

Blaenau Gwent

Final Draft

Employment & Skills Plan

2020 - 2023



Blaenau Gwent
Prosperes

FOREWORD

Blaenau Gwent has a very rich and prosperous past, primarily linked to the Industrialisation of Wales and the World, of which this small area of land played a full and active part through its Mining, Iron and Steel heritage, helping Wales to become the first Industrialised Nation in the World.

A skilled workforce is as vital today to the future economic success of the area as it has ever been, enabling the growth of higher value added activities and attracting new business to the County Borough. As part of achieving our objective to make sure that people benefit from growth in Blaenau Gwent and the wider region, an Employment and Skills Plan is required to maximise the impact of skills related programmes for the benefit of Blaenau Gwent businesses and residents and to enhance the local economy.

Blaenau Gwent is seeing significant investment opportunities by being part of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and Tech Valleys proposals, which estimates that more than 1,500 new jobs could be created in the next five years. Improving the skills and work readiness of individuals in Blaenau Gwent is vital to ensure that local people can access the job opportunities that are created and enable those currently in employment to progress within their current job roles.

Blaenau Gwent currently has fewer people with higher level qualifications and more people with no qualifications than the national average and whilst the County Borough currently enjoys a relatively low rate of unemployment, rates of youth unemployment and residents in receipt of out of work benefits are notably higher than both regional and national averages. To maximise the benefits of new investment in the region and Blaenau Gwent, this Plan will set out how, through partnership working and increased focussed investment and social clauses, we can secure more training, employment and business opportunities for Private Investors and local people.

It is important that those who most need it can access the skills support on offer; however, the range and volume of programmes available can sometimes be confusing, making the skills landscape difficult to navigate. The plan describes how we will guide and support our community by working closely with our education and skills partners to give local people all the information they need about the range of programmes available and how to access them. We will engage with employers through focused account management activity which will ensure that our businesses are informed as to the opportunities available to upskill their workforce and grow.

Finally, in considering the amount of change to the wider skills agenda it will examine the impact of national skills and apprenticeship reforms and consider how the Council and its partners can best meet the resulting challenges and take advantage of the opportunities that are now presented for the benefit of residents, businesses and economy.



Councillor Dai Davies
Executive Member for Regeneration
and Economic Development

CONTENTS

- 03 Foreword
- 04 Table of Content
- 05 Executive Summary
- 07 Introduction
- 08 Aligning with Local, Regional and National Strategy
- 09 Baseline Figures
- 11 SWOT Analysis
- 13 Priority 1 - Business and Enterprise
- 15 Priority 2 - Learning and Skills
- 17 Priority 3 - Social Mobility, Inclusion and Employability
- 19 Priority 4 - Education and Schools
- 21 Priority 5 - Procurement and Community Benefits
- 22 Governance and Delivery
- 23 Action Plan



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The world of work is changing, with the types of jobs and the way in which they are done continually evolving as a result of changing demands and technological advances. To ensure Blaenau Gwent and its residents can capitalise, a collective approach is needed to provide access to the right support, fulfil individual potential and support economic growth. Achieving the ambition is not without challenge and a people centred approach underpinned by our economic needs is critical to delivering success.

The plan sets out the vision:

Blaenau Gwent Prospers; Providing opportunities to raise aspirations and support economic growth through partnership working.

It identifies five priority areas, from which a detailed action plan will be developed.

- 1. **Business and Enterprise**
Facilitate growth and innovation by understanding and responding to local economic need.
- 2. **Learning and Skills**
Ensure that the skills provision is responsive and accessible to residents.
- 3. **Social Mobility, Inclusion and Employability;**
Create a motivated and skilled community, through appropriate employment support at every stage of an individual's journey.
- 4. **Education and Schools**
Raise awareness of opportunity and the aspirations of young people to fulfil their potential and support their pathway into work.
- 5. **Procurement and Community Benefits**
Maximise employment and skills related opportunities through the utilisation of contract social clauses.

The priorities identified are inclusive of all business types and employers. Similarly support to individuals will encapsulate all, including enterprise and business start-up; however, a focus on specific groups will be critical to deliver change and support economic growth.

