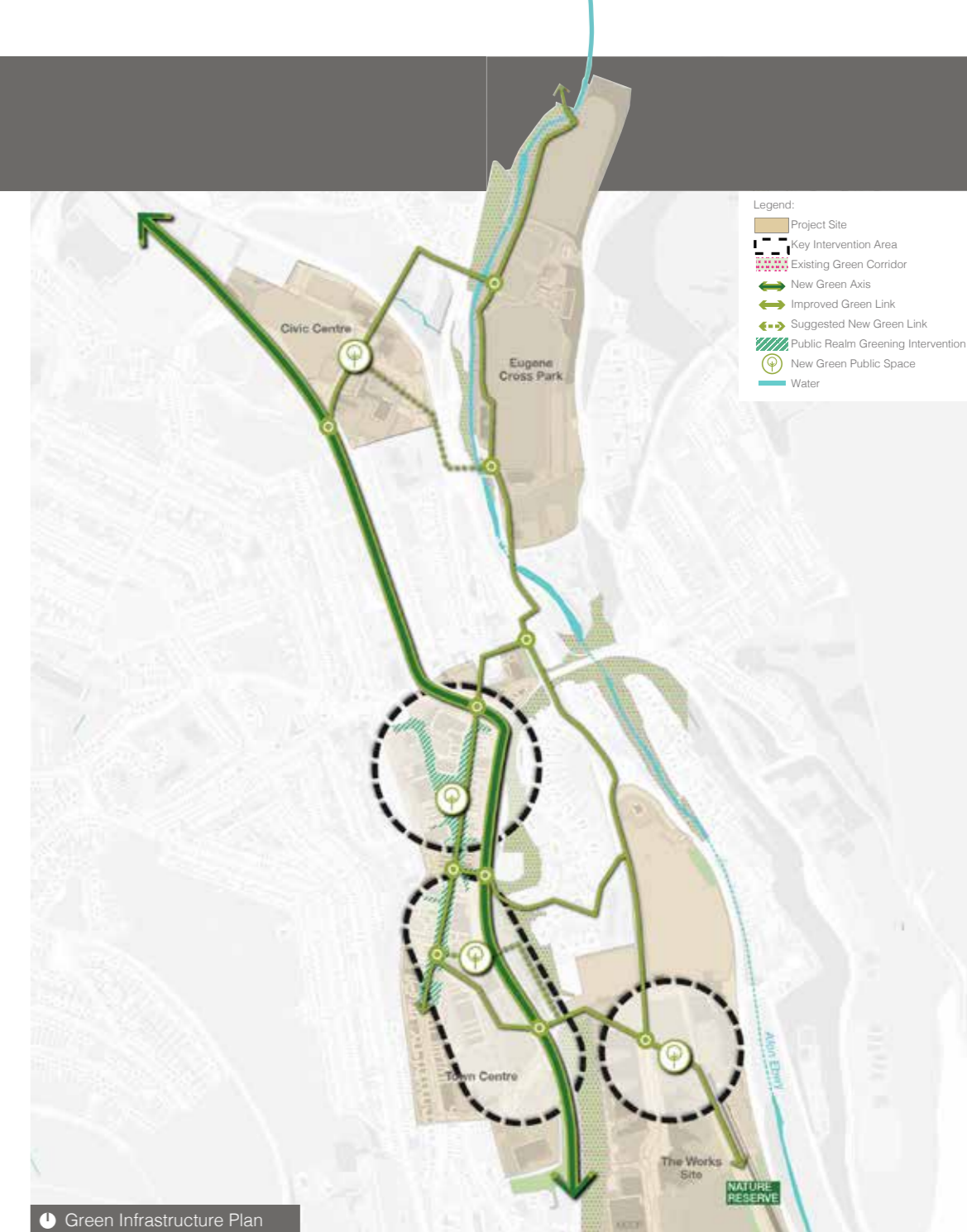


Transport & Movement Plan

6.0 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

In achieving our vision for Ebbw Vale we want to unlock the areas' green legacy and establish the town as an exemplar 'green' town. In better connecting the placemaking plan areas through investment in our active travel network we will create a landscape network of green corridors and places. Our strategy for delivering this is below.

- Regenerate the A4046 into a north-south green corridor with integrated active travel.
- Provide a green infrastructure network by greening the key pedestrian links through the plan area. For example the connections between the town centre, The Works and Eugene Cross Park.
- Introduce new public green spaces to serve the local community and attract visitors, and which are maintainable and 'owned' by new commercial developments and the community.
- Introduce parklets, planters and modular furniture to soften the town centre streets.
- Further consider vertical greening solutions in those parts of the town centre that are constrained by underground utilities.
- Protect the existing green corridor that runs along the A4046 and the River Ebbw.
- Provide a safe and active connection to the existing nature reserve located in The Works Site and work with partners to continue enhancing the reserve for the local community.



Green Infrastructure Plan

7.0 THE PLACEMAKING WALES CHARTER

In Wales placemaking is a statutory requirement of the planning system; the means to deliver sustainable development and provide solutions and investment that addresses current needs while also safeguarding the demands of future generations. The Placemaking Wales Charter provides guidance on how to undertake placemaking and introduces six placemaking principles to be considered. The placemaking plan for Ebbw Vale town has been prepared in accordance with the Charter and its principles. The below provides a summary of how the placemaking plan responds to the principles.

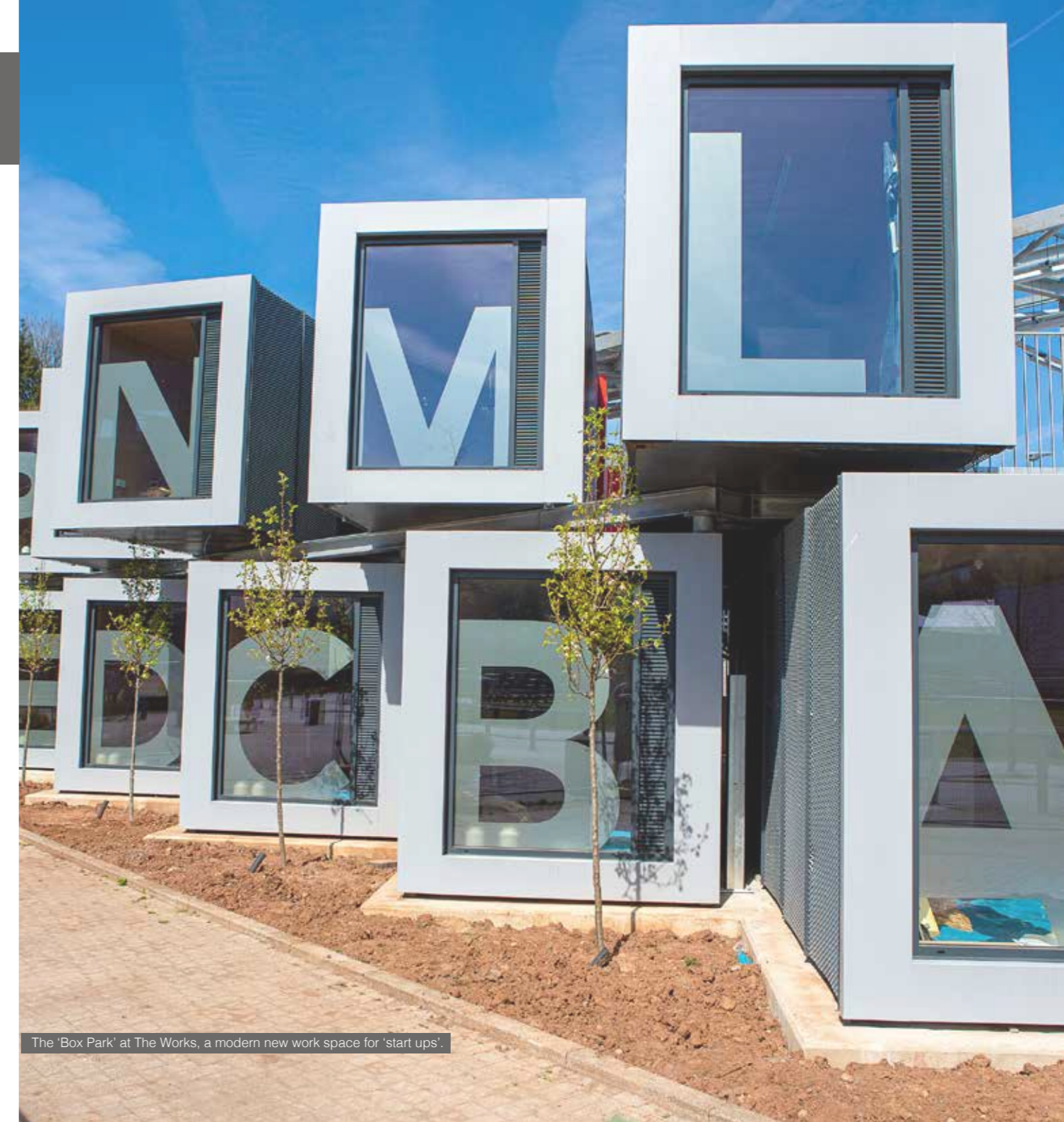
PLACEMAKING WALES CHARTER PRINCIPLES	EBBW VALE PLACEMAKING PLAN RESPONSE
<p>1. People and Community The local community are involved in the development of proposals. The needs, aspirations, health and well-being of all people are considered at the outset. Proposals are shaped to help to meet these needs as well as create, integrate, protect and/or enhance a sense of community and promote equality.</p>	<p>Comprehensive engagement has been undertaken during the preparation of the placemaking plan to find out about how the town works, what are the key ambitions for it, and what type of interventions and change would people like to see happen. Wider public engagement is also to be undertaken and will inform the delivery of the projects.</p>
<p>2. Location Places grow and develop in a way that uses land efficiently, supports and enhances existing places and is well connected. The location of housing, employment, leisure and other facilities are planned to help reduce the need to travel.</p>	<p>A key element of the vision is the 20 minute neighbourhood. The proposals intend to create a fine mosaic of diverse uses, intensifying residential uses, introducing new urban parks and creating new types of workspace will create round the clock activity that will breathe life back into the centre.</p>
<p>3. Movement Walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised to provide a choice of transport modes and avoid dependence on private vehicles. Well designed and safe active travel routes connect to the wider active travel and public transport network, and public transport stations and stops are positively integrated.</p>	<p>The form of new development will reduce the need to travel, while improved active travel infrastructure will reduce the reliance on private vehicles. Street space and underutilised plots previously dominated by cars are given over for planting, gardens, new public open spaces and bike lanes.</p>
<p>4. Mix of uses Places have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access to jobs, services and facilities via walking, cycling or public transport. Development density and a mix of uses and tenures helps to support a diverse community and vibrant public realm.</p>	<p>The Placemaking Plan comprises a number of projects, strategies and non-spatial interventions. The tenure, mix and density is outline at this stage and will be developed at the next stage, however, a vibrant mix of uses that supports the 'Town Centre first' principle, supports local businesses, digital innovation and promotes active travel will be adopted.</p>
<p>5. Public Realm Streets and public spaces are well defined, welcoming, safe and inclusive with a distinct identity. They are designed to be robust and adaptable with landscape, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage well integrated. They are well connected to existing places and promote opportunities for social interaction and a range of activities for all people.</p>	<p>Individual projects will tie together to create a multifunctional network of green streets, formal and informal spaces, walls and roofs. Projects include: introducing new park spaces and vertical green elements; extensive native street tree planting, management of existing green infrastructure, introducing SUDs to new and existing urban streets and spaces throughout the town.</p>
<p>6. Identity The positive, distinctive qualities of existing places are valued and respected. The unique features and opportunities of a location, including heritage, culture, language, built and natural physical attributes, are identified and responded to.</p>	<p>We have the opportunity to build on Ebbw Vale's distinctive heritage to create a unique experience-based offer in contrast with online shopping, convenient by proximity. Projects will build upon the town's Green legacy, strengthening the green infrastructure connections through the town. Projects will seek to build on incorporate Digital innovations and promote Ebbw Vale as a tech cluster.</p>

8.0 CONCLUSION

This placemaking plan responds to Ebbw Vale town's unique setting and attributes and provides the basis for enhancing the town into a unique place to work, live and visit. The vision set by this placemaking plan is ambitious in the current context, but it is also realistic and can be delivered by private and public stakeholders working collectively over a phased basis.

Welsh Government's Transforming Towns agenda has meant that investment into the placemaking plan area is already underway at The Works. Improved connections between key destinations, digital enhancements, along with the new development and placemaking opportunities identified in this plan form an action plan for implementing the Town Centres First policy and will be transformative for the town.

The projects and placemaking opportunities identified in this plan respond directly to this exciting and changing context, and collectively they can enable the town and its surrounding area to once again become a key economic, social and cultural centre that provides for the needs of its residents and also acts as a catalysts for spreading growth and prosperity through the wider County Borough and Capital City Region.



The 'Box Park' at The Works, a modern new work space for 'start ups'.



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Agenda Item 10

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 01.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **15th December 2021**
Report Subject: **Regional Approach to Employability**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Deputy Leader / Executive Member
Regeneration and Economic Development**
Report Submitted by: **Richard Crook, Corporate Director Regeneration
and Community Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
19.10.21	21.10.21	30.11.21			08.12.21	15.12.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to seek BGCBC endorsement of the regional paper and the principles of a locally delivered, regionally co-ordinated approach to employability (appendix 1).

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The paper presented in appendix 1 has been developed with contributions from each of the 10 Local Authority areas within the Cardiff Capital Region. This report is specific to the regional paper. A separate report in respect of Blaenau Gwent Employability Provision, will be presented separately, providing local context and activity.
- 2.2 All 10 local authorities in the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) currently deliver employability activity to support our residents into employment or to help them progress to more sustainable or better paid employment.
- 2.3 At its core, employability is about removing or minimising an individual's barriers to finding, maintaining or progressing in sustainable employment whatever that barrier may be. Depending on the individual, this could be any combination of **skills** (general or occupationally specific), it could be job **readiness/awareness**, or it could be the availability of **support**
- 2.4 Since 2014, across the CCR, employability provision has supported over 50,000 residents to secure a qualification and has helped almost 15,000 long-term unemployed into employment. An indication of the residents supported within Blaenau Gwent are incorporated within the performance section of this report.
- 2.5 The complex geographical and delivery arrangements have led to over 15 separate projects operating concurrently in different areas within the CCR.
- 2.6 Employability provision since 2007 has largely been funded from the European Social Fund (ESF); having now left the European Union this

funding stream will no longer be available; and ESF programme delivery will cease 2023 at the latest. It is not yet known whether the UK Government's replacement for EU funds (Shared Prosperity Fund) will support employability activity or whether this will continue to be separated into objective-led projects. Nor is the amount or delivery mechanism known at this stage.

- 2.7 Therefore, in advance of any funding bids to Shared Prosperity Fund, the 10 CCR Local Authorities have sought to create a single, clear, consistent framework for future employability projects in the region based on a shared vision, shared principles, and common tools.
- 2.8 In 2019, the CCR Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) adopted an Employment and Skills Plan. This sets a clear vision of the future skills needs of the City Region and the activities that regional partners need to deliver to achieve this, with employability featuring strongly.
- 2.9 With the impact of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic now being felt in the economy and labour market, employability is more important than ever.
- 2.10 To build on this, the employability leads from the 10 local authorities have produced a *Framework for Future Employability in the CCR* to shape a shared vision for an employability service which is:
- Responsive enough to rapidly changing employability trends / priorities;
 - Flexible enough to still address individual barriers;
 - Still aligned to local circumstances and still delivered by local teams;
 - Engaged with industry to support people into more sustainable roles;
 - With a particular focus on the following challenges:
 - Poverty arising from unemployment, under employment and unsustainable employment
 - Early Interventions for young people at risk of NEET
 - Barriers to high quality sustainable employment faced by adults
 - Priority Industry Engagement
- 2.11 The proposed employability framework is based on the following shared principles (defined fully within the main report), which reflect on the lessons learnt from 20 years of employability projects:
- Subsidiarity works (LA/trusted delivery bodies are well embedded)
 - Trusted bond (delivery leads, businesses and participants)
 - Prevention over profitability
 - Continuity of provision is valuable and cost-effective
 - Shared learning adds value
 - Decades of progress towards real change
 - Simplified costs have reduced bureaucracy
 - Assess participants for their “employability” journey, not their “project” journey
 - Flexible outcomes

- One framework, but not necessarily one project
 - Not just a job, but a *sustainable* job: closer alignment with industry
- 2.12 Delivery of the *Framework for Future Employability in the CCR* relies on the use of common tools / approaches, particularly at 5 key transition points:
1. The interface with Pre-16 NEET prevention activity
 2. Recruitment & engagement of participants
 3. Triage and caseworker allocation: *understanding the goal and the support available.*
 4. Client assessment process: *assessing barriers & what a participant can do*
 5. The menu of support & intervention: *co-designing and delivering the interventions*
- 2.13 Having a common approach and toolkit is designed to simplify the experience for both residents and employers.
- 2.14 To test this new approach, all 10 Local Authorities have successfully submitted a bid jointly, led by Torfaen, to the UK Government Community Renewal Fund. This will test key aspects including:
- Mobile & digital outreach (recruitment & engagement)
 - Shared Triage trial (understanding the goal)
 - Aligning employability to the CCR's priority industries (assessing the barriers)
 - Try before you qualify (co-designing and delivering the interventions)
- 2.15 Concurrently, further work has been undertaken in autumn 2021 to co-produce the detail of each shared tool / approach through a series of workshops led by LA Employability leads and inviting NEETs leads and other employability partners from the Regional Skills Partnership (Working Wales, third sector groups, Department for Work and Pensions, TUC and WG Skills and Employability team).
- 2.16 Moving forward any regional funding bid to support future employability services would be reported locally for endorsement and approval as appropriate.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
- 3.1 Option 1 Endorsement of the regional paper and the principle of a locally delivered, regionally co-ordinated approach to employability
- Option 2 To note the contents of the report only
4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- Blaenau Gwent Well being Plan – Pathway to Prosperity

- Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan – Blaenau Gwent Prospers
- WG Employability Plan
- CCR Regional Skills Strategy
- Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

5. Implications Against Each Option

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

ESF programmes are externally funded and therefore there are no/limited immediate financial implications or pressures. In the medium term programmes will end which presents a redundancy risk associated with staff employed to deliver the programme. A proportion of the redundancy costs will be met through the funding mechanism though there will be proportion for which the respective department/organisation will need to identify a budget for. The risk would be mitigated through successful redeployment to a new employment programme or alternative employment within the organisation, as appropriate. Relevant service areas are aware of the risk and associated cost implications.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

- 5.2.1 As the priorities for the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) have not yet been announced, there is a risk that the proposed Framework for Future Employability in the CCR will not align to these priorities.

To mitigate this risk, officers have carefully reviewed the priorities within the Community Renewal Fund (CRF) which is seen as a precursor to SPF

- 5.2.2 Other regional / national entities deliver employability activity and there is a risk for mis-alignment / duplication. This includes the recent procurement by the Department of Work and Pensions of providers to deliver the Restart project.

To mitigate this risk, officers have started engagement with other employability agencies operating in the region, including Welsh Government (Skills & Employability), DWP, Working Wales and the third sector. All are supportive of the concepts set out in the proposed.

- 5.2.3 It is not yet clear whether the same level of financial resource as is currently available from the ESF will be made available from the SPF.

At this stage, the proposed Framework for Future Employability in the CCR is not a funding application – it is a strategic document setting out the principles of how employability activity should be delivered within the region and what it should seek to achieve. Any funding application/s will need to be scaled to the resources available.

Without certainty on the timescales for a funding decision from the SPF, there is a risk that funding from the ESF may end before replacement funding is in

- 5.2.4 place. This will have implications for staffing levels and continuity of service delivery.

At this stage, the proposed Framework for Future Employability in the CCR is seeking to agree the principles of how employability activity should be delivered. The implications for any gaps in provision would be considered as part of any subsequent applications for funding once more detail is released on post-EU funding streams.

5.3 **Legal**

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no direct staffing implications associated with this paper specifically.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

An example of the successful outcomes associated with ESF programme delivery across the CCR to date are captured within the main report (Page 2/3)

In respect of ESF programme delivery within Blaenau Gwent an outline of the performance data available at the time of the report is presented below:

Bridges into Work (unemployed and economically inactive) has engaged 540 participants, with a 27% job entry rate. 56% have gained a level 3 or below qualification: 48% have participated in meaningful voluntary placements.

Working Skills for Adults² (employed with under a level 2 qualification) 72% have achieved a level 2 or below qualification.

Nurture, Equip, Thrive 152 Under-employed participants 44% have an improved labour market situation i.e. promotion, more hours, new job, 38 Underemployed participants with a work limiting health condition 23% have an improved labour market situation. 25 participants who were long term absence due to illness, 56% have to a substantive role.

Inspire 2 Work (16-24 year olds): 314 young people enrolled so far, with 71 (23%) supported into employment, 57 (18%) gaining qualifications and 71 (23%) supported into education and training.

Inspire 2 Achieve (11-16 year olds): 910 enrolled so far and of the 431 closed, 195 (45%) have reduced their risk of becoming NEET, 118 (27%) have been supported back into full time Education, 38 (9%) into work based training and 83 (19%) gained additional qualifications.

(* Communities for Work figures to be supplied)

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

There are a range of employment and skills related outcomes for participants as outlined in the diagram below:



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

The proposed Framework for Future Employability in the CCR has been presented to both the Regional Skills Partnership and Regional Business Council.

The proposed Framework for Future Employability in the CCR has been endorsed by the 10 Local Authority Directors with responsibility for Economy / Skills / Regeneration.

Initial discussions have been held with DWP, Working Wales and Welsh Government (Skills & Employability). In addition, Local Authority officers have supported the development of the paper.

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

The paper presented outlines a regional strategic framework, with local delivery; based on the lessons learnt and best practice from previous programmes. In addition, it makes consideration to future business needs in respect of skills and employment opportunities of the future.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The paper presents a proactive approach to develop key guiding principles to inform future delivery; early consideration has been made to best realise continuity of service in the medium to long term, ensuring those requiring access to support and services are able to do so.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The proposed Framework for Future Employability in the CCR has been presented to both the Regional Skills Partnership and Regional Business Council.

The proposed Framework for Future Employability in the CCR has been endorsed by the 10 Local Authority Directors with responsibility for Economy / Skills / Regeneration.

Initial discussions have been held with DWP, Working Wales and Welsh Government (Skills & Employability). In addition, Local Authority officers have supported the development of the paper.

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

This is a regional paper, discussions are being replicated locally with a close working relationship between Regeneration and Education to ensure locally delivered services, aligned to regional principles are aligned to local need.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

The report contents to not relate specifically to this agenda; indirectly a regional approach to employability will make consideration to:

- People having the opportunity to work close to home
- How public and integrated transport can support access to employment
- Employment and skills requirements relating specifically to the decarbonisation agenda

6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***

The report relates to employability provision and ensuring all residents requiring support at any stage of their employment journey have appropriate access.

6.9b. ***Equality Impact Assessment***
N/A

7. ***Monitoring Arrangements***

7.1 Monitoring arrangements will be put in place relating to any future funding opportunity.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 – Regional Paper*

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Shaping Employability to Achieve the Vision of the CCR Employment & Skills Plan

A Discussion Paper from the RSP Cluster Group

In 2019 the Cardiff Capital Regional Skills Partnership adopted its **Employment and Skills Plan**. This sets a clear vision of the future skills needs of the City Region and the activities that regional partners need to deliver to achieve this.

Employability features strongly. The value and importance that employers place on 'employability' skills is clearly reflected. So too is the need to help individuals address their personal barriers to employment to avoid communities being "left behind" in a very competitive labour market. With the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic now being felt in the economy and labour market, employability is more important now than ever.

There is recognition too of the important role and impact of Local Authority employability projects. With expertise built up over 20 years, the projects epitomise the benefits of subsidiarity and devolution. They are delivered as close as possible to the citizen. They are flexible making them highly responsive to local labour market changes. They are focussed on the personal needs of the client and not the need to generate profit. They create a long-term relationship with thousands of clients, helping people into work, to remain in work, and to progress into better paid work at various stages in their lives. They work together, solving problems in partnership with each other and with other early intervention and prevention services. They are respected and trusted by residents.

The end of EU funding is an opportunity to learn lessons: to remove some of the artificial barriers, constraints and bureaucracy. It is an opportunity to shape a new long-term local authority-led employability programme. But with EU funding ending in 2022, there is a need to do so quickly.

In this context, this discussion paper considers:

- The lessons learnt from employability delivery during the EU programmes
- The achievements and impact of locally-led employability programmes
- CCR labour market challenges and the "new context" for future employability

And concludes with the principles of a future employability approach:

- Local Authority-led delivery using...
- ... a common approach to "**pre-assessment & engagement**" and...
- ... a common "**Triage system**" and...
- ... a common "**Assessment Toolkit**" and ...
- ... a common but flexible "**menu of support & interventions**"

What is Employability?

At its core, employability is about removing an individual's barriers to finding, maintaining or progressing in sustainable employment whatever that barrier may be. This could be **skills** (general or occupationally specific), it could be **job readiness/awareness**, or it could be the availability of **support**.

Employability programmes *target* the individual but they *impact* on families, communities, employers and the economy too. From an employer's perspective, staff with the right skills, knowledge and attitude can "hit the ground running" and can introduce new thinking on products and processes adding significant value for the company. At a macro-economic scale, employability programmes can help prepare the workforce to move from lower demand to higher demand (or higher value) occupations.

Consequently, employability programmes have a positive impact on various economic policy objectives including:

- Early intervention & prevention
- Child poverty
- Young people at risk of becoming NEET
- Preparation for work and long-term unemployment
- Youth unemployment
- Short-term unemployment
- Economic integration of refugees (e.g. REACH)
- Under-employment and work-limiting health conditions
- Maximising income, in-work poverty & progression
- Workforce development and employee retention
- Preparation for entry into RSP priority sectors



With such wide impacts, employability is well-reflected in several national strategies and policy documents:

- **CCR Industrial and Economic Growth Plan:** *"We must... target our most deprived and isolated communities and support regenerative growth... GVA per capita remains low, like other regions in the UK. Participation rates - the proportion of the population that is economically-active - could be higher"*
- **UK Industrial Strategy:** *"We need to narrow disparities between communities in skills and education and remove barriers faced by workers from underrepresented groups in realising their potential."*
- **WG Employability Plan:** *"It is one of the prime responsibilities of Government to educate, train and prepare people for the world of work and to remove barriers which prevent people from accessing work so that they can make a contribution to society."*

"We are creating a new service, the Employment Advice Gateway, to provide employment-related advice and guidance to people in Wales... Careers Wales will be given an enhanced role to operate the Employment Advice Gateway"

- **WG Programme for Government:** *“Low skill levels are the single biggest barrier to building the Welsh economy we want, and often the biggest barrier for individuals in securing meaningful work. It is critical we tailor skills support to individuals’ needs, while addressing other barriers such as poor health, transport and caring responsibilities to drive up prosperity levels for all.”*

We will deliver the Young Persons Guarantee, giving everyone under 25 the offer of work, education, training, or self-employment.”

- **WG: Regional Framework in Wales After Brexit:** *[What works] “Unemployed participants on EU-funded employability projects are 46 per cent more likely to find work over twelve months than non-participants. Economically inactive participants are 84 per cent more likely to find work than similar economically inactive people who have not benefited from this support”*
- **WG: A More Equal Wales: Preparing for the commencement of the Socio-economic duty.** *Socio-economic disadvantage leads to inequality of outcome including lower paid work and poorer skills and attainment.*
- **WG: Wellbeing of Future Generations Act:** *“Applying the well-being goals can help tackle poverty as it helps you identify where the main determinants of poverty exist, how they work together and what opportunities there might be.”*
- **One Million Welsh Speakers:** *“The evidence received suggests that there is a demand for a bilingual workforce to meet business and customer needs; this can be addressed by developing the linguistic skills and confidence to meet the requirements of businesses.” “Employers in the Childcare sector were the most likely of all sectors to consider Welsh language skills important. 84 per cent considered such skills important, and 42 per cent ‘very important’.*
- **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework:** *“The recently published Tackling Poverty plan clearly identifies that reducing the number of young people who are not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET) will have a long-term impact on the lives of not just today’s young people, but generations to come. The cost of not addressing this issue is not just economic, but impacts on levels of unemployment, under employment, crime, well-being, substance misuse, premature death and early motherhood.”*

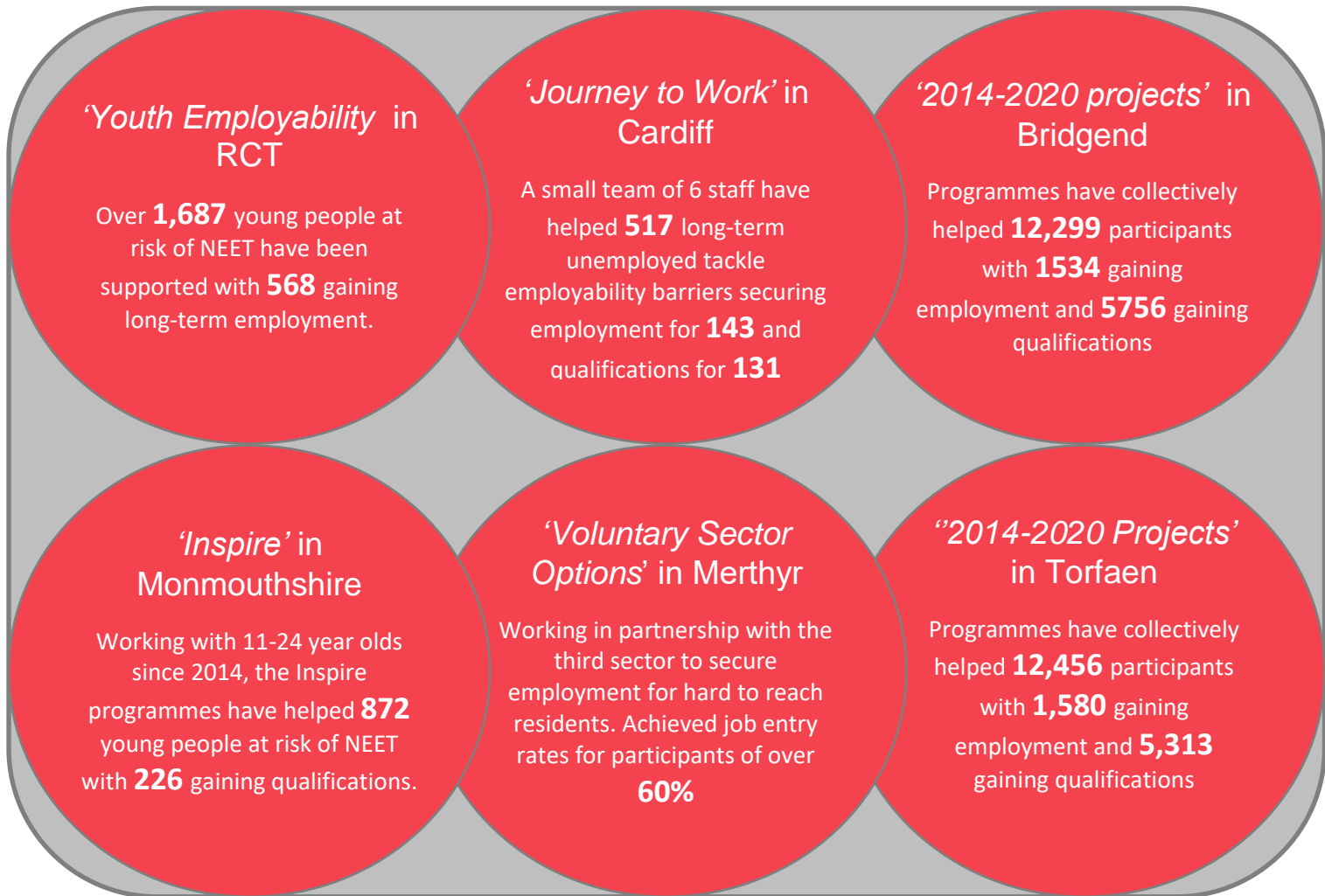
What have Employability Programmes Achieved?

It is well-established that reducing unemployment and economic inactivity, improving skills levels and equipping workers with the ambition to progress in their careers is one of the principal drivers of regional productivity growth. Employability programmes in the Cardiff City Region have helped thousands of people to improve their skills, gain new qualifications and enter / progress in employment.

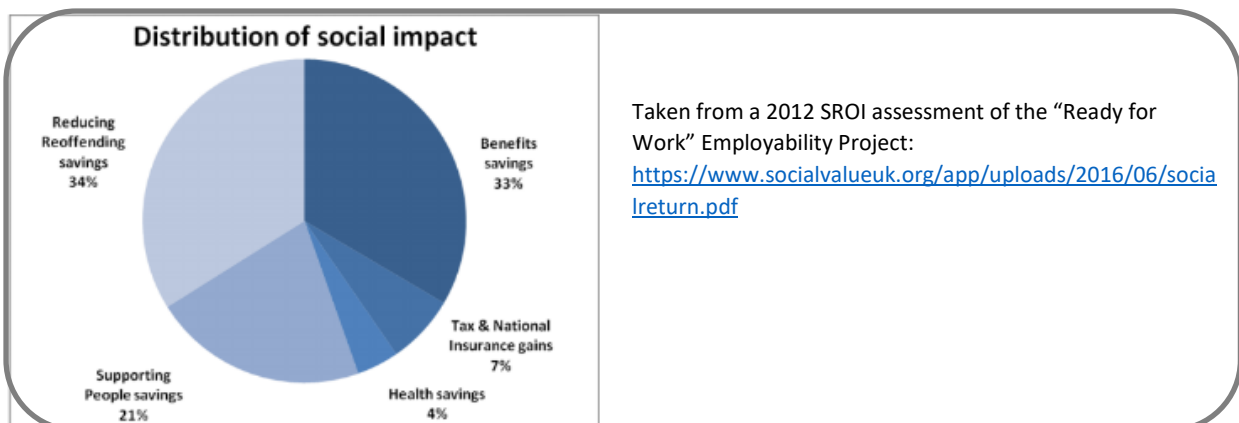
‘2014-2020 Structural Funds’ in the CCR

The projects supported **14,522** long-term unemployed into employment and **51,127** to gain qualifications

For over 20 years local authority led programmes have had success in deprived communities; success working in partnership with the third and private sectors; success working with young people and with vulnerable adults. Highlights include



But the statistics do not show the full impact of these interventions. It is well-established that employability programmes have a high social return on investment. A 2012 evaluation of employability programmes showed cashable impacts across various government departments:



Closer to home, a 2019 **social return on investment** study for RCT showed a net social impact of £2,080,078 on the £405,000 Inspire to Work project alone. A social return on investment of £5.10 for every £1 spent.

“RCT I2W: A social return on investment of £5.10 for every £1.00 spent”

Nor do they show the impact on individuals:

Monmouthshire Inspires to Achieve

In Spring 2016, Monmouthshire Inspire to Achieve (I2A) was asked to intervene to support a year 9 boy (“X”) who was not attending school. He had a turbulent family background, no contact with his dad and had recently seen his older sister sectioned under the Mental Health Act leading a severe decline in his own mental health. “X” withdrew from all facets of life and was becoming increasingly violent. His school attendance fell to 30% with 56% unauthorised absence. At this point I2A was asked to intervene.

“X” continued to work towards core subjects in school whilst receiving pastoral support for his emotional needs and employability skills support from I2A. Through intense 1:1 support, “X” and his case worker have developed a trusting and effective relationship which has identified his barriers to employment and has significantly reduced his anxiety and improved his confidence. He is now close to completing a BTEC L2 Qualification in Work Skills (ahead of his peers) and his attendance has increased to almost 90% (a 200% increase). He now has the ambition to progress into a career in advertising and design.

Torfaen Bridges into Work helps land Dream Job

In Winter 2020, Torfaen Bridges into Work (BiW2) supported Andrew Wilkinson into his dream job. Andrew was paralysed from the chest down following a road traffic accident 18 years ago. Prior to his accident he worked as a full-time scaffolder. Considered as long term unemployed and having no formal qualifications, he contacted BiW2, where he received support from Employment Mentors who helped him to build his confidence, develop his CV, complete online qualification and ultimately to secure a job as an assistive technologist at Rookwood Hospital – the hospital that provided him with treatment following his accident.

How employability has been delivered in CCR

The project-based nature of EU structural funding led to a plethora of employability programmes, each based on the principles above, but targeting a different **clientele**, **geography**, or **employability outcome** and using slightly different models, assessment tools and interventions.

To add to the complexity, there are many wider programmes that have an employability component, including: DWP Restart, DWP Kickstart, and Communities 4 Work+. This is alongside the Working Wales service that provides an independent careers information, advice, coaching and signposting service that incorporates referrals to the full breadth of employability and other provision

Summary of Recent EU-Funded Employability Programmes

	Clientele	Geography	Outcome
Bridges into Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term unemployed • Age 25+ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BGCBC, TCBC, CCBC, BCBC, MTCBC • Non-CF* areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term unemployment • Economic Inactivity
Working Skills for Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Employment • Age 16+ • QCF2 or lower 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BGCBC, TCBC, CCBC, BCBC, MTCBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In work poverty / career progression
Nurture, Equip, Thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Employment • Age 16+ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BGCBC, TCBC, CCBC, BCBC, MTCBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underemployment & Work limiting health conditions • Workforce development
Journey 2 Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term unemployed • Age 25+ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCC, NCC, MCC • Non-CF areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term unemployment • Economic Inactivity
Skills @ Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Employment • Age 16+ • QCF2 or lower 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCC, NCC, MCC • Non-CF areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In work poverty / career progression
Building Resilience, Prosperity & Wellbeing (SWAW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Employment • Returning to Work • WLHC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCTCBC • Non-CF* & CF areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term unemployment • Underemployment & Work limiting health conditions
Communities 4 Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 16+ • AND QCF2 or lower; OR • WLHC; OR • BME; OR • Jobless Household 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole CCR • CF areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term unemployment • Economic Inactivity
PACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economically Inactive • Parents • AND NEET 16-24 OR 25+ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-CF • Whole CCR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term unemployment • Economic Inactivity
ReAct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redundant less than 3 months • <16+ hours /week since redundancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole CCR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term unemployment • Careers advisory role
Traineeships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 16-17 • NEET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole CCR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Unemployment • Careers advisory role
Active Inclusion Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 25+ AND • 54+ econ. inactive; • OR BAME & long-term unemployed; OR • Carer & econ. inactive; • OR QCF2 or lower; • OR WLHC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole CCR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term unemployment • Economic Inactivity • Underemployment & Work limiting health conditions
Upskilling at Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees QCF2 or lower 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole CCR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing priority sectors • Career progression
Inspire to Achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 11-16 • At risk of NEET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole CCR (East & West projects) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At risk of NEET • Careers advisory role
Inspire to Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 16-24 • NEET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole CCR (East & West projects) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Unemployment

*CF – Communities First

Each employability project relies on staff resource to deliver or procure the appropriate mix of interventions that address their participants' barriers and achieve the project outcome. In some cases this involves specialist referrals to other programmes. These staffing roles / interventions / specialist referrals are summarised below:

Staff Resource	Interventions /	Specialist Referrals
Design & Deliver Qualifications (e.g. Agored)		Specialist referral: Prison leavers
Employer Liaison Officers	Delivery of courses via accredited centres (e.g. Pearsons, Highfields)	Specialist referral: Learning difficulties
Financial Inclusion Officers		Specialist referral: LAC
Counsellors	Volunteering	Specialist referral: work limiting health condition
Health & Wellbeing Support	Work Placements	
Post-16 Youth Worker Support	Job Prep / Employment Support	
Pre-16 Youth Support Workers	FE Referrals	
	Barriers Fund	

Lessons Learnt from the EU Programmes

What has Worked Well?

- **Subsidiarity works:** Local Authority delivered projects have great penetration into their target communities. LA employability teams have been embedded in communities for over 20 years and so have a strong understanding of residents' barriers, good networks with local support organisations, and are delivered by well-established (and well-known) practitioners.
- **Local knowledge is crucial:** Local Authority delivered projects have developed good knowledge of local labour markets, and good relations with local and regional employers built over many years. Collectively we have networks of thousands of employers who engage employability as part of their recruitment. Importantly, Local Authorities also have a strong understanding of the emerging employment opportunities in their local area.
- **A trusted brand:** Local authority delivered projects are trusted by participants. Without trust, it is impossible to engage those furthest from the labour market.
- **Prevention over profitability:** Local Authority led delivery has been motivated by tackling the root causes of participants barriers, however complex and however long that intervention takes. They have been successful at working as part of a wider Early Intervention & Prevention coalition of support agencies, employer networks and early intervention teams (e.g. money advice, benefits, foodbanks, ESOL provision, volunteering agencies, adult learning, children's services, education welfare, housing and health & wellbeing advisory services) to help participants.

- **Continuity of provision is valuable *and* cost-effective:** Under current EU programmes Local Authority employability teams employ 100s of support workers, counsellors and employment liaison officers. Many have developed networks in their local area over 20 years. Collectively there are hundreds of years of experience and local knowledge that would be lost if employability programmes were to end. In a profession that relies on building long-term 1:1 relationships with clients, the loss of this expertise could take decades to recover. Add to this the financial cost of decommissioning existing services (office costs, redundancy costs, re-branding) and it is clear that continuity between programmes significantly improves the short and long-term cost-effectiveness for the region
- **Shared learning adds value:** Over the past two decades strong networks have emerged between employability programmes, training providers, higher and further education institutions, the voluntary sector and the business community. Local Authority led provision is effective at working in partnership to deliver in areas where partners' have greater expertise, experience of knowledge.
- **Decades of progress towards real change:** Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, regional qualifications levels were rising, unemployment was low. Youth employability teams were able to implement a 10-year preventative approach (through successive programmes like Prevent, Lift and Inspire) which is benefitting a generation of young people. As a result of intervention, NEET figures were amongst their lowest ever.
- **Simplified Costs has reduced bureaucracy:** The FR40 simplified costs model used during the 2014-2020 programmes has had a significant impact on efficiency. This essentially creates a barriers and training fund for project participants. Local Authorities can now design interventions around a participant's needs and not around a pre-conceived list of compliant purchases.

What could be improved?

- **Assess participants for their "employability" journey, not their "project" journey:** Currently a participant is assessed when they enter each project. Each uses a different approach to determine eligibility and to assess what support to provide to a participant. To some extent this is necessary – the questions asked of an 11 or 16 year-old will be different from those asked of a 30 or 50 year old. But there should be more commonality between and coordination of assessment tools so that a client can move seamlessly in and out of support at key stages in their employability journey.
- **Flexible outcomes:** Whilst FR40 has made project delivery more flexible, the current ESF-funded programmes are still rigid in their outcomes. The Covid-19 pandemic has again highlighted the need for employability to adapt quickly to changing labour market conditions and priorities (e.g. the flexibility to switch from economic inactivity to unemployment; from long-term unemployment to short-term unemployment; or from unemployment to under-employment). The end of EU funding requirements means that apprenticeships, further learning and volunteering could all become more acceptable progression outcomes.
- **One Framework, but not necessarily one Programme:** Some programmes (particularly C4W/+) are wider than just employability. Others (particularly the Inspire 2 Achieve reduction of risk of NEET programme) require specialist interventions. Whilst these interact with an employability programme, they may also sit alongside rather than within it.

- **Hide ‘even more’ of the wiring:** Each project currently has strong brand identity amongst their clients, but the sheer number of brands can create confusion. There are examples of good practice in “hiding the wiring” (creating a seamless experience for a participant) within individual local authorities, but as a region there are still too many brands for employability alone (let alone complementary national programmes like Communities 4 Work/+, Jobs Growth Wales or Restart). There should be a clearer brand hierarchy, fewer brands, and a more consistent and universally accepted approach to triage across all employability interventions in the CCR.
- **Closer alignment with industry:** We want to move from projects which focus on ‘how do I support an individual into a job’ to ‘how do I support an individual into a *sustainable* job’ There is substantial change taking place in the economic base of the CCR, accelerated by Covid-19. The employability ‘skills’ needed to work in this emerging economy are also likely to evolve. With the adoption of a regional Employment and Skills Plan, and cluster groups in priority sectors, we face a unique opportunity to improve the alignment between our programme design and the demands of industry. There are some good innovative ideas:
 - E-learning modules for employability staff so that they are better placed to understand and therefore direct support towards priority sectors.
 - “Try before you qualify” model, supporting employability candidates into the workplace in priority sector roles before they make a decision on which qualification route to pursue.

The Future Context for Employability

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus the scale of the employability challenge. Structural changes are taking place in the economy at a rate not seen for decades with some well-established sectors declining rapidly.

The following represent opportunities / threats to the delivery of employability support:

- **Brexit:** The impact of Brexit on the industrial base of the CCR remains uncertain. Pre-departure assessments highlighted a high risk to the South Wales economy with its relatively high proportions of manufacturing employment and personal/financial services. Brexit impacts do not yet appear to be impacting on the labour market, but any decline in manufacturing employment will impact on the number of opportunities for employability clients.
- **Retail & Customer Service:** Even before Covid-19 restrictions the retail sector was transitioning away from bricks and mortar premises in town and city centres. Retail is one of the most popular and accessible routes from our employability programmes and any decline in retail employment will impact on opportunities for employability clients. The shift online (accelerated by Covid-19) will create other opportunities – in delivery and warehousing occupations in particular – but the propensity of these workplaces to cluster near to major transport routes will impact on the accessibility of any vacancies to employability clients. This is a particularly acute risk for young people at risk of becoming NEET.
- **Automation and Industry 4.0:** The CCR Industrial Strategy recognises a regional strength in advanced manufacturing and seeks to promote growth and innovation within key manufacturing sub-sectors (including medical devices and diagnostics, compound semi-conductors and transport engineering). The extent to which automation will reduce employment in South Wales’ largely SME manufacturers is unclear, but there is clearly a need to prepare employability programmes for the impact of a reduced number of lower-skilled occupations within these sectors. This will require better employability pathways, improved perceptions of the sector amongst clients and a stronger link between employability and technical skills.

- **Human Foundational Economy:** The Human Foundational Economy includes several priority sectors for the CCR RSP and has continued potential as a strong source of vacancies for employability clients. But there is a risk that these roles may perpetuate a low-wage economy and a need for employability programmes to engage with the sector to promote fair work, improve job security, improve the reputation of the sector and stimulate progression opportunities.
- **Covid-19: labour market tightening:** The Covid-19 pandemic has forced many businesses to either cease trading temporarily or adjust their business model. Schemes like the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough) and relief funds have to date limited the number of redundancies, but there remain risks to the labour market as this support is gradually withdrawn. At the peak of the pandemic, the ratio between claimants and vacancies rose substantially, and further such peaks may be seen. Any tightening of the labour market is likely to reduce opportunities for employability clients. In addition, employability teams are likely to be working with a more diverse range of clients, many of whom may not have previously been unemployed and may need to reskill / upskill. The extent to which demand on employability services will increase post Covid is, as yet, unknown
- **Covid-19: The psychological barriers:** Research conducted with children and young people by the Children’s Commissioners Office shows that young people’s emotional and psychological wellbeing has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. This is highly likely to ‘present’ as an additional barrier to employment amongst the most vulnerable and may affect their ability to achieve their potential in education and/or to sustain employment.

An Employability Framework Fit for the Future

The priorities for future delivery

Reflecting on the context, on what has worked well, and on the lessons from earlier programmes, any future employability approach for the CCR should:

- Use a single long-term employability “model” which can rapidly respond to changeable policy priorities, but is flexible enough to cater to individual barriers and needs.....
- as the basis for designing common programmes together and with our partners across the region which address our three principal employability themes: “flexible employability support”; “anti-poverty interventions” and “early intervention for young people at risk of becoming NEET”
- which would include a common triage process, a “single front door” that ‘hides the wiring’, and common participant assessment tools
- and which would be delivered by teams in each of the 10 LAs with the flexibility to directly deliver, procure or refer participants onto a range of approved interventions
- funded through the Levelling Up Programme or other similar funds.....
- alongside activity to work with the RSP cluster groups to design pre-employment pathways for priority sectors.
-with the aim to give the region the direction, stability and maturity to collectively engage with or bid for other emerging contracts (e.g. Kickstart, CAEHRs, Jobs Growth Wales+, apprenticeship programmes).

The Pre-Assessment Process

The pre assessment engagement process is about reaching out to individuals, supporting them into regular activity and positive routines, and helping them to connect with others.

Many economically inactive and unemployed individuals are not actively engaged with employability services. This may be because they are not interested in working, have had poor experiences of employability services in the past, or are unaware of the range of services available.

To overcome this lack of engagement, a number of mechanisms will be used to reach out to individuals and engage them in employability services. These include:

- Pro-active marketing.
- Effective location of services
- Community outreach workers
- Partnership working with community organisations.
- Co-location of services.
- Adopting area-based approach and client group-based approach

Upon engagement, Triage officers will begin the Triage process to identify the most suitable provision for the client.

The Triage Process

A triage process is an integral feature of employability programmes to successfully refer a client to the project which can best support the skills, needs and circumstances of the client and for which the client is eligible. Under the proposed framework, all 10 authorities, and partner organisations, will design a common, collective, consistent approach to triage.

In practice the client or referral body completes, with the client's agreement, an expression of interest which is sent to a Triage Officer. The Triage Officer must fully understand all the provision in the area, what that provision can achieve for the client and then assesses the details of the client that have been provided. If there are areas which need further clarification the Triage Officer would contact the client to ask for more details. When the Triage Officer is confident they have that level of detail which allows them to make a sound judgment they refer to the most suitable provision for the client in that locality.

The Triage Officer would notify the referrer that the client had been triaged to the particular project. The receiving agency would be asked to notify Triage when the client is successfully enrolled on the provision. Should the Mentor on that project undertake assessment with that client and determine that the provision is unsuitable for that clients needs they would refer back to the Triage Officer with any new information which would able the Triage Officer to make a new provision.

When clients complete their time on a particular project, for example they get a job, and would leave that project a judgment must be made if there is other provision which could continue to meet the clients needs, for example in work support, a referral back to Triage or at least informing Triage that a referral is made to another project is key so the clients employability journey can be tracked.

Many clients are re-referred to provision and seeing what schemes they have successfully or unsuccessfully completed helps inform Triage Officers when making the next referral and ensures that the client is eligible for that provision.

The Client Assessment Process

The model below provides a comprehensive and complete range of employment and skills interventions coordinated by the RSP. The ability to seamlessly link the client's journey, whatever their age, from their first engagement with employment and skills provision, demonstrates a model of local integration and delivery of services, which maximises benefits for clients. The various stages of the model below allow a client to re-engage at various stages of their employability journey. This section provides further information about the pipeline, and the different stages and interventions within it.



Alignment to Other Provision

An employability programme should not be developed in isolation from the wider skills provision in the CCR to ensure that participants can readily and seamlessly access specialist support, and, importantly, to provide opportunities for participants to progress into more technical skills development activities in priority sectors.

The following conversations should be prioritised during programme design:

- **Communities 4 Work(+):** National anti-poverty programmes have wider objectives which can complement the employability proposals in this discussion paper. In some LAs the projects may be delivered under the same management structures. Discussions should focus on a shared/consistent approach to branding, triage, and assessment.
- **NEET prevention:** Any successor programme to Inspire 2 Achieve will be an important feeder into the employability programme. Discussions should focus on the referral process from Inspire 2 Achieve into the employability programme.
- **RSP Priority Sector Cluster Groups:** Learning the lessons from previous EU programmes, the successor employability framework will need to establish a clear pathway into each sector for employability clients. This will need to consider the requirements of entry level job roles as well as technical skills requirements. This work – looking at starter roles – is now underway jointly between the local authorities and the RSP team.
- **Working Wales & School's Employer Engagement:** The creation of Working Wales and the launch of Jobs Growth Wales+ creates an opportunity to join up “careers & aspirations” workstreams with employability programmes. There are already pockets of good practice focussed on STEM in schools (BGCB) and coordination of opportunities for young people (Cardiff Commitment).
- **Further Education Provision & Technical Skills:** Upskilling / reskilling is likely to remain an important part of the employability offer and technical skills will play an increasing role in that. Discussions with FE should focus on the assessment/intervention model and how it can act as a seamless feeder into existing/proposed FE provision.
- **Work-based Learning & Specialist Apprenticeship Provision:** The end of EU funding restrictions provides an opportunity to embrace apprenticeships as a progression route from employability programmes. There are opportunities for joint promotion, and the co-design of the assessment/referral process. There are also opportunities to align to local-authority / third-sector led specialist apprenticeship provision like Y Prentis and Aspire. This collaborative programmes brings together education, industry and the local authority to provide skilled opportunities in the advanced manufacturing sector. With its strong industry links and track record of supporting industry with recruitment, training & work placements, the Aspire programme could represent a link from employability provision into technical skills development. Y Prentis can do likewise into construction routes.
- **Public Sector Shared Apprenticeships and InFuSe:** A public sector testbed is likely to stimulate new service provision and new occupational routes in the public sector. This could be a strong source of future opportunities for employability clients and should be considered at an early stage of InFuSe's development.
- **CCR Investment Pipeline:** The CCR City Deal is developing a strong pipeline of upcoming investments in infrastructure (creating opportunities for construction vacancies) and innovation

(creating opportunities for technological vacancies). If a clear “early warning” system could be created to notify employability programmes when an investment proposition looks likely to receive support, it will help the employability teams to begin to prepare the workforce to reskill for these opportunities.

Conclusions and Next Steps

The adoption of a new framework for employability and a commitment from the RSP to seek funding to sustain the teams required to deliver this framework would usher in an exciting new era for employability in the CCR.

Learning lessons from the EU programmes, our proposed framework would create a system based on coordination not competition; a system based on flexibility and responsiveness to structural changes in the regional labour market; a system aligned to the priority sectors with distinct employability pathways into each one.

The case is strong for locally delivered employability. It provides excellent value for money and social return on investment. It is based on over 20 years of experience, and relationships with local communities that would take years to recover if that expertise was lost.

Adopting the proposed framework for employability would give the Regional Skills Partnership a mechanism to:

- Rapidly adapt to changing regional employability priorities in response to structural changes in the economy and labour market (i.e. getting the right mix between short-term unemployed, long-term unemployed, NEETs, under-employment etc).
- Improve the integration of employability with the other elements of the Regional Employment and Skills Plan, like careers and aspiration, technical education and cluster development.

And it would provide direction to local authorities (working with the Cardiff City Deal) to seek funding from the Levelling Up fund to establish a long-term, regionally-minded, locally-delivered employability approach. It would provide a launchpad for further collaboration with other emerging contracts like Kickstart, Jobs Growth Wales+ or other programmes coming from the CAEHRs.

Immediate Next Step

Subject to approval on the principles within this paper from the RSP, the LA cluster group will commence work with partners on an employability project proposal for submission to Shared Prosperity Fund.

Agenda Item 11

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 02.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **15th December 2021**
Report Subject: **Communications Strategy Quarterly Performance Monitoring (July - September 2021)**
Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Daniels, Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Services**
Report Submitted by: **Bernadette Elias, Chief Officer, Commercial and Customer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	18.11.21	30.11.21			10.12.21	15.12.21		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
To present the quarter 2 update (July to September 2021) against the Corporate Communications Strategy.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Corporate Communications Strategy was approved by Council in 2020.
 - 2.2 There are 6 themes which drive the communications delivery:
 - Build and maintain a strong reputation;
 - Residents know how we are delivering council priorities;
 - Informed and engaged staff;
 - Ensure marketing campaigns are well planned, targeted and provide value for money;
 - Promote the use of digital communications channels and encourage self-service where appropriate;
 - Make sure residents are informed in advance of and at times of emergency.
 - 2.3 The communications response to the Covid-19 pandemic continued during the second quarter (July to September 21). Communication activity focused on the easing of restrictions, testing, return to school arrangements and the mass vaccination programme.
 - 2.4 The Corporate Communications Team remains a key member of the Gwent Local Resilience Forum Warning and Informing Group. This group is responsible for aligning communications and communicating key information to the residents of Gwent during the phases of the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring a consistent approach between local partners, PHW and Welsh Government. The content has been a mixture of partner material (Welsh Government, Public Health Wales, Health Board) and content created by the team maximising their creative skills.

- 2.5 The move into the recovery phase of the pandemic meant that the Communications team continued to pick up other priorities within the strategy including building the council's reputation, making sure that residents are aware of council priorities.
- 2.6 Appendix 1 details the media coverage for the period covering a wide range of topics which ensured that more of the corporate communications strategy priorities were planned and delivered. Coverage increased significantly in Q2 compared to the first quarter reflecting the focus priorities. 89 press articles appeared in Q2 compared to 54 in Q1 (an increase of 40%).
- 2.7 A communications strategy is in place to support the new operating model with staff communications including Wellbeing Wednesday being issued every week and a revised format to the staff newsletter.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The report will be considered by the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee on 10th December 2021 and any feedback will be provided verbally to the Executive Committee.

Option 1: That the Executive considers and accepts the quarter 2 (July to September 2021) update against the Communication Strategy.

Option 2: That the Executive Committee considers the quarter 2 (July to September 2021) update against the Communication Strategy and suggests areas for improvement.

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

- 4.1 The Communication Strategy supports the Corporate Plan and the Well Being plan as part of the governance framework.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

The communication activity is delivered within the existing budget whilst maximising material created by partners including Welsh Government and Public Health Wales and Individual marketing campaigns supported by external funded via partners (eg WRAP Cymru).

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

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

5.3 ***Legal***

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

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

5.4 **Human Resources**

A new Officer started in the team in September meaning the team is back to full strength. The new post holder will focus on internal communications and delivery of the communications plan for new ways of working. This is a key priority within the Corporate Communications strategy and a dedicated resource is a key enabler to delivery.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Key activity for the quarter is outlined in Appendix 2. This includes:

- 100,000 visitors to the Council website. This figure is up on the previous quarter reflecting the increased focus on promoting Council strategies.
- 2,130 social media posts – an average of 177 per week; this is down on the previous reporting period. The number of social media followers remains steady with Facebook followed by 15,000 residents and our Twitter account by just over 11,500.

Digital communication has a number of benefits for the Council as we can send out information regularly and reach key audiences in large numbers very quickly.

- Proactive media activity stepped up and we sent out 48 press releases compared to 31 in the previous quarter.
- Media coverage increased with 89 articles published covering a range of positive topics including reflecting Council priorities:
 - Housing developments including the £16m Golwg y Bryn and the £29 Carn Y Cefn schemes in Ebbw Vale
 - Extended opening hours and range of services for the community hubs
 - Food and Fun summer campaign in schools
 - A Level and GCSE success
 - Refurbishment work at South Roseheyworth Business allowing companies like Insurgo Media Services to develop their business
 - Rhos-y-Fedwen Primary school's new outdoor learning area constructed by Alun Griffiths Ltd
 - Positive end of year 2020-21 revenue budget
 - Our award winning apprentices- Aspire Apprentices of the Year
- Council wins Armed Forces Gold Award
In recognition for its work the Council was awarded the highest

badge of honour, Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award in the summer. This is awarded to those organisations that employ and support those who serve, veterans and their families

- Decarbonisation progress.
We reported that good progress is being made against the Council's 9 key target areas for focus a year after Council agreed its formal decarbonisation plan. The first area of focus is on Transport Direct which makes up 8% of the Council's gross carbon emissions. The Council now has a clear action plan in place for this area and communications plan for this area is being development to keep internal and external audiences up to date with progress.
- Ciner Glass visit.
Mrs Didem Ciner met Welsh political and council leaders including the First Minister, Mark Drakeford MS, to discuss plans for glass container production in Blaenau Gwent in late September.
- Internal communication remains very important and regular messaging using the following channels continued - the MD message, briefings for Elected Members and regular staff information. An internal communication plan supporting the move to the new operating model was introduced and 2 staff newsletters were sent out in July and August to update staff on key developments and changes to policy.

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

The focus until early 2021 has been on managing crisis communications and the response to Covid-19. The main objective has been regular and timely information for the public to keep them informed as the Covid pandemic shifted through a number of phases during the quarter.

During this quarter, there was more emphasis on delivering wider communications on council strategies and priorities, as the Covid situation eased.

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

Internal communication will be measured for impact through staff feedback and engagement activities.

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

The Communication Strategy supports the corporate plan objectives and strategies which look to the longer term.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

It is anticipated that effective and proactive communications will contribute to education and information campaigns designed to influence behaviour. Campaigns relating to littering, recycling and fly tipping and fostering are examples that have been supported by the communications activity.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

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

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

Opportunities for promoting cross cutting service impact will be identified as part of the communication campaigns including in relation to integrated marketing.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

The Communications team supported the promotion of the climate assembly report and recommendations as an important element of the council's decarbonisation plan.

Promotion of the littering strategy was also undertaken in this quarter as part of the launch activity.

6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***

Not applicable.

6.9b. ***Equality Impact Assessment***

A screening exercise on the communications strategy was undertaken. Material is produced in different formats and content accessibility is reviewed. Requirements in relation to the Welsh Language are considered as part of the wider communications activity planning.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Quarterly progress reporting against the Communications Strategy is part of the forward work programme of Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Committee

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 Media coverage*
- *Appendix 2 Communications Summary*

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Appendix 1 – Media Coverage

Date	Publication	Headline	Theme
1 July 21	Glass International	Ciner Planning application	Regeneration and Economic Development
2 July 21	Wales Online	Pupils self isolating	Covid response
2 July 21	Wales Online	Festival Park plans	Regeneration and Economic Development
12 July 21	South Wales Argus	Fly tipping Fire	Public Protection
14 July 21	South Wales Argus	Fun and Food Scheme	Education
14 July 21	South Wales Argus	Safeguarding in Education	Education
17 July 21	South Wales Argus	Use of agency staff	Covid response
19 July 21	South Wales Argus	Armed Forces Award	Corporate
19 July 21	South Wales Argus	Pothole repair investment	Community Services
20 July 21	South Wales Argus	Flood management plan	Community Services
21 July 21	South Wales Argus	Workforce strategy	Corporate
21 July 21	Glass International	Ciner plans	Regeneration and Economic Development
21 July 21	South Wales Argus	Numbers at funerals	Covid response
21 July 21	South Wales Argus	Bryn Serth housing development	Regeneration and Economic Development
21 July 21	Wales 247	Roseheyworth Business Park improvements	Regeneration and Economic Development
21 July 21	South Wales Argus	Stray animals plan	Community Services
21 July 21	South Wales Argus	Community hubs open longer	Customer services
21 July 21	South Wales Argus	Sickness levels down	Corporate
21 July 21	South Wales Argus	Schools improving performance	Education
22 July 21	South Wales Argus	Blaina homes potential demolition	Planning
22 July 21	South Wales Argus	Pothole repair investment	Community Services
22 July 21	Wales Online	City of culture bid	Corporate
26 July 21	South Wales Argus	Council revenue budget 2020-21	Finance
26 July 21	South Wales Argus	Council reserves	Finance
26 July 21	Wales Online	Council reserves	Finance
27 July 21	South Wales Argus	Municipal bond launch	Regeneration

28 July 21	Wales Online	Blackwood Engineering noise complaint	Public Protection
29 July 21	South Wales Argus	Blackwood Engineering noise complaint	Public Protection
29 July 21	South Wales Argus	Freedom of the Borough	Corporate
29 July 21	South Wales Argus	Councillor salaries	Democratic Services
27 July 21	Business Wales	Armed Forces Award	Corporate
2 Aug 21	South Wales Argus	Alcohol sales restricted in Tredegar	Public Protection
2 Aug 21	South Wales Argus	New housing development in EV	Regeneration
2 Aug 21	Wales Online	Aberbeeg park condition	Community Services
2 Aug 21	Wales Online	Sales of alcohol restricted in Tredegar	Public Protection
3 Aug 21	Business Wales	Roseheyworth Business Park development	Regeneration/Tech Valleys
4 Aug 21	Wales Online	New housing in EV	Regeneration
5 Aug 21	South Wales Argus	Level of parking fines	Public Protection
5 Aug 21	South Wales Argus	Road improvement investment	Community Services
6 Aug 21	South Wales Argus	Summer of Fun	Covid recovery
6 Aug 21	South Wales Argus	Regional PSB established	Corporate
9 Aug 21	South Wales Argus	Free nature walk in Bryn Bach	Community Services
10 Aug 21	Wales 247	Business support grant for a fitness business	Regeneration and Economic Development
13 Aug 21	Wales Online	GO car parking issues	Corporate
14 Aug 21	South Wales Argus	New Depot plans	Community Services
16 Aug 21	South Wales Argus	Brynawr town centre plans	Regeneration and Economic Development
17 Aug 21	South Wales Argus	28 new homes in Cwmtillery	Regeneration and Economic Development
12 Aug 21	South Wales Argus	Housebuilder social clauses	Regeneration and Economic Development
18 Aug 21	BBC	Afghan Resettlement scheme	Corporate
19 Aug 21	South Wales Argus	Afghan Resettlement scheme	Corporate
19 Aug 21	South Wales Argus	GO car parking issues	Corporate

19 Aug 21	UK News Today	Simba Chain relocation	Regeneration and Economic Development
20 Aug 21	Wales Online	GO parking decision revoked	Corporate
19 Aug 21	South Wales Argus	GO parking decision revoked	Corporate
23 Aug 21	South Wales Argus	GO parking decision revoked	Corporate
23 Aug 21	What Mortgage	Council Tax rate in BG	Corporate
25 Aug 21	Wales Online	Festival Park sale	Regeneration and Economic Development
26 Aug 21	South Wales Argus	Festival Park sale	Regeneration and Economic Development
28 Aug 21	South Wales Argus	Most pet friendly area	Corporate
31 Aug 21	Punchline	Festival Park sale	Regeneration and Economic Development
3 Sep 21	South Wales Argus	Staff get New Year's Eve off	Corporate
5 Sep 21	South Wales Argus	Sycamore tree to be felled	Community Services
5 Sep 21	South Wales Argus	B&B plans for Tredegar on hold	Planning
6 Sep 21	Nation Cymru	B&B plans for Tredegar on hold	Planning
9 Sep 21	South Wales Argus	Community hubs	Customer services
9 Sep 21	South Wales Argus	Organic September	Corporate
9 Sep 21	Public Sector Executive	Store Terra funding (decarbonisation)	Regeneration
11 Sep 21	Penarth Times	Afghan Resettlement scheme	Corporate
11 Sep 21	Caerphilly Observer	Parliamentary Constituency changes	Democratic Services
12 Sep 21	South Wales Argus	Community hubs	Customer services
14 Sep 21	South Wales Argus	Childrens play activity	Social Services
15 Sep 21	South Wales Argus	Staff sickness levels	Corporate
15 Sep 21	South Wales Argus	Covid levels in schools	Covid response
15 Sep 21	Business News Wales	New food allergen laws	Public Protection
19 Sep 21	Herald	New food allergen laws	Public Protection
21 Sep 21	South Wales Argus	Covid cases in schools	Covid response
22 Sep 21	South Wales Argus	Ciner development	Regeneration and Economic Development
25 Sep 21	South Wales Argus	Reduction in children looked after	Social Services

26 Sep 21	South Wales Argus	Number of BG Councillors reduced to 33	Democratic Services
27 Sep 21	South Wales Argus	Budget and Environment overspend	Finance
27 Sep 21	South Wales Argus	Trolley Boxes set on fire	Community Safety
29 Sep 21	South Wales Argus	Festival Park plans	Regeneration and Economic Development
29 Sep 21	Wales Online	Trolley Boxes set on fire	Community Safety
30 Sep 21	Wales Online	Festival Park plans	Regeneration and Economic Development
30 Sep 21	South Wales Argus	Concerns over BG pupils being educated outside BG	Education
30 Sep 21	Wales Online	Cross Keys to Newport rail link	Regeneration and Economic Development

Facebook

15,000

FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

1,550

INTERACTIONS

2,130

POSTS



1.73

MILLION REACH ON FACEBOOK

ALERT LEVEL 0 EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

FREEDOMS	SAFEGUARDS
<p>Face coverings will no longer be a legal requirement in education and hospitality settings such as restaurants, bars and pubs.</p> <p>There will be no legal limits on the number of people who can meet in homes, private establishments or public places.</p> <p>If you are double vaccinated and become a close contact of someone who has tested positive who will no longer have to isolate.</p> <p>Indoor nightclubs reopen.</p>	<p>Still carry a mask!</p> <p>You need it on public transport and health and in social care settings, pharmacies, and shops.</p> <p>Risk assessments and reasonable safety measures will continue as a legal requirement for all businesses, employers and event organisers.</p> <p>If you have symptoms of COVID-19 or if you test positive, you will need to self-isolate whether you have been fully vaccinated or not.</p> <p>Please continue to work from home wherever possible.</p>

GIG NHS
Gwent Test, Trace, Protect Service
South Wales
Prif Gwent, Ciliau, Gwasanaeth Amddiffyn
Local Callers



Twitter

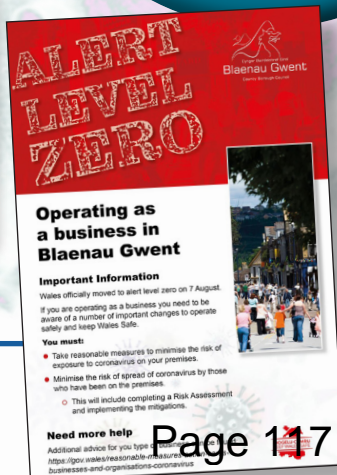
12,132

TWITTER FOLLOWERS



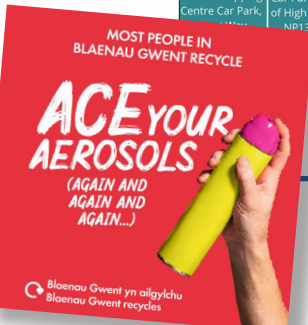
Blaenau Gwent Temporary COVID-19 Test Facilities

14 July	15 - 16 July	17 - 18 July	19 - 20 July
Tredegar Gwent Shopping Centre Car Park	Blaina Car Park, Rear of High Street, NP13 3AF	Abertillery Sports Centre, Alma Street, NP13 1QD	Tredegar Gwent Shopping Centre Car Park, Gwent Way, NP22 3EJ



11.31

MILLION REACH ON TWITTER



Website

100,000
VISITORS

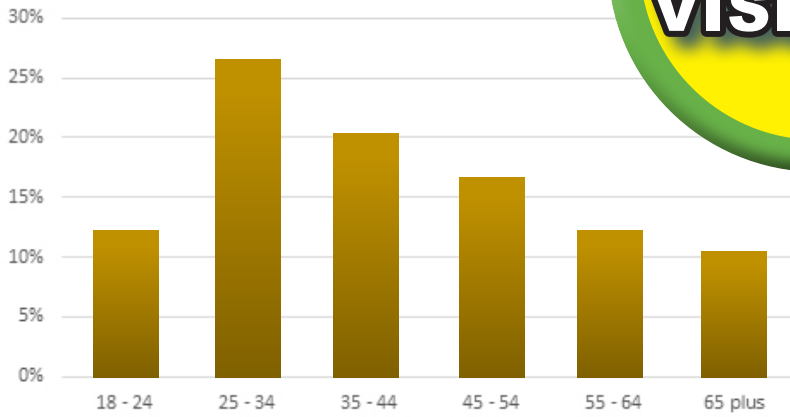
0.88M
PAGE VIEWS

VIEWING

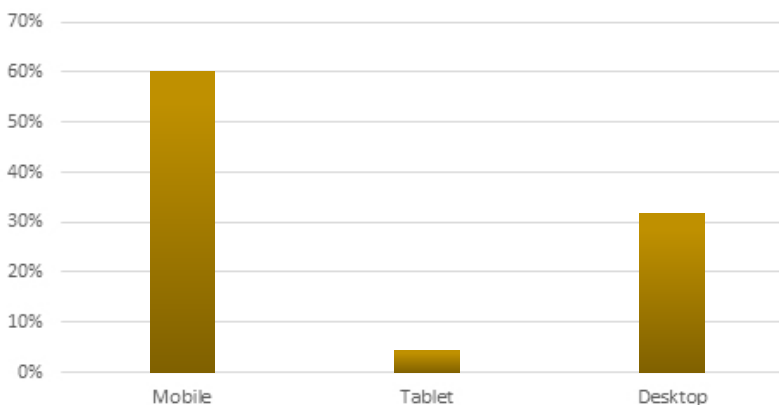
2.25 **PAGES**
PER
VISIT

70%
RETURNING
VISITORS

Age



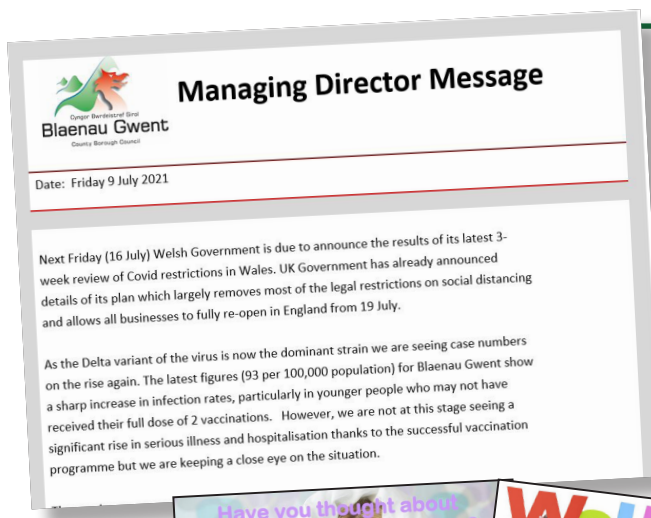
Access Site



Top 7 most popular pages

- 1** HOME PAGE
- 2** WASTE & RECYCLING
- 3** MY SERVICES
- 4** COVID-19 INFO FOR BUSINESSES
- 5** SEARCH RESULTS
- 6** JOBS
- 7** PLANNING

MD Message



Managing Director Message
Date: Friday 9 July 2021

Next Friday (16 July) Welsh Government is due to announce the results of its latest 3-week review of Covid restrictions in Wales. UK Government has already announced details of its plan which largely removes most of the legal restrictions on social distancing and allows all businesses to fully re-open in England from 19 July.

As the Delta variant of the virus is now the dominant strain we are seeing case numbers on the rise again. The latest figures (93 per 100,000 population) for Blaenau Gwent show a sharp increase in infection rates, particularly in younger people who may not have received their full dose of 2 vaccinations. However, we are not at this stage seeing a significant rise in serious illness and hospitalisation thanks to the successful vaccination programme but we are keeping a close eye on the situation.

Weekly staff Guidance



Have you thought about getting the flu jab this year?

Wellbeing Wednesday
16 September 2021

This resource is intended to support you, whether you are working on the front line, at home in the office or working in a school. Your wellbeing is of critical importance and this bulletin is intended to give you a snapshot of the resources available to you.

Managers help to promote Wellbeing Wednesday! especially where staff do not have access to resources. Include wellbeing on your team meeting agendas to ensure all staff are aware of how they can access resources.

This resource is circulated every Wednesday.

Happiness
16 September 2021

Check out the Happiness for September in Happiness. Click on each of the suggestions below which can help you to feel more positive, content and generally happier.

- **Set realistic targets.** This is good for your body and mind
- **Be grateful.** Being grateful for what you have will allow you to become more content
- **Be helpful.** Having purpose will help you to feel motivated
- **Be kind.** Working with people who have negative influences in your life

Regular Members team briefings



Elected Member Update

Dear Member,

Last year, Welsh Government asked Elytyn to review the work of local authorities in Wales in relation to how they have supported Schools and Education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The period reviewed was from March 2020 to October 2020, and placed an emphasis on how we worked to re-open schools and how we supported our most vulnerable pupils here in Blaenau Gwent.

We have worked positively with our schools and education settings on the challenge of supporting children and young people to continue learning through the Coronavirus Pandemic, and will be pleased to share with you the findings of our review.

Our report recently received formal written feedback from Elytyn in relation to their findings. I am grateful to our children and young people for their views and feedback on how we can continue to support our children and young people during their time at school and in the community.

Our report recognises four areas of notable practice, covering:

- **Beneficial support across the Local Authority Psychology service;**
- **The work of the local authority youth service; and,**
- **Effective sharing of ICT resources.**

It is a pleasure to be able to share these findings with you and to see how we have worked to support our children and young people, their families and the community.

Staff Newsletter



Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council
STAFF NEWSLETTER
AUGUST 2021

Things are moving quickly as we transition to our new operating model from 1 September and I want to give you a further progress update and to confirm some more of the detail of the working arrangements. The current Welsh Government guidance remains in place and staff should continue to work from home where possible.

Agile working from 1 September

Following the completion of the 1st 121 meetings we have now finalised the final members and any remaining adjustments to the agile working policy. This will be implemented from 1 September. The agile working policy will be implemented in a number of stages over the next few weeks.

Furniture and IT Kit

Details of the process for the issue of equipment for permanent home and site visitors are set to be reviewed. The plan is to have a complete review of the current equipment assessment (EAS).

Desk booking system

The new desk booking system has been in place for a few weeks and members of staff who need access to their desks should continue to work from home.

Desk booking system

The new desk booking system has been in place for a few weeks and members of staff who need access to their desks should continue to work from home.

Alert Level Update

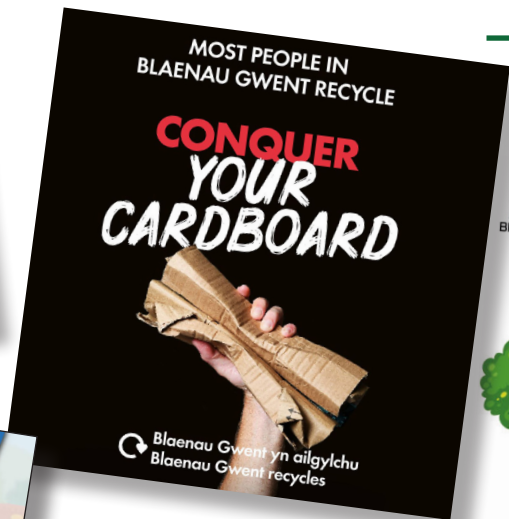
Alert Level 2: High Risk of a new wave of COVID-19 cases.

Alert Level 3: High Risk of a new wave of COVID-19 cases.

Alert Level 4: High Risk of a new wave of COVID-19 cases.

Appendix 2

Campaigns



Sweetie Pies EV Ltd

Contact
Telephone: 01495 350472
@sweetiepiesev

Sweetie Pies is another new business that has benefited from BG Effect funding to open up a retail premises in Ebbw Vale town centre. The comforting smell of fresh wales cakes greets you upon arrival and the business sells a delicious range of traditional homemade cakes, sandwiches and baguettes which are made and prepared on the premises. The coffee crèmes, cheesecakes and wales cakes are popular treats and the business is planning to operate a wider delivery food service in the near future.

The business which has been trading since April 2021, is located in the Bethcar St area of Ebbw Vale town centre and is run by Linda Lewis who operates the business. Linda confirmed that lunchtime business is increasing with the ease of lockdown restrictions and trading hours are currently Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 9am - 4pm.

The business applied for BG Effect funding to assist in the purchase of essential kitchen equipment and has supported a new business that is benefitting from increased footfall from local residents and those working in the town centre.

To discuss your business start-up idea, please contact
The Business Innovation Team Tel: 01495 355700 Email: business@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk



Agenda Item 12

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 02.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **15th December 2021**

Report Subject: **Commercial Strategy Quarterly Performance Monitoring (July – September 2021)**

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

Report Submitted by: **Bernadette Elias, Chief Officer Commercial & Customer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
w/c 15/11/21	18/11/21	30.11.21			10/12/21	15/12/21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the quarter 2 (July- September 2021) progress update against the Commercial Strategy.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Commercial Strategy approved by Council in 2020, sets out key themes which support a commercially minded organisation:

- A focus on the residents' experience of existing and new services;
- An understanding of our investments including return on investment (benefits), profits and losses;
- Developing our brand, trusted to deliver quality services;
- Spend control;
- Using data, technology and insights wisely;
- Having an agile workforce aligned to opportunities

- 2.2 Our commercial approach is driven by the ambitions within the strategy:

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

- 2.3 The strategy delivery involves all Directorates of the Council. Although the impact of the pandemic continues to affect some elements, considerable progress continues to be made in quarter 2 (July- September). The key activity is summarised in Section 6.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 This report will be presented to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee on 10th December 2021, and any feedback will be presented verbally to the Executive.

3.2 **Option 1:** The Executive accepts the performance of the Commercial Strategy during Quarter 2 as presented.

3.3 **Option 2:** The Executive provides comments and challenges the performance of the Commercial Strategy during Quarter 2.

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

4.1 The Commercial Strategy supports the future sustainability of the organisation, the Corporate Plan and the priority to be '*An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities*'.

4.2 It is aligned to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Bridging the Gap programme and supports the Well Being Plan and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

A number of the digital projects have attracted Welsh Government funding and this is being used to support our digital ambitions aligned to the Commercial Strategy.

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

5.1.2 In support of Bridging the Gap 3rd party spend review, cashable savings of £50,000 have been realised within Quarter 2 as a result of contract management fees and/or spend rebates, and is reported through the normal budget monitoring arrangements.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The risks associated with underperformance against the strategy will be mitigated through a whole Council adoption of the ways of working.

5.3 ***Legal***

The Head of Legal and Compliance is a member of the Strategic Commercial and Commissioning Board. Where alternative delivery models are explored due diligence will be undertaken before any decisions are made.

5.4 **Human Resources**

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

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Key activity undertaken in quarter 2 (July to September 2021) is set out under the relevant themes in the Commercial strategy.

6.1.1 **Excellence in Commissioning and Procurement**

- Procurement officers continue to engage with service areas to deliver the 2021/22 procurement programme;
- To support the Bridging the Gap (BtG) third party spend review, commercial opportunities are considered as part of each sourcing exercise. This includes financial, social and environmental considerations ensuring our sourcing activities;
- Pre-procurement and contract award reports are submitted to the Strategic Commercial Commissioning Board (SCCB), to ensure effective check & challenge;
- The Corporate Purchase Card programme continues to expand as an alternative payment methodology. The programme affords suppliers better cash flow and includes an annual 1% rebate which contributes to the BtG savings target. In summary, we currently have 55 cards in the programme and a year to date spend of £1,236,931 as compared with a spend of £965,117 for the same period in 2020/21;
- The Council either leads and/or participates in a number of collaborative procurement arrangements which includes management fees and/or spend rebates.

6.1.2 **Procurement Plans and Contract Management**

- The 2021/22 corporate procurement forward work programme has been approved by SCCB and is subject to the agreed check and challenge process;
- Proactive pre-procurement dialogue with client officers is taking place, to ensure that new sourcing requirements are aligned to Council priorities and that procurement documentation and contract terms are commercially favourable;
- Supplier/client contract management meetings are continuing to ensure contracts and performance remain fit for purpose and realise the intended social, environmental and economical outcomes;

- Progress against 3rd party spend BTG strategic business review will be reported through the normal BTG reporting process;

6.1.3 Procurement Strategy and Policy

- Work is progressing to review the current Procurement Strategy to ensure it considers all relevant key policy drivers within our sourcing and commissioning strategies including, the Well-being of Future Generations, Social Value, Foundation/Circular Economy and Decarbonisation (Carbon Neutral by 2030). A revised procurement strategy will be presented in 2022 to the new Council.

6.1.4 Customer Experience

Delivery of the Community Hubs Approach

- The community hubs delivery model commenced at the end of quarter 1 on 21st June 2021 with the full schedule of delivery commencing on 26th July 2021, in line with revised national restrictions.
- Revisions to the schedule to increase presence in some venues have been undertaken as the approach has embedded.
- The majority of residents using the hubs have been unable to self-serve with 50 residents being able to self-serve and 924 residents unable to self-serve during the quarter. Work has progressed on how the Community Hubs staff are able to support residents to self-serve where able to, further update to be provided in q3.
- Following Member and officer feedback on channels to promote the hubs, a proactive leaflet drop exercise in venues across the borough to promote the service has been undertaken.
- This has supported an increase in residents using the hubs, with 974 being supported through the Community Hubs model in q2. A break down is summarised below in 4 of the venues;

Venue	Footfall July	Footfall August	Footfall Sept
Abertillery library	20	89	87
Brynmawr library	17	54	55
Ebbw Vale library	39	133	110
Tredegar library	39	110	112

Cwm, Blaina and Llanhilleth venues have also seen an increase in visits linked to the revised schedule.

- The main requests for support to date continue to relate to Blue Badge Applications, Bus Pass applications (which has seen an increase in requests), Benefit applications and Council Tax enquiries
- Proactive work has commenced at end of q2 with further update to be submitted in q3 around the number of residents affected by the £20 loss in Universal Credit payments
- A further sample of case studies from the Community Hubs service delivery are included in appendix 1.

6.1.5 **Locality Response Team**

The Locality Response Service has clear links into the Community hubs model. Early planning on how the two areas align and complement each other moving forward has begun and will be reported in future quarter updates.

- 69 residents have been supported throughout the quarter with a wide range of assistance given from food shopping to supporting residents to apply for grants
- 39 residents contacted and supported to isolate due to shielding
- 35 referrals made to food bank for food parcels
- 29 referrals for fuel bill support
- 3 referrals to Citizens Advice for support with debt and budgeting

6.1.6 **Customer Services**

Key activity for the quarter includes:

- Following feedback, a review of the out of hours' service was undertaken which resulted in a local provider delivering the "out of hours" service from July 2021. This is offering an improved position and performance of the service.
- A training plan has been developed for Customer Services staff linking into Call Centre Management framework
- Review and development of key Performance Indicators to monitor the service delivery within the Contact Centre is progressing;

Total calls taken by Contact Centre in quarter 2	16,897
Average queue time for calls per in quarter 2	2 minutes 17 seconds

Benefit Service delivery

876 applications were received in respect of the Self Isolation Payment Scheme in the quarter, of which 534 were eligible and 226 were not eligible, 116 in process of being assessed for eligibility and will be included in q3 update

1739 applications were received in respect of the Clothing grant scheme which opened on 27th July 2021, of which 1317 were eligible and 422 were not eligible

6.1.7 *Using data insights and technology wisely*

Digital – external projects

- Working with the Centre for Digital Public Services (CDPS) to deliver better public services for Wales, funding has been secured to explore more user focussed and efficient ways of service delivery.
- Participation in a collaborative Adult Social Care project with Neath Port Talbot and Torfaen local authorities, looking at unavoidable contact at the front door. In Q2 testing and user research continues to progress.
- Continued participation in the Tech Valleys funded project, digital apprentice appointed and supported Digital projects. New content developed for front facing website and online tool developed for data interrogation. Final presentation to Tech Valleys Board in Q3 when project draws to a close
- The Digital Democracy Project discovery work involving user research with 16-25 year olds has been completed. Findings from the research have been included within the Diverse Council Action Plan which was agreed by Council. The action plan will also be included on the work programme of the Democratic Services Committee.

6.1.8 Digital - Organisational programme

- A planned 12-month digital programme has been set scoped. This includes (in addition to the externally supported digital projects)
- Corporate Digital Projects – linked into the Civic Centre closure and the move of server to vantage.
- Internal projects – supporting planning, street scene, Starters, leavers and movers process and Insurance claims

- Corporate activity aligned to the ICT investment roadmap and maximisation of Office 365
- Development of a Strategic Programme for Service Transformation and Digital and the creation of an internal network to develop a programme of work – updates to be provided in Q3 and Q4
- Development of a leadership and training programme for officers and Members raising awareness and understanding of the scope and opportunities of our digital ambitions and activity and creation of Digital champions to support the new agile operating model, build corporate resources for our Digital Programme and support the bridging the gap themes.

The Council's new hybrid meeting system has been installed at the General Offices and from September the full schedule of formal committee meetings (excluding full council due to continued national restrictions aligned to the pandemic) is operational using a hybrid model whereby attendees can either be present physically or remotely. Meetings are currently recorded and then uploaded onto the website. Work is being undertaken to operate live meetings and this is planned for early 2022.

Data and intelligence hub

- The establishment of an internal hub of officers from all Directorates has progressed, led by the corporate policy and performance teams. This work supports the enabling Bridging the Gap review of using data and behavioural insight. The use of data in a more insightful way was one of the key learning points from the organisational reflection on the response to the Pandemic. The intelligence hub looks to build on this ambition, gaining a better understanding of what our data tells us and how that impacts on services for our communities.
- User research, which forms a key part of our digital and customer approach will also be supported by the hub, with training opportunities via the WLGA taken to build our internal capacity on undertaking user research.
- The Council has also been successful in working with Data Science Academy Students from Cardiff University. The placements are currently looking at data to support the Community Hubs model and also Contact Centre.

6.2 *Expected outcome for the public*

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

- 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
As a key part of the commissioning cycle to ensure service specifications take account of the needs of service users. Any changes to service delivery models will be consulted on in the usual way.
- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
This strategy is at the heart of the medium and long term planning for Blaenau Gwent and recognises not only where the Council needs to seek new income streams but also where it needs to review how it deploys its current expenditure.
- 6.5 ***Preventative focus***
The Commercial Strategy is designed to support the needs of the Council now and in the future, including supporting financial resilience.
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
There are opportunities through this strategy to consider commercially advantageous ways of working across local authorities and the Public Service Board. This strategy seeks to identify commercial opportunities to work with suppliers across public sector organisations and to spend the Blaenau Gwent pound wisely.
- 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
The strategy takes a whole council approach. It promotes transparency across the organisation, building best practice outside of directorate silos and promotes the maximising and sharing of skills and learning.
- 6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***
The planned review of the corporate procurement strategy will include consideration of how it can better support the decarbonisation ambitions set out in the Council's plan.
- The work with CLES outlined in the report also involves this key policy driver.
- The community hub model brings access to services closer to the community residents live in. The democratic hub hybrid meetings enable remote access to committee meetings.
- 6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***
The CLES project outcome is to maximise procurement spend in Wales to support local wealth building and to creating a more resilient Welsh economy.
- The community hub model includes support, advice and guidance for residents to access financial support they may be entitled to.
- 6.9b ***EqIA***
Screening for impact on protected characteristics will be undertaken as per usual procedures. In addition, individual procurements consider the ability

to realise social, environmental and economic benefits through the inclusion of Community Benefits and Social Value contractual clauses.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1 Quarterly progress is reported through the democratic process.
The strategic commercial and commissioning board monitors activity set out within its terms of reference.
Grant funded projects specify monitoring arrangements which will be complied with.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 - Community Hub case studies

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Support Needed	Support provided/ Outcome
<p>A customer came into the library to ask for food recycling bags as she had just moved to the area and wasn't aware of the collection days for her recycling or general waste. She also wanted to set up a Council Tax account but didn't know how to do it.</p>	<p>I found out the collection days of her recycling and general waste collection using the Blaenau Gwent App. I suggested to her that she downloads the app to her mobile phone as this is where she would be able to find this and other information about the Local Authority</p> <p>I sent an email to Council Tax with all details to set her account up and informed her that as soon as she has been provided with a reference number she could call back in for me to provide her with a Pay Point card.</p> <p>I also gave her three hessian sacks for her recycling and advised that if she required any further information she could call back in and see me.</p>
<p>A customer came in with a friend who was very distressed at not being unable to get an appointment with her GP because they were struggling with some mental health issues. She was required to provide a sick note to staff at the Job Centre. She also explained that she has an issue with her property, specifically that there is no running water and the ceiling has fallen through in her bathroom.</p>	<p>I called her GP surgery, explained who I was and described the details of the customer to the receptionist. The receptionist advised she would ask a doctor to call her within the next few hours.</p> <p>I also sent a referral to Supporting People for help with both her mental health issues and the situation with the house.</p> <p>The customer came back into the hub a few days later and explained that the GP had rung her which made her feel loads better because she was able to talk in person to someone. They provided her with a sick note which she could give to staff at the Job Centre so that her benefit would continue.</p> <p>She also told me that Platform has been in touch with her and they are in the process of helping her with the issues she has with her house.</p>
<p>A customer came into the hub and explained they were struggling to manage his electricity bill payments. After an in depth conversation it became clear the customer has issues budgeting his money mainly caused by an addiction to online games and gambling. Customer advised he struggles to trust people and finds it difficult to accept help but feels safe when he is supported in the libraries with both Aneurin Leisure Trust and Blaenau Gwent staff.</p>	<p>I made a referral made to National Energy Action (NEA) for fuel / energy support because of his inability to manage his electricity bill and a referral to Citizens Advice for specialist debt advice.</p>

<p>A customer came in to the hub to enquire about a bus pass as he was new to the area and didn't know how to obtain one. After discussion with him, and taking into account he was new to the area, it became apparent he also knew nothing about the recycling process or the day it was collected, his general waste collection day or how he could set up Council Tax liability. The customer explained he had already sorted his Universal Credit with DWP for his housing costs. For his bus pass he only had one form of identification that showed his address but I was aware Transport For Wales would require two. He needed bus pass urgently because he had hospital appointments to attend and couldn't drive due to a medical condition with his legs. The customer also mentioned that he had personal belongings held in storage in Cardiff and didn't know how he was going to get them transported to his new Blaenau Gwent address as he was unable to drive. This was further complicated because the storage company were charging him in excess of £250 per week to store it.</p>	<p>Firstly, I gave the customer a map of Blaenau Gwent and highlighted some of the amenities for him to familiarise himself with, such as supermarkets, Doctor surgeries and post offices. I also gave him the leaflet on the recycling and explained the process. I rang Council Tax to set up his account having in mind that this would provide him with a bill to use as the other form of identification with his address shown so that he could apply for his pass with the confidence. Council Tax explained to me that to save time they would email the bill to him (he had an email address) to allow him to apply more quickly rather than waiting for the hard copy to arrive by post. I also helped him complete an application for Council Tax Reduction but during conversation it was evident he required further support. I sent a referral to NEA to help the customer set up his gas and electricity accounts because he wanted to see if he could move to prepayments as this would be more manageable for him. With regards to his belongings stored in Cardiff, I rang a removal service company to enquire about support and gave them the scenario of the customer. The customer was happy for me to give him his mobile number so they could contact him to make arrangements to pick up his belongings. The customer called me back on my mobile at the library to thank me for all my help and support as that my support had made a massive difference to him.</p>
<p>A customer and his wife came into Hub and explained they moved into Blaenau Gwent in June 2021. They had moved to the UK in early 2021. Whilst they could speak good English there were one or two language barrier issues. The customer was a newly enrolled student at University and his wife stays home to look after their young child. They were unfamiliar with the UK benefit system so I advised them of Universal Credit/Child Benefit and guidance around "Right to Reside".</p>	<p>I referred them to Citizens Advice for a full benefit entitlement check. I also referred them to National Energy Action for advice on minimising gas and electric costs. The customer wanted to call Child Benefit independently so to encourage self-serve I provided the helpline number for them to use. I assisted the customers in applying for Council Tax Reduction through BG Website with customer. We had a long, friendly conversation about the local area and how much they were enjoying Blaenau Gwent and looking</p>

	forward to seeing snow for the first time. It was very rewarding to help these new residents to the area.
A customer visited the Hub to apply for hers and her husband's Blue Badges. It was the first time she'd left the house in 18 months due to the pandemic and she was very nervous. I explained that the interview area had been sanitised since the last customer had left, the screen was in place, hand sanitiser was available and masks were there for protection too. The customer explained that both she and her husband have many health conditions, with her husband living with dementia and unable to leave the home.	I applied for the Blue Badges. We had a conversation about care provisions and support with her husband but they were already expecting a visit from social services to assess his condition. The customer was very grateful for the help and the conversation we had. The customer was frail and unsteady on her feet so hub staff carried all bags and shopping to car to support and felt relieved and happy that she knows where to come for any more support
A customer presented herself to the hub as homeless. She had just left a relationship and had absolutely nothing on her, including mobile phone, to contact Housing Options.	I rang the Housing Options Team and explained the situation and handed the phone to the lady who spoke directly to the Housing advisor. She was directed to go to a local Bed and Breakfast facility. I arranged a food parcel to be delivered to her and made a referral to Social Services for a support worker to help her. Approximately 3 weeks later the lady came back and said she had been given a flat in a sheltered accommodation but had no money to move and no furniture. I applied for a Discretionary Housing Payment to help with moving costs and applied for a Discretionary Assistance Fund grant for furniture and items at the new flat. Later the customer came in to the hub and explained she had been awarded a fridge, a freezer, an armchair and sofa, cutlery, crockery, pots and pans, a bed, mattress, pillows, pillow cases, duvet, duvet cover and sheets. She said she was absolutely delighted and so grateful for the support provided by staff in the hubs.
A young customer came in with his father as he had received a Notice seeking possession from his landlord and a court summons for over £2,000 for rent arrears. Both were very distraught and did not know what to do and had come to the hubs to see if staff there could provide any help, advice and support.	I spoke to one of the Housing options team who asked me to send him copies of all the paperwork the customer had brought in. It was decided that a small payment could be awarded to the landlord from the Tenancy hardship grant fund which would be enough to stop the eviction. It was then advised that he speaks to his landlord to set up a repayment plan to suspend the court summons.

