



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council



Blaenau Gwent Corporate Plan 2020/22

Foreword

On 31st January 2020, the World Health Organisation declared a global health emergency in relation to coronavirus. This led the Council to establish emergency planning arrangements.

In an emergency the Council would normally deal with the response and then move into the recovery phase, what is clear however, is that dealing with Covid-19 will be very different with many measures having to remain in place until a vaccine or treatment are found. As part of this, the Council need to be able to respond to the pandemic, whilst moving to the next phase and supporting some elements of recovery. The nature of this emergency means we expect to run both response and recovery side by side. This will place a further demand on resources.

It is also the case that so much about the way we live our lives has changed and we will not simply return to normal once Covid-19 is under control. This provides an opportunity for the Council to build on the positive work of the past few months with the expectation being that we do not seek to return to the way things were before but harness the positive aspects of the response to strengthen and modernise the Council, adopting new working practices and challenging how we did things before, in order to map out an ambitious future, create a stronger organisation and to sustain the strong relationships forged with our communities and partners.

The Council will continue to respond to the emergency but is now re-starting some services in line with the relaxation of lockdown. It will not be a case of delivering services as we have done before, service delivery will have to change to take into account the national framework which will for the foreseeable future involve mandatory social distancing alongside a clear direction to work from home, where possible; the phased 'restart' of wide range of public services and of the economy; and continued proactive work to prevent the further spread of the virus whilst also planning for potential future 'peaks.'

The Covid-19 pandemic has been devastating globally and will have a significant detrimental impact on the economy and the way we live, work, learn and socialise for the foreseeable future. The Council has had to respond to this unprecedented situation and has done so at pace, bringing an innovative approach to problem solving and changes in service delivery, ensuring that the health and well-being of our residents and communities has been the driver for our decision making and actions.

Despite the impact that the pandemic has had, it is possible to identify positive experience and good practice from the way the Council and community has responded in Blaenau Gwent. It is clear there is a real opportunity to hold onto these positives and to not simply return to normal but to build on our work to create a stronger and more resilient organisation and community.

The next steps will be really important now to ensure we use this experience to build a stronger organisation and place in Blaenau Gwent.

Introduction

Blaenau Gwent is a place like no other. At the head of the Gwent Valleys Blaenau Gwent provides a unique and lofty environment to live, work and play. With a heritage that is firmly based on an industrial past, we are a place that is changing to respond to new economic opportunities.

The Tech Valleys Vision, Valleys Regional Park and Cardiff Capital Regional City Deal combined with new transport links including the soon to be completed Heads of the Valley Road and rail routes to Cardiff bring a bright future. Together with the amazing location and surrounding parkland our people and communities make Blaenau Gwent great. Our people have influenced on the local, national and international stage in art, sport and politics for many generations – putting Blaenau Gwent on the map for all the right reasons.

The role of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and its partners is to maximise on the assets we have, doing more with less and doing it better. It is right that we recognise the challenges we face. The decline of heavy industry continues to impact on employment prospects and intergenerational opportunities. We face issues with health and wealth inequality, the rise of online shopping and the impact on our town centres and social issues affecting our families and young people.

As a Council we face increasing demand for some of our services with reductions to our budgets. But we are tackling these issues head on with our partners, businesses and the local community. We are looking at how we spend our money to achieve the best outcomes for our residents, we are supporting new and existing businesses, we are looking at our assets to achieve new income streams and we are removing barriers to enable residents to access what they need. All in all, we are looking forward to a positive future.

Our Core Vision and Values

Our core Vision and Values reflect who we are as a Council, how we do things and how we are shaping the future by ensuring that these apply to everything we do.

The Council's Vision:

**Proud Heritage
Strong Communities
Brighter Future**

Members wanted a vision that reflects both the rich heritage and past industry of the area, of which our communities are fiercely proud, but which also shows our commitment to moving forward by embracing new and emerging technologies that will better equip our communities and in turn lead to a more prosperous future for Blaenau Gwent.

The Council's Core Values:

**Proud and
Ambitious**

**Trust and
Integrity**

**Working
Together**

**Raising
Aspirations**

**Fair and
Equitable**

Corporate Plan Refresh 2020/22

As part of the Council's annual Assessment of Performance, written in October 2019, we identified that our ambitious programme of activity was in the early stages of development and implementation. As part of this we were honest in that we may need to make some changes to the Corporate Plan moving forward. This has resulted in some amendments being made to the Outcome Statements within the Corporate Plan in order to better demonstrate the contribution different areas across the Council will contribute to achieving them, enhancing our one Council approach. The overall emphasis of each Outcome Statement (Well-being Objective) has not changed.

Corporate Plan 2020/22 Outcome Statements:

- **Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities**
- **Support a fairer sustainable economy and community**
- **To enable people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities**
- **An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities**

The political leadership are keen that the priorities in the plan align with what local people have told us is important to them, in particular they want strong and clean communities and to see the economy grow for the well-being of future generations. We will continue to invest in our neighbourhoods so that they are places where people are proud to live and have prioritised economic development and regeneration to bring jobs, growth and opportunity to local people and businesses. Education and Social Services continue to be priorities as we work to improve standards in our schools so that all children and young people reach their full potential and we continue to look after the most vulnerable people in our communities against increasing demand for these services. Another priority is to make sure the services we provide are of a high standard and value for money, where more people are satisfied and services are more accessible for and responsive to the needs of citizens.

