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

THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

28th November 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Place Scrutiny Committee will be an Hybrid Meeting to be held via MS Teams and in the Sir William Firth Room at the General Offices, Ebbw Vale on Tuesday, 5th December, 2023 at 9.30 am.

Yours faithfully

Damien McCann
Interim Chief Executive

AGENDA

Pages

1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

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

2. APOLOGIES

To receive.

Mae'r Cyngor 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. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS**
- To receive.
4. **PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** 3 - 6
- To consider the decisions of the meeting held on 17th October 2023.
- (N.B. The decisions are submitted for accuracy points only).*
5. **ACTION SHEET** 7 - 10
- To receive.
6. **ADOPTION OF LITTER & DOG BIN POLICY** 11 - 66
- To consider the report of the Team Manager, Street Scene.
7. **DISABLED FACILITIES ADAPTATIONS (DFG'S) – QUARTER 2 – BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT** 67 - 84
- To consider the report of the Team Manager, Housing Solutions.
8. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 16TH JANUARY 2024** 85 - 88
- To receive.

To: Councillor M. Cross (Chair)
 Councillor R. Leadbeater (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor S. Behr
 Councillor K. Chaplin
 Councillor G. A. Davies
 Councillor J. Gardner
 Councillor W. Hodgins
 Councillor L. Parsons
 Councillor D. Rowberry

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

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

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

SUBJECT: PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17TH OCTOBER, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M. CROSS (CHAIR)

Councillors R. Leadbeater
S. Behr
K. Chaplin
G. Davies
J. Gardener
J. Holt (Sub: L. Parsons)
W. Hodgins

WITH: Interim Chief Executive
Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services
Chief Officer Resources
Head of Community Services
Service Manager Neighbourhood Services
Service Manager Business Regeneration
Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities
Team Leader (IFS) Waste Compliance & Development
Team Leader (IFS) Waste Operations
Team Manager Frontline Enforcement
Policy Officer Policy, Partnerships & Engagement
Communications and Marketing Officer
Scrutiny and Democratic Officer

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

No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Councillor L. Parsons.</p>
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declaration of interest was raised:-</p> <p><u>No. 8 – Abertillery Placemaking Plan</u> Councillor J. Holt, Trustee of Abertillery Institute</p>
No. 4	<p><u>PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the decisions of the meeting held on 4th September, 2023.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the action sheet.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and the action sheet be noted.</p>
No. 6	<p><u>CLIMATE CHANGE, NET ZERO ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Chief Executive.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and the Committee considered the progress made and supported the report. (Option 1).</p>
No. 7	<p><u>WASTE AND RECYCLING ANNUAL PERFORMANCE 2022-23</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Neighbourhood Services.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and the information provided be noted (Option 1).</p>

No. 8	<u>ABERTILLERY PLACEMAKING PLAN</u>
	<p>Consideration be given to the report of the Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities.</p>
	<p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and endorsed the Abertillery Placemaking Plan, its vision and core ambitions for the future. This would 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. (Option 2).</p>
No. 9	<u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 5TH DECEMBER 2023</u>
	<p>Consideration was given to the report.</p>
	<p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and the Scrutiny Committee agreed the Forward Programme for the meeting 5th December 2023, as presented. (Option 1).</p>

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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	<p>Item 5: Action Sheet Tai Calon to be approached to consider revisiting the development of an information leaflet for Tai Calon residents.</p> <p>Information for members to be provided in relation to which areas are Tai Calon's responsibility to maintain, e.g for grass cutting.</p> <p>Insurance Claims – Highways: A member enquired what was the insurance quoted for the Council in order for the premium to remain at £100k.</p>	<p>Matthew Stent</p> <p>Matthew Stent</p> <p>Matthew Stent</p>	<p>Tai Calon has been approached to discuss and it is unlikely that they will be producing any such documents at this time for members of the public or Elected Members of the Council Actions Complete: 17.10.23</p> <p>Confidential Email circulated to Members of the Committee on 17th October 2023. Action Complete: 17.10.23</p>
05.09.23	<p>Item 7: Community Services and Regeneration Directorate Performance End of Year report 2022/23</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Members to receive feedback on the findings of the research once available.</p>	<p>Amy Taylor</p> <p>Amy Taylor</p>	<p>The team are going to undertake research and engage with solar car port providers and feedback on the findings will be provided to Members. Action Update: 05.10.23</p>

Date of Meeting	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
	<p>Housing Development: Lower Ebbw Fach Valley: Clarification was sought on the data provided.</p>	Owen Ashton	<p>Housing site being referred to in the report was the Abertillery old Leisure Centre site for 22 homes – the Planning application has been received and once progressed we will work with the developer to bring to fruition. Action Complete: 17.10.23</p>
	<p>Six Bells Colliery: Members enquired who was the interested Registered Social Landlord.</p>	Owen Ashton	<p>Interested Registered Social Landlord is Melin Homes. Action Complete: 17.10.23</p>
	<p>Former Nantyglo School: Update on project to be provided and any timescales.</p>	Owen Ashton	<p>In the process of inviting expressions of interest from potential developers and this will be submitted by the end of this month, then we will be reviewing the expressions of interest returned before Christmas and that will give an opportunity for us to consider what types of proposals for development, to maximise the social and economic benefits of developing that site from a housing perspective. Action Complete: 17.10.23</p>
	<p>Improving Well-being and Resilience in Our Communities: TVR: Officer to liaise with Welsh Government to provide an update on the project for members.</p>	Moe Forouzan	<p>Officer has written to Welsh Government and awaiting a formal response from senior relationship managers. Action Update: 22.11.23</p>

Date of Meeting	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
17.10.23	<p>Item 6: Climate Change, Net Zero Annual Report 2022/23 <i>Page 8 of Appendix 1 – Natural Gas Heating data – information to be provided in relation to the large reduction in figures.</i></p>	Damien McCann / Daniel Wheelock	<p><i>Contribution of Civic Centre to heating carbon reduction?</i> The fall over last 3 years in carbon from heating is 430 tonnes CO₂, the Civic Centre heating footprint was 148 tonnes CO₂ in 19/20. So Civic Centre closure is responsible for 34% of the decrease. There have been some other building closures/transfers that have also contributed to overall reduction, but Civic Centre is by far the largest.</p> <p><i>Impact of homeworking on commuting emissions, why are reductions quite limited?</i> As of the Net Zero Report we had 2,279 full-time equivalent staff, of these 154 full-time equivalent classed as home workers (counted as 100% reduction in commute journeys) and 669 full-time equivalent agile workers (50% commute journey reduction). The figures reflect that half of staff are schools based where home and agile working very limited (in addition to significant number of non-school roles that cannot do home or agile working), also typically school based staff tend to travel farther to work which further reduces the carbon savings compared to the raw staff numbers. That is why carbon reduction from commuting is only 11.5% and even during peak of COVID was only 33%.</p>

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Agenda Item 6

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: **5th December 2023**
Report Subject: **Adoption of Litter & Dog Bin Policy**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Helen Cunningham – Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member – Place & Environment**
Report Submitted by: **David Watkins – Team Manager - Street Scene**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
14/11/23	16/11/23	23.11.23			05/12/23	03.01.24		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report is to seek support from Scrutiny Committee for the adoption of a new Council Litter Bin Policy as identified within the outcome objectives of the Fly-Tipping Strategy 2021-2026.
- 1.2 The Litter bin policy is applicable to litter, recycling and dog waste bins, and the term 'bins' refers to any of these.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 This report provides information on the rationale, relevance, and benefit that a Litter Bin policy would have to support the Council in the effective, efficient, and consistent operational management of litter across the County Borough.
- 2.2 As a result of being awarded Welsh Government funding through the Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) "Caru Cymru" scheme, the Council appointed an independent consultant in 2020 to support the drafting of an objective Litter & Fly Tipping Strategy for Council to consider for adoption.
- 2.3 Following a thorough and diligent process, including a service review and consultation with ward members and all stakeholders affected by the impact of litter and fly tipping, the Litter and Fly Tipping Strategy 2021-2026 (appendix 1) was formally adopted by Council in April 2021.
- 2.4 The strategy outlined a number of key objectives that would deliver recognised environmental improvements to ensure Blaenau Gwent realises the shared vision *"To radically reduce litter and fly-tipping so we can improve our natural habitats as well as our wild and urban landscapes, increasing pride and awareness of our local heritage and desire to keep it litter free."*

