Damien McCann,
Interim Chief Executive / Prif Weithredwr Interim

Public Document Pack

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Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent

Our Ref./Ein Cyf.
Your Ref./Eich Cyf.
Contact:/Cysylltwch â:

THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

Dydd Mawrth, 10 Hydref 2023 Dydd Mawrth, 10 Hydref 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

PWYLLGOR CRAFFU LLEOEDD

A meeting of the Pwyllgor Craffu Lleoedd will be held in Cyfarfod hybrid i'w gynnal yn rhithiol ar MS Teams on Dydd Mawrth, 17eg Hydref, 2023 at 9.30 am.

Yours faithfully

Damien McCann

Damien McCann
Interim Chief Executive

AGENDA		**Pages**
1.	**CYFIEITHU AR Y PRYD** Mae croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, mae angen o leiaf 3 diwrnod gwaith o rybudd os dymunwch wneud hynny. Darperir gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd os gwneir cais am hynny.	
2.	**YMDDIHEURIADAU** Derbyn ymddiheuriadau.	

Mae'r Cygor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn cyfathrebu gyda chi yn eich dewis iaith, dim ond i chi rhoi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.
The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh and English and we will communicate with you in the language of your choice, as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to any delay.

3.	**DATGANIADAU BUDDIANT A GODDEFEBAU**	
	Derbyn datganiadau buddiant a goddefebau.	
4.	**PWYLLGOR CRAFFU LLE**	5 - 8
	Ystyried penderfyniadau'r cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 5 Medi 2023. ***(D.S. Cyflwynir y penderfyniadau ar gyfer pwyntiau cywirdeb yn unig).***	
5.	**DALEN WEITHREDU**	9 - 16
	Derbyn y ddalen weithredu.	
6.	**ADRODDIAD BLYNYDDOL NEWID HINSAWDD, SERO NET 2022/23**	17 - 68
	Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Weithredwr Interim.	
7.	**PERFFORMIAD BLYNYDDOL 2022-23 GWASTRAFF AC AILGYLCHU**	69 - 122
8.	**CYNLLUN CREU LLE ABERTYLERI**	123 - 216
	Ystyried adroddiad y Rheolwr Tîm Cyfleoedd Adfywio.	
9.	**BLAENRAGLEN GWAITH: 5 RHAGFYR 2023**	217 - 220
	Derbyn y flaenraglen gwaith.	

To: M. Cross (Cadeirydd)
R. Leadbeater (Is-gadeirydd)
S. Behr
K. Chaplin
G. A. Davies
J. Gardner
W. Hodgins

L. Parsons
D. Rowberry

All other Members (for information)
Interim Chief Executive
Chief Officers

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

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

SUBJECT: **PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 5TH SEPTEMBER, 2023**

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

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M. CROSS (CHAIR)

Councillors R. Leadbeater
S. Behr
K. Chaplin
J. Gardener
. W. Hodgins
L. Parsons

WITH: Interim Chief Executive
Head of Community Services
Service Manager – Development and Estates
Team Manager – Trading Standards and Licensing
Service Manager – Business and Regeneration
Service Manager – Community Services
Senior Energy Officer
Team Manager – Connected Communities
Team Manager – Regeneration Opportunities
Team Manager – Business Innovation
Team Manager – Housing Solutions
Service Manager – Infrastructure Services
Team Manager – Built Environment
Assistant Team Manager – Building Control
Team Manager – Natural Environment
Service Manager – Policy and Partnerships
Team Manager – Frontline Enforcement
Service Manager – Public Protection
Communications and Marketing Officer
Scrutiny and Democratic Officer

ITEM	SUBJECT
No. 1	**SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION** It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.
No. 2	**APOLOGIES** An apology for absence was received from Councillor G. Davies.
No. 3	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS** The following declarations of interest was reported:- Councillor W. Hodgins Item No. 7 – Community Services and Regeneration Directorate Performance End of Year Report 2022/23
No. 4	**PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** Consideration was given to the decisions of the meeting held on 20th June, 2023. It was reported that the date on the decisions should read the 20th June, 2023 and not the 19th June, 2023 as stated. The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.
No. 5	**ACTION SHEET** Consideration was given to the action sheet. The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and the action sheet be noted.

No. 6	**PROPOSED FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24** Consideration was given to the report of the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer. The Chair and Committee Members agreed that the Abertillery Placemaking Plan be moved. The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing that the report be accepted and amendments were suggested prior to agreeing the Forward Work Programme (Option 2).
No. 7	**COMMUNITY SERVICES AND REGENERATION DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE END OF YEAR REPORT 2022/23** Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services. The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and Members accepted the report as provided. (Option 2)

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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Action Sheet - Place Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
05.09.23	**Item 5: Action Sheet** Tai Calon to be approached to consider revisiting the development of an information leaflet for Tai Calon residents.	Matthew Stent	***To be completed.***
	Information for members to be provided in relation to which areas are Tai Calon's responsibility to maintain, e.g for grass cutting.	Matthew Stent	***To be completed.***
	Insurance Claims – Highways: A member enquired what was the insurance quoted for the Council in order for the premium to remain at £100k.	Matthew Stent	***To be completed.***
	Item 7: Community Services and Regeneration Directorate Performance End of Year report 2022/23 **Energy and Digital:** **Electric Vehicle Charing Points:** Link to be provided to members detailing location of charging points and opening / closing times.	Amy Taylor	'Fast' electric vehicle charging is provided by Blaenau Gwent County Council in a number of locations. These locations can be found using https://www.zap-map.com/ There are two public charging networks operating in Blaenau Gwent. These are Dragon Charging and Connected Kerb. The Council website (see link below) has a list of charging points that are operational or under

Agenda Item 5

Date of Meeting	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
			development and it also provides a list of FAQ's to help answer common driver questions. [Electric Vehicle Charging | Blaenau Gwent CBC (blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)]
	Solar Car Parking: Members enquired if any research had been undertaken in Blaenau Gwent. Officer to undertake a desk top research and provide information to Members.	Amy Taylor	The team are going to undertake research and engage with solar car port providers and will feedback to members on their findings.
	Micro-Hydro Development: Members to be provided with information in relation to the reason why the micro-hydro development did not progress.	Amy Taylor	The initial phase of hydro generation assessment carried out in 2021 explored a range of potential opportunities across Cwm and Llanhilleth. This investigation included the River Ebbw and Ebbw Fach. The topography of these sites mean they are categorised as low head sites. None of the weirs are over 1m and therefore none would allow for cost effective installations. Further work was done on potential sites across the rest of Blaenau Gwent, but none were deemed to have the potential to be taken to full feasibility stage. The only site currently being taken forward to a detailed stage is Silent Valley **Actions complete: 05.10.23**
	Destination Management and Tourism: Railway Extension to Abertillery: Members to be provided with a project timeline.	Owen Ashton	Verbal update to be provided. **Action complete: In progress**

Date of Meeting	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
	Employment and Skills: **% of working age people who are economically active:** Further detail to be provided, e.g. full-time or part-time working adults.	Tara Lane	See attachment. **Action complete: 04.10.23**
	Housing Development: **Lower Ebbw Fach Valley:** Clarification was sought on the data provided.	Owen Ashton	Verbal update to be provided.
	Six Bells Colliery: Members enquired who was the interested Registered Social Landlord.	Owen Ashton	Verbal update to be provided.
	Former Nantyglo School: Update on project to be provided and any timescales.	Owen Ashton	Verbal update to be provided. **Actions complete: In progress**
	Improving Well-being and Resilience in Our Communities: **TVR:** Officer to liaise with Welsh Government to provide an update on the project for members.	Mo Forouzan	***To be completed.***
	A member requested that hard copies of the document be made available for the public at the Community Hubs.	Clive Rogers / Performance Team	Arrangements for printing currently being made for document to be placed in Hubs. **Action Complete: 09.10.23**

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Place Scrutiny Committee

Action:
Item 7: Community Services and Regeneration Directorate Performance End of Year report 2022/23

Employment and Skills:
% of working age people who are economically active: Further detail to be provided, e.g. full-time or part-time working adults.

Labour Supply

Employment and unemployment (Apr 2022-Mar 2023)

	Blaenau Gwent (Numbers)	Blaenau Gwent (%)	Wales (%)	Great Britain (%)
All People				
Economically Active†	32,100	72.7	75.5	78.4
In Employment†	30,900	70.1	73.0	75.5
Employees†	28,700	65.3	64.3	66.0
Self Employed†	1,700	3.6	8.4	9.2
Unemployed (Model-Based)§	1,200	3.6	3.3	3.6
Males				

Employment and unemployment (Apr 2022-Mar 2023)

	Blaenau Gwent (Numbers)	Blaenau Gwent (%)	Wales (%)	Great Britain (%)
Economically Active†	16,700	78.8	78.5	82.1
In Employment†	16,200	76.3	75.4	78.9
Employees†	14,000	66.2	63.4	66.7
Self Employed†	1,700	7.6	11.6	11.9
Unemployed§	#	#	3.8	3.8
Females				
Economically Active†	15,300	67.2	72.6	74.7
In Employment†	14,700	64.4	70.6	72.1
Employees†	14,700	64.4	65.1	65.2
Self Employed†	!	!	5.2	6.6
Unemployed§	#	#	2.7	3.5

Economic inactivity (Apr 2022-Mar 2023)

	Blaenau Gwent (Level)	Blaenau Gwent (%)	Wales (%)	Great Britain (%)
All People				
Total	11,800	27.3	24.5	21.6
Student	1,500	13.1	22.7	26.3
Looking After Family/Home	2,200	18.2	17.3	19.7
Temporary Sick	#	#	2.6	2.3
Long-Term Sick	5,500	46.9	34.5	26.5
Discouraged	!	!	#	0.3
Retired	#	#	12.0	13.3
Other	#	#	10.6	11.6
Wants A Job	1,400	12.0	17.3	18.0
Does Not Want A Job	10,400	88.0	82.7	82.0

Notes: numbers are for those aged 16-64.

Economic inactivity (Apr 2022-Mar 2023)

	Blaenau Gwent (Level)	Blaenau Gwent (%)	Wales (%)	Great Britain (%)
% is a proportion of those economically inactive, except total, which is a proportion of those aged 16-64				

Cabinet and Council only
Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:
Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee:	**Place Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting:	**17th October 2023**
Report Subject:	**Climate Change, Net Zero Annual Report 2022/23**
Portfolio Holder:	**Cllr Helen Cunningham, Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member Environment**
Report Submitted by:	**Damien McCann, Interim Chief Executive**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	**Corporate Leadership Team**	**Portfolio Holder / Chair**	**Governance Audit Committee**	**Democratic Services Committee**	**Scrutiny Committee**	**Cabinet**	**Council**	**Other (please state)**
	Virtually w/c 2.10.23	09.10.23			17.10.23	29.11.23		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
1.1 Annual Net Zero Report 2022-23 updating on progress made on climate change including presenting the Council's carbon footprint.

2. **Scope and Background**

2.1 The Net Zero Annual Report relates to two national Net Zero targets: Net Zero 2030 for the Welsh Public Sector (organisational emissions) and Net Zero 2050 for all of Wales (territorial emissions). Our organisational emissions are the carbon emissions produced by delivering our services, while Blaenau Gwent's territorial emissions include all the carbon emissions released within the borough, from homes, transport, businesses etc.

2.2 **Net Zero 2030**

Our Decarbonisation Plan was adopted in September 2020 at the same time we declared a Climate 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 identifies eight transitions, based on our carbon footprint data. Each of these transitions represents a coherent area of action with its own distinct low carbon technologies, business models and infrastructure. The Annual Report outlines the actions identified for each transition.

2.3 **Carbon Footprint**

Our overall carbon footprint has risen significantly this year, largely due to spend on rail infrastructure improvements to the Ebbw Vale line, which will of course have climate benefits for Blaenau Gwent in the long-term. This is a major one-off construction project that represents a real rise in our emissions. However, typically our overall carbon footprint is not suitable for year-on-year comparisons because it includes spend based emissions that are calculated based on national average carbon factors and as a result cannot capture year-to-year changes in our performance.

2.4 It is possible to track the annual progress of our direct emissions, which are the element of our carbon footprint that we have the greatest control over. These are the emissions that are either directly released through our operations (e.g. fuel burnt in our fleet) or through our consumption of electricity (e.g. street lighting). There has been a 6% fall in these emissions compared to last year and a cumulative 16% fall over the three years since our 2019/20 baseline. Following a rise in emissions last year post-COVID 19 an overall downward trend in emissions has resumed.

	tonnes CO_2e/year					
	2019/20	**2020/21**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**	**Change from Base Year**	**Change from Last Year**
Direct Carbon Emissions	14,750	11,793	13,087	12,336	-16%	-6%

While this fall in direct emissions represents real progress the reality is that achieving Net Zero 2030 will require additional finance and resources beyond our current capacities.

2.5 **Net Zero 2050**

There are already a number of actions taking place across the council to cut territorial emissions. However, similar to our position for organisational emissions prior to developing our Decarbonisation Plan, we do not have a clear overview of our actions total impact or any gaps in relation to Net Zero 2050. Our Climate Group has begun the process of developing a Net Zero 2050 Framework document to address this gap. It is proposed that the framework will be structured around the four themes that emerged from the Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly in 2021: energy, housing, nature and transport. Engaging with partners and the public will be crucial to Net Zero 2050 as the large majority of territorial emissions are not within our direct control.

2.6 **Policy Context**

Wales has set a series of 5-year carbon budgets. The first carbon budget (CB1) ran from 2016 to 2020 and set a target for an average reduction of 23% against the 1990 baseline. This target was exceeded with a 27.8% reduction. The current carbon budget 2 (2021-2025) sets a target for an average 37% reduction. The most significant factor in Wales meeting CB1 was the closing of Aberthaw power plant. There are no further one-off reductions of this type available, and the UK Climate Change Committee reported this year that Wales is not yet on track to meet its targets for the second half of this decade and beyond.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 Option One

That the Committee considers the progress made and supports the report.

Option Two

That the Committee considers the progress made and provides specific recommendations.

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

The Net Zero Annual Report covers one of the four priorities in the Blaenau Gwent Corporate Plan 2022/27, 'respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities.' It is also central to one of the two objectives of the Gwent PSB Well-being Plan, 'We want a climate-ready Gwent, where our environment is valued and protected, benefitting our well-being now and for future generations.'

The Net Zero Annual Report and our Carbon Footprint are submitted to Welsh Government on an annual basis as part of Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Reporting.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

The council has mainstreamed achieving Net Zero across service areas, rather than identify distinct decarbonisation projects and budgets. However, as each transition progresses, costs will be identified to deliver these actions and will require separate reports from business leads for consideration of the 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. There could also be significant costs from being left behind in some transitions as the availability of fossil fuel-based options decreases and their price increases.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

5.3 ***Legal***

The UK has put its commitment to reach Net Zero 2050 into law.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

Officers with specialist skills and knowledge are likely to be required to deliver key elements of Net Zero. Staff engagement will be a key enabler in what is really a programme of transformational change.

5.5 ***Health and Safety***

No direct implications from Net Zero targets.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Full Carbon Footprint Calculations attached Appendix A

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

Net Zero 2050 is closely tied to the council's wider well-being goals, for example, making housing and transport zero carbon in Blaenau Gwent is part of a wider transformation of these services to improve resident's well-being.

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

Our Net Zero 2050 work is heavily informed by Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly. In March 2021 44 residents of Blaenau Gwent got together online to discuss the question 'how can we tackle climate change in Blaenau Gwent in a way that is fair and improves living standards for everyone?' The 44 Assembly Members were chosen at random to be representative of people in Blaenau Gwent (in terms of age, gender, where they live, type of housing etc.) The Climate Assembly met for a total of 23 hours online, hearing evidence from over 20 experts (from academics to local residents), and voted on recommendations they created themselves, five of which received the 80% support needed to become official recommendations.

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

Achieving Net Zero requires long-term planning and investment decisions to develop zero carbon infrastructure and avoid carbon lock-in.

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 Blaenau Gwent Local Well-being Partnership Climate Mitigation Steering Group (currently via Local Area Energy Plan workshops) and Gwent Well-being Plan/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 the Gwent Green Grid.

Working with Aneurin Leisure and Blaenau Gwent schools whose emissions are part of our carbon footprint.

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

Delivery of transitions cuts across different service areas.

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

Direct focus of report.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)***
Not required as this is a progress report and does not relate to strategic decisions.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 All Net Zero 2030 actions are built into service area business plans. The Climate Group receives Transition Focuses at their meetings to monitor progress of all transitions in greater detail. These are then included in the Annual Net Zero Report.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 – BGCBC Net Zero Report 2022/23*

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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Net Zero Report 22/23

Decarbonisation Plan 2020 to 2030

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Net Zero Report 2022/23

If you have any queries or questions in relation to this report, please contact the BGCBC Policy and Partnerships Team at the below email address:

Email: pps@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar goel yn Gymraeg

This document is available in Welsh.

Contents

1. Our Approach

Our approach is based on Welsh Government's two Net Zero targets: Net Zero 2030 for the Welsh Public Sector (organisational emissions) and Net Zero 2050 for all of Wales (territorial emissions). Our organisational emissions are the carbon emissions produced by delivering our services, while Blaenau Gwent's territorial emissions include all the carbon emissions released within the borough, from homes, transport, businesses etc. We have made a clear separation between these two Net Zero goals because the two types of emissions often require quite different types of action, and we have greater direct control over our organisational emissions. This report provides an overview of our organisational carbon footprint for 2022/23 and a summary of the actions we are taking towards our Net Zero 2030 and Net Zero 2050 ambitions.

2. Summary of Activity

At the corporate level 'Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities' was adopted as one of the four key priorities in our new Corporate Plan 2022-27. This year saw a refresh of our Climate Group, which is now chaired by our Interim Chief Executive, its core membership also includes our first elected Climate Champion, three members of our senior leadership team and a trade union representative. The group meets every six weeks with an alternating focus on Net Zero 2030 at one meeting and Net Zero 2050 at the next.

Having identified all our Net Zero 2030 Actions across our transitions during 2021-22, to focus on the Climate Group is on delivery of these actions. The group has selected five of these as **key Net Zero 2030 actions** (see page 10) due to their significant carbon and resource impacts. While these actions will be the group's priority, over the course of a year the group will hear from lead officers about all our Net Zero 2030 actions through 'Transition Focuses' on all eight transitions. These Transition Focuses will take a forward look at the challenges and opportunities ahead, as well as monitoring progress. This report includes the first two completed **Transition Focuses** (see page 11) plus shorter versions of the others, and in future years will include full versions of all eight.

We have also taken significant steps in developing our approach to Net Zero 2050. The four themes that emerged from the Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly (Energy, Housing, Nature and Transport) will form the basis for out Net Zero 2050 Framework document that is currently being developed. Leads for each of these themes have been identified to take forward the Climate Assembly recommendations. Net Zero 2050 is not something that we can deliver alone and will require partnership working. Our work with Blaenau Gwent Well-being Partnership is currently focused on the ongoing workshops to develop our Local Area Energy Plan which will address how we reach a Zero Carbon energy system in Blaenau Gwent and will cover the majority of our territorial emissions. One of the two objectives of the new Gwent Well-being Plan is 'we want a climate-ready Gwent, where our environment is valued and protected, benefitting our well-being now and for future generations.'

Of course, achieving Net Zero is ultimately about delivery, and the detail our progress over the last year, can be found in our carbon footprint and the transition focuses.

3. Organisational Net Zero 2030

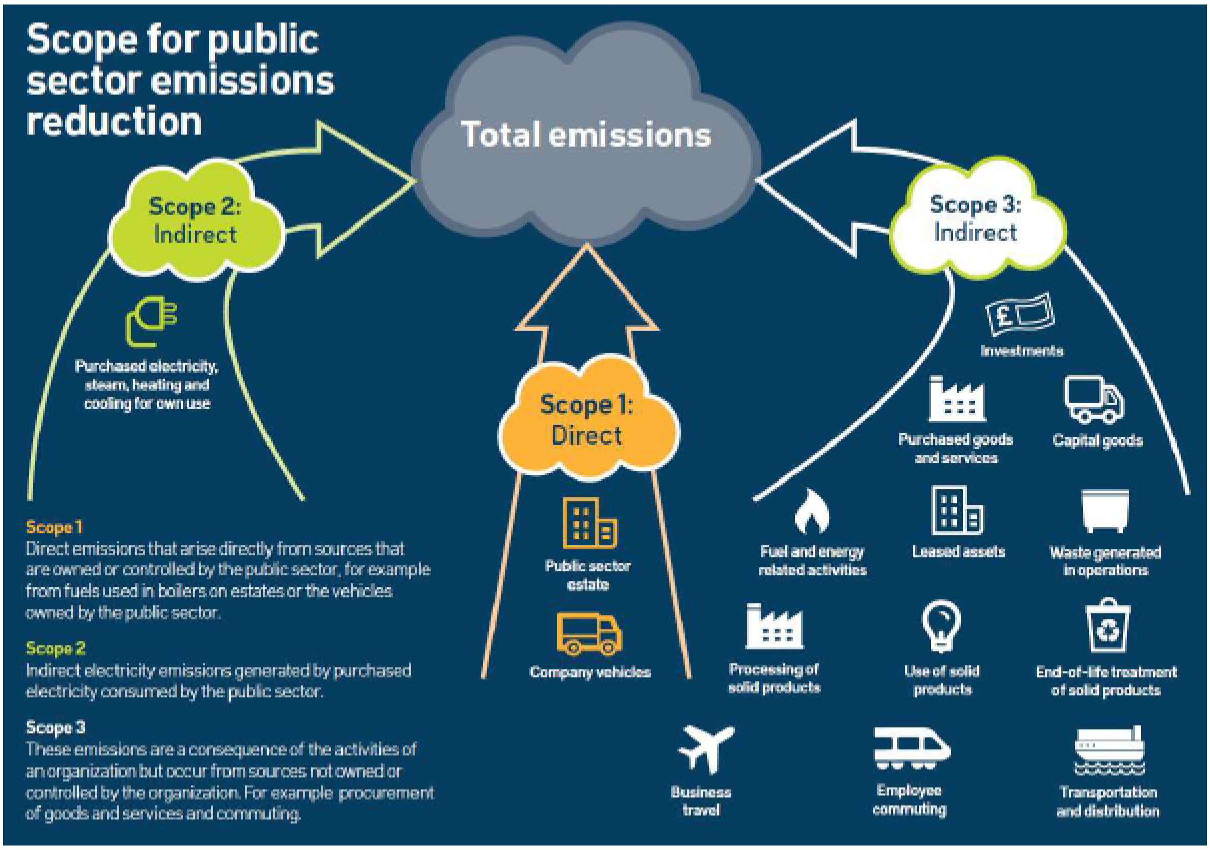
Our Decarbonisation Plan was adopted in September 2020 at the same time we declared a Climate Emergency. The plan addresses our organisational emissions with the aim of making our full contribution to the ambition of a Net Zero Public Sector in Wales by 2030.

We have adopted a data driven approach, based on identifying from our carbon footprint, eight transitions we have to undertake to reach Net Zero. Each of these transitions represents a coherent area of action with its own distinct low carbon technologies, business models and infrastructure. Each of these transitions has its own detailed actions to deliver it. Our approach is based on mainstreaming decarbonisation into our operations, rather than establishing separate decarbonisation projects and budgets. With a cross-organisation climate group providing corporate overview. Overview of our Transitions:

1. **Transport.** Travel by our staff in corporate or their own vehicles, includes fleet, commuting and staff travel within work.
2. **Nature Based Solutions.** Absorption of carbon on land we own and manage, largely associated with woodland, urban trees and peatland.
3. **Procurement: Goods.** Which covers what we purchase as an organisation and includes key items such as clothing, food, IT, machinery, equipment and furniture.
4. **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.
5. **Procurement: Works.** Which includes all construction and maintenance of our buildings and infrastructure.
6. **Electricity.** 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.
7. **Heat.** Includes our heating (and cooling) of our buildings.
8. **Waste.** Covers the carbon impacts of our treatment of municipal waste, whether recycling, landfill or waste to power.

4. Our Carbon Footprint

Our carbon footprint is divided in to three scopes (see diagram below). Our footprint includes 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) and emissions which are the result of our procurement and other organisations delivering services on our behalf (Scope 3 emissions). We calculated our baseline carbon footprint for 2019/20.



The underlying method for calculating our carbon emissions is quite simple. Carbon emissions are the amount of an activity that we carry out (e.g. litres of diesel used by our fleet or the amount spent on construction projects) multiplied by the nationally calculated average carbon intensity of a unit of that activity (e.g. the carbon emissions from a litre of diesel or pound of spend on construction projects):

carbon intensity of activity x amount of activity = total emissions
(e.g. CO_2 per litre x litres of fuel used = emissions)

Our carbon footprint emissions can be divided into two types, which differ significantly both in the level of control we have on achieving carbon reductions and also how they can be monitored. The first type, ***direct emissions*** are either directly released through our operations (e.g. fuel burnt in our fleet) or through our consumption of electricity (e.g. street lighting), these emissions largely correspond to scopes 1 & 2. Due to the direct relationship between our activities and carbon being released, we have relatively high levels of control on reaching Net Zero for these emissions and therefore we can directly measure our progress in terms of carbon emissions.

The second type, ***spend based emissions*** are related to our procurement of products and services, these include most scope 3 emissions, we have less direct control over these emissions. Spend based emissions calculations can give a reasonable estimate of the size of these activities' contribution to our overall carbon footprint.   However, because they are calculated based on our financial spend and national average carbon intensity factors, they cannot accurately detect changes in our performance from year to year, so they are not suitable for monitoring our performance over time. As a result, we will not update our spend-based emissions figures on an annual basis.

Two of our transitions have negative carbon emissions figures. The nature based solutions transition is about the carbon impact of the land we own. This figure is based on the net annual change in the carbon stored and released from the land we own and/or manage. These land-based figures are true ***negative net emissions*** that represent removal of carbon from the atmosphere.

The negative figure for the waste transition represents ***avoided emissions***, the amount of carbon emissions that are avoided by others producing products using recycled waste rather than new materials. However, our footprint only includes the emissions from the recycling process. For this reason, the avoided emissions from municipal waste are not part of our carbon footprint.

We have also reported the amount of renewable electricity we have generated; these figures are not directly part of our carbon footprint. As the carbon savings from the electricity we use ourselves is already captured in our footprint through the reduced amount of grid electricity we need to use, while the electricity we export to the grid contributes to the lowering of the carbon intensity of the national grid as a whole.

2022/23 Carbon Footprint (tonnes CO²e)

Scope 1 - Direct Emissions	**19/20**	**20/21**	**21/22**	**22/23**
Natural Gas Heating	3,942	3,725	3,483	3,512
Natural Gas Heating Aneurin Leisure	1,152	798	1,076	967
Biomass Heating	60	67	75	46
Diesel Fleet	911	905	933	782
Petrol Fleet	18	9	10	10
Liquid Natural Gas Fleet	35	31	32	28
Scope 1 Total	**6,118**	**5,535**	**5,609**	**5,345**
Scope 2 - Electricity Indirect Emissions				
Metered - Buildings	1,792	1,272	1,265	1,171
Metered - Buildings Aneurin Leisure	*572*	*279*	*374*	*343*
Unmetered - Street Lighting	968	870	700	642
Scope 2 Total	**3,332**	**2,421**	**2,339**	**2,156**
Scope 3 - Other Indirect Emissions				
Purchased Goods and Services	23,069	22,723	21,753	33,548
Extraction, Production & Transportation of Fuel & Energy Used	2,104	1,727	1,548	1,620
Extraction, Production & Transportation of Fuel & Energy Used Aneurin Leisure	*288*	*170*	*323*	*294*
Water	46	42	22	23
Water Aneurin Leisure	*22*	*12*	*6*	*8*
Business Travel	278	118	198	281
Business Travel Aneurin Leisure	*11*	*2*	*4*	*8*
Staff Commute	2,335	1,557	2,074	2,067
Homeworking Energy Use			352	327
Organisational Waste and Downstream Transport	216	209	612	205
Scope 3 Total	**28,369**	**26,560**	**26,892**	**38,383**
Sequestration				
Forest land	-2,350	-2,350	-2,350	-2,350
Grass land	-55	-55	-55	-55
Settlements	919	919	919	919
Sequestration Total	**-1,486**	**-1,486**	**-1,486**	**-1,486**
Carbon Footprint Total	**36,333**	**33,030**	**33,354**	**44,398**

Indicates figures not suitable for monitoring annual progress

Indicates figures not directly comparable due to change in methodology

Indicates new data

Indicates previous years data revised due to significant changes in emission figures

Indicates figures less accurate as fleet vehicles not able to refuel at Depot for most of year

Carbon Footprint Trends

Firstly, some notes on revisions to our carbon footprint data from previous years. There is a major change to our carbon footprint this year due to the use of a new set of emissions factors by Welsh Government to calculate our spend based emissions for purchased goods and services. These factors are significantly lower than the set of factors which we have used every previous year. New spend based factors had not previously been available due to the complexity of calculating them. As a result, the previous factors did not reflect a decade's worth of substantial decarbonisation in the supply chain, particularly of the electricity grid, there was also likely a significant issue with the impact of 10 years inflation on emissions per pound spent. The recalculation of our previous three years footprint using these factors has reduced these emissions each year by 42%-44%. This also has a substantial impact on the relative sizes of our transitions which have also been recalculated. These lower figures are almost certainly more accurate, but it is important to remember that the same limitations of spend based figures still apply, these figures cannot reflect any year-to-year changes in our carbon performance as they are based on national averages.

However, the procurement emissions figure this year is far higher than these revised figures for the three previous years. This is largely due to spend on rail infrastructure improvements to the Ebbw Vale line. This is a major construction project and represents a significant proportion of our total spend and will of course have climate benefits for Blaenau Gwent in the long-term.

We have also revised our commute emissions from 19/20 and 20/21 to make them directly comparable with our post home and agile working model years. When looking at the reductions from commuting and the new figures for homeworking energy use it is important to remember that the homeworking emissions are largely not new emissions, but rather existing emissions that have been displaced from our office-based gas and electricity emissions. Therefore, it would not be accurate to see them as new emissions that cancel out the savings from reduced commuting.

Changes in our directly measured carbon emissions which do capture annual changes in performance (and do not include the rail works) are shown in the table below. Overall there has been a 6% fall in these emissions compared to last year and a cumulative 16% fall over the three years since our 2019/20 baseline. Following a rise in emissions last year post-COVID 19 an overall downward trend in emissions has resumed.

	tonnes CO_2e/year					
	2019/20	**2020/21**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**	**Change from Base Year**	**Change from Last Year**
Direct Carbon Emissions	14,750	11,793	13,087	12,336	-16%	-6%

This year for the first time we have included our footprint submission includes our total annual generation from Solar PV, which is 301,839 kwh. Which is equivalent to 3% of our total grid electricity consumption, or enough to power 108 average terraced homes for a year.

5. Position Summary

With the completion in 2022 of our Readiness Assessments, identifying 39 Net Zero 2030 actions across the eight transitions identified in our Decarbonisation Plan, we felt that we have a good understanding of where we are and what we need to do to reach Net Zero 2030. With this understanding in place, it was decided to refresh the structure of our renamed Climate Group, with a forward-looking focus on delivery for Net Zero 2030. The group identified five key Net Zero 2030 actions (see table below) from within the full list of 39, to be the focus of their work. These key actions are either ***large impact/high ambition actions*** that will have the greatest impact on our journey to Net Zero 2030 (and correspondingly also have the largest resource implications) and/or ***low regrets actions*** which offer significant scope to make progress in the short-term with proven decarbonisation solutions (which may offer financial as well as carbon returns). These key actions will provide the initial focus for group in identifying the additional resources needed between now and 2030, including any skills and capacity gaps as well as financial challenges in achieving Net Zero.

Net Zero 2030 Key Action	Description
Fleet Decarbonisation Plan (T2)	We know that reaching Net Zero will require our entire fleet to switch to ULEV vehicles and that this will require the physical and power capacity to accommodate these vehicles. The 2030 target means that many fleet vehicles would need to be replaced anyway within this timescale, regardless of decarbonisation. There are significant challenges around the availability of larger vehicles that make up the majority of our fleet mileage and emissions, and budget challenges around the shifting balance between increased purchase and decreased running costs of fleet vehicles.
Procurement Deep Dives (PG5)	Taking a systematic look at how we can tackle the different carbon hot spots in our procurement (e.g. I.T., food etc.) through deep dives to explore supply chains and develop specific actions/plans.
School Climate (PS3)	Schools are a large part of our footprint across most of our transitions. Different service areas currently separately engage schools about a number of different climate related topics (e.g. transport, energy, nature). A single corporate point of contact to create a clearer climate 'offer' to schools would help to encourage schools to commit to the actions and investment that are crucial to us achieving Net Zero.
Local Renewable Investment (E3 & PS4)	Potential for continued action in short-term, investment should be focused on local generation here in Blaenau Gwent. This action has two elements: generating electricity on our own estate (E3) and investing in renewable capacity in Blaenau Gwent as a whole (PS4). These are both elements of our wider Energy Prospectus and borough wide energy transition for Net Zero 2050.
Nature Based Solutions (N6)	Further enhance nature and carbon benefits of land holdings such as highway verges and school grounds that have already been improved and develop systematic approach to all our land holding types.

6. Transition Focuses

We will continue to monitor progress across all eight of our transitions, including through the Climate Group receiving a 'Transition Focus' on every transition over the course of a year. These focuses will provide a summary of progress on actions and the upcoming challenges and opportunities for that transition. This year's report includes the first two complete transition focuses (procurement goods and waste) received by the Climate Group, as well as partial versions for the other transitions. Next year's report should include full details for all transitions.

6.1 Transport *(Proportion of Footprint: 13%)*

Carbon Data

	tonnes CO_2e/year					
	19/20	**20/21**	**21/22**	**22/23**	**Change From Base Year**	**Change From Last Year**
Diesel Fleet	911	905	933	782	-14%	-16%
Petrol Fleet	18	9	10	10	-42%	5%
Liquid Natural Gas Fleet	35	31	32	28	-21%	-14%
Business Travel	278	118	198	281	1%	42%
Business Travel Aneurin Leisure	*11*	*2*	*4*	*4*	-64%	0%
Staff Commute	2,335	1,557	2,074	2,067	-11%	0%
Transport Total	**3,588**	**2,622**	**3,251**	**3,172**	**-12%**	**-2%**

Indicates previous years data revised due to significant changes in emission factors

Indicates figures less accurate as fleet vehicles not able to refuel at Depot for most of year

Transition emissions as a percentage of our 2019-20 Carbon Footprint Baseline

13 %

What does the transition include?

Transport includes all emissions associated with our fleet, and all energy use from other journeys undertaken by BGCBC staff as part of their job role or travelling to work. It does not include travel by other organisations delivering services on our behalf, travel associated with deliveries to or from us, or transport services we commission others to provide on our behalf, e.g. buses (which are all captured in procurement transitions).

Where do emissions come from in this Transition?

There are four main sources of emissions in this transition identified in the plan:

Transitions Breakdown				
	16-17	**17-18**	**18-19**	**19-20**
Transition 1 - Transport Direct				
1. Fuel Use by Fleet Vehicles	1,057	1,105	1,039	987
2. Fuel Use in Employee Commute			2,200	2,005
3. Fuel Use in Employee Business Travel			294	279
4. Emissions from Manufacture and Maintenance of Fleet Vehicles			2,697	2,329
Transition 1 Total			***6,230***	***5,600***

Emissions from commuting are higher than those from the total fuel use of our fleet. Home and agile working has reduced commuting emissions substantially, but over half of our commuting emissions are associated with schools-based staff where the potential for home working is more limited. Refuse vehicles and other larger vehicles make up over half of our fleet fuel emissions, these are vehicle categories where there is currently limited availability of ULEV alternatives. Employee business travel was a small element of transport emissions, even before significant post COVID reductions. The embodied emissions from the manufacture and maintenance of fleet vehicles are a substantial element of this transition, but we have less direct control over these emissions.

How do we intend reach Net Zero?

Action Area	Ref	High Level Action	What Does Net Zero 2030 Look Like?
Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (Non-Depot)	T1	Develop a plan for non-depot charging infrastructure for fleet and staff personal ULEV vehicles at key sites	Sufficient Charging Infrastructure provided at council buildings for staff needs
Fleet Decarbonisation Plan	T2	Develop a Plan for a low carbon fleet and resource its implementation by building costs into Corporate Medium Term Financial Plan	All vehicles in Fleet are Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV)
Low Carbon Depot	T3	Develop and resource a low carbon Depot	Sufficient charging capacity for all fleet vehicles, with on-site zero carbon power generation and storage maximised.

New Fleet ULEV Vehicles	T4	Replace small vehicles in fleet with ULEV in phased way in line with available space, grid capacity and infrastructure (prior to opening of new Depot)	All vehicles in Fleet are Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV)
ULEV Vehicle Procurement	T5	Ensure procurement arrangements are in place to deliver the low carbon fleet plan. Including developing ownership/rental models and opportunities for regional and national collaboration.	Procurement models reflect costs and properties of ULEV vehicles
Staff Active Travel	T6	Investigate and identify staff demand for active travel and consider business case to meet this demand e.g. showers at main sites, secure shower facilities, safe storage and e-charging for cycles.	Active Travel infrastructure, such as cycle storage and changing facilities, available at sites with high demand
Home and Agile Working	T7	Embed the new operating model and assess its impact in terms of decarbonisation.	Commute travel distance and staff business miles are minimised through home and agile working and utilising digital technology/mobile worker functionality.
Grey Fleet/Business Travel	T8	Identify solutions for grey fleet use of personal vehicles delivering council services e.g. Social Services.	Corporate pool or hire ULEV vehicles are available for business travel wherever business need justifies.
Staff Travel	T9	Explore how staff can be encouraged to switch to their personal vehicles ULEV.	Provide and actively promote support and incentives for staff travel shifts from cars to public transport, vehicles sharing, walking and cycling wherever possible. Where not possible provided support and incentives to use personal ULEV.

Our challenges, opportunities and risks

- Low carbon alternatives are not currently available for many of the large vehicle types that we use to deliver services. Even when vehicles are on the market there are issues about real world performance; particularly in relation to (i) the use of auxiliary equipment that draws on power such as lifting and heating and (ii) the topography of the local area, hill starts and climbs are a major power drain. There are examples of local authorities procuring vehicles that were not able to deliver the service. We continue to trial large ULEV vehicles on the ground.
- Smaller ULEV vehicles are being added to the fleet, addressing constraints around funding models and charging capacity remains a challenge.
- Full fleet transition will need to address significant constraints around physical space and grid charging capacity.
- Home and agile working have led to significant reductions in commuting and business travel miles, further reductions will be restricted by requirements of staff to be on site. For these journeys modal shift to public transport, active travel and ULEV vehicles all have different challenges to address.
- We continue to develop our ULEV strategy and work on collaborative procurement arrangements for ULEV.
- Significant decisions about the replacement of the refuse fleet will need to be taken soon as all refuse vehicles are coming to the end of their working life at the same time.

Case Study: Community Meals ULEVS
The Community Meals service managed by the Social Services provides a daily hot meal to over 160 vulnerable adults living in Blaenau Gwent. The service has used the introduction of new Welsh Government funded electric vehicles in July 2023 to develop an intergenerational cross curriculum project with learners from Abertillery Learning Community Secondary campus. The learners have worked alongside the Community Meals team to design and develop the new branding and logos including designing the artwork on the new vans. The learners also came along to visit the service to see the operation and the nutritional importance of the meals. They also spent time with the Council's transport team learning about the benefits of the service moving to electric vehicles and impact on the environment.


6.2 Nature Based Solutions *(Proportion of Footprint: -4%)*

Carbon Data

	tonnes CO2e/year
Forest land	-2,350
Grass land	-55
Settlements	919
Nature Based Solutions Total	**-1,486**

Transition emissions as a percentage of our 2019-20 Carbon Footprint Baseline

-4% (is ***net negative*** because it removes carbon from the atmosphere by absorbing it into habitats and storing it)

What does the transition include?

Nature Based Solutions cover the carbon impact of all our land holdings, including both natural and developed areas.

Where do emissions come from in this Transition?

There are two main elements to the carbon impact of our land holdings:

- **Carbon Sinks** are the total amount of carbon stored in plants and soil.
- **Carbon Sequestration** is the annual net change in the amount of carbon stored in carbon sinks.

Using sequestration for large scale carbon offsetting is not a viable way of achieving Net Zero, as ecosystems do not have unlimited capacity to remove carbon from the atmosphere. The main role of nature based solutions will be balancing a small residue of unavoidable emissions that there is currently no way to decarbonise. It is also worth noting that nature based solutions will continue to cool the planet long after the other transitions are completed, therefore, their long-term impact is much larger than their contribution to Net Zero 2030.

Protecting our existing carbon sinks is a vital element of this transition, the potential carbon impact of the release of even a tiny proportion of these carbon sinks through land use change is enormous. NRW estimated that the total carbon stored on their estate is 309 times their annual carbon sequestration.

We currently only have data covering 53% of our landholdings, although these likely make up a much higher proportion of our total sequestration because they include many of our largest wooded areas, which have the highest sequestration potential.

How do we intend reach Net Zero?

There are three main types of nature based solutions:

- **Protect.** Avoid emissions by protecting existing habitats from land use change.
- **Manage.** Enhance carbon sinks and increase sequestration from existing land types.
- **Restore.** Restore native conditions of habitats to increase sequestration.

