

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 10TH NOVEMBER, 2021

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

**PRESENT: Leader of the Council/
Executive Member – Corporate Services**
Councillor N. Daniels

**Deputy Leader/Executive Member –
Regeneration & Economic Development**
Councillor D. Davies

Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins

Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins

Executive Member – Social Services
Councillor J. Mason

WITH: Managing Director
Corporate Director Social Services
Corporate Director Education
Chief Officer Resources
Chief Officer Commercial and Customer
Head of Community Services
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
Communications Officer

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest and dispensations raised.</p>	
	<p><u>MINUTES</u></p>	
No. 4	<p><u>EXECUTIVE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd September, 2021.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEMS – CORPORATE SERVICES</u></p>	
No. 5	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 10TH NOVEMBER, 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Leader of the Council.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	

No. 6

GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The following additional grants were received since the publication of the report:-

ABERTILLERY

Abertillery Ward - Councillor N. Daniels

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
| 2. | Chillax | £100 |

Abertillery Ward - Councillor J. Holt

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
|----|--------------------|--------|

Abertillery Ward - Councillor M. Cook

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
|----|--------------------|--------|

Cwmtillery Ward - Councillor T. Sharrem

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
|----|--------------------|--------|

Cwmtillery Ward - Councillor J. Wilkins

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
|----|--------------------|--------|

Cwmtillery Ward - Councillor M. Day

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
|----|--------------------|--------|

Llanhilleth Ward - Councillor H. McCarthy

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
|----|--------------------|--------|

Llanhilleth Ward - Councillor J. Collins

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
| 2. | Brynithel Senior Citizens | £200 |

Llanhilleth Ward - Councillor N. Parsons

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
| 2. | Wyndham Vowles Community Centre | £100 |

Six Bells Ward - Councillor D. Hancock

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
|----|--------------------|--------|

Six Bells Ward - Councillor M. Holland

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|--------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £14.10 |
| 2. | Six Bells Tenants & Residents | £300 |

BRYNMAWR

Brynmawr Ward - Councillor J. Hill

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £62 |
| 2. | Friends of North Ebbw Fach Interact | £150 |
| 3. | Serving Veterans Association of Blaenau Gwent | £150 |

Brynmawr Ward - Councillor L. Elias

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £62 |
| 2. | Brynmawr Town Centre Partnership Xmas Lights | £100 |
| 3. | St. Mary's Roman Catholic School | £50 |
| 4. | Blaen y Cwm School | £50 |

Brynmawr Ward - Councillor W. Hodgins

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £62 |
|----|--------------------|-----|

EBBW VALE

Badminton Ward - Councillor G. Paulsen

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £45 |
|----|--------------------|-----|

Badminton Ward - Councillor C. Meredith

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----|
| 1. | Remembrance Parade | £45 |
|----|--------------------|-----|

Beaufort Ward - Councillor G. Thomas & S. Healy

1. Remembrance Parade £82.50

Ebbw Vale North - Councillor D. Davies, P. Edwards & R. Summers

1. Remembrance Parade £135

Ebbw Vale South - Councillor J. Millard & K. Pritchard

1. Remembrance Parade £90

Rassau Ward - Councillor G. Davies

1. Remembrance Parade £41.25

Rassau Ward - Councillor D. Wilkshire

1. Remembrance Parade £41.25
2. Ebbw Vale Male Voice Choir £100
3. RTB Football Club £150
4. Hospice of the Valleys £75

NANTYGLO & BLAINA

Nantyglo Ward - Councillor P. Baldwin

1. Remembrance Parade £72.25

Nantyglo Ward - Councillor J. Mason & K. Rowson

1. Remembrance Parade £144.50

Blaina Ward - Councillor J. P. Morgan

1. Remembrance Parade £72.25
2. Blaina & District Cricket Club £500

Blaina Ward - Councillor L. Winnett

1. Remembrance Parade £72.25

Blaina Ward - Councillor G. Collier

1. Remembrance Parade £72.25

RESOLVED accordingly.

FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.

