

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT, REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENT, REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 29TH NOVEMBER, 2018

REPORT OF: BUSINESS SUPPORT OFFICER, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR P. EDWARDS (CHAIR)

Councillors P. Baldwin
D. Hancock
W. Hodgins
M. Holland
H. McCarthy
J. Millard
M. Moore
J.C. Morgan
K. Rowson
T. Sharrem
G. Thomas

**AND: Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services
Service Manager, Public Protection
Service Manager, Community Services
Service Manager, Regeneration (Temp)
Service Manager, Development Services
Team Manager, Thriving Communities
Team Manager, Environmental Protection
Team Manager, Housing Solutions & Compliance
Scrutiny Officer**

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

Deputy Leader of the Council/Executive Member – Environment

Councillor G. Collier

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 6	<p data-bbox="276 497 1283 577"><u>EXECUTIVE DECISION – CEMETERIES TASK AND FINISH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS (PART 2)</u></p> <p data-bbox="276 624 1283 748">To respond to any questions raised by the Committee following the Executive Committee’s decision regarding the Cemeteries Task & Finish Group recommendations report.</p> <p data-bbox="276 795 1283 918">The Chair invited the Executive Member – Environment and the Executive Member – Corporate Services to speak to the report.</p> <p data-bbox="276 965 1283 1261">The Executive Member – Environment commented that the Task & Finish Group had produced an excellent report but the recommendation could not be supported. The Managing Director had requested that the Technical Services Department prepare a business case setting out priority areas based on critical and non-critical improvements within Blaenau Gwent’s cemeteries.</p> <p data-bbox="276 1308 1283 1944">The Executive Member – Corporate Services agreed that it was a good report and that it was imperative to improve the condition of the Borough’s cemeteries as a matter of urgency. The Task & Finish Group’s recommendation was that £120,000 be allocated to make improvements to cemeteries but that money had not yet been received by the Council and if improvements were carried out funding would have to be provided through the Council’s reserves which were already below the recommended 4%. The Council had a duty to be financially prudent and not draw off general reserves unnecessarily. As part of the bidding process for 2019/20 an application could be submitted for funding to the Capital Programme, along with other Council priorities, for improvement works to be progressed on the priority areas identified within the business case.</p> <p data-bbox="276 1991 1283 2074">In response to a Member’s question regarding the appointment of consultants, the Executive Member –</p>	

Corporate Services explained that this would not be pursued as it would entail further costs to the Authority.

Members agreed that Blaenau Gwent cemeteries had been neglected for several years due to the financial cuts imposed on the Authority. In 2013/14 staffing levels had reduced which had also impacted on the condition of the cemeteries.

The Committee AGREED that the comments from the Executive Member – Corporate Services and the Executive Member – Environment be noted.

The Executive Member – Corporate Services Councillor N. Daniels and the Executive Member – Environment Councillor G. Collier left the meeting at this juncture.