The plan though applicable to all areas of the economy, aims to position Blaenau Gwent in meeting the needs of key sectors within the region including; Advanced Material and Manufacturing, Compound Semi-Conductors, Construction, Creative, Digital and Enabling Technologies and Human Foundational Economy including, Education, Health, Social Care and Childcare, Hospitality, Retail and Tourism.

A co-ordinated approach with collective buy-in from all key stakeholders will be integral to delivering a clear pathway and programme of opportunity with minimum duplication and that is responsive to need. All partners will have a clear role in delivering and measuring success against the vision;





INTRODUCTION

Enhancing the skills and work readiness of individuals in Blaenau Gwent is critical to ensuring residents can capitalise on the available employment opportunities, stemming from current demands, emerging investment and growth occurring locally, regionally and beyond.

The employment and skills plan outlines a range of priorities to ensure individuals have access to the right support, enabling them to fulfil their potential and support economic growth; this will be complementary to the priorities of the Cardiff Capital Region Skills Partnership. The plan will also sit alongside the Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Plan to ensure a complementary and seamless link between the support available for both business and individuals.

A strong and skilled workforce is essential to supporting both the existing and forecasted labour requirements of business and industry across a range of sectors going forward. Complementary to this is the opportunity to promote a culture of entrepreneurialism to meet current gaps and future requirements of the economy. Responding to the known challenges with a focus on areas such as upskilling in the work place, inspiring the next generation and promotion of apprenticeships and traineeships as a route to employment will be a priority.

In addition to raising aspirations of future generations, supporting residents who need it most, to maximise their opportunities in moving closer to entering or progressing in employment, is fundamental to improving the lives of local people and the economic prosperity of the area. Exploring the full breadth of opportunity from volunteering and training

through to work experience and placements will be integral to this offer. There will be a consideration to marginalised groups including those with disabilities, young people, and women in industry.

Fundamental to supporting our employment and skills aspirations is ensuring the right transport infrastructure is in place to enable people to access support, training and employment opportunities which is a current barrier for many. Improving local and regional transport networks and connectivity is critical and is being explored through regional pilot projects. This will also be a key priority within the emerging Blaenau Gwent Local Transport Strategy.

The Metro network will be a key travel hub to the area which will help deliver sustainable, economic prosperity to Blaenau Gwent and South East Wales. This will be further complemented by other initiatives, not least the ongoing dualling of the Heads of the Valleys road and consideration to improving the efficiency of local transport networks.

The plan outlines the National and Regional strategic context, Blaenau Gwent's baseline position, the vision, key priorities and outline action plan, against which we will seek to deliver over the next three years. The governance and partnership arrangements will be a key consideration during the early stages of implementation.

ALIGNING WITH LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL STRATEGY

The plan has been developed and aligned to National and Regional policy relating to the employment and skills agenda. Aligning with the strategic position will minimise duplication whilst enabling a localised “fit for purpose” approach. The following section highlights the key policy documents and programme that are underpinning the employment and skills drive in Wales.

National

- Welsh Government - Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan
- Welsh Government - Employability Plan
- Welsh Government - Community Benefits 2014
- Well-being for Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Regional

- CCR Skills Partnership - Employment and Skills Plan 2019-2022
- Valleys Task Force – Our Valleys Our Future Delivery Plan
- Tech Valleys - Strategic Plan

Local

- Blaenau Gwent CBC Corporate Plan 2018 – 2022
- Wellbeing Plan 2018 – 2023
- Growth and Investment Strategy
- Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Plan

BASELINE DATA

Understanding the challenges Blaenau Gwent as an area faces is critical to determining where support and priorities should be targeted in order to improve the economic competitiveness of the area and respond positively to existing and emerging opportunities. Within Blaenau Gwent there is an improving picture across a range of economic measures but challenges remain in continuing the upward trend and in most instances, move us closer the Welsh average.

The key statistical data has been supported by the following:

- Employment and Skills Stakeholder event
- PSB Maximising opportunities for prosperity stakeholder event
- Head Teacher STEM Survey
- Attendance at STEM Head Teacher Conference
- Representation at Tech Valleys and Head Teacher meetings
- Blaenau Gwent Skills Database participant survey
- Employability Provider survey
- STEM Inspiration Event Employer and Pupil survey
- Mapping of local employment and skills provision

This identified the main provision and support already in existence within Blaenau Gwent, including areas of best practice. From this information duplication and gaps in service were also identified.