	<p>The customers also made an appointment to complete a Housing application form in order to acquire more affordable accommodation.</p> <p>I spoke to the Council Tax section as there was a large amount of arrears on the account and they agreed to hold any further action and set up a repayment plan which the customer said he could afford. I have also arranged for the customer to come back to the hub with some more information and we will apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment to help with the shortfall on his rent. I also completed a Council Tax Reduction application for him to get some help with his current council tax liability.</p> <p>When they left they both said how they felt a weight had been lifted off their shoulders as they did not know where to go for help.</p>
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Agenda Item 13

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 02.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **15th December 2021**
Report Subject: **Revenue Budget Monitoring - 2021/2022, Forecast Outturn to 31st March 2022 (as at 30th September 2021)**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Daniels – Leader, Executive Member Corporate Services**
Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden – Chief Officer Resources**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	04/11/2021	30.11.21			22/11/21	15.12.15		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with the forecast financial outturn position across all portfolios for the financial year 2021/2022 (as forecast at 30th September 2021).

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 This report provides details on the following:

- Forecast financial position to the end of March 2022 across all portfolios
- Budget Virements actioned during the period July to September 2021
- Forecast outturn for Fees & Charges

- 2.2 This report will inform the quarterly financial reporting framework to Members.

3. Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Joint Budget Scrutiny Committee supported Option 1 at its meeting on 22nd November 2021.

3.2 Option 1 (Recommended Option)

Members to consider and provide appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report and to note the virements detailed in paragraphs 5.1.4 to 5.1.6.

3.3 Option 2

Members do not accept the report.

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

4.1 This report supports the Council Corporate Plan proposed outcome statement 2020/2022 “An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities”.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget**

5.1.1 The overall forecast outturn as at September 2021, is a favourable variance of £2.814m, after the application of Welsh Government Hardship Funding. There has been an increase in the favourable variance of £0.319m since the June 2021 forecast position (£2.495m).

5.1.2 The forecast overall financial position across all portfolios at 30th September 2021 (and before the inclusion of Covid-19 related expenditure) is shown in the table below:

Table 1 – Portfolio Summary

Portfolio/ Committee	2021/2022 Revised Revenue Budget	2021/2022 Forecast Outturn @ 30 Sept 2021	Favourable/ (Adverse) To 31 March 2022	Append ref:
	£m	£m	£m	
Underspending Portfolios				
Corporate Services & Financial Management & Strategy	18.425	17.171	1.254	1a
Education & Leisure	63.863	63.693	0.170	1c
Social Services	46.329	44.825	1.504	1b
Planning	1.274	1.274	0.000	1f
Licensing	0.106	0.106	0.000	1f
Sub Total (1)	129.997	127.069	2.928	

Overspending Portfolios				
Economy	1.551	1.568	(0.017)	1d
Environment	26.484	26.581	(0.097)	1e
Sub Total (2)	28.035	28.149	(0.114)	
Total	<u>158.032</u>	<u>155.218</u>	<u>2.814</u>	
Covid-19 Costs				
Social Services		1.487	(1.487)	
Education		0.277	(0.277)	
Environment		1.791	(1.791)	
Sub Total – Covid19 spend		<u>3.555</u>	<u>(3.555)</u>	
WG Hardship funding			<u>2.068</u>	
WG SS Hardship funding			<u>1.487</u>	
Revised Total			<u>2.814</u>	

- 5.1.3 The forecast includes actual and estimated funding from the Hardship fund for April to September 2021 of £3.555m. Claims have been submitted, in line with the set of principles issues by Welsh Government, for quarter 1 and quarter 2 loss of income and £104,000 is included in the forecast for Social Services.
- 5.1.4 It has been confirmed that Welsh Government Hardship Funding will continue to March 2022.
- 5.1.5 **Budget Virements**
- 5.1.6 During quarter 2, there have been a number of budget virements between and within Portfolios to realign budgets with forecast spend. These are in addition to those reported previously for quarter 1.
- 5.1.7 As agreed as part of the new operating model business case, an analysis of the mileage budgets was undertaken and a number of virements have been actioned between Portfolios to realign budgets to fund the Agile Working Allowances.

Table 2: Budget Virements

Portfolio	Virement
Corporate Services & Financial Management & Strategy	£38,500
Education & Leisure	(£5,000)
Social Services	(£37,000)
Environment	£5,000
Economy	£1,500
Planning	(£3,000)

5.1.8 **PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS**

5.1.9 Within the total forecast favourable variance of £2.814m, the cross cutting budgets within Corporate Services account for 28% (£0.865m) of this forecast. The breakdown is as follows:-

- Commercial & Contract Management - £0.5m
- Pay award contingency - £0.12m
- Contingency – Community Care - £0.25m

5.1.10 Portfolio summary pages can be found in Appendix 1.

5.1.11 Details of the variances greater than £50,000 within the Portfolios are included in the Portfolio Analysis section below.

5.1.12 Action plans to address cost pressures are attached at Appendix 3. A breakdown of the adverse variances contained within the action plans is summarised below:-

Table 3 – Significant Adverse Variances

Social Services	Legal Fees	£363,000
Environment	Waste Services	£208,684
Total		£571,684

5.1.13 **Portfolio Analysis**

5.1.14 **Corporate Services – £1,253,633 favourable variance**

5.1.15 The forecast is made up of the following main variances: -

5.1.16 ***Cross Cutting Budgets - £865,247***

5.1.17 Commercial & Contract Management (Budget £496,410) – This budget was created to fund contract price increases during the year, that cannot be managed within portfolio budgets. However, no requests for funding have been received to date, therefore this budget is showing a favourable variance of £496,410.

- 5.1.18 Contingency – Pay Award / Community Care (Budget £1.2m) - This budget has been established to cover a potential pay award for 2021/2022 of up to 2.0% for Council staff and increased costs within Community Care. The forecast includes a commitment of a 1.75% pay award for staff (£831,863). Local authority employers have subsequently rejected this offer with the decision to strike currently being considered by trade unions. At present this budget is showing a £368,838 favourable position.
- 5.1.19 ***Departmental Budgets - £307,611***
- 5.1.20 The forecast favourable variance mainly relates to reduced employee related expenditure due to delays in filling vacant posts, maternity leave, staff on temporary reduced hours and the utilisation of one-off grant funding. In addition, there is an increased level of income provided by Welsh Government for an administration grant for providing COVID-19 related support.
- 5.1.21 **Social Services – £1,504,024 favourable variance**
- 5.1.22 The forecast is made up of the following main variances: -
- 5.1.23 ***Children’s Services – Favourable Variance of £769,000***
- 5.1.24 There is only one main adverse variance, Legal Fees of £363,000 which is mainly due to the continuing cost pressure as a result of using an external law firm resulting from court proceedings in relation to Children Looked After.
- 5.1.25 A cost pressure of £350,000 was awarded in 2021/2022 to partially address the cost pressure.
- 5.1.26 This adverse variance has been completely offset mainly by two underspending areas:
 - Residential Placements showing a favourable variance of £745,000 mainly due to the application of Sustainability Grant Funding and
 - Social worker Teams of £332,000 mainly due to vacant posts resulting from the issues experienced with recruitment and retention.
- 5.1.27 ***Adult Services – Favourable Variance of £735,000***
- 5.1.28 The overall favourable variance of £735,000 is mainly due to the application of Sustainability Grant, ICF and Home First Grant funding for a number of established posts. In addition, there are a number of vacant posts and a reduction in staffing cover costs within Provider Services (as Day Services provision is not fully operational as yet). There has been a reduction in the number of placements and packages of care since the pre-Covid-19 period. The service is experiencing an increase in demand and referrals, however, current staff capacity is having an impact on the placement process.
- 5.1.29 **Education and Leisure – £170,002 favourable variance**
- 5.1.30 There are two main areas of favourable variances:-
 - Strategic Management - £150,000 favourable variance – relating to lower pension contributions to the local government pension scheme

for school based staff, and the delay in the appointment of the new Statutory ALN Officer.

- LEA Budget Supporting SEN £62,000 favourable variance, relating to income arising from the secondment of the Principal School Psychologist.

5.1.31 **Environment Portfolio – £97,139 adverse variance**

5.1.32 The forecast is made up of the following main adverse variances:-

5.1.33 **Recycling Collection - £137,059 adverse variance**

Approximately 50% of the adverse variance relates to the ongoing cost of receptacles and food waste bags. External funding for the purchase of food waste bags has ceased and therefore this now presents a cost pressure within this budget. The budget for receptacles is not sufficient to meet demand for replacement receptacles and food waste bags as requested by households and in addition new receptacles will need to be provided to the new development/builds that is ongoing within Blaenau Gwent.

5.1.34 **Disposal of Waste - £47,995 adverse variance**

This is mainly due to an increase in residual waste tonnages. This has been partly offset by Welsh Government Hardship Funding for Quarter 1 and quarter 2. Subsequently funding for the remainder of this year should have a positive impact on the adverse variance. Also the forecast cost of leachate disposal at the Silent Valley site exceeds the budget. However, this is based on last year's outturn. The weather has an impact on costs, so there is the potential for the forecast to change later in the year.

5.1.35 **Recycling Disposal - £23,635 adverse variance**

There is currently a high demand for steel, plastics and aluminium and therefore the forecast income has increased for these recyclates, which has improved the financial position when compared to quarter 1.

5.1.36 **Planning Committee – balanced budget forecast**

5.1.37 **Planning – Dealing with Applications - £13,413 adverse variance**

The variance is due to a Planning Application Fee of £300,000 being received from Ciner Glass Ltd. Receipt of this large fee has assisted the Service to offset additional costs arising from:

- staff shortages (due to sickness and retirements of two of the Services Management Team), which has greatly impacted on the Service.
- Planning Application Appeals costs of £20,000 arising from Planning Committee declining applications.
- Upgrade to Planning IT Software to support agile working.

5.1.38 **Fees & Charges**

5.1.39 The 2021/2022 portfolio estimates include income budgets in relation to fees & charges (excluding Council Tax) of £15m across all portfolios. Attached at Appendix 2 is an analysis of income received against budget for the financial year for individual portfolios, and current forecast indicates an adverse variance against this target of £1.1m, primarily relating to lost income: -

- from the sale of recycle - £0.2m
- charges for Community Care & CHC income - £1.3m

5.1.40 Whilst the analysis of fees and charges is useful, it should not be considered in isolation, as elements of any shortfall within Portfolios can be inextricably linked to underspends in expenditure within the same budget heading. Where this is the case, budget holders should action budget virements to ensure that the income targets reflect more accurately expected income. Likewise, any over achievement in income which offset overspends in expenditure within the same budget, should be treated in the same way.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

5.2.1 Grants form a significant element of the Council's income and support the delivery of priority services to the people of Blaenau Gwent. There is a risk that a reduction or cessation of grant funding will result in service levels reducing or services no longer being delivered.

5.2.2 A grants register has been developed and is being maintained and will be considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

5.2.3 There is a risk that Action Plans will not address the cost pressures identified.

5.2.4 Action Plans have been developed, identifying actions to mitigate the forecast cost pressures. The Action Plans will be monitored as part of the Budget Monitoring and Reporting Framework and the impact reported to the Joint Budget Scrutiny Committee, Executive Committee and the Cost Pressure Sub Group.

5.2.5 There is a risk that Covid-19 will continue into the medium/long term, impacting on Council services and budgets. This risk can be mitigated by the continuation of processes that the Council has introduced since March 2020 eg prioritising services, redeployment of staff, home working.

5.2.6 There is a risk that Welsh Government will not provide Hardship funding/loss of income funding for all cost pressures identified. This risk can be mitigated by a continuing dialogue and lobbying with Welsh Government, through the WLGA and the continuing development of action plans by budget holders.

5.2.7 There is a risk of increase costs for food, fuel and other essential goods and services as a result of the ongoing situation regarding the U.K. Exiting the E.U.

- 5.2.8 The UK Exiting the EU has been added as an organisational risk to the corporate risk register, whilst a separate, more detailed high level action plan has been developed and is being monitored by the Core Planning Group.
- 5.3 Legal
N/A
- 5.4 Human Resources
N/A
6. **Supporting Evidence**
- 6.1 **Performance Information and Data**
- 6.1.1 A summary page for each portfolio is contained in Appendices 1a to 1g.
- 6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**
- 6.2.1 The report details the financial implications for the Council in providing services to the communities of Blaenau Gwent.
- 6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**
- 6.3.1 CLT have considered the forecast financial position for 2021/2022 (as 30th September 2021).
- 6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**
- 6.4.1 For new and emerging cost pressures identified during the financial year, budget holders have produced Action Plans which should address the cost pressure during the year. These Action Plans will form part of the quarterly budget reports and will be submitted to the Cost Pressure Sub Group for scrutiny, challenge and monitoring.
- 6.4.2 Cost Pressures are also considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 6.5 **Preventative Focus**
- 6.5.1 Budget holders will continue to develop and monitor Action Plans for those services reporting forecast adverse variances which should address the cost pressure during the year
- 6.6 **Collaboration / Partnership Working**
- 6.6.1 Accountancy works closely with budget holders during the financial year in producing the financial forecast, identifying cost pressures and in developing Action Plans.
- 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
N/A
- 6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***
- 6.8.1 The Council is committed to the Decarbonisation Plan to achieve a carbon neutral public sector by 2030 and the Bridging the Gap programme includes a Strategic Business Review, Low Carbon.

6.9a **Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment**
N/A

6.9b **EqIA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)**
All Bridging the Gap Projects that were approved as part of the budget setting
6.8.1 process have gone through the EqIA process.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Financial reporting to Joint Budget Scrutiny and the Executive is carried out on a quarterly basis. Where services are reporting significant cost pressures, there will be a requirement for Budget Holders to develop and implement Action Plans these will be reported to the Cost Pressure Sub Group, on a quarterly basis.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Service Portfolios

Appendix 2 – Fees and Charges

Appendix 3 – Action Plans

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CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2021/2022	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2022	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)
	£	£	£
SUMMARY			
<u>DEPARTMENTAL AND OTHER RECHARGEABLE SERVICES</u>			
Corporate Services Department	(173,230)	(376,835)	203,605
Resources Department	1,500	(102,506)	104,006
Sub Total	(171,730)	(479,341)	307,611
<u>COMMERCIAL SERVICES</u>			
Archives	151,640	142,789	8,851
Festival Park	94,680	99,631	(4,951)
Housing Benefit	(117,130)	(115,927)	(1,203)
ICT Service	0	0	0
Cross Cutting	(50,000)	(50,000)	0
Community Hubs	111,440	111,440	0
Sub Total	190,630	187,933	2,697
<u>LEGAL & CORPORATE COMPLIANCE SERVICES</u>			
Registration of Electors	17,170	17,499	(329)
Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths	51,370	51,380	(10)
Sub Total	68,540	68,879	(339)
<u>GOVERNANCE & PARTNERSHIP SERVICES</u>			
Corporate Management (inc Audit Fees)	107,370	106,428	942
Democratic Representation and Management	1,267,430	1,258,800	8,630
CCTV Cameras	79,000	67,248	11,752
Civil Contingencies	101,040	88,858	12,182
Sub Total	1,554,840	1,521,334	33,506
<u>RESOURCES SERVICES</u>			
Corporate Management	348,810	349,458	(648)
Non Distributed Costs	1,039,730	1,033,300	6,430
Apprenticeship Levy	351,400	361,972	(10,572)
Council Tax Collection	(1,315,620)	(1,351,743)	36,123
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	9,908,050	9,899,296	8,754
N.N.D.R. Collection	(107,040)	(111,868)	4,828
Grants and Subscriptions	57,270	57,270	0
Cross Cutting Budget	2,189,110	1,323,863	865,247
Sub Total	12,471,710	11,561,548	910,162
<u>CORPORATE CHARGES</u>			
Corporate Recharges	4,310,790	4,310,794	(4)
Sub Total	4,310,790	4,310,794	(4)
Covid-19 Related Expenditure	0	0	0
CORPORATE SERVICES TOTAL EXPENDITURE	18,424,780	17,171,147	1,253,633

SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2021/2022	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2022	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)
	£	£	£
SUMMARY			
<u>SOCIAL SERVICES</u>			
Children's Services - Commissioning and Social Work	3,727,710	3,546,738	180,972
Looked After Children	7,428,140	6,876,898	551,242
Family Support Services	188,600	199,603	(11,003)
Youth Justice	232,920	228,118	4,802
Other Children's and Family Services	2,340,130	2,297,228	42,902
Older People Aged 65 or Over	6,672,430	6,260,780	411,650
Adults Aged Under 65 with a Physical Disability or Sensory Impairment	41,800	23,577	18,223
Adults Aged Under 65 with Learning Disabilities	3,306,890	3,165,832	141,058
Adults Aged Under 65 with Mental Health Needs	531,730	522,314	9,416
Other Adult Services	392,250	391,155	1,095
Community Care	15,373,320	15,291,024	82,296
Support Service and Management Costs	881,130	812,132	68,998
Corporate Recharges	5,212,400	5,210,027	2,373
Sub Total Expenditure	46,329,450	44,825,426	1,504,024
Social Services COVID-19 Costs	0	1,487,239	(1,487,239)
Total Expenditure	46,329,450	46,312,665	16,785

EDUCATION PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2021/2022	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2022	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)
	£	£	£
SUMMARY			
SCHOOLS BUDGET			
Individual Schools Budget	46,522,380	46,522,380	0
Education Improvement Grant	257,360	261,402	(4,042)
Other Costs	722,410	722,897	(487)
Supporting Special Education Needs	1,679,830	1,756,986	(77,156)
<i>Schools Budget Total Expenditure</i>	<u>49,181,980</u>	<u>49,263,665</u>	<u>(81,685)</u>
LEA BUDGET			
Strategic Management	2,432,410	2,243,658	188,752
Assuring Access to Schools	2,317,310	2,316,456	854
Facilitating School Improvement	419,760	407,815	11,945
Supporting Special Education Needs	342,470	310,763	31,707
<i>LEA Budget Total Expenditure</i>	<u>5,511,950</u>	<u>5,278,692</u>	<u>233,258</u>
OTHER EDUCATION SERVICES			
Further Education and Training	133,290	121,816	11,474
Youth Service	311,437	298,097	13,340
Other Expenditure	141,030	124,748	16,282
Education Departmental Budget	64,323	81,685	(17,362)
<i>Other Education Services Total Expenditure</i>	<u>650,080</u>	<u>626,346</u>	<u>23,734</u>
CORPORATE CHARGES			
Corporate Support Recharges	4,360,220	4,360,220	0
<i>Corporate Charges Total Expenditure</i>	<u>4,360,220</u>	<u>4,360,220</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Expenditure	<u><u>59,704,230</u></u>	<u><u>59,528,923</u></u>	<u><u>175,307</u></u>
LEISURE TRUSTS			
LEISURE TRUSTS			
Aneurin Leisure Trust	2,789,760	2,798,092	(8,332)
Awen Leisure Trust	205,000	200,507	4,493
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>2,994,760</u>	<u>2,998,599</u>	<u>(3,839)</u>
RETAINED SERVICES			
Corporate Recharges	1,164,340	1,165,806	(1,466)
General Reserve Funding Re: Staff Support	0	0	0
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>1,164,340</u>	<u>1,165,806</u>	<u>(1,466)</u>
LEISURE TRUSTS TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u><u>4,159,100</u></u>	<u><u>4,164,405</u></u>	<u><u>(5,305)</u></u>
Overall Portfolio Total	<u><u>63,863,330</u></u>	<u><u>63,693,328</u></u>	<u><u>170,002</u></u>
Covid-19 Related Expenditure	0	277,007	(277,007)
Revised Overall Portfolio Total	<u><u>63,863,330</u></u>	<u><u>63,970,335</u></u>	<u><u>(107,005)</u></u>

ECONOMY PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2021/2022	Total Forecast Expenditure to September 21	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)
	£	£	£
SUMMARY			
<u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u>			
Economic Strategy and Development - Departmental Budget	1,504	2,045	(541)
Estates Management - Rechargeable	(1)	(1,045)	1,044
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>1,503</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>503</u>
<u>ECONOMY SERVICES</u>			
Affordable Housing	0	0	0
Aspire	0	0	0
Community Benefits Investment	0	0	0
CSCS	(10,200)	810	(11,010)
Destination Management	16,473	16,473	0
DRivE	0	0	0
Financial Support to Business	4,276	4,276	0
General Offices	(53,783)	(53,783)	0
Industrial Land	7,195	7,006	189
Inspire	0	0	0
Nursery Units/Misc. Industrial Premises	(694,037)	(694,037)	0
Pentagon	0	0	0
Regeneration Projects	4,998	4,998	0
Resilient Project	0	0	0
Estates Management Non Rechargeable	(94,780)	(87,709)	(7,071)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>(819,858)</u>	<u>(801,966)</u>	<u>(17,892)</u>
Corporate Recharges	2,369,375	2,369,375	0
Funding from General Reserves	0		0
Total Expenditure	<u><u>1,551,020</u></u>	<u><u>1,568,409</u></u>	<u><u>(17,389)</u></u>

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2021/2022	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2021	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)
	£	£	£
SUMMARY			
<u>COMMUNITY SERVICES</u>			
<u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u>			
Environment Department - Corporate	0	(37,983)	37,983
Environmental Services Division	(629)	(25,908)	25,279
Technical Services - Engineering & Property Management	9,940	9,940	0
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>9,311</u>	<u>(53,951)</u>	<u>63,262</u>
<u>WASTE SERVICES</u>			
Waste Services Team	0	0	0
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>WASTE COLLECTION</u>			
Household and Trade Waste Collectio	616,930	619,177	(2,247)
Recycling Collection	2,088,970	2,226,029	(137,059)
Bulky Waste Collection	(2,440)	(12,878)	10,438
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>2,703,460</u>	<u>2,832,328</u>	<u>(128,868)</u>
<u>WASTE TRANSFER</u>			
Civic Amenity Sites	252,950	313,854	(60,904)
HWRC Roseheyworth	302,750	247,687	55,063
Transfer Station	630,940	629,792	1,148
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>1,186,640</u>	<u>1,191,333</u>	<u>(4,693)</u>
<u>WASTE DISPOSAL</u>			
Disposal Of Waste	1,028,490	1,076,485	(47,995)
Recycling Disposal	31,250	54,885	(23,635)
Trade Waste Collection, Transfer & Di	(24,930)	(15,887)	(9,043)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>1,034,810</u>	<u>1,115,483</u>	<u>(80,673)</u>
<u>PUBLIC SERVICES</u>			
County Borough Cleansing	1,094,140	1,093,802	338
Cemeteries / Crematorium	(279,475)	(272,001)	(7,474)

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2021/2022	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2021	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)
	£	£	£
Grounds Maintenance	959,000	958,983	17
Countryside Recreation Sites	36,690	35,212	1,478
General Entertainment	2,440	2,430	10
Sub Total	1,812,795	1,818,426	(5,631)
<u>FACILITIES MANAGEMENT</u>			
Corporate Landlord	1,571,200	1,535,562	35,638
Corporate Property	11,720	11,720	0
Building Cleaning	120,860	120,860	0
Catering Account	158,300	158,300	0
Appetite For Life	43,710	43,710	0
School Breakfast Club	394,180	394,180	0
Sub Total	2,299,970	2,264,332	35,638
<u>HIGHWAYS & ROADS SERVICES</u>			
Highways - Street Care Team	0	(315)	315
Non Operational Land	1,460	1,460	0
Licensing (Highway Permits)	(51,190)	(51,190)	0
Shopping Arcade, Abertillery	2,780	2,780	0
Road and Street Works Acts	(16,260)	(16,260)	0
Multi-Storey Car Parks	269,460	269,460	0
On Street Parking	1,100	1,100	0
Surface Car Parks	31,790	31,790	0
Public Transport Co-Ordination	910	910	0
Bridges	77,590	77,590	0
Structural Maintenance (Principal and Other Roads)	167,700	167,700	0
Environmental Maintenance (Principal and Other Roads)	19,440	19,440	0
Safety Maintenance (Principal and Other Roads)	71,590	71,578	12
Routine Repairs (Principal and Other Roads)	838,500	834,790	3,710
Street Lighting	1,191,780	1,191,780	0
Winter Maintenance	390,020	390,020	0
Sub Total	2,996,670	2,992,633	4,037

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2021/2022	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2021	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)
	£	£	£
<u>TRANSPORT SERVICES</u>			
Traffic Orders	(16,510)	(16,510)	0
Highways Adoptions	(9,750)	(9,750)	0
Traffic / Accident Research	15,690	15,690	0
Traffic Management	6,760	6,760	0
Civil Parking Enforcement	0	0	0
Road Safety Education	18,330	18,330	0
Crossing Patrols	151,540	150,004	1,536
Concessionary fares and Support to Operators	281,050	281,050	0
Local Transport Plans	2,620	2,620	0
Home to School Transport	0	0	0
Transport and Heavy Plant	79,780	79,780	0
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>529,510</u>	<u>527,974</u>	<u>1,536</u>
<u>CULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES</u>			
General Administration and Markets	(25,950)	(25,950)	0
Countryside Programme and Manage	1,710	1,710	0
Landscaping and Afforestation	20,290	20,290	0
Reservoirs, Tips, Quarries and Mines	10,130	10,130	0
Flood Defence And Land Drainage	55,380	55,380	0
ENRaW	0	0	0
City Deal	97,200	97,200	0
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>158,760</u>	<u>158,760</u>	<u>0</u>
COMMUNITY SERVICES TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>12,731,926</u>	<u>12,847,318</u>	<u>(115,392)</u>
<u>PUBLIC PROTECTION</u>			
<u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u>			
Environmental Health	(2,728)	9,185	(11,913)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>(2,728)</u>	<u>9,185</u>	<u>(11,913)</u>
<u>CARAVAN SITES</u>			
Cwmcraehen Caravan Site	(42,710)	(42,854)	144
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>(42,710)</u>	<u>(42,854)</u>	<u>144</u>

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2021/2022	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2021	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)
	£	£	£
<u>ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH</u>			
Food Safety	6,270	4,439	1,831
Control of Pollution	9,390	8,683	707
Dog Wardens	1,470	1,470	0
Animal Health and Welfare	23,360	20,028	3,332
Pest Control	62,000	60,003	1,997
Littering and Dog Control Orders	0	1,302	(1,302)
Health and Safety at Work (Commerci	1,510	(243)	1,753
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>104,000</u>	<u>95,682</u>	<u>8,318</u>
<u>HOUSING SERVICES</u>			
Homelessness	244,680	244,680	0
20 Church Street	15,800	2,197	13,603
General Properties	(8,160)	(7,413)	(747)
Housing Access	50,960	49,992	968
Works in Default	(250)	(1,840)	1,590
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,040	1,040	0
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>304,070</u>	<u>288,656</u>	<u>15,414</u>
<u>TRADING STANDARDS</u>			
Trading Standards	(1,643)	(8,098)	6,455
Inspection and Enforcement	4,350	4,515	(165)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>2,707</u>	<u>(3,583)</u>	<u>6,290</u>
PUBLIC PROTECTION TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>365,339</u>	<u>347,086</u>	<u>18,253</u>
<u>CORPORATE CHARGES</u>			
Fire Service	3,481,840	3,481,840	0
Coroner's Court	120,830	120,830	0
Corporate Recharges	9,783,955	9,783,955	0
CORPORATE CHARGES TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>13,386,625</u>	<u>13,386,625</u>	<u>0</u>

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2021/2022	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2021	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)
	£	£	£
Covid-19 Related Expenditure	0		0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	26,483,890	26,581,029	(97,139)

PLANNING COMMITTEE AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Item	Revised Estimate 2021/2022	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2022	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)
	£	£	£
PLANNING COMMITTEE SUMMARY			
<u>BUILDING CONTROL</u>			
<u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u>			
Building Control	(1,000)	999	(1,999)
<u>BUILDING CONTROL SERVICES</u>			
Building Regulations	10,840	10,840	0
Dangerous Structures	22,640	22,645	(5)
<i>Building Control Total Expenditure</i>	<u>32,480</u>	<u>34,484</u>	<u>(2,004)</u>
<u>DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT</u>			
<u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u>			
Development Management	(1,000)	(16,933)	15,933
<u>DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES</u>			
Dealing with Applications	(202,530)	(189,117)	(13,413)
Planning Appeals	3,250	23,254	(20,004)
Enforcement	(10)	15	(25)
<i>Development Management Total Expenditure</i>	<u>(200,290)</u>	<u>(182,781)</u>	<u>(17,509)</u>
<u>DEVELOPMENT PLANS</u>			
<u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u>			
Development Plans	132,000	112,485	19,515
<u>DEVELOPMENT PLANS SERVICES</u>			
Development Plans	34,760	34,762	(2)
<i>Development Plans Total Expenditure</i>	<u>166,760</u>	<u>147,247</u>	<u>19,513</u>
Corporate Recharges	1,275,250	1,275,250	0
Funding from General Reserves	0	0	0
Covid-19 Related Expenditure	0	0	0
Planning Committee Total Expenditure	<u><u>1,274,200</u></u>	<u><u>1,274,200</u></u>	<u><u>(0)</u></u>
LICENSING COMMITTEE SUMMARY			
Licensing	68,010	68,010	0
Internal Recharges	38,490	38,490	0
Funding from General Reserves	0	0	0
Covid-19 Related Expenditure	0	0	0
Licensing Committee Total Expenditure	<u><u>106,500</u></u>	<u><u>106,500</u></u>	<u><u>0</u></u>

Fees and Charges Forecast 2021/2022 (As at September 2021)

Appendix 2

Portfolio	Service	Description of Income	Income Source	Revised Estimate 2021/2022	WG Hardship Grant	Forecast	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)
				£	£	£	£
Fees & Charges							
Corporate Services	Communications	Advertising	Fees & Charges	3,000		760	(2,240)
Corporate Services	Business Support	External Printing and photocopying charges.	Fees & Charges	8,000		0	(8,000)
Corporate Services	Legal Fees	Legal Charges	Fees & Charges	14,330		6,850	(7,480)
Corporate Services	Corporate Support	Land Charges	Fixed - Set Locally	32,150		36,136	3,986
Economy	General Offices	Rental Income	Fees & Charges	41,969		61,581	19,612
Economy	Departmental	Reimbursement of staff costs and receipts for external works	SLA	69,087		35,625	(33,462)
Environment	Household and Trade Waste Collection		Fees & Charges	0		0	0
Environment	Recycling Collection	Recycling Collection & Disposal Income - Commercial Customers	Fees & Charges	0		0	0
Environment	Trade Waste	Trade Waste Collection & Disposal Income - Commercial Customers	Fees & Charges	140,590		140,590	0
Environment	Bulky Waste Collection	Bulky Waste Collection	Fees & Charges	71,690		82,624	10,934
Environment	Recycling Disposal	Sale of Recyclate Materials	Fees & Charges	629,720		531,678	(98,042)
Environment	County Borough Cleansing	C&CR - External Cleansing Works	Fees & Charges	220		0	(220)
Environment	Cemeteries / Crematorium	Burial Fees	Fees & Charges	495,080		492,858	(2,222)
Environment	Cemeteries / Crematorium	General Properties	Fees & Charges	2,680		3,000	320
Social Services	Meals On Wheels	Sale of Meals	Fees & Charges	175,280		154,759	(20,521)
Environment	Grounds Maintenance	Income from Letting of Playing Fields, Ground Rent & Way Leaves	Fees & Charges	76,395		69,360	(7,035)
Environment	General Properties	Rental Income	Fees & Charges	8,164		7,416	(748)
Environment	Cwmcrachen Caravan Site	Rental	Fees & Charges	113,947		109,984	(3,963)
Environment	Dog Wardens	Byelaw Enforcement Fees	Fees & Charges	2,030		2,030	0
Environment	Corporate Landlord	Civic Centre - Rental of Land	Miscellaneous	828		370	(458)
Environment	School Catering Service	Sale of Meals		861,898		876,021	14,123
Financial Management and Strategy	Accountancy Division	Administration charges for administering Appointeeships	Fees & Charges	26,030		19,838	(6,192)
Infrastructure	Technical Services - Engineering & Property Management	Reimbursement of staff costs and receipts for external works	Fees & Charges	418,938		430,119	11,181
Infrastructure	FEP - Increase in Income	Fees	Fees & Charges	0		0	0
Infrastructure	Licensing (Highway Permits)	Skips & Scaffolding Permits	Fees & Charges	51,342		51,342	0
Infrastructure	General Administration and Markets	Rental income	Fees & Charges	30,351		27,855	(2,496)
Infrastructure	Traffic Orders	Income from contractors, Welsh Water etc. for road works	Fees & Charges	24,810		24,810	0
Infrastructure	Road and Street Works Acts	Inspection fees, section 74's, FPN, coring, Dropped kerbs etc.	Fees & Charges	51,814		70,541	18,727
Infrastructure	Highways Adoptions	Highway Searches	Fees & Charges	9,754		186,600	176,846
Infrastructure	Multi-storey Carparks	Charge to Coleg Gwent	Fees & Charges	30,000		30,000	0
Infrastructure	Civil Parking Enforcement	FPN's	Fees & Charges	105,000		105,000	0
Infrastructure	Public Transport Co-Ordination	Charge to bus companies for use of Brynmawr Bus Station	Fees & Charges	234		234	0
Licensing	Hackney Carriages	Licence Fees	Fees & Charges	46,030		45,032	(998)
Licensing	Private Hire Vehicles	Licence Fees	Fees & Charges	1,830		2,958	1,128
Licensing	Scrap Metal	Sale of Scrap Metal	Fees & Charges	600		0	(600)
Planning	Enforcement	Enforcement Fees	Fees & Charges	610		0	(610)
Planning	Development Plans	Heritage Officer Income	Fees & Charges	0		0	0
Social Services	Other Children's and Family Services	Training Fees (Early Years tied in with expenditure which is set	Fees & Charges	0		0	0
Social Services	Older People aged 65 or over	Fees & Charges in respect of Care (Cwrt Mytton, Home Care, Extra Care & Joint Day Care Unit)	Fees & Charges	594,380	16,586	402,638	(175,156)
Social Services	Adults aged under 65 with Learning Disabilities	Fees & Charges in respect of Care (Augusta, Supported Living Bungalows & Community Options)	Fees & Charges	340,460	83,074	67,069	(190,317)
Social Services	Adults aged under 65 with Mental Health Needs	Fees & Charges in respect of Care (Vision House & Ysbyty'r Tri Chwm)	Fees & Charges	25,420	4,135	900	(20,385)
Social Services	Support Service and Management Costs	Fees & Charges in respect of Piper Alarms (IAA)	Fees & Charges	0		0	0
		Sub - Total		4,504,661	103,795	4,076,578	(324,288)

Fees and Charges Forecast 2021/2022 (As at September 2021)

Appendix 2

Portfolio	Service	Description of Income	Income Source	Revised Estimate 2021/2022	WG Hardship Grant	Forecast	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)
				£	£	£	£
Fees & Charges - Set Nationally							
Corporate Services	Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths	Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths	Fixed - Set Nationally	94,770		83,878	(10,892)
Environment	Food Safety	Hygiene ratings & Health Certificates	Fixed - Set Nationally	2,120		6,739	4,619
Environment	Control of Pollution	Environmental Permits	Fixed - Set Nationally	16,890		10,737	(6,153)
Environment	Health and Safety at Work (Commercial Prem.)	Petroleum + Tattoo Licences	Fixed - Set Nationally	0		1,011	1,011
Environment	Trading Standards	Explosives Licences	Fixed - Set Nationally	790		749	(41)
Licensing	Licence Fees	Various (Gambling, Premises/ Clubs & Street Trading)	Fixed - Set Nationally	56,900		55,265	(1,635)
Planning	Dealing with Applications	Planning Application Fees	Fees & Charges	213,360		502,659	289,299
Planning	Building Regulations	Building Regulation Fees	Fixed - Set Nationally	95,620		96,644	1,024
Social Services	Older People aged 65 or over	CHC Income (Home Care)	Fixed - Set Nationally	0		51,597	51,597
Social Services	Adults aged under 65 with Learning Disabilities	CHC Income (Augusta House; Supported Living Bungalows; Community Options)	Fixed - Set Nationally	50,000		61,747	11,747
Social Services	Community Care	Fees & Charges in respect of Care	Fixed - Set Nationally	3,493,660		2,950,592	(543,068)
Social Services	Older People aged 65 or over	Sale of Property (Cwrt Mytton)	Fixed - Set Nationally	0		45,703	45,703
Social Services	Community Care	Sale of Property	Fixed - Set Nationally	292,340		143,962	(148,378)
Social Services	Community Care	CHC Income	Fixed - Set Nationally	378,650		0	(378,650)
Social Services	Support Service and Management Costs	CHC Income (Adult Service Managers)	Fixed - Set Nationally	0		0	0
		Sub - Total		4,695,100	0	4,011,283	(683,817)
Fees & Charges - in Line with Local Agreements							
Economy	Industrial Land	Ground rent and commercial bookings	Fixed - Set Locally	2,750		2,770	20
Economy	Nursery Units/Misc. Industrial Premises	Rental income for industrial units	Fixed - Set Locally	708,195		805,317	97,122
Economy	Estates - Non Rechargeable	Ground Rent	Fixed - Set Locally	142,268		120,000	(22,268)
Economy	Financial Support to Business	Ground rent and commercial bookings	Fixed - Set Locally	2,650		2,650	0
Economy	CSCS	Charges for Construction Skills Certificates	Fixed - Set Locally	10,200		0	(10,200)
Environment	Corporate Landlord	Little Stars Nursery - Rent (Recovery of costs)	Miscellaneous	8,496		12,464	3,968
Education	Inter Authority Recoupment	Charges to other Local Authorities for SEN placements within Blaenau Gwent Schools	Fixed - Set Locally	659,110		746,789	87,679
		Sub - Total		1,533,669	0	1,689,990	156,321
		Total - Fees & Charges		10,733,430	103,795	9,777,851	(851,784)
SLA							
Aneurin Leisure Trust	SLA Income	Provision of Support Services	SLA	243,600		214,196	(29,404)
Environment	Grounds Maintenance	SLA	SLA	168,220		168,220	0
Financial Management and Strategy	Accountancy Division	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	181,840		181,840	0
Corporate Services	Organisational Development, Payroll & Health & Safety	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	313,350		313,350	0
Corporate Services	Legal Fees & GDPR	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	41,160		41,160	0
Corporate Services	Communications	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	3,190		3,190	0
Corporate Services	Performance (SIMS Support)	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	75,750		75,750	0
Corporate Services	Business Support (Courier)	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	5,660		5,660	0
Financial Management and Strategy	Creditors Division	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	6,350		6,350	0
Corporate Services	ICT	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	0		0	0
Environment	School Catering	SLA with Schools (excludes Corporate Landlord)	SLA	1,138,600		1,138,600	0
Environment	Cleaning Services	SLA with Schools	SLA	1,091,389		1,091,389	0
Infrastructure	CPM - Schools Biodiversity SLA	SLA with Schools	SLA	14,280		14,280	0
Infrastructure	Winter Maintenance	SLA with LA's for salt Storage	SLA	13,000		13,000	0
		Sub - Total		3,296,389	0	3,266,985	(29,404)

Fees and Charges Forecast 2021/2022 (As at September 2021)

Appendix 2

Portfolio	Service	Description of Income	Income Source	Revised Estimate 2021/2022	WG Hardship Grant	Forecast	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)
				£	£	£	£
Court Fees/Fixed Penalty Notices/Fines							
Corporate Services	Corporate Services and Strategy	Legal income and land charges. Advertising.	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	10,000		3,557	(6,443)
Education	Welfare Service	Fixed Penalty Notices	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	2,150		2,150	0
Environment	Littering and Dog Control Orders	Income in relation to FPNs	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	50,000		1,000	(49,000)
Corporate Services	Payroll Division	Attachment Orders	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	1,020		87	(933)
Financial Management and Strategy	Council Tax Collection	Court Costs	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	162,680		75,643	(87,037)
Financial Management and Strategy	NNDR	Court Costs	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	1,800		979	(821)
Corporate Services	Housing Benefits Account	Admin Penalties	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	25,000		0	(25,000)
		Sub - Total		252,650	0	83,416	(169,234)
Consortium Arrangements							
Economy	General Offices	Annual Service & Rental Charge to Torfaen CBC in relation to Archives	Consortium Arrangements	77,967		77,967	0
Environment	Disposal Of Waste	Contribution from SVWS	Consortium Arrangements	110,000		110,000	0
Environment	Cemeteries / Crematorium	Crematorium Income - Reallocation of surplus at year end	Consortium Arrangements	131,925		137,537	5,612
Environment	20 Church Street	Housing Advice Centre Contribution	Consortium Arrangements	12,210		13,550	1,340
Environment	Housing Access	Income from Housing Associations in relation to Administration of the Common Housing Register	Consortium Arrangements	110,763		121,939	11,176
Environment	Environmental Health	Public Protection Collaboration with Torfaen CC	Consortium Arrangements	0		0	0
		Sub - Total		442,865	0	460,993	18,128
Miscellaneous							
Education	Supporting Special Educational Needs	Internal Income - Recovery of pupil lead funding from schools.	Internal Income	102,000		102,000	0
Corporate Services	Corporate Procurement Division	Rebates - Energy & Randstad	Miscellaneous	95,700		73,816	(21,884)
Corporate Services	Corporate Procurement Division	Purchase Card Income	Miscellaneous	5,140		0	(5,140)
Infrastructure	L&A - Invasive Weeds	Contribution from Caerphilly for Treatment of Knotweed	Miscellaneous	10,000		10,000	0
		Sub - Total		212,840	0	185,816	(27,024)
		TOTAL		14,938,174	103,795	13,775,061	(1,059,318)

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Action Plan

Social Services

2021/22 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2021)

Appendix 3

Service Area	2021/2022 Variance at Sept 2021 Forecast £	2021/2022 Variance at June 2021 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Outturn £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
Looked After Children	(362,739)	(362,739)	(718,039)	<p>Legal Services</p> <p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an ongoing pressure in this area due to the use of a private law firm for all our court proceedings, and our inability to recruit and retain legal staff specialising in children's law. This has resulted in our need to outsource to an external provider. It is anticipated that the Legal budget will be significantly overspent again this year. <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A long term solution will need to be identified in conjunction with Legal Services to mitigate this cost pressure for future years and a collaborative arrangement for legal services is being considered with a neighbouring council. • This cost pressure is currently being offset by favourable variances within other social services budgets. <p><u>Updates</u></p>		Tanya Evans/ Andrea Jones

Action Plan

Social Services

2021/22 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2021)

Appendix 3

Service Area	2021/2022 Variance at Sept 2021 Forecast £	2021/2022 Variance at June 2021 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Outturn £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
				<ul style="list-style-type: none">Efforts have been made to progress the longer term solution with a neighbouring authority on our part, we are now awaiting a costed proposal to deliver the services on our behalf going forward.		

Action Plan

Environment

2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30th September 2021)

Appendix 3

Service Area	2021/2022 Variance at Sept 2021 Forecast £	2021/2022 Variance at June 2021 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at outturn £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
Waste Services	(137,059)	(138,485)	(86,180)	<p><u>Recycling Collection</u></p> <p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u> This is mainly due to the cost of receptacles and food waste bags. External funding for the purchase of food waste bags has ceased and therefore this now presents a cost pressure within this budget. In addition, the forecast also includes the cost of receptacles and food waste bags for new developments/builds that will be required towards the end of the financial year.</p> <p><u>Actions</u> The budget for receptacles is not sufficient to meet demand and consequently, this will be reviewed as part of the 2022/2023 budget setting process. Side Waste Enforcement have recommenced and this should have a positive impact on increasing recycle and reducing black bag waste.</p>		C Rogers / M Stent
	(47,995)	(60,449)	(2,643)	<p><u>Disposal of Waste</u></p> <p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u> This is mainly due to an increase in residual waste tonnages.</p>		

Action Plan

Environment

2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30th September 2021)

Appendix 3

Service Area	2021/2022 Variance at Sept 2021 Forecast £	2021/2022 Variance at June 2021 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at outturn £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
	(23,630)	(136,432)	(216,372)	<p><u>Actions</u> This has been partly offset by Welsh Government Hardship Funding. Also the disposal of leachate at Silent Valley forecast costs are over the budget. However, this is based on last year's outturn only, there is the possibility that the forecast could change later in the year.</p> <p>Recycling Disposal</p> <p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u> There is currently a high demand for steel, plastics and aluminium and therefore the forecast income has increased for these recyclates, reducing the adverse variance.</p>		

Agenda Item 14

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 02.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **15th December 2021**
Report Subject: **Capital Budget Monitoring, Forecast For 2021/2022 Financial Year (As At 30 September 2021)**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Daniels – Leader, Executive Member Corporate Services**
Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden – Chief Officer Resources**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	11/11/2021	30.11.21			22/11/2021	15/12/21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide members with an overview of each Portfolio's actual and forecast capital expenditure against funding approvals for the 2021/2022 financial year, as at 30th September 2021.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 This report provides details on the following:

- Forecast financial position to 31st March 2021 across all portfolios
- Details of any significant adverse and/or favourable variances

- 2.2 This report forms part of the quarterly financial reporting framework to Members.

3. Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Joint Scrutiny Committee supported Option 1 at its meeting on 22nd November 2021.

3.2 Option 1 (Recommended Option)

Members of the Executive Committee accept the report and

- Provide appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report.
- Continue to support appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council.
- To note the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding.

3.3 Option 2

Do not accept the report.

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

4.1 This report supports the Forward Looking Corporate Plan 2020/22 as it ensures effective forward financial planning arrangements are in place to support the Council’s financial resilience. This is a key element to achieving “An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities”

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

5.1.1 The overall financial position as forecast at 30th September 2021 indicates an adverse variance of £283,128 against a total in year capital budget of £17.12m.

The overall position across all Portfolios is shown below: -

Total Approvals Q2 (Sept 2021)	Future funding	In year funding	Actual Expenditure to 30/09/2021 (Month 9)	Forecast Expenditure 2021/2022	Forecast Variance underspent / (overspent)
£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
60,978	43,863	17,115	4,119	17,398	(283)

5.1.2 This report has identified significant overspends on the following projects:

- **Household Waste recycling Centre - £42,752**
The overspend relates to increased costs due to the Covid-19 pandemic & future proofing of the site.
- **Lime Avenue Business Park - £234,710**
The latest anticipated final account advises of a loss & expenses claim for items in relation to unforeseen issues caused by Covid-19 pandemic.

Discussions with funding bodies are ongoing to determine whether additional funding is available fund, therefore, at this stage it is not proposed that funding for these schemes be built in from the Capital contingency.

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

- 5.2.1 Expenditure against external funding approvals needs to be maximised in order to avoid loss of funding. If significant delays in capital expenditure are anticipated or contract costs rise due to the impact of Covid-19 and inflation pressures, liaison with funding bodies will be required at the earliest opportunity in order to secure approval for funding re-profile.
- 5.2.2 If funding re-profile cannot be agreed and capital schemes are not kept within budget, then capital reserves may be committed beyond affordable levels, with the consequence that projects that have not yet commenced may be deferred or not undertaken, so impacting upon future Capital Programmes.
- 5.2.3 If capital schemes do not achieve the required level of expenditure within the correct financial year and further peaks of the Covid-19 pandemic results in projects facing significant delay, funding may be lost to the Authority and be detrimental to the Authority's chances of securing future funding.
- 5.2.4 The aforementioned risks are mitigated as far as possible through close working relationship with Budget Holders, Technical Services and external funding bodies such as Welsh Government. This ensures that where possible, funding is maximised or funding amendments are secured should the need arise
- 5.2.5 Where overall funding approvals are likely to be exceeded and additional compensatory funding sources cannot be identified, budget holders will initially report the consequences to the Corporate Leadership Team, including proposals to defer/delete other approved schemes.
- 5.2.6 There is a potential risk of increase in Constructions costs & services following the ongoing situation regarding the UK's Exit from the European Union.
- 5.2.7 The UK's Exit from the EU has been added as an organisational risk to the corporate risk register, whilst a separate, more detailed high level action plan has been developed and is being monitored by the Core Planning Group.

5.3 Legal N/A

5.4 Human Resources N/A

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

- 6.1.2 The Capital Expenditure Report is attached at Appendix 1.
- 6.1.3 Appendix 2 provides information of funding changes since the first quarter report.

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

- 6.2.1 The report details the financial implications for the Council in providing capital investment for the communities of Blaenau Gwent.

All forecast overspends and underspends are managed in order that secured funding approvals are not lost and to mitigate any potential adverse impact upon future Capital investment in Blaenau Gwent.

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

The Capital Programme is developed to support the Council's strategic priorities and is considered and agreed by full Council. Joint Budget Scrutiny and Executive Committees consider the budget monitoring reports on a quarterly basis and provide challenge as appropriate.

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

It is essential that all forecast overspends and underspends are managed in order that secured funding approvals are not lost and to mitigate any potential adverse impact upon the future capital programme.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The Capital Services Team will continue their close working relationship with budget holders and external funding bodies to ensure that funding is maximised or funding amendments are secured in future financial years.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The Capital Services Team works closely with budget holders in producing the financial forecast and with external funding bodies to ensure that where possible funding is maximised or funding amendments are secured should the need arise.

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

N/A

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

The Council is committed to the Decarbonisation Plan to achieve a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. The Capital Programme currently contains schemes which promote the reduction of carbon emissions such as ReFIT, Electric Vehicle Charge Points and the purchase of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles. New Council buildings should be designed to the latest energy efficiency standards.

6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***

N/A

6.9b. ***Equality Impact Assessment***

N/A

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2022/6

Capital Programme Funding Estimates Summary

<i>Portfolio</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure To: September 2021</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
Corporate Services Portfolio	2,531,799	812,650	1,719,149	119,707	692,943	812,650	0
Social Services Portfolio	5,734,482	1,739,119	3,995,363	515,225	1,225,655	1,740,880	(1,761)
Economy Portfolio	13,773,153	3,263,132	10,510,021	1,463,630	2,034,212	3,497,842	(234,710)
Education and Active Living	26,446,098	2,433,361	24,012,737	567,246	1,866,115	2,433,361	0
Environment Portfolio	5,863,489	3,928,576	1,934,913	844,085	3,127,247	3,971,332	(42,756)
Infrastructure Portfolio	4,676,520	3,187,699	1,488,821	603,140	2,588,459	3,191,599	(3,900)
All Portfolios	1,952,775	1,750,860	201,915	5,960	1,744,900	1,750,860	0
Total Capital Funding	60,978,316	17,115,397	43,862,919	4,118,994	13,279,530	17,398,524	(283,127)

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Code	Scheme	Total Funding	In Year Budget	Future Funding	Expenditure to: September 2021	Remaining in Year Budget	Forecast Expenditure	Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav
Corporate Services Portfolio								
Corporate Services								
101385	Workplace Transformation	70,587	587	70,000	587	0	587	0
327102	Corporate Properties H&S and Capital Wo	314,131	3,632	310,499	3,632	0	3,632	0
327103	Civic Centre Decommissioning	650,000	70,350	579,650	14,296	56,054	70,350	0
327104	Democratic & Community Hubs	180,000	180,000	0	98,391	81,609	180,000	0
327106	ICT Roadmap	952,000	193,000	759,000	0	193,000	193,000	0
327107	Data Centre Move	362,000	362,000	0	0	362,000	362,000	0
328090	CCTV Upgrade	3,081	3,081	0	2,800	281	3,081	0
Corporate Services		2,531,799	812,650	1,719,149	119,707	692,943	812,650	0
Corporate Services Portfolio		2,531,799	812,650	1,719,149	119,707	692,943	812,650	0

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Code	Scheme	Total Funding	In Year Budget	Future Funding	Expenditure to: September 2021	Remaining in Year Budget	Forecast Expenditure	Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav
Social Services Portfolio								
Childrens Services								
323152	Beaufort Road - Extension Training Flat	12,110	12,110	0	13,082	0	13,082	(972)
323153	Beaufort Road - Outdoor spaces and Exiti	560	560	0	560	0	560	0
324719	Flying Start - Cwm 2	30,000	30,000	0	0	30,000	30,000	0
324721	Flying Start - Ebbw Vale North	265,473	265,473	0	151,885	113,588	265,473	0
324724	Flying Start - Sirhowy Primary	18,500	18,500	0	0	18,500	18,500	0
324726	Flying Start - Garnlydan	24,500	24,500	0	0	24,500	24,500	0
324728	Flying Start - Blaina ICC	235,000	235,000	0	0	235,000	235,000	0
324733	Flying Start Abertillery	12,000	12,000	0	149	11,851	12,000	0
324735	Flying Start Brynithel FS Centre	20,000	20,000	0	2,600	17,400	20,000	0
324736	Flying Start Additional Works	73,700	73,700	0	13,245	60,455	73,700	0
324737	Flying Start Capital (Covid-funding)	36,000	36,000	0	0	36,000	36,000	0
324738	FS Covid Recovery - Cwm Dev. Garden S	115,000	115,000	0	0	115,000	115,000	0
324739	FS Covid Recovery - Scout Hall	50,000	50,000	0	0	50,000	50,000	0
324770	Childcare Offer - Sixbells Scheme	1,482,230	0	1,482,230	0	0	0	0
324771	Childcare Offer - Badminton Scheme	1,500,000	50,000	1,450,000	0	50,000	50,000	0
324772	Childcare Offer - Blaina ICC Scheme	408,782	0	408,782	0	0	0	0
324773	Childcare Offer - Swfryd Scheme	484,965	420	484,545	420	0	420	0
324774	Childcare Offer - Small Grants Scheme	50,000	50,000	0	0	50,000	50,000	0
Childrens Services		4,818,820	993,263	3,825,557	181,940	812,295	994,235	(972)
Adult Services								

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Code	Scheme	Total Funding	In Year Budget	Future Funding	Expenditure to: September 2021	Remaining in Year Budget	Forecast Expenditure	Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav
323003	Health & Safety	57,483	0	57,483	0	0	0	0
323005	Tackling Food Poverty - WLGA	12,651	1,560	11,091	1,560	0	1,560	0
323006	Cwrt Mytton Replacement Boilers	50,000	50,000	0	0	50,000	50,000	0
323120	Disabled equipment	279,750	279,750	0	279,750	0	279,750	0
323141	ICF - Further Enhanced Digital & Mobile	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
323144	ICF Main Capital Programme	86,651	0	86,651	0	0	0	0
323147	Intermediate Care Fund	3,133	0	3,133	0	0	0	0
323148	ICF - Digital & Mobile Assistive Technol	38,825	38,825	0	39,614	0	39,614	(789)
323149	Better Care Capital Project	21,809	10,361	11,448	10,361	0	10,361	0
323151	Augusta House - Enablement Pods	365,360	365,360	0	2,000	363,360	365,360	0
	Adult Services	915,662	745,856	169,806	333,285	413,360	746,645	(789)
	Social Services Portfolio	5,734,482	1,739,119	3,995,363	515,225	1,225,655	1,740,880	(1,761)

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Code	Scheme	Total Funding	In Year Budget	Future Funding	Expenditure to: September 2021	Remaining in Year Budget	Forecast Expenditure	Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav
Economy Portfolio								
Tredegar Regeneration								
326163	Tredegar HLF	674,415	674,415	0	150,291	524,124	674,415	0
	Tredegar Regeneration	674,415	674,415	0	150,291	524,124	674,415	0
Ebbw Vale Town Centre								
326191	TRI - Urban Centre Commercial Property I	265,315	265,315	0	192,635	72,680	265,315	0
326192	TRI- Urban Centre Residential Property E	123,024	123,024	0	0	123,024	123,024	0
	Ebbw Vale Town Centre	388,339	388,339	0	192,635	195,704	388,339	0
Valleys Regional Park								
326200	VRP Ebbw Fach Trail	899	0	899	0	0	0	0
326205	VRP - Discovery Gateway	30,180	30,180	0	0	30,180	30,180	0
326206	Local Places for Nature Capital Funding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
326207	Parc Bryn Bach - Co Working Space	116,661	116,661	0	52,388	64,273	116,661	0
	Valleys Regional Park	147,740	146,841	899	52,388	94,453	146,841	0
The Works Site								
325097	Big Arch	1,008,986	0	1,008,986	0	0	0	0
325103	Learning Works	37,985	0	37,985	0	0	0	0
325220	Site Investigation Works	19,001	0	19,001	0	0	0	0
325225	Ebbw Valley Railway - Northern Extension	2,441	0	2,441	0	0	0	0

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	The Works Site	1,068,413	0	1,068,413	0	0	0	0
	Other Regeneration							
326006	Tech Valley s Initiative	465,776	0	465,776	0	0	0	0
326180	Lime Avenue Business Park	530,810	530,810	0	511,693	253,827	765,520	(234,710)
326181	Lime Avenue Employment park	2,495,101	0	2,495,101	0	0	0	0
326182	Box Works	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
326183	Regain 2	5,555,153	107,389	5,447,764	107,389	0	107,389	0
326184	Brexit Schemes	369,465	0	369,465	0	0	0	0
326193	TRI - Town Centre COVID-19 recovery ad:	529,818	37,530	492,288	37,530	0	37,530	0
326225	Heat Networks Project	17,385	0	17,385	0	0	0	0
326226	Electric Vehicle Chargepoints	20,085	0	20,085	0	0	0	0
326252	Constrained Units - Roseheyworth	6,665	0	6,665	0	0	0	0
326265	Victoria Business Park - Development	39,251	0	39,251	0	0	0	0
326266	Brynmawr Retail Development	759,224	759,224	0	9,224	750,000	759,224	0
326267	Blaenau Gwent Digital	138,049	138,049	0	101,831	36,218	138,049	0
326268	Covid Recovery for Town Centres	367,464	280,535	86,929	280,535	0	280,535	0
326269	HIVE – Hi Value Engineering Centre - Mor	200,000	200,000	0	20,114	179,887	200,000	0
	Other Regeneration	11,494,246	2,053,537	9,440,709	1,068,316	1,219,931	2,288,247	(234,710)
	Economy Portfolio	13,773,153	3,263,132	10,510,021	1,463,630	2,034,212	3,497,842	(234,710)

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Education and Active Living								
Education Services								
324125	Education Minor Works	48,497	88	48,409	88	0	88	0
324138	Education Capital Maintenance	90,802	14,217	76,585	14,217	0	14,217	0
324139	Education Capital Maintenance 20/21	155,676	0	155,676	0	0	0	0
324142	Georgetown Windows & Boiler Replaceme	6,206	0	6,206	0	0	0	0
324143	Rhos-y-fedwyn - Refurbishment	3,945	0	3,945	0	0	0	0
324144	St Marys - Refurbishment	200,000	2,412	197,588	2,412	0	2,412	0
324145	Tredegar Comp - Food & Technology	30,070	0	30,070	0	0	0	0
324146	Deighton - Kitchen	639	0	639	0	0	0	0
324147	Tredegar Comp Upgrade Services and Ac	3,450	0	3,450	0	0	0	0
324148	Coed y Garn Roof & Remedial Works	26,638	15,040	11,598	15,040	1	15,040	0
324149	Brynbach Primary Disabled Adaptations	70,000	5,839	64,161	5,839	0	5,839	0
324150	Ebbw Fawr - Developing 3/4 classrooms, t	100,000	0	100,000	0	0	0	0
324151	Tredegar Comp Upgrade Electrical Supply	8,107	8,107	0	8,107	0	8,107	0
324152	Brynmawr Canopy	50,000	6,210	43,790	6,210	0	6,210	0
324155	Brynmawr Comp Lift	110,000	0	110,000	0	0	0	0
324156	River Centre Boiler	70,000	0	70,000	0	0	0	0
324157	Tredegar Comprehensive Kitchen Electric	1,455	1,455	0	1,455	0	1,455	0
324158	Beaufort Hill Kitchen	69,238	69,238	0	43,944	25,294	69,238	0
324159	Glyncoed Highways Works	30,000	30,000	0	750	29,250	30,000	0
324161	Pen Y Cwm – Refurbishment Works	53,376	53,376	0	53,376	0	53,376	0
324201	Class Size - Willowtown	69,557	0	69,557	0	0	0	0

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324203	Period Poverty	5,028	0	5,028	0	0	0	0
324205	St. Marys CIW MUGA	11,450	11,450	0	11,450	0	11,450	0
324519	Digital 2030 Capital Grant - Post 16	4,621	0	4,621	0	0	0	0
324530	ALN	22,299	50	22,249	50	0	50	0
324532	Ebbw Fawr ASD	3,890	0	3,890	0	0	0	0
324560	Schools IT Infrastructure	39,225	39,225	0	39,225	0	39,225	0
324561	IT Upgrades - Schools	21,318	21,318	0	21,318	0	21,318	0
324580	Brynmawr 3G Pitch	862,480	862,480	0	199,863	662,617	862,480	0
324590	Tredeggar Comp 3G Pitch	79,359	0	79,359	0	0	0	0
324743	21st Century Schools Six Bells Project	50,295	50,295	0	8,871	41,424	50,295	0
324750	Band B - Welsh Medium New Build	5,962,761	100,000	5,862,761	84,468	15,532	100,000	0
324751	Band B - New Primary Ebbw Fawr Valley	8,002,596	580,000	7,422,596	30,720	549,280	580,000	0
324752	Band B - Secondary Remodelling Brynma	3,190,237	0	3,190,237	0	0	0	0
324753	Band B - Secondary Remodelling Abertille	3,198,691	0	3,198,691	0	0	0	0
324754	Band B - Secondary Remodelling Tredega	3,197,459	0	3,197,459	0	0	0	0
324755	Band B - Welsh Medium Remodelling Bro	561,513	561,513	0	18,796	542,717	561,513	0
Education Services		26,410,878	2,432,313	23,978,565	566,199	1,866,114	2,432,313	0
Active Living Services								
329089	Abertillery LC Demolition	1,048	1,048	0	1,048	1	1,048	0
329092	ALC - Changing Room Refurbishment	20,000	0	20,000	0	0	0	0
329095	AWPOG - Play Equipment 20-21	1,733	0	1,733	0	0	0	0
332368	Play Area Schemes - Boroughwide	12,439	0	12,439	0	0	0	0

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<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: September 2021</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
	Active Living Services	35,220	1,048	34,172	1,048	1	1,048	0
	Education and Active Living	26,446,098	2,433,361	24,012,737	567,246	1,866,115	2,433,361	0

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Environment Portfolio								
Environmental Services								
327018	RCAF Long Term Organics Procurement	26,512	0	26,512	0	0	0	0
327039	Kerbside Collections	2,052	0	2,052	0	0	0	0
327042	Collaborative Change Programme 18-19	88,436	88,436	0	88,436	0	88,436	0
327043	Household Waste Recycling Centre	120,042	120,042	0	104,446	58,348	162,794	(42,752)
327044	AHP Waste Collections	52,380	52,380	0	0	52,380	52,380	0
327045	BRC Decommissioning Project	191,777	0	191,777	0	0	0	0
327046	Repair Cafe	1,066	0	1,066	0	0	0	0
327061	CATS	80,000	0	80,000	0	0	0	0
327065	Re:Fit	2,088,980	2,088,980	0	540	2,088,440	2,088,980	0
327067	Market Hall - Asbestos Removal	18,606	0	18,606	0	0	0	0
327068	Cemeteries Investment Programme	196,071	196,071	0	173,034	23,037	196,071	0
327069	Green Recovery	10,010	10,010	0	10,006	4	10,010	0
327070	WRAP Cymru Capital Funding	3,787	0	3,787	0	0	0	0
327071	Education Centre	200,000	200,000	0	920	199,080	200,000	0
327073	Kerbside Recycling Lorry	165,566	165,566	0	165,566	0	165,566	0
327074	New Vale HWRC Refurbishment Works	256,526	256,526	0	8,087	248,439	256,526	0
327076	Ultra Low Emission Vehicles	92,920	92,920	0	0	92,920	92,920	0
327080	Cemetery Capacity - Cefn Golau Tredegar	527,028	0	527,028	0	0	0	0
327081	Cemetery Capacity - Dukestown Tredegar	227,500	0	227,500	0	0	0	0
327082	Cemetery Capacity - Brynmawr	142,000	0	142,000	0	0	0	0
327083	Cemetery Capacity - Brynithel Abertiller	105,000	0	105,000	0	0	0	0

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Code	Scheme	Total Funding	In Year Budget	Future Funding	Expenditure to: September 2021	Remaining in Year Budget	Forecast Expenditure	Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav
327090	Fly Tipping CCTV	14,000	14,000	0	14,004	0	14,004	(4)
327110	Allotment Support Grant	25,599	25,599	0	0	25,599	25,599	0
Environmental Services		4,635,858	3,310,530	1,325,328	565,039	2,788,247	3,353,286	(42,756)
Housing Environmental Health								
328221	Remediation of Contaminated Land/Dereli	154,269	2,470	151,799	2,470	0	2,470	0
350510	Improvement grants - new scheme	753,905	469,000	284,905	208,555	260,445	469,000	0
350550	Support for Independent Living	151,154	131,053	20,101	52,498	78,556	131,053	0
350560	Empty Property Grants	168,303	15,523	152,780	15,523	0	15,523	0
Housing Environmental Health		1,227,631	618,046	609,585	279,046	339,000	618,046	0
Environment Portfolio		5,863,489	3,928,576	1,934,913	844,085	3,127,247	3,971,332	(42,756)

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Infrastructure Portfolio								
Engineering Services								
328040	Cwm By Pass	13,970	0	13,970	0	0	0	0
328149	SRiC - Tredegar Footway Improvements	25,000	25,000	0	0	25,000	25,000	0
328310	Local Transport Fund	0	0	0	3,900	0	3,900	(3,900)
328312	Local Transport Fund 2020/21	174,702	174,702	0	174,702	0	174,702	0
328314	Local Transport Network Fund	2,319	2,319	0	0	2,319	2,319	0
328315	Local Transport Fund - Project Retention	16,020	0	16,020	0	0	0	0
328318	Active Travel Fund	399,000	399,000	0	12,715	386,285	399,000	0
328323	Resilient Roads Fund	300,000	300,000	0	0	300,000	300,000	0
328340	LTF Metro Plus	220,000	220,000	0	0	220,000	220,000	0
328342	LTF Bedwellty Pits	990,000	990,000	0	1,382	988,618	990,000	0
328344	LTF Bus Stop Infrastructure	405,000	405,000	0	7,448	397,552	405,000	0
Engineering Services		2,546,011	2,516,021	29,990	200,147	2,319,774	2,519,921	(3,900)
Highways Network Management								
328063	Bridge Strengthening Works	1,857	0	1,857	0	0	0	0
328095	Ebbw Vale Railway study Phase 3	2,668	2,668	0	2,668	0	2,668	0
328269	Highways PB Imp. Works.	20,946	0	20,946	0	0	0	0
328270	Highways Improvement Works	1,692,700	381,078	1,311,622	276,945	104,133	381,078	0
328334	LGBl - Trinant Hall	59,747	45,805	13,942	45,805	0	45,805	0
328404	Flood Damage - Emergency Repairs	12,593	12,593	0	0	12,593	12,593	0
328405	Aberbeeg Road Repairs	110,498	34	110,464	34	0	34	0

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Management Reports		Capital Programme Funding Estimates						
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<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: September 2021</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
328406	Small Scale Works Grant	229,500	229,500	0	77,541	151,959	229,500	0
	Highways Network Management	2,130,509	671,678	1,458,831	402,993	268,685	671,678	0
	Infrastructure Portfolio	4,676,520	3,187,699	1,488,821	603,140	2,588,459	3,191,599	(3,900)

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<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: September 2021</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
All Portfolios								
All Portfolios								
300300	City Deal	1,220,900	1,220,900	0	0	1,220,900	1,220,900	0
303990	OS Capital Admin/Design & Supervision	524,000	524,000	0	0	524,000	524,000	0
321112	Disabled Access - Special Programme	10,911	5,960	4,951	5,960	0	5,960	0
324672	The Company Shop - Tred	196,964	0	196,964	0	0	0	0
All Portfolios		1,952,775	1,750,860	201,915	5,960	1,744,900	1,750,860	0
All Portfolios		1,952,775	1,750,860	201,915	5,960	1,744,900	1,750,860	0

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<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: September 2021</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
	Total Capital Funding	60,978,316	17,115,397	43,862,919	4,118,994	13,279,530	17,398,524	(283,127)

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Information on Capital Funding Changes 2021/22
New Approvals and/or material Funding Changes in Quarter Two

APPENDIX 2

Portfolio	Cost Centre	Scheme	Amount (£)	Funding Body	Type	Additional Information
Corporate Services						
	327102	Corporate Properties H&S and Capital Wor	-85,960	Blaenau Gwent	Capital Programme	Transfer to projects as agreed by Budget Holder.
Social Services						
	323003	Health & Safety	-279,000	Blaenau Gwent	Capital Programme	Transfer to correct project code
	323120	Disabled equipment	279,000	Blaenau Gwent	Capital Programme	Transfer to correct project code
	324724	Flying Start - Sirhowy Primary	6,500	Welsh Government	Flyng Start	New Approval
	324726	Flying Start - Garnlydan	24,500	Welsh Government	Flyng Start	New Approval
	324728	Flying Start - Blaina ICC	235,000	Welsh Government	Flyng Start	New Approval
	324733	Flying Start Abertillery	12,000	Welsh Government	Flyng Start	New Approval
	324735	Flying Start Brynithel FS Centre	17,400	Welsh Government	Flyng Start	New Approval
	324737	Flying Start Capital (Covid-funding)	36,000	Welsh Government	Flyng Start	New Approval
	324738	FS Covid Recovery - Cwm Dev. Garden Space	115,000	Welsh Government	Flyng Start	New Approval
	324739	FS Covid Recovery - Scout Hall	50,000	Welsh Government	Flyng Start	New Approval
	323006	Cwrt Mytton Replacement Boilers	50,000	Blaenau Gwent	Capital Programme	Transfer from cost code - 327102 to fund replacement boilers at Cwrt Mytton
Economy						
	326180	Lime Avenue Business Park	242,927			Adjustment to funding due to system reporting glitch.
	326183	Regain 2	1,550,000	Welsh Government		Additional approval for the National Digital Exploitation Centre at Regain 2.
	326268	Covid Recovery for Town Centres	-25,000	Welsh Government	Valleys Taskforce	Virement from Covid Recovery approval to fill the funding gap on the Parc Bryn Bach - Co Working Space project, as agreed with Welsh Government.
	326207	Parc Bryn Bach - Co Working Space	25,000	Blaenau Gwent	Valleys Taskforce	
Education, Active Living and Learning						
	324159	Glyncod Highways Works	30,000	Blaenau Gwent	Capital Programme	Transfer from cost code - 327102 to fund the new layby works on Allotment Road, Glyncod.
	324138	Education Capital Maintenance	-30,000	Welsh Government	Education Capital Maintenance	Virement to individual projects
	324139	Education Capital Maintenance 20/21	-142,171	Welsh Government	Education Capital Maintenance	Virement to individual projects
	324151	Tredeggar Comp Upgrade Electrical Supply	8,107	Welsh Government	Education Capital Maintenance	Transfer from cost code - 324139
	324158	Beaufort Hill Kitchen	69,238	Welsh Government	Education Capital Maintenance	Transfer from cost code - 324139
	324161	Pen Y Cwm – Refurbishment Works	53,376	Welsh Government	Education Capital Maintenance	Transfer from cost code - 324139
	324205	St. Marys CIW MUGA	11,450	Welsh Government	Education Capital Maintenance	Transfer from cost code - 324139
	324159	Glyncod Highways Works	30,000	Welsh Government	Education Capital Maintenance	Transfer from cost code - 324138 to fund the new layby works on Allotment Road, Glyncod.
	324560	Schools IT Infrastructure	14,388	Welsh Government	Education Capital Maintenance	Welsh Government approval
	324755	Band B - Welsh Medium Remodelling Bro Helyg	-338,487	Welsh Government	Band B	Reprofiling of spend within the Band B funding envelope
Environment						
	327045	BRC Decommissioning Project	-191,777			
	327065	Re:Fit	-2,088,980			
	327069	Green Recovery	-10,010			Reversal of system glitch where funding amounts were duplicated, resulting in the total funding being overstated by double within the quarter one report.
	327071	Education Centre	-200,000			
	327073	Kerbside Recycling Lorry	-165,566			
	327074	New Vale HWRC Refurbishment Works	-256,526			
Infrastructure						
	328312	Local Transport Fund 2020/21	-16,785			
	328404	Flood Damage - Emergency Repairs	-12,593			Reversal of system glitch where funding amounts were duplicated, resulting in the total funding being overstated by double within the quarter one report.
	328405	Aberbeeg Road Repairs	-110,498			
All Portfolios						
	321112	Disabled Access - Special Programme	5,960			Transfer from cost code - 327102 to fund essential disabled access works within corporate buildings

It should be noted that the funding changes detailed above will not balance to total funding changes between Q1 to Q2

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Agenda Item 15

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21
Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 02.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **15 December 2021**
Report Subject: **Use of General and Earmarked Reserves 2021/2022**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. N. Daniels, Leader / Executive Member
Corporate Services**
Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer Resources**

Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	11/11/21	30.11.21			22/11/21	15/12/21		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To report to the members of the Executive Committee the forecast reserves position for 2021/2022 as at Quarter 2 (30 September 2021).
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 There are a number of statutory requirements concerning Local Authority Reserves, including:
 - The Local Government Act 1972;
 - The Local Government Finance Act 1988;
 - The Local Government Finance Act 1992;
 - The Local Government Act 2003; and
 - The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.
 - 2.2 The CIPFA Local Authority Accounting Panel (LAAP) issued Bulletin 99: Local Authority Reserves and Balances in July 2014. This provides non-statutory guidance on relevant issues including:
 - Proper accounting treatment; and
 - Principles to assess the adequacy of reserves.
 - 2.3 To ensure compliance with CIPFA Local Authority Accounting Panel Bulletin 99 and identified best practice, the Council revised its protocol for managing reserves, with effect from April 2015.
 - 2.4 One aspect of the revised protocol concerns the enhancement of Elected Member engagement and scrutiny. To this end quarterly reports are prepared and presented to Executive and Joint Budget Scrutiny Committee during the financial year. These detail actual and forecast use of general and earmarked reserves, changes to the requirement to hold specific reserves and the level of reserve balances.
 - 2.5 In order to adopt a long-term approach to the need to provide services to the citizens of Blaenau Gwent, the protocol was amended and agreed by Council in March 2016 to include a target level for general reserves. This was set as 4% of the last reported actual net revenue expenditure (as included in the Revenue Outturn return).

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 The Joint Scrutiny Committee supported this report at its meeting on 22nd November 2021.

3.2 That the Executive Committee considers the forecast use of general and earmarked reserves for 2021/2022 and:

- consider the impact of the £2.814m favourable variance for 2021/2022 would have on the budgeted contribution to the General Reserve;
- note the forecast increase of the General Reserve in 2021/2022 to £10.567m, being 8.0% of net revenue expenditure, above the 4% target level;
- Consider the need for ongoing prudent financial management given the potential for future public spending restrictions required to fund the impact of Covid-19; and
- continue to challenge budget overspends and implement appropriate service Action Plans, where required.

3.3 Maintenance of general reserves at an adequate level is crucial to the Council being able to meet future liabilities arising from risks for which specific provision has not been made.

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

4.1 **National Well-being Goals**

The management of earmarked and general reserves (in recognition of the need to plan for known or predicted future obligations, unexpected events or emergencies), allows the Authority to deliver services in pursuance of its obligations under the national well-being goals.

4.2 **Corporate Priorities**

This report supports the Council Corporate Plan 2020/22 proposed outcome statement “An ambitious and Innovative Council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities”.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Financial Impact**

5.1.1 Section 6 provides an overall summary of the forecast financial position in relation to the balances in general and earmarked reserves at 31 March 2022.

5.1.2 The general reserve opening balance of £7.553m represents 5.72% of net revenue expenditure, which is above the 4% target level of £5.284m. Table

1 at 6.1.3 (below) shows the forecast position for the general reserve at year-end 2021/2022 to be an increase of £3.014m, to £10.567m. This balance would represent 8.0% of net revenue expenditure £5.283m above the 4% target level of £5.284m, indicating further progress towards strengthening the financial resilience of the Council and providing a buffer to deal with unexpected future issues.

5.1.3 The forecast increase in general reserves is a result of:

- currently forecast net portfolio underspends of £2.814m and;
- an agreed budget contribution in 2021/22 of £0.200m to support medium term financial planning and strengthen the Council's financial resilience

5.1.4 Table 2 at 6.1.6 (below) shows the forecast level of specific/earmarked reserves at 31 March 2022 to be £20.913m, an in year increase of £0.132m.

5.1.5 Table 3 at 6.1.8 (below) shows the forecast level of specific/earmarked reserves per reserve category at 31 March 2022. Further details of earmarked reserve movements are included in Appendix 1.

Significant elements of these earmarked sums relate to grant funding held in respect of specific projects or services that will be utilised in delivering the relevant service outcomes. In future years, it is probable that there will be restrictions on public spending in order to mitigate the extraordinary levels of borrowing incurred by Central Government in dealing with Covid-19. It would therefore be prudent to retain appropriate levels of earmarked and general reserves to assist with a funding situation potentially similar to that experienced during the last decade.

5.2 Risk

5.2.1 The Council must ensure an appropriate level and use of reserves to support its financial sustainability and to meet future liabilities arising from risks for which a specific provision has not been made.

5.2.2 The 2021/2022 budget includes a planned increase in the general reserve of £0.2m and in earmarked reserves of £1.054m. Additional increases to the general reserve of £0.2m per annum are planned for the life of the current Medium Term Financial Strategy. However potential ongoing cost pressures and reductions in income associated with the response to Covid-19 may adversely impact on the Council's ability to maintain and increase the level of reserves.

5.2.3 Failure to comply with the requirements set out in CIPFA LAAP Bulletin 99: *Local Authority Reserves and Balances*, which include the implementation of a clear protocol for the establishment, use, control and review of reserves, could result in adverse comments by regulators.

- 5.2.4 A protocol for the management of reserves was adopted in April 2015 to mitigate the risk of non-compliance with CIPFA LAAP Bulletin 99 and identified best practice.
- 5.2.5 In the short-term, the level and adequacy of reserves are regularly reviewed and monitored through regular outturn/ forecast reporting. In the medium term, reserves are assessed as part of the budget-setting process and the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which includes provision for an increase in reserves of £0.2m per annum over the life of the Strategy.
- 5.2.6 There is a risk that failure to maintain reserves at an appropriate level will attract adverse criticism from regulators. This risk can be mitigated by application of the Council's Reserves Policy including increases to the General Reserve if required.

5.3 **Legal**

- 5.3.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires authorities in England and Wales to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.
- 5.3.2 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a duty on chief finance officers' to report on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves when the authority is considering its budget requirement.
- 5.3.3 Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the chief finance officer to report to all the authority's councillors if there is or is likely to be unlawful expenditure or an unbalanced budget. This would include situations where reserves have become seriously depleted and it is forecast that the authority will not have the resources to meet its expenditure in a particular financial year.

5.4 **Personnel**

There are no direct personnel/staffing implications arising out of this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

- 6.1.1 The level of the Council's general reserve disclosed in the statutory accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2021 was £7.553m equating to 5.72% of net revenue expenditure (as reported in the 2020/2021 Revenue Outturn forms). The current 4% target level of general reserves is £5.284m.
- 6.1.2 The revenue budget forecast year-end position for 2021/2022 (as at end of Quarter 2) indicates a surplus of £2.814m.
- 6.1.3 Therefore, the potential impact on the forecast outturn position for the general reserve at 31 March 2022 would be as follows:

Table 1: General Reserve	£000
Balance at 31 March 2021	7,553
Budgeted Contribution to General Reserve	200
Contribution to the Reserve: Net Portfolio Underspends	2,814
Forecast Balance at 31 March 2022	10,567

6.1.4 Appendix 1 gives details of the total earmarked reserves held at the start of the 2021/2022 financial year (£20.781m) with actual reserve movements to the end of quarter 2 (30 September 2021) and forecast movements to 31 March 2022.

6.1.5 The level of earmarked reserves has been determined in accordance with the agreed reserves protocol. The level of earmarked reserves available to the Authority is forecast to increase by £0.132m in 2021/2022.

6.1.6 The current summary forecast outturn position for earmarked reserves at 31 March 2022 is as follows:

Table 2: Earmarked Reserves	£000
Balance at 31 March 2021	20,781
Budgeted Contribution to Earmarked Reserves	1,054
Actual Expenditure to Q2	(155)
Forecast Expenditure to Q4	(767)
Provisional Balance at 31 March 2022	20,913

6.1.7 For those reserves that have been utilised to fund actual expenditure to 30 September 2021 (£0.155m), details of the expenditure funded have been provided in Appendix 2.

6.1.8 The current summary forecast outturn position for the categories of specific/earmarked reserves at 31 March 2022 is as follows:

Table 3: Summary of Provisional Earmarked Reserve Balances at 31 March 2022	£000
Earmarked for Capital Purposes	745
Usable Earmarked Revenue Reserves	13,135
Unusable Earmarked Revenue Reserves	5,203
Revenue Grants and Contributions Unapplied	1,830
Provisional Balance at 31 March 2022	20,913

6.1.9 The reserve categories are summarised as follows:

- Earmarked for Capital Purposes are to meet expenditure or liabilities arising on Capital schemes;
- Usable Earmarked Revenue Reserves can be applied to fund revenue expenditure on specific schemes or services. These are retained at the discretion of the Council for known or potential liabilities and projects;
- Unusable Earmarked Revenue Reserves represent sums held by the Council but cannot be applied generally or specifically to fund services.
- Revenue Grants and Contributions Unapplied have yet to be applied to the specific scheme or service to which they relate, and cannot be applied to fund items other than those for which they were received.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

6.2.1 The management of earmarked and general reserves (in recognition of the need to plan for known or predicted future obligations, unexpected events or emergencies), helps demonstrate stewardship of the Authority's resources and its ability to provide services to the local community.

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

6.3.1 Not applicable.

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

6.4.1 Stewardship of the Authority's resources allows for the provision of services to the local community in the short and long term.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

6.5.1 Not applicable.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

6.6.1 Not applicable.

6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

6.7.1 Not applicable.

6.8 **Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions**

6.8.1 Not applicable.

6.9 **Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment**

6.9.1 A Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment has not been completed for the Authority's forecast use of reserves, as it provides details of the Authority's transactions for the financial year and position at the year-end. This information can be utilised in making decisions that might help to reduce the inequalities of outcome associated with socio-economic disadvantage.

6.10 **Equality Impact Assessment**

6.10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this report provides an estimated outturn position in relation to the Authority's reserve balances for the financial year, on an objective basis in accordance with relevant accounting standards, codes, concepts, principles, guidance and legislation.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 In the short-term, the level and adequacy of reserves are regularly reviewed and monitored through regular outturn/forecast reports.

7.2 There are legal requirements in respect of the reporting of reserves when setting the annual budget and the statutory outturn position is considered by the Authority's external auditors in their audit of the annual Statement of Accounts.

7.3 In the medium term, reserves are assessed as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

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Appendix 1: Earmarked Reserves Movements 2021-2022

Name of Reserve	Balance Brought Fwd 1 April 2021	Reserve Adjustments		Total Reserve Adjustments	Actual Expenditure	Forecast Expenditure	Balance Carried Fwd 31 March 2022
		Increases	Decreases				
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Earmarked for Capital Purposes							
Deminimis Capital Works	86,098.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	86,098.46
Facilities	118,769.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	118,769.00
Energy Centre	107,217.22	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	107,217.22
Industrial Units	50,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(50,000.00)	0.00
IT Infrastructure	225,811.79	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	225,811.79
Road Maintenance	229,715.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(229,715.00)	0.00
WRAP Regional Vehicles	206,579.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	206,579.85
Total Earmarked for Capital Purposes:	1,024,191.32	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(279,715.00)	744,476.32
Usable Earmarked Revenue Reserves							
Budget Contingency Fund / Invest to Save	64,351.89	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	64,351.89
Business Support Hybrid Model	53,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	53,000.00
Corporate Landlord Building Rationalisation	73,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	73,000.00
COVID19 Response & Recovery	2,000,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(11,367.00)	0.00	1,988,633.00
Customer Services	95,892.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(6,250.00)	89,642.05
Discretionary Housing Payments	67,482.87	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	67,482.87
Displaced Expenditure - Social Services	87,230.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(23,682.00)	(63,368.00)	180.00
Downsizing & Redundancy & Transitional Costs	183,038.71	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	183,038.71
Election Costs	36,228.83	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	36,228.83
Financial Planning / Resilience	2,500,000.00	1,054,000.00	0.00	1,054,000.00	0.00	0.00	3,554,000.00
Future Interest Rate	244,055.89	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	244,055.89
General/ Voluntary Sector Grants	27,680.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	27,680.00
ICT	1,438,352.18	0.00	0.00	0.00	(1,875.00)	(191,125.00)	1,245,352.18
Individual Schools Budget (ISB)	168,491.81	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	168,491.81
Insurance Liabilities	2,851,230.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,851,230.80
Local / Strategic Development Plans	143,512.54	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	143,512.54
Match Funding Regeneration Projects	60,129.22	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	60,129.22
Members Local Grants	54,192.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	54,192.28
Payroll Project Management	23,529.97	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	23,529.97
PRC Funding	293,219.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	293,219.00
Re-fit Loan Repayments	18,750.39	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(18,750.39)	0.00
Specialist Commercial Advice (Silent Valley)	100,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(15,000.00)	85,000.00
Social Services - Legal Costs	400,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	400,000.00
Stock Conditions Survey	12,137.34	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12,137.34
Strategic Business Reviews	193,061.27	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	193,061.27
Superannuation	600,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	600,000.00

Appendix 1: Earmarked Reserves Movements 2021-2022

Name of Reserve	Balance Brought Fwd 1 April 2021	Reserve Adjustments		Total Reserve Adjustments	Actual Expenditure	Forecast Expenditure	Balance Carried Fwd 31 March 2022
		Increases	Decreases				
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Taxation	133,913.08	0.00	0.00	0.00	(3,320.00)	0.00	130,593.08
Technology Park Feasibility Study	26,017.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	26,017.00
Test, Trace, Protect Service	77,944.86	0.00	0.00	0.00	(77,944.86)	0.00	0.00
Transport Oncost	147,470.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	147,470.00
Waste Services	120,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	120,000.00
Winter Maintenace	200,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200,000.00
Total Usable Earmarked Revenue Reserves:	12,493,911.98	1,054,000.00	0.00	1,054,000.00	(118,188.86)	(294,493.39)	13,135,229.73
Unusable Earmarked Revenue Reserves							
Building Control Fees	75,868.68	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	75,868.68
Cardiff Capital Region City Deal	136,361.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	136,361.00
Deposits and Bonds	3,200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,200.00
Land & Property Charges (Social Services)	161,954.55	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	161,954.55
LMS Balances	3,681,671.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,681,671.49
Section 106 Agreements	191,988.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	191,988.51
W Adoption Collaboration	708,973.95	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	708,973.95
Social Services - Gwent Regional Development (SP)	43,330.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	(7,793.83)	0.00	35,536.77
Workforce Development Collaboration	207,516.16	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	207,516.16
Total Unusable Earmarked Revenue Reserves:	5,210,864.94	0.00	0.00	0.00	(7,793.83)	0.00	5,203,071.11
Revenue Grants and Contributions Unapplied							
All Age School Forum	100,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100,000.00
Aneurin Bevan Health Board - Education	18,225.89	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	18,225.89
Community Safety & CCTV	45,895.66	0.00	0.00	0.00	(11,663.00)	0.00	34,232.66
Contribution to Crematorium Infrastructure Works	63,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	63,000.00
Early Action Together Programme	31,903.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	(17,272.00)	(14,631.29)	0.00
Early Years Grant	279,057.24	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(73,324.00)	205,733.24
Education - Gypsy Travellers	21,028.42	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	21,028.42
Flood Risk Management	132,729.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	132,729.00
Homelessness Transitional Funding	55,463.57	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(4,467.85)	50,995.72
Individual Electoral Register	103,745.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	103,745.13
LEA / ALN Grant	168,729.16	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	168,729.16
Participatory Budget	100,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(100,000.00)	0.00
Period Poverty	12,796.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12,796.05
Planning WAG Grant - Planning Committee	2,103.66	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,103.66
Regen General Contributions Unapplied (Town Centre Management)	65,621.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	65,621.25
Rights of Way Diversions	20,255.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	20,255.00
Scrutiny Development	7,867.15	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,867.15

Appendix 1: Earmarked Reserves Movements 2021-2022

Name of Reserve	Balance Brought Fwd 1 April 2021	Reserve Adjustments		Total Reserve Adjustments	Actual Expenditure	Forecast Expenditure	Balance Carried Fwd 31 March 2022
		Increases	Decreases				
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Small & Rural Schools Grant	35,904.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	35,904.00
SMIFFs	166,685.84	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	166,685.84
Syrian Resettlement Programme	173,520.88	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	173,520.88
Tai Calon Highways Maintenance (Commuted Sums)	374,876.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	374,876.00
Youth Service	72,360.34	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	72,360.34
Total Revenue Grants and Contributions Unapplied:	2,051,767.53	0.00	0.00	0.00	(28,935.00)	(192,423.14)	1,830,409.39
Total:	20,780,735.77	1,054,000.00	0.00	1,054,000.00	(154,917.69)	(766,631.53)	20,913,186.55

Earmarked for Capital Purposes	Revenue reserves established to meet expenditure or liabilities arising on Capital schemes.
Usable Earmarked Revenue Reserves	Reserves that can be applied to fund revenue expenditure on specific schemes or services. These reserves are retained at the discretion of the Council for known or potential liabilities and projects.
Non-Usable Earmarked Revenue Reserves	Reserves which represent sums that are held by the Council but cannot be applied generally or specifically to fund services. These includes amounts restricted by statutory provision and balances relating to other individuals or entities, such as the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal or Schools.
Revenue Grants and Contributions Unapplied	Grants or contributions received by the Council that should not have to be repaid to the awarding body but have yet to be applied to the specific scheme or service to which they relate. These reserves cannot be applied to fund items other than those for which they were received.

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Appendix 2: Expenditure Funded by Earmarked Reserves, 2020-2021

<u>Name of Reserve</u>	<u>Actual Expenditure to Q2</u>	<u>Purpose of Expenditure</u>
	£	
COVID19 Response & Recovery	11,367.00	Payment to Recruitment agency.
Displaced Expenditure - Social Services	23,682.00	Lateral flow testing and mental health professional training.
ICT	1,875.00	Laptops.
Taxation	3,320.00	Tax Consultancy.
Test, Trace, Protect Service	77,944.86	Underspend from 2020/2021 to fund additional EHO's required in 2021/2022.
Social Services - Gwent Regional Development (SP)	7,793.83	Regional costs incurred - Wider Gwent Development for SP (Supporting People).
Community Safety & CCTV	11,663.00	This reserve covers the shortfall in funding from the PCC grant which pays towards the salary of the Community Safety Officer.
Early Action Together Programme	17,272.00	Employee Costs.
Total to Qtr 4:	154,917.69	

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Agenda Item 16

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 02.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **15th December 2021**

Report Subject: **Bridging The Gap (BTG) Programme 2021/2022 – Progress Update July to September 2021**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden - Chief Officer Resources**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	4/11/2021	30.11.21			22.11.21	15.12.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report is to provide Members with an update on the progress made with the Strategic Business Reviews during the period July to September 2021, and the latest assessment of the financial achievement for the current financial year.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) currently identifies budget gaps for 2022/23 to 2026/27 as:-

Table 1: Budget Gaps (surplus) per Draft MTFS (November 2021)

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Prior to BtG Opportunities	(548)	6,693	3,546	3,551	3,555	3,556

2.2 In recognising the challenges that the Council faces in the short, medium and long term, a programme of Strategic Business Reviews have been developed to deal with the potential funding gaps identified in the MTFS (Table 1) and to improve the financial resilience of the Council.

2.3 The latest assessment of the potential achievement of the BtG programme (as per the Draft MTFS) is estimated to be £7.5m between 2021/2022 and 2026/2027. Table 2 provides the annual assessment of achievement at that time.

