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THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

29th October 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee will be held in Hybrid Meeting: Via MS Teams/Abraham Derby Room at the General Offices, Ebbw Vale on Wednesday, 3rd November, 2021 at 10.00 am.

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

Yours faithfully

Michelle Morris
Managing Director

AGENDA

Pages

1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

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

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

will be provided if requested.

2. APOLOGIES

To receive.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

To receive.

4. REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 5 - 18

To receive the minutes of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 15th September, 2021.

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

5. ACTION SHEET - 15TH SEPTEMBER, 2021 19 - 22

To receive the Action Sheet arising from the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 15th September, 2021.

6. HYBRID UNITS AND HWB BOCS – PERFORMANCE MONITORING 23 - 32

To consider the report of the Service Manager Business and Regeneration.

7. STEM FACILITATION PROJECT 33 - 46

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

8. KICKSTART SCHEME 47 - 54

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

9. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 8TH DECEMBER 2021 55 - 58

To receive the report.

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

All other Members (for information)
Manager Director
Chief Officers

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE
REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

SUBJECT: **REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
15TH SEPTEMBER, 2021**

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

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. HILL (CHAIR)

Councillors G.A. Davies

M. Cook

P. Edwards

K. Hayden

J. Holt (***substituting for S. Healy***)

W. Hodgins

J.C. Morgan

H. McCarthy

G. Paulsen

K. Rowson

L. Winnett (***substituting for M. Cross***)

B. Willis

AND: Managing Director
Corporate Director Regeneration & Community
Services
Service Manager Business & Regeneration
Team Manager, Regeneration Opportunities
Team Manager, Connected Communities
Policy Officer
Marketing & Communications Officer
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer/Advisor

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

No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were reported for Councillors S. Healy and M. Cross.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Special Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 9th June, 2021 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 30th June, 2021 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 30TH JUNE, 2021</u></p> <p>The Action Sheet arising from the meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 30th June, 2021 was submitted.</p> <p><i><u>Electric Vehicle Charging Points</u></i></p> <p>In response to a question raised by a Member the Team Leader Regeneration Opportunities confirmed that the Council had received two electric taxi vehicles. Arrangements for management of the vehicles was currently being developed, and once this was in place the vehicles would be ready for use. The Officer undertook to inform Members when the taxis were in operation.</p> <p><i><u>Community Municipal Investment</u></i></p>	

	<p>In response to a question raised the Officer confirmed that the administration fee was a one-off amount.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the Action Sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 7	<p><u>REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Special Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 15th July, 2021 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 8	<p><u>PROGRESS UPDATE ON DECARONISATION PLAN</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Managing Director.</p> <p>The Managing Director presented the first progress report since adoption of the Council's Decarbonisation Plan and the declaration of a Climate Emergency on 24th September, 2020. The Plan sets out how we intend to 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, and these were highlighted at section 2.3 of the report.</p> <p>The Managing Director said a lot of work had been done during the last year to try and embed decarbonisation into how we think and operate as an organisation, and the summary at section 2.4 of the report highlighted that whilst we are making good progress there was still a lot of work to be done.</p> <p>The Managing Director then went through the report and highlighted points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member asked whether there would be opportunity for financial support from WRAP to adapt our fleet and practices at our HWRC sites.</p> <p>The Managing Director said good work had been done over the last few years and the Council had been successful in</p>	

increasing its recycling rates and this was having a positive impact on the decarbonisation agenda; and was recognised by the Climate Change Citizens Assembly. In terms of next steps and decarbonising our fleet, the Managing Director pointed out that WRAP was a facilitator, so any potential funding would come from Welsh Government. She looked forward to publication of the Zero Wales Plan in the coming weeks, to see what financial support Welsh Government intended putting behind the Plan to help us achieve its targets.

The Team Leader Regeneration Opportunities confirmed that work had been done with Community Services to review our fleet, and an analysis had also been undertaken of vehicles / technology currently on the market that would be suitable for the Borough. She felt the Council were in a good position to present proposals and a business case when funding becomes available.

A Member said he was pleased with the progress made since the Plan was adopted by the Council, and felt the Council was being pro-active and commended everyone involved in the BG Climate Change Citizens Assembly. He asked how the Council intended to develop the recommendations made by the Citizens Assembly.

The Managing Director said the response and enthusiasm of Officers to be involved was excellent. The Council's response to the Assembly's recommendations would be reported in due course, and a special Wider CLT meeting was being convened to consider the recommendations and look at what we are currently doing and where more action was needed in response to what our residents are telling us. Work was also being done through the Public Services Board and collectively across the public sector in Blaenau Gwent, and she was confident that that work would provide good outcomes and actions for the future.

A Member referred to renewable energy technology, and pointed out that the approximate life span for a wind farm was 20 years. He asked what would happen to these sites when they are no longer in working order.

	<p>In response the Managing Director said this was all part of the decarbonisation journey, and work was being done to review procurement strategies to ensure that the carbon impact was taken into account when purchasing goods and services. In terms of wind farms, they were currently providing a valuable source of renewal energy for Wales, however, advances in technology may mean that renewal energy could be achieved in different ways.</p> <p>A Member referred to the planning restrictions in place to protect listed buildings and the impact of this when trying to decarbonise these buildings.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services said this was challenging, and it may be that legislation would have to change in the future to align with the climate change agenda. A pragmatic approach was taken in relation to any works undertaken on listed buildings without changing the character of the building, however, some buildings would not achieve carbon zero. Welsh Government have issued guidance around planning applications for listed buildings, and each site would be considered individually.</p> <p>A Member asked whether it was intended to designate land within the Local Development Plans for tree planting to help reduce our carbon footprint, and also help to prevent flooding, and also whether peat bogs were being considered.</p> <p>In response the Managing Director confirmed that this was being considered as part of the PSB response, with specific actions and work streams in relation to the environment.</p> <p>In relation to peat bogs, the Corporate Director said these were an important resource in capturing carbon. There was some land within Blaenau Gwent that could become peat bogs, and moving forward it may be necessary to reconsider some of our previous land allocations within the Local Development Plan.</p> <p>A Member asked how it was intended to relay the challenges of net Zero to the community.</p>	
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	<p>The Managing Director said one of the positive outcomes from the Climate Change Citizens Assembly was that the community are up for the challenge. Part of our response to the Assembly is to harness that enthusiasm and work in partnership to identify actions moving forward.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the Committee support presentation of the report to the Executive Committee. (Option 1)</p>	
No. 9	<p><u>REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services presented the annual service activity report for the period April 2020 to July 2021. The Corporate Director went through the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member referred to previous discussions in relation to the Audit of Commemoration that went through Welsh Government in November 2020, and asked when a report on this could be expected.</p> <p>In response the Corporate Director undertook to investigate.</p> <p>Another Member enquired as to the current percentage of rented properties against home ownership, and whether there was greater need for social housing or private housing within the Borough.</p> <p>The Corporate Director said balance was key in meeting the needs of the community and having the right mix of housing to meet those needs. In terms of the percentage of rented properties, he said this was approximately 30% including social landlords and private rented. He confirmed that the Housing Market Needs Assessment was used to identify trends and demands coming through, and there was currently a demand for people wanting to move to Blaenau Gwent, and also for people wanting to move-up the property ladder, which had resulted in interest from private housing</p>	

developers, however, it was important not to lose sight of the needs of our existing community. He confirmed that the Housing Market Needs Assessment would be brought to Scrutiny in due course to ensure we have the right balance and understanding of future demand.

The Team Leader Connected Communities said moving forward a more blended approach to new housing developments would be encouraged i.e. a mix of social rented and intermediate products, and also low cost home ownership.

Another Member asked how many long term empty properties there were currently in the Borough.

The Corporate Director said this figure was currently in the region of 800-900 vacant properties. There were a number of initiatives to reduce this figure, i.e. reduced empty property discount, and there was also a very active grant and loan programme in place to bring empty properties back into use. In 2019/20 56 properties were brought back into use, however, this number was less during 2021 due to the redeployment of staff in response to the Covid pandemic. However, there were less properties vacant for a period of 6 months which meant the work being done in this area was proving beneficial.

A Member expressed concern regarding the impact of the rental increase of the Council's business units, which had resulted in some businesses leaving the Borough. She also felt that the new Box Works units had not been sufficiently advertised.