- 2.5 To achieve the objections and realise the shared vision, an operational Strategy Action Plan (appendix 2) was included that set out key actions to be undertaken during the lifespan of the strategy 2021-2026, these are set out under four themes, as follows.
- Influence
 - Engage
 - Adopt Best Practice
 - Empower
- 2.6 The timelines associated with the key actions within the action plan are set out as follows.
- short-term – one to two years
 - medium-term – two to three years, and,
 - long-term – three to five years
- 2.7 Within the short-term timeline of “Adopt Best Practice” was the implementation of a Litter Bin Policy and protocol to allow for a more efficient, effective, and consistent approach to the management of the council’s litter bin stock. Unfortunately, this has been delayed primarily because of the Covid pandemic.
- 2.8 Subsequently, a Litter bin policy has been drafted (appendix 1) that, sets out the procedures and requirements for the installation and maintenance of new bins, and the replacement and refurbishment of existing bins. It also looks at the protocol for responding to requests for bins.
- 2.9 The scoring matrix within the proposed policy will allow for a far more efficient and consistent method of assessing bin requests that will result in a successful or unsuccessful outcome.
- 2.10 Currently the Council has 622 litter bins and 491 dog waste bins at various locations across the County Borough. The cost to install or replace a bin on average costs £275.00 each. Between April 2022 to November 2023 there were 114 requests for a bin to be replaced or an additional bin to be installed. There are currently 63 outstanding requests to be actioned on the system. The allocated annual budget for a damaged bin replacement or requests for a new bin at a new site is approximately £12,000.
- 2.10 The scoring matrix has separate categories, each allowing for a score to be appropriately allocated:
- Street Cleaning Zone (NB covers tourist hotspots and lay-bys) as defined with the National Code of Practice on Litter & Refuse (2006)
 - Proximity to existing bins – How far is the nearest bin
 - Proximity to facilities – Schools, shops, takeaways, bus stops, sport, and public facilities.

- Number of requests for de-littering received within six months.
- Number of requests for a bin received within a six-month period.

2.11 The total overall score is compared to a threshold table that determines the success of the request:

Score	Outcome
0-40	Unsuccessful
41-79	Successful

The matrix methodology allows for objective assessments that removes any ambiguity.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1 (preferred)**

To support the adoption of the proposed Litter Bin policy as attached at appendix 1.

3.2 **Option 2**

Not to support the adoption of the proposed Litter Bin policy.

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

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

Benefits

- Adoption of the Litter and Fly-tipping Strategy has seen Blaenau Gwent as one of only two Local Authorities in Wales to have a specific litter and fly-tipping strategy providing a strategic direction that supports its aim to improve the local environment quality to the benefit of the community.
- As detailed with 2.7 the proposed policy supports the Litter & Fly Tipping Strategy outcome objectives to “Adopt Best Practice.”
- With increasing budgets pressures, the proposed policy will allow for more efficient and effective management of the councils Litter bins stock.
- Utilising the consistency of the scoring matrix with the policy, the proposal will remove the existing ambiguity and subjective nature of the existing process of allocating new bins.

Dis-benefits

- Initial Challenges on Decision, particularly where threshold scores are near to threshold barrier.

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

- 5.1.1 The service reviews and subsequent Litter and Fly Tipping Strategy has been funded by Welsh Government.
- 5.1.2 It is anticipated that the policy will be delivered within existing revenue resources.
- 5.1.3 The budget allocation for the replacement of is £12,000.

5.2 *Risk including Mitigating Actions*

Risks Option 1

- Challenges to decisions made on litter bin allocation.
 - if approved, the policy would allow consistent justification against challenges made.

Risks Option 2

- Budget pressures on existing budget with no policy to support decision making.
- Inconsistent approach across borough
- Not support the outcome aims of the Litter & Fly tipping strategy.
- The council would have no strategic document to use as a basis for securing external funding opportunities.

5.3 *Legal*

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

5.4 *Human Resources*

NA

5.5 *Health and Safety*

6. *Supporting Evidence*

6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

Littering across all local authorities in Wales is monitored through the Welsh Government's Local Environment Audit and Management System (LEAMS). LEAMS records two issues in the street scene environment.

Firstly, street cleanliness and secondly it records Adverse Environmental Quality Indicators (AEQI) - this would include flyposting, graffiti, dog fouling, vandalism, weeds, and detritus. Audits have been published on an annual basis since 2007.

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

6.2.1 Public consultations and litter champion surveys have identified that the impact of litter has a detrimental impact of the perception of the local environment. With the adoption of the Litter and Fly Tipping Strategy the outcome aims and policies of the strategy will put systems in place to improve the environment to the benefit of the whole community.

6.2.2 As one of the short-term outcome gains in adopting best practice, the community will benefit from a fair, consistent, and transparent decision-making process.

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

Extensive consultation was undertaken through a Street Cleansing review to provide the necessary information needed in the drafting of the Strategy, and its subsequent outcome aims including the proposed litter and dog bin policy. This included engagement with the following:

- Elected Blaenau Gwent Member Engagement
- Keep Wales Tidy
- Litter Champions
- External partners/Community Groups
- Welsh Government
- Departmental officers

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

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

6.4.2 The litter and dog bin policy has been identified as one of the key actions within the short term “adopt best practice” element of the strategy.

6.4.3 As detailed in 2.7 the policy will allow for a more efficient, effective, and consistent long-term approach to the management of the council’s litter bin stock.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

6.5.1 During the preparatory process of the strategy the appointed consultant undertook a fundamental review of the Street Cleansing service.

- The findings of the review formed the basis of the strategy and identified the key objectives, and actions including the adoption of

the litter and dog bin policy as a means to adopting best practice to meet the needs of the community in an efficient manner.

- There will be a need both corporately and operationally to adopt to adapt to the proposed changes to ensure it is fit and fair for residents, visitors and sustainable going forward.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working.***

6.6.1 As detailed in 6.3 extensive collaboration and consultation was undertaken in the preparation of the strategy that resulted in one of the key outcome objectives being the implementation of a litter and dog bin policy.

6.6.2 There are opportunities to work with other internal service areas, housing associations, community groups, local businesses and keep Wales tidy to work in collaboration to achieve the objectives of the policy across the borough.

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

The content of this report has been considered across several services including: Education, Environmental Services, Community Services, and Community Safety.

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

6.8.1 The policy will allow for bins to be allocated more effectively and has the opportunity for operational practices to be more efficient in how fleet vehicles are used to service the bins.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)***

Attached appendix 4.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The policy will be monitored through Scrutiny and the Executive with performance reports being submitted together with analysing the annual LEAMS report being submitted.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Attached to this report:

- Appendix 1 – Draft Litter and Dog Bin Policy
- Appendix 2 - Litter Strategy 2021-2026
- Appendix 3 – Litter Strategy Action Plan 2021-2026
- Appendix 4 - IIA

Appendix 1



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Litter & Dog Bin Policy

Litter & Dog Bin Policy

Blaenau Gwent Borough Council is the designated Litter Authority in Blaenau Gwent as set out in the Environmental Protection Act 1990. In this capacity, the Environment Directorate has responsibility for maintaining an acceptable level of cleanliness, installing, emptying and maintaining litter and dog waste bins, on streets, in green spaces and parks for which it is accountable.

Unless specified otherwise in this document, the supply, installation, maintenance, emptying, replacement or refurbishment of bins on land for which Blaenau Gwent CBC is accountable, is the responsibility of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

This policy sets out the procedures and requirements for the installation and maintenance of new bins, and the replacement and refurbishment of existing bins. It also looks in particular at the protocol for responding to requests for bins. This policy is applicable to litter, recycling and dog waste bins, and the term 'bins' refers to any of these.

The current BGCBC bin provision in place is as follows:

Bin Type	Quantity
Litter Bins	622
Dog Waste Bins	491

1. Requests and Requirements for New Bins

1.1 Origin of Requests

The installation of new bins will normally come about through one of three routes:

- requests from the public, or;
- requests from ward members, or;
- recognition from either Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council or its staff that additional bin facilities are required.

All requests must be made via the council's MCS (My Council Services) reporting system

As there are on-going staffing and financial resource implications with the installation of any new bin, due consideration should be given to all requests for bins, using a scoring system to determine need and suitability of locations. This scoring system is shown in Appendix 1, and will be followed for each request or requirement for a new bin. At the end of the assessment, the scores should be added up to give an overall score.

Prior to assessment, the suitability of location will be considered. If BGCBC deems the location to be unsuitable for reasons of safety, such as stopping to empty a bin, proximity to housing, or installation difficulties, it may be declined prior to scoring. An alternative location may be suggested.

Once a decision has been made by BGCBC regarding the outcome of a request for a bin, that decision will not be reviewed for a minimum of six months following the decision being made.

1.2 Relevant Land

Bins will only be supplied, installed, maintained or emptied if they are on land for which BGCBC Council has responsibility. This includes streets, parks, green spaces, but doesn't include schools, private land, or riverbanks.

The zones referred to in the scoring system (appendix 1) are as set out in the Environmental Protection Act 1990 Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse 2006, and relate to the level of use of areas

1.3 Preferred Style of Standard Bin Design

Where a request or requirement for a new bin has been deemed successful using the scoring system in Appendix 1, a new bin will be installed. This bin will, as far as practicable, be a standard design and style which is consistent across the Borough. However, alternative designs of bin may be supplied in special circumstances e.g. parks, town centre's. All bins must be approved by BGCBC prior to installation, and should include contact details for reporting problems with the bin

1.4 Timescales for Requests for Bins

Following any request for a new bin, irrespective of the origin of the request, consideration will be given to the request, following the scoring system in Appendix 1. This evaluation will be conducted by an appointed officer/s with a response made to the originator of the request within 10 working days of receipt of the request. Should a request be deemed successful, installation of the bin will be scheduled in for the completion by the operational crews.