Table 2: Latest Estimated Achievement of BtG

Estimated Achievement:	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 & 2026/27	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Low	755	2,688	1,180	1,262	846	7,577

- 2.4 In agreeing the budget for 2021/2022 the estimated achievement of BtG is £755,000 resulting in a surplus budget of £1.3m. For 2022/2023 onwards the forecast budget gaps based upon the estimated achievement above are:-

Table 3: Remaining Budget Gaps following application of BtG Opportunities

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/27
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Remaining Budget Gap	(1,303)	4,005	2,366	2,289	2,709	2,710

- 2.5 The Council's Corporate Leadership Team, supported by officers from all services are continuing to identify / develop additional BtG proposals to close the future years' budget gaps.
- 2.6 The budget gaps identified within the report are based upon the Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy assumptions. These assumptions include a cash flat settlement from Welsh Government, pay awards & price inflation of 2% per annum and annual cost pressures of £4.2m for 2022/23 and £2m thereafter.
- 2.7 Variations to/from these assumptions will impact the budget gaps.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Joint Scrutiny Committee supported Option 1 at its meeting on 22nd November 2021.

3.2 **Option 1 – (Recommended Option)**

Members of the Executive Committee consider and approve the report and provide appropriate challenge to the Bridging the Gap programme.

3.3 **Option 2**

Members of Executive Committee do not accept the report.

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

- 4.1 The Bridging the Gap programme supports the achievement of the Outcome Statement of an ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities, supporting:
- The financial resilience of the Council
 - Developing a more commercial organisation to generate income and deliver cost reductions to make local services sustainable and raise money to re-invest in our priorities

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

5.1.2 Financial Year 2021/2022 – Forecast Out-turn

- 5.1.3 Table 4 identifies the Strategic Business Reviews, the estimated achievement and the forecast actual achievement to be delivered in 2021/2022.

Table 4: Strategic Business Reviews Forecast Out-turn 2021/2022

Strategic Business Review	Estimated Achievement 2021/2022 £'000	Forecast Achievement 2021/2022 £'000	(Adverse) / Favourable Variance £'000
Industrial Units	0	92	92
Commercial Waste	0	0	0
Income Recovery	0	0	0
Fees & Charges	0	0	0
Commercial Activity	0	0	0
Third Party Spend	490	490	0
Assets & Property	35	140	105
Review of MRP	0	0	0
Future Workplace & Service Delivery	0	0	0
Growth Strategy	230	230	0
Low Carbon	0	0	0
TOTAL	755	952	197

- 5.1.4 Overall, the forecast achievement is expected to exceed the estimated achievement of £0.75m by £0.2m for the current financial year. This is due to:
- the successful outcome of the appeals on the rateable values of the Council's property and assets, with the Council receiving a rates rebate, relating to previous years' charges, totalling £120,000. Further appeals are anticipated during the current financial year
 - Rental income on the Industrial Units portfolio exceeding the income budget by £92,000.
- 5.1.5 A number of Strategic Business Reviews have no financial achievement for 2021/2022, due to the impact the Covid-19 pandemic is having on the Council's ability to progress the Reviews including:

- Fees and Charges due the economic impact of the pandemic on the residents and local businesses
- Commercial Waste, there was a delay in implementing the new service change due to closure of businesses within the borough as a result of the national lockdown in March 2020.

5.1.6 In setting the budget for 2021/2022, cost pressure funding was built into the budget for Industrial Units (£133,000) and Commercial Waste (£23,000) to recognise the medium / long term impact of the pandemic and mitigate the resulting cost pressure for 2021/2022. However, the financial performance of the Industrial Units has improved.

5.1.7 A progress update on the individual business reviews is attached at Appendix 1.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

5.2.1 Current assessment of achievement against the Strategic Business reviews do not identify sufficient financial benefits to Bridge the funding Gap identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy in the medium to long term. Additional / alternative proposals will therefore be required to ensure that the Council can set a balanced budget.

5.3 **Legal**

5.3.1 The Council must set a balanced budget on an annual basis and the Bridging the Gap programme will support this requirement.

5.4 **Human Resources**

5.4.1 The Strategic Business Review, Future Place and Service Delivery, will have an impact on staff as it will result in a variation to Terms and Conditions.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

6.1.1 The scope and outcome, including key activities for each of the Strategic Business Reviews is attached at Appendix 1.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

6.2.1 The Bridging the Gap Programme support the Council in the development of its annual budgets which in turn will allow the Council to deliver services to the public.

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

6.3.1 Officers & Members of the Council are involved in the development of the Bridging the Gap Strategic Business Reviews.

- 6.3.2 The proposals have/will be considered by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.
- 6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**
- 6.4.1 The Bridging the Gap programme supports the Council's medium term financial planning in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 6.5 **Preventative focus**
- 6.5.1 Included within the Bridging the Gap programme is a proposal focussing on an evaluation of the long term impact of prevention and early intervention on reducing the requirement for high cost services and better outcomes for our most vulnerable residents.
- 6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**
- 6.6.1 Achievement of the Bridging the Gap proposals will require cross Council working and collaboration / partnerships with other stakeholders.
- 6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**
- 6.7.1 Bridging the Gap proposals have been developed across the Council and are crosscutting in nature.
- 6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***
- 6.8.1 The Council is committed to the Decarbonisation Plan to achieve a carbon neutral public sector by 2030 and the Bridging the Gap programme includes the strategic business review, Low Carbon.
- 6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***
N/A
- 6.9b ***EqlA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***
- 6.9.1 Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken on the opportunities taken forward as part of the Bridging the Gap proposals.
7. **Monitoring Arrangements**
- 7.1 Progress against predicted delivery of Bridging the Gap proposals form part of the budget monitoring arrangements and is monitored and reviewed by the Strategic Commercial and Commissioning Board, Scrutiny Committee & Executive.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1*

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Review Title	Lead Officer/ Portfolio Holder	Scope and Outcome	Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables			
			Quarter 1 2021/2022		Quarter 2 2021/2022		Quarter 3 2021/2022		Quarter 4 2021/2022			
Industrial Portfolio	Ellie Fry	<p>To review the Council's Industrial Unit Portfolio to identify areas for improvement and opportunities to maximise income.</p> <p>Intended outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a long term sustainable income source for the Council. Explore and develop new income streams. Reduce reactive maintenance liabilities. Improve quality of portfolio to further support economic development. Get greater visibility of income and expenditure to support invest/divest decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointed agents to undertake high value RR's. Appointed agents to manage service charge (SC) program Planned 1st phase of Capex/revenue investments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up new accountancy structure Implement SC to pilot estate Completed handover of Lime Avenue units to portfolio Handover of BoxHyb units Completion of first lettings at Lime Av. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of rent review program Review of 1st phase SC program Begin targeted investment program on portfolio Recruitment of key estates role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further role out of SC. Continued investment in portfolio. Completion of 						
			Financial Management:-		Quarterly progress update against deliverables (Project outcomes and financial)							
			Estimated Financial Achievement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 of the high value rent reviews are underway and initial valuations are showing a very positive reply due to positive market conditions. On target to roll out service charge program to pilot estate by end Q2. We have completed the letting of 5 of the 9 Lime Av hybrid units with a further 2 under offer and with solicitors. There has been strong interest in the remaining 2 which I would anticipate being let by the end of Q3. Awaiting rent review results to update figures. 							
			2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025					
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000								
0	0	100	0	50								
Risk Management:-												
Risks / Issues					Mitigating Actions							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departure of Team Manager Estates & Asset Management Lack of resource (legal, estates, tech services) Negative PR associated with actions End of year accounts affect finance resources required to manage portfolio budgets Covid-19 related rent arrears 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members briefings to forewarn about PR issues Recruitment underway for estates & legal role Communications Officer in post to support PR going forward Regular credit reviews to keep onto of debt and appropriate action being taken. 							
Commercial Waste	Richard Crook	<p>To roll out a new Commercial Waste service borough wide. A successful capital bid secured £250,000 for Blaenau Gwent's Commercial Waste Service.</p> <p>During the financial year 2019/2020, the Trade Waste Service underwent a full revamp with a revised implementation date of 1st April 2021.</p> <p>Intended outcome</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch of Service [May 2021] Liaise with customers re. any teething issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidation of the new service Monthly budget monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin proactive marketing of new service to attract more customers, annual review of pricing strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of online contracts and Duty of Cares Implementation of revised pricing schedule 						
			Financial Management:-		Quarterly progress update against deliverables (Project outcomes and financial)							
			Estimated Financial Achievement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Service was launched on Tuesday 4th May following delay [this was to allow businesses to reopen after relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions around non-essential businesses]. New Service continues to be consolidated, initial issues with vehicles, rounds and customer's containment requirements have settled. Budget being monitored with Portfolio Accountant 							
			2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025					
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000								
0	0	0	64	96								
Risk Management:-												
Risks / Issues					Mitigating Actions							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 3rd Covid-19 wave could see the reintroduction of restrictions meaning some customers would have to close and therefore suspend their service requirements. 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some customers would continue to operate, therefore minimising losses. 							

Review Title	Lead Officer/ Portfolio holder	Scope and Outcome	Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables																										
			Quarter 1 2021/2022		Quarter 2 2021/2022		Quarter 3 2021/2022		Quarter 4 2021/2022																										
Income Recovery	Rhian Hayden	To review current income recovery activities to ensure best / efficient practices in place. Intended outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income recovery policies are appropriate and include early intervention actions agreed Fees & charges are implemented payment in advance of service delivery (where appropriate) thereby avoiding costs of issuing invoices easy access to various payment methods use of technology is maximised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current arrears levels Update debt analysis Implement agreed fees & charges for 2021/22 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor debt levels & ongoing recovery rates Revisit recommendations of CIPFA review Identify services where payment in advance can be implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor debt levels & ongoing recovery rates Consult with service areas identified where payment in advance could be implemented Recommend pilot scheme – attending community organised sessions, providing advice as appropriate (subject to lifting of restrictions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor debt levels & ongoing recovery rates Work with services where payment in advance can be implemented Review outcomes from the pilot scheme and continue attending community organised sessions (providing advice as appropriate) 																													
			Financial Management:-			Quarterly progress update against deliverables (Project outcomes and financial)																													
Estimated Financial Achievement																																			
2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025																															
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000																															
54	0	0	0	0																															
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Income Recovery review has been impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic. <p>2020/21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant numbers of Blaenau Gwent residents have been affected by the economic impact of the pandemic and throughout 2020/21 the Council saw increasing daily contacts from residents indicating they were having difficulty paying their bills (including Council Tax, NNDR & other Council liabilities e.g. Industrial Unit rentals) – alternative payment arrangement have been agreed and are being monitored including payment holidays, smaller instalment payments over a longer period of time. Where appropriate individuals have been encouraged to apply for Council Tax Reduction Scheme (eligible applications have increased significantly compared to previous years) and signposted to other advice organisations. Limited formal recovery action has been undertaken (this is consistent with the agreed approach across all Welsh LA's) Unfortunately the planned attendance at community organised sessions to provide advice to the public was suspended in line with the government's coronavirus restrictions. Whilst many Direct Debits were cancelled there has been an increased take up overall from those who would previously have paid by cash or cheque (a consequence of the national lockdowns & restrictions) <p>The Council Tax portal is now online with approximately 950 registering to use the service – when registered Council Tax payers are able to receive / view their accounts on line, make payments, set up a direct debit. There is also the ability to report change of circumstances via the my Council Services app. The overall impact of the above is a £1.3m increase in the level of arrears as at 31 March 2021 when compared to 2020:-</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Arrears as at 31 March 2020 £000's</th> <th>Arrears as at 31 March 2021 £000's</th> <th>Increase / (Decrease) £000's</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Council Tax</td> <td>5,046</td> <td>7,069</td> <td>2,023</td> <td>Reduced collection rates have been identified across Wales, WG have acknowledged this pressure on LA budgets and provided a grant at the end of 2020/21 to help mitigate some of this (for BG this was £587k).</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sundry Accounts</td> <td>5,714</td> <td>5,191</td> <td>(523)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>HB Overpayments</td> <td>1,561</td> <td>1,372</td> <td>(189)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>12,321</td> <td>13,632</td> <td>1,311</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>2021/22 – Quarter 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current debt analysis continues Court dates for formal recovery action have commenced with the first court taking place during September 2021, with further sessions planned for October and December 2021 and February 2022. Bailiff visits have been reinstated. Recommendations of CIPFA being reviewed. 									Arrears as at 31 March 2020 £000's	Arrears as at 31 March 2021 £000's	Increase / (Decrease) £000's		Council Tax	5,046	7,069	2,023	Reduced collection rates have been identified across Wales, WG have acknowledged this pressure on LA budgets and provided a grant at the end of 2020/21 to help mitigate some of this (for BG this was £587k).	Sundry Accounts	5,714	5,191	(523)		HB Overpayments	1,561	1,372	(189)		Total	12,321	13,632	1,311	
	Arrears as at 31 March 2020 £000's	Arrears as at 31 March 2021 £000's	Increase / (Decrease) £000's																																
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Total	12,321	13,632	1,311																																
Risk Management:-																																			
Risks / Issues				Mitigating Actions																															
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic impact of Covid 19 may have medium / long term implications 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor arrears levels & compliance with agreed payment arrangements 																															

Review Title	Lead Officer/ Portfolio holder	Scope and Outcome	Key Activities / Deliverables	Key Activities / Deliverables	Key Activities / Deliverables	Key Activities / Deliverables		
			Quarter 1 2021/2022	Quarter 2 2021/2022	Quarter 3 2021/2022	Quarter 4 2021/2022		
Fees and Charges	Rhian Hayden	<p>To review and develop an approach to the setting of fees and charges that reflects full cost recovery, and identifies further opportunities for raising income from discretionary services. Options to stretch targets on those budget lines that over achieving will be explored in future years.</p> <p>Intended outcome</p> <p>Fees and Charges are set at an appropriate level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review baseline income for 2020/21 - to assess underlying issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor Q1 forecast position Develop a priority matrix to determine which areas have potential to develop into full cost recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options appraisals for individual areas in line with agreed priority list Re-establish the Officer Working Group and commence review of Fees & Charges Register for 2022/2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options appraisals for individual areas in line with agreed priority list Complete Review of Fees & Charges Register for 2022/23 and report to Council 		
			Financial Management:-				Quarterly progress update against deliverables (Project outcomes and financial)	
			Estimated Financial Achievement			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarter 1 forecast Fees & Charges analysed and reported as part of the Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring report. Initial discussions have taken place to develop full cost recovery model for social services. 		
2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025				
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000				
121	0	100	100	100				
Risk Management:-								
Risks / Issues			Mitigating Actions					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political agreement to move to full cost recovery Reduced demand for Service as a consequence of Loss of custom with increased charges 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued monitoring of income collected through fees & charges Fees & Charges are set in consultation with relevant stakeholders 					

Review Title	Lead Officer/ Portfolio holder	Scope and Outcome	Key Activities / Deliverables	Key Activities / Deliverables	Key Activities / Deliverables	Key Activities / Deliverables			
			Quarter 1 2021/2022	Quarter 2 2021/2022	Quarter 3 2021/2022	Quarter 4 2021/2022			
Commercial activity, investment and new income	Richard Crook	<p>This strategic review will focus on identifying additional commercial opportunities to supplement the current activities of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fees and charges Developing the Industrial Portfolio Current income from traded or shared services Property Investment inside the Borough and out of the Borough Investment in energy and low carbon activities Disposals or development of assets and property <p>Intended outcome</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing for Exec around Wind Turbine opportunity Planning Feasibility work being undertaken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of planning application for Turbine Review Investment Framework inc advice around ROI Identify Investment funds in MTFS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement exercise for Turbine Market review of potential property investments Finalise funding arrangement for the Turbine Review Gov Tech Opportunity Review Industrial estate Energy Challenge Consider LUF investment Complete SV Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sign off Commercial arrangements with SV for the Turbine Report and agree on SV Options Agree Investment Fund in MTFS 			
			Financial Management:-			Quarterly progress update against deliverables (Project outcomes and financial)			
			Estimated Financial Achievement						
2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025					
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000					
0	0	0	50	50					
Risk Management:-									
Risks / Issues			Mitigating Actions						
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 						

Review Title	Lead Officer/ Portfolio holder	Scope and Outcome	Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables		
			Quarter 1 2021/2022		Quarter 2 2021/2022		Quarter 3 2021/2022		Quarter 4 2021/2022		
Third party expenditure – commissioning, procurement and contract management	Bernadette Elias	<p>The Council commissions, procures and manages contracts with a wide range of third party suppliers across all its services spending circa. £80m +. This strategic business review seeks to identify for efficiencies and improved outcomes where possible.</p> <p>Intended outcome</p> <p>Through a combination of re-negotiated contract terms, consolidation of contracts competitive tendering and effective contract management, we are seeking to maximise cashable and non-cashable benefits comprising cost reductions, cost avoidance, efficiency savings (through alternative payment methodologies) and social and environmental benefits through the inclusion of community benefits and social value contract clauses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCCB Check and Challenge process agreed for Contracts above £75,000; Operational Board Terms of Reference (TOR) reviewed to provide Check & Challenge for Below £75,000 contracts; 2021/22 procurement programme has identified circa 320 recurring and/or planned contracts; Contracts prioritised by renewal date and value; Procurement officers assigned service areas / categories and commenced Quarter 1 activities; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report Quarter 1 Outcomes; Contracts prioritised by renewal date and value; Procurement officers assigned service areas / categories and commenced Quarter 2 activities; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report Quarter 2 Outcomes; Contracts prioritised by renewal date and value; Procurement officers assigned service areas / categories and commenced Quarter 3 activities; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report Quarter 3 Outcomes; Contracts prioritised by renewal date and value; Procurement officers assigned service areas / categories and commenced Quarter 4 activities; Collate and Report 2022/23 Forward Procurement Programme; 					
			Financial Management:-			Quarterly progress update against deliverables (Project outcomes and financial)					
Estimated Financial Achievement											
2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025							
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000							
550	490	250	250	250	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement officers are actively engaging with service areas to deliver the 2021/22 procurement programme; BtG commercial opportunities considered as part of each sourcing exercise. Pre-procurement and contract award reports are submitted to commercial board to ensure effective check & challenge; The Corporate Purchase Card programme continues to expand as an alternative payment methodology. The programme affords suppliers better cash flow and includes an annual 1% rebate which contributes to the BtG savings target. In summary we currently have 55 cards in the programme and a year to date spend of £1,236,931 as compared with a spend of £965,117 for the same period in 2020/21; The Council either leads and/or participates in a number of collaborative procurement arrangements which includes management fees and/or spend rebates. During qtr2, cashable savings of £50,000 have been realised; 						
Risk Management:-											
Risks / Issues				Mitigating Actions							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract are awarded at a local level without due consideration to the wider organisational objectives. Commissioning and procurement activities fail to realise the intended outcomes. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCCB established to provide robust governance around the Council's 3rd Party spend and wider commercial activities. Client and procurement officers will continue to challenge all existing contracts to determine commercial effectiveness. Procurement officers will continuously monitor in-year spend to identify further commercial opportunities. 							

Review Title	Lead Officer/ Portfolio holder	Scope and Outcome	Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables	
			Quarter 1 2021/2022		Quarter 2 2021/2022		Quarter 3 2021/2022		Quarter 4 2021/2022	
Assets and Property	Richard Crook	<p>The Council has a range of property assets. This review will ascertain their value to the Council and identify how best to maximise these assets to strengthen our balance sheet. This review would include buildings and green spaces and will align with the growth strategy.</p> <p>Intended outcome</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-operational buildings identified and programme of disposals agreed. Rating Agents appointed to review rates liability and identify potential savings. Leased in properties identified and discussions with service users ongoing. Area review of land holdings discussed and criteria for review agreed. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target date to discuss rating appeals in respect of Abertillery properties set with VOA Ongoing inspections and appeals by Rating Agents Area Review Criteria and process agreed with Members Lease renewal terms agreed for 20 Church Street – Housing office Obtain external valuations of staff tenanted residential property Ongoing discussions with Landlords agent in respect of re-gearing Anvil Court lease Bring Bridge Street Health Centre lease to an end pending Social Services vacating team to Anvil Court. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disposal programme – Blaina toilets informal tender for sale Discussions/negotiations with staff on residential tenanted properties for subsequent sale as per non-operational disposal list Ongoing rating discussions and appeals between retained rating agents and VOA Rating review of Civic Centre once decommissioning is finalised Ongoing discussions with Landlords agent in respect of re-gearing Anvil Court lease Area Review Criteria and process agreed with Members 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disposal programme reviewed Ongoing review of rating liabilities Ongoing discussions with Landlords agent in respect of re-gearing Anvil Court lease 	
			Financial Management:-			Quarterly progress update against deliverables (Project outcomes and financial)				
Estimated Financial Achievement			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In year savings achieved through back dated NNDR rebates against the 2021/22 target to date total £140,000.. Application for 3 months' rates relief on the basement, ground, fourth and fifth floors of the Civic Centre has been submitted. Agreements and actual savings yet to be determined. Community Asset transfer agreed for Queen Street Primary. Legal completion pending (Budget savings applied to previous year). Abertillery Toilets sold, further sales being considered for 2021/22 from non-operational list. 							
2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025						
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000						
85	35	50	0	0						
Risk Management:-										
Risks / Issues			Mitigating Actions							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex legal issues delaying/preventing sale Departmental or Ward member opposition to sales Operational issues with sale to retained land Level of rates reduction/liability may be challenged. Reduction in rental levels on lease renewal may be unsatisfactory Property Solicitor is about to commence maternity leave, potential difficulty in backfilling the post which could mean a delay in undertaking property transactions. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to ensure adequate legal support to review documents/legal title in advance of sale Communication and consultation with stakeholders and area review criteria agreed in advance Provide option appraisal for alternatives to sale Specialist Rating Adviser appointed Property Advisor appointed to renegotiate lease terms/rental in respect of Anvil Court 							

Review Title	Lead Officer/ Portfolio holder	Scope and Outcome	Key Activities / Deliverables	Key Activities / Deliverables	Key Activities / Deliverables	Key Activities / Deliverables																				
			Quarter 1 2021/2022	Quarter 2 2021/2022	Quarter 3 2021/2022	Quarter 4 2021/2022																				
Review of the MRP Policy	Rhian Hayden	<p>To undertake a review of the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) to determine options available for consideration when determining the optimum MRP strategy</p> <p>Intended outcome Identification of optimum MRP Strategy for Blaenau Gwent CBC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of current MRP policy Review of current methodology applied for supported & unsupported borrowing Identification of options to provide optimum MRP Strategy / comparison of MRP charges for options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to Council recommending change to MRP (subject to outcome of findings during Quarter1) Review & update of current asset lives in readiness for policy change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review & update of current asset lives in readiness for policy change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review & update of current asset lives in readiness for policy change cr 																				
			<p>Financial Management:-</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="5">Estimated Financial Achievement</th> </tr> <tr> <th>2020/2021</th> <th>2021/2022</th> <th>2022/2023</th> <th>2023/2024</th> <th>2024/2025</th> </tr> <tr> <th>£'000</th> <th>£'000</th> <th>£'000</th> <th>£'000</th> <th>£'000</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>1,335 *</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Estimated Financial Achievement					2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	0	0	1,335 *	0	0
Estimated Financial Achievement																										
2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025																						
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000																						
0	0	1,335 *	0	0																						
*Subject to approval of a change in Policy by Council																										
Risk Management:-																										
Risks / Issues				Mitigating Actions																						
MRP Policy not compliant with guidance				Proposals will be developed with due regard to WG guidance																						

Review Title	Lead Officer/ Portfolio holder	Scope and Outcome	Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables		
			Quarter 1 2021/2022		Quarter 2 2021/2022		Quarter 3 2021/2022		Quarter 4 2021/2022		
Future work place and service delivery	Michelle Morris	<p>This is a new Strategic Business Review that merges the previous business review on customer experience and the business review on workplace transformation.</p> <p>The impact of the pandemic has force the organisation to think radically about how and where it will deliver services to the communities in Blaenau Gwent. This Programme includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Operating Model; • Community Hubs to improve customer access to council services; • Democratic Hub at the General Offices for formal Council business; • Permanent vacation of Civic Centre and move to Agile Working Model based on remaining office accommodation; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Programme Governance • Open new Democratic Hub and pilot agile meeting model • Open new Community Hubs • Commence project to decommission Civic Centre • Agree new Agile Working Policy • Commence leadership development to support new working arrangements • Complete consultation with all staff moving to home or agile working and agree variation to contracts • Complete Communication Plan to support change programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence full Council Diary using new agile meeting arrangements (in line with relaxation of covid restrictions) • Continue to develop the Community Hubs to broaden the services delivered - Phase 2 completed • Design and procurement of Anvil Court refurbishment – in progress • Commenced return to the office (in line with WG Guidance) • Revision to the application of the Mileage Allowance – Completed • Continued to progress decant of Civic Centre • Records Management progressing well with disposal and retention in line with policy • Leadership Development - Commenced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete establishment of new Democratic Hub • Continue to develop the Community Hubs – Phase 3 • Complete decant from Civic Centre • Progress with the refurbishment of Anvil Court in line with agreed plan • Masterplan for the redevelopment of the site completed and agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic Centre decanted and decommissioned, tender returned and awaiting award of contract • Community Hubs & Democratic operating BAU – within Covid restrictions • Progress with the refurbishment of Anvil Court in line with agreed plan • Achieve full financial savings to support 2022/23 Revenue Budget 					
			Financial Management:-			Quarterly progress update against deliverables (Project outcomes and financial)					
Estimated Financial Achievement			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme on-target for Quarter 2 deliverables; • Democratic Hub now operational; • Community Hubs now in Phase 3 of delivery; • Change in Out of Hours service delivery to a local provider – completed; • Leadership support in progress to assist in moving to new agile working model; 								
2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025							
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000							
50	0	400	0	0							
Risk Management:-											
Risks / Issues				Mitigating Actions							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays to the final decommissioning of civic centre due to the need to relocate IT Servers to new host and the impact of global supplies shortage • Risk of increased costs from procurement activity due to pressures within the economy and the increasing price of goods and services • Impact on staff well-being from the return to the workplace 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk being managed and removal of servers prioritised for January 2022 • Tenders being developed for issuing early in 2022 • Continue to comply with Covid restrictions in the workplace, ensure risk assessments are in place, leadership development and support to ensure managers understand their role in supporting staff, provision of support via occupational health 							

Review Title	Lead Officer/ Portfolio holder	Scope and Outcome	Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables											
			Quarter 1 2021/2022		Quarter 2 2021/2022		Quarter 3 2021/2022		Quarter 4 2021/2022											
Growth Strategy	Richard Crook	<p>Our Growth Strategy involves a programme of housing development that will see an impact on our revenue streams through increase Council Tax. This will contribute to the MTFS and is a critical element of building strong communities.</p> <p>Intended outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To bring back into use 5-10% of vacant properties per annum (circa 40) To support the delivery of circa 400 new houses by 2023 To increase the economic competitiveness of Blaenau Gwent in the 2022 UKCI To secure £548,000 pa into the local economy with 100 households attracted/retained in BG To implement water and wind turbines to generate 3.6 mW and £2.5m of investment To have commenced an investment portfolio for BG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote housing sites for private development Continue to administer loans and grants for vacant properties (post covid) Work through planning process on housing sites SAB issues - address (Davies, Works) Delivery programme for EV School site, to inform build out rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint new vacant property officer Begin 'investment portfolio' with Industrial Units review Silent Valley wind turbine scoping and planning Lovell's site 65% built 50% sold Persimmon site starts build SUDs scheme approved for Davies site Stage 2 decision on Ashvale Planning/SABS Northgate Delivery programme Northgate Development brief Civic Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal launch Energy Prospectus linked to COP26 CCR approval for Tredegar? Completion of Golwg Y Bryn Completion of Greenacres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	Financial Management:-													
							<p>Estimated Financial Achievement</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020/2021</th> <th>2021/2022</th> <th>2022/2023</th> <th>2023/2024</th> <th>2024/2025</th> </tr> <tr> <th>£'000</th> <th>£'000</th> <th>£'000</th> <th>£'000</th> <th>£'000</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>184</td> <td>230</td> <td>300</td> <td>100</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	184	230
2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025																
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000																
184	230	300	100	100																
Risk Management:-																				
Risks / Issues						Mitigating Actions														
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SABS decisions causing delays on development Internal staff resources e.g. planning to make determination on applications Escalating material costs associated with development Increasing house prices/demand – potential stall to the upward trend Supply outstrips demand 						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing discussions with the SAB approving body and developers Contingency with funding applications Positive uplift in Social Housing Grant to assist development where appropriate Monitoring activity and close liaison with developers Development programme considered alongside wider policy docs and strategies e.g. LDP/Empty Property 														

Review Title	Lead Officer/ Portfolio holder	Scope and Outcome	Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables		Key Activities / Deliverables	
			Quarter 1 2021/2022		Quarter 2 2021/2022		Quarter 3 2021/2022		Quarter 4 2021/2022	
Low Carbon	Michelle Morris	Develop a Low Carbon Plan which sets out an ambitious vision and targets for BG to become a Low Carbon Borough and supports the corporate objectives of being a more Efficient Council and Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities. <u>Intended outcome</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readiness Assessment (RA) – Transport (Direct) complete Response to BG Climate Assembly findings complete Agree high level timeline for RA for all Transitions 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring Report to Scrutiny Committee Monitor/Progress delivery of actions from RA – Transport (Direct) Complete 2nd RA Council Report Template updated to ensure CC impact taken into account in all reports 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete 3rd RA Annual Report to Council Monitor/Progress delivery of actions from completed RA First annual report to WG completed 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete 4th RA All Transitions to be completed to inform high level action plan Monitor/Progress delivery of actions from completed RA Annual Progress Report to be reported to Council 	
			Financial Management:-			Quarterly progress update against deliverables (Project outcomes and financial)				
Estimated Financial Achievement			Quarter 1 –							
2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RA Transport Direct (complete) Response to CA – in progress Timeline – in progress 					
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000						
138	0	200	200	200						
Risk Management:-										
Risks / Issues					Mitigating Actions					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New investment may be required to ensure that actions can be progressed to support transition to carbon neutral Need to ensure that policy development/service re-design is under-pinned by the principles of achieving carbon neutral council Capital Programme needs to support delivery through investment in the right designs and technology e.g. carbon neutral buildings 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RA need to identify funding gaps/opportunities or where we need to change funding model to support this work All Committee Reports to identify impact on carbon emissions to ensure that the organisation builds a more sustainable future All investment decisions need to include impact on carbon emissions and ensure the Council only invests in low carbon or carbon free solutions 					

Review Title	Lead Officer/ Portfolio holder	Scope and Outcome	Key Activities / Deliverables			
			Quarter 1 2021/2022	Quarter 2 2021/2022	Quarter 3 2021/2022	Quarter 4 2021/2022
Use of external grants	Bernadette Elias	<p><u>Scope of the Review</u> This strategic business review is concerned with deployment of additional grant funding that is available to the council and its partners. It is estimated that the organisation receives approximately £22m additional funding to support our priorities. This review will explore how the grants are utilised across the council to deliver outcomes for our residents.</p> <p>This review will also consider the impact of the removal of these grants and the risk placed on core funding.</p> <p>Intended outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better organisational oversight of how grants support our corporate priority areas. Clearer lines of accountability with identified leads to ensure delivery of intended outcomes and management of risk to core funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start Review and update of the grants register with resource colleagues Initial scoping for review of Regeneration grants with service and finance colleagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated grants register on SCCB agenda and presented quarterly to keep organisational oversight Finalise and agree scope for Regen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings from review of Regen presented to SCCB Quarterly reporting of grants register 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly reporting of grants register Focus of next phase of review agreed
		<p>Quarterly progress update against deliverables (Project outcomes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updating the Grants Register continues to be progressed during the Quarter Meeting taken place with Service area to scope out the work. Report anticipated during quarter 4 				
<p>Risk Management:-</p>						
<p>Risks / Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 			<p>Mitigating Actions</p>			

Review Title	Lead Officer/ Portfolio holder	Scope and Outcome	Key Activities / Deliverables			
			Quarter 1 2021/2022	Quarter 2 2021/2022	Quarter 3 2021/2022	Quarter 4 2021/2022
Developing our customer experience and digital ambitions	Bernadette Elias	<p>This review supports the customer focus and use of technology themes in the Commercial strategy</p> <p>Intended outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved Customer Service experience for residents of the borough Creation of Community Hub model Delivery of 12-month Digital programme set out for Council Collaboration with NPT and Torfaen on Digital projects – best practice to be shared across Council Development of Leadership & Development opportunities Links into ICT investment roadmap 	<p>Customer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Centre review commenced focussing on Customer Service delivery Working with community services, mapping process and understanding customer experience Development and introduction of service level standards, Review of answerphone message Review of out of hours' service Community Hubs model preparation and development <p>Digital / Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital programme to support the new operating model Progression of externally supported digital projects, Adult Social Care, GovPay, Tech Valley and Democracy Planning for Leadership & Development opportunities to raise awareness and scope of digital Digital apprentice role developed 	<p>Customer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further development of Contact Centre review – focus on training / skills gap to support improved service delivery Local out of hours' service delivery from July 2021 Community hubs implementation <p>Digital / Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital programme to support the new operating model, hybrid democratic meeting arrangements, service move to digital offer where this focus is most needed Leadership and Development awareness sessions– in progress Findings of Digital projects delivered with other Local Authorities, sharing learning Digital apprentice role recruited 	<p>Customer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community hubs implementation and review to inform next phase of development Scoping of Customer Service Standards development <p>Digital / Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> digital programme to support the new operating model, hybrid democratic meeting arrangements, service move to digital offer where this focus is most needed Leadership and Development awareness sessions– in progress Developing the organisational approach Service re- design linked to the commercial strategy ambitions, digital programme and customer experience 	<p>Customer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further development of Community Hubs model Scoping of Working towards excellence in Customer Service delivery – charter mark for Customer Services across the Council <p>Digital / Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> digital programme to support the new operating model, hybrid democratic meeting arrangements, service move to digital offer where this focus is most needed Leadership and Development awareness sessions– in progress Developing the organisational approach Service re- design linked to the commercial strategy ambitions, digital programme and customer experience
			Financial Management:-			Quarterly progress update against deliverables (Project outcomes and financial)
Estimated Financial Achievement			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community services, mapping sessions held focusing on full end to end process Development of service level standards – setting residents expectations on delivery of services Review of answerphone message, findings were that it was very long and protracted. Queuing system introduced Review of out of hours' service, identified that the existing provider was not delivering great service from Customer perspective – resulting in change of providers from July 2021 (Q2) Community Hubs model preparation and development, phase 1 delivery commenced 21st June 2021 Training plan developed linking into Call Centre Management framework Phases 2 and 3 delivery of Community Hubs model, increasing Hub presence in all agreed venues Development of Key Performance Indicators to support service delivery 			

Digital / Technology

- Digital programme to support the new operating model developed – attendance at DMT meetings to understand needs of services as we move into next phases of delivery
- Corporate road map developed – now, next, later setting out technical objectives
- Progression of externally supported digital projects, Adult Social Care, GovPay, Tech Valley and Democracy
- Planning for Leadership & Development opportunities to raise awareness and scope of digital – linking into offers from Centre for Digital Public Services and increasing knowledge of staff and members
- Digital apprentice role developed, appointed and inducted as part of Tech Valleys project focussing on waste and recycling services
- Further progression of digital programme, including supporting hybrid meetings to support NOM,
- Further development of digital road map, now, next, later objectives to support corporate objectives
- Commencement of Planning piece of work, supporting and assisting the Planning team
- Continuation of external projects linking into Centre for digital public services
- Commencement of digital skills maturity assessment
- Digital apprentice role recruited to

£'000 £'000 £'000 £'000 £'000

Risk Management:-

Risks / Issues	Mitigating Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 	

Review Title	Lead Officer/ Portfolio holder	Scope and Outcome	Key Activities / Deliverables	Key Activities / Deliverables	Key Activities / Deliverables	Key Activities / Deliverables
			Quarter 1 2021/2022	Quarter 2 2021/2022	Quarter 3 2021/2022	Quarter 4 2021/2022
Prevention and early intervention services	Damien McCann / Lynn Phillips	<p>This review will focus on an evaluation of the long term impact of prevention and early intervention on reducing the requirement for high cost services and better outcomes for our most vulnerable residents.</p> <p>Approach potentially involves children and young people transitioning to adulthood to maximise the preventative benefits. Links to NEETs, Recovery/Renewal and Adult Social Care.</p> <p>Intended outcome</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning meeting to take place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed at CLT meeting and agreed this was a corporate issue rather than for Social Services and Education only. • Have discussed potential to hold a workshop on prevention and early intervention corporately to share examples and generate ideas across the Council • Briefing Paper to SCCB Board for discussion regarding seeking external consultancy support. 		

Quarterly progress update against deliverables (Project outcomes)

- CLT have had initial update and requested further information on overall strategic approach etc
- CLT agreed the corporate nature of this strand of work
- Lead Officers met to discuss next steps
- Discussed a Children's Services Invest to Save Project being badged under the Bridging the gap proposals

Risk Management:-	
Risks / Issues	Mitigating Actions
•	• • • •

Review Title	Lead Officer/ Portfolio holder	Scope and Outcome	Key Activities / Deliverables			
			Quarter 1 2021/2022	Quarter 2 2021/2022	Quarter 3 2021/2022	Quarter 4 2021/2022
Using data and behaviour insight to help deliver better services	Bernadette Elias	<p>Becoming a 21st Century Council means using data and insight to drive decision making. This Strategic Business Review will identify opportunities for the sharing and use of data to design services around the customer.</p> <p>Intended outcome</p> <p>The insight from quantitative and qualitative data is recognised as a valuable asset across the organisation.</p> <p>Data is used insightfully and routinely in service re design, analytics and performance monitoring to support better outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build the data work streams supporting recovery Audit Wales data review- initial findings and scoping for next phase workshop. Nesta data maturity assessment framework. Behavioural science- early scoping of potential leadership session on applying the MINDSET methodology to service delivery Programme of WLGA funded sessions on user experience, content design and service re design delivered Cardiff University data science academy- summer MSc placement. Expression of interest and proposal submitted Assessment of Well Being planning for next round of Well Being plans in progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit Wales data review, next phases and findings Revisit Data application to BTgap reviews eg work done previously on income and debt testing Nesta data maturity assessment against a recovery theme-economic recovery Show and tell from digital projects Developing the organisational approach Service re- design linked to the commercial strategy ambitions, digital programme and customer experience. applying service re design to a prioritised programme of service areas including supporting the New Operating Model (NOM). Consideration of applying MINDSET to a pilot programme of service areas, potentially including the NOM Cardiff university placement progression Assessment of Well Being development through the regional sub group of GSWAG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the organisational approach Service re- design linked to the commercial strategy ambitions, digital programme and customer experience Testing Nesta data maturity assessment against a recovery theme Cardiff university MSc final product delivery Assessment of Well Being development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cardiff university MSc --- exploring ways to use the product Assessment of Well Being mature product Development of a research and data programme for the organisational to include external opportunities, behavioural science potential and learning from Nesta assessment, intelligence hub and service re design work
			Quarterly progress update against deliverables (Project outcomes)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recovery themes are being supported with performance and data insight, including development of a set of performance indicators at both population and performance level. Council Tax data profiling has been re-established to support the bridging the gap project to provide the most up to date information. Audit Wales Review on Data agreed as part of their work programme, initial phase undertaken, next phase to be scoped in 2022 which will support the organisational approach to data. Data insight including user research used to inform digital transformation projects with services supporting agile delivery. Cardiff University data science academy student placements progressing. Assessment of Well being work to inform the next Well Being Plan is progressing with active input from officers into the regional working group. The Performance Team and Social Services are using monies from WG to support the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being Act Performance Framework. The Council is looking to get support from Oxford Brookes University to undertake a review of the Directorates' current effectiveness in its use of performance data and to support any future re modelling of services. The work will take place in quarter 4 and additional support is planned for mid-2022, once the directorate has submitted their annual data return to WG. 						

Risk Management:-	
Risks / Issues	Mitigating Actions

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Agenda Item 17

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 02.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **15th December 2021**
Report Subject: **Progress Report Contracts over £500k**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member
Corporate Services**
Report Submitted by: **Clive Rogers, Head of Community Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
16/11/21	18/11/21	30.11.21			10/12/21	15.12.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with updated information on the progress of capital projects over £500,000 in cost, undertaken within the Authority and, where appropriate, seek the necessary approval required under the Contract Procedural Rules to additional expenditure incurred on a particular project.

2. Scope and Background

- 1.2 The report is required to inform Members of the progress with these capital works projects, and also to satisfy the reporting requirements of Contract Procedural Rules. Appendix 1 includes each major contract with financial details and commentary update. The report is presented to Members on a six monthly basis, informing them of progress on delivering key projects.
- 1.3 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the last report was submitted in February 2020, as the pandemic has impacted significantly on the delivery programme of construction projects.
- 1.4 Members of the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee have requested that they be kept informed of the progress of projects being undertaken within the Authority, particularly where contracts have been affected by additional costs or time overruns.
- 1.5 Contract Procedural Rules also require reports to be presented to Executive Committee seeking approval for additional expenditure if the funding budget is not available and/or excessive time period over-runs have been experienced.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 The report has been presented to RCSLT and CLT.

This report will also be presented to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee on 10th December 2021, and any feedback will be provided verbally to the Executive Committee.

Option 1

Members to accept the information included within the report as presented.

Option 2

Members consider the information included within the report and make specific comments for improvement prior to accepting the report.

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

The report has been developed to satisfy the requirements of the Contract Procedural Rules, and supports the key priorities identified in the Corporate Plan.

5. Implications Against Each Option

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

The financial positions of individual contracts are shown in the attached schedule Appendix 1.

5.2 *Risk including Mitigating Actions*

The risks associated with not completing a contract within budget or time scale could have a financial and negative reputational impact on the Council.

Where the financial risks associated with these projects have impacted on the capital programme allocations they would have previously been subject to review and approval by CLT and Council.

5.3 *Legal*

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 *Human Resources*

There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

There are seven current contracts valued over £500,000 and of these the risk assessed performance highlights the following:-

- Green – four contracts
- Amber – three contracts

In respect of the four contracts risk assessed as green, the Highways Refurbishment Capital Programme is progressing to plan, with all projects anticipated completion by February 2022. Two projects have been deferred until after Christmas, as they may involve road closure and/or traffic management to be in place. The National Digital Exploitation Centre (NDEC) project has recently commenced works on site on 8th November 2021, Both contracts are within their funding budget allocations. The Network Rail

Implementation Agreement (Ebbw Vale Phase 1), and the Transport for Wales Professional Services Contract (Ebbw Vale Phase) are progressing as planned.

Regarding the three projects risk assessed as amber, the new pitch at Brynmawr Foundation school is progressing albeit the project has been affected by unforeseen drainage issues uncovered on the site during the excavation process. The two other contracts, Roseheyworth HWRC and The Works Hybrid and Box Units, had to be constructed throughout the Covid-19 pandemic which has resulted in both cost increases and programme delays encountered for the projects. In the case of the latter two projects, the increase in costs are being reviewed both through existing budget allocations, and a further grant claim for additional funding to WG.

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

The Contracts Over £500k support the development and/or re development of buildings and infrastructure across the Blaenau Gwent authority, thus providing better facilities and highways for use by the community and members of the public.

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

Where relevant, consultation, engagement and involvement with the public and other interested parties have been carried out as part of delivery requirements of the capital projects.

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

The investment in property and infrastructure across Blaenau Gwent is identified to ensure sustainability for the future, removing redundant and substandard facilities, improving highway infrastructure, and providing new modern facilities to meet the service requirements and wellbeing of future generations.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

Investing in capital projects will prevent problems exacerbating with our property and infrastructure, by making prudent decisions to invest now rather than in the future when the costs are likely to be higher through further deterioration and inflation.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The works undertaken are in collaboration with a number of partner funding agencies, e.g. WG 21st Century Schools and Regeneration funding, and WG Waste Grant funding.

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

The works undertaken impact on a number of service areas across the Council such as education, infrastructure, corporate landlord and regeneration.

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

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

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 The Contracts Over £500k are routinely monitored within the service areas and six monthly reports on progress with contracts will be provided to Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Committee.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 – Contracts Over £500k*

PROGRESS REPORT TO COMMITTEE – CONTRACTS OVER £500,000

Red (R)	There are significant issues with the project in respect of cost time or scope risks and the matter has to be reported to Corporate Management Team and/or Executive Committee for consideration and approval.	R
Amber (A)	There are issues with the project, in respect of cost, time or scope risks, and the matter can be resolved at project officer team level.	A
Green (G)	The project is progressing as planned, to original/revised budget allocation, scope and programme.	G
Blue (B)	The project is complete within approved original/revised budget allocation, scope and contractually agreed timescales.	B

DEFINITIONS

- A** - Name of Project.
- B** - The amount of funding allocated to the project.
- C** - Amount of the contract approved in accordance with the Authority’s Contract Procedure Rules.
- D** - The estimated final cost of the project.
- E** - Estimated underspend/overspend of contract comparing the Funding Budget (B) and Anticipated Final Cost.(D)
- F** - The date at which the contractor takes possession of the site.
- G** - The date included within the contract for completion of the project.
- H** - The date at which the project is actually completed for use by the Authority.
- I** - The number of weeks the project has been delayed comparing the Contract Completion Date (G) and Anticipated Completion Date (H)

PROGRESS REPORT TO COMMITTEE – CONTRACTS OVER £500,000

Project Title A	Funding Budget B	Contract Cost C	Anticipated Final Cost D	Underspend/ (Overspend) E	Contract Start Date F	Contract Complete Date G	Anticipated Complete Date H	Contract Delay I	Comments	RAGB Rating
Highways Capital Works Programme 2021 – 2022 Including A4048 Heathfield Works Cwm Bypass Resurfacing Blaenant Ind Est resurfacing	£912,000.00	£894,398.22 £636,019.15 £146,999.94 £46,387.97 £64,991.06	£894,398.22 £636,019.15 £146,999.94 £46,387.97 £64,991.06	£17,601.78.	01/09/2021.	18/02/2022	18/02/2022	-	Works progressing as planned. Completion end of November 2021. Two schemes left to complete under road closures completion. Works anticipated to start in January 2022 under two traffic lights. Works due to start in January 2022 under 3 way traffic lights. Works complete to tender value	G
Construction of New 3G Pitch at Brynmawr Foundation School	£963,960.00	£871,494.78	£920,000.00	£43,960.00	24/05/2021	10/10/2021	11/01/2022	13 weeks	The project has been delayed and an extension to the contract period required of 13 weeks, extending the contract completion date to 11 th January 2022. The delay has resulted from the discovery of the existing defective surface water system serving the school, running and discharging under the proposed 3G pitch footprint. The repair, diversion and delay costs associated with these works is approximately £55k. Further variations include the	A

PROGRESS REPORT TO COMMITTEE – CONTRACTS OVER £500,000

									redesign of the existing/new drainage system to meet sustainable drainage requirements £23K and ground stabilisation works £33k. The cost associated with these variations will be met from funding for this project included within the Capital programme 2021/22.	
Network Rail Implementation Agreement (Ebbw Vale Phase 1 2tph)	£68,845,000.00	£68,845,000.00	£68,845,000.00	N / A	17/09/2021	16/10/2025	16/10/2025	N / A	The project is progressing as planned.	G
Transport for Wales Professional Services Contract (Ebbw Vale Phase 1 2tph)	1,155,000.00	1,155,000.00	1,155,000.00	N / A	20/09/2021	16/10/205	16/10/2025	N / A	The project is progressing as planned.	G

PROGRESS REPORT TO COMMITTEE – CONTRACTS OVER £500,000

Project Title	Funding Budget	Contract Cost (Tender)	Anticipated Final Cost	Underspend/ (Overspend)	Contract Start Date	Contract Complete Date	Anticipated Complete Date	Contract Delay	Comments	RAGB Rating
National Digital Exploitation Centre (NDEC), The Works, Ebbw Vale	£4,751,201.00	£4,751,201.00	£4,751,201.00	-	08/11/2021	20/09/2022	20/09/2022	-	Commencement on site date 8 th November 2021. The first construction works to take place on site will be demolition of the basement structure, shoring, and drilling and grouting to stabilise the existing ground.to support the new building structure.	G
HWRC Roseheyworth, Abertillery	£1,867,907.37	£1,404,247.90	1,910,662.37	(£42,755.00)	20/01/2020	27/11/2020	15/04/2021 (Actual)	20 weeks	Additional works and costs were incurred in meeting Waste Permitting requirements and Delays/Extension of time due to Covid-19 respectively This project was procured prior to and constructed through the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of Covid-19 restrictions, social distancing, workers isolating, has resulted in significant management and construction issues on site to be overcome. Also the availability of materials and supply chain issues has impacted on the programme and costs of the project. The budgets are currently being reviewed to cover the reported overspend of £43k. Formal receipt of the required Waste Permit from WRAP and WG delayed the opening date of the facility to 15 th April 2021.	A

PROGRESS REPORT TO COMMITTEE – CONTRACTS OVER £500,000

Project Title	Funding Budget	Contract Cost (Tender)	Anticipated Final Cost	Underspend/ (Overspend)	Contract Start Date	Contract Complete Date	Anticipated Complete Date	Contract Delay	Comments	RAGB Rating
Lime Avenue – Hybrid Business units & Box units	£7,271,000.00	£6,508,033.00	£7,450,000.00	(£179,000.00)	09/03/2020	16/11/2020	16/07/2021	34 weeks	The project is now substantially complete and part occupied by Thales. Partial Completion of the Units was achieved on 16 th July 2021. We await resolution to a building services matter and then full Practical Completion will be certified. Completion has been delayed and an extension to the contract period required of 34 weeks, extending the completion date to 16 th July 2021. This contract was let pre-Covid-19 pandemic, but was constructed on site right through the Covid-19 pandemic. The effects of the supply chain and Covid-19 site restrictions impacted directly upon the contractor's ability to deliver the Hybrid Business and Box Units project within the original contract timescales. The delay has primarily been caused by the effects of Covid-19 pandemic to the various trades workers and management (i.e. availability of people to manage & build the project), construction materials delayed due to slowdown in manufacturing,	A

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PROGRESS REPORT TO COMMITTEE – CONTRACTS OVER £500,000

									and also working methods changed due to social distancing restricting close proximity of labour. The combined effect of these causes resulted in the overall delay to the contract completion .Discussions are ongoing with WG regarding additional funding required to meet the £179k reported overspend on the project.	
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Agenda Item 18

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 02.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **15th December 2021**
Report Subject: **Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) 2020/21 annual report**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J. Wilkins, Executive Member Environment**
Report Submitted by: **Clive Rogers, Head of Community Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
13/10/2021	21/10/2021	30.11.21			15/11/2021	15.12.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on how the Council is meeting its statutory duties under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- 1.2 As Members are aware the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) was passed by Full Council in October 2019. The biodiversity and ecosystem resilience duty under Section 6 of the Act requires that “a public authority must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.”¹

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 In order to comply with the Environment (Wales) Act the Council has produced a Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 This report gives the overview of annual progress against the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) for 2020/21.
- 2.3 The actions identified within the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) prioritises actions, to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, by 2022, aims to:
- Reduce overall resource use; reuse where possible and recycle everything recyclable.
 - Increase biodiversity and ecosystems understanding in the council staff and councillors through appropriate channels including Service Area Environment Champions and the Councillor Nature Champion role.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/3/section/6/enacted>

- Embody the challenge of integrating the Decarbonisation Plan, Active Travel, Well-being of Future Generations, Planning and Environment Acts to encourage sustainability in the ways we live, work and play.
- Promote responsible use of natural resources in Blaenau Gwent by working in partnership with others to initiate positive action and behaviour change.
- Maintain and enhance biodiversity and improve ecosystem resilience on council owned land, particularly with regard to priority species and habitats.
- Support the Blaenau Gwent & Torfaen Local Nature Partnership.

2.4 The three delivery mechanisms, for implementing activities, are Service Area Action Plans; Environment Champions network and advice from the Natural Environment team. However, Covid-19 has restricted activities since March 2020. As a result, there is a cross over in reporting.

2.5 **Summary of Progress**

Progress in 2020/21 by Service Area against the delivery mechanisms and activity plan for 2021/22 is shown in Appendix 2 (2020/21 Progress and 2021/22 Activity Plan).

Area of activities 2020/21

Governance & Partnerships:

- PSB is overseeing the development of a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Blaenau Gwent
- Significant progress with climate change work, including the Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly, where key recommendations were made around nature and green space, particularly its protection and improvement.

Commercial Services:

- Further development to streamline processes and reduce the use of paper
- Communication to be electronic. However, it was impacted by Covid19, therefore a delay to completely paperless regarding staff communication
- Introduction on new Hybrid mail system

Social Services:

- Adult services have prioritised supporting the delivery of essential services and a number of non-regulated services as a result of Covid-19
- Made progress with the garden at one of the establishments, including bird boxes and wild flowers

Regeneration & Community Services:

- The Resilient Greater Gwent (RGG) has several work streams delivering on maintaining & enhancing biodiversity and improve ecosystem resilience

- a) Blaenau Gwent Urban Hedgehog project was launched in October 2020. This was to give away 60 hedgehog packs to Blaenau Gwent Residents. Schools and community groups. It was received well as initially there were over 400 people interested in participating. In May 2021 Tai Calon further supported by giving away another 40 packs to Tai Calon residents. The RGG looked at our approach, with partners implementing similar schemes across the whole of Gwent.
- Supported the Local Nature Partnership
 - a) Working with the Blaenau Gwent & Torfaen Local Nature Partnership Coordinator, several projects have been developed that has directly benefited community groups. For example, hedgerow management at Beaufort Hill Ponds and Woodlands, Hedgerow planting at Cwmtillery and grass cutting equipment and training provided to Sirhowy Woodlands community group.
 - b) Supported the Local Nature Partnership Coordinator with making changes to the grass cutting regimes on verges and meadows. Working with Alun Watkins in Neighbourhood Services. For example, A4046- Cwm bypass junction, A467-Llanhilleth Park Traffic lights, a relaxed mowing regime was implemented in the grounds of Rhos Y Fedwen Primary school. In the first year of doing so, a bee orchid was recorded for the first time.
- Supported community groups running events, but with restrictions, and assisted with promotional material for a virtual Wales Nature Week in June 2020

Education:

- Engagement with schools via educational sessions, SLA with Natural Environment Team and eco-councils had to be adapted because of Covid-19. A blended delivery style of online engagement and outdoor classroom.
 - a) 17 schools are signed up to the SLA. The Urban Hedgehog project was also delivered to eight Blaenau Gwent schools (Beaufort Hill Primary, Coed-Y-Garn Primary, Deighton Primary, Rhos y Fedwen, Sofrydd, St Illtyds, St Joseph's RC Primary and Willowtown Primary). The eight schools expressed an interested in participating in a national trial project to become Hedgehog Friendly School. All eight schools were successful in being selected to take part.

- 2.6 There have been four quarterly Environment Champions meetings, with ten champions in the network representing all Service Areas and Councillors. Meetings were held virtually via Microsoft Teams and at Parc Bryn Bach. Topics included resource use, developing a youth Nature Ambassadors across the school network, developing an educational action plan/policy and urban wildlife.

- 2.7 From the review of progress, the Forward Plan (2019-22) has not been changed. Minor amendments have been made to accurately reflect the Service Area structure, recognising that Organisational Development sits within Commercial Services.
- 2.8 The annual report and Forward Plan do not cover statutory duties included in the Rights of Way, Planning or Active Travel Acts but is connected to these through the Welsh government's commitment to sustainable development as the best way to improve the well-being of Wales now and for future generations.

3. Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Community Services Scrutiny Committee supported Option 1, at its meeting on 15th November 2021.

3.2 Options Appraisal

- **Option 1: Preferred option** Members to approve the annual report 2020/21 and activity plan recommended for 2021/22 to meet the Section 6 Duty.
- 3.3
- **Option 2:** Members to comment on the annual report 2020/21 / the activity plan for 2021/22 and suggest areas of improvements to be included.
- 3.3 *Approval of the annual report*
Goes beyond the minimum to show a proactive approach to meeting the duty; embeds the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into business planning and enables an efficient mechanism for reporting and meeting the requirement to report to Welsh Government.

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

4.1 Corporate Plan Priority:

Continued efforts to meet the aims of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) primarily contributes to meeting the following priority:

- 4.2 Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities
- To improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors.

4.3 Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

Continued efforts to meet the aims of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) meets all of the well-being plan objectives:

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

4.4 Benefits provided by resilient ecosystems across the well-being goals are shown in appendix 7.2 of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan 2019-2022 (Appendix 1).

4.5 **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

4.6 Continued efforts to meet the aims of the Forward Plan directly contributes to actions needed for the ‘resilient Wales’ goal:

“A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change)”

4.7 By implementing the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 the Local Authority will maximise its contributions to the Well-being Goals.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 *Impact on Budget*

There has been a cost neutral impact on budgets, 2020/21 from implementing the Forward Plan. Officer time was funded through existing revenue budgets as shown in Appendix 3 (Impact on Budget).

Actions in 2021/22 will have a cost neutral impact on budgets. Officer time will be funded through existing revenue budgets. Additional external revenue and capital funding to deliver further biodiversity and ecosystem resilience related schemes of work as shown in Appendix 3 (Impact on Budget).

5.2 *Risk*

The main risk is that failure to meet the aims of the plan will result in the Authority failing to meet its statutory duty and miss out on funding opportunities for delivery of the council corporate objectives and Blaenau Gwent well-being plan.

5.3 *Legal*

The legal implications of failing to meet the Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 are currently unknown.

5.4 *Human Resources*

The ways of working that will develop by working towards the aims of the Plan will contribute to staff health and well-being. For example, by raising awareness of the nearest Local Nature Reserves to council buildings.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

Is gathered quarterly through business plan reporting.

6.2 *Expected outcome for the public*

Biodiversity underpins the health and resilience of all of our ecosystems. In turn, these ecosystems support all life on Earth. This means that taking positive action for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience in Blaenau Gwent will enhance the natural resources the public utilise such as clean water, air and food production including pollination services. The natural environment is also a vital resource to enhance mental and physical health and well-being.

6.3 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

Activities that meet the aims of the Plan are undertaken between the Natural Environment team and other service areas.

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

The Plan covers the 2019-22 period and will be revised and renewed in line with up to date policy, legislation and evidence. Meeting the duty enables support for long term management of Green Spaces.

6.5 *Preventative focus*

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

6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working*

The work on the Environment Act duty fits with the Blaenau Gwent well-being plan and ways of working could be shared with members of the Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board. Support for the Blaenau Gwent & Torfaen Local Nature Partnership will assist with a strategic approach to environmental and ecological management in both boroughs.

6.7 *Integration (across service areas)*

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

6.8 *Equalities Impact Assessment*

A brief Equality Impact Assessment was submitted with the Forward Plan and has not needed to be updated as the Plan has not changed.

All service area business plan objectives and actions will take into account each of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. They are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Environment Champions network will be open to all and will strive to be representative of employees across the Council.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1 The identified delivery mechanisms will continue to be monitored quarterly by the Governance and Natural Environment teams in the 2021/22 Financial Year.
- 7.2 A report will be submitted to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee in the second quarter of the 2021/22 Financial Year summarising progress of progress made, action planned for 2021/22 and any updates on the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan 2019-2022.
- 7.3 The Forward Plan should be revised and approved by March 2022 for the next agreed period.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council*
- <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/3/contents/enacted>
- <https://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/160321-frequently-asked-questions-en.pdf>
- <https://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/150512-biodiversity-and-resilience-of-ecosystems-duty-en.pdf>
- <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/Nature%20and%20mental%20health%20infographic.pdf>
- <https://www.wcva.org.uk/about-us/news/2017/04/doing-your-bit-for-a-resilient-wales>

Glossary

- 9.1 Biodiversity - means 'biological diversity' which refers to all the variety of life on Earth (plants, animals, fungi and micro-organisms) as well as to the communities that they form and the habitats in which they live.
- 9.2 Ecosystem - dynamic network of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit.
- 9.3 Ecosystem Resilience - is the ability of an ecosystem to maintain its normal patterns of nutrient cycling and biomass production after being subjected to damage caused by an ecological disturbance, for example extreme weather events caused by climate change, outbreak of disease or human exploitation.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

**Biodiversity and Ecosystem
Resilience Forward Plan
(2019-2022)**

**To meet requirements of
Section 6 Biodiversity and
Ecosystem Resilience duty of the
Environment (Wales) Act 2016**



Photos: Clockwise from left; Cwmcelyn Pond; Waun y Pound ponds, Silent Valley

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1. Executive Summary

The Council recognises that resilient ecosystems underpinned by a biodiverse landscape deliver multiple benefits for the people of Blaenau Gwent. We are committed to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and working in partnership with others to ensure the sustainability of the subsequent benefits and their contribution to the well-being goals.



Councillor N. J. Daniels, Leader of the council

This Forward Plan has been prepared to meet the Section 6 Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and outlines the Council's commitments to meeting requirements of the legislation. It will also contribute to delivering the Council's requirements under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Section 6 of the Environment Act places a duty on the Local Authority to **'seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity'** so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions. In so doing, the Local Authority must also seek to **'promote the resilience of ecosystems'**. The duty replaces the section 40 duty in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act 2006), in relation to Wales.

The Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Forward Plan:

- Summarises the relevant legislative requirements for biodiversity & ecosystem resilience (Section 2 and Appendices in Section 7).
- Sets out aims for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to meet the duty (Section 3).
- Through Service Area Action Plans, identifies objectives for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's compliance with the Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience duty (Section 4).

Carrying out the requirements under the new biodiversity duty will help to:

- contribute to physical and mental health and wellbeing of people who live and work in the borough;
- offer opportunities for community engagement and volunteering
- take action to intercept and help break down air, water and soil pollution;
- take action to reduce flood peaks; and
- play an important role in tackling global climate change and take action to regulate local climate.

Further benefits provided by resilient ecosystems through the sustainable management of natural resources, and how they contribute to the Well-being Goals, are expanded on in Section 7.2.

2. Introduction to the Forward Plan

The Environment (Wales) Act was introduced in March 2016; it is a statutory duty that the Council must comply with. Part 1 of the Act sets out Wales' approach to planning and managing natural resources at a national and local level with a general purpose linked to statutory 'principles of sustainable management of natural resources'.

Section 6 of part 1 places a duty on the Local Authority to seek to:

- 'maintain and enhance biodiversity' so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions and
- 'promote the resilience of ecosystems'

To assist in implementing the new duty the Local Authority is required to publish a Forward Plan on how they intend to comply with the biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty and then report on how that plan is working. The first Forward Plan was due in March 2017. This was delayed in Blaenau Gwent due to resource constraints and awaiting formal guidance from Welsh Government.

The duty to forward plan ensures that biodiversity is considered at the decision-making level, and the new reporting duty ensures the Local Authority takes responsibility for showing how our actions have helped to enhance our natural resources and ecosystems.

This Forward Plan follows guidance prepared by Welsh Government and considers the seven Wellbeing Goals contained in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, the principles of Sustainable Development objectives of the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales and the Ecosystem Approach Principles (Section 7.1, 7.3, 7.4 & 7.5).

Service Area opportunities and objectives (section 4) have been derived via discussion with managers from all service departments throughout 2018 and 2019. These interviews have highlighted risks and opportunities for delivery of the Environment Act duty. The interview template can be found in section 7.6. A more detailed set of questions was used within the Green Infrastructure team and is available upon request.

It will be an evolving plan that can be updated in line with further evidence from Natural Resources Wales such as Area Statements. Blaenau Gwent CBC will be required to report on the outcomes of this plan by December 2019 and then

subsequently every three years. The Forward Plan will be reviewed accordingly in light of that reporting.

3. Forward Plan

3.1 Aims

To maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, by 2022, aims to:

1. Reduce overall resource use; reuse where possible and recycle everything recyclable.
2. Increase biodiversity and ecosystems understanding in the council staff and councillors through appropriate channels including Service Area Environment Champions and the Councillor Nature Champion role.
3. Embody the challenge of integrating the Active Travel, Wellbeing of Future Generations, Planning and Environment Acts to encourage sustainability in the ways we live, work and play.
4. Promote responsible use of natural resources in Blaenau Gwent by working in partnership with others to initiate action and behaviour change.
5. Maintain and enhance biodiversity and improve ecosystem resilience on council owned land, particularly with regard to priority species and habitats.
6. Support the Blaenau Gwent & Torfaen Local Nature Partnership.

These aims also contribute to meeting the council's corporate and well-being objectives.

3.2 Forward Plan timeline

Activity in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to develop and implement the Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan as required by the Environment Act (Wales) 2016:

2019-20

- Business Plan linked objectives start April 2019
- Implementation of objectives
- Start Environment Champions in April 2019, quarterly meetings
- Report to Welsh Government by end of December 2019

2020-21

- Report to Scrutiny Committee in April 2020
- Implementation of objectives
- Quarterly Environment Champion meetings

2021-22

- Report to Scrutiny Committee in April 2021
- Implementation of objectives
- Quarterly Environment Champion meetings
- Develop new Forward Plan before end of March 2022

2022-23

- Report to Scrutiny Committee in April 2022
- New Forward Plan in place from April 2022

3.3 Forward Plan responsibilities

The Green Infrastructure Team is responsible for leading, reporting on and providing advice related to the implementation of the Environment Act across the council.

The Green Infrastructure Team can provide guidance on fulfilling the Council's Biodiversity Duty however implementation of each action plan will be the responsibility of the individual Service Area managers.

4 Service Area Action Plans

4.1 Governance & Partnerships

Governance & Partnerships	
Summary of functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate performance, scrutiny and democratic services • Policy, partnerships & engagement 	
Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holder of corporate business plan and progress monitoring • Gateway to many engagement forums • Link to well-being plan 	
	Objective 1: Support the integration of Forward Plan objectives into council Corporate Business Plans and provide quarterly reporting
	Objective 2: Provide a link to Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan and Public Service Board

4.2 Resources

Resources
Summary of functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial services • Revenue services • Internal audit / risk management
Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore Environmental Management System accreditation (e.g. Green Dragon or ISO 14001)
Objectives to be set

4.3 Commercial Services

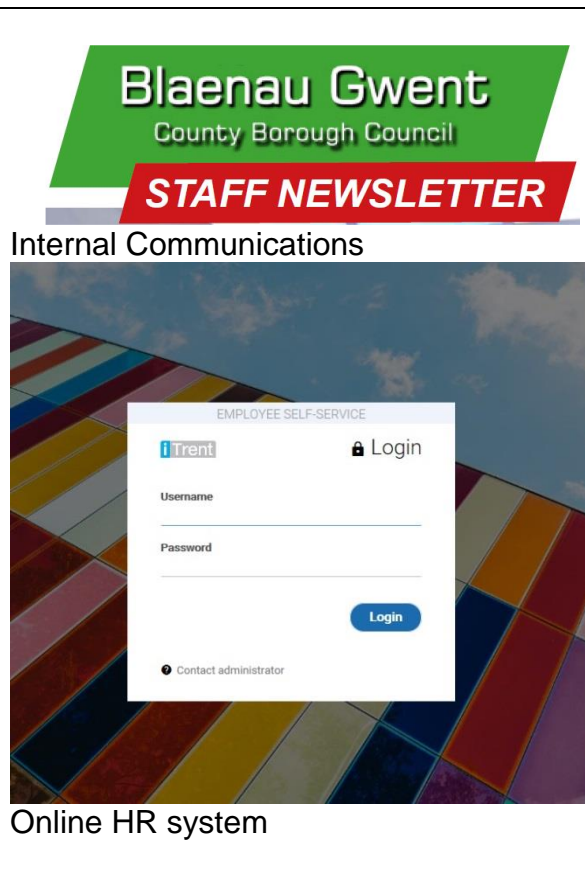
Commercial Services

Summary of functions:

- Customer service
- Communications
- Organisational Development
- Procurement

Opportunities:

- External communications with residents, businesses & tourists
- Internal communication led by Environment Champions group
- Consider local, regional and global impacts of procurement of goods
- Contribute to procurement strategy
- Contribute to Organisational Development strategy
- Encourage work culture changes for example taking meetings outside and actively travelling (cycling or walking) to work



The image shows a staff newsletter header for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. Below the header, it says 'Internal Communications'. The main content is a screenshot of an 'EMPLOYEE SELF-SERVICE' login page for iTrent. The login page has fields for 'Username' and 'Password', a 'Login' button, and a link to 'Contact administrator'.

Objective 1:
 Take further steps towards implementation of a “paperless office” via the further development of the iTrent system and the roll-out of the self service functions

4.4 Social Services

Social Services

Summary of functions:

- Adult Social Services
- Child Social Services

Opportunities:

- Multiple opportunities exist in children's and adult's services:
- Using green spaces
- Improving and enhancing social service property gardens and grounds
- Engaging well-being of children in council care




Photo: Getty Images

Objective 1:
 Green Infrastructure team (Environment Act leads) to attend Provider Managers meeting annually


Objective 2:
 Encourage nature friendly management at our Provider Services outside spaces

Objective 3:
 Engage our citizens and staff with the environment through involvement in environmental projects within our Provider Services

4.5 Regeneration & Community Services

<h3>Regeneration & Community Services</h3>	
<p>Summary of functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frontline integrated services • Public Protection • Property Services • Infrastructure • Regeneration • Planning 	
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate land management • Involving local communities • Engaging more people in their local green spaces • Improving access and quality of local green spaces • LDP policies • Increasing efficiency of council buildings 	
	<p>Objective 1: Work towards the Local Development Plan (LDP) aims, including the production of Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>
	<p>Objective 2: Maintain and enhance biodiversity and improve ecosystem resilience on council owned land, particularly with regard to Section 7 priority species and habitats in partnership with community groups, Gwent Wildlife Trust and others.</p>
	<p>Objective 3: Ensure that the Council Embraces the Well-being of Future Generations Act across the service functions and contribute to improving educational standards in relation to biodiversity.</p>
	<p>Objective 4: Support the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in its work as a strategic partnership of organisations and individuals directing and delivering nature conservation in both Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent boroughs, at local and wider landscape scales.</p>
<p>Supporting pollinators with pollen & nectar rich verge planting in Ebbw Vale. Photo: Liz Hancocks</p>	

4.6 Education

<h3>Education</h3>	
<p>Summary of functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion and school improvement • Transformation & performance • Youth service 	
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging schools and students via educational sessions and eco-councils • Attend Head Teachers meetings • Management for nature on school grounds • To get students involved in the council e.g. work placement projects 	
 <p>Engaging school pupils with Natural Resource Management. Photo: Aileen Vaughan</p>	<p>Objective 1: Engage schools and students via educational sessions and eco-councils and embed sustainability</p>
	<p>Objective 2: Green Infrastructure team (Environment Act leads) to attend a Head Teachers meeting annually</p>
	<p>Objective 3: Encourage nature friendly management on school grounds</p>
	<p>Objective 4: Engage young people with the environment through the youth service</p>

5 Reporting

5.1 Mid-year 2019-20 summary

	Business Plan linked Objectives	Environment Champion	Further engagement
Governance & Partnerships	Yes	Yes	Yes
Resources	No	Yes	-
Commercial Services	No	Yes	Yes
Organisational Development	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social Services	Yes	Yes	Yes
Regeneration & Community Services	Yes	Yes	Yes
Education	Yes	Yes	Yes
Councillors	Not applicable	Yes	Yes

5.2 Reporting schedule

One of the principles of the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources set out in the Environment Act is that we should be adaptable and plan, monitor, review and change our work as we gain a better understanding through improved evidence and our experiences. This way we can work together to ensure that with every iteration of the Forward Plan further steps can be taken to embed the duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity into every function of the council.

Blaenau Gwent CBC will be required to report on the outcomes of this plan by December 2019 and then subsequently every three years. The Forward Plan will be reviewed accordingly in light of that reporting.

6 References

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Corporate Plan 2018-22:

<http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/council/policies-plans-strategies/corporate-plan-2018-2022/>

(accessed 13/09/19)

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Well-being Objectives 2017:

http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Council/Policies_Strategies_Plans/Wellbeing_Objectives_-_June_2017-WF3.pdf (accessed 13/09/19)

Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan 2018-23:

<https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/well-being-plan.aspx> (accessed 13/09/19)

Environment (Wales) Act 2016:

<https://gov.wales/environment-wales-act-2016-overview> (accessed 13/09/19)

Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales 2015:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/nature-recovery-action-plan-2015.pdf> (accessed 13/09/19)

State of Natural Resources Report 2016:

<https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/the-state-of-natural-resources-report-assessment-of-the-sustainable-management-of-natural-resources/?lang=en> (accessed 13/09/19)

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

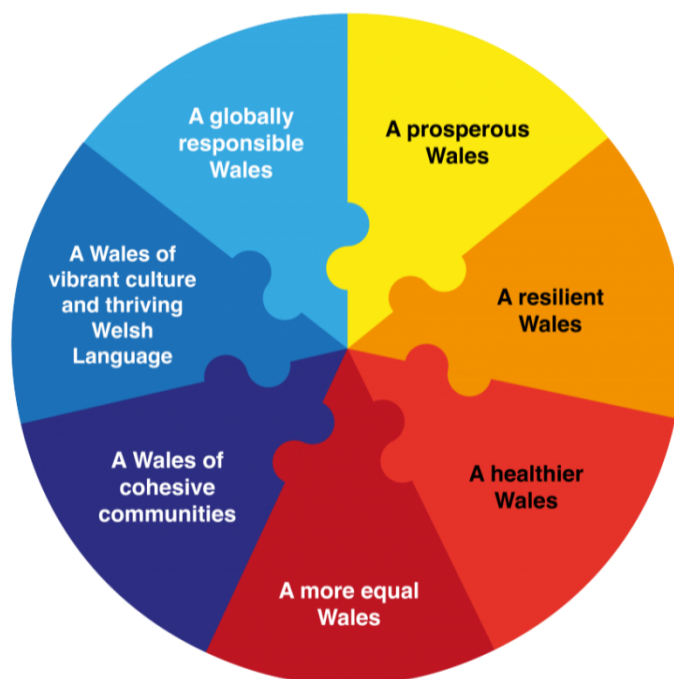
<https://gov.wales/well-being-future-generations-wales-act-2015-guidance> (accessed 13/09/19)

7 Appendices

7.2 Link to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ensures the Local Authority takes a more joined up approach to improving the environmental, as well as the economic, cultural and social well-being of Wales. The sustainable management of natural resources put in place by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 enables Wales' natural resources (including biodiversity) to be managed in a more proactive, sustainable and joined-up way.

There are seven well-being goals that the Local Authority must work towards achieving. These are:



The 'resilient Wales' goal is the top commitment to biodiversity:

“A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change)”

By implementing the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 the Local Authority will maximise its contributions to the Well-being goals contained in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

7.3 Benefits provided by resilient ecosystems

Well-being Goals	Benefits
A Prosperous Wales	Natural resources provide significant opportunities for employment and economic activity in Wales. Many of our key industries, such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry, energy and tourism are dependent on natural resources.
A Resilient Wales	Biodiversity, mountains, moorlands and heaths, semi-natural grasslands, woodlands, urban greenspaces, rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands, coastline and marine ecosystems all contribute to supporting Wales' ability to adapt to climate change. They are fundamental in supporting all of the well-being goals.
A Healthier Wales	Natural resources make a significant contribution to the physical health and mental wellbeing of people in Wales. For example, trees help to absorb pollutants and improve air quality; access to nature and greenspace has positive impacts on physical and mental health.
An Equal Wales	Equal access to ecosystems that provide cultural services would contribute to equality in Wales. At present, access is not equally distributed. For example, not everyone lives in close proximity to accessible greenspace.
A Wales of Cohesive Communities	Involving communities in the management of their local parks and woodlands has been shown to improve community cohesion and reduce antisocial behaviour.
A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language	Landscapes have played a significant role in the development of distinct cultural practices, such as local building techniques which use local materials and locally specific art and literature.
A Globally Responsible Wales	The environment supplies all our material resources, so we must better understand the impacts of our activities globally in terms of both imports and exports. By making these inter-linkages and dependencies more explicit, it becomes clear that taking action to build the resilience of natural resources will provide significant other benefits across the Well-Being Goals.

Source: State of Natural Resources Report, 2016

7.4 Sustainable Development Five Ways of Working

In addition the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out five ways of working linked to sustainable development, that public bodies must adhere to in order to demonstrate how they are meeting their duty. Any plan/project must now demonstrate that they are following these ways of working.



7.5 Link to the Environment (Wales) 2016 Act Ecosystem Approach

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 helps to deliver the sustainable management of natural resources as it requires the Local Authority, in delivering the new biodiversity duty, to promote the resilience of ecosystems – the ‘**ecosystem approach**’. This approach, developed by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity has been acknowledged internationally as the most effective method of addressing biodiversity decline.

The Environment (Wales) Act puts the ecosystem approach into statute through a set of principles, which are based on the 12 principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). These principles must be used in designing and implementing projects and programmes of work.

The ecosystem approach is an application of joined-up planning and management processes that look at ecosystems as a whole and seeks to build the resilience of those ecosystems and the multiple benefits that they provide. As biodiversity underpins the resilience of ecosystems, it is a fundamental component of the approach.

Ecosystem Approach Principles

1. **Societal Choice:** The objectives of management of land, water and living resources are a matter of societal choices.
2. **Localised Decisions:** Management should be decentralized to the lowest appropriate level
3. **Adjacent Effects:** Ecosystem managers should consider the effects (actual or potential) of their activities on adjacent and other ecosystems
4. **Economic Drivers:** Recognizing potential gains from management, there is usually a need to understand and manage the ecosystem in an economic context. Any such ecosystem-management programme should:
 - a. Reduce those market distortions that adversely affect biological diversity;
 - b. Align incentives to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use;
 - c. Internalize costs and benefits in the given ecosystem to the extent feasible.
5. **Resilience:** Conservation of ecosystem structure and functioning, in order to maintain ecosystem services, should be a priority target of the ecosystem approach
6. **Integrity:** Ecosystem must be managed within the limits of their functioning
7. **Spatial and Temporal Scale:** The ecosystem approach should be undertaken at the appropriate spatial and temporal scales
8. **Temporal Scale:** Recognizing the varying temporal scales and lag-effects that characterize ecosystem processes, objectives for ecosystem management should be set for the long term.
9. **Managing Change:** Management must recognize that change is inevitable

10. **Balancing conservation and use of biodiversity:** The ecosystem approach should seek the appropriate balance between, and integration of, conservation and use of biological diversity
11. **Evidence:** The ecosystem approach should consider all forms of relevant information, including scientific and indigenous and local knowledge, innovations and practices.
12. **Stakeholder Engagement:** The ecosystem approach should involve all relevant sectors of society and scientific disciplines.

7.6 Link to Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales

The Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales produced by Welsh Government in 2015 is aimed at addressing the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by:

- putting nature at the heart of decision-making
- increasing the resilience of the natural environment
- taking specific action for habitats and species

It sets out how Wales will deliver the commitments of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the EU Biodiversity Strategy to halt the decline in biodiversity by 2020 and then reverse that decline.

By fulfilling the Environment Act's biodiversity and ecosystem resilience duty, the Local Authority will help to achieve the Nature Recovery Action Plan objectives. These are:

- Objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.
- Objective 2: Safeguard species and habitats of principle importance and improve their management
- Objective 3: Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation
- Objective 4: Tackle key pressure on species and habitats
- Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring
- Objective 6: Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery

7.7 Service Area Action Plan interview template

Generating Service Area Action Plans

to contribute to the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan to meet Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016

These questions are aimed at finding out what we do well already and what areas we need to focus on to help deliver the obligations under the Act. Your answers will form the basis of service area action plans which will be shared with the service area for feedback before completion of the forward plan.

Name	
Job Title	
Service Area	

Questions

1. What are the opportunities for your service area to gain more from the Green Infrastructure¹ currently present in Blaenau Gwent?
2. Please indicate areas of responsibility/activity within your department:

- Influencing land or resource use
- Land management e.g. activities such as grazing, vegetation removal, planting
- Authorising activities on land
- Utilising council owned land for activities, e.g. Local Nature Reserves or/and the Green Infrastructure network in Blaenau Gwent (footpaths, cycle paths etc.)
- Liaising with environmental organisations or/and community groups
- Work related to energy use; carbon emission etc.
- Procuring or using natural resources on council business e.g. stationary, food, building materials

Others:

¹ Green Infrastructure: is a network of connected, accessible, multi-functional sites (including parks, woodland, informal open spaces, and nature reserves) as well as linkages (such as river corridors and wildlife corridors) that can bring about multiple social, health, economic and environmental benefits to the area. The sites are multi-functional in that apart from their ecological value they can be used for various purposes, for example, leisure activities and promoting tourism with associated benefits in terms of health and the economy.

3. What do you think you already do well?
Examples could be:
policies / actions on the ground / supporting volunteers or community groups
4. What could you do better, or more of, and what are the barriers?

(E.g. when planting areas with wildflowers for pollinators make sure that the habitat is also suitable for other stages of the invertebrate life cycle)

5. Have you started to incorporate the five ways of working linked to sustainable development from the Wellbeing of Future Generations act?
(Long-term/ Prevention/ Integration/ Collaboration/ Involvement)
6. Are there any aspects of green infrastructure or/and biodiversity and ecosystem resilience that you or your service area would like to understand better – please describe?
7. Evidence collecting, decision making and reporting. Are you collecting evidence on the need for, and monitoring the success or otherwise of your actions? Any examples, and can we share your case study/ data?

Further information

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 enhances the previous NERC² Act 2006 duty to require all public authorities, when carrying out their functions in Wales, to seek to “maintain and enhance biodiversity” where it is within the proper exercise of their functions. In doing so, public authorities must also seek to “promote the resilience of ecosystems”.

Under the Act, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has to report to Welsh Government on the actions we aim to take.. This is a statutory requirement that the Council must comply with.

We are currently in development of the Forward Plan. It was agreed at SMT in May 2017 to take forward proposals to interview all service area managers to establish what we are doing well already and what actions we need to take to comply with the Act.

Contacts:

Chris Engel, Green Infrastructure Team Manager, extension 5545
Liz Hancocks, Ecologist, extension 5702

The Green Infrastructure Team is responsible for leading the reporting on and providing advice related to the implementation of the Environment Act across Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

² NERC – Natural Environment and Rural Communities

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) 2020/21 annual report

Section 2.5. Appendix 2.

2020/21 Progress and 2021/22 Activity Plan

Service Area	Business Plan linked Objectives	Progress 2020/21	Areas of Focus and Opportunity 2021/22	Environment Champion/s	Assessment Red – Amber – Green
Governance & Partnerships	<p>1. Support the integration of Forward Plan objectives into council Corporate Business Plans and provide quarterly reporting</p> <p>2. Provide a link to Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan and Public Service Board</p>	<p>1. Fully integrated into processes during 20/21 and being utilised also for the Annual Report on Council Performance.</p> <p>On-going projects continue, despite COVID-19 and the PSB is overseeing the development of a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>Significant progress with climate change work, including the Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly, where key recommendations were made around nature and green space, particularly its protection and improvement.</p>	<p>1. Further strengthen relevant duties for Biodiversity and Ecosystem throughout organisational processes.</p> <p>Strengthen local and regional partnership working on environmental issues in-line with Gwent PSB changes, with a strong local focus on the Green Infrastructure Plan</p> <p>Build on the delivery of community led projects benefiting from participatory budgeting in the borough.</p> <p>Ensure key stakeholders are able to consider and participated in consultation on</p>	Yes – One (Governance)	Green

		<p>Furthermore, a number of environment community based projects have been funded by 20/21 participatory budgeting programme in Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>Biodiversity and Ecosystem a key part of development of the Gwent Well-being Assessment for the newly formed Gwent PSB. Considered locality issues e.g. Blaenau Gwent and will be available for formal consultation early in 2022.</p>	the well-being assessment, which will shape the new PSB well-being plan for 2022/23.		
Resources	None set	-	Set objectives with Section 6 duty leads	Yes – One (Accounting)	Amber
Commercial Services	Organisational Development (OD): 1. Take further steps towards implementation of a “paperless office” via the further development of the iTrent system and the roll-out of the self service functions	<p>New Agile Working Operating Model: Further reduction in the use of paper Less commuting but also less business travel overall Closure of a building</p> <p>Occupational Health- Fully remote service</p> <p>ITrent: Further development to streamline processes and reduce use of paper i.e.</p>	<p>Include section in Staff Newsletter</p> <p>Further digitalisation of the remaining filing.</p> <p>Tendering for a permanent Hybrid mail solution which will give the service area full functionality and the ability to send out secure emails to staff instead of paper letters.</p> <p>Making more use of staff email addresses since COVID</p>	Yes – Two (OD; Business Support)	Green

		<p>recruitment and other forms Majority of correspondence now within the system to auto populate</p> <p>It was agreed (prior to the pandemic) that all communication being electronic, however it was impacted by Covid 19 do there has been a delay to going completely paperless on staff communication.</p> <p>Introduction of the new Hybrid mail system but does not allow all functionality of going completely paperless with staff communication.</p>	<p>Decarbonisation Agenda: One of OD's actions is to explore how staff can be encouraged to switch to ULEV. This will be considered through the review our car loan scheme next year.</p>		
Social Services	<p>1. Environment Act leads to attend Provider Managers meeting annually</p> <p>2. Encourage nature friendly management at our Provider Services outside spaces</p> <p>3. Engage our citizens and staff with the environment through involvement in</p>	<p>Unfortunately, Community Options closed in March 2020 and staff were redeployed to essential services and as a result limited progress has been made within Social Services – Adult services has prioritised supporting the delivery of essential services and a number of non-regulated services have focussed of supporting citizens in their own homes and in the</p>	<p>In 2021 staff member Steven Spear has attended environment champion meetings, Steven has worked with the group in helping with the new sensory garden at Bryn Bach Park. Steven will continue to work with environment champions and continue the upkeep of our gardens and also the planting of wild flowers and bird boxes in our community centres.</p>	<p>Yes – Two (Adult; Child)</p>	<p>Amber</p>

	environmental projects within our Provider Services	community who are assessed as being in critical need. However recently we have made some progress with the garden at one of our establishments, including bird boxes and wild flowers.			
Regeneration & Community Services	<p>1. Work towards the Local Development Plan (LDP) aims</p> <p>2. Maintain and enhance biodiversity and improve ecosystem resilience on council owned land, particularly with regard to Section 7 priority species and habitats in partnership with community groups, Gwent Wildlife Trust and others.</p> <p>3. Ensure that the Council Embraces the Well-being of Future Generations Act across the service functions and contribute to improving educational standards in relation to biodiversity.</p>	<p>1. Supported the inclusion of ecosystem resilience in the Local Development Plan 2018-2033 and reference up to date policies from the Environment Act including Natural Resources Policy and Area Statements.</p> <p>Changes to Edition 10 (2018) of Planning Policy Wales highlighted by Chief Planner 1st March 2021. PPW 11 was issued February 2021.</p> <p>2. The Resilient Greater Gwent has several work streams delivering on maintaining & enhancing biodiversity and improve ecosystem resilience.</p> <p>3. Due to covid 19 (March 2020) and changes to staffing, engagement</p>	<p>1. Support LDP Allocation master planning</p> <p>2. Support Local Nature Reserves and community groups via collaborative management plans.</p> <p>3. Programme of environmental education to be developed to deliver the Schools SLA from April 2021.</p> <p>4. Support the Blaenau Gwent & Torfaen Local Nature Partnership Nature Recovery Action Plan. Bring to council for scrutiny and approval.</p> <p>To support and assist with promotion materials for Wales Nature Week 2021.</p> <p>Discuss and develop BGCBC becoming Bee Friendly (WG scheme)</p>	Yes – Two (Regeneration; Natural Environment)	Green

	<p>4. Support the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in its work as a strategic partnership of organisations and individuals directing and delivering nature conservation in both Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent boroughs, at local and wider landscape scales.</p>	<p>wasn't able to take place at its full level of delivery. January 2021 the role of the Biodiversity officer to be filled.</p> <p>4. Supported the Local Nature Partnership (Appendix 2a, Local Nature Partnership progress 2020-21).</p> <p>Supported community groups running events and assisted with promotion materials for Wales Nature Week in June 2020 (Appendix 2b, Nature Week Events 2020).</p>			
Education	<p>1. Engage schools and students via educational sessions and eco-councils and embed sustainability</p> <p>2. Environment Act leads to attend a Head Teachers meeting annually</p> <p>3. Encourage nature friendly management on school grounds</p>	<p>1. A Bio-diversity SLA is in place between Natural Environment team and schools; engaging with 17 schools providing indoor and outdoor learning sessions linked to the natural environment. Adaptation required for Covid-19 restrictions. Blended delivery style of online engagement and outdoor classroom. The SLA review process has commenced, the aim of</p>	<p>1. Adaptation required for Covid-19 restrictions.</p> <p>Schools built as part of the 21st Century Schools programme built to excellent Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) standard.</p> <p>Further development and implementation of the Ecology and Education Action plan, in line with the following key themes:</p>	Yes – One (Education transformation)	Green

	<p>4. Engage young people with the environment through the youth service</p>	<p>which, is to extend provision throughout the school estate.</p> <p>2. Update provided in newsletter. An Engagement Plan and regular meetings are in place between the Natural Environment team and Education, which includes the development of a School Engagement and Communication plan.</p> <p>3. Via School Eco Councils and SLA with Natural Environment Team. In addition, projects and priorities will be developed and agreed as part of the joint action planning process with Education</p> <p>4. Ongoing, this work will also form part of the action planning process (referenced above).</p> <p>Schools built as part of the 21st Century Schools programme built to excellent Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of Education (including schools and Youth Service) business (i.e. procurement, planning, projects, programmes etc.) and grounds (i.e. maintenance, management, development etc.) – creation of a Education Ecology Policy • Engagement – children, young people, partners and schools • Links to the curriculum and future employment opportunities • Connection to nature and wellbeing • Training, awareness and communication 		
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		Method (BREEAM) standard. In addition, remodelling and maintenance projects factor in ecological and environmental enhancement considerations.			
Councillors	N/A	N/A	Update briefing on Activity Plan and funding outputs. Virtual or in person.	Yes – Nature Champion Cllr Lee Parsons	Green

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Appendix 2a

Local Nature Partnership 2020/21 Progress Summary

Aims for the 2020/21:

1. To support the regional LNP Cymru project
2. Contribute to Area Statement and local NRAP development as required
3. To deliver Partnership projects, including Local Places for Nature

Key figures (Q1)	
Number of LNP meetings held	2
Number of steering group meetings held	0
Number of recipients on email distribution list	173
Number of people engaged through social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram)	489
Enquiries	34
Talks / presentations	2
Site visits	24
LNP Projects developed & cost	7
Local Places for Nature programmes	4

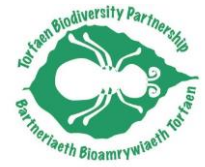
Key work:

Talks / presentations – Wales Biodiversity Partnership conference workshop on nature and wellbeing; LNP Cymru meeting

Site visits – advice and support for local authorities, Community Councils, residents, community groups on enhancing sites for biodiversity

LNP projects developed – pond restoration at Cwmcelyn, Beaufort Hill and Tredegar Park; hedgerow management at Beaufort Hill; hedgerow planting at Cwmtillery; Torfaen Urban Hedgehog Project; wildlife cameras for households / community groups;

Local Places for Nature projects – two main themes for 2020 / 21 were boundary features (hedgerows and stone walling) and changes to grass cutting regimes on verges and



meadows. Progress has been made across both county boroughs in identifying additional sites for changes in management to enhance biodiversity.

Looking forward:

2021/22

- Complete delivery of 100 hedgehog packs in Torfaen
- Develop and deliver plans for Local Places for Nature 2021/22 – expansion of changes to grass cutting regimes and urban tree planting, including orchards, hedgerows and street trees

PARTNERIAETHAU NATUR LLEOL LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIPS CYMRU

Image © Rose Revera

Wales Nature Week

30 May – 7 June
#wnw2020 #NatureNeighbours

This year, Wales Nature Week is all about nature in our gardens- and we need your help! We want you to share your encounters with the amazing variety of birds, native plants, bees and bugs that share your garden.

@LNPCymru @WBP_wildlife

Keep an eye on our social media channels for more details of the following:

National Garden Bioblitz **Nature facts** **Live moth trap reveal**

Big Nature Pub Quiz **Thanks to volunteers day** **Many more local activities!**

Armchair birding **Nature Wellbeing day**

WYTHNOS NATUR CYMRU WALES NATURE WEEK

30 MAI/MAY - 7 MEHEFIN/JUNE 2020

Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen Local Nature Partnership

#WalesNatureWeek2020
#WNW2020
#WildlifeWhereWeLive
@BGandTorfaenLNP

30th May	31st May	1st June	2nd June	3rd June	4th June	5th June	6th June	7th June
Nature in our Gardens	Nature in our Gardens	Pollinators Day	Nocturnal animals		Quiz day	Homes for Wildlife Day	Wellbeing Day	Bird Day
Garden Bio-Blitz	Challenge: Nature Bingo	Challenge: Create a butterfly feeder	Challenge: Night Time Movers	Challenge: Make a Nature Video	Challenge: Wildlife Quiz	Challenge: Make a home for wildlife	Challenge: Sit, Spot and Notice- Creative writing	Challenge: Armchair Naturalist- Birding
Challenge: Nature Safari		Ask an expert: Liam Olds, Buglife LIVE on twitter @nptwildlife	Facebook LIVE! The Great Moth Trap reveal with Barry Stewart: NPT Facebook	Ask an expert: Mark Barber, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation @nptwildlife	The Big Nature Pub quiz with wildlife enthusiasts (You tube) 7pm	Volunteer for Nature- to celebrate National Volunteer Week/World Environment Day	Challenge: Nature Art	



Blaenau Gwent CBC @BlaenauGwentCBC · 29 May 2020

This Saturday is the start of a series of garden events and nature activities you can join in from home to celebrate Wales Nature Week

Read more - crowd.in/2KW1jC

[#WNW2020](#) [#nature](#) [#biodiversity](#) [#blaenaugwent](#)



4

6



Nadine Morgan 🌸 😊 🌍 🇬🇧 🌞 @BGEco_Education · 1 Jun 2020

Its Day 3 of [#WalesNatureWeek2020](#) [#WNW2020](#) here is today's challenge- have fun! Share your creations [#WildlifeWhereWeLive](#)

[@BGTorfaenLNP](#) [@WBP_wildlife](#) [@LNPCymru](#) 🦋🦋🦋🦋

create a Butterfly Feeding Station / **wnewch orsaf fwydo pilli pa**

Butterflies are a wonderful sight in spring and summer. / **ie'n hyfryd gweld pilli pala yn y gwanwyn a'r haf.**

Encourage butterflies to your garden or window box by creating a DIY butterfly feeding station. They are so simple to make and many can be made using up-cycled or recycled materials. / **ant mor syml i'w gwneud a gellir gwneud llawer ohonynt yn defnyddio deud ledol neu ailgylchu.**

I would love to see what you find share your discoveries @BGEco_Education / **idem wrth ein bodd gweld yr hyn a welwch @BGEco_Education**

[@BGTorfaenLNP](#) [#WildlifeWhereWeLive](#) / **@BGTorfaenLNP #BywydGwylltBieRydymYnByw**

WYTHNOS NATUR CYMRU
WALES NATURE WEEK
30 MAI/MAY - 7 MEHEFIN/JUNE 2020

WYTHNOS NATUR CYMRU
WALES NATURE WEEK
30 MAI/MAY - 7 MEHEFIN/JUNE 2020

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17



 **BGandTorfaenLNP** @BGTorfaenLNP · 29 May 2020

There's a jam packed week of nature activities starting tomorrow - watch this space! [#WNW2020](#)

 **Nadine Morgan** 🌸 😊 🌿 🐦 🐛 @BGEco_Education · 29 May 2020

[#WalesNatureWeek2020](#) [#WNW2020](#) [#WildlifeWhereWeLive](#)
 Here are the planned activities from @BGTorfaenLNP with live Q&A from experts coming from other areas in Wales. [#LNPCymru](#) @NptWildlife
 To find out more: biodiversitywales.org.uk/Wales-Nature-W...