Through the implementation of the Employment and Skills plan we would hope to see an improving picture against the key statistics outlined in Table 1. The interventions and aspirations to improve skill levels will also seek to contribute to our Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Plan and it’s vision to improve our ranking on the UK Competitiveness Index 2016.

The SWOT analysis on the following page summarises the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing Blaenau Gwent and has been used alongside the baseline data to inform the vision, priorities and associated actions identified within the plan.

Table 1

Baseline Figures	Blaenau Gwent	Wales	United Kingdom
Unemployment	4.6%	4.2%	4.1%
Economic inactivity due to long term sickness	37.2%	28.6%	23.0%
18-24 year olds who are claiming benefits	7.0%	4.6%	4.0%
Earnings (by place of residence)	£457.80	£540.70	£587.00
Self Employed	6.7%	9.4%	10.7%
Skills level 0-4 (NVQ)			
NVQ 4 +	23.6%	35.4%	39.3%
NVQ 3 +	44.6%	55.1%	57.8%
NVQ 2 +	63.1%	74.0%	74.9%
NVQ 1 +	77.3%	84.9%	85.4%
No Qualifications	14.8%	8.6%	7.8%
GCSE English and Maths A*-C	44.5%*	55.1%*	-
GCSE Science A*- C	46.1%*	63.0%*	-
Young people who are NEET	1.9%**	1.6%**	-

Source: Nomis
 * Stats Wales (Commuter stats comparative to neighbouring authorities of a similar size)
 **Careers Wales Destination Survey 2018



SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

Targeted Investment Status

- Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Board
- Tech Valleys
- Valleys Task Force
- Targeted regeneration investment
- WEFO
- Established enterprise zone status

Employability

- Comprehensive provision of employment support
- Dedicated Skills and Employability team within the Local Authority
- Employment Liaison function

Skills

- Apprenticeship provision (shared apprenticeship) meeting needs of manufacturing and engineering skills gaps
- Specific funding streams to support upskilling of individuals.

Local Area

- Strong partnership working and close local relationships due to the size of the Local Authority.
- Well established communities
- Strong engineering and advanced manufacturing business base

WEAKNESSES

Unemployment

- Lower than average employment rate
- High proportion of young people 18-24 claiming benefits
- 2,900 out of work who would like a job
- High levels of economic inactivity due to long term sickness compared to the rest of Wales
- Low job density

Employment

- Low pay comparative to Wales and UK
- Low wages for female residents
- Male £543.90 vs Female £389.70
- Ageing population and workforce – succession planning
- Low or semi-skilled jobs

Skills

- 6,300 people with no qualifications
- Educational attainment in schools is lower than Regional and Welsh average at grades A*-C
- Under 50% of the population have skills Level 3 and above.

Transport

- Transport connectivity – access to employment within the borough and the region.

OPPORTUNITIES

Funding

- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal
- Tech Valleys - £100 million over 10 years
- Links to CCR City Deal and influence within the Regional Skills Partnership

Initiatives

- Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme expansion across Heads of the Valley
- NDEC – upskill within the digital and enabling technologies priority through collaboration between Thales and USW
- Establishment of digital/cyber clusters (Fujitsu/Admiral)
- Support and inform the development of Regional transport networks e.g. METRO
- Grow the established Enterprise culture within Blaenau Gwent

Partnerships

- Enhance Industry and School relations to promote STEM in schools
- Link and influence the priorities within the Regional Skills Partnership and associated plan
- Development of employment progression pathways aligned to need
- Support local business growth
- To work in partnership to determine future skills

THREATS

Funding and Investment

- Commitment from funding bodies
- Ensuring sustainability of programmes post-funding.
- Inflexible funding timescales
- Lack of inward investment and interest
- Uncertainty around BREXIT and EU funding for continuation of employment and skills projects post 2022
- Demands on public money and diminishing budgets.

Skills

- Inability to meet identified skills gaps
- Low level of basic skills
- Ability for HE and FE to respond in line with pace of development.
- Loss of indigenous companies due to skills shortages

Partnerships

- Lack of community buy in
- Partners working in isolation



BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE

Priority
One

Facilitate growth and innovation by understanding and responding to local economic need.

