

Finance and Performance Report
2019/20
Quarter 1 & 2 (April to September)

Foreword

The purpose of the report is to present the performance of the Council for the quarter 1 and 2 period (April to September 2019), setting out the key activities and measures used to monitor performance against the priority areas as identified within the Council's Corporate Plan 2018/22, which includes the following five priority areas:

- Social Services;
- Education;
- Environmentally Smart Communities;
- Economic Development and Regeneration; and
- Efficient Council.

All of these priorities have identified supporting actions and measures which are monitored as part of the Council's business planning process. The Council has fully aligned all of its planning to the Corporate Plan which includes the Well-being Objectives. These are central to the organisation and future work planning and strategies are aligned to these areas.



The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is ground-breaking 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 and progress against these areas is evidenced throughout the report.

The Council's performance supports delivery of the core vision of the Corporate Plan:

Blaenau Gwent Vision -

Proud Heritage

Strong Communities

Brighter Future

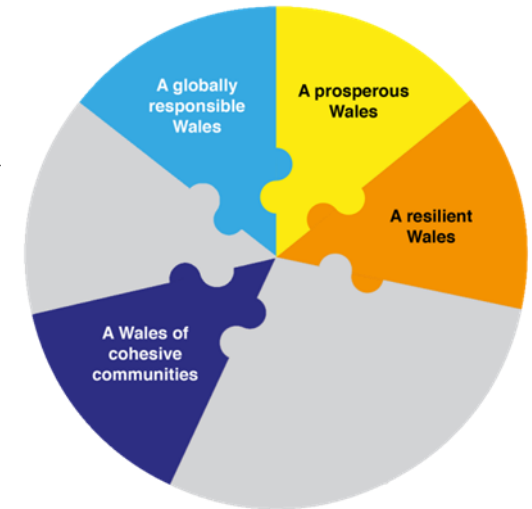
BRAG Rating

The Council uses a BRAG rating system to assess progress against actions and measures, the definitions are provided in the table below:

Status	Description
Blue	The action/priority has been completed; all performance factors set have been achieved (time, quality, financial aspects).
Green	The action/priority is performing to plan; all performance factors are within the acceptable variance levels set.
Amber	Issues have been identified with the action/priority that will/may negatively impact on performance; the priority owner is able to resolve the problem or make corrective decisions without assistance; action/priority is at risk of failing on one or more of the performance factors set.
Red	Significant issues identified with the action/priority that requires corrective action in order to meet objectives; the priority owner requires assistance to resolve the issue; action/priority is failing on one or more of the performance factors set.

Why this is important

Our Corporate Plan provides the focus for delivering lasting change for the area. It also provides the platform for transforming Blaenau Gwent into a more confident and capable Council. Our ambition is to deliver better outcomes for the people of Blaenau Gwent and that ambition is underpinned by solid and sustainable plans, ensuring the Council can be held to account for what it has promised to deliver. Maximising the impact of our resources to deliver those outcomes sits at the heart of this priority. This includes understanding our costs, controlling expenditure, maximising our income and aligning our resources to the needs of our residents, businesses and visitors to build a Blaenau Gwent for the future.



Progress against actions

A number of high level priorities (shown below) have been identified to support delivery of the 'Efficient Council' corporate theme. These are detailed in the following overview pages along with some associated achievements and challenges.

Priorities:-

- To demonstrate clear and visible leadership to deliver a viable and resilient Council;
- To continue our programme of public engagement and respond in a timely and effective way to feedback;
- To ensure effective forward financial planning arrangements are in place to support the Council's financial resilience;
- To support and develop a workforce that has the capacity and capability to be productive and responsive to future demands;
- To improve online public services and ensure people have access to the appropriate digital technology and skills to use it properly;
- To develop a more commercial organisation to generate income and deliver cost reductions to make local services sustainable and raise money to re-invest in our priorities; and
- To be a strong and effective partner and collaborate where possible to deliver financial, business and community benefits.

The following section reflects the overall progress position for the delivery of the 'Efficient Council' priority theme of the Corporate Plan, along with a breakdown of each individual priority, highlighting progress, achievements and challenges

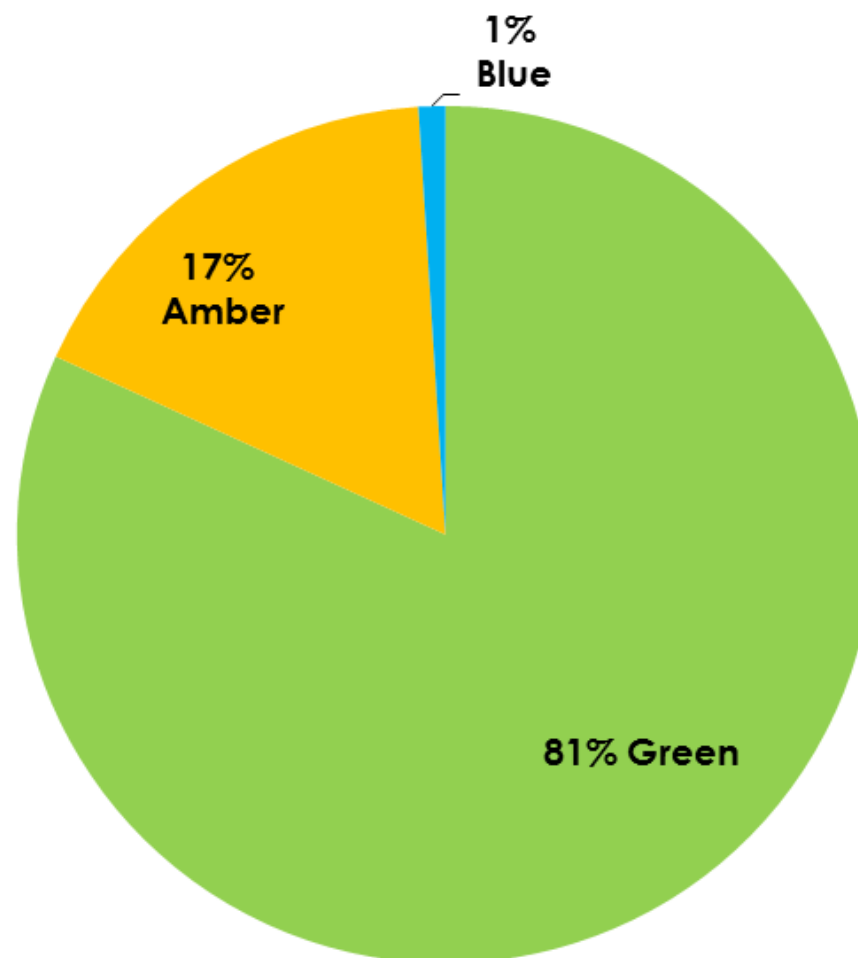
How we performed

Throughout quarter 1 & 2 there has been progress in the implementation of the 'Efficient Council' priorities but it is recognised that there is still further work to do to fully implement the aims and objectives.

As at the 30th September 2019, the performance of 'Efficient Council' was evaluated as being **mainly successful as 81% of actions were green (on target), 18% were amber (behind target) and 1% was blue (completed).**

Central to the Efficient Council priority is looking at an approach to working in a cost effective and efficient way across the Council. This ambitious programme is called 'Bridging the Gap' and is an integral part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and delivery of the Corporate Plan. This programme of activity is looking at delivering a council that is more commercially minded in the way it delivers services. Progress of this programme will be seen over the remainder of the Corporate Plan.

Overall 'Efficient Council' corporate theme delivery position as at 30th September 2019.



Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To demonstrate clear and visible leadership to deliver a viable and resilient Council

- WLGA funding has been provided to each local authority to support corporate planning. This has been utilised by employing a Policy Officer who has a role in supporting the Council to prepare for exiting the EU which includes sitting on the WLGA National Coordinators Network for exiting the EU.
- There has been a launch of refreshed internal communication mechanisms to improve engagement, share good stories and ensure staff and managers promote core organisational ways of working.
- Two managers Conferences will take place in October in order to consider our progress as a Council – in delivering on our strategic priorities and positive outcomes for our communities, strengthening our financial resilience, regenerating the area and defining our ambition to be a commercially minded council.

To continue our programme of public engagement and respond in a timely and effective way to feedback

- Discussions are ongoing with the Youth Forum to identify how best young people can engage in the democratic process.
- Nine Streetscene engagement events have been held in markets, supermarkets and town centres across the area. A corresponding web survey was published with 159 people taking part in the survey at the events and 120 completing via the web. Many more engaged with us at roadshows.
- An Open Data event was held alongside Data Cymru to promote the sharing of data across organisations as a means to improving the design of services for the public.
- There is a focus on aligning the relevant work streams of the Public Service Board and Regional Partnership Board. Initial discussions have taken place relating to the integrated well-being programme recently launched which has a whole population focus.

How we currently perform



As at 30.09.19 the average number of days lost per FTE (cumulative) was 5.93



There were 162,559 website visitors from April to September.



89% of Internal Audits were completed within the time allocated.



Income Collection rates showing slight increase on 2018/19 figures.



Five year Medium Term Financial Strategy drafted.

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To ensure effective forward financial planning arrangements are in place to support the Council's financial resilience

- The Council recognises the challenges that it faces in the short, medium and long term and has developed a programme of Strategic Business Reviews to deal with potential gaps between anticipated funding and expenditure that aims to build financial resilience.
Based on strategic themes our 'Bridging the Gap' programme will identify savings opportunities, potential cost avoidance and new revenue streams.
- A draft Medium Term Financial Strategy covering a 5 year period and including an overview of the 'Bridging the Gap' programme and individual strategic business reviews has been approved by Council. The final Medium Term Financial Strategy will be considered by Council during quarter 3.
- There has been finance business partner engagement on all 'Bridging the Gap' working Groups, including the development of a full cost recovery model which is currently being tested.
- Capacity to support the 'Bridging the Gap' projects is a challenge. This is being monitored through supervision and prioritisation of work load and relocating duties.



COLLABORATION

Collaborative relationships have been established with Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen Councils through SRS working arrangements.

Work has been carried out to ensure that Blaenau Gwent are at the heart of conversations with Welsh Government about public sector reform and have involvement in Wales Digital Transformation.

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To support and develop a workforce that has the capacity and capability to be productive and responsive to future demands

The importance of our responsibility to manage attendance is recognised and is done so via procedures that incorporate mechanisms to monitor individual attendance levels and, where appropriate, reduce high levels of sickness absence through proactive management action. Sickness absence information for 2018/19 was reviewed at CLT July 2019 including whole Council and Directorate position statements resulting in the following recommendations:

- Target setting per service and seasonally;
- Hold focussed sessions quarterly to review sickness absence – on agenda for team meetings, etc;
- Hold managers to account for managing sickness – end to end;
- Objective for managers as part of annual performance coaching and regular 121s;
- Ensure managers are using ITrent effectively and timely;
- Application of the Managing Attendance Policy 'to the letter';
- Managers recognising good attendance; and
- Push ownership to the individual.