[@WBP_wildlife](#) [@loloWilliams2](#) [@LNPCymru](#) 🐾 🌱 🐛



The image shows a calendar for Wales Nature Week 2020, running from 30th May to 7th June. It lists various activities and challenges for each day, such as 'Garden Bio-Bitz', 'Pollinators in our Gardens', 'Night Time Mowers', 'Wildlife Quiz', 'Homes for Wildlife Day', 'Wellbeing Day', and 'Bird Day'. It also includes social media challenges like 'Nature Safari' and 'Nature Art'.

🗨️ 2 ❤️ 4 📤

 **Nadine Morgan** 🌸 😊 🌿 🐦 🐛 @BGEco_Education · 1 Jun 2020

[#WNW2020](#) [#WalesNatureWeek2020](#)

Butterfly

The Orange Tip Butterfly can be seen on the wing from April to June. The female which doesn't have the orange tips, lays its eggs on cuckoo flower, also known as lady's smock or may flower.

[#WildlifeWhereWeLive](#) [@BGTorfaenLNP](#)



The image shows a close-up of an Orange Tip Butterfly (Gonepteryx rhamni) perched on a white cuckoo flower. The butterfly has white wings with a distinct orange tip on the forewing. A small insect is visible on the flower next to it. A timestamp in the bottom right corner reads '08/05/2017 02:48'.

🗨️ 2 ❤️ 5 📤

BGandTorfaenLNP @BGTorfaenLNP · 30 May 2020

We'd love to know what you find in your garden - don't forget to record your garden wildlife with [@SEWBRc](#) [#WNN2020](#) [#wildlifewherewelive](#)

SEWBRc @SEWBRc · 30 May 2020

Another way to send in your [#WalesGardenBioBlitz](#) records is sewbrecord.org.uk. Here's a series of video guides on how to get started: youtube.com/playlist?list=...
[#WNN2020](#)



2

3

BGandTorfaenLNP @BGTorfaenLNP · 5 Jun 2020

Today's [#WalesNatureWeek2020](#) activity is to make a home for wildlife in your garden. Don't forget to send us a photo or video of what you make - we'd love to see [@BGeco_Education](#) [@LNPCymru](#) [@WBP_wildlife](#)



3

4



For [#WalesNatureWeek2020](#) task today we're inviting you to be an armchair naturalist, look out of your window and see what birds are nearby. Maybe make a list and share it with us [@BGEco_Education](#) [@LNPCymru](#) [@WBP_wildlife](#)



3 7



[BGandTorfaenLNP](#) [@BGTorfaenLNP](#) · 6 Jun 2020 ...
It's Saturday - take a little time to relax, sit somewhere and notice nature for [#WalesNatureWeek2020](#) Be inspired to write about what you encounter [@BGEco_Education](#) [@LNPCymru](#) [@WBP_wildlife](#)



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Appendix 3: Impact on budget

Additional external revenue and capital funding to deliver further biodiversity and ecosystem resilience related schemes of work were secured and delivered as follows:

Source – Project	Forward Plan Aims met	Amount	Schemes of Work
ENRaW* - Resilient Greater Gwent	<p>Council owned land</p> <p>Embody the challenge of integrating legislation and five ways of working</p> <p>Working in partnership</p>	<£77,000	<p>Invasive Non Native Species work</p> <p>Urban biodiversity</p> <p>NRAP delivery</p> <p>Sustainable Communities</p> <p>BGCBC owned Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) surveys x5 (GWT and Buglife)</p> <p>Actions across LNRs</p>
ENRaW* - LNP Cymru	<p>Support the LNP</p> <p>Council owned land</p> <p>Working in partnership</p>	£61,000	<p>Priority habitat work: hedgerows, meadows</p> <p>Verge & grass management</p>
ENRaW* - Gwent Green Grid	<p>Council owned land</p> <p>Embody the challenge of integrating legislation and five ways of working</p> <p>Working in partnership</p>	£60,000	<p>Woodland management</p> <p>Access improvements</p>
Planning - Biodiversity S106 payments	<p>Embody the challenge of integrating legislation and five ways of working</p>	£0	N/A

Actions in 2021/22 will have a cost neutral impact on budgets. Officer time will be funded through existing revenue budgets. Additional external revenue and capital funding to deliver further biodiversity and ecosystem resilience related schemes of work have been secured as follows:

Source	Aims to be met	Amount	Schemes of Work
ENRaW* - Resilient Greater Gwent	<p>Council owned land</p> <p>Embody the challenge of integrating legislation and five ways of working</p> <p>Working in partnership</p>	<£77,000	<p>Invasive Non Native Species work</p> <p>BGCBC owned Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) surveys x5 (GWT and Buglife)</p> <p>Urban biodiversity</p> <p>NRAP Delivery</p> <p>Sustainable Communities</p> <p>Action across LNRs</p>
ENRaW* - LNP Cymru	<p>Support the LNP</p> <p>Council owned land</p> <p>Working in partnership</p>	£97,500	<p>Priority habitat work: hedgerows, meadows</p> <p>Verge & grass management</p>
ENRaW* - Gwent Green Grid	<p>Council owned land</p> <p>Embody the challenge of integrating legislation and five ways of working</p> <p>Working in partnership</p>	£60,000	<p>Woodland management</p> <p>Access improvements</p>

Planning - Biodiversity S106 payments	Embody the challenge of integrating legislation and five ways of working	£0	N/A
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*ENRaW – Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being grant from Welsh Government

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Agenda Item 19

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 02.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **15th December 2021**
Report Subject: **Civil Parking Enforcement – Service Update**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Joanna Wilkins, Executive Member Environment**
Report Submitted by: **Head of Community Services, Clive Rogers**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
26/10/21	28/10/21	30.11.21			15/11/21	15.12.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Executive Committee with an update on Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) since the last update of Autumn 2020. The time period of this report is 1st November 2020 to 30th September 2021.

2. Scope and Background

Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE)

- 2.1 Blaenau Gwent CBC has had the powers to enforce its own Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) since 1st July 2019. Enforcement proper commenced on the 10th September 2019, whereby any Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued carried a financial penalty.
- 2.2 Civil Parking Enforcement gives the Council the powers to tackle wider transport and environmental issues such as traffic congestion and road safety, and safeguards the interests of residents, blue badge holders, transport operators and local businesses. It also allows the Council to target enforcement in key areas such as town centres and other areas where parking contraventions create potential risks to pedestrians and other road users, such as parking on School Keep Clear markings and double yellow lines in the immediate vicinity of schools. This is in line with the Council's priorities including Healthy and Safe Communities and Managing our Highways Network and Infrastructure.
- The introduction of CPE has allowed the Council to successfully monitor and target areas where complaints of illegal and dangerous parking are received. However, the Council is currently seeing an increase in demand for parking enforcement from residents, businesses and the Police, and our current resource provision cannot meet the demand.
- 2.3 Caerphilly CBC (CCBC) is continuing to provide enforcement resource via a Service Level Agreement. This provides Blaenau Gwent CBC with two part-time civil parking enforcement officers.

2.4 Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC (RCTCBC) provides a PCN processing service, under the name of the South Wales Parking Group. RCTCBC provides the ongoing processing service and is the first point of contact for anyone wishing to pay or challenge a PCN.

2.5 Agreed Business Case Model

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

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

Capital set up costs

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

Annual Operational costs

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

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

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

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

- **A total of 3777 PCN's have been issued since CPE began in September 2019**
- **1029 PCN's have been issued between 1st Nov 2020 to 30th Sept 2021**

- **95% collection rate of PCN's (this figure relates to the percentage of PCN's paid)
This is an improvement on last year's collection rate (88 %)**

2.7 Between 1st November 2020 and 30th September 2021, 1029 PCNs were issued, which is lower than the business case model. This is due to Covid restrictions rather than an increase in compliance with our TROs. Details on factors impacting number of PCNs is provided in Section 2.9 of this report.

However, notwithstanding the effects of Covid, the CPE operation is performing in line with the agreed business case model.

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

Table 1:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Number of PCN's Issued</u>
ABERTILLERY	218
BLAINA & NANTYGLO	5
BRYNMAWR & BEAUFORT	244
EBBW VALE*	406
TREDEGAR	145
Total	1029

* Note The Ebbw Vale total includes 212 PCNs issued at The Works

2.8 Financial Update

For the financial year 2020/21 a positive variance of £11,466.66 was recorded. This was due to a Welsh Government Covid Grant of £27,000, which was received to off-set payments lost during the redeployment of enforcement officers during the national lockdown between March 2020 and July 2020.

For financial year 2021/22 (April 2021 to Sept 2021) an adverse variance of -£8042.89 is recorded.

Budget monitoring will continue to be undertaken by officers going forward.

Table 2 below shows the income and expenditure so far for 2021/22, which has been based on monthly pay-over reports received from RCTCBC and invoices from CCBC.

Table 2:

Month	Number of PCNs Issued	PCN Payments In (£)	Payments Out (£) (RCTCBC & CCBC)	Balance
Apr-21	52	1390	3711.1	-2321.1
May-21	77	2175	3839.35	-1664.35
Jun-21	85	1971	3880.39	-1909.39
Jul-21	114	3448	4029.16	-581.16
Aug-21	110	3345	4008.64	-663.64
Sep-21	107	3090	3993.25	-903.25
Total	545	15419	23461.89	-8042.89

2.9 Factors Impacting PCNs

A combination of factors has affected the CPE provision during this time period. The contributing factors are as follows:

Lockdown restrictions: The national and regional lockdown restrictions of Autumn and Winter 2020 adversely impacted on the CPE service as fewer cars were observed in town centres and schools were closed for a number of months.

Staff sickness: Interim periods of sickness during the reporting period.

2.10 Type of Contraventions

There are over 35 different on-street and off-street parking contraventions in the Blaenau Gwent Enforcement Policy. The most common type of contravention within the reporting period is Code 30 Overstay, which is where a car exceeds the allowed time in a limited waiting bay. A total of 451 PCNs were issued against this code, almost 50 per cent of the total PCNs issued. Contravention Code 01, Waiting Prohibited (parking on single or double yellow lines), was the second most common contravention with 417 PCNs issued against this code. Table 3 below lists the number of PCN's issued against contravention code for the reporting time period.

Table 3:

Code	Type of Contravention	No. of PCNs issued
1	Waiting Prohibited	417
2	Loading Restricted	2
12	No Resident Permit	14
22	No Return	6
23	Prohibited Vehicle Class	0
24	Out of Marked Bay	0
25	Loading Area	17
26	Double Parked	1
27	Dropped Footway	45
30	Overstay	451
40	No/Invalid Blue Badge	73
45	Taxi Rank	0
47	Bus Stop Clearway	1
48	Outside School	0
99	Pedestrian Crossing	2

2.11 Update on the Traffic Regulation Order Review

Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) are the legal orders that govern the regulations along streets and in car parks (on-street and off-street respectively). In Blaenau Gwent these have been consolidated into two single orders –on-street parking and off-street parking.

2.12 Following on from the implementation of these orders, the Council has received a significant number of requests from Members, Town Centre business forums and the general public to review existing parking restrictions at various locations throughout the county borough. Due to the significant level of requests received the Council has had to prioritise this work, with our town centres and strategic routes being considered first.

Work is ongoing to review the current TROs and make changes where it is deemed appropriate. This work is currently being progressed. Five schemes are programmed for completion by the end of this financial year, with procurement for each scheme imminent (2021/22). Table 4 provides a list of the five schemes below.

Table 4:

Schemes ready for Procurement and Delivery by 31st March 2022
Bethcar Street, Ebbw Vale
Tillery Street, Abertillery
Church Street, Abertillery
Rees Street, Ebbw Vale
Lime Avenue, Ebbw Vale

Tredegar Town Centre was part of the original TRO review, but this area is now being looked at by Regeneration with a study being commissioned to look at the pedestrianisation of Commercial Street.

The TRO review for Blaina has been put on hold due to budget constraints, but will be looked at in the next financial year (2022/23)

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

2.13 CEO's Safety & Welfare

On occasion, CEOs have been the target of abuse, threats and intimidating behaviour whilst on patrol. All incidents of threats and physical abuse have been reported to the Police.

2.14 Update on Pavement Parking

The Welsh Government is proposing to give Local Authorities the power to fine people who are parked on pavements.

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

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

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

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

The aim is to commence civil enforcement of pavement parking in Wales by July 2022. However, the Council is still awaiting operational guidance from Welsh Government.

3. Options for recommendation

3.1 Option A

Members accept the latest annual progress update relating to Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) since its introduction in 2019 and the current business case model.

3.2 Option B

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

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

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

From an environmentally smart perspective, residents may consider using active travel (walking and cycling for purposeful journeys) as an alternative to the car when collecting their child/grandchild from school or nursery, or when visiting the shops/pharmacy/Post Office, if they believe there is a risk of being issued a PCN if parked in contravention of a TRO. This will help increase the amount of exercise residents participate in, which should help improve their health and wellbeing. In addition, using active travel to replace car journeys will help to reduce the amount of carbon emissions and support the Council's Decarbonisation Plan 2020 – 2030.

5. Implications Against Each Option

Option A - Members accept the latest annual progress update relating to Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) since its introduction in 2019 and the current business case model.

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

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

5.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

Funding

Option A: Members accept the latest annual progress update relating to Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) since its introduction in 2019 and the current business case model.

In line with the agreed business model the CPE enforcement service will potentially remain cost neutral to the authority (small surplus).

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

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

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

Option A: Members accept the latest annual progress update relating to Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) since its introduction in 2019 and the current business case model.

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

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

5.3 Legal

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 Human Resources

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

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 Performance Information and Data:

Performance is currently monitored in the following ways:

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

6.2 Expected Outcome for the Public

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

6.3 Involvement (Consultation, Engagement, Participation)

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

6.4 Thinking for the long term (forward planning)

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

6.5 Preventative Focus

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

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

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

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

6.7 Integration (across service areas)

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

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

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

7. Monitoring Arrangements

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

8. Background Documents / Electronic Link

8.1 Appendix 1 – List of traffic order review requests

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**BGCBC CPE Traffic Orders
Review Schedule
21/10/21**



No. -	Member	Ward	Street/ Location	Description of Traffic Order	Change Required	Reason for Change	Notes	Comments	Status
1	Julie Holt	Abertillery	Tillery Street (Nos 14 - 27)	No Waiting at Any Time	Removal of double yellows	Lack of residents' parking. Residents from opposite side of the street take up all the spaces ad spaces behind the houses.	Please refer to DRG NO: 0001, please can you mark up any changes if required. 28 04 2020 - Email rec'd 24 03 20 - Removed Draft for Comment, added map title No. - to title frame - TRO DRG No. - 0001 issued. Awaiting confirmation to progress detail design DRG/BQ	Drawings and BoQ complete, next stage invite tenders	Live - TRO DRG Approved - Awaiting confirmation to start detail design drawing March 2021
2	Nigel Daniels	Abertillery	Alma Street	No Waiting at Any Time	Introduce single yellow lines along a section to provide parking for residents after 6pm	Lack of parking at Alma Street for residents.	IC & MH to undertake a site visit, awaiting confirmation of extents. 28 04 20 - DRG No. - 0002 - IC & MH to undertake site visit.		Site survey required
3	Nigel Daniels	Abertillery	Church Street	Limited Waiting Mon - Sat 9 am - 6pm, Disabled Persons Parking, loading only	Rationalise parking bays to maximise parking for shoppers	Lack of parking at Church Street for shoppers.	Awaiting Detailed design from Capita and updated maps for map book. March 2021	Drawings and BoQ complete, next stage invite tenders	Live
4	Lisa Winnet	Blaina	Abertillery Road	No Waiting at Any Time	Removal of double yellows	To provide extra parking by the plumbing shop			Site survey required
5	Lisa Winnet	Blaina	Cwmcelyn Road	No Waiting at Any Time	Removal of double yellows	To provide extra parking by the plumbing shop and reduce number of cars racing the road			Site survey required
6	Lisa Winnet	Blaina	High Street	No Waiting at Any Time	Removal of double yellows	To provide extra parking by the plumbing shop and reduce number of cars racing the road	IC & MH to undertake a site visit, awaiting confirmation of extents. 28 04 20 - DRG No. - 0006 - IC & MH to undertake site visit.	Consultation Drgs completed, no funding/resource to progress	
7	Lisa Winnet	Blaina	Railway Terrace	No Waiting at Any Time	Introduction of Resident Permit Parking	Requested by local residents		Would not consider Residents Parking	N/A
8	Garth Collier	Blaina	Abertillery Road	No Waiting at Any Time	Remove DYL on west side	No longer necessary on western side		Site Visit Required	
9	Garth Collier	Blaina	Cwmcelyn Road	No Waiting at Any Time	South Side Part Only	To allow better flow of traffic		Site Visit Required	
10	Garth Collier	Blaina	High Street	No Waiting at Any Time	Open to advice from officers	As change is required	IC & MH to undertake a site visit, awaiting confirmation of what is required. 28 04 20 - DRG No. - 0006 - IC & MH to undertake site visit.	Consultation Drgs completed No funding to progress	
11	Garth Collier	Blaina	Hope Street	No Waiting at Any Time	Remove short section near Lllys-y-Capel rear car park	Not needed now road is one-way	IC & MH to undertake a site visit, awaiting confirmation of extents. 28 04 20 - DRG No. - 0006 - Email 31 03 2020 rec'd from IC - remove Hope Street Cross Street from review.		Closed/complete
12	Garth Collier	Blaina	Surgery Road	No Waiting at Any Time	Remove section at Park Terrace	No longer required		Site Visit Required	
13	Derrick Bevan	Cwm	Marine Street (from junction with Aubrey Terrace)	Limited Waiting Mon - Sat 8 am - 6pm	Revocation	Since Cwm By-Pass was built, this restriction isn't required.		Site Visit Required	
14	Keith Pritchard	EVS	Rees Street	Single Yellow Lines	Revocation	They don't serve any purpose		Drawing and Bill of Quantities Complete	
15	Jonathan Millard	EVS	Church Crescent Outside Christ Church	Double yellow lines	Two parking bays 2hr time limits	Allow public to access amenities and businesses in the area		Site Visit Required	Site survey required
16	Jonathan Millard	EVS	Church Street	1 hour restriction	Resident permits	The area is predominantly residential, ratio of 3/1 residential and although some residents have off road parking to the rear of the properties many do not. To be fair to residents this should be introduced for them similar to king street, Brynmawr. I canvassed the area last night, speaking to businesses and residents and the majority said that permits were the way for residents, and shouldn't be penalised for living in a mixed use area.		Site Visit Required	
17	Jonathan Millard	EVS	Alexandra Street	Double yellow	Single yellow 9 - 5pm	Would allow access for delivery etc,		Site Visit Required	
18	Jonathan Millard	EVS	Holland street north entrance	Double Yellows	Move to 15ft of junction, remove others	Not required, in my opinion		Site Visit Required	
19	Jonathan Millard	EVS	Hills of bottom road , Tylwyn	Double yellow	Moved to 15 ft of junction	To short		Site Visit Required	
					1. Removal of time restrictions 2. increase time	Will help the hospital in regards to visitors for		Drawing And BoQ complete, next stage	

20	Jonathan Millard	EVS	Lime Avenue Hospital to thales/regain/ mill lane	Time Restricted bays		appointments and businesses in the area, meetings/appointment typically are 1.5hrs 30 minutes is to short to do anything really and the bays are to small for deliveries.		invite tenders	
21	Keith Pritchard	EVS	Steelworks Road B4485 Junction with Eastville Road	No Waiting at Any Time	Extension of DYL by 10m into Eastville Road	Cars parking too close to junction causing restrictions to visibility			
22	Keith Pritchard	EVS	Alexandra Street	No Waiting at Any Time	Revocation	The DYL serve no purpose and limits number of parking spaces			
23	Keith Pritchard	EVS	Drysiog Street Pen - Y - Bryn Junction	No Waiting at Limited Times	Change to Double Yellow Lines	Cars parking too close to junction causing restrictions to visibility			
24	Lee Parsons	Llanhilleth	Blaencuffin Road, Llanhilleth NP13 2RN	No Parking 7am-7pm.	Traffic Restrictions lifted of No Parking from 7am-7pm from numbers 1-10 and number 17-19 inclusive	Request from residents of limited parking in area.			
25	Lee Parsons	Llanhilleth	Commercial Road Llanhilleth NP13 2JA	No Parking at any time Double Yellow Lines	Change to Single Yellow Line	Request from retailers! Safety issues of speeding cars if no cars are present.			
26	Phillip Edwards	Ebbw Vale North	Bethcar Street (outside Morgan's Bar)	Loading Only Bay	Change to 30 minutes limited waiting	Greater turnover of vehicles		Drawings and BoQ complete, next stage invite tenders	
27	Phillip Edwards	Ebbw Vale North	Bethcar Street (outside Roberts Estate Agents)	Loading Only Bay	Change to 30 minutes limited waiting	Greater turnover of vehicles	Please refer to DRG NO: 0010, please can you mark up any changes if required. 28 04 2020 - Email rec'd 24 04 20 - Removed Draft for Comment, added map title No. - to title frame - TRO DRG No. - 0010 issued. Awaiting confirmation to progress detail design DRG/BQ.	Drawings and BoQ complete, next stage invite tenders	
28	Phillip Edwards	Ebbw Vale North	Bethcar Street (outside Davies Carpets)	Disabled Persons Parking Bays x 2	Change to 30 minutes limited waiting	Greater turnover of vehicles		Drawings and BoQ complete, next stage invite tenders	
29	Phillip Edwards	Ebbw Vale North	Bethcar Street (outside Greggs)	Disabled Persons Parking Bays x 1 Loading Bay x 2	Change to 30 minutes limited waiting	Greater turnover of vehicles	Please refer to DRG NO: 0010, please can you mark up any changes if required. 28 04 2020 - Email rec'd 24 04 20 - Removed Draft for Comment, added map title No. - to title frame - TRO DRG No. - 0010 issued. Awaiting confirmation to progress detail design DRG/BQ.	Drawings and BoQ complete, next stage invite tenders	
30	Gareth Davies	Rassau	Honeyfield Road (67 - 69)	None	Prohibition of Waiting	Road safety/visibility for drivers at roundabout heading towards Garnlydan/Reservoir Road			
31	Wayne Hodgins	Brynmawr	Staleybridge Terrace	Removal of DPPP	Revoke Traffic Order	No longer required		DPPP revoked	Complete
32	Resident	Abertillery	Vivian Street	Removal of DPPP	Revoke Traffic Order	No longer required			
33	Resident	Brynmawr	Glamorgan Street	Removal of DPPP	Revoke Traffic Order	No longer required			
34	Resident	Sofrydd	Rectory Road	Removal of DPPP	Revoke Traffic Order	No longer required			
35	Tredegar Members	Tredegar	Tredegar Town Centre	Limited Waiting Traffic Orders Varying	Review Tro's introduce time waiting Bays	Improve Town Centre Parking	28 04 2020 - Email rec'd 25 03 20, DRG No. - 0011 prepared and issued Draft for Comment.	On Hold/ Due to Regen study	
36	John Mason	Nantyglo	King St, Queen St to Parrot Row	Prohibition of waiting, Limited Waiting	To Consider areas of restriction to be removed	To create additional on street parking	Queen Street only considered, changes made where possible		Queen St review only and complete
37	Nigel Daniels	Abertillery	King St, King Street	Previous restriction revoked	I introduce 1 hour waiting with no return within 2 hours	To ensure on street parking I not sterilized near businesses		Reduce waiting time 30 minutes waiting no return with in 1 hour	Scheme Complete
38	Resident	Beaufort	Beaufort Hill	Prohibition of waiting of waiting 8am - 6pm	Consider revoking TRO	Restriction has not been enforced and is no longer relevant	Removal of DYL	Site Visit Required	
39	Resident	Abertillery	Portland Street	Prohibition of Waiting	Part removal of yellow lines	To create additional on street parking	Removal of DYL	Site Visit Required	
40	Councillor S. Thomas	Ashvale	Tredegar	Prohibition of Waiting	Amending yellow lines to create parking	Removing some yellow lines will create parking with no road safety implication	Removal of DYL	Site Visit Required	
41	Resident	Abertillery	Portland Street	Prohibition of waiting	Consider revoking TRO where appropriate	To try to create on street parking	Removal of DYL	Site Visit Required	
42	Clr G Thomas	Beaufort	Big Lane	Prohibition of Waiting	New Request	To prevent Obstructive Parking	Introduce DYL	Site Visit Required	
43				prohibition of waiting	Part removal of yellow lines	To try to create on street parking			
44	Resident	Tredegar	Gelli Road	prohibition of waiting	Introduce DYL	To prevent Obstructive Parking	introduce DYL	Site Visit required	
45	Clr Trollope	Tredegar	Lay By Opposite Barclays Bank, Queen Victoria Street	Double Yellows	1 hour / No return within 1 hour	To try to create on street parking		On hold due to Regen Study	
46	Nick Smith/ Residents	Nantyglo	Barleyfield Way	Prohibition of Left Turn	Prohibition of left turn	To restrict left turn movements when exiting Industrial estate	There is currently a Prohibition of Driving Order on Limestone Road which is not enforced by the Police	Not Practical to consider and would not be supported by the Police	
47	Ebbw Vale RFC	Ebbw Vale	Station Approach/Pontyogof	Prohibition of Waiting Order	Introduce DYL	To prevent Obstructive Parking		Site Visit Required	
48	Nick Smith/ Residents	Brynmawr	Gurnos Est	Prohibition of Waiting Order	Introduce DYL	To prevent Obstructive Parking		Site Visit Required	

49	Nick Smith/ Residents	Nantyglo	Brynawelon	One Way TRO	Introduce one way system	To improve Capacity / vehicle flow		Site Visit Required	
50	Residents	Blaina	Brynteg / Abertillery Road	Prohibition of Waiting Order	Introduce DYL	To prevent obstructive parking at Jct		Site Visit Required	
51	Residents	Beaufort	Wesley Pl / Park Pl	Prohibition of Waiting Order	Introduce DYL	To prevent obstructive parking at Jct		Site Visit Required	
52	Resident / Cllr Hodgins	Brynmawr	Greenland Road Car Park				Introduce Sign and Lining		Completed
53	Cllr G areth Davies	Rassau	Un named road from A4281 to Rassau	Prohibition of driving or sign saying no access to Ind Est		Sign would be more appropriate		Site Visit Required	
54	Resident	Ebbw Vale	Fair View (side Rd to No.12 Bank Lane /Gwent Shopping Centre/Commercial Street (rear of Car Parks	Revoke POW Order	Revocation Order	Create additional parking		Site Visit Required	
55	CPE Team	Tredeggar	44 Holland Street	Control of use Order	Control of use Order	Introduction of Electric Charging Points		Out for Statutory Consultation	
56	Resident	Ebbw Vale	6 Coronation St	Revoke DPPP	Revocation Order	Create additional parking		Site required and consult with Terri Lovell	
57	Cllr Collier	Blaina	Jct of Bryn Deri with Tredeggar Road	Revoke DPPP	Revocation Order	Create additional parking		Site visit required and consult with Terri Lovell	
58	Member of Public	Ebbw Vale	Jct of Parkville / Park Hill	Prohibition of Waiting Order	Introduce DYL	Prevent Obstructive Parking		Site Visit Required	
59	Resident	Tredeggar	George Street	Prohibition of Waiting Order	introduce DYL	Prevent Obstructive Parking on Jct		Site Visit Required	
60	Cllr Hodgins	Brynmawr	Bailey Street	Removal of DPPP	Revocation Order	Create additional parking	Consultation Completed 15th April 2021	Revocation	Closed/ Complete
61	Cllr Hodgins	Brynmawr	Waun Fawr	Removal of DPPP	Revocation Order	Create additional parking	Consultation Completed 15th April 2021	Revocation	Closed / Complete
62	Social Services	Nantyglo	8 Rassau Road	Introduce DPPP	TRO procedures	Provide accessibility for resident	Consultation Completed 15th April 2021	No Longer required	
63	Via Contact Centre	Ebbw Vale	17 Clydach Avenue	Introduce DPPP	TRO procedures	Provide accessibility for resident	Consultation Completed 15th April 2021	No longer Required	
64	Via Contact Centre	Ebbw Vale	144 Arail Street	Introduce DPPP	TRO procedures	Provide accessibility for resident	Consultation Completed 15th April 2021		Closed/complete
65	Via Contact Centre	Sixbells	G.O. Car Park	Introduce DPPP	TRO procedures	Provide accessibility for resident	Consultation Completed 15th April 2021		Closed/Compete
66	Community Services	Ebbw Vale	Merthyr Road	Amendment Order required	TRO procedures	Car Park will be for Permit Holders only with drop off bay for Railway	Amendment required for Consolidation Order	Public Objection to scheme	
67	S Hughes Brynbach Park	Tredeggar	Penybont Llwyn Helyg Jct	Introduce Prohibition of waiting Order	TRO procedures	To prevent Obstructive Parking	Requested Consultation Plan From Capita	No Funding to progress with scheme	
68	Cllr T. Smith	Tredeggar	Lower Coedcae Jct	Introduce Prohibition of waiting Order	TRO procedures	To prevent Obstructive Parking		Public Objection to scheme	
69	Cllr J Mason	Nantyglo	Stayley Bridge Tce	Introduce Prohibition of waiting Order	TRO procedures	To prevent Obstructive Parking		Public Objection to scheme	
70	Cllr Hodgins	Brynmawr	Stonebridge Road	Revocation of DPPP	TRO procedures	DPPP no longer required	Consultation completed 15th April 2021	No Objections Received	completed
71	Cllr G areth Davies	Rassau	Newchurch Road	Introduce Prohibition of waiting Order	TRO procedures	To prevent Obstructive Parking		Site Visit Required	
72	Resident	Ebbw Vale	Taxi Rank	Introduce Prohibition of waiting Order			Prohibition of Waiting near Jct to Bowling Green	Site Visit Required	
73	Sarah Williams Regen	Ebbw Vale	Taxi Rank	No Stopping Except Electric Vehicle Taxis	TRO procedures	Introduction of Electric Charging Points	2 EV Spaces 2hrs waiting no return within 2 hrs	Consultation Imminent	
74	Sarah Williams Regen	Brynmawr	Taxi Rank	No Stopping Except Electric Vehicle Taxis	TRO procedures	Introduction of Electric Charging Points	2 EV Spaces 2hrs waiting no return within 2 hrs	Consultation Imminent	
75	Sarah Williams Regen	Abertillery/Tredeggar	Carmel St and GSC	No Stopping Except Electric Vehicle Taxis	TRO procedures	Introduction of Electric Charging Points	2 EV Spaces 2hrs waiting no return within 2 hrs (Taxi Rank)	Consultation Concludes 4th Nov 2021	
76	Sarah Jones resident	Ebbw Vale	Heol Cai Ffwnais	Introduce Prohibition of waiting Order	TRO procedures	Prevent obstructive Parking	Prohibition of Waiting at Junction	Site Visit Required	
77	Cllr P. Baldwin	Nantyglo	6 Spring Bank	Intoduction of DPPP	TRO procedures	Provide accessibility for resident	Provision of DPPP - No funding to progress	Cllr Baldwin Requested as an Officer of Tai Colon no funding to progress	
78	Dave Watkins	Cwmtillery	Lakes Access Rd	Highway Gating Order	TRO procedures	Prevent Anti Social Behaviour	Gating Order - Objections received from residents and Emergency Services	Consultation Concluded 7th October	
79	Cllr J. Hill	Brynmawr	Catholic Lane	Prohibition of Driving Order	TRO procedures	To Prevent Obstructive Parking			
80	Cllr J. Collins	Llanhilleth	High Street	Revocation of a length of DYL	TRO procedures	To Create Additional on-street Parking	Revocation Order	DYL have been removed but TRO requiresAmendment	
81	Cllr T. Smith	Tredeggar	Waundeg	Introduction of Unsuitable for HGV's		To prevent HGV's Entering residential area	Not TRO	Requested Sign	
82	Cllr G. Thomas	Beaufort Ward	Llangynidr Rd			Advanced Cycle / Pedestrian Warning Sign	Not TRO		

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Agenda Item 20

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 02.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **15th December 2021**
Report Subject: **Animal Health, Welfare & Licensing Service Collaboration – Powys CC Partnership – Activities & Update report – October 2021**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Joanna Wilkins, Executive Member Environment**
Report Submitted by: **David Thompson – Service Manager – Public Protection**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
26/10/21	28/10/21	30.11.21			15/11/21	15.12.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the Animal Health, Welfare & Licensing work undertaken between by Powys CC on behalf of Blaenau Gwent.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 In 2012, the Authority entered into a Service Level agreement for the delivery of Animal Health, Welfare & Licensing Services. This agreement was entered into against the backdrop of significant financial challenges and a strong Welsh Government collaboration agenda.
- 2.2 Blaenau Gwent has a comparatively small number of relevant premises and risks, compared to other local authorities. Prior to the commencement of the collaboration, the level of resource committed to this field of work was very small, and as such, at the periphery of other mainstream services in the department. This left the service without a broad base of core knowledge and without resilience.
- 2.3 Situated on our northern boundary, and given the large size and rural nature of the county, Animal Health & Welfare is a major issue in Powys and this has meant that the service has developed into one of the leads in Wales in this field. The Authority continues to be comparatively well resourced to deliver these services with significant expertise and resilience built in. Powys has contingency plans in place to deal with an outbreak of any notifiable animal disease and the service demonstrates a robust response to those perpetrating breaches of the law and will take legal action when necessary. However, where appropriate, Officers will educate and advise the farming community before taking stronger action. The philosophy is to assist businesses to get it right in order to preserve a strong level playing field, whilst being prepared to take legal action against those that deliberately flout the law and who potentially put the whole industry at risk. This was the reason for setting up the partnership in 2012 and this has led to a number of key successes for Blaenau Gwent.
- 2.4 The functions undertaken by Powys within the Blaenau Gwent include the following:

- i. Programmed Animal Health and Welfare premises inspections on agricultural holdings, licensed or licensable animal establishment premises and any resulting enforcement work as may be necessary.
 - ii. Responding to all complaints/enquiries relating to Animal Health and Welfare issues relating to agricultural holdings, licensed or licensable animal establishment premises.
 - iii. Undertake all animal licensing functions (e.g. pet shop licensing, dog breeding establishment licences, etc.)
 - iv. All data entry, record keeping and reporting that is required of Blaenau Gwent Council for Animal Health and Welfare for the areas listed above, including animal movements.
 - v. Leading in the investigation of all notifiable diseases for Animal Health – providing Blaenau Gwent with an expert resource to call upon in the event of outbreaks – e.g. the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001.
- 2.5 **Appendix 1** – outlines the total number of premises in Blaenau Gwent covered by these arrangements - by type.
- 2.6 **Fly Grazing Horses/Straying Livestock.** As previously (including since the the discontinuation of the Authority's own impounding service a few years ago) these specific issues continue to be dealt with by Blaenau Gwent Council Officers. however Powys Animal Health Officers regularly provide advice on relevant legislation on request.
- 2.7 **Other complaints.** Persons making animal welfare complaints relating to companion animals and/or horses (not connected with licensed/licensable premises) are advised to contact the RSPCA or another suitable animal welfare organisation/charity. The SLA with Powys does not cover this work.
- 2.8 Since the commencement of the partnership (2012), Powys Animal Health Officers have undertaken the following work on behalf of Blaenau Gwent CBC.
- 352 - Inspections of agricultural holdings/records;
 - 290 - Animal Health Complaints investigated;
 - 27 – Business Advice Provided to farmers;
 - 149 - inspections of licenced premises;
 - 210 - Companion Animal Complaints investigated – related to a licensed or licensable establishment;
 - 85 - Companion Animal Enquires – related to a licensed or licensable establishment and or other enquiries signed posted to the RSPCA;

- 185 – Companion Animal Visits – these relate to a licensed or licensable establishment
- 80 – FOI Requests for information

2.9 **Recent activities** – Levels of compliance at agricultural premises are now generally good compared to the earlier years of the partnership (see section 6 below) although the service continues to proactively undertake statutory inspections and respond to complaints of welfare problems along with APHA (Animal & Plant Health Agency) veterinary surgeons, where appropriate. At present, one farmer has been subject to several joint inspections and steps are being taken help the farmer more easily comply with animal welfare and record keeping regulations (see section 6, below).

2.10 During the pandemic it was necessary to reduce the number of routine inspections to animal health and licensed premises. All none urgent and planned licensed premise welfare inspections were cancelled to safeguard the public and members of staff from possible sources of Covid infection. Any reports of non-compliance or animal welfare issues continued to be investigated and actioned as normal.

2.11 **Illegal Dog Breeding.** The pandemic has also seen a significant increase in illegal dog breeding locally, regionally and nationally as part of serious organised crime activity and Blaenau Gwent (via Powys Officers for Animal Health and BG Trading Standards Officers for consumer protection legislation) is actively participating in multi-agency activities and intelligence gathering involving the Police and the Welsh Trading Standards Regional Investigation Team. Operation Brutus, is one such local investigation with Powys Officers and the Police executing a warrant in relation to large scale illegal dog breeding and other offences. When the warrant was executed, 90 dogs were seized from the property, including 30 puppies all of which were taken into the care of the RSPCA. The Authority charged the defendant with the operation of an unlicensed dog breeding establishment and the RSPCA charged with a number of animal welfare offences relating to the dogs seized. This case is currently in the court system.

2.12 Appendices 2 to 4 Outline the Service Plans and activities for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 (up to 19^h October 2021) respectively.

2.13 Section 6, below, also outlines a summary of some key operations completed and ongoing since the start of the partnership.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 Option 1 - That Members consider the content of the report and support the work of the service going forward.

- 3.2 Option 2 - That Members consider the content of the report and make any recommendations.
4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 4.1 The services outlined in this report are statutory duties and support the Corporate Plan key objectives relating to Strong & Environmentally smart Communities, Economic Development & Regeneration and an Efficient Council (specifically to be a strong and effective partner and collaborate where possible to deliver financial benefits and resilience).
5. **Implications Against Each Option**
- 5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***
- 5.1.1 The annual cost of the service is outlined in the attached schedule. Legal Services have advised that these costs are commercially sensitive and so this information is exempt. The costs equate to 0.5 FTE Animal Health Officer. The service costs represent excellent value, have not increased for several years and the SLA is now due for review.
- 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***
- 5.2.1 see paragraph 5.4.1, below.
- 5.3 ***Legal***
- 5.3.1 The service operates within the boundaries of all relevant legislation. Where cases are considered for prosecution, Powys Officers will refer cases back to Blaenau Gwent Public Protection Officers and solicitors for a decision.
- 5.4 ***Human Resources***
- 5.4.1 Powys CC, as a large rural Authority, is staffed to deliver Animal Health, Welfare & Licensing services with significant expertise and resilience built in. Blaenau Gwent has no in-house experience and expertise to deliver the services currently provided by Powys. Direct delivery would require recruitment and training, significantly increase costs for the Authority and provide less resilience.
6. **Supporting Evidence**
- 6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***
- 6.11 For a small Authority, Blaenau Gwent has a considerable number of significant Animal Health issues to deal with since the collaboration began in 2012. A Summary of the key operations is as follows:
- i **2013** – Search Warrants executed at numerous premises in relation to alleged illegal dog breeding (4 premises searched, insufficient evidence found to support allegation.)

- ii **2013** – Farmer 1 successfully prosecuted for sheep carcasses (49) at Abergavenny Magistrates Court – Fined
- iii **2014** – Search Warrant executed at sanctuary premises in relation to illegal dog breeding, illegal animal boarding and animal welfare (joint operation with RSPCA); insufficient evidence found to support allegations.
- iv **2014** – Joint Operation with CCBC and BG Officers and trusted horse charities to remove illegally grazing horses from Manmoel Common (49 horses seized and re-homed). This planned operation received Welsh Government grant funding support without which it could not go ahead.
- v **2014** – Farmer 2 prosecuted at Abergavenny Magistrates Court for Animal By-products, Animal Welfare and other offences (119 offences) – Fined a total of £5,000 and costs awarded of £2,043.
- vi **2014** – Search Warrants executed at several premises in Blaina relating to 2 individuals and alleged illegal dog breeding and Animal Welfare offences. Insufficient evidence found to support allegations.
- vii **2014** – Farmer 3 - Simple caution issued in relation to horses without passports.
- viii **2014** – Farmer 4 – prosecuted at Bridgend Magistrates Court for Animal By-products, Animal Welfare, Sheep Records and Movement Offences (112 offences) – sentenced to 12 weeks in prison, suspended for 12 months, costs £7,356 and banned from keeping livestock.
- ix **2015** – Farmer 4 – related to the above matter – contempt of court prosecution – sent to prison for 6 weeks. Operation followed to round up, care for and dispose of the farmer’s livestock as per court sentence.
- x **2015** – Farmer 2 – Operation to excavate 24 buried cattle carcasses and have them removed from site for incineration.
- xi **2017** – Farmer 2 – Conditional Simple Caution given in relation to continuing offences (see sub paragraph v, above) and Sheep records and movement offences – conditional on the farmer disposing of all livestock and giving an undertaking not to keep livestock in future.
- xii **2020** – Operation Brutus. Joint operation – Powys Officers and the Police executed a warrant to enter premises in relation to large scale illegal dog breeding and other offences. The case is currently in the court system (due to delays relating to Covid-19 and other legal arguments). The defendant has put forward a defence alleging they were subject to modern slavery, the result of which is the matter has been referred to the National Crime Agency (NCA) for their consideration. The court process is currently on hold pending a report from the NCA.

- xiii **2021** – Investigation currently underway in relation to a problematic farmer in the Abertillery area in connection with record keeping and animal welfare matters. Several joint on-farm inspections have taken place with vets from APHA and steps are being taken to reduce current stock numbers to a level that the farmer can more easily manage.
- xiv **Ongoing.** Joint working with the Police and Welsh Trading Standards Regional Investigation Team (RIT) is on-going to identify and investigate alleged illegal dog breeding within the Authority. A number of potential targets are linked to Organised Crime Groups both in and outside Blaenau Gwent which are best suited to a Regional Investigation and further action is being considered by the RIT.
- xv **Ongoing.** Trading Standards Wales is now in year two of its project looking at Licensed Dog Breeding in Wales. The project is being led by Monmouthshire County Council who have been successful in obtaining funding from Welsh Government to fund 8 licensing officer posts which were filled in the week beginning 18th October 2021. Those officers are currently undergoing intensive training and will eventually be available to assist Welsh local authorities by way of providing a reserve of licensing expertise and assistance with licensing inspections on request. In order to permit the latter, each local authority requesting assistance will be required to authorise the officers to work in their respective authority.

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

- 6.2.1 Improved compliance with Animal Health, Welfare and licensing rules.

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

- 6.3.1 Community Services Scrutiny Committee considered this report on 15th November 2021. The Committee resolved to support Option 1 (paragraph 3.2, above). Other consultation and engagement with key stakeholders is undertaken as necessary in accordance with the Authority's enforcement policy.

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

- 6.4.1 This is an ongoing collaboration/partnership agreement that has worked successfully since 2012, tackling key animal health problems in Blaenau Gwent.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

- 6.5.1 The work programmed work undertaken as part of this partnership has a preventative focus aimed at promoting animal health and welfare.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

6.6.1 This is an ongoing collaboration/partnership agreement that has worked successfully since 2012, tackling key animal health problems in Blaenau Gwent.

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

6.7.1 Powys CC has worked successfully across the Authority. Most recently, Powys Officers have provided expert advice and support to the new Front Line Service, Estates and Community Safety service areas. in relation to the ongoing problems relating to straying animals/fly-grazing horses.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

Not applicable.

6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***

N/A – this is an activities/performance report – no decisions are being taken.

6.9b. ***Equality Impact Assessment***

No equality issues relating to this report

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Reports to DMT/CLT Executive, as necessary

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Contact points for Powys Animal Health Officers:-

Gavin Jones – Senior Enforcement Officer

gavin.jones@powys.gov.uk

Tel: 01874 612260

Jennifer Schwank – Enforcement Officer

jennifer.morgan@powys.gov.uk

Tel: 01874 612052

trading.standards@powys.gov.uk

List of Appendices

1. Total Number of Premises Covered by the SLA – 2021/22
2. Activities report – 2019/20
3. Activities report – 2020/21 – impacted by Covid 19
4. Activities report – 21/22 up to 19 Oct 2021
5. Service Level Agreement Cost (Exempt item)

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Appendix 1 – Total Number of Premises Covered by the SLA – as at 2021/22

1	Agricultural Premises*	
	- High Risk	1
	- Medium Risk	12
	- Low Risk	74
	- Total	87
	<p>* All agricultural inspections are risk based. Risk ratings are determined via a nationally agreed risk assessment matrix and takes account of the business' compliance history</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High Risk – annual inspection - Medium risk – Inspection every 2 years - Low risk – up to 5 years. 	
2	Licensed/Licensable Premises	
	- Pet Shop	4
	- Dog Breeder	0
	- Animal Home Boarder	4
	- Animal Boarding Establishment (i.e. Cattery or Kennels)	0
	- Horse Riding Establishment	0
	- Dangerous Wild Animals	0
	- Zoos	1

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BLAENAU GWENT

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**ANIMAL HEALTH, WELFARE AND LICENCING
ACTIVITIES**

–

1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020

ACTIVITY PLANNED FOR FY 2019/20

Activity	No.	Remarks
Primary visits to Licenced Pet Shops	5	Announced Primary Licencing Inspection
Welfare visits to Licenced Pet Shops	5	Unannounced Welfare Inspection of premises.
Primary visits to Licenced Animal Home Boarders	4	Announced Primary Licencing Inspection
Welfare visits to Licenced Animal Home Boarders	4	Announced Primary Licencing Inspection
Primary and Welfare Inspection to Zoo	2	1 x Primary Inspection and 1 x Welfare Inspection
Companion Animal Complaints & Enquiries	-	Action all welfare complaints within 1 working day. All other complaints/enquiries to be actioned within 3 working days.
Primary – Planned Farm inspections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Risk • Medium Risk • Low Risk 	0 5 10	Conduct any necessary unplanned inspections as a result of complaints received.
Newly identified/re-opened premises	2	Each newly identified or re-opened AH premise is to be risked rated by means of either of the following: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Primary AH Inspection of the premises; or • By use of an alternative enforcement business questionnaire being sent to the premises
Breach Report Investigations	-	Breach reports to be investigated within 3 months of receipt
Alternative Inspections – RP05 Record Checks	-	Alternative enforcement checks to be completed within 3 months of receipt
FSA Slaughterhouse referral investigations	-	Referrals to be investigated within 3 months of receipt
Freedom of Information Requests	-	Action all FOI requests within appointed timescale.

Activity Report: 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020

Activity	No.	Remarks
Visits to Licenced Pet Shops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary • Welfare 	6 5	1 Pet shop ceased trading during year. Plus an addition 7 non-primary welfare inspections.
Visits to Licenced Animal Home Boarders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary • Welfare 	4 4	1 new premise licensed since beginning of FY
Inspection to Zoo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary • Welfare 	0 1	Plus an additional welfare inspection. Note that planned primary inspection due in March was cancelled due to Covid 19.
Companion Animal Complaints received	36	
Companion Animal Enquiries received	8	
Animal Health Complaints received.	50	
Primary – Planned Farm inspections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Risk • Medium Risk • Low Risk 	0 2 6	Shortfall of planned inspections have been addressed when alternative inspections are taken into account.
Unplanned/Non-primary Farm Inspections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Risk • Medium Risk • Low Risk 	0 0 3	
Primary alternative Inspections – RP05 Record Checks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Risk • Medium Risk • Low Risk 	0 2 14	

Non-Primary alternative Inspections – RP05 Record Checks	23	
Newly identified/re-opened premises identified for inspection in this FY	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruten now closed. • JC Merrick – closed - principal holding in Monmouthshire.
Newly identified/re-opened premises identified since beginning of FY	5	
Premises closed.	22	
Breach Report Investigations	1	
Enforcement Action Taken		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosecutions • Simple Cautions • Written warnings • Verbal warnings • Oral Advice 	1 0 2 0 6	
Freedom of Information Requests	20	
Data returns for AHPA	5	Complete and submit data returns for AHPA in respect of:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 x Sheep Scab Returns; and • 2 x Prosecution Returns • 1 x WATO Return
Intelligence Reports submitted	38	

Notes:

All planned routine inspections have been achieved except for the Primary Zoo Inspection. The latter was not completed due to initial delays with AHPA in arranging Zoo Inspector availability, with the visited planned for the end of March having to then be cancelled due to the Covid 19 outbreak.

[Redacted] continue to take up a disproportionate amount of time between Complaints received, Enquires received and Operation Flush.

Since 1st April 2019 Powys has received 38 complaints relating to animal health, welfare and licensing, 61% of which related to [Redacted], they also account for 50% of Companion Animal enquires received.

BLAENAU GWENT

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**ANIMAL HEALTH, WELFARE AND LICENCING
ACTIVITIES**

–

1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

ACTIVITY PLANNED FOR FY 2020/21 – Note that a plan was not submitted due to the Covid Pandemic

Activity	No.	Remarks
Primary visits to Licenced Pet Shops	4	Announced Primary Licencing Inspection
Welfare visits to Licenced Pet Shops	4	Unannounced Welfare Inspection of premises.
Primary visits to Licenced Animal Home Boarders	4	Announced Primary Licencing Inspection
Welfare visits to Licenced Animal Home Boarders	4	Announced Primary Licencing Inspection
Primary and Welfare Inspection to Zoo	1	1 x Primary Inspection and 1 x Welfare Inspection
Companion Animal Complaints & Enquiries		Action all welfare complaints within 1 working day. All other complaints/enquiries to be actioned within 3 working days.
Primary – Planned Farm inspections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Risk • Medium Risk • Low Risk 	0 7 14	Conduct any necessary unplanned inspections as a result of complaints received.
Newly identified/re-opened premises	6	Each newly identified or re-opened AH premise is to be risked rated by means of either of the following: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Primary AH Inspection of the premises; or • By use of an alternative enforcement business questionnaire being sent to the premises
Breach Report Investigations		Breach reports to be investigated within 3 months of receipt
Alternative Inspections – RP05 Record Checks		Alternative enforcement checks to be completed within 3 months of receipt
FSA Slaughterhouse referral investigations		Referrals to be investigated within 3 months of receipt
Freedom of Information Requests		Action all FOI requests within appointed timescale.

Activity Report: 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

Activity	No.	Remarks
Visits to Licenced Pet Shops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary • Welfare 	5 0	Welfare inspections were not undertaken due to the Covid pandemic to safeguard staff and licensee`s.
Visits to Licenced Animal Home Boarders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary • Welfare 	2 0	2 Premises closed due to the Covid pandemic. Welfare inspections were not undertaken due to the Covid pandemic to safeguard staff and licensee`s.
Inspection to Zoo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary • Welfare 	1 1	
Companion Animal Complaints received	38	
Companion Animal Enquiries received	12	
Animal Health Complaints received.	40	
Primary – Planned Farm inspections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Risk • Medium Risk • Low Risk 	0 0 0	Inspections were not undertaken due to the Covid pandemic to safeguard staff and individual farmers.
Unplanned/Non-primary Farm Inspections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Risk • Medium Risk • Low Risk 	0 2 3	
Primary alternative Inspections – RP05 Record Checks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Risk • Medium Risk • Low Risk 	0 0 0	

Non-Primary alternative Inspections – RP05 Record Checks	0	
Newly identified/re-opened premises identified for inspection in this FY	5	
Newly identified/re-opened premises identified since beginning of FY	6	Unable to run report from data base – software issue
Premises closed.	0	
Breach Report Investigations	0	
Enforcement Action Taken <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosecutions • Simple Cautions • Written warnings • Verbal warnings • Oral Advice 	1 0 1 3 0	Prosecution – Op Brutus
Business Advice provided	4	
Bovine Tb Referrals	2	
Freedom of Information Requests	17	
Data returns for AHPA	5	Complete and submit data returns for AHPA in respect of:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 x Sheep Scab Returns; and • 2 x Prosecution Returns • 1 x WATO Return
Intelligence Reports submitted	39	
Total Nos of AH premises:- H – 0 M – 12 L - 75		

Notes:

All planned routine inspections have been achieved except for the Primary Zoo Inspection. The latter was not completed due to initial delays with AHPA in arranging Zoo Inspector availability, with the visited planned for the end of March having to then be cancelled due to the Covid 19 outbreak. The planned inspection took place on 12th October 2021 and the report is awaited.

[Redacted] continue to take up a disproportionate amount of time between Complaints (42%) received, enquires received and Operation Flush.

Work is ongoing in relation to illegal dog breeding activities with the support of the Police and Trading Standards Wales Regional Investigation Team. A large number of potential targets are known to the police and active in OCG`s working across several Local Authority areas.

Appendix 3

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BLAENAU GWENT

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**ANIMAL HEALTH, WELFARE AND LICENCING
ACTIVITIES**

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1st April 2021 to 19th October 2021

ACTIVITY PLANNED FOR FY 2021/22

Activity	No.	Remarks
Primary visits to Licenced Pet Shops	5	Announced Primary Licencing Inspection
Welfare visits to Licenced Pet Shops	5	Unannounced Welfare Inspection of premises.
Primary visits to Licenced Animal Home Boarders	4	Announced Primary Licencing Inspection
Welfare visits to Licenced Animal Home Boarders	4	Announced Primary Licencing Inspection
Primary and Welfare Inspection to Zoo	1	1 x Primary Inspection and 1 x Welfare Inspection
Companion Animal Complaints & Enquiries		Action all welfare complaints within 1 working day. All other complaints/enquiries to be actioned within 3 working days.
Primary – Planned Farm inspections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Risk • Medium Risk • Low Risk 	0 9 12	Conduct any necessary unplanned inspections as a result of complaints received.
Newly identified/re-opened premises		Each newly identified or re-opened AH premise is to be risked rated by means of either of the following: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Primary AH Inspection of the premises; or • By use of an alternative enforcement business questionnaire being sent to the premises
Breach Report Investigations		Breach reports to be investigated within 3 months of receipt
Alternative Inspections – RP05 Record Checks		Alternative enforcement checks to be completed within 3 months of receipt
FSA Slaughterhouse referral investigations		Referrals to be investigated within 3 months of receipt
Freedom of Information Requests		Action all FOI requests within appointed timescale.

Activity Report: 1st April 2021 to 19th October 2021

Activity	No.	Remarks
Visits to Licenced Pet Shops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary • Welfare 	1 5	1 pet shop closed during year.
Visits to Licenced Animal Home Boarders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary • Welfare 	4 2	2 Premises closed due to the Covid pandemic.
Inspection to Zoo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary • Welfare 	1 1	
Companion Animal Complaints received	26	
Companion Animal Enquiries received	13	
Animal Health Complaints received.	36	
Primary – Planned Farm inspections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Risk • Medium Risk • Low Risk 	1 0 1	
Unplanned/Non-primary Farm Inspections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Risk • Medium Risk • Low Risk 	3 0 0	Multiple visits required to newly high risk rated premises – part of an ongoing investigation.
Primary alternative Inspections – RP05 Record Checks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Risk • Medium Risk • Low Risk 	0 0 0	

Non-Primary alternative Inspections – RP05 Record Checks	0	
Newly identified/re-opened premises identified for inspection in this FY	6	
Newly identified/re-opened premises identified since beginning of FY	4	
Premises closed.	2	
Breach Report Investigations	0	
Enforcement Action Taken <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosecutions • Simple Cautions • Written warnings • Verbal warnings • Oral Advice 	1 0 0 0 0	Prosecution – Op Brutus [Redacted] – currently under investigation
Business Advice provided	1	
Bovine Tb Referrals	0	
Freedom of Information Requests	5	
Data returns for AHPA	0	Complete and submit data returns for AHPA in respect of:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 x Sheep Scab Returns; and • 2 x Prosecution Returns • 1 x WATO Return
Intelligence Reports submitted	59	Levels of intelligence are already 20 higher than the whole of the preceding year.
Total Nos of AH premises:- H – 1 M – 12 L - 74		

Notes:

Work continues on all planned routine inspections and all targets are expected to be met. The Primary Zoo Inspection was completed on 12th October 2021 and the report is awaited from the Zoo Inspectors.

Work is ongoing in relation to illegal dog breeding activities with the support of the Police and Trading Standards Wales Regional Investigation Team. A large number of potential targets are known to the police and active in OCG's working across several Local Authority areas.

**ANIMAL HEALTH, WELFARE & LICENSING SERVICE
COLLABORATION – POWYS CC PARTNERSHIP –
ACTIVITIES & UPDATE REPORT – OCTOBER 2021 –
APPENDIX 5 – EXEMPT INFORMATION**

Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended) – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

(Appendix 5 circulated under separate cover to Members)

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Agenda Item 21

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 02.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **15th December 2021**
Report Subject: **Energy Prospectus Annual Review**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**
Report Submitted by: **Richard Crook, Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
16.11.21	18.11.21	30.11.21			8.12.21	15.12.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To present members with an update on progress for the last 12 months on the Energy Prospectus and emerging opportunities for the future.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1. In December 2019, Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee were asked to consider the draft Energy Prospectus. Both Committees agreed to approve the document and to move forward with a proactive approach to projects that will help meet our future energy challenges.
- 2.2. The prospectus document provides a mechanism through which, a range of available development opportunities within Blaenau Gwent can be promoted; and as a means of engaging proactively with potential investors, scheme developers, other Local Authorities and community groups in an effort to stimulate local energy development and supply. This will in turn address the fuel poverty challenges and carbon reduction targets we currently face.
- 2.3. The first annual review for 2019 – 2020 was presented to Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee in December 2020.

Review of Activity 2020-21

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

- 2.6. One of the key areas which will directly impact on our work around future energy requirements is the understanding of energy infrastructure across the Borough. In some parts of Blaenau Gwent there are constraints within existing grid infrastructure that will impact upon the deliverability of projects. Over the past 12 months we have worked with Western Power Distribution to better understand the current position and to seek further opportunities to work with them to strengthen the grid through innovation and reduce demand on the grid through alternative sources of energy.
- 2.7. During 2021, some of the highlighted activities that were completed include:
- Completion of the works phase of the Re:FIT Programme. Work is ongoing around monitoring and evaluation of the project.
 - The Works District Heating Expansion. Lime Avenue Business Park Units have been connected to the District Heating Network.
 - Wind Generation – Progress has been made with one site to reach full business case development stage.
 - Hydro Generation – Funding was secured for feasibility studies. Phase 1 of a 2 Phase process has now been completed.
 - EV Charging Infrastructure – Completion of the Gwent Regional Project and all sites are now live
- 2.8. More detail on the projects above is contained within Appendix 1 – Energy Prospectus Annual Review 2020-21.

Emerging Opportunities

- 2.9. Alongside delivery of existing projects within the Prospectus several new opportunities have emerged which would add value to work already being undertaken and create a pipeline of further opportunities for us to take forward.
- 2.10. Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) through Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council have secured £1.3million from the Welsh Government Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV) fund to install rapid chargepoints for taxi ranks across the region, purchase electric taxis for deployment across the City Region and install chargepoints for general public use. Rapid chargepoints have been installed in four taxi ranks within Blaenau Gwent and a rapid charge point will also be installed at the Depot as part of the project.
- 2.11. Welsh Government has awarded all Local Authorities in Wales a £300k EV charging infrastructure grant to provide infrastructure for Council fleet and staff as part of the transition to low emission vehicles. This is to support Councils in reaching ambitious targets that all new cars and light goods vehicles in the Public Sector fleet are ultra-low emission by 2025 and where practically possible, all heavy goods vehicles are ultra-low emission by 2030.
- 2.12. We have continued to work with the Welsh Government on the Smart Living Programme. Through this work, we have been able to apply for further funding to run a Small Business Research Initiative. SBRI is a mechanism which enables public sector bodies to connect with innovative ideas and technology

businesses to provide innovative solutions to specific Public Sector challenges and needs. Therefore, the Council launched the Whole Systems Business Research Innovation for Decarbonisation Challenge (WBRID) “Developing Smart Industrial and Commercial Energy Platform Solutions to Achieve Net Zero Outcomes” in December 2020.

2.13. We are continuing to explore the opportunity to launch Council Community Municipal Investments in partnership with an investment finance platform. We are in the process of carrying out due diligence financial and legal checks with a view to developing a full investment issue during 2022. The intention of this project is to engage the public and in particular the local community to invest in renewable energy generation within Blaenau Gwent.

2.14. Other projects and funding opportunities continue to become available e.g. Horizon Europe, SBRI etc. and these will be pursued for each of the projects as we become aware of them.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 This report will be presented to the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 8th December 2021, and any feedback will be presented verbally to the Executive Committee.

3.2 **Option 1 – Do Nothing**

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

3.3 **Option 2 – Continue to support the Blaenau Gwent Energy Prospectus**

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

3.4 **Preferred Option**

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

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

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

- To create strong and environmentally smart communities we are taking a strategic approach to the management of buildings;
 - To be a carbon neutral Council by 2030;
 - To develop a portfolio of potential energy opportunities to deliver economic, business and community benefits; and to develop a more commercial organisation to generate income and deliver cost reductions to make local services sustainable and raise money to re-invest in our priorities.
- 4.2. It will also work towards addressing some of the key challenges identified within the Council's Decarbonisation Plan 2020-2030. For the Council to become Carbon Neutral by 2030 we will have to exploit local opportunities for renewable generation and using energy differently.

5. Implications Against Each Option
Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

- 5.1. Background research and initial feasibility work is carried out within existing staff resources. Further work to determine feasibility of projects has been completed with either external funding or support from the Welsh Government Smart Living Programme and Welsh Government Energy Service.
- 5.2. Works carried out through the Re:FIT programme were funded through a Salix interest free loan. The overall programme had a total cost of £4.1 million with the portfolio expected to achieve savings that enable payback within 8 years (or less).
- 5.3. In September 2020 an application was submitted to the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme under the LEADER scheme for funding to undertake a Community Hydro Study of potential opportunities within the electoral wards of Llanhilleth and Cwm. The Council were awarded £20,000 to conduct the study within the total contract value of £29,600.
- 5.4. The Gwent EV Charging Infrastructure Network received circa. £450,000 of funding through the UK Government funded Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV). This was matched with funding from the five Local Authorities to deliver a Gwent EV Charging network.
- 5.5. Cenex were appointed to provide a Low Emission Fleet Review and Depot Power Supply Assessment. Total cost of the Fleet Review was £17,052.62 which was funded jointly by Regeneration and Community Services Departments. and included a review of the Gwent Public Body Fleet Review (2019) to provide a basis for a more in-depth assessment of low emission vehicle suitability under the current fleet operating conditions within Blaenau Gwent.
- 5.6. The Whole System Business Research Innovation for Decarbonisation (WBRID) scheme, Phase 1 gave funding of £25k to each competitor to conduct

feasibility studies with the aim of decarbonising Blaenau Gwent Business Parks. Two successful suppliers from the first phase were invited to demonstrate their solutions on Blaenau Gwent business parks with a total of £500k funding split between the suppliers to deploy solutions in Phase 2. This project is 100% funded through Welsh Government.

- 5.7. Within the energy prospectus we also provided a snapshot of the level of investment required to deliver each of the projects together with some high level projections of the level of return per annum that could be achieved once completed. Further financial modelling has been carried out for the projects and this will be built into business cases for investment over the coming months.
- 5.8. There are also modern forms of generating funding which offer the local community a chance to become involved in creating a better future for Blaenau Gwent. Such forms of investment could include Green Energy Investments (Bonds). In July 2021 the Council's Executive Committee approved a proposal to proceed with a Community Municipal Investment.

Risk including Mitigating Actions

- 5.9. The risks associated with option 1 outlined within the report is that energy development within Blaenau Gwent remains low, especially relating to private open market development.
- 5.10. The risks associated with option 2 outlined within the report are minimal. There is a risk that the prospectus fails to stimulate interest; utilising the prospectus as a method through which relationships with a range of interested parties within the Welsh energy sector would reduce this risk.

Legal

- 5.11. There are no direct legal implications associated with this report. The projects identified within the prospectus are located on sites within the ownership of Blaenau Gwent.
- 5.12. Some of the Projects within the prospectus will look at different business models for delivery. As part of the Phase 2 work for the Blaenau Gwent Energy Catalyst project funded through Welsh Government, legal advice was commissioned to consider potential business models that could be used to deliver the project.

Human Resources

- 5.13. Energy projects outlined within the Prospectus are not delivered by one single department. Staff from a number of departments are involved in project development and implementation.

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

6. **Supporting Evidence**

Performance Information and Data

- 6.1. Approving the continuation of the annual review of the energy prospectus will demonstrate the Council's commitment towards achieving the Welsh Government target of generating 70% of energy from renewable sources by 2030 and 1GW of renewable electricity capacity to be locally owned in Wales by 2030.
- 6.2. For each of our projects we will continue to look at overall impact upon carbon footprint and this will be included in future annual reviews. To demonstrate the impact these projects, have on our carbon footprint we can use the REFIT project. It is expected that through installing the energy conservation measures across the portfolio we can save circa. 880 tonnes of carbon per annum.

Expected outcome for the public

- 6.3.
- Increased energy choices (private/social rented/business/industrial)
 - More efficient homes and communities
 - Reduction in carbon emissions and improved air quality
 - Stimulation of other related benefits including green transport

Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)

- 6.4. Officers from across Regeneration and Community Services were involved in the development of the prospectus. They have continued to be involved in its development and delivery over the past 12 months. Project development support has continued to be received from the Welsh Government Energy Service.
- 6.5. To understand our local grid infrastructure availability and constraints we have established good working relationships with representatives of Western Power Distribution and we are continuing to explore opportunities with Western Power Distribution and Wales and West Utilities across a number of areas.

Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)

- 6.6. The prospectus has been designed to stimulate interest in energy development within Blaenau Gwent that will facilitate a supply of renewable energy that will meet the changing and future energy needs of Blaenau Gwent.
- 6.7. It will also contribute towards our target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Collaboration / partnership working

- 6.8. Continuing to maximise the impact of the prospectus will be dependent on strong collaboration and partnership working with communities, the public and private sector and businesses. Progressing opportunities from the prospectus would require partnership working across the Council.
- 6.9. Although the prospectus is presented by Regeneration to the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee it is important to note that the projects are developed and delivered alongside many sections within the Council. These include Community Services, Education and Social Services. This ensures that we align with the one Council approach being taken for decarbonisation.
- 6.10. Members of the team have been asked on a number of occasions to present and share our model for partnership working and collaboration to deliver projects such as the Gwent Electric Vehicle Charging Network. We continue to share and develop knowledge and strengthen local and regional partnerships through our Smart Living and WBRID projects as we are working collaboratively with other WBRID Challenge Owners including Bridgend Council, North Wales Consortium of Councils and Rhondda Cynon Taff Council who are also individual project managers for other decarbonisation trials through Welsh Government.

Integration (across service areas)

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

7. Monitoring Arrangements

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

8. Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Energy Prospectus Annual Review

Previous Reports

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

Energy Prospectus Annual Review, Regeneration Scrutiny Report and Appendix – December 2020

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Blaenau Gwent Energy Prospectus

Annual Review 2020 -2021

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1. Introduction

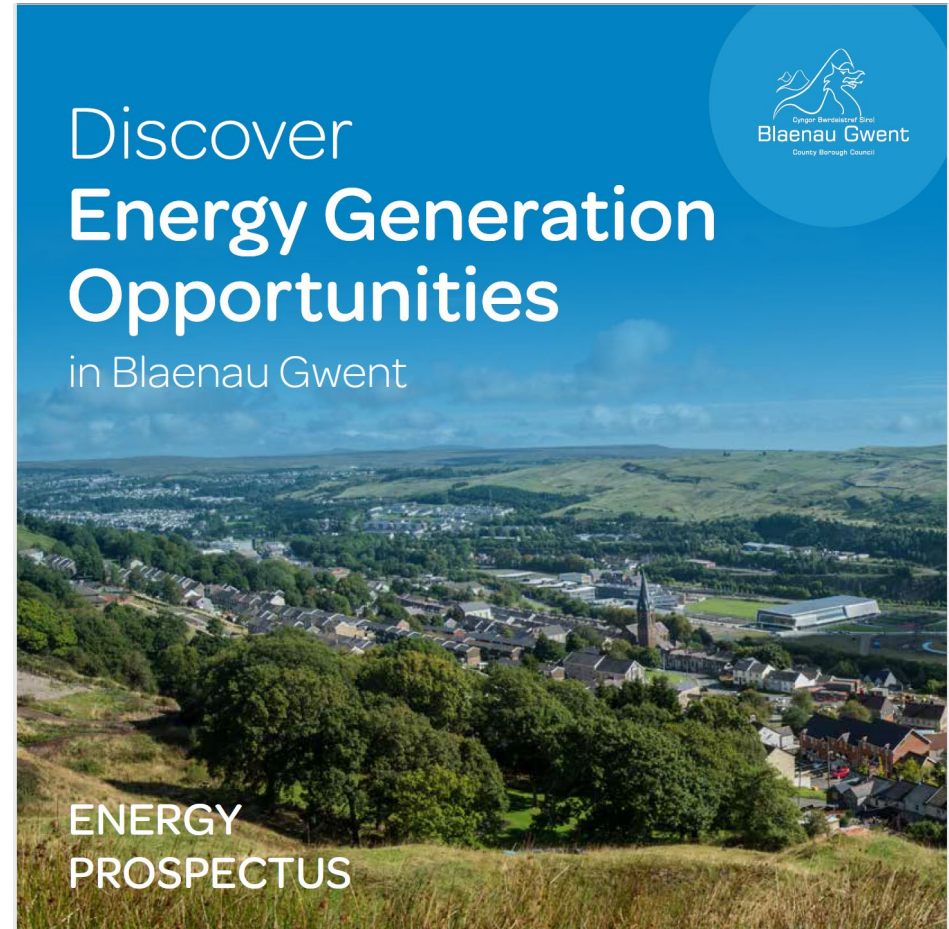
The Blaenau Gwent Energy Prospectus was approved by Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee in December 2019.

The first Annual Review for 2019/20 was presented to the Regeneration Scrutiny and Executive Committees in December 2020.

This Annual Review seeks to provide a progress update on projects for the last 12 months and emerging opportunities for the future.

The work and projects carried out to develop and deliver upon the Energy Prospectus will support the work needed as a result of the Council's decision to adopt a Decarbonisation Plan and to become net zero by 2030 alongside the declaration of a climate emergency.

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1. Introduction

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Decarbonisation Plan



2020 to 2030



Transition Pathway

Challenges in reaching Carbon Neutrality

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

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

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

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

2. Existing Projects Overview

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

Project Name	Total Cost / Capex	Funding Source	BRAG Status	Comments
Re:FIT	£4.1 million	Salix Loan		Works completed. Work is ongoing around monitoring and evaluation.
The Works District Heating Expansion	£1.2 million	Private & Public Sector		Lime Avenue Business Park units have been connected to the District Heating Network. Further expansion is possible within the site.
District Energy Network Development	£9 million	Private & Public Sector		Opportunities identified but dependent upon future development across the sites.
Wind Generation	£4.6 million	Private & Public Sector		Progress has been made with one site to reach full business case development stage.
Hydro Generation	£500k	Private & Public Sector		Funding secured for feasibility studies. Phase 1 of a 2 Phase process completed.
EV Charging Infrastructure	£465k	OLEV & Public Sector		Gwent Regional Project. Installations completed. Final draw down of OLEV money to be undertaken.

3. New and Emerging Projects

The table below provides a quick reference to new and emerging projects

Project Name	Total Cost / Capex	Funding Source	BRAG Status	Comments
CCRCDC Taxi ULEV Infrastructure	£1.82m (for the region)	Cardiff Capital Region City Deal		Rapid Charge points for taxi drivers in four BG Town Centres
CCRCDC Public Charge Points Fund	£2.87m (for the region)	Cardiff Capital Region City Deal		Fast charge points in 12 locations with further sites to follow
ULEV Infrastructure Fund	£300k	WLGA		Fast Charge points for BG Schools, Social Services Buildings and Anvil Court.
Low Emission Fleet		Welsh Government		Fleet review completed. Procurement of first ULEV fleet completed.
Whole Systems Business Research Innovation for Decarbonisation Challenge (WBRID)	Ph1 £100k Ph2 £500k	Welsh Government		Phase 1 completed. Phase 2 started July 2021 and covers deployment of R&D innovative solutions from phase 1.
Community Municipal Investment Bonds	£400k	Community / Private Investment		Launch of BGCBC Green Bonds to raise public finance for investment into green projects and raise awareness of climate change.

3. New and Emerging Projects

Project Name	Total Cost / Capex	Funding Source	BRAG Status	Comments
LoRAWAN Digital Technology for Energy Consumption Monitoring	£30K	Welsh Government		Digital infrastructure monitoring of solar pv with a view to reducing energy consumption. This relates to solar installations via the RE:FIT programme.
Tech Valleys Business Improvement Grant	£500k	Tech Valleys		Application for funding to decarbonise Crown Industrial Estate as deployment of Smart Living Programme R&D.
HyBRID Hydrogen Feasibility studies.	Tbc	Welsh Government	n/a	Exploring partner opportunities to act as a test site for hydrogen feasibility and deployment under the Welsh Government HyBRID SBRI Fund 2021.
Horizon Europe	Tbc	European Union	n/a	Monitoring forthcoming funding calls with a view to entering R&D partner trials.

4. RE:FIT – Energy Efficiency

Street Lighting

Around 6,000 of the Council's street lighting stock was non-LED and therefore not the most energy efficient. The Council also operated multiple management systems some of which were obsolete and no longer supported.

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

An initial phase of the programme to replace the lanterns started in 2020 and this together with an additional phase was completed in April 2021.

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



Street Lighting Installation Before and After

5. Renewable Energy Generation – Wind Power

Within the Energy Prospectus approved in 2019 we identified two opportunities for Wind Generation within Blaenau Gwent.

Within Future Wales 2040 the National Development Framework for Wales published by Welsh Government includes a number of pre-assessed areas for wind turbine development.

Discussions are ongoing with Western Power to understand import/export capacity within the current network to accommodate proposed projects.

Local generation that is used locally onsite would reduce energy being directly exported to the grid. This may have financial benefits and play a key role in our ongoing journey to carbon neutrality.

One of the proposed sites shall be developed to business case stage and seek Council approval in 2022. The second site has identified grid export capacity constraints. Options to mitigate this and maintain financial viability will be investigated.



6. Renewable Energy Generation – Hydro power

In 2020, the Council was awarded £20,000 from the Rural Development Fund LEADER programme to support the Council in appointing consultants to assist with exploring the potential for hydro power generation across Blaenau Gwent.

After completing a tender process to find technical consultants to help us explore potential hydro power opportunities, Dulas Ltd were commissioned to undertake a technical modelling and feasibility of sites across Blaenau Gwent for hydro power

Using the LEADER funding, consultants Dulas identified two sites in the Cwm and Llanhilleth Wards alongside the river Ebbw with potential to carry out feasibility studies.

The findings of the feasibility study suggested that whilst the development of hydro generation would support local energy demand, the level of generation is extremely low when compared to the level of investment required. For this reason we have determined it is not financially viable to take either of the two schemes forward at the current time.

Dulas are currently working on feasibility of further sites across the rest of Blaenau Gwent which will be reported on in due course.



7. Collaborative Project – EV Charging Infrastructure

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

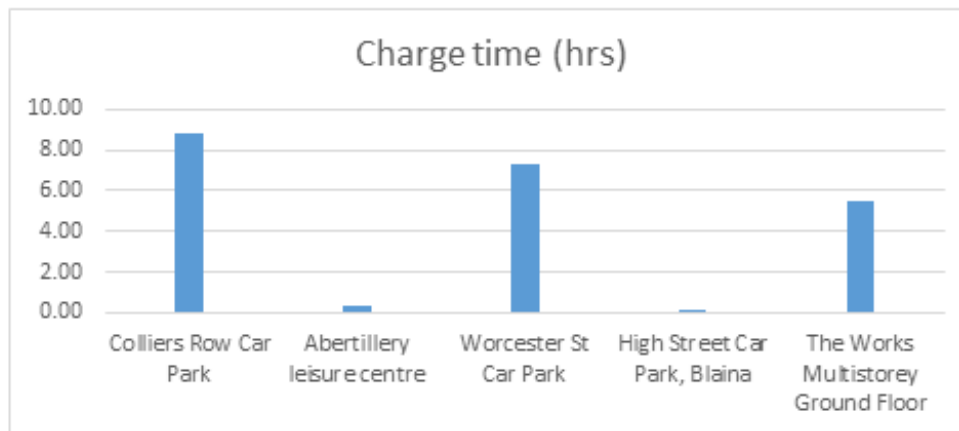
- Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- Monmouthshire County Council
- Newport City Council
- Torfaen County Borough Council

Under this project we have installed 63 charge points across 34 sites. Blaenau Gwent took the role as the Lead Partner for the Procurement and Project Management of the charge point Installation.

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All charge points across Gwent are now operational. Since being launched all charge points have seen usage (see graph for September 2021 below). In some cases this has been regular usage and less frequent for others. Whilst usage at some sites is lower than others having the infrastructure in place enables residents and visitors to Blaenau Gwent to charge their vehicles.



September 2021 usage data



9. CCRC D Taxi Charging Infrastructure

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRC D) has secured funding from Welsh Government to install rapid charge points for taxi ranks across the region and purchase electric taxis for deployment across the City Region and offered under a 30-day 'try before you buy' free trial for taxi drivers.

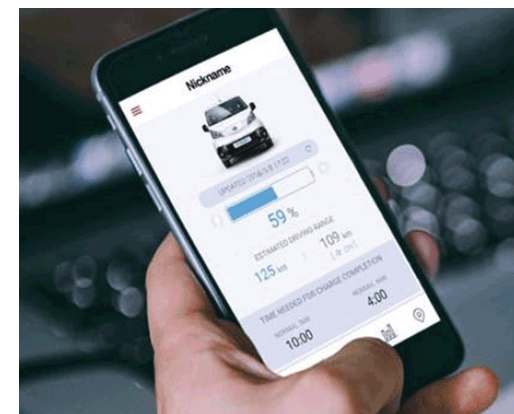
CCRC D has purchased 44 wheelchair accessible electric taxis that will be available for trial across the region. The trial is expected to operate for two years and Blaenau Gwent has taken delivery of two of the electric taxis which will be available for trial by Taxi Drivers.

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Day to day management of the taxi trials will be undertaken by a management company that will be appointed by CCRC D. A tender process has been undertaken to appoint a management company and it is hoped this will be in place by the end of 2021.

Commissioning of the rapid charge points throughout the City Region area is underway.

Once the charge points are operational we will work with CCRC D to develop communications that will raise awareness and promotion of the scheme.



10. CCRC – Public Use Charging Infrastructure

Within the Region 159 public use charging sites have been identified for on street, car parks and transport hubs.

The Council has put forward 12 sites to be included as part of this contract. The contract has just been awarded with an expected completion date of March 2022. This may be subject to change as a result of current global supply chain issues which are affecting the market.

The contract for the region will be awarded under a concession arrangement identical to that of the taxi infrastructure and will include a share in profit.

An All Wales Framework has been included within the tender to enable other public bodies (other regions within Wales, TFW and WG) to deliver future EV infrastructure under this framework.



11. EV Infrastructure Fund

Within Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales, Welsh Government has set ambitious targets for the decarbonisation of the public fleet. One of the key targets and ambitions is that all new cars and light goods vehicles in the Public Sector fleet are ultra-low emission by 2025 and where practicably possible, all heavy goods vehicles are ultra-low emission by 2030.

Welsh Government has awarded a £300k EV Charging Infrastructure grant to each Local Authority to provide infrastructure for Council fleet and staff. Local Authorities have been encouraged to develop a ULEV (Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles) Transition Plan to detail the plan to transition Council fleet to a ULEV fleet and also provide infrastructure across the borough for employees, residents and businesses.

Officers have been working alongside the Community Services, Education and Social Services Departments to identify suitable sites and have determined charging infrastructure can be provided at:

- 9 schools
- Community Meals Service, Pond Road
- Anvil Court
- Bert Denning Centre
- Augusta House

The next step will be to agree the location of the charge points with our EV Contractor and it is the intention that the sites will be added into the Concession Agreement already in place.



Community Meals Service, Pond Road



Bert Denning Centre, Brynmawr



Augusta House, Ebbw Vale

8. Low Emission Fleet

The Council is currently preparing a 10 - 15 year Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Transition Plan. In November 2020 the Council completed a Low Emission Vehicle Fleet Review with Consultants Cenex. The fleet review has considered our current fleet, low emission vehicle technology options, performance reviews and infrastructure review.

Within the Fleet Review Cenex have identified vehicles that could be replaced by low emission technologies with minimal change to operating patterns and ownership periods. It also presents a set of recommended next steps to implement replacement vehicles.

At the time of the review our fleet consisted of 97 vehicles and included passenger cars, light commercial vehicles, large minibuses and a range of trucks. Our fleet contributes 800 tonnes of CO2 annually and 63% of these emissions come from rigid trucks (12-18t).

The review found that battery electric vehicles within the light commercial segment represent the best opportunity for Blaenau Gwent CBC to introduce low emission vehicles into the fleet in the short term.

A order has been placed for the first of these vehicles and they are expected to arrive in November/December 2021.



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



12. Research and Innovation – Smart Living

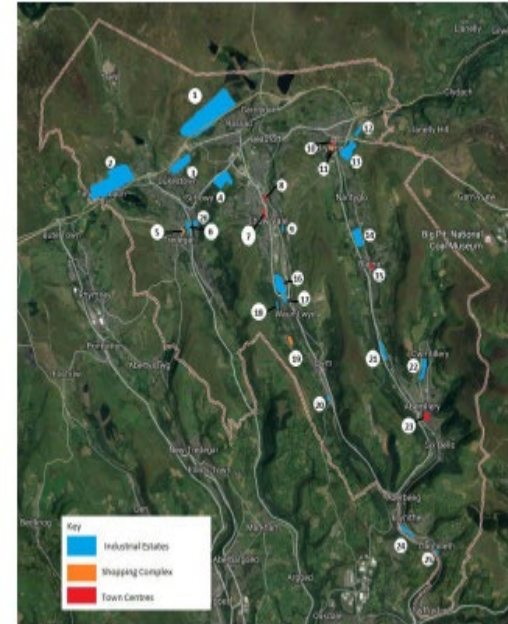
The Welsh Government Smart Living Initiative has been supporting the Council on its ambition to catalyse local energy through the building of separate but then integrated energy platforms across commercial/business-public-social/domestic assets.

In 2020, Welsh Government invited the Council to apply for funding to run a Small Business Research Initiative type project. This type of project enables public sector bodies to connect with innovative ideas and technology businesses to provide innovative solutions to specific Public Sector challenges and needs. The Whole System Business Research Innovation for Decarbonisation (WBRID) challenge is a two phase pilot to evaluate and demonstrate solutions for Decarbonisation.

BGCBC are looking for innovative solutions which will support energy generation, supply, demand and storage for commercial end users (and in the future domestic end users) across Blaenau Gwent and to work towards creating zero energy parks as a USP for Blaenau Gwent.

The challenge will be split into two phases:

- Phase 1 Initial concept design and feasibility
- Phase 2 Detailed design and demonstration



Industrial Estates Across BG

The Challenge

Developing Smart Industrial and Commercial Energy Platform Solutions to Achieve Net-Zero Outcomes



12. Research and Innovation - WBRID

Phase 1 – Four Suppliers developed feasibility studies to meet the challenge of zero energy business parks:

In Phase One, we wanted explore how we create a local energy system that would meet industrial and commercial energy requirements and work alongside domestic energy requirements to help alleviate fuel poverty.

Our contract notice was issued on 23rd December 2020. To brief potential suppliers we held a Virtual Briefing Event on 19th January 2021. The deadline for submission of applications was Wednesday 27th January 2021.

A total of 11 submissions were received – mixture of single suppliers and consortia. Of these four Companies were selected to go forward into Phase One. The four suppliers undertook initial research and desktop analysis to prepare feasibility studies for their concepts.

Concepts considered included renewable generation, energy storage, energy trading and demand-side management.

A panel of experts including representatives from Welsh Government and Blaenau Gwent Council assessed the outcomes of the four project studies in Phase 1 of the competition and two companies were invited to participate in Phase 2 to run a demonstration across Blaenau Gwent Business Parks.



Supplier One - Aquatera



Supplier Two - IBECCS



Supplier Three - Stortera



Supplier Four – Urban Chain

12. Research and Innovation - WBRID

Phase 2 – Live demonstration of solutions.

Phase 2 will be a demonstration phase with two shortlisted suppliers. Stortera and BankEnergi have each been given a share of the funding to carry out demonstration of their solutions over the next year.

StorTera are an Edinburgh based energy storage solution provider working to revolutionise the energy storage industry. BankEnergi is a consortium consisting of Consortio, Carbon Track, Wales and West Utilities and BankEnergi. The consortium has worked together on a number of previous projects from whole systems thinking to Prospering From the Energy Revolution (PFER) projects related to energy and flexibility trading.

The companies will be demonstrating their solutions which includes creating an energy trading platform utilising existing renewable energy generation and installing new equipment including battery storage, solar PV, heat pump and Artificial Intelligence (AI) controls. This will optimise performance and energy utilisation with a view to decarbonising business parks.



13. Community Municipal Investments



Blaenau Gwent Community Municipal Investment with Abundance Investment and the Green Finance Institute

Blaenau Gwent Council are exploring opportunities to launch Community Energy Bonds as a way for the local community to play a part in raising the funds to support the development of low carbon energy generation infrastructure and technology.

As one of a number of UK pilot areas, the Council has the opportunity to use Community Municipal Investment (CMI) to fund low carbon infrastructure for the Council.

In September 2021, the Council's Executive Committee agreed to move forward with due diligence to consider the risks / issues associated with this route of investment.

As a result this approval, the Council have signed the Local Climate Bond pledge with the UK Government Green Finance Institute. The Blaenau Gwent Climate Bond will support us in raising the funds to make investment in low carbon infrastructure and help us on our journey to become net zero by 2030.

We pledge to:

1. Explore the launch of a Local Climate Bond within 18 months of COP26, aiming to raise funding for a specific local net zero project(s)
2. Set and share publicly the target dates for completion of the project(s)
3. Provide public updates on the measurable positive impacts – eg. environmental, financial, economic and social – of our funded project(s), including any learnings for the future.

Agenda Item 22

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 02.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **15th December 2021**
Report Subject: **Net Zero Reporting, Climate Assembly Response and Progressing Transitions**
Portfolio Holder: **Councillor David Davies, Deputy Leader / Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**
Report Submitted by: **Michelle Morris, Managing Director**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
Nov 21	25 Nov 21	30.11.21			8 Dec	15 Dec		Decarb Programme Board

1. Purpose of the Report

To present the response to Welsh Government's Net Zero reporting requirements, seek comment on an initial response to the Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly report, and update on the action plan development for the Decarbonisation Plan transitions.

2. Scope and Background

Welsh Government Net Zero Reporting

- 2.1 As reported in the September 2021 meeting, Welsh Government have outlined its expectations in terms of content and data requirements for Net Zero Reporting for local authorities in Wales by 31 October 2021.
- 2.2 A sub group of the Decarbonisation Board (the Board hereafter) was called to consider the expectation and prepare the appropriate response following the internationally recognised carbon footprint format. This included data for greenhouse gas emissions for council's baseline year of 2019/20 and the subsequent year of 2020/21.
- 2.3 The data, which is summarised in the performance data and information section of this report (section 6.1), is divided into three scopes. Our organisational boundaries include all emissions from assets, such as buildings and vehicles that we have day-to-day operational control of, whether we own or lease them (Scope 1 and 2 emissions). Our wider operational boundaries include emissions both up and downstream, which are the result of our procurement and other organisations delivering services on our behalf (Scope 3 emissions). Sequestration represents the annual change in the net amount of carbon stored in the different land-use types.
- 2.4 The council has previously calculated a carbon footprint for the baseline year of 2019/20 utilising a method based on the Carbon Positive approach developed by Natural Resources Wales. The revised calculation using the Welsh Government Net Zero method reflects some fairly small variations in the organisational boundaries and emissions factors used, but are broadly similar.

- 2.5 The data shows that 2020-21 has seen a fall of 3,292 tonnes CO2e in our carbon footprint, which equates to 6%. COVID 19 has likely contributed to this fall in some areas such as staff commute.
- 2.6 Furthermore, on responding to Welsh Government, commentary of progress made against our Decarbonisation Plan 2020 to 2030 was included to show our progress as we aim to make our full contribution to the ambition of a Net Zero Public Sector in Wales by 2030.
- 2.7 The report submitted to Welsh Government is provided at Appendix 1.

Responding as a Council to the Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly

- 2.8 As reported earlier in the year, the Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly was the very first of its kind in Wales to meet in March 2021 and made a number of recommendations for consideration.
- 2.9 The council continues to take an active role in responding with our partner organisations from the Public Services Board, and work continues to develop on the collective response provided to assembly members earlier in the year, with a focus on action this Autumn around the main five recommendations.
- 2.10 Furthermore, as a key local public service provider, it is important that the Council as an organisation consider the recommendations in relation to our own organisation. To take this forward, on 8 October 2021, the Managing Director hosted a specific session with members of Wider Corporate Leadership Team and the Board to consider the recommendations and to begin developing our first organisational response.
- 2.11 The sessions proved valuable in engaging key officers from across the council, and in particular gleaned some useful insight into work already being carried out on some of the issues raised by the Climate Assembly. It also provided a useful forum for initial discussions on what more could be done to respond to the Climate Assembly recommendations.
- 2.12 Feedback from the session has been used to develop our first organisational response, which is provided at Appendix 2. The response, focusing on providing an overview of the Council's position with climate change e.g. the declaration of a climate emergency, our decarbonisation plan and partnership work through the PSB mitigation group, and provides a high level response on the areas where we as the council can have the greatest direct influence.
- 2.13 The response notes our broad support the five main Assembly recommendations as outlined in the previous collective partnership response, but also notes the remaining 19 recommendations many of which received the support of a substantial majority, and cover a range of other issues that are very important for residents. Therefore, they represent an important basis for developing future climate actions, which should not be lost.
- 2.14 The response concludes by noting that the council is keen that Assembly members and wider residents continue to be engaged in developing these actions and response to climate change, by looking to seek participation of assembly members into the future.

Further Progress on Decarbonisation Plan Transitions

- 2.15 The [Decarbonisation Plan](#) set out how we would deliver our commitment to the ambition of the Welsh Public Sector to achieve net Zero by 2030. It outlined how we could reduce our organisational emissions across nine transitions.
- 2.16 Since the plan was adopted a Decarbonisation Board (the Board) was set up and has agreed to carry out readiness assessments for each transitions to understand what was already being done, and to identify the key actions we need to take to progress. This process is being based on good practice from the Place-based Climate Action Network (PCAN) at Leeds University.
- 2.17 As reported in September 21 to the Committee, the Board agreed that the first readiness assessment to be examined would be 'Transport Direct' making up 8% of our carbon emissions, and was moving forward with a piece of work one 3 transitions related to 'buildings' covering three transitions: Electricity, Heating and Procurement (Works). These collectively make up 22 % of our gross carbon emissions.
- 2.18 Emissions from buildings can be divided into two main types:
- Operational energy use (heating, lighting, computers etc.)
 - Life-cycle embodied emissions (construction, (non-energy) use and maintenance, and demolition or disassembly etc.)

Both these types of emissions will ultimately be eliminated through the use of zero carbon energy. The difference is that the choice to use zero carbon energy is in our direct control for operational energy emissions, but is outside our direct organisational control for life-cycle emissions. However, we can address these life-cycle emissions by (i) using our (and collective public sector) purchasing power to encourage the market to move towards zero carbon energy based products and (ii) where possible by reducing are total consumption (e.g. product miles, material throughput (the total volume of materials used)).

- 2.19 Transition 6 Procurement Works (10% of carbon footprint) is the life-cycle embodied emissions from our buildings. Transition 8 Heat (6%) and Transition 7 Electricity (5%) include our operational energy use from our buildings. Electricity also includes some non-buildings emissions, mainly street lighting which is about third of our electricity emissions, which have also been included in this readiness assessment.
- 2.20 The Buildings Readiness Assessment was considered by the Board and CLT in October 2021 with a number of high level actions agreed. These are outlined below with organisational leads identified:

Energy Use

1. Strategic Heating Decarbonisation Plan. Develop a plan for replacement of existing heating systems and associated retrofitting of buildings with zero carbon alternatives by 2030 (in line with Welsh Government policy), including the investment required. **(Lead: Property Services)**
2. Energy Policy- Review the existing policy to ensure energy demand reduction is aligned to the Council's Zero Carbon commitment. **(Lead: Property Services)**
3. Procurement (Energy-Use). Commit to using carbon data (energy standards and life-cycle costs) to inform procurement decisions. Review

Procurement Strategy and arrangements to align to the Council's Zero Carbon commitment. **(Lead: Commercial Services)**

4. Street Lighting Strategy – Develop a plan and targets for future energy reductions including reaching 100% LED lighting no later than 2030. **(Lead Neighbourhood Services)**
5. Zero Carbon Electricity. Develop a plan and targets for ensuring the Council maximises its use of renewable energy, through installing renewables and through procurement. **(Lead: Regeneration)**
6. District Heating Networks. Set date for future review of whether developments in technology allow for additional networks in Blaenau Gwent. **(Lead: Regeneration)**

Construction

1. Commit that all new builds will be built to Net Zero Standards. How this will be achieved, and any barriers to delivery, will be set out in detail in the Strategic Outline Case and only in exceptional circumstances will projects proceed without these being fully addressed. **(Lead: Property Services / Commissioning Departments)**
 2. Procurement (Works). Commit to take into account carbon costs (the emissions associated with undertaking works) in procurement of building and maintenance works, including setting appropriate carbon standards. Integrated into decision making as part of procurement review. **(Lead: Property Services / Procurement)**
- 2.21 This list summarises these actions, with more detailed description of these transitions and the rationales for the actions provided in Appendix 3.
- 2.22 It is anticipated that all of the transitions will have been subject to a readiness assessment with high level actions identified for each during this financial year 21/22. The Board signed off the next transition to be Waste, followed by Sequestration in the new year and will be brought to the Committee as part of its forward work programme.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
- 3.1 This report will be considered by the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 8th December and any feedback will be provided verbally to the Executive Committee.