It is important to note that while nature based solutions have real carbon benefits, the benefits to biodiversity and well-being are greater. Therefore, carbon calculations should not be allowed to disproportionately dominate decision making about how and where nature based solutions are delivered. This is reflected in the maxim 'right tree, right place, right reason', just planting as many trees as possible will not achieve the best outcome for nature, in some situations other habitat types are more appropriate.

Action Area	Ref	High Level Action	What Does Net Zero 2030 Look Like?
Sequestration Data & Mapping	N1	Bring together and optimise existing internal and external information and mapping (supported by wider corporate GIS improvements) to give better understanding of our current sequestration position and the potential for further development.	GIS and other data give us strong understanding of opportunities for nature based solutions across borough in woodland, peat and other habitats.
Policies impacting Nature Based Solutions	N2	Strengthen existing actions and policy with specific reference to, and targets for, carbon sequestration/climate impact, including the replacement Local Development Plan.	Policies across council impacting Nature Based Solutions are strengthened and include explicit assessment of climate impacts.
Renewables & Nature Based Solutions	N3	Investigate the potential for renewable energy projects to also improve carbon sequestration and how this could be integrated into future schemes	Renewable energy schemes in BG are designed to also maximise benefits to nature.
Carbon Impact of Planning	N4	Include explicit references to, and /or figures for, carbon impacts as part of environmental assessment of planning proposals	Environmental assessments of planning proposals include explicit assessment of carbon impact
Land disposals/ acquisitions and Nature Based Solutions	N5	Ensure that carbon impact of land-use changes and disposals/acquisitions in our own estate are assessed and where possible put in place specific carbon sequestration requirements e.g. requirements in leases and community asset transfers	Requirements in place to protect and enhance carbon and nature benefits whenever council acquires, disposes or changes use of land
Enhancing Carbon Benefit	N6	Investigate potential for programmes enhancing carbon	Council land holdings managed to maximise

of Our Land Holdings		sequestration and biodiversity from specific land-use types in our estate. e.g. schools, business parks.	benefits to climate and nature, with programme of improvements to further enhance climate and nature value

Our challenges, opportunities and risks

Large scale tree planting is an important element in most proposed responses to the climate emergency. National government are setting ambitious targets, Welsh Government target is for 86 million trees in the next decade. Our current activity in this area is largely based on a reactive approach with a focus on maintaining existing provision and meeting legal standards, reflecting current levels of resourcing. Our Tree Policy aims for 'zero net loss of trees under our control within any 5-year period' and to take advantage of any opportunities that may arise to increase this coverage, which reflects the level of resources currently available. Across Wales and England that levels of forestation have remained largely unchanged for the last 20-30 years, despite ambitious paper targets for increases (Scotland has achieved significant increases in the same period through significant policy change). Blaenau Gwent currently has tree coverage above the Welsh average.

It is important that actions are driven by wider range of factors than just the number of new trees planted. Unfortunately, there are many examples of mass tree planting schemes with extremely high failure rates, and even if trees do not die there is still significant potential for variation in the carbon performance dependent on the type of planting and management, in addition to variable impacts on biodiversity. There are also significant carbon benefits to enhanced management of existing trees and other habitat types. The core woodlands management budget is £25-30k per annum. The reality is that this budget can cover emergency work only and probably not all of this.

Mostly our activity is based on external funding and as a result reflects the priorities of these programmes, the largest being Greater Gwent Green Grid. They both include direct tree planting and other activity that does has a sequestration impact, but sequestration is not the explicit purpose of the activity.

We mainly operate from individual management plans for nature reserves. This could lead to potential opportunities being missed, such as landholdings outside of these areas, and also the cumulative impacts of habitat types such as grassland or highway verges. The Blaenau Gwent Nature Recovery Action Plan, currently being developed, may help to address this.

Peat covers only 3% of the world's land but stores one-third of all soil carbon. The carbon it contains is highly vulnerable. Undamaged peatland sequesters carbon, but damaged peatlands are often net emitters. Currently we have limited understanding of our potential for peatland restoration and any development on peatland could have very significant negative carbon impacts.

6.3 Procurement Goods *(Proportion of Footprint: 14%)*

Procurement Goods Focus (Received Climate Group Meeting April 2023)

Carbon Data (19/20 Baseline)

	tonnes CO2e/year
IT & Office Machinery	2,149
Equipment and Furniture	1,173
Food and Drink	958
Machinery	355
Paper and Printing	202
Soap and Cleaning Materials	67
Water Supply	46
Glass and Metal Products	32
Clothing	19
Procurement Goods Total	**5,001**

Transition emissions as a percentage of our 2019-20 Carbon Footprint Baseline

14%

What does the transition include?

What we purchase as an organisation and includes key items such as clothing, food, IT, machinery, equipment and furniture.

Where do emissions come from in this Transition?

See data above, these figures are ***spend based emissions*** calculated from our financial spend and national average carbon intensity factors. These factors are the average amount of carbon emitted per pound of money spent in each of these categories. While spend based emissions can give a reasonable estimate of the relative contributions of different product categories to our carbon footprint, they cannot accurately detect changes in our performance from year to year. As a result, we will not update our spend-based emissions figures on an annual basis and will use alternative measures to show our progress towards Net Zero in this transition, drawing on existing data from other organisations and studies.

How do we intend reach Net Zero?

Action Area	Ref	High Level Action	What Does Net Zero 2030 Look Like?
Embedding Carbon in Procurement Policy	PG1	Make decarbonisation a key component of revised Procurement Policy, including clear statements of key elements such as whole life costs, end of life arrangements etc.	Minimise carbon impact of procurement by making whole life costs and circular economy principles important element of procurement process.

Decarbonising Procurement Adopted as Priority for Corporate Decision Making	PG2	Formally adopt decarbonisation of procurement as a priority at a corporate strategic decision-making level, including, Strategic Commissioning and Commercial Board which considers all contracts awarded over £75,000 and Medium Term Financial Strategy.	Minimise carbon impact of procurement by making whole life costs and circular economy principles important element of procurement process.
Carbon Impact of All Significant Contracts	PG3	All significant contracts (above £75,000 SCCB threshold, with discretion to include lower value if good reason to believe will have significant carbon impact) should identify what the most significant carbon impact(s) are from the contract. Wherever possible we should identify suitable benchmark target(s)/criteria to measure performance against, and where possible/relevant this should be incorporated into contract criteria.	In all major procurement decisions, the most significant carbon impacts are identified, and targets are set to monitor performance
Engaging Local Suppliers with Climate Change	PG4	Develop long-term engagement plans to grow decarbonisation capacity of (local) suppliers in key areas.	Actively support local providers of low carbon products in key areas
Procurement Decarbonisation Deep Dives	PG5	Ongoing programme of decarbonisation initiatives targeted at key procurement areas, supported by additional resources to explore supply chains and develop specific actions/plans. These deep dives could be initiated through Annual Procurement Review. Service areas should be encouraged to develop relevant proposals.	We have significantly reduced carbon impact of all major types of goods purchased based on detailed understanding of our needs and supply chains

Our challenges, opportunities and risks

- Carbon footprint calculations for large construction projects are becoming more common and Welsh Government is encouraging this type of reporting. However, for most procurement decisions it is not possible to produce single definitive carbon figure but it should be possible to produce a decarbonisation benchmark for most decisions.
- General principles around circular economy are relevant across all our procurement but will require specialist knowledge of officers working in specific service area to apply them.

- In many cases we are already doing things in procurement that reduce carbon, we need to make sure that we promote awareness of decarbonisation principles and ensure having meaningful impact on decisions.
- Sweating assets and minimising material throughputs is good for decarbonisation and finances.
- Not all decarbonisation options will lead to immediate savings, the challenge of higher up-front costs for longer lasting products is a familiar one.
- Need to make time/resources available to look at the bigger picture of procurement not just single purchasing decisions and make sure we review and strengthen impact/quality of decarbonisation decision making.
- Deep dives are the key to understanding the impact but need to identify format and resources required.
- Role of collaborative procurement, do we understand carbon impact of regional and national procurement arrangements, and can we influence them where needed?

Current Status of Transition

Carbon is built into reports on procurement for Strategic Commissioning and Commercial Board and supporting guidance developed.

Net Zero is part of revised Procurement Policy.

Carbon Reduction Plan required from suppliers for contracts above £5million. https://www.gov.wales/wppn-06-21-decarbonisation-through-procurement-taking-account-of-carbon-reduction-plans-html.

Welsh Government is encouraging all Public Bodies to, where possible, start moving beyond current Tier 1 spend based reporting of carbon emissions, which are not suitable for monitoring the impact of our actions, to Tier 2 reporting based on carbon data from suppliers. However, outside of substantial construction projects this is unlikely to be possible and/or proportionate to the level of effort required, certainly in the short to medium term. Therefore, Tier 2 reporting is most immediately relevant to the Procurement Construction Transition. This transition will require an alternative approach that does not require complex calculations of the definitive carbon cost of every product we procure.

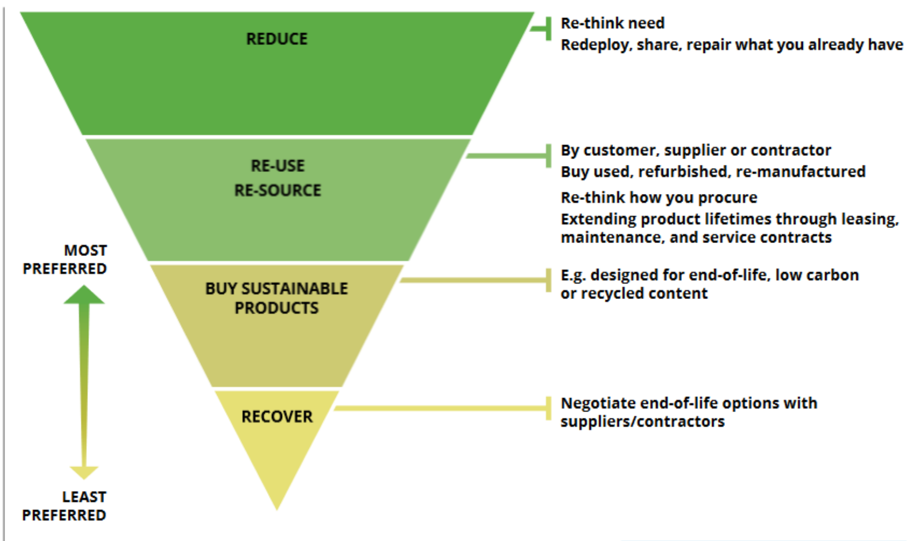


Figure 1: The Sustainable Procurement Hierarchy

This alternative approach will be based on the sustainable procurement hierarchy. As the hierarchy shows choosing low carbon products will likely not be the main method of addressing carbon in procurement. The simplest way to think about the procurement hierarchy is that it aims to reduce both the volume of new materials entering our operations and the volume of material leaving the system as unrecoverable waste. Both elements have carbon costs because of the resources and energy needed to produce new, and tied up in existing, materials. This is the basis for the circular economy, keeping the same materials in circulation being reused for as long as possible.

In many cases we may already be taking actions in line with the procurement hierarchy because reducing material and energy consumption will also lead to financial savings. There are also potential benefits that increased use of hire and leasing arrangements reduces upfront cost of procurement. However, in other cases there maybe increase costs associated with more durable and/or lower carbon products.

Options for Next Steps *(Approved by Climate Group)*

Measuring Progress – Alternatives to Spend Based Emissions

Decarbonisation Benchmarking

A decarbonisation benchmarking approach would be based on identifying a relevant, easy to measure, benchmark serves a good indicator to the largest carbon impact of that procurement exercise without requiring complex calculations or detailed technical specifications. For example, the exact carbon footprint of our laptops is very difficult to calculate given the range of materials and supply chains involved, but much simpler measures such as their energy efficiency certificate and their active use life span capture major elements of their overall carbon impact. Benchmarks of this type (other examples could include all lighting be LED, % of recycled material used in product, % of products that reused/refurbished etc.) would form the basis of reporting for this transition.

Already introduced a decarbonisation question for all procurement reports, propose that identifying a decarbonisation benchmark and a review date to check that benchmark achieved should be key elements in this. These Decarbonisation Benchmarks should be based, where possible, on publicly available information about current standards in the relevant sector and should represent an ambitious target rather than a minimum level. The Local Authority Sustainability Procurement Toolkit also provides many examples of potential benchmarks. These benchmarks could also be a decision-making criterion in the procurement process, by requiring contracts to meet the benchmark standard and giving credit to those who go beyond this standard.

As an initial pilot all goods contracts over £75,000 would be required to identify a Decarbonisation Benchmark from now on (there are typically around 12 contracts annually of this type), with the intention of expanding this to all goods contacts over £25,000 as soon after this initial phase as possible.

1. **All procurement reports for goods orders over £75,000 (where a carbon impact identified) to include a Decarbonisation Benchmark, expanding to all goods orders over £25,000 after initial phase.**

2. **Where a Decarbonisation Benchmark identified should be part of specification and/or used as a selection criterion.**

Benchmarking Workshop

Assessing the decarbonisation implications of procurement and setting benchmarks will be a learning process. Guidance on the general principles of circular economy and reducing material and energy consumption in this transition can assist officers with the reporting template. However, given the range of things that we buy there is not a one size fits all model for decarbonising procurement across the authority. Decarbonisation Benchmarking will be informed by officers' knowledge of their own areas of work. It is also worth recognising that we are already taking actions that reduce the carbon footprint of our procurement. Both with explicit reference to climate change, and because officers are already taking actions that reduce material and energy consumption from procurement for non-climate reasons including cost savings.

To kick start the learning process around completing decarbonisation reporting requirements and benchmarking for procurement, we will organise a workshop with procurement and service area staff identified as being involved in relevant upcoming procurement activity. This would provide an opportunity for staff to come together to discuss how reporting and benchmarking would work, by looking at upcoming procurement exercises and to share examples of past specifications that have reduced carbon impact.

3. **Hold workshop for staff who likely to be involved in producing procurement decarbonisation reports and benchmarks.**

Reporting

Important not just to collate procurement decarbonisation benchmarking for annual report but also to assess collective impact and to drive improvement, share good practise and track financial impact of decarbonisation actions. Recognising as a new area of work, reporting will not be perfect immediately. Therefore, it is important to look at the overall picture of activity and helping to strengthen quality of reporting over time. Also integrate decarbonisation into the forward-looking processes such as the Annual Procurement Strategy, so incorporate carbon as well as financial impact of planned activity.

4. **All Decarbonisation assessments and benchmarks should be collated on ongoing basis for Annual Net Zero 2030 Report and reviewed by Climate Group and/or Strategic Commissioning and Commercial Board.**

5. **Make Decarbonisation integral part of forward planning process for procurement.**

Deep Dives

We cannot rely solely on assessing procurement on a case-by-case basis to reach Net Zero. Decarbonising procurement is about more than just choosing the lowest carbon product at the time of purchase, other factors such as how the product is used and how long it lasts can be more impactful on our carbon footprint. We can take a more systematic look at how to reduce this carbon impact through a deep dive into the product categories identified as making the greatest contribution to our carbon footprint (see table above). The same principles still apply to these deep dives, that this does not necessarily require complex carbon calculations, in the first instance we should look to apply publicly available carbon information to understand where we can have the greatest impact. An initial pilot will help to understand the time and resources needed to conduct deep dives and implement the changes identified.

6. **Scope and carry out deep dive into one of our highest carbon impact product types, possibly computing and other appliances.**

6.4 Procurement Services *(Proportion of Footprint: 37%)*

Carbon Data (19/20 Baseline)

	tonnes CO_2e/year
Social Care and Health	5,845
Education	3,806
Pensions/Investments	1,461
Public Administration	1,431
Legal and Consultancy Services	590
Computer Services	145
Post and Telecommunications	120
Miscellaneous	95
Procurement Services Total	**28,640**

Transition emissions as a percentage of our 2019-20 Carbon Footprint Baseline
37%

What does the transition include?

This transition includes the emissions related to services that are delivered by us, or on our behalf.

Where do our greatest emissions come from in this Transition?
The three largest emissions sources within this transition are social care, schools and pensions. The high emissions in this transition are mainly the result of a high volume of low carbon intensity actions. As a result, the source of the carbon emissions in this transition are less concentrated in hotspots, and the level of influence that we have over many of these emissions is significantly lower, than for other transitions.

How do we intend reach Net Zero?

Action Area	Ref	High Level Action	What Does Net Zero 2030 Look Like?
Supplier Climate Pledge/Commitment	PS1	Initial engagement with suppliers to raise awareness of, and secure commitment to, decarbonisation via signing of pledge/joining scheme (ideally one also being used by other Welsh public sector bodies).	Engaging with suppliers to reduce the carbon impact of services they provide to us

Social Services Supplier Climate Engagement	PS2	Social services to undertake long-term engagement to support suppliers to build their capacity to decarbonise key areas of their operations, such as transport and energy.	Social service providers making good progress towards Net Zero from their energy use and transport.
Education Supplier Climate Engagement	PS3	Education to undertake long-term engagement to support schools to build their capacity to decarbonise key areas of their operations, such as transport and energy.	Schools have good understanding of their carbon footprint and working together to achieve Net Zero
Local Renewable Supply (Non-estate)	PS4	Investigate the possible benefits of Power Purchase Agreement to secure low carbon electricity by directly investing in renewable generation supply, with clear emphasis on local capacity and links to Energy Prospectus.	Supporting renewable generation schemes in Blaenau Gwent, with emphasis on community ownership, including through purchase of zero carbon electricity for use by council
Pensions Carbon Impact	PS5	Consider whether we should ask the Greater Gwent Pension Fund to develop a more proactive approach to accelerating the transition to Net Zero through its investment strategy, such as divestment policy. Starting with requesting position statement from Greater Gwent Pension Fund.	Pension contributions are not supporting fossil fuel extraction and are supporting local investment in Net Zero projects

Our challenges, opportunities and risks

Decarbonising social care providers and schools transport and energy use are key to this transition, but this will be very challenging for many providers, requiring long-term engagement and support.

Collaborative procurement is very important. The Gwent Regional Partnership Board plays an important role in social care, foster and domiciliary care big element of this. Already perhaps 20-25% via collaborative procurement and this is only going to increase in coming years. We are midway through an 8-year contract with Caerphilly. Cross authority procurement of services helps to avoid duplication (reducing inefficiencies and carbon impact), providers have single point of contact which helps with engagement on issues such as decarb, and also builds resilience in system, for example, where we need cover for transport.

Domiciliary care is a big area due to transport for carers. Due to the geography of Blaenau Gwent we are able to commission local care staff and create walking rounds wherever possible. However, Covid has shown the limits to this, sometimes carers need to travel by car. Beyond this there are already cost pressures from achieving the real living wage, we will need to support providers to seek capital investment into things like electric cars. Probably the case that the market is not currently ready to respond to the decarbonisation agenda.

We have had contact from care homes about whether they can join LA purchasing to achieve savings on energy bills, there could be a green element to this if developed. Similar approach could be applied to engaging with care homes supply chains and building local resilience across other decarbonisation issues, e.g. food. This is something that will require planning and capacity to engage providers.

Re:Fit is important element of schools transition. Recognise that uptake has been low in the past, think that the future revenue implications were the concern for schools. A contributing factor here may have been that last round came at a time of high turnover in school management, heads may not have wanted to leave this cost legacy for the next regime. Feel that improving relationship with school management means that better placed for future rounds. Also important that schools get quality of information to understand impact of Re:Fit, including separating out cost and carbon impacts, particularly given rising energy prices. Larger WG capital programmes are planned processes, think decarbonisation can/will be built in.

Almost all schools are part of maintenance SLA. We have a good understanding of our estate in this context, programmes of maintenance and minor works in place. On New build there have been returns to WG with Net Zero proposals at Glyncoed and Welsh medium school.

There were already a limited number of suppliers for home to school travel prior to COVID, they have been badly hit by the collapse of demand for buses during the rest of day due to the makeup of contracts for morning and late-afternoons only, which means that companies lost a lot of drivers as they can only offer limited hours. The lack of suppliers also constrains our ability to optimise routes. This is before considering again the issue that largely local suppliers so constrained in awareness of, and ability to invest in, ULEV vehicles as they come on to the market.

The Greater Gwent Pension Fund adopted a Climate Change Policy in 2019, which outlines that their ‘overall policy objective is to lower the ‘carbon footprint’ of the greenhouse gas emissions of our investments, so that we are either in line with or, ideally, below the international targets to keep global warming well below 2°C.' Ultimately, we do not directly control either policies or investment decisions of the Pension Fund, but we are represented on the Board along with other public sector partners, so can continue to influence following recent resolution passed by council.

6.5 Procurement Works *(Proportion of Footprint: 10%)*

Carbon Data (19/20 Baseline)

	tonnes CO_2e/year
Construction and Maintenance	3,544
Procurement Works Total	**3,544**

Transition emissions as a percentage of our 2019-20 Carbon Footprint Baseline

10%

What does the transition include?

This includes the life cycle embodied emissions from the construction, maintenance and demolition of our buildings and other infrastructure (e.g. roads) (it does not include the energy use from the operation of our buildings which is part of the heat and electricity transitions).

Where do emissions come from in this Transition?

Most procurement works emissions are associated with capital expenditure with external contractors on major construction projects. 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 (the 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.

How do we intend reach Net Zero?

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.

Action Area	Ref	High Level Action	What Does Net Zero 2030 Look Like?
Impact of major construction projects on territorial climate emissions	PW1	Assess the impact of major projects on territorial emissions in Blaenau Gwent e.g. projects that will create significant new energy use or travel demand outside of our own organisational footprint.	All major construction projects are planned to minimise emissions for energy use and travel demand during their lifetime operation

Net Zero New Build	PW2	Commit that all new builds will be designed and constructed to Net Zero standards. Only in exceptional circumstances will projects proceed without the requirement being met. Where the standard has been judged to be unachievable, the barriers will be set out in detail in writing.	All new builds designed and constructed to Net Zero standards
Carbon Costs of Building and Maintenance Works	PW3	Commit to consider carbon costs (the emissions associated with undertaking works and future energy use) in procurement of building and maintenance works, including setting appropriate carbon standards. Integrated into decision making as part of procurement review.	Life cycle costs and circular economy principles inform building and maintenance budgets and programmes to minimise carbon impacts

Our challenges, opportunities and risks

- Significant progress is being made on improving the carbon performance of our new buildings. However, there are still a number of challenges:
- Funding requirements have an impact. Funders have negative reactions to the higher costs of zero carbon build. Tight deadlines significantly constrain innovation. Both short lead in and tight spend profiles mean that we are often condensing design processes more than we would like at moment.
- Need to look at lifetime use of building. There are also potential costs to occupiers in long term. New tech requires maintenance, especially as these are often new systems.
- Already concerns 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.
- Measuring carbon impact is not straight forward, and there is not a clear single definition of what it means to be a zero-carbon building. Reliant on emerging national guidance and product information.
- For existing buildings incorporating these life-cycle factors into decision making will have financial implications. There is a strong downward pressure on costs, and this would require a culture change, especially after 10+ years of austerity. Improving any of these elements will have significant up-front costs, even when there are long-term savings.

6.6 Electricity *(Proportion of Footprint: 11%)*

Carbon Data

	tonnes CO_2e/year					
	19/20	**20/21**	**21/22**	**22/23**	**Change From Base Year**	**Change From Last Year**
Metered - Buildings	1,792	1,272	1,265	1,171	-35%	-7%
Metered - Buildings Aneurin Leisure	*572*	*279*	*374*	*343*	-40%	-8%
Unmetered - Street Lighting	968	870	700	642	-34%	-8%
Electricity Total	**3,332**	**2,420**	**2,339**	**2,156**	**-35%**	**-8%**

Transition emissions as a percentage of our 2019-20 Carbon Footprint Baseline

11%

What does the transition include?

All electricity used by council buildings and infrastructure.

Where do our greatest emissions come from in this Transition?

Around two thirds of our current electricity use is associated with our buildings, with the other third from street lighting.

How do we intend reach Net Zero?

Action Area	Ref	High Level Action	What Does Net Zero 2030 Look Like?
Carbon Impact of Devices that use electricity	E1	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	All electrical devices used by council meet high energy efficiency standards and purchasing decisions minimise life cycle costs
Street Lighting Decarbonisation	E2	Street Lighting Strategy – Develop a plan and targets for future energy reductions including reaching 100% LED lighting no later than 2030.	Energy use from street lighting minimised through use of LED etc.
Maximising Renewable	E3	Zero Carbon Electricity. Develop a plan and targets for ensuring the	Generation of zero carbon electricity on council estate

Generation on our Estate		Council maximises its use of renewable energy, through installing renewables.	maximised on basis of clear understanding of potential capacity
Electricity Demand Reduction	E4	Energy Policy- ensure energy demand reduction is aligned to Council's Zero Carbon commitment.	Electricity demand minimised through use of technology, data and behaviour change

Our challenges, opportunities and risks

Over the last four years' total carbon emissions from our electricity consumption have fallen by 39%. The majority of this reduction has been due to a fall in the carbon intensity of grid electricity (the amount of carbon produced per unit of energy). Our electric energy consumption fell by 6.5% over the same period.

Generating electricity from building mounted renewables, we currently have around 350kwh of installed capacity, including work with Aneurin Leisure on Sports Centre. There can be viability issues on delivering return on upfront investment, factors such as asbestos and roof strength add costs, and some buildings unsuitable due to issues such as roof alignment.

Potentially large amounts of electricity could be generated from non-building mounted renewables. Investment could have wider community benefit for Blaenau Gwent. But there are limiting factors around matching generation to demand, grid capacity if we do need to export energy and that many of our land holdings are potentially vulnerable to vandalism due to location.

Demand reduction could be achieved through automation and data/performance systems to effectively reduce electricity usage, but this requires staff and resource capacity.

Majority of street lighting converted to LEDs, already realised carbon and cost saving and on track to complete full conversion.

Significant challenges around the increased supply that will be required by electrification to achieve Net Zero for transport and heat transitions, both in terms of grid capacity and matching supply and demand.

6.7 Heat *(Proportion of Footprint: 16%)*

Carbon Data

	tonnes CO_2e/year					
	19/20	**20/21**	**21/22**	**22/23**	**Change From Base Year**	**Change From Last Year**
Natural Gas Heating	3,942	3,725	3,483	3,512	-11%	1%
Natural Gas Heating Aneurin Leisure	*1,152*	*798*	*1,076*	*967*	-16%	-10%
Biomass Heating	60	67	75	75	25%	0%
Heat Total	**5,154**	**4,590**	**4,634**	**4,554**	**-12%**	**-2%**

Transition emissions as a percentage of our 2019-20 Carbon Footprint Baseline

16%

What does the transition include?

Includes all energy use for heating (and cooling) space and water in our buildings.

How do we intend reach Net Zero?

Action Area	Ref	High Level Action	What Does Net Zero 2030 Look Like?
Heating Demand Reduction	H1	Energy Policy - Utilise data and controls to reduce heat demand.	Heating demand minimised through use of technology, data and behaviour change
Decarbonising Heating	H2	Develop a strategic heating Decarbonisation plan to include replacement of existing heating systems and associated retrofitting of buildings with net zero carbon alternatives by 2030 including the investment required	All buildings retrofitted (where appropriate) to improve energy efficiency and zero carbon heating systems installed
District Heating Networks	H3	District heating networks. Set date for future review of whether developments in technology allow for additional networks in Blaenau Gwent	District Heating Systems based on Zero Carbon heating technology developed where viable opportunities emerge

Our challenges, opportunities and risks
Heating accounts for most of our buildings energy emissions and is the most challenging element of our entire Net Zero journey. Gas cannot be a zero-carbon fuel, so unlike the electricity grid, it is not possible to decarbonise heating without major infrastructure changes for end energy users.

Modern condensing boilers have achieved significant carbon reductions and effective action is about more than just replacing boilers. Further significant carbon savings are possible, including some options with a positive rate of return on investment:

- Retrofitting to improve building energy efficiency with 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.

However, these measures fall well short of achieving Net Zero, which will require a shift away from gas boilers. This will 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. Alternatives include:

- Heat pumps are more efficient in providing heat per unit of energy consumed than gas boilers, but there are two big barriers to their adoption (i) gas is currently (and has historically been) significantly cheaper per unit of energy than electricity and (ii) gas boilers can produce a much greater total quantity of heat than heat pumps, so are much better able to heat energy inefficient buildings, which will often be expensive, or even impossible, to retrofit for heat pumps. Recent procurement exercises for schools found that heat pumps would be many more times expensive than a modern gas boiler.

- Hydrogen has often been proposed as a substitute fuel to replace gas, but there are significant questions about whether this will ever be technically viable at the national grid scale. 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. Hydrogen may have a part to play in specific local schemes with high heating loads like major public buildings.

- Biomass can play a role in replacing gas, as it does in The Works heating network. However, biomass does not have the capacity to replace more than a small part of the total energy provided by the gas grid.

District Heating Networks, like The Works, are not a distinct technology, rather they are a way of achieving economies of scale by linking multiple buildings to a single heating system (which could be gas, hydrogen, biomass or heat pumps).

6.8 Waste *(Proportion of Footprint: -22%)*

Waste Transition Focus (Received Climate Group Meeting July 2023)

Carbon Data

	tonnes CO_2e/year			
	2019/20	**2020/21**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**
Recycled/Composted	-11,828	-11,760	-12,205	-11,504
Waste to Energy	3,611	4,078	3,833	3,762
Landfill	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1
Waste Total	**-8,216**	**-7,682**	**-8,372**	**-7,742**

Note: The percentage change calculations for waste have been removed because the figures would be misleading. For example, this year despite an increase in the recycling rate, the total carbon savings have reduced reflecting a small reduction in the total volume of waste entering the system. Ultimately the aim for this transition is for the total figure to reach Zero when Zero Waste is achieved, rather than generating ever increasing negative figures.

Transition emissions as a percentage of our 2019-20 Carbon Footprint Baseline

-22% (the carbon savings from treatment of municipal waste are equivalent to 15% of our total carbon footprint)

What does the transition include?

This transition includes the emissions associated with the treatment of municipal waste collected by the authority.

Where do emissions come from in this Transition?

These emissions are an estimate of the net carbon impact of the treatment of the municipal waste we collect. Landfill is by far the most carbon intensive method of disposal, but only a very small fraction of our waste is landfilled. Recycling/composting save carbon by eliminating the need to use new materials in manufacturing. Waste to energy releases carbon, but overall, our waste has a significant negative carbon impact.

	Recycled/Composted		**Waste to Energy**		**Landfill**	
	Tonnes	**tCO2e**	**Tonnes**	**tCO2e**	**Tonnes**	**tCO2e**
21.22	19,955	-11,827	11,158	3,611	0.65	0.37

Technically these figures are not part of our Welsh Government Net Zero Public Sector carbon footprinting. This is because this carbon saving contribution towards Net Zero is captured in the carbon footprinting of other organisations who treat the waste, so including it in our footprint would be double counting. However, how our municipal waste is treated is still an important element of our overall contribution to Net Zero.

The waste related emissions reported in our carbon footprint are very small. We estimate that the waste we generate ourselves is around 5% of the total volume of municipal waste. The footprint also includes a small quantity of emissions associated with the onward transport of waste after collection for disposal. (The emissions from our refuse fleet are significant but are part of the transport transition).

How do we intend reach Net Zero?

Reaching Net Zero means achieving Zero Waste. There is a close alignment in this transition between carbon reduction and existing service priorities and targets. As a result, as the table below shows, there has been significant progress in recent years in reducing the carbon impact of our waste, although gains have plateaued in the last couple of years.

Year	Waste Tonnes	Recycled/Composted	Waste to Energy	Landfilled	Carbon Saving
16.17	31,537.20	56.9%	43.1%	0.0007%	-4,076.93
17.18	31,661.22	57.7%	42.2%	0.0008%	-4,847.34
18.19	30,044.09	59.8%	40.2%	0.0017%	-7,421.34
19.20	31,138.92	64.1%	35.8%	0.0021%	-8,215.79
20.21	31,410.26	62.0%	37.7%	0.0021%	-7,682.49
21.22	31,138.92	64.1%	35.8%	0.0021%	-8,215.79

Action Area	Ref	High Level Action	What Does Net Zero 2030 Look Like?
Zero Waste – Carbon Impact	W1	Zero Waste. Deliver Waste Management and Recycling Strategy	Achieving or exceeding Welsh Zero Waste Targets, with increased use of 'closed loop' operations and 'up-cycling'
Carbon Impact of Onward Waste Transport/Treatment	W2	Minimise environmental impact of onward treatment of waste	Onward transport of municipal waste for treatment minimised
Carbon Impact of Commercial Waste Service	W3	Commercial Waste Service. Develop upgraded service.	Achieving or exceeding Welsh Zero Waste Targets
Promoting waste reduction with households	W4	Develop stronger ‘reduce’ element to household waste communication	Significantly reduced volume of waste entering municipal waste stream

Our challenges, opportunities and risks

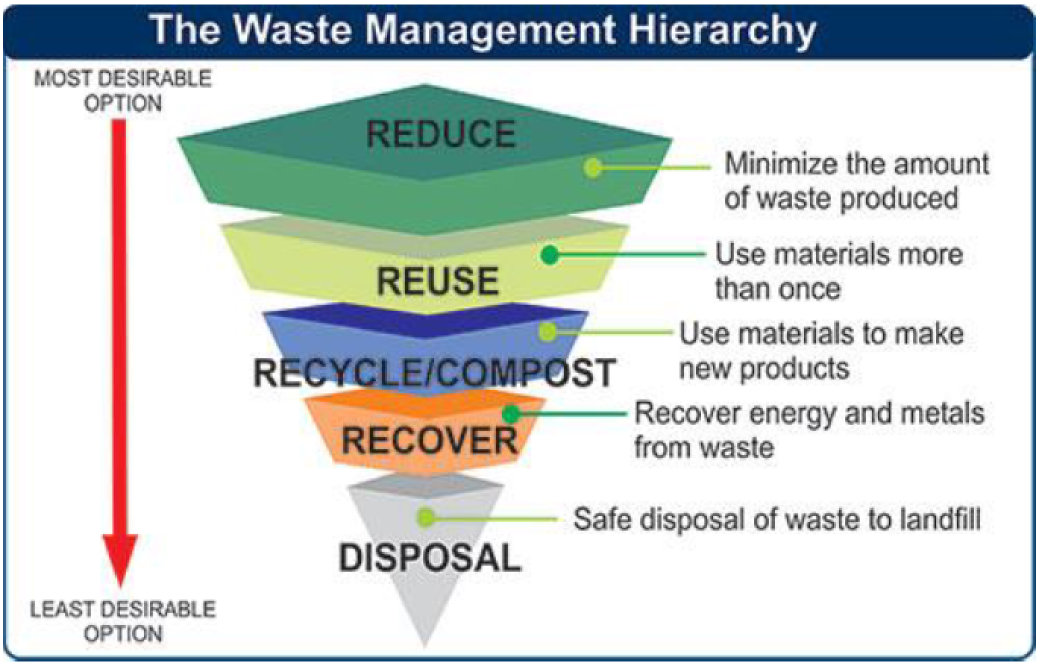
Progress has been the result of actions at the bottom levels of the waste hierarchy (below), which correspond to 'traditional' local authority municipal waste activities around the point of disposal. Further progress is possible through continued activity to increase the range of materials than can be recycled and behaviour change to ensure that residents recycle all the materials they can and contamination of waste is minimised.

However, the volume of waste entering the system has remained essentially unchanged. Achieving Zero Waste will require actions at the top levels of the waste hierarchy, which tends to involve moving further upstream in the waste process, where local authority waste services have less direct influence. This requires new activity related to the circular economy, which we are now moving into but does not have the same established policy and budget frameworks.

The Climate Assembly demonstrated strong public support for action in this area:

Establish local Repair hubs to Re-use/re-purpose/upcycle items.	79

Currently activity is concentrated on maximising reuse of material that has entered municipal waste system (e.g. new reuse shop). There is a lot that could be done prior to waste being thrown away (which could drive further public engagement), including the type of hubs suggested in this recommendation (these could potentially be linked to community hubs and/or town centre development) and engaging with local business about reducing material use/waste as well. Some work has been done in these areas when funding is available, such as the local repair directory, but there is not currently a dedicated plan or resource. It may also be that other organisations are better placed to deliver some of this work.



Nationally the total volume of commercial waste is more than 50% greater than the volume of domestic waste, but the recycling rates are much lower. Potentially Local Authorities could play an important role in this element of this transition as well, and in doing so might also improve the recycling rate for municipal waste overall, but at the moment there are substantial regulatory barriers to this. If national government were to give Local Authorities greater role in business waste, then would have resource implications for the increased collection capacity required.

We have upgraded our commercial waste offer in line with Welsh Government legislation, although due to the COVID pandemic the introduction of this legislation has been extended from October 2021 to March 2024, with limited enforcement initially. Now we are segregating into three waste streams (paper/card; plastic/metal; glass) and since May 2021 operating two new vehicles to collect. At the beginning there was a lot of contamination, as historically there has not been the same drive as with home waste for behaviour change. We have clamped down on side waste and limited bin size, if customers can't fit their waste into existing bins then they are told they need to pay for larger collection. We are looking to expand our customer base and offering.

There are financial implications if the authority does not achieve the statutory recycling target of 70% in 2024/25 it could face financial penalties from Welsh Government of £200 per tonne for every tonne under the target.

Over several decades a model for waste has built up that focuses primarily on the point of disposal, as a result individual members of the public and local government are identified as the main responsible actors, with business producers disappearing from the picture. There is now increasing emphasis on producer responsibility, for example, through Welsh Government initiatives such as the plastic bag charge and potentially encouraging producer responsibility for recycling packaging from their products.

We are seeing an increasing amount of material being diverted into the reuse shop, but the reality is that a lot of bulky items are not in reusable condition and finding ways to divert them from Viridor (waste to energy) to recycling is not easy. There is limited market capacity in the UK, and even for items where providers are becoming available such as mattresses and carpets, the storage of items to keep them in acceptable condition for recycling prior to onward transport is challenging.

Only the initial onward journey of waste is part of our footprint, but it is only one factor in the total carbon impact of waste treatment. We currently prioritise ensuring that wherever possible waste is not taken outside the UK, rather than just the initial journey distance, and full audit trails of the entire process are submitted to Natural Resources Wales. The market is the biggest factor in where and how waste is treated. The Welsh Government is seeking to address the low level of domestic treatment capacity.

Current Status of Transition and Next Steps

W1 Zero Waste. Deliver Waste Management and Recycling Strategy

Currently exceeding targets for recycling rates, with latest Quarter 1 figures looking very positive. The main pressure here is the increasing capacity needed to meet requirements of more collections due to increased waste streams. Increased use of agency staff has been needed as a result. Resource pressure is likely to increase further with potential recycling of plastic film material from 2027, which is currently being trialled. Replacement of refuse fleet needs to begin in next 2-3 years due to vehicle age and will be a big challenge for the transport transition. It also represents an opportunity for the waste transition to procure fleet that is better suited to future waste streams, which will result in carbon and cost savings from more efficient collections.

W2 Minimise environmental impact of onward treatment of waste

Good progress being made, carbon considerations are an important part of procurement, both in terms of minimising export of waste and in requiring all suppliers to provide decarbonisation plan. Will continue to be a focus in future contracts.

W3 Commercial Waste Service. Develop upgraded service.

New service has been operating for two years now, performing well, we have enforcement team in place and other local authorities have been contacting us to look at what we have been doing well. Workplace recycling requirements will come into place in April 2024. This may have a significant effect on number of customers although it is difficult to say in which direction this will be, there could be a drop if the private sector comes in with new services at low price in response to this requirement, or we may acquire more customers due to increased demand. There is due to be a national advertising campaign during the summer to raise awareness of these changes and we will be following that with a campaign targeted at our own customers.

The suggestion is that '***develop upgraded service'*** as the action under Carbon Impact of Commercial Waste Service has now been completed successfully and that we adopt a new action '***increase customer base and recycling rate'***. In addition to the direct carbon benefit of improved commercial recycling rates, commercial providers refuse vehicles travelling up from Cardiff or similar to service small number of businesses in Blaenau Gwent has a significant carbon impact that our service could reduce. From a financial point of view our commercial service is not subsidised and increasing our customer base will help reach Bridging the Gap profit targets.

We have held meeting with Executive Member for Education and Climate Champion to address school recycling rates. The main issue with reducing the high rates of residual waste being produced by schools is having an engaged facilities manager who has the support of school leadership to ensure that waste is being separated for collection, which is always a challenge for sites such as schools. We have made available data to schools which shows who are good and poor performers in this area.

W4 Develop stronger 'reduce' element to household waste communication

First education suite at Roseheyworth opened, to engage school and community groups. A new reuse shop at New Vale currently under development and this will mean we can offer bulky items for the first time. Grant funding is driving our current work in this area as this is a priority for Welsh Government now recycling is making strong progress in Wales. Staff time for engagement is important to this ‘reduce’ message also.