Why is this important?

- Blaenau Gwent has an ageing population with many skilled workers approaching retirement, leaving a skills gap within existing industry.
- There are known growth sectors linked to the CCR City Deal. Ensuring that we have the capacity and skills to support this growth is key.
- To ensure initiatives for learning and continuous professional development are available and aligned to support upskilling of the existing workforce and prepare future skills requirements.
- Technological advances and the way in which we work is changing with developments in areas such as artificial intelligence and automation.
- Self-employment within Blaenau Gwent is low in comparison to rest of Wales.

Priority areas

- To build and embed effective business relationships for locally significant sectors in order to;
 - Understand and define “future skills” and “jobs of the future”.
 - Identify needs and gather business intelligence (recruitment/workforce/skills)
 - Provide responsive solutions
 - Proactively inform businesses of skill related opportunities.
- To champion apprenticeships as a sustainable solution to business productivity.
- To use business intelligence and resource to inform and complement activity across other priorities within the plan.

What are we already doing?

- The Blaenau Gwent Business Hub; a digital platform enabling local businesses and start-ups to access business support, network, connect with each other and discover local opportunities.
- A range of business support including workshops, drop in sessions, networking and grant funding opportunities for both existing and start-up businesses.
- Employability support across all sectors to promote upskilling and provide advice for recruitment, training and funding needs.
- Delivery of Shared Apprenticeship Programmes within Construction (Y Prentis) and Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering (Aspire).
- Member of the Regional Skills Partnership.

What are we going to do next?

- Commission a Blaenau Gwent skills analysis within engineering and manufacturing to determine the future skills needs of businesses.
- Determine viability and progress proposal for a Future Skills Academy.
- Promotion and growth of the apprenticeship offer to local businesses.
- Positively engage with the Regional Skills Partnership to support delivery of priorities.
- Raising the profile of opportunity for residents to start up their own business will promote innovation and economic growth.



LEARNING AND SKILLS

Priority Two

Ensure that the skills provision at all levels is responsive and accessible to residents.

Why is this important?

- There is a need to raise the skill level in Blaenau Gwent to ensure residents are best placed to secure employment including skilled and higher paid roles.
- A high level of residents are currently skilled at level 2 or below including those with no basic skills.
- A need to align skills provision to known growth sectors within the region, particularly Advanced Materials and Manufacturing.
- A high percentage of employers expect problems in recruiting for STEM related positions moving forward.

Priority areas:

- Strengthen links between industry, further and higher education establishments.
- Provide innovative and responsive delivery models to facilitate specific industry requirements.
- Encouraging flexible delivery to facilitate alternative learning pathways, which provide opportunities for all.

What are we already doing?

- Delivery of the Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme in response to local market failure.
- Utilising available funding to upskill existing workforce e.g WULF/Flexible Skills Programme.
- Exploration and introduction of new courses/learning pathways e.g composites and aeronautical.

What are we going to do next?

- Expand the Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme where there is identified need.
- Explore future funding opportunities to further support upskilling in the work place.
- Influencing providers to pathway development responsive to employer need.
- Consideration of new further and higher education course delivery locally and within the emerging skills academy.



SOCIAL MOBILITY, INCLUSION AND EMPLOYABILITY

Priority Three

Create a motivated and skilled community, through appropriate employment support, at every stage of an individual's journey.

Why is this important?

- To raise the employment level to ensure Blaenau Gwent does not continue to fall behind the Wales and UK averages.
- To reduce the high percentage of economic inactivity stemming from long term sickness comparative to other areas.
- To reduce the number of young people in receipt of benefits by ensuring they are supported and equipped for the transition from education to employment.
- To challenge deep-rooted and inter-generational barriers to employment; such as workless households, which remains high in Blaenau Gwent.
- To ensure individuals are given the skills to succeed and support local labour requirements.
- Employers are communicating the need for flexible and transferable skills e.g problem solving and basic time keeping.