Option One

That the Committee considers the progress made and supports the response to the Climate Assembly.

Option Two

That the Committee considers the progress made and provides specific comments on the response to the Climate Assembly.

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

Welsh Government published their 2nd delivery plan [Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2](#) in October 2021 which sets out the ambition for the Welsh public sector to be carbon neutral.

In September 2020, Council has approved an evidence based Decarbonisation Plan for the organisation. The Decarbonisation Plan is an important element of the Council providing public leadership on climate change. The long-term implications of climate change mean that is also central to the PSB's responsibilities under the Well-being of Future Generations Act. In particular, that in accordance with the Sustainable Development Principle.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

At this moment in time the Council has taken a business as usual approach to resourcing the Decarbonisation Plan. That said, as each transition is progressed and high level action agreed, costs will be identified to make this work happen and will, moving forward, form separate reports from business leads for consideration of any investment required. It is anticipated that investment decisions will need to be taken by the Council, Welsh Government and wider partners to enable local action.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Having declared a climate emergency reputational damage is a risk if we do not respond to the challenges facing us as we implement our agreed Decarbonisation Plan. The systematic way in which we are approaching the transition work should enable us to arrive at well informed proposals on the actions we need to take to move towards Net Zero. These actions will though need to be fully integrated into our business planning processes and closely monitored to ensure progress is maintained.

5.3 ***Legal***

The legislative context around climate change is evolving with both UK and Welsh Government announcing new, more ambitious emissions reductions targets.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

The full human resources implications in implementing the plan are not yet fully known. These will become clearer as leads take forward actions that emerge from the readiness assessments. These might include the need for officers with specialist skills and knowledge to deliver key elements. It is also highly likely that staff engagement will be a key enabler in what is really a programme of transformational change.

6. **Supporting Evidence**
 6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

The Welsh Government Net Zero Carbon Reporting is using 2019-20 as baseline year for monitoring progress towards ambition of Net Zero Public Sector by 2030. We had already calculated our 2019-20 carbon footprint using a broadly similar method but this recalculation led to a significantly lower figure:

BGCBC Base Year Greenhouse Gas Emissions (2019/20)	BGCBC Old Method 19-20	WG Net Zero 19-20	Difference
Carbon Footprint Total (tCO₂e)	71,346	53,526	-17,820

Although there were some differences due to the inclusion of elements of our footprint that we had not previously includes, most notably the energy usage of the Aneurin Leisure Trust and a larger proportion of our land holdings, the large majority of this difference was due to the use of slightly more recent (2012 rather than 2009) carbon factors to calculate our emissions from procurement.

	BGCBC Old Method 19-20	WG Net Zero 19-20	Difference
Purchased Goods and Services	60,921	40,992	-19,929

This decline reflects the limitations of calculations of procurement emissions, as even small changes in emissions factors, which are based on national averages for product categories, will have large effects when applied to large amounts of organisational spend, regardless of whether or not the organisation has taken action. The downward change in this figure reflects that the ongoing decarbonisation of the national grid is reducing the carbon intensity of activity across most sectors. (If more up to date emission factors were available our procurement emissions figure would almost certainly be significantly lower again). This highlights that while procurement footprint figures can give a reasonable idea of the scale of procurement emissions, relative to other elements of our footprint. However, unlike other elements such as energy or transport, they are no suitable for monitoring progress.

Emissions Trends

The Council's Base Year Greenhouse Gas Emissions (2019/20) and current year (2020/21) are provided in detail in Appendix 1. The table below summarises:

	19-20	20-21	Difference	Difference %
Carbon Footprint Total	53,655	50,359	-3,297	-6%

The table above shows overall there is a small fall in our carbon footprint from 2019-20 to 2020-21, but further analysis shows a more complicated picture.

Firstly, for the reasons outlined above, any changes in figures for procurement reflect our level of spend, rather than carbon performance, and as a result this figure is essentially unchanged. Removing purchased goods and services, which make up well over half of our footprint, reveals a much larger fall in our carbon footprint in the other areas where the figures do reflect year-on-year changes in carbon emissions.

	19-20	20-21	Difference	Difference %
Total Excluding Purchased Goods and Services	12,663	9,788	-2,875	-23%

There is also substantial variation within these non-procurement emissions, largely due to the extent to which COVID has impacted our operations. For example, in electricity there has been a 9% fall in the carbon intensity of the grid, so we would expect our emissions to fall by this amount even if we used the same amount of electricity in the previous year. This is largely the case for street lighting which has not been effected by COVID, however, our emissions from electricity use in buildings has fallen by significantly more, while the fall for Aneurin Leisure buildings has been even greater, likely due to more of their estate being shut during lockdown.

	19-20	20-21	Difference	Difference %
Grid Carbon Intensity				-9%
Unmetered - Street Lighting	968	870	-98	-10%
Metered - Buildings	1,792	1,272	-520	-29%
<i>Metered - Buildings Aneurin Leisure</i>	<i>572</i>	<i>279</i>	<i>-293</i>	<i>-51%</i>

Similar trends occurred across a number of areas with falls in emissions from heating not being as large (possibly due to increased heat use where windows were kept open for increased ventilation), while falls in staff travel were even larger.

	19-20	20-21	Difference	Difference %
Natural Gas Heating	3,942	3,725	-217	-5%
<i>Natural Gas Heating Aneurin Leisure</i>	1,152	798	-354	-31%
Water	46	42	-4	-9%
<i>Water Aneurin Leisure</i>	22	12	-10	-47%
Staff Commute	1,733	1,039	-694	-40%
Business Travel	279	118	-161	-58%
<i>Business Travel Aneurin Leisure</i>	11	2	-9	-82%

Waste related transport saw only small falls in emissions, again reflecting that this service continued during COVID.

	19-20	20-21	Difference	Difference %
Fleet Total	964	945	-19	-2%
Downstream Transportation and Distribution - Silent Valley	216	209	-7	-3%

Looking at 4 year trends, up to 2019-20, prior to COVID there has been a large fall in our emissions from electricity, whereas there has been no change in emissions from heating, reflecting that this is a more challenging transition.

	Difference
Electricity Buildings (Carbon)	-44%
Electricity Buildings (Energy Demand)	-9%
Fleet	-9%
Heating (Excluding Energy Centre)	0%

One area, which is not part of our carbon footprint, but where we have had a very large impact is the very substantial increase in carbon emissions that have been avoided due to the increase in recycling and reduction in waste going to landfill.

Waste	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	Difference
Tonnes	45,119.01	45,038.22	42,136.79	42,297.53	-6%
Carbon Impact	-4,076.93	-4,847.34	-7,421.34	-8,215.79	-102%

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

The Climate Assembly provided an excellent representative opportunity for the members of the public to help shape recommendations set around the key topic:

“What should we do in Blaenau Gwent to tackle the climate crisis in a way that is fair and improves living standards for everyone?”

The findings will play a crucial role in shaping action from partner organisations collectively and responding locally to the climate change emergency.

Furthermore, the Decarbonisation Plan helps to reduce the risks from climate change to service delivery, as well as identifying opportunities to develop a more resilient council for the public.

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

The development of the readiness assessments has its core the involvement of key stakeholders from the relevant service areas. The Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly built on our existing public engagement with environmental issues, including recycling, nature areas and eco councils in schools.

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

The Decarbonisation Plan and the readiness assessment approach fully recognises the long term nature of some of the high level actions that will emerge from this process.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

Addressing increasing revenue costs from rising energy prices and a reliance on fossil fuels. It is important that decarbonisation and whole life cycle costs (both financial and carbon) are considered in all capital spending decisions, so that the Council is not locked into new carbon intensive infrastructure with high long-term running costs.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working.***

We are working with partners on climate change in Blaenau Gwent through the PSB Climate Mitigation Steering Group and Well-being Plan and at the regional level through Climate Ready Gwent. Work on regional projects is already underway, where public bodies in Gwent face similar challenges and can pool resources, such as EV charging and Fleet Review. Procurement is a major element of our carbon impact and many of our suppliers also supply other local public sector organisations, so collaboration will be key to engaging them with cutting their carbon emissions.

We successfully worked with Aneurin Leisure Trust to identify those emissions we needed to include within carbon footprint in-line with recent Welsh Government reporting.

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

Integration remains a key element of the Decarbonisation Plan and our plans in tracking agreed actions through service area business plans demonstrates this.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

The Decarbonisation plan is central to the Council's contribution to the Welsh Government ambition of a carbon neutral public sector by 2030, and responding to the Climate Assembly, and considering on-going involvement will be crucial.

6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***

Not required as this is a progress report and does not relate to strategic decisions.

6.9b. ***Equality Impact Assessment***

An EQIA was carried out for the Decarbonisation Plan and separate EQIA's will be carried out for major decarbonisation actions by relevant business leads as part of usual reporting arrangements.

7. ***Monitoring Arrangements***

The Board will oversee progress against the transitions, and reporting accordingly through the Managing Director to CLT.

Key actions agreed by the Board will be built into the service area business plans. This will ensure Decarbonisation actions are integrated into the Council usual performance management arrangements.

The Council reported appropriately to Welsh Government at the end of October in-line with their Net Zero Reporting arrangements.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 – Net Zero Report 2020/21

Appendix 2 – BGCBC Response to Climate Assembly

Appendix 3 – Building Readiness Assessment

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Net Zero Report 20/21



Decarbonisation Plan 2020 to 2030

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Net Zero Report

2020/21

This document is produced in-line with the requirements of the Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Reporting Guide published by Welsh Government in May 2021.

The 2021/22 report includes Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's 19/20 (baseline), and 20/21 data, alongside supporting commentary of progress made against our Decarbonisation Plan 2020 to 2030.

If you have any queries or questions in relation to this plan, please contact:

Policy and Partnerships

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Anvil Court
Church Street
Abertillery
NP13 1DB

Email: pps@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk



Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

This document is available in Welsh



Introduction

The Council's Decarbonisation Plan was adopted in September 2020 at the same time as we declared a Climate Change Emergency. The plan addresses our organisational emissions with the aim of making our full contribution to the ambition of a Net Zero Public Sector in Wales by 2030.

The plan provides a strategic overview of how we can achieve this ambition. It adopts a data driven approach, based on our carbon footprint, identifying from this data nine transitions we have to undertake to reach Net Zero.

The plan recognised that considerable further work would need to be undertaken to develop the full detail of the actions needed to deliver these transitions. The plan established a Decarbonisation Board which has been developing this detail, including integrating the significant actions we are already taking into an overarching corporate framework.

The approach in our plan was based on 6 core elements, this report provides an update on progress under each of these elements, with a particular focus on the data element.

Data Overview

The tables below present the data submitted to Welsh Government in the internationally recognised carbon footprint format divided in to three scopes. Our organisational boundaries include all emissions from assets, such as buildings and vehicles that we have day-to day operational control of, whether we own or lease them (Scope 1 and 2 emissions). Our wider operational boundaries include emissions both up and downstream, which are the result of our procurement and other organisations delivering services on our behalf (Scope 3 emissions). Sequestration represents the annual change in the net amount of carbon stored in the different land-use types.

The council has previously calculated our carbon footprint for the baseline year of 2019/20 utilising a method based on the Carbon Positive approach developed by Natural Resources Wales. The revised calculation below using the Welsh Government Net Zero method reflects some fairly small variations in the organisational boundaries and emissions factors used, but are broadly similar. The rest of this report analyses the implications of this data for the council and how we aim to address these emissions.

The tables show that 2020-21 has seen a fall of 3,292 tonnes CO₂e (6%) in our carbon footprint. COVID 19 has likely contributed to this fall in some areas such as staff commute. The Decarbonisation Board will be using this data to look in more detail at the reasons for this decrease.

Table 1: BGCBC Base Year Greenhouse Gas Emissions (2019/20)

Scope 1 - Direct Emissions	tonnes CO₂e/year
Natural Gas Heating	3,942
<i>Natural Gas Heating Aneurin Leisure</i>	1,152
Biomass Heating	60
Diesel Fleet	911
Petrol Fleet	18
Liquid Natural Gas Fleet	35
Scope 1 Total	6,119
Scope 2 - Electricity Indirect Emissions	
Metered - Buildings	1,792
<i>Metered - Buildings Aneurin Leisure</i>	572
Unmetered - Street Lighting	968
Scope 2 Total	3,332
Scope 3 - Other Indirect Emissions	
Purchased Goods and Services	40,992
Extraction, Production & Transportation of Fuel & Energy Used	2,104
<i>Extraction, Production & Transportation of Fuel & Energy Used Aneurin Leisure</i>	288
Water	46
<i>Water Aneurin Leisure</i>	22
Waste Landfill	0.3
Business Travel	278
<i>Business Travel Aneurin Leisure</i>	11
Staff Commute	1,733
Downstream Transportation and Distribution - Silent Valley	216
Scope 3 Total	45,691
Sequestration	
Forest land	-2,350
Grass land	-55
Settlements	919
Sequestration Total	-1,486
Carbon Footprint Total	53,656

Table 2: BGCBC Greenhouse Gas Emissions (2020/21)

Scope 1 - Direct Emissions	tonnes CO₂e/year
Natural Gas Heating	3,725
<i>Natural Gas Heating Aneurin Leisure</i>	798
Biomass Heating	67
Diesel Fleet	905
Petrol Fleet	9
Liquid Natural Gas Fleet	31
Scope 1 Total	5,535
Scope 2 - Electricity Indirect Emissions	
Metered - Buildings	1,272
<i>Metered - Buildings Aneurin Leisure</i>	279
Unmetered - Street Lighting	870
Scope 2 Total	2,420
Scope 3 - Other Indirect Emissions	
Purchased Goods and Services	40,570
Extraction, Production & Transportation of Fuel & Energy Used	1,727
<i>Extraction, Production & Transportation of Fuel & Energy Used Aneurin Leisure</i>	170
Water	42
<i>Water Aneurin Leisure</i>	12
Waste Landfill	0.1
Business Travel	118
<i>Business Travel Aneurin Leisure</i>	2
Staff Commute	1,039
Downstream Transportation and Distribution - Silent Valley	209
Scope 3 Total	43,889
Sequestration	
Forest land	-2,350
Grass land	-55
Settlements	919
Sequestration Total	-1,486
Carbon Footprint Total	50,359

Taking Action in 2020/21

1. Public Leadership

“We are committed to leading decarbonisation across Blaenau Gwent. We believe that this leadership starts with addressing the climate impact of our own operations. We are already taking a number of positive actions, but we recognise the need to increase our efforts through a systematic corporate approach to decarbonising the authority.”

Our approach to providing leadership on the climate emergency starts with addressing our own organisational emissions, actions that we are taking to do this include:

Investing in Energy Saving and Renewables across our Estate

We have invested £4 million, supported by Welsh Government Energy Service, from Wales Funding Programme in lighting, heating, controls and building integrated renewables across 20 properties saving 26,500 tonnes of CO² and reducing the council’s energy bills by £9 million over the project’s lifetime.

Developing a New Depot

An outline business case for a New Depot drafted by the Waste Resource Action Programme (WRAP) was presented through the council’s governance and political process in July 2021. This included plans to co-locate renewable energy infrastructure. The design will include solar panels on the main buildings, rainwater capture for use in vehicle washing, and charging points enabling the move to an electric collections fleet and electric support vehicles.

We will also be planning to be feed renewable energy into the grid from the wind turbine currently being considered for Silent Valley in Ebbw Vale, which will facilitate Blaenau Gwent purchasing lower cost energy for the new centre of operations.

The New Depot will facilitate the decarbonisation of our fleet, including the recent purchase of our first electric vehicles, four small electric vans for £95,000 (supported by Welsh and UK government grants).

Decarbonising Business Parks

As part of Whole System Business Research Innovation for Decarbonisation (WBRID) we are developing a Smart Industrial and Commercial Energy Platform Model Solutions to achieve Net Zero outcomes. Working with two suppliers to demonstrate

solutions on council owned business parks, which will include creating an energy trading platform utilising existing renewable energy generation and installing new equipment including battery storage, solar PV, heat pump and Artificial Intelligence (AI) controls. This will optimise performance and energy utilisation with a view to decarbonising business parks.

New Operating Model

Since March 2020 the council has operated agile working arrangements, initially in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. During this period staff and elected members, where they can, have been working remotely and the organisation has shifted to new working arrangements based on digital platforms.

A survey conducted in late 2020 indicated that staff have responded positively to agile working and supported the continuation of working in a more agile and flexible way. The move to the new operating model is having a significant positive impact on our carbon footprint: reduced commuting to and from work; less business travel; the closure of the Civic Centre (an old energy inefficient building), plus a more efficient digital way of working.

2. Collaboration

“We will work with our partners to develop joint projects to address common sources of carbon emissions and will be developing a plan for decarbonisation of Blaenau Gwent as a whole, through the Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board. This collaborative approach is informed by the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.”

Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) have established a Climate Mitigation Steering Group to address territorial emissions, chaired by our Managing Director. The first major piece of work the group has been involved in is the Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly, the first climate assembly in Wales, which took place online in March 2021. 44 demographically representative Blaenau Gwent residents, heard from over 20 expert speakers and deliberated for 23 hours about the question *‘what should we do in Blaenau Gwent to tackle the climate crisis in a way that is fair and improves living standards for everyone?’*. The Assembly produced five official recommendations, drafted by Assembly participants that received 80% support.

Theme	Recommendation	% Support
Transport	Establish an affordable, integrated road & rail transport system accessible throughout BG. A one ticket system that links to bus, rail & cycle schemes - inclusivity for purchasing of tickets (digital or paper). Accessible all hours with safety via lighting, CCTV and to keep maintained.	91
Transport	Establish & improve a safe, easily maintainable infrastructure for walkers & cyclists, for either recreational or work purposes, with access to the public transport network. Including lighting & CCTV & storage for bikes.	88
House retrofit	Train local tradespeople, create qualifications and upskill local businesses, involve FE colleges and local Universities, future proof it and provide the right courses to enable them to do the work in all green construction.	86
Green space and nature	Implement a programme of woodland preservation and reforestation of BG, using the right tree in the right place for the right reason, increasing opportunities for jobs, biodiversity and connecting woodlands. Making sure the skills are available so we can create green jobs, e.g. saw milling and timber framed housing.	86
Housing new build	Ensure that all new build properties are built using the latest sustainable technologies (E.g. Glanffrwd development as a template), employing local builders and providing a variety of accommodation types appropriate for all inc. homeless/single occupancy up to large families.	81

These recommendations are supported by a detailed report covering the eight themes deliberated on by the Assembly. Assembly members have presented their recommendations to a range of local decision makers, including elected members and senior management at the council. The PSB has issued an initial response supporting the recommendations, and is currently holding workshops to develop more detail about how they can be delivered. The Climate Assembly will inform the development of a plan to address territorial emissions in Blaenau Gwent. Continuing this public engagement is a priority for both the council and the PSB.

We have also been involved in a range of collaborative regional projects including:

- Electric Vehicle Charging Point Project. 62 new dual electric vehicle 22kw fast charging units have been installed at 34 sites across Gwent. A grant of £465,000 was provided for the project from the UK Government's Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV), with match funding provided by each local authority. Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales both contributed funding towards a feasibility study to support development of the project.

- Gwent Green Grid Partnership. Significant funding has been secured by Gwent partners for a three year programme that will facilitate better woodland management and creation and take action to protect and enhance vital habitats for pollinators and make improvements to green spaces, urban and country parks, cycleways and public rights of way.
- Climate Ready Gwent. Climate change was identified by the five Gwent PSBs as a shared priority. A Gwent specific Carbon Literacy training course has been co-developed and rolled out across the public sector, with senior managers and Elected Members among those who received training.
- Contributed to the development of Cardiff Capital Region Energy Strategy.

3. Data Driven

“The basis of our plan is a comprehensive assessment of the carbon impact of our operations, including calculating our carbon footprint. Using this data to identify, and target for action, the highest impact areas of our operations.”

The transitions identified in our Decarbonisation Plan are driven by our carbon footprint data. Each transition represents a coherent area of action with its own distinct low carbon technologies, business models and infrastructure.

The scopes and categories used in calculating our carbon footprint were developed to provide a standardised way of measuring organisations carbon impact. In contrast, the transitions are organised around the actions needed to reduce these emissions, which leads to different groupings. For example, emissions from our fleet sit in scope 1 of our footprint alongside gas because both of these emissions are released directly by the council. However, decarbonising our fleet will require completely different actions to decarbonising our gas heating, therefore, fleet sits within the ‘direct transport’ transition with business travel and commuting, which are part of scope 3 in our footprint, but require similar decarbonisation actions. The transitions also include data about avoided emissions, calculating carbon savings generated by delivering services, for example, diverting municipal waste from landfill. Carbon footprint calculations only report emissions, so developing data about these avoided emissions is an important part of our data driven approach to carbon neutrality.

This approach enables us to break decarbonisation down into manageable parts, and working back from the final destination of carbon neutrality to identify the key actions required in each transition pathway.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council: Transitions Summary 2019/20



Note: Graphic figures based on 2019/20 method based on the Carbon Positive approach developed by Natural Resources Wales.

Overview of our 9 Transitions

1. Transport Direct travel by our staff in corporate or their own vehicles, includes fleet, commuting and staff travel within work.
2. Transport Commissioned travel and transport by non- council staff delivering goods and services on our behalf, such as school transport, subsidised bus provision and onward transport for waste.
3. Sequestration absorption of carbon on land we own and manage, largely associated with woodland, urban trees and peatland.
4. Procurement: Goods which covers what we purchase as an organisation and includes key items such as clothing, food, IT, machinery, equipment and furniture.
5. Procurement: Services which covers the services we procure to deliver our functions such as schools and social services. This also includes investments such as pension schemes.

6. Procurement: Works which includes all construction and maintenance of our buildings and infrastructure.
7. Electricity which covers the electricity we purchase to run all our services. It includes key things such as street lighting, running our corporate buildings and schools. It also includes our use of renewable technologies.
8. Heat which includes our heating (and cooling) of our buildings.
9. Waste which covers the carbon impacts of our treatment of municipal waste, whether recycling, landfill or incineration.

4. Our Transition Pathways

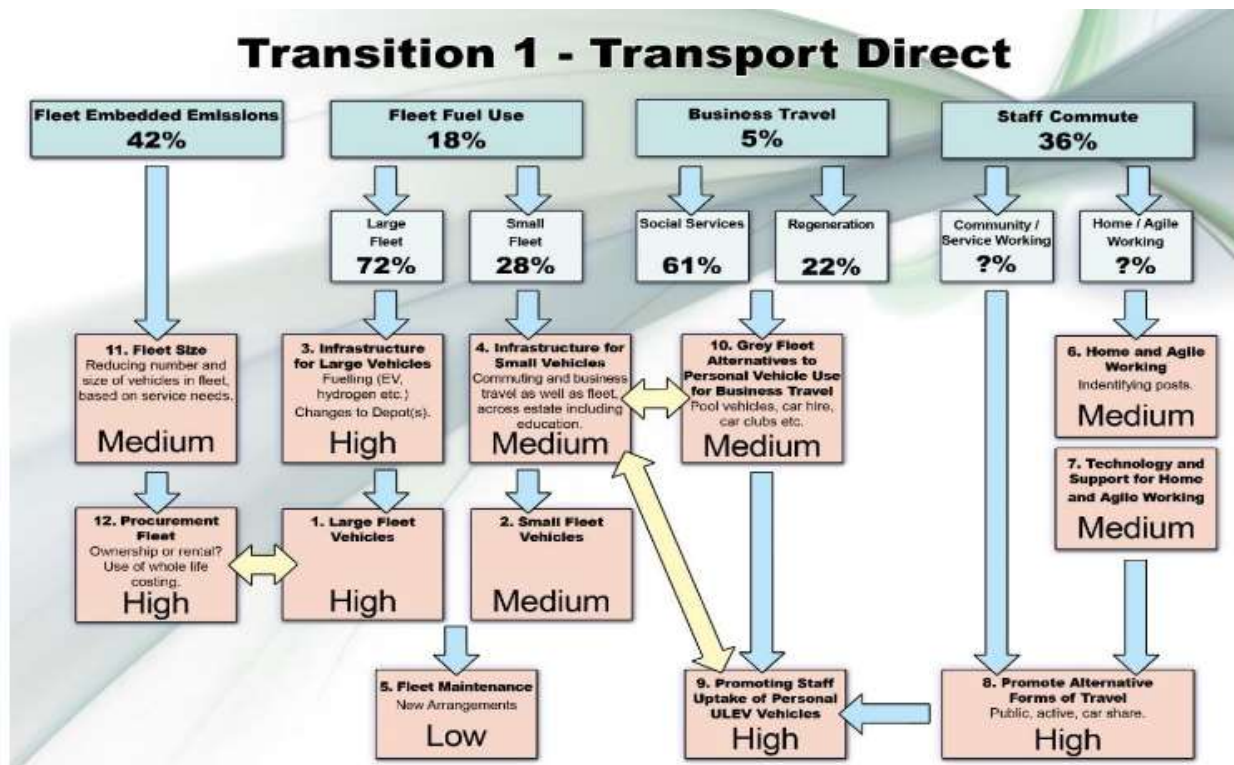
“Decarbonising the council will involve a number of different transitions in each of these high impact areas (e.g. travel, electricity). The plan includes transition summaries which identify key challenges in achieving carbon neutrality in each of these areas.”

Since the Decarbonisation Plan was adopted we have been developing the detail of how these transitions are going to be delivered using a readiness assessment method. Workshops involving officers from relevant service areas from across the authority are taking place to develop detailed pathways for the transitions. The workshops assessed our readiness to take action in that transitions across five categories: (i) technical, (ii) policy, (iii) financial, (iv) workforce and (v) delivery readiness.

For each transition the assessment is based on discussion of the key action areas identified as being necessary to reach net zero in that transition. These actions are based on the data from our carbon footprint, to ensure that they cover the entire transition. Each is given a difficulty level based on the scoring system below:

- **Low Difficulty** Actions that are technically feasible and could be undertaken using existing, or limited additional, resources.
- **Medium Difficulty** Actions that are technically feasible but will require significant additional resources.
- **High Difficulty** Actions where best alternative is not yet known and/or not yet technically possible.

As an example, the diagram below for Transition 1 - Transport Direct, summarises both the distribution of carbon emissions (blue boxes) and the difficulty levels of the 12 key actions identified to address these emissions (pink boxes).



5. Low Carbon Framework

“Although each transition will require its own distinct actions, we will also need a low carbon framework to provide a common strategic direction across these transitions.”

The next step in the readiness assessments is to identify high-level actions, the immediate next steps needed to move the transition forward. For each of these high-level actions a lead service area is identified and the action is built into the service areas business plan and can be monitored through our corporate performance management system. This reflects that we are committed to making decarbonisation an integral part of mainstream corporate business planning rather than an add-on programme to business as usual. It also provides the framework for the Decarbonisation Board to monitor decarbonisation actions across the authority. The Decarbonisation Board will also continue to report regularly to elected members through the democratic process.

Progress on agreed actions will be monitored via the council's existing business planning process on an ongoing basis with updates provided by the identified leads on a quarterly basis. Developing this range of measures to monitor progress is also important because reductions in carbon emissions are often lagging indicators, because in many cases actions only start to produce emissions reductions once they are completed (e.g. when new low carbon heating system is installed and operational).

Example of high-level actions identified in for Transition 1 - Transport Direct:

Fleet

- *Develop a fleet plan and resource its implementation by building costs into Corporate Medium Term Financial Plan. (Lead: Community Services)*
- *Develop and resource a low carbon depot. (Lead: Community Services)*
- *Ensure procurement arrangements are in place to support the plan. This needs to recognise the inter-dependant work on the new depot and collaborative opportunities at a regional and national level. (Lead: Commercial Services)*
- *Replace small fleet ULEV in phased way in line with available space, grid capacity and infrastructure. (Lead: Community Services)*

Travel

- *Embed the new operating model and assess its impact in terms of decarbonisation. (Lead: Commercial Services)*
- *Consider how to further reduce commute / travel impact in wider areas of the business e.g. Schools and Social Services. (Lead: Commercial Services)*
- *Investigate and identify staff demand to travel more actively and consider business case to meet this demand e.g. showers at main sites, secure shower facilities, safe storage and e-charging for cycles. (Lead: Community Services – Active Travel)*
- *Develop a plan for non-depot charging infrastructure for fleet and personal ULEV vehicles at key staff sites in the new operating model. (Lead: Regeneration)*
- *Explore how staff can be encouraged to switch to ULEV. (Lead: Commercial Services)*

6. Next Steps

“A Delivery Board will be established to take decarbonisation forward.”

The Decarbonisation Board chaired by our Managing Director has been meeting on a regular (6 weekly) basis, and made its first annual report on progress through the democratic process in September 2021. Over the next 12 months the Board aims to:

- Complete the readiness assessment process for all transitions.
- As a result, the Decarbonisation Plan will have been developed into a full action plan and key actions and timelines will have been agreed by the council and incorporated into the corporate performance management system.
- Developed council response to the Climate Assembly recommendations.

Blaenau Gwent Council Response to Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly Recommendations

Since the Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly took place in March the assembly recommendations and report have been considered through the democratic process by councillors, and assembly members have also presented the recommendations to a special information session for all councillors. The Assembly report has also recently been discussed in length at a special meeting of our senior leadership team, with these discussions informing this response.

Blaenau Gwent Council has already been part of the initial response to the Climate Assembly recommendations as a member of the Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board (PSB). We will not repeat the full detail of the PSB response (link), but will briefly recap, and state our support for, the main points of that response:

- We support the five Assembly recommendations, thank the participants in the Assembly for their time and effort, and we commit to continuing and accelerating meaningful action on climate change in response.
- The work of the Assembly makes clear that Climate action is not just a narrow technical fix to reduce emissions, it is about actions that will improve wider well-being by ensuring people in Blaenau Gwent have more ownership of the changes needed and by creating new opportunities.
- Implementing the assembly recommendations is part of a larger ongoing process to tackle the Climate Emergency. We can't solve everything locally, but working together we can make a meaningful difference.
- We are playing an active role in PSB Workshops taking place in November to develop detailed responses and actions to the five official recommendations of the Assembly.
- The PSB committed to report on progress on the recommendations on a regular and ongoing basis, we will do so as a council as well.

Format of this response

The main focus of this response is on the areas where we as the council can have the greatest direct influence, while the PSB considers the wider picture of Blaenau Gwent as a whole. Therefore, the focus of this response is on the wider set of 24 recommendations, and in particular on those where the council is either itself one of the lead delivery organisations, and/or where we have a significant role to play in providing support to residents taking action themselves. With our partner organisations from the PSB, we are currently developing more detail for the five official recommendations, which will also feed into our future actions.

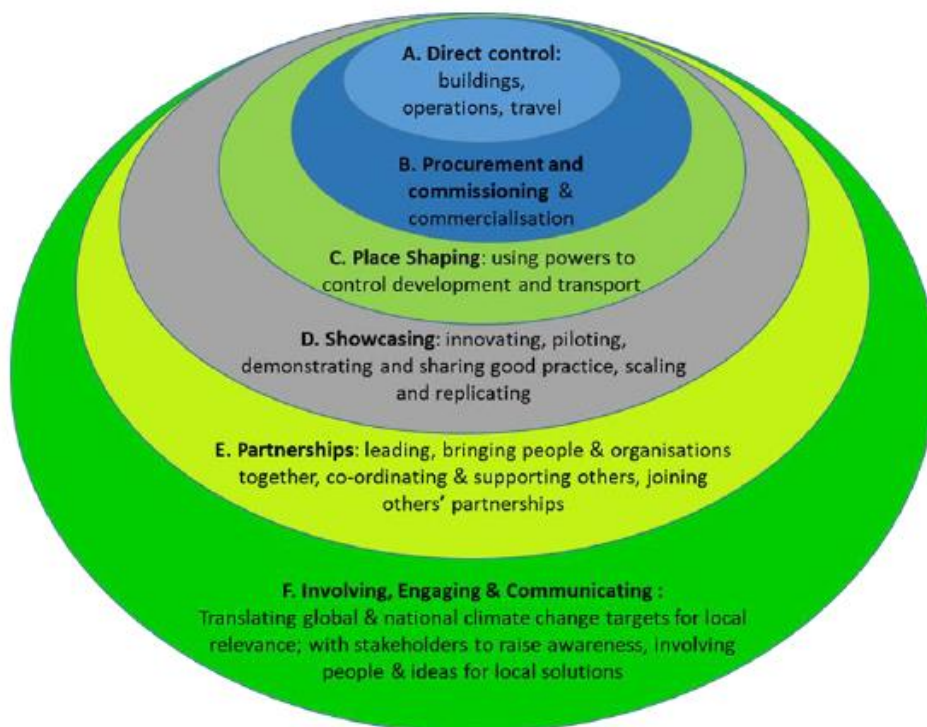
Another reason for the wider scope of our response is that we feel that it is important to recognise that the Climate Assembly did a large amount of important work and thinking beyond the five recommendations that achieved 80% support during the Assembly. Achieving 80% support for the type of detailed recommendations that the Assembly produced, particularly within the limited time available, is challenging. The final voting scores reflect the level of consensus that Assembly members were able to achieve within the time available, they are not a ranking of the relative importance of the issues they considered. We believe that these other 19 recommendations, many of which received the

support of a substantial majority, cover a range of other issues that are very important for residents. Therefore, they represent an important basis for developing future climate actions, which should not be lost. We are keen that Assembly members and wider residents continue to be engaged in developing these actions (see below).

How is the council responding to climate change?

Last September we declared a Climate Emergency at the same time as adopting our Decarbonisation Plan 2020-2030 (link). The Decarbonisation Plan is about our organisational emissions, the carbon we release from our own operations (heating our buildings, our fleet, staff travel etc.) The plan sets out how we intend to play our part in the ambition for a Net-Zero Public Sector in Wales by 2030.

There is another Net Zero target for Wales as a whole by 2050. This 2050 target relates to territorial emissions, which means all the emissions released in an area (housing, transport, business etc.) It is these territorial emissions that were the main focus of the Climate Assembly. We have an important role to play in tackling these emissions in Blaenau Gwent, the diagram below shows some of the ways we can influence them, but these emissions are not something that we, or anyone else, can solve on their own.



Last year a Climate Mitigation Steering Group was established by the PSB, chaired by our Managing Director, bringing together local partners to develop a plan to address territorial emissions in Blaenau Gwent. The Assembly recommendations are helping to drive development of this plan.

More generally our approach to climate action recognises the scope of the challenge we face and how far reaching the actions required, something reflected in the range of the assembly recommendations. We do not think that, in most cases, these actions can be

delivered by separate stand-alone climate projects. Rather our approach is about mainstreaming zero carbon into all our activities, a process that is already underway. For example, we do not have a separate low carbon vehicle budget, our aim is all our fleet budget will be low carbon.

We also recognise that some of the things we need to do to achieve zero carbon will be more expensive (at least in the short-term), and many individuals and organisations, including the council, will need support and additional resources to deliver them. The appointment of the new Climate and Deputy Climate Ministers in Wales (Julie James and Lee Waters), who both spoke to the Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly, indicates Welsh Government are taking this need for investment seriously, and we will be continuing to work with partners to push for further support for climate action in Blaenau Gwent.

Responding to the Recommendations

The table below shows the Climate Assembly recommendations where we have a role as a lead local delivery organisation and/or in supporting people to take action. This response does not attempt to go through each of these recommendations one by one, but instead identifies some key themes that cut across multiple recommendations.

Develop a local Climate Change Communications Strategy for promoting climate change action within the community at all levels by 2022 to be reviewed annually.	67	Develop a community owned/part-owned green energy programme e.g. solar farms, wind farms, or hydro electric. Supported by community green bonds. Making sure bonds are accessible and provide beneficial return.	74
Employ dedicated local Communication Officer(s) to lead on the Climate Change Communication Strategy.	53	Set a goal and support schools to source Welsh/British, sustainable produce and increase the use of these products over time, to include more vegetarian options.	74
Set up a Climate Change Communications Network that oversee the evolving Strategy (to be cross sector including citizens and youth representatives) sharing best practice, information and knowledge.	63	Establish an affordable, integrated road & rail transport system accessible throughout BG. A one ticket system that links to bus, rail & cycle schemes - inclusivity for purchasing of tickets (digital or paper). Accessible all hours with safety via lighting, CCTV and to keep maintained.	91
Make climate change and its impacts mandatory, interactive (e.g. competitions, prizes, rewards), relevant to the local area in the school curriculum. The council should assist schools with projects relevant to the age and practical involvement by the young people with the wider community.	62	Set up an enhanced information website, newsletter & community boards to promote transparency and sharing of information about recycling and how to access these services - this would improve awareness for future consultation on these issues.	63
Blaenau Gwent must create an accessible, practical, well publicised information platform for all (an upgraded website, an app, information lines and local one stop 'retrofitted shops/hubs' for advice and demonstrations on all things green throughout the area.	70	Reinstate community skips - to robustly address fly-tipping & litter - siting of more litter bins that are emptied more often. Install & monitor more CCTV/enhanced measures at known fly-tipping spots. Re-direct fly-tipping & CCTV costs to community skips and in time it would pay for itself.	65
Providing centralised grants to improve energy performance of all homes and reduce fuel poverty and energy usage by 2027.	70	Establish local Repair hubs to Re-use/re-purpose/upcycle items.	79
Providing advice, space and funding for communities to create their own local hub with a network of Outreach Officers.	58	Implement a programme of woodland preservation and reforestation of BG, using the right tree in the right place for the right reason, increasing opportunities for jobs, biodiversity and connecting woodlands. Making sure the skills are available so we can create green jobs, e.g saw milling and timber framed housing.	86
Prioritize brown field sites over green belt for new builds and ensure green space created within new developments	79	Create roles for coordination, cultivation and support of the use of green spaces (allotments, woodlands and urban green spaces) by the community to benefit all generations and create a sense of community ownership. Supporting communities in activities including food growing, recreation, bio-diversity, green prescribing, green space planning and aesthetics (e.g Blaenau Gwent in Bloom).	77
Establish & improve a safe, easily maintainable infrastructure for walkers & cyclists, for either recreational or work purposes, with access to the public transport network. Including lighting & CCTV & storage for bikes.	88		

We are already taking significant action across many of these recommendations. Examples include, the proportion of waste recycled in Blaenau Gwent have increased to 62%, thanks

to the efforts of residents, leading to the amount of CO₂ being saved increasing by over 3,500 tonnes CO₂, in the last 4 years. Further actions to reduce waste are being taken including the opening of the new Den Reuse Shop at Roseheyworth ([link](#)). The latest round of Arbed warm homes scheme completed this year saw £2.7 million spent on improvements to the energy efficiency of 577 homes within the Lower Ebbw Fach area. In recent years our valleys have become far greener, with the active involvement of community groups in many of these green spaces, including three Green Flag community awards this year. A process that is ongoing, for example, with the recent creation of the Ebbw Fawr trail, improving active travel links for walking and cycling, and consultation on a 10 year Active Travel Strategy having just been completed.

A range of pilot projects and plans are already being developed or already underway. This year the council launched a pilot community green bond scheme to support our Energy Prospectus ([link](#)). A pilot Fflecsi bus scheme was launched this year, operating Monday to Saturday between 5:15am and 10:35pm, to improve links to work and services. £70 million has been made available to us to reopen the link between Newport and Ebbw Vale, to secure four trains per hour and a new station in Abertillery. Climate action will also be a central consideration in informing development decisions, including through the new Local Development Plan and the placemaking approach to develop Town Centre Strategies.

£30,000 a year over a three-year period has been secured to support the appointment of a Local Environmental Quality Officer to work with existing Litter champions and groups along with engaging with schools and community groups to deliver the new Blaenau Gwent Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy for 2021-2026 ([link](#)). £2.7 million has been secured for a Gwent wide project Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing (ENRaW), to facilitate better woodland management and creation and take action to protect and enhance vital habitats for pollinators and make improvements to green spaces, urban and country parks, cycleways and public rights of way.

In addition to these actions relating to the Assembly recommendations highlighted in the table above, we are also taking action across a range of other areas of climate change. 62 new dual fast charging public Electric Vehicle Charging Points have been installed at 34 sites across Gwent, supported by a grant of £465,000. Cardiff Capital Region City Deal have secured £1.3million for the delivery of infrastructure to support taxis in the transition to low emission vehicles.

Work is ongoing on the Blaenau Gwent Energy Prospectus ([link](#)) to promote opportunities for renewable energy, including the recent expansion of The Works District Heating Network in Ebbw Vale to additional business units. We have also been involved in the development of the Cardiff Capital Region Energy Strategy ([link](#)), which aims to reduce emissions from our regional energy system by 55% by 2035. We are developing a pilot project to demonstrate solutions to decarbonising business parks, including renewable energy generation and installing new equipment including battery storage, solar PV, heat pump and Artificial Intelligence (AI) controls.

We are also taking action to address our own carbon footprint. We have invested over £4 million, supported by Welsh Government Energy Service, in lighting, heating, controls and building integrated renewables across 20 properties saving 26,500 tonnes of CO₂ and reducing the council's energy bills by £9 million over the project's lifetime. An outline business case for a New Depot was presented in July. The design will include solar panels on the main buildings, rainwater capture for use in vehicle washing, and charging points to facilitate the decarbonisation of our fleet, including the recent purchase of our first electric vehicles, four small electric vans for £95,000. Since March 2020 the council has operated agile working arrangements based on digital platforms, initially in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Staff and members have responded positively and supported the move to a new operating model, which is having a significant positive impact on our carbon footprint: reduced commuting to and from work; less business travel; the closure of the Civic Centre (an old energy inefficient building), plus a more efficient digital way of working. We are also currently reviewing our Procurement Strategy to address our climate impact and strengthen our existing commitment to buying local.

However, we also recognise that we do not currently have a complete overview of how these actions fit together, and most importantly we can't say how the total impact of these actions compares to the total action needed to reach net zero. We are committed through the PSB mitigation steering group to producing a data driven plan for reducing territorial emissions in Blaenau Gwent. This will allow us to produce clear pathways from the actions we are already taking, to delivering on the recommendations of the Climate Assembly and achieving Net Zero.

Similarly, it can be difficult for residents to get a clear picture of what is going on across all these areas and what they can do themselves to take action on climate change. Communication is a common theme across many of the recommendations, and we recognise this is not just about telling residents about the things we are doing already, or reproducing generic information about climate actions that is already available from a number of other sources. Keeping accessible Blaenau Gwent specific information up to date and providing opportunities for two-way communication are important elements of responding to these recommendations that will require consistent resourcing to make a climate communication strategy meaningful.

Building on the Success of the Climate Assembly

The Climate Assembly demonstrated both the widespread support for climate action in Blaenau Gwent and the potential for in-depth input from the public. While it is not possible, or necessary, for this level of engagement to be maintained at all times, we are keen to continue this process. A standing group and/or process for public input into decision making about climate change, will require clearly defined purpose and support, to ensure that, like the Climate Assembly, it has meaningful outcomes. We are keen to work with residents and partners to create a permanent successor to the Climate Assembly. Accompanying this document is a brief questionnaire ([link](#)) through which both Assembly

members and other residents can give us feedback about both this response and possible options for continuing the work of the Climate Assembly on an ongoing basis.

Buildings Readiness Assessment

Context of Readiness Assessment

The Decarbonisation Plan sets out our commitment to the ambition of the Welsh Public Sector achieving Net Zero organisational emissions by 2030. The plan identifies nine transitions: 1. Transport Direct; 2. Transport Commissioned; 3. Sequestration; 4. Procurement Goods; 5. Procurement Services; 6. Procurement Works; 7. Electricity; 8. Heat and 9. Waste. To progress the nine transitions, the Decarbonisation Board agreed to carry out readiness assessments to understand what is already being done and identify the key actions we need to take for each transition.

This report covers three transitions: Procurement Works, Electricity and Heat, which the Decarbonisation Board decided to combine into a single “buildings” readiness assessment. These three transitions collectively represent 21% of our gross emissions, a figure which is in line with Welsh Government’s Public Sector Net Zero Route map that identifies that buildings typically represent 20% of the public sector carbon footprint.

Emissions from buildings can be divided into two main types:

- Operational energy use (heating, lighting, computers etc.)
- Life-cycle embodied emissions (construction, (non-energy) use and maintenance, and demolition or disassembly etc.)

Both these types of emissions will ultimately be eliminated through the use of zero carbon energy. The difference is that the choice to use zero carbon energy is in our direct control for operational energy emissions, but is outside our direct organisational control for life-cycle emissions. However, we can address these life-cycle emissions by (i) using our (and collective public sector) purchasing power to encourage the market to move towards zero carbon energy based products and (ii) where possible by reducing are total consumption (e.g. product miles, material throughput (the total volume of materials used)).

Transition 6 Procurement Works (10% of carbon footprint) is the life-cycle embodied emissions from our buildings. Transition 8 Heat (6%) and Transition 7 Electricity (5%) include our operational energy use from our buildings. Electricity also includes some non-buildings emissions, mainly street lighting which is about a third of our electricity emissions, which have also been included in this readiness assessment.

Recent Trends

- Over the last four years’ total carbon emissions from our electricity consumption have fallen by 39%. However, the majority of this reduction has been due to a fall in the carbon intensity (the amount of carbon produced per unit of energy) of the electricity grid. Our electric energy consumption has only fallen by 6.5% over the same period.
- Unlike the electricity grid there has been no real change in the carbon intensity of the gas grid, so our carbon emissions directly reflect our energy usage, which has risen 12% over last 4 years. Largely due to The Energy Centre at The Works, which makes up 35% of our total gas consumption.
- The 10 highest energy consuming buildings make up around half of total energy use by buildings for both electricity and gas. Six buildings appear in the top 10 for both electricity and gas: Energy Centre, Civic Centre, Ebbw Fawr Primary Campus, Abertillery Comprehensive, Tredegar Comprehensive and Central Depot.

- The majority of procurement works emissions are associated with capital expenditure with external contractors.

Heating accounts for the majority of our buildings emissions and represents a distinct transition with its own technologies and solutions. It is probably the most challenging element of our energy use to decarbonise as it is not currently possible to decarbonise the gas grid in the same way as the electricity grid is currently being decarbonised. Using zero carbon, rather than fossil fuel based, electricity has little, if any, direct impact on the operation of existing electrically powered council infrastructure such as lighting, computers etc. Whereas the most plausible alternative heating technology, heat pumps, in order to operate efficiently will also require significant changes to wider buildings infrastructure (insulation, radiators etc.), in addition to replacing existing gas boilers, in itself a substantial investment.

Summary of Next Steps

The Buildings Readiness Assessment identified a number of high-level actions which represent the next steps in our transition to net zero in this transition. This list summarises these actions, the rest of the document provides a more detailed description of these transitions and the rationales for these proposed actions. For each action a service area(s) is identified so the action can be built into their business planning. The actions identified here will be developed with service areas into performance measures/targets, informed by both by the detailed information about specific actions in the readiness assessments and more good practise.

Energy Use -

1. Strategic Heating Decarbonisation Plan. Develop a plan for replacement of existing heating systems and associated retrofitting of buildings with zero carbon alternatives by 2030 (in line with Welsh Government policy), including the investment required. (Property Services)
2. Energy Policy- Review the existing policy to ensure energy demand reduction is aligned to the Council's Zero Carbon commitment. (Property Services)
3. Procurement (Energy-Use). Commit to using carbon data (energy standards and life-cycle costs) to inform procurement decisions. Review Procurement Strategy and arrangements to align to the Council's Zero Carbon commitment. (Commercial Services)
4. Street Lighting Strategy – Develop a plan and targets for future energy reductions including reaching 100% LED lighting no later than 2030. (Neighbourhood Services)
5. Zero Carbon Electricity. Develop a plan and targets for ensuring the Council maximises its use of renewable energy, through installing renewables and through procurement. (Regeneration)
6. District Heating Networks. Set date for future review of whether developments in technology allow for additional networks in Blaenau Gwent. (Regeneration)

Construction:

1. Commit that all new builds will be built to Net Zero Standards. How this will be achieved, and any barriers to delivery, will be set out in detail in the Strategic Outline Case and only in exceptional circumstances will projects proceed without these being fully addressed. (Property Services / Commissioning Departments)
2. Procurement (Works). Commit to take into account carbon costs (the emissions associated with undertaking works) in procurement of building and maintenance works, including setting appropriate carbon standards. Integrated into decision making as part of procurement review. (Property Services /Procurement)

Overview of Transition

Energy Use

The most visible element of buildings carbon impact is their operational energy use. These emissions are the result of energy consumption, both electricity and gas (and biomass in heating network). There are some similarities in how Net Zero will be achieved in both forms of energy use. Ultimately achieving Net Zero will be reliant on using zero emission energy source(s) for all our energy use. Also crucial will be reducing our total energy demand, the lower energy use is the easier it will be to secure sufficient Net Zero energy, as well as providing additional benefits in terms of both environmental impacts and reducing costs. Demand reduction requires long-term planning, using new technology and staff engagement.

There are, however, also very significant differences between electricity and gas in relation to Net Zero. Recent years have seen very substantial reductions in the carbon intensity (the amount of carbon emitted per unit of energy generated) of the electricity grid, leading to substantial reductions in the carbon footprint of our buildings. This trend is likely to continue, with a clear path towards total decarbonisation of the grid through renewables (largely solar and wind) being visible. In contrast there has been very little change in the carbon intensity of the gas grid and there is little prospect of that changing in at least the short to medium term. Biomass can play a role in replacing gas, as it does in The Works heating network, but it does not have the capacity to replace more than a small part of the total energy provided by the gas grid. There are some suggestions that hydrogen could be used as an alternative fuel in the existing national gas grid, however, there are substantial doubts about the viability of this even in the long-term. Although sufficient volume of hydrogen could be produced for the entire grid, producing Net Zero hydrogen is significantly more expensive currently (there are less expensive non-Zero carbon ways of producing hydrogen). The extent to which the existing gas grid would have to be modified to run on hydrogen is not clear, but it would certainly require significant changes to both the network and boilers. There are also serious doubts that powering the existing gas grid would be the most efficient and climate friendly use of hydrogen. The recent advice of the Committee on Climate Change to Local Authorities was that they should not wait for a hydrogen grid, but treat hydrogen like district heating networks, as something that may have a part to play through specific local schemes with high heating loads (e.g. business parks and major public buildings) as one element of a wider local energy plan. It currently appears that the role of gas in heating our buildings is likely to be mainly filled by heat pumps. Heat pumps use electrical energy to redistribute heat from the environment (either the air or ground), meaning they require less energy than gas boilers, and can be net zero if run on zero carbon electricity. However, in order to operate efficiently they heat the water used in heating systems to a lower temperature than gas boilers, meaning they may well require improvements to buildings such as larger radiators and a higher standard of insulation to heat them effectively.

The large majority of our gas use is associated with heating our buildings, making heating our buildings a distinct net zero transition. Around two thirds of our current electricity use is associated with our buildings, with the main uses being lighting and powering appliances, most notably Information Technology. The other third of our current electricity use is for street lighting. In contrast to the changes required to heating infrastructure changing to Zero Carbon electricity will be far less disruptive. We are in an ongoing process of installing lower energy consumption lights, computers etc., which connect to the existing grid, usually with no need for any further changes. However, there are wider changes associated with the transition to zero carbon electricity. Heating

is just one example of how reaching zero carbon will require electrification of a major energy use that previously used a different fuel. Another example being our fleet transition from diesel and petrol to electric vehicles. This trend towards electrification may well require changes on a larger organisational scale. For example, the greater overall levels of electricity demand will place additional requirements on the grid, and require more load management by the Council including generating electricity on site, particularly where there is high demand, use of batteries and more automation to balance demand. This represents a switch from the current situation where the biggest challenge is ensuring peak demand for electricity is met, to balancing supply and demand 24/7/365. So although this assessment identifies a number of specific transitions relating to our existing electricity use: lighting and computing/appliances, electrification is a much larger theme that cuts across multiple transitions.

Embodied Emissions

In addition to operational energy use buildings also produce life-cycle embodied emissions, which include the carbon used throughout each stage of a building's life: construction, (non-energy) use and maintenance, and demolition or disassembly. The life-time embodied energy in complex commercial buildings may be equivalent to 30 times their annual operational energy use. There are several different elements to these emissions including: embodied emissions (the emissions associated with the energy used in the manufacture of products), product miles and material throughput (total volume of material used). Actions which reduce emissions related to one element do not automatically reduce other elements or buildings direct energy use, in fact they may even increase emissions from another element. Which is why a whole life-cycle understanding of carbon impacts is important. However, from a wider point of view these emissions are not fundamentally different from the emissions associated with our direct energy use and will ultimately be eliminated in a similar way, by utilising zero carbon energy. The emissions appear more complex from an organisational point of view because the choice to use zero carbon energy for these activities is not within our direct operational control, unlike our energy use. There are two main ways we can address these life-cycle emissions. Firstly, we can use our (and collective public sector) purchasing power to encourage the market to move towards low carbon options (including as a first step making information about life-cycle emissions available to purchasers). Secondly, where possible to reduce our total consumption, this could be total material throughput or product miles.

Next Steps in More Detail

(See Appendix for Full Details of Readiness Assessments)

1. Heating Decarbonisation Plan

The development of the plan should be based on an understanding of our full estate in terms of building type, technology required and buildings (future) usage. Welsh Government Net Zero Wales suggests that local authorities should develop a strategic plan for decarbonising buildings by the end of 2023. This Heating Decarbonisation Plan will bring together a number of interlinked elements identified in the readiness assessment. Central to this plan is switching our estate from current gas boiler based heating infrastructure, to zero carbon energy alternatives, most likely predominantly heat pumps. Just developing this plan will require significant additional capacity, and delivering it will require a step change in resources as the 2030 target requires a rate of replacement of heating systems that far exceeds current rates of boiler replacement. The plan will also need to cover a

range of other actions to lower the total energy demand from heating (and cooling) our buildings, which are necessary to make zero carbon heating systems operate efficiently:

- Retrofitting to improve building energy efficiency as heat pumps operate at lower temperatures than gas boilers so require well insulated high-performing buildings.
- Optimise the use of buildings and space in them to reduce demand by integrating decarbonisation into estate strategy, agile working etc.
- Heating (and cooling) demand reduction. Technology/automation supported by staff engagement, including setting corporate standards for temperatures across estate.

Developing this plan will require additional resources, and significant corporate commitment/investment will be necessary, but likely not sufficient, to deliver it. A plan of this type may well not be deliverable within existing council resources, Welsh Government, or other external, investment is also likely to be needed. The next step for developing this plan is to develop detailed project scope for development of plan perhaps through a working group led by Property Services.

The plan should include the existing District Heating Network at The Works, but with the intention of decarbonising by 2035 rather than 2030. The network is one of our most significant emissions sources and provides energy to a number of our largest buildings. In this context, it is important to note that District Heating Networks are not strictly a distinct form of heating technology like heat pumps, gas or biomass boilers. Rather they are a way of delivering both heat and electricity (using 'waste' heat), potentially from any of these technologies, to a large number of buildings simultaneously, achieving increased efficiency and reduced carbon emissions via the resulting economies of scale. The rapid improvements to the carbon intensity of the national electricity grid in recent years means that the previously significant carbon emission benefits of common hybrid biomass/gas Combined Heat and Power (CHP) (as used at The Works) compared to standard grid based heat and power alternatives have largely disappeared. Welsh Government guidance has suggested a 2035 target, recognising the need to decarbonise existing heating networks, but also that changing the heating technology used in an existing heating network is a very significant challenge.

Reducing existing electricity demand:

2. **Energy Policy**, previous energy policies have set paper targets and policy statements that had little impact. Any new Energy Policy needs to be based on delivery mechanisms informed by data, automation and staff engagement.
3. **Procurement (Energy-use)**. Set energy efficiency and life-cycle standards for IT/appliances and lighting and incorporate carbon considerations and data into procurement processes, which are key moments in determining future energy demand.
4. **Street lighting**, around 8k out of 13k lights been converted to LED, leading to significant carbon and cost savings, replacement of remaining 5k is part of forthcoming Street Lighting Strategy. This needs to include actions and targets that achieve 100% LED lighting no later than 2030.
5. **Zero Carbon Electricity**. A plan will need to be developed with targets to ensure the council maximises its use of renewable energy through installing renewables and through procurement. Currently all the electricity we procure is certified as 100% through REGO (Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin) scheme. However, the REGO scheme is based on purchasing certificates for renewable electricity that has already been generated, as a result our share of the grid average non-renewable electricity is effectively redistributed to other

electricity users who do not choose to purchase REGO certificates. As a result, there is no real mechanism in REGO schemes to generate a net increase in the total amount of zero carbon electricity generated.

There are two potential mechanisms for the council to create additional zero carbon capacity. Firstly, through generating our own renewable electricity, which has substantial benefits where supply and demand are well matched (e.g. generating electricity for fleet at Depot). Other organisations have found the carbon benefits of renewables projects have been disappointing where new capacity has not been well matched to demand. The total amount we can generate as an organisation is, therefore, limited by the physical constraints of our sites, local demand and grid capacity. Secondly, through procurement that ensures new renewable generation capacity is created (known as additionality). A PPA (Power Purchase Agreement) for a long term supply of a set amount of electricity, with the supplier committing to build new renewable capacity linked to the national grid equivalent to the contracted amount of energy. PPAs are an increasingly common way for large organisations to help to finance additional zero carbon electricity capacity while ensuring a stable long-term price for energy.

We also have a crucial role to play in setting ambitious borough wide territorial renewable generation targets through the LDP and Energy Prospectus as well as future local energy planning. Our total organisational electricity demand is a small fraction of these targets for territorial renewable capacity.

6. **District Heating Networks.** Set date for a review of effect of new technology on viability of additional networks in Blaenau Gwent.

Construction (Embodied Emissions):

7. **Net Zero New Build.** Council should make commitment to all new buildings to be net zero (including their operational energy use, a key consideration as this is the element that can lead to future retrofit requirements). This will require additional resources and a clearly defined standard.
8. **Procurement Works.** Considerable life-cycle emissions will be associated with continuing maintenance and improvement of our existing buildings, which will continue to make up the majority of our estate. Corporate commitment required to incorporate these carbon considerations into decision making in procurement process targeted at highest emitted areas. Again requires move away from cost being determining factor in these decisions.

Emerging Cross-Cutting Themes

During Readiness Assessments several themes cutting across transitions have emerged:

- **Staff Engagement.** There are a number of areas where staff have role to play in reducing carbon emissions and/or incentives and support may be offered to staff. It does not make sense for different parts of council to run a number of different engagement or communication efforts. There was view in workshops that there should be a single point of contact for staff engagement across all the transitions. It was also identified the need to agree a corporate position on the limits of where council will attempt to monitor and/or influence staff actions, particularly with home working transferring a number of emissions from workplace into home.

- **Schools Engagement.** It is clear from assessments so far that schools are a major emissions source in many elements of our footprint. However, they have a high degree of decision making independence. As with staff engagement there was a feeling that we need to develop a single point of contact for decarbonisation, rather than having uncoordinated efforts to engage schools across different transitions. In this context, ideally schools would adopt same corporate standards for decarbonisation as rest of council (e.g. energy policy).
- **Electrification.** Solutions across several transitions involve increased electricity consumption. It is also clear that issues of grid capacity at both a borough wide and local level are going to be important, informed by an overview of total electricity demand across organisation. This may include other issues such as need for batteries for load management. This is a strategic issue that does not sit in any single transition.
- **What does achieving Net Zero mean?** With Scope 1 and 2 emissions it is clear what net zero would look like and how it could be achieved i.e. all energy used is zero carbon. But with Scope 3 emissions we will need common set of measures and agreed standards/targets to have a meaningful way of measuring progress. Something that will need to be done at WG level. It is not possible to reach zero energy use or material throughput, so aim is to reduce energy use and embodied emissions as far as possible and use zero carbon energy/electricity.
- **Territorial Emissions.** Readiness assessments only consider our organisational emissions, but it is clear from discussions that several of elements considered will also have wider impact on BG territorial emissions. Need to start considering corporate approach to territorial emissions as well and how it relates to Decarbonisation Plan and Board. The public may not be that clear on difference and without clear communication could cause confusion and or public dissatisfaction later if they are also not 'Net Zero' by 2030. Territorial emissions will also need own metrics and targets eventually, although again likely to be driven at WG level.
- **Regional Collaboration.** Already identified a number of areas where we are already, or it would make sense to collaborate regionally on actions. It might be beneficial to have greater corporate overview of what these collaborations are and how they contribute to overall decarbonisation goal.
- **Local Zero Carbon Capacity.** Identified that reducing product miles requires local suppliers. This is likely to be relevant across a range of our transitions and building capacity to deliver decarbonisation in local business is also relevant to reducing territorial emissions for Blaenau Gwent as well.

Building Readiness Assessment Appendix

1. Next Steps

This section provides full details of the readiness assessment and the 13 potential next steps identified.

1. Heating Systems

Net Zero: All public buildings supplied with low carbon heat by 2030

Readiness: This is a very challenging ambition which will require major investment replacing gas boilers as the method of heating space (and water) in our buildings, with no guarantee that the financial rate of return will be positive. For example, the payback on a conventional gas boiler is around 40 years. The currently leading alternative technology are heat pumps. Currently the upfront costs of heat pumps are several times those of an equivalent gas boiler (400k compared to 50-60k for typical primary school). There are also other significant costs associated with heat pumps. Heat pumps are most efficient (and therefore deliver carbon benefit) when heating the water in the heating system to lower temperatures (55 rather than 80), which may often require changes to the heating system and building fabric to deliver the same performance, in some existing buildings these changes may be prohibitively expensive or even physically impossible (asbestos a common issue). Currently the cost of energy per kwh from electricity is around 4.4 times higher than gas (because heat pumps are more efficient breakeven point around 3.2 times higher cost), meaning ongoing energy costs will be higher (issue WG recognised in recent announcement). The ongoing maintenance costs of heat pumps are also typically higher than gas boilers at the moment.

Timing of schemes has to be considered. As we have seen technology will improve and lower costs. There is also issue about whether we want to be the guinea pig for these types of systems changes? They need to be fitted to the specific buildings. Costs will be higher and greater potential for systems to not work as well as planned. Conversely, also still a space where limited number of experienced suppliers, and demand is likely to be high.

The main alternative heating technology appears to be hydrogen boilers, but the technological viability of converting the gas grid to hydrogen is not yet demonstrated, hydrogen is also not automatically a zero carbon fuel depending on how it is produced, there are also strong arguments that even if hydrogen is produced in a zero carbon way that using it in the heating grid is not the most efficient use of it due to energy loss. Even if all these problems can be overcome we are a number of years away from grid hydrogen being available, the Climate Change Committee Advice Report: The path to a Net Zero Wales is that LAs cannot wait for grid hydrogen to decarbonise heating.

District Heating Networks may provide a solution in some areas (see below)

The cost of these works will likely far exceed what LAs own budgets, a significant intervention rate from WG (or other funders) to close viability gap, of type provided in other areas such as solar PV, will be needed to deliver.

Currently gas boilers are run past their recommended working life (many are 30, 40 plus years old) to the point of failure, and the cost of replacement gas boiler(s) in a one of our big energy using building exceeds annual maintenance budgets. Acting at the point of failure also makes it very difficult to make the significant changes required by heat pumps. The implementation of this type of strategic plan will require corporate commitment to the investment levels required, including across the school estate (see schools cross-cutting theme).

Difficulty Level: Medium to High difficulty. The technology exists, but the costs are far beyond existing budgets and may not be compatible with some of our buildings.

Next Steps: Corporate commitment to strategic Heating Decarbonisation Plan. WG Net Zero Wales suggests that LAs should develop a strategic plan for decarbonising building by the end of 2023. A plan of this type will only be meaningful with corporate commitment including a

step change in resources in this area as the rate of replacement of heating systems required far exceeds current rates.

Reduce heating energy use by raising performance.

Net Zero: Achieving Net Zero will be driven by using low carbon heating sources, but less energy need to heat buildings easier this will be to achieve. Several elements to this:

- **2. Existing Building Performance DEC/Retrofit**

Readiness: Retrofit is particularly important as outline above, heat pumps are more efficient at low temperatures in well insulated high-performing buildings. Our 68 eligible buildings have recently been assessed for Display Energy Certificates (DECs), 85% reached D or above.

Workshop suggested all buildings achieving C would be a good minimum starting point. In the context of resources available, we need to seriously ask, what level of performance are we ultimately aiming for.

There is no one size fits all solution to this area, each building is unique and comes with its own challenges, with limits to the level of performance that existing buildings can achieve given their basic design. Even seemingly obvious improvement such as insulation may be challenging because of a combination of the additional costs of changes needed to the fabric of the building, and the long payback period of works. Currently 8-year payback is requirement of many funders, alternative funding arrangements needed to close this viability gap. The buildings that most need this work and also the most challenging for same reasons: age and size.

Programme of retrofits needs to be informed by understanding of estate as whole. Makes sense to start with the highest energy using buildings. Any strategy should look at building type first, then look at technology type, finally look at usage.

Difficulty Level: High difficulty because of the specific nature of retrofits requires bespoke solutions for individual buildings

Next Steps: Set corporate ambitions for building performance standards. Identify priorities for achieving these standards based on understanding of building types and current performance/energy use.

- **3. Building Usage/Estate Strategy**

Readiness: The financial viability of retrofits can only be assessed in the context of understanding future usage and life-span of building. There may be cases where it does not make sense to undertake works given the remaining life span of the building (both for financial and carbon reasons), but this can only be determined if this life span is known. We have substantially reduced number of buildings, with closure of Civic Centre feel getting close to minimum space needed to deliver services.

Beyond number of buildings also have to consider how they are used, our core buildings are open 7-7. More people are working from home since lockdown and this is going to continue. Therefore, lots of energy is potentially being used even though the building is not being utilised. A booking system where staff can book day slots only is being put in place. There will be peak occupancy times. Heating (and lighting) can be potentially targeted at specific areas and times to reduce energy use, although this may require retrofitting system with controls and valves. But only if these times and places are known, and staff are made aware of them and systems facilitates them following them, and more fundamentally if it is physically possible to create separately heated spaces, e.g. Anvil Court does not lend itself to this without construction of new dividing walls.

Sharing space with other (public sector) organisations is another potential method of optimising space use and therefore reducing energy.

Next Step: Carbon implications need to be integral part of relevant strategies/documents such as Estates Strategy, Agile Working Systems and Public Sector Facility Sharing.

- **4. Heating Demand Reduction**

Readiness: Building design determines maximum not actual performance. Just a couple of staff members can be enough to significantly decrease performance through their behaviour. The effectiveness of heating improvements also depends on a good control system. Otherwise people will find they are getting hot and open the windows for example. Increasing automation of control systems reduces reliance on staff to manage use.

A consistent corporate approach to what temperature work environments should be would reduce energy use across the estate, it was highlighted that some schools choose to heat to higher temperatures. There also needs to be a recognition that people do have different preferences about the temperature of work environment, and this also touches on office dress as well.

Think that significant savings could be realised via better use of existing BMS (Building Management System) control to optimise actual performance of heating systems, but this requires sufficient staff time from staff with the correct skills.

Staff engagement via Energy Champions took place prior to COVID, potential to return to this, as part of wider staff engagement (see cross-cutting theme). Staff engagement of this type does have potential for real impact, but requires consistent resourcing, energy is very small team covering a large organisation.

Difficulty Level: Medium, technically possible, but significant costs.

Next Steps: Set corporate standards for temperature in different work spaces. Scope programme to optimise use of automation and BMS and identify potential savings/business case for investment (potentially as part of larger strategy)

- **5. Space Cooling**

Readiness: We know this is likely to be increasing issue in future as hot days get more frequent, although starting from a low base. In terms of understanding impact on future demand will affect lots of organisations in Gwent, does not make sense for BGCBC to investigate on own. Currently if temperature reach 27 then system brings it down to 24. New ventilation is currently being installed at Anvil Court. You can have an A/C system without it being on, but of course there are the embodied emissions associated with installation.

Staff can play in keeping self at comfortable temperature in ways that not wasteful of energy. Desk Fans are emblematic in this issue, COVID has impact in leading to successful ban in Anvil Court and Schools. This felt to be something that should be continued, noted that previous attempts to ban fans at Civic Centre failed.

Difficulty Level: Medium, cost implications

Next Steps: Include considerations in corporate standards for temperature in work space (see above) and staff engagement work. Keep future demand under active review to inform planning (possible regional collaboration).

Building Embodied Emissions

This involves consideration of the Scope 3 carbon impact of our buildings, beyond scope 1 and 2 direct energy use associated with heating, cooling, lighting and power of any appliances. Life-cycle embodied emissions include the carbon used throughout each stage of a building's life: construction, use and maintenance, and demolition or disassembly. The life-time embodied energy in complex commercial buildings may be equivalent to 30 times annual operational energy use.

More complex what net zero means in this context as these elements can't be decarbonised in the same straight forward way as direct energy use. There are several different elements including embodied emissions, product miles and material throughput, which, along with

direct energy use, do not automatically reduce together. In fact, actions which reduce emissions related to one element may well increase emissions from another. So complex balancing act to work out lowest life-cycle impact. Also more complex to measure than direct energy-use. BGCBC will not resolve these questions our self, national guidance will lead. (see cross-cutting theme.)

- **6. Existing Buildings**

Net Zero: Reduce Life-Cycle Emissions

Readiness Assessment:

Life cycle costing is important. There are several elements to this, all of which represent measurement challenges to inform decision making as new areas for all organisations, not just BGCBC. Will require corporate commitment to incorporating these life-cycle factors into decision making as will have financial implications. There is a strong downward pressure on costs, and would require a culture change, especially after 10 years of austerity. Improving any of these elements will cost significant money, even when there are long-term savings.

Life-cycle elements:

- Material Throughput. Product durability plays a big role. But reality is that the shorter lasting option is often cheaper and that is the default choice. Another element is the waste outcome of works. How much results and what do with it?
- Product Miles. This is area that are making significant effort to procure locally, including using local engineers etc. to service buildings. But this is reliant on products being available locally. The more we move towards specialist low carbon products the more challenging it will be as local skills and supply chains are limited at the moment. Currently no doubt Germany and Scandinavia are dominant in this space. There are some Welsh companies in this space, for example, get building block from Newbridge company. But we have to accept that risks in working with companies with limited delivery history. There are also issues that these new/local companies not confident in tendering, may have issues with cost of achieving certification (Example that BG LED companies have not bid for work).
- Embodied Emissions. There is data out there about embodied emissions from products associated with production of used in fabric of building, but it is not perfect, and the extent to which this information has been integrated into the market and product information is even more limited.

Difficulty Level: High difficulty due to number of elements where solutions not clear and are outside of our direct control.

Next Steps: Create corporate procurement priorities based on identifying high carbon impact elements of procurement for existing building (likely using existing national data).

- **7. New Buildings**

Net Zero: WG 'All new buildings to be built to net zero standard (build and use)'

Readiness: Feel doing good work in this area. BREAM Excellent can give false idea. Does contain carbon elements but it is possible to get excellent without reducing carbon at all by scoring other points. Some of these are important to other environmental issues such as ecology which key elements. But feel that criteria could be streamlined. Also raise issue of how cost effective BREAM is, the costs of certification can run to five figures, money that could be spent on other ways of reducing carbon.

Funding requirements have impact. Funders have negative reactions about higher costs of zero carbon build. Tight deadlines significantly constrain innovation. Both short lead in and tight spend profiles mean that often condensing design processes more than would like at moment. Also speculated that WG and other funders may make these considerations a requirement in the future, if do so this needs to be recognised in funding levels.

Key stat is only 20% of life cycle carbon emissions from new building are the construction phase. Need to look at life time use of building. There are also potential costs to occupiers in long term. New tech requires maintenance, especially as these are often also new systems. Design and build contracts for new building make it difficult to specify local product, as contractor can select lower cost equivalent performance alternative, perhaps this will change post Brexit?

Making new buildings Zero Carbon easier than existing buildings, but only make up small element of total estate.

As with several of these building related actions there is a concern about the number of companies and people with the skills to carry out this work. If large number of organisations start to carry out similar decarbonisation work at the same time, then costs will rise and capacity may not meet demand. May not just be other public sector organisations who are decarbonising, private sector already pays higher and could outbid public for limited supply of skilled engineers etc.

Difficulty Level: High, solutions not yet fully clear, particularly for full life zero carbon.

Next Steps: Corporate commitment to defined net zero standard for new build. WG and UK government definitions will play a big role here. Also could be that BGCBC does not want to wait/wants to go further, but if this is the case needs to have clear definition of ambitions.

8. District Heating Network(s)

Net Zero: WG 'Existing district heating networks will switch to low-carbon sources (electric heat pumps/hydrogen) in the 2030s. Heat networks will be developed in areas of dense heat demand, cities and towns.' Large Public Sector buildings are potential anchor loads for heating networks.

Readiness: Existing Works Network has 990kwh biomass capacity. Biomass comes from Carmarthen firm woodchip, no information of what original source(s) is. CHP runs 24/7. Able to heat site for 8 months of a year. Gas boilers kick in the winter when demand is higher. As more buildings link into network inevitable they will need to run more. Not just replacing the biomass system but all the buildings are designed to work with 90o heat so no way heat pumps could take over currently unless very significant investment.

We are looking at Rassau network but would have little impact on council footprint as have few, if any, buildings on potential network.

Past investigations showed Abertillery topography prevented a network, while in Brynmawr was not enough load to make workable. In both cases this was with technology available at time so worth keeping under review.

Difficulty Level: High, technology not yet available.

Next Steps: Limited actions that can take now, but important to keep technology under review both for existing network and potential additional networks. Could identify formal review dates/periods?

Electricity

9. Renewable Generation

Decarbonisation Plan only covers renewable generation that would be directly operated by BGCBC, council has important role in wider renewable capacity in BG via LDP and Energy Prospectus.

Net Zero: Own generation can contribute to larger target of using zero carbon electricity

Readiness: Currently have around 350kwh of installed capacity, plus work with Leisure Trust including Sports Centre. Building mounted renewables can play a role, good for demonstrating public leadership, Phase 1 Re: Fit has shown the potential viability issues, as have to deliver 8-year return. Things like asbestos and roof strength add costs apply to a

significant number of our buildings, we have absorbed them in some cases in Estates budget. Can also be more fundamental issues where roof alignment not suitable.

We are also working on industrial stock and business units. This work is not directly impacting on our footprint much at the moment because we do not have operations control, although they might potentially come back into our ownership. This may also be relevant consideration for Community Asset Transfer buildings also.

Potentially large amounts could be generated from non-building mounted renewables.

However, grid capacity means until Western Power upgrade that limited what can put in grid, but anyway we would ideally want to generate power where it will be consumed. Silent Valley good example of where this possible. The council owns limited land suitable for wind farms, lot of our land is urban so free standing solar would be very vulnerable to vandalism.

Difficulty Level: Medium (Some sites high)

Next Steps: BGCBC could set target for own renewable generation, based on assessment of potential capacity. Important that this target should be informed by larger context of total electricity needs and relative carbon benefit compared to other forms of decarbonisation investment.

10. Electricity Procurement

Net Zero: WG currently requires use renewable supply. However, Climate Change Committee notes that most forms of procurement do not actually lead to increased renewable electricity generation within the wider UK system (considered as 'additionality'), as the majority of renewable electricity being purchased either already exists or is being supported through Government mechanisms including Contracts for Difference. Suggest move towards Power Purchase Agreements (PPA) which are long-term contracts creating specific renewable capacity rather than a green tariff. As building renewable infrastructure is very capital intensive, a long-term contract will give developers long-term revenue certainty to create additional renewable capacity.

Readiness: Electricity procurement done not just on all Wales but all UK basis. Smooths costs over 18 months, have to wait for contracts to end. Can choose from range of options. Have split to individual contracts for different buildings. Difficulty of procurement contracts not high if know what we want.

Data is available. Upload to Team Sigma. Not using the full capability of system, similar issues to gas data above that need suitable staff time and skills. But are assessing impact of schemes such as Re:Fit.

Making use of right data in timely way when decisions being made is the challenge. For example, investigating system that will allow schools greater access to their data.

Difficulty Level:

Next Steps: Investigate and set corporate position on additionality of electricity procurement (unlikely to be area where BGCBC acts alone).

Electricity Demand

Decarbonising heating like decarbonising transport is likely to increase demand for electricity. Electrification has been identified as a cross-cutting theme that needs to be considered separately, rather than potentially merging multiple transitions into electricity. The readiness assessment considered the areas that are already being powered by electricity.

- **11. Demand Reduction from Buildings**

Net Zero:

Readiness: Big problem here is making policy meaningful. We have had Energy Policy covering this area before, but it just sat on the shelf having little or no impact on demand. Need to make sure that any new policy is meaningful, key to this is corporate culture change. It is not a

policy that single person or small team can roll out on own, 1.1k staff involved in this demand. Also need to recognise that not just on staff, automation big part of this and trying to roll out across estate.

Also need to be supported by increased visibility of data, want all buildings to be on performance system. Big issue across all these areas is use of data and performance. Aware that can potentially do a lot more, but need to make associated with impact. Also need to understand how to evaluate against relevant benchmarks such as past performance and other organisations.

Difficulty Level: Medium, the technology exists, challenges around rolling out across all buildings and staff.

Next Steps: Any new Energy Policy need to have basis in delivery mechanisms around data, automation and staff engagement, not just paper targets and policy statements. Also understand place in larger context of electrification.

- **12. Information Technology (Appliances)**

Net Zero: Reducing energy use and embodied emissions.

Readiness: Legacy laptops have been replaced. Likely that this had beneficial carbon impact, it would be possible to go back and calculate the carbon impact, but wasn't considered at the time. Highlights that need to bring these considerations upstream to point of procurement, this is the point where big impact can be made. Not just energy efficiency standards, but whole life costings etc. There is larger issue that we have tended to just go with what SRS recommend, starting to be more proactive in recognizing that we make decisions and taking lead as client on procurement.

Similar situation with end of life disposal, tendency for equipment to mothball on 2nd floor at Civic. Bridging the Gap has looked to take more proactive approach, should have financial benefits, worst case people will strip for metal.

This is another area which highlights that we hold performance data that has carbon implications that we are not considering. We need to make these carbon calculations routine practise, and most importantly insert the data into decision making processes at right moment.

Software change programme will also have impact. Firstly, moving to avoid systems that rely on printing, access work orders etc. via smart device (already highlighted for transport will reduce travel). Secondly move to cloud and servers in Newport Data Centre. Economies of scale not just about cost, will save carbon by not having separate cooling etc.

Apart from IT suspect biggest use is kitchen appliances, mainly in schools. Most if not all have these school kitchens have transitioned from gas to electric.

Difficulty Level: Medium

Next Steps: Set standards and incorporate carbon considerations and data into procurement processes.

13. Street Lighting

- **Net Zero:** Reduce Energy Demand
- **Readiness:** 1.5k LED lights installed through first Salix. Another 6-6.5k being converted at moment. In total we have around 13k columns. Selection was based on E. ON report about where biggest (financial) savings would be made. Have also made savings because able to dim bulbs, this was initially in response to public feedback that much brighter than old bulbs. Similarly timing and alternate lights being on has reduced energy consumption, seeing savings. Question of length of time that remaining 5k will take and if need further funding will be addressed through assessment of existing programme and development of operational policy for street lighting which not something had previously. Replacement costs roughly £150 each. At moment use any spare maintenance budget to continue making replacement, some money is available because less replacement need to be made with so many LEDs now in operation.

The main challenge is now town centre ornamental lighting, often installed as part of improvement projects, so in most cases straight replacement with LED bulb will not be possible, more expensive replacement of entire lighting fixture will be needed.

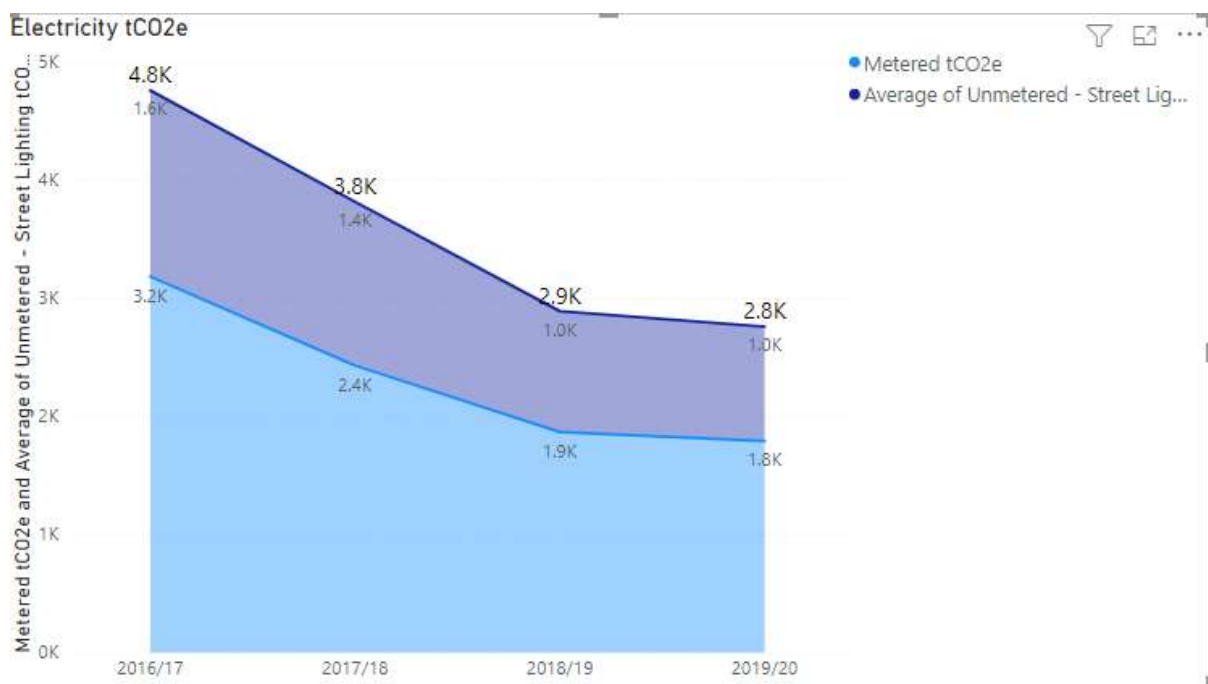
Difficulty Level: Medium (due to town centre lighting)

Next Steps: Carbon implications part of new Street Lighting Policy, possibly including target(s) for replacements.

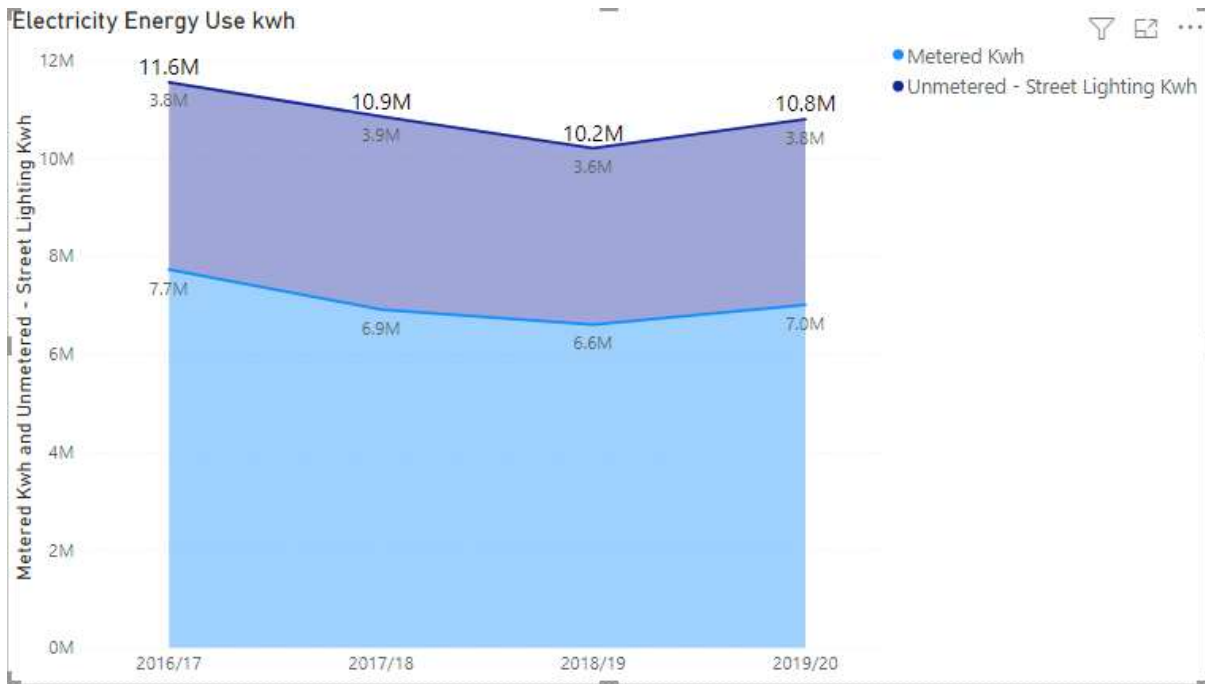
2. Footprint Data

Transition 7 Electricity

Over the last four years' total carbon emissions from our electricity consumption have fallen 39%, with similar falls for both our metered (buildings) and unmetered (street lighting) emissions.

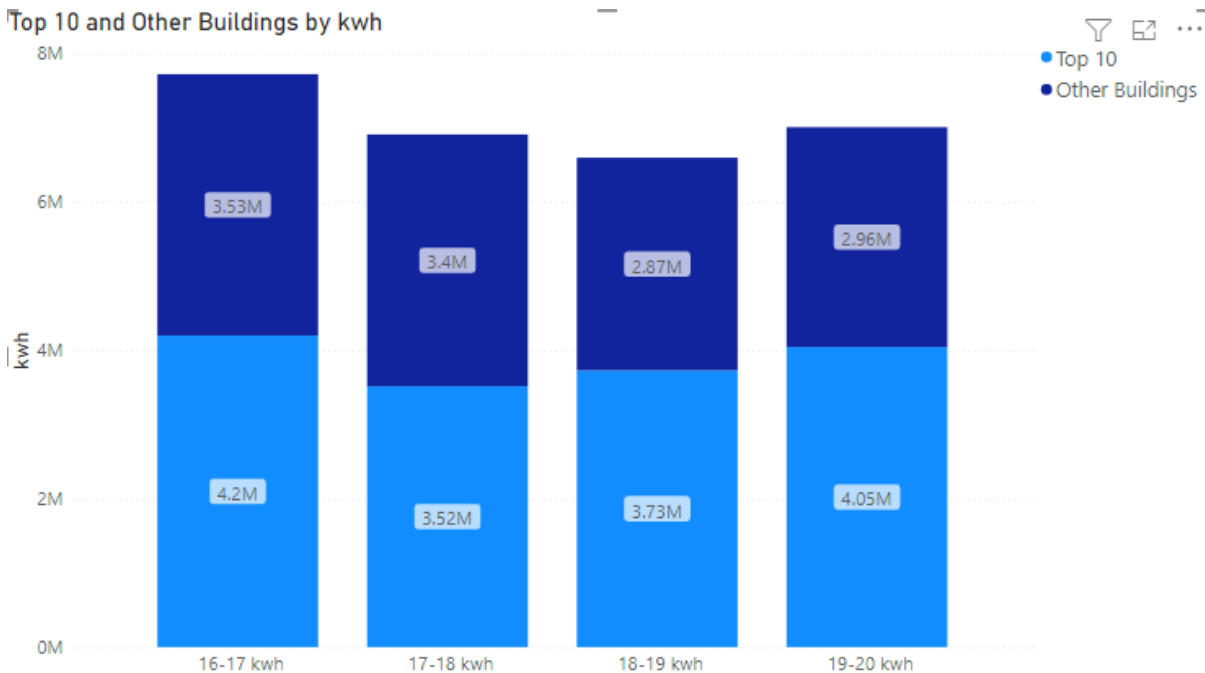


However, the majority of this reduction has been due to a fall in the carbon intensity of the electricity grid, our electric energy consumption has only fallen by 6.5% over the same period.

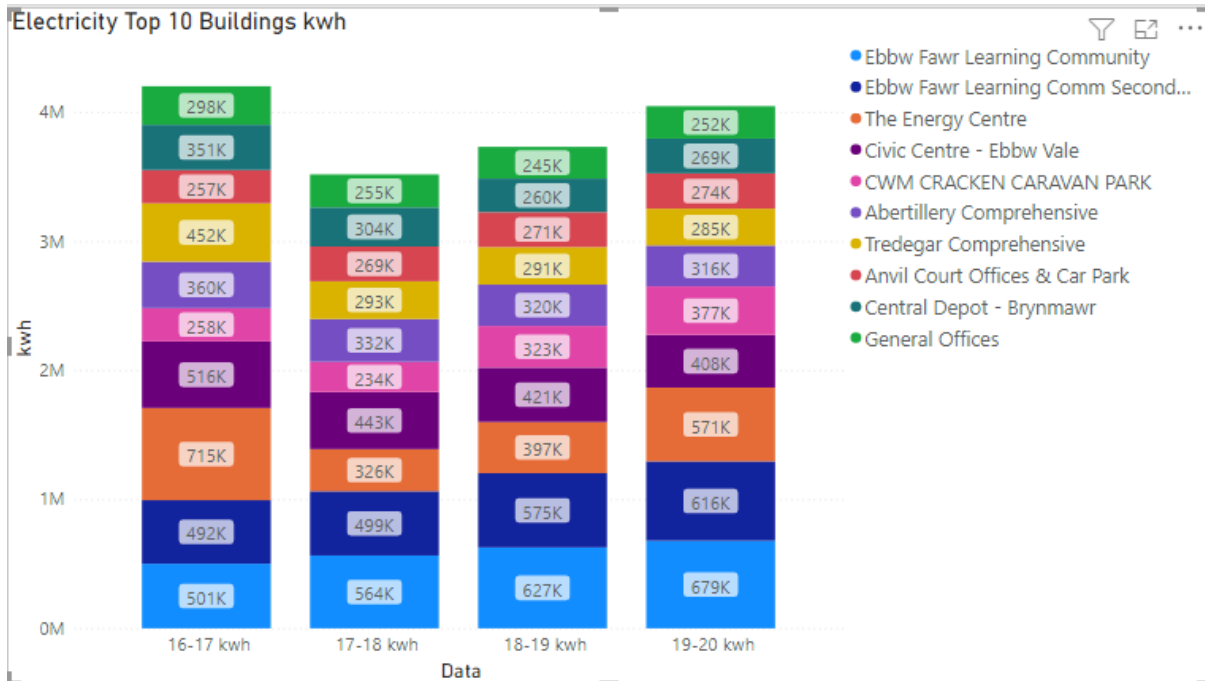


Our buildings make up two thirds of our electricity consumption, with unmetered supply to street lighting making up the other third. Over half of our electricity use in buildings takes place in our top 10 electricity consuming buildings

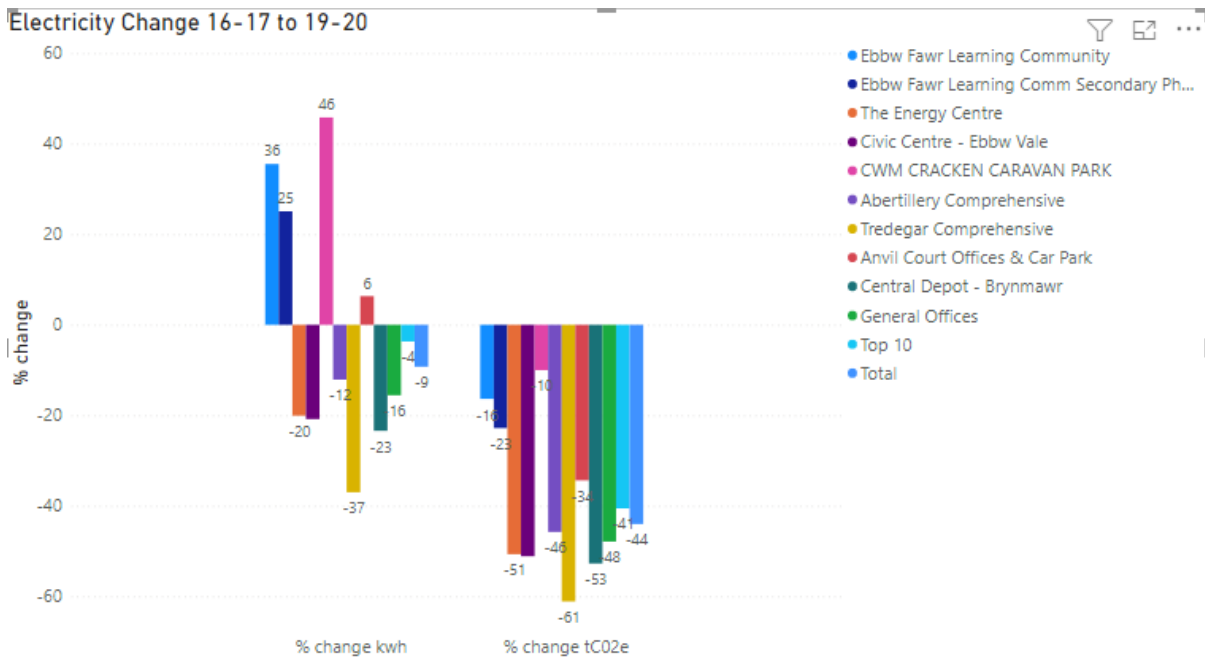
(Figures for buildings are kwh to reflect our energy usage rather than grid decarbonisation.)