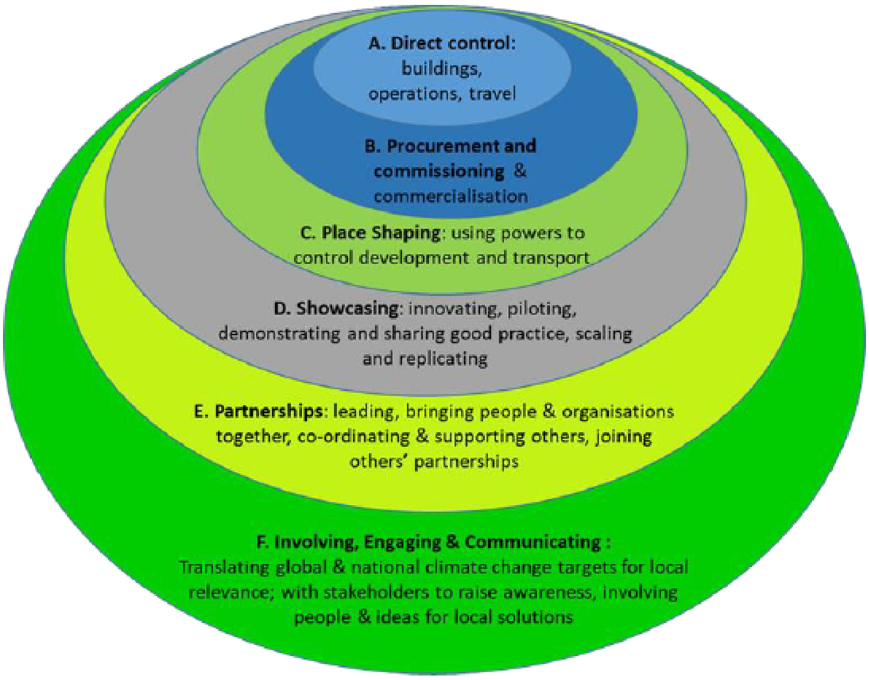
Worked with Ebbw Vale Institute to provide funding and equipment for a first repair café, run by volunteers. At the moment this was a one-off trial, but the aim is to work towards a network or regular repair cafes run across the three valleys. Engaged with partners such as GAVO and Tai Calon on providing support and volunteers for this. Currently work is paused due to staff turnover, but finance is available via Welsh Government for us to facilitate funding applications for community groups. There maybe potential working with Regeneration to engage with business around these circular economy themes as well.

7. Territorial Net Zero 2050

Our Territorial Emissions

Net Zero 2050 relates to production based territorial emissions, these include all the carbon emissions (i) released in Blaenau Gwent and (ii) released to produce energy that is used in Blaenau Gwent. It does not include consumption based territorial emissions, which are the emissions associated with making products that were made elsewhere and consumed in Blaenau Gwent. Consumption based emissions vary much less between local authority areas than production-based emissions, reflecting that there is much more limited scope to influence them at the local level.

We have much less direct control of territorial emissions, actions to reduce these emissions mainly sit in areas C through F of the diagram below, in contrast to actions to reduce organisational emissions, which largely sit in areas A and B. As a result, partnership working and regional and national strategies have a far greater role to play in Net Zero 2050 than in Net Zero 2030 and will also require much more public action. The local authority cannot deliver territorial Net Zero 2050 alone, but we are the organisation that is best positioned to produce a local overview, particularly due to our role in place shaping.



Territorial emissions in Blaenau Gwent have fallen 33% between 2005 and a 2019 baseline, compared to 29% for Wales as a whole. 71% of these reductions in emissions are associated with electricity consumption, while some of these reductions will be due to actions taken locally to improve energy efficiency, a majority will be due to decarbonisation of the National Grid.

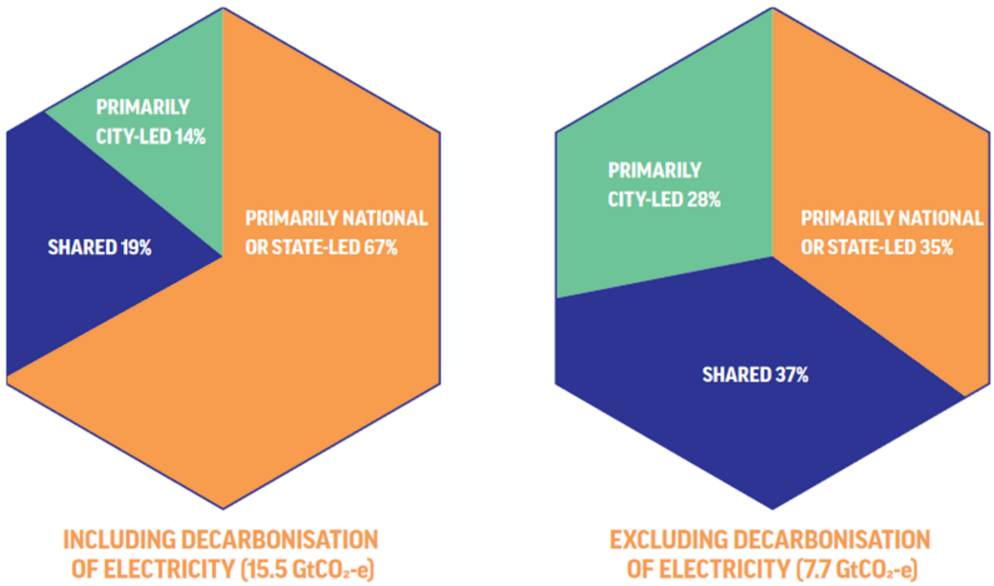
Where do BG emissions come from?

	Industry and Commercial	Transport	Domestic	Sequestration
2005	171	92	182	-6
2018	102	80	108	-3

This is reflected in significant falls in both industrial and home carbon emissions, where electricity consumption plays a large role. In contrast reductions in transport emissions have been much smaller.

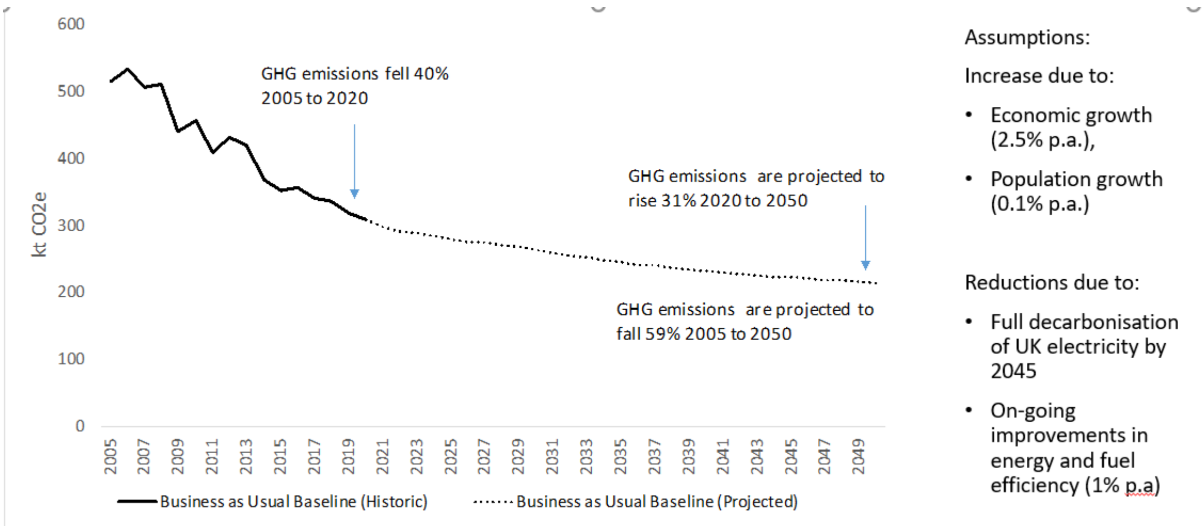
How much can be done locally?

FIGURE 15. PROPORTION OF 2050 URBAN ABATEMENT POTENTIAL OVER WHICH DIFFERENT LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT HAVE PRIMARY AUTHORITY OR INFLUENCE.

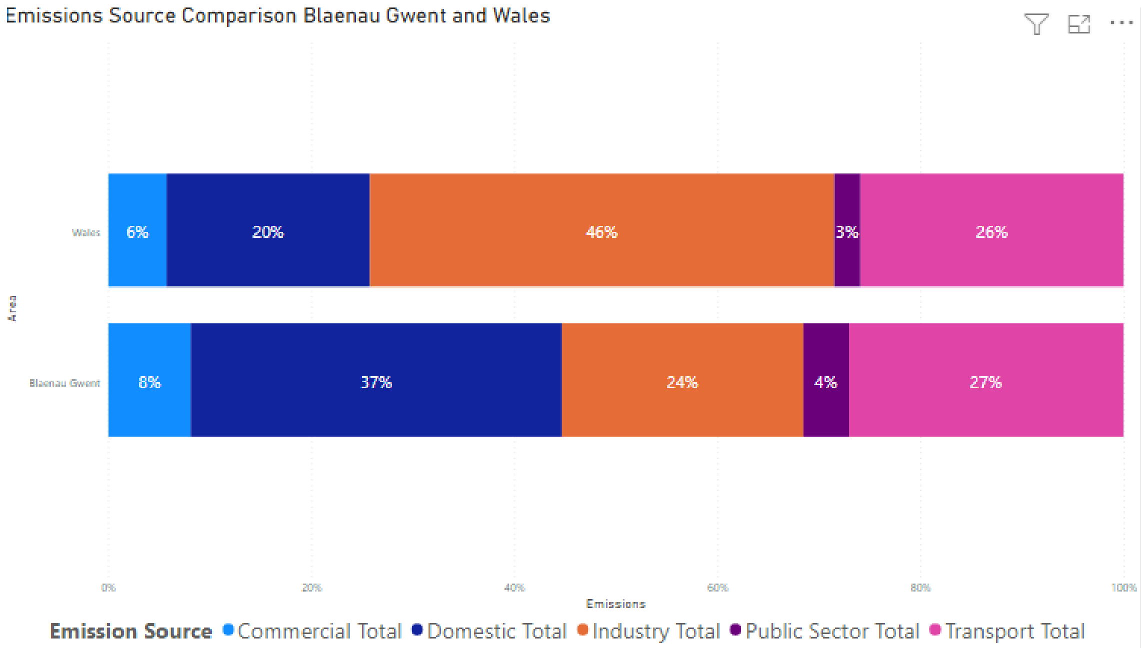


The graphic above estimates the share of territorial emissions that Local Authorities (city-led government) have influence over. The graph on the right excludes decarbonisation of the electricity grid, to show the influence local action has on the other half of non-grid emissions. The UK Climate Change Committee says ‘Progress to date has been largely achieved through centrally driven policy to phase out coal for electricity production. This required a small number of actors supported by local supply chains in specific places. But many of the urgent changes and decisions which are needed next to reduce emissions and reach Net Zero have a strong local dimension. Decarbonising buildings, transport, waste and industry, cutting emissions from agriculture and storing more carbon through land-use and forestry are dependent on delivery at a local scale.'

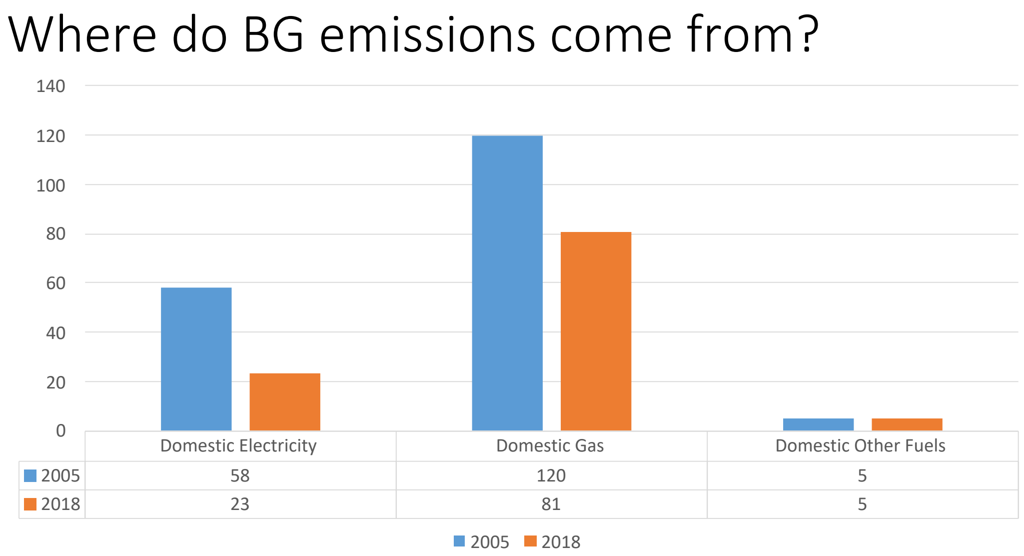
Projected Business as Usual Territorial Emissions for Blaenau Gwent



This is reflected in graph of Blaenau Gwent emissions above projecting that full decarbonisation of the National Grid is not enough to reach Net Zero 2050 without local action as well.



Compared to Wales overall a far higher proportion of emissions in Blaenau Gwent come from housing (37% vs 20%), and far less from industry (24% vs 46%), meaning that we likely have more local control over a higher proportion of our emissions.



Over 75% of our remaining emissions from homes are from gas usage, so decarbonising home heating is key to achieving Net Zero for Blaenau Gwent.

Position Summary

There are already a number of actions taking place across the council to cut territorial emissions. However, similar to our position for organisational emissions prior to developing our Decarbonisation Plan, we do not have a clear overview of their total impact or any gaps in relation to Net Zero 2050. The refreshed Climate Group has begun the process of developing a Net Zero 2050 Framework document to address this gap. The framework will be structured around the four themes that emerged from the Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly in 2021: energy, housing, nature and transport. Officers working in each of these areas have been identified as Climate Leads and will contribute to developing the framework, in addition to their existing work delivering in these areas, including on the five Climate Assembly Recommendations.

The framework is not intended to cover all elements of Net Zero 2050 as comprehensively as the Decarbonisation Plan covered Net Zero 2030, given that (i) the range of emissions sources is far greater and (ii) many of them are much less subject to local control by us (or our partners). Therefore, the intention is that the Net Zero 2050 Framework will sit on top of, and bring together, a number of key plans/strategies which will contain much of the detail of delivery. These documents will largely not be climate specific plans, as the transition to Net Zero 2050 is not separate from achieving our wider well-being objectives under these themes. Many of these will be existing/revised plans, although new plans will be developed to fill gaps (for example the new Local Area Energy Plan, currently under development).

The framework will have two main parts. The first part will provide an overview of the key features of what Net Zero 2050 looks like for Blaenau Gwent in each theme and the key changes needed to reach it. Net Zero 2050 in Blaenau Gwent is not something that we or any other single organisation can deliver on our own, but the framework can provide a long-term overview which we and partner organisations can refer to guide our actions.

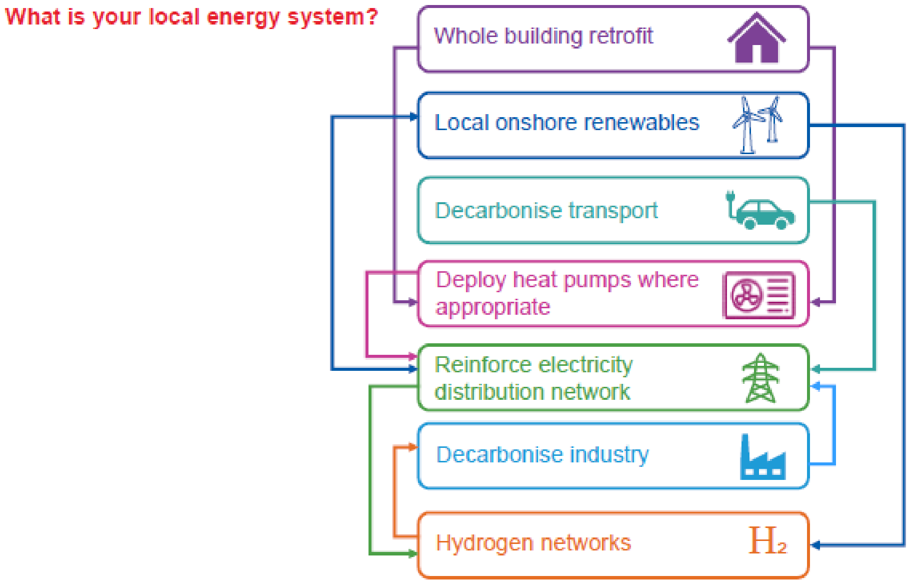
The second part of the framework will focus on short/medium term actions under each theme, informed by the long-term goals and areas of greatest local control identified in the first part of the framework. In this part, each theme will be updated on a regular basis (circa 3-5 years) to reflect both changes in the local context and wider technological/policy developments. This will also allow key non-climate plans to be updated with additional detail about our journey to Net Zero 2050 over time, either as replacement plans are developed or as updates to exiting documents.

As part of the Net Zero 2050 Framework, we will report annually on Blaenau Gwent's territorial carbon emissions, in a clear and accessible format, as part of this report from next year onwards alongside our organisational footprint. There is already significant data about our territorial emissions available, the main challenge now is to compile this in a single place and understand what it means for us. This includes understanding how our emissions fit in with existing regional and national plans. While ultimately, Net Zero 2050 is not something that can be achieved by us or any other organisation alone, we feel it is important that progress in Blaenau Gwent is reported publicly.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Transport</th><th>Energy</th><th>Nature</th><th>Housing</th></tr>
<tr><td>Part 1: Net Zero 2050 Overview</td><td colspan="4">For each theme:
Clear Description of What Net Zero 2050 means in Blaenau Gwent and the key steps needed to reach it.
Well-being objectives and how shape path to Net Zero 2050.
Identify where we have most local influence/control.
Baseline Data, Carbon Budget and Annual Emissions Reporting.
Cross-cutting:
Just Transition/fairness for residents
Community Engagement</td></tr>
<tr><td>Part 2: Priority Actions</td><td colspan="4">For each theme regularly updated summary of:
Current position
Summary/links to key strategies/plans.
Key actions</td></tr>
</table>

Central to Net Zero 2050 is understanding our future energy system. Our Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) is currently being developed, with workshops with partners taking place throughout 2023, and will be one of the key documents supporting the Net Zero 2050 Framework. The aim of the LAEP is to assess what are the preferred combination of technological and system changes we can make to the local energy system, to decarbonise heat and local transport and realise opportunities for local renewable energy production.

As such, the LAEP covers the majority of territorial emissions sources in Blaenau Gwent. It will provide a long-term vision for the energy system in Blaenau Gwent, rather than providing a detailed schematic that sets out how each part of the system would be designed and built. The Blaenau Gwent LAEP, along with LAEPs being developed for each Local Authority area, will feed into Cardiff Capital Region and Welsh Energy Plans.



Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly

In March 2021 44 residents of Blaenau Gwent got together online to discuss the question **'how can we tackle climate change in Blaenau Gwent in a way that is fair and improves living standards for everyone?'** The 44 Assembly Members were chosen at random to be representative of people in Blaenau Gwent (in terms of age, gender, where they live, type of housing etc.) The **Climate Assembly** met for a total of 23 hours online, hearing evidence from over 20 experts (from academics to local residents), and voted on recommendations they created themselves, five of which received the 80% support needed to become official recommendations.

Through the Blaenau Gwent Mitigation Steering Group partners developed a set of proposed actions that we could take in response to the Climate Assembly at the Blaenau Gwent level (recognising that some elements of recommendations will take action at regional or national scale). We agreed to lead for four of these priorities.

8. Climate Adaptation

Net Zero 2030 and Net Zero 2050 are both about ***climate mitigation*** actions (reducing carbon emissions). The other main form of climate action is ***climate adaptation***, which is about taking action to reduce the impact of climate change that is already taking place/will take place in the future.

We can expect by mid-century:
•warmer and wetter winters
•hotter and drier summers
•higher variability of extreme weather
•increased exposure to weather related hazards
•increased frequency and intensity of wildfire.

Climate adaptation will be needed in a number of areas including: the local economy, natural environment, infrastructure and communities. Currently, there is activity being taken by different service areas, but we do not at a corporate level have a clear idea of what the total activity is, any gaps in that activity or what our priorities should be. Over the next 12 months we intend to significantly develop this corporate understanding of adaptation.

As with climate mitigation, adaptation has organisational and territorial elements. Our initial focus will be on organisational climate adaptation, where we have the greatest level of influence on the risks. Our approach to adaptation will be based on working through our existing risk management systems. On the basis that most of the impacts of the climate emergency increase the likeliness and/or severity of existing risks, which are already managed through these systems, rather than creating entirely new risks. This being the case it makes sense to integrate climate adaptation into existing risk management, rather than creating a separate system addressing many of the same risks. Another early priority for this corporate work will be to create a shared understanding of what the likely impacts of climate change are for Blaenau Gwent that can inform a consistent approach across the council.

9. Concluding Remarks

This report sets out the progress we have made so far, including a 6% fall in our direct emissions last year and a cumulative 16% fall over last three years from our 2019/20 baseline. We are determined to continue and accelerate progress towards both Net Zero 2030 and 2050, but the rest of the journey is not going to be an easy one. Ultimately achieving Net Zero will require additional finance and resources beyond our current capacities. We aim to develop our understanding on these resource gaps and positively explore with others how they can be addressed.

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Agenda Item 7

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee:	**Place Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting:	**17th October 2023**
Report Subject:	**Waste and Recycling Annual Performance 2022-23**
Portfolio Holder:	**Cllr. Helen Cunningham, Cabinet Member - Place & Environment / Deputy Leader**
Report Submitted by:	**Matthew Stent - Service Manager Neighbourhood Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	**Corporate Leadership Team**	**Portfolio Holder / Chair**	**Governance Audit Committee**	**Democratic Services Committee**	**Scrutiny Committee**	**Cabinet**	**Council**	**Other (please state)**
26/09/23	28/09/23	09.10.23			17/10/23	29.11.23		

1. Purpose of the Report

To provide the Members of the Place Scrutiny Committee with an update of Waste and Recycling Annual performance outcomes for 2022-23.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The report summarises the waste and recycling performance data for 2022-23 **[APPENDIX 1]**. In 2020/21 and 2021/22 we exceeded the WG statutory recycling target of 64%, achieving 64.3% and 64.9% respectively, in 2022/23, we have maintained that success and exceeded the target of 64% once again, attaining 66.71%. This has been achieved through the hard work and dedication of the Waste Team as a whole [officers, wardens and the frontline staff], working in partnership with WRAP and with support from the Communications Team, Business Support, Performance Team, Senior Management, the Elected Leadership and most importantly, the residents of Blaenau Gwent, in what has been another challenging year.

2.2 The Council's Waste & Recycling Strategy 2018-25 **[Appendix 2]** sets out how Blaenau Gwent will provide residents, local businesses and visitors with an efficient, smart and modern waste management and recycling service for now and into the future. The strategy reflects Blaenau Gwent's commitment to protect and sustain the environment through its well-being objectives. It also sets out how Blaenau Gwent aims to meet challenging Welsh Government targets, to avoid possible fines, whilst delivering improved services within a revenue budget which is increasingly stretched.

2.3 All local authorities are required to report their waste data to Welsh Government. The data reported is for all the waste which the Local Authority collects, known as municipal waste.

2.4 Waste data is collected via various methods (e.g. Contract monitoring, weighbridge tickets) on a monthly basis and is collated and validated internally by the Corporate Performance Team. All waste is reported where possible until it has reached a compliant final destination through the various contractors and processes required.

2.5 Waste data is reported to Welsh Government quarterly via Waste Data Flow. Waste Data Flow is the web based system for municipal waste data reporting by UK local authorities to government.

2.6 Waste Data Flow is designed for local authorities:

- to allow faster and more accurate data collection of municipal waste statistics, more regularly and efficiently;
- to enhance their local data management for reporting and strategic planning purposes; and
- to offer them streamlined access to performance benchmarking with other authorities.

Waste Data Flow allows the Welsh Government:

- to monitor progress towards national and local targets;
- to produce National Statistics on municipal waste; and
- to provide an evidence base to guide government policy.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1** to accept the information in the report **[Preferred option].**

3.2 **Option 2** to consider the information contained within the report and provide challenge and/or further action for consideration to make improvements.

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

Corporate Plan Priorities

The improvement of waste and recycling performance supports the Council Priority to 'Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable Connected communities' in particular '*to increase rates of recycling to enable us to achieve national targets'.*

Statutory Responsibilities

Local Authorities in Wales have been set statutory recycling targets through the Wales Waste Measure 2010, and failure to meet the targets will result in a financial penalty from Welsh Government.

Gwent Well-being Plan

Waste and recycling services support the Well-being objective 'where the natural environment is protected and enhanced' by using our resources in a fair and sustainable way.

5. **Implications Against Each option**

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

The Local Authority may continue to face financial penalties from the Welsh Government if it fails to achieve the statutory recycling targets. These are currently £200 per tonne below the recycling tonnage required to achieve the target, 64% from 2019-20, rising to 70% in 2024-25.

The Local Authority currently pays for the treatment and disposal of black bag waste. The greatest disposal cost in the budget is for the black bag waste and the income we receive from the sale of recyclate helps to support the service but does not offset the cost. As residents recycle more of their waste, the money spent on waste treatment and disposal will reduce and the income gained from the sale of recyclate may increase, however, this is very much dependant on market forces [It should be noted that we only get income from the kerbside collected recyclate – for all other waste streams we have to pay for the collection, disposal and processing costs]. Any savings achieved against black bag disposal have been utilised to pay for the additional resources required to continue with the side waste enforcement at kerbside, additional Wardens, the black bag sorting at the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) and the continued implementation of the "Keeping up with the Jones's" behaviour change campaign.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

There is a risk that the Local Authority will continue to face financial penalties from the Welsh Government if it fails to achieve the statutory recycling targets.

Failure to ensure that there is robust monitoring of Council services carries with it a number of significant risks:

- Undetected and unaddressed decline in service performance and the quality of provision; and
- Negative impact on the reputation of the Council.

Regular monitoring of waste and recycling performance is a key element in ensuring that the Council knows its services well and is able to support and intervene appropriately.

5.3 **Legal**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no Human Resources issues associated with this report.

5.5 **Health and Safety**

There are no Health and Safety implications associated with this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

In direct comparison with 2021/22 data, 2022/23 data shows a slight improvement in our performance with an increase of 1.84 percentage points. The total municipal waste figure has remained consistent with a slight decrease of 9.94 tonnes. Even though the total municipal waste figure has remained the same there has been a decrease in dry recycling and a decrease in residual waste.

6.1.1 **Recycling Targets**

	2021/22	2022/23
Quarter 1	66.51%	67.76%
Quarter 2	67.01%	68.29%
Quarter 3	63.47%	64.66%
Quarter 4	62.34%	66.32%
Annual	**64.94%**	**66.78%**

6.1.2 In 2020/21 we saw a shift in tonnages of different waste streams as a result of the Pandemic. Certainly, tonnages have increased at kerbside because of the stay at home orders issued during the pandemic and changing buying habits at home. These trends have created significant operational issues which we needed to overcome, cardboard in particular, was a problem and continues to be so. We saw a 36.66% increase in the amount of cardboard being collected at the kerbside; this was something our collection vehicles were not designed for. Yet, we expect this trend to continue, so will factor this into our collection rounds and future vehicle specifications.

6.1.3 The decrease in tonnages at the HWRC are as a result of closing the site during Lockdown 1 and residents have continued to recycle at kerbside.

6.1.4 Enforcement activity around our Side Waste Policy and “Keeping up with the Jones’s’ behaviour change campaign were reinstated following the Pandemic.

6.1.5 **Residual Waste**

There has been a decrease in residual waste collected at the kerbside in 2022/23.

Kerbside

2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
11149.552	**10244.398**	**9434.211**

In comparison there has been a decrease of 1715.34 tonnes (15.38%) of residual waste collected at the kerbside in 2022/23.

HWRC

2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
521.797	806.839	1150.948

In comparison there has been an increase of 629.15 tonnes (120.57%) of residual waste from New Vale and Roseheyworth HWRC in 2022/23.

Composting Recycling
There has been a decrease in food and garden waste collected in 2022/23.

Food

2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
3726.52	3674.12	3573.21

In comparison there has been a decrease of 153.31 tonnes (4.11%) of food waste collected in 2022/23.

Garden Waste

2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
1739.161	1672.390	1684.118

In comparison there has been a decrease of 55.043 tonnes (3.16%) of garden waste collected in 2022/23.

6.1.6 **Dry Recycling**
There has been a decrease in kerbside dry recycling, collected in 2022/23.

Kerbside

2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
6564.174	5902.920	5388.640

In comparison there has been a decrease of 1175.53 tonnes (17.91%) of dry recycling collected at the kerbside in 2022/23.

Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP)

2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
655.24	600.75	602.70

In comparison there has been a decrease of 52.54 tonnes (8.02%) of absorbent hygiene products (AHP) collected at the kerbside in 2022/23.

HWRC (Recycling)

2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
3032.566	4262.122	4410.108

In comparison there has been an increase of 1377.542 tonnes (45.42%) of dry recycling from the HWRC.

HWRC (Reuse)

2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
29.85	**101.95**	**177.786**

In comparison there has been an increase of 147.936 tonnes (495.60%) of reuse from the HWRC. This is in part due to the opening of the reuse shop (The Den) at Roseheyworth HWRC.

6.1.7 **Welsh Local Authority Comparison**

2021/22 Overall | **2022/23 Overall**

Rank	Local Authority	%	Rank	Local Authority	%
1	[redacted]	[redacted]	1	[redacted]	[redacted]
2	[redacted]	[redacted]	2	[redacted]	[redacted]
3	[redacted]	[redacted]	3	[redacted]	[redacted]
4	[redacted]	[redacted]	4	[redacted]	[redacted]
5	[redacted]	[redacted]	5	[redacted]	[redacted]
6	[redacted]	[redacted]	6	[redacted]	[redacted]
7	[redacted]	[redacted]	7	[redacted]	[redacted]
8	[redacted]	[redacted]	8	[redacted]	[redacted]
9	[redacted]	[redacted]	9	Blaenau Gwent	66.78%
10	[redacted]	[redacted]	10	[redacted]	[redacted]
11	[redacted]	[redacted]	11	[redacted]	[redacted]
12	[redacted]	[redacted]	12	[redacted]	[redacted]
13	[redacted]	[redacted]	13	[redacted]	[redacted]
14	Blaenau Gwent	64.94%	14	[redacted]	[redacted]
15	[redacted]	[redacted]	15	[redacted]	[redacted]
16	[redacted]	[redacted]	16	[redacted]	[redacted]
17	[redacted]	[redacted]	17	[redacted]	[redacted]
18	[redacted]	[redacted]	18	[redacted]	[redacted]
19	[redacted]	[redacted]	19	[redacted]	[redacted]
20	[redacted]	[redacted]	20	[redacted]	[redacted]
21	[redacted]	[redacted]	21	[redacted]	[redacted]
22	[redacted]	[redacted]	22	[redacted]	[redacted]

6.1.8

2021/22 Dry Recycling Only

Rank	Local Authority	%
1	[redacted]	[redacted]
2	[redacted]	[redacted]
3	[redacted]	[redacted]
4	[redacted]	[redacted]
5	[redacted]	[redacted]
6	[redacted]	[redacted]
7	Blaenau Gwent	47.49%
8	[redacted]	[redacted]
9	[redacted]	[redacted]
10	[redacted]	[redacted]
11	[redacted]	[redacted]
12	[redacted]	[redacted]
13	[redacted]	[redacted]
14	[redacted]	[redacted]
15	[redacted]	[redacted]
16	[redacted]	[redacted]
17	[redacted]	[redacted]
18	[redacted]	[redacted]
19	[redacted]	[redacted]
20	[redacted]	[redacted]
21	[redacted]	[redacted]
22	[redacted]	[redacted]

2022/23 Dry Recycling Only

Rank	Local Authority	%
1	[redacted]	[redacted]
2	[redacted]	[redacted]
3	Blaenau Gwent	49.34%
4	[redacted]	[redacted]
5	[redacted]	[redacted]
6	[redacted]	[redacted]
7	[redacted]	[redacted]
8	[redacted]	[redacted]
9	[redacted]	[redacted]
10	[redacted]	[redacted]
11	[redacted]	[redacted]
12	[redacted]	[redacted]
13	[redacted]	[redacted]
14	[redacted]	[redacted]
15	[redacted]	[redacted]
16	[redacted]	[redacted]
17	[redacted]	[redacted]
18	[redacted]	[redacted]
19	[redacted]	[redacted]
20	[redacted]	[redacted]
21	[redacted]	[redacted]
22	[redacted]	[redacted]

6.1.9

2021/22 Composting Only

Rank	Local Authority	%
1	[redacted]	[redacted]
2	[redacted]	[redacted]
3	[redacted]	[redacted]
4	[redacted]	[redacted]
5	[redacted]	[redacted]
6	[redacted]	[redacted]
7	[redacted]	[redacted]
8	[redacted]	[redacted]
9	[redacted]	[redacted]
10	[redacted]	[redacted]
11	[redacted]	[redacted]
12	[redacted]	[redacted]
13	[redacted]	[redacted]
14	[redacted]	[redacted]
15	[redacted]	[redacted]
16	[redacted]	[redacted]
17	[redacted]	[redacted]
18	[redacted]	[redacted]
19	[redacted]	[redacted]
20	Blaenau Gwent	16.78%
21	[redacted]	[redacted]
22	[redacted]	[redacted]

2022/23 Composting Only

Rank	Local Authority	%
1	[redacted]	[redacted]
2	[redacted]	[redacted]
3	[redacted]	[redacted]
4	[redacted]	[redacted]
5	[redacted]	[redacted]
6	[redacted]	[redacted]
7	[redacted]	[redacted]
8	[redacted]	[redacted]
9	[redacted]	[redacted]
10	[redacted]	[redacted]
11	[redacted]	[redacted]
12	[redacted]	[redacted]
13	[redacted]	[redacted]
14	[redacted]	[redacted]
15	[redacted]	[redacted]
16	[redacted]	[redacted]
17	[redacted]	[redacted]
18	Blaenau Gwent	16.84%
19	[redacted]	[redacted]
20	[redacted]	[redacted]
21	[redacted]	[redacted]
22	[redacted]	[redacted]

6.1.10 The statutory recycling target for all Welsh local authorities is currently set at 64% and will rise to 70% in 2024/25. **The efforts of the residents of Blaenau Gwent have been instrumental in our improved recycling performance**, therefore, the continued support of residents and businesses is required to continue to reduce the amount of non-recyclable waste sent for disposal and increase the amount recycled in Blaenau Gwent.

6.1.12 It's important to recognise that even with all the difficulties recent years has thrown at us, we have seen a cultural change in Blaenau Gwent. For years, we languished at the bottom of the League Table when it came to recycling, and yes, our performance had dropped slightly in 2020/21 due to changes in trends, HWRC site closures and relaxed enforcement, as a result of Covid, as mentioned above, but we have still exceeded the target set by Welsh Government. **These continued efforts by everyone involved means we are already well on our way to achieving the next target of 70%, both quarters 1 and 2 of this financial year see us at the 70% mark already** [figures yet to be verified by NRW].

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

Increased involvement from our communities as residents recycle in line with service requirements to achieve national targets.

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

Through the public engagement sessions, the public have been consulted and their views have been sought regarding the impact of the side waste enforcement policy.

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

In line with the Councils agreed Waste Management and Recycling Strategy 2018-2025, we will continue to seek to identify actions needed to ensure that not only are fines avoided but crucially that service users and stakeholders have a clear understanding of the aims of the service, the actual services to be provided by the Council, the education and engagement activities it can undertake to promote these, the Council's future plans to meet its aspirations and statutory requirements and how it will work together with residents, partners and neighbours to meet wider goals and agendas.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

Improved waste management at a local and national level can help reduce our Ecological footprint, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change impact, therefore preventing problems from getting worse.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

Waste Services continue to work closely with the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to further develop and improve the service to achieve future targets. WRAP and Welsh Government support the implementation of side waste restrictions and behaviour change campaigns.

6.7 **<u>Integration</u>**

6.7.1 Our Waste Collections service is made up of an Integrated Frontline Service, at the outset of the current Pandemic, all non-priority service staff were redeployed into our Priority 1 Service areas, this included Waste & Recycling collections, this has allowed us to maintain all of our collection services throughout the Pandemic.

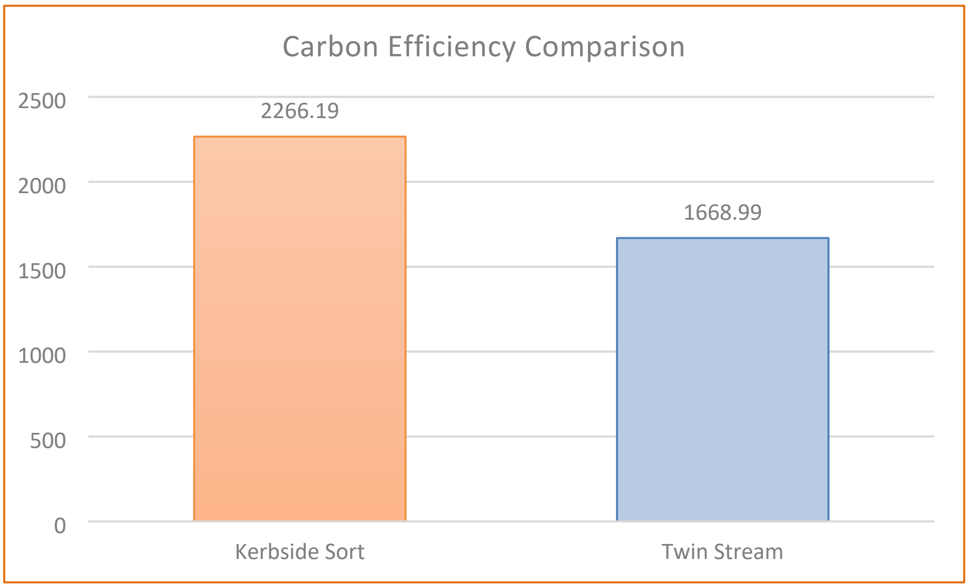
6.8 **Decarbonisation and reducing Carbon Emissions**

6.8.1 A WRAP issued report entitled “The Climate Change impacts of Recycling Services in Wales” documented the increased carbon benefit of a kerbside sort collection service when compared to a Twin Stream (Co-mingled) collection service.

The report produced the following assumptions;

- 10,000 tonnes of material collected via Kerbside Sort = 2569 tonnes CO2e Carbon benefit
- 10,000 tonnes of material collected via Twin Stream = 1892 tonnes CO2e Carbon benefit

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	22/23
Collected recycling tonnage	2115.259	2143.722	2049.499	2512.810	8821.290
CO2e Carbon Benefit – Kerbside Sort	543.41	550.72	526.52	645.54	2266.19
CO2e Carbon Benefit – Twin Stream	400.21	405.59	387.77	475.42	1668.99
Difference	143.20	145.13	138.75	170.12	597.20



7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The performance of the waste and recycling service will be monitored by the service on a monthly basis, including, but not limited to:

- Changes in residual waste tonnage collected;
- Changes in tonnage of recyclables and food waste collected;
- Recycling performance;
- Financial position;
- Number of residents presenting side waste;
- Number of residents issued with Section 46 notice;
- Number of residents issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice; and
- Survey results.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Waste & recycling Performance Annual Report 2020/21 [Appendix 1]*

Environment & Regeneration

Waste & Recycling

Performance Report

Annual 2022/23

CONTENTS

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS & TRENDS

Local Authorities within Wales have been set statutory recycling targets of 64% by 2019/20 and 70% by 2024/25. Failure to meet these targets may result in Blaenau Gwent being issued a fine from Welsh Government at the rate of £200 per tonne for every tonne reported below the target level.

Please note: The following indicators are not the final version and may change following final validation by Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

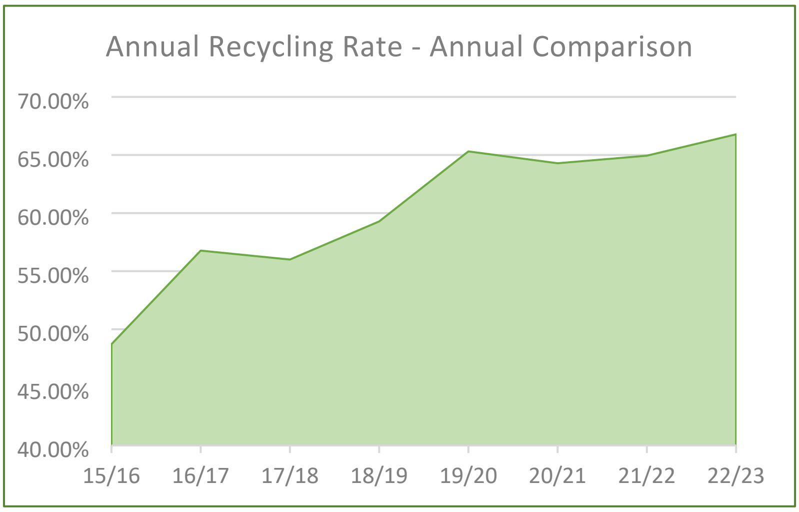
PAM/030 – Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted.

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	2022-23
Dry Reuse	48.732	43.72	42.81	47.29	182.54
Dry Recycling	3680.858	3,750.72	3,576.75	4,216.98	15,225.31
Composting	1,544.86	1,447.52	1,135.42	1,069.33	5,197.12
Total Municipal Waste	7,784.52	7,675.89	7,353.42	8,042.64	30,856.47
Dry Reuse %	0.63%	0.57%	0.58%	0.59%	0.59%
Dry Recycling %	47.28%	48.86%	48.64%	52.43%	49.34%
Composting %	19.85%	18.86%	15.44%	13.30%	16.84%
Recycling Rate	**67.76%**	**68.29%**	**64.66%**	**66.32%**	**66.78%**
Wales Average	**67.75%**	**66.85%**	**65.06%**	**64.42%**	**66.09%**

With the exception of quarter 3 Blaenau Gwent exceeded the Wales average each quarter. The annual recycling rate of 66.78% was 0.69 percentage points higher than the Wales average.