1.5 Responsibility for Installation and Maintenance of Bins

BGCBC takes full responsibility (including costs) for the installation and maintenance (including cleaning and emptying) for all bins on land for which the Council is responsible.

1.5.1 Installation of bins on BGCBC Land

Third parties must not install bins on land for which BGCBC has responsibility.

1.5.2 Positioning of new bins

New free-standing bins should always be positioned out of the main line of travel or grouped with other existing street furniture, so that they do not present a collision hazard for people with sight loss or reduce the usable width of the footway for people using wheelchairs, mobility aids or guide dogs.

New post-mounted bins should not protrude into circulation space as a cane or guide dog could go underneath, leading their owner into the bin.

2. Maintenance of Bins

Over time, bins are subject to wear and tear, accidental or , willful damage and will need to be either refurbished or replaced. This section looks at the process for assessing the condition of bins, who should take responsibility for their replacement or refurbishment, and the associated timescales for action. It also considers the maintenance of bins, including cleaning.

Responsibility for Assessment, Replacement, Repair and Refurbishment of Bins
Bins which have been supplied, installed and emptied by BGCBC are included in the assessment, replacement, repair and refurbishment process.

2.1 Frequency of Assessment of the Condition of Bins

The condition of bins is surveyed regularly when being emptied/serviced by operational staff. This is set out according to the street cleaning zones laid out in the Environmental Protection Act 1990 Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse 2006.

As part of this policy, BGCBC is required to assess the condition of bins as follows:

2.2 Criteria for the Assessment of the Condition of Bins

During the regular assessment of bins, the following criteria should be used to determine the need for repair, refurbishment, or replacement. Photographic examples of these criteria are available in appendix 2.

2.2.1 Where a bin is deemed to have either of the following, no action to replace, repair or refurbish the bin should be taken:

- i. No damage, or
- ii. Reasonable wear and tear, but bin still fully functioning.

2.2.2 Where a bin is deemed to have any of the following, the bin should be repaired or refurbished where possible. If the extent of the damage is too severe to warrant repair or refurbishment, a replacement bin should be installed:

- i. Significant damage, compromising the function of the bin, or
- ii. Severe damage, causing complete loss of function of the bin.

If the outcome of the assessment using the criteria above indicates that a bin should be replaced, repaired or refurbished, action should be taken by BGCBC to refurbish, repair or replace that bin, as appropriate.

Regular monitoring of the decisions taken on the repair, refurbishment and replacement of bins will be carried out, in order to verify the validity of the decisions being made.

2.3 Repeated Vandalism

Where individual bins are repeatedly targeted with vandalism, a flexible approach to finding a suitable solution should be found. This may include using a different type of bin, moving the bin to a nearby location, or removing the bin entirely.

When the most appropriate solution is to move or remove the bin, consultation should be carried out with local people to ensure that they support the solution.

3. Removal of Existing Bins

If a member of the public, other interested party or BGCBC deems a bin to be no longer needed in a particular location, an assessment will be carried out in accordance with the details in Appendix 1.

If the assessment shows the bin to be in a suitable location, it will remain in place. If the assessment shows the bin to be in an unsuitable location, consultation will be carried out by BGCBC with local people to further determine the suitability of the location.

An alternative location can be suggested for the existing bin, and an assessment will be carried out against the scoring system for a new bin, and this will be proposed in the consultation with local people.

If this consultation shows that the bin is unsuitably located, it will be removed entirely, or moved to an approved alternative location.

4. Consultation

This policy does not suggest public consultation on the installation of bins in general. However, in some circumstances, it is recommended, such as when bins are proposed in close proximity to houses.

5. Authorised Officer

Final decisions on all matters relating to bins, as outlined in this document, will be the responsibility of the Council's Authorised Officer. This is the Head of Environmental Services, or their nominated representative.

Bin Installation Scoring System

Each request or requirement for a new bin should be assessed using the scoring system below.

Category	Options	Score
Street cleaning zone (NB covers tourist hotspots and lay-bys)	Zone 1 – High intensity of use, such as busy public areas	10
	Zone 2 – Medium intensity of use, such as residential areas	5
	Zone 3 – Low intensity of use, such as rural roads	1
	Zone 4 – Areas with special circumstances, such as health and safety issues (Highway carriage ways where Chapter 8 regs are applicable)	0
Proximity to existing bins	>300m to any bins	10
	<200m to 1 bin	5
	<100m to more than 1 bin	0
Proximity to facilities	<100m to schools	5
	<50m to take away outlets	10
	<50m to shops	5
	<100m to sports facilities	2
	<50m to bus stops	2
	<100m to other public facilities such as pub, church, community centre	2
Number of requests for de-littering received within six months	0	0
	1-2	2
	3-5	5
	6-10	10
	Over 11	12
Number of requests for a bin received within a six-month period	1	0
	2-10	10
	11-50	15
	51 or over	20

Note: If request has come from a Councillor, add 10 points

The overall score should be compared to the thresholds shown in the table below, to determine the success of the request.

Score	Outcome
0 – 40	Unsuccessful
41 - 79	Successful

Appendix 2

Assessment Criteria for the Replacement or Refurbishment of bins

Where a bin is deemed to have either of the following, no action to replace, repair or refurbish the bin should be taken:

1. No damage
2. Reasonable wear and tear, but bin still fully functioning

Example 1 below:



Example 1

Where a bin is deemed to have any of the following, the bin should be repaired or refurbished where possible. If the extent of the damage is too severe to warrant repair or refurbishment, a replacement bin should be installed:

1. Significant damage, compromising the function of the bin (example 2)
2. Severe damage, causing complete loss of function of the bin (example 3)



Example 2



Example 3

LITTER & FLY-TIPPING STRATEGY 2021-2026



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

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

Red & White Resource

FOREWORD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Joanna Wilkins

Executive Member - Environment - Councillor Joanna Wilkins

July 2021

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VISION

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

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

POLICY CONTEXT



613
REPORTS
OF LITTER
IN BLAENAU
GWENT
IN 2019

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

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

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

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



WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

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

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

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



THE COST OF LITTERING AND FLY-TIPPING

Littering is an offence that costs the people of Wales in excess of £70 million per annum². Litter, fly-tipping, dog fouling and fly-posting blight the local environment to such an extent that it can influence people's choice of where to live, affect their health and well-being and have a severe impact on the local wildlife and environment.

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



MEASURING LITTER

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

²Welsh Government, Litter, May 2013, [accessed 7 June 2017]

02 VISION & OBJECTIVES

CORE VALUES OF THE COUNCIL

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has a vision for **“Proud Heritage - Strong Communities - Brighter Future”** The Corporate Plan³ has taken this vision and created five core values that inform this Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy.



VISION

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

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

³Blaenau Gwent Corporate Plan Priorities 2020-22

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

KEY OBJECTIVES

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

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



DEMOGRAPHY & POPULATION

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

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

With 2.2% of the Welsh population, Blaenau Gwent has almost 69,000 residents. Almost three quarters of the working-age population of Blaenau Gwent are economically active. The economy of the area is driven by the service industry⁴ however, significant investment, a framework for regeneration and support from the Welsh Government⁵ will provide a platform for the area to develop a greater skilled workforce that can compete in the current climate.

⁴PMP Recruitment, Regional Profile for Ebbw Vale and Blaenau Gwent
⁵www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/story/news/the-economic-future-of-blaenau-gwent-first-minister-confirms-support/, June 2020

IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT



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

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

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



04 CURRENT SERVICES & STANDARDS

RESOURCES EMPLOYED

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

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

The strategy sets out how the council maintains and improves standards of cleanliness across Blaenau Gwent with the available resources. In addition, whilst large amounts of litter and fly-tipping is collected, very little is currently recycled, despite the fact almost half of the Litter Champions surveyed reported they do regularly recycle some of the litter they collect⁶.



⁶Blaenau Gwent CBC Litter Champion Survey, February 2020

⁷Code of Practice on Litter & Refuse (2006)

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

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

MONITORING & PERFORMANCE



100%
OF STREETS
INSPECTED OF
AN ACCEPTABLE
LEAMS
STANDARD

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

The surveys are conducted across all zones as defined by the Code of Practice⁷ and adapted by the Council.

The National picture in Wales shows the All Wales Cleanliness Indicator Score continuing to improve year-on-year (surveys began in 2007). However, common everyday items such as fast food and smoking related litter continue to be found on many streets in Wales⁸, and Blaenau Gwent is no exception.

