

Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities

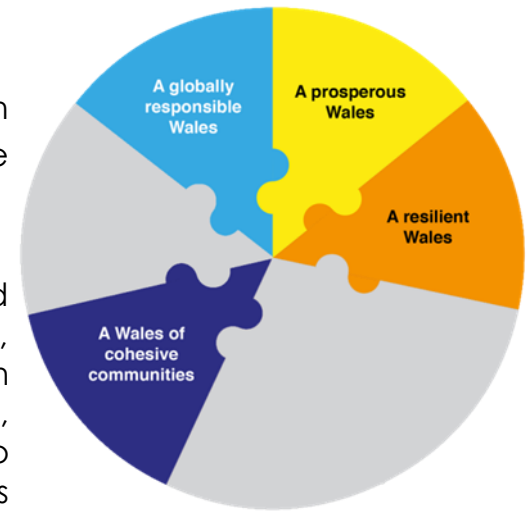
Quarter 1 & 2 (April - September 2019) Performance Report



Foreword

The purpose of this report is to present service activity from April 2019 to September 2019 which highlights how we are contributing to the Council's overall aim of delivering a globally responsible Wales, a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales and a Wales of more cohesive communities.

The following overview pages set out our performance for the period along with some associated achievements and challenges aligned to the priority areas identified in the Corporate Plan 2018/22, which are: ► To increase rates of recycling to enable us to achieve national targets, ► To re-invest in environmental services to address the issues created by fly-tipping, dog fouling, littering, grass cutting, street cleansing and pest control, ► To re-invest in highways maintenance particularly improvements to our residential roads, streets and pavements, ► To improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors, ► To build the relationships across the Council to support organisations and partners to deliver services in different ways, and ► To take a strategic approach to the management of our land and property services in different ways.



This report is broken down into the themes below which have been identified for the Community Services area and support delivery of the priority areas above:

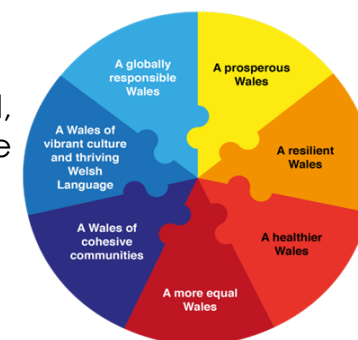
- Improving the Local Environment;
- Managing Our Estate;
- Improving the Well-being and Resilience of our Communities;
- Healthy and Safe Communities; and
- Managing our Highways Network and Infrastructure.

Blaenau Gwent has a rich heritage and our buildings and countryside are part of Blaenau Gwent's attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit. Our local environment should be used to help improve the health and well-being of our families and communities and be enhanced for future generations to continue to enjoy. There is also a real desire to see the communities where people live kept clean, tidy and useable, creating areas that people can be proud of.



Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is legislation which aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The vision of this legislation is expressed in the seven National well-being goals.



The Act also puts a duty on public bodies to apply the sustainable development principle which states they 'must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

The sustainable development principle is made up of the following five ways of working, pictured below:



Collaboration



Integration



Involvement



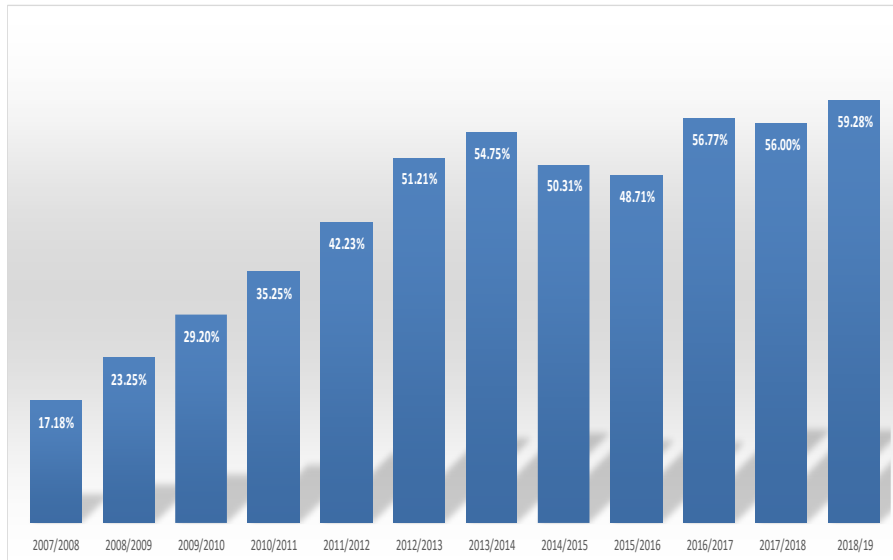
Long Term



Prevention

Throughout this report some areas of performance that meet these ways of working are demonstrated by the above images.

Improving the local Environment



Welsh Government set statutory recycling targets of recycling 58 per cent of waste by 2015-16, 64 per cent by 2019-20 and 70 per cent by 2024-25.

Blaenau Gwent has made significant improvements over the last few years and are on course to meet the 64% target this year.

62.24% of waste produced within Blaenau Gwent was recycled in Quarter 1.

64.81% was recycled in Quarter 2. (Provisional figure)

The average Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) recycling rate has **increased** by 8.13 percentage points to **86.22%** during Quarters 1 & 2, compared to the same period last year.



Dry Recycling collected at the kerbside during Quarters 1 & 2 has increased by **125.04 tonnes** (5.42%) when compared to the same period last year



The implementation of side waste enforcement has now been completed. There has been a positive impact from the implementation of the side waste enforcement whereby residual waste collected during Quarters 1 & 2 has decreased by **895.26 tonnes** (13.08%) when compared to the same period the previous year.



Starting in September 2019 the "Keeping up with the Joneses" campaign is currently being rolled out across the borough to encourage residents to recycle more of their waste. Initially approx. 3000 properties are being monitored with the next phase due to start in January 2020.

Improving the local Environment

**FLY-TIPPING
ACTION
WALES**

467 Fly-tipping incidents were reported during Quarters 1 and 2, the average number of days taken to clear was **3.72**

Over the past few years the service have seen significant increases in energy costs relating to street lighting, this, along with budget cuts to the service resulted in street lights being switched off on our main roads and Industrial areas. Recently we have **invested £400,000** to the **street lighting** budget which has meant we have restored this lighting.

We are currently trialling solar LED lanterns; we currently have 33 units fitted throughout the Borough. If successful, this fairly new energy efficient, cost saving technology could be used as an alternative to the usual mains supply lanterns where there is a power supply problem.

Upgrading our street lighting to LED is key to us providing a more energy efficient, low carbon lighting network. We are currently bidding to secure funds to replace 4,600 street lights [lanterns] in order to meet this objective.

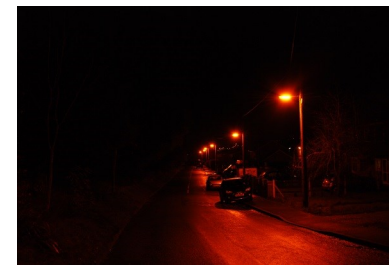


cadwch keep
gymru'n wales
daclus tidy

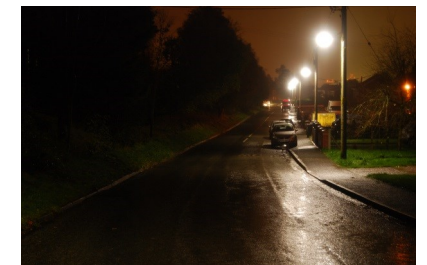
During the first 2 quarters 191 streets were inspected by Blaenau Gwent Officers/ Keep Wales Tidy. Of these **96.86%** were rated at a high or acceptable standard on cleanliness.