Directorate	Number of Full Time Equivalent Staff (FTE) As at 30.06.19	Quarter 1 Average Days lost per FTE (cumulative)	Number of Full Time Equivalent Staff (FTE) As at 30.09.19	Quarter 2 Average Days lost per FTE (cumulative)
Corporate Services	284.97	1.71	284.85	4.34
Regeneration & Community Services	442.14	3.78	464.81	7.09
Social Services	457.62	3.62	469.18	7.45
Education	945.12	2.84	935.72	5.09
Target	-	2.75	-	5.50
Council Total	2129.85	3.06	2154.56	5.93

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To improve online public services and ensure people have access to the appropriate digital technology and skills to use it properly

- The Council's Customer & Digital Programme continues to develop accessible services for the resident. Usage of online services has increased.
- A project has commenced to enable Council Tax payers and Housing Benefits claimants to self-service (Citizens Access).
- The Council has engaged with Government Digital Service (GDS) to explore the use of their platform to improve services for customers.
- A review of current IT systems and their capabilities, cost and usage is being undertaken to ensure that a system is fit for purpose and cost effective. The customer & digital programme continues to implement digital solutions to working practices to enable the Council to become more efficient and effective in dealing with customer demand.

To be a strong and effective partner and collaborate where possible to deliver financial, business and community benefits.

- The partnership arrangements secured through the creation of SRS ensure that joint working on digital projects is maximised. This has strengthened contract management and opportunities for spend control with third party suppliers. Working in partnership with Newport City Council, a Project Team has been established to manage developments within the Council's ITrent system and relationship with the provider.
- We continue to seek opportunities to work differently through partnership and collaboration not only across Gwent but across the Public Sector. As part of this the Council has provided a response to the Welsh Government and Welsh Local Government Association on the review of Strategic partnerships. Findings from the review are anticipated in early autumn and will assist in shaping the focus of local work.
- The Council has commenced a review of Leisure and Culture Services in order to determine the future management options available to the Council for the provision of sustainable Leisure Services.
- The Council has undertaken a review of Silent Valley which was reported to Council in December 2017. At that meeting the Council agreed to undertake due diligence on the company. That work has been completed and that report, and recommendations for next steps, are to be presented to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee.



LONG TERM (forward planning) -

The Council's Statutory Strategic Equality Plan will outline the Council's intentions for meeting the requirements of the Act over a four year period (2020-24).

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To develop a more commercial organisation to generate income and deliver cost reductions to make local services sustainable and raise money to re-invest in our priorities

- Creation of 'Bridging the Gap' proposals and initial discovery has been completed and project sponsors have been identified for all projects. Capacity and capability is an ongoing challenge. In order to mitigate this, external support is now on-board in order to expose people to new ways of working whilst work is being completed.
- Opportunities to share transformation synergies have been established with Newport and Torfaen Councils. Re-negotiating some IT contracts has taken place along with identifying the sharing of Transformation resources and capabilities.
- A Commercial Strategy, that includes identified opportunities through Regeneration and Community Services, has progressed with links being established between growth strategy investment opportunities and existing commercial activities. This will be reported to Council in quarter 4.
- A forensic examination of 3rd party spend has been carried out as the pre-requisite to identifying potential savings for 2020/21 and future years.
- A review of fees and charges is now included in the Bridging the Gap Programme, alongside income recovery strategic business reviews.
- Collection rates during the period have been in line with expectations, showing a slight increase on 2018/19 figures.

Case Study – How we are ‘Bridging the Gap’... financial planning for the future

Financial planning is a year round task!

Our exciting new approach – Bridging the Gap - isn't just about making it from budget to budget it's a much wider plan to become a more financially resilient and commercial minded organisation which maximises and creates income, reduces demand for services and provides a great customer experience.



We are currently working on the assumption that our revenue funding settlement from the Welsh Government will again be cash flat. This means we will need to find £2 - £3 million in savings for 2020/21 to continue to provide public services and invest in the future of Blaenau Gwent, without using our council reserves which we need to build up. The 12 Strategic Business Reviews that make up ‘Bridging the Gap’ will help us to do this.

Going forward, we will be:

- Maximising income and potential income generation - taking a clearly commercial approach where appropriate.
- Maximising our resources by making sure we are getting best value for money through procurement and contracts.
- Exploiting the opportunities of digital transformation.
- Making best use of our assets and property.
- Influencing and reducing demand from our customers and supporting residents to do more for themselves.

This important work involves all of Corporate Leadership Team and is being led by our Chief Officer Commercial, Anne Louise Clark, who says:

“It’s clear that if we want to provide the best services for the people of Blaenau Gwent then we need to think differently, become more business minded and redesign services so that they are more commercial and fit for the 21st Century.

Bridging the Gap offers some quick gains such as looking at our third party spend to get the most for our money where we spend it, and looking at new ways of bringing in money, as well as some longer term projects like reducing our carbon footprint which will be great for the environment, too!”
“This really is an exciting time as we continue to work together to transform services.”

The Strategic Business Reviews are each led by a member of the Corporate Leadership Team and supported by the Strategic Transformation Team and officers from across the Council.

How 'Efficient Council' Performed in quarters 1 & 2

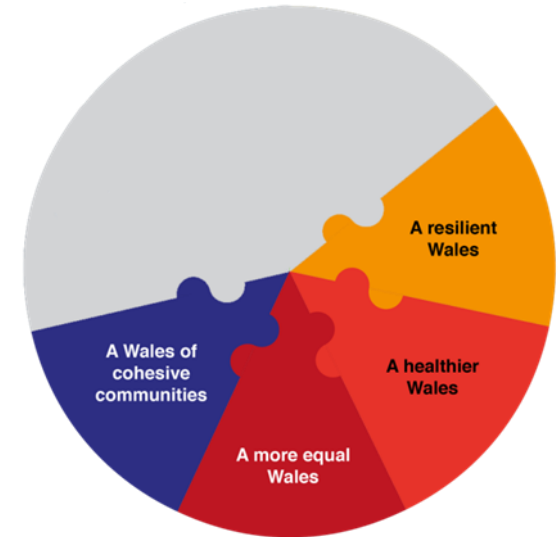
The Council has identified a number of performance measures to evidence how well delivery of the Corporate Objectives is going. These are split by both local and national indicators.

Performance Indicator	National / Local	Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Quarterly Performance Trend
Number of working days lost to sickness absence per employee	National	11	3.06	5.93	-	-	↓
Percentage of Service Reports / Requests via digital means (self-service) (waste and recycling, street cleansing, roads and lighting and switchboard)	Local	-	29%	39%	-	-	↑
Level of General Reserve as a proportion of net revenue expenditure as at 31 March 2019	Local	4.00%	-	4.58%	-	-	-
Net expenditure compared to agreed budget – Revenue	Local	0	(150,000) (0.01%)	(7,000) (0.004%)	-	-	↑
Net expenditure compared to agreed budget – Capital	Local	0	(3,000) (0.02%)	0	-	-	↑
External fees and charges as a percentage of Gross Expenditure <i>* Estimated Figure</i>	Local	5.98%	-	5.59% <i>* Estimated Figure</i>	-	-	-

Why this is important

We want to encourage and support people to make healthy lifestyle choices to enable children, young people and families to thrive. Research has proven people demonstrating positive health behaviours from birth through their life will lead to greater independence, and people being free from complicated health conditions later in life and reducing costs to public services. This in turn could reduce demand on services and ensure the services that are provided are high quality, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

With reduced funding and increasing demand on services the Council can no longer do everything it has done in the past. We must focus on those actions that will have the greatest impact. Safeguarding the most vulnerable people in our communities continues to be a top priority for the Council alongside transforming the aspirations of residents and valuing fairness and equality in everything we do. As a whole the aim of this Objective will be to support vulnerable people of all ages to maximise, maintain and sustain their independence.



Progress against actions

A number of high level priorities (shown below) have been identified to support delivery of the 'Social Services corporate theme. These are detailed in the following overview pages along with some associated achievements and challenges.

Priorities:-

- To improve accessibility, provision of information and advice to enable people to support their own well-being;
- To work with people to make sure they have a say in achieving what matters to them;
- To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater;
- To work with our partners including Aneurin Bevan Health Board and neighbouring authorities to deliver integrated responsive care and support;
- To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering health and social care involving key partners and our communities;
- To put effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect people from harm; and
- To develop a partnership approach to reducing and alleviating the impacts of Poverty

The following section reflects the overall progress position for the delivery of the '**Social Services**' priority theme of the Corporate Plan, along with a breakdown of each individual priority, highlighting progress, achievements and challenges

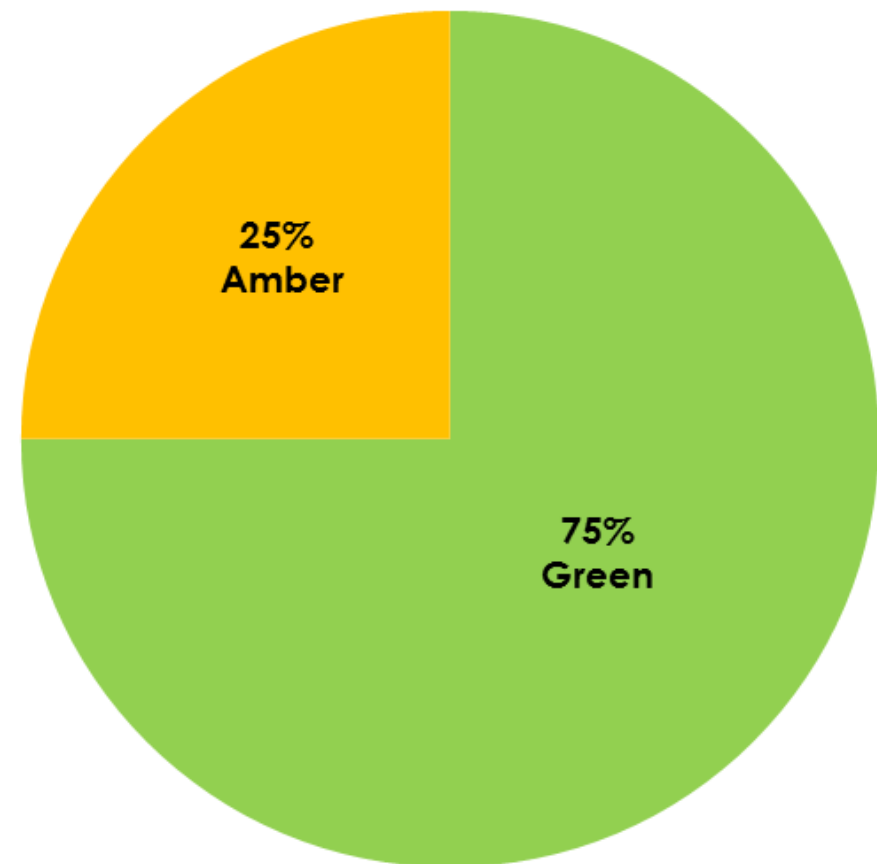
How we performed

Throughout quarter 1 & 2 there has been progress in the implementation of the Social Services priorities but it is recognised that there is still further work to do to fully implement the aims and objectives.

As at 30th September 2019, the Council evaluated performance and activity against Social Services Objective as mainly successful **as 75% of the actions were green (on target) and 25% amber (behind target)**. When considering trend against the performance indicators **five saw an improvement, four a decline and one remained the same**.

The Social Services function remains high on the Council agenda. The Council is looking to address the areas that will have a long term benefit, ensuring that the needs of people of all ages and future generations are at the centre of service design and delivery.