In response the Corporate Director said Members would be aware that as part of the Council's plans to become a more commercial organisation and to manage our units more effectively a service charge was introduced for our business units. Whilst this resulted in an increase in rental for occupiers, they were now getting an improved service. He said the retention of businesses in the Borough was paramount, and while many of our business units were designed for 'start-ups', it was expected they would move on to larger units as they grow, and the Council was focussed on ensuring that we have that ladder of

	<p>accommodation for businesses, but also taking a business-like approach in the management of our units.</p> <p>In relation to the Box Works site the Corporate Director explained that the Council had yet to take possession of the units from the contractor and this was anticipated to take place during the next week. He was optimistic that demand would increase significantly over the coming weeks.</p> <p>Another Member referred to the refurbishment of Trinity Chapel and expressed concern that the relocation of the Library to the building, along with the plans for a community shop and café in the former library building would draw people away from the Town Centre. He also looked forward to the refurbishment of Monwel and asked whether it was possible bring the scheme forward.</p> <p>In relation to the Monwel site the Corporate Director said it was intended that the scheme would be completed and open for students in September 2022. This was a tight timescale due to the significant remodelling to reach the high aspirations for the site.</p> <p>In terms of the proposals for the former Abertillery Library, he said the community shop and café was more of an ancillary facility for people accessing the training centre.</p> <p>A Member said the report was evidence of the good work being undertaken within the Department. However, he said it lacked detail in relation to employability, in terms of the number of people employed locally and also initiatives in place within the Borough to get people into work. He said there were a number of projects through the voluntary sector and partners and their work in supporting the Borough and employment opportunities should be highlighted in the report moving forward.</p> <p>The Corporate Director agreed that this should be included moving forward.</p> <p>A Member reported that the bridge over Cwmcelyn Pond was in need of repair, and asked that it be included on the Forward Work Programme for the relevant Scrutiny</p>	
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	<p>Committee as it provided a vital link to areas within the community.</p> <p>The Member also expressed concern that the electric vehicle charging point in Blaina was not being used.</p> <p>In response the Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities said it was important to have every area within the Borough included within the project. The locations were based on forecast usage, and usage across most of the charging points was good. However, more work would be done to promote the provision, but it may be that electric vehicle ownership was lower in Blaina and other locations were more prominent and in busier locations.</p> <p>Another Member referred back to the refurbishment of Trinity Chapel and said a further consultation exercise was needed. He was aware that many residents were against the proposals to move the library provision from a purpose built premises and undertake extensive renovations of Trinity Chapel in order to relocate the library. He also referred to the community supermarket and pointed out that the plans for the building, under the previous administration, would have provided an excellent resource during the Covid pandemic but the building had now stood empty for 4 years.</p> <p>In response the Corporate Director said the scheme for Trinity Chapel had been agreed and was progressing along with significant investment from Coalfields Regeneration Trust to bring back the building into a meaningful use.</p> <p>A discussion ensued a Member said the project and was an excellent opportunity for Abertillery. Another Member expressed concern that the refurbishment costs seemed to be escalating, and asked regarding the current costs of the project.</p> <p>The Team Leader Regeneration Opportunities said she was unable to provide the figure as the tender review process was currently underway. However, the Covid pandemic had impacted on the figures due to an increase in building and construction costs due to the lack of materials available. The full costs of refurbishment would be available in the next few weeks.</p>	
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The Member asked that this be highlighted as an action point.

Another Member referred to the rail link to Abertillery and disagreed that the link and increased frequency of trains would increase footfall in the town centre. He also said that increased frequency of trains did not guarantee more passengers, and expressed concern that in years to come the Ebbw Valley railway would become unviable.

The Corporate Director reported that when undertaking original work to justify reopening of the railway, passenger numbers were estimated at 400k per annum, however, following reopening the numbers exceeded 700k. Our forecast also assumed travel from Ebbw Vale to Cardiff, however, there was a huge number of journeys within the Valley which were not in the original forecast. He said increased frequency would make travel within the Borough easier for people accessing jobs and visiting family etc, and provide a strong public transport hub at the edge of town.

Another Member referred to the public consultation exercise undertaken on Llanhilleth Pithead Baths and the fact that the public were against the proposed use of the site for housing. He asked whether an alternative proposal was intended, and whether the Council would be in a position to purchase the land without the proposed housing.

In response the Corporate Director said this report highlighted progress on projects. He said feedback from the consultation on the Pithead Baths would be considered to understand the nature of those concerns, and how best to deal with them.

The Service Manager Business & Regeneration confirmed that a number of consultations exercises were planned to continue this work which was fundamental to the development of the site, to achieve a deliverable scheme to improve the area.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted as provided. (Option 2).

No. 10	<p><u>INVESTMENT IN MICRO-HYDRO INVESTMENT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given report of the Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities.</p> <p>The Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities presented the report which provided an update on progress of the Micro-Hydro Feasibility Study for Cwm and Llanhilleth wards, and sought support for the next steps for this part of the Project.</p> <p>A Member said he was disappointed that the project would not be progressed and asked whether it was possible for a trial to be undertaken in one location in the Borough.</p> <p>In response the Team Leader Regeneration Opportunities said it was a good scheme, however, due to the costs of the technology and grid costs at the present time the scheme would not offer the financial returns that the Council would expect. However, if any community groups etc secured funding the feasibility studies could be offered and the Council could work to support those organisations.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and that the Council choose not to take these schemes forward for further investigation and development. The projects be closed from the current point and would only be revisited should costs significantly reduce or new technologies become available. (Option 1)</p>	
No. 11	<p><u>PARTNERSHIP DELIVERY APPROACH – TOWN CENTRES</u></p> <p>Consideration was given report of the Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities.</p> <p>The Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities presented the report which sought support for the formulation of Town Centre Advisory Boards across the Town Centres of Abertillery, Brynmawr and Ebbw Vale to support a partnership delivery approach for future project delivery. A Member expressed concern that Blaina had been omitted from the report.</p>	

	<p>In response the Officer explained that Blaina had been omitted due to current resources within the Team. However, it was intended to establish a Town Centre Advisory Board for Blaina in the future and the Officer undertook to amend the report to include Blaina prior to the report being submitted to the Executive Committee.</p> <p>A discussion ensued regarding representation on the Advisory Boards and the importance of everyone working towards the best outcomes and improvements for their towns.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the addition of Blaina, that the report be accepted; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members support and recommend approval by the Executive Committee for the formation of a series of Advisory Boards for the Town Centres of Abertillery, Brynmawr and Ebbw Vale based upon the Tredegar Advisory Board approach, and acknowledge the draft Terms of Reference (Appendix One). The Advisory Board shall act as a consultative body to oversee development and delivery of Town Centre Strategies and Plans. • Each shall start with a small membership identified by members of the Town Centres Task and Finish Group alongside Officers. The membership can then be expanded and developed further as discussions develop. (Option 1) 	
No. 12	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 3RD NOVEMBER, 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Forward Work Programme for the meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 3rd November, 2021.</p> <p>It was reported that the Tredegar Placemaking Plan report would be moved to the December meeting.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the Forward Work Programme for 3rd November, 2021 be approved.</p>	

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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Action Sheet - Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – 15th September 2021

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
6	<u>Action Sheet – 30th June 2021</u> Electric Vehicle Charging Points: An update to be provided in terms of timelines.	Amy Taylor	All BG funded charge points have been installed and are operational. Additional charge points are being installed by Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. The contract for install has just been awarded and this will be followed by timelines for delivery.
9	<u>Regeneration and Development Performance</u> A Member requested that the Welsh Audit of Commemoration be reported to the appropriate committee for discussion. Destination Management and Tourism: A Member requested that the issues with the bridge over Cwmcelyn Pond be prioritised as part of the Destination Management Plan and asked that it be discussed as appropriate. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure: Update to be provide on usage in Blaina.	Richard Crook Richard Crook Amy Taylor	Update to be provided. The Authority is looking at whether Cwmcelyn Pond bridge could be repaired by submitting a scheme/bid for Active Travel funding as an Active Travel route although discussions with Sustrans to date have suggested that this may not be supported by Transport for Wales [TfW] as there are already existing Active Travel routes around the pond that lead between residential area and school. This will however be raised for due consideration and comment from TfW through a meeting due to be held shortly with Sustrans who will hopefully provide a definite answer either way. Since commissioning in November 2020 the chargers at High Street, Blaina have been used on two occasions once in July and the second occasion in September. Although the figure is low it shows the charge point has seen some usage in recent months and when compared to the Abertillery Sports Centre figure of seven occasions it shows that whilst uptake has been low we are now seeing some usage.