INVOLVEMENT - Blaenau Gwent carried out **9** Street Scene engagement roadshows during June, over a two week period. This consisted of town centres and shopping centres. **279** Residents were surveyed and asked if they felt the cleanliness of the borough had improved, and the consensus was that performance has remained the same. It was positive to see that performance has been maintained and further engagement sessions will be carried out during Quarter 4 of 2019/2020.

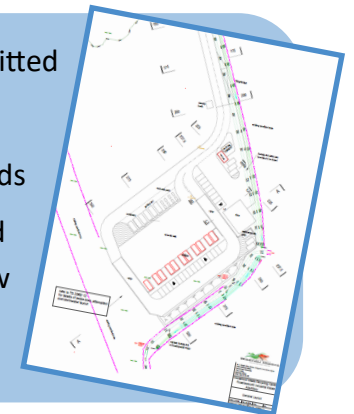


Before



After

Business case developed and submitted to Welsh Government for Capital funding of **2.8 million** pounds to develop an additional Household Waste Recycling Centre in the Ebbw Fach Valley.



Managing Our Estate



Six Bells Primary School has been completed and handed over on time and within budget. The building is now in operation and has been well-received by pupils, staff, parents and the majority of the community.

91.3% of Blaenau Gwent Bridges were compliant with statutory inspections in quarter 2, exceeding the target of 90%

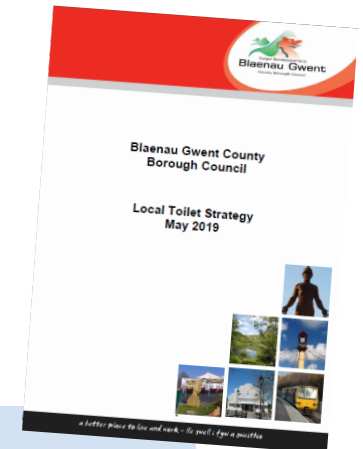


The ReFit Scheme has been used to implement various energy improvement projects. Work is being undertaken to consider the downsizing of the Council's property portfolio in order to assist with reducing the energy costs across the estate.

The development cost of the new Six Bells Primary School and associated main public sewer diversion is £9.366 million.

The Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process is working to build relationships between the council, organisations and partners to support the delivery of services in different ways whilst taking a more commercial approach to the management of our land and property assets. As part of this, the Council has successfully undertaken Community Asset Transfers across a number of buildings and facilities. The next phase will be on resolving the outstanding CATs including the resolving of competing interests through a selection process as well as supporting organisations to be sustainable in the long term. The CAT transfer exercise is expected to be concluded in quarter 3 2019, however, the budget has been exceeded and is now under review.

A condition survey has been undertaken on parts of the Industrial Portfolio which can be used to inform investment decisions.



https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Council/Policies_Strategies_Plans/BG_Toilet_Strategy_190108_v2_update.pdf

Blaenau Gwent has agreed a Toilet Strategy for implementation across the area. In order for the Strategy to be successfully delivered, there will be a need to establish relationships between the public, private and voluntary sectors in order to drive forward sustainable public toilet provision. All of the publicly available toilet facilities will be signposted and mapped, so that residents and visitors will know where to find them, when they are open and what facilities are available.

Improving the Well-being and Resilience of our Communities

Key progress of projects to date include:

- Completion of Granny's Wood;
- 'Blaenau Gwent on the Move' is nearing completion;
- Completion of this year's invasive weeds programme;
- Working with a local farmer to manage in excess of 5Ha of grassland;
- Harvesting 108 large hay bales from numerous green network sites.



Granny's Wood – is a community based project in Llanhilleth that has secured £73,000 to open a woodland walk through a local woodland area. A route that was traditionally used by miners on the daily route to work.



Following an application to the Valleys Regional Park (VRP) for improved facilities at Parc Bryn Bach, funding has been awarded in the sum of £500,000 for redevelopment of the play area and Bunkhouse.

In Quarter 1. **50** natural resource management activities were delivered within schools, reaching **1,941** children

Recently, the Wales Audit Office undertook a review of the Corporate Plan Objective, *'To improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors'*.