Overall 'Social Services corporate theme delivery position as at 30th September 2019.



Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To improve accessibility, provision of information, advice and assistance (IAA) to enable people to support their own well-being

- Sustainability and embedding of the Compassionate Communities work stream is ongoing and includes the increased presence of social care within GP surgeries as part of the integrated approaches to IAA. We are currently strategically mapping our community resources via the transformation Integrated Well-being Networks programme (Adult Services).
- Partnership work continues with the Police under the Early Action Together programme. A DS has ben co-located in IAA and early indications are that this is having a positive impact on the timeliness of undertaking the Child Protection process and in ensuring that information is collated and considered in all decision making .
- A review of staff resource in this area is being undertaken to ensure that it is appropriately staffed to meet service demand as the IAA team are the front door for children's services and it is crucial that service demand is met.

To work with people to make sure they have a say in achieving what matters to them

- We continue to work with colleagues across Health , Social care and Third sector to promote the importance of personal well-being and independence.
- An internal case audit was devised in September 2019 and the theme was 'The Voice of the Child'. A total of 18 cases were randomly chosen and each case audit was completed by either a Team Manager and/or Senior Practitioner, and Independent Reviewing Officer.
- The Safeguarding / Children Looked After (CLA) education team are developing a framework for CLA child friendly schools, which will include a good practice guide and self-evaluation tool for schools. A task and finish group has been established during which it was agreed the child's voice should help inform these documents.

How we currently perform



Blaenau Gwent remains top of the DToC league in Wales



Number of Children Looked After 225



Preventative Services supported 54.9% of child cases.



61 Children on the Child Protection Register



97.9% Adult protection enquiries completed within 7 days .

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater

- The Safe Reduction of Children Looked After Strategy has started to evidence how it is preventing problems faced by children and families escalating to a point which requires children becoming looked after or their names going onto the child protection register. Good evidence of this is the work undertaken by the Supporting Change Team and a full evaluation showed evidence that the team is making a real difference to the children and families of Blaenau Gwent.
- We have successfully achieved a £4.5m capital bid which will be used to fund 5 projects linking the childcare Offer nursery provision to schools to provide wrap around day care.
- The prevention and early intervention strategy is in the first 6 months of its 3 year delivery plan. There is still a significant amount of work to be done to achieve the objectives of this strategy.
- The SPACE Well-being programme is working co productively with partners such as Health, Education, Police, Probation, Youth Offending Service and 3rd sector providers to ensure that the mental health needs of children and young people are assessed early with the right agency taking the lead on providing the most appropriate interventions.
- The Education Directorate are key partners in the Gwent Early Action Together Programme and continue to work collectively to strengthen safeguarding arrangements which has included the embedding of the Operation Encompass initiative which provides an early alert to schools before the start of the school day of any child that is subject to, or witness to, police-attended incidents of domestic abuse.

To work with our partners including Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and neighbouring authorities to deliver integrated responsive care and support

- Integrated Care Fund grant money has been received and some of this money will be used for psychology support for 2.5 days a week. The psychologist will be seconded into Blaenau Gwent from ABUHB.
- Relationships with housing are very positive and new housing developments within Ebbw Vale are looking to include 1 bedroom flats and children looked after will be considered as a priority.
- New domiciliary care tender has been completed and will commence 1st October 19.
- The department has submitted a number of new ICF bids for consideration by the RPB panels which will enable us to 'test' new initiatives and ways of working during 19/20 and 20/21.
- Collaborated with the third sector to commission additional housing related support provision and preventative support in the long term teams via SLA's with our third sector partners.
- We are collaborating with our LA and ABUHB partners to develop commissioning arrangements on a Gwent wide footprint to ensure that the Care Home market is sustainable and consistent in its quality and delivery to residents across Gwent.
- We have developed a (5 LA's) hospital discharge service (Home First) to be funded by the health board and are looking to further expand this to other parts of the Health and Social care system.

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering health and social care involving key partners and our communities

- Work with Corporate colleagues continues in order to remodel our Day Activities / Community Options Service including working with Third Sector partners to develop and enhance our horticulture service.
- Additional capital Integrated Care Funding has been secured to enhance our assistive technology offers.
- The Food and Fun Programme was delivered in participating schools this summer, led by school staff with support from the council for catering and cleaning. The school-based programme provided healthy meals, food and nutrition education and physical activity to children in a fun social environment. Schools involved this year were; Blaen-y-Cwm Primary in Brynmawr, Rhos-y-Fedwen Primary in Rassau, Abertillery Learning Community (primary campuses) and Willowtown Primary in Ebbw Vale. Around 160 pupils and families took part with the ethos being centred around activities based around fitness, healthy eating and appreciating the environment.

INTEGRATION

Integrated work across directorates supports delivery of the Corporate Parenting Board Action Plan work to improve the well-being of Children Looked After. This includes the improvement of facilities for children to have contact with their families at Beaufort Road, care leavers being exempt from council tax and care leavers now being classified as a priority group when requiring housing in Blaenau Gwent



To put effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect people from harm

- The all Wales Safeguarding Procedure has been under review for some years, the new procedures are now complete and they will be launched during early November. A dissemination plan will be drafted by the safeguarding managers to ensure they are understood and adhered to.
- A single Point of Access for Children's Emotional well-being has been developed - (SPACE Wellbeing)
- A safeguarding screening project has been developed in conjunction with IAA
- The SERAF document to assess Child Sexual Exploitation is under review and its likely replacement is currently being

To develop a partnership approach to reducing and alleviating the impacts of Poverty

- Work with Welsh Government to deliver parental support is ongoing with most recently baby bundles being distributed.
- A child sufficiency assessment has been carried out at which time we consulted with parents on period poverty.
- A Holiday Hunger Programme Pilot has been very successful this summer.
- Ongoing monitoring and review of those grants within the Housing Support Grant (HSG) has evidenced that all grants have been maximised and outcomes have been monitored in line with the WG guidance.

Case Study

Supporting Change Team

Child A and Child B have lived with their maternal grandmother since they were babies under an informal family arrangement. However, the children's names were placed on the child protection register on two separate occasions owing to various concerns such as hygiene and neglect. There were also concerns about hostility between mother and grandmother.

Following assessment, the local authority felt the need to seek legal advice. The case then progressed into the Public Law arena and an initial Public Law Outline meeting was held.

The Supporting Change Team became involved with the family and their work centred around supporting the implementation of appropriate boundaries and routines, ensuring that the children were receiving adequate supervision. Work was also completed around ensuring good home and hygiene conditions. This work was completed on an intensive basis and all involved engaged well throughout and even attended the Supporting Change Team 'Circle of Security' Parenting Group. The Supporting Change Team was asked to provide practical and emotional support to the family while the children transitioned from residing with their grandmother to residing with their mother. As part of this process the family have also had a Family Group Conference.

Mother and her partner have received a positive parenting assessment which demonstrates significant progress given the historical concerns in relation to mother's care. Mother and her partner have shown a good understanding of the children's needs and have been keen for the children to reside with them since the start of Social Services involvement in relation to this referral. The Local Authority plan recommends that the two children are to reside with their mother and her partner. This living arrangement is positive and the children are settled and have started in their new school.

The children will continue to live with their mother and her partner and continue to be supported by wider family members in line with the plan they determined in their family group conference.

Case Study

X suffers with MS and has done for the past 9 years and often spends a lot of time alone in the house. X finds it difficult to get about and struggles to manoeuvre the wheelchair, due to hand weakness.

Prior to having MS, X was a confident person, but now lacks confidence. X did attend an MS group but found that this was not suitable. The Community Connector tried to identify alternative support groups for X.

The Community Connector contacted a local MS group and GAVO for X to become a phone befriender and X is now doing this. Arrangements have also been put in place for X to receive home deliveries from her pharmacy.

A number of outcomes have been achieved for X from the support received and this includes:

- Improved confidence;
- Less socially isolated;
- Happier;
- Feels connected; and
- Feels worthwhile.

How 'Social Services' Performed in quarters 1 & 2

Blaenau Gwent continues to implement the required cultural and operational changes that the Act requires in order to ensure that all social care services are individually shaped by the people that use them. This includes improving how the service effectively engages with service users, carers, families and partner organisations, whilst actively encouraging all to provide feedback which can be utilised to shape and improve services.

The Council has identified a number of performance measures to evidence how well delivery of the Corporate Objectives is going. These are split by both local and national indicators.

Performance Indicator	National / Local	2018/19 Outturn	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Quarterly Performance Trend
Percentage of proportionate assessments that led to a more comprehensive assessment for care and support - Children	Local (available)	43%	25.4%	44.6%	-	-	↓
Percentage of proportionate assessments that led to a more comprehensive assessment for care and support - adults	Local (available)	64.3%	30.3%	9.5%	-	-	↑

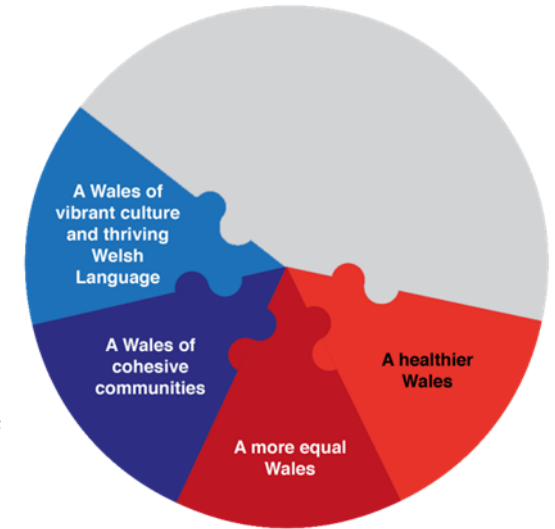
Performance Indicator	National / Local	2018/19 Outturn	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Quarterly Performance Trend
Percentage of referrals signposted to preventative services (adults)	Local (Data Development)	7.1%	13.0%	16.2%	-	-	↑
Proportion of adult services cases supported by preventative services (New)	Local (available)	29.6%	32.2%	33.9%	-	-	↑
Percentage of referrals signposted to preventative services (children)	Local (Data Development)	TBC	12.8%	13.7%	-	-	↑
Proportion of children's services cases supported by preventative services (New)	Local (available)	57%	61.0%	54.9%	-	-	↓
Rate of Delayed Transfers of Care	National	1.16	0.33	0.33	-	-	↔
Percentage of adult protection enquiries completed within statutory timescales	National	93.3%	100.0%	97.9%	-	-	↓
Number of Looked After Children	Local (available)	222	220	225	-	-	↓
Number of Child Protection	Local	56	70	61	-	-	↑

Why this is important

Improving the quality and provision of teaching and learning is vitally important to ensure we are achieving ambitious outcomes for all children and young people. We will continue to invest in our education services in order to support economic development and regeneration in order to provide opportunities for local people and businesses.

Progress against actions

A number of high level priorities (shown below) have been identified to support delivery of the 'Education' corporate theme. These are detailed in the following overview pages along with some associated achievements and challenges.



Priorities:-

- To improve pupil outcomes, progress and well-being, particularly for our more able and our most vulnerable learners;
- To improve the quality of our education services and our school buildings to help learners achieve great outcomes; and
- To continue to support our school leaders to help our pupils achieve their ambitions.