The top ten buildings for electricity consumption are shown below

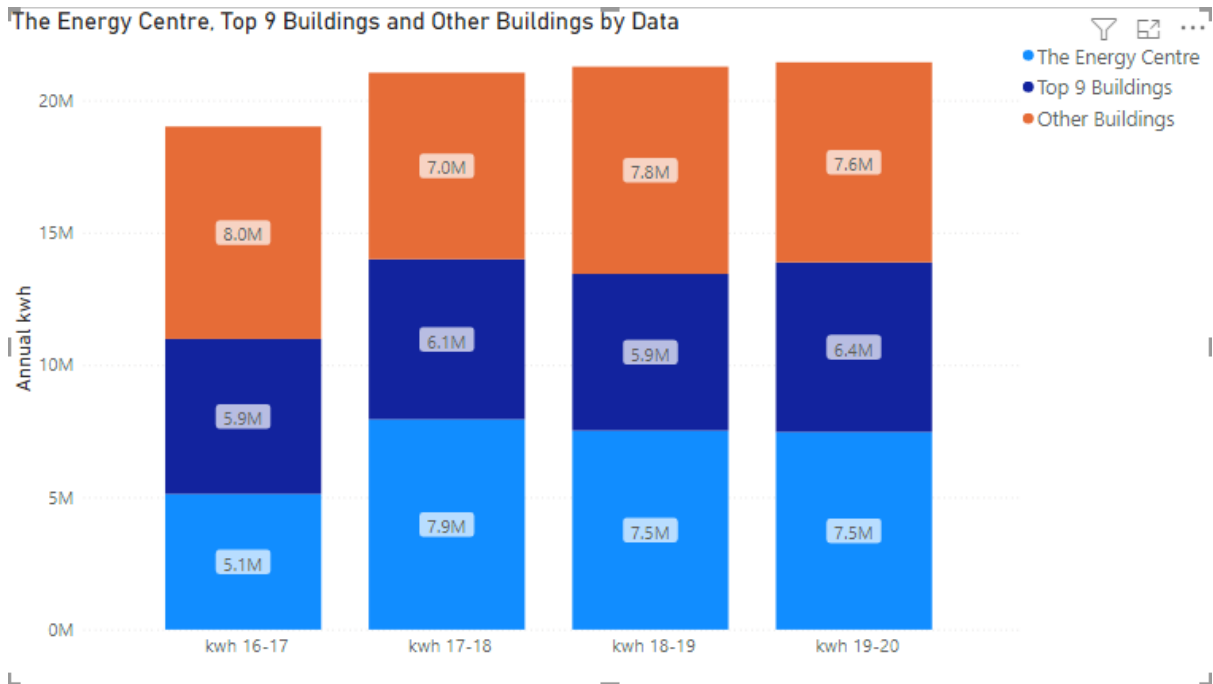


There is considerable variation in the trends of electricity consumption across these top 10 sites over the last four years. Although once grid decarbonisation is taken into account the carbon impact of all these buildings has fallen.



Transition 8 Heating

The Energy Centre at The Works makes up 35% of our gas consumption, the next 9 largest consuming buildings make up another 30% of gas use, and all other buildings the remaining 35%. Unlike the electricity grid there has been no real change in the carbon intensity of the gas grid, so our carbon emissions directly reflect our energy usage. Which has risen 12% over last 4 years.

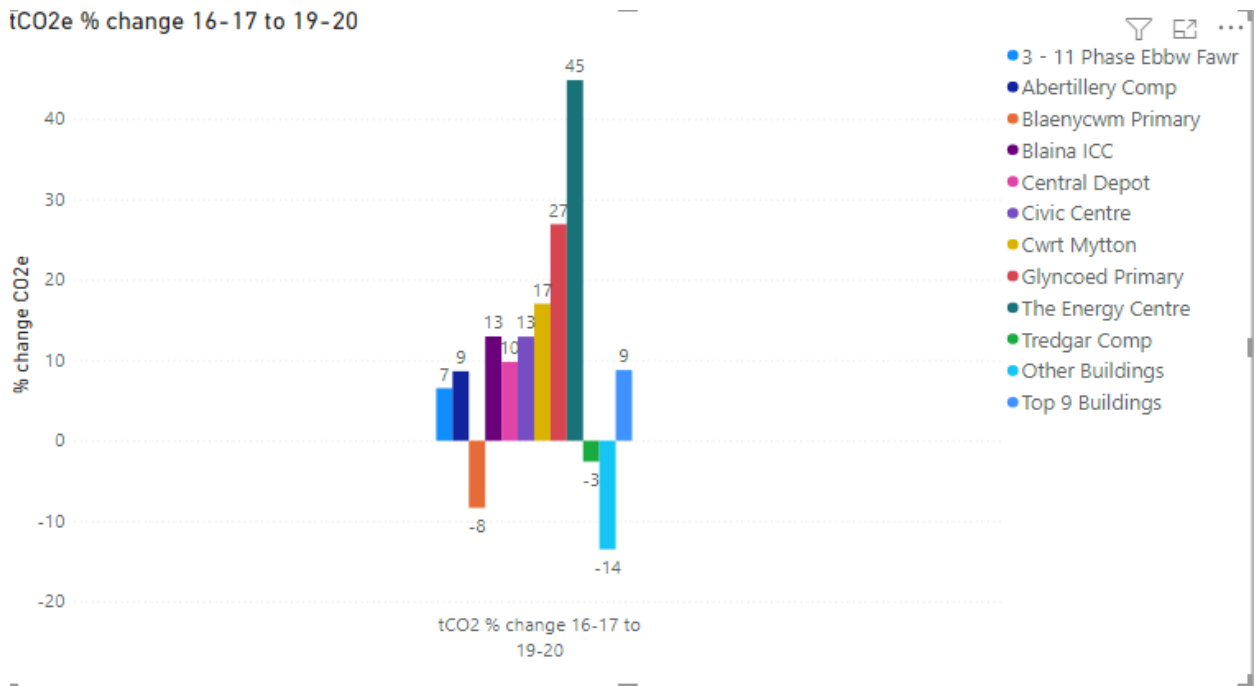


Six buildings appear in the top 10 for both electricity and gas: Energy Centre, Civic Centre, Ebbw Fawr Primary Campus, Abertillery Comprehensive, Tredegar Comprehensive and Central Depot.



There is considerable variation in change in energy use over last four years, the Energy Centre has driven much of the rise.

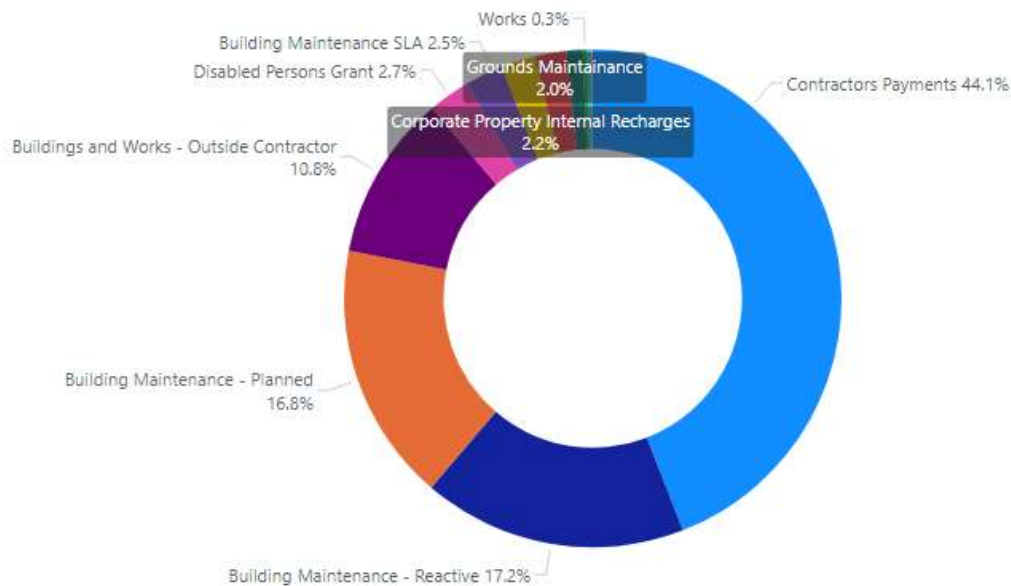
tCO2e % change 16-17 to 19-20



Transition 6 Procurement Works

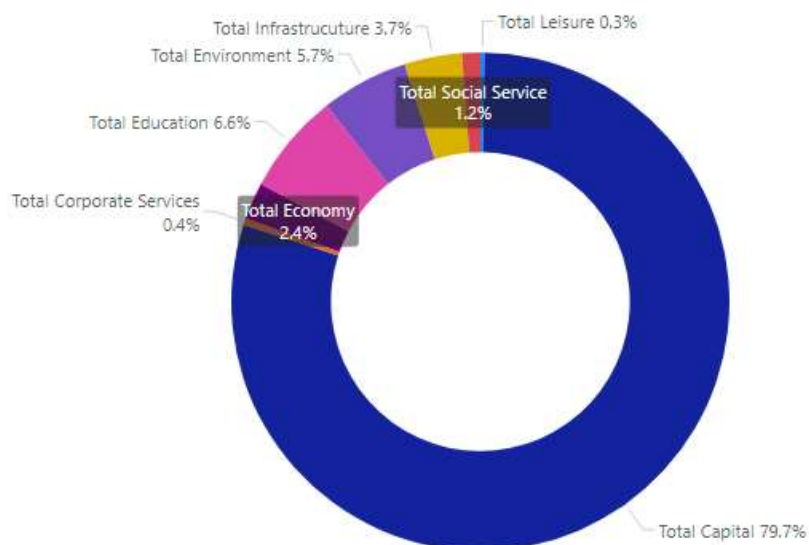
Breakdown of procurement works spending by detail code

Procurement Works by Category



Breakdown of spending by department

Procurement Works By Department



3. Policy Context

Welsh Government Buildings Route map to 2030

Moving up a gear – 2021-2022

- ***Our construction programmes include mandatory net zero objectives.***
- ***Develop plan for hard to decarbonise building types***
- ***Scoping for Low Carbon Heat pilot projects and significant progress on remaining energy efficiency opportunities.***

Well on our way – 2022 – 2026

- ***Transition to all new schools, colleges and offices built to net zero (and associated reduction in supply chain impacts).***
- ***All remaining existing buildings will be highly energy efficient OR scheduled for replacement & renewable heat schemes will be rolled out.***
 - Develop and deliver a strategic plan for the **local authority estate** decarbonising existing (retained) buildings, moving to renewable energy sources for electricity and heating, and ensuring any new build is to net zero standards (in construction and operation)
- Ystadau Cymru as strategic lead for the public sector will work with LA estate managers to identify and shape what the estate will look like longer term (following recovery from the pandemic) ensuring decarbonisation is at the forefront of this agenda, and help drive the next three commitments:
 - Develop a strategic plan for **hard to decarbonise building** types within 18 months
 - All public buildings are supplied with **low carbon heat** by 2030 and generate their own electricity where feasible.

- All **new** [*new build and new acquisitions, e.g. hubs and lease arrangements*] public sector buildings are **built to net zero standard**, including supply chain impacts. (net zero build and net zero operation)
- Work with the 21st Century schools programme to establish and address cost differential and barriers to building net zero/carbon positive schools [note there will be a separate 21st Century Schools programme contribution in the NZW]
- Plan ahead for a coordinated programme of boiler replacement in council-owned properties
- Work with colleges to develop a ‘pipeline’ of skilled workers, through apprenticeships and training, to support LA retrofit work.

‘Achieving our goal’ 2026-2030

- ***All new public sector buildings are built to net zero standard, including supply chain impacts***
- ***All public buildings are supplied with low carbon heat by 2030 and generate their own electricity where feasible***
- ***The focus is no longer on buildings but healthy environments to live, work and visit.***

Heating

- Welsh Government Targets
 - No new fossil-fuel boilers: No new gas boilers installed in public buildings from 2030. No new oil boilers in 2025/26. From 2028 onwards, no new fossil-fuel boilers should be installed in off-gas grid areas.
 - Existing district heating networks will switch to low-carbon sources (electric heat pumps/hydrogen) in the 2030s. Heat networks will be developed in areas of dense heat demand, cities and towns.
 - A significant increase in installed energy efficiency measures: By 2028 public buildings and social rented homes need to achieve EPC C rating where practical and affordable.
 - Specify high standards for new buildings on the council’s own land. Local authorities can require that new homes or commercial buildings are built to Passivhaus or equivalent low emissions standards, or BREEAM Excellent.
- UK Climate Change Commission Advice
 - Waiting for hydrogen / gas grid decarbonisation is not acceptable in the context of a net zero public sector by 2030. Renewable energy is more efficiently used to generate heat by a heat pump than through hydrogen generation and there is uncertainty if existing gas grid infrastructure could be used for hydrogen distribution.
 - Fossil fuel CHP – no new units, no replacement of failed, and no major maintenance spend. Fossil fuel CHP plants are shown to increase emissions as the electricity grid decarbonises, and even now more carbon intensive than a gas boiler.
 - Whole System Optimised Retrofit. Although higher temperature heat pumps and hybrid solutions are available; the operational costs, electrical requirements, and carbon emissions will be reduced by lowering building temperature and heat demand first. This can be achieved by first considering fabric upgrades which also provide the benefits of building comfort improvements.

Electricity

- UK Climate Change Commission Advice
 - Most forms of procurement do not actually lead to increased renewable electricity generation within the wider UK system (considered as 'additionality'), as the majority of renewable electricity being purchased either already exists or is being supported through Government mechanisms including Contracts for Difference. Alternative is the long-term contractual nature of the PPA compared to green tariffs. As building renewable infrastructure is very capital intensive, a long-term contract will give developers long-term revenue certainty which in turn provides them with bankability.

WG Net Zero Wales Proposed LA Commitments

Buildings
<p>Commitment # - Develop and deliver a strategic plan for the local authority estate decarbonising existing (retained) buildings including retained council housing, moving to renewable energy sources for electricity and heating, and ensuring any new build is to net zero standards (in construction and operation)</p>
<p>Commitment # - Ystadau Cymru as strategic lead for the public sector will work with LA estate managers to identify and shape what the estate will look like longer term (following recovery from the pandemic) ensuring decarbonisation is at the forefront of this agenda, and help drive the next three commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategic plan for decarbonising buildings by the end of 2023 • All public buildings are supplied with low carbon heat by 2030 and generate their own electricity where feasible. • All new [<i>new build and new acquisitions, e.g. hubs and lease arrangements</i>] public sector buildings are built to net zero standard, including supply chain impacts as soon as practicable/dates to be confirmed as part of strategic plan. (net zero build and net zero operation)
<p>Commitment # - Work with the 21st Century schools programme to establish and address cost differential and barriers to building net zero/carbon positive schools [note assuming a a separate 21st C Schools programme contribution in the NZW – this could come out?]</p>
<p>Commitment # - Plan ahead for a coordinated programme of boiler replacement in council-owned properties</p>
<p>Commitment # - Work with colleges to develop a 'pipeline' of skilled workers, through apprenticeships and training, to support LA retrofit work.</p>

LG Decarbonisation Strategy Panel (DSP)

Proposed actions/commitments from DSP Buildings deep dive -

Note this is a working living document. Allocated leads and dates are indicative only and are being discussed and developed with the relevant networks as well as feeding into planning for the WLGA support programme and with the DSP.

No.	Proposed Action/Commitment	Lead?	E V
	TIERS - not yet determined		

1	Help and support LAs, collaboratively and with the wider Welsh Public Sector review their current office estate from a staff point of view (given the majority are still working remotely)	Ystadau Cymru / LAs
2	Identify and shape what the estate will look like longer term (following recovery from the Pandemic) - ensure decarbonisation is at the forefront of this agenda	Ystadau Cymru / LAs
3	Recommend that if a building is still in place by 2025 and therefore secure for the short-term, that activity such as PV / LED lighting should progress and meet any target (e.g. all sites held in 2025 will be fully LED lit).	Ystadau Cymru / LAs
4	Share knowledge between estate managers on decarbonisation	Ystadau Cymru / LAs
5	Develop a decarb skills and training framework for estate managers.	Ystadau Cymru / LAs
6	Build up a bank of decarb estate case studies (change of use etc.)	Ystadau Cymru / LAs
7	Identify and gain a strong LA Chief Exec mandate for the described YC work to be undertaken.	Everyone
8	Provide a template report and guidance for LAs to map their current estates and enable them to have a good understanding of the climate impacts of their built estate by the end of the year.	WG / WLGA
9	Identify and align with an industry best practice standard and update and communicate this as it evolves. Communicate to LAs what "good" looks like – what is the standard LAs should be aiming for?	WG
10	Communicate a proposed Net Zero definition for buildings.	WG / WLGA
11	Create one demonstrator Project in each Region. These can be learned from. Risks can be taken. Engage with CLAW group - try and identify what the cost of change is going to be.	Everyone
12	A joint approach is needed on the grid capacity and distribution issues for the whole of the Welsh Public Sector.	WG / UKG
13	Investigate the merits of and potential ways an aggregated net zero building target could be identified and implemented across Regions as opposed to an individual buildings net zero target.	WG / UKG
14	Consider ways to build on the Refit programme and make an offer of energy service expertise to LAs.	WG
15	Brief Ministers' of carbon emission effects of office buildings and the wider estate to highlight its importance.	WG
16	Support Ystadau Cymru to coordinate review of current estate.	WG
17	Highlight Ystadau Cymru work; effective joint working between LAs and an effective delivery mechanism such as the WG Energy Service in a business case to ministers requesting funding for energy changes of offices.	WG
18	Continue to undertake formal review of the grid with operators.	WG
19	Set up a 21st schools LA decarb group? Or LAs engage in one of Neal O'Leary's current working groups. - A net zero school group.	Everyone

20	Build net zero construction objectives into construction programmes.	LAs
21	Provide guidance on appropriate and achievable net zero objectives for LAs to build into construction programmes.	WG / WLGA
22	Identify 5 big things in this area that we could be procuring together as a LA - or as a public sector	WLGA / LAs
23	Develop a plan for hard to decarbonise buildings within their estate, using advice and support from WGES or similar services.	LAs
24	Provide a list of 'easy wins' what should be achieved quickly by the end of the year.	WG / WLGA / WGES
25	Scope potential regional and possible collaborative low carbon heat projects.	WLGA / LAs
26	Organise an extraordinary Strategy Panel to focus on housing and decarbonisation.	WG / WLGA
27	Share research and knowledge on decarbonising listed or historic buildings e.g. work being done by CADW and the National Trust.	WG / WLGA

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Agenda Item 23

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 02.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **Wednesday 15th December 2021**
Report Subject: **Management of Pupil Places and the School Estate 2020/21**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Joanne Collins, Executive Member Education**
Report Submitted by: **Corporate Director of Education – Lynn Phillips
Service Manager Education Transformation and
Business Change – Claire Gardner**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
4.11.21	4.11.21	30.11.21			30.11.21	15.12.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to provide the Executive Committee with an overview of the management of pupil places and the school estate, throughout the 2020/21 academic session.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Capacity calculations were determined for all Blaenau Gwent schools in November 2020, which informed the final admission numbers published within the Blaenau Gwent School Admissions Policy 2022/2023.
- 2.2 The Education Transformation team review pupil projections including surplus and sufficiency issues throughout the school estate twice per/annum. Projections are undertaken for primary schools for a 5-year period and a 7-year period for secondary schools.
- 2.3 Pupil projection accuracy remains consistently high with 99% of secondary and 98% of primary projections in January 2021, confirmed to be accurate in September 2021.
- 2.4 Surplus places within the primary sector has increased to 14% in January 2021, when compared to 13% in Jan 2020, however, we remain within our target, which is 15%. The increase is attributable to more pupils leaving primary school (Year 6) at the end of the 19/20 academic year than pupils starting primary school (Reception) in 20/21. This is consistent with pupil progressions expected in line with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board live birth data.
- 2.5 There was, however, an increase in year 6 transition to secondary, which has resulted in a decrease in surplus places across the secondary sector with the percentage going from 16% in Jan 2020 to 15% in Jan 2021 (i.e. more pupils started in Year 7 than pupils leaving in Year 11). The table/graph in **Appendix 1**, demonstrates a positive position throughout the school estate, which for secondary is the lowest it has been throughout the

last 9 years. It is important to maintain a level of surplus to accommodate potential growth, along with reconfiguration of the learning environment.

- 2.6 Surplus places in both the primary and secondary sector are projected to decrease further over the next 2 years, taking the primary percentage to 12% and secondary to 10% by the 2023/24 academic session, with the overall combined status falling from 15% in Jan 2021 to 11% in 2024.
- 2.7 The School Organisation Policy (2020) sets a target of reducing surplus places to 15% across the County Borough. The primary sector is projected to remain under 15% over the next 3 years, with a slight increase to 16% expected in 2025/26, in line with a birth rate decline. The secondary sector is set to continue reduce to under 15% over the 5 years.
- 2.8 For 2019/20 the Education Transformation team targeted the following schools whereby the percentage was 15% or over, in line with the delivery of surplus place reduction action plans during the 2020/21 academic session:
- Coed y Garn Primary School - reduced admission number from 246, (which equates to 21% surplus places) to 210 (7% surplus places)
 - Ebbw Fawr Primary Campus reduced from 324 (25% surplus places) to 284 (12% surplus places)
- 2.9 The Education Transformation team's strategy for the 2021/22 academic session, is to work on the development of surplus place reduction action plans with the following schools, who are projected (as at January 2021) to have over 15% surplus between 2022/23 and 2023/24:
- Abertillery Learning Community Primary Campuses – amber category (19% - 17%)
 - Ebbw Fawr Learning Community Primary Campus – amber category (17%- 24%)
 - Glanhowy Primary School – amber category (18% - 19%)
- 2.10 There are, however, a number of our smaller schools i.e. those with 210 places and under, who we will work with to monitor the surplus and explore temporary self-help initiatives – where possible. The surplus in these schools needs to remain higher, to enable pupil population growth in line with live birth rate fluctuations, also due to the fact that a reduction in the admission number would negatively affect configuration of the teaching and learning environment and staffing levels:
- St Illtyd's Primary School (210 places)
 - Coed y Garn Primary School (210 places)
 - St Mary's R.C. Primary School (210 places)
 - Cwm Primary Schools (210 places)
 - Rhos y Fedwen Primary School (177 places)
- 2.11 Live birth rates have fluctuated over the last ten years, with a downward trend noted between 2012 and 2017 (Please refer to **Appendix 2** for more information). The Council are yet to receive the 2020/21 data from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. Migration into Blaenau Gwent between

September 2020 and August 2021 increased with 150 pupils. 52 of which were primary pupils and 98 secondary pupils. There are a number of schools which are projected to have sufficiency issues between 2021 and 2025 as follows:

- Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg
- Abertillery Learning Community Secondary Campus
- Tredegar Comprehensive School

2.12 All 3 of the above, can and will be addressed via the annual capacity assessment, along with planned physical works which are programmed to take place over the course of the next 2 academic sessions.

2.13 In addition to the above, Ebbw Fawr Learning Community Secondary Phase, are experiencing accommodation issues aligned to configuration of the teaching and learning environment. Every space/room is being used and there is no surplus to accommodate additionally should pupil numbers grow. Therefore, a modelling exercise and growth plan are currently under development, which will seek identify options and implications associated with growth.

2.14 **All Wales Position**

The latest dataset available is the January 2019 surplus place overview for Wales (please refer to **Appendix 3** for more information). Blaenau Gwent's position was as follows:

- 13th (out of 22 Local Authorities) for primary;
- 10th (out of 22) for secondary; and,
- 11th (out of 22 Local Authorities) in terms of the combined primary and secondary position.

2.15 The Council are presently awaiting the Family of Local Authority and All Wales comparative data sets for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic sessions.

2.16 **Management of the School Estate Maintenance, Repair and Planned Works**

The Division of Responsibilities Guidance and associated procedure (Please refer to **Appendix 4**), were successfully implemented during the 2020/21 academic sessions. 433 TE100's were received between September 2020 and August 2021, 100% of which were acknowledged and received a response within 48 hours of receipt. 313 (72%) have been reported as being completed to date. All unresolved works are programmed for delivery and will be resolved by the end of the summer-term 2022, and priorities in accordingly i.e. in line with Health and Safety and operational risk levels. Delays in resolving this issues are attributable to the following:

- Market forces including material availability
- Access to school buildings in line with the schools individual COVID Secure Risk Assessments
- Programming and time constraints due to the size/scale of works and in order to minimise the potential for disruption

- Budgetary constraints and cost implications
- Securing contractors to undertake the required work
- The capacity of Technical Services to assess the extent of repair/maintenance work

2.17 **Health and Safety and Fire Risk Assessment**

In line with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005; the Council has a duty to monitor compliance and manage health and safety and fire risk assessment related matters in schools and education buildings.

2.18 The data below details Health & Safety and Fire Risk Assessment developments and actions undertaken throughout the 2020/21 academic session the following inspections were carried out:

- 1 Health & Safety Inspection and Fire Risk Assessment was carried out during the Autumn-term, 11 actions were identified, 7 (64%) of which have been completed.
- 2 Health & Safety Inspections and Fire Risk Assessment were carried out during the Spring-term, 22 actions were identified, 17 (77%) of which have been completed.

2.19 Actions are prioritised and monitored on a monthly basis by the Education Health and Safety Forum. Outstanding actions are programmed for resolution by the end of the summer-term 2022. In addition to the above, **Appendix 5** details the school estate Summer works programme for 2021, with 18 schools having works completed in line with their Facilities Action Plans.

2.20 **Condition and Suitability**

The 2019/20 position for school building condition and suitability demonstrated continued improvement, in line with:

- The TE100 process
- Health and Safety and FRA action monitoring and implementation
- Planned Works and Structural Maintenance Programmes
- The Minor Works Programme
- 21st Century Schools Programme Delivery (along with wider education projects i.e. the ICT Infrastructure and Connectivity Project)

2.21 Condition and suitability assessment criteria range from A (good) - D (bad). Blaenau Gwent has only 1 school categorised as 'D' for condition. **Appendix 6** highlights the latest position in respect of the Blaenau Gwent school estate. There is only one school building categorised as a 'D' (Glyncoed Primary School) within the school estate, which is being address and replaced with a new building under Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

2.22 The 2020/21 assessment is scheduled for completion by December 2021, with the position expected to improve in terms of condition and suitability,

due to the extensive minor works and maintenance programme, along with implementation of the Council's 21st Century Schools Band B Programme.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 The report will be considered by the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee on 30th November 2021, and any feedback will be presented verbally to the Executive Committee.

3.1 **Option 1:** Members considers and accepts the report.

3.2 **Option 2:** Members considers the report and provides comments relating to improvements that can be made to the current monitoring processes.

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

4.1 Education is a priority in the Council's Corporate Plan of which the planning of school places and management of the school estate are essential components. In addition, facilities management contributes to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The Council has a statutory duty and responsibilities in line with the planning of school places and the management school Estate in line with:

- Welsh Government's Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales Guidance (2011)
- Welsh Government School Admission and Admission Appeals Codes (2013)
- Welsh Government School Organisation Code (2013)
- The School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- The Local Authority Financial Scheme Regulations 1998
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

4.2 The planning of school places and management of the school estate seeks to respond to the Council's wellbeing goals for all learners.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

Welsh Government have indicated that there will be a further Schools Capital Maintenance Grant allocated to Local Authorities in 2021/22 financial year. The Council received a Welsh Government Schools Capital Maintenance Grant of £953,544 for the 2020/21 financial year, which alongside the minor works budget, will result in a capital investment of approximately £1,083,544 into the school estate, once all programmed works have been completed.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The Council have a statutory duty to comply with Welsh Government legislation and policy as detailed above. The primary risks and mitigating actions are as follows:

- Sustainability issues within the school estate– this is managed and mitigated against in line with capacity assessments, projections,

condition and suitability reviews, along with the delivery of minor and planned works programmes and school organisation.

- Ineffective distribution of pupil places and/ or insufficient places to meet demand – this managed, mitigated and informed by the capacity assessment process and pupil projections, in conjunction with the admissions process.

5.3 **Legal**

There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Surplus places are set to decrease further to within and below target over the next 5 years (Please refer to **Appendix 7** for pupil projection data as at January 2021).

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

The management of pupil places aims to secure continued access to education places in Blaenau Gwent for current and future pupil populations. The management of the school estate seeks to secure improved condition and suitability of education facilities in line with the creation and management of sustainable education system in Blaenau Gwent.

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

Stakeholders and end user needs and engagement are of paramount importance to the planning of school places and management of the school estate.

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

The planning of pupil places and management of the school estate takes account of short, medium and long-term planning arrangements informing:

- Minor works and maintenance priorities
- 21st Century Schools and School Organisation Priorities
- Capacity plans in line with school admissions

6.5 **Preventative focus**

Management of pupil places and the school estate is focused on early identification and planning, in order to secure a school estate that is fit for purpose that contributes to raising educational standards, which is a Council priority.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

Key management and operational staff across the Council and school estate, are involved in detailed annual reviews of facilities and pupil places i.e. Education, headteachers, Health and Safety, Social Services, Community Services, Planning and Building Control, Environmental Health, Highways and Development etc.

6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

The process is cross-cutting in the sense that it impacts upon Education, Schools, Estates, Planning and Building Control, Community Services, and Social Services etc.; therefore, service area involvement is key to effective implementation.

6.8 **Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions**

Any physical works planned and undertaken within education settings are planned in order to take account of decarbonisation and reducing carbon emissions.

6.9a **Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment**

The report does not involve a strategic decision covered under the act.

6.9b. **Equality Impact Assessment**

EqlA screening and impact assessments are carried out on a case by case basis.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Education review and monitor both the planning of school places and management of school estate processes and outcomes consistently throughout each academic year, incorporating learning from the previous year.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1a and 1b – Surplus Place % Table and Graph	Appendix 2 – Live Birth Data and Graph
Appendix 3 – All Wales Graph	Appendix 4 – Division of responsibilities Guidance
Appendix 5 – Education Summer Works Overview	
Appendix 6 – Condition and Suitability Assessment Overview	Appendix 7 – January 2020 Projections

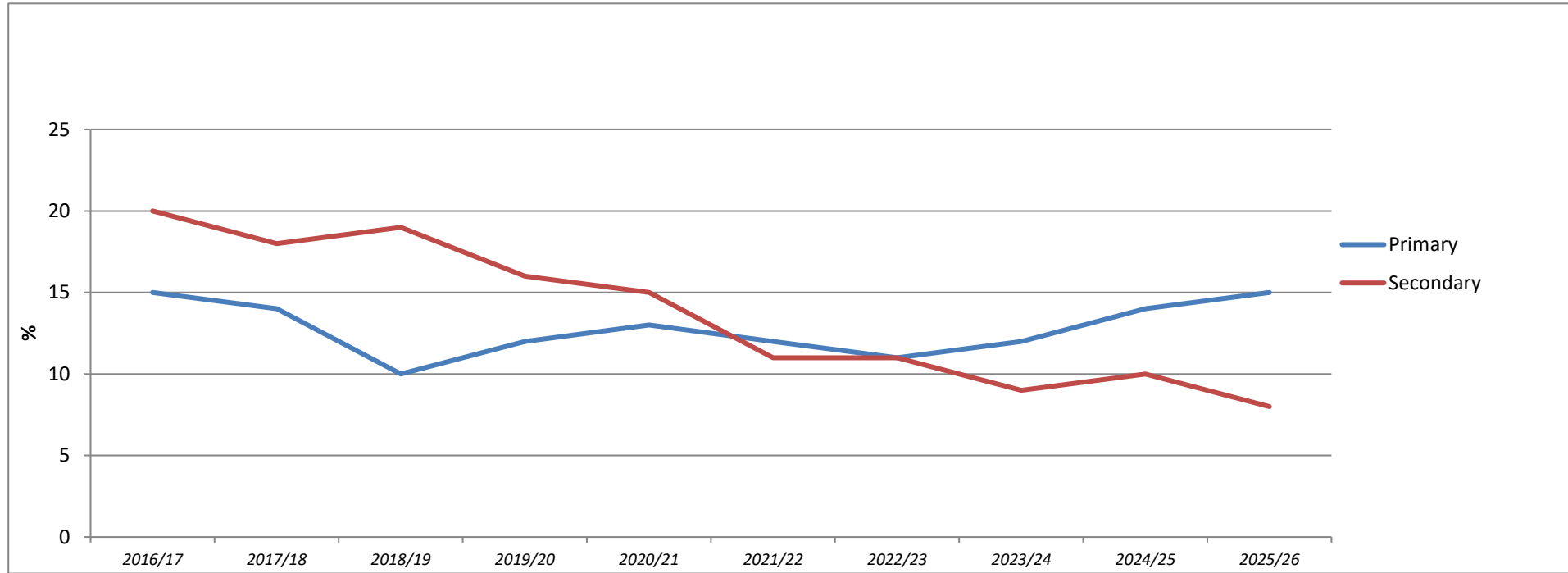
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Appendix 1 Surplus Place % between 2011 and 2020

Year	% Surplus Places –Primary Sector	% Surplus Places Secondary Sector
2011/12	28.7	19
2012/13	28.1	19.7
2013/14	25.9	20.2
2014/15	17.5	18.3
2015/16	18	20
2016/17	16	17
2017/18	14	19
2018/19	11	19
2019/20	13	16
2020/21	12	15

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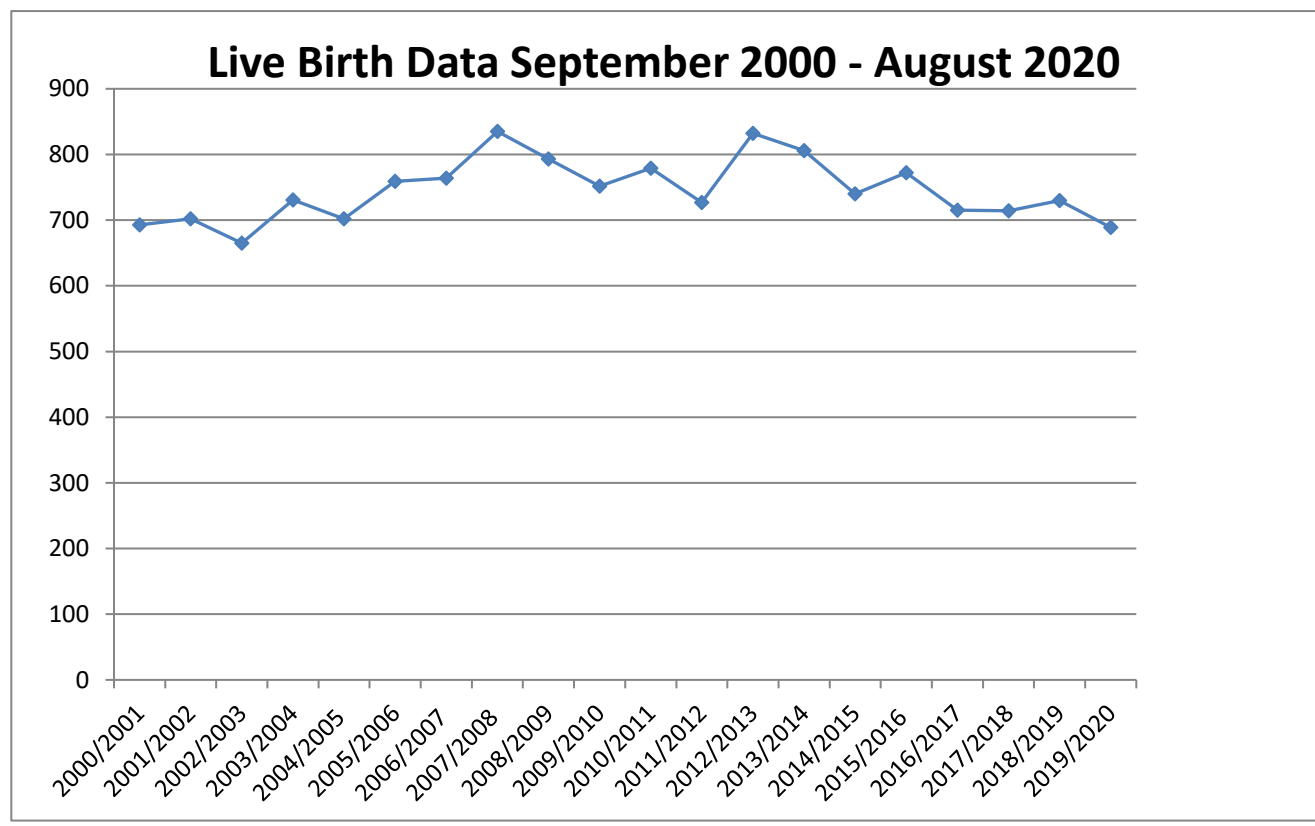
Annual Surplus Places Summary Jan 2021



Year	Primary %	Secondary %	Target %	
Jan				
2016/17	15	20	15	Actuals
2017/18	14	18	15	
2018/19	10	19	15	
2019/20	12	16	15	
2020/21	13	15	15	
2021/22	12	11	15	Projected
2022/23	11	11	15	
2023/24	12	9	15	
2024/25	14	10	15	
2025/26	15	8	15	

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Date	Number
2000/2001	693
2001/2002	702 (Inc Updates)
2002/2003	665 (Inc Updates)
2003/2004	731 (Inc Updates)
2004/2005	702
2005/2006	759
2006/2007	764
2007/2008	835
2008/2009	793
2009/2010	752
2010/2011	779
2011/2012	727
2012/2013	832
2013/2014	806
2014/2015	740
2015/2016	772 inc updates
2016/2017	715 inc updates
2017/2018	714
2018/2019	730
2019/2020	689

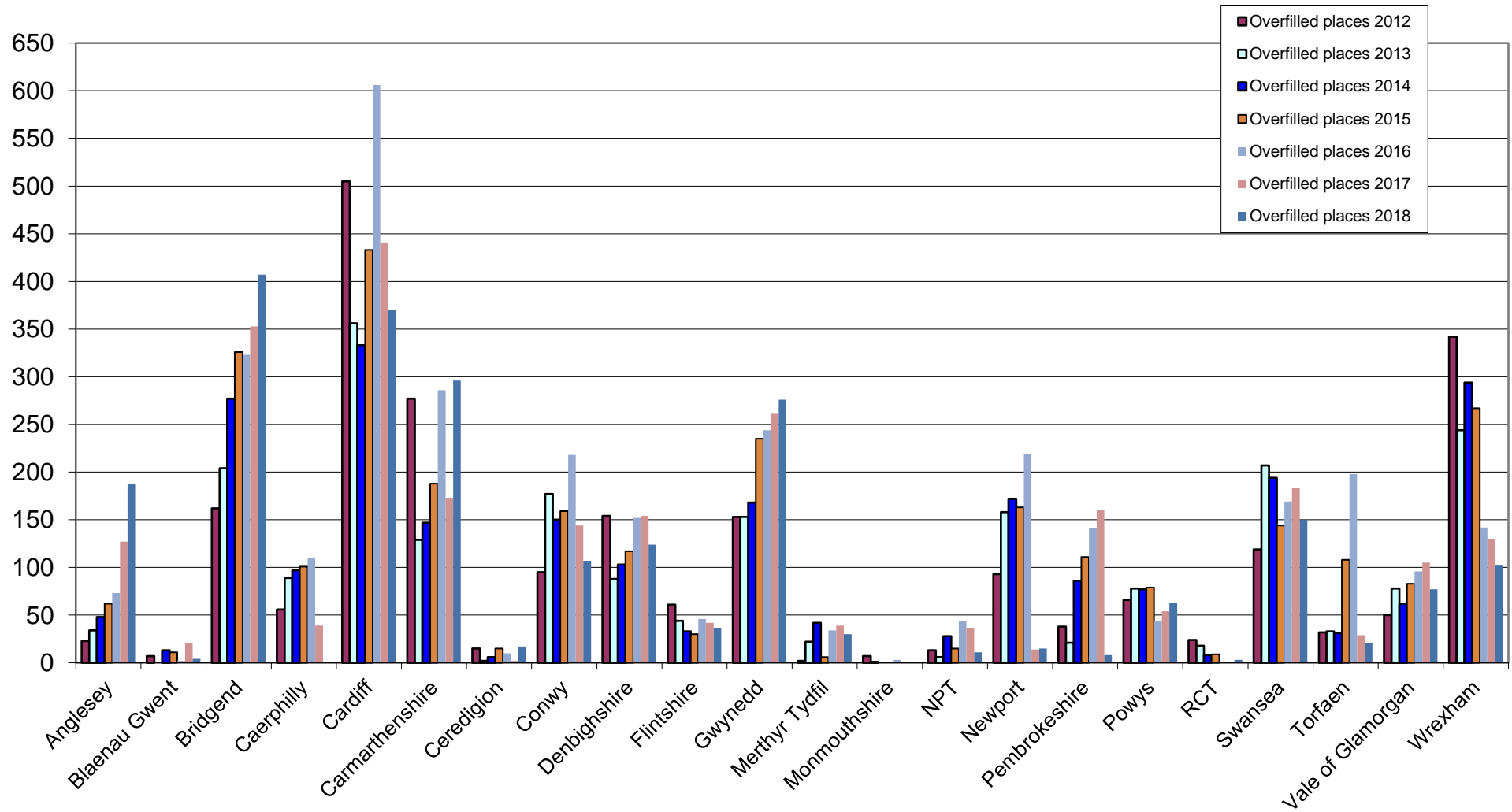


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Number of overfilled Primary Places - January 2012 - 18

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Division of Responsibilities Guidance: Between Blaenau Gwent Community/Faith and Foundation Schools and Council



Version 2.0

Date of Issue: July 2019

Date of Implementation: Sept 2019

Building and Engineering Repairs and Maintenance

The purpose of the following guidance and procedure is to ensure the effective instigation, monitoring and completion of maintenance and repair works to schools by both Education and Technical Services; also, to inform quality monitoring processes.

Maintenance and repair refers to, the action necessary to retain an element of a building in, or to restore it to a state in which it can perform the required function.

The requirement for maintenance shall be not less than that necessary to meet statutory health and safety and current legal requirements. Maintenance shall mean 'maintaining an element in an effective state, safe, in efficient working order and in good repair.'

In carrying out the function of maintenance it is understood that only materials of an equivalent quality and standard will be provided and the work undertaken by competent and suitably qualified persons with all the accompanied qualifications, insurances and Risk and Method statements.

***Self-help approaches** - this involves the use of external parties approached directly via the school to address minor works identified by the headteacher and/or a member of school staff. In instances where this is deemed to be the best approach by the school, Technical Services/Health and Safety and Education approval **must be** sought prior to work being carried out in order to ensure compliance with the Council's policies such as Health and Safety, FRA, Asbestos Management etc. This does not preclude schools from carrying out works that are cost efficient to the school, they do however ensure that Headteachers, Governing Bodies comply with necessary technical and health and safety precautions/requirements prior to the works being undertaken.

Schools must complete an application form in relation to any self-help schemes they want to carry out.

On receipt of the form a decision will be taken by officers within Education/Tech Services and Health and Safety re the nature of the project, its requirements and risks involved and either:

- Agree to the school proceeding with the works themselves providing a risk assessment and the technical specification for the work has been approved by the Health and Safety and Technical Officers of the Council.
- Arrange to meet with the school and for the scheme to be project managed via the Council to ensure that it is undertaken in a legal and safe manner.

It is therefore essential that projects are planned and approval sought well in advance of implementation to avoid delay. The Council must ensure regulatory compliance with the law and that the works are undertaken by a competent person(s)/company.

Substantial - Within this document 'substantial' shall mean where the work/repair/component represents 75% or more of the whole system and/or structure concerned.

Glazing - this item of work is paid through the Glazing programme which schools contribute to annually. If schools do not contribute into the programme any works that fall under the Glazing heading will be the responsibility of the school.

School (SIMS) - this item of work is the responsibility of the individual school to fund.

SIMS* - this item of work is paid through SIMS* which schools contribute to annually. If schools do not contribute into SIMS* any works that fall under the SIMS* heading will be the responsibility of the school.

Corporate Landlord - The cost of this item of work is the responsibility of the Corporate Landlord/Council to meet.

Statutory Testing - please see page 17.

For further information and/or enquires relating to the guidance document please contact:

Education

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Property Services

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Paul Colston: 01495 355532/ 07964 119858

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Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
1	STRUCTURE						
1.1	Foundations (below top of ground floor slab)	✓			✓		
1.2	Ducts and duct covers (internal)		✓			✓	
1.3	Foundations including foundation walls up to d.p.c level – repairs including underpinning work	✓					✓
1.4	Ground Floors i.e. floor slabs, d.p.m's, hard-core filling (under 10m2 in any one area or room)		✓			✓	
1.5	Ground Floors, floor slabs, d.p.m's hard-core filling (over 10m2 in any one area or room)	✓			✓		
1.6	1 Retaining wall and d.p.c (supporting buildings) repair or replacement		✓			✓	
1.7	All Retaining walls and d.p.c's (supporting buildings) repair or replacement	✓					✓
2	EXTERNAL WALLS AND STRUCTURE						
2.1	Structural frame (steel frames, portal frames, reinforced concrete, precast concrete)	✓					✓
2.2	Access ramps and steps to external doorways		✓			✓	
2.3	Chimney stacks including flashings – repairs including repointing		✓			✓	
2.4	External rendering – repair or re-render		✓			✓	
2.5	External rendering – re-render to substantially all of an existing building	✓					✓
2.6	External walls (including cavity ties, cavity walls insulation, wall cladding, copings) repair or rebuild/re-clad		✓			✓	
2.7	External walls (including cavity ties, cavity walls insulation, wall cladding, copings) replacement of all or substantially all to a building	✓					✓
2.8	Internal walls (including cavity ties, cavity walls insulation, wall cladding, copings) repair or rebuild/re-clad		✓			✓	
2.9	Internal walls (including cavity ties, cavity walls insulation, wall cladding, copings) replacement of all or substantially all to a building	✓					✓
2.10	External walls – Demountable – repair and replacement		✓			✓	
2.11	D.P.C's cavity trays – repair or replacement		✓			✓	
2.12	D.P.C's cavity trays – replacement of all or substantially all to building	✓					✓
2.13	Cills and lintels – repairs and individual replacement		✓			✓	
2.14	Cills and lintels – replacement of all or substantially all to a building	✓					✓
2.15	Graffiti/ Moss removal			✓			✓
2.16	Repointing of brickwork		✓			✓	

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
2.17	Repointing of brickwork affecting substantial part of a building	✓					✓
3	EXTERNAL WINDOWS AND DOORS						
3.1	Single glaze, double glazing, seals, putties solar film			✓			✓
3.2	Draught proofing to windows and doors			✓			✓
3.3	Emergency exit and fire escape doors - repairs			✓			✓
3.4	Emergency exit and fire escape doors – replacement	✓					✓
3.5	Automatic roller shutter door servicing including fire shutters	✓					✓
3.6	Automatic doors – service	✓					✓
3.7	Glass upgrading and safety film	✓					✓
3.8	Linings, beads			✓			✓
3.9	Ironmongery i.e. locks, bolts, hinges, door closers, floor springs, panic bolts, handles casement stays, door safety devices etc.			✓			✓
3.10	Replacement Roller shutters to window and external doors		✓			✓	
3.11	Repair Roller shutters to window and external doors			✓			✓
3.12	Secondary glazing		✓			✓	
3.13	Window guard, steel sheet coverings to doors			✓			✓
3.14	Windows, doors and frames including mastic joints – repairs			✓			✓
3.14	Windows, doors, and frames including mastic joints – individual replacement		✓			✓	
3.15	Windows, doors, and frames including mastic joints – replacement of all or substantially all to a building	✓					✓
3.16	Window winding gear (manually or electrically operated)			✓			✓
4	INTERNAL DOORS, PARTITIONS AND WALLS						
4.1	Repair brick, block, studded, chimney breasts and flues (excluding finishes)		✓			✓	
4.2	Replace brick, block, studded, chimney breasts and flues (excluding finishes)		✓			✓	
4.3	Demolition of brick, block, studded, chimney breasts and flues (excluding finishes)		✓			✓	
4.4	Dry rot treatment including irrigation treatment to internal and external walls, re-plastering	✓			✓		
4.5	Repairs frames, architraves, skirting, dados, picture rails etc.			✓			✓
4.6	Substantial repairs frames, architraves, skirting, dados, picture rails etc.		✓			✓	

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
4.7	Replacement of frames, architraves, skirting, dados, picture rails etc.		✓			✓	
4.8	Fire screens, glazed partitions, internal windows			✓			✓
4.9	Fire screens etc. – upgrading to meet statutory notices		✓			✓	
4.10	Repair of Fire shutters (apart from kitchens)	✓			✓		
4.11	Replace of Fire shutters (apart from kitchens)	✓			✓		
4.12	Repair of Fire stops, cavity barriers and fire curtains	✓			✓		
4.13	Replace of Fire stops, cavity barriers and fire curtains	✓			✓		
4.14	Glazing see above*			✓			✓
4.15	Glass upgrading and safety film		✓			✓	
4.16	Internal doors, hinges, floor springs, door closures, locks, bolts, handles, door safety			✓			✓
4.17	Sliding/folding screens			✓		✓	
4.18	Steel sheet coverings to doors (secure stores)		✓			✓	
4.19	Toilet cubicles, shower cubicles, screens		✓			✓	
4.20	Minor alterations to partitions			✓			✓
5	ROOFS						
5.1	Asbestos cement roof cladding – repairs (without removing asbestos sheets)	✓			✓		
5.1.1	Removal of Asbestos sheets	✓			✓		
5.2	Asbestos cement roof cladding – replacement	✓			✓		
5.3	Covered links, veranda's, porches etc. if school have paid for them - rebuild or substantial repair	✓					✓
5.4	Covered links, veranda's, porches etc. if school have paid for them – repairs			✓			✓
5.5	Covered links, veranda's, porches etc. if built as part of the school - rebuild or substantial repair		✓			✓	
5.6	Covered links, veranda's, porches etc. if built as part of the school - rebuild or substantial repair		✓			✓	
5.7	Eaves, fascia's, soffit and barge boarding – repair or replacements		✓			✓	
5.8	Eaves, fascia's, soffit and barge boarding – replacement of all or substantially all to an existing roof/building	✓			✓		
5.9	Repair or replace of flashing, valley gutters or verge fillets			✓			✓
5.10	Flat roof finishes – repair leaks			✓			✓

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
5.11	Flat roof finishes – replacement (to include improving insulation standards)		✓				✓
5.12	Flat roof structure, metal deck and trusses – treat areas of rusted metal deck		✓				✓
5.13	Flat roof structure, reinforced concrete deck, beams – make good areas of spalling concrete where reinforcement exposed	✓					✓
5.14	Flat roof structure, reinforced concrete deck, metal deck and trusses, beams – replacement of all substantially all to an existing roof/building	✓					✓
5.15	Flat roof structure, timber joists and deck (e.g. plywood, wood-wool slab or composite board) repair		✓				✓
5.16	Flat roof structure, timber joists and deck (e.g. plywood, wood-wool slab or composite board) replacement		✓				✓
5.17	Asbestos insulation boards – specialist removal/ replacement of damaged/ disturbed asbestos based materials, planned or emergency	✓			✓		
5.18	Fire stops and barriers	✓				✓	
5.19	Rainwater gutters and downpipes cleaning out and repairs			✓			✓
5.20	Rainwater gutters and down pipes– replacement		✓			✓	
5.21	Rainwater gutters and down pipes replacement of all or substantially all to a building	✓				✓	
5.22	Pitched roof finishes (e.g. slate, tile etc.) repair missing or broken slates/tiles			✓			✓
5.23	Pitched roof finishes (e.g. slate, tile etc.) replacement of all or substantially all to a roof/building	✓					✓
5.24	Pitched roof structure, rafters, trussed rafters, purlins (but not trusses) – repair or replacement of parts of an existing structure		✓				✓
5.25	Pitched roof structure, rafters, trussed rafters, purlins (but not trusses) – replacement of all or substantial part of an existing structure	✓					✓
5.26	Pitched roof structure, steel portal frame, purlins	✓					✓
5.27	Rainwater outlets set in flat roofs, clean out and repair			✓			✓
5.28	Rainwater outlets set in flat roofs – individual replacement		✓			✓	
5.29	Rainwater outlets set in flat roofs – replacement of all or substantially all	✓				✓	

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
5.30	Reflective paint, white stone chippings (i.e. on roof) replacement of all or substantially all		✓				✓
5.31	Ridges, ridge ventilators, soffit ventilators, verges, slate or tile ventilators – repair or replace		✓				✓
5.32	Ridges, ridge ventilators, soffit ventilators, verges, slate or tile ventilators – replacement of all or substantially all to roof	✓					✓
5.33	Roof cladding (e.g. profiled steel sheets, fibre cement sheets, composite roof sheets) – repair or replacement of sheets		✓				✓
5.35	Roof cladding (e.g. profiled steel sheets, fibre cement sheets, composite roof sheets) – replacement of all substantially all to a roof/building	✓					✓
5.36	Roof edge trim, fascia's – repair or replacement of individual lengths		✓				✓
5.37	Roof edge trim, fascia's – replacement of all or substantially all to a roof/building	✓					✓
5.38	Roof screeds, insulation (to flat or pitched roofs) – repair or part replacement on an existing roof		✓				✓
5.39	Roof screeds, insulation (to flat or pitched roofs) – replacement of all or substantially all to a roof/building	✓					✓
5.40	Roof lights – glazing only			✓			✓
5.41	Roof lights (excluding glazing) – repair or replacement of individual roof lights		✓				✓
5.42	Roof lights – replacement of all/substantially all on existing roof	✓					✓
5.43	Snow and gutter boards		✓			✓	
5.44	Tank housings (including kitchen)		✓				✓
5.45	Trusses (not trussed rafters)	✓					✓
6	FLOORS AND STAIRCASES						
6.1	Fire escapes staircases (external not enclosed) – repair	✓				✓	
6.2	Fire escapes staircases (external not enclosed) - replacement	✓				✓	
6.3	Staircases, handrails and balustrades – repair change to school			✓			✓
6.4	Staircases, handrails and balustrades - replacement	✓					✓
6.5	Suspended floors (structure) – repair or replacement of (i.e. joists and floor boards or individual beams)		✓			✓	
6.6	Suspended floors (structure) – replacement of all or substantially all of structure	✓			✓		
6.7	Floor Screeds - repair		✓			✓	
6.8	Floor screeds – substantial replacement to floors	✓			✓		

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
7	SUSPENDED CEILINGS						
7.1	Asbestos insulating boards – Inspection/air testing, applying sealant coats to asbestos surfaces for protection	✓			✓		
7.2	Insulation		✓			✓	
7.3	Structure (i.e. grid, suspension system and tiles etc..) repairs		✓				✓
7.4	Structure (i.e. grid, suspension system and tiles etc..) substantial renewal	✓				✓	
8	INTERNAL FINISHES FLOORS						
8.1	Flooring bonded to screed including tiles/carpets (non asbestos)			✓		✓	
8.2	Removal of asbestos tile and bonding	✓			✓		
8.3	Door mats, loose and fitted carpets, carpet tiles			✓		✓	
8.4	Mat wells, nosings, cover and expansion strips			✓		✓	
8.5	Woodstrip, wood block, Granwood block, quarry or ceramic tiles including screed bed, grano/terrazzo – repair floors		✓			✓	
8.6	Woodstrip, wood block, Granwood block, quarry or ceramic tiles including screed bed, grano/terrazzo – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
9	INTERNAL FINISHES – WALLS						
9.1	Plaster, dry lining, artex, covings etc.			✓		✓	
9.2	Skirting's, dado rails			✓		✓	
9.3	Wall tiles, terrazzo etc.			✓		✓	
9.4	Wood strip panelling		✓			✓	
10	INTERNAL FINISHES – NON SUSPENDED CEILINGS						
10.1	Asbestolux	✓			✓		
10.2	Fibreboard, supalux etc.			✓		✓	
10.3	Hardwood or softwood strip panelling			✓		✓	
10.4	Plaster or plasterboard			✓		✓	
10.5	Upgrading of fire rating	✓			✓		
10.6	removal of artex ceilings	✓			✓		
10.7	Finish to ceilings (e.g. acoustic tile, plasterboard) including access panel	✓			✓		
11	ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS						
11.1	Enabling work for cabling for IT networking (Council funded)	✓			✓		
11.2	Class change systems repair			✓			✓

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
11.3	Substantial Repair of Class change systems (if installed through CL)		✓			✓	
11.4	Drama and stage lighting (for school purposes)			✓			✓
	Installation of Drama and stage lighting		✓			✓	
11.5	Drama and stage lighting (for school purposes only) - inspection and testing (statutory)	✓			✓		
11.6	Earth bonding to meet regulations following repair or inspection		✓			✓	
11.7	Earth bonding to meet regulations following repair or inspection – substantial repairs (other than work not done in accordance with guidelines)	✓			✓		
11.8	Minor electrical work to mobile classroom (LA owned)		✓			✓	
11.9	Electrical installation – replacement of substantial element of obsolete or dangerous installation	✓			✓		
11.10	Emergency lighting repair/replace			✓			✓
11.11	Emergency lighting - substantial replacement	✓			✓		
11.12	External lighting fixed to external walls (limited installation up to 5 lights)			✓			✓
11.13	Extractor fans, in external walls or on roof (excluding kitchen)		✓			✓	
11.14	Extractor fans – internal			✓			✓
11.15	Fire alarms system (including panels, break glass, smoke detectors etc..) –repairs and replacement of parts (excluding main panel)			✓			✓
11.16	Fire alarm systems – monitoring (excluding service provider charges), inspection and service		✓	✓		✓	✓
11.17	Fire alarm systems – total replacement of system or replacement of main panel	✓			✓		
11.18	Fuses, M.C.B's, R.C.D's final distribution of power and lighting circuits including switches – , repairs and replacement			✓			✓
11.19	Internal lighting, light fittings – repairs and maintenance, replacement			✓			✓
11.20	Internal lighting, light fittings – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
11.21	Light fittings – cleaning, replacement of starters, diffusers, lamps and shades			✓			✓
11.22	Lightning conductors – repairs/replacement		✓			✓	
11.23	Lightning conductors – inspection and testing	✓			✓		
11.24	Main switchgear including distribution boards – replacement	✓			✓		
11.25	Main switchgear including distribution boards – repair		✓			✓	
11.26	Portable electrical appliances – annual testing and repairs/replacement of			✓			✓

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
11.25	Repair/replacement of Portable fans			✓			✓
11.26	Power points and sockets including low voltage – repairs and replacement			✓			✓
11.27	Power sockets on wall benches and computer worktops			✓			✓
11.28	Public address and sound amplification systems repair			✓			✓
11.29	Public address and sound amplification systems if installed by CL substantial replacement		✓			✓	
11.30	Radio/TV aerials cabling and sockets			✓			✓
11.31	Remedial works – repair/replacement following electrical inspections/testing			✓			✓
11.32	Sub-mains, sections boards, three phase switch gear including distribution boards – repair/replacement	✓			✓		
11.33	Switchgear from incoming substation to electrical switchgear – repair/replace/maintain	✓			✓		
11.34	Telephone installation and associated trunking			✓			✓
11.35	Water heaters (electrical) – repairs			✓			✓
11.36	Water heaters (electrical) – replacement		✓			✓	
12	PHOTO VOLTAIC (PV)						
12.1	Renewable Energy/systems						
12.2	Photo Voltaic(PV) system Maintenance			✓			✓
12.3	Photo Voltaic(PV) system Repair			✓			✓
12.4	Photo Voltaic(PV) system inverter Replacement	50%		50%	50%		50%
12.5	Photo Voltaic(PV) system panel replacement up to 6			✓			✓
12.6	Photo Voltaic(PV) system panel replacement over 6		✓			✓	
12.7	Photo Voltaic(PV) system Substantial Replacement	✓			✓		
12.8	Solar Hot water system maintenance			✓			✓
12.9	Solar Hot water system Substantial Replacement	✓			✓		
12.10	Biomass Boiler repair/maintenance			✓			✓
12.11	Biomass Boiler new installation	✓			✓		
12.12	Biomass Boiler substantial replacement/repair		✓			✓	
12.13	Ground/Air source heat pump new installation	✓			✓		
12.14	Ground/Air source heat pump Repair/Maintenance			✓			✓
12.15	Ground/Air source heat pump substantial replacement/repair		✓			✓	

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
13	MECHANICAL SERVICES INCLUDING HEATING						
13.1	Asbestos based heating and D.H.W installation lagging – replacement, testing or monitoring	✓			✓		
13.2	Monthly domestic hot water statutory testing (legionella's)	✓			✓		
13.3	Fixed electric or gas heaters – replacement		✓			✓	
13.4	Freestanding flues non asbestos – repairs		✓			✓	
13.5	Freestanding flues asbestos – removal	✓			✓		
13.6	Freestanding flues – inspection and substantial replacement non asbestos		✓			✓	
13.7	Freestanding flues – inspection and substantial replacement asbestos	✓				✓	
13.8	Heat emitters (radiators, natural and fan convectors etc..) filters of single thermostats, controls and motors – cleaning, repairs and replacement			✓			✓
13.9	Heat emitters – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
13.10	Combined heat and power units – replacement	✓			✓		
13.11	Combined heat and power units maintenance/repairs			✓			✓
13.12	Heating boilers, direct gas fired hot water boilers, burners, plate heat exchangers, pumps and flues – repairs and maintenance including replacing pumps		✓			✓	
13.13	Heating pipework including valves, isolation valves, insulation and automatic air vents – repair/replacement of single units			✓			✓
13.14	Heating pipework including valves, isolation valves, insulation and automatic air vents – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
13.15	Laboratory equipment taps, valves, heat treatment equipment – repairs/replacement			✓			✓
13.16	Gas pipework, distribution valves – repairs and maintenance		✓			✓	
13.17	Pressure vessels – testing and repair statutory			✓			✓
13.18	Pressure vessels – renewal	✓			✓		
13.19	Protective guards to controls and flue outlets – repair and maintenance			✓			✓
13.20	Repairs following statutory inspection and servicing of all mechanical and Electrical services			✓			✓
13.21	Automatic gas isolation and gas detection equipment servicing	✓			✓		
13.22	Repairs following statutory gas safety tests			✓			✓
13.23	Thermostatic radiator valves, motorised valves – repairs/replacement			✓			✓
13.24	Hydrotherapy pools – service and inspection	✓			✓		
13.25	Hydrotherapy pools – equipment repair and renewal		✓			✓	

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
14	VENTILATION						
14.1	Air handling units – replacement	✓			✓		
14.2	Air handling units (mechanical, electrical services and controls) repairs and maintenance		✓			✓	
14.3	Fan speed controllers – repair and replacement		✓			✓	
14.4	Induced draft and extract fans – repair/replacement and cleaning		✓			✓	
14.5	Ventilation grilles, ductwork and canopies (excluding kitchens) cleaning		✓			✓	
14.6	Ventilation grilles, ductwork and canopies (excluding kitchens) – repair/replacement	✓			✓		
14.7	Ventilation fans and ducting for dust and fume extraction – repairs, replacement and cleaning			✓			✓
14.8	Dust and extract systems – inspection statutory	✓			✓		
14.9	Air conditioning – repairs and maintenance			✓ x			✓
14.10	Air conditioning – replacement if installed by CL	✓			✓		
14.11	Air conditioning – service and inspection Statutory			✓			✓
15	HEATING AND VENTILATION – CONTROLS						
15.1	Building energy management systems – remote monitoring and remote adjustments (where they exist)	✓			✓		
15.2	Heating controls/Sensors/Actuator etc.. – repair/replacement and calibration			✓			✓
15.3	Heating control systems – full replacement	✓			✓		
15.4	Energy saving measures/projects assessed on an individual basis			✓			✓
15.5	Monitoring of energy use – oil fuel, water, electric and gas consumptions excluding on site readings	✓			✓		
15.6	Time controllers, optimisers and weather compensators – repair/replacement and adjustment of individual items			✓			✓
16	BUILDING FITTINGS AND EQUIPMENT						
16.1	Fire extinguishers, blankets etc.. – repair, recharge and replacement		✓			✓	
16.2	Fire extinguishers, blankets etc.. – annual servicing and inspection statutory	✓			✓		
16.3	Hose reels – repair and replacement	✓			✓		
16.4	Hose reels – annual servicing and inspection	✓			✓		

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
16.5	Fixed fume cupboards and associated extract flues – statutory inspection and repair			✓			✓
16.6	Fixed fume cupboards and associated flues – initial inspection complete replacement	✓			✓		
16.7	Fixed and portable stages – repair and replacement			✓			✓
17	SANITARY FITTINGS, APPLIANCES, LABORATORY FITTINGS (including connections to services and wastes together with all above ground drainage)						
17.1	All sanitary appliances, wc pans and cisterns, urinals, sinks, basins, shower trays, inc cubicles, cleaning, caretaker's sink and sink units			✓			✓
17.2	Drinking fountain Repairs/Renewal			✓			✓
17.3	Incinerators		✓			✓	
17.4	Laboratory and classroom/workshop sinks repairs and replacement			✓			✓
18	GAS AND WATER SERVICES						
18.1	Gas services and connections to equipment – repair or replacement (to include repairing gas leaks)		✓			✓	
18.2	Hot and cold water services and connections to sanitary fittings (from incoming stop valve including services between buildings)			✓			✓
18.3	Isolating valves, regulating valves etc..			✓			✓
18.4	Thermostatic mixing valves – repairs/renewals			✓			✓
18.5	Thermostatic mixing valves – servicing/cleaning	✓			✓		
18.6	Water risk assessments (control of legionella)	✓			✓		
18.7	Repair following legionella inspection			✓			✓
18.8	Water sprinkler system Repairs (i.e. fire)	✓		✓	✓		✓
18.9	Water storage tanks – cleaning and disinfection	✓			✓		
18.10	Water storage tanks and calorifiers – repairs including replacement of ball valves		✓			✓	
18.11	Water storage tanks and calorifiers - replacement	✓			✓		
19	EXTERNAL REPAINTING/INTERNAL REDECORATION						
19.1	External repainting complete including fences and outbuildings Should not be here			✓			✓
19.2	Internal repainting including varnishing, sprayed finishes, fire retardant coatings Should not be here			✓			✓
19.3	Murals painted insignia and other art work, playground markings Should not be here			✓			✓

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
19.4	Wallpapering or other applied finishes Should not be here			✓			✓
20	DRAINAGE FROM SCHOOL BUILDINGS						
20.1	Clearing blockages, cleaning channels and grease traps, emptying and cleansing septic tanks			✓			✓
20.2	Drainage pipes – clearing blockages, cleaning or jetting			✓			✓
20.3	Drainage pipes – repairs including replacement of collapsed or fractured		✓			✓	
20.4	Drainage pipes – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
20.5	Manhole covers and frames, gulley's and grids, grease traps, internal floor gratings, channels, rodding eyes - repair		✓			✓	
20.6	Manhole covers and frames, gulley's and grids, grease traps, internal floor gratings, channels, rodding eyes – replacement		✓			✓	
20.7	Manholes and inspection chambers – repair including repointing works and renewing benching	✓			✓		
20.8	Manholes and inspection chambers – replacement	✓			✓		
20.9	Sewage pumps – cleaning blockage or repair due to blockage			✓			✓
20.10	Sewage pumps – replacement	✓			✓		
21	ENGINEERING SERVICES – MAINS SUPPLY (from point of entry into School Buildings and between buildings)						
21.1	Electric	✓			✓		
21.2	Gas	✓			✓		
21.3	Water	✓			✓		
22	OTHER BUILDINGS						
22.1	Demountable classrooms, fuel stores, external toilets		✓			✓	
22.2	School house	✓			✓		
22.3	Greenhouses, potting sheds, garages, buildings erected by the school			✓			✓
22.4	Swimming pool (LA provided) – hygiene, cleansing, cleaning, maintenance and repairs (internal and external)	✓			✓		
23	SCHOOL MEALS KITCHENS AND DINING HALLS						

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
23.1	Kitchen (including stores, toilet accommodation) maintaining kitchen to LA requirements including cleaning and drainage systems, internal redecoration, repairs to internal finishes, repairs or replacement of sanitary fittings	✓			✓		
23.2	Kitchen cleaning of grease traps and associated drainage	✓			✓		
23.3	Kitchens (including stores, toilet accommodation) – external repairs and repainting	✓			✓		
23.4	Kitchen refurbishment/enhancement works to meet legislation and food safety requirements (e.g. provision of additional ventilation, formation of ante-spaces and changing areas, decoration)	✓			✓		
23.5	Extract ventilation and ductwork, filters, canopies fans, motors etc. repairs and maintenance	✓			✓		
23.6	Extract ventilation and ductwork, filters, canopies fans, motors etc. – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
23.7	Dining halls – internal and external repairs including redecoration	✓			✓		
24	SCHOOL SITES						
24.1	Access roads, bus parking and turning areas, car parks, paths and paved areas including kerbs, sleeping policemen and retaining walls there to repairs within school buildings			✓			✓
24.2	Access roads, bus parking an turning areas, car parks, paths and paved areas including kerbs, sleeping policemen and retaining walls thereto – substantial repairs/replacement within school boundary	✓			✓		
24.3	Boundary walls, perimeter fencing and gates and retaining walls – there to – repairs			✓			✓
24.4	Boundary walls, perimeter fencing and gates and retaining walls thereto – substantial repairs/replacement	✓			✓		
24.5	Demolition and site clearance of large structures (removal of mobile classrooms) including making good of ground finish	✓			✓		
24.6	Demolition and site clearance of small structures (small outbuildings, sheds, incinerators etc..) including making good of ground finish		✓			✓	
24.7	Fire hydrants – maintenance and servicing statutory	✓			✓		
24.8	Free standing/ fixed safety railings		✓			✓	
24.9	Gas meter chambers and utility housings		✓			✓	
24.10	Kitchen yards, bin areas, screen walls and fences		✓			✓	

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
24.11	Nursery play area fencing and gates – repairs/replacement		✓			✓	
24.12	Nursery play area fencing and gates – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
24.13	Playground and play court fencing – repairs and replacement		✓			✓	
24.14	Playground and play court fencing – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
24.15	Playground and play court markings for games			✓			✓
24.16	Playgrounds – complete resurfacing	✓			✓		
24.17	Playgrounds and play courts – repairs			✓			✓
24.18	Playgrounds and play courts –sweeping of surface to removal gravel			✓			✓
24.19	Pointing to boundary walls, retaining walls etc.			✓			✓
24.20	Pointing to boundary walls, retaining walls etc. substantial areas	✓			✓		
24.21	Steps and ramps to access buildings – maintenance		✓			✓	
24.22	Steps and ramps within site – replacement		✓			✓	
24.23	Site lighting columns and lanterns – access roads, car parks – inspection and substantial renewal		✓			✓	
24.24	Site lighting columns and lanterns – access roads, car parks – re-lamping and repairs		✓			✓	
24.25	Sports field floodlighting – inspection only	✓			✓		
24.26	Sports field floodlighting – repair and renewal		✓			✓	
24.27	Underground ducts and duct covers for services between school buildings – repair/maintenance/replacement	✓			✓		
25	SITE FITMENTS						
25.1	Cycle sheds, racks and blocks			✓			✓
25.2	Free standing drinking fountains			✓			✓
25.3	Free-standing flag poles			✓			✓
25.4	Free standing lighting standards – statutory inspection	✓			✓		
25.5	Free-standing lighting standards – repair and replacement		✓			✓	
25.6	Free standing school name board and directional signing			✓			✓
25.7	Sculptures, fountains and other site features			✓			✓
26	DRAINAGE SCHOOL SITE						
26.1	Ground and surface water pumps and chambers – cleaning, emptying and repairs			✓			✓
26.2	Ground and surface water pumps and chambers – replacement and servicing		✓			✓	

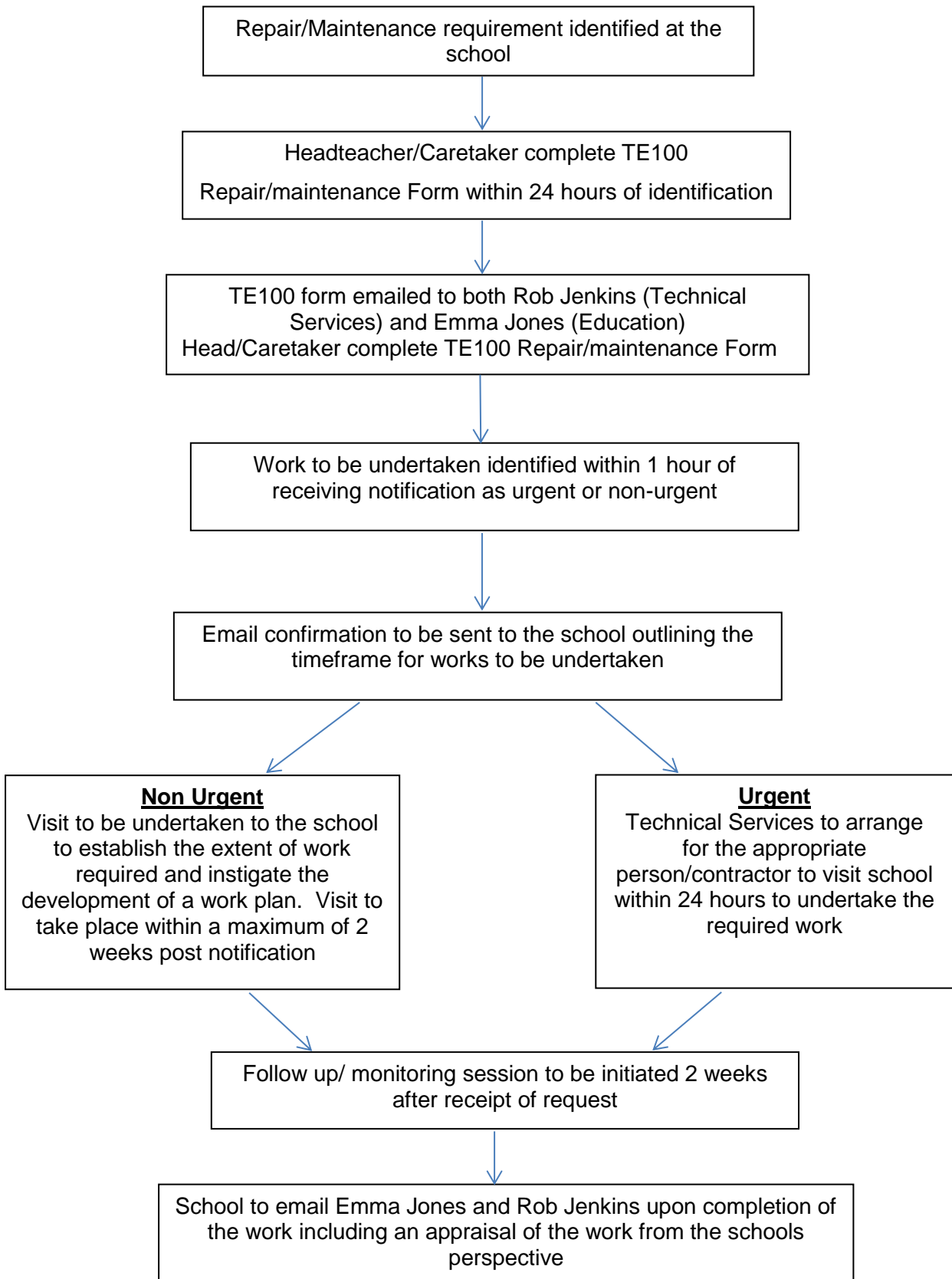
Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
26.3	Sewage pumps and pump chambers – cleaning emptying and repairs and servicing			✓			✓
26.4	Sewage pumps and pump chambers – replacement	✓			✓		
26.5	Surface water drains – cleaning blockages minor repairs			✓			✓
26.6	Surface water manhole covers and frames, gully's and grids, rodding eyes		✓			✓	
26.7	Surface water manhole and inspection chambers – repair including repointing works and renewing benching		✓			✓	
26.8	Surface water manholes and inspection chambers – replacement	✓			✓		
26.9	Surface water drainage pipes – clearing blockages, cleansing or jetting			✓			✓
26.10	Surface water drainage pipes – including replacement of collapsed or fractured pipes			✓			✓
26.11	Surface water drainage pipes – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
27	SECURITY MEASURES						
27.1	Entry phones, door access systems			✓			✓
27.2	Intruder alarm systems – repairs, servicing and monitoring			✓			✓
27.3	Intruder alarm systems (LA provided)servicing and monitoring			✓			✓
27.4	Security fencing (around school buildings not site)repair			✓			✓
27.5	Security gates and grills to entrances and exits attached to school buildings including windows			✓			✓
27.6	Intruder alarm replacement		✓			✓	
27.7	Security lighting – free-standing			✓			✓
27.8	Security fencing substantial replacement	✓			✓		
27.9	Security lighting – fixed to buildings			✓			✓
27.10	Security locks (internal and external windows and doors)			✓			✓
27.11	Video surveillance system/CCTV repair and maintenance			✓			✓
28	MISCELLANEOUS						
28.1	Asbestos removal – inspection/air testing, applying sealant coats to asbestos surfaces for protection	✓			✓		
28.2	Asbestos removal – specialist removal/replacement of damaged/disturbed asbestos based materials, planned or emergency	✓			✓		
28.3	Lift, stair lifts, passenger lifts and hoists – inspection and renewal	✓			✓		

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
28.4	Lifts, stair lifts, passenger lifts and hoists – repairs		✓			✓	
28.5	Bell/clock towers		✓			✓	
28.6	Rodent and insect infestation measures			✓			✓
28.7	Works arising as a result of changes in legislation	✓			✓		

Statutory Test	Corporate Landlord	School
Water Hygiene/Legionella	X	
Fire Alarms		X
Emergency Lighting		X
Lifts	X	
Evacuation Chairs	X	
Portable Fire Fighting Equipment	X	
Gas Boilers		X
Mansafe Systems	X	
Rollershutter Doors	X	
Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)		X
Automatic Doors	X	
Intruder Alarms		X
F Gas Testing		X
Lighting Protection	X	
Safety Glazing	X	
Thermostatic Mixing Valves	X	
Pool Sampling	X	
Sprinkler Systems	X	
Gas Fired Appliances		X
Dry Riser Systems	X	
Asbestos Management costs	X	
Drama/Stage Lighting	X	
Chimney Inspections	X	
Fume Cupboards		X
Gas Suppression Systems	X	
Pressurisation Units		X
Fire Dampers	X	
Periodic Electrical Inspection (not Annual)	25%	75%

Catering Responsibilities	Signed into Catering SLA		Not signed into Catering SLA	
	Corporate Landlord	School	Corporate Landlord	School
For replacement or repair of all catering equipment and Elec, Mechanical and Waste Services up to £750		X		x
For replacement or repair of all catering equipment and Electrical, Mechanical and Waste Services Between £751 and £1500	50%	50%		x
For replacement of all catering equipment and Electrical, Mechanical and Waste Services over £1500	X			x
Gas statutory safety testing for kitchen	X			x
Statutory Canopy cleans for kitchen		X		x
For all repairs after or during Statutory Testing		X		x
For reactive repairs to Catering Equipment or kitchen envelope		X		x
Repairs to electricity supply within kitchen up to kitchen equipment	X			x
Repairs to Gas supply within kitchen up to kitchen equipment	X			x
Full kitchen refurbishment	X			x
Decoration to any part of kitchen including toilet area	X			x
Full Redecoration to kitchen	X			x
Repairs to kitchen canopy including new filters	X			x
Renewal or installation of Kitchen Canopy	X			x
Repairs to cashless system	X			x
Renewal of Cashless System	X			x

Process Chart for Schools for notifying Technical Services and Education Department of repairs/maintenance required at school



TE100 REPAIR/MAINTENANCE REPORT FORM

Section A: To be completed by the Head or Caretaker

Name of School:	
Name:	
Position held:	
Date Reported:	
Description of repair/maintenance required:	
Location or repair/maintenance:	

TE100 REPAIR/MAINTENANCE REPORT FORM

Section B: To be completed by Technical Services

Urgent:	Non Urgent:
Action:	Action:
Proceed: Yes/No	Proceed: Yes/No
Contractor/Maintenance Officer contacted:	Contractor/Maintenance Officer contacted:
Estimate of Costs:	Estimate of Costs:
Costs to be paid from CL / S / S*	Costs to be paid from CL / S / S*
Timeframe for works to be completed:	Timeframe for works to be completed:
Date of Completion:	Date of Completion:
Signed Off by:	Signed Off by:

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Education Summer Project Overview (Community Services)

Abertillery Learning Community – Secondary Campus

- science lab refurbishment (upgrade for autumn term until refurb in October) (AS) - **Completed**
- decoration of dining hall - **Completed**

All Saints Primary School

- paving around school replaced with tarmac - **Completed**

Beaufort Hill Primary School

- kitchen refurbishment - **Completed**
- new ceiling & lights to hall, including decoration - **Completed**

Bryn Bach Primary School

- play area cleared and artificial grass laid – **Completed**
- re-turf banking - **Completed**
- access ramp to classroom - **Completed**
- higher fencing to be installed (safe guarding issue) - **Completed**

Brynmawr Foundation School

- 7 classroom refurbishments - **Completed**
- new ceiling, lighting and decoration of girl's gym - **Completed**

Brynmawr R.C. Primary School

- meetings re: extension. BG are undertaking the initial design work, prior to seeking cost estimates and obtaining planning. The project will commence in the 2021/22 financial year - Ongoing

Coed y Garn Primary School

- 2 classrooms to have new carpets - **Completed**

Cwm Primary School

- new flooring to foundation phase - **Completed**
- external gate lock and intercom - **Completed**

Deighton Primary School

- classroom upgrade - **Completed**
- ramp to canopy - **Completed**

Georgetown Primary School

- re-decoration of 3 classrooms - **Completed**

Glanhowy Primary School

- painting of railings to school perimeter – To be completed by 20th September

Ebbw Fawr Primary School

- convert classroom into staffroom - **Completed**

Ebbw Fawr Secondary School

- replace damaged ceiling in main hall - **Completed**

Pen y Cwm Special School

- convert 1 room into 2 classrooms, hygiene room and toilets - **Completed**
- works in EFLC * additional late work requests - **Completed**
- 2 rooms into 1 - **Completed**
- doorway created between 2no rooms upstairs and decorate - **Completed**
- external works, fencing & tarmac – **Completed**
- removal of heavy duty outdoor gym equipment and making good flooring- **Completed**

Rhos y Fedwen Primary School

- resurfacing of play yard during the autumn-term
- redecoration of classroom- **Completed**

St Illtyd's Primary School

- new carpet in 3 classrooms - **Completed**

Thomas Richards Centre School

- new flooring to dining area - **Completed**

Tredeggar Comprehensive School

- I.T. & 8 classroom refurbishments (SH) - **Completed**
- new kitchen roof - out to tender for implementation within the next academic session

All works required to satisfy H&S in regards to the SWFRS report in schools - **Completed**

Appendix 5 – Overall Building Condition and Suitability Ratings

	A	B	B/C	C	D
Primary (19 Schools – 19 buildings)					
Condition	0	11	0	7	1
Suitability	3	7	9	0	0
Secondary (2 schools – 2 buildings)					
Condition	0	1	0	1	0
Suitability		1	0	1	0
Middle (2 schools - 6 buildings)					
Condition	4	1	0	1	0
Suitability	4	1	0	1	0
Special (2 schools- 4 buildings)					
Condition	1	1	0	2	0
Suitability	1	2	0	1	0

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Jan-21

School	2020/2021 capacity	actual NOR Jan 2021 (exc. SEN)	% surplus places as at Jan 2021	2021/22 capacity	Jan 2022	2022/23 Capacity	Jan 2023	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	Jan 2026	Jan 2027	Jan 2028	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	Jan 2026	Jan 2027	Jan 2028
SECONDARY SCHOOLS																			
Abertillery Learning Community, Secondary Campus	750	672	10	750	722	750	743	754	767	776	736	720	4	1	-1	-2	-3	2	4
Brynmawr Foundation School	755	636	16	755	633	755	614	638	625	649	657	642	16	19	15	17	14	13	15
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community Secondary Phase	1191	944	21	1191	992	1191	1024	1006	1007	1000	964	943	17	14	16	15	16	19	21
Tredegar Comprehensive	758	692	9	770	746	760	714	719	736	752	735	771	3	6	5	3	1	3	-1
TOTALS	3454	2944	15	3466	3093	3456	3095	3117	3135	3177	3092	3076	11	10	10	9	8	11	11

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Agenda Item 24

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 02.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **Wednesday 15th December 2021**
Report Subject: **Education Directorate – ALN Reform Update**
Portfolio Holder: **Executive Member of Education, Cllr. Joanne Collins**
Report Submitted by: **Corporate Director of Education, Lynn Phillips and Head of School Improvement and Inclusion, Luisa Munro-Morris**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	18/11/2021	30.11.21			30/11/2021	15.12.21		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Executive Committee with an overview of the progress made against ALN reform and associated policy renewal.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Additional Learning Needs Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, makes provision for a new statutory framework for supporting children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN). This replaces existing legislation surrounding special educational needs (SEN). The LA has a duty to review the arrangements made by the authority and the governing bodies of maintained schools in its area for children and young people with additional learning needs, having regard to the additional learning provision that may reasonably be arranged by others.
 - 2.2 Principles of the Act:
 - a) **A rights-based approach** where the views, wishes and feelings of the child, child's parents/carers or young person are central to planning and provision of support;
 - b) **Early identification, intervention and effective transition planning;**
 - c) **Collaboration** where all involved work together in the best interests of the child or young person;
 - d) **Inclusive education** supporting participation fully in mainstream education, wherever feasible, and a whole setting approach to meeting the needs of learners with ALN; and,
 - e) **A bilingual system** where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver additional learning provision (ALP) in Welsh.
 - 2.3 **From 1st September 2021** the revised ALN system commenced for children of compulsory school age and below who are **newly identified** as having ALN (that is, those without already identified SEN, or are not awaiting or undergoing an SEN assessment).
 - 2.4 **From 1st January 2022** the ALN system will commence for children of compulsory school age and below who attend a maintained setting in: Nursery (N1 and N2), Year 1, Year 3, Year 5, Year 7 and Year 10 who have special educational provision via early years' action/ early years' action plus or school action/school action plus.

- 2.5 Children who currently have special educational provision via a statement, are awaiting or are in the process of an SEN assessment, and those who are over compulsory school age, **will not be** included in the first year of implementation.
- 2.6 Children or their parents can request they move to the ALN system earlier than they are due to move to the ALN system. However, they will not be able to request a move to the new system **until 1st January 2022** (and onwards). The statementing process will cease for those captured by the Commencement Orders on December 31st 2021.
- 2.7 Regional Implementation Plan 2020/21
A Regional Implementation Plan 2020/21 for ALN reform is in place. Progress against this plan is monitored monthly by the Additional Learning Needs Transformation Lead and SEWC ALN panel.
- The strategic priorities in the Regional Implementation Plan for 2020/21 are:
1. Early Years
 2. Schools
 3. Post 16
 4. Collaboration – SEWC, Health and Social Care
- 2.8 Update on Priority 1: Early Years (EY)
- 11 training modules have been developed regionally (specifically on ALN and Act/Code requirements) and this is available to all BG settings (maintained, non-maintained and child minders);
 - Regional EYs steering group set up - sharing good practice and develop best practice.
- 2.9 Update on Priority 2: Schools
- Training offer 2021/22 available to all schools and all school staff;
 - SEWC ALN Transformation network on HWB;
 - Code process training and all resources, including leaflets for parents, developed;
 - Implementation training guidance and all relevant resources available for all schools;
 - Cluster lead ALNCos meet half-termly. Facilitate progress of their clusters on their action plans;
 - BG ALNCos meet half-termly;
 - School Development Plans have a specific action on ALN transformation, which is monitored and supported by the EAS;
 - Removing Barriers to Learning matrix is available to all schools electronically - supports all teachers and teaching assistants to use the most appropriate strategies and resources to help every pupil make progress.
- 2.10 Update on Priority 3: Post 16
- LA Post 16 steering group- multi-agency including ABUHB and Social Care;
 - Post 16 transition protocol developed;
 - Principles and expectations work - LA/Colleges working together to support young people and ensure successful transitions.

2.11 Update on Priority 4: Collaboration

- Social Care - ALN leads meetings bi-monthly. Training and raising awareness has taken place and specific training for Children's teams e.g. Disability teams;
- Separate Health Implementation Plan;
- ALN champions meet monthly;
- Q and A sessions organised for ALNCOs monthly;
- Gwent Attachment Service delivered attachment training for schools;
- Statutory officers working together have developed Code process guidance and Removing Barriers to Learning matrix;
- SNAP CYMRU - regular parent forums and co-construction of parental leaflet;
- Regional Youth Forum - produced presentations to support other young people to understand the Act and their rights.

2.12 LA Implementation - Lead Organisation

Tredegar Comprehensive School (TCS) was approached in May 2021 by the LA to support with the realisation of the Regional Implementation Plan. It was agreed that the school would lead on Priority 2 for all mainstream settings across the LA.

2.13 Since September 2021, TCS has met with nearly all maintained schools across the LA, and engaged in high-quality professional dialogue with headteachers/SLT and ALNCOs. Following these initial discussions, TCS will now put in place relevant and tailored support for each school, in order to realise fully the implementation plans for mandated years by Summer 2022. A more comprehensive report can be found in Section 8 – ALN Education Transformation Summary.

2.14 The Council are well on track for implementing ALN reform. Where challenges for implementation have been identified, relevant training opportunities are being put in place for both senior leaders and ALNCOs. Further training will also be commissioned for Governors.

2.15 ALN Policy - Updates

A number of LA policies have been created or updated in line with the Act, please see section 8 (please note that where policies have been updated, updated parts are highlighted for ease of reference):

- Traveller School Attendance Guidance
- Pastoral Support Plan Guidance
- Policy for the Education of Pregnant School Girls and School Age Parents
- Policy and Guidance for Schools on the Use of Reduced Timetables
- Hard to Place Protocol
- Exclusion Guidance
- Education Other Than at School Guidance
- Blaenau Gwent Policy for the Education of Children and Young People with Medical Needs
- Admission Guidance

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 This report has been discussed by Education DMT and CLT. This report will also be presented to the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee on 30th November 2021, and any feedback will be presented verbally to the Executive.

Option 1: Members considers and accepts the report, associated documentation and proposed course of action.

Option 2: Members considers the report and provides comments relating to improvements that can be made to the associated documentation and proposed course of action.

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

- 4.1 Education is a strategic priority and key to facilitating effective delivery of the Corporate Plan.

- 4.2 One of the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan is for every child to have the best start in life. Implementation of the Act will support the creation of a fully inclusive education system where all learners are given the opportunity to succeed and have access to an education that meets their needs and enables them to participate in, benefit from and enjoy learning.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget**

- Cost of translation of key documentation for schools.
- Posts to support the Act's implementation (ALN Officer and CLA ALN officer) that are currently supported through the WG ALN grant, could create a cost pressure for the Education Portfolio if the ALN Grant ceases next year. However, this is likely to be a component of WG's financial settlement arrangements.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

- The current delay in the publication of the WG implementation guidance is placing schools and LAs at risk. The new ALN system went live on September 1st and we have yet to receive WG guidance on which pupils are included during the first term of implementation and the subsequent remaining two terms of this academic year. Furthermore, schools and LAs need to understand the longer implementation programme in order that they can plan strategically. However, once the guidance is released relevant training for all schools and ALN leads will be put in place by the Regional Implementation Lead;
- There is lack of clarity regarding how implementation will be supported post March 31st 2022 as the ALN Transformation Lead post will cease at this point. Alternative support models are currently being explored with the other Inclusion leads from SEWC;
- Schools are engaged but some attendance at meetings has been affected by pressure placed on schools by Covid. To mitigate this risk, all training is

recorded and uploaded onto Hwb so that relevant staff can catch up with any missed training;

- Impact of lockdowns and interruptions to regular routines and learning of pupils, creating a rise in learning needs over academic year 2020/21 which will impact on schools and LA services in the short and long term – possibly leading to an over identification of pupils with ALN 2021/22. This situation will be monitored and schools will be supported by the Inclusion Service to support with both early and correct identification of learners with ALN;
- Large numbers of referrals to all ABUHB children’s therapy services is causing anxiety as waiting lists are constantly growing and increasing COVID numbers may lead to pressures, which could impact negatively on collaborative working with ABUHB; The SEWC Inclusion group is working with ABUHB to continue to monitor this situation;
- Pressure of work on social care – steep rise regionally in numbers of CLA will have impact on workload with new Code requirements. The appointment of a CLA Officer in the ALN team will support the mitigation of this risk.

5.3 **Legal**

This report provides information relating to the Additional Learning Needs Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Education are in the process of mapping individual schools existing progress against the requirements of the Act, please see section 8 for further details on progress.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

There is a commitment from the Council and its schools to provide quality education for our children and young people to improve their life chances, this includes pupils with ALN.

6.3 **Involvement**

- Young people have been involved via the regional youth forum, the participation officers in each LA and via the Youth Service across SEWC;
- Parents have been engaged termly via SNAP facilitating local parent forums for each LA and Coleg Gwent;
- Partnership work with the EAS has led to the development of training and support for schools, GBs and ALNCOs;
- Governor training is delivered to all LAs;
- Termly newsletters for all headteachers and ALNCOs are produced by SEWC to update on progress.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term**

The Act has been partially implemented since September 2021. However, it is imperative that we now receive WG guidance on the Code to ensure that the Act is implemented correctly over the long term period.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

The LA will continue to work closely with SEWC and different partners to ensure the best provision can be in place for all learners, particularly those identified as having an ALN.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

The report outlines the significant amount of partnership working at a strategic and operational level. This has resulted in a strengthening of the working relationships between the Council, schools and other key partners.

6.7 **Integration**

The approach to ALN readiness has been based on partnership working with SEWC and the EAS.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

Any physical works planned and undertaken within education settings are planned in order to take account of decarbonisation and reducing carbon emissions.

6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***

An assessment will be carried out in relation to each priority area during the autumn-term review process.

6.9b **EqIA**

The application of EqIA's to each priority has been considered as part of the Regional Plan.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 The report will be presented to the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee and then subsequently through to the Executive Committee for monitoring purposes.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Ysgol Gyfun Tredegar Comprehensive – Evaluative Summary

Appendix 2 – Traveller School Attendance Guidance

Appendix 3 – Pastoral Support Plan Guidance

Appendix 4 – Policy for the Education of Pregnant School Girls and School Age Parents

Appendix 5 – Policy and Guidance for Schools on the Use of Reduced Timetables

Appendix 6 – Hard to Place Protocol

Appendix 7 – Exclusion Guidance

Appendix 8 – Education Other than at School (EOTAS) Policy

Appendix 9 – Policy for Education of Children and Young People with Medical Needs

Appendix 10 – Admission Guidance



ALN Education Transformation: Supporting LA Implementation

Evaluative Summary (Autumn 2021)

Context

YGTCs was approached in May 2021 by BG LA to support with the realisation of the Regional Implementation (RI) Plan for Educational Transformation. It was agreed that the school would lead on Priority 2 for all mainstream settings across the LA. The school would work in close liaison with the LA Inclusion and ALN teams, the Lead for Early Years, the Lead for post-16 provision and the WG Additional Learning Needs Transformation Lead.