ZONE 01

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

ZONE 02

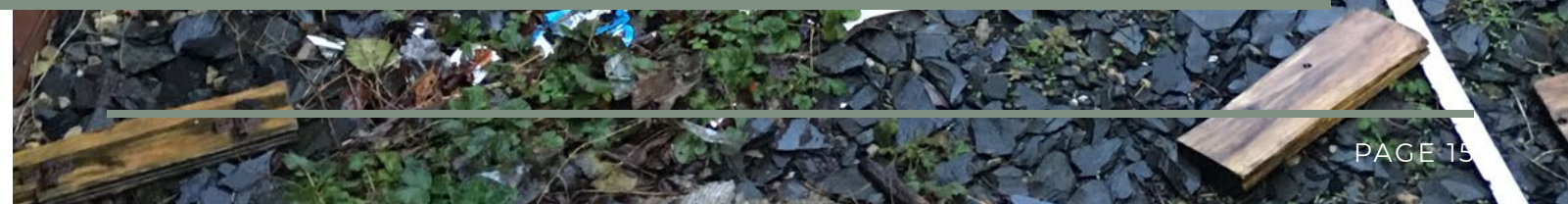
Terraced housing and flats.

ZONE 03

Detached and semi-detached housing and industrial estates.

The Cleanliness Indicator in Blaenau Gwent has continued to increase in recent years and have shown that the percentage of highway that is of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness has consistently been over 90% in the last three years with figures reaching 100% by the end of 2019-20⁹. In addition, whilst fly-tipping continues to be a problem in Blaenau Gwent, the time taken to collect the waste has reduced over the last year.

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



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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



**DAYS PER MONTH
LITTER CHAMPIONS
ARE COLLECTING**

LITTER BINS

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

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

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

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

A recent study looking at the composition of litter in Wales suggests up to 15% of litter could be captured by a DRS with around a third likely to fall within the EPR reforms¹⁰.

¹⁰ Composition analysis of litter waste in Wales, Welsh Government, June 2019

**OS
TACKLING
& FLY-TIPPING
LITTER**

Abertillery

CLEANING PRACTICES

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

622 TONNES OF LITTER COLLECTED ANNUALLY IN BLAENAU GWENT 

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

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

SERVICE EFFICIENCY

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

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



EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Keep Wales Tidy provides an excellent resource platform for schools across Wales. Recognising the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals agreed by World Leaders in 2015, the Eco-schools Wales programme includes an informative and innovative package on litter for Key Stage 2 children¹¹. Getting the message across to children of school age is an investment in time for future generations.

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

14
ECO-SCHOOLS
IN BLAENAU
GWENT 

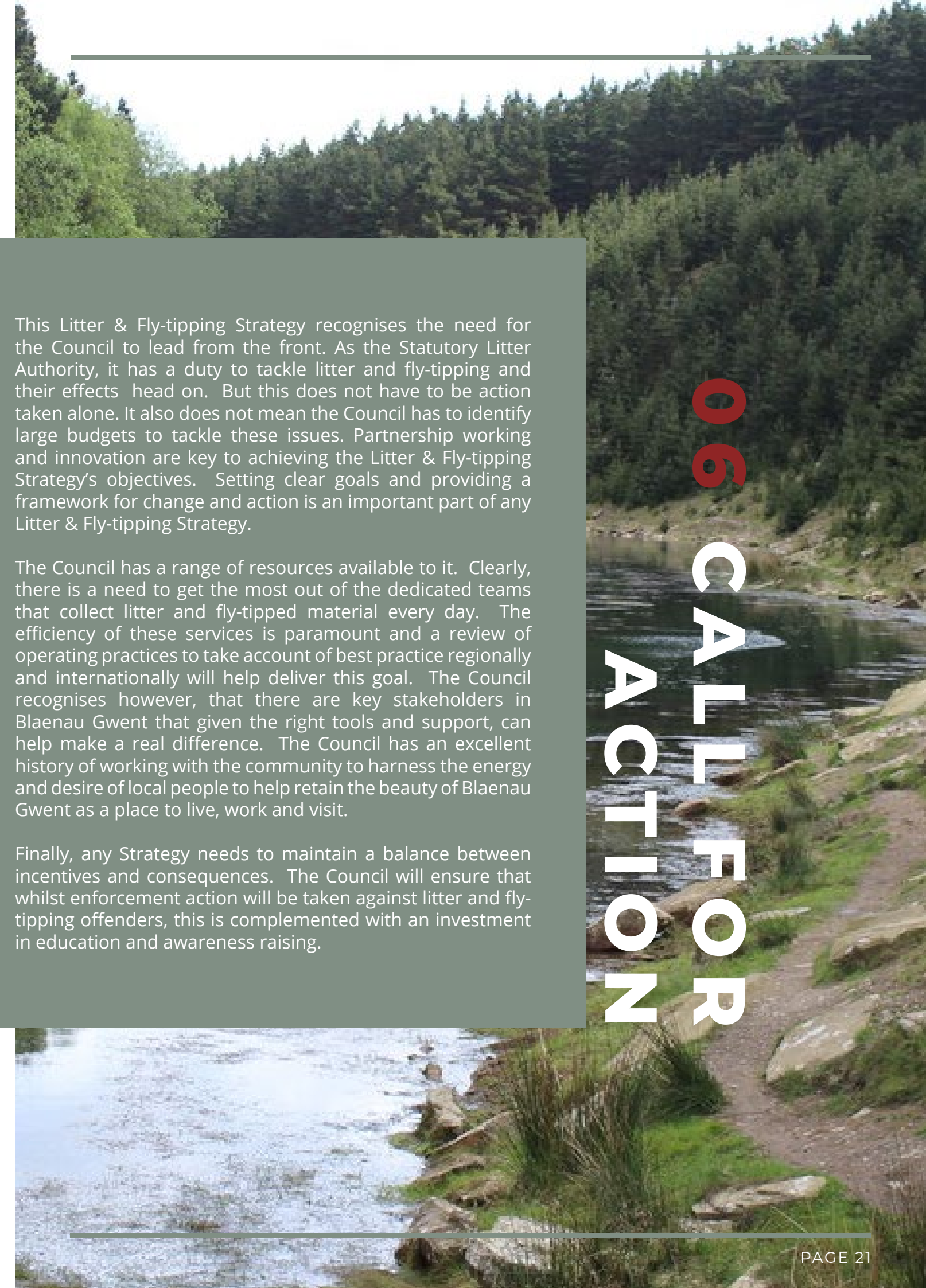
¹¹Keep Wales Tidy Eco-Schools Wales Topics, www.keepwalestidy.cymru

ENFORCEMENT

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



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



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

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

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

06 CALL FOR ACTION

POLICY STATEMENTS

01. DEMONSTRATE STRONG COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

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

02. INTRODUCE A LITTER BIN PROTOCOL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



07. WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR STAKEHOLDERS

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

08. PROMOTE AND SUPPORT LITTER CHAMPIONS

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



NEXT STEPS

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

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

INFLUENCE

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

ENGAGE

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

ADOPT BEST PRACTICE

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

EMPOWER

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



ACTION PLAN TO SUPPORT POLICY STATEMENTS

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

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

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



LEADERSHIP

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

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

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

INFLUENCE



SHORT-TERM

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



MEDIUM-TERM

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



LONG-TERM

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

ENGAGE



SHORT-TERM

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



MEDIUM-TERM

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



LONG-TERM

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

ADOPT BEST PRACTICE



SHORT-TERM

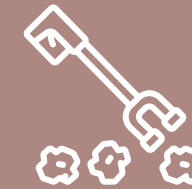
- Develop and adopt a litter bin protocol that uses a fair and equitable scoring system for ensuring the right number of litter bins are in the most appropriate places.
- Investigate the use of technology for asset management i.e. QR codes on litter bins.
- Work with Keep Wales Tidy on ensuring accurate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



MEDIUM-TERM

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

EMPOWER



SHORT-TERM

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



MEDIUM-TERM

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



LONG-TERM

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



ACTION PLAN TO SUPPORT POLICY STATEMENTS

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

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

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



LEADERSHIP

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

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

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

INFLUENCE



SHORT-TERM

- Identify a lead officer and member to champion the fight against litter and fly-tipping.
- Develop a five-year work programme for the implementation of the Action Plan.
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- Develop and adopt a communication plan to promote litter prevention.



MEDIUM-TERM

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LONG-TERM

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ENGAGE



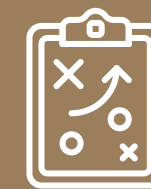
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- Identify methodology for capturing public satisfaction with cleanliness standards across Blaenau Gwent.
- Work with Keep Wales Tidy to build strong educational anti-litter package in Blaenau Gwent and promote within schools across the Council area.



MEDIUM-TERM

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



LONG-TERM

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

ADOPT BEST PRACTICE



SHORT-TERM

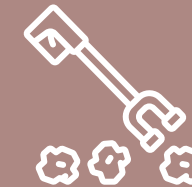
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EMPOWER



SHORT-TERM

- Review the Street Cleansing resources to identify resource requirements, including training, to deliver an effective and efficient service
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MEDIUM-TERM

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



LONG-TERM

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

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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council - Integrated Impact Assessment

All decisions, policy reviews or policy implementation will now require a completed Integrated Impact Assessment.