Priority areas:

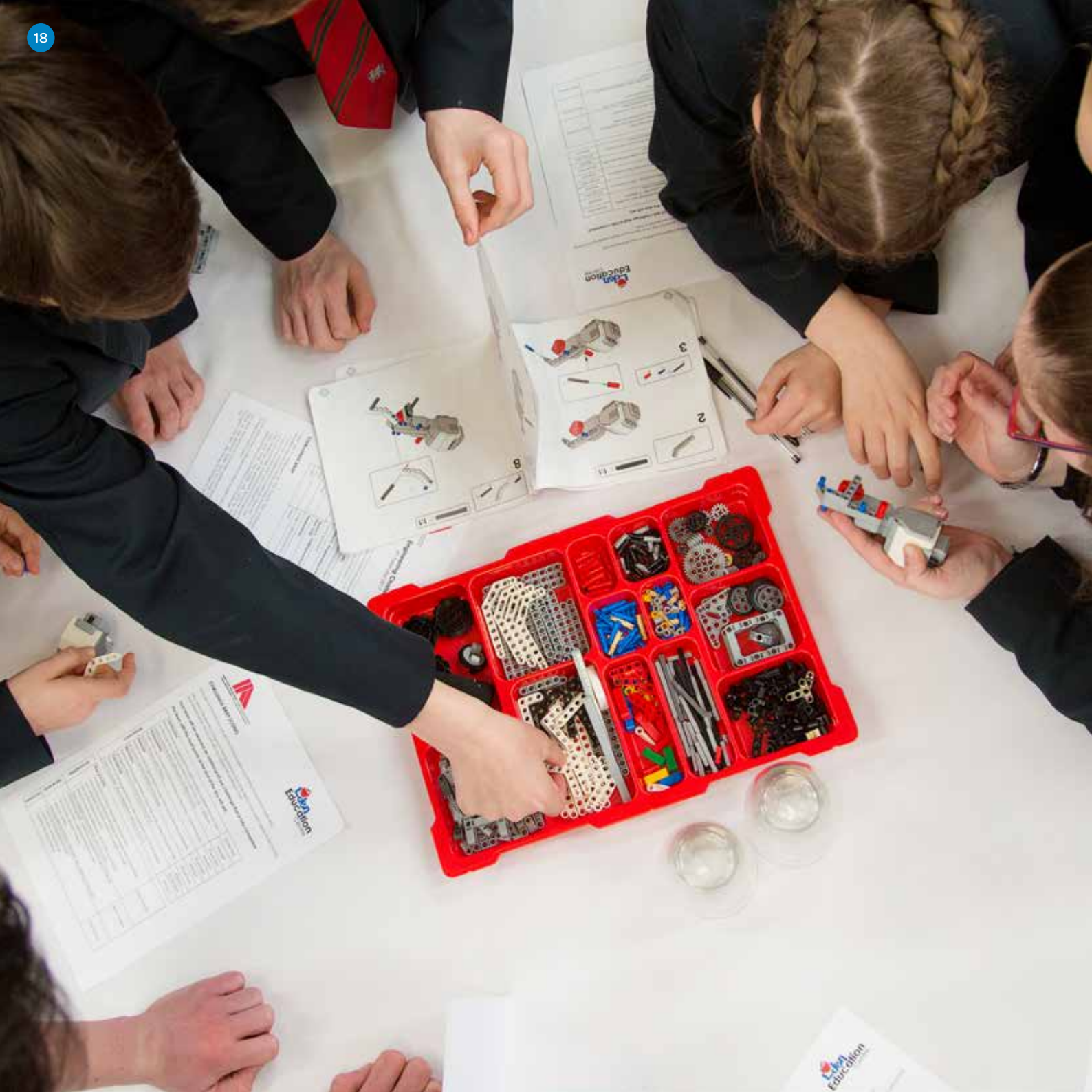
- Ensure a seamless provision of employment support that caters for the needs of all residents at every stage of their journey that is bespoke to need.
- Effective use of partner agencies to support the wider needs of individuals in securing and sustaining employment related opportunities.
- Expand the provision of in-work support available to upskill individuals.
- Promote self-employment, apprenticeships, traineeships and volunteering as alternative routes to employment.

What are we already doing?

- Providing a comprehensive provision of employment related support for residents.
- Delivering bespoke pathways and initiatives to enhance employment related skills.
- Strategic partnerships to inform and align delivery of provision.

What are we going to do next?

