

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

SUBJECT: **CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 21ST SEPTEMBER, 2021**

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

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S. HEALY (CHAIR)

Councillors: M. Cook
G.A. Davies
P. Edwards (substitute for Cllr L. Elias)
J. Hill
J. Holt
C. Meredith
G. Paulsen
T. Smith
H. Trollope (substitute for Cllr S. Thomas)

AND: Managing Director
Corporate Director of Social Services
Corporate Director of Education
Chief Officer Resources
Head of Regeneration
Service Manager Performance & Democratic Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
No. 2	<u>APOLOGIES</u> Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Elias and S. Thomas; and	

	Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE 2020/21</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Performance and Democratic which was to present the Council's Assessment of Performance 2020/21 (attached at Appendix 1) for consideration.</p> <p>The Service Manager Performance and Democratic spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein. She advised Members that as part of the Local Government Measure the Council had a statutory responsibility to develop an assessment of performance each year and make it publicly available. It should be noted that the Local Government and Elections Act has now replaced the duties under the Measure, therefore, this assessment will be the last under these regulations. However, in future the Council will still be required to report progress of the Corporate Plan and implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.</p> <p>In response to a Member's question regarding impact assessments being included on reports, the Service Manager Performance & Democratic explained that impact assessments were included as part of the reporting template and should be looked at when producing reports for committees to ensure that any impacts are addressed. The Assessment of Performance had undertaken an equality impact assessment but did not require a socio economic impact assessment as it was not defined as a strategic decision. The Member had concerns that some impact assessments were not being carried out. The Service Manager said that this process should be undertaken and report authors need to ensure these are completed and included within reports as appropriate.</p> <p>A Member commented that it was a positive report with some good developments such as the reduced number of Children Looked After and enquired if this trend was</p>	

continuing. The Director of Social Services confirmed the trend was continuing, the figure stood at 189 which was the lowest for some time. Referrals were also continuing but the general trend was downwards.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Members considered the retrospective progress made and included within the Council's Assessment of Performance for 2020/21 and be assured that it fulfils all required statutory legislative requirements before being submitted to Executive Committee for endorsement and to Council for approval.

No. 5

**TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REVIEW
REPORT 1ST APRIL 2020 TO 31ST MARCH 2021**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources which was presented to give Members the opportunity to scrutinise the Treasury Management activities carried out by the Authority during the 2020/2021 financial year.

The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.

In response to a Member's question regarding short and long term loans, the Chief Officer confirmed that a short term loan was anything under 1 year and a long term loan was 1 year plus.

A Member enquired if the Council had shares in gas or electricity companies that found themselves in financial difficulties. The Chief Officer Resources said the Council did not have shares in utility companies as the Council tended not to invest directly into stocks and shares. The Council usually invested in financial institutions such as Banks and other public sector organisations and felt that in the current circumstances the risk was low.

A Member enquired regarding withdrawing investments in fossil fuels. The Chief Officer Resources explained that the brokers the Council use and the companies and organisations that they invest in have policies around ethical investments; and that where possible the Council

avoided investing in companies involved in the fossil fuel market.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Members scrutinised the treasury management activity undertaken during the 2020/21 financial year and provided comment prior to its submission to full Council.