Education

This section reflects the overall progress position for the delivery of the 'Education' priority theme of the Corporate Plan, along with a breakdown of each individual priority, highlighting progress, achievements and challenges.

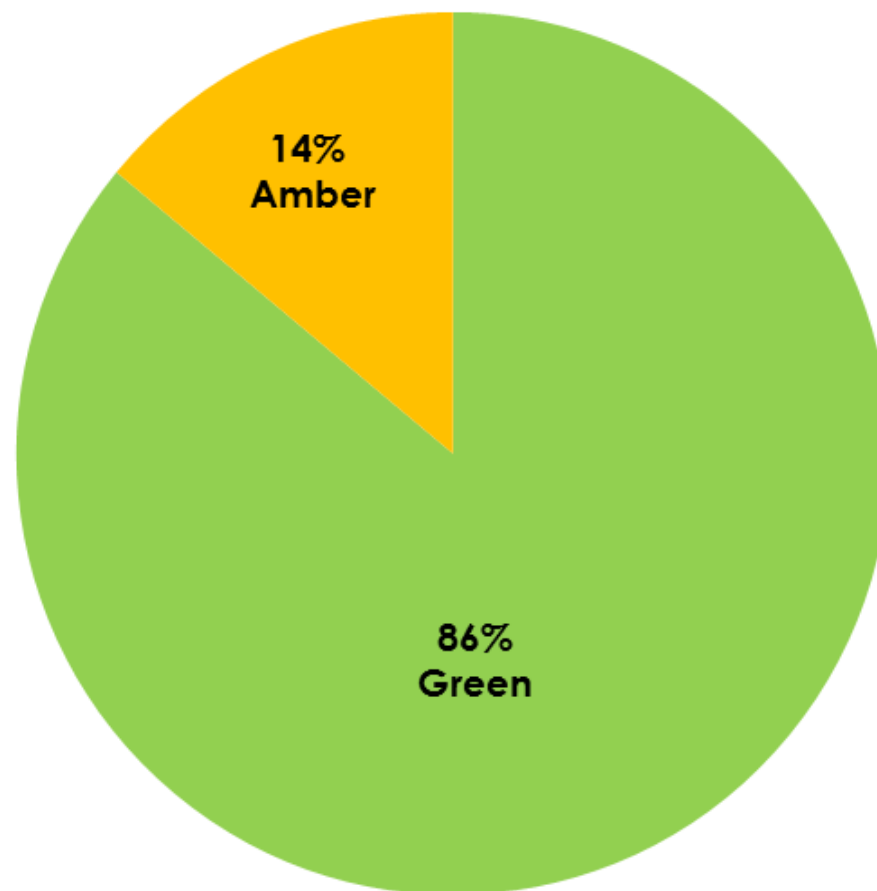
How we performed

Throughout April to September, there has been substantial progress in the implementation of the Education priorities but it is recognised that there is still further work to do to fully implement the aims and objectives.

As at the 30th September 2019, the performance against Education objectives were **evaluated as successful as 86% of the actions were green (on target) and 14% were amber (behind target)**. When considering **trend against the available performance indicators four saw an improvement and two a decline**.

Education remains high on the Council's agenda. The Council is looking to support the well-being agenda of teachers and pupils as well as support improvements in attainment.

Overall 'Education' corporate theme delivery position as at 30th September 2019.



Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To improve pupil outcomes, progress and well-being, particularly for our more able and our most vulnerable learners

- Close working with cluster and regional lead ALNCOs within the Borough is effective at supporting schools to develop their practices, particularly in preparation for the ALN reforms.
- A review of Sensory and Communication Support Services (SENCOM) is ongoing which will consider governance arrangements as well other areas. The outcome should involve an improved dissemination of data at required times.
- Exclusions for the 18/19 academic year are lower than the previous year.
- Specific plans to address persistent absenteeism and Elected Home Educated have been effective although plans will run into the next academic year to ensure a focus remains on these areas. Specific programmes of work have improved how schools manage these areas.
- Welsh Government has decided that in order to ensure the ALN reforms achieve what they were established to achieve that it is necessary to delay implementation by one year. Therefore implementation will be from September 2021 with the changes taking three years. Whilst this delay is unfortunate it is not impacting on the regional approach in place in SEWC.
- Lead and regional ALNCO approach is proving effective in the Borough, ensuring an ownership of the agenda by schools as well as the Local Authority.



PREVENTION - Pupils are to be given earlier in-school mental health support as part of an innovative programme aimed at preventing more serious problems from occurring later in life. The In-reach to Schools Programme has dedicated Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) practitioners who are working closely with schools to develop a whole school approach to management of mental health.

How we currently perform



2018/19 academic year pupil achievement figures will be available from Quarter 3



In 2018/19 Blaenau Gwent had 1.9% of year 11 leavers as NEET



1.6% of primary school pupils are persistently absent and this is a consistent figure over the last 3 years



For 2017/18 4.1% of secondary school pupils were persistently absent, a decrease from the previous year



81.5% of schools were categorised as Yellow or Green

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To continue to support our school leaders to help our pupils achieve their ambitions

- The respect and resilience (PREVENT Extremism) action plan has been finalised and is being implemented across the Directorate.
- The content of the joint safeguarding performance report has been reviewed and now includes broader contextual information, which will be built upon through the year. The 2019/20 Safeguarding in Education policy has also been reviewed.
- It is evident from the range of work being undertaken that schools in Blaenau Gwent are increasingly working in a school-led, school-to-school way. They are planning their time effectively, planning the activities well so that outcomes feed directly into improved practice.
- Pupil outcomes (at the expected and higher +1 level), particularly in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 have improved in 2018.
- There is more work needed to improve early literacy and numeracy skills, English at the higher level 6+ in Key Stage 3, boys' performance in language skills, particularly eFSM boys and to secure greater progress in basic skills between the ages of 11,14 and 16 years of age. Focussed work in identified schools is being undertaken in this regard.
- Whilst it is too early to fully demonstrate high impact, it is clear that schools are increasingly working in a partnership way; initiatives are increasingly school-led and schools in Blaenau Gwent are increasingly presenting as outward facing, outward learning and achieving.

- School categorisation has improved year on year over the last 3 years, school inspections are generally positive.
- The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) report for school governors has been finalised and shared with schools for implementation.



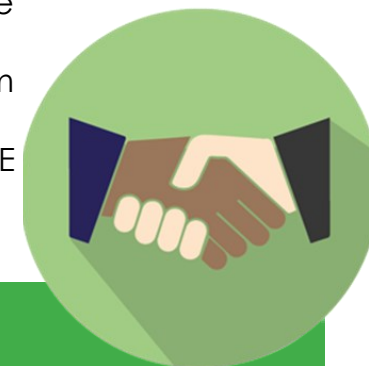
LONG TERM

The Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation and the Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Transformation projects are focusing on re-designing the ALN and CAMHS landscape to make them fit for purpose going forward. The ALN programme is considered by Welsh Government as a once in a generation change and therefore has a significant profile nationally as well as regionally and locally. Involving multiple services working with schools and the region to ensure the projects keep a clear pupil focus and results in appropriate change for schools and pupils.

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To improve the quality of our education services and our school buildings to help learners achieve great outcomes

- The £20.25m 21st Century Schools Band A programme is now fully delivered.
- Following a successful partnership delivery approach between Education and Community Services the new Six Bells Primary Campus, part of the Abertillery Learning Community, opened its doors on time and within budget.
- 21st Century Schools programme management arrangements were independently recognised as being 'impressive' in the Welsh Government facilitated Gateway Review findings.
- The Youth service continues to improve and perform well as demonstrated by a National Youth Work Award.
- All Targets have been met in respect of the Inspire projects which support young people to establish and maintain a placement in further learning, training or employment. This support includes 1:1 support sessions, structured group activities and open access clubs/groups. Confirmation has now been received that this funding has been extended to 2023.
- The number of young people not in education, employment or Training (NEETs) has stabilised at 1.9% (11 young people).
- The Information, Communications, Technology (ICT) Infrastructure project is now well in to the implementation stages. The planned works that took place over the summer holiday period has resulted in the migration of approaching 50% of the schools to the SRS Education system. The full roll-out will take by the spring of 2020 across the school estate. This investment will be complemented through a £2m investment via the WG Hwb initiative for schools.
- The Managing School Places and the School Estate report demonstrates improving performance with the adoption of the admissions policy, reducing surplus places and improved suitability/condition data.
- Welsh Government has announced that Blaenau Gwent has been successful with the Welsh medium grant and this could result in an investment of £6m.
- The Post 16 partnership has improved significantly and the Learning Zone's data is strong e.g. 100% A*-E and 75.9% A*-C pass rates and also strong vocational outcomes are being realised.



COLLABORATION -

The Corporate Parenting plan has a clear Education focus and is driving better connectivity with the Education Achievement Service in terms of information sharing as well as with schools in terms of their day to day management of Children Looked After pupils. Close working is in place with Social Services Children's Services officers.

Case Study

St. Mary's RC Primary School, Brynmawr

At St Mary's we believe that working and learning together with the support from our families, parish and the wider community enhances the learning and well-being of our pupils.

Our shared vision has been developed through successful collaboration and communication with our school community. Our aim is to embed the four purposes whilst nurturing our pupils to be happy, healthy and safe at St Mary's.

We aim to develop empathy and sensitivity within our pupils so that they grow to be proud of themselves. Our families and community partners have contributed to workshops which have supported our more vulnerable in the school community. The musical theatre workshops helped develop literacy skills, pupil confidence and independence.

The workshops were led by Peter Karrie who starred in the West End as the 'Phantom of the Opera' and they

reflected his passion of the musicals. Throughout the workshops the pupils developed performance skills as well as an understanding of empathy through drama.

The progression of the workshops successfully established parent, school, parish and community partnerships as the project concluded with a whole school concert at St Mary's Parish church.

Our Key stage 2 learners have developed relationships with community members living in local care homes. Groups of children have termly visits there to perform for the staff and residents.

The school has established a positive partnership with the Metropole Theatre which is a part of Aneurin Leisure Trust. An organisation with a shared vision to improve community life through Leisure, Learning and culture.

The pupils plan, develop and implement their own concerts and musicals which

are then performed for the wider community at the Metropole Theatre in Abertillery, Blaenau Gwent. The pupils assume a variety of roles during the production and the knowledge and skills developed are incalculable.



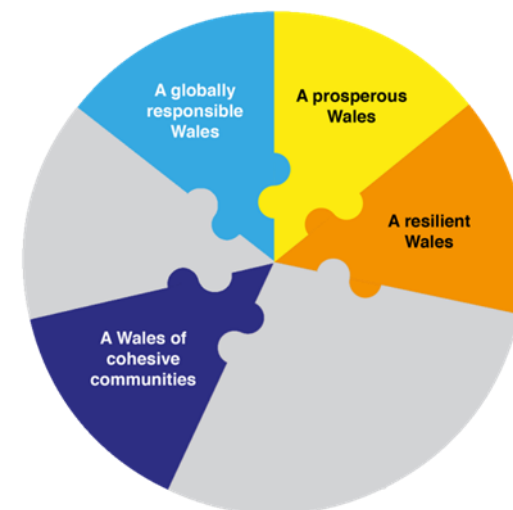
How 'Education' Performed in quarters 1 & 2

The Council has identified a number of performance measures to evidence how well delivery of the Corporate Objectives is going.