- Exploring regional opportunities and alignment through the CCR City Deal.
- Explore the requirement for an Employment Skills centre to upskill local residents looking for work, aligned with industry need.
- Increase liaison with businesses for early identification of emerging employment or enterprise opportunities.
- Ensure key organisations consider emerging employment opportunities as part of their support package.
- Ensure employability is a consideration when developing broader strategic initiatives such as transport and digital connectivity.



EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS

Priority Four

Raise awareness of opportunity and the aspirations of young people to fulfil their potential and support their pathway into work.

Why is this important?

- To raise attainment levels within schools which are currently lower than both the Wales and UK averages, especially within STEM related subject areas.
- To prepare students for advancing technology.
- To ensure retention of local talent within Blaenau Gwent to address recruitment challenges in skilled positions.
- To ensure resilience within the future workforce.
- Challenge perceptions and ensure that vocational learning has parity with traditional academic pathways.
- To address the disparity between males and females in STEM.

Priority areas:

- Increase links between employers and schools for an enriched learning experience.
- Ensure appropriate provision is in place for teachers and parent/guardians to support pupil learning and the new curriculum.
- To highlight the full breadth of vocational and academic pathways available to young people.
- Encourage the development of enterprise and work readiness skills in young people.

What are we already doing?

- STEM Inspiration Events to provide career guidance to students from local employers.
- A range of STEM related initiatives within Primary and Secondary schools including Aspire 2 Be, Interschool LEGO competitions and EESW.
- Support for pupils to improve attendance, attainment, behaviour and health and wellbeing e.g. Inspire 2 Achieve.
- Developing links between employers and schools. e.g. Careers Wales Education Business Exchange, Business Class.
- Embedded programme of support in place through Careers Wales within Secondary schools.

What are we going to do next?

- Develop a more coordinated programme of support within schools to ensure pupils have access to and engage with STEM provision. To include:
 - STEM focused initiatives aligned with individual school needs
 - Enhancement of business/ school interaction
 - Provision of support for parents/ guardians and teachers
 - Proactively engage with the pupils and parent/guardians to ensure that academic and vocational opportunities are promoted equally.



PROCUREMENT AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Priority
Five

Maximise employment and skills related opportunities through local procurement and the utilisation of contract social clauses.

Why is this important?

- Community Benefits provide a means to encourage a range of local benefits additional to the contract itself including employment, training, skills and community support.
- Maximising local procurement opportunities can increase local and re-occurring spend through business supply chains and local employee spend of disposable income.

Priority areas:

- To work proactively with public, private and third sector organisations to raise awareness and give consistent consideration to the inclusion of social clauses on all contract opportunities.
- Support sustained employment through raising awareness of contract opportunities amongst local businesses.
- To utilise existing support providers, to plan and respond to employment and skills related opportunities delivered through contract social clauses.
- To encourage contract social clauses that delivers a sustainable legacy to the local area, its economy and residents.

What are we already doing?

- Working with procurement to embed social clauses within contracts.
- Working with partners, including locally operating Registered Social Landlords, to facilitate identified opportunities.
- Creation of employment opportunities for local residents through Community Benefits.

What are we going to do next?

- Maximise community benefits through public, private and third sector organisations.
 - Raise awareness amongst all stakeholders, share knowledge and existing good practice.
 - Develop a co-ordinated programme of delivery to maximise the local benefits to Blaenau Gwent.
 - To ensure agreed social clauses are robustly monitored as part of contract delivery to ensure benefits are realised.
-

GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY

The successful implementation of the Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan will require a collaborative partnership approach building on existing structures and engagement work to date.

The PSB will give consideration to the Governance arrangements required to deliver the plan as part of their 'To Forge New Pathways to Prosperity' priority. This may include the establishment of a Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Board comprising of key partners including Tech Valleys Strategic Advisory Group, Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Board and colleges, amongst others.

Sub/working groups will then be established, if a mechanism is not already in place for each of the priorities set out within the plan. These groups will consist of the most appropriate representatives who support initiatives relating to each of the priorities. Their remit will be to consider the action plan, identify lead partners for specific actions, ensure timely delivery and provide regular progress updates to the board.