No. 7

UPDATE ON UK RESETTLEMENT AND ASYLUM SEEKER DISPERSAL SCHEMES

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial and Customer.

The Chief Officer Commercial and Customer spoke to the report which provided an update on participation supporting the UK Resettlement scheme. The Chief Officer noted the recent addition which included supporting the resettlement of Afghan Nationals and advised that the report also sought agreement for the participation in the Home Office Widening Asylum Seeker Dispersal Scheme.

The Chief Officer further highlighted the work done to date working with lead officers and partners as detailed in the report.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the report which demonstrated the Council's commitment in supporting people who seek sanctuary in Blaenau Gwent. The Leader referred to the work undertaken by the Chief Officer along with other officers and the Working Group which had been active for a number of years. The Working Group identified good external partnership working and was chaired by the Executive Member for Social Services. The Executive Member for Education also played a key role in the Working Group and the Leader wished to acknowledge the excellent work achieved by the Working Group, particularly the aforementioned Executive Members.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the progress made in participation with the UK resettlement, including most recently the Afghan resettlement programme be noted. The proposal to participate in the Widening Asylum Seeker Dispersal Scheme as a pilot be agreed (option 1).

The Chief Officer Commercial and Customer left the meeting at this juncture.

DECISION ITEM – SOCIAL SERVICES MATTERS

No. 8

PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A BLAENAU GWENT MY SUPPORT TEAM (MYST)

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Children’s Services.

The Corporate Director Social Services advised that the report outlined the proposal and business case to develop a Blaenau Gwent My Support Team (MyST) instead of the current joint MyST with Monmouthshire. The Corporate Director noted that Monmouthshire had now agreed their stand-alone Team via their democratic process.

The Corporate Director spoke to the report and provided an overview of the actual savings and cost avoidance the MyST have achieved during 2019/2020 and 2020/2021. The Corporate Director further highlighted the costs of a full Blaenau Gwent team as detailed in the report and advised that this had been based on the forecast that Monmouthshire had provided for the joint Blaenau Gwent Monmouthshire Team for 2021/2022.

Further key points were reported in relation to the financial benefits of the preventative work undertaken by Social Services along with anticipated savings estimated to be achieved by an establishment of a BG MyST.

The Executive Member for Social Services welcomed and sought support from the Executive to develop a Team which had far reaching benefits for the children and families of Blaenau Gwent. The work undertaken brought children back into the Borough and placed Social Services at the heart of our communities now and in the future.

The Executive Member noted the success of the partnership working between Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire which was a credit to all the dedicated staff involved. The Executive Member was confident that a stand-alone Team for Blaenau Gwent would continue to recognise benefits for our children and families in Blaenau Gwent.

In conclusion, the Executive Member wished to thank everyone involved for their work over the last two years.

The Leader of the Council supported the comments raised by the Executive Member and felt that the work undertaken in this area by the Corporate Director and the Executive Member was remarkable. The Leader felt it was paramount that Blaenau Gwent continued with this work and looked forward to seeing the positive work in the coming months and years.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the positive work MyST have undertaken be noted and the development of a Blaenau Gwent MyST be supported (option 1).

DECISION ITEM - ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

No. 9 **SECTION 19 FLOOD INVESTIGATION REPORT, LLANHILLETH**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community Services.

The Head of Community Services advised that the report presented the S19 Flood Investigation Report for Llanhilleth following the flooding that occurred in Meadow Street and Railway Street during the 15th and 16th February 2020. The Officer spoke to the report and provided a detailed an overview of the key findings from the S19 Flood Investigation Report for Llanhilleth and referred the Executive to the full report which was detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

The Head of Community Services further informed the Executive of the key actions from S19 Flood Investigation Report.

