

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 2ND MARCH, 2022

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

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

**Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins**

**Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins**

**Executive Member – Social Services
Councillor J. Mason**

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

**WITH: Managing Director
Corporate Director Education
Corporate Director Social Services
Chief Officer Customer and Commercial
Chief Officer Resources
Head of Regeneration
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
Press Officer**

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<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	<u>APOLOGIES</u> An apology for absence was received from Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.
No. 3	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u> The following declarations of interest was reported:- Councillor J. Wilkins (Business Owner) <u>Item No. 9 - Business Rates Relief –</u> <u>Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief – 2022/2023</u>
	<u>MINUTES</u>
No. 4	<u>SPECIAL EXECUTIVE</u> Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on the 9 th February, 2022. RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.

	<p><u>GENERAL MATTERS</u></p>															
No. 5	<p><u>CONFERENCES/COURSES AND INVITATIONS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Conferences/Courses and Invitation report.</p> <p><u>2022 Royal Garden Parties, London</u></p> <p>RESOLVED that Councillor C. Meredith be approved to attend.</p>															
	<p><u>DECISION ITEMS – CORPORATE SERVICES</u></p>															
No. 6	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 2ND MARCH, 2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Leader of the Council.</p> <p>The Leader reported that there would be additional monitoring reports to be added to the agenda which would be accepted in order to conclude any business.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme be accepted and the Forward Work Programme as presented for the Special Executive on 16th March, 2022 be agreed (Option 1).</p>															
No. 7	<p><u>GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The following grants to organisation which had been received since the publication of the report:-</p> <p><u>ABERTILLERY</u></p> <p><u>Llanhilleth Ward - Councillor L. Parsons</u></p> <table> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td>Friends of St. Illtyds</td> <td>£166.75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td>Knit & Natter</td> <td>£100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.</td> <td>Brynithel Activities Group</td> <td>£250</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.</td> <td>Brynithel Bowls Club</td> <td>£100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.</td> <td>Groundwork Wales</td> <td>£100</td> </tr> </table>	1.	Friends of St. Illtyds	£166.75	2.	Knit & Natter	£100	3.	Brynithel Activities Group	£250	4.	Brynithel Bowls Club	£100	5.	Groundwork Wales	£100
1.	Friends of St. Illtyds	£166.75														
2.	Knit & Natter	£100														
3.	Brynithel Activities Group	£250														
4.	Brynithel Bowls Club	£100														
5.	Groundwork Wales	£100														

BRYNMAWR

Brynmawr Ward - Councillor W. Hodgins

1.	BGfm	£250
2.	Libanus Church	£300
3.	Brynmawr Business Forum	£150
4.	G – Expressions	£144.85

Brynmawr Ward - Councillor L. Elias

1.	Libanus Church	£150
2.	Brynmawr Musical Theatre Company	£54.85

EBBW VALE

Badminton Ward - Councillor C. Meredith

1.	Tredvale Camera Club	£150
2.	Chair of the Councils Charity Appeal	£100
3.	Raglan Terrace WOAP	£150
4.	Ebbw Vale Childrens Contact Centre	£100
5.	St. Davids Church	£113.07

Rassau Ward - Councillor D. Wilkshire

1.	Ysybty Tri Chwm	£150
2.	Rassau & Beaufort Bowls	£68.34
3.	Rassau OAP	£68.34
4.	Puddleducks	£68.34
5.	Beaufort RFC	£68.34
6.	Rhos y Fedwen	£68.34
7.	Beaufort Male Voice Choir	£68.34
8.	Rock Chapel	£68.34
9.	Ebbw Vale Netball	£68.40

NANTYGLO & BLAINA

Nantyglo Ward – Councillor P. Baldwin

1.	Katie Treharne	£200
2.	Nantyglo RFC	£150
3.	Wesleyan Chapel	£100
4.	Hooks & Pins	£100
5.	St Anne's Church Holy Trinity	£100
6.	Winchestown OAP's	£100
7.	Hermon Cemetary Trust	£600
8.	Nantyglo Community Shop	£250
9.	Nantyglo Football Club	£200
10.	BGfm	£150
11.	Friends of Parc Nant Y Waun	£100
12.	1 st Blaina Scout Group	£100
13.	Nantyglo OAP's	£100
14.	Nantyglo Community House	£184.10