In July 2021, the new Education Minister announced a delay in the implementation of Phase 1, with the exception of those newly identified. As such, schools would be expected to commence their roll-over plans for mandated years from January 2022. However, given the preparations and plans to date, it was deemed that schools in BG could be in a position to initiate the process during Autumn 2021.

As part of its work, YGTCS planned to discuss with individual schools, their own status and plans. In order to secure the requirements of the RI plan, it was anticipated that all schools would engage fully in open, honest and non-judgemental discussions with regards to their current position for ALN transformation. The initial dialogue was to be held with the school's respective Headteacher (and/or SLT Lead where applicable) and ALNCO, together with YGTCS's Headteacher and ALNCO.

Following these initial discussions, YGTCS would seek to support schools to progress, in line with their set timelines, in order to realise fully the implementation plans for mandated years by Summer 2022. YGTCS would be very much led by the individual school's own requirements, and any support identified would reflect fully these bespoke needs as part of a co-constructed provision package.

Over the course of the first half term, nearly all maintained schools across the LA have engaged in a high-quality professional dialogue with YGTCS. This valuable engagement has provided a comprehensive snapshot of the position of our schools in relation to Priority 2 of the RI plan.



Priority 2 of the RI plan comprises six key objective areas. Each of these aspects were explored in detail through the initial school discussions and a summary of the findings, in relation to those schools met, is as outlined below.

Objective 1

'Ensure consistent PCP approaches involve children, young people and parents at every opportunity'

PCP approaches across both primary and secondary schools are strong. All schools have adopted these principles and have implemented these practices within their settings. C-19 has presented challenges in the facilitation of the reviews, with most being held through virtual platforms over the past 18 months. Since the return in September 2021, there has been a shift back by many schools to the 'face-to face' processes. It was identified by many ALNCOs that, although the virtual aspect had allowed for continuity, the 'in-person' opportunities supported a greater involvement and a richer dialogue with the children, families and external agencies (as required).

In terms of facilitating the PCP reviews, most ALNCOs are currently undertaking this role within their settings, although there was a common appreciation for this aspect of the role to be delegated within settings, as appropriate. In light of this, there has been extensive professional learning provided by ALNCOs to either whole staff or identified staff with regards to the PCP process. Most ALNCOs confirmed that throughout this academic year, there would be opportunities provided for key staff to observe 'roll-modelled' PCP reviews and to share the facilitation. There was a clear need recognised for robust quality assurance processes, once the PCP facilitation had been delegated, to ensure a consistent and high-quality approach within settings.

Objective 2

'Ensure the school continues to develop and effective and efficient workforce ready for transformation'

The time allocation for ALNCOs to fulfil their now statutory roles is highly variable, and ranges from non-teaching ALNCOs to those allocated one afternoon a week. The increasing strategic demands of the role was recognised by all leaders, but budgetary demands were identified as the key limiting factor in providing greater time. Despite not having the capacity to provide greater timetabled time allocations, all leaders were fully supportive of providing additional time, as needed, in response to ALNCO requests and key 'pinch-points' e.g. annual reviews.

In many primary settings, the ALNCO is part of the leadership team. In many secondary settings, the ALNCO role does not sit within the senior or extended leadership teams, although there is a direct line to leadership through line management arrangements.



In nearly all schools, initial Governor training has been delivered by the Headteacher and/or ALNCO. All schools identified ongoing training provision for Governors throughout the academic year. In a minority of schools, bespoke ALN governor sub-committees had been established at the start of the year to develop further understanding and knowledge.

All schools have identified calendared opportunities throughout the year to support the ongoing professional learning for their staff. Nearly all schools discussed how they have used the available time during the pandemic 'lock-down' periods to extend the skills and knowledge of the teaching assistant teams. Many schools identified key specialists within their teams focusing on areas such as literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. In the majority of schools, there were clear plans to further build and strengthen TA 'specialisms' to support both in-class and in small group/1:1 interventions.

All ALNCOs identified the significant training and input they had received to date through the LA forums, cluster meetings and work with Tracey Pead.

Objective 3

'Develop robust and consistent practices to inform early identification of need using a graduated response, resulting in effective provision mapping'

All primary settings confirmed that the identification of need occurs during early years settings, with the exception of in-year transfers into later years. Any potential difficulties or problems are quickly recognised by the early years teams and shared with the leadership team and ALNCO. As such, appropriate provision and additional requests for support are timely, although there are significant identified challenges for schools when learners are awarded the 2-terms funding support in nursery but then progress to reception without ongoing allocated support.

At the secondary level, identified learner needs are discussed by all schools as part of the transition processes. Any 'newly-identified' within these settings are a result of in-year transfers.

Revised provision mapping, in line with the graduated response, is variable. Whilst there is no expected 'structure' e.g. columns/pyramids etc., at this point in the journey, there is a clear distinction between the quality and depth of information/strategies/processes. In around half of the schools, there are highly detailed and comprehensive approaches, not only detailing universal, targeted and specialised provisions, but also the clear expectations and accountability for all staff. Nearly all schools were able to articulate their targeted and specialised provisions, but a minority of schools had greater difficulty identifying clear provisions at a universal level.

In schools presenting high-quality practice, an array of ideas and approaches were identified. These included:



- ALN standing-item on staff meeting / HT reports to Governors
- Regular ALN scrutiny panels between HT/SLT and ALNCO to ensure effective learner provision
- Half-termly review meetings between ALNCO and individual class teachers (and associated TA where applicable) to review targets and have in-depth discussions on each identified learner.
- An 'eyes-wide open' consistent approach by all staff to ensure no learner missed
- ALNCO 'drop-in' sessions for staff to discuss specific learners and strategies
- Interventions case studies and directory of effective strategies provided as staff toolkits

Objective 4

'Ensure teaching responds to the needs of individual learners; Develop effective systems for monitoring the progress and achievement of learners with ALN'

All schools provided a comprehensive overview of their processes and practices for tracking and monitoring at a whole school level. Progress reviews by all were at least termly, and in the majority of cases, half termly. Deep data analysis ensures a full review of learner progress. In most schools, there is review meeting with the ALNCO and Headteacher/SLT to discuss the school's current position for ALN, with actions identified as needed. In the majority of schools, the ALN register is also reviewed at these 'snapshot' points.

In a few schools which have LA resources bases attached, the ALNCO has been timetabled to teach within this provision to ensure a full understanding of all learner needs across the school community.

In a few schools, ALN targets are included as part of the performance management process.

Objective 5

'Develop arrangements for reviewing the effectiveness of interventions'

There is an array of interventions being implemented across BG schools to support literacy, numeracy, social and emotional skills. Commonly identified interventions include: THRIVE, ELSA, Catch -up literacy and numeracy and COMIT. In a few schools, nurture and sensory rooms have been, or are in the process of, being developed to support pupil wellbeing further.

All schools have appropriate tracking and monitoring systems in place for their interventions. In nearly all cases, the impact of the interventions are reviewed on a half-termly basis, although flexibility in approach with this was noted should it become evident that an intervention was having limited impact at an earlier stage.



In all schools, teaching assistants play a pivotal role in planning, delivering and monitoring interventions. One school has made the innovative decision to move away from the traditional 'out-of classroom' small group intervention, moving instead to an in-class provision which is accessible and therefore 'universal' provision for all. Although this approach is in its infancy, the initial indications for this approach are very positive. Another approach, within a secondary setting, was to allocate teaching assistants to a faculty, rather than to a learner or class. In this approach, the faculty lead is accountable for the effective deployment of the teaching assistant within the subject area. In this school, the ALNCO is responsible for quality assuring the role of the teaching assistant within each faculty. Again, this novel and progressive idea is in its infancy but has real potential to be a highly effective strategy in supporting learners with ALN at a subject-specific level.

Objective 6

'Undertake moderation of IDPs to secure a consistency of approach and understanding by all'

It was evident through discussion that this is the area of most concern within Priority 2. There is a global desire for greater opportunities to be provided for both cluster and BG - wide moderation. Whilst there is the full appreciation that every learner is an individual and as such will have different needs, a bank of WAGOLL IDPs would be invaluable to support ALNCOs and other key staff.

The number of IDPs across school settings was variable with one school reporting over 15 IDPs (ex of a resource base) whilst others reporting none. Whilst there is the full recognition that schools will have differing numbers of learners with ALN, further work is evidently needed to confidently determine whether a learner satisfies the full requirements for an IDP. A few schools proposed the idea of a 'requirements checklist' by way of supporting this as part of a IDP toolkit.

All schools identified the want and need to have IDPs checked and agreed in the early stages of educational transformation. This would help build confidence levels and secure a greater knowledge and understanding of the IDP requirements.

There is some confusion with regards to the IDPs for learners placed with LA maintained resource bases. Clarity is needed as to who is accountable for owning and maintaining the IDP in this case. Further clarity is also required with regards to the legislation with regards to IDPs and how the LA will support schools with this to avoid any resulting tribunal scenarios.

One school faces significant additional challenges due to its language status. As a Welsh medium school, the availability of translated documentation is extremely limited and as such, a significant amount of time is needed to undertake the translation requirements. Furthermore, the school in question, sits within both a LA and Welsh-medium provision



cluster, and as such can receive different and occasionally conflicting messages and information.

Moving forward

Firstly, YGTCS would like to thank all participating schools for their valuable time and honest contributions during a period which has been extremely challenging for all.

The next half term will focus solely on IDPs and ensuring all concerns and requests for support are addressed. It is the ambition that by January 2022, all schools will have had the opportunity to engage in meaningful and worthwhile professional learning opportunities to build further confidence and knowledge with the IDP process and paperwork, with a view to confirming a BG consistent approach. This work will not only be of significant value to our own school settings but consistency in approach will be imperative to support learners with placement changes, in-year transfers and transition points.

Traveller School Attendance Guidance

Education Inclusion Service
Traveller School Attendance
Guidance

September 2021



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Introduction.

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers', Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers'.

The Education Act 1996 and the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 make statutory provision for all of these groups.

Children of Traveller groups, whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at school.

However, many Traveller families will travel for work purposes. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has issued this guidance to support schools with clarity around attendance and registration of Traveller pupils.

School attendance regulations.

Section 444(6) Education Act 1996, gives parents a defence in which they cannot be found guilty of a school attendance offence, provided that the child is of no fixed abode and:

- (a) parents are engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place, and
- (b) the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
- (c) if the child has attained the age of six, that he or she has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted.

Registration Codes.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 provide the following registration guidance.

When should the T code be used?

On days when a pupil from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller (GRT) family is known to be out of the area for work purposes and is not in educational provision, schools can use the T code to record the absence.

Parents should make sure they let the school know in advance when they are going to be travelling and when they expect to return. This enables the child's attendance and absence to be recorded accurately, their safety and well-being to be monitored and appropriate distance learning work to be set by the school.

The term 'travelling' means travelling as part of the parents' trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place. It does not mean travelling as part of a holiday.

The T code can only be used if the child is travelling for work purposes with their parents, not with any other relatives.

The use of the T code to authorise a pupil's absence is at the discretion of the headteacher.

The school and the GT Officer must make every attempt to encourage Traveller parents to come back for a week in May for children to sit their national tests.

D code

The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. To help ensure continuity of education for GRT children it is expected that the child(ren) should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling. Where a GRT pupil is travelling and attending another school the pupil should be dual-registered using D code. The child remains on the D code until the subsidiary school informs the base school they have left and are off roll, or until they return to the school full time.

C code

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

O code

Where GRT children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be residing at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence must be investigated in precisely the same way as that for any other pupil. If the reason for the absence is not known, it must be recorded as unauthorised.

Apart from travelling for work purposes, Gypsies and Travellers participate in events and occasions that are of particular significance to them, e.g. Appleby show/horse fairs. Extended family and religious events such as weddings and christenings or economic gatherings such as horse fairs will draw together extended family groups and reinforce communal identity. Gypsies and Travellers put high value on extended family responsibilities so families may move to care for sick relative or a bereaved family member.

If a school approves leave of absence, the school needs to make it clear the days that are authorised and from what time that approval takes place.

What actions should school undertake when a GRT child does not return to school after travelling?

If a child/ young person does not return to their base school after travelling the school should:

- Make regular attempts, beginning on the first day of any unexplained absence to contact the pupil's parents either by telephone or text messaging. Every effort to locate and contact the family must be taken.
- Contact the GRT access and attendance officers who will make every effort to visit the family and ascertain when the child will be returning to school (contact details below).

- Contact any other school where the pupil or their siblings are known to attend while they were away.
- For pupils known to be at risk or where safeguarding is a concern the school should contact social care.
- If despite these efforts the pupil's absence continues and his/her whereabouts remains unknown where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days' school must contact the Education Welfare Service in line with the CME Policy.

Distance learning and parent held education records.

When it is known that a family is going travelling the school should supply a Parent Held Education record, to the family. Parent held records can be downloaded from the National Association of Teachers for Travellers website at <http://www.natt.org.uk/parent-held-education-record-book>

The school should complete the relevant sections before handing it to the family. This record enables swift transfer of important information, including base school contact details, between dual registered educational settings. It can also serve as a record when children are travelling with distance learning materials.

Clarifying Guidance

Schools must not remove Traveller children from the school register when they are travelling for occupational purposes and have stated their intention to return. It is good practice for schools with registered Traveller pupils to ensure that the guidance in this document is written into the school's attendance policy and that the guidance is explained to parents. Schools may differentiate Traveller absence statistics for school attendance evaluation purposes in the school's self-evaluation form.

Estyn

Estyn should not criticise schools for absences of Traveller children, providing the school can demonstrate that it:

- has used the registration codes correctly
- is strategic and proactive in communicating with Traveller parents about their travelling patterns on a regular basis
- is strategic and proactive in ensuring excellent attendance when the children are not travelling
- provides distance learning materials in accordance with good practice
- provides Travelling families with the parent held education record before they travel
- includes specific guidance for Travellers in the school's attendance policy and ensures the policy is accessible to parents
- evaluates its provision for narrowing the gap in attendance for Traveller children in the school self-evaluation form
- evaluates its provision for narrowing achievement gaps for Traveller children in the school self-evaluation form

Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) Guidance

September 2021



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

Education Inclusion Services

Pastoral Support Plan Guidance

Pastoral Support Plan Initial Summary Sheet

The Reason for a Pastoral Support Plan is:

To improve academic attainment, attendance and/or prevent alternative provision / permanent exclusion.

To support the pupil to manage his/her behaviour/attendance/academic performance.

To identify precise and realistic behavioural/academic/attendance outcomes for him/her to work towards.

Basic Details

Name	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Date of Birth	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Dates of Fixed Term Exclusions	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Attendance	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Primary need / diagnosis for PSP	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Year Group	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>

Brief description of current support in school and at home

Background information:

School:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>		
Address:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	Home/Mobile Phone nos.	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
Nationality:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	Ethnicity:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
Preferred Language:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	Gender:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
FSM:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text" value="Yes / No"/>	Other (e.g. MAT, EAL):	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
Any medical information:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>		

Additional Needs

SEN Register?	YES/NO	Code of Practice Stage (SA/SA+/ST):	
Initial Statement/IDP date:		Last Statement/IDP Review date:	
Support:			
Educational Psychologist		Date of last Consultation	

Educational Attainments (Complete as appropriate.)

Foundation Phase Outcomes (Outcomes 1-6)

Date Outcomes Measured	Language Skills	Mathematical Skills	Personal; Social; Well-being; Cultural Diversity

National Curriculum Levels (KS2 - 4)

Teacher Assessment	Current National Curriculum Level			Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) Standardised Scores (SS)			
	KS2	KS3	KS4		NC Y4	NC Y7	NC Y9
English				Verbal			
Mathematics				Non-verbal			
Science				Quantitative			
Welsh				Mean S.S.			

Standardised Measures of progress

Date of Assessment	Name of Test	Result (Standard Score)	Age Equivalent if available

KS4 Predicted Grades and Courses

Course	Subject	Predicted Grade

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Safeguarding Information

Looked after by the LA:

Social Worker Name:

Social Worker Contact details:

Child Protection Register:

Child In Need:

Risk Assessment:
(If yes the RA must be completed and attached to this form)

Involvement of Other Agencies

Educational Psychology Service		Inclusion Officer	
Education Welfare Service		Social Services	
CAMHS		Learning Coach	
Police		School Nurse	
Restorative Justice		Young Carers	
Families First		BAROD (substance abuse)	
Domestic Abuse		Youth Offending Service	
School Counsellor		REACH	
GP		CLA	

ATTENDANCE CONCERNS?			
Truancy		YES/NO	
Attendance for last three terms	%	E.W.O. Involvement?	
Current term	%	E.W.O. Name:	
Last term	%	Action by E.W.O / School	

Term before last	%		
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Exclusions

Internal	Date initiated	Length in lessons/days	Reason	Parents/Carers informed

External	Date initiated	Length in days	Reason	Return Date

Governor Discipline Committee	Date	Parents/Carers attended	Outcome

**Pastoral Support Plan
Initial Meeting**

Name of Pupil:		Date of Birth:	
Class/Form:		Year Group:	
Date of Meeting;			
Attending			
Agency	Name	Agency	Name
CAMHS		Careers	
Educational Psychologist		Education Welfare Officer	
Inclusion Officer		Social Services	
School Nurse		Police	
Young Carers		Other	
Learning Coach		Families First	
Domestic Abuse		BAROD	
Youth Offending Service		REACH	
GP		CLA Officer	
Main points arising from the discussion			
Key Triggers Identified			

Effective Support Already in Place		
Target 1	Strategies to support target 1	
Target 2	Strategies to support target 2	
Target 3	Strategies to support target 3	
Additional actions to be taken		
Action	When	By whom
Future meeting dates:		
Weekly (school and parents/carers)		
Interim (all professionals)		
Final (all professionals)		
Agreed by:	Signature	
Pupil		

Parents/carers	
School	
Other agencies	

**Pastoral Support Plan
Interim Review Meeting**

Name of Pupil:		Date of Birth:	
Class/Form:		Year Group:	
Date of Meeting;			
Attending			
Agency	Name	Agency	Name
CAMHS		Careers	
Educational Psychologist		Education Welfare Officer	
Inclusion Officer		Social Services	
School Nurse		Police	
Young Carers		Other	
Learning Coach		Families First	
Domestic Abuse		BAROD	
Youth Offending Service		REACH	
GP		CLA Officer	
Apologies			
Summary of progress			
Target 1	Progress made		

Strategies	Review	
Target 2	Progress made	
Strategies	Review	
Target 3	Progress made	
Strategies	Review	
Additional Strategies		
Additional actions to be taken		
Action	When	By whom
Future meeting dates		
Weekly (school and parents/carers)		
Final (all professionals)		
Agreed by	Signature	

Pupil	
Parents/carers	
School	

**Pastoral Support Plan
Final Review Meeting**

Name of Pupil:		Date of Birth:	
Class/Form:		Year Group:	
Date of Meeting;			
Attending			
Agency	Name	Agency	Name
CAMHS		Careers	
Educational Psychologist		Education Welfare Officer	
Inclusion Officer		Social Services	
School Nurse		Police	
Young Carers		Other	
Learning Coach		Families First	
Domestic Abuse		BAROD	
Youth Offending Service		REACH	
GP		CLA Officer	
Apologies			
Summary of progress			
Target 1	Progress made		

Strategies	Review	
Target 2	Progress made	
Strategies	Review	
Target 3	Progress made	
Strategies	Review	
Evaluation of progress		
Next steps to be taken		
Additional actions to be taken		
Action	When	By whom

Agreed by	Signature
Pupil	
Parents/carers	
School	

Appendix 1 - Guidance

What is a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP)?

The aim of a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) is to promote social inclusion and help to reduce the need for permanent exclusion. This guidance aims to provide both a school management process and procedural framework within a PSP in any Blaenau Gwent school.

The PSP procedure and process is designed to support those pupils for whom the normal school based strategies have not been effective. A PSP is a structured intervention for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. The aim of the PSP is to involve the pupil, parent and family in the shared challenge of improving behaviour and social skills and ensuring social and educational inclusion.

The PSP should not be used to replace the normal Special Educational Needs assessment process; pupils should still be taken through the appropriate stages of the SEN Code of Practice.

A PSP is essentially a school based and owned process. Schools and parents/carers will for the most part, be providing the additional support, interventions, adaptations and communication that are agreed.

Given the intensive nature of a PSP, schools need to target those pupils whose behaviours mean that they are at risk of permanent exclusion. A number of factors may be considered including the number of fixed term exclusions (three exclusions or more than ten days in one term should certainly be a trigger), integration from a managed move or starting at a school following a permanent exclusion. There is an expectation that pupils who receive three or more fixed term exclusions that amount to more than ten days' exclusion will be placed on a PSP.

It is for individual school leadership and management to decide upon the number of PSP's that it can manage at any one time, but given the fact that each one will require additional intensive support over and above that, that could be agreed as part of a normal Individual Education Plan (IEP) it is likely that only small numbers can be managed.

There would have to be a good reason for a pupil not to be on a PSP at the point of permanent exclusion. It would be expected that a PSP would have been in place within the last two terms. The PSP process is useful in co-ordinating support and reviews of alternative packages. The decision to propose a PSP should be done in conjunction with the school's behaviour policy.

Who should be invited to a PSP meeting?

An Inclusion Officer should be invited to attend the first meeting. This allows them to hear a potted history of issues and support to date. If by the time the interim and final reviews are held, things have not progressed then the Inclusion Officer should be invited to these meetings. The Inclusion Officer keeps records of all the information sent. This can be particularly helpful and important if he/she is supporting schools, for example in cases where parents/carers feel that a school is not doing enough to support a child or young person.

What should already be put in place?

Before initiating a PSP, the following should have been considered and/or carried out:

- changes to learning environment
- adaptations to unstructured times
- deployment of additional adults (1:1 or group work)
- review differentiation of curriculum
- adaptations for learning style
- ensure behaviour policy consistently applied
- review behaviour management strategies
- baseline behaviour assessment
- discuss difficulties with pupil
- discuss difficulties with parents/carers
- consult colleagues in department, key stage, pastoral team and/or ALNCO regarding special educational needs
- additional staff training
- IEPs with smart targets and regular reviews

- referral to and liaison with EPS and any other Outside Agencies
- withdrawal from lessons
- flexible curriculum and/or individualised timetable
- use of IT
- risk assessment
- allocation of a key worker
- managed move
- internal exclusion
- restorative approaches work
- CAF

If it is decided that a PSP is the best way forward, the school staff member identified as being responsible for co-ordinating monitoring and reviewing a PSP needs to initiate a meeting.

What does an effective PSP look like?

Before the meeting

The nominated person at the school for organising PSP's should arrange a PSP and invite the parents/carers (a model letter is available – Appendix 4) and appropriate outside agencies, as well as ensuring that key staff that are involved with the child are included. It would be advisable to check an Inclusion Officer is available before booking the date.

At this stage, the co-ordinator needs to ensure that the parents/carers and pupil understand the nature of the process before the initial meeting. Close liaison with the ALNCO is paramount.

Schools should also remember that good practice indicates that PSP's are most effective when there are on-going weekly meetings between the school and the parents/carers to discuss progress against the agreed targets.

Schools should ensure a suitable room is available.

The Staff Questionnaire (Appendix 2) should be completed to elicit staff views about the pupil and highlight the main areas of concern.

The Parent Questionnaire (Appendix 3) should be sent to parents/carers to give them the opportunity to describe the qualities in their child and express their own concerns.

A member of staff who has a good rapport with the pupil should elicit how the pupil feels about the current situation. The pupil should be encouraged to express views freely and honestly and they should be recorded uncritically. (Appendix 5 can be used for Primary pupils and Appendix 6 for Secondary pupils.) The purpose of a PSP should be explained to the pupil and the agenda of the initial meeting shared before the meeting.

The Initial Meeting

The following information needs to be available at the meeting:

- The Initial Summary Sheet
- An up to date Behaviour Log
- Completed Staff questionnaire(s) (Appendix 2)
- Completed Parent Questionnaire (Appendix 3)

This may be presented as a written summary of significant information.

Parents/carers and school staff will need to consider whether the pupil should be present for the whole meeting or whether it may be appropriate for him/her to contribute towards the end.

The chairperson will need to clarify the purpose and aims of the meeting, encourage brief introductions and run through the agenda (Appendix 7). A note taker should be agreed.

Everyone should have the opportunity to have their say and offer some contribution to the solution to the issues.

At the conclusion everyone will need to be clear about what is to be done, by whom and by when. A consistent approach both in and out of school is necessary to affect a positive outcome.

Targets agreed at the meeting will need to be distributed to all appropriate staff the next school day.

A record of the meeting (not minutes) will need to be sent to everyone who attended and others who are involved.

A date for the next meeting will need to be set which includes key professionals.

PSPs run for approximately 16 weeks or a similar length of time at the discretion of the meeting

Ongoing Support

At the initial meeting monitoring arrangements will have been made explicit. These would usually be weekly or fortnightly with a key member of staff (although in exceptional circumstances, daily reporting may be helpful).

The most effective PSP's are where there is ongoing communication between school and home. There should therefore be a commitment from both the school and the home for adults to meet each week to review how things are going. The pupil may be included for all or part of the meeting. This will provide opportunities to share successes and if necessary amend any arrangements to support the pupil to continue to move forward.

The Mid Term Review

A midterm review meeting between the pupil and all the participants from the initial meeting will be useful to reflect on the progress to date. An outline agenda can be found in Appendix 7.

The focus of the meeting should be on areas of improvement and the pupil should be praised for progress made. The half way point is the occasion for encouraging further and

better efforts. The aim is to assess what is working, maximise it and to shift the emphasis away from what has gone wrong. Adjustments can be made to the routine, content and targets in the programme. Prior to the meeting the pupil's views should have been sought about how they feel they have made progress against the targets and strategies that are in place.

Where targets have been achieved, subsidiary or consequent targets can be introduced. It is important both to keep up momentum and to monitor and evaluate targets.

The idea of the session is to give pupils the opportunity to identify what has gone well, what effect that has had and how to replicate success.

The Final Review

Although it should have been clear at some point in the second half of a PSP whether or not the programme has been successful, reviewing and assessing the intervention is an integral part of the process. Appendix 7 provides an outline for this review meeting.

Focusing on solutions is the key. If the current provision is not meeting the pupil's needs what further measures can be put in place to help a pupil sustain his/her place in mainstream schooling. The experience of the programme should provide excellent information from which to plan for the future.

An assessment by the school of each programme will help develop knowledge for subsequent PSPs. Identifying what went wrong has a place, but of far greater importance is to examine, replicate and develop what went right.

The procedures following a PSP could be as follows:

- School repeat PSP
- Look for a planned request for change of placement

Appendix 2 - Staff Questionnaire

Name:		Class:				
National Curriculum Levels						
Speaking and Listening		Reading				
Writing		Maths				
Any additional Comments regarding their learning						
Please rate his/her behaviour this term						
5 – Very good	4	3	2	1 – Very poor		
Please rate the behaviour of the class						
5 – Very good	4	3	2	1 – Very poor		
Please rate the pupil's behaviour in each of these aspects:						
Positive to teacher	5	4	3	2	1	Negative to teacher
On task	5	4	3	2	1	Off task
Self-contained	5	4	3	2	1	Attention seeking
Appropriate behaviour	5	4	3	2	1	Inappropriate behaviour
Positive to peers	5	4	3	2	1	Negative to peers
In their place	5	4	3	2	1	Out of their place
Appropriately equipped	5	4	3	2	1	Inappropriately equipped
Work up to date	5	4	3	2	1	Work behind deadlines
Able to follow instructions	5	4	3	2	1	Ignores instructions
Puts up their hand	5	4	3	2	1	Calls out
Answers appropriately	5	4	3	2	1	Answering back
Homework always done	5	4	3	2	1	No homework done
Calm when others behave inappropriately	5	4	3	2	1	Reacts badly when others behave inappropriately

Things this pupil does well in school	
What strengths / skills does the pupil demonstrate in other areas?	
What specific behaviours shown by this pupil regularly cause concern?	
Any other comments you may wish to make.	
Please return this form to:	
Return date:	

Appendix 3 - Parent Questionnaire

Name:	Class:
What do you think are your child's best qualities?	
What sort of things worry you about your child?	
When did you first notice difficulties with your child's behaviour?	
How does your child behave at home?	
What do you think we can do to help your child at school?	
Is there anything else you think we should know about?	
I/We will/will not be able to come to the meeting. Please delete as applicable.	
Signed:	Date:

Appendix 4 - Letter to Parents/Carers

Dear _____

As you know we are worried that _____ may be placing themselves at risk of permanent exclusion from school. We want to do everything we can to avoid this, and are asking for your help.

We would like you to come to a meeting to plan a support plan for _____ on _____ at _____.

It will be an opportunity for you to give us your views and will enable us to work together to help _____ to be successful in school. We have also invited staff from the school and professionals from other services to attend.

Would you please complete the form and return it to me by _____? If you wish to add additional information, please do so overleaf.

Thank you for your help.

Appendix 5 - Pupil View – Primary

Name:		Date:		
Class:		Year Group:		
Please help us by saying how you feel you are getting on in school. A grown up you trust can help as much as you want but they need to record your ideas and comments in your words.				
Activity	Happy	Okay	Sad	Comments
Reading				
Writing				
Maths				
PE				
Computers				
Science				
Art/Craft				
Carpet/Listening time				
Working by yourself				
Working with a group				
Assembly				
Playtime				
Lunchtime				
Homework				
With friends				
With teachers				

What things do you enjoy doing in school?

What things do you find tricky in school?

What would make school better for you?

What do you enjoy doing when you are not at school?

Appendix 6 - Pupil View – secondary

Name:		Date:	
Tutor Group:		Year Group:	
How would you describe yourself?			
What things do you like doing at school?			
What things do you find tricky in school?			
What would make school better for you?			
What do you enjoy doing when you are not at school?			

What do you think about your behaviour in?					
	Very Good	Quite Good	OK	Poor	Very Poor
Classrooms	5	4	3	2	1
Corridors	5	4	3	2	1
Assembly	5	4	3	2	1
Toilet	5	4	3	2	1
Breaks	5	4	3	2	1
Outside school	5	4	3	2	1
Canteen	5	4	3	2	1
How do you feel you generally behave?					
5 – Very Good	4	3 - Average	2	1 – Very Poor	
Do you think your behaviour needs to change?					
Yes			No		
How do you feel about changing your behaviour?					
5 – Able to change	4	3 – May be able to change	2	1 – Unable to change	
Would you like some help to change your behaviour?					
Yes			No		
What would that help look like?					

Appendix 7 - PSP Meeting Agenda

Initial PSP Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome (includes anticipated finish time)
2. Purpose and aims of the meeting
3. Introductions and apologies
4. What the pupil does well (Class teacher, Head of Year/House or form tutor)
5. Analysis of staff questionnaires (SENCO)
6. Summary of behaviour log (Class teacher, Head of Year/House or form tutor)
7. Parent comments
8. Pupil comments (Their view should be given if they are not attending)
9. Contributions from other professionals
10. Summary and target setting
11. Strategies to support targets including rewards.
12. Monitoring and review arrangements
13. Dates of next meetings – weekly session, interim review, final review.
14. Thanks

Interim PSP Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome (includes anticipated finish time)
2. Purpose and aims of the meeting
3. Introductions and apologies
4. What the pupil is doing well (Class teacher, Head of Year/House or form tutor)
5. Summary of behaviour log (Class teacher, Head of Year/House or form tutor)
6. Parent comments
7. Pupil comments (Their view should be given if they are not attending)
8. Contributions from other professionals
9. Summary of progress to date
10. Review of targets and strategies to date, any additional actions
11. Monitoring and review arrangements
12. Thanks

Final PSP Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome (includes anticipated finish time)
2. Purpose and aims of the meeting
3. Introductions and apologies
4. What the pupil is doing well (Class teacher, Head of Year/House or form tutor)
5. Summary of behaviour log (Class teacher, Head of Year/House or form tutor)
6. Parent comments
7. Pupil comments (Their view should be given if they are not attending)
8. Contributions from other professionals
9. Summary of progress
10. Review of targets and strategies
11. Next steps
12. Thanks

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POLICY FOR THE EDUCATION OF PREGNANT SCHOOL GIRLS AND SCHOOL AGE PARENTS

Education Inclusion Service

**Policy for the Education of
Pregnant School Girls and
School Age Parents**

July 2021



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Education Inclusion Services

Policy for the Education of Pregnant Schoolgirls and School Age Parents

Policy for the Education of Pregnant Schoolgirls and School Age Parents

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Introduction

This policy has been developed to support pregnant schoolgirls and teenage parents in continuing their education. It outlines the responsibilities of the local authority and schools and the need to ensure adequate support and safeguarding arrangements and child protection procedures are in place. It is essential that all agencies work together to provide a co-ordinated support package for the young person.

The legislative framework:

This policy is cognisant of the 2016 Welsh Government Pupil Support and Inclusion Guidance as well as the Protocol from All Wales Child Protection Procedure which in accordance with the Sexual Offences Act 2003 states that:

- Children under the age of 13 are of insufficient age to give consent to sexual activity;
- For young people aged between 13 and 16 whilst mutually agreed, non-exploitive sexual activity between teenagers does take place, the age of consent should still remain at 16. This acknowledges that this group of young people is still vulnerable, even though they do not view themselves as such; and,
- For young people over the age of 16 but under the age of 18 consideration needs to be given to sexual exploitation and abuse of power and where appropriate a referral needs to be made.

In any of the above circumstances a member of staff receiving the disclosure should not promise to maintain confidentiality and should share the information with the schools Designated Safeguarding Officer who will then determine the most appropriate course of action, which in the case of children under the age of 13 will involve an automatic child protection referral.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 removed the exemption that previously applied to schools about bringing discrimination cases on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity. This means that pupils should not be excluded because of their pregnancy or be required to study at home or in an alternative provision when they wish to remain in school. Pupils must also be allowed to return to school once they have had their babies.

The responsibilities of the local authority

The local authority has a statutory duty to provide suitable education for all pupils who reside in the local authority and ensure all learners are kept safe. This includes pregnant schoolgirls and young parents.

Child Protection

In line with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019):

When a girl under the age of 13 is known to be pregnant, an immediate referral to Social Services **MUST** be made.

Any staff member in a school setting who becomes aware that a girl is pregnant must inform the school's Designated Safeguarding Officer who will determine the most appropriate course of action and ensure appropriate support and safeguarding arrangements are in place. Further advice may be sought from the Safeguarding in Education Manager, Sarah Dixon (01495 356016 / 07815 005241).

Any professional in any learning setting in Blaenau Gwent must not assure confidentiality to a young person, under the age of 18. Appropriate safeguarding and child protection procedures must take precedence. The duty of confidentiality is not absolute and must not be assured or guaranteed.

Any decisions regarding disclosure must be justified according to the particular facts of the case and guidance and documented accordingly. Advice should be sought in cases of doubt from Social Services, Information, Advice and Assistance team.

The responsibilities of the schools

When a school becomes aware that a pupil on their roll is pregnant they should follow the Child Protection guidance and safeguarding arrangements as set out in this policy. The school must also make sure that the pupil is made aware of local services and how to access them.

The school should inform the school's Education Welfare Officer so that appropriate support can be put in place. This support could include counselling, youth service projects or Families First. The head teacher will ensure that the pupil is able to continue with their education and that teachers and other pupils deal with the pregnancy sensitively.

A meeting should be arranged in school to complete a risk assessment, to develop a pre and post-natal plan and look at what multi-agency support might be needed. This may include counselling if the young mum wants to talk about her situation and options. Awareness is needed of the reaction of other pupils to the pregnancy and the support structure that may be needed for the young mum regarding this. Childcare arrangements should form part of the meeting. The risk assessment will need to be reviewed every trimester.

The Youth Service are able to support the young mum using the Baby Think It Over (BTIO) programme to help develop the young mum's confidence and skills (also dads). Other ways in which the Youth Service could provide support should also be explored.

It is good practice for schools to identify a designated person to have responsibility for school age parents so that they can oversee the young person's educational and pastoral support needs. This could be the Designated Officer for

Safeguarding in the setting. It should be noted that pregnancy is not a reason for exclusion.

School Attendance

The pregnant school girl is expected to attend school as regularly and punctually as her pregnancy allows as she is still a child of compulsory school age. Where necessary the pupil should be allowed out of class to rest during the day.

Pregnant schoolgirls and expectant young fathers are entitled to attend ante-natal classes. These absences should be authorised and code 'C' must be used for registration purposes.

A schoolgirl who becomes pregnant is entitled to up to 18 weeks authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth. It would also be reasonable to authorise two weeks' paternity leave for the expectant father following the birth. Code 'C' must be used for registration purposes for both young mum and dad.

The school should consider how they can best support the pupil's education during the period of maternity leave, for example by sending work home.

After the period of maternity leave, the young mother should return to the school at which she is on roll. There may be instances when it is agreed, in consultation with the pupil and her parents/carers that a return to mainstream education would not be in her best interests. In this situation the school are advised to seek guidance from the Inclusion Service.

Breastfeeding has a strong protective effect on the health of the mother and baby. It is important that schools support the student's choice to breastfeed. If the childcare is close to the school, the pupil should be allowed to leave at agreed times or arrangements made for the baby to be brought into school. The school should identify a private area to enable the student to express milk and provide suitable facilities to store milk during the school day.

Young parents are also entitled to some time off to care for their baby in the case of illness. Absence in this instance should be classified as 'authorised' for the mum or the dad. However, should this be an ongoing issue it would be advisable to contact the allocated EWO to discuss what support is available.

Supporting Young Parents

Schools should be supportive of both parents, acknowledging the additional needs that school age fathers and fathers-to-be have. In some cases, the parents may attend the same school. Schools may need to consider offering counselling or additional support to the father as appropriate.

Childcare

The availability of childcare facilities should be taken into account when considering options. Lack of appropriate or affordable childcare provision can prove to be a significant barrier to participation in education. The Family Information Service can provide advice to the young parents about accessing childcare. Families where both grandparents are working, or where a lone grandparent works, may be eligible for the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit for the childcare of their grandchild while they are claiming child benefit for that child. Further information about Working Tax Credit is available by calling 0345 300 3900.

Provided that appropriate education and free childcare facilities are available, any pupil who still fails to attend education will be liable to the same legal action as any other pupil. Where there are childcare problems the young parent should contact the designated Education Welfare Officer to see whether there are alternative educational arrangements that could be made.

Wherever possible, pregnant schoolgirls and young parents will continue their education in mainstream settings. However, where there are medical or psychological difficulties preventing this then an alternative placement or part-time education will be considered.

Appendix 1

School Risk Assessment - Example

To be completed by schools educating a pregnant schoolgirl

Extra-curricular school visits and events necessitate a separate risk assessment.

Young parent name:	Tutor group:	Estimated date of delivery:
Young parent lead:	Risk assessment lead:	Current planned maternity leave date:
Risk assessment date:	Review date:	Review date:
Emergency contact numbers: Parent/Guardian emergency contact number 1 – Parent/guardian emergency contact number 2 –		
Pregnancy and coronavirus guidance: The coronavirus environment and official guidance is constantly evolving. Please see the latest NHS pregnancy and coronavirus guidance to inform your risk assessing. https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/pregnancy-and-coronaviru Your workplace risk assessment should already consider any risks to female employees of Childbearing age and, in particular, risks to new and expectant mothers. As part of your risk Assessment, you should consider whether adapting duties and/or facilitating home working may be appropriate to mitigate risks. It is recommended that schools follow the same principles for pregnant pupils, in line with their wider Health and safety obligations. From week 28 if school are unable to offer a separate room for the pupil to work in, remote learning should be offered. If it is felt that this would be unsuitable due to additional learning needs then an I needs to be completed and forwarded to the Inclusion service, along with a current risk assessment.		
Additional Notes		

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Activity or Risk	Hazard	Control Measures In place	Further Controls Measures required Y/N
Manual handling of equipment and school books/bag.	Excessive manual handling increases the potential for postural issues to arise. Risk may increase as the pregnancy progresses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pregnant schoolgirl should take particular care when moving or carrying any loads and should not presume that she is capable of moving equipment "as normal". - Reduce manual handling tasks where possible and alter the way the task is done to minimise fatigue and reduce physical stress. - Provide a locker to reduce the need to carry heavy loads. - These measures are especially important from the 28th week of pregnancy onwards. 	N
<p>Exposure to shocks, vibration, sudden movements.</p> <p>Risk of impact injuries, falls and being knocked over.</p>	<p>Regular exposure to shocks and vibrations can lead to health complications for the unborn child.</p> <p>Impact injuries, falls and being knocked over can lead to health issues for the pregnant schoolgirl and her unborn child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workstations to be assessed taking the schoolgirl's need for more space into account. - Pregnancy pass (or similar more discrete pass if appropriate) issued permitting schoolgirl to leave class five minutes early to avoid congestion in corridors and to avoid queueing for lunch. - Agreed quiet space can be accessed during break and lunch to avoid congested social areas. - Contact sports ceased. No new sports not already undertaken before pregnancy, to be started in PE. 	N

<p>School activities causing physical fatigue.</p>	<p>Fatigue caused by excessive physical exertion can lead to significant health issues for the unborn child.</p> <p>Fatigue caused by over exerting during P.E lessons or walking around a large school site with urgency and multiple flights of stairs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In discussion with the schoolgirl, adjustments to the length of school day and lessons undertaken should be under regular review. - Seating to be provided where possible and additional rest breaks should be considered. - Access to food and drink between lessons for regular snacking, a bottle of water accessible during lessons. - The amount and type of exercise a pregnant schoolgirl is able to undertake within P.E. lessons to be determined by the schoolgirl in collaboration with her P.E. teacher or identified mentor. - Pregnancy pass (or similar) issued to allow schoolgirl to leave class five minutes early so she can take her time and not rush around the school site. - Consider if a lift pass would be appropriate. 	<p>N</p>
<p>Using chemical agents during science lessons.</p>	<p>Use of chemical substances may cause ill-health to the pregnant schoolgirl and her unborn child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Normal safety practices which apply to all students will protect the pregnant schoolgirl and her unborn child. - Consider seating plan allow the schoolgirl to be sat in a well ventilated part of the classroom to minimise exposure to smoke and fumes. 	<p>N</p>
<p>Ingesting harmful foods during food</p>	<p>Ingesting foods the NHS recommends</p>	<p>Food technology teacher should be aware of the pregnancy and educated on which foods pregnant women should avoid.</p>	<p>N</p>

		- Particular care is taken to ensure the pregnant schoolgirl avoids food the NHS has recommended pregnant women avoid	
Extended use of computer equipment during lessons.	Postural issues may occur through being seated for extended periods of time.	- Workstations assessed taking into account additional needs such as more space needed and postural support. - Sufficient rest breaks to be taken away from the screen.	N
Working in extremes of hot and cold.	Pregnant schoolgirls may be more susceptible to heat stress and may generally feel more uncomfortable in extreme conditions.	- Pregnant schoolgirl not to be in areas where temperatures are especially hot or cold. - Consider additional rest and refreshment breaks.	N
Evacuation in an emergency	Pregnant schoolgirl may be injured through impact with other evacuees during evacuation.	- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan put into place, schoolgirl fully informed of plan in case of emergency. - Key staff informed of pregnancy	N
Access Arrangements to and from school.	Fatigue through travelling and risk of knocks and bumps from travelling in crowded areas.	- Schoolgirl to allow adequate travel time so no need to rush. - Consider using alternative modes of transport if appropriate - Consider travelling and arriving/leaving school before it becomes crowded.	N
Poorly fitting school uniform due to an inevitable increase in size during pregnancy.	Severe discomfort leading to adverse effects. Difficulty wearing school uniform.	- Allow comfortable clothing, ideally in school colours. - Consider if some uniform, such as a blazer, could be comfortably worn in a larger size.	N
First aid needs to be administered.	Pregnancy not taken into account during administration of first aid.	- First Aiders are discretely familiar with the pregnant schoolgirl - First Aiders and team responsible for calling an ambulance have quick access to	N

		<p>emergency contact details.</p> <p>- Pregnant schoolgirl to keep maternity notes with her throughout the school day.</p>	
Sitting exams.	<p>Increased stress and anxiety potentially causing health complications.</p> <p>Postural issues from being seated for long periods.</p>	<p>- Pregnant schoolgirl to be assessed for Exam access arrangement needs and necessary provision made.</p> <p>- Postural support should be provided.</p> <p>- Emotional support provided through a mentor or through mental health services</p>	N

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POLICY AND GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS ON THE USE OF REDUCED TIMETABLES

September 2021

POLICY AND GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS ON THE USE OF REDUCED TIMETABLES

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1.0 Purpose

This guidance is intended to support all maintained Blaenau Gwent schools, Pupil Referral Units and specialist provision settings, hereafter referred to as 'schools', in the appropriate use of reduced timetables (sometimes referred to as 'partial' or 'part-time' timetables), within the current legal and safeguarding framework for pupils deemed medically fit to attend school.

This guidance does not refer to the 'staggered' introduction of reception-aged pupil.

2.0 Summary

There is no statutory basis upon which to establish a reduced timetable, however, in exceptional circumstances schools may need to implement a reduced timetable in order to support a pupil who cannot attend school full-time for a short, agreed period.

To ensure that the application of a reduced timetable is time-limited and that re-integration to full-time education occurs swiftly and is appropriate to the pupil's personal needs, abilities and circumstances, BGCBC is sharing this guidance with all schools in respect of all pupils of statutory school age.

Schools and education settings have a statutory responsibility to ensure that all pupils on their roll receive a full educational entitlement and achieve good outcomes.

In very exceptional circumstances, where the needs of a pupil require it, (for reasons outlined below), it may be reasonable for schools to consider placing a pupil on a reduced timetable for a short period. As the pupil's ability to cope improves, unmet needs are addressed and the offer is adapted, the pupil would be re-integrated quickly into full-time education.

For the purposes of this guidance, a reduced timetable means by agreement with the parent/carer, school and the Senior Education Welfare Officer, that the number of hours spent in education is reduced for a time-limited period of usually no more than six weeks. Schools should consult with all appropriate agencies involved with a pupil when considering a reduced timetable.

Schools should take account and act upon the following guidance in order to continue to improve standards of educational attainment, safeguard the well-being of all children and young people and reduce the likelihood to the school of charges being made in respect of a failure to educate.

3.0 What is a reduced timetable?

All pupils are entitled to a full time education consistent with their Key Stage.

The WG recommendations are that the school offer for the taught curriculum on a weekly basis should be:

- Reception and Years 1 to 2 (children aged 5 to 7): 21 hours
- Years 3 to 6 (children aged 7 to 11): 23.5 hours
- Years 7 to 10 (children aged 11 to 15): 24 hours
- Year 11 (children aged 15 to 16): 25 hours

However [s19](#) of the Education Act 1996 permits a Local Authority to not provide full time education if it is considered in the best interests of the child.

If a school decides to implement a reduced timetable, then there must be a suitable reason to take such an approach as they could be found to have discriminated against a pupil (contrary to s15 of the Equality Act 2010) by a tribunal because the pupil has been denied full time education.

A reduced timetable is one which restricts a pupil's access to a full time curriculum. Careful consideration must be given by schools to the impact that reduced timetables will have on a pupil's entitlement, academic progression and any safeguarding issues that may arise as a consequence of a reduced timetable being implemented.

4.0 General Principles of a reduced timetable

4.1 In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary reduced / part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual need. For example, where a medical condition prevents full-time attendance in education and reduced / part time timetable is considered appropriate to support the pupil's medical needs at this time. This package should form part of a planned reintegration package. A reduced timetable should be supported by a timetable comprising blended learning led by and monitored by the school and that it is suitable for the individual pupil.

4.2 The Local Authority advice is that schools should keep detailed records of the learning programmes provided to the pupil and identify a teacher /teachers who will be responsible for marking completed work and providing feedback to the pupil.

4.3 A reduced / part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution and any agreement must have a time-limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend the school on a full-time basis. (Timescales are outlined in 5.3 below) If despite a robust reintegration plan a child/young person does not respond positively to school, consideration may need to be given to reviewing the current provision. If this is the case

the school should call a meeting with parents, Senior Education Welfare Officer and other relevant LA Officers; e.g. Family First to discuss if other agencies can provide advice and support to address underlying need or Outreach Support to discuss strategies to support the pupil.

4.4 Where a pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Individual Development Plan delegated then a reduced / part-time timetable should only be used in exceptional circumstances and agreement must be obtained from the ALN Manager. A pupil should not be considered for a part-time timetable because of their additional learning need as this may constitute discrimination.

4.5 For a pupil who is looked after (either through agreement under section 76 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 or a Care Order), has a care and support plan or is on the Child Protection Register, consideration of implementing a reduced timetable must be taken in the context of the significant vulnerability of the pupil and this should be discussed with relevant agencies who may have a view as to whether or not this should be agreed. In these cases, any reduced timetable must be agreed with the Corporate Parent and the Senior Education Welfare Officer.

5.0 Reduced timetables could be implemented due to any of the following: -

- A pupil having a short term medical condition
- A pupil in receipt of tuition for long term medical reasons
- A pupil who has been excluded from school and is being reintegrated back into school

5.1 When agreed by school's / education providers, Local Authority and parents/carers as part of a planned reintegration approach for a pupil who has not attended school / provision for a period of time due to a significant event such as illness, disability or mental health issues

5.2 Where a pupil has an on-going medical condition, which results in them being unable to attend school as a result of the condition, then schools can refer them to the Local Authority for tuition in line with Local Authority practice.

5.3 In limited circumstances reduced timetables are used as a method of managing a pupil at risk of exclusion. The Local Authority identify that this may only be chosen after other strategies have been implemented and exhausted. In this case the Local Authority advice is that these are for a maximum six-week period with regular reviews.

NB Where a reduced timetable is agreed, the offer or provision must also include blended learning through the school's hub to ensure continuity of learning. If the pupil does not have access to suitable technology to access this, the school would be expected to provide the equipment necessary to do so.

6.0 Implementing a reduced timetable

6.1 When considering placing a pupil on a reduced timetable, the school must:

- be satisfied that a reduced timetable is an appropriate intervention given the needs of the pupil. There must be a clear and evidenced rationale for considering a reduced timetable as an intervention aimed at supporting the needs of the pupil. A detailed assessment undertaken by the school with relevant evidence from an appropriate professional must be available to inform the decision in line with the rationale for a reduced timetable (e.g. if it is felt that a pupil requires tuition as they are not in a position to engage with the full curriculum due to significant medical/wellbeing concerns then this must be supported by appropriate advice from a CAMHS consultant prior to a referral being made for tuition, or if a pupil is struggling to access a full day in school then EPS advice should be sought as to appropriateness of a reduced timetable with the aim of reintegrating the pupil and enabling them to access a wider range of provision in school.
- formally notify the Senior Education Welfare Officer and where appropriate also alert the ALN Manager that this approach is being considered. Either Officer will link with relevant officers, i.e. EP, EWO, Social Worker to ensure agreement from the Local Authority
- clearly evidence all strategies that they have implemented to engage the pupil in a formal document such as a Pastoral Support Plan
- ensure ethical and informed permission has been secured from parent / carer. This will be underpinned by a written agreement with the parent / carer ensuring signed parental permission prior to the commencement of a time limited reduced timetable. If the parent does not agree, the reduced timetable arrangements cannot be implemented. In these circumstances the school must consider alternative interventions
- complete a detailed written action plan with clear objectives, agreed with the parents / carers and the pupil and involving a relevant Local Authority Officer, demonstrating a clear path of planned reintegration from part time to full time provision over a maximum of a six-week period, reviewed regularly.
- ensure that the written agreement / action plan is provided to the Local Authority within 2 days of its completion
- ensure that review information is provided to the Local Authority within 2 days of each review
- ensure the pupil has an active involvement in the process of planning, reviewing and evaluating the planned intervention
- ensure full time education is in place at the end of the agreed period or arrange a review meeting to identify the way forward. A maximum of one further period of six

weeks should only be agreed in exceptional circumstances with parental and Local Authority agreement. In this case, the school should revisit the plan to reflect the need for an extension.

- ensure that where the pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs/Individual Development Plan, a copy of the reintegration plan must also be sent to the Statutory ALN Team so that it can be included in the pupil's file. The Local Authority must agree to the intervention and a reintegration (reduced) timetable must not interfere with any additional support given to a pupil due to his/her educational needs.
- amend / undertake a risk assessment of the pupil's needs to assess the impact that a reduced timetable would have on the child / young person. It is essential that the pupil's welfare during any absence from school is considered.
- amend any other existing documentation as appropriate to reflect the reduced timetable
- ensure the blended learning offer is in place and that the pupil has the necessary equipment, IT infrastructure and skills to access the school's learning platform
- ensure parents / carers are clear they are taking responsibility for the pupil when he/she is not in school and guarantee that the pupil will be supervised off site and that this is recorded on the agreement
- provide termly returns to the Senior Education Welfare Officer indicating the numbers and names of learners who are accessing reduced timetables (in line with Local Authority practice for monitoring)

7.0 Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The school must:

- Notify the Senior Education Welfare Officer (and where necessary also notify the ALN Manager) that a reduced timetable is in place
- Meet with parent / carer to consider proposals
- Provide the pupil with sufficient and appropriately differentiated work to do for those hours they are not in school. Arrangements should be made to ensure that the work is marked; assessed and constructive feedback is given to the pupil.
- Establish robust arrangements for monitoring and regular review of the plan by a named member of senior staff.
- Ensure the written agreement and action plan is completed and shared with the Local Authority

- Ensure effective communication with parents or carers and key professionals with regard to progress towards the pupil's full re-integration to school.
- Record the pupil's attendance, using the appropriate registration codes, any sessions where the pupils are undertaking blended learning from home whilst not directly supervised by a school member of staff would be coded "C" i.e. an authorised absence
- Consult with Local Authority and provide appropriate information as outlined above to enable Local Authority to make an informed decision and consider the need for officer involvement (if not already in place) if an extension to the initial 6-week period is being sought

5.2 The Local Authority must:

- ensure appropriate monitoring and challenge by collecting termly returns
- agree to any request for a further extension to a part time timetable for it to continue beyond 6 weeks
- undertake quality assurance with schools to audit arrangements where part time timetables are in operation

Appendix 1

Reintegration (Reduced) / Part-time Timetable Process Flow chart

Step 1. School informs Senior Education Welfare Officer that it is considering implementing a reduced timetable and also inform relevant LA Officers; e.g. ALN Manager, Social Worker as required. Consultation with ALN Manager would be required if a pupil has a statement

Step 2. School gathers clear evidence in the form of robust assessment information to support the rationale for a reduced timetable.

Step 3. Local Authority discuss request and give agreement if pupil in receipt of additional funding/provision or is known to Social Services

Step 4. School meets with parents / carers.

Step 5. School completes written agreement and action plan and provides copy for Local Authority

Step 6. Named senior member of school staff to monitor and review at agreed periods and at the end of the 6-week period. Review information to be shared with Senior Education Officer and where appropriate ALN Manager.

Step 7. Meeting arranged to agree way forward

Step 8. A further period of 6 weeks may be considered in exceptional circumstances with agreement from the Local Authority. *

*If the Local Authority do not give agreement further discussion would be required with relevant officers before extending the reduced timetable period.

Appendix 2

Reintegration (Reduced) / Part-time Timetable Consent Form and Action Plan

Pupil Name:		UPN:	
Date of birth:		Gender: MALE/FEMALE	
School:		Year Group:	
FSM: YES/NO	CLA: YES/NO	EAL: YES/NO	ALN: YES/NO
If FSM: What arrangements that have been made to ensure child has access to lunch meals?			
If CLA: Who have proposals re amended timetable been discussed with and what were their view?		Local Authority:	
		Name of Social Worker:	
		Social Worker View:	
		Discussed with Senior Education Welfare Officer:	
		Senior Education Welfare Officer View:	
Is pupil on Child Protection Register/ Child In Need of Care and Support?		Name of Social Worker:	
		Social Worker View	
Have any safeguarding issues been highlighted and discussed with Safeguarding in Education Officer?		SIE Officer view:	
Is the pupil in receipt of ALN provision?		Discussed with ALN Manager:	
		ALN Manager View:	
Has the child had a part-time timetable before? YES/NO		If yes, when:	

Name of parents / carers:	
Name of lead person at school:	
Date when this has been discussed and agreed with head teacher by lead person at school:	
Name of head teacher:	
Name of lead LA Officer	
Name of EP:	
Name of EWO:	

Reason for reduced / part time timetable (Including evidence)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pupil having a short term medical condition • A pupil in receipt of tuition provision for long term medical reasons • A pupil who has been excluded from school and is being reintegrated to school

Date of meeting agreeing the part-time timetable:	
Persons Present at above meeting:	
Start date of part-time timetable:	
Number of hours in education each week	
Review date of part-time timetable:	
End date of part-time timetable:	

--	--

Timetable	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Time in school					

Objectives of part time /reduced timetable:

Reintegration Plan

Review date	
Outcome:	

I / we agree to my child being placed on a reduced / part time timetable for a time limited period in line with the Local Authority policy on reintegration timetables. This has been discussed with me in detail and I understand that this is an intervention to support the reintegration of my child into full time education.

I agree to take full responsibility for my child during the hours they are not attending school / education

Parent/carer signature:

Date:

School signature:

Date:

Other signatures (if required):

LA Officer:

Date:

Social worker:

Date:

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HARD TO PLACE PROTOCOL

**Education Inclusion Service
Hard to Place Protocol**

September 2021



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

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Aim of the Hard to Place Protocol

The aim of this Protocol is designed:

- to provide a fair, equitable and open allocation of school places for those learners who do not have a school place, have been permanently excluded or require re-integration following specialist provision;
- to ensure that vulnerable learners who require a school place quickly are admitted without unnecessary delay;
- to be fair and transparent and to have the confidence of all schools with all schools working collaboratively;
- to take account of the School Admissions Code (2013) and the statutory duty under section 86(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to comply with parental preferences on school admissions;
- to ensure implementation in conjunction with the Blaenau Gwent School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education;
- to ensure up-to-date and accurate records are kept of the movements in and out of all schools;
- to take account of genuine school concerns, e.g. previous serious breakdown of relationship between school and family.

Needs of Learners considered by the Hard to Place Protocol?

Learners covered under the Protocol will be those who are in years Reception to Year 11 who are not solely on a mainstream school roll or are out of school because they are in the process of transferring between schools and who fall under one of the following categories:

- Children who were permanently excluded from their last maintained school placement and are able / ready to integrate to an alternative school;
- Children attending PRUs or alternative provision who are ready to be reintegrated back into mainstream education;

- Children returning from the criminal justice system (secure estate);
- Child victims of serious crimes (child cruelty, kidnapping, sexual or violent crime, FGM);
- Children who are CLA;
- Children who have been out of education for longer than two months, including electively home educated pupils where there is evidence that the child has not been in receipt of a suitable education
- Children with below 50% attendance;
- Children with disabilities or medical conditions which have already impacted on their attendance or participation at school;
- Children of carers, Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, children whose parents offend, asylum seekers and refugees who have been in the UK less than two years and need a supported entry to school;
- Homeless children who have been placed in temporary housing;
- Children who are in a refuge due to domestic violence;
- Children of UK service personnel where a change of location ordered by the service leads to a need for a change of school and will have experienced multiple moves;
- Children who have received 10 days' exclusions in the last twelve months;
- Children on the child protection register;

Coordinating the Hard to Place Protocol

It will be the role of a Designated Inclusion Officer (DIO) to coordinate the movement of learners who are considered hard to place, working in close liaison with the Admissions Officer who manages admissions arrangements and the general transfer process.

The role will include:

- point of contact for schools regarding hard to place learners;

- management of the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet;
- oversight of PSPs;
- close liaison with schools, parents/carers, social services, health and other agencies to ensure a team around the learner approach for those hard to place;
- providing quality assurance of the hard to place summary forms;
- provision of regular updates to DMT, Attendance Forum, Admissions Forum and ALN QA Group.

In addition to the role of the DIO, and in line with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013) and Blaenau Gwent Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education, the Admissions Forum will monitor how well the protocol is working, how quickly learners are found places, and the contribution every school in the area is making.

Determining which Learner is Hard to Place

The table below (Hard to Place Learner Summary) will be used to determine those learners who are considered hard to place. Learners will fall into one of three categories:

Level 1 – Straight admission

Level 2 – Admission with acknowledged need but not meeting criteria for hard to place

Level 3 – considered hard to place

The table sets out 14 categories each covering areas that would either cause a learner to be hard to place (such as permanent exclusion) or contribute in part to a learner being hard to place (such as a learner having been out of education).

Each category has a weighting attached to it, the sum of which determine whether a learner is considered hard to place.

NB: It should be noted that a learner who meets the criteria for Hard to Place does not mean that the learner is unable to be placed or is not appropriately placed in mainstream. It simply gives an indication of those pupils for whom a mechanism is needed to ensure a careful, coordinated and planned integration/reintegration and a recognition that the school has enrolled a pupil with particularly needs.

Nor is the Hard to Place Learner summary a list to be used to support a position that a learner in mainstream is no longer suitable for mainstream. Where schools consider a learner requires a more specialist placement appropriate documentation must be completed and submitted to ALN Panel for consideration.

Hard to Place Learner Summary

Category Score	Category	Tick if relevant	(for INC use only)
7	Children who were permanently excluded from their last maintained school placement and who are ready for re-integration to an alternative school.		
7	Children attending PRUs or Alternative Provision who are ready to be reintegrated back into mainstream education but into a different school from the one originally attended;		
7	Children returning from the criminal justice system (secure estate);		
5	Children who are CLA and in a residential setting;		
3	Child victims of serious crimes (child cruelty, kidnapping, sexual or violent crime, FGM);		
3	Children who are CLA.		
2	Children who have been out of education for longer than two months including electively home educated pupils where there is evidence that the child has not been in receipt of a suitable education;		
2	Children with below 50% attendance;		
2	Children with disabilities or medical conditions which have already impacted on their attendance or participation at school;		
2	Homeless children who have been placed in temporary housing;		
2	Children who are in a refuge due to domestic violence;		
2	Children who have received 10 days exclusions in the last twelve months;		

2	Children on the child protection register;		
1	Children who are carers; children of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers; children where parents offend; children of asylum seekers and refugees who have been in the UK less than two years and need a supported entry to school; children with SEN.		
1	Children of UK service personnel where a change of location ordered by the service leads to a need for a change of school;		
		Total	

Hard to Place Level

Description	Points
Level 1 - Straight forward Admission	0
Level 2 - Admission but doesn't meet scoring for Hard to Place (added to Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet)	1-5
Level 3 - Hard to place (Education Information) form to be completed	6+

The Learner form is sent to schools as part of the information requested by the Admissions Officer upon receipt of an in-year transfer request.

When the summary has been completed the scoring will determine whether a learner is considered hard to place.

Should a learner be Level 1 there is no further action required and the admission will be processed by the Admissions Officer in the usual way. Details of the learner will not be recorded by the DIO.

Should a learner be Level 2 the Admissions Officer will pass the details to the DIO who will hold the information provisionally until placement has been agreed through the Admissions process. Level 2 acknowledges a level of need but not to the extent that a learner could be considered hard to place. The DIO would allocate the scoring to the school the learner transfers to once enrolled and remove the same allocation from the school the pupil has left.

Should a learner be Level 3 then a Hard to Place (Education Information) form will be sent to the school for completion and the Hard to Place process will commence.

All in-year transfers have a 15-day processing deadline. If there is an indication or relevant additional information submitted that determines the pupil(s) is hard to place, then the transfer request will still need to be processed in line with the Blaenau Gwent Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education, within the 15-day deadline.

Foundation Schools

Foundation schools manage their own admission process and therefore reference to Admissions Officer in this document refers to both a local authority Officer in the Education Transformation Team and the admissions committee responsible for admissions in the Foundation school.

Who can refer a pupil under the Hard to Place Protocol?

An officer of the Council can refer an individual under the Hard to Place Protocol. It is anticipated that any individual who has been identified as unplaced will be referred immediately following the local authority becoming aware of their status.

Any school receiving an application outside the normal applications round can refer any applicant under the Hard to Place Protocol if they consider that the applicant satisfies the criteria referred to in the Hard to place Protocol. However, if a parent/carer has applied for a place as an In-Year Admission and a place is not subsequently offered the parent/carer is entitled to appeal this decision. The outcome of an independent School Admissions Appeal will take precedent over the Hard to place Protocol.

All referrals to the Hard to Place Protocol will be reviewed within 15 working days of the referral date.

Hard to Place Processes

Each year a significant number of learners change schools. For the majority, the change of placement will be straightforward and managed solely through the Admissions Team.

However, there are a smaller number of learners who will have a range of needs that would warrant consideration of being Hard to Place.

A number of processes are needed to ensure that for such learners' movements between schools and in and out of specialist provision are managed smoothly.

Below are processes for:

- Movements between Blaenau Gwent schools
- Learners permanently excluded from a mainstream school
- Integration from Specialist Provision into a new school
- Re-integration from Specialist Provision back into current m/s school

Movements between Mainstream Schools

The process below covers only Hard to Place pupils moving between schools following an in-year request by parents.

NB: This process sits separate to the managed move protocol although for pupils who are managed moved, once the learner is sole registered on the new school roll, and if the pupil met the level 2 or 3 criteria then the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet will be updated to reflect the learner starting in the new school and leaving the previous school. The additional weighting will be added to the new school and subtracted from the old school.

1. Admissions form is submitted to the Education Transformation Team.
2. Admissions Officer forwards a copy of the Learner form to the current school.
3. Learner form completed and returned to Education Transformation Team.
4. If the learner scores 0 the Admissions Officer will process the admission in accordance with the Blaenau Gwent Policy.
5. If the learner scores above 0, the Admissions Officer will pass the details to the Designated Inclusion Officer (DIO).
6. If the learner scores above 0 but does not meet the threshold for Hard to Place, the learner's details and scoring will be recorded on the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet and the Admissions Officer will be informed to proceed with the general admissions process.
7. If the learner's score meets the threshold for Hard to Place, the DIO will contact the current school and request that an Education Information Form (EIF) is completed.

8. Upon receipt of the EIF, the DIO will meet with the Admissions Officer and the Lead Officer for Inclusion to discuss parental preference and the current position of each school in terms of new pupil placements accepted and pupils who have moved into other provisions or out of the Borough, as recorded on the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet.
9. Should it be agreed that based on the current scoring a placement in an alternative school should be considered, the DIO will discuss this with the parents/carers.
10. Once a placement has been determined in discussion with parents/carers (whether the original choice of school or an alternative) the DIO will contact the school to provide a copy of the EIF and the Learner form and seek their views. The following needs to be borne in mind:

The LA and the governing body of a maintained school have a statutory duty under section 86(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to comply with parental preferences on school admissions.

11. Should a school not agree with the placement they will be asked to complete a Hard to Place referral form which will be returned to the DIO for discussion at the Additional Learning Needs Panel (Appendix 1)
12. On receiving a referral from a school the Additional Learning Needs Panel will consider the application and make a determination as to whether the referral meets the criteria for placement on the grounds of challenging behaviour.
13. Any referral under the Hard to Place Protocol that does not meet the agreed criteria will be referred back to the named school for admittance as an in year admission. The Additional Learning Needs Panel reaching this determination will provide the School full reasoning for this decision. Schools accept that the Additional Learning Needs Panel's decision in this matter is final and all pupils will be admitted within 5 days of receipt of the Vulnerable Pupil's Panel's decision.
14. Any referral not accompanied by suitable supporting evidence from the School will not be considered. Schools will instead be required to admit any pupils as an In-Year Transfer (in order to reduce the period of time a young person is unplaced). Pupils are to be admitted as an In-Year Transfer within 5 days of receipt of the Additional Learning Needs Panel's decision.

Additional Learning needs panel decision

Any school required to admit a pupil under the Hard to Place Protocol will be provided with the full reasoning for this placement and any supporting evidence and information that would assist with the pupil's admission and transition to the school.

Once a placement decision has been made, the Chair will notify the school that has been identified, in the first instance. The Council's Admissions Department will formally notify the school and parent/carer. Schools accept the Panel's decision and must contact the parent/carer to arrange the admission within seven calendar days. The School must also notify the Admissions Department of the admission date confirming that the child is on roll.

In the event that a school refuses access of a pupil they must provide a written response to the Corporate Director of Education within seven calendar days. In this event the Council will seek to use its powers of direction or will seek the secretary of state to direct the school to admit.

Learners permanently excluded from a mainstream school

Excluded learners should only be educated outside of the mainstream where there are significant problems that need to be addressed in a different environment. For some permanently excluded learners the best course of action is for them to re-join a mainstream school within a matter of days or weeks. The longer a learner is out of school the more difficult it is for them to be reintegrated. For those who are permanently excluded from primary schools, rapid reintegration into a mainstream environment is particularly important.

For a small number of learners approaching the end of compulsory schooling it may be unrealistic to expect them to make a successful return to school. In these circumstances the LA will arrange a programme of study and experience designed to lead to further education, training or employment.

Admission authorities should not normally refuse admission to learners because of their past disciplinary record, including any previous exclusions. The Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013) - Statutory Code Document No: 005/2013 makes it clear that admission authorities should not make subjective judgements as to the suitability of certain learners for a school.

The LA and the governing body of a maintained school have a statutory duty under section 86(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to comply with parental preferences on school admissions. However, this duty does not apply when a learner has been permanently excluded from two or more schools and at least one of the exclusions took place after 1 September 1997. The requirement to comply with parental preference is disapplied for a period of two years following the second exclusion.

When a pupil is permanently excluded from a Blaenau Gwent school, in addition to following Welsh Government process guidance, the school will complete an Education Information Form (EIF) within five school days of the permanent exclusion being issued and forward it to the Designated Inclusion Officer (DIO).

For learners who are CLA, a meeting will also be held within the first five days following the issuing of a permanent exclusion. More details are in the section 'CLA Learners' on page 17.

The LA will convene a Permanent Exclusion meeting within five school days of receiving the EIF with Lead Officer for Inclusion, Principal Educational Psychologist, ALN Manager, DIO and a senior representative from the River Centre. The meeting will determine whether it would be appropriate for the ALN Panel to consider a placement in revolving door provision if available or whether a mainstream placement should be sought.

Option 1 – Mainstream

1. If agreed that a mainstream placement should be sought the outcome of the Discipline Committee and appeals process will be awaited.
2. If the permanent exclusion is overturned the pupil will return to school.
3. If the permanent exclusion is upheld the DIO will liaise with the parents/carers to ascertain parental choice of placement.
4. The DIO will meet with the Admissions Officer and the Lead Officer for Inclusion to discuss parental preference and the current position of each school in terms of the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet and pupil movements.
5. Should it be agreed that a placement in an alternative school to the one expressed as parental preference should be considered, the DIO will discuss this with the parent.
6. Once a placement has been determined in discussion with parents (whether the original choice of school or an alternative) an admissions form will be completed and the DIO will contact the school to provide a copy of the EIF and seek their views. The following needs to be borne in mind:

The LA and the governing body of a maintained school have a statutory duty under section 86(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to comply with parental preferences on school admissions.

7. Should a school not agree with the placement they will be asked to complete a Disagreement form which will be returned for discussion between the DIO and Lead Officer for Inclusion. The Lead Officer for Inclusion will then contact the Head for further discussion. If the matter

remains unresolved, the Lead Officer for Inclusion will provide a brief for the Director of Education.

Option 2 - Specialist Provision

1. If agreed that a River Centre revolving door placement may be appropriate the outcome of the Discipline Committee and appeals process will be awaited.
2. If the permanent exclusion is overturned the pupil will return to the school unless it is agreed at independent appeal that because of exceptional circumstances or other reasons it would not be practical to give a direction requiring reinstatement
3. If the permanent exclusion is upheld the DIO will make contact with the parents/carers regarding placement and will:
 - a. gain parental consent for discussion at ALN Panel
 - b. gain the parents/carers and learner views
 - c. ascertain parental choice of roll school
 - d. explain next steps.
4. The DIO will meet with the Admissions Officer and the Lead Officer for Inclusion to discuss parental preference for roll school and the current position of each school in terms of the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet and pupil movements.
5. DIO will agenda the learner for discussion at the next ALN Panel (late inclusion on the agenda is agreed in this instance).
6. DIO will inform parents/carers of outcome.
7. DIO will liaise with Admissions Officer regarding enrolment.
8. Revolving door placement, if agreed, will begin. If not agreed, the process for integration into mainstream will be followed.
9. After a period of intervention, the pupil will be reviewed and paperwork submitted to ALN Panel with recommendations (either move to mainstream or continued placement at River Centre). If the latter, DIO will agenda under 'Ongoing Placement' and provide a clear rationale as to what has been done with the pupil and what will be done differently to meet their needs to prepare for reintegration.

10. If it is the view of the ALN Panel that a mainstream placement is appropriate, then the process for 'Integration from Specialist Provision into a new mainstream school' should be followed.

Integration from Specialist Provision into a new mainstream school

This process is applicable for:

- Learners who have been permanently excluded and are awaiting placement into a new school from a specialist provision.
 - Learners who attend a specialist provision on a dual registered basis but it would not be appropriate for them to reintegrate back into the school they previously attended.
1. At the point at which it is felt that a pupil is ready to integrate into a new school from specialist provision an EIF will be completed. It is not necessary for a Hard to Place summary to be completed as pupils in specialist provision for SEBD are considered Hard to Place learners automatically.
 2. The DIO will liaise with the parents/carers to ascertain parental choice of placement.
 3. The DIO will meet with the Admissions Officer and the Lead Officer for Inclusion to discuss parental preference and the current position of each school in terms of new pupil placements accepted and pupils who have moved into other provision or out of the Borough, as recorded on the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet.
 4. Should it be agreed that a placement in an alternative school should be considered, the DIO will discuss this with the parent.
 5. An admissions form will be completed.
 6. Once a placement has been determined in discussion with parents (whether the original choice of school or an alternative) the DIO will contact the school to provide a copy of the EIF and seek their views. The following needs to be borne in mind:

The LA and the governing body of a maintained school have a statutory duty under section 86(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to comply with parental preferences on school admissions.
 7. Should a school not agree with the placement they will be asked to complete a Disagreement form which will be returned for discussion

between the DIO and Lead Officer for Inclusion. The Lead Officer for Inclusion will then contact the Head for further discussion. If the matter remains unresolved, the Lead Officer for Inclusion will provide a brief for the Director of Education.

8. Should it be determined that the integration is not appropriate at that time, a further period of specialist provision will be allocated.
9. Once placement has been agreed, but whilst the learner is still on roll at the specialist provision, a PSP meeting should be held to update the PSP. This will be attended by the DIO, a senior member from the specialist provision, a senior leader from the school's relevant key stage as well as representatives from other agencies involved.
10. Once the learner is on roll, the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet will be updated reflecting the learner starting in the new school and leaving the previous school. The additional weighting will be added to the new school.

Re-integration from Specialist Provision back into current mainstream school

1. At the point at which it is felt that a pupil is ready to re-integrate back from specialist provision into their current school, an EIF will be completed. It is not necessary for a Hard to Place summary to be completed as pupils in specialist provision for SEBD are considered to be Hard to Place automatically.
2. As the pupil is already dual registered there is no requirement to seek parental choice or complete an admissions form.
3. The DIO will contact the school to provide a copy of the EIF.
4. The DIO will coordinate a meeting between the school, DIO, specialist provision and the school's Educational Psychologist.
5. The meeting will discuss the reintegration plan, the establishing of a new PSP, timescales and the support that may be required to ensure a successful reintegration.
6. Should a school not agree with the reintegration they will be asked to complete a Disagreement form which will be returned for discussion between the DIO and Lead Officer for Inclusion. The Lead Officer for Inclusion will then contact the Head for further discussion. If the matter remains unresolved, the Lead Officer for Inclusion will provide a brief for the Director of Education.

7. Should it be determined that a reintegration is not appropriate at that time, a further period of specialist provision will be allocated.
8. Once reintegration has been agreed, but whilst the learner is still dual registered at the specialist provision, an updated PSP meeting should be held. This will be attended by the DIO, a senior member from the specialist provision, a senior leader from the school's relevant key stage as well as representatives from other agencies involved.
9. Once the learner is on roll, the Hard to Place Learner spreadsheet will be updated reflecting the learner being back in school.

Permanent Exclusion – More Details

The School's Role

A decision to exclude a learner permanently is a serious one. It will usually be the final step in a process for dealing with disciplinary offences following a wide range of other strategies, which have been tried without success. It is an acknowledgement by the school that it has exhausted all available strategies for dealing with the learner and should normally be used as a last resort.

There will, however, be exceptional circumstances where in the head teacher's judgement it is appropriate to permanently exclude a learner for a first or one-off offence. These might include:

- serious actual or threatened violence against another learner or a member of staff
- sexual abuse or assault
- supplying an illegal drug
- use or threatened use of an offensive weapon.

Exclusion should not be imposed in the heat of the moment. Before deciding whether to exclude a learner the head teacher should:

- ensure that an appropriate investigation has been carried out
- consider all the evidence available to support the allegations. The more serious the allegation and thus the possible sanction, the more convincing the evidence substantiating the allegation needs to be
- take account of the school's behaviour and equal opportunities policies, and, where applicable, the Equality Act 2010
- allow the learner to give his or her version of events
- check whether the incident may have been provoked, e.g. by bullying or by racial or sexual harassment
- if necessary consult others, but not anyone who may later have a role in reviewing the head teacher's decision, e.g. a member of the discipline

committee

- keep a written record of the incident and actions taken.

The school's obligation to provide education continues while the learner is still on the roll and therefore the name of a permanently excluded learner should remain on the school roll until the appeals procedure is completed, or until the time for appeals has expired without an appeal being lodged. It may be removed earlier if the parents/carers and/or learner give notice in writing that they do not intend to appeal.

CLA Learners

Everything must be done to avoid the permanent exclusion of any Child Looked After. Schools are expected to be proactive in working with the young person, carers, social workers, CLA Education Coordinator, River Centre and the Inclusion Service in doing everything possible to avoid permanent exclusion.

Should a head teacher permanently exclude a Child Looked After, the school will provide a completed Education Information Form to the LA within five school days. In addition, the head teacher will convene a meeting within that same timescale to discuss the pupil needs and the support available. The meeting will be attended by the social worker, foster carer/parent, CLA Education Coordinator and representative from the River Centre. The meeting will be chaired by the CLA Education Coordinator.

The head teacher will present the case for the permanent exclusion, providing evidence that the decision was reasonable, fair, proportionate and lawful. Those present will then have an opportunity to comment on the permanent exclusion. At the meeting it will be determined whether there is an option to put alternative provision in place that would enable the head teacher to rescind the permanent exclusion, dual registering the pupil whilst an alternative school setting is found. However, the right still remains with the head teacher to permanently exclude should the circumstances warrant it.

The Education (Admission of Looked after Children) (Wales) Regulations 2009 places a duty on admission authorities in Wales to admit children looked after by a LA in Wales where an application for admission outside the normal admissions round is made by the corporate parent on their behalf.

However, before making an application, the corporate parent (i.e. the Welsh LA responsible for looking after the child) must consult with the relevant admissions authority and make every effort to ensure the appropriateness of the named school in the light of the child's background including SEN and/or faith needs.

Learners with a Statement of SEN/Individual Development Plan

Other than in the most exceptional circumstances, schools should avoid permanently excluding learners with statements of SEN/Individual Development Plans. They should also make every effort to avoid excluding learners who are being supported at School Action or School Action Plus under the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, including those at School Action Plus who are being assessed for a statement.

Where a learner with a statement of SEN is permanently excluded, the head teacher should use the period between their initial decision and the meeting of the discipline committee to work with the LA to see whether more support can be made available or whether the statement can be changed to name a new school. If either of these options is possible, the head teacher should normally withdraw the exclusion.

Therefore, when a learner with a statement of SEN/IDP is permanently excluded, the school will provide a completed Education Information Form to the LA within five school days to enable a LA Permanent Exclusion meeting to be held. This meeting will discuss whether the ALN Panel should consider a revolving door placement for the pupil or whether another mainstream school may be appropriate.

No action can be taken on alternative/new placement until the discipline committee has reached a decision and the appeals process has been concluded.

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires a maintained school that is named in a statement of SEN to admit the child.

Funding to follow learners

Funding is removed from the excluding school's budget at the point at which the permanent exclusion is upheld by the independent appeal panel, or alternatively if there is no appeal, the final date on which an appeal could have been made. The learner will remain on the excluding school's roll until that time and the school remains responsible for the learner's education.

Where a learner is permanently excluded from a maintained school, that school's budget share for that year will be reduced by the amount required in the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010 at the point at which the exclusion is upheld by the independent appeal panel, or alternatively if there is no appeal, the final date on which an appeal could have been made.

Where a school admits a learner who has been permanently excluded in that financial year from another maintained school, the LA will allocate an amount for the rest of the financial year as required by the regulations.

Alternatively, it will help offset the cost to the LA of education otherwise than at school under the LA's duty under section 19 of the Education Act 1996.

The LA's Role

The LA will seek to ensure there are flexible, creative strategies in place to meet the individual needs of learners permanently excluded from school.

Once a learner is removed from a school roll, unless a new school has been identified and transition begun, the LA is responsible for ensuring that suitable education is made available. In cases where the school from which the learner has been excluded is maintained by a different LA, this will be the home LA.

Should the LA Permanent Exclusion meeting decide that the excluded learner should be considered for a revolving door placement, the learner will be added to the agenda of the next available ALN Panel for consideration of future arrangements. Representatives from those services involved with the learner will be invited e.g. social services, CAMHS, Careers etc. and the learner will be discussed first on the agenda.

LA Support to mainstream schools

Reintegration of excluded learners into mainstream schools is a significant challenge for both schools and learners. The LA will make support available for the receiving school to ensure that the reintegration is successful. Support may be in terms of services such as advice & guidance, a suitably trained member of special school staff who provides an agreed level of transition support or ongoing support or funding to assist the school to support the excluded pupil. This is separate from the transfer of learner-related funding from excluding schools to accepting schools under the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010 and the Education (Amount to Follow Permanently Excluded Pupil) Regulations 1999 (as amended).

Reintegration plans and Pastoral Support Programmes (PSPs)

An excluded learner reintegrating into a mainstream school will require a reintegration plan (or transition plan) drawn up. The plan may be an adaptation of an existing PSP or may remain as a separate but linked element.

The school and LA will look carefully at how to meet the needs identified in a learner's plan by using their resources both creatively and flexibly, making best use of existing and additional resources provided. Multi-agency strategies and provision should be fully considered in the development of a full individual timetable. Consideration should be given to whether learners need regular input from a teacher to address their key skills. The amount of input should be agreed according to the individual needs of the learner.

The LA will liaise with the parents/carers, the learner and the receiving school about the plan, where appropriate agreeing action with the learner. The plan should include the steps to be taken for reintegration into school including action to be taken by the River Centre to address the learner's problems and ensure a smooth return to mainstream, or transition into post-16 education.

Where it is considered that reintegration into mainstream is appropriate and possible, consideration should be given to:

- support arrangements to be put in place by LA and school
- preparing the pupil (including knowing their views)
- preparing the parents/carers (including knowing their views)
- preparing receiving staff
- arrangements for arrival
- time-tabling implications
- Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant Time-bound (SMART) targets
- monitoring and review arrangements
- learning and behaviour targets for individual education plans
- the nomination of a key worker in the LA and school
- multi-agency involvement and key areas of responsibility
- home-school liaison.

Appendix 1

Additional Learning Needs Panel Referral Form

Hard to Place

NB. Please consider UNCRC, Disability Discrimination 1995 and the Equality Act 2010 and any reasonable adjustments that can be made when completing this form.

School making referral			
Pupil name			
Pupil address			
DOB		NCY	
Reason for changing school			

I am referring this pupil to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council as a Hard to place pupil. The pupil meets the following fair access criteria (*please indicate as appropriate*):

Blaenau Gwent Hard to Place Criteria	X
Children who were permanently excluded from their last maintained school placement and who are ready for re-integration to an alternative school.	
Children attending PRUs or Alternative Provision who are ready to be reintegrated back into mainstream education but into a different school from the one originally attended;	
Children returning from the criminal justice system (secure estate);	
Children who are CLA and in a residential setting;	
Child victims of serious crimes (child cruelty, kidnapping, sexual or violent crime, FGM);	
Children who are CLA.	
Children who have been out of education for longer than two months;	
Children with below 50% attendance;	

Children with disabilities or medical conditions which have already impacted on their attendance or participation at school;	
Homeless children who have been placed in temporary housing;	
Children who are in a refuge due to domestic violence;	

1. Information about your school *(Secondary schools – please read ‘class’ as year group)*

No. in year group	
How year group is organised	
No. in class this pupil would join	
No. of Statements/IDPs in class	
No. of SA and SA+ in class	
No. of EAL in class	
Support available in the class	
Additional information about this year group	

Please indicate below if there are any particular challenges the school is currently facing in addition to the pupil profile above:

2. Information about the pupil

What is it specifically about this child that means your school could not meet their needs but another school could? These must be unique to the school and considered as valid reasons by the panel

What can the school offer the pupil and what support might be needed to integrate them into the school?

Please give any further information you would like the Panel to take into account

NAME	
ROLE	
DATE	

Please email this form to lisa.adams@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

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EXCLUSION GUIDANCE

September 2021



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

Exclusion Guidance for Schools Contents

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This guidance is supplementary to and should be read in conjunction with the Welsh Government (WG) Guidance "Exclusion from schools and pupil referral units" – which was revised in November 2019. All decisions about exclusion must be made with reference to the guidance which outlines statutory responsibilities. In this BG guidance document, the term 'schools' refers to Primary, Middle, Secondary and Special schools. **Schools should note that the WG guidance is statutory guidance and is available via the link below:** <https://gov.wales/exclusion-schools-and-pupil-referral-units-pru>

Contact details for queries relating to exclusions:

Statemented pupils – ALN Manager

ALNEnquiries@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk or 01495 355443

Non statemented pupils – Senior Education Welfare Officer

lisa.adams@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk or 07870 998947

Introduction

Our vision is for all children and young people in Blaenau Gwent is to be purposefully engaged in an educational programme appropriate to their needs and age. We want our children and young people to flourish and to achieve positive outcomes for themselves, their families, and our community and for society at large. We want our children and our adults to be happy, healthy, capable and engaged with school and the wider community. Minimal school exclusions will be a key indicator of our collective success.

National government recognises and promotes the importance of wellbeing in schools as a key factor in achieving this ambition. Blaenau Gwent is aware that improving the all-round wellbeing of pupils and staff is important in and of itself, as well as crucial in lifting performance and attainment levels.

The latest published data from Welsh Government in October 2020 highlighted the fact that children with free school meals were consistently (at least 3 times higher) more likely to be excluded and overall children with additional learning needs (ALN) have higher rates of exclusion than those without.

The Children's Commissioner for Wales report, 'Building Blocks – Inclusion in the Foundation Phase', highlighted concerns about repeat exclusions, reduced timetables and children being taught in isolation.

The Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has also recently written a report in light of growing national concern regarding the correlation between school exclusions and children's subsequent involvement in crime. The research indicated that school exclusions were not necessarily a causal factor for criminality, but rather an indicator of a series of vulnerabilities that increase both exposure to crime and exploitation. More specifically, the research suggested that children excluded or at risk of exclusion from school sit within a network of vulnerability, including adverse childhood experiences, additional learning needs and care experience.

In most cases, fixed-term exclusions are only given after exhausting all the available options for internal interventions and exclusions from the classroom. However, the research also demonstrated the clear need to consider what additional external support can be provided to children to prevent exclusion when internal school-based interventions do not succeed.

In light of the recent reports, the increased focus on the emotional well-being needs of children, and the fact that Blaenau Gwent has the 2nd highest number of fixed term exclusions in Wales, the guidance has been revised as part of Blaenau Gwent's strategy to reduce exclusions

In addition, the Managed Move policy has also been revised and we would encourage head teachers to use this as a supportive intervention.

About This Guidance

This supplementary guidance updates and replaces all previous guidance regarding exclusion from maintained schools, including special schools, published by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, herein after referred to as the Local Authority (LA). It applies equally to children with and without statements of special educational needs or individual development plans (IDPs).

This guidance differs to previous guidance as it now contains a checklist for schools to reflect on provision for learners presenting with challenging behaviour to reduce the risk of exclusion.

This guidance is intended to be of assistance to all parties involved in the exclusion process including head teachers, governing bodies and local authority officers.

The requirements of the guidance apply in relation to all pupils, including those who may be below or above compulsory school age, such as those attending nursery classes.

The term “parents” in this guidance include any person who has parental responsibility (which includes the LA where it has a care order in respect of the child) and any person (for example, a foster carer) with whom the child lives. Where practicable it is expected that all those with parental responsibility should be engaged with the exclusion process. – **check reference in page 5 of WG to ‘relevant person’**

The Education Welfare Service should be the first point of contact for any queries that head teachers, governors, parents, pupils or others may have regarding exclusions.

1 3 stage approach to supporting Inclusion of learners presenting with challenging behaviour

1. Monitor Behaviour – report card – contact home	Use the school relationship/behaviour policy and monitor behaviour, attendance and attainment regularly. Work with ALNCO to ensure repeated behaviours resulting in sanctions are not a result of unmet need. Ensure work is being planned for at the right level of challenge. Work with parents, to ensure home-school partnership towards improved engagement with school and learning.
2. Inclusion Support Plan ISP The ISP is a helpful alternative to an individual behaviour plan or Pastoral support plan. Try to establish what the child is trying to communicate through their behaviour by reflecting on triggers	Introduce following internal exclusions or a serious behaviour incident. Review WEEKLY with key adults in school. Work towards agreed outcomes (rather than set targets) to ensure the

for disengagement and developing strategies to reengage the learner.	pupil makes progress from where they are currently.
3. Pastoral Support Plan PSP - The PSP continues to run as the main framework for supporting school settings to reduce permanent exclusions.	Introduce if the pupil is at risk of exclusion/PEX. Outline the support offered. Frequently meet with parents to review progress. Set achievable goals towards an acceptable outcome in a period of time.

When thinking about next steps for the learner – consider the following questions

- Check the data (attendance / exclusions / behaviour points)
- Are there any themes?
- Can you identify any triggers for behaviour through the patterns?
- Does the pupil file highlight a history of need?
- Has the pupil been identified with any ALN?
- Has Blaenau Gwent ALN guidance been used to check what the key barriers to engaging in learning are for the pupil? [hyperlink to be inserted](#)
- Have any diagnostic assessments been used to identify any needs or areas for development?
- Is the pupil in a group vulnerable to underachievement? (CLA/ALN/EAL/CASP)
- Is there an IDP/statement in place / Has there ever been a CAF or IDP/statement for this child?
- Does the pupil have a one-page profile?
- Is the school relationship/behaviour policy being used consistently to support the learner (including any identified reasonable adjustments?)
- Is the school reward system being used in a way that is equitable to the pupil's needs?
- What external issues may be affecting the learner at this time? (e.g. significant family events).
- Are there any historic issues that may now be affecting the pupil?

Provision for the learner. Have you engaged with or considered the following?

- Team teach training and de-escalation strategies
- Behaviour assessment to identify inclusion strategies
- Is there a Risk Assessment in place for staff, other pupils, the pupil themselves?
- Have you considered an Ed Psych referral and assessment?
- Have you tried a bespoke timetable working with the pupil to avoid 'behaviour hot spots'?
- Work with the pupil to RAG rate their timetable and put in support to eliminate red and reduce amber.
- What incentives are meaningful and relevant to the pupil?
- Is a reduced timetable a useful tool at this time? (Ensure all guidelines are followed for safeguarding reasons)
- What nurture interventions are available that would benefit the pupil?
- Would the CYP benefit from seeing a counsellor at this time?

- Some form of therapy?
- Is support needed for the family?
- Consider referral to external agencies / partners.
- Is there a key adult for the pupil – to advocate and support them each day, rewarding where success and progress has been made and communicate with home and other adults in school?
- Is there a need for restorative justice to move a relationship forward?
- Is there a time line of incidents that supports the pupil to begin to understand and manage their behaviours?
- How are staff being supported?
- How is the pupil developing independence in managing their emotions?
- Support for developing emotional literacy and self-regulation strategies.

At each meeting / review point

- What is the data telling us now?
- What are the views of the child?
- What are the views of the Parents / staff / support team / external agencies?
- How will I ensure the meeting is professional and managed well so all views can be heard and it is a positive process for all moving the situation forward?

At each significant incident

- Ensure the paperwork is completed and a clear record is maintained. Avoid emotional language and keep it factual.
- Ensure all parties share what happened so that an accurate account is recorded in an impartial manner.
- Ensure the pupil has supported time to reflect and learn from what went wrong using appropriate tools when they are calm, ready and able to do so.
- Ensure the pupil learns from the behaviour incident and has opportunities to mend relationships and 'put right' the situation when they are calm, ready and able to do so.
- Ensure staff who were involved have time to follow up with the pupil to move on from the incident when the time is appropriate.
- Ensure students who were involved in the incident have the appropriate follow up.
- For all CYPs involved communicate clearly with parents / carers what happened and the follow up

2 Decision to Exclude

- 2.1 Only the Headteacher or teacher in charge of a PRU can exclude a learner. They cannot delegate the power to exclude to another teacher. In their absence, the most senior teacher may exercise the power of exclusion though they should make clear they are working in the Head teacher's absence.

2.2 If a pupil is deemed to be at risk of exclusion it is appropriate to have a Pastoral Support Programme and support from Families First to enable a range of strategies and support to be implemented.

2.3 Schools should, as far as possible, avoid permanently excluding any pupil with a statement, an individual development plan or any pupil who is a child looked after.

3 Key considerations before excluding – Safeguarding

Where a pupil receives support from a Families First worker, is a child in need of care and support or subject to child protection planning, the school must inform the relevant professionals within social care if they feel the child is at risk of exclusion and in advance of any decision to exclude.

If you are concerned about the risk of exclusion of a looked after child, please contact the pupil's social worker and the child looked after co-ordinator.

For pupils where there is concern around sexual, drug or gang exploitation, for those who self-harm or demonstrate behaviours that could cause them significant harm, an exclusion can result in increased risks to the pupil's immediate safety, health and wellbeing.

Proactive planning with professional partners and family/carers about what to do in the event of a serious breach of school relationship/behaviour policy where the conditions for exclusion are met is the ideal, but in an unforeseen situation, contact the relevant involved professionals at the earliest opportunity and before sending a pupil home.