- Section 1-Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Section 2-Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010
- Section 3-Corporate Plan
- Section 4-Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Section 5-Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Section 6-Children’s Right “The Right Way”
- Section 7-Community Safety
- Section 8 Armed Forces
- Section 9-Data
- Section 10-Consultations Statutory Consultation Doctrine of Legitimate Expectation and Gunning Principles
- Section 11-Monitoring
- Section 12-Decision of proposal

Lead Officer	Head of Service	Service Area & Department	Date
Alun Watkins		Community – Neighbourhood Services	6/11/23

Briefly outline the proposal indicating what change or decision is to be made, also provide any documentation that may be used to support this.
What is the proposal that needs to be assessed?

The proposal to be assessed is the adoption of a new Council Litter Bin Policy as identified within the outcome objectives of the Fly-Tipping Strategy 2021-2026.

Section 1

Outline how the proposal will impact on any people or groups of people with protected characteristics, please refer to the Equalities Act 2010 (Wales) for further information [Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) and the EHRC guidance [The Essential Guide to the Public Sector Equality Duty: EHRC](#)

Briefly outline below if there will be any positive or negative impacts as a result of the proposal being considered.

Protected characteristics	Will the proposal have any positive impacts on those with a protected characteristics?	Will the proposal have any negative impacts on those with a protected characteristics?	Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.
Age (<i>people of all ages</i>)	The proposal will benefit the whole community and in accordance with Equality Act 2010	No	As detailed within the report the proposed policy will maximise the efficiency of service provision to the benefit of residents and visitors.
Disability (<i>people with disabilities/ long term conditions</i>)	As above	As above	As above
Gender Reassignment (<i>anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth</i>)	As above	As above	As above
Marriage or Civil Partnership (<i>people who are married or in a civil partnership</i>)	As above	As above	As above

Pregnancy and Maternity (<i>women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave</i>)	As above	As above	As above
Race (<i>people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds</i>)	As above	As above	As above
Religion or Belief (<i>people with different religions and beliefs including people with no beliefs</i>)	As above	As above	As above
Sex (<i>women and men, girls and boys and those who self-identify their gender</i>)	As above	As above	As above
Sexual Orientation (<i>lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, other</i>)	As above	As above	As above

NOTE: Section 2 only needs to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. See page 6 of the Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty Welsh Government Guidance.

Section 2

Socio-economic Duty (Strategic Decisions Only)

The Welsh Governments [Socio-economic Duty](#) provides a framework in order to ensure tackling inequality is at the forefront of decision making.

.Please consider the below vulnerable groups and consider how the proposal could affect them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- People with low literacy/numeracy
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Carers
- Armed Forces Community
- Students
- Single adult households
- People misusing substances
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales (WIMD)
- People involved in the criminal justice system



Socio Economic disadvantage definitions.	Will the proposal have a positive, negative or neutral impacts on the below?	How could you mitigate the negative impacts outlined?	Please highlight any evidence that has been considered.
Low Income / Income Poverty <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i>	Neutral Impact		
Low and/or No Wealth <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i>	As above		
Material Deprivation <i>(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life</i>	As above		




<i>insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)</i>			
Area Deprivation <i>(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport) Impact on the environment?</i>	The policy will allow more effective management of the Litter and dog bin allocation and decision process.		
Socio-economic Background <i>(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)</i>	As above		
Socio-economic Disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i>	As above		

Section 3-Corporate Plan
 Please outline any Corporate Plan linkages of the proposal -[BG Corporate Plan 22-27](#)

<p>Priority 1 - Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent</p>	<p>In line with the Councils Litter and Fly Tipping Strategy, the proposal if supported would aim achieve the outcome themes being: Influence, Engage, Adopt Best Practice and Empower. Although the policy will support the other 3 outcomes, the specific outcome aim of the policy is to adopt best practice as detailed within the report.</p>
<p>Priority 2 - Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities</p>	<p>Through the outcome objectives of Litter and Fly tipping Strategy, the policy will support those aims to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote behaviours that align with the Strategy outcomes. • align with the behaviour change programme to encourage the transfer of behaviours adopted at home into the school environment or place of work, and promote the objectives of the Council.
<p>Priority 3 - An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place</p>	<p>Refer to Priority 1 The proposal objective is for all stakeholders including council staff, departments and partners to participate to understand and adopt best practices thus decreasing levels of littering and fly tipping to enhance the environment.</p>
<p>Priority 4 - Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient</p>	<p>Refer to priority 1 to include: The proposal will allow for the continuation and growth of the support and appreciation given to many volunteers and community groups who give up time litter pick in their community enhancing community pride and resilience.</p>

Section 4-Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – The Five Ways of Working (ICLIP)
Sustainable development principles. The WBFG Act requires the Council to consider how any proposal improves the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales using the five ways of working as a baseline)

Five Ways of Working	How have you used the Sustainable Development Principles in forming the proposal?
<p>Long Term</p> 	<p>Consider the long-term impact of the proposal on the ability of communities to secure their well-being.</p> <p>The proposal long term impact objective is achieved through adopting best practices along with educational events and raising awareness through behaviour change campaigns. Encouraging active community participation for all members of the community will improve the health and wellbeing of those participants.</p> <p>Our proposal theme of Influence, Engage, Adopt Best Practice and Empower is aimed to be applicable to all 5 ways</p>
<p>Prevention</p> 	<p>Consider how the proposal is preventing problems from occurring or getting worse</p> <p>Adopting best practices and achieving the other outcome objectives of the strategy will improve along with reducing litter and fly tipping.</p>

<p>Integration</p> 	<p>Consider how your proposal will impact on other services provided in our communities (these might be Council services or services delivered by other organisations or groups)</p> <p>As detailed above the proposal involves the collaborative and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders involved in or affected by Litter and fly tipping. Through involving all stakeholders, the proposal will capture a wide and broad audience in its delivery.</p>
<p>Collaboration</p> 	<p>Consider how you are working with Council services or services delivered by other organisations or groups in our communities.</p> <p>As above the proposal involves the collaborative and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders involved in or affected by Litter and fly tipping. Through involving all stakeholders, the proposal will capture a wide and broad audience in its delivery.</p> <p>Influence, Engage, Adopt Best Practice and Empower</p>
<p>Involvement</p> 	<p>Consider how you involve people who have an interest in this proposal and ensure that they represent the diversity of our communities.</p> <p>As above the proposal involves the collaborative and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders involved in or affected by Litter and fly tipping. Through involving all stakeholders, the proposal will capture a wide and broad audience in its delivery.</p> <p>Influence, Engage, Adopt Best Practice and Empower,</p>

How does your proposal link to the Welsh Governments Priorities for Wales? Please indicate below.

1. **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.

The policy will ensure the efficient use of public resources.

The policy proposal would be applicable to all members of community irrespective of wealth or background.

2. **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 capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change). Think about how your activity will have regard to protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

The policy proposal reflect the importance and priority given to enhance the environment both in the short and long term to benefit future generations.

3. **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.

The policy proposal's alignment to the litter and fly tipping strategy supports the aim to not only to improve the environment but also to support and enhance the health and well-being of members of the community.

4. **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).

The proposal within this report will give equal access to the services provided for all residents irrespective of wealth.

5. **A WALES OF COHESIVE COMMUNITIES ...** attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

The proposals within this report will contribute through providing a customer focused sensitive service that remains viable, safe and well connected to local and regional communities. Again the theme of Influence, Engage, Adopt Best Practice and Empower reflects the importance of cohesive communities.

6. **A WALES OF VIBRANT CULTURE AND THRIVING ...** 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.

7. **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.

The recommendations within this report will provide for a community focused service, supporting the well-being of the local community. Subsequently the proposal would support a positive contribution to the global well-being of Wales as a whole.



Section 5-Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards

(The Welsh Language Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards require the Council to have 'due regard' for the positive or negative impact that any proposal may have on opportunities to use the Welsh language. [Welsh Language Standards](#))

Requirement	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts in regards to the below?	What can be done to mitigate any negative impacts?	Please demonstrate any evidence used to form this opinion.
<p>Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. <i>Specifically Standards 88 - 93</i></p>	No		
<p>What opportunities are there to promote the Welsh Language? <i>e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work / community</i></p>	In compliance with the Standards all media and communications of events and campaigns will be bilingual	Policy would be available bi-lingually to be completed and submitted	
<p>What opportunities are there for a person or person to use the Welsh Language? <i>e.g. staff, residents and visitors</i></p>	No		
<p>Has the Welsh Language been considered in order to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?</p>	No	As above	

Section 6 – Children’s Rights Approach - [The Right Way](#)

The Children’s Rights Approach – The Right Way is a framework for working with children, grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It places the UNCRC at the core of planning and service delivery and integrates children’s rights into every aspect of decision-making, policy and practice. The Right Way focuses on three main them Participation, Provision and Protection.