Blaina Ward - Councillor J. P. Morgan

1.	Nantyglo FC	£250
2.	Aberystroth Archaeology	£100
3.	BGfm	£144.10
4.	Ystuth Ladies Hut	£200
5.	Blaina Mens Bowls	£500
6.	Cwmcelyn Methodist Church	£100
7.	Blaina Scouts	£100
8.	Coedcae Interact	£100
9.	Blaina Community Centre	£200
10.	Chair of the Councils Charity Appeal	£50

TREDEGAR

Sirhowy Ward - Councillors T. Smith & M. Cross

1.	Trefil RFC	£200
2.	Tredegar Orpheus Male Voice Choir	£100
3.	2167 Squadron Air Training Corps	£100
4.	Tredegar Angling Club	£50
5.	Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum	£100
6.	Tredegar Ironsides RFC	£200
7.	Gwent Area Ass. Welsh Pony and Cob Society	£50

8.	Sirhowy Valley Woodlands	£50
9.	Nantybawch Community Centre	£350
10.	Sirhowy Community Centre	£350
11.	Ystrad Deri Community Centre	£350
12.	Horeb Chapel	£50
13.	Sardis Chapel	£50
14.	St George's Church	£100
15.	Silurian Amateur Boxing Club	£50
16.	Tredegarr Junior Netball Club	£50
17.	Tredegarr Operatic Society	£200
18.	Tredegarr Twinning Association	£100
19.	Glanhowy Primary (Autism)	£100
20.	Ebenezer Welsh Congregational Church	£100
21.	Immaculate Conception Church	£50
22.	Tredegarr Women's Institute	£50
23.	Cymru Creations	£169.70
24.	Valleys Life Afterstroke	£50
25.	Brynbach Running Club	£100
26.	Oak Football Club	£50
27.	Siloam Chapel	£50
28.	Bedwellty Park Men's Bowls	£250
29.	Sirhowy Angling Club	£100
30.	Noh's Ark Appeal	£50
31.	Tredegarr RFC	£100
32.	Tredegarr Mayors Appeal	£100
33.	Moose International	£50

Sirhowy Ward - Councillor B. Thomas

1.	Kids R Us	£100
2.	Tredegarr Operatic Society	£200
3.	Royal British Legion Ebbw Vale Branch	£200
4.	Friends of Ebbw Vale Hospital	£200
5.	St Johns Ambulance Tredegarr	£100
6.	Immaculate Conception Church	£217.85

RESOLVED accordingly.

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

No. 8

BLAENAU GWENT COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.

The Managing Director spoke to the report which sought agreement from the Executive on the approach to be adopted to monitor the Recovery from the Covid 19 Pandemic across Council Services and the wider community.

The Managing Director referred to the emergency response situation which had been in place across the Authority over the last 2 years and advised that this work would now come to an end and the Council had identified a recovery phase. The Managing Director advised that the recovery work would be integrated into the Councils governance arrangements using the Business Planning and Performance Management processes. There would also be a set of measures developed which would be used to measure recovery at a strategic level.

The Managing Director added that the Recovery Plan and approach to be undertaken was supported by Scrutiny and it was welcomed that a great deal of the focus would be around the economy on how the Council would support businesses and individuals.

The Leader advised that respective Executive Members had been fully involved in the various strands of the work undertaken and recovery themes. All of which had been reported via the Scrutiny and Executive Committees.

The Executive Member – Economic Development & Regeneration wished to thank the staff across the Council for their work which had been undertaken in response to the pandemic. In terms of the Economic Development and Regeneration Portfolio, the Executive Member noted the monies received from Welsh Government for businesses, however it was felt that it was how it had distributed via the Regeneration and Resources Teams which had allowed the Council to support businesses in the way it had during the pandemic. The Executive Member felt that a fantastic job had been carried out and the Council could now grow from this where it could have been devastation.

	<p>The Executive Member also expressed thanks to the all local governments in their efforts to support businesses across the country.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the approach set out to manage recovery from the Covid 19 Pandemic across Council Services and the wider community be agreed to be taken forward (Option 1).</p>
No. 9	<p><u>BUSINESS RATES RELIEF – RETAIL, LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY RATES RELIEF – 2022/2023</u></p> <p>Councillor J. Wilkins declared an interest in this item and did not take part in discussions or the vote.</p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources advised that the report had been presented to the Executive to consider and adopt the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief – 2022/23 scheme, as a section 47 discretionary rate relief for 2022/23 on behalf of the Council.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report and highlighted the key points as contained in the report. The Chief Officer added that approximately 300 businesses across Blaenau Gwent would benefit from the scheme, however in order for assistance to be given to ratepayers, the Council must resolve to adopt the Welsh Government prescribed scheme as a discretionary rate relief scheme in line with s47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief – 2022/23 scheme be adopted on behalf of the Council, to supplement the Council’s discretionary rate relief scheme (Option 2).</p>

DECISION ITEMS –
REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

No. 10 **ANEURIN BEVAN DESTINATION STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.