	<p>The Executive Member for Environment noted the report which investigated the flooding incident which affected a significant amount of homes in the Llanhilleth Ward. The Executive Member stated that the report was very factual, however it could not recognise the human and community impact the flooding had on families in the area. The Executive Member added that the work would be ongoing and updates would be reported as part of the Annual Flood Management Plan to both Scrutiny and Executive in due course.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted along with the Section 19 Flood Investigation Report, Llanhilleth and agreed to publish the report in accordance with the FWMA 2010 legislation (option 1).</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEM – EDUCATION MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 10</p>	<p><u>MUTUAL INVESTMENT MODEL (MIM) 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS WELSH EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP – THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the execution, delivery and performance of a supplemental agreement to the WEP Strategic Partnering Agreement dated 30th September 2020 (the “Deed of Adherence”) be agreed and from the date of execution of the Deed of Adherence to give effect to and be bound by the terms of the WEP Strategic Partnering Agreement dated 30th September 2020 as a party to it, to facilitate the delivery of a range of infrastructure services and the delivery of education and community facilities; (b) the terms of the Deed of Adherence and the WEP Strategic Partnering Agreement dated 30th September 2020 at Appendix A and B of this report be approved and summarised in Appendix 1 and 2 of this report so as to give effect to recommendation (a), subject to recommendation (c) below; (c) it was noted that the Corporate Director of Education shall complete the Deed of Adherence for execution and was approved to complete all information gaps; 	

	<p>(d) it was noted that the Deed of Adherence shall be executed as a deed and attested in accordance with in accordance with Section 12.5 of the Council’s Constitution of the Constitution; and,</p> <p>(e) it was approved (i) the appointment of the Service Manager - Education Transformation and Business Change as ‘Participant Representative’ to sit on the Strategic Partnering Board (SPB) for the purposes of Clause 12 (<i>Parties’ Representatives</i>) of the WEP Strategic Partnering Agreement; and (ii) the name, address and contact details for the purposes of Clause 40 (<i>Notices</i>) of the WEP Strategic Partnering Agreement; and</p> <p>(f) it was noted that in agreeing to enter into the Deed of Adherence it was not being asked during this meeting to decide to proceed with any Project, and that any decision to proceed with a Project would be considered separately and reported back to Cabinet in future report(s) for decision.</p>	
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS – ENVIRONMENT</u></p>	
<p>No. 11</p>	<p><u>COMMUNITY SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and information contained therein be noted (option 1).</p>	
<p>No. 12</p>	<p><u>WASTE AND RECYCLING PERFORMANCE 2020-21</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Neighbourhood Services.</p> <p>The Head of Community Services outlined the report and provided an overview of the waste and recycling performance outcomes for 2020/2021. The Head of Community Services noted that the Welsh Government statutory recycling targets had been achieved and the Council had maintained success for the current year in exceeding the target of 64%.</p>	

The Head of Community Services felt that this had been achieved due to the hard work and dedication of the frontline staff, officers and wardens who worked in partnership with WRAP and with support from the Communications Team, Performance Team, Senior Management, the Elected Leadership and most importantly the residents of Blaenau Gwent. The Head of Community Services stated that this had been one of the most difficult years in recent history and was therefore thankful for the support to maintain collections throughout the pandemic.

The Head of Community Services further added that the Local Authority continued to face financial penalties from the Welsh Government if the Council failed to achieve the statutory recycling targets, however at present Quarters 1 and 2 were exceeding targets.

The Executive Member for Environment and the Leader of the Council echoed the comments raised by the Officer and wished to extend thanks to all involved. The Leader of the Council added that it was also important to acknowledge the participation of the majority of the public in the Council's waste and recycling services. If the Council did not meet the targets set by Welsh Government the fines would have a significant effect on the Council's budget and services provided.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (option 1).

MONITORING ITEMS – CORPORATE SERVICES

No. 13 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES 2020/2021

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (option 1).

No. 14

**REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - 2021/2022,
FORECAST OUTTURN TO 31ST MARCH 2022
(AS AT 30TH JUNE 2021)**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report which detailed the forecast financial outturn position across all portfolios for the financial year 2021/2022 as forecast at 30th June 202 and outlined the key points as contained in the report.