Performance Indicator	National / Local	Baseline	Annual – Provisional (P) as of Oct 2019	Performance Trend
Pupil outcomes and progress for our 7, 11, 14 and 16 year old pupils in English and Maths, particularly our more able and our most vulnerable learners	National	Key Stage (KS)4 Level 1 92.8% Level 2 59.2% Level 2+ 41.1%	Annual Figures - KS4 Level1 94% (2019P) Level 2—2019 not available Level 2+ 52% (2019P)	↑ - ↑
School inspection and school categorisation Judgements (Proportion of schools in Yellow and Green)	Local (available)	70%	Annual - 81.5%	↑
The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent (<80%) - Secondary	National	4.1%	5%	↓
The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent (<80%) - Primary	National	1.6%	Not available	-
Average Capped 9 score for pupils in Year 11	National	-	Annual Figure 318.7	-
Percentage of pupil attendance in primary schools	National	94.5	Annual Figure 94.3% (unverified)	↑
Percentage of pupil attendance in secondary schools	National	92.9	Annual Figure 92.9%	↔
Percentage of Year 11 leavers known not be in education, training or employment (NEET)	National	-	Annual Figure 1.9%	-

Why this is important

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.



Progress against actions

A number of high level priorities (shown below) have been identified to support delivery of the 'Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities' corporate theme. These are detailed in the following overview pages along with some associated achievements and challenges.

Priorities:-

- To re-invest in highways maintenance particularly improvements to our residential roads, streets and pavements;
- 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 improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors; and
- To build the relationships across the Council to support organisations and partners to deliver services in different ways whilst taking a strategic approach to the management of our land and property services in different ways (Community Asset Transfers).

Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities

The following section reflects the overall progress position for the delivery of the 'Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities' priority theme of the Corporate Plan, along with a breakdown of each individual priority, highlighting progress, achievements

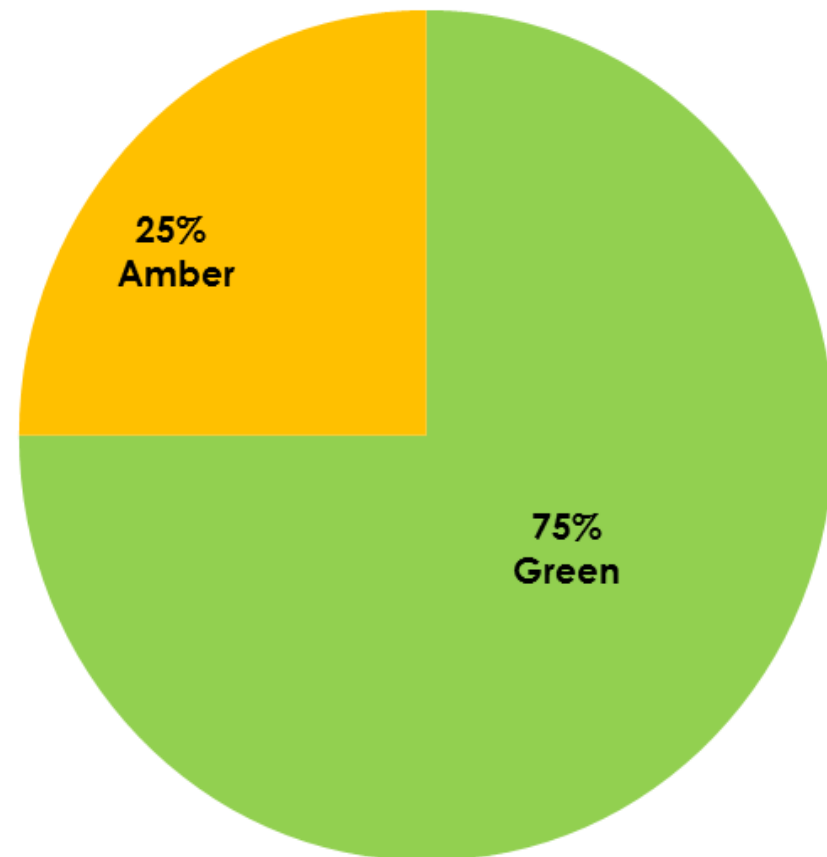
How we performed

Throughout quarter 1 & 2 there has been progress in the implementation of the Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities priorities but it is recognised that there is still further work to do to fully implement the aims and objectives over the remainder of the Corporate Plan.

As at the 30th September 2019, the performance was **evaluated as being mainly successful as 75% of the actions were green (on target) and 25% were amber (behind target)**. When considering **trend against the performance indicators four saw an improvement, two a decline and two stayed the same. (awaiting Leisure calculation)**

The environment remains as a high priority for the community. The Council is looking to improve the area so that it is somewhere to be proud to live. Through focusing on delivering against the main priorities set out in the Corporate Plan we can begin to transform Blaenau Gwent into a more prosperous and welcoming area that celebrates its heritage and plays its part on the regional and national stage. We will continue to invest in our neighbourhoods so that they are places where people are proud to live.

Overall 'Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities' corporate theme delivery position as at 30th September 2019.



Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To re-invest in highways network particularly improvements to our residential roads, streets and pavements

- Phase 2 Improvement works are now fully completed with improvements to A, B C & residential roads being undertaken.
- Final costs being determined to enable the development of a Phase 3 - 20/21 programme.
- Other related works have included new safety barriers, bus stops and works related to the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement.
- We continue to maintain the Highway network in line with the Highway Maintenance Plan.
- We continue to move forward on the development of the Highways Asset Management Plan in conjunction with County Surveyor's Society Wales CSS[w].

To increase rates of recycling to enable us to achieve national targets

- A Strategic Outline Business Case has been submitted to Welsh Government to consider a second household waste recycling centre at Roseheyworth.
- Side waste enforcement has been completed throughout Blaenau Gwent. Work will now be undertaken to consider the implementation of the policy and findings will be reported through the democratic process in due course.



INVOLVEMENT -

Public buy in to recycling & side waste policy remains a challenge, further media & public engagement to improve awareness around recycling is taking place.

How we currently perform



62.7% of waste is reused, recycled or composted



93.3% of streets are clean



91.3% of Bridge Inspections have been carried out



78% of fly tipping incidents have been cleared within 5 working days



9 Street Scene Engagement roadshows have been held

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To re-invest in environmental services to address the issues created by fly-tipping, dog fouling, littering, grass cutting, street cleansing and pest control

- The service has continued to invest in cleansing activity across the area with particular focus around grass cutting and seasonal related activities. There will be continued engagement with the public to encourage waste recycling and to discourage fly tipping.
- We continue to engage with Community Groups around collective litter picking activities.
- Preparation for the next round of Public Engagement road shows is ongoing and these will take place in November
- The Cleanliness Indicator increased this year to 66.3, the second highest figure recorded to date in Blaenau Gwent.
- 98% of streets surveyed were awarded a B grade or above, the highest figure for Blaenau Gwent to date.

To improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors

- We continue to work across the area with our community groups, internal and external partners to improve the quality of and access to green space. Funding has been secured to develop our Integrated Network Maps Active Travel Plans further over the next 12 months.
- Working collaboratively with the Gwent Local Authorities two major funding applications have been developed and submitted to Welsh Government using the Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being (ENRaW) Funding. These have been approved in principle.
- Valleys Regional Park money secured for Bryn Bach park and will provide a new play area & bunk house provisions.
- Progress on key projects include:-
 - * completion of 'Granny's Wood', a £73,000 funded project which reinstated a pathway from the centre of the village to the site of the Llanhilleth Colliery Memorial which has been refurbished. It has established a new start and finish point for the Ebbw Fach Trail and created a Heritage, Wildlife & Woodland Walk for those within the community and visitors to the area;
 - * 'BG on the Move' , a local wildlife and natural environment initiative is nearing completion;
 - * completion of this year's 'Invasive Weeds' programme; and
 - * work with a local farmer to cut & gather 5 hectatres [108 bales of hay] from numerous public green network sites programme.



INTEGRATION - The Council works together to improve school buildings to assist in enhancing the quality of educational achievement.

Community Services has worked closely with Education to ensure that the new Six Bells school was completed within time & budget. September term commenced with teachers & children into new school. Support also continues through proactive maintenance of buildings and Service Level Agreement's across a range of key operational areas - catering, cleaning, energy and moving forward on Band B programme of 21 Century Schools programme.

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To build the relationships across the Council to support organisations and partners to deliver services in different ways whilst taking a strategic approach to the management of our land and property services in different ways (Community Asset Transfers)

- The majority of non operational buildings have now been disposed of or demolished.
- The service continues to work with the community groups who have leased buildings and grounds by offering technical advice and assistance.
- We continue to improve relationships with CAT leasees via the Blaenau Gwent Community Asset Transfer officer.
- 95% of Grounds CATs have been completed.
- The Community Asset Transfers have been a challenging task, continued assistance is needed to help them take on the assets. Some of these may eventually transfer back if the right help is not secured for them now.
- The 4 outstanding Community Asset Transfers, Llanhilleth, Ebbw Vale, Brynithel & Tredegar are to be resolved via a matrix selection.
- We continue to develop and drive the collaboration agenda particularly within technical services with regular meetings taking place with Client Authorities.



COLLABORATION -

The Council has been actively involved in two important projects to consider how public services across Gwent can collaboratively work together to reduce the regions carbon footprint. The first of these projects involved a review of the fleet of vehicles each public service has across the area, and what opportunities there are to work individually and collaboratively to reduce the impact of our fleet on the environment. The second project has been looking at the opportunities across Gwent to set up electric charging points, including identifying appropriate sites and where funding is available nationally to take the project forward. Moving forward, the Council will look to work with partners to consider the findings of the carbon reduction projects and consider the individual and collective action that can be taken forward to help mitigate our carbon emissions as a public service provider.

Case Study

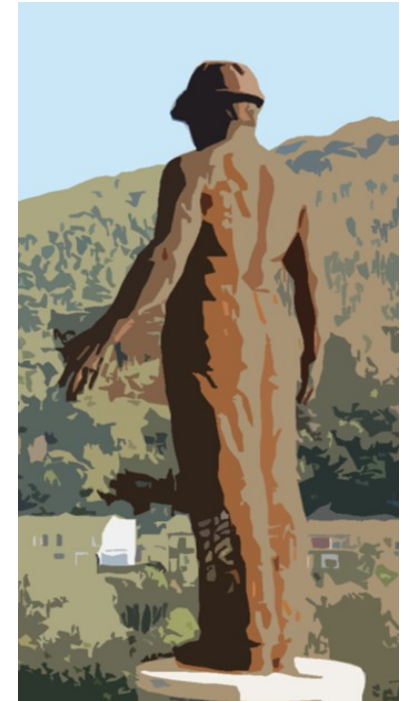
Six Bells Primary Campus

The new Six Bells Primary Campus, part of the Abertillery Learning Community, recently opened its doors following the successful delivery of the construction contract, Project Managed by Community Services, in partnership with Education Transformation.

The success of the project can mainly be attributable to the development of a strong delivery team and collaborative working partnership with the appointed principle contractor, Morgan Sindall. Community Services provided strong professional services across all sections of the department, including, but not limited to, Project Management, architectural services, mechanical and electrical design and supervision services, cost management and engineering consultation.