Annual Comparison

Year	**Recycling Rate**
2015-16	**48.71%**
2016-17	**56.77%**
2017-18	**56.00%**
2018-19	**59.28%**
2019-20	**65.31%**
2020-21	**64.29%**
2021-22	**64.94%**
2022-23	**66.78%**



In comparison to 2021-22 the annual recycling rate has improved by 1.84 percentage points.

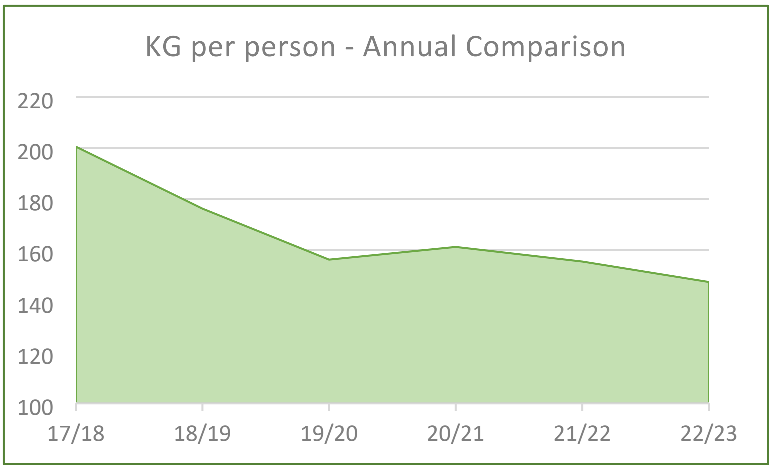
PAM/043 – Kilograms of residual waste generated per person.

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	2022-23
Total Residual Waste	2510.068	2433.941	2598.449	2709.048	10251.506
BGCBC Population*	69508	69508	69508	69508	69508
KG per person	**36.11**	**35.02**	**37.38**	**38.97**	**147.49**

***Sourced from Stats Wales 2018 based population projections**

Annual Comparison

Year	KG per person
2017-18	**200.48**
2018-19	**176.21**
2019-20	**156.25**
2020-21	**161.22**
2021-22	**155.50**
2022-23	**147.49**



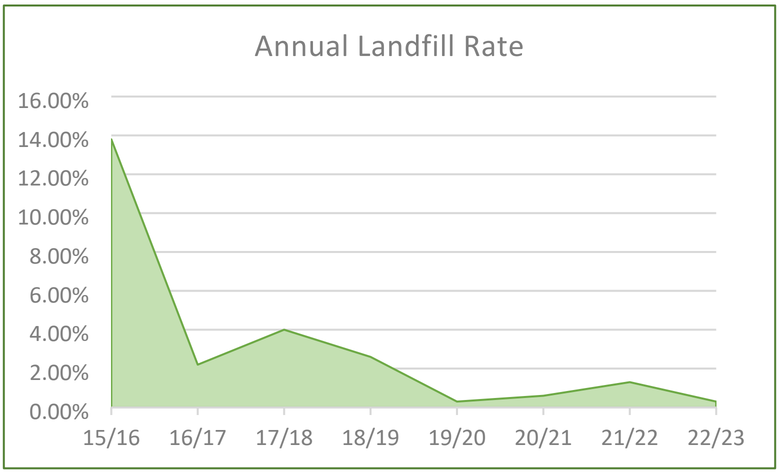
With the exception of 2020-21 year on year there has been a decrease to the amount of residual waste each resident generates. Since 2017-18 there has been a decrease of 52.99 kg per person of residual waste.

WMT/004 – The percentage of municipal waste collected by local authorities sent to landfill.

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	2022-23
Total Landfilled	53.177	28.209	6.887	8.209	96.482
Total Municipal Waste	7784.516	7675.892	7353.423	8042.641	30856.472
Landfill Rate	**0.68%**	**0.37%**	**0.09%**	**0.10%**	**0.31%**

Annual Comparison

Year	Landfill Rate
2015-16	**13.8%**
2016-17	**2.2%**
2017-18	**4.0%**
2018-19	**2.6%**
2019-20	**0.3%**
2020-21	**0.6%**
2021-22	**1.3%**
2022-23	**0.3%**

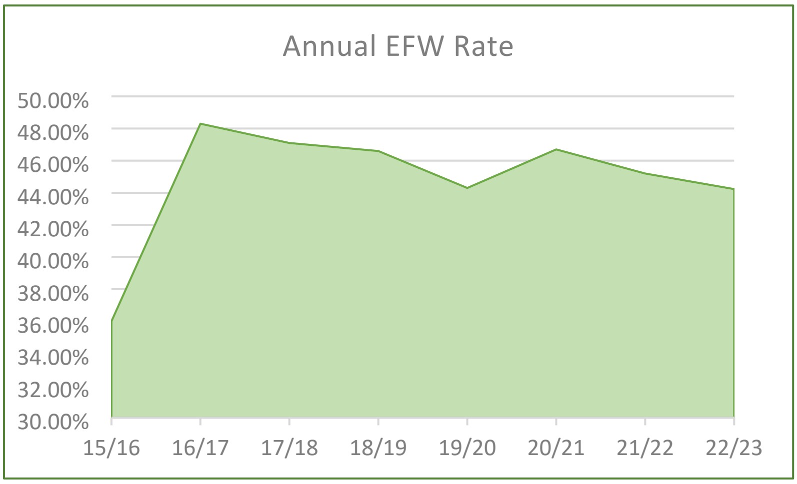


WMT/012 – The percentage of municipal waste collected by local authorities sent to Energy from Waste.

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	2022-23
Total Sent to EFW	3315.211	3251.196	3477.577	3604.460	13648.444
Total Municipal Waste	7784.516	7675.892	7353.423	8042.641	30856.472
EFW Rate	**42.59%**	**42.36%**	**47.29%**	**44.82%**	**44.23%**

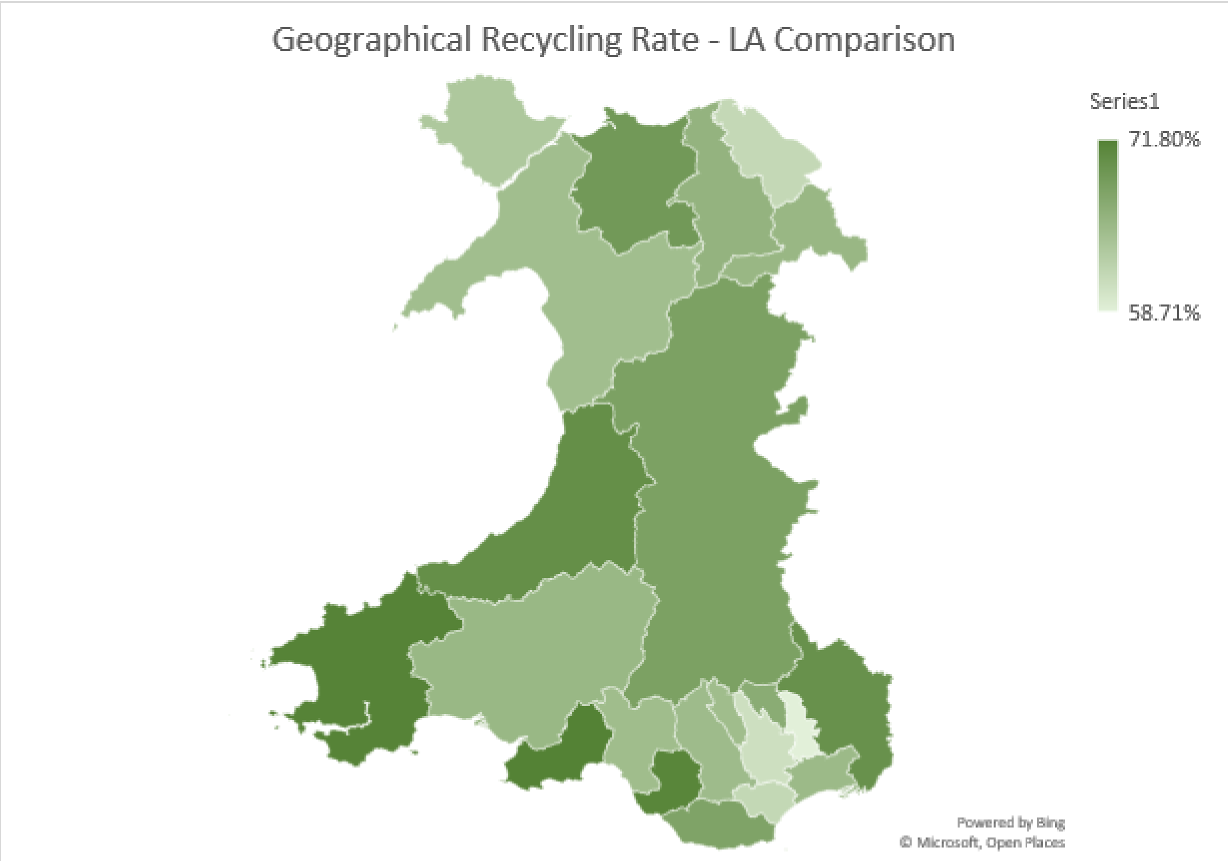
Annual Comparison

Year	EFW Rate
2015-16	**36.00%**
2016-17	**48.30%**
2017-18	**47.10%**
2018-19	**46.60%**
2019-20	**44.30%**
2020-21	**46.70%**
2021-22	**45.20%**
2022-23	**44.23%**



Local Authority Comparison – Annual 2022-23

Local Authority	Pos.	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	2022-23
[redacted]	1	74.02%	74.59%	69.84%	68.43%	71.80%
[redacted]	2	71.75%	72.59%	69.47%	72.56%	71.64%
[redacted]	3	71.24%	73.75%	70.56%	69.71%	71.38%
[redacted]	4	69.55%	70.47%	70.77%	70.38%	70.27%
[redacted]	5	70.85%	70.82%	69.99%	68.00%	69.98%
[redacted]	6	70.81%	69.15%	67.12%	68.88%	69.04%
[redacted]	7	70.45%	57.00%	78.71%	67.28%	68.13%
[redacted]	8	70.27%	69.56%	66.69%	64.27%	67.82%
Blaenau Gwent	9	67.76%	68.29%	64.66%	66.32%	66.78%
[redacted]	10	66.40%	66.04%	69.31%	61.88%	65.91%
[redacted]	11	68.78%	67.27%	61.79%	62.85%	65.46%
[redacted]	12	64.50%	65.30%	63.49%	68.39%	65.43%
[redacted]	13	66.98%	66.40%	62.88%	64.15%	65.17%
[redacted]	14	67.48%	65.93%	62.34%	63.76%	64.97%
[redacted]	15	65.92%	65.94%	62.91%	64.41%	64.82%
[redacted]	16	65.27%	66.93%	63.13%	63.83%	64.82%
[redacted]	17	66.74%	65.16%	63.20%	63.28%	64.67%
[redacted]	18	65.78%	64.76%	61.64%	61.00%	63.46%
[redacted]	19	64.73%	63.28%	59.69%	58.02%	61.57%
[redacted]	20	64.75%	63.54%	56.72%	60.04%	61.51%
[redacted]	21	60.85%	63.83%	59.93%	57.90%	60.69%
[redacted]	22	65.68%	60.00%	56.43%	51.86%	58.71%



Local Authority Comparison – Dry Recycling Only

Local Authority	Pos.	2022-23
[redacted]	1	51.01%
[redacted]	2	50.50%
Blaenau Gwent	3	49.34%
[redacted]	4	49.07%
[redacted]	5	49.06%
[redacted]	6	48.79%
[redacted]	7	48.69%
[redacted]	8	47.55%
[redacted]	9	46.69%
[redacted]	10	46.28%
[redacted]	11	45.80%
[redacted]	12	45.60%
[redacted]	13	44.89%
[redacted]	14	43.87%
[redacted]	15	43.36%
[redacted]	16	42.86%
[redacted]	17	41.71%
[redacted]	18	41.69%
[redacted]	19	40.67%
[redacted]	20	40.63%
[redacted]	21	39.35%
[redacted]	22	37.48%

Blaenau Gwent is ranked 3rd out of the 22 local authorities when comparing dry recycling only across Wales in 2022-23

Local Authority Comparison – Composting Only

Local Authority	Pos.	2022-23
[redacted]	1	27.62%
[redacted]	2	25.92%
[redacted]	3	24.69%
[redacted]	4	24.67%
[redacted]	5	24.42%
[redacted]	6	23.33%
[redacted]	7	23.20%
[redacted]	8	22.72%
[redacted]	9	21.74%
[redacted]	10	20.46%
[redacted]	11	19.69%
[redacted]	12	19.36%
[redacted]	13	18.86%
[redacted]	14	18.69%
[redacted]	15	18.18%
[redacted]	16	17.84%
[redacted]	17	17.24%
Blaenau Gwent	18	16.84%
[redacted]	19	16.78%
[redacted]	20	15.84%
[redacted]	21	14.47%
[redacted]	22	11.28%

Blaenau Gwent is ranked 18th out of the 22 local authorities when comparing composting only across Wales in 2022-23

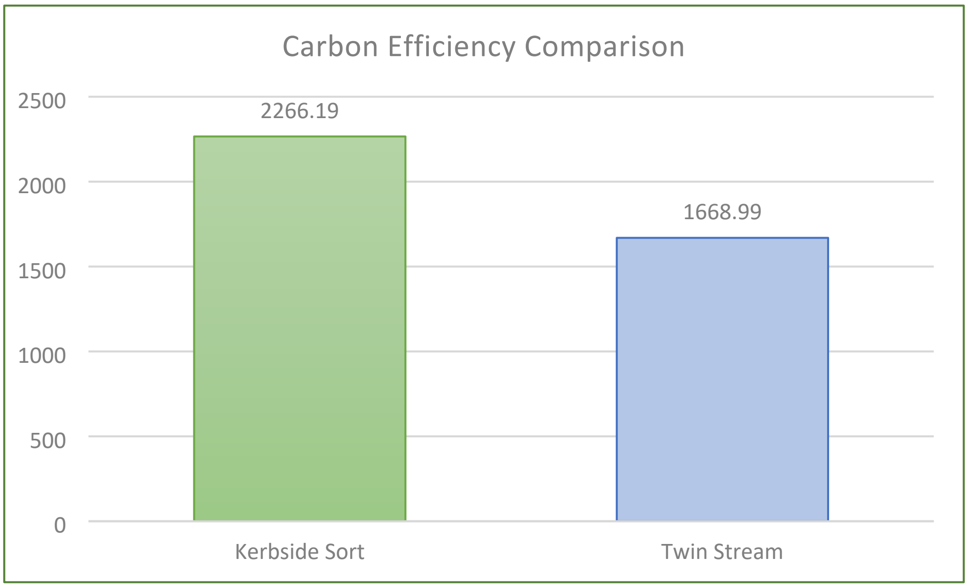
Carbon Efficiency

A WRAP issued report entitled "The Climate Change impacts of Recycling Services in Wales" documented the increased carbon benefit of a kerbside sort collection service when compared to a Twin Stream (Co-mingled) collection service.

The report produced the following assumptions.

- 10,000 tonnes of material collected via Kerbside Sort = 2569 tonnes CO2e Carbon benefit
- 10,000 tonnes of material collected via Twin Stream = 1892 tonnes CO2e Carbon benefit

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	2022-23
Collected Recycling	2115.259	2143.722	2049.499	2512.810	8821.290
C02e Carbon Benefit – Kerbside Sort	543.41	550.72	526.52	645.54	2266.19
C02e Carbon Benefit – Twin Stream	400.21	405.59	387.77	475.42	1668.99
Difference	143.20	145.13	138.75	170.12	597.20



Switching to a kerbside Sort collection service has resulted in a C02e benefit of 597.20 tonnes when compared to a Twin Stream collection service.

COLLECTED MATERIAL DATA ANALYSIS

In October 2015, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council made a service change which included moving to a weekly kerbside sort recycling collection and a three-weekly residual collection.

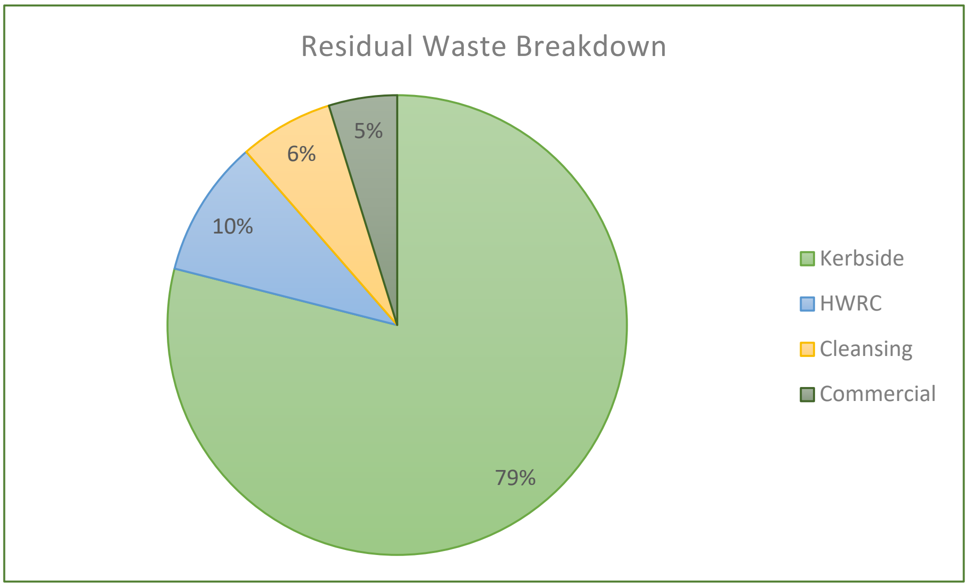
A dedicated weekly Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP) was also introduced in January 2017, which required residents to subscribe to the service.

Residual side waste enforcement and a strict black bag sorting policy at the HWRC were introduced during June 2018 to encourage residents to recycle more of their waste.

In September 2019 the "Keeping up with the Jones's" campaign was rolled out across the borough to encourage residents to recycle more of their waste.

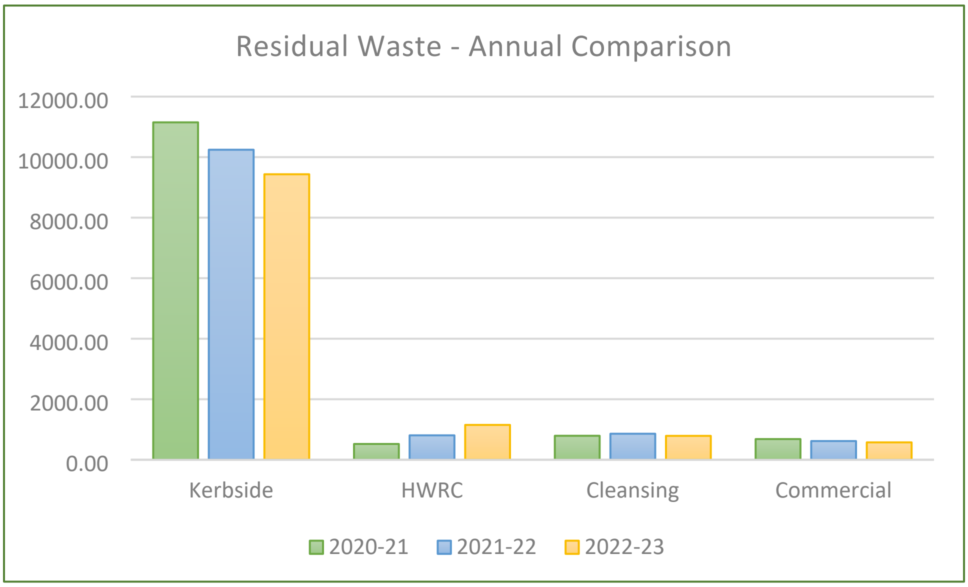
Residual Waste

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	2022-23
Kerbside	2387.933	2240.291	2365.074	2440.913	9434.211
HWRC	252.101	274.583	306.362	317.632	1150.948
Cleansing	196.519	198.373	175.336	219.088	789.316
Commercial	145.464	136.198	144.456	148.494	574.612
Total	**2982.017**	**2849.715**	**2991.228**	**3126.127**	**11949.087**



Residual Waste Annual Comparison

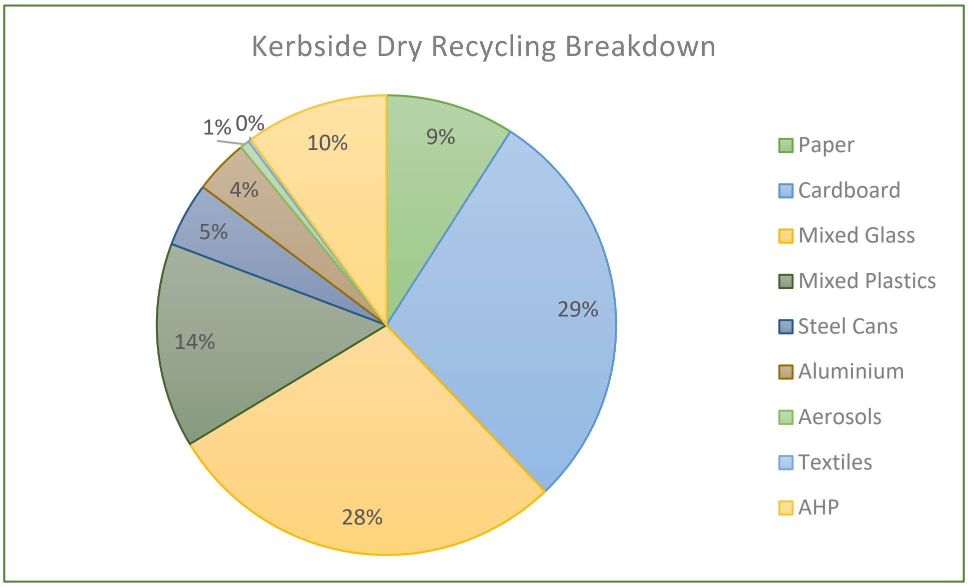
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Difference	Diff. %
Kerbside	11149.552	10244.398	9434.211	-1715.34	-15.38%
HWRC	521.797	806.839	1150.948	629.15	120.57%
Cleansing	792.053	859.700	789.316	-2.74	-0.35%
Commercial	683.178	617.782	574.612	-108.57	-15.89%
Total	**13146.580**	**12528.719**	**11949.087**	-1197.49	-9.11%



Overall residual waste has decreased by 1197.49 tonnes (9.11%) since 2020-21

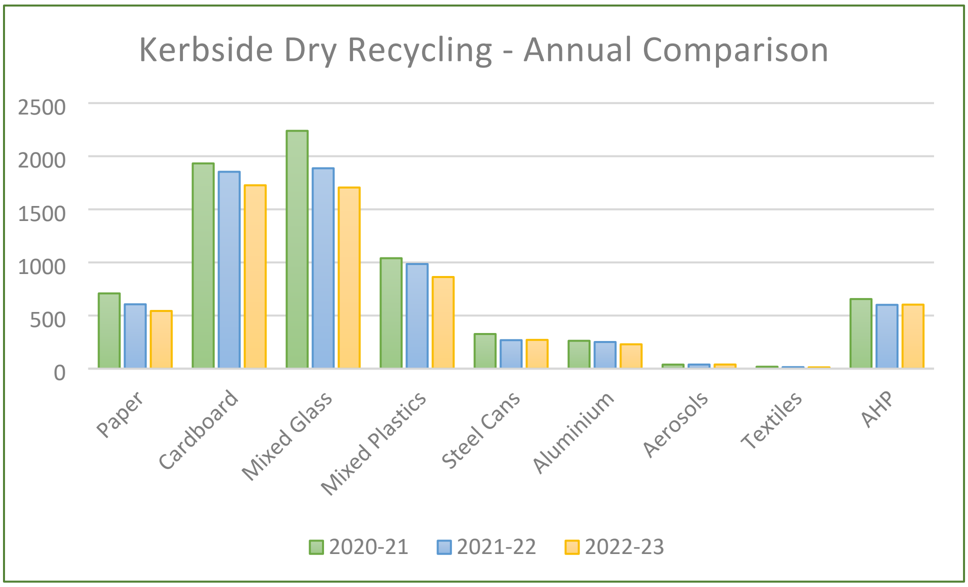
Kerbside Dry Recycling

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	2022-23
Paper	143.540	127.340	125.420	146.851	543.151
Cardboard	377.507	371.657	362.306	615.052	1726.522
Mixed Glass	389.738	448.752	392.406	474.434	1705.330
Mixed Plastics	236.044	206.243	198.177	222.233	862.697
Steel Cans	52.540	78.200	55.880	84.160	270.780
Aluminium	62.100	58.920	42.460	65.780	229.260
Aerosols	9.300	7.680	9.820	12.020	38.820
Textiles	3.800	3.440	3.180	1.660	12.080
AHP	148.720	141.720	157.040	155.220	602.700
Total	**1423.289**	**1443.952**	**1346.689**	**1777.410**	**5991.340**



Kerbside Dry Recycling Annual Comparison

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Difference	Diff. %
Paper	708.446	606.000	543.151	-165.295	-23.33%
Cardboard	1932.340	1853.538	1726.522	-205.818	-10.65%
Mixed Glass	2239.080	1886.690	1705.330	-533.75	-23.84%
Mixed Plastics	1039.820	984.982	862.697	-177.123	-17.03%
Steel Cans	326.080	268.280	270.780	-55.3	-16.96%
Aluminium	262.268	250.800	229.260	-33.008	-12.59%
Aerosols	38.040	38.500	38.820	0.78	2.05%
Textiles	18.100	14.130	12.080	-6.02	-33.26%
AHP	655.240	600.750	602.700	-52.54	-8.02%
Total	**7219.414**	**6513.530**	**5991.340**	**-1228.074**	**-17.01%**

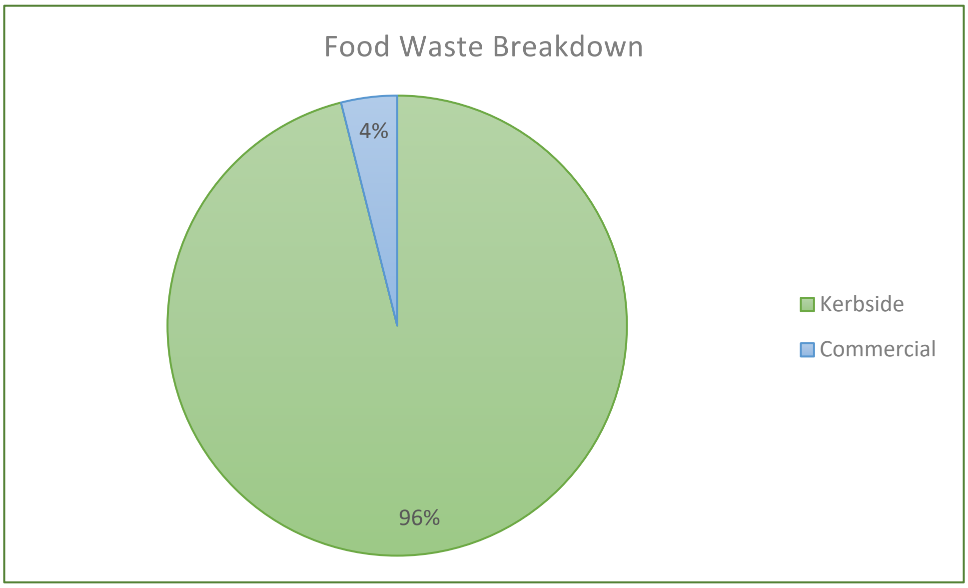


Overall dry recycling has decreased by 1228.074 tonnes (17.01%) since 2020-21

Kerbside Composting

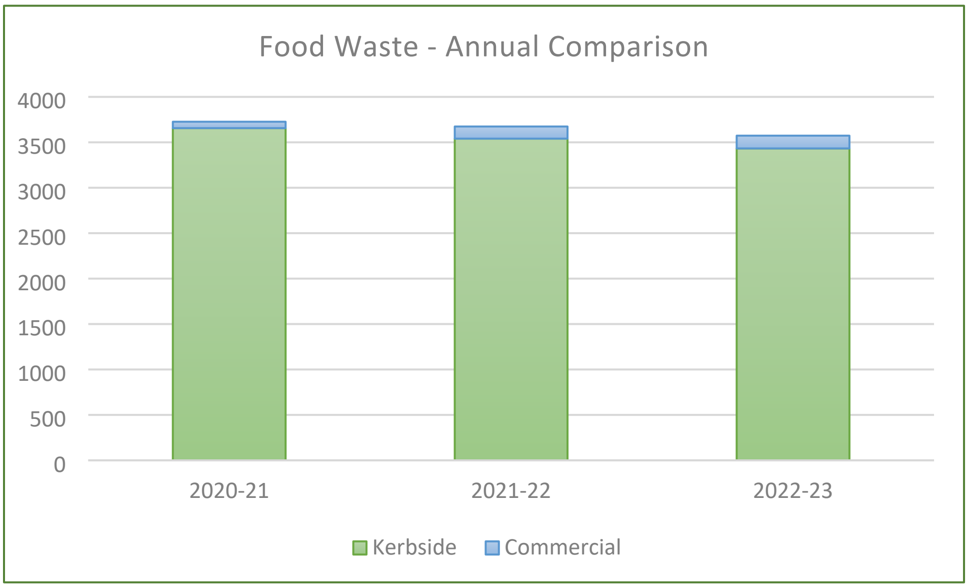
Food Waste

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	2022-23
Kerbside	840.69	841.490	859.850	890.620	3432.650
Commercial	33.720	24.500	47.140	35.200	140.56
Total	**874.410**	**865.990**	**906.990**	**925.820**	**3573.210**



Food Waste – Annual Comparison

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Difference	Diff. %
Kerbside	3655.86	3540.260	3432.650	-223.21	-6.11%
Commercial	70.66	133.86	140.56	69.9	98.92%
Total	**3726.52**	**3674.120**	**3573.210**	**-153.31**	**-4.11%**

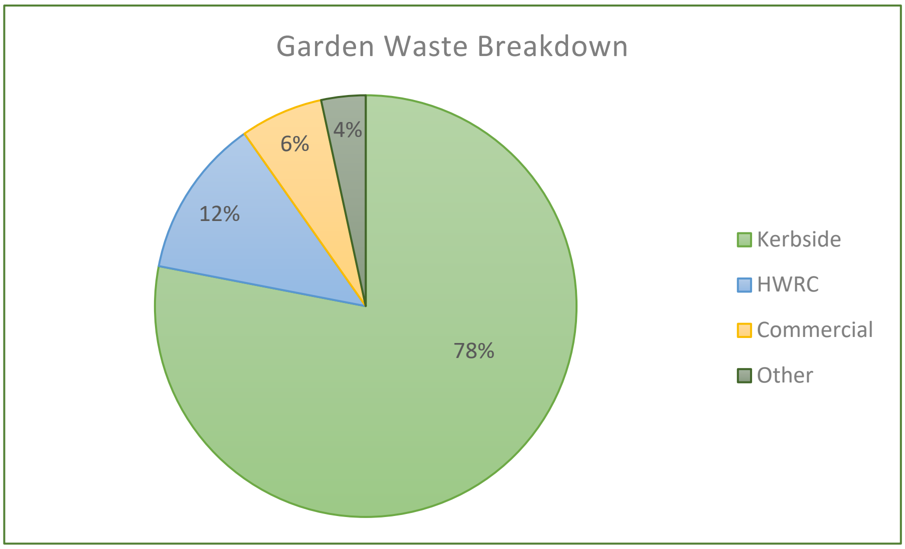


Overall food recycling has decreased by 153.31 tonnes (4.11%) since 2020-21

Kerbside Composting

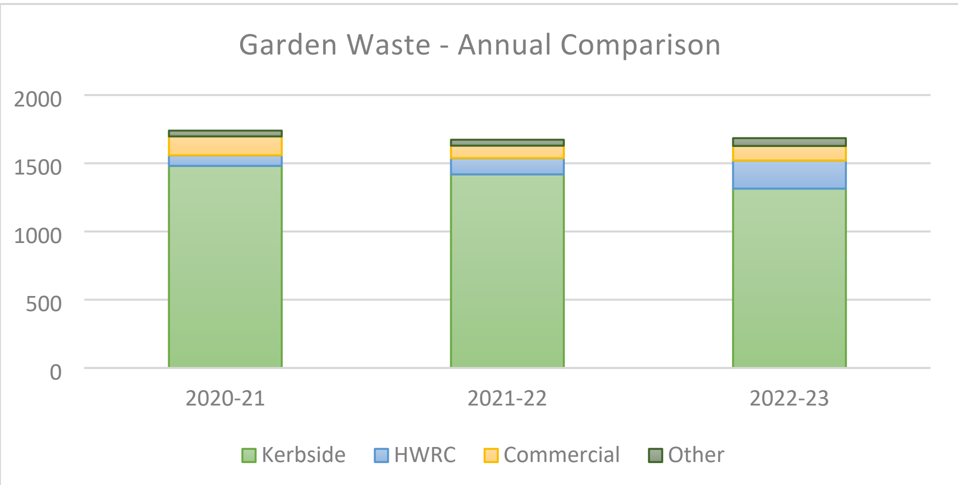
Garden Waste

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	2022-23
Kerbside	581.645	501.703	154.222	76.734	1314.304
HWRC	61.518	60.910	29.832	53.230	205.490
Commercial	32.382	24.829	34.003	15.884	107.098
Other	10.993	10.017	21.523	14.693	57.226
Total	**686.538**	**597.459**	**239.580**	**160.541**	**1684.118**



Garden Waste – Annual Comparison

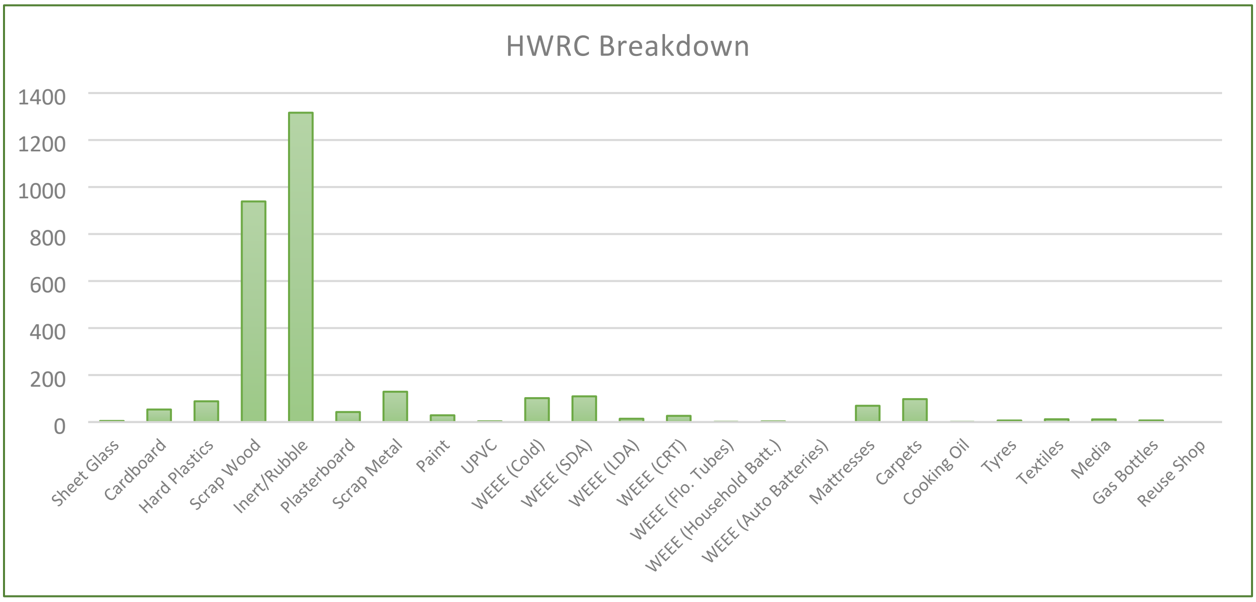
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Difference	Diff. %
Kerbside	1481.057	1418.775	1314.304	-166.753	-11.26%
HWRC	77.279	118.744	205.490	128.211	165.91%
Commercial	138.549	91.494	107.098	-31.451	-22.70%
Other	42.276	43.377	57.226	14.95	35.36%
Total	**1739.161**	**1672.390**	**1684.118**	**-55.043**	**-3.16%**



Overall garden waste recycling has decreased by 55.043 tonnes (3.16%) since 2020-21

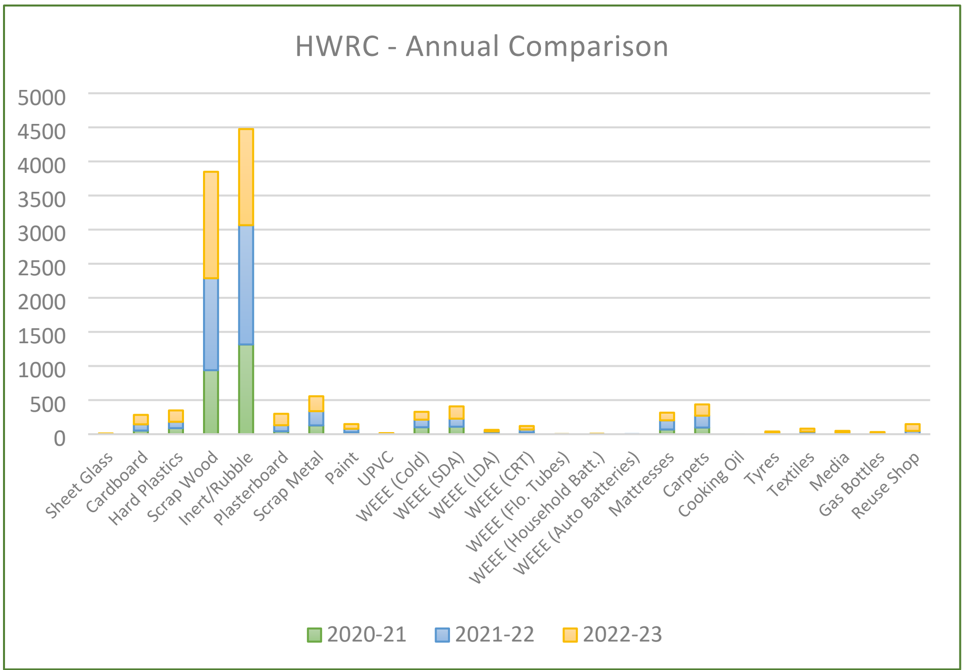
Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) Recycling / Reuse

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	2022-23
Sheet Glass	0.000	0.000	0.000	6.140	6.140
Cardboard	22.820	27.660	46.440	41.740	138.660
Hard Plastics	44.940	42.780	39.240	40.040	167.000
Scrap Wood	399.960	440.040	334.660	386.320	1560.980
Inert/Rubble	396.460	313.060	427.020	272.880	1409.420
Plasterboard	53.020	39.740	55.400	19.520	167.680
Scrap Metal	63.350	62.740	49.980	42.780	218.850
Paint	22.750	19.950	13.300	12.950	68.950
UPVC	1.000	1.000	2.000	2.000	6.000
WEEE (Cold)	30.020	35.130	24.080	25.670	114.900
WEEE (SDA)	46.000	52.480	41.040	40.680	180.200
WEEE (LDA)	5.040	6.240	6.320	5.740	23.340
WEEE (CRT)	11.100	10.560	11.280	17.660	50.600
WEEE (Flo. Tubes)	0.000	0.540	0.030	0.180	0.750
WEEE (Household Batt.)	0.026	0.132	0.000	0.000	0.158
WEEE (Auto Batteries)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Mattresses	28.920	25.080	26.280	32.420	112.700
Carpets	50.460	50.810	25.160	38.470	164.900
Cooking Oil	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Tyres	5.540	6.220	2.780	4.340	18.880
Textiles	12.530	10.780	7.250	12.700	43.260
Media	4.898	5.225	5.435	6.790	22.348
Gas Bottles	4.291	2.961	3.571	1.617	12.440
Reuse Shop	27.036	24.768	23.389	24.545	99.738
Total	**1230.161**	**1177.896**	**1144.655**	**1035.182**	**4587.894**



Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) Annual Comparison

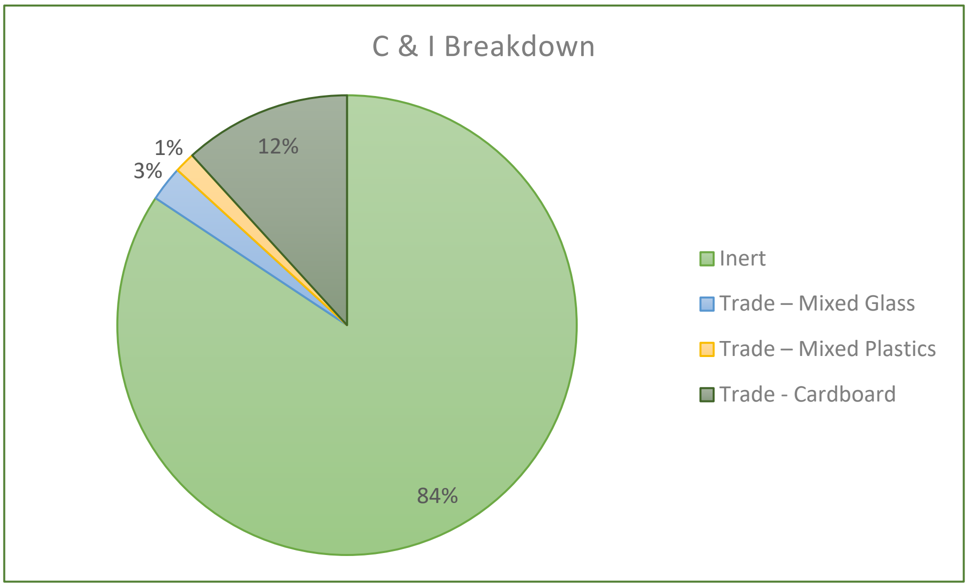
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Difference	Diff. %
Sheet Glass	4.540	0.000	6.140	1.6	35.24%
Cardboard	53.320	91.200	138.660	85.34	160.05%
Hard Plastics	88.240	93.380	167.000	78.76	89.26%
Scrap Wood	938.700	1348.900	1560.980	622.28	66.29%
Inert/Rubble	1316.330	1749.240	1409.420	93.09	7.07%
Plasterboard	42.600	88.880	167.680	125.08	293.62%
Scrap Metal	128.990	208.440	218.850	89.86	69.66%
Paint	28.700	50.674	68.950	40.25	140.24%
UPVC	3.000	6.740	6.000	3	100.00%
WEEE (Cold)	101.733	111.360	114.900	13.167	12.94%
WEEE (SDA)	109.340	118.400	180.200	70.86	64.81%
WEEE (LDA)	14.020	26.080	23.340	9.32	66.48%
WEEE (CRT)	26.289	43.120	50.600	24.311	92.48%
WEEE (Flo. Tubes)	0.589	0.220	0.750	0.161	27.33%
WEEE (Household Batt.)	2.675	0.828	0.158	-2.517	-94.09%
WEEE (Auto Batteries)	0.000	1.950	0.000	0	
Mattresses	69.200	134.020	112.700	43.5	62.86%
Carpets	97.500	174.270	164.900	67.4	69.13%
Cooking Oil	0.200	0.000	0.000	-0.2	-100.00%
Tyres	6.600	14.420	18.880	12.28	186.06%
Textiles	11.780	26.640	43.260	31.48	267.23%
Media	11.341	14.930	22.348	11.007	97.05%
Gas Bottles	6.729	12.441	12.440	5.711	84.87%
Reuse Shop	0.000	47.939	99.738	99.738	
Total	**3062.416**	**4364.072**	**4587.894**	**1525.478**	**49.81%**



Overall HWRC Recycling has increased by 1525.478 tonnes (49.81%) since 2020-21

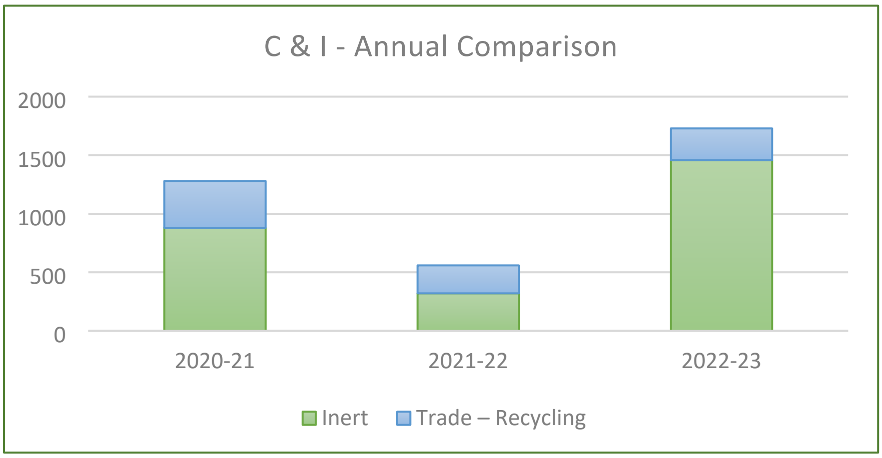
Commercial & Industrial Recycling

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	2022-23
Inert	180.000	466.740	299.780	511.020	1457.540
Trade – Mixed Glass	12.322	10.888	9.874	9.506	42.590
Trade – Mixed Plastics	7.216	6.377	5.783	5.567	24.943
Trade - Cardboard	58.883	52.035	47.184	45.428	203.530
Total	**258.421**	**536.040**	**362.621**	**571.521**	**1728.603**



Commercial & Industrial Recycling Annual Comparison

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Difference	Diff. %
Inert	880.000	320.34	1457.540	577.54	65.63%
Trade – Recycling	399.58	238.67	271.063	-128.517	-32.16%
Total	1279.58	559.010	1728.603	449.023	35.09%

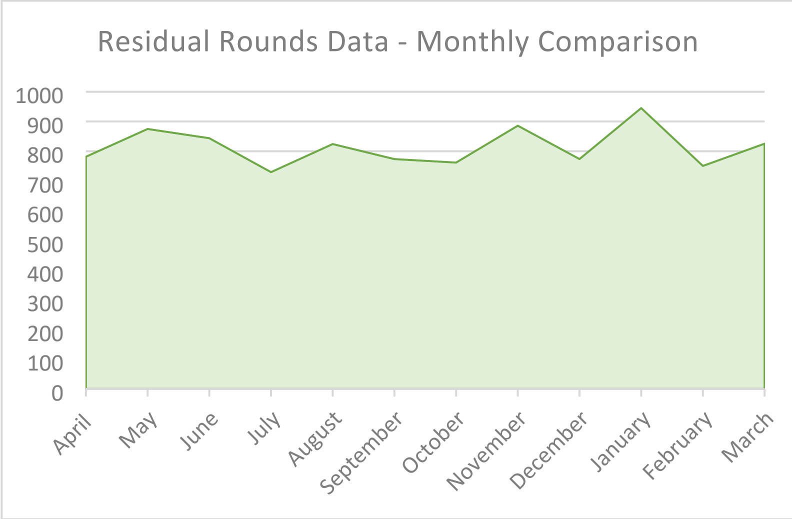


Overall Commercial and Industrial Recycling has increased by 449.023 tonnes (35.09%) since 2020-21

Residual / Recycling Round Data

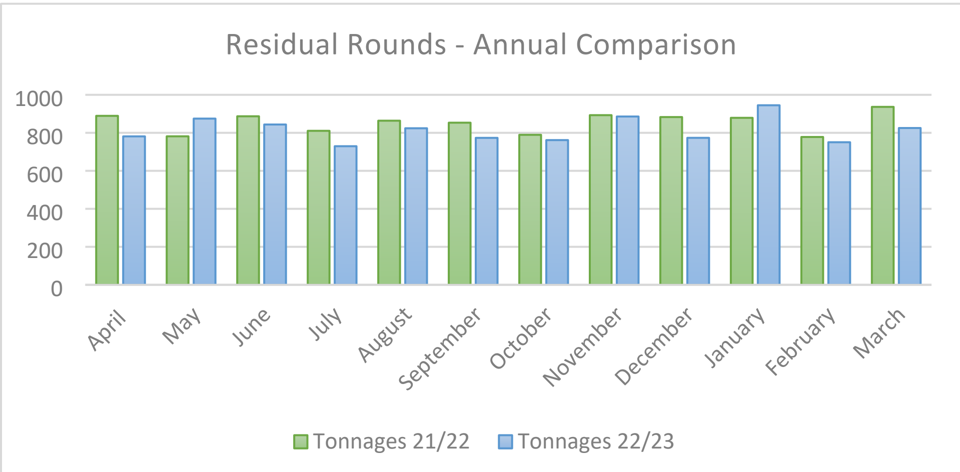
Residual Round Data

Month	Tonnages Collected
April	781.28
May	874.8
June	843.72
July	729.52
August	824.04
September	773.44
October	761.68
November	885.82
December	773.58
January	945.04
February	750.44
March	825.26
Total	**9768.62**



Residual Round Annual Comparison

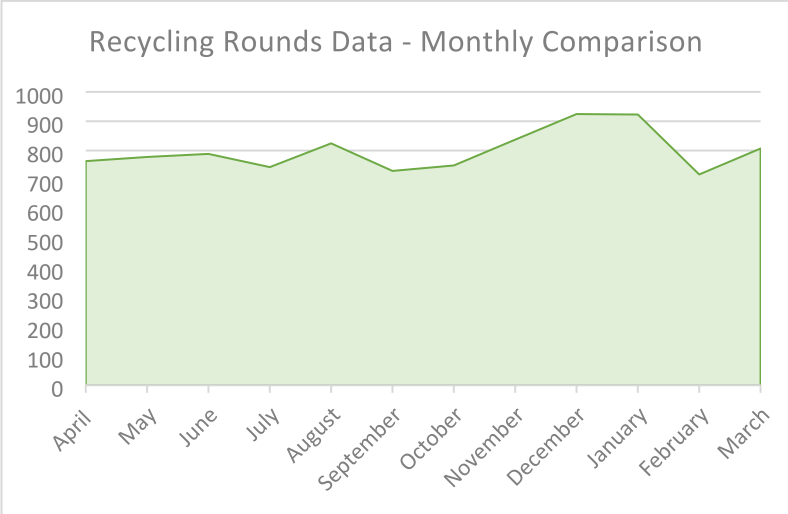
Month	Tonnages 21/22	Tonnages 22/23	Difference	Diff. %
April	889.26	781.28	-107.98	-12.14%
May	781.61	874.8	93.19	11.92%
June	887.042	843.72	-43.322	-4.88%
July	810.52	729.52	-81	-9.99%
August	863.78	824.04	-39.74	-4.60%
September	853.28	773.44	-79.84	-9.36%
October	789.42	761.68	-27.74	-3.51%
November	892.96	885.82	-7.14	-0.80%
December	882.9	773.58	-109.32	-12.38%
January	878.86	945.04	66.18	7.53%
February	778.04	750.44	-27.6	-3.55%
March	936.54	825.26	-111.28	-11.88%
Total	**10244.212**	**9768.62**	**-475.592**	**-4.64%**



Overall Residual Waste collected has decreased by 475.592 tonnes (4.64%) when compared to the previous year (2021-22)

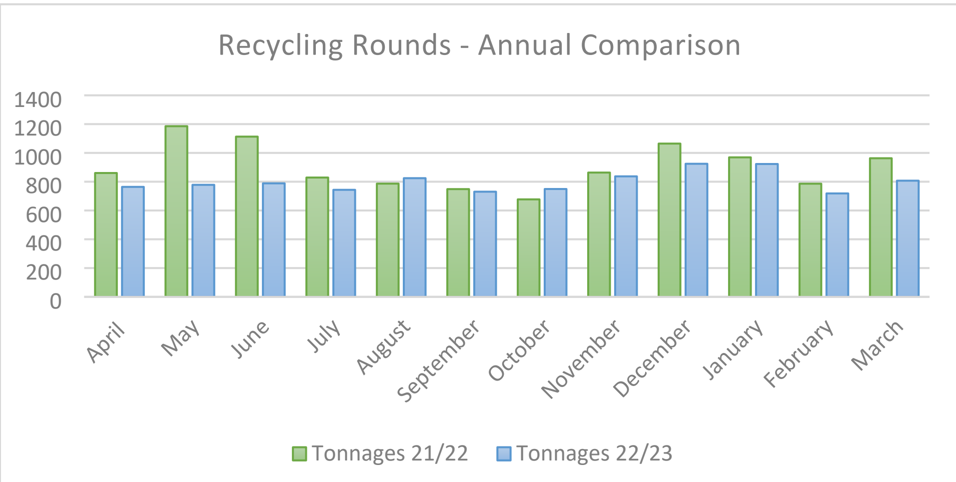
Recycling Round Data

Month	Tonnages Collected
April	763.96
May	778.15
June	788.6
July	743.56
August	824.51
September	730.54
October	749.2
November	837.15
December	924.47
January	922.9
February	718.52
March	807.02
Total	**9588.58**



Recycling Round Annual Comparison

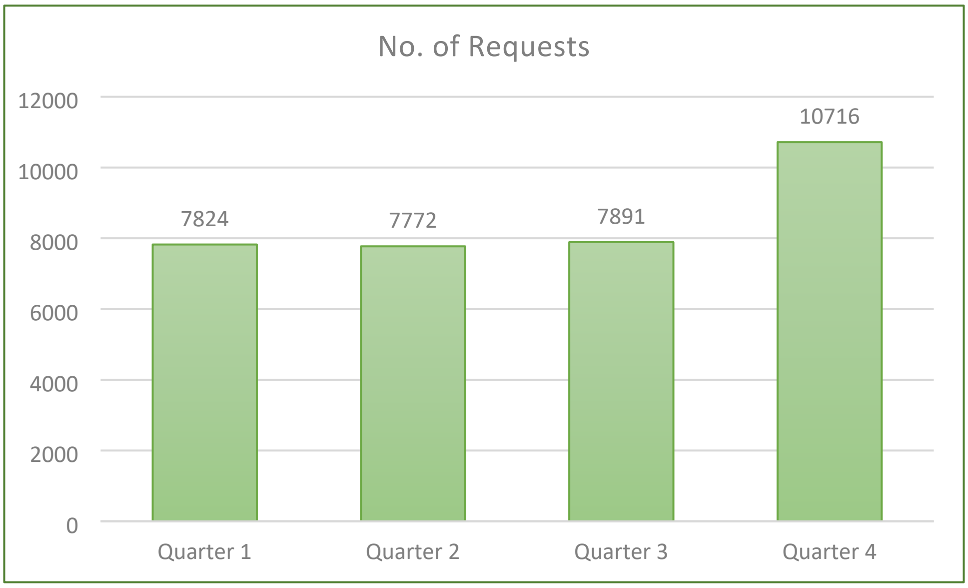
Month	Tonnages 21/22	Tonnages 22/23	Difference	Diff. %
April	860.35	763.96	-96.39	-11.20%
May	1185.56	778.15	-407.41	-34.36%
June	1113.12	788.6	-324.52	-29.15%
July	828.88	743.56	-85.32	-10.29%
August	786.606	824.51	37.904	4.82%
September	748.48	730.54	-17.94	-2.40%
October	677.24	749.2	71.96	10.63%
November	863.42	837.15	-26.27	-3.04%
December	1064.72	924.47	-140.25	-13.17%
January	969.12	922.9	-46.22	-4.77%
February	786.16	718.52	-67.64	-8.60%
March	962.98	807.02	-155.96	-16.20%
Total	**10846.636**	**9588.580**	**-1258.056**	**-11.60%**



Overall Recycling Waste collected has decreased by 1258.056 tonnes (11.60%) when compared to the previous year (2021-22)

Demand Monitoring Data

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	2022-23
No. of Requests	7824	7772	7891	10716	34203



Demand Data Breakdown

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2022-23
Apply for a Van Permit	0	0	552	586	1138
Assisted Collection	45	51	68	92	256
Cancel an assisted collection	0	0	0	2	2
Bulky Waste	1575	1593	1313	1496	5977
Book a Christmas Tree Collection	0	0	183	395	578
Commercial Waste	56	61	41	50	208
General Enquiry	489	676	517	943	2625
Garden Waste	393	236	15	0	644
Winter Garden Waste Collection	0	0	522	531	1053
Request Green Waste Sacks	665	520	192	470	1847
Hygiene/Nappy Collection	326	341	335	352	1354
Request hygiene/nappy Bags	1136	1175	1175	1350	4836
Cancel a hygiene/nappy collection	32	37	26	43	138
Missed Collection	771	811	701	919	3202
Waste & Recycling Presented Early	39	56	27	49	171
Request Recycling Receptacles	1834	1697	1796	2778	8105
Request a Wheelie Bin	347	370	305	330	1352
Warden Enquiry	116	148	123	330	717
Total	**7824**	**7772**	**7891**	**10716**	**34203**

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Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

V1 INTERIM REVIEW

BLAENAU GWENT COUNCIL:

WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING STRATEGY 2018-2025

An inclusive waste management and recycling strategy for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

Publication Date: June 2022




a better place to live and work

This document sets out an interim review of the waste management strategy and recycling strategy for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

Document reference:
Interim Review Strategy 2018-2025

Written by: Waste Team Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Contents

1.0 Executive Summary

The strategy sets out how Blaenau Gwent will provide residents, local businesses and visitors with an efficient, smart and modern waste management and recycling service for now and into the future. The strategy reflects Blaenau Gwent's commitment to protect and sustain the environment through its well-being objectives. It also sets out how Blaenau Gwent aims to meet challenging Welsh Government targets, to avoid possible fines, whilst delivering improved services within a revenue budget which is increasingly stretched.

Blaenau Gwent's vision for its waste and recycling service is

Working together to build strong and environmentally smart communities.

Five key objectives, aligned to the Corporate Plan, have been identified to ensure the Council continues to improve services for all stakeholders.

Objective 1 – Working Together

Objective 2 – Engagement First

Objective 3 – Ambitious Targets to Maximise Recycling

Objective 4 – Strong Community

Objective 5 – Fair and Equitable Enforcement

In developing the actions, and changes needed to the service, Blaenau Gwent has considered what its service should look like.

Welsh Government Strategic Target Areas	2024/25 Targets	What Does Good Look Like for Blaenau Gwent Stakeholders
Min. levels of reuse & recycling/composting	70%	• 100% of residents have collections services enabling them to recycle • Residents have access to information allowing them to participate in maximising recycling • Any waste that is produced is placed in correct recycling containers • Council provides collections in the right container at the right place and on time
Min. proportion of reuse /recycling /composting from source separation (incl. bring banks and HWRCs)	80%	• Council sources economic and environmental solutions for an increased range of materials • Residents are informed on the range of materials and bring minimal non-recyclable waste to the HWRCs • Residents have places to go where experts can repair broken goods and extend their life • Residents have advice on how to upcycle their own goods and textiles

Max. level of landfill	5%	• Maximum sorting and capture of materials at kerbside and HWRCs • Minimum food waste and information freely available to all residents • Minimum textiles discarded in residual waste – advice freely available to residents
Max. level of energy from waste	30%	• Council has in place policies that promote engagement first and fair and equitable enforcement last, giving every resident the opportunity to participate in services in the correct manner to maximise recycling
Min. levels of preparing for reuse (excluding Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE))	1.0%	• Residents have access to and use reuse shops and reuse networks where they can pass on goods to others • Re-use services generate an income for re-investing into the service and into the community • Council works closely with the third sector to create work programmes to improve employability and opportunity for unemployed residents

The strategy reflects Blaenau Gwent's commitment to protect and sustain the environment and provide all Blaenau Gwent residents and local businesses with a first-class waste management and recycling service.

As the strategy covers such a significant time period it was determined that it would be sensible to undertake a more significant review every three years. This interim review is the scheduled review three years on from the adoption of the strategy.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 National Context

The waste and recycling strategy was aligned to the latest Welsh Government Strategy 'Towards Zero Waste' which was launched in 2010 and the subsequent targets which are highlighted below:

Table 1: Headline targets for Municipal Waste from WG – Towards Zero Waste

Target Year	2010/11	12/13	15/16	19/20	24/25
Min. levels of reuse & recycling/composting (or AD)	40%	52%	58%	64%	70%
Min. proportion of reuse /recycling /composting from source separation *	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%
Max. level of landfill	-	-	-	10%	5%
Max. level of energy from waste	-	-	42%	36%	30%
Min. levels of preparing for reuse (excluding Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE))	-	0.4%	0.6%	0.8%	1.0%

*kerbside, bring and/or civic amenity (CA) site

The Welsh Government has since reviewed its Waste Strategy and published 'Beyond Recycling – A strategy to make the circular economy in Wales a reality' in 2021. The Welsh Governments aim is to keep resources in use for as long as possible and avoid waste. They aim to achieve this by:

- Supporting businesses in Wales to reduce their carbon footprint by becoming more resource efficient;
- Providing the tools to enable community action;
- Phasing out unnecessary single-use items, especially plastic;
- Eradicating avoidable food waste;
- Procuring on a basis which prioritises goods and products which are made from remanufactured, refurbished and recycled materials or come from low carbon and sustainable materials like wood;
- Striving to achieve the highest rates of recycling in the world;
- Reducing the environmental impact of the waste collection from our homes and businesses; and
- Taking full responsibility for our waste.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Deposit Return Schemes (DRS) are being phased in 2024 and these schemes will need to be considered in terms of how they may affect the objectives of this strategy. Welsh Government have also commissioned a national Waste Composition Analysis exercise in the Spring and Autumn of 2022, the results of which will indicate what materials are still in resident's black bag waste and could be targeted in future campaigns.

2.2 Local Context

The global pandemic has certainly affected the delivery of the strategy and in particular has affected the team's ability to engage with the public and other stakeholders. The roll out of the Trade Waste service was disrupted by the many lockdowns and closure of local businesses and also impacted on the planned development of a network of Repair cafes.

Since the adoption of the strategy, Blaenau Gwent has pledged its support to Welsh Government's ambition for the Welsh public sector to be carbon neutral by 2030, and have developed a Decarbonisation plan which sets out how we intend to deliver on this ambition over the next ten years. The plan will also help to ensure that decarbonisation is built into long term plans, including this strategy, to improve well-being in Blaenau Gwent. Two of the transition pathways identified within the Decarbonisation plan directly relate to waste:

- Transport direct – transition to ultra-low emission vehicles and the related infrastructure;
- Waste – working towards zero waste and a circular economy.

Ultra-low emission vehicles have been trialled with front line services and will be considered with the fleet replacement programme. However, the new Centre of Operations is integral to Blaenau Gwent achieving a low carbon fleet as we cannot transition to a low emission fleet without the appropriate infrastructure in place to support it.

The consolidation of the enforcement activities into one team in Community Services has changed the way we deliver our services in this area with a more joined up and coordinated response.

3.0 Our Vision and Strategic Objectives

3.1 Vision

Working together to build strong and environmentally smart communities.

3.2 Key Objectives

Five key Objectives have been identified to ensure Blaenau Gwent continues to improve services for customers and other stakeholders.

Objective 1 – Working Together - Blaenau Gwent will work together with its residents, contractors, community groups and the third sector to increase the range of materials able to be recycled, maximise recycling and value, and increase the opportunity for re-use.

Objective 2 – Engagement First - Blaenau Gwent will be part of a programme of public engagement and invest in communications and resources to support this Waste Strategy.

Objective 3 – Ambitious Targets to Maximise Recycling - Blaenau Gwent will explore opportunities to divert waste from disposal by increasing the levels of re-use, recycling and composting. Ensure that all households have either a regular collection service or a convenient alternative arrangement available to them.

Objective 4 – Strong Community - Blaenau Gwent will continually review its services and seek new ways to work with residents and communities to ensure best practice is implemented and services are retained locally where possible.

Objective 5 – Fair and Equitable Enforcement - Blaenau Gwent will implement a programme of Enforcement that is both fair and consistent to enable those residents who are not participating in the recycling schemes to participate.

The strategy reflects Blaenau Gwent's commitment to protect and sustain the environment and provide all Blaenau Gwent residents, local businesses and visitors with an efficient, smart and modern waste management and recycling service for now and into the future.

In future we must prevent waste from being generated, where we cannot prevent, we must reduce, repair, re-use, recycle and compost more. Waste must be considered a resource from which as much value as possible should be recovered. Disposal should only ever be the last resort

4.0 Delivering the Strategy

4.1 Working Together

Blaenau Gwent will work together with its residents, contractors, community groups and the third sector to increase the range of materials able to be recycled, maximise recycling and value, and increase the opportunity for re-use.

Since 2018 we have:

- Constructed and opened a second Recycling Centre at Roseheyworth;
- Worked with Welsh Government to develop an Outline Business Case for a Regional Wood Facility at Silent Valley;
- Successfully secured funding to support the rollout of a Repair Café network across the Borough;
- Developed a regional online Repair Directory for residents to access the nearest repair outlets;
- Constructed our first Reuse Shop at Roseheyworth Recycling Centre which is operated by our contracted partner Wastesavers;
- Successfully secured funding to construct an Education Centre at Roseheyworth Recycling Centre;
- Successfully secured funding to convert a barn at New Vale Recycling Centre to a Reuse shop;
- Appraised options for a new Centre of Operations and selected a preferred site;
- Developed initial designs for the Centre of Operations;
- Trialled an ultra-low emission vehicle for recycling;
- Through our partners Wrap Cymru, participated in a bulk density exercise to inform future fleet development and infrastructure requirements;
- Started to work on the transition of Silent Valley Waste Services coming in house.

4.2 Engagement First

Blaenau Gwent will be part of a programme of public engagement and invest in communications and resources to support this Waste Strategy.

Since 2018 we have:

- Delivered a series of roadshows across the Borough to engage with residents about the side waste enforcement policy;
- Delivered the ‘Keeping up with the Joneses’ campaign through a consistent message and approach;
- Introduced a new Trade Waste service to all customers which is compliant with the latest Welsh Government legislation through a consistent message and approach;
- Developed online communications for reuse shop at Roseheyworth;

4.3 Ambitious Targets to Maximise Recycling

Blaenau Gwent will explore opportunities to divert waste from disposal by increasing the levels of re-use, recycling and composting. Ensure that all households have either a regular collection service or a convenient alternative arrangement available to them.

Since 2018 we have:

- Introduced black bag sorting policy at New Vale recycling centre;
- Introduced a 'No side waste policy' at kerbside for residual waste;
- Maintained all kerbside collections throughout the course of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns;
- Through our partners Wrap Cymru, participated in a plastic film trial;
- Introduced a new larger, weighted reusable cardboard sack for all residents;
- Changed the way we collect tetrapak cartons so these can be processed for recycling;

4.4 Strong Community

Blaenau Gwent will continually review its services and seek new ways to work with residents and communities to ensure best practice is implemented and services are retained locally where possible.

Since 2018 we have:

- Introduced a new Trade Waste service to all customers which is compliant with the latest Welsh Government legislation. Bespoke multi-stream collections vehicles have been purchased and a new pricing structure has been developed to ensure the service is sustainable going forward;
- Carried out a route optimisation exercise on all our recycling rounds;
- Introduced in-cab technology across the recycling fleet;
- Reinstated a number of rear lane collections utilising bespoke vehicles

4.5 Fair and Equitable Enforcement

Blaenau Gwent will implement a programme of Enforcement that is both fair and consistent to enable those residents who are not participating in the recycling schemes to participate.

Since 2018 we have:

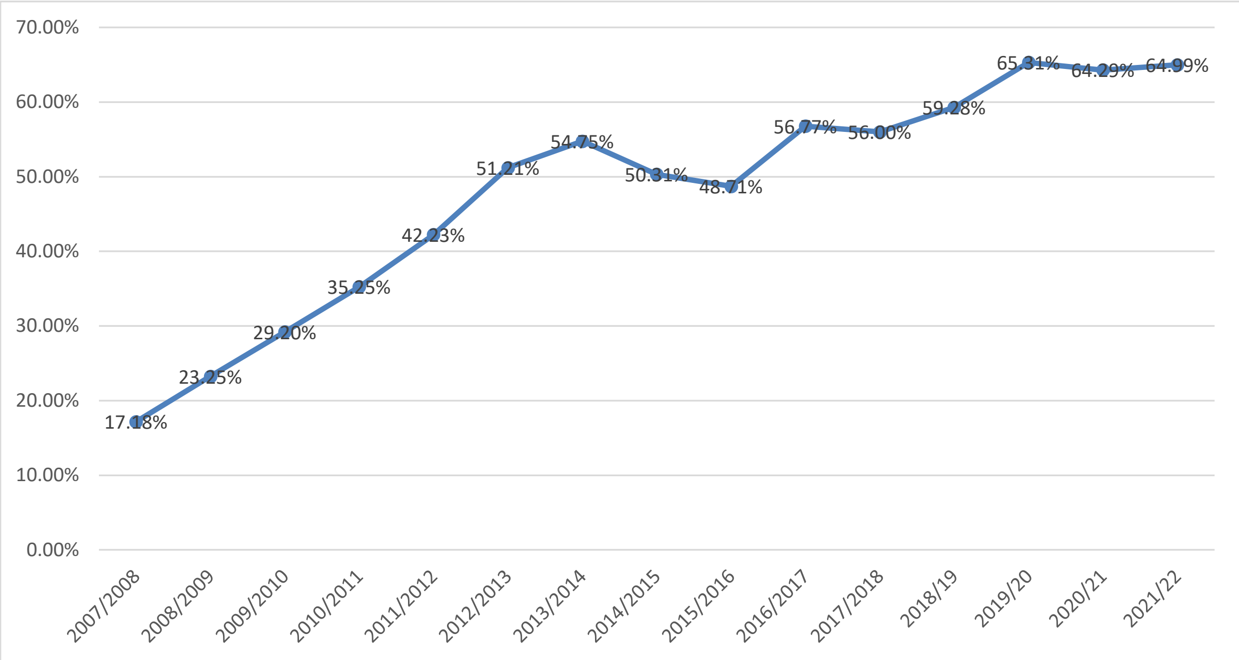
- Introduced a consolidated Enforcement Team in Community Services;
- Introduced a 'No side waste policy' at kerbside for residual waste;
- Delivered the 'Keeping up with the Joneses' campaign;
- Utilised powers under Section 46 of the the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to take enforcement action against residents who are not following Blaenau Gwent policies for recycling;
- Developed a process for the misplacement of waste;
- Worked with residents to phase out communal collection points where this is possible;
- Carried out Commercial Duty of Care checks in Town Centres;

5.0 Monitoring

5.1 Performance

Annual performance is shown below. Performance has increased since the introduction of the Strategy in 2018/19 but has plateaued since then. This review sets the direction of travel for the next three years as we work towards 70%.

2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
17.18%	23.25%	29.20%	35.25%	42.23%	51.21%	54.75%	50.31%	48.71%	56.77%	56.00%	59.28%	65.31%	64.29%	64.99%



Assuming the total municipal waste remains constant over the next few years, to achieve 70% we would need to reduce our residual and increase our recycling by 1562.44 tonnes. This means that for every 1% increase in our recycling rate would require a swing of 308.66 tonnes

5.2 Timeline

Appendix 1 identifies the key actions to deliver Blaenau Gwent's Objectives. They outline Blaenau Gwent's commitment to continuous improvement, the delivery of statutory objectives and engagement with its stakeholders throughout the process. The dates indicated are the dates at which Blaenau Gwent will start work on the evaluation and delivery of any specific action.

6.0 Investment

There are number of actions, included in Appendix 1 that will require capital investment. For capital spend that continues to move the Council towards a Circular Economy, Blaenau Gwent will prepare capital grant applications justifying how the investment would assist in meeting or exceeding of statutory targets through the identified service change or enhancement.

Other actions will require revenue investment from within a revenue budget which is increasingly stretched. In these circumstances a case by case cost benefit analysis will be carried out to identify how the actions can be delivered though invest to save means.

Appendix 1: Summary Action Plan and Timeline

These are the proposed key actions – how they will be tactically delivered will be determined at the point each project / change is to be implemented.

	Strategic Objective	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
				70%
HWRC	**Strong Community** **Working Together**	Open re-use furniture and large items shop at New Vale. Establish contacts for Repair cafes	Develop network of Repair cafés	
Kerbside Recycling	**Engagement First** **Ambitious Targets to Maximise Recycling**	On-going 'Keeping up with the Joneses' campaign Promotion of kerbside collected household batteries	On-going 'Keeping up with the Joneses' campaign	On-going 'Keeping up with the Joneses' campaign
	Ambitious Targets to Maximise Recycling	Market review to identify further opportunities for extending recycling materials including plastic film	Introduce financially viable new materials for recycling	Consolidate extended service to maximise recycling
	Strong Community		Plan for fleet replacement and future proof fleet for new / additional materials and the latest technology	Procure new fleet
Kerbside Residual	**Fair and Equitable Enforcement** **Ambitious Targets to Maximise Recycling**	Continue with side waste enforcement	Continue with side waste enforcement	Continue with side waste enforcement

	Strategic Objective	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
				70%
	Ambitious Targets to Maximise Recycling	Review residual collection frequency and containment	Trial reduced residual frequency and/ or reduced containment or number of bags	Introduce reduced residual frequency or reduced containment
Waste Transfer Station	**Working Together** **Ambitious Targets to Maximise Recycling**	Ensure transfer station is compliant and future proofed to incorporate further developments Investigate options available for baling	Investigate options and procure for replacement baling solution	Introduce baling solution
	Working Together	Work with other local authorities to develop a partnership for Regional Wood Facility. Secure funding	Construct Regional Wood Facility	Commission Regional Wood Facility
Trade Waste	**Strong Community** **Ambitious Targets to Maximise Recycling**	Survey commercial premises to identify any gaps in the market. Trial trade waste recycling service at Roseheyworth Recycling Centre	Grow service - review service to provide access to all local businesses.	Create network of Community Recycling Ambassadors in local businesses
Engagement and Education	**Engagement First**	Opening of Education Centre. Develop an education programme to be delivered at the centre	Carry out participation and set out study and deliver focussed and targeted communications to maximise recycling	Survey residents to ensure we are delivering what we said we would Create network of Community Recycling Ambassadors in schools and Council Buildings
Communications supporting service changes	**Engagement First** **Ambitious Targets to Maximise Recycling**	Promote textiles, domestic batteries and small WEEE collections at kerbside	Social media communications for reuse HWRC site shop and bulky items outlet. Communications for any	Communications for reduced frequency or reduced containment of residual

	Strategic Objective	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
				70%
		Analyse results of Waste Composition Analysis	additional kerbside collected materials. Targeted communications campaign based on Waste Composition Analysis results.	collections and enhanced recycling
Centre of Operations	**Working Together** **Strong Community**	Financial options for new Centre of Operations. Planning permission sought	Construct new Centre of Operations	Transition to new Centre of Operations

Appendix 2: Current Service

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	
Residual Waste	• Collected 3 weekly using 240 litre bins or 4 black bags per household, with no side waste accepted.
Recyclate	• Weekly collection of recyclate for all households in either a Troliboc, 55-litre black boxes with different coloured lids, to distinguish the materials, and hessian reusable sacks. • Recyclate collected weekly include food tins and drink cans, empty aerosols, newspapers, magazines and junk mail, catalogues and telephone directories, glass jars and bottles, plastic bottles, mixed plastics, clothes, textiles and paired shoes, small WEEE and domestic batteries. • A weekly AHP and nappy collection service is open to all household which provides extra capacity where needed. • Provision of two HWRCs - with black bag sorting required.
Organics	• A weekly collection of green waste is operated from March to November each year collected in green hessian sacks. • Food Waste is collected source segregated on a weekly basis in 23 litre green caddies. The Authority supplies food liners to residents for this service.
Trade Waste	• Weekly Residual Waste collections to approximately 300 trade customers. • All customers have residual and recycling collection contracts.
Disposal	• Residual Waste is treated at Viridor's Energy from Waste Facility at Trident Park in Cardiff.
Contractual Arrangements	• Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd are currently contracted to operate the New Vale and Roseheyworth HWRCs and the Waste Transfer Station on behalf of BG and are the permit holders for all sites.

Appendix 3: Integrated Communication Package – a practical approach

Communications that underpins the strategy to achieve Blaenau Gwent's goals

- There will be a **focus** on – and prioritisation of – those behaviours/actions which will make the greatest contribution to the waste and recycling strategy's overarching objectives.
- Communications and engagement **activity must align with and complement the wider waste strategy.** In particular this means linking with any future service changes as identified in the Action Plan in Appendix 1. The focus will be on delivering excellent service change communications, with additional communications, engagement and behaviour change activity scheduled in around this.
- Adopting a **project-focused** rather than 'always on' communications approach, with two types of communications project: those linked to service change (time-specific and delivered as an integral element of the wider service change), and those not linked to service change (non time-specific and delivered as discrete projects), all of which will have clear objectives and timelines. This means that at any one time there may be **one key communications focus**; it also means that there will be short periods between projects during which there will remain only a low level of communications outputs e.g. the Council's social media accounts.
- Developing communications activities and materials from scratch can be expensive and time-consuming. Where possible, the Council will **make use of existing materials/templates** etc, amending them as necessary to meet its own specific needs. This does not mean that 'one size fits all', only that where possible, the Council will continue to make use of existing materials/templates etc as a starting point, with additional bespoke materials and activities to be developed at a later stage as needed. This approach is **low-cost and low-risk** compared to developing materials from scratch.
- Investigating opportunities to **benefit from the Welsh Government's Behaviour Change Programme** and other national initiatives as they are developed. This is likely to provide multiple opportunities for participation and collaboration.
- Continuing to make the most of **existing networks and partnerships**.
- Using findings from planned trials **target specific audience segments** using the channels and messages that will best work for them. The focus will remain on targeting those segments which will have the **greatest impact** – **which will also deliver the best value for money.**

Appendix 4: Well Being Goals

How Blaenau Gwent' s Strategic Waste Objectives and Action Plan will result in multiple benefits for our communities and contribute to the national well-being goals.			
Well-being goals	**5 ways of working and how we will deliver**	**Blaenau Gwent's Strategic Waste Objectives that deliver against well-being goals**	**How actions beneficially contribute to the national well-being goals**
A prosperous Wales An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.	Long-term	**Strong Community** **Ambitious Targets to Maximise Recycling** **Working Together**	Services designed so that everyone can participate. Maximise benefits of emerging technologies to recycle more and introduce additional materials. Providing residents with a more suitable HWRC and re-use facilities for the future to achieve 70% recycling rate by 2025. As new materials are included in the recycling services Blaenau Gwent will first seek reprocessing outlets in Wales.
A more equal Wales A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances).	Integration and Collaboration	**Strong Community**	Services that are accessible to all residents, local businesses and visitors to Blaenau Gwent. Improvements to HWRC will

		Fair and Equitable Enforcement	allow alterations to be made in order to accommodate everyone. Engagement and communications that give everyone the opportunity to participate in recycling and waste minimisation schemes.
A Wales of cohesive communities Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.	Collaboration and Involvement	**Engagement First** **Working Together**	Blaenau Gwent will encourage residents and local businesses to participate in and use the services provided to them to ensure that quality of service is maintained at all times Working with residents and local stakeholders for an inclusive and community focused waste management and recycling service. Encourage community resilience and enable individuals to help others. Listen to our workforce and involve them in future decisions and service changes. Waste Wardens will work together with third sector partners to develop employment opportunities and enhance qualifications such

			as training in NVQs, to increase re-use and the wider social benefits.
A healthier Wales A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.	Integration and Involvement	**Engagement First** **Strong Community**	Waste Wardens will work with schools, in conjunctions with our Biodiversity Team, so our children understand how they can make a difference from an early age. Targeted education - encouraging people to do the right thing by appealing to their sense of belonging. Focusing messages with emphasis on the positive and appealing to residents' sense of identity and community. Blaenau Gwent will make its services accessible to all new residents, to ensure they have both the information and equipment to participate.
A resilient Wales A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the	Long-term	**Strong Community** **Ambitious Targets to Maximise Recycling**	An inclusive strategy that is aligned to the waste hierarchy and supports its Corporate plan for **Strong & Environmentally**

capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).			**Smart Communities**
A globally responsible Wales A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.	Prevention	**Strong Community** **Ambitious Targets to Maximise Recycling**	A strategy that is aligned to the waste hierarchy through providing opportunities to recycle what is produced and reducing the amount of waste disposed.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.	Involvement and Collaboration	**Engagement First** **Working Together**	Engagement - all communications with our community will be provided in English and Welsh.

The Five Ways of Working

Long-term - The importance of balancing short-term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.

Integration - Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

Involvement - The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

Collaboration - Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.

Prevention - How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.

WRAP's vision is a world in which resources are used sustainably.

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recycle

Cabinet and Council only
Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:
Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee:	**Place Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting:	**17th October 2023**
Report Subject:	**Abertillery Placemaking Plan**
Portfolio Holder:	**Cllr J. Morgan, Cabinet Member for Place and Environment**
Report Submitted by:	**Amy Taylor, Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	**Corporate Leadership Team**	**Portfolio Holder / Chair**	**Governance Audit Committee**	**Democratic Services Committee**	**Scrutiny Committee**	**Cabinet**	**Council**	**Other (please state)**
3.10.23	5.10.23				17.10.23	29.11.23		

1. **Purpose of the Report**

1.1. To present and seek the endorsement of the Abertillery Placemaking Plan from the Place Scrutiny Committee.

2. **Scope and Background**

2.1. As one of five towns across Blaenau Gwent, Abertillery like all towns faces significant challenges as a result of a shift to online retailing.

2.2. 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 Abertillery.

2.3. 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. 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.

2.4. The Placemaking Plan highlights opportunities to diversify the town centre to support existing businesses and facilities and to create the conditions to attract new enterprise. These opportunities have been considered in the context of available funding and delivery streams, and the particular economic conditions of Abertillery.

2.5. As a result of a competitive tendering exercise, the Contract to deliver the Placemaking Plan was awarded to Arup.

2.6. This report presents the first of their deliverables – the Placemaking Plan that identifies our overall strategic vision and core ambitions for the Town. This will then be followed by a Delivery Plan that will become a fluid and evolving document that will be used to identify and measure progress of the projects.

2.7. The work undertaken by Arup will be 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 ‘evidence-based’ recommendations on development/ redevelopment for the Council to take forward.

2.8. This report introduces the Placemaking Plan, a critical first step in our strategic vision to rejuvenate Abertillery. The Placemaking Plan outlines our core ambitions for the town, setting the stage for our future development initiatives. Following this, we anticipate preparing a first iteration of the Delivery Plan in late 2023. The Delivery Plan will provide a comprehensive roadmap, complete with actionable steps and projects, to turn our vision into reality.