The Head of Regeneration advised that the report sought endorsement of the Aneurin Bevan Destination Strategy and provided a summary of the Strategy's content along with the Themes around which a range of projects for tourism and economic regeneration.

The Head of Regeneration noted the work which had been undertaken collaboratively in relation to tourism and economic development and outlined the projects which had been identified. It was reported that the Strategy tied into and complements the Blaenau Gwent Destination Management Plan and would provide a framework for delivering local projects under the strategic umbrella of the Management Plan. The Head of Regeneration added that once approval had been received it would enable officers to further develop the projects, including feasibility work and establish updated costs.

The Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration advised that Strategy had been worked towards for a while and had now started to fit into the Council's Placemaking Plans with there being more impact in Tredegar at the moment. However, the Executive Member stated that Nye Bevan was a representative of Blaenau Gwent and therefore the Council should look at the Strategy across all towns. The Executive Member continued that the Strategy was not just about Nye Bevan and felt it was important that the Council looked at other aspects, including our industrial heritage and the Chartists which a massive part in our history. The Executive Member also referred to the sporting hero's which could also be considered and felt that there was an opportunity to develop many heritage aspects from our history across the Borough in all our communities in line with the Councils Placemaking Plans.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Aneurin Bevan Strategy be agreed (Option 1).

No. 11 **LEVELLING UP FUNDING (LUF) BID REQUEST**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.

The Head of Regeneration advised that the report sought approval for the Authority to submit Levelling Up Funding (LUF) bids during the second call in line with the UK Govt LUF timetable. The Head of Regeneration gave an overview of the Levelling Up Funding and the bidding process. The Head of Regeneration also highlighted the work undertaken by the Regeneration Team along with the projects identified that met the criteria and hoped that one of the projects could be taken forward.

The Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration stated that one of biggest challenges around the Levelling Up Funding and the Community Renewal funding was timing and although the pandemic had interrupted work, the Department had been put under significant pressure to put projects forward with the funds available. The Executive Member added that this was Phase 1 and it was hoped that as funding become available including European funding the Council could bid for more projects.

The Executive Member concluded that the projects being explored are long standing issues for the Borough which included the Ebbw Vale Car Park and Brynmawr Bus Station. These are big projects that met the criteria for Levelling Up funding and the Executive Member felt that these were projects that would benefit the whole Borough.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and it was agreed that applications be prepared be for the next Levelling Up Fund round of bidding for the schemes as identified in the report (Option 1).

DECISION ITEMS – EDUCATION MATTERS

No. 12 **BLAENAU GWENT DRAFT 10-YEAR WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN CONSULTATION REPORT / DRAFFT**
ADRODDIAD YMGYNGHORI CYNLLUN STRATEGOL CYMRAEG
MEWN ADDYSG 10-MLYNEDD BLAENAU GWENT

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.

The Corporate Director Education outlined the report which provided an overview of the draft Blaenau Gwent 10-year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, providing views, comments and responses in line with the consultation process. The Corporate Director noted the consultation responses and pointed out that a number of respondents referenced the positive progress made to date, whilst also recognising the commitment of the Council to develop both Welsh Education and the Welsh language. All responses would be considered, which included areas whereby consultees had suggested that the draft plan could be strengthened. The Corporate Director advised that the document has been updated accordingly to reflect the consultation.

The Corporate Director advised that the draft plan had been submitted to Welsh Government following the consultation in line with their clear guidelines on 31st January, 2022, however it was informed that the document would be subject to Executive approval and the final version would be submitted in March 2022 once agreed by the Executive. It was noted that this was a course of action taken in a number of authorities.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Draft 10-Year WESP agreed (Option 1).

No. 13 **REVISIONS TO THE SOUTH EAST WALES EDUCATION
ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE COLLABORATION AND MEMBERS
AGREEMENT (CAMA)**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.