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
			<p>Low usage could be down to a number of factors including awareness of the charge point location or level of EV car ownership in the Blaina and surrounding area. Whilst the usage to date has been low it is essential we maintain the provision as the infrastructure will be essential to support everyone's move away from Petrol and Diesel cars.</p> <p>We are working with the Corporate Communications team to develop some messaging around the locations of the charge points across Blaina Gwent and hope will help increase usage of all charge points as EV car ownership becomes greater.</p>
	<p><u>Actions Referred from the Joint Budget Scrutiny Committee – 27th September 2021</u></p> <p>Update on the Tredegar Company Shop to be provided.</p> <p>Capital Budget Monitoring Forecast – Appendix 1 328340 - Detail to be provided in relation to the Metro Plus funding and the Abertillery Spur and acquisition of land.</p>	<p>Steve Smith</p> <p>Richard Crook / Ellie Fry</p>	<p>See attached.</p> <p>The Metro Plus funding makes up a small proportion of the funds required to begin the development of the Abertillery Spur work. In 2020-21 the expenditure was £430,374 and this included both WeITAG work and purchase of the land required as a terminus point. The allocation for 2021-22 is £390,000 for further design work taking the project into early GRIP (Governance for Railway Investment Projects) stages in preparation for the UK Govt funding expected.</p>

Background

Members will be aware of the long standing case of Tredegar Company Shop (aka former British Legion) at Shop Row Tredegar. The building is listed but has deteriorated over the past 20 years to the point where the building is shored by scaffolding and the highway closed. The Council now owns the property.

We have instructed the Conservation Officer at Mon CC to act as our agent to demolish parts of the complex to allow for the highway to be reopened for the benefit of the local community and address ongoing revenue liabilities with the scaffolding.

As the building is listed and owned by this Council, the application will be decided by Cadw/Welsh Ministers. A robust case is required based on the condition of the building, efforts to save the structure, site restoration and after use.

As we are unable to access the site due to the parlous condition of the building, we have instructed expert structural engineers who have used state of the art drone footage to survey the site and using this data, prepare detailed computer generated drawings to accompany the application.

Due to capacity issues, covid and other factors this process has taken longer than expected.

Current Position

Along with our agent and the structural engineers, the Development & Estates Service Manager met with Cadw in August to explain the basis of the draft listed building application and the information that was to be submitted.

Cadw raised further issues around after use and making good of the site, all of which they require to accompany an application for demolition. Since that time, we have been working on this supplemental information and the application was duly submitted to Cadw on 30th September

The Council will now await a decision. Money has been allocated in the capital program but it is unclear at this time whether that will be sufficient to complete the demolition and comply with any conditions imposed by Cadw on site after-use/restoration (assuming approval).

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Agenda Item 6

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **3rd November 2021**

Report Subject: **Hybrid Units and Hwb Bocs– Performance Monitoring**

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

Report Submitted by: **Owen Ashton, Service Manager Business & Regeneration**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
19.10.21	21.10.21				03.11.21			

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a Performance Monitoring update on the Hybrid Units and the Hwb Bocs developments at the Works Site, Ebbw Vale.

2. Scope and Background

Background - Hybrid Units

- 2.1 As part of the development of the Works site, Ebbw Vale, the Council has sought to provide an attractive range of business units to cater for demand within the County Borough itself and the wider south east Wales region. Within this context, a need was identified for a range of higher quality premises to appeal to a wider range of businesses.
- 2.2 To deliver this, the Council entered into a Joint Venture with the Welsh Government to develop Hybrid Units at Lime Avenue, creating high quality business space, comprising 3 separate buildings housing 9 units.
- 2.3 The funding secured includes contributions from the Council itself, the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) and the Welsh Government (WG) and is split as follows:
- Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council - £850,000
WEFO- £2,580,000
Welsh Government - £3,150,000
- 2.4 The revenue generation split follows the investment; BG have a small return from the Joint Venture, the majority of the monthly rental goes to WG.

Current Position – Hybrid Units

- 2.5 The Council has taken possession of the Hybrid Units and has been working closely with the Welsh Government to market the site. Thales have taken occupation of two buildings and the Council is nearing completion on a further lease for a business requiring space in the remaining building. In total there are now 16 Thales positions working from Regain and the hybrids and this is set to rise, with another 10 jobs associated with the additional lease. This is an exciting development for Blaenau Gwent, continuing the regeneration of the strategic Works site and provides an excellent opportunity for business to establish, grow and develop within the area creating employment and helping to support local supply chains.

Background – Hwb Bocs

- 2.6 Like the Hybrid Units, the development of the Hwb Bocs forms an exciting part of the regeneration of the Works site with the aim of providing a range of premises for businesses and entrepreneurs. The project has taken inspiration from other similar developments elsewhere, with a focus on providing attractive premises, complemented by on site-business support from the Council's Regeneration staff and access to a range of other sources of support and inspiration. The Hwb Bocs will be formally launched with our business partners during Entrepreneurship week.
- 2.7 The project was delivered in partnership with Welsh Government and has transformed shipping containers into 21 separate office spaces alongside communal facilities and is located adjacent to the Coleg Gwent building.
- 2.8 The funding secured for the project comprises contributions from the Council itself and the Welsh Government (WG) and is split as follows:

Blaenau Gwent - £780,000
Welsh Government £490,000

Current Position

- 2.9 Like the Hybrid Units, the Council has taken possession of the Hwb Bocs units and is currently in the process undertaking the final internal fit-out works. Given the nature of the Units, the Council is working closely to identify suitable tech-based businesses and entrepreneurs as part of its marketing programme with significant interest being expressed.
- 2.10 Like the Hybrid Units, the project is an exciting development for Blaenau Gwent and provides a striking venue for a range of tech businesses and entrepreneurs to be based at the Works site. As well as working with the business community, the Council is also working with the College to encourage potential spin out projects to be based at its doorstep, providing an attractive proposition for students to test out business ideas.

3. Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 Option 1 – Members to accept the content of the report.

3.2 Option 2 – Members to not accept the content of the report

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

4.1 This project supports the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-22 Outcome Statements:

- Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities
- Support a fairer sustainable economy and community

4.2 The Council's Well-being Plan for 2018-23 includes 5 Objectives. This project directly supports the objectives of creating 'safe and friendly communities' and 'forge new pathways to prosperity'.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget***

The Council has secured funding from a range of sources for each of the projects.

5.2 The premises will form part of the Council's industrial portfolio and their ongoing maintenance and management has been factored into and will be covered through a mixture of requirements placed on tenants (for example via FRI leases) and income generated from the rentals.

5.3 ***Risk***

Officers will continue to work with Welsh Government on promoting both projects for potential tenants. As has been highlighted, there has been significant interest from businesses for both the Hybrid Units and the Hwb Bocs Units with the former almost fully let to suitable businesses already.

5.4 ***Legal***

Appropriate legal agreements have and will be entered into with each tenant and officers in Regeneration will continue to work closely with colleagues in Welsh Government.

5.5 ***Human Resources***

Staff within the Regeneration and Estates will continue work collaboratively with WG to promote the projects.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

The projects have been based on a robust analysis of data and information which has established a demand for the projects.

6.2 Expected outcome for the public

The project provides an excellent opportunity for existing and new businesses within Blaenau Gwent to establish and grow on the Works Site and support local employment and training.

6.3 Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)

The project continues the regeneration at the Works site forming part of the Works Masterplan on a collaborative delivery model.

6.4 Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)

The projects have increased the range of premises available to local businesses and entrepreneurs and enhanced the pathway for growth in the area.

6.5 Preventative focus

The project will ensure that a range of new premises are created for businesses and entrepreneurs in Blaenau Gwent and help support the conditions for sustainable economic growth.

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

The project can be seen as another excellent example of collaborative and partnership working between BGCBC, WEFO, Welsh Government and the private sector in delivering high quality premises that supports the regeneration of the county borough.