The plan will complement the aspirations and priorities of our key strategic partnerships, not least Tech Valleys Strategic Advisory Group and the Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Board. The plan will be delivered over a three year period (2020-2023), including an annual review of progress. As the plan enters the implementation phase, additional actions may be required and will be incorporated within the action plan, which will serve as a working document for the life of the plan.



ACTION PLAN

Priority 1	Aims	Partners	Actions
<p>Business & Enterprise</p> <p>Facilitate growth and innovation by understanding and responding to local economic need.</p>	<p>To build and embed effective business relationships for locally significant sectors in order to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand and define “future skills” and “jobs of the future”. - Identify needs and gather business intelligence (recruitment / workforce/ skills). - Provide responsive solutions. - Proactively inform businesses of skill related opportunities. <p>To champion apprenticeships as a sustainable solution to business productivity.</p> <p>To use business intelligence and resource to inform and complement activity across other priorities within the plan.</p>	<p>BGCBC</p> <p>Tech Valleys</p> <p>Welsh Government</p> <p>CCR City Deal</p> <p>MTC</p> <p>Business Support e.g</p> <p>Business Wales</p> <p>South Wales Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Industrial Alliance</p> <p>Industry Wales</p>	<p>Commission a Future Skills Analysis for the advanced manufacturing and engineering sectors and consider the recommendation made.</p> <p>For the Tech Valleys Strategic Advisory Group and Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Board to consider the Employment and Skills Plan and identify specific work packages, potential project leads and associated funding.</p> <p>To develop a business case to sustain the Aspire Blaenau Gwent Shared Apprenticeship Programme, including potential expansion to meet business need.</p> <p>To maximise the number of businesses registered on the Blaenau Gwent Business Hub, providing a single platform to access support initiatives including events, recruitment, funding, training, apprenticeships and graduate opportunities.</p> <p>To review the BG Effect model with consideration to: Enterprise and Business start-up support Delivery of the effect network Re-establishment of an Effect advisory board</p> <p>To implement the business engagement framework for consistent business account management.</p> <p>To promote and increase networking events to support marginalised groups e.g. Women In Business event.</p> <p>Active representation in Regional partnerships to ensure appropriate infrastructure (digital/ transport) is developed to meet the needs of Blaenau Gwent businesses.</p>



ACTION PLAN

Priority 2	Aims	Partners	Actions
<p>Learning and Skills;</p> <p>Ensure that the skills provision at all levels is responsive and accessible to residents.</p>	<p>Strengthen links between industry, further and higher education establishments.</p> <p>Provide innovative and responsive delivery models to facilitate specific industry requirements.</p> <p>Encouraging flexible delivery to facilitate alternative learning pathways, which provide opportunities for all.</p>	<p>BGCBC</p> <p>HE partners</p> <p>FE partners</p> <p>RSP</p> <p>PSB</p> <p>NDEC</p>	<p>To conduct a mapping exercise of existing industry and further/ higher education partnership meetings to support future delivery mechanisms.</p> <p>Progress discussions around Centres of Excellence in key sectors, e.g. Cyber and Digital</p> <p>Progress proposal for the development of the Blaenau Gwent Future Skills Academy to facilitate identified industry and academic needs.</p> <p>Utilise the findings of the Future Skills Analysis to inform learning pathways moving forward.</p> <p>Active representation in the Regional Skills Partnership (action plan) to ensure the needs of Blaenau Gwent are appropriately represented and potential funding is aligned appropriately.</p> <p>Ensure seamless pathways from Primary and Secondary through to further and higher education.</p> <p>Highlight innovative delivery models to support skills needs e.g. CCR Graduate Scheme, Shared Apprenticeship Programmes.</p>