The Corporate Director Education advised that the purpose of the report was to provide the Executive with the opportunity to update the South East Wales Education Achievement Service Collaboration and Members Agreement (the CAMA). It was added that the proposal outlined within the report would provide a suitable and necessary level of support to the Education Achievement Service (EAS) should the need to make significant staffing changes, with consequential restricting costs, that impact on their ability to operate as an on-going concern.

The Corporate Director Education highlighted the key points of the report and noted that the EAS working with Directors proposed that the five controlling authorities formalised an agreement, similar to the home authorities Joint Services Protocol, to underwrite certain severance costs (i.e. redundancy payments and any employer capital pension costs) arising through the EAS having to take appropriate action to achieve a balance budget. The Corporate Director noted that this would be achieved through:-

- The home authorities underwriting those severance costs incurred within the EAS, which arise through actions required to meet a balance budget. Home authorities would underwrite those costs, pro rata to their current core contribution percentages, subject to the Company first contributing 50% of its retained balances towards the total cost.

The Corporate Director further referred the Executive to the impact on the budget which detailed a scenario exposure presented for each local authority based on respective contributions to the EAS.

The Executive Member for Education highlighted that the risk to the Authority was low in terms of the financial commitment being requested.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the revised form of wording in the report be agreed. It also be agreed that the EAS be allowed to retain at fifty percent of their balances to protect their liquidity.

	<p><u>MONITORING ITEM – CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS</u></p>
No. 14	<p><u>FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTERS 1 AND 2 (APRIL 2021 TO SEPTEMBER 2021)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Performance and Democratic.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 2)</p>
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEM – REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS</u></p>
No. 15	<p><u>ASPIRE SHARED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>The Head of Regeneration advised that the report outlined the performance of the Aspire programme and associated external business engagement. It also provided performance information on the BGCBC internal apprenticeship programme.</p> <p>The Head of Regeneration advised how well the programme had progressed and added that the Aspire Programme had won a number of awards. It had been recognised alongside other apprenticeships in getting young people into work. The Head of Regeneration further highlight key points from the report and advised that if individuals had not gone into employment they had gone on to study in higher education. It was hoped that the Aspire Programme could be continued and hoped to have discussions with City Capital Region and suggested that there may be opportunities to link with Hive.</p>

	<p>The Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration felt that the Aspire Programme was a fantastic achievement to set up and seeing it grow had been a pleasure. The Executive Member welcomed the interest which had been shown from Merthyr Tydfil Council and Coleg Gwent and felt that the Aspire Programme could go up against any apprenticeships in the Country as it was excellent. It identified opportunities for the Local Authority and local business who had benefited from the apprenticeships which had been undertaken.</p> <p>The Executive Member also wished to pay tribute to Mark Langshaw who had been a champion of the Aspire Programme from the start and it was hoped that Welsh Government would look to continue the funding to ensure the good work could be carried on into the future.</p> <p>The Leader welcomed the report and felt it was something for this Authority to be proud of with political support of the Executive Member for Economic Development & Regeneration.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 2)</p>
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS – EDUCATION MATTERS</u></p>
<p>No. 16</p>	<p><u>21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS BAND B PROGRESS</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 contained therein be noted (Option 1).</p>
<p>No. 17</p>	<p><u>EDUCATION DIRECTORATE – RECOVERY AND RENEWAL PLAN</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted along with the associated documentation and proposed course of action (Option 1).</p>

No. 18	<p><u>CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION SERVICES SPRING AND SUMMER TERMS REPORT 2021</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 detailed within the Corporate Director of Education’s Spring/Summer terms 2021 report and contribute to the continuous self-assessment of effectiveness. (Option 1)</p>
No. 19	<p><u>BLAENAU GWENT EDUCATION SCHOOLS ICT STRATEGY AND PROJECT UPDATE</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 ITEMS – SOCIAL SERVICES MATTERS</u></p>
No. 20	<p><u>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES 2021/2022 (QUARTERS 1 AND 2)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Social Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 1).</p>
No. 21	<p><u>SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND EDUCATION – 1ST APRIL TO 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Social Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 1).</p>

DECISION ITEM –
REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

No. 22 **TRANSFORMING TOWNS**
EMPTY PROPERTY MANAGEMENT FUND

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 Paragraphs 12 and 14, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services and an overview was provided to the Executive by the Head of the Regeneration.

The Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration welcomed the report and felt it was an important change in how the Local Authority dealt with empty properties. The Executive Member felt it presented a real opportunity across our towns to make buildings available and enhance our town centres.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information which contained details relating to an individual and the business/financial affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted (Option 2).