2.9. The primary focus of the Placemaking Plan for Abertillery is to inform and influence strategic decision-making for regeneration activity within the town, act as an evidence base to support the Council with future external funding options and support the development of the replacement Local Development Plan (LDP). All placemaking plans will be used to form the town centre policies that will be used to support future planning decisions within the towns. It is the intention that placemaking plans will all be complete or substantially complete in advance of the finalisation of the Local Development Plan.

2.10. The previous Placemaking plan commissioned by Powell Dobson placed a strong emphasis on physical interventions within Church Street some of which were implemented. However, the results of these physical changes have yielded mixed responses and impacts upon activity that takes place in the town. The placemaking plan will consider these areas but also aims to be less focused on physical changes, recognising the additional challenges the town faces beyond those resulting from previous project.

2.11. The draft Placemaking plan identifies the five biggest strengths and opportunities that could support us with our role transforming the Town. These strengths and opportunities provide a solid foundation upon which to build Abertillery's future prosperity and community well-being:

- Local Community Pride: There is a palpable sense of pride and a strong desire for improvement within Abertillery. The town benefits from numerous local champions who organise events and initiatives aimed at enhancing the area. Notable examples include the rejuvenation of Abertillery Park and the Abertillery Workmen’s Welfare Institute.

- Unique Landscape Assets: Abertillery is surrounded by significant landscape features, including steep valley sides and Abertillery Park. These natural assets have the potential to be better connected to the town and more effectively utilised for various recreational and leisure activities. Additionally, the nearby Cwmtillery Lakes offer tourism opportunities and the potential to drive footfall to the town.

- Historical Significance: As a former thriving mining town, Abertillery boasts a rich history and evidence of its past success. The town centre showcases quality architecture, including Trinity Chapel. The well-defined Church Street contributes to the town's unique character.

- Victorian Arcade: Abertillery is home to the only Victorian Arcade within Blaenau Gwent, presenting a distinctive feature that sets it apart from neighbouring towns. The Victorian Arcade, while currently underutilized, offers substantial potential, particularly for bolstering the town's night-time economy.

- Improved Rail Accessibility: Plans for a new rail station in Abertillery, located adjacent to the Tesco site as a spur off the Ebbw Vale line, represent a significant opportunity. This rail link will dramatically enhance the town's accessibility, facilitating easier transportation and connectivity to neighbouring areas.

2.12. The fact that the Local Authority does not own any commercial properties in our Town Centres presents both challenges and limitations. This lack of ownership means that the Council cannot unilaterally decide what businesses or activities are established in these properties. It also means that projects like meanwhile that require use of shop premises need us to establish working relationships with building owners.

2.13. The placemaking plan has identified several possible projects which could act as catalysts for regeneration and help realise the vision for Abertillery. For the first phase projects or "quick wins" are actionable wins to achieve visible and tangible change

Jubilee Square

2.14. Unlocking Jubilee Square's potential benefits residents and St. Michael's Church. It offers a gathering space for residents, that could also support local entrepreneurship, and enhance the town centre's vibrancy. The square also serves as a great venue for events, aligning with our goal of a dynamic, community-centered town centre.

Cleansing strategy

2.15. A common message from the engagement undertaken was the perceived poor cleanliness of the street. It was seen as grubby and dirty and many local residents saw the appearance of the Town as a major concern. It is suggested that a consistent and regular cleaning strategy for the Town will quickly create tangible change.

Trinity Chapel

2.16. The proposal to relocate the existing Castle Street library to a modern, 'state of the art' library facility at the Former Trinity Chapel building on Church Street is a positive step forward and should be supported. This strategic move offers several potential benefits for Abertillery:

- Relocating the library to the High Street area enhances its accessibility to residents and visitors, making core services more readily available. This creates a dynamic hub that caters to a broader range of community needs, fostering collaboration and engagement.

2.17. This proposal aligns with the goal of enhancing accessibility to services and promoting the use of modern amenities within the town centre. In addition to traditional library offerings, the new library facility will be strategically designed to accommodate adult education services.

Pedestrianisation of Somerset Street

2.18. Community engagement efforts have revealed a clear demand for enhancing the pedestrian environment on Somerset Street in Abertillery. This presents an opportunity to explore temporary measures to transform the street and evaluate its success. A potential approach involves temporarily restricting traffic on Somerset Street to create additional space for local businesses to trade outside.

2.19. The success of this initiative would be evaluated on a test and trial basis, with the initial phase serving as an experiment. Implementing this as a temporary project allows for cost-effective testing of its feasibility and further business and community engagement before considering more permanent solutions.

The Arcade

2.20. The Victorian Arcade in Abertillery stands as a unique asset within Blaenau Gwent. Recognising its distinctiveness, there is an opportunity to explore diverse uses for the Arcade beyond traditional retail, thus ensuring its continued vitality and viability. Existing retail and hospitality businesses need to be supported by filling the remaining empty units and the smaller unit sizes of the arcade present excellent opportunities for meanwhile uses and service businesses.

The Metropole

2.21 From engagement activities, it is clear that ‘The Met’ is a valued community asset. The theatre continues to host a range of successful events. The Met should be encouraged to explore additional events in new and different locations, opening up an opportunity for a greater range of events such as connecting with Abertillery Park or utilising the top deck of the multi-storey car park for larger outdoor events.

2.22 The placemaking plan has identified **medium** and **longer-term developments** and enhancements. These are set out below.

Gateway

2.23. Currently, Abertillery faces the challenge of not having a distinct and recognisable focal point that signals the entrance to its town centre, which could provide a genuine sense of arrival for both residents and visitors. There are several points of entrance to the town and these need to be exploited to create more of a sense of arrival. The towns overall branding and perception are linked to this and they should be used to celebrate Abertillery and its rich history. These could complement The Guardian of The Valleys as part of a series of local landmarks.

Abertillery Multi-Storey Car Park (High Street)

2.24. Extending the Abertillery multi-storey car park's hours can improve late shopping and the evening economy. If successful, we can explore more options, including events on the top deck. Measures to mitigate antisocial behaviour (ASB) are also being explored.

Church Street configuration

2.26. Church Street remains the heart of Abertillery, the ongoing engagement efforts have highlighted the need for a more detailed redesign to address issues like excessive street furniture, and narrow parking bays, striking a delicate balance between accommodating vehicles and pedestrians. There is currently a WelTag study being undertaken that will focus on Church Street to develop proposals / options for Church Street reconfiguration.

Abertillery Workmen's Welfare Institute

2.27. Community Action has made strides in securing funding to improve the Abertillery Workingman's Welfare Institute, a crucial community asset. However, additional support is necessary to fully realise the potential of this strategic location. A proposed change to the building's frontage, facing towards the town centre, is under consideration. Further investment in the building itself represents a valuable opportunity to create a key community asset accessible to all age groups, including youth clubs and senior events. This development would contribute to establishing another vibrant destination within the town.

Cwmtillery Lakes

2.28. While located outside the town centre study boundary, Cwmtillery Lakes is a significant asset that has the potential to attract visitors and draw footfall to Abertillery. Building upon its existing popularity for activities like walking and fishing, there is an opportunity to expand its offerings with other outdoor and water-based activities. Linking our work to develop the offering in the town to the needs of the visitors and users of Cwmtillery Lakes will ensure we are best placed to exploit the opportunities they present to improve vitality of the town.

Abertillery Park

2.29. Abertillery Park currently serves as a valuable space for sports groups and the local community, providing essential outdoor areas. However, there is a unique opportunity to envision a more ambitious use for the park—one that transforms it into a new regional sports and leisure destination. This vision encompasses addressing highway issues on Glandwr Street, considering a proposed vehicle link, exploring possibilities for a 4G pitch, increasing car parking facilities on the northern end, and enhancing the cricket pavilion.

Anvil Court

2.30. Anvil Court is one of the Council's key buildings that is used to provide office / desk space for Council employees. The Council's current lease for Anvil Court will expire in 2025.

Railway Link

2.31. The report highlights the significance of the proposed new rail link and train station at the "Former Lo-Cost Site," which will establish a crucial connection between Abertillery and the Ebbw Valley rail line. This presents a substantial opportunity for enhancing public transport accessibility within the town.

2.32. *Transport and Movement Strategy*
The Council has engaged Arcadis to conduct a WelTAG Assessment.

23.3. The core concept underpinning this Placemaking plan is the vision of creating a walkable Abertillery. This concept aligns with global trends and focuses on reducing car travel, enhancing community cohesion, and promoting walking and cycling. The fundamental idea is to ensure that the daily needs and desires of residents are conveniently accessible within a short walk from their front door.

3. *Options for Recommendation*

3.2 The options contained within this report relate only to the endorsement 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 projects that emerge through development of the delivery plan and details of potential projects to be developed and implemented for us to achieve our overall vision.

Option 1 – Do Nothing

3.3 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

3.4 Endorse the Abertillery Placemaking Plan, its vision and core ambitions for the future. This will enable us to finalise the draft of the delivery plan and take steps towards the implementation of the projects that will be contained within it.

Preferred Option

3.5 The preferred option is Option Two. This will enable the projects that will support the 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 Transforming Towns funding.

3.6 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 the overall impact upon the area.

4. Evidence of how 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 they live, learn, work and play.

4.5 The Placemaking plan will work 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.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Corporate Plan 2022-2027

4.6 The vision of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council:

'Blaenau Gwent – a place that is fair, open and welcoming to all by working with and for our communities'.

The Corporate Plan 2022/27 sets out an ambitious programme of activity for the Council over the next five years. The Corporate Plan 2022/27 priorities are:

- Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities – we aim to greatly reduce carbon emissions and provide an environment which supports growth and well-being and connects communities.
- An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place – working in partnership to provide high-quality

services to meet local needs and improve the quality of life and well-being within the community.

- Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent, and resilient increasing resilience of communities, where everyone is welcome and safe which minimises dependency and maximises independence.

5. Implications Against Each Option

Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

5.1 Option 1 – there would be no immediate financial implications associated with option one of this report. If the Council does not endorse and adopt a placemaking plan for Abertillery it is unlikely that projects from Abertillery would be considered for funding through the Welsh Governments Transforming Towns programme. Without the support of transforming towns funding, the amount of financial support the Council would be able to access to enable regeneration of the towns would be extremely restricted.

5.2 Option 2 – there would be no immediate budgetary implications as a result of endorsing the Abertillery Placemaking Plan. There would however be medium and long-term capital and revenue implications associated with taking forward the emerging projects that are identified in 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 for Council led projects 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 70% of these costs and for Council led projects we would need to identify capital match funding for the remaining 30%.

5.5 Further detail on development and implementation costs will be included within the Delivery Plan which will be prepared in late 2023.

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 a risk that sites will remain undeveloped or fall into disrepair.*
The footfall within the town centre associated with retail has been severely hit by the increase in online shopping. It has also failed to return to pre-covid levels. Key to recovery will be the intervention that supports repurposing and reinventing

our town centres. This would not happen if option 1 is chosen and there is a risk of further deterioration in footfall. The total number of visitors to Abertillery Town Centre for the last 52 weeks is 797,743 which is 4.7% down on the previous year. The total number of visitors for the year to date is 555,322 which is 6.4% down on the previous year.

5.8 *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. There is a risk that without sufficient match funding from the Council it is unlikely we will be able to deliver on the strategic vision and ambitions of the Placemaking Plan.

Legal

5.9 There are no direct legal implications for any of the options considered within this report. The report seeks the endorsement of a Vision and set of ambitions that set out our approach to the future regeneration of Abertillery Town Centre

5.10 Legal implications associated with project delivery will be explored as part of the delivery plan.

Human Resources

5.11 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 undertaken in July 2022. The health check identified key issues within the town centre, which can be found on page 13 of the Placemaking Plan:

- There are known issues with the management of local assets such as the market.
- The increase in vacancies around the town centre is a key warning and trigger for change.
- The retail vacancy rate in Abertillery is higher (17% in 2020), than the Welsh average of 14.5%
- Local 'place champions' exist who could be catalysts for future change
- The night-time economy is a perceived strength of Abertillery.
- A number of national retailers have pulled out of Abertillery in recent years, however, a limited amount of national retailers (Greggs, Iceland and Boots) have remained in the Town Centre.
- Currently there are no banks within the town.
- The concentration of vacant units towards Somerset Street would suggest the retail offer is oversized.

- The presence of a Victorian Arcade is a unique strength.
- There is a Tesco adjoined to the town which competes with the town centre and poses further challenges to traders in the town

Expected outcome for the public

6.2 There has been a sustained decrease in footfall in the town centre which presents a real challenge. There must therefore be a focus on projects and measures that will attract people to the centre.

6.3 Active travel routes and access to Abertillery Park need improvement. Improved active travel will provide greater accessibility for residents and visitors to move within the area.

Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)

6.4 Engagement has also taken place through Public Consultation, and engagement with Businesses and stakeholders including Elected Members.

6.5 Stakeholders that have formed part of the engagement to date include:

- The Council (Officers and Elected Members)
- Welsh Government
- Public Consultation
- Gwent Police
- Local businesses
- Design Commission for Wales
- Abertillery Aspirations Group
- The Trustees of Abertillery Institute

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. These were presented to businesses and the community of Abertillery in January 2023 through a two-day public consultation event hosted in the Abertillery Metropole. The comments and feedback gathered from the public consultation event were used to inform and develop the placemaking plan.

6.7 A briefing session with elected Ward Members to present details of the Placemaking plan prior to it being presented to Place Scrutiny Committee for consideration was held on 11th September 2023.

Preventative focus

6.8 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

6.9 Many of the projects that will be identified to deliver on our core ambitions for Abertillery Town Centre will require collaborative approaches to delivery. This will be developed further alongside stakeholders subject to the endorsement of this report and the delivery plan.

6.10 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 has been undertaken to identify the membership of the group.

Integration (across service areas)

6.11 As previously mentioned, we have successfully initiated consultations across various service areas within the Council. These areas encompass crucial sectors including highways, housing, planning, and education.

Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions

6.12 Blaenau Gwent declared a Climate Emergency in 2020 and as a Council, we have committed towards the achievement of net zero carbon emissions by 2030. The projects that emerge from the Placemaking Plan offer an opportunity to support further decarbonisation across Blaenau Gwent. Creating high-quality green spaces in the town centre will help with decarbonisation and offset carbon emissions. It will also help improve air quality.

6.13 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.

6.14 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.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

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

8. Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix One – Abertillery Placemaking Plan*

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Abertillery Placemaking Plan

SEPTEMBER 2023

ARUP

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

ARUP

Prepared by Arup on behalf of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client. It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.
In preparing this report we are relying on information contained in reports supplied by the client and third parties, as stated throughout the document. We have relied in particular on the accuracy and completeness of such reports and accept no liability for any error or omission in this statement to the extent the same results from error or omission in the other consultants' reports.

Please note, proposals on private land require further discussions with private landowners.

This report is intended to be viewed and printed as an A4 double-sided document with cover page.

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Contents

1. Church street, Abertillery

1.1 Introduction

REPORT OVERVIEW

Arup have been commissioned by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC) to create a strategic placemaking plan that will provide a basis for future, strategic decision making in the study area and act as an evidence base to support BGCBC Officers with future regeneration funding applications.

The purpose of the plan is to;

- Highlight development and redevelopment opportunities that will increase the viability, vitality and functionality of Abertillery town centre
- Identify and implement measures that will act as a catalyst for private sector investment, and plan a comprehensive range of development projects suitable for applications for funding.

The plan will be used by BGCBC as a 'roadmap' for future regeneration activity in the study area with a view to stimulating economic growth, retail, leisure and the vitality of the town centre.

ABERTILLERY AND ITS CHALLENGE

The issue of post-industrial decline is manifest in above average levels of socio-economic deprivation and a subsequent lack of local spending power.

The towns topography, geographical isolation in relation to major roads, lack of existing rail network and functioning public transport network present unique challenges for the town.

Wider trends of town centre retail decline are evident in the town. The rapid onset of digital retail, remote working and services, in the wake of Covid-19, is transforming the way urban centres operate. From a position of having to use our centres to access services such as banks and retail we now need to want to visit these places.

This profound shift has led to a reduced need and lack of viability for physical retail and commercial spaces in town centres. The cost of living crisis and accelerating inflation rate has exacerbated these issues.

The withdrawal of major national retailers and all banking facilities from the town has further impacted the town centre. However, Abertillery has a well defined, historic core and a population who are motivated to see, and be part of the change within the town.

For Abertillery to reverse the decline it has seen in recent years it will require maximising the benefit from its existing assets, whilst carefully planning and providing new ones.

Given its economic profile and geographic location, Abertillery does not attract the same levels of private investment that other, more affluent and connected place do. Basing this plan on the assumption of private investment would ultimately limit its effectiveness. It also needs to be recognised that the prosperity of the town centre will inevitably be linked to the wider prosperity of local people and enterprise. Yet this should not preclude an ambitious plan to transform the town centre.

COMMUNITY LED CHANGE

The plan is to be based in part on one of Abertillery's strengths - its people. From the positive improvements the community have achieved in Abertillery Park, to the ongoing work to reopen Abertillery Institute, the desire for improvements in the town are evident. This plan should be viewed as a means of mobilising this latent strength.

A SPRINGBOARD TO THE FUTURE

The focus of this study is shown on the map overleaf, however this plan considers the town as a whole and beyond the red line boundary. This plan looks to link together these areas and the wider town and ensure opportunities for the whole town are maximised.

The second key aspect of this approach is the application of integrated place-making. This means exploring opportunities not through one particular lens such as transport but through multiple lenses including ecology, placemaking, sustainable transport and health to deliver multiple benefits from each intervention.

2. Agreed Study Area

1.2 Sustainable Growth

A TRANSITION IN THINKING AND THE PURSUIT OF DE-CARBONISATION

In 2019 the Welsh Government declared a ‘climate emergency’ recognising the need for urgent action to combat the effects of global climate change.

The target for Wales as a country to transition to Net- Zero by 2050 requires pragmatic thinking around transitioning to de-carbonisation.

Fundamentally, the impacts of climate change and the pursuit of Net-Zero will change the way in which we live, move around and require new ways in which to respond to essential needs such as waste management energy production and food supply chains.

At a global and national level, the guidance, policy, and legislation to direct decisions makes clear the need for sustainability in its broadest sense.

Consideration towards sustainability and de-carbonisation must be implemented through the design process, rather than attempting to retrofit.

THE DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability needs to be addressed in terms of long term economic sustainability whilst also maintaining and strengthening the social and cultural value of an area. A transition to reduced waste and de-carbonisation does align with many of the opportunities within Abertillery in terms of reduction of waste.

This placemaking plan creates the opportunity for Abertillery to respond to a global issue on a local level to create local resilience associated with a changing climate and extreme weather events.

GLOBAL CONTEXT

In response to the Paris Accord on Climate Change, The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) provide a blueprint at the highest level to direct decision-making towards environmental, political, social and economic sustainability.

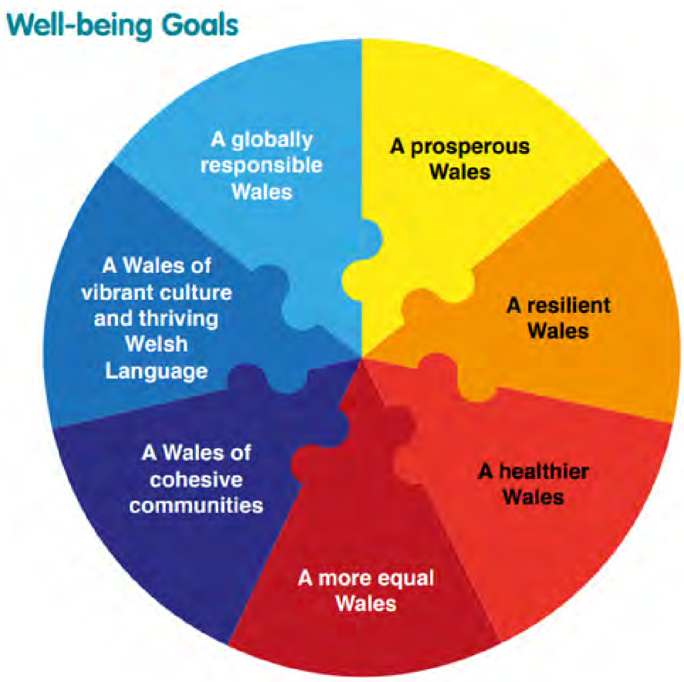
For Abertillery, nine of the goals have been identified by Arup as being particularly relevant in steering the project and are shown below.

Any and all proposals contained within this report have been considered in the context of current and future alignment to the UNSDGs.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 offers a radically different way of approaching development and change.
The Act enshrines in law the need to consider the impact of our decisions on future generations.

Central to the act are the seven goals and of equal importance, the five ways of working which set out the means for public bodies to achieve the goals. This is a unique piece of legislation that provides us with an unprecedented means of working differently toward a common goal.



Five Ways of working

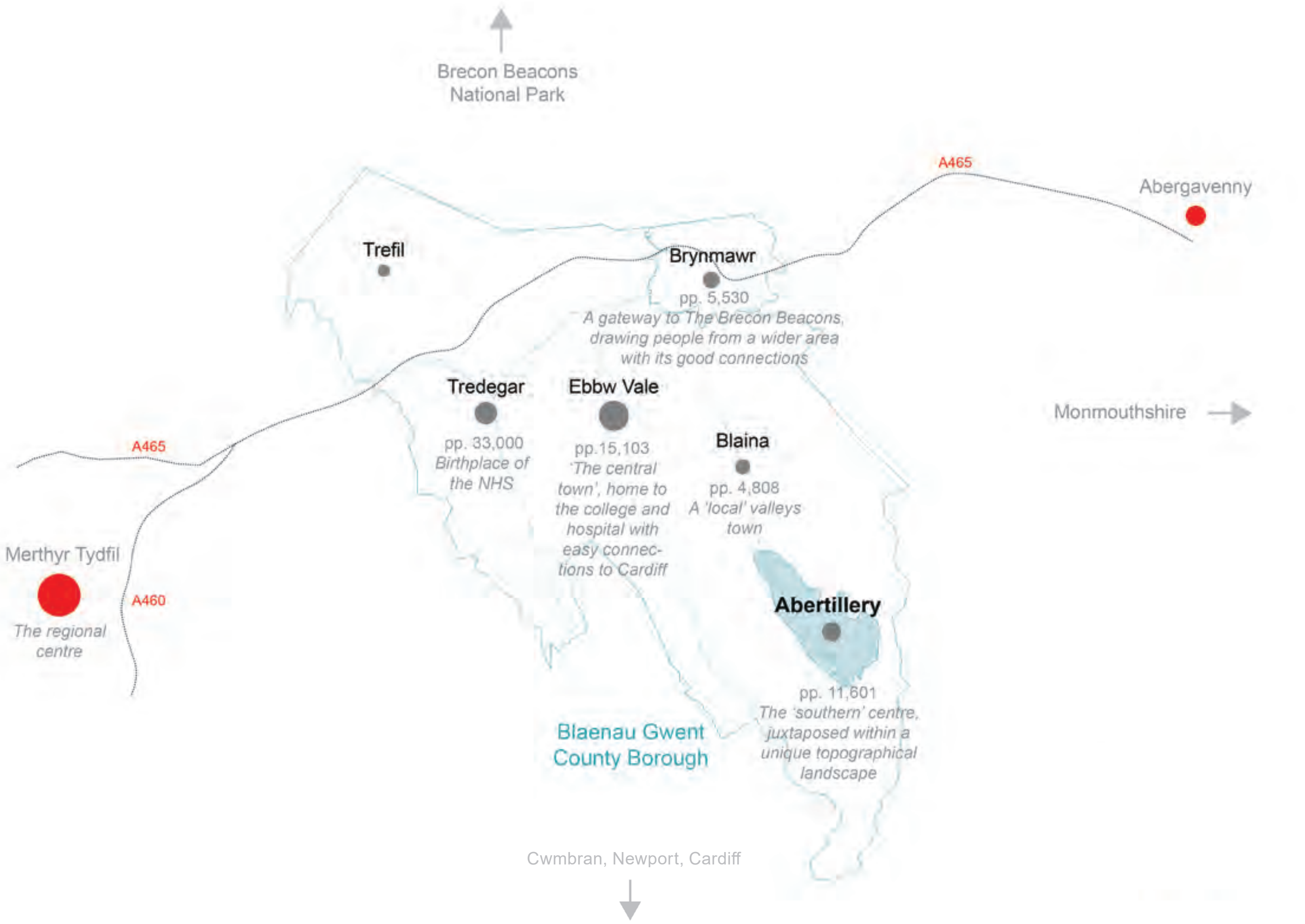
- Long-term - Balancing short and long-term needs.
- Integration - Considering impacts on all goals.
- Involvement - Ensuring representative diversity
- Collaboration - Working together.
- Prevention - Preventing problems occurring or worsening.

2.1 The wider area

ECO-SYSTEM OF 5 TOWNS

Within Blaenau Gwent, Abertillery is part of what can be viewed as a '5 town eco-system' where there are inherent linkages and interdependencies between these places. Future development within Abertillery needs to be complimentary to the other towns within the 'eco-system' rather than compete against them for footfall. The connections to larger settlements Abergavenny, Merthyr, Cardiff and Newport must also be considered.

The success and future vitality of Abertillery does not lie within competing with these areas, but instead building upon what makes Abertillery a unique place and focusing on what can be the "point of difference" for the town compared to the other settlements.



2.2 Abertillery through time

The trajectory of Abertillery follows a similar path of many industrial town's in Wales. From rich natural habitats to growth and decline of heavy industry. The position Abertillery finds in itself in today gives us the chance to move the town into a new chapter that looks confidently forward without losing touch of its history.

Pre-industrial

Industrial Era

Late C20th and early C21st

Do nothing - further deterioration of the town

“The Abertillery Vision”

2.3 Baseline summary

Extensive baseline data gathering took place as part of a Baseline Summary 1 report which forms Part 1 of this commission. A summary of which can be found overleaf.

“We need more diversity in the town centre”

- Quote from Community Engagement 19th January 2023

BASELINE CONCLUSIONS

LOCAL ECONOMY

- There are known issues with the management of local assets such as the market
- The increase in vacancies around the town centre is a key warning and trigger for change
- The retail vacancy rate in Abertillery is higher (17% in 2020), than the Welsh average of 14.5%
- Local 'place champions' exist who could be catalysts for future change
- The night time economy is a perceived strength of Abertillery
- A number of national retailers have pulled out of Abertillery in recent years, however a limited amount of national retailers (Greggs, Iceland and Boots) have remained in the Town Centre.
- Currently there are no banks within the town
- The concentration of vacant units towards Somerset street would suggest the retail offer is oversized
- The presence of a Victorian arcade is a unique strength
- There is a Tesco adjoined to the town which competes with the town centre and poses further challenges to traders in the town

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Natural features are significant around the town and can be considered a major positive
- The topography of the town centre brings a challenge to Abertillery, the narrowness of streets brings issues related to servicing and access

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 32.3% of the local population are classified as having "no-skills"
- 15.6% of the local population are qualified to degree level
- All communities within the study are classified as being "financially stretched" or "urban adversity"
- In 2011 Abertillery had a working population – aged 15 to 64 – of 66%, and 17.2% aged over 64, which is relatively lower than the rest of Blaenau Gwent and Wales
- Abertillery employed 3,292 people in 2011
- The unemployment rate in Abertillery was 7.2% in 2011 (Compared to a Wales Average of 4.3%)

WALKING & CYCLING

The National Cycle Network Route 465 has an easy gradient with tarmac surface from Llanhilleth train station to Abertillery Park, which totals 16.5km (50 minute cycle). The path also heads north to Brynmawr. The majority of the route is a traffic free path (depicted as orange in the image) that uses the former railway line.

The Topography around the town centre is severe and provides significant barriers to active travel, especially cycling, however BGCBC are currently reviewing funding sources for a e-bike pilot as part of the Abertillery to Brynmawr WelTAG study.

The ongoing WelTAG work conducted by BGCBC is currently in the feasibility and design stage of improving the Blaina to Abertillery Recreation Park active travel route. All Active Travel improvements are undertaken as part of a wider transport and regeneration scheme, rather than in isolation.

RAIL

The nearest train station is Llanhilleth railway station which is 2.8 miles south of Abertillery town centre. The station operates services between Cardiff and Ebbw Vale. As part of the South Wales metro there is a proposal for a 3-4 mile rail link from Abertillery to Ebbw Vale Fawr at Aberbeeg. TFW are considering and looking to implement Active Travel improvements as part of the wider rail scheme.

This will include a park and ride for 100 vehicles, and a possible increase of train services on the Ebbw Vale Line to four trains per hour (two to Abertillery). It is proposed that the delivery of this will be integrated with public transport.

The indicative area for the proposed station is south of the existing Tesco store, west of Castle Street.

BUS

Bus service provision in Abertillery is limited. There are four main services within Abertillery that operate on an hourly basis Monday to Friday. There is only one bus service that operates on Sundays.

ROAD NETWORK

The road network is well defined with a clear loop around the town centre connecting to routes in and out of the town. The road provides a loop around the town centre.

The A467 provides links to Cardiff and Newport to the south, and to Blaina and Brynmawr to the north.

3. Walking & Cycling Context

Traffic Free Route
On Road Network

4. Main Vehicle Routes

Town Centre 'Loop" key movement
Primary route through Town Centre
Primary Road network

2.4 Engagement Summary

Engagement with a wide range of local groups, traders and residents has taken place in order to obtain and understand the views towards Abertillery from the people who experience it everyday.

In person engagement was held with local businesses and residents in July 2022. Whilst elected members and officers of Blaenau Gwent County Council have been engaged in July 2022 along with a separate session with the Design Commission for Wales.

Further engagement with local members was carried out in October 2022, and Blaenau Gwent Council further engaged with local residents and businesses in January 2023, which was conducted over a two day public consultation based at the Metropole Theatre in Abertillery Town Centre. The event was advertised to local businesses by flyer and residents by The Councils Social media accounts. The consultation was well received with 515 written comments received by officers in addition to significant verbal feedback.

The engagement process was undertaken to connect the community and bring them into the process of the placemaking plan.

Through online meetings and in person workshops with various stakeholder groups from local councillors to local traders, this report has been able to ascertain feedback as to what the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are for the town.

Various key themes arose from the engagement sessions. These are summarised in this section.

What is great about Abertillery?

- The strength of the community and the willingness for the community to engage with activities and create their own initiatives within the town
- The landscape features around the town are significant and breathtaking
- The Victorian Arcade within the town centre is a point of difference between Abertillery and the surrounding towns
- There are a number of significant Victorian era historical buildings within the town centre. The strong townscape within Abertillery defines the town centre

“The towns biggest strength is the community”

- Quote from Community Engagement activities 25 July 2022

Issues & concerns

- General cleanliness of the town centre and particularly Church St appearing dirty and presence of dog fouling
- Anti-social behaviour in the town which appears to stem from the lack of activities for youths
- Operational hours of town centre car parking has a significant detrimental impact upon the night time economy
- Illegal parking is an issue compounded by a perceived lack of enforcement
- Church Street is cluttered with street furniture and is too narrow for deliveries or access
- Lack of permanent bank and free cash machines in the town
- Nowhere to sit and dwell
- Abertillery feels ‘unloved’

Opportunities

- Potential for a greater amount of events in the town to create a draw to the town
- A community hub to give the youth something to do and help combat loneliness in the older population
- The Victorian Arcade as a focal point of the town
- Integrate the town centre with Abertillery Park
- Pedestrianisation of Somerset Street to boost the night time economy and improve the sense of place
- Quick “wins” such as improving street cleaning
- Creating partnerships between the Council and local businesses to work towards common goals for the good of the town through business forums and ongoing engagement between council and local business

2.5 Planning Context

PLANNING POLICY WALES

The key principles for the planning system in Wales are established by Planning Policy Wales (PPW). The key theme from PPW is People and Places: Achieving Well-being Through Placemaking – using placemaking as a tool for the planning system to output sustainable places which improve well-being of communities.

PPW has to be used in three stages.

1. Assessing plans or proposals against the Strategic and Spatial Choices issues and the national sustainable placemaking outcomes. This stage is to ensure that opportunities are correctly identified and any potentially required mitigation measures are included.
2. Assessing whether plans or proposals contribute to Active & Social Places, Productive and Enterprising Places and Distinctive & Natural Places. The merits of the proposal need to be considered whether they are in the public interest.
3. Ensuring the strategy or proposal aids in contributing to either sustaining or the creation of sustainable places.

PPW's was created to facilitate good design which contributes to the viability and sustainability of places.

THE BLAENAU GWENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP)

The Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted in November 2012.

Abertillery is part of the southern area (Lower Ebbw Fach)

Relevant policies for Abertillery are as follows:

Strategic Policies

- SP2 Southern Strategy Area, regeneration – ensuring the public transport connection between Abertillery and Ebbw Vale and supporting the town centre through promoting culture and (active) tourism, removal of dereliction, promoting regeneration whilst building on the unique identity of the area (built heritage and natural environment)
- SP3 The Retail Hierarchy and Vitality and Viability of Town Centres – the district town centre of Abertillery is second in the retail hierarchy, and will be improved accordingly through refurbishment / redevelopment of buildings.
- SP4 Delivering Quality Housing – provision is made for the development of 3,907 new dwellings within the wider authority area by 2021
- SP5 Spatial Distribution of Housing Sites – limited number of suitable sites in the lower Ebbw Fach, 228 dwellings are planned here (7% of total plans)
- SP8 Sustainable Economic Growth – 50ha of employment land is allocated to meet the wider authority area's need by 2021. For Abertillery, land is only allocated for the Education Department, see ED1.2.
- SP10 Protection and enhancement of the natural environment
- SP12 Securing an adequate supply of minerals

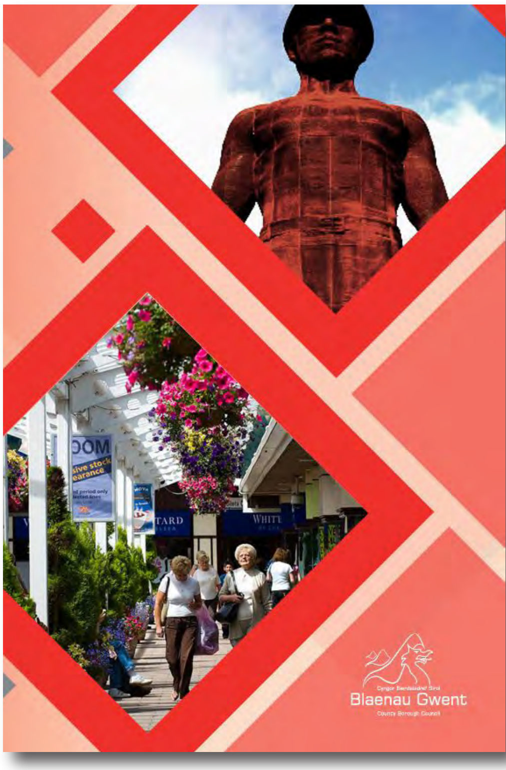
Policy Designations

- ENV2 Special Landscape Areas – SLAs are located to the east (Eastern Ridge and Mynydd James) and north east (Cwm tyleri and Cwm Celyn) of the town centre. Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn and Cefn yr arail are located on the west.
- ENV3 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) – multiple SINCs are located around the settlement boundary of Abertillery.

Site Allocations

- H1 Housing allocations - a total of 228 housing units is planned in the area of lower Ebbw Fach (H1.12; H1.13; H1.14; H1.15; H1.16; H1.17; HC1.29; HC1.30; HC1.31) closest to town centre. This includes 33 units at the Roseyheyworth Comprehensive in Abertillery and 20 units at Cwm Farm Road.
- T1 - Cycle Routes – a cycle route extension from Abertillery to Aberbeeg is planned, one from Aberbeeg to Royal Oak, which may pass through Abertillery, same for the one from Royal Oak to Swfrydd (T1.9 which is now complete, T1.11, T1.12)
- T2 - Rail network and station improvements – T2.3 the rail link from Aberbeeg will be extended to Abertillery and a park and ride facility will be provided (T2.4).
- T6 Regeneration Led Highway Improvements – improvements are planned for the A467/
- EMP2 Employment Area Protection – the Glandwr (EMP2.20) and Llanhilleth (EMP2.21, more south, map #30) industrial estate and Cwmtillery industrial estate (EMP2.11) more north of the city centre are protected for employment use.
- ED1 Community – a new primary school is allocated more south of the town centre, at the Six Bells Colliery Site which is now opperational. This school is considered part of SP8 - Sustainable economic growth.
- M1 Safeguarding of minerals – there is one zone, Six Bells and Vivinan Tips, located west from the town centre.

5. Planning Policy Wales



6. Blaenau Gwent LDP

2.6 Landscape Context

The surrounding landscape is imposing and offers immense potential to provide new opportunities for community and environmental well-being and the visitor economy. The summary below outlines the current condition of this unique landscape.

URBAN

Abertillery has a linear town centre with a heavily industrialised past.

This creates the opportunity for the introduction of more landscape into the urban environment which can have added benefits such as improving air quality.

WATER

The Ebbw Fach River has hard engineered edges along the urban boundary. The River Tyleri is culverted through the urban area.

Run off and storm water from valley slopes which reaches the town is managed through engineered solutions (pipes and culverts) creating a fast flow of water through the town and increases flood risk downstream

It is a heavily polluted catchment (Natural Resources Wales), which would benefit from nature based solutions such as SuDs to clean and slow the run off of water.

VEGETATION

A well wooded steep sided valley mix of coniferous plantations and deciduous woodland. There are wild uplands, rough grassland and bracken on plateaux (most of which is common land).

Historically, woodland would have been cleared in the valley bottom for grazing. Likely to have consisted of a mix of flood plains and meadows and wet woodland.

This diverse landscape setting provides opportunity to provide local residents with a greater connection to nature.


7. View of surrounding context

2.7 Summary of Issues

Five biggest constraints

SHRINKING RETAIL AND LACK OF BASIC SERVICES (BANKS)

Retail in the town has declined with a number of national retailers pulling out of the town in recent years, including the lack of any bank in the town, apart from a mobile bank at the health centre.

PHYSICAL CONDITION - BUILDINGS AND PUBLIC REALM

There are issues around cleanliness and appearance of buildings. Many have large metal roller shutters which give an unpleasant appearance, whilst the pavements and walls appear dirty. There are also instances of dog fouling within the town centre.

COMPETITION FROM NEARBY RETAIL PARKS AND TOWNS

There are instances of businesses relocating to other towns within the borough. Abertillery does not currently have its own train station and does not have direct access to the heads of the valleys roads which makes other towns more appealing to do business in. There is also the issue of greater retail selection within other towns within the borough.

DISCONNECT BETWEEN PARK AND TOWN

There is significant landscape and land form around the town centre which gives Abertillery a striking back drop. Currently there is no direct or clear connection linking the town and the landscape including the substantial Abertillery Park.

THE TOWN NEEDS TO FIND A NEW ROLE

Supporting Abertillery Town Centre in developing its role as a centre to meet the complementary roles around culture, leisure and tourism needs of its local community and visitors.

Five biggest opportunities

COMMUNITY MOBILISATION

There is a real sense of pride and desire for improvement within Abertillery. There are numerous local champions who organise events and put plans into action which improve the area. Examples include Abertillery Park and Abertillery Workmens Welfare Institute.

HISTORICAL URBAN FABRIC AND WELL DEFINED TOWN CENTRE

Formerly Abertillery was a thriving mining town, evidence of the past success is visible in the quality of architecture within the town centre, including Trinity Chapel. The town centre is well defined along Church Street.

PRESENCE OF A VICTORIAN ARCADE

Abertillery has the only Victorian Arcade within Blaenau Gwent. It provides a real point of difference between Abertillery, and the other towns. It is currently under utilised and provides significant opportunity such as supporting the night time economy.

FUTURE RAIL LINK AND CONNECTION TO SOUTH WALES METRO

There is a new rail station planned for Abertillery adjacent to the Tesco site, as a spur off the Ebbw Vale line. This new link will dramatically improve accessibility of Abertillery.

LANDSCAPE SETTING

The town has significant landscape on steep valley sides and Abertillery Park, these can be better connected to the town and better utilised for activities. Cwmtillery Lakes, although outside of the town, does provide the opportunity for tourism and to be a footfall driver to the town.

3.1 Emerging trends for town centres

Welsh Government's 'Town Centre First' policy provides a clear basis for town centre regeneration. They are integral to our social, environmental and economic well-being and are the places that define us culturally. As the traditional retail-led model of town centres continues to decline, new and often innovative approaches are going to be needed to ensure they remain not just relevant but places we celebrate and give us a sense of pride.

A number of new trends are explored here that offer the potential to give new meaning and purpose to town centres and delivery against other essential agendas including education, health and environmental improvement

NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS

For many years, hard infrastructure such as culverts, concealed pipe networks and pumping have been used to manage rainwater. At the same time, bio-diversity has declined.

New approaches such as the award winning Greener Grangetown project (Cardiff) have shown that by using low-tech landscape solutions such as rain gardens we can transform the character of an area, provide invaluable habitats whilst reducing the threat of flooding and filtering contaminants from surface water. In these systems, rain water is filtered through the soil and temporarily stored underground before slowly entering the water network whilst sustaining planting.

