

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny**  
Date of meeting: **9<sup>th</sup> December 2019**  
Report Subject: **Regeneration & Economic Development 6 Month Performance Report**  
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**  
Report Submitted by: **Ellie Fry, Head of Regeneration**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
26.11.19	26.11.19	29.11.19			09.12.19	Info Item 29.01.20		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present the six month service activity from April 2019 to September 2019 and highlight how the Department is contributing to four of the Council's Corporate aims of delivering a:
- Resilient Wales
  - Healthier Wales
  - More equal Wales, and
  - A Wales of more cohesive communities.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1. The Regeneration and Economic Development Department has gone through a year of changes and restructure to enable the teams to focus on delivering a more structured program of work based around the priority areas identified in the Council's Corporate Plan 2018/22.
- Housing
  - Employment and Skills
  - Destination Management and Tourism
  - Energy and Digital
  - Town centres
- 2.2. The performance report makes reference to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which not only underpins the Council's aims, but also guides the ways in which sustainable development can be delivered through:
- Collaboration
  - Integration
  - Involvement
  - Long term
  - Prevention

- 2.3. From the report the achievements around the Housing priority show a marked improvement in numbers of affordable and private homes delivered and delivery of new sites for housing; with high numbers of homes accessing funding for making them more energy efficient. The Housing Prospectus, launched in Cardiff has had a positive effect on enquiries and interest in sites and the LDP review is identifying new sites. Alongside this the early intervention for homelessness means 41 out of 59 households were prevented from being homeless.
- 2.4. Employment and Skills showcases the Aspire shared apprenticeship scheme with 13 apprentices already being trained; the employment liaison project and stakeholder events looking at needs and opportunities for local businesses. The Council's industrial portfolio is at 86% occupancy rate with projects developed to build out new units in 2020. Start-ups in BG higher than this time last year by 45.9% and community benefits to a number of communities delivered through physical projects. STEM delivery in schools is increasing with a bid to Tech Valleys for more resource and the future skills academy being progressed for the former Monwell building.
- 2.5. A number of key documents prepared for Destination Management and Tourism across BG. The Destination Management Plan and walking trails leaflet. Work with individual businesses to help them maximise their tourism potential and working across the Head of the Valleys on events and festivals.
- 2.6. The research and development behind the Energy Prospectus has been completed and the prospectus document is being drafted. Funding for electric charging points in BG is being sought to enable more charging points to be available for the community and visitors. Work on the Refit program of works has commenced – this is a £4.1million fit out of public buildings and will generate energy savings for the Council. The GovTech Catalyst project is in the first stages of development and will enable BG's fleet vehicles to collect and report data as they travel around the Borough. Thales are working with us and Welsh Government to develop a £20million National Digital Exploitation Centre (NDEC) to assist SMEs and micro businesses with cyber security and digital design – the first R&D facility of its kind in Wales.
- 2.7. Heritage Lottery Funding of £3.6million is being spent in Tredegar Town Centre alongside town centre loans and grants. A number of key buildings have been brought forward like the Territorial Arms Boutique Hotel with the NCB Grade 2 listed building next. The LDP review is identifying sustainable developments around towns to support the wellbeing of future generations.
- 2.8. A series of case studies are included to highlight some of the work that has been outlined in the performance report.

### **3. Options for Recommendation**

#### 3.1 Option 1:

That Members consider the information provided and make specific comments / recommendations to the Executive Committee.

#### Option 2:

That Members accept the report as provided.

### **4. Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

#### 4.1. This topic supports the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2022 in the following area:

##### Economic Development and Regeneration

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

### **5. Implications Against Each Option**

#### 5.1. ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

There are no short term budget implications associated with the report.

#### 5.2. ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

There are no risks directly associated with this report

#### 5.3. ***Legal***

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

#### 5.4. ***Human Resources***

There are no additional implications for human resources.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1. ***Performance Information and Data***

The Six Month Performance report is attached.

6.2. ***Expected outcome for the public***

Improved economy and community benefits from the work undertaken in the last 6 months

6.3. ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The strategy and action plan is designed to be a method to organise support to target areas of need identified through business and take account of changing and future business needs of Blaenau Gwent.

6.4. ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The areas of collaboration are outlined in the performance report.

6.5. ***Integration (across service areas)***

Integration is outlined in the performance report

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

Monitoring will be done through the Council's Corporate Plan and Service business plan

8. **Background Documents /Electronic Links**

*Appendix 1 – Economic Development & Regeneration Q1 and 2  
Performance Report*