The Leader of the Council advised that the report identified the positive strides made over the last 3-4 years on the Council's budget. The Leader added that although in recent years the Council had been criticised for their low level of reserves, these were now being built to an acceptable level and our budgets are in a more favourable position.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and

- (a) Members provided appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report; and
- (b) approved the virements detailed in paragraphs 5.1.4 to and 5.1.7.

No. 15

**CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, FORECAST FOR
2021/2022 FINANCIAL YEAR (AS AT 30TH JUNE 2021)**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Chief Officer Resources advised that the report provided the Executive with an overview of each Portfolio's actual and forecast capital expenditure against funding approvals for the 2021/2022 financial year as at the 30th June 2021. The Chief Officer further spoke to the report and provided an overview of the information contained therein.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and

- (a) Members provided appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report.
- (b) Members continued to support appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council.
- (c) Members noted the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding.

<p>No. 16</p>	<p><u>BRIDGING THE GAP (BTG) PROGRAMME 2021/2022 - PROGRESS UPDATE APRIL TO JUNE 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources noted that the report provided an update on the progress made in terms of the Strategic Business Reviews during the period April to June 2021. The Chief Officer Resources further outlined the key points in relation to Budget Gaps (surplus) per MTF5 (March 2021), latest estimated achievements, and the Remaining Budget Gaps following application of BtG Opportunities.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive provided appropriate challenge to the Bridging the Gap programme (option 1).</p>	
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS – EDUCATION</u></p>	
<p>No. 17</p>	<p><u>EDUCATION DIRECTORATE – RECOVERY AND RENEWAL PLAN</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the joint report of the Corporate Director Education, Head of School Improvement and Inclusion and Service Manager - Education Transformation and Business Change.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, associated documentation and proposed course of action (option 1).</p>	
<p>No. 18</p>	<p><u>IMPROVING SCHOOLS PROGRAMME 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Education advised that the report provided an overview on the Blaenau Gwent Improving Schools Programme, in line with national changes to school evaluation, improvement and accountability. The report also covered the pilot of the new regional approach 2021-2022. The Corporate Director referred to the new arrangements in place to support schools and gave an overview of the level of support provided which resulted in positive progress made in schools.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and information contained therein be noted.</p>	

<p>No. 19</p>	<p><u>PUPIL EXCLUSIONS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information therein be noted (option 1).</p>	
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEM – REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 20</p>	<p><u>HYBRID UNITS AND HWB BOCS – PERFORMANCE MONITORING</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager – Business and Regeneration.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information therein be noted (option 1).</p>	
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEM - SOCIAL SERVICES</u></p>	
<p>No. 21</p>	<p><u>CHILDREN AND COMMUNITIES GRANT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Children’s Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the progress made to date on the Children and Communities grant was considered; and (b) it be noted that the CCG Steering Group continued to oversee and implement the delivery programme and provides an annual report on progress to scrutiny, executive and the new local arrangements to replace the Public Service Board. 	

No. 22

CARE INSPECTORATE WALES (CIW) ASSURANCE CHECK 2021:
BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
SOCIAL SERVICES

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Social Services.

The Corporate Director Social Services advised that the report presented the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Assurance check summary as identified in their letter dated the 11th June 2021 which was attached at Appendix 1. The Corporate Director added that the purpose of the assurance check was to review how well the Local Authority's Social Services continued to help and support adults and children with a focus on safety and well-being.

The Corporate Director referred to the questions asked by CIW and reported the responses provided along with areas which need improvement.

The Executive Member for Social Services was pleased that the CIW recognised the hard work and commitment of Blaenau Gwent's Team. The Executive Member stated that the last 18 months had been difficult, however the Team remained focused on service users and their families' specific situation.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the comprehensive and honest report provided by the Corporate Director and wished to pass on thanks on behalf of the Executive to the Team who work tirelessly to support families in Blaenau Gwent their level of work and commitment was recognised.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information detailed within the CIW Assurance letter be noted (option 1).

**MONITORING ITEM –
REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

No. 24 **SILENT VALLEY WASTE SERVICES LTD
PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to report of the Service Manager Neighbourhood Services.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information which contained details relating to the business/financial affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted. (Option 1).