Protected characteristics	Will the proposal have any positive impacts on the Children’s Rights Approach?	Will the proposal have any negative impacts on the Children’s Rights Approach?	Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.
<p>Participation (child or young person as someone who actively contributes to society as a citizen)</p>	<p>The proposal supports the adopted strategy that identifies the requirement to engage, educate and empower the community including children. The proposal’s outcomes are dependant on the contribution of children.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>As the proposal aligns to the adopted strategy, the objectives and outcomes of the Strategy require the inclusion of Children to succeed and achieve a sustainable environment. As part of the proposal children will be represented as Stakeholders via School councils, Youth Services etc</p>
<p>Provision (the basic rights of children and young people to survive and develop)</p>	<p>The proposal allows for children to be educated and empowered to create a legacy for environmental issues for their and future generations</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>As above and refer to positive impact section</p>
<p>Protection (children and young people are protected against exploitation, abuse or discrimination)</p>	<p>All protective legislation will be strictly adhered to.</p>	<p>No</p>	

Section 7– Community Safety

Duty to Consider Crime and Disorder Implications

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on the local authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder, anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment, the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances, re-offending and serious violence.

Impacts	Will the proposal have any positive impacts on crime and disorder?	Will the proposal have any negative impacts on crime and disorder?	Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.
Crime (consider impact on each: victims, offenders and neighbourhoods)	As the policy forms part of Strategy, the proposal will develop links with stakeholder partners such as the Police, Youth Services and the probation service to adopt best practices that will support Anti-Social Behaviour Projects within the community.	No	Raising awareness, educating and empowering those involved in the proposal will highlight the impact litter and fly tipping has on the community and environment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent partnership events with the Police within a town centre area was extremely successful. • The Probation service are supporting volunteer groups undertake litter picks in “hot spot” areas which has been appreciated by the volunteers and community
Anti-Social Behaviour and behaviour adversely	As Above	No	As above

affecting the local environment (consider impact on each: victims, offenders, neighbourhoods and green spaces)			
Misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances (Think vulnerable children, adults, families and communities)	As Above	No	
Re-offending (Think young people and adults, victims, families, communities)	As Above	No	
Serious Violence (Think vulnerable young people, vulnerable adults, victims, families, communities)	No	No	
Counter Terrorism (People and places that are vulnerable to terrorism or violent extremism)	No	No	

Community Cohesion (Asylum seekers, Migrants, Victims or Hate Crime, Community tensions)	No	No	
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Section 8- Armed Forces Covenant Duty [AFC Draft Statutory Guidance - Final.pdf](#)

Impacts	Will the proposal have any positive impacts on the armed forces community?	Will the proposal have any negative impacts on the armed forces community?	Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.
Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of services • Planning and funding • Co-operation between bodies and professionals <p>These healthcare functions are within scope of the Duty in the following settings:</p>	The proposal will support and comply with the Armed Forces Covenant to give 'Due Regard' in respect of the Armed Forces Community and the challenges they face.	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LEQ Officer who has been appointed to deliver the litter and Flytipping strategy and its subsequent outcomes is ex Armed Forces. • The response and feedback from schools, volunteers and the community to him and his delivery has been extremely positive

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Primary Care services, including general practice, community pharmacies, NHS dental, NHS optometry services and public health screening services. • NHS Secondary Care services, including urgent and emergency care, hospital and community services, specialist care, mental health services, and additional needs services (as applicable). • Local authority-delivered healthcare services, including sexual health services and drug and alcohol misuse services 			
<p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Educational attainment and curriculum • Child wellbeing • Transport • Attendance • Additional needs support 	As above		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Service Pupil Premium funding (England only) <p>These education functions are within scope of the Duty in compulsory education settings, that is, primary, secondary, and, for England only, compulsory further education. The Duty does not cover nursery (early years education), higher education, or other voluntary adult education settings</p>			
<p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocations policy for social housing • Tenancy strategies (England only) • Homelessness • Disabled Facilities Grants 	<p>No</p>		

Section 9-Data-Please outline any data or evidence that has been used to develop the proposal, this can be previous consultations, local/national data, pilot projects, reports, feedback from clients etc.

Data/evidence –What data/evidence was used? - provide any links.	What were the key findings?	How has the data/evidence informed this proposal?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BGCBC Adopted Waste & Recycling Strategy • BGCBC Adopted Litter & Fly Tipping Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public consultation undertaken in the preparation of the Strategy ○ Data from Welsh Government’s Local Environmental Audit and Management System (LEAMS). • BGCBC Corporate Plan objectives • Keep Wales Tidy “Caru Cymru” project objectives 	<p>The key findings of the evidence and data detailed is that to succeed the and outcome objectives must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Raise Awareness • Change Behaviour • Adopt Best Practice, and • Empower <p>The recommendations of the proposal is to achieve each of the objectives over the short, medium and long term</p>	<p>The evidence and data has identified the need to introduce additional resources to enable the related strategies to be delivered successfully to the community to both improve the environmental quality of Blaenau Gwent and also to ensure BGCBC meets WG’s recycling targets.</p>
<p>Are there any data or information gaps and if so what are they and how do you intend to address them?</p>		
<p>No</p>		

Section 10-Consultation. Please provide details of consultation undertaken to support the proposal. Please consider the Gunning Principles: -

Principle 1: Consultation must take place when the proposals are still at a formative stage. You must not have already made up your mind.

Principle 2: Sufficient reasons must be put forward to allow for intelligent consideration and response. Have people been given the information and opportunity to influence?

Principle 3: Adequate time must be given for consideration and response. Is the consultation long enough bearing in mind the circumstances?

Principle 4: The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when finalising the decision

Briefly describe any planned consultations or consultations that have been carried out to date. Please consider the above principles.

Please consider the following questions; -

1. Who did you consult?

Refer to Section 9 to include Staff, Keep Wales Tidy, Volunteers & Community Groups, OD

2. When did the consultation take place and was adequate time given for a response?

2019 using external independent consultants (WG funded via KWT)

3. Was there enough information provided to response effectively?

Yes

4. What were the findings?

To identify the necessary resource to achieve each Strategy's outcome aims to; **Influence, Engage, Adopt Best Practice and Empower**

The resource identified is detailed in the proposal with specific reference to the need to Adopt Best Practice by adopting a Litter and Dog Bin Policy

5. Have the findings been considered in regards to the decision?

Yes

Section 11-Monitoring and Review	
How will the implementation of the proposal be monitored, including the impacts or changes made?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor MCS (My Council Services) data & requests • Annual review of Policy to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Partner/Stakeholder feedback ○ Member feedback • Monitor Data analysis (LEAMS) • Monitor against Strategy Outcome Aims – short, medium, long term
What monitoring tools will be used?	MCS report data LEAMS Strategy Outcome aims
How will the results be used for future development?	Continual monitoring and evaluation of impact
How and when will it be reviewed?	Ongoing evaluation to ensure proposal aims are achieved and identify gaps or where improvements are required
Who is responsible for ensuring this happens?	Line Management

Section 12 - Decision

Using the information you have gathered from sections 1-9 please state in the table below whether you are able to proceed with the proposal.

Continue with the proposal in its current form	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Continue with proposal but take into account reasonable steps to mitigate any negative impacts of the proposal	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

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Name of person completing the IIA	
Name:	Alun Watkins
Job Title:	Team Leader – Street Scene
Date:	09/11/2023

Head of Service Approval			
Name:			
Job Title:			
Signature:		Date:	

Please contact Policy & Partnerships should you require any further advice or guidance on completing your assessment via lissa.friel@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk or emma.scherptong@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk.

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: **5th December 2023**
Report Subject: **Disabled Facilities Adaptations (DFG's) – Quarter 2 – Budget and Performance Monitoring Report**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Helen Cunningham, Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member Place and Environment**
Report Submitted by: **Mark Congreve, Team Manager – Housing Solutions**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
07.11.23	09.11.23	23.11.23			05.12.23	03.01.24		

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a brief update on progress and current spend against the DFG Capital Budget and Enable funding at the end of Quarter 2 - 2023-24. The report also updates on other relevant matters – staffing pressures and the statutory performance indicator relating to disabled facilities grants (DFG) delivery times.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 On the 16th March 2022 a decision was made by the Executive Committee to remove the means test (Appendix 4) for disabled facilities adaptations grants (Visit [here](#) for full report – item 7). This decision was based on the understanding that this would improve access to adaptations for people who need them, reduce grant delivery times, improve health outcomes, and save money in health and social care. However, recognising that the impact of this policy change would need to be closely 'monitored' to assess the potential consequences this could have on service delivery and capital costs, as this could drive up demand, and result in an increase in applications from people who would not previously have applied or been eligible for an adaptations grant or those people who cancelled their applications due to needing to provide a contribution to the cost of the adaptation works.