6.7 Integration (across service areas)

Consultation has been undertaken across Planning and Regeneration and the design, development and contract management work has been completed by Technical Services.

6.8 Decarbonisation & Reducing Carbon Emissions

The projects have been developed with an emphasis on reducing energy consumption and the need for by car. Both projects are located near to the Ebbw Vale train station, are accessible from the town centre, are on Active Travel routes and have bike storage facilities as well as EV charging points.

6.9 Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment

The projects contribute to and support the Council's Socio Economic Duty, by providing local employment opportunities for residents and opportunities for businesses and enterprises to establish and grow within the area.

6.10 EqIA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)

An Equalities Impact Assessment screening is currently being undertaken.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

To be confirmed.

8. **Background Documents / Electronic Links**

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CONSTRUCTION NOTES

SITE WORKS

Paving Slabs Generally

Tobermore 450x450x50mm smooth finish standard flags. Colour to be 'Natural' or 'Charcoal' as indicated on EPT Proposed Site Plan drawing 2001. NOTE: Setting out of paving shown ~~indicatively TBC. Refer to Civil Engineers drawings for details.~~

Block Paving to Car Parking

Tobermore 450x450x50mm Pedestra (Hydropave TBC) block paving. Colour to be 'Natural' or 'Charcoal' as indicated on EPT Proposed Site Plan drawing 2001. NOTE: Setting out of paving shown ~~indicatively TBC. Refer to Civil Engineers drawings for details.~~

Brick Retaining Walls generally

215mm wide two skin engineering brick retaining walls with brick on edge to top. Concrete strip foundations to SE design. Refer to Civil Engineers drawings for details. Colour of brick and mortar TBC by Client.

Carpark Road Linings

Linings generally to be Class 1 retro reflectivity. To be a standard specification from and installed by the 'Road Safety Markings Association'. Colour to be white.

Cycle Shelter & Cycle Hoops

4340x2260mm deep Falco 'Falcospa Cycle Shelter' to accommodate 5no cycle hoops to be polyester powder coated, from standard ~~range TBC.~~

5no PPC steel 'Sheffield Style' cycle hoops set in concrete pads / slab to Structural Engineers design.

External Grade Mailboxes

PPC external grade fire rated 11no two-tier stacked mailboxes (22no total) to be DAD FR120MBH or similar with sprung painted steel flaps, cam locks and cylinders with 2 sets of keys. Suited master key to be provided. To be securely floor / wall fixed over concrete base upstand or similar to suspend off external ground floor. All installed to manufacturers recommendations.

Gullies and Channel Drainage

Marshalls or similar gullies and linear drainage channel with galvanised steel slotted cover grating suitable for heel guard protection with anti-vandal security catches. With associated rubber gaskets and mud bucket sump units where required over suitable base to SE design, all installed to manufacturers recommendations.

Misc. Site Furniture

Litter bins, tree guards and tree grille requirement TBC.

FENCING & BALUSTRADING

Site Boundary Fence & Gates

Heras Eco Contour Standard 1800mm high or similar PPC galv. steel fencing consisting of circa 25mm vertical bars with capped tops at max 120mm centres with circa 60mm PPC galv. steel SHS posts at regular / equal centres to Steel fabricators design, set in concrete pads to SE design.

Vehicle and pedestrian gates required where indicated on EPT proposed site plan drawing 2001. All gate heights, style and finish to match adjoining fencing with circa 60mm SHS framing fixed back to SHS fencing posts. To be provided with lockable slip-hatch, site adjustable hangings, lockable drop bolts and ground tubes. Req. access control TBC by Client. Colour of boundary fencing and gates to be RAL 7016.

Ground Floor Infill Barrier Screen & Gates

Galv. steel vertical plate style infill. To be taken up full height to U/S of first floor steel structure and fitted between galv. UC columns. Galv. steel SHS posts at regular / equal centres where required to larger spans to steel fabricators design. Panels to be fixed back to steel framing / posts at side / head of panels, exact fixing detail to be determined by steel fabricator. Circa 60x60mm galv steel SHS framing to be provided to access gate locations with matching vertical plate infill panels above gates. To be provided with lockable slip-latch, site adjustable hangings, lockable drop-bolts and ground tubes. Access control TBC by client. Refer to EPT drawing 4001 for fence / gate details and setting out.

First Floor Deck Perimeter Balustrading

Galvanised steel balustrading at regular / equal centres with matching horizontal top rail and vertical plate galv. steel infill panels between uprights at regular / equal centres to steel fabricators design. Top of balustrading to be 1200mm high above first floor deck level with uprights faced fixed to steel frame, refer to EPT drawing 4003.

ACCESS STAIRS

Galv. steel vertical plate balustrading fixed to plate stringers set out at equal centres with galv. steel Elephant 'Type N' grating infill panels and 55mm oval handrails with nylon coating / sleeves TBC. Treads and landings to be galv. steel 5mm dia raised / depressed surface by Elephant 'Type O5-M' providing a non-slip, heel guard protected surface with Elephant 75mm non-slip black nosings and integrated riser plates, treads to be directly side fixed to plate stringers to manufacturers recommendations. Refer to EPT drawing 4004 for details.

NOTE: All balustrading, handrailing, infill mesh and access gates to be designed in accordance with horizontal uniformly distributed line loads as stated in table A4 of BS6399-1: 0.74KN.M. Load calcs to be undertaken by steel fabricator.

FIRST FLOOR DECK

Galvanised steel 5mm dia raised/depressed surface by Elephant 'Type O5-M' providing a non-slip, heel guard protected surface over steel joists, depth and centres to be determined by Structural Engineer. All installed strictly to manufacturers details.

PLATFORM LIFT

Gates: Arico 7000XT or similar external grade self supporting enclosed platform lift. Solid type enclosure (colour to be RAL 7016 to match containers) to be plastic film laminated hot dipped galvanised steel with a 1480x1100mm cabin size suitable for 410kg load. 2no landings with same side entry doors to be non-fire rated automatic swing doors with full height class 1 toughened glazing. 50mm deep lift pit. Allow for weathering base detail to lift manufacturers recommendations suitable for external use.

Platform lift enclosure frame to be clad with galv steel expanded metal cladding to match container unit cladding.

Structural

Lightweight galvanised steel SHS frame with angles and T sections for fixing of cladding to lift frame to be provided to SE design.

Civil

Gully to be provided to lift pit, located centrally in accordance with manufacturers recommendations. Refer to Civil Engineers drawings and specification for details.

Electrical

Allow for single phase supply for platform lift. Battery-backed LED lighting in shaft ceiling to standard details. Programmable Logic Controller with manual emergency lowering to ground floor. Emergency buzzer alarm with continuous-charged battery in the control unit and two way communication with intercom. All required power and cabling to be allowed for and provided by others.

RECORD DRAWINGS

This is a record of the latest construction issue on the project. It is not a survey of the completed works. Details shown on this drawing should be verified on site prior to undertaking any future works. For further details, reference should also be made to specialist consultant and sub-contractor's details.

ALL DIMENSIONS TO BE CHECKED ON SITE.
DO NOT SCALE THIS DRAWING.
ALL DISCREPANCIES TO BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY.
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AUTOCAD VERSIONS OF THIS DRAWING ARE GENERATED FROM REVIT AND ARE NOT CHECKED. THEY ARE PROVIDED TO CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS FOR INFORMATION ONLY TO USE AT THEIR OWN RISK.

GENERAL KEY

- Site Boundary
- Proposed 1.8m high boundary fence/line with vehicular / personnel gates where indicated. Refer to EPT drawing 4001 for details
- Proposed galv. steel infill barriers between columns and container units, full height to u/s of FF deck structure. Secured access gates where indicated. Refer to EPT drawing 4001 for details
- Circa 1000mm high x 500mm long galv. steel Boyco door guard or similar with rubber stop
- Asphalt concrete to Civil Engineers drawings & specification
- 'Natural' grey textured paving slabs to match existing on adjacent college site. Refer to Tobermore details
- 'Charcoal' grey textured paving slabs to match existing on adjacent college site. Refer to Tobermore details
- 'Natural' grey brick paving to parking bays. Refer to Tobermore details
- 'Charcoal' grey brick paving to parking bays. Refer to Tobermore details
- Areas of Soft Landscaping, planting and trees - refer to BGCB landscape proposal drawings for details
- Insitu concrete with large pebble mix to Civil Engineers drawings & specification
- Gullies and channel drains indicatively shown, refer to Civil Engineers drawings and specifications for details.
- Gullies and channel drains indicatively shown, refer to Civil Engineers drawings and specifications for details.
- Services slots indicatively locations. Refer to Civil Engineers drawings

CONTAINER TYPES KEY

- Type 1 (Standard) - 7620mm / 25ft.
- Type 2 (Long Unit 1) - 9144mm / 30ft.
- Type 3 (Long Unit 2) - 9144mm / 30ft.
- Type 4 (Long Unit 3) - 9144mm / 30ft.
- Type 5 (Toilet Unit) - 6058mm / 20ft.
- Type 6 (Bin Store) - 6058mm / 20ft.