8. Greener Grangetown, Cardiff

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The recent publication 'People, Place and Health' by Arup and the Bevan Commission outlines a radical new approach to preventative health in the community a new decentralised model where access to health and care mvoes from general hospitals towards our high streets, homes and community spaces. This could diversify our town centres and place vital services in the heart of communities where they can be co-located with other day-to-day needs

9. 'People, Place, Health' Arup Publication

TEMPORARY AND MEANWHILE USES

Covid-19 afforded local authorities the power to deliver rapid and temporary transformations to streets and public spaces. The Castle Street project in Cardiff saw one of the capital's arterial roads transformed overnight into an outdoor dining area and new bike lanes. This created a vital physical demonstration of a progressive approach to urban spaces for the public to experience first-hand whilst providing a vital lift to local businesses.

This flexible approach to streets and spaces allows us to move away from potentially complex and expensive 'fixed' designs to something far more fluid where we can experiment and trial in real time. This often reduces up-front conflict with traders and the public and delivers invaluable lessons.

TOWN CENTRE POSITION STATEMENT

This Welsh Government Statement makes a clear recommendation for the public sector to locate our town centres. In addition, "Town Centre First" has been a requirement of development policy plans in Wales since 2021. This means town centres are to be the first consideration of new public services, education, commercial, health, leisure and retail locations and sets a clear pathway for town diversification.

EXPERIENCE

Meeting friends, chance conversations, physical retail, attending events and accessing physical services such as high street banks or health services simply cannot be replicated on-line. The importance of 'experience' is now becoming an integral part of town centre strategies. Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) afford control of certain aspects of town centre management to local businesses to hand control to those whose prosperity is dependent on a thriving town centre.

10. FitzPark Pop-up Park, London

11. Welsh Government Town Centre: Position Statement 2023

12. Business Improvement Districts Handbook

3.2 Learning from elsewhere

The role of high streets are changing. No longer feasible as purely retail destinations, they must re-focus and provide additional services and amenities for the community. A number of case studies are outlined below where different uses have been introduced to high streets to support community needs and boost vitality.

PN www.positive.news

The Library of Things: coming to a town near you - Positive News

A Library of Things allows people to borrow stuff they only need now and then. Hundreds are in planning, can they help save the high street?

PN www.positive.news

Coming to a high street near you: factories that repair your electronics

Can 'fixing factories' help tackle the climate crisis and reduce waste? Campaigners think so - and want to open one on every UK high street

A COMMUNITY WHO SHARES

The Pandemic and high interest rates and the high cost of living have escalated hardship. Towns such as Abertillery are particularly vulnerable during times of increased economic hardship.

A “Library of things” allows communities to share resources they may only need occasionally. This provides both a vital service and is an important demonstrator of resource efficiency.

A COMMUNITY WHO BUILDS

Fast electronics, much like fast fashion sends millions of tons of waste to landfill every year. The cost of having to replace electronics and household items is an additional financial burden on households.

Across the UK “fix it factories” are popping up to help combat this. They allow things to be fixed rather than thrown straight into the bin, reducing costs for households and reducing waste. This is already happening informally at the nearby waste disposal centre where items too good for landfill are saved, fixed and given away for free.

www.positive.news

The UK is poised to get its first community-run shopping centre

Can a neglected shopping arcade in West Yorkshire become a blueprint for the high street's much-needed revival?

theteenagemarket.co.uk

The Teenage Market - Giving young people a free platform to showcase their creative talents

Giving young people a free platform to showcase their creative talents

A COMMUNITY WHO REINVENTS

The Victorian Arcade is under utilised and features a number of vacant units within it. Thinking about innovative ways in which this significant asset can be used provides significant potential for the town.

Within Dewsbury, West Yorkshire the Council have taken ownership of the Grade II listed Victorian Arcade with the aim to turn it into a community hub which will be home to small independent retailers, artisans, art and craft businesses and entrepreneurs with either side of the arcade being anchored by a coffee shop and bar. The building is leased as a not-for-profit community benefit.

THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

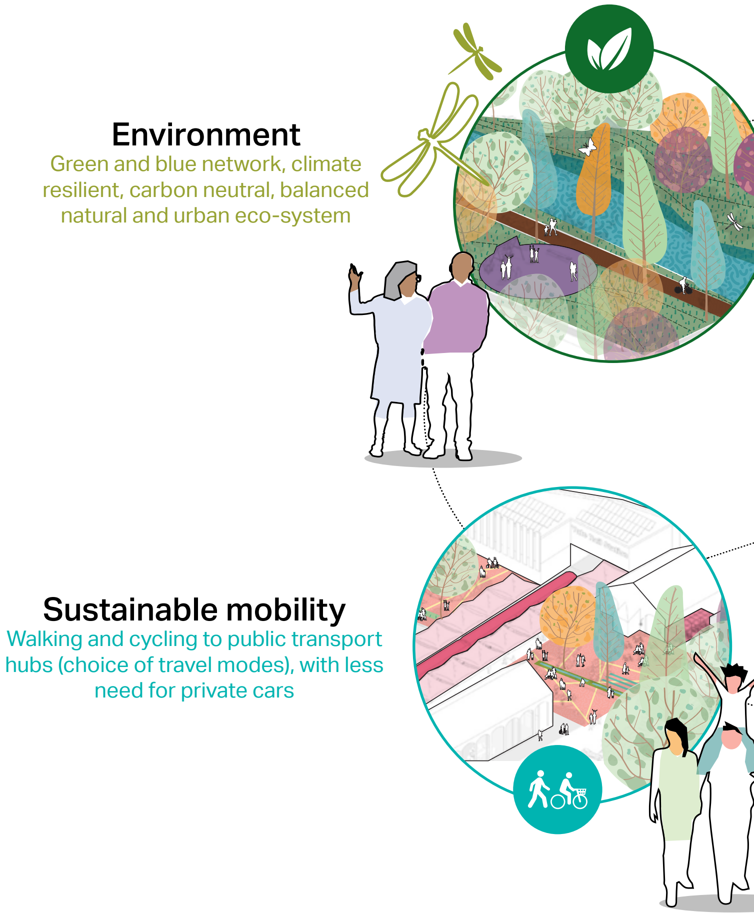
Providing opportunities within Abertillery to be part of its future is important in ensuring completeness to a whole community approach.

Giving young people a free platform to showcase their creative talents is the concept behind the "Teenage Market". What started as an idea in Stockport has caught on and spread around the country, allowing different towns to provide specialist market space for young people. This helps fosters entrepreneurship and gives a focus to young people whilst adding much needed life to our town centres.

3.3 A Walkable Abertillery

To help us reduce car travel, improve community cohesion and get us walking and cycling this placemaking plan is formed around the concept of a walkable Abertillery. This concept which is growing across the world seeks to ensure that day-to-day needs and wants are within a short walk from your front door.

The principles are outlined in the image to right. Each of these are deemed as essential to the future prosperity for Abertillery, to meet the agenda of sustainable development and to improve the lives of local people. This concept has directed the development of the recommendations of this report.



13. The Walkable Concept

"We should be able to purchase all our daily requirements in Abertillery, without having to go to other towns"

- Quote from Community Engagement activities
19 January 2023

4.1 Vision - 6 missions for change

The vision for Abertillery is to reshape the town to ensure it is a vital part of day to day life and plays a crucial role in local economic prosperity and sustainable growth as part of an 'ecosystem' of towns in the region.

This Vision aims to:
Maximise Abertillery's assets namely its people, its built and cultural heritage and landscape to draw more people and businesses.
It will do this by **embracing innovation** to **trial and test new ideas** and **bring new partners** to the table to **support existing local champions.**

The vision will be delivered via six missions which are explained in the following pages.

14. View of Abertillery ©Tylerian

Six Missions for Change

A 'mission' based approach sets clear objectives for stakeholders and the community to follow. In this section, these missions are explained.

15. FitzPark, London - Pop Up Park London

1) Shape a more attractive and diverse centre and be a test bed for new ideas by

- Trialling new pop up and temporary uses to rapidly test ideas and learn
- Improving the cleanliness and appearance
- Physically consolidate the town centre to fill vacancies on Church St and High St
- Bringing other services, leisure and community uses into the town centre
- Continue to ensure local tourism opportunities such as Cwmtillery Lakes, align with regional and national strategies.
- Pro-actively work with partners to deliver change such as Ffrindiau Tyleri, Welsh Water, NRW and the local health board.

2 Translate Community passion into community action by

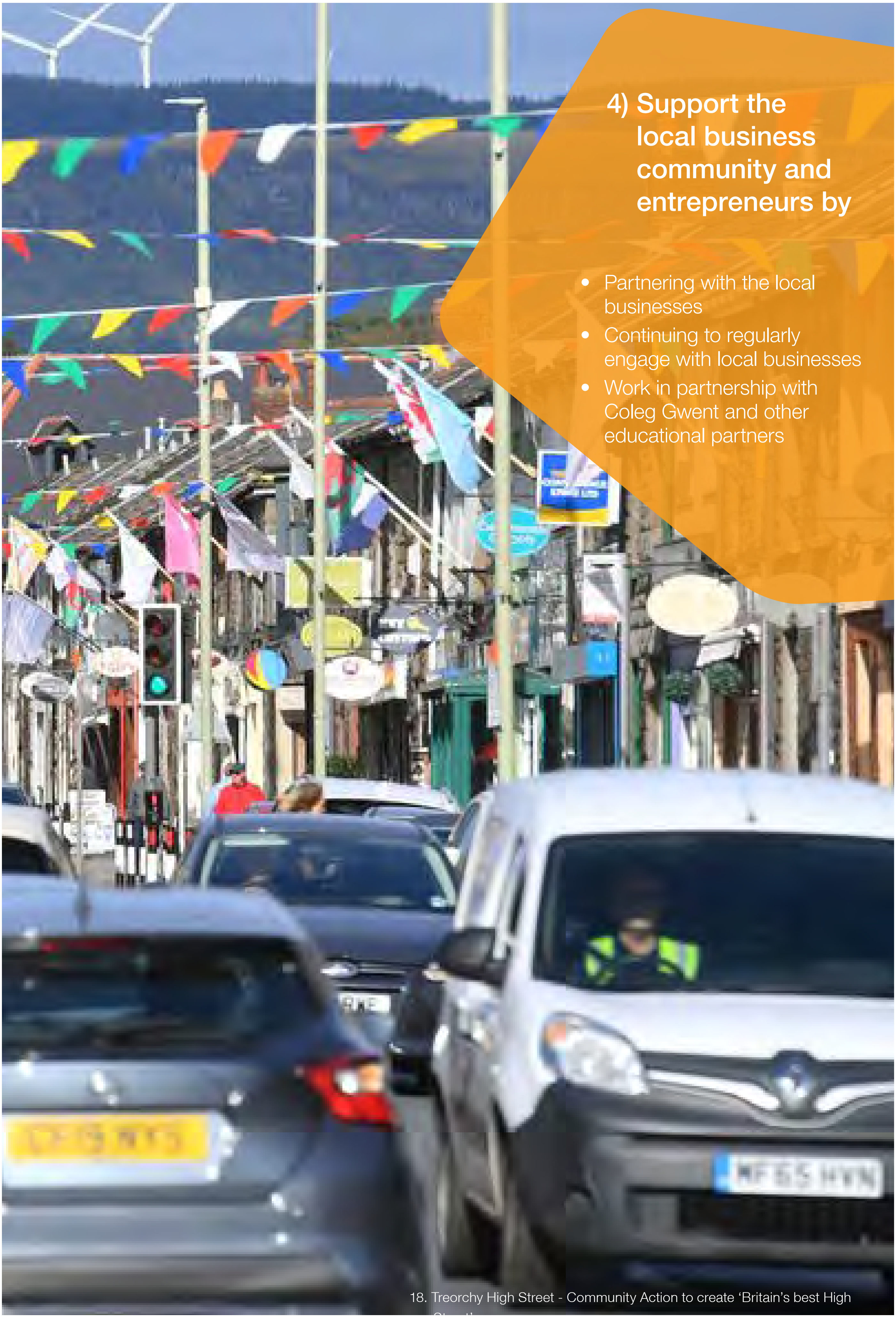
- Creating new opportunities for community led regeneration such as the arcade to encourage community projects and new start-ups
- Ensuring the Abertillery Workmens Welfare Institute project is realised and supported
- Expanding the event calendar utilising spaces such as Jubilee Square
- Targeting hard to reach groups such as youth groups

16. Frau Gerolds Garten, Zurich - Community Space

3) More space for people and nature by

- Maximising the potential of Abertillery park
- Tackling regional green infrastructure issues at a local scale by embedding SuDS as part of any public realm project
- Regional bike hire strategy linked to destination park

17. GoApe, Alexandra Palace - Tree Top Adventure



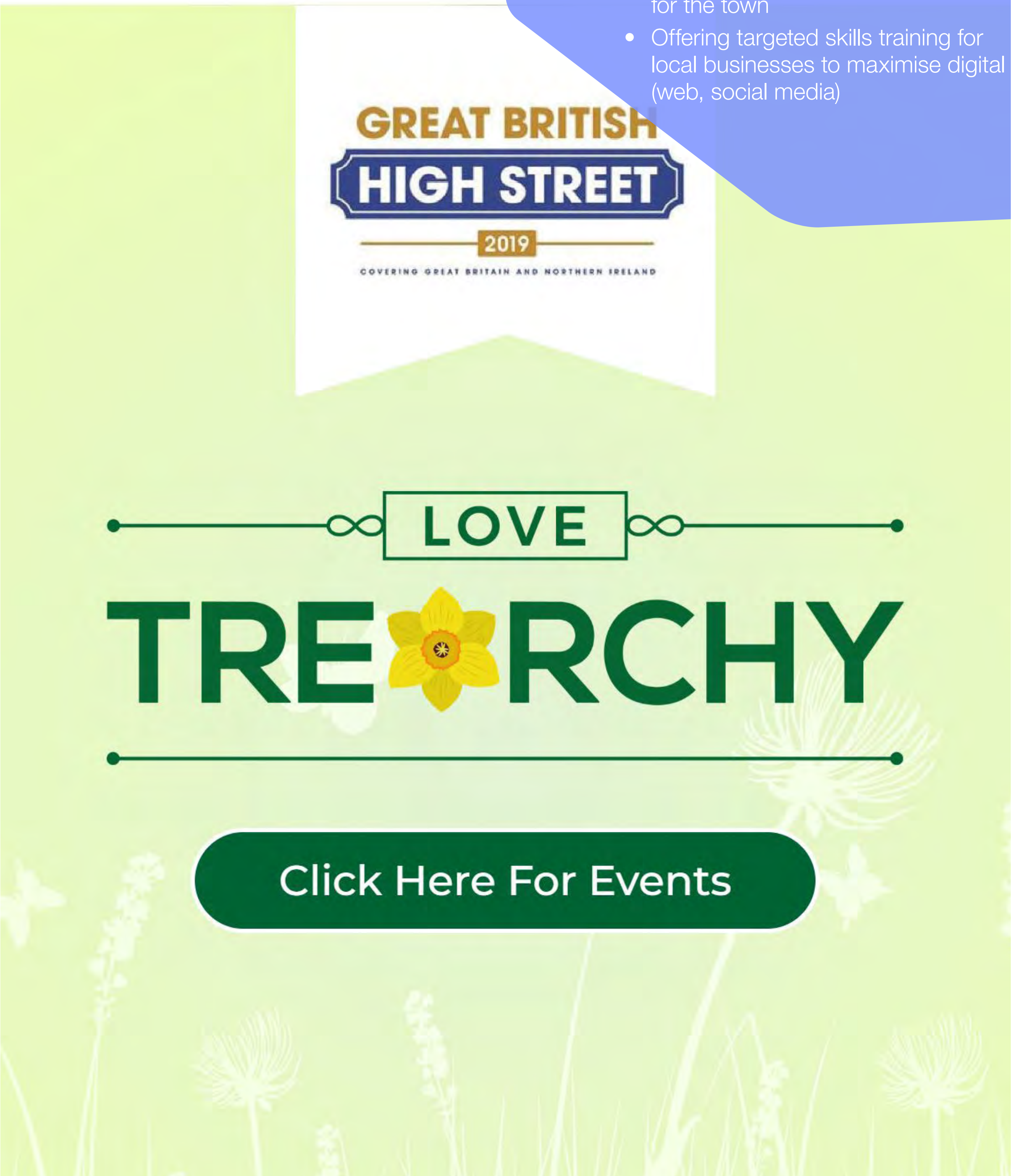
4) Support the local business community and entrepreneurs by

- Partnering with the local businesses
- Continuing to regularly engage with local businesses
- Work in partnership with Coleg Gwent and other educational partners

18. Treorchy High Street - Community Action to create 'Britain's best High

5) Embed and embrace the use of technology by:

- Creating a single, shared website for the town
- Offering targeted skills training for local businesses to maximise digital (web, social media)



19. Love Treorchy Website

6) Make getting to and from and around Abertillery easier and safer and prioritise sustainable transport by:

- Working with TfW to ensure that the proposed station is seamlessly connected to the town centre
- Making parking more accessible by extending opening times
- Improving bus access and waiting facilities
- Improving safety around walking routes, lighting and perception

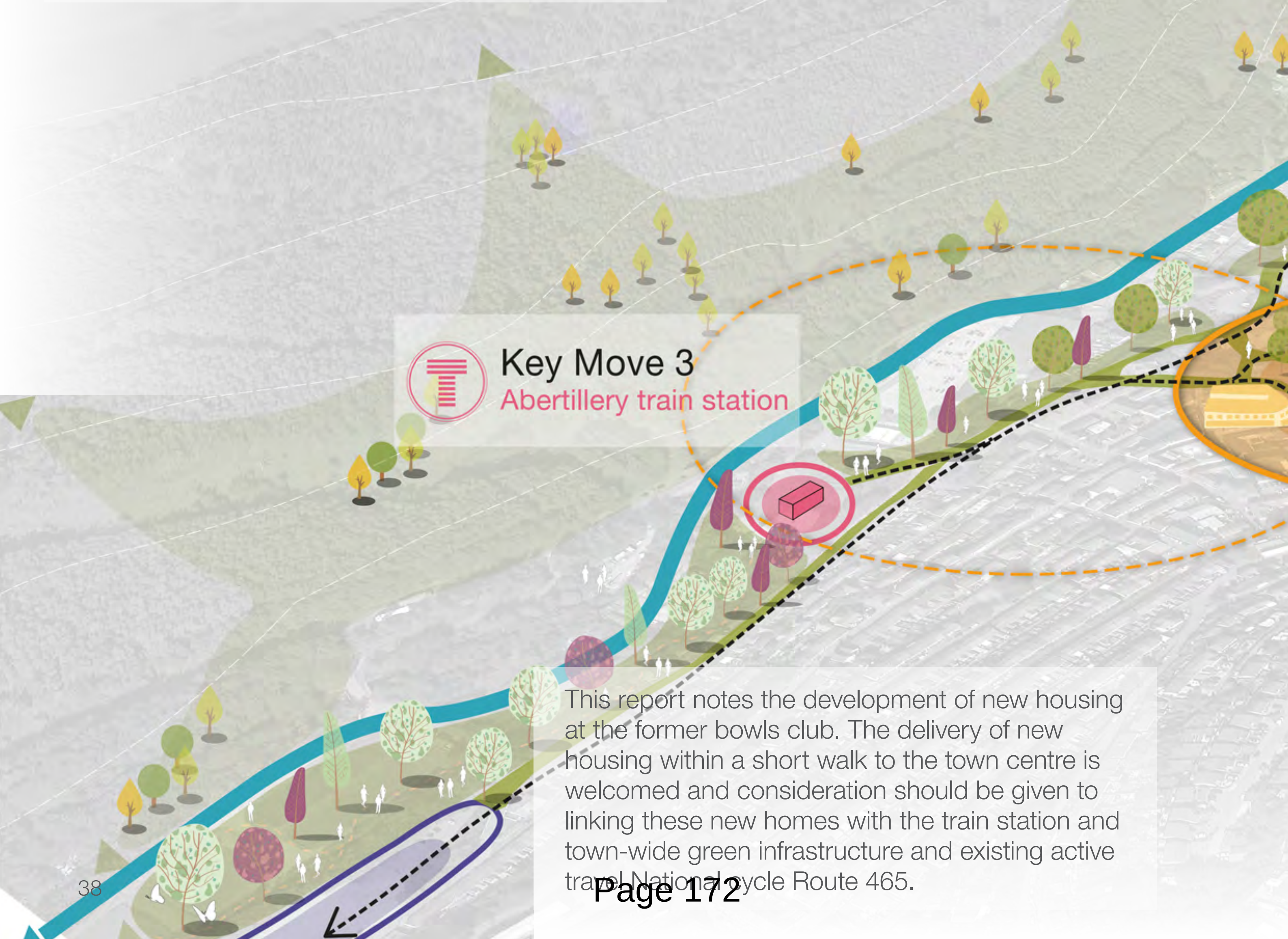
20. Nimes-Pont-Du-Gard Train Station - Multi-modal interchange

4.2 The town-wide context for change

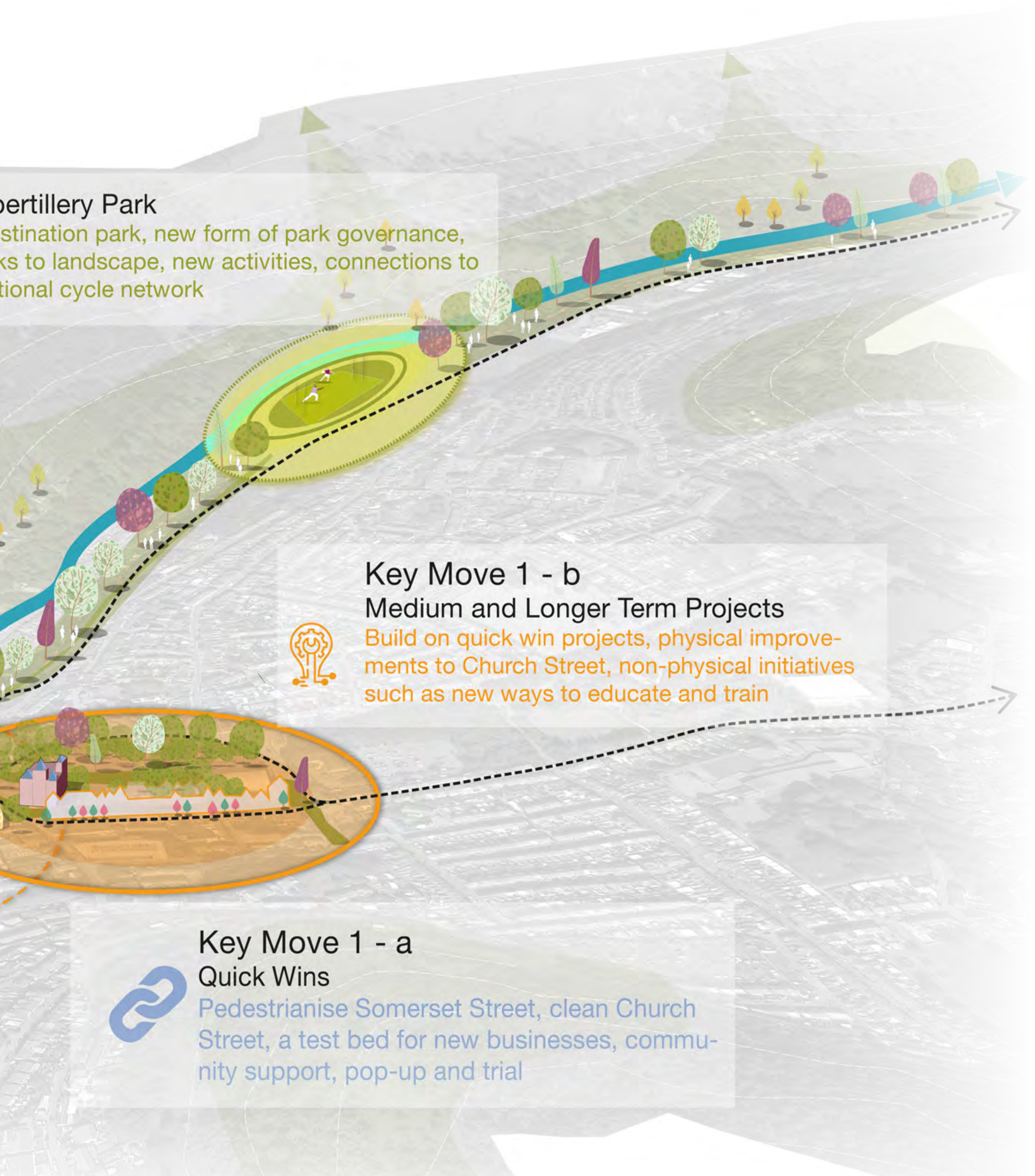
The focus of this report is:

Key Move 1 - Revitalise Abertillery town centre
a. Short term Projects
b. Longer term Projects
Key Move 2 - Opportunities for Abertillery Park
Key Move 3 - Abertillery's conection to the Rail link

Although outside of the study boundary, Cwmtillery Lakes is another important site which can attract footfall to Abertillery. Building on its existing popularity for walking and fishing to offer other outdoor and water based activities such as stand up paddle boarding and camping can reap rewards for the town.



This report notes the development of new housing at the former bowls club. The delivery of new housing within a short walk to the town centre is welcomed and consideration should be given to linking these new homes with the train station and town-wide green infrastructure and existing active travel National cycle Route 465.



pertillery Park
stination park, new form of park governance,
ks to landscape, new activities, connections to
tional cycle network
Key Move 1 - b
Medium and Longer Term Projects
Build on quick win projects, physical improvements to Church Street, non-physical initiatives such as new ways to educate and train
Key Move 1 - a
Quick Wins
Pedestrianise Somerset Street, clean Church Street, a test bed for new businesses, community support, pop-up and trial

4.3 Key Move 1 - a . Short Term Projects

The following pages outline the proposed initiatives for Abertillery. They are presented in two stages, initial short term projects and a second stage which focusses on more significant or complex projects. This plan illustrates the short term projects which are outlined over the following pages .

Property Enhancements
Improvement of façades within the town centre.
Example: 'Town Centre Loans' Blaenau Gwent

Cleaning
A consiste
regular cle
strategy fo
Street

Further Community engagement
Continuing to engage and consult with the people of Abertillery

Jubilee Square
New uses in an underutilised space
Example: St Andrews Cardiff

Partnership working
Supporting and growing new partnerships such as Town Centre Businesses


Strategy
nt and
aning
r Church
Extending car park opening times & events
Test and trial later opening hours and potential pop up uses
Example: Peckham Levels, London
Maximise the Met
Supporting the Met to expand its events to new additional locations
Example: Wareham Cinema
Somerset Street pedestrianisation
Trial street closure to create outdoor dining and meeting space.
Example: FitzPark, London
Arcade Regeneration
Revitalise the arcade with new uses
Example: St Nicholas, Bristol

Key Move 1 - a . Short Term Projects

QUICK WINS STRATEGY

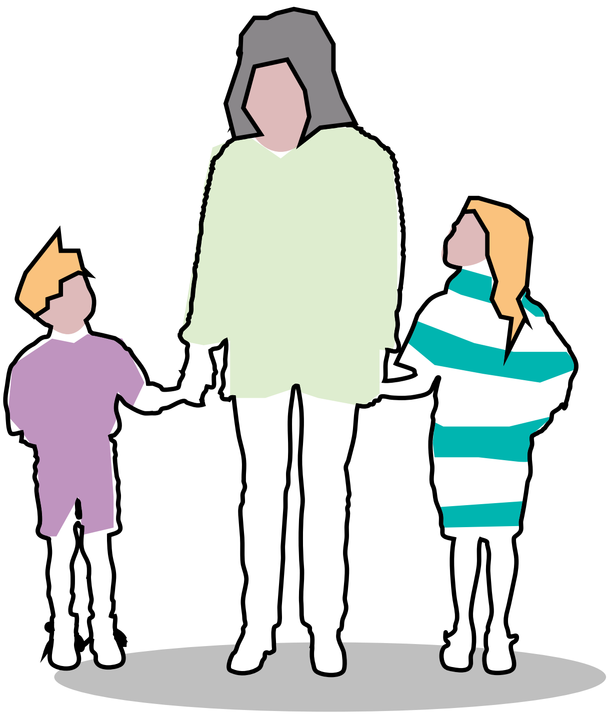
There is a need for quick, actionable wins to achieve visible and tangible change to gain buy-in from the community and demonstrate the commitment to improving Abertillery.

The key aims for the quick wins strategy is to:

- Align to the overarching vision and objectives
- Demonstrate change – alter perceptions, bring in more people
- Be prudent – through the creative reuse of existing buildings and spaces
- Enable local groups and local champions to play a role
- Collaborate – continue to build relationships with stakeholders and partner groups
- Keep the conversation going – continue to engage with the public and stakeholders

SIX MISSIONS FOR CHANGE

1. Shape a more attractive and diverse centre and be a test bed for new ideas
2. Translate Community passion into community action
3. More space for people and nature
4. Support the local business community and entrepreneurs
5. Embed and embrace the use of technology
6. Make getting to and from and around Abertillery easier and safer and prioritise sustainable transport



SOMERSET STREET PEDESTRIANISATION

During community engagement it became clear that there was demand for improving the pedestrian environment on Somerset Street.

This can be done on a temporary bases by restricting through traffic to allow more street space for local businesses and provide a new way of using the space for local residents and businesses.

The success of this should be judged on a test and trial basis with the success leading to a next stage which can include more regular temporary closures such as on weekends. By first implementing this as a temporary project it allows it to be tested at a low budget and its success to be judged prior to more perminent, potentially higher cost solutions.

21. FitzPark - Temporary pop-up park

CASE STUDY

BRIDGE STREET USK

Arup engaged with Monmouthshire County Council and local stakeholders in Usk to temporarily close the heavily trafficked Bridge Street for one day.

The event proved successful with local traders enjoying their best takings of the year.

Implementation of this helped to change public perception of the road and obtain public support for further interventions within the area.

22. Bridge Street, Usk © John Winder

23. Bridge Street, Usk temporary closure

ARCADE REGENERATION

The Victorian Arcade is unique within in Blaenau Gwent. The opportunity for the Arcade is to bring other uses beyond traditional retail such as including service provision. In addition consideration should be given to other uses that serve the needs of the community such as the examples below and those referenced on page 27. This will help ensure that the Arcade remains a vital part of community infrastructure with new stakeholders to ensure future vitality and viability.

24. St Nicholas Market, Bristol. Arcade transformed into food destination

www.positive.news

Coming to a high street near you: factories that repair your electronics

Can 'fixing factories' help tackle the climate crisis and reduce waste? Campaigners think so - and want to open one on every UK high street

theteenagemarket.co.uk

The Teenage Market - Giving young people a free platform to showcase their creative talents

Giving young people a free platform to showcase their creative talents

The future of high street fashion? A hub where you mend, make and swap clothes

An empty shop in England has been turned into a hub, where people are inspired to achieve sartorial satisfaction beyond fast fashion

25. Possible uses for the Arcade

IMPROVING BUS WAITING FACILITIES

CASE STUDY:

ARUP MOBILITY HUB CONCEPT

The concept is to take an integrated approach to public transport that can help breathe new life into town centre buildings and spaces. It includes co-locating bus stops with complimentary uses such as cafe spaces, co-working, community space. This transforms customer experience of bus travel and helps underpin the viability of key services. Such a concept could be considered for the Arcade.

CLEANING STRATEGY

A common message from engagement was the perceived poor condition of the street. It was seen as grubby and dirty and many local residents saw the appearance of the street as a major concern.

A consistent and regular cleaning strategy for the street will quickly create tangible change within the town centre.

26. Council Clean Ups to keep High Street presentation high quality

“Business would be so much better if the street was more appealing”

- Quote from Community Engagement activities 26 July 2022

EXTENDING CAR PARK OPENING TIMES & EVENTS

Currently the multi-storey car park within Abertillery closes early, and is not supportive of late afternoon shopping or an evening economy.

Testing later opening hours of the car park is a simple and temporary method to improve the town centre. The success of this can be assessed, and if proved popular further interventions such as temporary events on the top deck of the car park can be used.

28. Bussey Building, London - Reimagination of a roof space to create an outdoor cinema

27. Peckham Levels, London - Adaptive Re-Use of a car park as bar, pop-up and event space

JUBILEE SQUARE

A currently under-utilised space in a prime position on Church Street. Opening up Jubilee Square to the public can have a dual and mutually beneficial impact on both the residents of Abertillery and for St Michaels Church.

By allowing local people to use the space it provides a place to gather and host pop-up businesses. This would also allow St Michaels Church to generate revenue from initiatives such as selling coffee or baked goods, and utilised for community events to drive footfall on Church St.

This represents a potentially low cost initiative which can be adapted or extended depending on the success of initial tests and trials.

29. Jubilee Square, Abertillery

30. St Andrews Church, Cardiff - Before


31. St Andrews Church, Cardiff - After

32. St Andrews Church, Cardiff

CASE STUDY ST ANDREWS COFFEE COURT

Turning under-utilised negative space into positive space that provides small events, coffee and other uses that help to generate new revenue for the Church, whilst improving the street and urban area.

MAXIMISE THE MET

From engagement activities it is clear that 'The Met' is a cherished and valued community asset. The theatre continues to host a range of successful events.

The Met should be encouraged to explore additional events in new and different locations, opening up opportunity for a greater range of events such as connecting with Abertillery Park or utilising the top deck of the multi-story car park for larger outdoor events.

33. Community Cinema

"The Metropole is excellent"

- Quote from Community Engagement activities 26 July 2022

34. Outdoor Events

FURTHER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Significant community engagement has been undertaken with town centre stakeholders and feedback received has contributed to this placemaking plan and has informed its findings and recommendations.

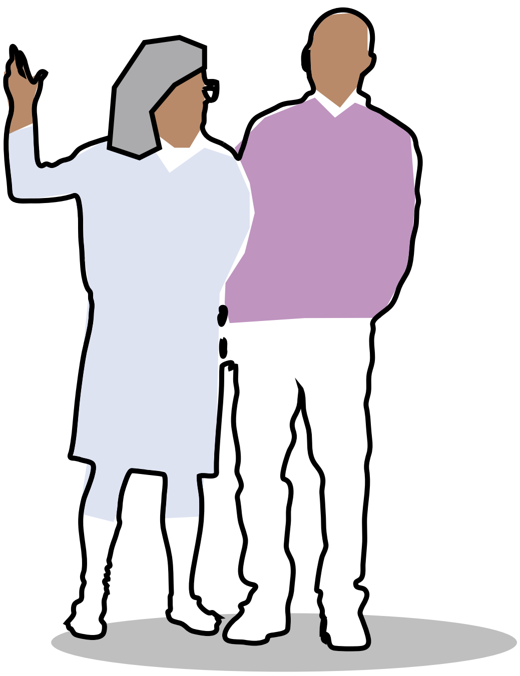
Engagement with the local population and stakeholders should be continued in order to harness the passion within Abertillery, and to ensure projects are implemented side by side with the community.

The ultimate success of a town is dependant on engagement to ensure the measures are implemented to meet the needs of its stakeholders.

BUSINESS FORUM

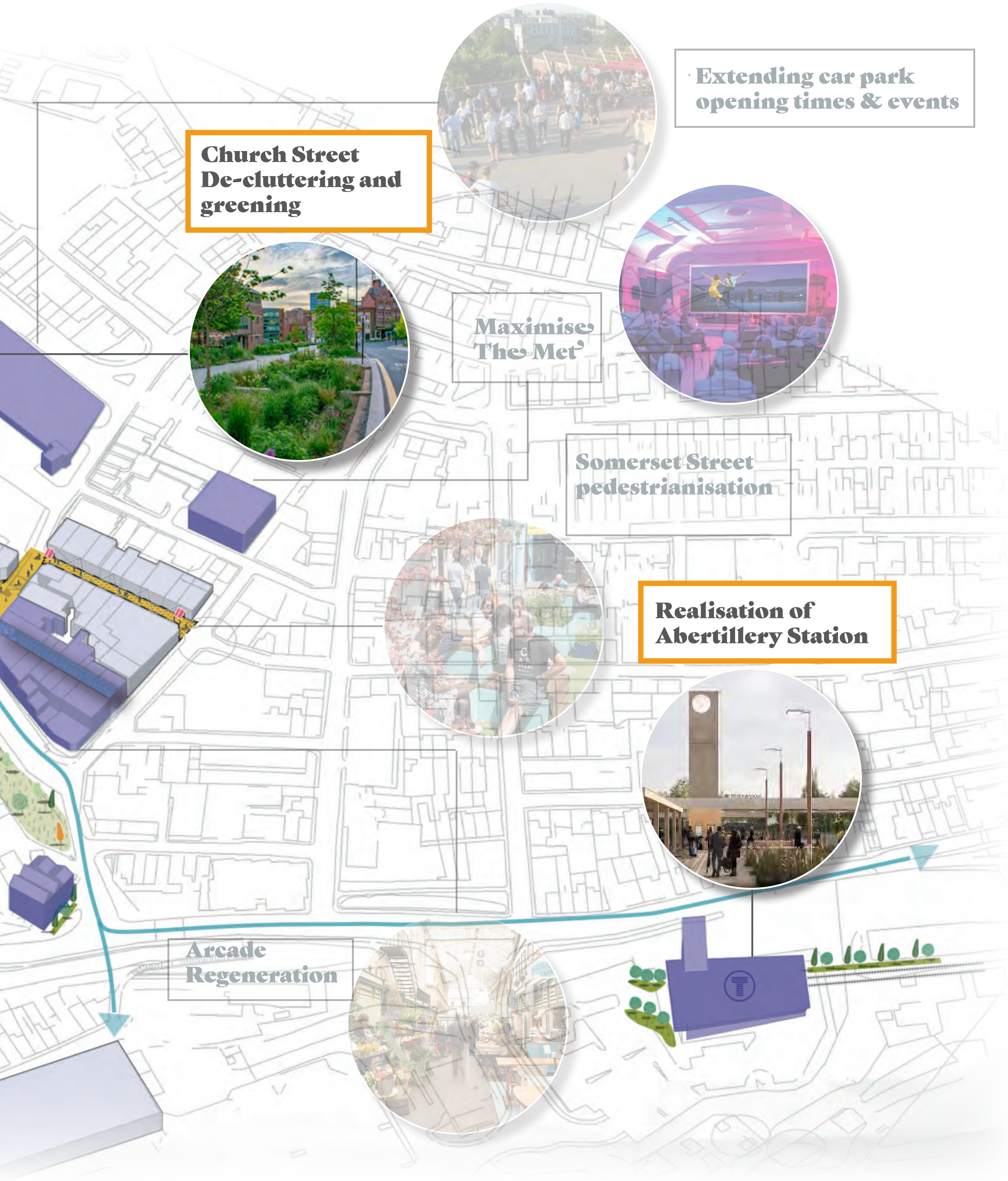
There is a need to re-establish the business forum within Abertillery which will need continued support to ensure alignment between the council and local businesses within the town.

This should be supported and expanded with initiatives such as branding for the town, and a town wide website to support and advertise Abertillery which is explored later in this report.



4.4 Key Move 1 - b. Longer term Projects

The short term change will lay the foundation for longer term, more complex projects. These projects will have a catalytic effect and will require adequate resource and capacity from the local authority. They will likely need to be developed alongside business cases and should be treated as individual packages of work that are aligned to the overarching vision of this placemaking plan.


Extending car park opening times & events
Church Street De-cluttering and greening
Maximise The Met
Somerset Street pedestrianisation
Realisation of Abertillery Station
Arcade Regeneration

Key Move 1 Projects Longer Term

MEDIUM AND LONGER TERM (2-10 YEARS)

The following section outlines the proposed longer term strategies. These will:

- Align to the overarching vision and objectives
- Build on quick win projects
- Deliver ambitious projects that are beyond small scale change
- Develop projects in line with business cases to maximise funding opportunities that are available

SIX MISSIONS FOR CHANGE

1. Shape a more attractive and diverse centre and be a test bed for new ideas
2. Translate Community passion into community action
3. More space for people and nature
4. Support the local business community and entrepreneurs
5. Embed and embrace the use of technology
6. Make getting to and from and around Abertillery easier and safer and prioritise sustainable transport

TOWN LIBRARY

Proposals to re-locate the existing Castle Street library to a modern, ‘state of the art’ library facility at the Former Trinity Chapel building on Church Street should be supported. Re-location of the library to the High Street will improve accessibility to core services ultimately improving footfall to both the library and Town Centre.

Re-location to a modern facility provides the opportunity for the library to integrate other vital serves such as community space and co-working.

35. Render of proposed new library

“GATEWAY” TO ABERTILLERY AND CONNECTION TO CULTURE

Currently there is no clear visual distinction to create a sense of arrival. A Gateway is more than just a physical object, but can help to celebrate a towns identity.

There is opportunity for town branding to be linked to this as a way to celebrate Abertillery and its rich history. This could compliment The Guardian of The Valleys as part of a series of local landmarks.

Other initiatives to fit in with a town branding can look to integrate a colour palette that is linked to Abertillery such as “Six Bells Red” which is a unique shade of red that has been created through recycling ochre minerals from the Six Bells colliery. “Turning Landscape” was created as a project partnership between UCL and The Coal Authority and has achieved Heritage Lottery Funding. Celebrating Abertillerys passed and existing attractions such as the Guardian of The Valleys and Cwmtillery Lakes.

A celebration of culture should also provide the opportunity to celebrate famous and notable individuals from Abertillery such as Beatrice Green who was a prominent activist in the 1920s who lobbied for women’s birth control, organised aid for striking miners amongst other courageous acts.

A detailed study should be undertaken to determine the nature of a physical gateway. This could include wall art, sculpture, (re)naming of existing streets and spaces. This could include the existing mosaic underpass located south of Abertillery Park, or at the junction of Castle Street and High Street or the adjoining buildings.