Prior to the construction period and throughout the project there were numerous Consultation and Community Engagement events. The contractor also demonstrated and delivered Employment and Training and Community Benefits far exceeding their contractual requirements.

During the construction period visits were facilitated for the pupils and staff. Just prior to opening additional visits were arranged for parents and pupils. It was extremely pleasing to receive such positive feedback during these visits and the smiling faces of the children are proof of a successful project.



Case Study – School Workshops, Keep Wales Tidy Marine Clean Cymru Campaign

As part of Keep Wales Tidy Marine Clean Cymru Campaign a number of school workshops have been delivered.

- One of these workshops was at Bryn Bach Park on 25th September (which was also Recycling Week) where 4 pupils from St Mary CIW, Blaenycwm, Deighton, Georgetown, Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, Willowtown, Rhos Y Fedwen and All Saint RC Primary Schools attended. The workshop involved a litter pick (whereby 15 bags of litter were collected. We then examined different items of rubbish and sorted them into what could and could not be recycled and into their relevant categories. To highlight the importance of recycling and the impacts it can have on the local environment and biodiversity the children made 'junk monsters'.



How 'Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities' Performed in quarters 1 & 2

The Council has identified a number of performance measures to evidence how well delivery of the Corporate Objectives is going. These are split by both local and national indicators.

Performance Indicator	National / Local	Baseline	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Quarterly Performance Trend
Percentage of streets that are clean	National	95.52	93%	93%	-	-	↔
Percentage of people living within 400m of their nearest area of Greenspace in Blaenau Gwent	Local	85% (LDP target)**	Annual				
Average number of working days taken to clear fly-tipping incidents	National (new)	6.2	10.6	4.6	-	-	↑
Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted	National	56.77%	56.6%	62.7%	-	-	↑
Kilograms of residual waste generated per person	National (new)	TBC	52.6	39.6	-	-	↑
Number of Community Asset Transfers that are actively operating within Blaenau Gwent	Local	TBC	39	40	-	-	↑
Percentage of active Community Asset Transfer's within Blaenau Gwent that have been successfully operating for 6 months or more	Local	20	51	50	-	-	↔
Number of Community Asset Transfers implemented during the period	Local	TBC	19	1	-	-	-

How 'Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities' Performed in quarters 1 & 2

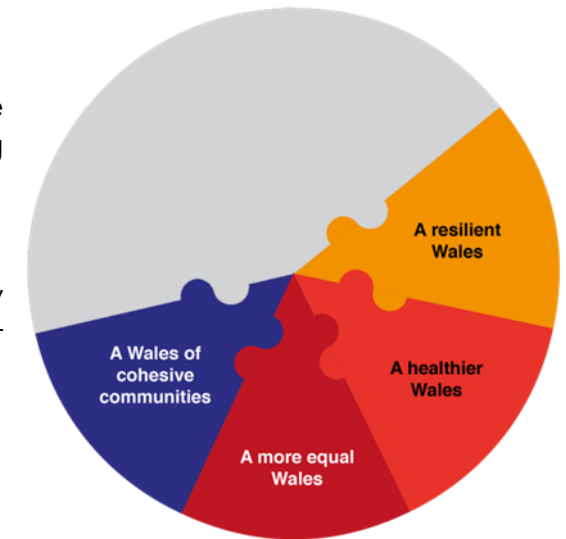
The Council has identified a number of performance measures to evidence how well delivery of the Corporate Objectives is going. These are split by both local and national indicators.

Performance Indicator	National / Local	Baseline	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Quarterly Performance Trend
Average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	National	293.2	337.8	347.8	-	-	↓
Number of visits to local authority sport and leisure facilities during the year per 1,000 population	National	9,082.7		Being calculated	-	-	
Percentage of principal A roads that are in overall poor condition	National	2.6	-	-	-	-	Annual
Percentage of principal B roads that are in overall poor condition	National	5.6	-	-	-	-	Annual
Percentage of principal C roads that are in overall poor condition	National	5.5	-	-	-	-	Annual
Percentage of food establishments which are 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene standards	National	92.3	92.4	90.1	-	-	↓

Why this is important

We will continue to invest in our neighbourhoods so that they are places where people are proud to live. We have prioritised economic development and regeneration in order to bring jobs, growth and opportunity to local people and businesses.

Increasing employability makes a fundamental contribution to reducing and tackling poverty and the economic status of the area. Supporting people to obtain and retain employment reduces reliance upon support services aligned to social well-being and poverty.



Progress against actions

A number of high level priorities (shown below) have been identified to support delivery of the 'Economic Development and Regeneration' corporate theme. These are detailed in the following overview pages along with some associated achievements and challenges.

Priorities:-

- To increase the start-up business rate, retention and growth of local businesses and attract new inward investment;
- To work in partnership with Registered Social Landlords and private developers to provide a variety of homes;
- To work with partners to provide effective employment support and access to skills development;
- To develop digital infrastructure and improve connectivity by promoting digital participation;
- To develop a portfolio of potential energy opportunities to deliver economic, business and community benefits; and
- To work with partners to develop a new vision for our town centres ensuring their long term future.

This section reflects the overall progress position for the delivery of the 'Economic Development and Regeneration' priority theme of the Corporate Plan, along with a breakdown of each individual priority, highlighting progress, achievements and challenges.

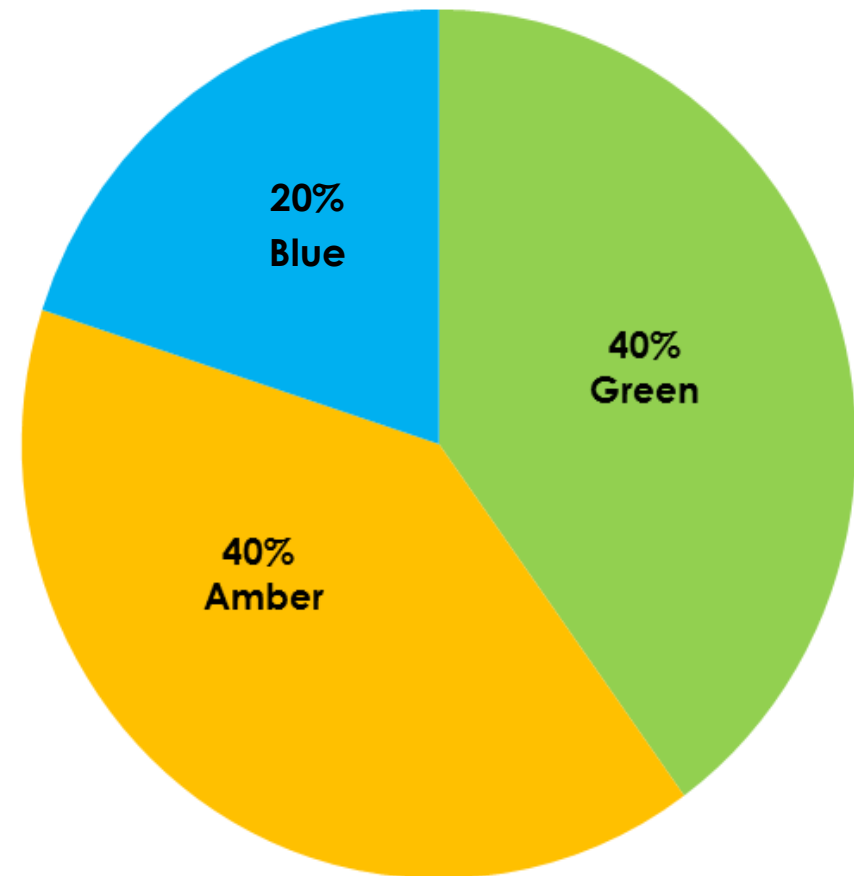
How we performed

Throughout quarter 1 & 2 there has been progress in the implementation of the Economic Development and Regeneration priorities but it is recognised that there is still further work to do to fully implement the aims and objectives over the remainder of the Corporate Plan.

By the 30th September 2019, performance for Economic Development and Regeneration was **evaluated as being mainly successful as 20% were blue (completed), 40% of the actions were green (on target) and 40% were amber (behind target)**. When considering **trend against the performance indicators two saw an improvement, two declined and one has no comparative trend**.

Economic Development and Regeneration supports a number of regional programmes that are taking place within the area including the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, Tech Valleys and the Valleys Task Force.

Overall 'Economic Development and Regeneration' corporate theme delivery position as at 30th September 2019.



Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To increase the start-up business rate, retention and growth of local businesses and attract new inward investment

- The Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Strategy has been drafted in partnership with the Enterprise Board (private sector). Support provided for start ups and businesses is being increased through partnership working with business support agencies and specialists.
- Indigenous businesses & inward investment - Enquiries remain active from local businesses regarding expansion and financial plans. The environment remains buoyant. Industrial units are being built (both from the private sector and local authority) to support expansion plans of local and inward investment businesses.
- The Thales project is ongoing and the Regeneration's Project team are working on plans for an extension for the building and The Box Works project is ongoing and will be available for businesses from March/April 2020.

To work in partnership with Registered Social Landlords and private developers to provide a variety of homes

- The Discover Blaenau Gwent Housing Prospectus was successfully launched in May 2019 by the Executive Member for Regeneration. The event was attended by over 20 representatives from the housing sector including Registered Social Landlords, Private Limited Companies, Small Medium Enterprises and planning consultants. The launch has generated land enquiries from perspective developers.
- Additional Social Housing Grant has been allocated for 2019/20 this has been assigned to Tai Calon, bringing them into programme. This will assist in their first development of approximately 24 units, on the former Glanffrwyd Site.
- Brynserth (Golwg y Bryn) sales launch event has been held, 6 of the 8 homes available have been reserved and it is anticipated the first homes will be available Dec 2019/early 2020.
- Options on the housing review are currently being considered including a regional approach in collaboration with Gwent partners, (akin to the regional Homelessness Strategy).

How we currently perform



59 households met threshold for being threatened with homelessness. Of these, 41 successfully prevented-69.5%



In Blaenau Gwent 73.5% (32,700) were Economically Active



13.4% more business Start ups compared with the same period last year.



99% of Planning Applications determined within timescales



84% Occupied floor space of business units

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To work with partners to provide effective employment support and access to skills development

- The employment and skills stakeholder event was held and proved to be a successful and interactive session which involved over 70 attendees. There was representation from Education, Further Education, Business, Employment and the Public Service Board. The findings are currently being collated in order to prepare the plan and next steps.
- Recruitment and induction of apprentices was successful, including a team building event at Glyn Neath Waterfall for all current Aspire Apprentices. 13 have commenced the programme and their joint employment with host companies. 3 new host companies are also engaged on the programme, 2 of which are Small Medium Enterprises.
- A 'best practice' proposal was sent to the Valleys Task Force (VTF) outlining a partnership approach to deliver the Shared Apprenticeship Programme across VTF areas.
- The employment liaison work includes 8 companies engaged and the project continues to receive new referrals. Training opportunities are being promoted in areas such as health and safety, first aid, CSCS and ICT, delivered through a range of partners.
- Work to identify and deliver community benefits continues, an example of which being Sirhowy Nursery Site:
 - The Star Centre applied for funding to pay for internet access for 2 years so they can provide support with Homework clubs, Job search clubs, and Universal Credit support.
 - Provided a new Fridge Freezer so that local business can supply the general public free food which is near to the use by dates.
 - School engagement - artist worked with children 6 weeks to design mosaics one for school and one for site.