The review looked to consider how the five sustainable development principles had been applied when implementing our priorities. In response to the findings an action plan is being developed which will be implemented over the year and monitored as part of the business planning process.

83% of complaints regarding trees or non emergency works were responded to within 10 days in quarter 1



INVOLVEMENT - We continue to work across the Borough with community groups and both internal and external partners to improve the quality of and access to our green spaces.

COLLABORATION - Working collaboratively across the five Gwent areas, two major funding applications were developed and submitted to Welsh Government. Once the funding was secured work on 'Resilient Gwent' began and is on schedule.



Improving the Well-being and Resilience of our Communities

Under The Welsh Governments ' Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing Funding' Blaenau Gwent have taken the lead role in securing £1.3M of funding over 3 years for the Resilient Greater Gwent project. By 2022 the project aims to:

- Enhance biodiversity and resilient ecology networks in Greater Gwent;
- Put biodiversity at the heart of decision making and clearly evidenced in our strategic plans;
- Ensure that our communities are connected with nature and encourage sustainable lifestyles which in term supports health and well-being; and
- Take action against the drivers of biodiversity loss ; climate change, pollution, habitat change and loss, invasive non not species and exploitation.

A complementary project for the Gwent Green Grid (£2.4M), also working collaboratively across Greater Gwent, is also being developed with a programmed start date of April 2020 and will tackle broader landscape and access issues.



Healthy and Safe Communities



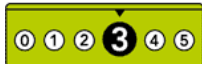
Urgent improvement necessary



Major improvement necessary



Improvement necessary



Generally satisfactory



Good



Very good

90.1% of food establishments are broadly compliant with food hygiene standards.

Grant funding has been approved from the Food Standards Agency to facilitate the targeting of additional supportive interventions with some of the poorest performers in terms of compliance with food hygiene requirements. The coaching visits funded by this grant will commence in Quarter 3.



75.1% of streets surveyed showed that no dog fouling was present.

24.4% showed small amounts of Dog Fouling

0.5% showed large amounts of Dog Fouling

The Community Meals Service have delivered a total of **13,247** meals over the past six months

The Catering and Cleaning Sections provide services to the local community schools and corporate buildings. Both services support 500 good quality local jobs within the local community in various occupations i.e. cleaners, catering assistants, assistant cooks and qualified cooks.



INVOLVEMENT - We work to ensure delivery of fit for purpose Licencing Services and engagement with **alcohol licensed premises** takes place to advise and educate them regarding their responsibilities when selling alcohol. **138** premises have been selected for inspection this year **68** of which were **inspected** during the reporting period.

521 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) issued in Quarter 1 and 2 which is significantly more than the same period in 2018/19. This reflects filling of vacancies in the Local Authority Support Service leading to more enforcement action. The Local Authority is not setting out to serve as many FPNs as possible. It is always hoped that the number of FPNs issued would reduce as behaviour patterns relating to litter and dog control improve as a result of enforcement.

PREVENTION —Trading Standards activity contributes to crime reduction and protection of vulnerable people from scams and rogue traders. Intervention visits were made to **100%** (32) of identified vulnerable potential scam victims during the period.



Managing our Highways Network and Infrastructure



The net expenditure on the highway asset last year was

£1,017,434

The percentage of all roads in an overall poor condition has

reduced by 5.6 percentage

points to **11.4%**



All schemes identified within the original Highways Programme are complete with the exception of the Tredegar By-Pass resurfacing. A review of available finances is to be undertaken to consider a further programme of highway works should appropriate funding be available.

A matrix has been developed to determine a programme schedule for the resurfacing of residential streets. Early notification to residents prior to commencing work on site is key, so that residents are aware of the duration and disruption of the resurfacing works.

Key progress of projects to date include:

- Replaced **7** vehicle containment systems (Crash Barriers)
- **4** new bus shelters
- **58** residential highways
- **2** Class A Roundabouts
- Total of **12 miles** of highways resurfaced

94% of dangerous structures were attended to within 1 hour which is 25% above last quarter.