Through focusing on delivering 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. It is also a key part of building a more confident and capable Council. It is about achieving real outcomes for the people of Blaenau Gwent and is underpinned by solid and sustainable plans, ensuring the Council can be held to account for what it has promised to deliver.

The Council's Outcome Statements and Activity 2020/22

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.

Outcome Statement 2020/22	Corporate Plan Activity
Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To increase rates of recycling to enable us to achieve national targets• To re-invest in environmental services to address the issues created by fly-tipping, dog fouling, littering, grass cutting, street cleansing and pest control• To re-invest in highways maintenance particularly improvements to our residential roads, streets and pavements• To improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors• To work with partners to provide a variety of homes• To develop an excellent digital infrastructure including internet and mobile network connectivity that can support the needs of the whole community.• To develop a portfolio of potential energy opportunities to deliver economic, business and community benefits• To improve the quality of our school buildings to help learners achieve great outcomes• To be a carbon neutral Council by 2030
Outcome Statement 2020/22	Corporate Plan Activity
Support a fairer sustainable economy and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support all learners to achieve improved outcomes• To improve pupil outcomes, progress and wellbeing.• Improve skills and promote digital participation• To work with partners to provide effective employment support and access to skills development (Apprenticeships)• To increase the start-up business rate, retention and growth of local businesses and attract new inward investment• To actively participate in partnerships such as Tech Valleys and CCRCD to attract investment• To work with partners to develop a new vision for our town centres ensuring their long term future

Outcome Statement 2020/22	Corporate Plan Activity
To enable people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve accessibility, provision of information and advice to enable people to support their own wellbeing • To work with people and families to make sure they have a say in achieving what matters to them • To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater • To put effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect people from harm • To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering integrated responsive care and support with partners • To continue our programme of public engagement and respond in a timely and effective way to feedback • To build a collaborative culture between services, partners and communities working together and with people directly to shape and deliver services. i.e. (Community Asset Transfers). • To develop a partnership approach to maximising income reducing the impacts of Poverty.

Outcome Statement 2020/22	Corporate Plan Activity
An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To demonstrate clear and visible leadership to deliver a viable and resilient Council • We will deliver online services that are simple and convenient, improving the relationship between residents, business and the council • 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 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 • To be a strong and effective partner and collaborate where possible to deliver financial, business and community benefits • COVID 19 – safe working environment for our staff and service users • We will work in an agile way, capturing learning and seeking continuous improvement

Legislative Requirements

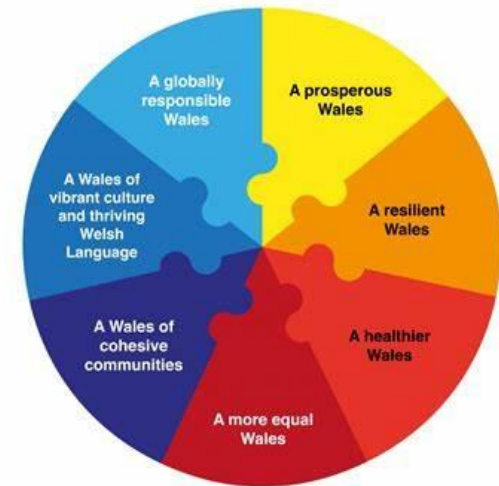
The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is ground-breaking legislation which aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The vision of this legislation is expressed in the seven National well-being goals.

In order to meet the statutory legislative requirements, the Council has implemented the following:

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: places individual duties on public bodies. The legislation is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and creating a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. The report uses the Outcome Statements within the Council's Corporate Plan as its Well-being Objectives.

The **Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (Section 15)**, places a duty on all Local Authorities in Wales to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. As part of this, the Council is required to develop a Corporate Plan. The report also uses the Outcome Statements within the Council's Corporate Plan as its Improvement Objectives.

The Act also puts a duty on public bodies to apply the sustainable development principle which states they '**must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs**'. The sustainable development principle is made up of the following five ways of working, pictured below:



Contact Information

This document is available electronically and in hard copy by request.

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Providing Feedback

We welcome any feedback you might have about the Council's Corporate Plan 2020/22. Your views are important to us and we want to know what information you would like to see and how you would like to see it reported. Please contact the team on the details above if you would like to give feedback on the Corporate Plan, if there is any information you think could be considered for inclusion in the future, or if you require this document in a different format e.g. large print, Braille, audio version, etc.

Fersiwn Gymraeg

Yn unol â Chynllun Iaith Gymraeg y Cyngor, bydd fersiwn Gymraeg o'r Cynllun Gwella ar gael ar wefan y Cyngor.

This document acts as Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's Well-being Statement, prepared under section 7 of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and related guidance issued by the Welsh Government.

The Council is satisfied that the information given in this plan is accurate based on the information available at the time of publication.

This Council's Corporate Plan 2020/22 has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment screening.