To develop digital infrastructure and improve connectivity by promoting digital participation

- GovTech Catalyst Project has completed Phase one and progression into Phase two has commenced. This project is aimed at looking at how we can use our assets to collect information and relay that information to help us deliver our services more efficiently. Options tested in phase one included:
 - detection of potholes using camera technology mounted on refuse, recycling fleet - no driver intervention required; and
 - recycling participation levels identifying properties where recycling is out for collection or recycling containers being emptied.
- There are currently delays to the delivery of the Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) project which is being delivered by the CCRC. Awaiting an update on progress.



COLLABORATION -

Blaenau Gwent together with four neighbouring authorities have secured up to £450,000 of funding for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) for the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points across 30 sites within the five Local Authority areas.

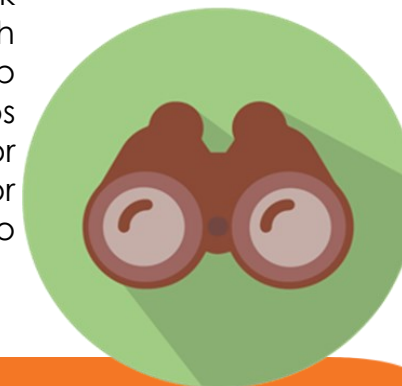
Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To develop a portfolio of potential energy opportunities to deliver economic, business and community benefits

- Phase 1a of the ReFit project continues with lighting schemes being completed in almost all of the buildings within this phase which includes Corporate Buildings, Leisure Trust Buildings and Willowtown Primary School. Bedwellty House and Park will also have new lighting in the near future
- ReFit Phase 1b focusses on schools with engagement ongoing with Headteachers and Governing Bodies.
- To support the DRivE Project, SRS have been commissioned to assist in installing additional metering and are working with our building management system company to upgrade our system from Trend 965 to Trend IQ Vision. The costs associated with this upgrade are being met through the project and we will use this system to extract and supply to partners monthly reports on energy (electricity and heat) from buildings utilising our District Energy Network.
- The Smart Living Demonstrator Energy Catalyst Project is reaching the end of Phase 2. Opportunities explored in this phase through engagement with businesses across Blaenau Gwent include energy brokering and materials brokering (inc. solar panels and lighting).
- Energy prospectus completed in draft, however, securing investment to carry out the development of the energy opportunities contained within the energy prospectus is a challenge. A range of options to fund projects are being investigated including borrowing, green bonds and seeking private investment.

To work with partners to develop a new vision for our town centres ensuring their long term future

- Work is ongoing to engage with potential town centre properties across Blaenau Gwent to participate in the town centre loans and grants scheme. Due diligence into potential applications is being carried out by the Regeneration Opportunities team alongside a Quantity Surveyor from Technical Services and the property solicitor from Development and Estates.
- Tredegar Townscape Heritage Initiative - Tredegar Arms works are nearing completion and the owners are officially opening the building on the 23rd October 2019. The total project cost is £1.8m which has been from various funding sources including private investment from the building owners.
- Works are also due to start on site for the NCB building (the building is Grade 2 listed) in early October.
- Targeted Regeneration Investment (TRI) funding has been secured for the Eugene Cross Park site. Meetings scheduled with Ebbw Vale rugby club representatives and other groups to identify potential options for the site including opportunities for the match funding required to deliver against the TRI funding.



LONG TERM - by 2033, Blaenau Gwent's Local Development Plan will support delivery of a network of connected sustainable, vibrant valley communities that support the well-being of current and future generations.

Case Study – Bringing New Homes and Prospects to Blaenau Gwent.

The construction of new homes at Golwg y Bryn, Ebbw Vale is well underway. This is the result of Blaenau Gwent CBC's positive partnership working relationship with one of the country's leading house developers – Lovell and Melin Homes an experienced social landlord, to bring much needed quality homes to Blaenau Gwent. The collaboration has ensured the exciting venture being brought to fruition backed with the support of Welsh Government funding.



Golwg Y Bryn, Ebbw Vale
£17m Mix Tenure Development comprising 100 units
Commencing Spring 2019

With the aim of creating opportunities for local suppliers and skilled craftsman to engage with a major house builder, an extremely successful “Meet The Buyer” event was facilitated by Blaenau Gwent's CBC Regeneration Team. A & M Brick Laying and Taylor Lane are two Local Companies that are already on site as a direct result from the event. Local employment, apprenticeships and wider community benefits are all future opportunities we hope to secure from this exciting development.



The development, which will see 70 open market homes and 30 affordable, including shared equity, has recently been launched from a neighbouring site with a hugely positive response, from residents looking to secure their choice of home. Several plots have already being reserved and plans are underway to officially open the exquisite show home on site later this year.

LOVELL
A MORGAN SINDALL GROUP COMPANY

How 'Economic Development and Regeneration' Performed in quarters 1 & 2

The Council has identified a number of performance measures to evidence how well delivery of the Corporate Objectives is going. These are split by both local and national indicators.

Performance Indicator	National / Local	Baseline	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Quarterly Performance Trend	
House building completions	Local	TBC	5	22	-	-	↑	
Number of affordable housing units delivered per 10,000 households	National (new)	TBC	Annual					
Number of Business start-ups supported (directly created as a result of targeted support from the council)	Local (available)	14	9	2	-	-	↓	
Percentage of occupied floor space of available council business units	Local (available)	85%	83%	84%	-	-	↑	
Percentage of empty private properties brought back into use during the year through direct action by the LA	National	3.3	Annual					
Percentage of all planning applications determined within required time periods	National	97.3	100%	99%	-	-	↓	
Percentage of appeals against planning application decisions dismissed	National	63.6	100%	100%	-	-	↔	

Financial Management

2019/20 Forecast (as at 30th September 2019)

Revenue Budget				
Portfolio	£,000 Budget 19/20	£,000 Forecast 19/20	£,000 Variance Favourable/ (Adverse)	Favourable/ (Adverse) Variance %
Corporate Services & Financial Management & Strategy	14,718	14,643	75	0.51
Economy	1,515	1,437	78	5.1
Education	55,477	55,541	(64)	(0.16)
Environment	29,530	29,790	(259)	(0.9)
Licensing	65	75	(10)	(15.4)
Planning	1,056	1,057	(1)	(0.1)
Social Services	44,915	44,740	175	0.39
Council Total	147,276	147,283	(7)	0.002

Current Budget Position:

The overall forecast financial position across all portfolios to 31 March 2020, is a small adverse variance of £7,000, (as at 30 September 2019) against a net revenue budget of £147.3m. This is an improved forecast when compared to Q1 (£150,000 adverse) and evidences the robust budgetary controls operating within the Council.

Preventative measures, including the Supporting Change Team & the MYST project are having a positive impact on expenditure and when combined with the Supporting Sustainable Social Services grant of £762,000 has contributed to the favourable variance against the Social Services budget.

The most significant adverse variance is within the Environment Portfolio, including Waste Services (£104,000) and in the Corporate Landlord budget (£63,000).

Capital Budget			
Portfolio	£,000 Budget 19/20	£,000 Variance	Favourable/ (Adverse) Variance %
Corporate Services & Strategy	227	0	0.0
Environment, Economy & Infrastructure	10,107	0	0.0
Social Services - Adult & Children	1,408	0	0.0
Education, Active Living and Learning	6,627	0	0.0
All Portfolios	789	0	0.0
Council Total	19,158	0	0.0

Current Budget Position:

As at September 2019, it is forecast that expenditure against projects within the capital programme will be within budget (in year funding available £19m).

There has been a £1.2m increase in capital funding since quarter 1.

Regulatory Proposals

The Council is subject to numerous internal and external audits and regulatory reviews each year which ensures local authorities provide value for money when delivering services, services are being run efficiently and effectively, and identifies local authorities approach in planning and delivering improved services in the future. This section aims to capture the progress being made against these proposals.

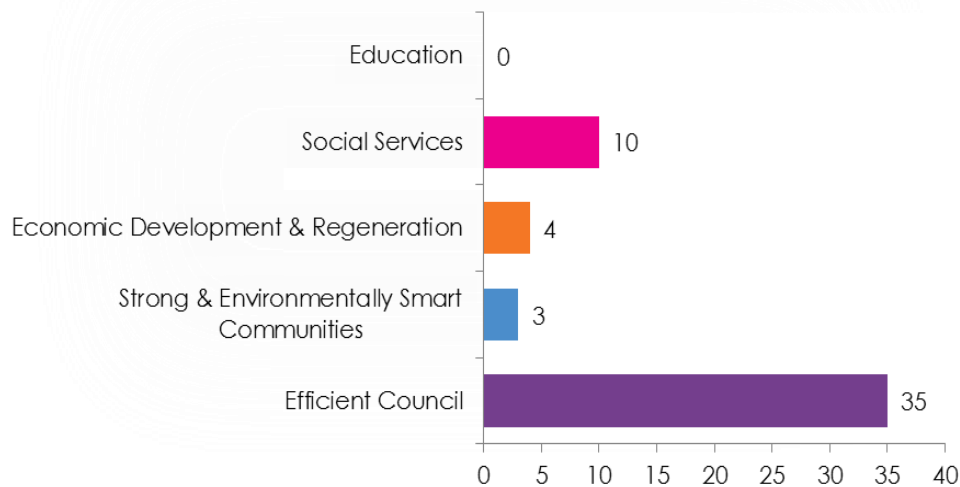
Reports and Proposals

At 30th September 2019 there are **31** audit reports. Of those:-

- 15 Reports still in initial stages, either newly received where the Council will be subject to review or currently proceeding through the Democratic process for approval by Members; and
- 16 reports where 52 proposals for improvement are being monitored via business plans.