GENERAL NOTES

- Refer to Civil / Structural Engineers drawings for external hard landscaping detail.
- Foundations and below ground drainage layouts and details.
- Refer to M&E drawings for extent of external lighting design.

H&S NOTES

- Hazards identified:

- Works site adjacent to operational college site - ensure site boundary is fully secured during construction works
- Collision with columns on circulation routes. Manifestation or reflective hazard tape to be provided to columns
- Collision with u/s of stairs. GF guarding to be provided. Refer to EPT drg 4004 for details
- Potential for entrapment / compromised site security between gaps at ground floor container units. Client to confirm any requirements to close gaps between units

06	Record drawing issue	01/02/21	DJS
05	Whiteline updated	24/01/21	DJS
04	Give-way whiteline added	06/01/21	DJS
03	Bin store relocated	25/08/20	DJS
02	Meter housing location added. Paving slabs and gate on east elevation omitted	17/08/20	DJS
01	Various updated following latest design team updates	22/07/20	DJS

No.	Revision Description	Date	By
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Cynghor Bwrdeistref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

EPT PARTNERSHIP
CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

Client:
Kier Construction

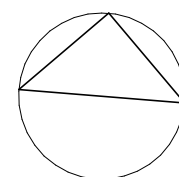
Project:
Lime Avenue Box Units

Drawing Title:
Proposed Site Plan

Status: Record Drawing

Scale : 1 : 100 Original sheet size : A1

Project	Originator	Volume	Level	Type	Role	Number	Subsidiary	Revision
TWBU - EPT	- 00 - 00 - DR - A -	2001 -	CR -	C06				
EPT internal project ref:	Drawn by:	Checked by:	Exported from model:					
11153	DJS	MP	01/02/2021 18:38:59					



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Agenda Item 7

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **3rd November 2021**

Report Subject: **STEM Facilitation Project**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Dai 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)
	07.10.21	21.10.21			03.11.21	10.11.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Environment, Regeneration Economic Development Scrutiny Committee information on the performance of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Facilitation Project.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 In response to the anticipated employment and associated skill requirements created as a result of Tech Valleys there is a need to ensure local residents (including children and young people) within Blaenau Gwent are equipped and positioned to benefit. In response to this challenge, and as an early and proactive intervention, the STEM Facilitation Project has been developed.
- 2.2 The project establishes a co-ordinated programme of support, centred on “industry in schools STEM facilitation” within a cluster of Blaenau Gwent based schools, raising aspiration and preparing children for their journey into the world of work, whilst remaining complementary to the school curriculum.
- 2.3 The project seeks to raise awareness of opportunities amongst children, young people and the wider community in order to positively engage them and ultimately increase aspiration and attainment.
- 2.4 The project is not intended to duplicate existing initiatives as it is designed to enhance the current offer; with a specific focus on understanding the specific needs of individual schools and clusters, responding to those needs by providing resource to coordinate a programme of support and address any identified gaps.
- 2.5 The project is also seeking to support and develop a sustainable relationship between local businesses and schools, via the industry liaison element of the role. In the first six months the project has engaged with thirty-one

businesses and twenty-nine have pledged to support where possible. The topics covered by

Of the twenty-nine businesses that have engaged there is a wide range of industry sectors covered including manufacturing, a range of aspects of Engineering, Environmental, Renewable Energy and Chemistry within Science.

All businesses committed to supporting the project have provided innovative ideas for provisions. Some of these companies already have education outreach programmes developed which include delivery of a wide range of STEM learning opportunities. Other businesses have offered to develop bespoke STEM provisions to deliver based on the school and industry needs and requirements and have already suggested ideas to be developed. These businesses include Continental Teves, NDEC, Castleoak and Griffiths Construction.

Details of business offerings are summarised in Appendix 1, Table 2.

- 2.6 Initially a pilot project that will operate through to March 2023, focused on the Ebbw Fawr cluster; reflective of the outcomes achieved and the impact made, further funding will be sought to continue and broaden the reach of the project across Blaenau Gwent. The team are aware of wider STEM in school activity operating across Blaenau Gwent and are will actively share information they have available that may benefit the Blaenau Gwent school community.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 Option 1

Endorse the project progress made to date.

Option 2

Endorse the project progress made to date and to provide comment on future delivery.

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

4.1 Corporate Plan

This project supports various points within the Outcome Statement of “Support a fairer sustainable economy and community”:

- Support all learners to achieve improved outcomes.
- The STEM Facilitation project is working with learners across seven primary schools, one mainstream secondary, one special needs school and one school that caters for learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. STEM interventions are planned for learners across all ability levels and key stages.

- To improve pupil outcomes, progress and wellbeing.
Personalised plans have been developed with each school to allow interventions to work alongside their existing curriculum and to help improve specific STEM outcomes identified in each school.

- To improve skills and promote digital participation.
Business engagement has allowed the project to identify skills that need development and interventions will focus on improving these. Digital skills have been identified as a key area and are forming the basis of a transition project across the cluster.

4.2 Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

The Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan 'The Blaenau Gwent We Want' has two objectives that are supported by this project:

- Best Start in Life
This project works with EAS to monitor education standards within the cluster of schools in Blaenau Gwent. This ensures there is a strong focus on investing in the current and future generations.

- Forge New Pathways to Prosperity
This project works with local businesses, the college and providers to ensure learners have the right skills for the future. It also helps learners to have the aspirations to fulfil their potential and to place a high value on education and development.

4.3 Employment and Skills Plan

This project helps work towards three of the priorities in this plan:

- Business and Enterprise

To facilitate growth in local industry, the project has identified skills gaps within local businesses and is using this to inform the development of interventions for schools.

- Learning and Skills

A high percentage of employers expect problems in recruiting for STEM related positions in the future so this project is fully focussed on strengthening links between industry and schools. This allows the next generation to have the opportunity to develop relevant skills during their education.

- Education and Schools

The project aims to add relevant interventions to schools which will help raise attainment in STEM related subjects. Key priorities are also to work on addressing the disparity between males and females in STEM, through use of STEM ambassadors, and to prepare children for advancing technology,

through linking with relevant local businesses and external providers. Building up relationships with local businesses and providers will also help encourage work readiness skills in young people.

5. Implications Against Each Option

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

The project is one hundred percent externally funded by Tech Valleys with outcomes agreed. The project is initially funded for 2 years through to March 2023. The funding supports staff costs, implementation of activities (where required) and development of school resources to support participation.

5.2 *Risk including Mitigating Actions*

The risk of schools not understanding the aim of the project, or not prioritising STEM in their plans, could hinder progress for their learners. This can be mitigated by demonstrating the associated impact of the activities being delivered in other schools in the cluster.

A further risk is the project and schools not aligning to the future skills needs of local industry. The proactive engagement of local, regional and national businesses as part of the project will mitigate this risk.

5.3 *Legal*

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 *Human Resources*

There are two full time staff allocated to deliver this pilot project.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

Performance information and data against Welsh Government targets is included in appendix one.

6.2 *Expected outcome for the public*

The expected outcome is that learners in the cluster of schools involved will understand STEM in more detail. This will also mean they understand the skills needed for STEM-related careers and then have more aspirations and ambitions to succeed in achieving local STEM-related jobs.

It is hoped that this in turn will position children and young people to pursue further education and/or secure better paid employment opportunities, including those available locally.