Examples of these structures include walls, roofs, fencing and gates, guttering and downpipes, chimneys, windows and buildings in general disrepair.

From 1st July 2019 the Council began its Civil Parking Enforcement scheme. In order to support residents to fully understand the scheme an initial eight week 'bedding in' process took place whereby warning notices were provided, highlighting impending enforcement. Acquiring Civil Parking Enforcement provides the Council with the powers to tackle wider transport and environmental issues such as traffic congestion, road safety and to safeguard the interests of residents, blue badge holders, transport operators and local businesses.

The service is working on a number of Capital Schemes in order to provide a new Household waste recycling centre at Roseheyworth such as A467 junction improvements. Also Recently completed is the highway infrastructure at Six Bells school to improve highway safety.



COLLABORATION - Working with Torfaen County Borough Council in order to improve bus shelters following a Transportation Grant from Welsh Government.

Case Study - SHEP (School Holiday Enrichment Programme)



SHEP is a school-based programme that provides healthy meals, food and nutritional education, physical activity and enrichment sessions to children in areas of social deprivation during the summer holidays. SHEP was introduced to help children with their mental health and well-being as, during this time, some experience social isolation and a lack of intellectual stimulation, normally provided by school or family enrichment activities.

SHEP is a collaborative working partnership made up of schools, several departments within the Local Authority as well as a host of outside agencies.

In 2018 Blaenau Gwent took part for the first time and with two schools on board, Tillery St. Campus in Abertillery and Willowtown School in Ebbw Vale. This year we were able to double the number of schools and carried out the project in four schools, Blaen y Cwm in Brynmawr, Rhos y Fedwen School in Rassau, Roseheyworth Campus in Abertillery and Willowtown School in Ebbw Vale.

The children took part in a number of activities all based around being healthy, being fit and the environment. Children have to have a minimum of 1 hour physical activity a day (WLGA guidelines), three meals with snacks and other activities to stimulate the mind and their creativity.

We had a great response from the pupils attending. Over the four sites we fed up to 138 children out of a maximum of 160 across the 12 days.

The parents and children rated the choice, taste and variety of the food offered by our Catering Department as Good to Excellent for the breakfast and lunch they provided.

Parents asked to see more variety of activities being planned and said they would like to see more trips, more cooking demonstrations, first aid for parents and more craft type activities being carried out over the 12 days.

Parents and staff have expressed that they wish for SHEP to continue in the future.



Case Study - Crucial Crews

Crucial Crew is an event organised by "Resolve It Crucial Crew" and teaches year 6 children (10 & 11 year olds) across Wales that they have a right to feel safe. The life – saving PSE workshops run by different agencies such as Road Safety Units, Fire Service, Arriva Trains, Food Standards Agency, NSPCC, Dog Trust, Coastguard, Samaritans and many other charities and organisations, are interactive and engaging ensuring that each child is taught strategies to cope with challenging situations.

The workshops help young people to:

- Become more aware of personal safety;
- Learn how to react to dangerous situations;
- Learn social responsibility and foster good citizenship;
- Develop an awareness and understanding of the role of the emergency services; and
- Avoid becoming victims of crime and lead a healthy lifestyle.

The Road Safety Team educate these children on the importance of wearing a seatbelt for EVERY journey they take in a car and to wear it in the correct position. Statistics have unfortunately shown that at least half of the children we see do not always wear a seatbelt. At the end of our presentation almost ALL children say that they have changed their mind and will always wear a seat belt.

The Road Safety Officer is involved in organising the event and contacting the schools directly which has resulted in a significant increase in participating schools over the last few years. This year we had 20 schools attending which resulted in all agencies seeing 640 children over 5 days. Abertillery and Roseheyworth will receive the event in December.

The Organisations involved rely on this event every year to get their message across to these children as they find it very hard to get into the Schools.