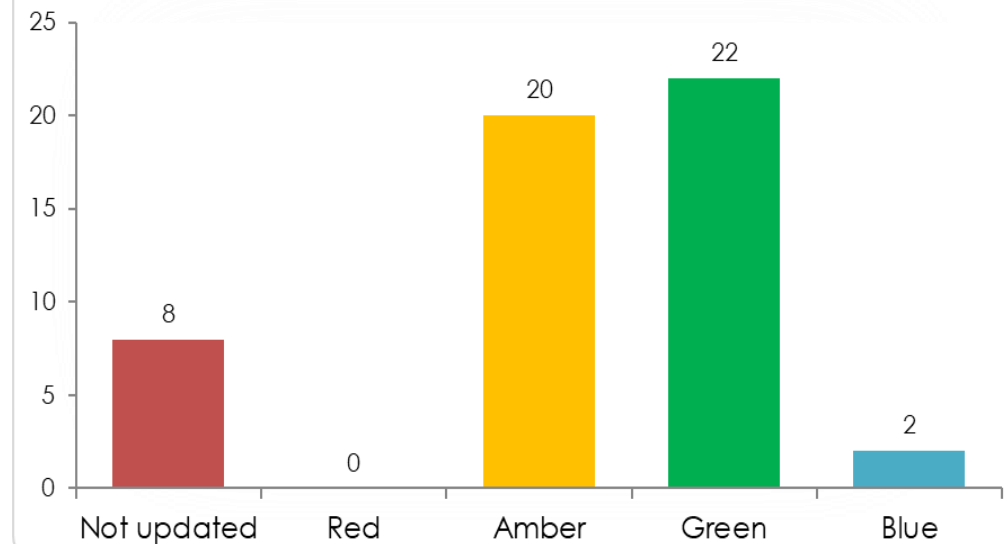
Open proposals for improvement

Open Proposals for Improvement by Corporate Plan Theme



Current proposals status

Current Proposal Status



Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	Quarter 2 Update (July – September 2019)	Status
<p>CRR20 -</p> <p>There is a risk that increasingly complex needs and demand for services provided by Social Services and Education, in particular for Looked After Children, will put further significant pressure on the Council's budget.</p> <p>Director of Social Services and Councillor John Mason</p>	<p>This remains a volatile area and it is impossible to predict an ideal number of children looked after per head of population. The population of children looked after is affected by multiple variables outside the immediate control of the local authority and, in that respect, we must be both proactive and reactive. The Children's Services IAA is implementing the principle of Early Action Together; this places an officer from Gwent Police in our IAA service which, in turn, enables multi-agency screening of referrals. Having a police presence in the IAA service also enables us to undertake basic checks and swifter risk assessment of extended family when it is deemed too risky for children to remain in the care of their parents.</p> <p>ICF funding has been used to develop a 'Mediation Worker' post for those young people and their families experiencing significant relationship tensions. This is intended to prevent family breakdown being a reason for young becoming looked after. The Supporting Change Team continues to provide intensive support services for those children identified as being at risk of becoming Looked After and quarterly monitoring undertaken by the senior management team is demonstrating the efficacy of the team's work.</p> <p>The MyST (My Support Team) is now fully operational and working at capacity. The remit of the team is to work intensively with children who are in residential provision with the aim of helping them return to a foster placement or family environment if possible. The team also works with children, families and carers where there is a risk of having to move to residential provision with the aim of preventing that escalation. Our Placement Team continues its recruitment process and we continue to work collaboratively to commission high quality foster placements for our children looked after. The newly developed Special Guardianship Support Team already shows that foster placements are being converted to Special Guardianship placements thus reducing the numbers of children Looked After by the Local Authority.</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; text-orientation: mixed; background-color: red; color: white; text-align: center;">Critical</p>

Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	Quarter 2 Update (July – September 2019)	Status
<p>CRR1 -</p> <p>Failure to deliver and sustain the changes required to ensure that vital services are prioritised within the financial constraints faced by the Council.</p> <p>Managing Director and Councillor Nigel Daniels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has made good progress in starting to strengthen its financial resilience – achieving a balanced revenue budget in 2018/19 and forecasting a balanced budget for 2019/20 as well as increasing the level of reserves (both general and ear-marked) during 2018/19; financial management is improving with all Senior Managers having performance objectives in their annual performance reviews to make them accountable for the management of their budgets and for delivering a balanced position; • The MTFS has been reviewed and the draft agreed by Council in July 2019, further work will now be done before the final document is presented to Council for final approval in December 2019; • The Bridging the Gap Programme has been agreed – in draft – by Council in July 2019 and this will support the MTFS and address the shortfall in funding over the next 5 years whilst protecting as far as possible front line services; work has commenced on Strategic Business Reviews to deliver the efficiencies and cost reductions required and there will be reports to Scrutiny Committees through October/November on the proposals which will achieve budget reductions in 2020/21; • The new structure for the Commercial Team is being put in place with one key appointment remaining and this new team will support the move to becoming a more commercially minded Council; • Work has commenced on the Commercial Strategy which will support the development of a more commercial culture and approach across the organisation and all service areas; this has been presented to and discussed with all Senior Managers at Managers Conferences in October; • There has been a strengthening of the understanding of the road map in relation to ICT and determination of the level of investment is required to support service improvement and commercial activity; • The Leisure Review is progressing with Phase 2 report now completed and the Council now undertaking the agreed next actions which is to complete a soft market testing exercise to assess the potential for sustainable service delivery; • Due diligence in relation to the review of Silent Valley Waste Management Ltd has been completed and the Project Team is now reviewing the viable options in advance of a report to Members. 	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">High</p>

Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	Quarter 2 Update (July – September 2019)	Status
<p>CRR14</p> <p>Failure to improve staff attendance rates within the Council will lead to an unacceptable impact on the ability of the Council to deliver services effectively and financially support the cost of sickness absence.</p> <p>Head of Organisational Development and Councillor Nigel Daniels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Sickness absence report to CLT September 2019 – report to progress to Corporate Overview Scrutiny on agenda for December 2019 (moved because of cancellation of October meeting) • Quarter 1 figures show a worsening position in comparison to this time last year – Corporate figure 3.11 average days per employee – on CLT agenda for 29/10/19 • Senior HR Business Partners working with Directorates to target 'hotspots' – those areas exceeding the Corporate target of 2.75 days – further analysis of the 'hotspot' areas to be undertaken • Training to raise awareness of mental health for managers and staff to be programmed for the new year in 2020 • Discussion held with Strategic HR Head teachers group and agreement to form a project team to review the Managing Attendance Policy for Schools aligning to the learning of the Corporate review of sickness absence • Managing Attendance policy layout to be simplified with the use of managerial guidance – early new year 2020 • Plans developing for the retendering process for Occupational Health – this will include consideration of an employee assistance programme • Awareness raising on sickness absence will feature as part of the staff newsletter. 	High
<p>CRR19</p> <p>If the Council does not manage its information assets in accordance with requirements set down within legislation, then it may be faced with financial penalties and possible sanctions that hinder service delivery.</p> <p>Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance and Councillor Nigel Daniels</p>	<p>The Information Governance Forum (IGF) reconvened in September 2019 with the Terms of Reference reviewed and agreement to now meet on a quarterly basis. At the first meeting, the Information Asset Owners (IAOs) have been reviewed and approved. Going forward this group will be critical in identifying risks and driving improvements and messages across the council. A revised Information Security Policy has been considered by the IGF and will now progress to CLT prior to adoption by Members. The Record Retention and Disposal Policy has been reviewed and approved and will shortly be promoted to all staff.</p>	High

Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	Quarter 2 Update (July – September 2019)	Status
<p>CRR21</p> <p>The Financial resilience of the Council could be at risk if the Council does not ensure that financial planning and management decisions support long term stability and sustainability.</p> <p>Chief Officer – Resources and Councillor Nigel Daniels</p>	<p>The Council has considered a draft Medium Term Financial Strategy covering a 5 year period to 2024/25. Included within the strategy is an assessment of the spending requirements the Council is likely to face to deliver its priorities and the level of cuts i.e. reducing or stopping services that will need to be made to ensure the Council can set a balanced budget each year. Planning now to meet known or anticipated changes in the future provides greater opportunity to phase in the impact of the changes.</p> <p>To deal with potential gaps between anticipated funding and expenditure the Bridging the Gap programme has been developed that aims to build financial resilience. Based on strategic themes, over the life of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the programme will identify savings opportunities, potential cost avoidance and new revenue streams. Designed to support a balanced budget it is also focussed on creating the conditions of a commercially minded council.</p> <p>Financial resilience is a Council priority and this includes ensuring that reserves are adequate to be able to respond to unexpected events, emerging need or unforeseen budget pressures. During 2018/19 the overall level of the Council's reserves increased and during 2019/20 it is forecast that the General Reserve will increase to £6.1m (an additional £240,000).</p> <p>Given the current level of the General Reserve, it is not planned to utilise any of this reserve to balance the annual budget. The establishment of a budget contingency within the annual budget setting process is proposed.</p>	High
<p>CRR22</p> <p>Failure to deliver the Council's priorities within the agreed annual budget resulting in the increased use of emergency finance measures and the drawdown of reserves.</p> <p>Chief Officer – Resources and Councillor Nigel Daniels</p>	<p>In agreeing the 2018/19 & 2019/20 revenue budget, the Council agreed additional budget to address cost pressures within priority areas.</p> <p>During 2019/2020 the revenue budget monitoring reports indicate that the Council will be in a breakeven position at the end of the year. This forecast has improved when compared to the 2018/19 position and the 2019/20 quarter 1 position (forecast of £150k adverse variance). Within the forecast, an assessment of delivery of the budget savings indicate that 97% have / will be delivered.</p>	Medium

Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	Quarter 2 Update (July – September 2019)	Status
<p>CRR24</p> <p>There is a risk that exiting the EU will have an adverse impact at a national and local level which could impact on the community and on the Council and its ability to deliver public services.</p> <p>Managing Director / Head of Governance and Partnerships and Councillor Nigel Daniels</p>	<p>Preparations for exiting the EU intensified during this period and there was a noticeable increase in communications with WLGA and Welsh Government as the 31st October 2019 Brexit deadline approached. The Brexit core planning group continued to meet on a monthly basis, sometimes more frequently where necessary, to review the planning process and ensure robust processes are in place to mitigate against the risks or take advantage of any opportunities associated with the UK's exit from the EU. The planning group focussed on the challenges that presented the most pressing risks to the local authority, such as risks associated with no-deal Brexit relating to social care, supply chains for essential goods (food, fuel, medical supplies etc.) and demand on the council workforce, as well as maintaining lines of communication with local businesses to support them through the Brexit process where necessary.</p> <p>The council has utilised the EU Transition Funding from Welsh Government (secured by WLGA on behalf of all local authorities) to prepare for Brexit by appointing the corporate policy officer as the Brexit coordinator. Two sub-regional community cohesion officers funded by the EU Transition Fund are also now in post. These officers have been monitoring community cohesion and raising awareness of the EU settlement scheme amongst local EU citizens since July.</p>	High
<p>CRR7</p> <p>Failure of schools in Blaenau Gwent to adapt and change accordingly to the requirements of the new curriculum and national agenda of the Welsh Government as laid out in the National reform agenda document "Education for Wales: Our national Mission".</p> <p>Director of Education and Councillor Jo Collins</p>	<p>Schools have responded well to all professional learning opportunities provided by the EAS. Learning Network schools in Blaenau Gwent are working well with schools in the Borough and across the region. Elected members are beginning to develop a shared understanding about the requirements of the new reporting arrangements linked to the national requirements to reduce high stakes accountability measures and approaches. Schools in the Borough performed at expectation when compared with schools in the region and using residuals (Scrutiny Report 25th October 2019). The midyear update of the Education Directorate's Business Improvement Plan evidences that progress has been made against our key priorities for last year, particularly in English in all Phases and key stages and at the higher A*/A level at GCSE, for eFSM pupils and improvements in boys' progress and performance. Schools support each other well and the school categorisation profile has improved significantly over the last 3 years. In summary schools are responding well to the changes and the outcomes of self-evaluation processes identify clear areas for ongoing improvement.</p>	Medium

Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	Quarter 2 Update (July – September 2019)	Status
<p>New Risk identified for Quarter 3</p> <p>The 2 schools currently in receipt of Council Intervention fail to make appropriate progress against the Statutory Warning Notice to Improve and their Post Inspection Action Plans.</p> <p>Director of Education and Councillor Jo Collins</p>	<p>Progress updates will be provided from Quarter 3</p>	Medium