3 Headteacher' s Checklist

3.1 Any decision to exclude a pupil must be:

- In response to serious breach of the school's behaviour policy and
- If allowing the learner to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the learner or others in the school.

3.2 In making a decision to exclude a pupil, the Headteacher must be able to demonstrate that the exclusion has been carefully considered and is being used as a last resort. The checklist below is designed to assist head teachers in these deliberations.

The circumstances of the case	Yes	No
Has there been a serious breach or breaches of the school behaviour policy?		
Does the pupil's presence seriously harm or threaten to harm the education/welfare of pupils/others?		
Is exclusion a last resort following a wide range of other strategies that have been unsuccessful? Is this a serious 'one off' offence?		
Is exclusion the appropriate response? Factors to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a thorough investigation been carried out? • Has the pupil's version of events been sought / encouraged / recorded? • Has the evidence been considered in the light of school policies and possible discrimination? • Are there any mitigating circumstances or any provocation which may be relevant (bullying, harassment etc.)? 		
Has a pastoral support programme been used?		
Is this pupil at school action or school action plus? and if so; Has the possibility of additional support from the LA been explored?		
Have alternatives to exclusion been considered (e.g. restorative approach, mediation, internal exclusion)?		
Standard of proof – "on the balance of probabilities" is it more probable than not that the pupil did what he/she is alleged to have done?		
Special considerations	Yes	No
ALN Does this pupil have a statement of special educational needs or an individual development plan? Has the ALN team been contacted? Has an emergency review been arranged?		
CLA Is this pupil looked after? Has the CLA Co-ordinator been contacted?		
SAFEGUARDING Is this pupil subject to a child protection or a child in need plan? Has the social worker been contacted?		
Is there a JAFF for this pupil? What other agencies/services are involved?		
Have issues of ALN or disability been taken into account and reasonable adjustments put in place?		

3 Notification of Exclusions

3.1 When a Headteacher has decided to exclude a pupil he/she must:

- immediately inform the parent(s) by telephone;
- draft the appropriate letter (see model letters in appendices)
- ensure that this letter is sent by first class post to arrive the following day or is hand delivered;
- ensure that the letter contains the following information:
 - the reasons for the exclusion;

- the period of fixed term exclusion or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent and the date it takes effect;
- parents' and learner's right to make representation about the exclusion to the governing body's discipline committee; *
- how any representation should be made including the person for the parent/carer and/or learner should contact;
- when there is a legal requirement for the governing body to consider the exclusion, that the parents and/or learner have a right to attend a meeting, be represented at this meeting (at their own expense) and to bring a friend;

* or for a PRU

- for a fixed term exclusion, the parent/carer's and learner's right to make representations about the exclusion to the LA
- for a permanent exclusion, the right to an independent appeal panel hearing.

3.2 Headteachers should ensure an exclusion form is completed **within 24 hours** after all exclusions and forwarded to the LA via BSInclusionSupport@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk so that the LA database can be kept up to date (see Appendix A for exclusion form). Full details of notification requirement to the school's governing body can be found in section 8.4 of this guidance and in Appendix B 'Summary of Main Processes and Time Limits for Fixed Term Exclusion'.

3.3 For a permanent exclusion, if the pupil lives outside the LA in which the school is located, the head teacher must also advise the pupil's 'home authority' of the exclusion without delay.

4 Unofficial / Illegal Exclusions

4.1 The procedures described above and in the WG guidance must always be applied when a pupil is excluded. Sending a pupil home informally for a "cooling-off period" or asking parents to take a pupil home to avoid an exclusion are illegal acts which could be subject to challenge. This also applies to lunchtimes; if a pupil is asked by the school to go home at lunchtimes this must also be treated as one quarter of a day exclusion for each lunchtime.

4.2 It is also unlawful to exclude for a non-disciplinary reason. For example, it would be unlawful to exclude a pupil simply because they have additional needs or a disability that the school feels it is unable to meet, or for a reason such as: academic attainment/ability; the action of a pupil's parents; or the failure of a pupil to meet specific conditions before they are reinstated, such as to attend a reintegration meeting.

4.2 At no time should a school encourage a parent to electively home educate (EHE) in order to avoid a permanent exclusion. Such children will either not have access to the provision that they need or will transfer to a new school

without appropriate support thereby placing additional pressures on both schools and families. Schools should, therefore, not promote the use of EHE as a means to remove a child with challenging behaviour or poor attendance from their roll.

5 Reduced Timetables

- 5.1 It is illegal for a school to impose a reduced or partial timetable.
- 5.2 In some cases a reduced timetable may be used as a short-term measure towards achieving full reintegration, building back up to full time hours as long as the parents are in agreement and a written agreement, signed by all parties with stated review dates where appropriate, put in place via a PSP.
- 5.3 Full Blaenau Gwent Guidance on the use of reduced timetables is available from the education directorate.

6 Procedures following Exclusion

- 6.1 Following a permanent exclusion, staff are available within the LA to assist with the reintegration and support of excluded learners.

Statemented pupils – ALN Manager

Non statemented pupils – Senior Education Welfare Officer

- 6.2 The Education (Reintegration Interview) (Wales) Regulations 2010 which came into force on 5 January 2011, require Headteachers of schools to request in specified circumstances parents/carers of learners excluded for a fixed-term to attend a reintegration interview at the school. The request for interview applies to all fixed-term exclusions for primary-aged learners but only fixed-term exclusions of six or more days for secondary-aged learners. Reintegration interviews need to take place within 15 school days of the last day of the exclusion period.

Headteachers should note, however, that neither parents nor a pupil can be required to meet specific conditions, such as attending a reintegration meeting, before reinstatement.

7 ALN / Disability / Vulnerable Group Considerations

- 7.1 Other than in the most exceptional circumstances, schools should avoid permanently excluding any pupil with a statement of SEN or an IDP. The 2010 Equality Act does not prohibit schools from excluding learners with a protected characteristic but does prohibit schools from excluding learners because of their protected characteristic (e.g. excluding a disabled learner because of their disability or because of their racial group) or discriminating unlawfully during the exclusions process. This applies to permanent and fixed-term exclusions.

Where a pupil is 'Looked After' (CLA), schools should try every practicable means to maintain the learner in school and should seek LA and other professional advice as appropriate prior to any exclusion decision.

8 The Governing Body's Duty to Consider an Exclusion – Key Points

- 8.1 The responsibility of the governing body to consider exclusions is usually delegated to a sub-committee of at least three governors. This committee is known as the Discipline Committee. The Discipline Committee has a clear set of responsibilities.
- 8.2 Where required or requested, the governing body must hold a Governors Discipline Committee (GDC) within the required timescale. (In the case of a permanent exclusion, the GDC must meet within 15 school days of being notified of the exclusion).
- 8.3 For all fixed term exclusions of 5 days or fewer within a term, the Headteacher must notify the governing body discipline committee once a term. For fixed term exclusion of 6 to 15 days or more than 20 lunchtimes in a school term and/or where a public exam or national test will be missed, the Headteacher must notify the governing body discipline committee within one day. For all fixed term exclusions of more than 15 days in a school term and following any exclusion in the same term after 15 days has been reached the Headteacher must notify the governing body discipline committee within one day.
- 8.4 Full advice and support is available to school and governing bodies on the role and responsibilities of the GDC from the Governor Support and Development Section of the EAS (where the school has entered into the SLA agreement).

South East Wales Education Achievement Service

[Statutory Committees <statutory.committees@sewaleseas.org.uk>](mailto:statutory.committees@sewaleseas.org.uk)

NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL EXCLUSION

Please send completed form within 24 hours to:
BSinclusionsupport@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk



SCHOOL

TYPE OF EXCLUSION

Permanent

Fixed Term

Lunchtime

Name of Pupil

DOB

Gender

NC Year

Is Pupil CLA?

If Yes, please state
LA and status

ALNN Status

SA

SA+

Statement
/IDP

Ethnicity

Name of Parent/ Carer

Address

Contact Telephone Number/s

EXCLUSION DETAILS:

Start date of exclusion:

*AM / PM

(*please delete as appropriate)

End date of exclusion:

*AM / PM

(*please delete as appropriate)

No of days excluded:

Return date:

#INSET dates:

please indicate if there are any INSET / school closure days during the period of the exclusion

REASON(S) FOR EXCLUSION: ONE primary reason must be marked with a "P" for reporting to the Welsh Government. Supplementary reasons may also be marked with S.

Physical Assault against pupil (PP)

Sexual misconduct (SM)

Physical assault against adult (PA)

Drug and alcohol related (DA)

Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against a pupil (VP)

Damage (DM)

Verbal abuse / threatening behaviour against an adult (VA)

Theft (TH)

Persistent disruptive behaviour (DB)

Bullying (BU)

Racial abuse (RA)

Other (OT)

Signed:(Headteacher)

Date:.....

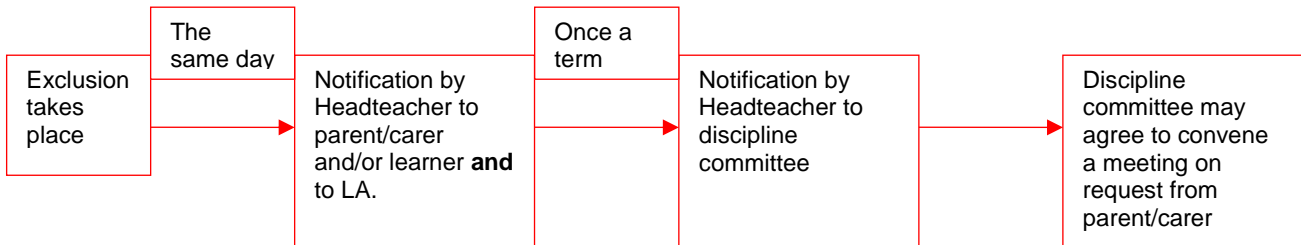
You MUST attach a copy of the notification letter sent to parents/guardian

Appendix B

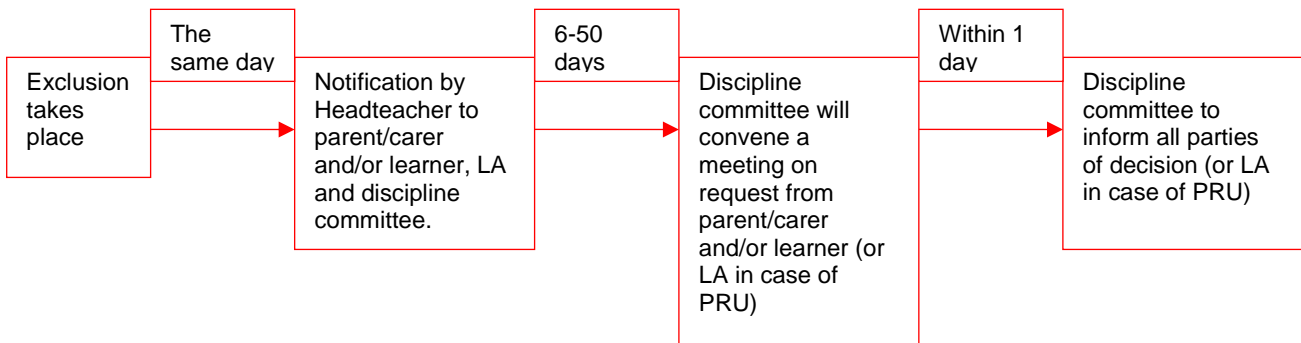
Fixed-term exclusions

The term 'days' refers to school days throughout.

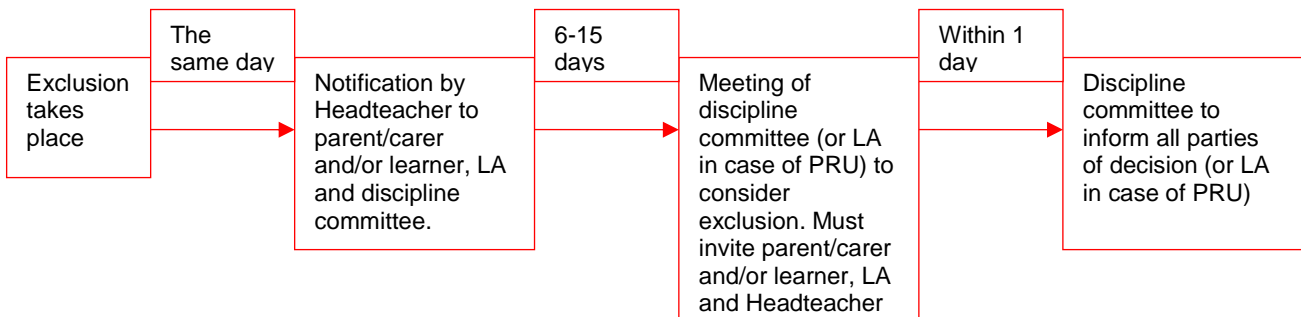
5 days or fewer in a school term



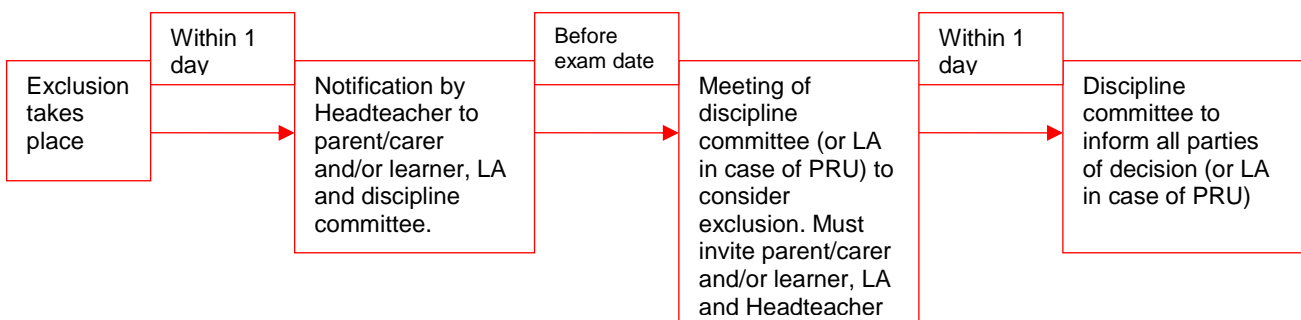
6-15 days or more than 20 lunchtimes in a school term and/or where a public exam or national test will be missed



More than 15 days in a school term and following any exclusion in the same term after 15 days has been reached



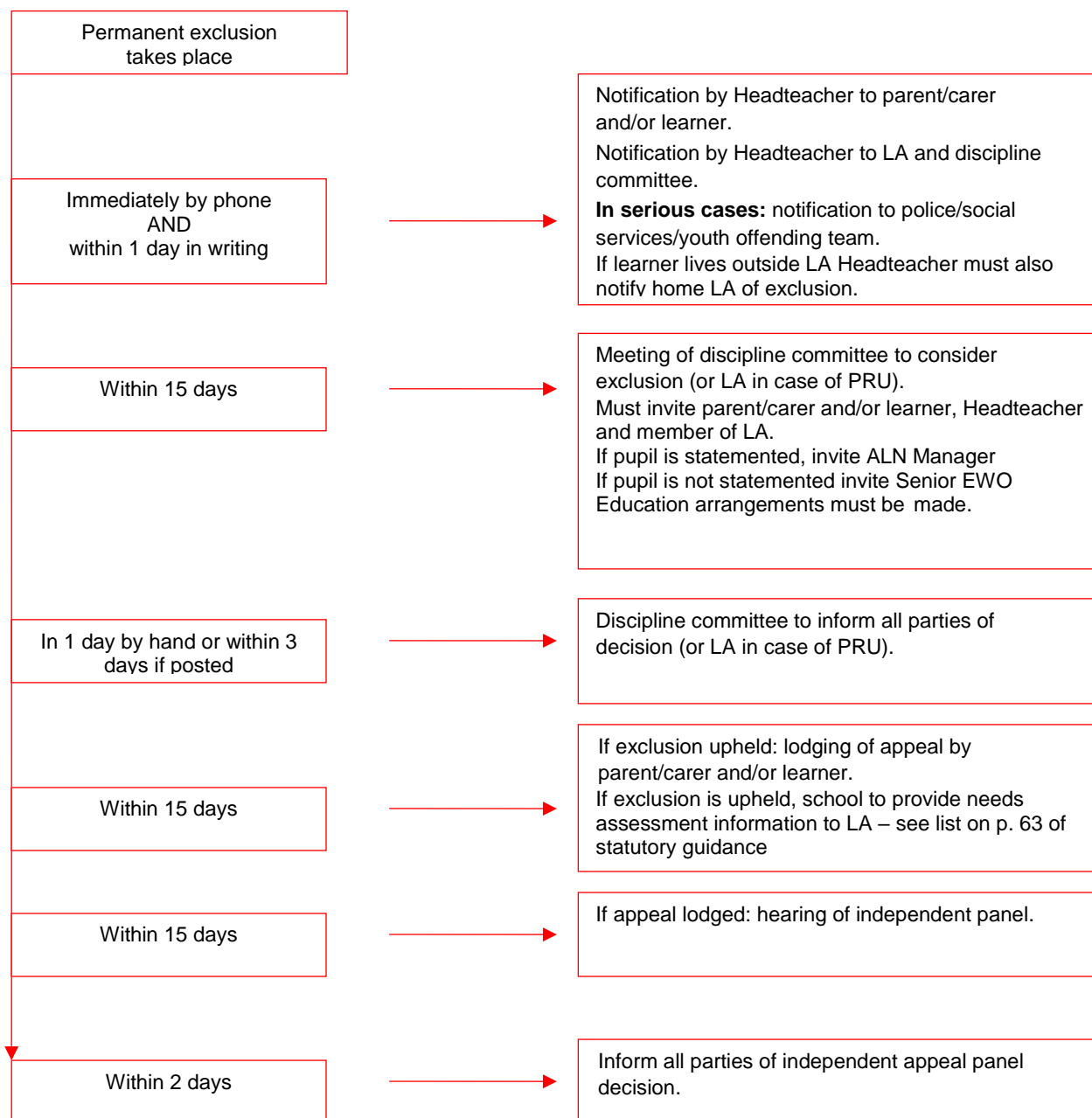
Where a public examination will be missed



Appendix C

Permanent exclusions

The term 'days' refers to school days throughout.



Appendix D

Model Letters

Model letter 1: Fixed-term exclusion of less than six days

From Headteacher (or teacher in charge of a PRU) notifying parent/carer and/or learner of a fixed term exclusion of less than six days, and where a public examination is not missed.

Dear **[parent/carer/learner's name]**

I am writing to inform you of my decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** for a fixed term of **[period of exclusion]**. This means that **[learner's name/you]** will not be allowed in school for the period of the exclusion which began on **[date]**.

I realise that this exclusion may well be upsetting for you and your family, but the decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** has not been taken lightly. **[learner's name/you]** has/have been excluded for this fixed term because **[reason for exclusion]**.

The school will continue to set work for **[learner's name/you]** during the period of his/her/your exclusion **[insert details of arrangements that are in place for this]**. Please ensure that any work set by the school is completed and returned to us for marking.

[For learners over compulsory school age insert the following]. As you have been excluded from the school you should arrange for someone to return the work to us on your behalf.

[School other than PRU]

You **[and learner's name where learner is aged less than 11]** have the right to make representations to the school governors' pupil discipline committee. If you wish to make representations please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, as soon as possible. While the discipline committee has no power to direct reinstatement they must consider any representations you make and may place a copy of their findings on your child's/your school record.

[PRU only]

You **[and learner's name where learner is aged less than 11]** have the right to make representations to **Blaenau Gwent LA**.

These representations will be considered by **[contacting the Lead Officer for Inclusion]**. If you wish to make representations please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]** as soon as possible.

You also have the right to see a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. Due to

confidentiality restrictions, you will need to notify me in writing if you wish to be supplied with a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. I will be happy to supply you with a copy if you request it. There may be a charge for photocopying.

A parent/carer also has the right to make a claim of disability discrimination to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW) if she or he thinks that the exclusion is because of a disability their child has. The address to which claims should be sent is Unit 32, Ddole Road Enterprise Park, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6DF.

[Primary school only]

You **[and learner's name]** are requested to attend a reintegration interview with me **[alternatively, specify the name of another staff member]** at **[place]** on **[date]** at **[time]**. If that is not convenient, please contact the school before **[date within the next 10 days]** to arrange a suitable alternative date and time. The purpose of the reintegration interview is to discuss how best **your child's/your** return to school can be managed. You should be aware that **your/your parent's/your carer's** failure to attend a reintegration interview will be a factor taken into account by a court when deciding, on any future application, whether to impose a parenting order on **you/your parent/your carer**.

You may want to contact **[name]** at Blaenau Gwent LA on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, who can provide advice.

[Learner's name/your] exclusion expires on **[date]** and we expect **[learner's name/you]** to be back in school on **[date]** at **[time]**.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Headteacher/teacher in charge of PRU

Model letter 2: Fixed-term exclusion of 6–15 days

From Headteacher (or teacher in charge of a PRU) notifying parent/carer and/or learner of a fixed-term exclusion of six to 15 days, or where cumulative exclusions in the same term fall within this range, or where a public examination is missed.

Dear **[parent/carer/learner's name]**

I am writing to inform you of my decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** for a fixed term of **[period of exclusion]**. This means that **[learner's name/you]** will not be allowed in school for the period of the exclusion which began on **[date]**.

I realise that this exclusion may well be upsetting for you and your family, but the decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** has not been taken lightly. **[learner's name/you]** has/have been excluded for this fixed term because **[reason for exclusion]**.

The school will continue to set work for **[learner's name/you]** during the period of his/her/your exclusion **[insert details of arrangements that are in place for this]**. Please ensure that any work set by the school is completed and returned to us for marking.

[For learners over compulsory school age insert the following]

As you have been excluded from the school you should arrange for someone to return the work to us on your behalf.

[School other than PRU]

You have the right to request a meeting of the school governors' pupil discipline committee at which you **[and learner's name where learner is aged less than 11]** may make representations and the decision to exclude can be reviewed. As the length of the exclusion is more than five school days (or equivalent) the committee must meet if you request it to do so. The latest date the committee can meet is **[date – no later than 50 school days from the date the committee is notified]**. If you wish to make representations to the committee and wish to be accompanied by a friend or representative please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, as soon as possible.

[PRU only]

You **[and learner's name where learner is aged less than 11]** have the right to make representations to **Blaenau Gwent Local Authority**. These representations will be considered by **the Lead Officer for Inclusion**. If you wish to make representations please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]** as soon as possible.

[Note: this wording is not suitable where the learner would lose the opportunity to take a public examination.]

You also have the right to see a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. Due to confidentiality restrictions, you will need to notify me in writing if you wish to be

supplied with a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. I will be happy to supply you with a copy if you request it. There may be a charge for photocopying.

A parent/carer also has the right to make a claim of disability discrimination to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW) if she or he thinks that the exclusion is because of a disability their child has. The address to which claims should be sent is Unit 32, Ddole Road Enterprise Park, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6DF.

[Applies to children of compulsory school age only]

You **[and learner's name]** are requested to attend a reintegration interview with me **[alternatively, specify the name of another staff member]** at **[place]** on **[date]** at **[time]**. If that is not convenient, please contact the school before **[date within the next ten days]** to arrange a suitable alternative date and time. The purpose of the reintegration interview is to discuss how best **your child's/your** return to school can be managed. You should be aware that **your/your parent's/your carer's** failure to attend a reintegration interview will be a factor taken into account by a court when deciding, on any future application, whether to impose a parenting order on **you/your parent/your carer**.

You may want to contact **[name]** at **Blaenau Gwent** LA on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, who can provide advice.

[Learner's name/your] exclusion expires on **[date]** and we expect **[learner's name/you]** to be back in school on **[date]** at **[time]**.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Headteacher/teacher in charge of PRU

From Headteacher (or teacher in charge of a PRU) notifying parent/carer and/or learner of a fixed-term exclusion of 16 days or more, or where cumulative exclusions in the same term are 16 days or more.

Dear **[parent/carer/learner's name]**

I am writing to inform you of my decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** for a fixed term of **[period of exclusion]**. This means that **[learner's name/you]** will not be allowed in school for the period of the exclusion which began **[date]**.

I realise that this exclusion may well be upsetting for you and your family, but the decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** has not been taken lightly. **[learner's name/you]** has been excluded for this fixed term because **[reason for exclusion]**.

Alternative education other than setting work will be provided for **[learner's name/you]** if the exclusion has not been overturned within 15 days. A **Blaenau Gwent** LA representative will contact you to discuss this.

[School other than PRU]

As the length of the exclusion is more than 15 school days (or equivalent) the school governors' pupil discipline committee must automatically meet to consider the exclusion. At the review meeting you may make representations to the committee if you wish to do so. The latest date the committee can meet is **[date – no later than 15 school days from the date the discipline committee is notified]**. If you wish to make representations to the committee and wish to be accompanied by a friend or representative please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, as soon as possible. You will, whether you choose to make representations or not, be notified by the Clerk to the committee of the time, date and location of the meeting.

[PRU only]

As the length of the exclusion is more than 15 days **Blaenau Gwent LA** must consider the exclusion. **[Set out the arrangements which the LA has made to review fixed-term exclusions.]** A review meeting will be held and at the review meeting you may make representations if you wish. The latest date for a review meeting is **[date – no later than 15 school days from the date the LA is notified]**. If you wish to make representations and wish to be accompanied by a representative please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**.

You also have the right to see a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. Due to confidentiality restrictions, you will need to notify me in writing if you wish to be supplied with a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. I will be happy to supply you with a copy if you request it. There may be a charge for photocopying.

A parent/carer also has the right to make a claim of disability discrimination to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW) if she or he thinks that the exclusion is because of a disability their child has. The address to which claims should be sent is Unit 32, Ddole Road Enterprise Park, Llandrindod Wells, Powys, LD1 6DF.

[Applies to children of compulsory school age only]

You **[and learner's name]** are requested to attend a reintegration interview with me **[alternatively, specify the name of another staff member]** at **[place]** on **[date]** at **[time]**. If that is not convenient, please contact the school before **[date within the next 10 days]** to arrange a suitable alternative date and time. The purpose of the reintegration interview is to discuss how best **your child's/your** return to school can be managed. You should be aware that **your/your parent's/your carer's** failure to attend a reintegration interview will be a factor taken into account by a court when deciding, on any future application, whether to impose a parenting order on **you/your parent/your carer**.

You may want to contact **[name]** at **Blaenau Gwent** LA on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, who can provide advice.

[Learner's name/your] exclusion expires on **[date]** and we expect **[Learner's name/you]** to be back in school on **[date]** at **[time]**.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Headteacher/teacher in charge of PRU

Model letter 4: Permanent exclusion

From Headteacher (or teacher in charge of a PRU) notifying parent/carer and/or learner of a permanent exclusion.

Dear **[parent's/carer's/learner's name]**

I regret to inform you of my decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** permanently from **[date]**. This means that **[learner's name/you]** will not be allowed back to this **[school/pupil referral unit]** unless reinstated by the **[school governors' discipline committee/LA pupil referral unit management committee]** or by an appeal panel.

I realise that this exclusion may well be upsetting for you and your family, but the decision to exclude **[learner's name/you]** has not been taken lightly. **[Learner's name/you]** has been excluded permanently because **[reason for exclusion – also include any other relevant history here]**.

Alternative education other than setting work will be provided for **[learner's name/you]** if the exclusion has not been overturned within 15 days. A LA representative will contact you to discuss this.

[School other than PRU]

As this is a permanent exclusion the school governors' pupil discipline committee will meet to consider the exclusion. At the review meeting you **[and learner's name where learner is aged less than 11]** may make representations to the committee if you wish to do so. The discipline committee has the power to reinstate **[learner's name/you]** immediately or from a specified date, or alternatively, has the power to uphold the exclusion in which case you may appeal to an independent appeals panel. The latest date the committee can meet is **[date – no later than 15 school days from the date the committee is notified]**. If you wish to make representations to the committee and wish to be accompanied by a friend or representative please contact **[name of contact]** on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, as soon as possible. You will, whether you choose to make representations or not, be notified by the Clerk to the committee of the time, date and location of the meeting.

[PRU only]

You have the right to appeal to an independent appeal panel against this decision. If you wish to appeal please notify **[name of Clerk to appeal panel]** of your wish to appeal including your grounds of appeal in writing to **[address]** by no later than **[specify the latest date – the fifteenth school day after the second working day after the letter is posted if sent by first class post, or, if delivered by hand, the fifteenth school day after delivery]**. If you have not lodged an appeal by this date your right to appeal will lapse.

A parent/carer also has the right to make a claim of disability discrimination to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW) if she or he thinks that the exclusion is because of a disability their child has. The address to which claims should be sent is Unit 32, Ddole Road Enterprise Park, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6DF.

You also have the right to see a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. Due to confidentiality restrictions, you will need to notify me in writing if you wish to be supplied with a copy of **[learner's name/your]** school record. I will be happy to supply you with a copy if you request it. There may be a charge for photocopying.

You may want to contact **[name]** at **Blaenau Gwent** LA on/at **[contact details: address, phone number, e-mail]**, who can provide advice on what options are available to you.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Headteacher/teacher in charge of PRU

Model letter 5: Permanent exclusion – discipline committee’s decision

From the Clerk of the discipline committee notifying the parent/carer of a permanently excluded learner of the discipline committee’s decision.

Dear **[parent’s/carer’s/learner’s name]**

The meeting of the school governors’ pupil discipline committee at the **[school]** on **[date]** considered the decision by **[Headteacher]** to permanently exclude you/your son/daughter **[name of learner]**. The committee, after carefully considering the representations made and all the available evidence, have decided:

Either

to overturn the exclusion and direct that **[you/name of learner]** are/is reinstated in the school by **[date]**. We therefore expect **[you/name of learner]** to be back in school on **[date]** at **[time]**.

If you wish to discuss **[learner’s name/your]** return to school before reinstatement, please contact **[name of Headteacher]** to arrange a convenient time and date.

A copy of this letter will be added to **[learner’s name/your]** school record for future reference.

Or

to uphold **[your/name of learner’s]** exclusion.

The reasons for the committee’s decision are as follows: **[give the reasons in as much detail as possible, explaining how the committee arrived at its decision]**.

You have the right to appeal against this decision. If you wish to appeal, please notify **[name of the Clerk to the appeal panel]** of your wish to appeal. You must set out the reasons for your appeal in writing and if appropriate, you may also include any disability discrimination claim you may wish to make and send them to **[address]** by no later than **[specify the latest date – the seventeenth school day after the date of this letter]**. If you have not lodged an appeal by **[repeat latest date]**, your right to appeal will lapse.

Your appeal would be heard by an independent appeal panel.

A **[three-member/five-member]** panel will comprise **[one/two]** serving education practitioner[s] (possibly **[a]** Headteacher[s]) **[one/two]** serving or recently serving experienced governor[s]; and one lay member who will be the chair. The appeal panel will rehear all the facts of the case – if you have fresh evidence to present to the panel you may do so. The panel must meet no later than the fifteenth school day after the date on which your appeal is lodged. In exceptional circumstances panels may adjourn a hearing until a later date.

I would like to remind you of the following sources of advice and assistance: **[repeat**

details from the original exclusion letter, i.e. a named LA officer and the Advisory Centre for Education and any other local source of advice or assistance if known].

The arrangements currently being made for **[learner's name/your]** education will continue for the time being. However, new arrangements to provide full-time education for **[Learner's name/your]** are being made and **[name of LA officer]** will liaise with you shortly about these new arrangements. If you have any questions about this please contact **[name]**.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Clerk to the discipline committee

Model letter 6: Independent appeal panel decision

From the Clerk to the independent appeal panel notifying the parent/carer and/or learner of the outcome of their appeal.

Dear **[parent's/carer's/learner's name]**

Following the hearing of your appeal by the independent appeal panel constituted by **Blaenau Gwent** Local Authority on **[date]** at **[location]** against the decision of the governing body of **[name of school]**/the discipline committee for **[name of PRU]** not to reinstate **[learner's name/you]**, I am writing to advise you of the panel's decision.

After careful consideration of your representations (both oral and written) and those of **[school/PRU]** and **Blaenau Gwent** Local Authority **[and of others if applicable, e.g. any victim]** and in the light of the available evidence, the panel has decided:

Either

(i) to uphold the exclusion

or

(ii) to direct **[learner's name/your]** reinstatement in **[name of school/PRU]** with effect from **[date and time]**. **[Learner's name/you]** should report to **[name of school staff member]** at that time

or

(iii) that it is not practical to direct **[learner's name/your]** reinstatement **[here give reasons, e.g. because this is an exceptional case where reinstatement would not be in the learner's best interests or those of the whole school/PRU community]** although otherwise reinstatement would have been appropriate. Your **[child's]** school record will show that the permanent exclusion was overturned on appeal even though reinstatement was not directed.

[Give reasons in as much detail as possible for the panel's decision: the decision may be challenged by judicial review; or be the subject of a complaint of maladministration by the appeal panel to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.]

The panel's decision is binding on you, the governing body of **[name of school]/[name of PRU]** and **[name of LA]**.

For decisions (i) and (iii) above:

The alternative arrangements put in place for **[learner's name/your]** full-time education will continue for the time being; but **[LA officer's name]** will be in touch with you to discuss future provision.

A copy of this letter will be added to **[learner's name/your]** school record for future reference.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Clerk to the independent appeal panel

Education Other than at School (EOTAS) Policy

Education Inclusion Service
EOTAS Policy

September 2021



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

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Introduction and Context

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council believes that for the majority of children in Blaenau Gwent the best place to undertake their education is in their local mainstream school. It is recognised that schools have to respond to a diverse range of pupil need and they do require help and support from other agencies, including the Local Authority. There will however be a small but significant group of children who cannot be educated in school. Children sometimes require education outside school because of illness, injury or clinically defined mental health issues. In addition, there are a number of children with behavioural issues. The situations of these children and young people will vary widely but they all run the risk of a reduction in self-confidence and educational achievement.

Where a child is not electively home educated, a key priority for the Local Authority is returning these children to school as soon as they are able to do so, therefore EOTAS provision should not be seen as a long term solution.

This policy details the arrangements through which the Local Authority meets these requirements.

It should be noted that children and young people with statements of Special Educational Needs/Individual Development Plans are overrepresented in EOTAS provision.

Legal Background

Education Act 1996: Section 19. "Each local education authority shall make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusions from school, or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them".

Excluded pupils

For a fixed-period exclusion of more than fifteen school days, the governing body must arrange suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age. This provision must begin no later than the sixteenth day of the exclusion. Schools will need to contact the local authority to start discussions as soon as possible so that suitable education can be looked at.

For permanent exclusions, in compliance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the local authority must arrange suitable full-time education for the pupil to begin no later than the sixteenth day of the exclusion.

In addition, where a pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Individual Development Plan (IDP) plan the Local Authority needs to ensure that an appropriate full-time placement is identified in consultation with the parents who retain their rights to express a preference for a maintained school that they wish their child to attend, or make representations for a placement in any other school. Excluded learners should only be educated outside mainstream schools where there are significant problems that are better addressed in a different environment. Where this is the case, the Inclusion Panel will discuss the learner and consider the most appropriate provision. This could be a turn-around placement at the River Centre, or a bespoke package where cost-effectiveness, quality and provision is appropriate to learners' needs.

Full-time and appropriate provision

Part-time provision is often inadequate to meet the educational needs of excluded learners and to ensure continuity of education. It also leaves some of these learners unsupervised for significant periods of a normal school day. Such learners are often drawn into crime as a result. BGCBC therefore aims for all learners to receive full-time education 15 days after being excluded, either at another school or, where necessary an alternative provision. Where learners may have become so

disengaged from education, or their current circumstances may be such, that a rapid reintroduction to full-time education is unlikely to prove successful a plan will be drawn up specifying how the move to full-time education is to be achieved.

Full-time means that the amount of supervised education should mirror that provided by mainstream schools in the area. An average school week might amount to some 25 hours; so excluded learners should receive around five hours of supervised education or other activity a day. A full timetable for an excluded learner may, however, look significantly different from that provided in a mainstream school.

Pupils who are not medically fit to attend school

In 2018 Welsh Government published statutory Guidance – ‘Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs’. It provides comprehensive guidance to local authorities and related services. Roles and responsibilities, including those of the local authority and school, are outlined in detail. This policy should be read alongside this guidance and any future relevant guidance.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that pupils with health needs are not at home or in hospital for more than 15 working days without access to education: this may be consecutive or cumulative with the same medical condition. If the pupil is a patient at hospital they will usually receive education on the ward from the onsite Hospital Teacher as soon as they are fit enough to do so. Effective liaison with medical professionals’ will ensure that there is a minimum of delay in starting appropriate support for those pupils not admitted to hospital.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council will arrange suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would otherwise not receive suitable education.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that there is a named senior officer with responsibility for the provision of education for children who are unable to attend school because of medical needs. In this Local Authority the officer is the Inclusion Manager.

Educational provision for pupils who are physically ill or injured is the responsibility of all schools and education services'. Provision for tuition is made through the River Centre. Where the child has a mental health condition, which requires a small group setting this will be provided at Ty Afon as long as the entry criteria is met. It is important to note that Ty Afon is not actually an EOTAS provision.

The current entitlement of medical tuition is as follows:

- Pupils who have not yet reached statutory school age i.e. the beginning of the term after the 5th birthday is achieved - no provision is made
- Pupils, from the beginning of the term after the 5th birthday is achieved, to the end of Year 9 – 1 hour per day (up to 5 hours per week)
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 – 2 hours per day (up to 10 hours per week)

The provision may include use of more than one teacher, on-line learning, cluster groups etc.

Clear lines of communication operate to ensure that a pupil absent from school due to medical needs for more than 15 school days consecutively is not left without education.

Parents and pupils will be consulted before teaching begins. In order to support reintegration back into school at the earliest opportunity and reduce isolation, tuition will only take place in the home as an exception and may include an element of on-line learning.

Children receiving education outside of school should do so in the most appropriate setting to their needs.

Pupils will be taught in groups wherever possible according to their medical needs to provide a more rounded education and social experience.

Teaching at home will only be carried out if there is an agreed "named adult" also in attendance and the appropriate risk assessment identifies safe practice for all.

On-line tuition will be provided where appropriate, including the establishment of on-line links to the pupil's school to support social inclusion and maintain friendship groups.

Transport will be provided to the educational setting if outside of the home in line with the LA's home to school transport policy.

The pupil's experience will be an extension of their school experience and will seek to maintain their studies and social contacts with the schools (as their medical condition allows).

Close liaison and sharing of information will be maintained by the pupil's school with the pupil's teacher from the service, and other key professionals, which will include some or all of the following, medical professional, educational psychologists, Education Welfare Officers, Tuition Service and Careers Wales.

Provision will be reviewed on a half termly basis and will be integral for long term planning for the education provision for the child.

Where the child has a mental health condition and a pupil has been offered a place at Ty Afon, the provision will be a full-time placement.

Transport will be provided to the educational setting if outside of the home in line with the LA's home to school transport policy.

The pupil's experience will be an extension of their school experience and will seek to maintain their studies and social contacts with the schools (as their medical condition allows).

Close liaison and sharing of information will be maintained by the pupil's school with the pupil's teacher from the service, and other key professionals, which will include some or all of the following, medical professional, educational psychologists, Education Welfare Officers, Tuition Service and Careers Wales.

Provision will be reviewed on a half termly basis and will be integral for long term planning for the education provision for the child.

It is recognised that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within their mainstream school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate pupils back into mainstream education at the earliest opportunity as soon as they are well enough. Arrangements for reintegration will be discussed with school staff and each child will have a personalised reintegration plan.

The Tuition Service and Ty Afon should make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage faced by children with disabilities, and plan to increase these children's access to their premises and their curriculum. They will also maintain good links with the child's home school and, through regular reviewing, involve them in decisions concerning the educational programme and pupil progress. This should also include social and emotional needs, for example ensuring that learners feel fully part of their school community, are able to stay in contact with classmates, and have access to the opportunities enjoyed by their peers.

The pupil's school should be aware of its continuing role in the child's education whilst they are not attending. For example, through providing relevant assessment information and liaising with the relevant Tuition service or Ty Afon staff over planning and examination course requirements where appropriate, and ensuring that there is a named teacher within school who can co-ordinate and support these links.

The pupil's school must also work closely with the provider to prepare Key Stage 4 pupils for their transition into post 16 education, employment or training – this would be under the umbrella of careers guidance.

All pupils will remain on roll of their home school and the prime responsibility for their education lies with that school. The process to refer to Ty Afon or the Tuition service is via the ALN panel.

The panel paperwork is sent to the ALN team by the school with the attached medical advice. The advice confirming that a pupil is medically unfit for school must be completed by a Community Paediatrician, Consultant or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Consultant. Once the referral has been received the Local Authority will work with the pupil's school to put appropriate education in place within the 15 days as stated in the WG guidance.

As soon as educational support via the relevant has been agreed, schools are required to provide baseline assessment information and curriculum plans to inform the planning of educational provision. This information, along with advice from medical professionals, will ensure that the education provided is effectively matched to the child or young person's unique needs.

The education provided should be tailored to the learner's individual educational needs and the impact of their medical condition on their ability to access education. Use of baseline assessment information from the home school will inform individual education plans, which should be suitable and flexible enough to be appropriate to the learner's needs. The nature of the provision should also reflect the demands of what can be a changing or fluctuating medical condition.

Schools are responsible for monitoring the quality of the provision for the individual learner e.g. through regular reviewing. The learner should, where available, have access to IT equipment and to the school's intranet and internet. However, this will not be used in isolation and should complement face to face education.

Pupils who are hard to place

Sometimes children can find themselves without a school place during the course of the year, for example, because their personal circumstances are such that they have had to move into the local authority or are looked after children. In some cases, these children may also exhibit challenging behaviour. (Please refer to Blaenau Gwent's Admission Guidance and Hard to Place protocol for further information). Where children meet the criteria they will be referred into the ALN panel for further discussion. Where it is deemed that a mainstream placement is

not the most appropriate provision for the child tuition will be provided, whilst further assessments are completed.

Areas of Responsibility

Schools

Notifying the Education Welfare Officer if a pupil is likely to be away from school due to medical needs for longer than 15 school days; Making an appropriate referral to ALN panel; Remaining responsible for:

- producing a plan with clear targets for each half terms learning incorporated in half
- termly work programmes in core curriculum subjects which the pupil would normally be studying in accordance with statutory requirements
- schemes of work in each subject
- setting and marking work
- resources
- examination entry fees
- making arrangements for National Tests
- assessment of course work
- career interviews
- work experience placements
- informing all other agencies of any alterations to the agreed plan.

Providing appropriate support for reintegration at the earliest opportunity.

Tuition responsibility

- supports schools in producing a medical plan which will include arrangements for the delivery of a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum, homework and marking
- ensures clear lines of communication between all agencies and particularly ensures parents are informed about whom to contact in respect of education provision
- sends a half termly report to the pupil's school and the LA, outlining the pupil's progress and achievements

- works with the Education Welfare Service to ensure good attendance whilst receiving teaching outside of school and if necessary, making the appropriate referral requesting a home visit
- completes attendance records which will be sent to the pupil's school
- attends review and reintegration meetings
- ensures that teachers receive appropriate continuing professional development
- liaises with appropriate agencies

Partnership Working

It is essential that, for pupils with medical needs, there is effective partnership working between education, health and other agencies. Medical / Healthcare Plans are an effective tool to ensure that the pupil's education is not compromised by interim arrangements as a result of the pupil's medical needs.

Funding

While the pupil remains on roll at the school, the Authority will withdraw from the school the funding linked to that pupil, on a daily basis, consistent with the number of days that the pupil is in receipt of medical tuition and that funding is then passed to the tuition service.

Monitoring and Evaluation

For pupils on the role of a school the school is responsible for monitoring the progress of the pupil's education through regular liaison with the tutor. Schools should also review their provision for vulnerable pupils through their own school self-evaluation.

In the case of children on bespoke packages the local authority will be responsible for quality assuring the quality of the provision. The local authority should ensure an appropriate level of insurance is in place to cover the setting's activities in supporting learners with healthcare needs. The level of insurance should appropriately reflect the level of risk. Additional cover

may need to be arranged for some activities, e.g. off-site activities for learners with particular needs.

Where EOTAS services are commissioned from private providers the local authority will have a set of guidelines regarding the education, safeguarding and wellbeing responsibilities they will be expected to fulfil. The local authority reporting will be responsible for undertaking all necessary checks to ensure they are satisfied that the organisation has met their requirements. Once the local authority has undertaken these checks, the ALN panel can agree the organisation's 'approved' status. A database should be made available to all maintained schools within the local area.

Once an EOTAS provider has been entered onto the local authority's database as 'approved', the local authority will have a responsibility to regularly monitor the provision available to ensure that the quality of the provision available, and all necessary safeguarding precautions, remain suitable.

Links to other strategies / key documents

Welsh Government - Inclusion and Pupil Support 203/2016

Public Health Wales – Report 1 Aces

Estyn – Happy and Healthy (2019)

Estyn – Education other than at school (2016)

Public Policy Institute for Wales: Promoting Emotional Health, Well-being, and

Resilience in Primary Schools 2016

National Behaviour and attendance review (2008)

Wellbeing of Future Generations Act

Additional Learning Needs Act (ALNET) (2018)

Shared Ambitions (2019)

Behaviour Strategy (2020)

Wellbeing strategy (2020)

Inclusion and ALN Strategy (2020)

Managed Moves Policy
Elective Home Education Protocol
Safeguarding Policy

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BLAENAU GWENT POLICY FOR THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH MEDICAL NEEDS

**Education
Inclusion Service**

**September
2021**



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

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RATIONALE

Blaenau Gwent's Tuition Service and Ty Afon provide temporary educational support for pupils who are unable to attend school for medical reasons and pregnant school girls, where mainstream school is not appropriate (Please read policy for pregnant school girls). The purpose is to minimise disruption to education, provide access to as much education as their medical condition allows, and enable pupils to return to school as soon as their health permits.

REGISTRATION

Pupils will remain solely on the school roll until they are allocated tuition or a placement at Ty Afon. A pupil's registration status will be agreed as appropriate for the individual pupil at the ALN Panel. A pupil may be dual registered and their main registration type will be the setting where the pupil spends the majority of their time (more than 50%). School must contact the tuition service on a regular basis to ensure that marks are reflective of the pupil's attendance on tuition.

A pupil who is unable to attend school because of medical needs **must not** be removed from the school register, even during a long period of ill health.

FUNDING

Pupil funding will be divided between the school, the tuition service and The River Centre in a pro rata agreement based on the amount of time spent in each provision. The Head of the River Centre and the Head of the Tuition Service will provide the finance team details of pupils' placement at the end of each term. The finance team will arrange for the appropriate proportion of the pupil's AWPUP to be transferred from the school to The River Centre/Tuition Service.

AIM

The aims of tuition and Ty Afon is to reduce the detrimental impact of illness on the pupils' education, to re-engage pupils in learning, help them maintain education or make up for lost time, and successfully reintegrate them into mainstream or alternative education at the earliest opportunity. Therefore, all placements will be for an initial 6-week trial period and then reviewed.

TUITION: CAPACITY

Due to the high demand for tuition, tuition will not be offered to a pupil on a long term basis. It is anticipated that tuition will be offered short term for a maximum of 1 - 2 terms, if the initial trial period is successful.

EXIT CRITERIA

If tuition provision is offered, pupils will be reviewed every 4-6 weeks to establish when a return to school is appropriate. At the end of the maximum provision of 2 terms, the review meeting will consider discharge to the host school, to another school or an alternative arrangement for the pupil's education.

GROUPS COVERED

All pupils whose home is in Blaenau Gwent who are:

- of compulsory school age
- on roll at a Blaenau Gwent maintained school

When a pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs/IDP, the school will need to hold an interim review with recommendations from the Review being forwarded for consideration by the ALN Panel. As such, the processes outlined in this document do not apply to such pupils.

REFERRAL CRITERIA: PRIORITY LIST

- pupils who are unable to attend school due to physical illness
- pupils who are unable to attend school due to a mental health illness
- girls of compulsory school age who are pregnant or new mothers with additional health related needs that mean they are unable to remain in their own school.
- pupils returning from elective home education, where there is evidence that the child has not been in receipt of an appropriate education

Tuition will normally only be considered where the pupil's anticipated absence will be for longer than 15 school days. Schools should note that for the first 15 school days of a pupil's absence they are responsible for the pupil's education.

Pupils with poor attendance and pupils excluded or in danger of exclusion for presenting inappropriate behaviours as the main concern are not appropriate referrals for tuition.

REFERRING AGENCIES

Referrals for tuition will be considered at the ALN Panel. Referrals will be made by Heads, Deputies and designated staff of schools. Acceptance of referrals is dependent upon the pupil's needs meeting the referral criteria.

REFERRAL ROUTES

Requests for tuition should be made to the ALN Panel with appropriate documentation (see below).

The ALN Panel will consider referrals and determine what provision will be made.

The educational provision offered could be made up, in the short term (one review period), of a combination of time in school and small group provision. The primary provision offered will be group work at a centre. Any individual tuition has to be agreed on a case by case basis by the ALN Panel.

REFERRAL INFORMATION

It is essential that a referral to tuition is part of an integrated support plan for a pupil which is underpinned by the work of all relevant professionals and which

has clear goals or outcomes for a return to school, or other provision. Referral information will need to make clear the expected outcome.

In the case of pupils presenting with mental health conditions, it is expected that referrals are supported by:

- clear evidence of mental health difficulty experienced from senior CAMHS professionals
- information regarding work already carried out by the school, including the impact of advice implemented following Educational Psychologist involvement
- clear evidence that the home school has tried EVERY possible approach to re-engage the pupil and has evaluated the impact that these approaches have had.
- information regarding impact of family interventions and other agencies
- an indication of consensus amongst involved professionals that a referral to tuition is likely to be the most effective way forward
- The child must not have any evidence of disruptive or aggressive behaviours or incidents of exclusions.
- The home school must provide evidence that the child's attendance figure is lower than 50%.
- An agreement to continuing support for pupil and family by the referring agency, planned outcomes for tuition including a return to school.

* A request from a GP/ SSD or parent is not regarded as sufficient grounds for tuition.

** Please note those pupils allocated a Ty Afon placement will:

- serve a trial period of 6 weeks
- comply with an agreed attendance target that will be gradually increased
- exhibit no disruptive behaviours being displayed by pupils, that may cause upset to others

Any breach of these conditions can result in the placement being terminated.

TUITION: LINKS WITH SCHOOL

When tuition has been agreed for a pupil with medical needs, a tutor will be appointed.

It is the home school's (the pupil's usual school) responsibility to provide work at the appropriate Curriculum level for the pupil. At key stages 1 and 2 the child's class teacher usually takes this responsibility and liaises with the tutor.

At key stage 3, a Head of Year or Additional Needs Co-ordinator is usually asked to take responsibility for obtaining work from subject teachers and liaise with the tutor.

Every school should have policy in place for meeting the needs of pupils with medical needs and a teacher with responsibility these pupils who will liaise with the tutor.

TUTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The tutor is responsible for:

- planning and delivering a programme of work and maintaining appropriate records
- sending reports to the school and parents outlining the pupil's progress and achievements at least every half term
- Completing accurate attendance records which will be sent to the school and the LA.
- liaising between home, school and other agencies

All pupils receive support from the service in the knowledge that their ultimate goal should be to return to school as soon as their health permits.

Pupils should return to full time education as soon as they are able. Should special arrangements be advised by health professionals then the local authority, school and home tutor, in consultation with parents, will ensure they are in hand. However, if the necessary arrangements are complex or the pupil has emotional difficulties and is anxious, then the tutor may make arrangements for a supported return to school.

Following consultation with pupil, parent, school and tutor an individual programme of gradual reintegration will be arranged and tailored to the pupil's needs.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

The school will be responsible for:

- notifying the LEA/EWS if a pupil is, or is likely to be, away from school due to medical needs for more than 15 school days and request that ALN Panel considers the request for Home Tuition
- If agreed by the ALN Panel, liaise with the home tuition service to draw up an individual learning plan for the duration of the tuition. This plan should be agreed with appropriate health service personnel.
- providing information regarding pupils' prior educational progress and attainment in order to implement a programme appropriate to meet pupil needs
- implementing agreed reintegration programmes
- attending review meetings
- Ensuring that regular plans of work are made available in all Curriculum subjects that the pupil would be normally studying. (This will aid successful reintegration by helping the pupil feel confident that they have covered a similar programme of work to their peers.)
- Loaning appropriate resource materials where possible. These will be returned when the pupil has finished with them
- examination entry fees, making arrangements for examinations and assessment of coursework
- career interviews
- work experience placements
- a named contact within the school to aid communication and attend reviews

- procedures ensuring the pupil is successfully reintegrated into school
- issues related to a pupil with statements of special educational needs
- Ensure that pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs are kept informed about social events, and are able to participate, for example afterschool clubs.
- Encourage and facilitate liaison with peers, for example, through visits, videos and internet links

WITHDRAWAL OF TUITION

Tuition will be withdrawn if the pupil fails to attend or make themselves available for tuition on a regular basis without evidence of a medical reason for this and the Education Welfare Officer will be notified if there is an attendance issue. If the provision is considered inappropriate during the initial planning stage, the provision will be ended. In this event, the referrer and school will be notified through the review process.

SUCCESSFUL RE-INTEGRATION INTO SCHOOL

Local authorities are responsible for ensuring that an individually tailored plan is in place for pupils before they return to school.

The local authority will work with the tutor, host school, parents and professionals to facilitate a return to school. The local authority will co-ordinate a school re-integration plan or some other exit strategy. For example, home tuition will gradually reduce as time in school increases.

The local authority will keep in regular contact with professionals involved in the pupil's case. In partnership with the tuition service, school and other agencies, the local authority will oversee the reintegration process when the relevant professionals agree that the pupil is well enough to go back to school. Some pupils may go on to more long term specialist provision if their mental health illness cannot be effectively addressed during the short period of tuition.

A review meeting will be convened to review the Individual learning plan and look at all of a child's needs and how they can be best met in order for effective reintegration to take place. A review of the ILP at this stage will:

- bring together the support provided by all the different agencies
- identify any on-going medical support that the pupil might need or any reasonable adjustments that may be required
- consider whether the pupil will be back in school for the long term, whether he/she is likely to fall ill again in the near future or need further medical intervention
- review academic progress
- Consider what support will be required to reintegrate the pupil back into school successfully.

The pupil and parents/guardian should attend the reintegration meeting and should be given the opportunity to put forward his or her views. These views should be recorded in the ILP.

Where pupils need extra support to reintegrate, The River Centre and the home school will need to identify how that support will be provided. All schools receive funding for 'additional needs' as part of their funding formula and this funding can be utilised to support reintegration.

After a pupil has been successfully reintegrated, the support available from the different agencies should not stop immediately. A final review meeting should be held after the pupil has been back at school for about eight to ten weeks. The purpose of this meeting will be to ensure that the pupil has reintegrated successfully and that strategies are working. This meeting can decide whether any on-going support is required and whether any future review meetings will be required. It will also be a useful forum for evaluating the multi agency service that was provided whilst the pupil was too ill to attend school.

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

Tuition should not to be confused with Elective Home Education which involves the parent or guardian of a child removing the child from local authority schooling and accepting the responsibility of providing an appropriate education programme.

Admission Guidance

**Education Admission and
Inclusion Service
Admissions Guidance**

September 2021



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

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BLAENAU GWENT IN YEAR APPLICATION PROCESS

Includes; In Year Transfer process, Hard to Place and Managed Move protocols

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The School Admissions Code places duties and expectations upon Schools, Local Authorities and Admissions Authorities.

1.2 The purpose of this document is to outline the key changes with regards to In-Year Admissions, the Hard to Place Protocol and Managed Moves and to outline a transparent process that will enable all schools and the local authority to meet their statutory duties around the provision of school places.

1.3 These protocols have been developed by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, in association with the admissions forum, and take into consideration government statutory guidance and departmental advice;

- School Admissions Code,
- School Admissions Appeal Code,
- Exclusions from schools and pupil referral units in Wales, November 2019
- Blaenau Gwent Hard to Place Protocol.
- The Education Act 2002
- The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

1.4 For the purpose of this document the term 'school' refers to maintained schools and independent schools

2.0 ADMISSION TO SCHOOLS – IN YEAR TRANSFERS

2.1 Children admitted to the reception year group of an infant/ primary school, those children and those transferring from year 6 in a junior/ primary school to year 7 in a secondary school apply to do so during the normal admissions round.

Where the number of applications for that year group is at or below the schools published Pupil Admission Number (PAN) all children will be offered places. However, where the number of applications for a school is greater than the number of places available the Admissions Authority – the Council for maintained and Voluntary Controlled schools and the Governing Body for Voluntary Aided Schools must apply their published oversubscription criteria. Any children who, as a consequence of the Admissions authority's oversubscription criteria, do not receive an offer of a place will be added to the school's waiting list. The waiting list will be ranked according to the published criteria. Parent/carers will also be offered the right to appeal against this decision.

2.2 In addition to the normal admissions period applications can be made by parent/carers who wish to transfer their child from one institution to another throughout the academic year. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's School Admissions Team currently co-ordinate this activity on behalf of all local schools except for faith and foundation schools.

2.3 As with applications within the normal admissions round, any children who are not offered a school place following an in-year admission application will be added to the requested school's waiting list. Their place on the waiting list will be ranked according to the admission authority's published oversubscription criteria. Parent/carers will be offered the right of appeal against this decision.

3.0 MAKING AN IN-YEAR APPLICATION

3.1. Schools have identified key data and information required by any receiving school in advance of any pupil completing an In-Year Admission. This will ensure the maximum success for any pupil changing school outside the normal admissions round. Information that is required via the in-year transfer information sheet by a receiving school includes;

- ALN status of applicant
- CLA status of applicant
- Attendance and exclusion data for current and previous school year
- Support service and other agency involvement with applicant
- Current levels of performance and details of qualifications currently undertaken by the applicant where relevant
- Details of any exclusions or behavioural issues for which additional support may be required at the receiving school.

3.2 The In-Year Admission application form has been developed to assist the admission process. This now needs to be completed online via the Blaenau Gwent website, paper copy applications can be issued on request. Any transfer request which is not accompanied by a fully completed application form will not be considered.

3.3. Completed application forms are to be forwarded to the School Admissions Team at the Council by a pupil's current school. The Council will then forward the completed application to the requested school. On receipt of a completed application the process identified in Section 4 must be followed.

4.0 IN YEAR ADMISSIONS PROCESS

4.1 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, through the School Admissions Team, must, on request, provide information to a parent/carer about the places still available in schools in the area. In order to achieve this, it is important that all

schools provide the Council with up to date information on the number of places available in each year group. Application forms for both primary and secondary in-year admissions for all admissions authorities are available on the School Admissions page via the Blaenau Gwent website.

4.2 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

4.2.1 Parent/carers must complete Section A of the application form. It must then be returned to their current school. The current school will complete Section B and will forward the completed application to the School Admissions Team at the Council who will then liaise with the requested school on the availability of places. Applications for an in-year admission will not be considered without this supplementary information.

4.2.2 The School Admissions Team will communicate to the parent/carer the outcome of their application. The letter will explain whether their application has been successful, or, should it be unsuccessful, their right to appeal. Where a school operates as their own Admissions Authority, parent/carer will be advised that they need to contact the school directly to request an appeal form. The Governance Services Team at the Council will coordinate appeals in circumstances where it has not been possible to offer a place in a maintained school.

4.2.3 When communicating the outcome of an application, the letter must provide the following information:

- The outcome of an application
- If an application has been unsuccessful the reason that the application has been unsuccessful
- The right to appeal against the refusal of a place and process to do so

NOTE –The same process will apply to all applications, including those moving into the area. The Local Authority Acknowledge the difficulty in receiving evidence/paperwork from another Local Authority, but this should not be a barrier to admit a pupil.

4.2.4. Where a secondary school has not provided a response on an application for an in year transfer for an unplaced applicant within 10 days of receipt the Council will inform the school of its intention to use its powers of direction or its intention to seek secretary of state intervention.

4.2.5 It is anticipated that the all applicants will be notified on the outcome of an application within 15 working days of the receipt of a completed application form (with section B completed). During this time, it is the responsibility of the Council, receiving school and current school to co-ordinate the completion of the remainder of the application form.

5.0 PARENT/CARER PREFERENCE

5.1 The duty to comply with parent/carer preference is not removed, despite an application to transfer a school place occurring outside of the normal admissions round. All Admissions Authorities have a duty to comply with parent/carer preference when there are sufficient places within the applicant's identified year group to facilitate this.

5.2 In the event that parent/carer preference cannot be met within the applicant's identified year group, the applicant will be provided with an opportunity to be added to the nominated school's waiting list. The School Admissions Code requires each Admissions Authority to maintain a clear, objective and fair waiting list for at least the first term of the academic year. Each child on the list will be ranked against the admission authority's published oversubscription criteria. Looked after children, previously looked after children and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with Blaenau Gwent's Hard to Place Protocol (See 7.3) must take precedence over those on a waiting list. In an instance where a school place cannot be offered the applicant must be given the right to appeal this decision.

6. SCHOOLS STATUTORY DUTY TO ADMIT PUPILS

6.1 As the Admissions Authority for Local Authority Maintained Schools the Council has the statutory ability to admit children to its schools, however this would always be following consultation with the school leadership and/ or governing body. For other maintained schools the Council's powers of direction are identified below. A local authority has the power to direct the governing body of a maintained school for which they are not the admission authority to admit a child in their area even when the school is full. The local authority can only make such a direction in respect of a child in the local authority's area who has been refused entry to, or has been permanently excluded from, every suitable school within a reasonable distance. The local authority must choose a school that is a reasonable distance from the child's home and from which the child is not permanently excluded.

6.2 Should an applicant be unplaced but not be eligible for the Hard to Place process it is expected that they are offered a place at the school for which they have applied. In circumstances where following negotiation a school refuses to admit an unplaced applicant and cannot provide sufficient rationale to support this decision the Council will seek to use its powers of direction or will seek the secretary of state to direct the school to admit.

7. REFUSAL TO ADMIT PUPILS WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

7.1 Where the governing body of a school which does not wish to admit an unplaced child with challenging behaviour outside the normal admissions round, even though places are available, they must refer the case to the local authority for access under the Hard to Place Protocol.

7.2 Where the governing body of a school which does not wish to admit an unplaced child with challenging behaviour outside the normal admissions round, and there are no places available, they must refer the case to the local authority for access under the Hard to Place Protocol. This will normally only be appropriate

where a school has a particularly high proportion of children with challenging behaviour or previously permanently excluded children.

7.3. However, the allocation of a place in accordance with the Hard to Place Protocol does not override parent/carer's right to appeal against refusal of a place at any school for which they have applied. If an application has been refused despite there being places available, the governing body must present their case for refusal, demonstrating how the admission of the child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.

7.4 In instances where a school wishes to refer an in year transfer application from a child with an existing school place to the Council under the Hard to Place Protocol it must provide the Additional Learning Needs Panel with written evidence as to why the application should be considered. While not prescriptive the school must as a minimum demonstrate that the receiving school has already admitted a disproportionate number of pupils in the named year group through the normal In- Year Transfer Process, Managed Moves or the Hard to Place Protocol and that how the challenging behaviour of the applicant will prejudice either the provision of efficient education to the existing cohort or the efficient use of resources. Information demonstrating the pupils challenging behaviour should also be provided.

7.5 Parent/carer preference is to be taken in to consideration but is, ultimately, not the decisive factor when allocating a school place under the Hard to Place Protocol, given that schools are expected to admit a fair number of children with challenging behaviour. Should a parent/carer apply for a school place as an In-Year Admission but be allocated an alternative place under the Hard to Place Protocol they are entitled to appeal the decision not to offer a place at their chosen school. Where an Independent Appeals Panel considers the admission would not be prejudicial to the school or other children and make the decision to admit the child then it is this decision which takes precedence over the allocation of a place under the Hard to Place Protocol.

7.6 A school will not be considered for a placement under the Hard to Place Protocol where an applicant has had either an unsuccessful appeal for a school place (on the grounds of challenging behaviour) or has undertaken an unsuccessful managed move at the school in the 12 months prior to their referral at that school.

7.7 If, at the point that the Additional Learning Needs Panel meets to discuss an applicant's referral, the referring school has not been removed from consideration through either appeals panel or mitigating circumstances (identified through the Hard to Place Panel placement process) it will be included as a potential placement destination.

7.8 Any referral to the Additional Learning Needs Panel on the grounds of challenging behaviour must be received by the Council within 5 days of the receipt of an In-Year Admission application.

8.1 HARD TO PLACE CHILDREN:

8.1.1 Sometimes children can find themselves without a school place during the course of the year, for example, because their personal circumstances are such that they have had to move home; or are looked after children; or they have been permanently excluded from their school. In some cases, these children may also exhibit challenging behaviour.

8.1.2 There is often a balance to be struck between finding a place quickly, perhaps in an undersubscribed school or one facing challenging circumstances, and finding a place which is appropriate for the child. It is also recognised that no school should be requested to take an excessive or unreasonable number of pupils who have been excluded from other schools or are otherwise 'hard to place'.

8.1.3 While the Hard to Place Protocol is a means of securing places for hard to place children it does not mean that an application from a hard to place child should automatically be referred to the Hard to Place Protocol. A parent/carer can still apply for a place at any school as an in year admission and is entitled to an appeal if they are not offered that place.

8.1.4 For a pupil to be eligible to be considered under the Hard to Place protocol, school must demonstrate that a pupil can be identified once as a minimum from each of the lists of children identified below

- Children from the criminal justice system or Pupil Referral Unit who need to be reintegrated into mainstream education
- Children who have been out of education for two months or more,
- Children of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers.
- Children who are homeless
- Children with unsupportive family backgrounds for whom a place has not been sought.
- Children who are carers

Children with additional learning needs (ALN), disabilities or medical conditions that do not have a statement or IDP/IEP

8.1.5 In addition to the minimum requirements the following will be considered as hard to place attributes:

- Children in year 11, that have significantly challenging behaviours and who have moved into the authority.
- Children who are permanently excluded, including those moved into the authority (MIA)
- Children leaving custody

- Children who have been withdrawn from schools by their parent/carers, following a number of fixed term exclusions, due to social or behavioural difficulties or additional educational needs, and are unable to find another place
- Children whose parent/carers have been unable to find them a school place after moving into the area or moving around the Borough.
- Children without a school place and with a history of serious attendance problems. This must have included previous involvement with the education welfare service. Children, without a statement/IDP, with significant challenging behaviour. (i.e. a high number of previous exclusions (including internal exclusions) and/or accessing alternative provision.

The above list is not exhaustive and it is recognised that some children not included on this list will be considered 'vulnerable' and may be required to have their case considered within the protocol. Schools will need to demonstrate how they perceive a child to be vulnerable and hard to place.

8.1.6 Challenging behaviour will normally be defined as;

- Children whose behaviour has resulted in multiple fixed term exclusions or multiple internal exclusions within a period of one academic year preceding the request for a school place.
- Children whose behaviour has resulted in a permanent exclusion or managed move within the last 12 months preceding the request for a school place.
- Significant unauthorised school attendance, in the current academic year linked to behavioural or emotional issues.

8.1.7. Issues relating to non-attendance in isolation of any other factors will not be considered under the Hard to Place Protocol.

8.1.8 Where a parent/carer has elected to home educate and subsequently requires a school place, a child will only be eligible for Hard to place if there is evidence that the child has not been receiving an education. Where there is evidence that a pupil has not been receiving an education the Panel may consider parent/carer preference and consider returning the child to their school of origin. However, if a child was previously permanently excluded from their school of origin or the Panel deems it is not in the best interests of the pupil to return to their school of origin, an alternative school placement will be sought. Schools best placed to support the child's educational and welfare needs will be considered in the first instance.

8.2 REFERAL UNDER THE HARD TO PLACE PROTOCOL

8.2.1 An officer of the Council can refer an individual under the Hard to Place Protocol. It is anticipated that any individual who has been identified as unplaced will be referred immediately following the local authority becoming aware of their status.

8.2.2 Any school receiving an application outside the normal applications round can refer any applicant under the Hard to Place Protocol if they consider that the applicant satisfies the criteria referred to in the Hard to place Protocol. However, as noted above if a parent/carer has applied for a place as an In-Year Admission and a place is not subsequently offered the parent/carer is entitled to appeal this decision. The outcome of an independent School Admissions Appeal will take precedent over the Hard to place Protocol.

8.2.3 All referrals to the Hard to Place Protocol will be reviewed within 15 working days of the referral date.

8.2.4 On receiving a referral from a school the Additional Learning Needs Panel will consider the application and make a determination as to whether the referral meets the criteria for placement on the grounds of challenging behaviour.

8.2.5 Any referral under the Hard to Place Protocol that does not meet the agreed criteria will be referred back to the named school for admittance as an in year admission. The Additional Learning Needs Panel reaching this determination will provide the School full reasoning for this decision. Schools accept that the Additional Learning Needs Panel's decision in this matter is final and all pupils will be admitted within 5 days of receipt of the Additional Learning Needs Panel's decision.

8.2.6 Any referral not accompanied by suitable supporting evidence from the School will not be considered. Schools will instead be required to admit any pupils as an In- Year Transfer (in order to reduce the period of time a young person is unplaced). Pupils are to be admitted as an In-Year Transfer within 5 days of receipt of the Additional Learning Needs Panel's decision.

8.3. ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS PANEL DECISION

8.3.1 Any school required to admit a pupil under the Hard to Place Protocol will be provided with the full reasoning for this placement and any supporting evidence and information that would assist with the pupil's admission and transition to the school.

8.3.2 Once a placement decision has been made, the Chair will notify the school that has been identified, in the first instance. The Council's Admissions Department will formally notify the school and parent/carer. Schools accept the Panel's decision and must contact the parent/carer to arrange the admission within seven calendar days. The School must also notify the Admissions Department of the admission date confirming that the child is on roll.

8.3.3 In the event that a school refuses access of a pupil they must provide a written response to the Corporate Director of Education within seven calendar days. In this event the Council will seek to use its powers of direction or will seek the secretary of state to direct the school to admit.

9.0 MANAGED MOVES

9.1 All schools in Blaenau Gwent have made a significant effort to avoid permanent exclusion. However, there are occasions where after lengthy and concerted efforts it is clear that it is not in the pupil's or school's best interest to continue with the placement but mainstream education is nevertheless appropriate. In these circumstances one of the strategies that could be considered is a managed move. It must be recognised that this is not a means of avoiding permanent exclusion as in the most severe and persistent cases the problems often recur in the receiving school.

9.2 A managed move is a managed transfer, over a period of time, of a child from one school to another. A managed move consists of a formal agreement between the child's parent/carer, the head teachers of both the referring (home) school (School A) and the receiving school (School B). A managed move provides a child with the opportunity of a 'fresh start' in another school and is a means of positively re-engaging the pupil in education.

9.3 Generally, a pupil should not participate in more than two managed moves in one academic year.

9.4 PRINCIPLES OF A MANAGED MOVE

9.4.1. It is seen to be in the best interest of those pupils who are experiencing difficulties, which could appear to be leading towards permanent exclusion. When the full range of pastoral support strategies (including a pastoral support programme) have been resourced and tried but have failed to reach the young person.

9.4.2. When a 'new start' at another school is seen positively by all concerned and has not been used as a threat or punishment by either the school, or the parent/carers. This is a possible, negotiated strategy, not an imposition. It aims to keep pupils included who might otherwise become further disaffected.

9.4.3. A managed move is a voluntary arrangement and no pressure must be put on to a Headteacher or a parent/carer if either feels that the move would not be in the child's best interests.

9.5 CRITERIA FOR A MANAGED MOVE:

9.5.1. A pupil with an otherwise good record has committed an offence that might lead to permanent exclusion, but the school feels the pupil would benefit from another chance.

9.5.2. There has been an irrevocable breakdown of relationships between a pupil and staff, as a consequence of significantly challenging behaviours displayed.

9.5.3. There has been an irrevocable breakdown of relationships between a pupil and his or her peers, as a consequence of significantly challenging behaviours displayed

9.5.4. A pupil with a record of inappropriate and disruptive behaviour or poor attendance, as a consequence of inappropriate and disruptive behaviour applies for an in-year transfer.

9.5.6 There has been an irrevocable breakdown in relationships between the pupil and staff or peers resulting in a pupil's low or non-attendance.

9.5.7 Where a managed move is proposed to resolve an attendance issue the school must demonstrate that the pupil in question has been referred to the Education Welfare Service. The managed move must be endorsed by the Council's Senior Education Welfare Service, where it is anticipated the move may resolve the existing barriers to attendance.

9.5.8. The above list is not intended to be a complete list of scenarios and there may be other occasions where a Managed Move is considered appropriate

9.6 THE PROCEDURE FOR A MANAGED MOVE

9.6.1 Managed moves will need to be referred to the Additional Learning Needs Panel. Prior to requesting a managed move, Headteachers must satisfy themselves that all possible preventative procedures have been met in full. Headteachers must make available all records in respect of:

- Pastoral support programme
- School's intervention and support given in respect of issues causing concern
- Referrals to external agencies
- ALN stage, provision of support and involvement of external agencies (if applicable)
- Assessment information
- Attendance
- Parent/carer interviews/discussions
- Strengths and potential areas for future development – a positive statement detailing the pupil's strong points/subject preferences
- Key Stage 4 pupils – record of options

9.6.2 A system of managed moves works by negotiating a transfer of the pupil into a new school as a means of positively re-engaging the pupil in education. In the first instance, the head teacher or the head teacher's representative of School A, will have discussed the consideration of a managed move with the parent/carer and child.

9.6.3. Where a Managed Move is being considered because of a pupil's behavioural issues, this should only be considered when School A's own behaviour management strategies and a pastoral support programme of at least

16 weeks has been resourced, tried and failed. Following agreement at the Additional Learning Needs Panel, a further pastoral support plan should then be set up for the pupil at the Initial Managed Move Meeting with School B to support the pupil. On occasions when a single incident occurs that would precipitate a permanent exclusion and without a background history of significant behavioural disruption, a pastoral support programme may not have been drawn up and exhausted by School A. In these circumstances, it is essential that a pastoral support programme is set up as soon as possible by School B to support the Managed Move.

9.6.4 An Initial Managed Move Meeting is arranged by the Headteacher's representative from School A. Those in attendance will be the representatives from Schools A and B, an Inclusion Officer, parent/carer and the pupil. The managed move protocols will be explained and all parties will provide written confirmation of their understanding and agreement to the parent/carer agreement (see appendix 3). Targets will be set to support the managed move process and information will be shared by parties (see appendix 3). An agreed start date and induction process will be agreed at the initial meeting. The pupil will then continue to attend the School B on a daily basis as agreed for the period of the Managed Move

9.6.5 The pupil remains on roll of the home school, but has a fresh start and attends the new school for a period of up to 12 term weeks as a "dual registered pupil". If the placement is successful, the pupil would then go onto the roll of the new school – School B.

9.6.6 The success of a managed move is based on targets set at the initial managed move meeting and the following:

- A pupil must have a good level of attendance and punctuality, as determined by the School B, during the period of the managed move.
- A pupil must have a good level of behaviour, as determined by the School B, during the period of the managed move
- A pupil must engage in learning in all aspects of their curriculum whilst attending the School B, during the managed move period

The above targets will be recorded at the meeting and reviewed during the managed move process.

9.6.7 A Review Meeting will be convened by the School B at approximately 6 school weeks into the Managed Move. This Review Meeting will be organised in advance, on a date where all professionals, the parent/carer(s) and the pupil attend. It is at this point where targets set are discussed and/or amended, if appropriate. At this point any concerns can be raised by any party and discussed to support the managed move process.

9.6.8 The School B will convene, a final Review Meeting to take place at 12 school weeks into the Managed Move. It is at this point where all parties consider whether targets set have been achieved, thus determining the success of the managed move. If successful, parties will agree a date when a pupil is to be taken off the School A's roll and become single registered with the School B.

9.6.9 In extenuating circumstances (i.e. when a pupil has had a medical condition that can impact on the attendance target), a managed move may be extended. The length (generally a further 6 weeks) must be agreed with all parties and another Final Review meeting must be arranged.

9.6.10 At the Review Meeting, the Final Review Meeting or at any point during the period of the Managed Move, it may be determined that the Managed Move has been unsuccessful. The determination of whether the Managed Move is unsuccessful will rest with School B and their decision is final. There is no appeal route following a determination that the Managed Move is unsuccessful. All records from School B will be transferred to School A and the pupil will continue to attend School A as a registered pupil there.

9.6.11 If the Managed Move is deemed to be unsuccessful at a point other than the end of the agreed period or at the mid review stage of the Managed Move, the Managed Move will come to end with immediate effect. Non-exhaustive examples of when a Managed Move may come to an end earlier than the agreed period of the Managed Move could be where the pupil displays poor behaviour or fails to attend School B under the Managed Move.

9.6.12 Should the Managed Move be deemed to be unsuccessful, the pupil will return to School A.

9.6.13 There is a clear understanding that School B does not have the ability to permanently exclude the pupil during the period of the Managed Move or at its conclusion. School A retains responsibility for the pupil until such time as the pupil is placed on roll of School B or returned to School A.

9.6.14 A managed move would not normally be appropriate where a year group is full but could be accommodated in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of head teachers.

9.6.15 All school records (as referred to in the Managed Moves Protocol) will be transferred to the receiving school for the Managed Move placement period. If the Managed Move is unsuccessful subsequent transfer applications to the School B may lead to the transfer application being referred by School B to the Hard to Place Protocol. School B will not be considered for placement if there has been an unsuccessful Managed Move for the same pupil in the 12 months prior to the referral.

9.7 PROCEDURE FOR A MANAGED MOVE WHERE THE PUPIL HAS ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND/OR A DISABILITY

9.7.1 A child with a statement/ Local Authority IDP/IEP would not normally be considered for a managed move, evidence should be gathered for submission to the ALN Panel for a change of placement. Where a child has a statement or Local Authority based IDP/IEP, the consideration of the managed move should only be undertaken as part of a Person Centred Planning (PCP) review process.

9.7.1 Pupils with a school based IDP can be considered under the Managed Move Protocol or the school can request that the Local Authority considers taking

responsibility for the IDP through the ALN Panel submission process. A PCP review meeting will need to be held and the outcome of the PCP is submitted with the Panel Submission paperwork to the ALN Panel,

9.7.2. Where a managed move takes place for a pupil that has a statement/IDP/IEP, School A should always discuss the arrangements with the Additional Learning Needs Manager prior to the managed move being considered.

9.7.3. Where a pupil has ALN, but does not have a statement/IDP, the procedure outlined above should be followed at all times.

9.8 PROCEDURE FOR A MANAGED MOVE FOR A CHILD LOOKED AFTER

9.8.1. A looked after child would not normally be considered for a managed move. Should a managed move be considered for a looked after child it can only take place with the consent and support of the CLA Education Officer and form part of the child's Education care plan.

9.9 REGISTRATION AND ROLL ARRANGEMENTS

9.9.1 School A keeps the pupil on roll during the trial period and includes him/her in all attendance statistics, local authority census, PLASC etc. School A maintains the pupil's record with an enrolment status of "M" (main dual-registration)

9.9.2 Although not placed on the roll, school B is responsible for recording the pupil's attendance and for feeding back to school A on a weekly basis. School B maintains the pupil's record with an enrolment status of "S" (subsidiary dual-registration). This enables the school to allocate the pupil to a tutor group, register, and generate a timetable.

9.9.3 It would be the responsibility of school A to keep the Inclusion Officer informed of progress of the managed move and in addition the Additional Learning Needs Team in the case of a child with a statement.

9.10 OTHER FACTORS

9.10.1 Every school involved in a Managed Move should identify a single person in their respective school who will manage all Managed Moves regardless of year group. This may be the Headteacher or a member of the leadership team.

9.10.2 Only the Headteacher of School A can exclude the pupil. School B would need to consider whether the actions of the pupils would warrant the termination of the Managed Move. It is important that School B keeps School A advised of any issues arising during the period of the Managed Move so that appropriate decisions can be taken by School A in a timely manner.

9.10.3 The pupil needs to be committed to the Managed Move process. There should be time allowed for the pupil and parent/carers to reflect on the suggestion of a Managed Move before the initial managed move meeting is scheduled. A copy of the managed move protocols should be provided to the parent/carer and pupil prior to the initial meeting taking place.

9.10.4 The pupil's transition into School B as part of the Managed Move must be on a full-time basis and will similarly need to be supported with effective induction process. These inductions are expected to be more detailed than what is normally provided to new pupils. The key to success is likely to be the pupil feeling an ownership of the transfer, prepared for it, and supported in it by School A, School B and the Inclusion Officer.

9.10.5 School A should enable pupils on a Managed Move who are eligible for free school meals to access them in School B immediately.

9.10.6 Not all pupils will be suitable candidates for a Managed Move. Negotiated transfer is part of a continuum of (developing) provision. Permanent exclusions may still be appropriate in certain cases.

9.10.7 It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to also ensure that the pupil conforms to the uniform regulations at School B.

9.10.8 Pupils who move out of the area and where their home school is no longer within statutory walking distance of their residence, should not be subject to a managed move. A parent/carer has the right to submit a transfer request to their preferred school and the School Admission Code should be adhered to.

9.11 FINANCE

9.11.1 During the period of the Managed Move, funding related to the pupil will remain with School A. However, where a school is above their PAN, prior to the managed move then an agreement between both School A and School B should take place to discuss the recoupment of any additional costs incurred. This should be agreed prior to the initial managed move meeting taking place.

9.11.2 If the Managed Move is successful and the pupil transfers to the roll of School B, funding will be transferred to School B from this date. The accountancy team will calculate the funding available from the date it is agreed the pupil will be transferred to the roll of School B. This may involve the recoupment of some monies from School A for this same period. Accountancy will inform School A and School B of the amount of money to be transferred and the process of transferring such funds.

9.12 OUT OF AREA MANAGED MOVES

9.12.1 There are no official arrangements for managed moves between local authority areas. However, it is suggested that where a managed move takes place between local authorities, schools and local authorities should follow the local authority's protocols of where the receiving school is located.

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Agenda Item 25

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 01.12.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 02.12.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **15th December 2021**
Report Subject: **Regional Partnership Update**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr John Mason, Executive Member Social Services**
Report Submitted by: **Damien McCann, Corporate Director of Social Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
		30.11.21			18.11.21	15.12.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Executive Committee with an overview of the work and decisions taken over the last 6 months by the Regional Partnership Board, developed under statutory guidance Part 9 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWB Act) since the last report presented to Social Services Scrutiny Committee on the 22nd April 2021.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The SSWB Act came into force in April 2016, Part 9 of the Act sets out statutory requirement for a Regional Partnership Board (RPB), along with the required minimum membership and a regional Citizen Panel, regional Provider Forum and regional Leadership Group (senior officer group) which have all been established.
- 2.2 The Regional Partnership Boards has been established on current local health board footprints – so the Gwent regional partnership board includes Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) and Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen local authorities.
- 2.3 The regulations also set out required membership of Regional Partnership Boards. The Executive member in each local authority, with responsibility for health and social care, sits on the Regional Partnership Board. In a similar vein, non-executive members of the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board also sit on the Regional Partnership Board.
- 2.4 The Regional Partnership Board is an advisory body, that does not take away the existing responsibilities of the individual statutory bodies, but it is expected to take oversight of and provide direction to, any areas of integrated working across health and social care.
- 2.5 Social Services Scrutiny Committee on the 13th March 2017 agreed for the Executive Member of Social Services and Director of Social Services to

report back to Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis. This approach was endorsed by Executive Committee on the 15th March 2017.

- 2.6 The Regional Partnership Board has met on 3 occasions since the last report to Scrutiny Committee on the 22nd April 2021. There has been a number of areas which have occupied the Regional Partnership Board at these meetings. Firstly, the continued response to the Coronavirus outbreak across partner agencies and the effect on services. Secondly, the continuation of the Integrated Care Revenue and Capital Funds and the Transformational Offer beyond 2022, Finally, it has been considering the crisis in health and social care with the inability to recruit staff to certain part of the system.
- 2.7 At each of the Regional Partnership Board meetings we have received updates on the hospital and community position on the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, and more recently the progress on the vaccination programme being rolled out. This included feedback from the Citizen Panel on some of the issues that had been raised with them concerning access to healthcare. The Board have been reassured that although the pandemic has been worse third time round in terms of community transmission the hospital capacity and support in the community has been able to cope with the third wave locally and regionally which was very much due to the success of the vaccination roll out and collaborative working by all partners.
- 2.8 Although seeing higher community transmission rates across Gwent during the third wave the impact on hospital admissions has been much less, although there has been between 70 to 80 cases admitted a week with Coronavirus to Gwent hospitals. There has also been increasing outbreaks particularly with staff in Care Homes across Gwent although over 95% having received both vaccinations and 98% of all residents.
- 2.9 The Regional Partnership Board is the body who sign off and agree the Integrated Care Fund revenue and capital proposals. Members may recall that Welsh Government agreed to continue the Integrated Care Fund revenue and capital funding for 2021/22 at the same level as 2020/21, as a means of transition for any new administration to come in and determine how they wish to proceed with this funding following the Senydd elections in May 2021.
- 2.10 Therefore, this transition period for the Regional Partnership Board, will see the impending cessation of the current partnership funding model in March 2022, which is due to be replaced by a single coherent source of revenue funding to support transformation and integration. Gwent Regional Partnership Board have discussed and considered its priorities to support longer term planning during this transition period. These new priorities place significant emphasis on care closer to home for all priority groups for integration, and enabling an infrastructure within our partnership that supports delivery.

- 2.11 To facilitate this transition period, and to support continuous efforts to address the challenges within our system, Gwent Regional Partnership Board endorsed a programme transition plan for 2021-22 to support both partnership and organisational financial planning, and ensure sufficient notice is provided to any initiatives that may need to conclude at 31 March 2022. This plan identifies all consideration activity of the existing portfolio to be complete by mid-November, by the Gwent Regional Partnership Board.
- 2.12 The £2million previously utilised for WCCIS implementation within the ICF revenue funding stream has been repurposed for a new priority area 'Safe accommodation for children with complex, high end emotional and behavioural needs'. This priority area has been introduced in direct response to the Children's Commissioner for Wales' report, No Wrong Door and in line with current Ministerial priorities. Welsh Government invited expressions of interest from Regions, Gwent submitted a proposal to Welsh Government to develop a children's residential home at Windmill Farm, Newport, setting out the opportunity of exploring joint commissioning methodologies for a wider cohort of children with complex needs. Welsh Government approved funding for this purpose and work has commenced using ICF capital together with the ICF revenue funding stream to deliver this proposed integrated model.
- 2.13 Members may recall from previous reports that the Regional Partnership Board had successfully submitted a 'Gwent transformational offer' to Welsh Government in response to 'A Healthier Wales' which set out a new £100 million transformational programme. The new transformation fund was intended to provide additional funding to catalyse 'whole system change', driven through the Regional Partnership Boards with an expectation that each region develops a 'transformational offer'.

The offer in Gwent related to four areas, these include:

- The development of early intervention and prevention services (Integrated Wellbeing Networks);
- The development of primary and community care services (Compassionate Communities);
- The redesign of child and adolescent emotional and mental health services (Iceberg model);
- The development of an integrated 'Home First' discharge model;

- 2.14 The programme was awarded £8,313,131 for 2021/22. Sustainability being the primary focus in this final year, bringing together successful elements alongside successful ICF programmes, to create a framework of services within a model of 'Place Based Care'.
- 2.15 All four programmes, have embedded well and the evaluation reports demonstrate both financial efficiencies and improved wellbeing outcomes for citizens have been achieved.
- 2.16 Welsh Government have commenced the development of a new funding model in coproduction with the Regions. The principles within this emerging

funding model propose to address the challenges that have been highlighted within the existing partnership funding arrangements, namely linked to project sustainability, local area needs and longer term strategic planning. Ministerial commitment has been made to a 5 year partnership funding model that will provide a single revenue funding source for regions for the following purposes:

- Acceleration funding: up to 90% financial support for the testing and development of new ways of working. A maximum duration will be applied to acceleration initiatives, currently anticipated to be 2-3 years.
- Embedding funding: funding to support the scaling and sustainability of successful initiatives. This funding source will require a tapered match funding from alternative budgets.
- Resource funding: funding to provide regional capacity to support RPBs in their activities, programme development, area needs and planning. Regional match funding will be required and appropriate resource thresholds are currently being discussed with Welsh Government.

- 2.17 Since June 2021, Social Services have been increasingly reporting workforce issues to the Regional Partnership Board. What we have seen is restrictions being eased and more sectors re-opening, an exhausted workforce taking well deserved holidays, staff off sick and those self-isolating either because they have caught Covid19 or been 'pinged' as being in contact with someone who has tested positive.
- 2.18 We have seen a shortage of staff across health and social care sectors, but particularly within the domiciliary care and residential care sector, as we have seen many staff leave to obtain better paid jobs which they have described as easier and with less responsibility in the hospitality and retail sector, than what they had been doing in social care. We have also had great difficulty in recruiting to vacancies across the sector leaving the sector short of staff to deliver vital services.
- 2.19 This crisis is multi-faceted, with blockages in hospital because of no capacity in the domiciliary care market to meet new packages of care for those coming out of hospital. We believe that the difficulty on some people being able to obtain a GP appointment may have increased the demand at Accident and Emergency units. The shortages of beds and increased demand at Accident and Emergencies has resulted in ambulances waiting outside hospitals to discharge patients into hospital. The lack of ambulance to attend incidents has then been severely reduced, resulting in Police having to transfer patients from incidents to hospital resulting in officers having to spend time in Accident and Emergency to discharge patients into hospital or be seen by Accident and Emergency staff.
- 2.20 This resulted in the Blue Light Services (WAST and Gwent Police) in August asking the Gwent Strategic Co-ordination group(SCG) to convene as they felt this had become a public emergency situation. The SCG then

set up a Tactical Co-ordination Group to look at a set of short term interventions to alleviate immediate pressures and longer term re-design how the system can work more effectively to reduce cyclical pressures.

- 2.21 The SCG and TCG will try and develop short and long term measures to alleviate the pressures. It will be the Regional Partnership Board responsibility to implement these measures to try and resolve the current crisis we find health and social care in.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Social Services Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 18th November agreed Option 1.

The options for consideration are:

Option 1 – Executive Committee to accept the report and support the decisions of the Regional Partnership Board:

Option 2 – Executive Committee do not accept the report and do not support the decisions of the Regional Partnership Board

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

The report is fulfilling our statutory functions under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 and accompanying regulations. The report is also fulfilling a number of the Social Services aims within the Corporate Plan:

- To improve accessibility, provision of information and advice to enable people to support their own wellbeing;
- To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater;
- To work with our partners including Aneurin Bevan Health Board and neighbouring authorities to deliver integrated responsive care and support;
- To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering health and social care involving key partners and our communities.

A number of the areas being progressed by the Regional Partnership Board will support us to achieve two of the Wellbeing Plan objectives:

- The best start in life for everyone;
- To encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the place that they live, learn, work and play.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

- 5.1 Option 1 - The Regional Partnership Board have statutory responsibilities laid out within the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 and Ministers

expect to see the Regional Partnership Boards, maturing into a vehicle for more integrated commissioning, transformation and improvement across health and social care, with an emphasis on providing more care closer to home, maintaining independence and reducing unnecessary hospital admissions. Therefore, by implementing the Gwent transformation offer the Regional Partnership Board are complying with the legislation and Ministerial expectations.

Option 1 – Welsh Government have also determined that the use of the Integrated Care Capital and Revenue Fund, the new Transformational fund and any Integrated Winter Planning funding will have oversight by the Regional Partnership Board. All these funding sources are to assist with the integration of health and social care across the Gwent Regional footprint. It is essential that the Regional Partnership Board has oversight of funding proposals and subsequent use of these funding streams, and have approved the proposals before they were submitted and agreed by Welsh Government.

Option 2 – The Regional Partnership Board are made up of a number of organisations who collectively make decision for the good of the region. If Scrutiny were to recommend alternative approaches, then it would need the support of neighbouring authorities and the health board to obtain consensus. Failure to do this would mean being in breach of legislation and could result in Welsh Government intervention. Whilst failure to comply with the requirements of the Integrated Care Capital Fund and Revenue Fund, Transformational fund and Integrated Winter Planning fund could result in the withdrawal or ability to receive funding for the Blaenau Gwent and Gwent region respectively.

5.2 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

There are no immediate impacts on the budget, the Integrated Care Capital Fund is provided on an annual basis to fund innovative projects within Health and Social Care which has been extended for a further 12 months during this transition year. The transformation fund is to develop new models of transformation at pace and has been agreed for a further 12 months during transition as well. These are all additional funding coming into the system.

The Integrated Care Capital and Revenue Fund provides significant investment to develop a number of projects across Blaenau Gwent and Gwent as a whole and should this funding be removed at the end of the proposed transition period will have significant consequences going forward. In addition, the transformation fund is a time limited fund intended to replace or reconfigure existing services not adding an extra layer; therefore, there is an expectation that these models will be funded from core budgets going forward.

Welsh Government have indicated their intent to develop a new fund to replace both the Integrated Care Fund and Transformation fund and are currently developing this new funding stream and working with partners.

5.3 ***Legal***

The Legal department becomes involved in considering and advising on any legal agreements before signing such as the Section 33 Agreement.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

The Gwent Transformational Team support senior officers and elected members to deliver and implement the priorities of the Regional Partnership Board. In addition, they administer the Regional Partnership Board and Leadership Group. The Gwent Transformation Team is hosted by Torfaen County Borough Council.

6. ***Supporting Evidence***

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Not applicable.

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

The role of the Regional Partnership Board is to ensure more seamless provision of health and social care services across Gwent.

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

The Regional Partnership Board has involvement from the third sector and representation from the Citizens Panel to ensure engagement and involvement in its direction.

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

The Regional Partnership Board provides the opportunity to work collectively and have a long term vision to progress integration and partnership across the Gwent region.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The Regional Partnership Board within its strategic intent statement will be considering how Health and Social Services can work together in a more preventative way.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The role the Regional Partnership Board is to work collaboratively across boundaries to benefit citizens requiring health and social care services across Gwent.

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

The purpose of the Regional Partnership Board is to foster integration between Health and Social Services.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

The report contents do not relate specifically to this agenda; indirectly local employment supports to ensure:

- People having the opportunity to work closer to home;
- The public can access services closer to home;
- Employment and service provision locally relates specifically to the decarbonisation agenda.

6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***

The report relates to a number of jobs which support employment locally, a loss to funding for these jobs would have a negative impact and may increase social and economic inequalities

6.9b. ***Equality Impact Assessment***

Not applicable

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The monitoring arrangements for the Regional Partnership Board are through the Social Services Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Committee on a quarterly basis.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- N/A

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

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