6.3 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

The interventions are delivered in collaboration with a range of partner organisations as outlined below:

Organisation	Outcome	Further Activity
EAS	Overview provided of all schools in the cluster and	Regular updates provided to EAS and guidance on areas of improvement provided.

	assistance in carrying out a self-evaluation.	
NDEC	Clear aims and objectives for a transition project.	Development of resources for transition project.
Technocamps	Clear aims and objectives for a transition project.	Development of resources for transition project.
Coleg Gwent	Information on existing engagement with schools and plans for interventions in primary and secondary.	Plans for primary interventions are on-going. Plans with secondary schools to be developed.
External Providers	Meetings with a range of external providers have been recorded to help support schools.	Liaising with providers to compliment curriculum plans within the cluster.
Local Businesses	Identified skills gaps and future needs. Discussed the development of interventions in schools.	Regular review of skills gaps and future needs. Evaluation of school interventions.
Careers Wales	Clear distinction and where appropriate alignment of initiatives.	Representation on the STEM Facilitation steering group.

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

This project has been created to align with the agreed priority themes for regeneration. Consideration has been given to each of the outcome statements in the Corporate Plan 2020/22, Well-being Plan and Employment and Skills Plan.

The project will have a long term impact as it will help to raise attainment levels in STEM-related subjects and to encourage local aspirational learners to work in their local area, securing higher skilled and better paid employment, as opposed to leaving the area.

In line with the priorities of the Tech Valleys Strategic Plan, the long term aims are to engage learners from Foundation Phase to inspire them to be part of the regeneration of their area. The project also aims to develop existing skills but also uses business engagement to forecast future recruitment gaps and new skills that will be required in the next generation (i.e. robotics, cyber security, programming skills).

The project aligns to wider aspirations relating to employment and skills including the Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme (SAP), the HiVE Centre (former Monwel) and Immersive Classroom experience.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The project aims to work in a proactive way, rather than a reactive way, so that future skills gaps and knowledge are identified in advance to allow this knowledge to influence the development of relevant interventions in schools. This will happen through regular interaction with the businesses that have pledged their commitment to the project.

The project also aims to tackle the lack of aspiration across all levels of learners, not just those aiming for higher-skilled STEM jobs. This will be achieved by working with learners across all abilities and backgrounds.

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

The interventions are delivered in collaboration with a range of partner organisations as outlined below:

- EAS
- NDEC
- Technocamps
- Coleg Gwent
- External providers
- Local businesses
- Welsh Government
- Careers Wales

6.7 Integration (across service areas)

The project liaises with Aspire, Education and the Employment and Skills Team regularly as many priorities are shared across the service area; all teams are fully engaged in the STEM Facilitation Project and share knowledge as necessary.

This project will also be involved with the next Blaenau Gwent STEM Inspiration Event. Businesses and providers that were at the last event formed the basis of the mapping exercise at the start of this project. The number of businesses and providers involved with the project has grown, and continues to do so; this success can be used to enhance the next STEM Inspiration Event even further.

6.8 Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions

The delivery of the project does not impact this area directly. However, within the teaching of STEM across the cluster, and with interventions from businesses and providers, skills and knowledge related to decarbonisation and reducing carbon emissions are taught and emphasised.

6.9a Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment

The project is available to all learners across the cluster of ten schools, regardless of background or ability. This allows all learners to have the opportunity to have access to STEM role models who can inspire them and broaden their horizons, showing them that their background does not need to determine their future and allow them to have increased ambitions to achieve a local higher skilled job.

The project also has a target of addressing the disparity between males and females in STEM. This will be achieved by the use of female STEM role models from local businesses, as well as using STEM learner ambassadors from the secondary school to engage with primary school activities.

6.9b. Equality Impact Assessment

This report has no identified impact on the protected characteristics.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1 Summarised updates are sent to Welsh Government on a monthly basis. Reports and presentations are delivered to the Tech Valleys Advisory Group and Steering Group on a quarterly basis.

Personalised STEM plans for each school will be reviewed on a termly basis and RAG rated. Once each provider/business has completed an intervention, the delivery team, teachers and learners will be asked to provide feedback which will be analysed and used to inform future planning. Learner focus groups are also being used in each school, including a cross-section of learners, to provide in-depth feedback to the project.

Annual performance will be reported to scrutiny moving forward.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Performance Information against Welsh Government Targets

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Project Target Tracking

The targets must be achieved by 20 March 2023 and funding must be claimed in full by 31 March 2023.
Documentation of the completed work must be presented to the Welsh Government before any funding can be released.

<u>TARGET 1: ENGAGEMENT WITH 40 BUSINESSES (YEAR ONE: 10, YEAR TWO: 30).</u>	
<u>TIMEFRAME</u>	<u>EVIDENCE</u>
<i>Meetings have been held with each engaged business. Meeting notes and information on each business has been collated on a spreadsheet in a common format for ease of reference.</i>	
April 2021 – July 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Renishaw – 28/04/20212. Wastesavers – 30/04/20213. Welsh Water – 06/05/20214. DULAS – 11/05/20215. Silverstone Green Energy – 12/05/20216. Hanson – 19/05/20217. GE Aviation – 19/05/20218. Dynamic Extractions – 24/05/20219. Continental Teves – 26/05/202110. The Urbanist – 28/05/202111. Roseblade Media – 01/06/202112. Gwent Wildlife Trust – 03/06/202113. Castleoak-Offsite - 09/06/202114. Tai Calon – 16/06/202115. NDEC/Thales – 16/06/202116. British Gas/Nest – 17/06/2021

	17. Pobl – 18/06/2021 18. Swan EMS – 21/06/2021 ** 19. Griffiths – 01/07/2021 20. WRW Construction – 06/07/2021 (went into administration August 2021) 21. Royal Navy – 07/07/2021 22. Network Rail – 14/07/2021 23. AECOM – 16/07/2021
August 2021 – November 2021	24. Newport Wafer Fab – 03/08/2021 25. Tilbury Douglas – 10/08/2021 26. BGCBC Recycling Department – 11/08/2021 27. ELITE Supported Employment Agency Ltd – 11/08/2021 28. BGCBC Biodiversity Officer – 19/08/2021 29. Principality Building Society – 23/08/2021 30. RAR UK – 07/09/2021 31. PCI Pharma Services – 13/09/2021
December 2021 – March 2022	
April 2022 – September 2022	

<u>TARGET 2: A MINIMUM OF 25 BUSINESSES PLEDGING A COMMITMENT TO WORK WITH SCHOOLS.</u>	
<i>Completed business meeting notes and collated spreadsheet detail the pledges businesses have made to deliver STEM provision to schools</i>	
<u>TIMEFRAME</u>	<u>EVIDENCE</u>
April 2021 – July 2021	1. Renishaw – offers visits and online workshops. 2. Wastesavers – visits to recycling centres and workshops. 3. Welsh Water – visits to education centre, assemblies, workshops/challenges. 4. DULAS – projects and promote girls into STEM, as part of Community Benefits.

	<p>5. Silverstone Green Energy – interactive sessions using solar panels and solar surveys.</p> <p>6. Hanson – trips to quarry sites, introduction to geology and quarrying materials.</p> <p>7. GE Aviation – project aimed at girls in STEM, resources for teachers and career talks.</p> <p>8. Dynamic Extractions – chemistry experiment projects.</p> <p>9. Continental Teves – can develop projects based on school curriculum needs.</p> <p>10. The Urbanist – project for secondary pupils to develop a plan for Ebbw Vale.</p> <p>11. Roseblade Media – graphic design or computer programming projects.</p> <p>12. Gwent Wildlife Trust – any climate change related sessions/projects.</p> <p>13. Castleoak-Offsite – design structures using software and make small scale structures.</p> <p>14. Tai Calon – will provide a bespoke offering based on school requests.</p> <p>15. NDEC/Thales – Cyber Heroes for primary and CyberFirst for secondary schools.</p> <p>16. British Gas/Nest – careers workshops and design challenge workshops.</p> <p>17. Pobl – provided bird box kits to primary schools to develop construction and maths.</p> <p>18. Griffiths – offers projects, safety messages, online teacher resources.</p> <p>19. Royal Navy – overview of the Navy, helicopter builds, environmental presentations.</p> <p>20. Network Rail – engineering challenges, robot railways, career talks, activity books.</p> <p>21. AECOM – careers talks, energy efficiency project, animal habitat building project.</p>
August 2021 – November 2021	<p>22. Newport Wafer Fab- introduction to semi-conductor industry, can develop projects.</p> <p>23. Tilbury Douglas – site visits, engineer tool kit sessions, career talks, projects, courses.</p> <p>24. BGCBC Recycling Department – engineering process of recycling, recycling kits.</p> <p>25. ELITE Supported Employment Agency Ltd – courses for disabled learners.</p> <p>26. BGCBC Biodiversity Officer – preservation projects, enhancing school grounds.</p> <p>27. Principality Building Society – enterprise challenges, teacher CPD, financial GCSE.</p> <p>28. RAR UK – robot demonstration and programming tasks.</p> <p>29. PCI Pharma Services – primary school experiments, mentoring for secondary with PCI.</p>
December 2021 – March 2022	
April 2022 – September 2022	

TARGET 3: A MINIMUM OF 25 ACTIVITIES DELIVERED / SUPPORTED BY BUSINESS.