ACTION PLAN

Priority 3	Aims	Partners	Actions
<p>Social Mobility, Inclusion and Employability;</p> <p>Create a motivated and skilled community, through appropriate employment support, at every stage of an individual's journey.</p>	<p>Ensure a seamless provision of employment support that caters for the needs of all residents at every stage of their journey that is bespoke to need.</p> <p>Effective use of partner agencies to support the wider needs of individuals in securing and sustaining employment related opportunities.</p> <p>Expand the provision of in-work support available to upskill individuals.</p> <p>Promote self-employment, apprenticeships, traineeships, and volunteering as alternative routes to employment.</p>	<p>BGCBC</p> <p>PSB</p> <p>Employability and training providers</p> <p>RSLs</p> <p>Voluntary Sector</p> <p>Tech Valleys</p> <p>RSP</p>	<p>To consider the utilisation of existing platforms to engage and support delivery. E.g Raising Aspirations Group, Multi-Agency meeting, BG That Works.</p> <p>Annual mapping of available employment support and gaps in provision.</p> <p>Identify and pursue funding opportunities to deliver employability support responsive to gaps and known areas of growth. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effect fund for enterprise - Upskilling in the workplace - Shared apprenticeship programmes - Pathways to Employment <p>Utilise the results from the Future Skills Analysis to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Influence training and support to individuals. - Determine feasibility of training space within the Future Skills Academy to support employability e.g. Gemba training room <p>To promote and increase networking events to support marginalised groups e.g. Women In Business event.</p> <p>Active representation in Regional partnerships to ensure appropriate infrastructure (digital/ transport) is developed to meet the needs of Blaenau Gwent residents.</p>



ACTION PLAN

Priority 4	Aims	Partners	Actions
<p>Education & Schools;</p> <p>Raise awareness of opportunity and the aspirations of young people to fulfil their potential and support their pathway into work.</p>	<p>Increase links between employers and schools for an enriched learning experience.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate provision is in place for teachers and parent/guardians to support pupil learning and the new curriculum.</p> <p>Highlight the full breadth of vocational and academic pathways available to young people.</p> <p>Encourage the development of enterprise and work readiness skills in young people.</p>	<p>BGCBC</p> <p>Tech Valleys</p> <p>Primary Schools</p> <p>Secondary Schools</p> <p>EAS</p> <p>PSB</p> <p>Careers Wales</p>	<p>Utilise existing platforms within education to engage and support delivery. E.g Tech Valleys and Education group, Head Teacher meeting/ bulletin, Raising Aspiration Group.</p> <p>To secure Tech Valleys funding to implement a pilot STEM facilitation programme within schools aligned to identified need.</p> <p>To develop a single mechanism through which to promote the breadth of initiatives available to schools to support learning.</p> <p>To engage with the EAS to develop a complementary and enhanced programme of support to pupils and teachers.</p> <p>Continued delivery of the annual STEM Inspiration Event with exploration into the development of a wider programme, to include primary schools.</p> <p>Enhance the Enterprise offer within schools through current initiatives, e.g Young Enterprise, Big Ideas Wales Enterprise Troopers.</p> <p>Ensure seamless pathways from Primary and Secondary through to further and higher education.</p> <p>To consider new initiatives and enhance existing opportunities to link industry and education e.g. Classroom in Industry, Business Class, Education Business Exchange.</p>



ACTION PLAN

Priority 5	Aims	Partners	Actions
<p>Procurement and Community Benefits;</p> <p>Maximise employment and skills related opportunities through the utilisation of contract social clauses.</p>	<p>To work proactively with public, private and third sector organisations to raise awareness and give consistent consideration to the inclusion of social clauses on all contract opportunities.</p> <p>Support sustained employment through raising awareness of contract opportunities amongst local businesses.</p> <p>To utilise existing support providers, to plan and respond to employment and skills related opportunities delivered through contract social clauses.</p> <p>To encourage contract social clauses that delivers a sustainable legacy to the local area, its economy and residents.</p>	<p>BGCBC</p> <p>PSB</p> <p>Employability and training providers</p> <p>RSLs</p> <p>Voluntary Sector</p> <p>Business Community</p>	<p>Develop a communications plan to raise awareness of social clauses amongst procuring organisations and delivery partners; as a mechanism to support increased local employment and skills</p> <p>Collate case studies and examples of best practice to support delivery of the communications plan.</p> <p>To encourage early consideration of social clauses within organisational contract opportunities.</p> <p>To utilise pilot projects (Welsh Government Innovation fund, Community Wealth Building) to make recommendations on best practise and future operating processes.</p> <p>Engage with delivery partners to identify needs within Blaenau Gwent that can inform social clauses within upcoming contract opportunities.</p> <p>Identify a coordinated approach to monitoring achieved outcomes and demonstrate the value added achieved through contract social clauses.</p>





Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Regeneration Connected Communities

Tel: 01495 355508 Email: TBC