

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **15th September 2021**
Report Subject: **Regeneration & Development Performance Report**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**
Report Submitted by: **Richard Crook, Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	26.08.21	05.09.21			15.09.21	22.09.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present the annual service activity from April 2020 to July 2021 and highlight how the Department is contributing to four of the Council's Corporate aims of delivering a:
- Prosperous Wales
 - Resilient Wales
 - Healthier Wales
 - More equal Wales
 - Globally responsible Wales, and
 - A Wales of more cohesive communities.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1. The Regeneration and Development Department has gone through a year of changes and temporary restructuring to manage Covid-19 work, whilst still delivering some of the main priorities for BG. The teams continue to focus on delivering a more structured program of work based around the priority areas identified in the Council's Corporate Plan 2018/22.
- Housing
 - Employment and Skills
 - Destination Management and Tourism
 - Energy and Digital
 - Town centres
- 2.2. The performance report makes reference to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which not only underpins the Council's aims, but also guides the ways in which sustainable development can be delivered through:
- Collaboration
 - Integration
 - Involvement
 - Long term
 - Prevention

- 2.3. From the report the achievements Housing continues to show a marked improvement in numbers of affordable and private homes delivered and delivery of new sites for housing; with high numbers of homes accessing funding for making them more energy efficient. Alongside this the early intervention for homelessness means 73% of potentially homeless households were prevented from becoming homeless. Planning enquiry responses were down due to IT issues that are being addressed.
- 2.4. Employment and Skills showcases the Aspire shared apprenticeship scheme with success being demonstrated through businesses taking on a second apprentice following a productive first experience. The Council's industrial portfolio is at 85% occupancy rate, supporting 615.5 jobs and newly developed units coming to market offering an additional 26,000 sq ft. Start-ups in BG higher than this time last year by 6.7% and community benefits to a number of communities delivered through physical projects. STEM delivery in schools is increasing through a successful bid to Tech Valleys for more resource and the future skills academy being progressed further for the former Monwell building. Covid-19 related support grants to businesses amounted to £1.9M (894 grants) delivered alongside other priorities.
- 2.5. The 2020-25 collaborative Destination Management Plan has been completed plus Covid-19 response through grants and support has continued for Tourism across BG. Work with individual businesses to help them maximise their tourism potential and working across the Head of the Valleys on events and festivals has also been undertaken.
- 2.6. The Energy Prospectus has been completed 'Energy Generation Opportunities' is now in the market place. Funding for electric charging points in BG has been successful enabling 73 charge points across 35 sites for the community and visitors in addition to workplace, taxi and bus points. Work on the Refit program of works continues – 6000 non-LED street lights have been replaced with LEDs and will generate energy savings for the Council. Hydro and wind generation projects are being investigated in detail. The GovTech Catalyst project is in the last stages of development and final reporting will enable BG to assess the suitable tech for us. £20million National Digital Exploitation Centre (NDEC) is running and has started to assist SMEs and micro businesses with cyber security and digital design – the first R&D facility of its kind in Wales.
- 2.7. Placemaking plans for all towns are now in train. Footfall has been increasing in towns over the last 3 months with a total of 864,612 people. Grants and loans for privately owned property continue to be successful with around £2M in total being approved. Heritage Lottery Funding in Tredegar Town Centre continues with NCB Town Hall and ongoing funding discussions with HLF continue. Rail improvements are gathering pace for both Ebbw Vale and Abertillery as funds from WG have been secured and funds from UK Govt are awaited. Key, are complex buildings and structures like Big Arch, Trinity Chapel and Truck Shop have all been progressed during this period.

2.8 A series of case studies are included to highlight some of the work that has been outlined in the performance report.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1:
That Members consider the information provided and make specific comments / recommendations to the Executive Committee.

Option 2:
That Members accept the report as provided.

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

4.1. This proposal supports the amendments made to the Outcome Statements within the Corporate Plan in its review in October 2019.

Corporate Plan 2020/22 Outcome Statements:

- Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities
- Support a fairer sustainable economy and community
- To enable people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities
- An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities

5. Implications Against Each Option

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

There are no short term budget implications associated with the report.

5.2. *Risk including Mitigating Actions*

There are no risks directly associated with this report

5.3. *Legal*

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.4. *Human Resources*

There are no additional implications for human resources.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1. *Performance Information and Data*

The Six Month Performance report is attached as Appendix 1.

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

Improved economy and community benefits from the work undertaken in the last 6 months

6.3. ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The strategy and action plan is designed to be a method to organise support to target areas of need identified through business and take account of changing and future business needs of Blaenau Gwent.

6.4. ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The areas of collaboration are outlined in the performance report.

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

Integration is outlined in the performance report

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

Monitoring will be done through the Council's Corporate Plan and Service business plan

Background Documents /Electronic Links

*Appendix 1 – Economic Development & Regeneration Q1 and 2
Performance Report*