<u>TIMEFRAME</u>	<u>EVIDENCE</u>
April 2021 – July 2021	Mapping of providers and businesses commenced during this quarter.
August 2021 – November 2021	Activities have begun in September 2021 – numbers will be updated every half term.
December 2021 – March 2022	
April 2022 – September 2022	

TARGET 4: A MINIMUM OF 10 SCHOOLS ENGAGED WITH (YEAR ONE: 5, YEAR TWO: 5)

<u>TIMEFRAME</u>	<u>EVIDENCE</u>
April 2021 – July 2021	Nine schools have engaged and discussed plans for the project and Enthuse partnership. Six plans for the next academic year have been confirmed.
August 2021 – November 2021	Ten schools have been engaged. Plans are confirmed for seven schools, one is awaiting confirmation and two more schools to be developed.
December 2021 – March 2022	
April 2022 – September 2022	

TARGET 5: A MINIMUM OF 10 STEM AUDITS UNDERTAKEN (YEAR ONE: 3, YEAR TWO: 7).

<u>TIMEFRAME</u>	<u>EVIDENCE</u>
April 2021 – July 2021	Nine audits have been completed with the schools in the cluster. Results are in the STEM School folder.

August 2021 – November 2021	Engagement has been made with the remaining school – awaiting information on current STEM provision.
December 2021 – March 2022	
April 2022 – September 2022	

<u>TARGET 6: 50 STEM SESSIONS DELIVERED TO SCHOOLS (MIN 5 PER SCHOOL).</u>	
<u>TIMEFRAME</u>	<u>EVIDENCE</u>
April 2021 – July 2021	Mapping of providers and businesses has ensured a range of offerings to schools.
August 2021 – November 2021	Plans have ensured at least five sessions will take place – numbers to be updated every half term.
December 2021 – March 2022	
April 2022 – September 2022	

<u>TARGET 7: A MINIMUM OF 5 EVENTS DELIVERED</u>	
<u>TIMEFRAME</u>	<u>EVIDENCE</u>
April 2021 – July 2021	Businesses have discussed engaging with larger scale events.
August 2021 – November 2021	Events are awaiting confirmation – current draft ideas are a transition event, BT 5G event, employers event, STEM Inspiration event and Teen Tech event.
December 2021 – March 2022	
April 2022 – September 2022	

TARGET 8: PROGRESS MUST BE REPORTED BY THE LAST WORKING DAY OF THE MONTH TO WG OFFICIAL.

<u>TIMEFRAME</u>	<u>EVIDENCE</u>
April 2021 – July 2021	Updates sent: 20 th May / 28 th June / 28 th July.
August 2021 – November 2021	Updates sent: 25 th August / 28 th September.
December 2021 – March 2022	
April 2022 – September 2022	

TARGET 9: PROGRESS MUST BE REPORTED QUARTERLY TO THE TECH VALLEYS STRATEGIC ADVISORY GROUP.

<u>TIMEFRAME</u>	<u>EVIDENCE</u>
April 2021 – July 2021	Attended TVAG on 28 th May and July 30 th .
August 2021 – November 2021	Next TVAG to attend is October 29 th .
December 2021 – March 2022	
April 2022 – September 2022	

TARGET 10: FURTHER TARGETS, INCLUDING PUPILS ENGAGED AND PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAMME, MUST BE AGREED WITH WG IN THE SECOND YEAR OF THE PROJECT.

<u>TIMEFRAME</u>	<u>EVIDENCE</u>
April 2021 – July 2021	TBC
August 2021 – November 2021	TBC
December 2021 – March 2022	
April 2022 – September 2022	

Agenda Item 8

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **3rd November 2021**

Report Subject: **Kickstart Scheme**

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)
05.10.21	12.10.21	21.10.21			03.11.21	10.11.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update on the progress of the DWP Kickstart Scheme and Blaenau Gwent CBC role as a gateway organisation for local businesses seeking to access the programme.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Kickstart Scheme is a £2 billion Scheme funded by the UK government aiming to create hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people across the country. The Scheme provides funding to employers to create new 6-month job placements for young people who are currently on Universal Credit or Jobseeker's Allowance, and at risk of long-term unemployment.
- 2.2 Funding covers the following for each job placement:
- 100% of the relevant National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week
 - the associated employer National Insurance contributions
 - employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions
- 2.3 Additional funding is also provided to businesses to support young people to build their experience and help them move into sustained employment after they have completed their Kickstart Scheme funded job.
- 2.4 DWP approached Blaenau Gwent CBC in Q3 2020 to act as a Gateway organisation to support applications from local businesses. As a Gateway the Employment and Skills team are required to liaise with partners within their networks to identify Kickstart job placements, submit bids directly online through the Kickstart portal and administer grant funding to companies.

- 2.5 A number of expressions of interest were received from a range of sectors including childcare, production/manufacturing, retail, hospitality and construction.
- 2.6 Following approval of Gateway status, the first application for funding was submitted in November 2020. This was approved and, although a delay with COVID restrictions lengthened the process, the first Kickstart trainee began in an external company in April 2021.
- 2.7 A further 8 applications have been submitted to date. The latest bid was submitted in September 2021 with 24 placements being approved for 7 businesses. A bid for October is planned with a number of expressions of interest received already.
- 2.8 To date the Blaenau Gwent Gateway has:
- supported 25 businesses
 - created 109 placements
 - 63 placements filled
 - 48 placements in recruitment stage
- 2.9 5 placements are for internal departments within Workforce Development and Policy and Performance, with further expressions of interest invited from across all service directorates. An officer has also attended a number of DMT meetings to promote the scheme.
- 2.10 Of the 63 placement starts 8 Kickstart trainees have left before the end of the 6-month placement. 2 left to complete higher education courses, 2 left to take up permanent job offers, 1 finished due to long term sickness and 3 were not a suitable match for the position.
- 2.11 The first Kickstart trainee will complete their placement at the end of October 2021. The company has reported that the trainee is progressing well through the placement and they would be keen to take employ at the end of the placement should finances and incoming work allow.
- 2.12 The scheme has administered £191,755.05 to date. The grant money provides a start-up cost and reimbursement for wages paid in arrears to the companies managed by the Blaenau Gwent CBC Gateway.
- 2.13 The Kickstart scheme has recently been extended and will be accepting new application from employers until 17th December 2021 and supporting new starters up until the end of March 2022. Candidates in post by 31st March 2022 will be supported through to the end of the scheme in September 2022.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
- 3.1 Option 1 – To note the contents of the report and outcomes to date

Option 2 - To note the contents of the report, outcomes to date; and make observations on BG Kickstart delivery.

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

4.1 **Corporate Plan Priorities**

- Economic Development & Regeneration
 - To work with partners to provide effective employment support and access to skills development

4.2 **Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

- Forge new pathways to prosperity

4.3 **Employment and Skills Plan**

- Social Mobility, Inclusion and Employability
 - Ensure a seamless provision of employment support that caters for the needs of all residents at every stage of their journey that is bespoke to need.
 - Effective use of partner agencies to support the wider needs of individuals in securing and sustaining employment related opportunities.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

There are no adverse financial impacts for BGCBC in undertaking the gateway function.

Funding is provided through DWP (UK Government)

Gateway organisations receive a sum per job placement starts to reflect their work as the Representative body.

Payments flow from DWP to the Representative body and then to the end employer.