36. “Guardian of The Valleys”

37. “Six Bells Red” paint made from recycled ocher minerals from the disused Six Bells Colliery

38. Image of the General Strike 1926, which Beatrice Green coordinated aid for striking workers families ©Walesonline

FORMER PEACOCKS BUILDING

The former Peacocks building has one of the largest floor plates and inhabits a prominent position on Church Street. Efforts to find a tenant for this building have proved problematic due to the existing lease taken up by Peacocks which is still being serviced by the administrators.

A threat to this building is security and in the short term it needs to be ensured it does not become a target for anti-social behaviour. Initiatives such as painting the external walls or placing murals or art on the windows can help to improve the address to Church Street.

In the long term an aspiration should be to find a suitable tenant for this important building. Whether this be carried out through market forces, or through public intervention to support any business, or cluster of businesses who would be open to take on the building.

39. Former Peacocks Building

ANVIL COURT

The location of key public services within the town centre is a major strength, and aligns to Welsh Government policy on Town Centres which recommends locating public services within town centres.

However, the current Council lease of the building expires in 2025. Although as it stands BGCBC have no intention of leaving this location, should they re-locate then additional work and study would be required to find a suitable use for this building and to mitigate any drop in footfall to Abertillery town centre.

40. Anvil Court

CHURCH STREET DECLUTTERING AND GREENING

Church Street remains the centre of Abertillery. Improving the street in terms of general cleanliness and street design has been a continued engagement theme. Further redesign of the street will involve detailed design work to remedy issues such as street furniture ‘clutter’.

These issues need a careful balance between vehicle access and pedestrians. Such a substantial redesign would likely be a longer term aspiration that would require careful stakeholder engagement and the acquisition of additional capital funding

In the short to medium term a more nuanced approach for Abertillery would consider a flexible approach to the street that allows for temporary closures to accommodate events (weekly markets for example). In the event of permanent design changes, ‘Mini-Holland’ plans in England adopt a pedestrian focused design approach that incorporate strong landscape elements such as Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) to deliver multiple benefits including flood resilience, improved character and habitat.

41. Greener Grangetown

42. Church St, Abertillery

45. Orford Road, Walthamstow, London - 2011 ©Google Maps

44. Orford Road, Walthamstow, London - 2015

CASE STUDY FOCUS WALTHAMSTOW

De-cluttering and re-configuration of Walthamstows main retail core towards a pedestrian focus has led to significant aesthetic and allowing local businesses to thrive

43. Orford Road, Walthamstow, London - 2022

THE INSTITUTE IMPROVEMENTS

Community action has secured funding to improve the building but more support is needed.

There is a proposal to change the frontage of the building to face towards the town centre. Further investment in the building itself can be seen as an opportunity for the creation of a key community asset in a strategic location, which can provide uses and community value to all ages, from youth clubs, to seniors events. This would create another destination in the town

Abertillery Workingman's Welfare Institute has an existing business plan which aims to support the long term survival of the club by re-developing, and diversifying its uses. Where possible the club should be wholly supported in developing what would be become an important community facility and opportunity for Abertillery.

The immediate next steps for the Abertillery Workingman's Welfare Institute require the completion of architecture plans which will require funding to be found to the approximate value of £40,000, which will facilitate the tender stage

46. Abertillery Institute

CASE STUDY:

BETHNAL GREEN WORKING MENS CLUB

Saved from closure and transformed with modern uses and events to attract a younger generation such as yoga, club nights and pop up street food vendor, whilst still providing for older generations with a quiet bar, bridge club and bingo nights.

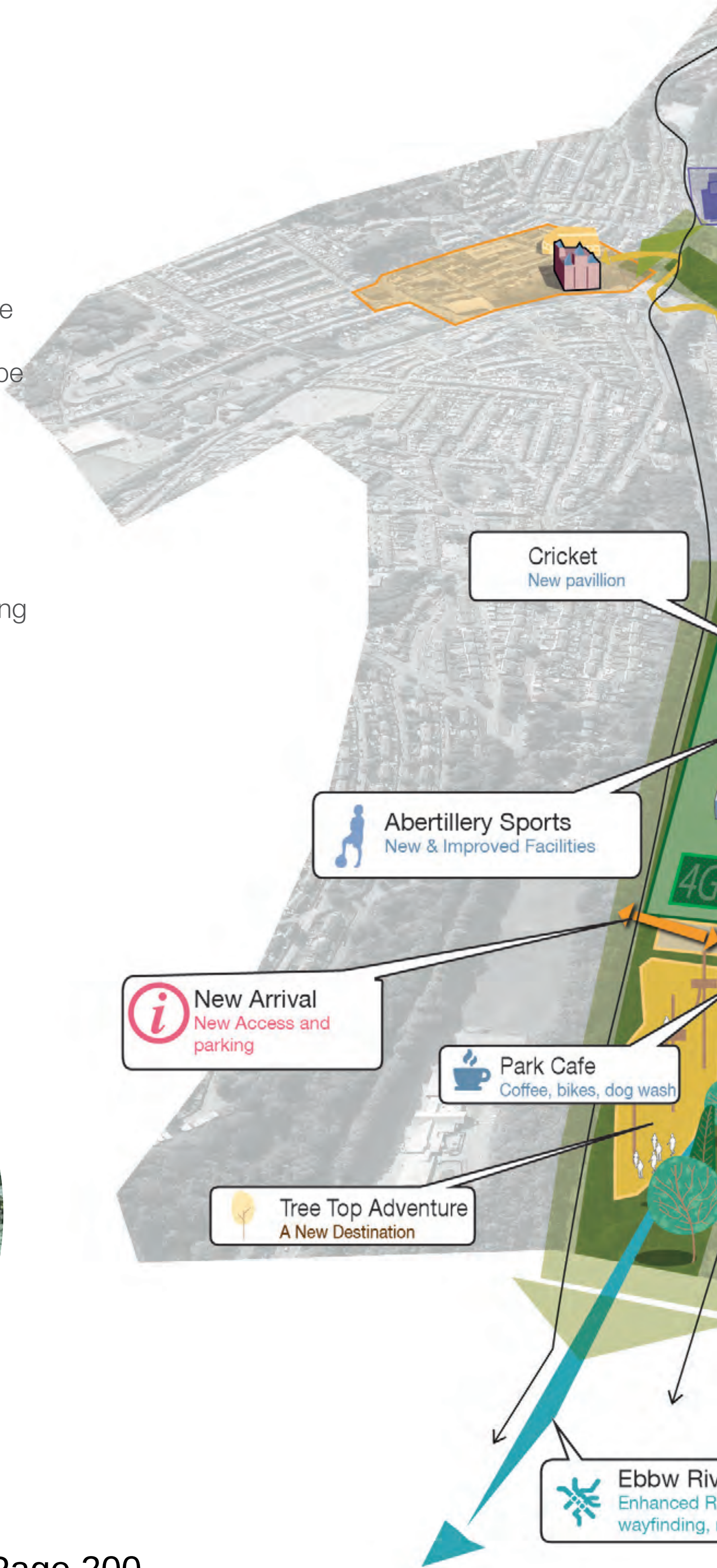
4.5 Key move 2 - Abertillery Park

THE POTENTIAL OF THE PARK

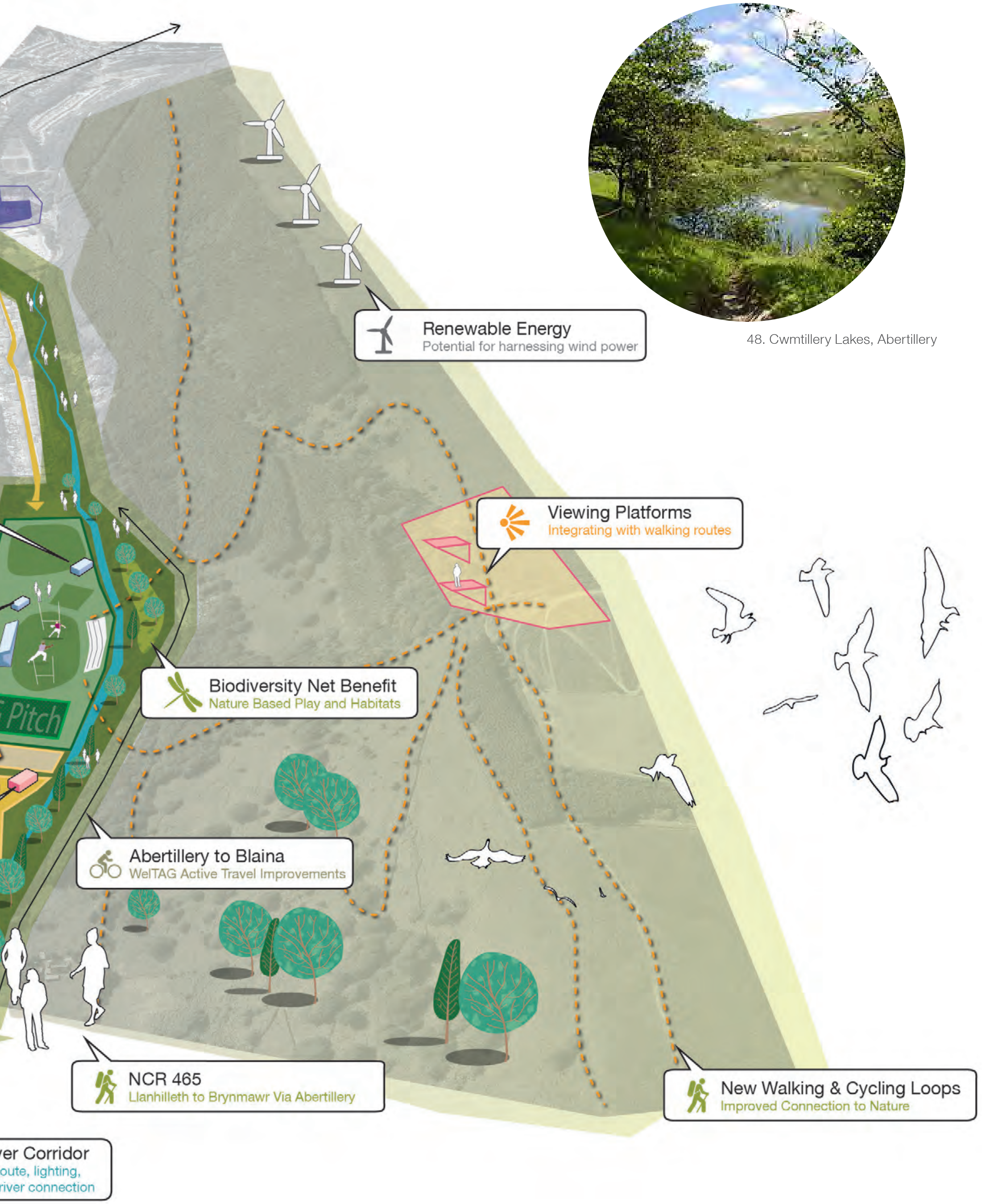
Abertillery Park is currently home to several sports groups and provides essential outdoor space for the community.

There is an opportunity for a more ambitious use of the park that creates a new destination. This new destination can link to other major landscape destinations such as Cwmtillery Lakes.

This could profoundly improve the physical, mental, environmental and economic well-being of the town. The concept illustrated here proposes a radical rethink on the surrounding landscape. This is explored further in the following pages.



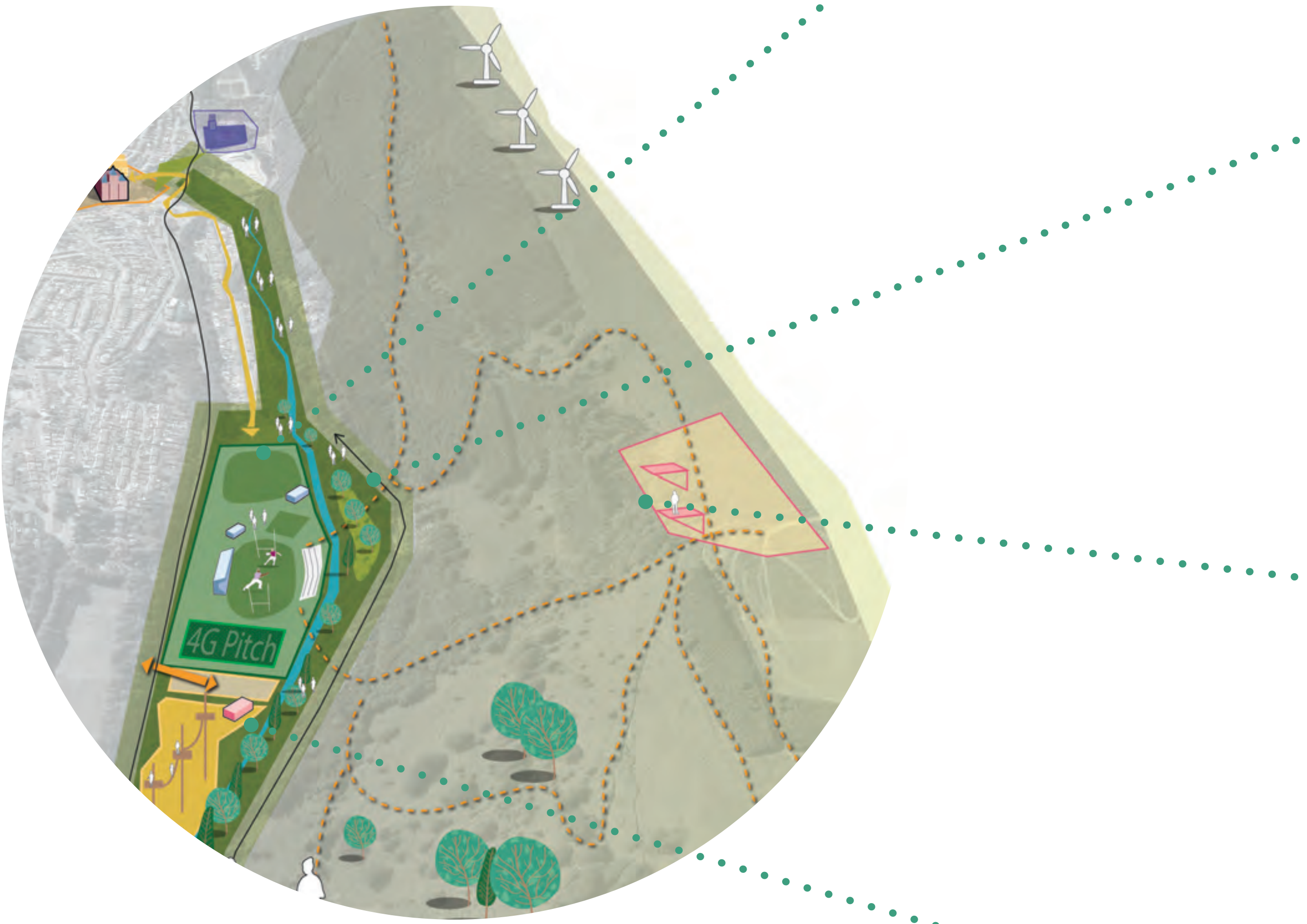
47. The Jungle, Northern Ireland



48. Cwmtillery Lakes, Abertillery

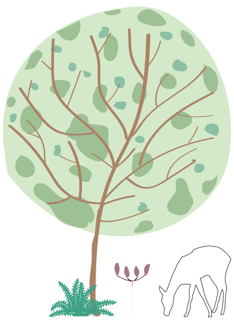
Abertillery Destination Park

The early vision for the park centres around 7 distinct themes.



Long-term contact with nature is linked to longer lives.

Source: The Lancet Planetary Health



1. SPORT FOR EVERYONE

50. Claygate Cricket Changing Rooms and Cafe Bar

Allowing everyone to enjoy the benefits of nature and the natural environment by:

- Supporting existing sports, improving existing facilities which need investment and providing space for new ones such as a 4G pitch to support existing sports clubs
- Enhanced route to the park on the Abertillery to Brynmawr WelTAG corridor , lighting and wayfinding
- Linkage to Welsh Sports strategy - greater uptake from younger groups, community benefit, community health and well-being, social inclusion
- Support increased participation in sports as per Welsh Government 'Climbing Higher' strategy

2. BIODIVERSITY NET-BENEFIT AND NATURE BASED PLAY

49. Bio-diversity improvements - FitzPark, London

Placing nature at the heart of the strategy to reverse species decline and raise awareness amongst younger people by:

- Facilitating community habitat creation
- Creating citizen science opportunities
- Habitat retention schemes
- SuDs linked to the Ebbw Fach River
- Delivering a management and monitoring strategy

3. ACCESS - NEW WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTES

51. Sustrans Route 465

Encouraging a more active lifestyle and the opportunities for recreation within the landscape through:

- Improved and new walking and cycling routes
- Creating the opportunity for links to health through social prescribing
- Walking and cycling/mountain biking routes (new routes linked to National Cycle Route 465) for all ages and ability
- Alleviating congestion on Glandwr Street by exploring the opportunities for an alternative access to Abertillery Park

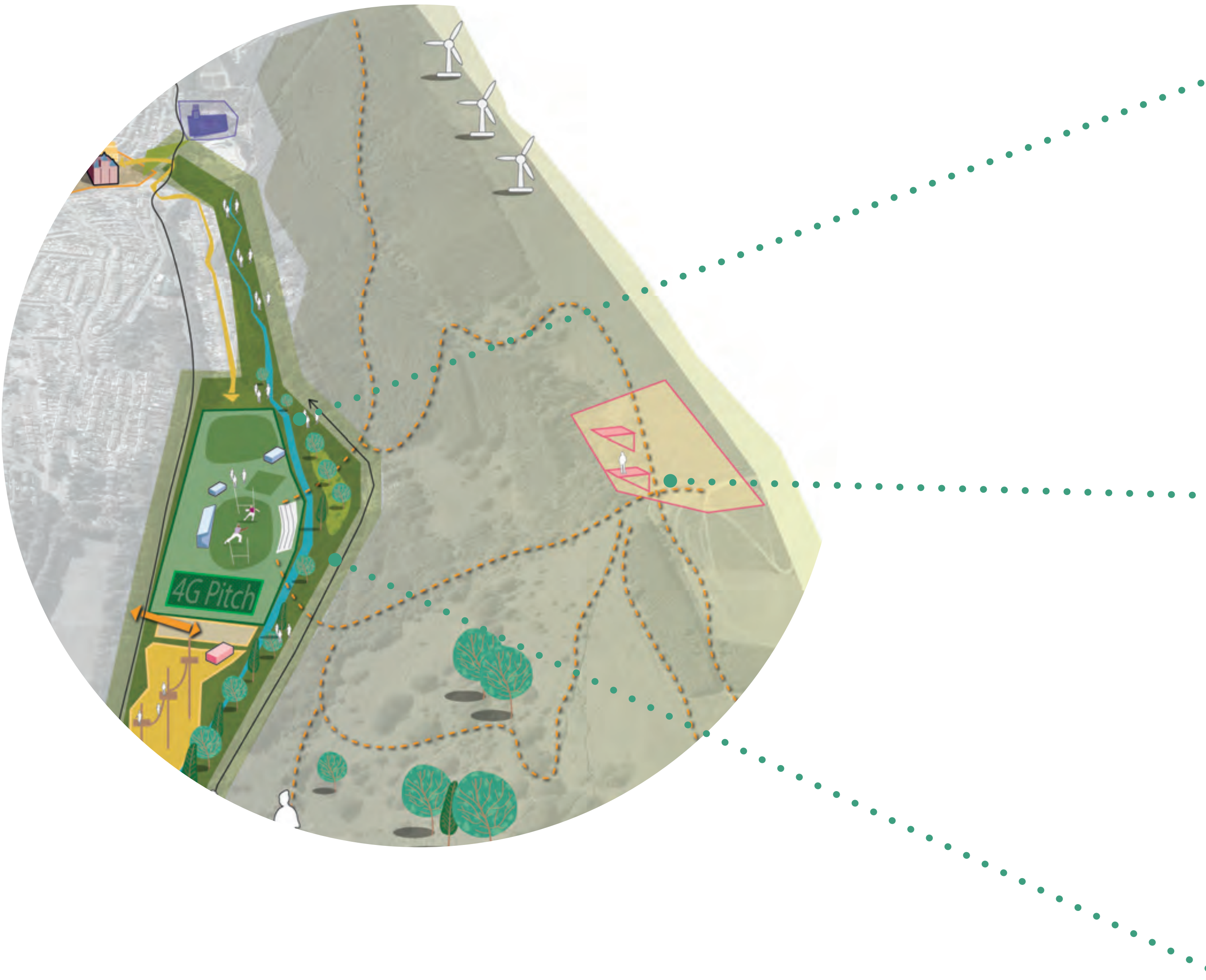
4. NEW DESTINATION

52. GoApe, Alexandra Palace

Attract new users and provide for existing park users through the creation of:

- A new Adventure park to attract new users (subject to feasibility)
- Potential new park access to the north side of the park and new arrival area
- New cafe space
- Customer experience focus - A outdoor dog wash and bike wash
- Creation of new social groups based around activities within the park and landscape

Abertillery Destination Park



53. Wyre Forest Dog Wash

54. Incredible Edible UK

55. Blaenavon Totem

56. River Ebbw adjacent to the park

5. EBBW RIVER

Increasing the prominence and connection to the Ebbw River by:

- Nature based solutions around the river to clean polluted water at source and slow its flow
- Where possible, daylighting the river and providing greater access to the water
- Greater connection between the river and the park to provide better integration
- Explore feasibility for micro-hydro to support the sports clubs utility costs

57. Blaenavon Totem

6. VIEWS

Linking to other park initiatives such as the new walking and cycling, there is the opportunity to celebrate the landscape through the inclusion and marking of:

- Viewpoints over the landscape of Abertillery
- Wayfinding markers such as totems which can link back to the town branding and celebrate moments in history from Abertillery

58. West Gorton, Manchester

7. NATURE BASED PLAY

Encouraging younger people to engage with nature and live active lifestyles by:

- Strategising with local schools to encourage use of the park.
- Providing space for natural play
- Outdoor classrooms for links to education
- Initiatives such as Incredible Edible UK

CASE STUDY:

WELCOME TO OUR WOODS RHONDDA

A community partnership set up to make local resources more accessible and useful to the local community, and wider region. This is achieved by a new destination park with funding and governance model. Bottom up/top down sustainability that joins the dots between landscape, town and community.

The work done by the partnership has three key elements of focus on:

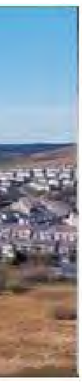
- Health and Wellbeing
- Skills and Jobs
- Poverty

The partnership secured first round funding from the National Lottery Community Fund - Climate Action Fund.

The project:

- Was initiated by local community
- Learned from elsewhere - Scotland
- Has a dedicated website
- Aligns to funding, delivery and operations

SKYLINE PROJECT:



PAY AS YOU FEEL CAFE:

MICRO HYDRO PROJECT:

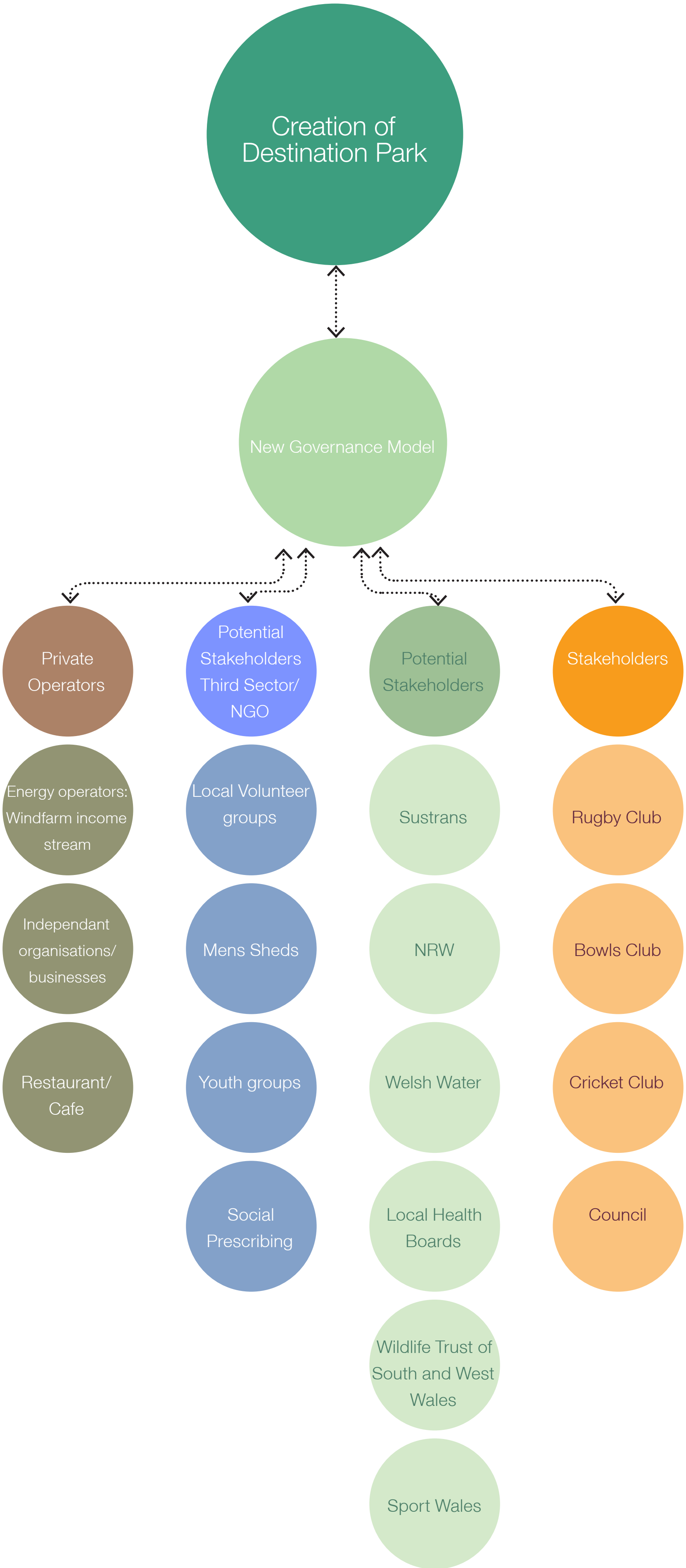
59. “Welcome to the Woods” Web page

A NEW FORM OF GOVERNANCE

Existing stakeholders are playing an essential role in ensuring that key sports facilities remain operational. To realise the potential of the park, these stakeholders will need to be bolstered and partnered with a new cohort of individuals and groups.

Linking with new partners can facilitate private investment, new uses, greater footfall and revenue generation. These mutually beneficial relationships can lead to fresh ideas towards turning Abertillery Park into a flexible and resilient destination which is a significant community asset.

A potential list of organisations and stakeholders its outlines overleaf. This list is not definitive, but illustrates the scale of opportunity and diversity in organisations of which can be brought on board for the future next step of the park.


Creation of Destination Park
New Governance Model
Private Operators
Potential Stakeholders Third Sector/ NGO
Potential Stakeholders
Stakeholders
Energy operators: Windfarm income stream
Local Volunteer groups
Sustrans
Rugby Club
Independant organisations/ businesses
Mens Sheds
NRW
Bowls Club
Restaurant/ Cafe
Youth groups
Welsh Water
Cricket Club
Social Prescribing
Local Health Boards
Council
Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales
Sport Wales

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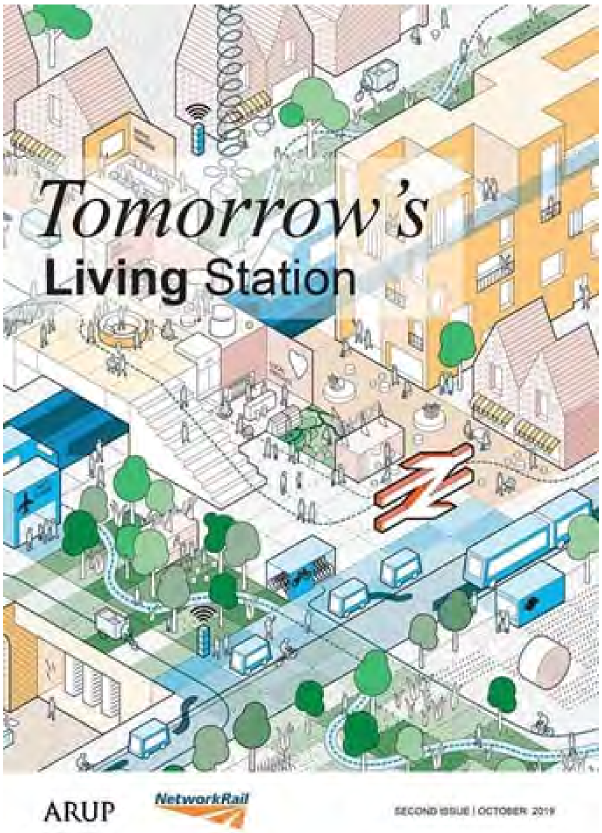
4.6 Key move 3 - Future Rail Station

The new proposed rail link at the "Former Lo-Cost Site" which will connect Abertillery to the Ebbw Vale rail line is a significant opportunity for improved public transport.

The station must be integrated with the town via clear, safe and direct links. It must also be connected seamlessly to local buses and active travel routes, to offer a viable alternative to car travel.

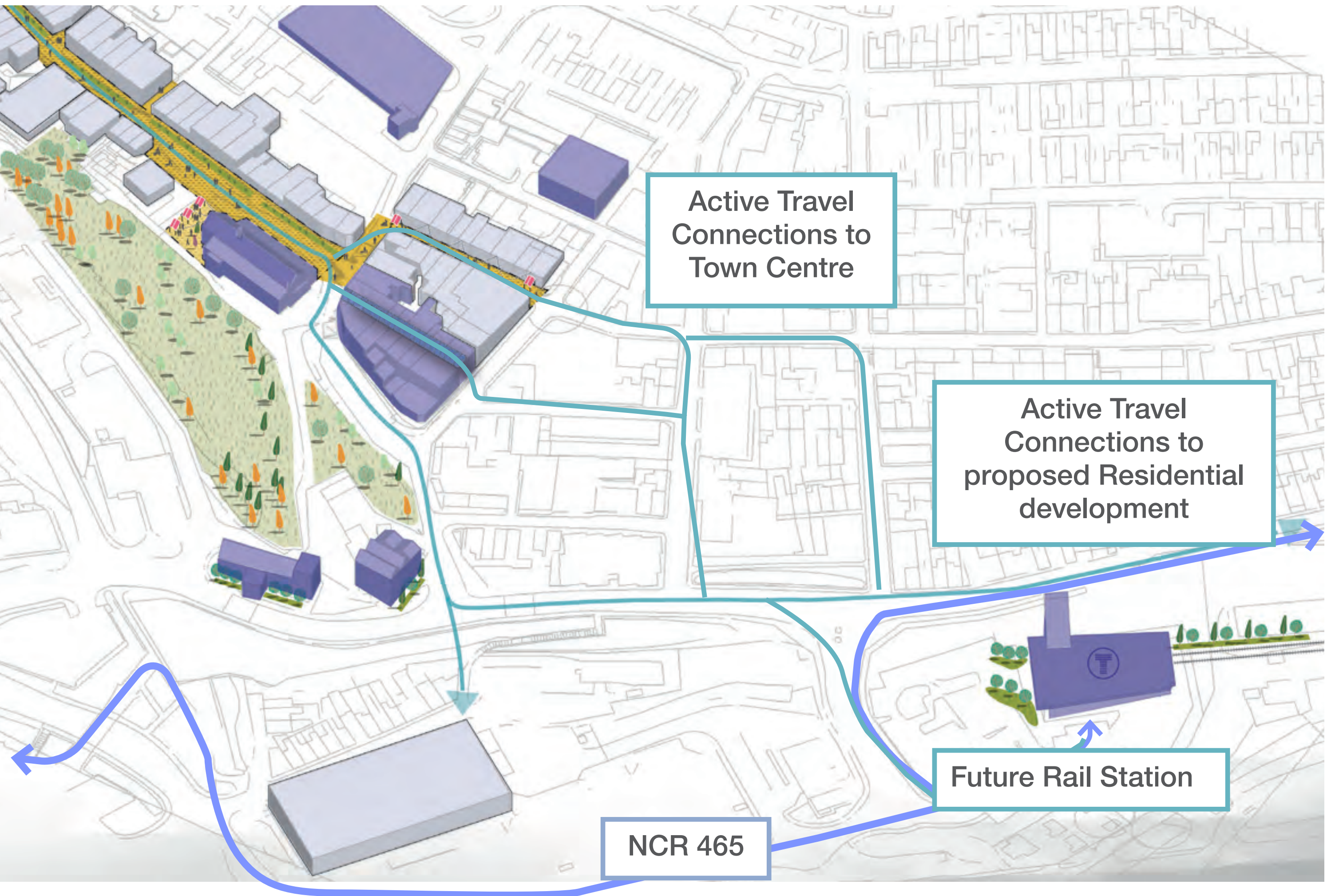
The design of the station area should be focused on contributing to the overall character of Abertillery and improving the sense of place. The Arup publication 'Tomorrows Living Station' provides a blueprint for integrating stations into the surrounding area whilst delivering multiple benefits such as green infrastructure, community cohesion and local economic prosperity.

BGCBC are currently working with TfW to ensure Active Travel improvements are delivered as part of the wider rail scheme and linking to the ongoing work on improvements to the active travel route between Blaina and Abertillery Recreation Park.



60. "Tomorrow's Living Station" Arup Publication

61. Tilburg Station, Netherlands. High quality public space and interchange



5.1 Phasing & Delivery Summary

DELIVERY AND PHASING

A delivery plan has been developed, as a separate document, to support this placemaking plan.

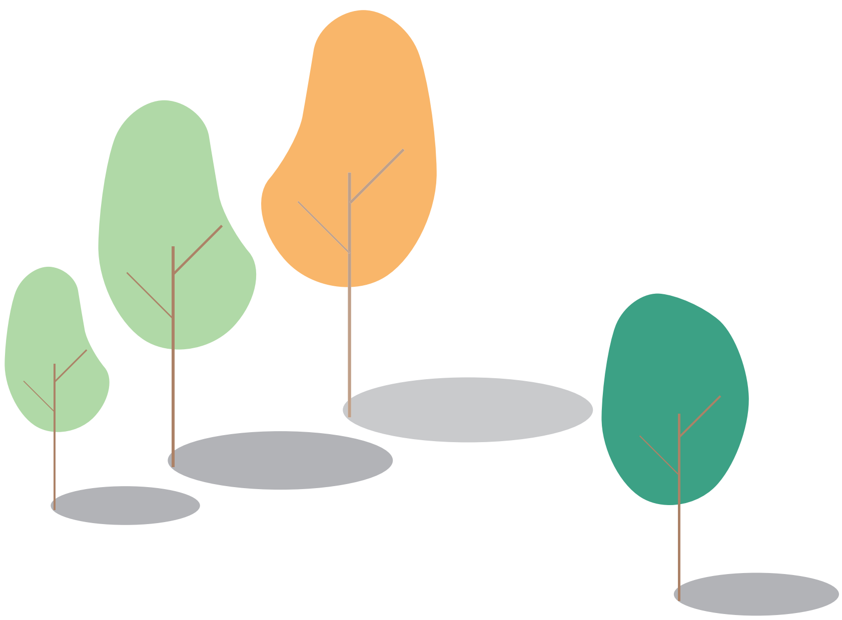
This articulates the case for investment in Abertillery and sets out clear and deliverable actions to move the plan forward. For each identified project, a set of key actions and overall delivery plans has been developed.

To support delivery of the projects, and the next step actions associated with each, there are several potential sources of funding available. These are summarised in the delivery plan, and include:

- Shared prosperity fund (UK Government): £585 million of funding allocated to help spread opportunity and level up Wales, with three investment priorities – Community & Place, Supporting Local Business, and People & Skills (approx. £28M of which is ringfenced for Blaenau Gwent).
- Levelling Up Fund: £4.8 billion fund supporting town centre and high street regeneration, local transport projects, and cultural and heritage assets.
- Transforming Towns: supports projects to redevelop and improve town centres.
- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal: a £495M Wider Investment Fund aimed at priority investment areas of innovation, infrastructure and challenge.
- National Lottery Heritage Fund: provides funding for heritage projects at range of scales (from £3,000 to £5M), prioritising projects that meet outcomes of involving people, resilience, wellbeing, skills, local economy and creating better places.

Alongside seeking grant funding support, there are several other sources of funding for delivery of the identified projects, including private investor funding using key partners to support delivery of specific projects e.g. The Arcade.

There could be an opportunity to consider a Business Improvement District (BID) in Abertillery. This would need further investigation, and exploration with the business community before implementation.



6.1 Conclusion & Next Steps

This plan identified a clear necessity for a placemaking plan that uses the power of the community to drive change. This grass roots approach puts the community at the heart of change. The following conclusions are offered:

CONTINUATION WITH THE COMMUNITY

The plan will need to work for people of all ages. Young people in particular are often overlooked. The plan offers a wide range of opportunities for young people to mitigate issues of anti social behaviour. Abertillery Park, Jubilee Square, The Arcade and potential teenage markets offer new spaces and places for young people to become involved in meaningful activities that can and should be aligned to broader strategies to improve physical and mental well-being and entrepreneurship.

QUICK, DECISIVE ACTION

For the first phase projects or "quick wins" it is vital that these are actioned and implemented immediately by the Council to gain community buy in. The plan and project sets the foundation for a new cohesive relationship between the Council and community stakeholders.

TEST, TRIAL. ASSESS

Many of the projects within this plan suggest a test and trial approach. This is to assess a project's success and build support prior to expensive permanent interventions. Testing and trialling also allows different interventions to be implemented to create an early impact and to change the perception of areas and how they can possibly used, such as the multi-storey car park.

BE AMBITIOUS

This plan has strong ambitions for Abertillery and successful implementation will require a positive attitude towards the potential that Abertillery has.

This is especially important during the early phases of implementation when momentum has yet to be built.

BUILD ON SUCCESS

There are projects already in creation within Abertillery (for example the library project) and this plan looks to build on these successes. This plan should not be seen as an end state but projects should be continuously assessed and discussed as to how to evolve them and to keep improving Abertillery.

NEXT STEPS

Outlined below are a number of next steps towards the delivery of this plan and where to begin to build momentum and get projects off the ground and into reality.

QUICK WINS

Implementation of the quick wins strategy should start immediately. Especially for areas council have control over such as the cleaning strategy for Church Street.

CONTINUE ENGAGEMENT

Engagement should continue with stakeholders and the public, not just for their thoughts on the plan but also to get them involved with the projects and make them part of the change within Abertillery.

FEASIBILITY

A number of the larger projects such as Abertillery Park and ownership of the Arcade will need feasibility studies to establish full costs to align with a Business Case in order to achieve funding from the appropriate funding stream identified within the delivery plan.

POP-UPS AND TEMPORARY USES

Engaging with the businesses on Somerset Street to facilitate temporary closure should be quickly put into place.

The trial for extending opening times for the multi-storey car park has also begun. The surrounding community should be continually engaged with starting now to obtain feedback on its success, but also to address any issues or concerns that may be raised.

CELEBRATE THE PLAN

The plan aims to support Abertillery and build on its strengths and opportunities. Generating excitement around the plan and the projects in the pipeline will help to stimulate positivity and build momentum for change.

Communicating the positive chagnes that are to happen and the benefits to the community will help to shift public perception and build on the pride within the town.

ARUP

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

Cabinet and Council only
Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A
Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee:	**Place Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting:	**17th October 2023**
Report Subject:	**Forward Work Programme: 5th December 2023**
Portfolio Holder:	**Cllr Helen Cunningham, Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member Place and Environment** **Cllr John C Morgan, Cabinet Member Place and Regeneration**
Report Submitted by:	**Scrutiny and Democratic Officer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	**Corporate Leadership Team**	**Portfolio Holder / Chair**	**Audit Committee**	**Democratic Services Committee**	**Scrutiny Committee**	**Cabinet**	**Council**	**Other (please state)**
x	x	09.10.23			17.10.23			

1. **Purpose of the Report**

1.1 To present to Members the Place Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 5th December 2023 for discussion and agreement.

2. **Scope and Background**

2.1 The Scrutiny Work Programmes are key aspects of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and support the requirements of the Constitution.

2.2 The topics set out in the Forward Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's revised Corporate Plan, corporate documents and supporting business plans.

2.3 Effective work programmes are essential to ensure that the work of scrutiny makes a positive impact upon the Council's delivery of services.

2.4 The Committee's Forward Work Programme was agreed in September 2023, 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 agree the Forward Programme for the meeting 5th December 2023, as presented.

3.2 **Option 2:** The Scrutiny Committee consider the Forward Work Programme for the meeting 5th December 2023, 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.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme – Meeting on 5th December 2023

Place Scrutiny Committee

Forward Work Programme

Dates	Scrutiny Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Cabinet / Council
Meeting: 5th December 2023 Deadline: 21st November 2023	Waste and Recycling Fleet Renewal	**Pre-Decision** To consider the report and recommend to Cabinet.	Matthew Stent	Cabinet
	Community Asset Transfer	**Performance Monitoring** To provide progress to date on the Community Asset Transfer.	Clive Rogers	Cabinet
	Disabled Adaptations – Quarter 2 2022/23	**Performance Monitoring** To provide quarterly update to Members.	Dave Thompson Mark Congreve	Cabinet

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