2.2 Therefore, in line with the monitoring arrangements, the position as of the 30th September 2023 (end Q2) is as follows:

2.2.1 Capital Budget 23/24

Medium/Large adaptations		£	£
DFG Capital Programme & ENABLE Grant Uplift		446,386	
Carry Forward from 2022/23		262,756	
ENABLE Grant (via Care & Repair)		92,800	
Housing Care Fund (grants over 36k)		96,260	
Housing Care Fund (top up funding)		112,000	
Total			1,010,202
Expenditure 23/24		Q2 £	Q4 end forecast £
Capital Budget		385,684	815,661
ENABLE Grant (via Care & Repair)		59,022	92,800
Total		444,706	908,461
Carry forward to 24/25			101,741

Forecast Budget 24/25

Medium/Large adaptations		£	£
Forecast Carry Forward from 23/24		101,741	
DFG Capital Programme 24/25 (& Enable Uplift)		446,386	
ENABLE Grant (via Care & Repair)		92,800	
Housing Care Fund (top up funding)		112,000	
Total			752,927
Estimated Expenditure 24/25		£	£
DFG & Enable Grant Uplift (excludes HCF - grants over 36k)		812,201	
ENABLE Grant		92,800	
Total			905,001

Key Points:

1. There will be a forecast underspend this year of £101,741. This will be carried over to 24/25 to assist with the forecast budget pressure in 24/25). However, any additional referrals which are currently on the waiting list (64) and completed (alongside existing commitments) during Q3 and Q4 will likely have an impact on the amount of underspend to be carried forward into 24/25, a further update report will be provided at the end of Q3 to determine this.
2. It's important to note that if the additional £400,000 had not been allocated (£200,000 p.a. for 2023/24 & 2024/25) within the Councils' Capital Programme at the end of Q2 and the successful award of £112,000

wasn't received from the Housing Care Fund, there would currently be a projected overspend of £210,259 for 2023/24.

3. There is a potential shortfall forecast for 2024/25 of £152,074 (excluding the grant applications on the waiting list).
4. The cost of adaptations has increased as a consequence of the high inflation currently being experienced. This may increase further. (See paragraph 5.1.4, below).

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1**

That Members note the content of this report.

Option 2

That Members note the content of this report and make any necessary recommendations for Cabinet consideration.

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

4.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objective / objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

- Helping people and communities to be healthier and resilient - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.

4.1.1 Local Authorities have statutory duties under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 to deliver mandatory grants and can also offer discretionary assistance through the use of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

5.1.1 **Capital Budget Availability.** Under the current approved capital programme, the current DFG budget reduced from £469k in 21/22 to £200k per annum from 2023/24 to 2025/26 (this figure includes salaries). In response to increased demand against the budget the Council were able to identify an additional resource of £400k to be utilised over the next two years (2023/24 & 2023/25).

5.1.2 Alongside the Housing Care Funding already received for DFG's that exceed the maximum grant award of £36,000 in 2023/24, the Council have also been successful in securing additional Housing Care Funding (£112,000 per annum for the next two years) to top up the DFG capital budget.

5.1.3 Although, the allocation of additional funding above will assist to reduce the budget pressure on the DFG Capital Programme, Officers have undertaken an analysis of demand and there has been an increase in grant referrals of 208% since the removal of the means test in 2021/22. Therefore, if this continues, it is expected that if all the grants currently at an 'approval' stage (36) and which are currently on the waiting list proceeded, alongside, additional referrals being received in Q3 and Q4, it is likely that the budget will come under significant pressure in 2024/25 (See paragraph 2.2.1, above). Therefore, the Council will again potentially need to consider mitigating action going forward, which could include:

- Identifying further capital resources to allocate for DFG's; or
- Reintroducing the means test for DFG's. If this is to be considered, Welsh Government have confirmed that this would result in the loss of the annual Enable Grant Uplift funding of £46,386. Therefore, this would need to be considered in conjunction with the amount of means test contributions (Appendix 3) received each year during years 2015 – 2021. Based on current applications the reintroduction of the means test would result in an estimated £20,000 income contributions from applicants (based on the average means test over the last 6 years of this being in place). This would result in a potential overall loss of £26,000.

5.1.4 With increasing inflation over the last couple of years and the cost of materials rising, the average grant has increased from £8,010 in 2021/22 to £9,080 in 2023/24.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

5.2.1 With increasing demand, waiting times for clients will increase and this will be compounded if grants need to be put on hold/delayed due to lack of funding. This also increases the risk of corporate complaints and referrals to the Ombudsman.

5.2.2 Performance against PSR/002 (The average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant in private homes to support independent living) is already amongst the lowest in Wales but on a positive note, it is currently 1 day lower than the last financial year (2022/23). Please see below;

- 21/22 - 361 days (32 Social Services + 329 Housing)
- 22/23 - 329 days (20 Social Services + 310 Housing)
- 23/24 - 328 days (13 Social Services + 315 Housing)

5.2.3 Allocation of additional capital resources to DFG's will reduce the available resources to other areas of the Capital Programme.

5.3 ***Legal***

5.3.1 As outlined in the Executive report of 18th March 2022, in line with the request by the Minister, the Council is utilising its discretionary powers under the

Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 to not to apply the means-test for disabled adaptations. Also, Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are mandatory in that they are delivered in accordance with the Housing Grants, Construction & Regeneration Act 1996. Where a need is identified the Council must provide financial assistance to that applicant. If the Council cannot allocate sufficient funding year on year it will be open to corporate complaints, Local Government Ombudsman complaints and the potential for legal challenge.

5.4 **Human Resources**

5.4.1 The demand (social services weekly referrals rate) for adaptations has increased by approximately 208% (Appendix 2) compared to 21/22 when the means test was in place. This initially led to an increase in waiting time for occupational therapy (OT's) assessments in Social Services, however due to the Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) team restructure the number of staff who can assess and refer for adaptations has increased (now including physiotherapists, assistant practitioners, and well-being coordinators), however without this additional staffing capacity, the waiting list for assessments would have increased further.

5.4.2 The Housing Solutions (grants) team consists of two Housing Surveyors. The Officers currently split their time between DFG's and the National Empty Property Grant Scheme, and so their caseload is extensive. Therefore, presently there is not enough capacity within the team to cope with demand. This has led to the formation of a waiting list, whereby there are currently 64 grant applications (by date order, unless deemed a priority by the OT's) awaiting a visit from a Housing Surveyor. However, in terms of the completed grants, the actual delivery time has improved, which can be attributed to the process being streamlined following the removal of the means test from the overall DFG process. However, based on the current rate of referrals from social services, it is likely that this will inevitably lead to an increase in delivery time and continue to exceed the performance delivery target of 300 days even further. (See paragraphs 5.2.2 and 5.4.2).

5.4.3 IAA staff have found that due to the increased number of referrals, the wait for the work to be completed is taking longer and so staff are regularly receiving calls from people they've referred asking when work will be completed, which takes time away from them undertaking their other duties.

5.4.4 Staff from Housing Solutions (grants) and Business Support have also confirmed that occasionally they have grant applicants, or their family members contact them to complain about the delay with carrying out the adaptation.

5.4.5 Prior to removal of the means test, this was a significant amount of work for Business Support including home visits to assist with complicated form filling and gathering of financial information. Means test forms were then passed to the revenues and benefits section who would carry out the necessary checks (including delays resulting from requests for further information) before

notification of the means test outcomes back to Business Support and then the client.

5.5 ***Health and Safety***

5.5.1 Disabled Facilities Grants is a grant essentially to improve access to and from and within the property. They promote independence and wellbeing for the person and can achieve a greater degree of comfort and safety for that of the carer as well.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

See paragraph 2.21 above and Appendices 1 & 2.

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

6.2.1 Disabled Adaptations are considered to be a preventative approach to reducing risks within the home and assist individuals to live and manage independently in a safe and accessible home environment. Adaptations can also reduce and/or delay the need for care and support and also prevent/delay the admission to residential care. Therefore, failure to provide sufficient resources to meet local need will result in waiting lists continuing to grow. This will continue to have a detrimental impact on the statutory performance indicator of the average time it takes to deliver a DFG. If sufficient resources are not made available, then any grants on a waiting list will start to have a negative impact on the Council's performance time.

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

6.3.1 Relevant internal colleagues (Public Protection, Accountancy, and Social Services) have been consulted on the content of this report.

6.3.2 Members have previously requested an explanation of the means test; therefore, an example has been provided in Appendix 4.

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

6.4.1 The provision of financial support for disabled adaptations enables the Council to meet the needs of services users to live independently in the short, medium, and long term.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

6.5.1 Investment in aids and adaptations maximises the opportunity for people to remain safely in their home for longer and to prevent or minimise care costs, hospital admissions, and a deterioration in independence and quality of life.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

6.6.1 There is currently a Service Level Agreement in place with Care and Repair to deliver grants for people 60+ by utilising the Enable funding to their core client group.