DWP will check with HMRC before releasing funds to the Gateway body and onward to the end employer monthly in arrears.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The primary risks associated with the Kickstart scheme are;

- Future take up from local employers
- Staff resource to ensure co-ordinated approach and facilitate delivery of the scheme

Measures to mitigate the risks identified include;

- Continued engagement and discussions with partners and employers to ensure enough employers take up the funding offer
- Links with key partners including Jobcentre plus and Registered Social Landlords to ensure a collaborative approach
- Employment Officer to manage Kickstart Gateway as part of their wider remit

5.3 **Legal**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Agreements in place with DWP

5.4 **Human Resources**

A single point of contact is required for the Employer Advisers at Jobcentre plus to signpost employers who wish to apply for Kickstart placement grants.

The Gateway organisation is required to carry out the following:

- Gather Kickstart expressions of interest.
- Submit a bid directly online through the main Kickstart portal.
- Once the bid is approved the Gateway body will sign a grant agreement.
- Organise Employer contracts and Job Vacancy templates for successful companies.
- Manage the grant funding and administer to employers.

The work is undertaken by the Employment Officer with the required finance team support.

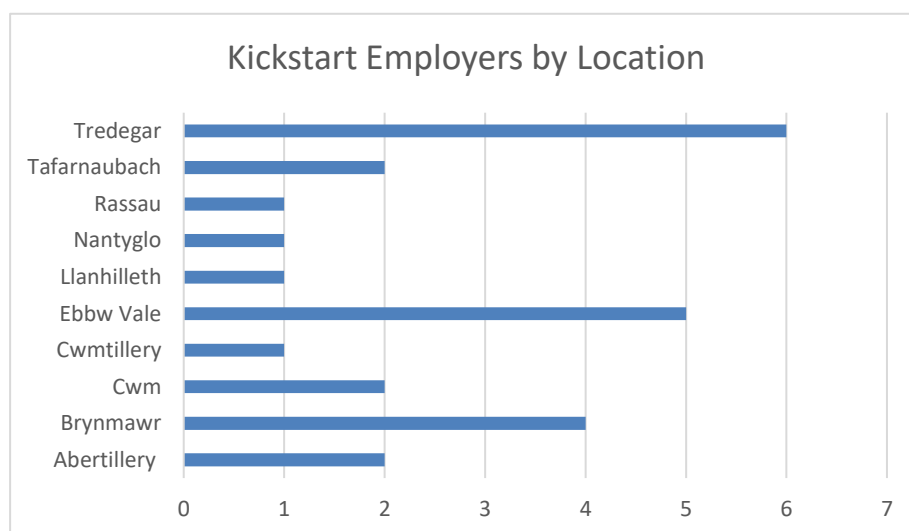
Kickstart job placements will be loaded onto the UC platform and will be visible to Jobcentre Work Coaches. Jobcentre plus Work coaches will identify suitable candidates and work with the end employer to agree interviews etc. Kickstart Gateway representative will liaise with DWP staff throughout.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Company Name	Number of placements approved	Placements Filled
360 Ventures	1	0
Andy King Estates	3	3
Atal Cyf	2	1
Basement Waterproofing Services UK	2	1
Beacon Finance IFA	2	2
BGCBC Policy and Performance	2	2
BGCBC Workforce Development	3	1
Car Call	1	0
Cash and Xchange	11	5
Central Cars	1	1

Fresh Active	20	9
Head 4 Arts/ Breaking Barriers	2	0
Hille Educational Supplies	15	15
JC Mouldings	2	1
Louvain Properties	1	0
Milo's	6	0
Outdoor Retreats	1	0
Pentref Tyleri	10	10
Poultney & Sons t/a JJ's	1	0
Quids Inn t/a King William iv	1	0
Silent Valley	3	0
TAFY	8	4
Taylor Lane	5	3
The Flower Cwtch	1	1
The Little Role Play Town	4	4
Tredeggar Town Council	1	0



Report produced at the closure of the scheme will take account of any placements which have converted to employment, both within or external to the host company.

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

There are a number of positive outcomes for the public;

- Increased local employment opportunities
- Increased opportunities for unemployed 16-24-year-olds to gain skills and knowledge in a work environment
- Increased local employment
- Sustained local businesses
- Increased skills
- Individuals closer to the labour market

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

The Blaenau Gwent Kickstart Gateway links extensively with businesses and partner agencies such as DWP. Opportunities are shared with working groups to make them aware of the opportunities available through the Kickstart Scheme.

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

The Kickstart Scheme funding ends in June 2022. As part of the funding through Kickstart employers were able to provide training and support for young people to move them into full time employment following their 6 month Kickstart Scheme placement. The Gateway will work with DWP to ensure that participants have the opportunity to apply for roles following their placement and will also engage with businesses to understand whether they intend to employ their trainee following the work placement.

The learning may inform a future employment programme.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The Kickstart Scheme focuses on 16-24 year olds who are unemployed. The scheme aims to equip young people with the skills to move into meaningful employment at the end of their work placement which they may not have had without the opportunities provided by Kickstart.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

As a Kickstart Gateway the team engage with an extensive range of employment and skills partners and local businesses. A strong working relationship with DWP and the Kickstart District Account Manager ensures that the placements are filled and shared with eligible candidates.

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

All departments have the opportunity to employ a Kickstart trainee with a number of departments already taking up the offer and several others interested in submitting expressions of interest.

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

There is a limited impact but the programme is facilitating local employment opportunities negating the need to travel to roles further afield. All Kickstart job adverts highlight the public transport options available for each role. All meetings related to the Kickstart Scheme are being carried out remotely with no travel to employers or job centres in the borough.

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

The Kickstart Scheme is a targeted intervention at a specific demographic (unemployed 16-24 year olds) and is aimed at reducing socio economic disadvantage through employment work placement and supported training.

6.9b ***Equality Impact Assessment***

The Kickstart Scheme is a targeted intervention at a specific demographic (unemployed 16-24 year olds) and is aimed at reducing socio economic disadvantage through employment work placement and supported training.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 Figures are automatically reported to DWP and updates are provided to the Kickstart District Account Manager at bi-weekly meetings. A programme closure report will be prepared and presented to Scrutiny (July 2022); an interim performance report can be presented in April if required.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- N/A

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Agenda Item 9

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **3rd November 2021**

Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme: 8th December 2021**

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

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

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	x	21.10.21			03.11.21			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present to Members the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 8th December 2021 for discussion and agreement.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Scrutiny Work Programmes are key aspects of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and support the requirements of the Constitution.
 - 2.2 The topics set out in the Forward Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's revised Corporate Plan, corporate documents and supporting business plans.
 - 2.3 Effective work programmes are essential to ensure that the work of scrutiny makes a positive impact upon the Council's delivery of services.
 - 2.4 The Committee's Forward Work Programme was agreed in June 2021, recognising the fluidity of the document to enable the Committee to respond to urgent and emerging issues, and included timescales when reports will be considered by the Committee. The work programme is managed and implemented by the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer under the direction of the Chair and Committee.
 - 2.5 The forward work programme for the forthcoming meeting will be presented to Committee on a 6 weekly cycle in order that Members can consider the programme of work; request information is included within the reports, as appropriate and / or make amendments to the work programme.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1:** The Scrutiny Committee consider the Forward Work Programme for the meeting 8th December 2021, and

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

3.2 **Option 2:** The Scrutiny Committee agree the Forward Programme for the meeting 8th December 2021, as presented.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme – Meeting on 8th December 2021.

Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

Date	Topic	Purpose	Lead	Executive / Council
Wednesday 8th December 2021 Deadline: Wednesday 24 th November 2021	Energy Prospectus Annual Review	Performance Monitoring To provide members with information on the progress made since approval of the Energy Prospectus	Amy Taylor	Executive
	Tredegar Heritage Initiative	Performance Monitoring Members to receive the closure report.	Amy Taylor	Council
	Blaenau Gwent Replacement Local Development Plan	Pre Decision Endorse the Deposit Plan and the report of Consultation on the Preferred Strategy	Steve Smith / Lynda Healy	Council
	Ebbw Vale Placemaking Plan	Pre Decision Endorse the proposals for placemaking in Ebbw Vale	Amy Taylor	Executive
	Performance Information on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Quarterly	Performance Monitoring Members to consider the activity of Blaenau Gwent Council as part of the overall CCRCD and influence areas of focus.	Ellie Fry	Council

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