6.6.2 The DFG process involves close partnership working with Public Protection, Social Services and Business Support on a daily/weekly basis.

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

6.7.1 The delivery of disabled adaptations contributes to the well-being and regeneration agendas within social services.

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

6.8.1 All approved contractors are encouraged to utilise local suppliers, and therefore avoid lengthy distances to source materials which can decrease emissions by reducing fuel usage.

6.8.2 Contractors are also requested to reuse materials in the first instance as this extends the lifetime value of the product. However, when reusing or recycling is not an option, contractors are advised that the negative impact on the environment can be lessened by responsible waste management.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)***

An equality impact assessment has not been carried out in relation to this report as it is for information and monitoring purposes only.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Further reports will be provided to the Regeneration and Community Services Leadership Team (RCSLT) and Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) as the year progresses whereby more accurate projections will be made from the end of quarter 3.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

[Agenda for Executive Committee on Wednesday, 16th March, 2022, 2.00 pm](#)

[Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

[The Regulatory Reform \(Housing Assistance\) \(England and Wales\) Order 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

List of Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – DFG Capital Programme Budget Spend & Analysis
- Appendix 2 – DFG Comparison Data 2019 - 2023
- Appendix 3 – DFG Budget Analysis of Means Test Contributions 2015 - 2023
- Appendix 4 – The Disabled Facilities Grants Means Test

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DFG Capital Programme Budget Spend / Analysis

1. Blaenau Gwent Capital Programme (excluding Enable Funding delivered by Care and Repair)

Data	No.	Value	Total
Number of grants approved (committed, but not spent)	32	402,977	705,661
Number of referrals from Social Services approved and processed (estimated)	4	27,000	
Number of grants completed (spent)	40	275,684	
Estimated Salaries			110,000
Total Projected Spend on Grants / Salaries			815,661
Number of referrals not processed (estimated by average cost type of adaptation)	64	419,200	
Total Projected Spend 2023/24			1,234,861
Capital Budget			
Capital Programme Allocation			400,000
Carry Forward 2022/23			262,756
WG Enable Uplift Funding			46,386
Housing Care Fund (to be reclaimed for grants exceeding 36k)			96,260
Housing Care Fund (DFG top up grant)			112,000
Total Capital Budget 2023/24			917,402
Total Funding Remaining 2023/24 (when adding the 64 referrals that have not been processed to the total projected spend)			-317,459

Key Points:

1. As can be seen from the table above, combining the value of the grants completed, grants approved, the social services referrals processed and the expected cost of salaries for the financial year (£815,661) against the total capital budget (£917,402), this demonstrates that there will be an underspend of £101,741. However, there are also 64 referrals that have been received from social services that are currently on the waiting list and pending a visit from the Housing Surveyor. Therefore, adding the estimated value of these grants (£419,200) to the total projected spend (£815,661) amounts to £1,234,861 and will leave the total remaining budget for the financial year overspent by £317,459 (if all grants were to be completed by 31st March 2023).
2. However, this is deemed the worst case scenario, therefore in reality (availability of contractors, time to complete the works, surveys being carried out etc.) it is estimated (based on the type of the adaptation works) that of the 64 referrals, if half (32 - £209,600) of these grants that have not yet been processed, were to be approved and completed by the end of the financial year, alongside the current 76 grants that are likely to be completed, this would amount to an estimated overspend of £107,859. If additional resources cannot be identified, this overspend would need to be funded from the Council's 2024/25 capital allocation reducing the resources available in that year.
3. Taking this estimated overspend (£107,859) into account and combining this with salaries of an estimated £110,000 (pending pay award) and deducting the annual capital budget allocation (£400,000), the Enable uplift funding (£46,386) and HCF top up funding (£112,000), it is estimated that we could start the 2024/25 financial year with a reduced base budget of £340,527, compared to the base starting budget of £448,386 in 2023/24. Therefore, we are reliant on any previous grants being repaid in 2023/24, to reduce this estimated overspend so that the starting position in 2024/25 is improved. However, due to the lower number of grants that have been completed in recent years, this has an impact on

the number of grants repaid in future years (i.e., £19,553 in 2022/23), and so it isn't expected that the amount of repaid grants, will provide enough slippage to cover this estimated overspend. In addition, this analysis does not include the number of grant applications that will be received in Q3 and Q4 and which would add further pressure on the budget.

2. Enable Grant Funding (Care & Repair)

Data	No.	Value	Total
Number of grants completed	1	2,749	
Number of grants in progress	9	56,273	
Number of grants not started (based on average Enable C & R grant)	2	11,804	
			70,826
Total Projected Spend 2023/24			92,800
Total Budget 2023/24			92,800
Total Funding Remaining 2023/24			21,974

Key Point:

1. As can be seen above, although only 1 grant has been completed, a further 9 grants are in progress to the value of £56,273 and 2 other grants to the value of £11,804 are in the pipeline. This amounts to a committed spend of £70,826. The remaining funding (£21,974) will be committed and spent in Q3 and Q4.

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Blaenau Gwent Capital Programme Grants Summary

(Excludes ENABLE Funding delivered by Care & Repair)

	2023-24 (as of 30/9/23)	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
Grants Completed	40	63	31	30
Grants Approved	76	63	31	30
Completion rate/week	1.54	1.21	0.60	0.58
Current SS referral rate/week	2.98	1.21	0.62	0.63
Average Completed DFG	£9,091	£9,081	£8,010	£6,311
Capital Spend	£815,661	£616,496	£365,322	£339,435
Capital Budget	£917,402	£879,252	£787,387	£809,501
Overspend	-£101,741	-£262,756	-£422,065	-£470,066

2019-20
41
41
0.79
0.87
£8,480
£452,074
£782,977
-£330,903

	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20
	£	£	£	£	£
Total Completed DFG Spend (Net of Means test)	632,041	598,132	366,171	241,022	452,074
Total Means Test Contributions (completed DFGs)	33,340	7,179	7,234	8,819	7,424
Total	665,381	605,311	373,405	249,841	459,498
% Means Test contributions	5.0%	1.2%	1.9%	3.5%	1.6%
Number of Grants Completed	92	80	47	33	40
No. of the above with "Nil" Mtest	80	76	41	26	36
No. MT contributions	12	6	6	7	4
Average contribution (£)	2,778	1,197	1,206	1,260	1,856
Average completed Grant (£)	6,870	7,476	7,790	7,303	8,903

20-21	21-22	22-23
£	£	£
339,435	365,322	616,496
4,831	0	0
344,266	365,322	616,496
1.4%	0.0%	0.0%
30	31	63
25	31	63
5	0	0
966	0	0
6,311	8,010	9,081

The Disabled Facilities Grants Means Test

1. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are means tested grants for disabled people to help towards the costs of making their home accessible.
 - 1.1 The Disabled Facilities Grant means-test is the financial resources (income and savings) of the disabled person (the applicant) and the spouse or partner (if applicable) that are taken into consideration to establish if a contribution to the adaptation works would be required. Financial Resources is the net weekly income (after tax and National Insurance have been deducted), together with benefits and savings over £6,000.
 - 1.2 To enable the Council to carry out a means test, the applicant and the spouse or partner (if applicable) would be required to provide proof of their finances.
 - 1.3 If the applicant is a child or a young person under the age of 19 who is in full time education and not in receipt of a means tested benefit, or if he/she is in receipt of one or more of the following benefits, he / she would qualify automatically for a mandatory grant without the requirement for a means test:
 - Income Support
 - Universal Credit
 - Income-based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) – (not contribution based ESA)
 - Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) – (not contribution-based JSA)
 - Guarantee Pension Credit – (not Savings Pension Credit alone)
 - Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit – (where your annual income for the purposes of
 - 1.4 An applicant is assessed as being able to contribute towards the cost of the work, then the Council would expect the applicant to pay the contribution and then the Council would top up to cover the cost of works up to £36,000. Therefore, for example, if the cost of work is £15,000 and an applicant is assessed as being able to contribute £2,500 towards the cost of work, the applicant would pay the initial £2,500 and the Council would pay the outstanding £12,500.
 - 1.5 If, however, the applicant is assessed as being able to contribute the full £15,000 or the contribution is higher than the cost of the work then the applicant would not receive any grant.

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Agenda Item 8

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: **5th December 2023**
Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme: 16th January 2024**
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	23.11.23			05.12.23			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present to Members the Place Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 16th January 2024 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 16th January 2024, as presented.

3.2 **Option 2:** The Scrutiny Committee consider the Forward Work Programme for the meeting 16th January 2024, 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 16th January 2024

Place Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

Dates	Scrutiny Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Cabinet / Council
Meeting: 16 th January 2024	Community Services and Regeneration Directorate Performance – Quarters 1 and 2 – 2023/24	Performance Monitoring Members to monitor the performance of the Directorate.	Clive Rogers Ellie Fry Dave Thompson	Cabinet
Deadline: 2 nd January 2024	Annual CCTV Monitoring report	Performance Monitoring Members to monitor the performance	Andrew Parker	Cabinet

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