

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

**SUBJECT: SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE –
14TH OCTOBER, 2020**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

**PRESENT: Leader of the Council/
Executive Member Corporate Services
Councillor N.J. Daniels (CHAIR)**

**Deputy Leader/Executive Member –
Regeneration & Economic Development
Councillor D. Davies**

**Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins**

**Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins**

**Executive Member – Social Services
Councillor J. Mason**

**WITH: Managing Director
Corporate Director Social Services
Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
Chief Officer Resources
Chief Officer Commercial
Education Transformation Manager
Communications, Marketing & Customer Access Manager
Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance**

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>An apology was received from the Interim Corporate Director Education.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declarations of interest and dispensations were made:-</p> <p>Councillor J. Wilkins – Item No. 13</p>	
	<p><u>MINUTES</u></p>	
No. 4	<p><u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd September, 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 8th September, 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	

<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 16th September, 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 21st September, 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEMS - CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 9TH DECEMBER, 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Leader of the Council.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and information contained therein be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Leader reported that the allocation made to Zion Miners Chapel by Councillor J. Holt read £50.00 not £200.00.</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p>	

The following additional grants were reported:-

ABERTILLERY

Llanhilleth Ward - Councillors J. Collins & N. Parsons

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|------|
| 1. | Brynithel Activities Group | £150 |
|----|----------------------------|------|

EBBW VALE

Beaufort Ward – Councillors G. Thomas & S. Healy

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|------|
| 1. | The Beaufort Theatre | £100 |
|----|----------------------|------|

TREDEGAR

Georgetown & Central & West Ward – Councillors

K. Hayden & J. Morgan & S. Thomas & H. Trollope & B. Willis

- | | | |
|-----|---|------|
| 1. | 2167 Air Force Cadets | £200 |
| 2. | Bedwellty Park Bowls Club | £200 |
| 3. | Bethania Chapel | £200 |
| 4. | Chloe's Community Kitchen | £200 |
| 5. | Cymru Creations | £200 |
| 6. | FC Tredegar Under 13's | £100 |
| 7. | FC Tredegar Under 10 Tigers | £100 |
| 8. | Gymfinity | £200 |
| 9. | Kids R Us | £200 |
| 10. | Mother & Toddler Group Tredegar Central Baptist | £200 |
| 11. | St Georges Church | £200 |
| 12. | Silurian Amatuer Boxing Club | £200 |
| 13. | Tredegar Business Forum | £200 |
| 14. | Tredegar Central Baptist Church | £200 |
| 15. | Tredegar Methodist Church | £200 |
| 16. | Tredegar Netball | £200 |
| 17. | Tredegar Orpheus Choir | £200 |
| 18. | Tredegar Town AFC Juniors | £100 |
| 19. | Tredegar Town AFC | £100 |

	<p>20. Tredegar Women & Girls AFC £200</p> <p>21. Tredvale Camera Club £200</p> <p>22. Stocktonville Senior Citizens £200</p> <p>23. British Legion (Moose International) £200</p> <p>24. Planet Fitness £200</p> <p>25. Tredegar Angling Club £200</p> <p>26. Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum £200</p> <p>27. St Johns Ambulance Tredegar £117.85</p> <p>28. Tredegar Ironsides RFC £100</p> <p>29. Tredegar Ironsides Junior RFC £100</p> <p>30. Southend Allotments £100</p> <p>31. Southend Beekeepers £100</p> <p>32. Georgetown Community Centre £200</p> <p>33. Sirhowy Valley Woodlands £200</p> <p>34. St Georges Court Tenants & Residents Association £200</p> <p>35. Reliance Bus Preservation Society £200</p> <p>36. Saron Chapel £200</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEMS – REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 10</p>	<p><u>CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION & WELSH GOVERNMENT ASPIRE ROLL OUT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that the purpose of the report was to gain endorsement for the submission of a proposal to Cardiff Capital Region to roll out the Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme and become the host Authority. Also, to sought endorsement for the submission of a proposal to Welsh Government to merge the Aspire Blaenau Gwent and Aspire Merthyr Tydfil programmes from September 2021 which would retain funding for both local authorities to work with the education to facilitate apprenticeships.</p>	

The Corporate Director provided a background to the work of the Aspire Shared Apprentice Programme and advised that in 2019 it won the 'Large Employer of the Year' award at the Apprenticeship Awards Cymru 2019. The award category entitled 'Large and Macro Employer of the Year' recognised and celebrated the employer's commitment to developing their workforce through apprenticeships, whilst supporting employees during training

The Corporate Director felt that the programme would open up opportunities in our Community and throughout the Heads of the Valleys. The model also had the capabilities to operate across the city region with additional recruitment. He felt that it was positive that Blaenau Gwent was taking the lead on the programme and that CCRD asked to take this forward based on Blaenau Gwent's model

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic noted his admiration for the programme and he was proud to work alongside with the Aspire Team.

The Skills Agenda was massive for Blaenau Gwent and Wales and the work of this small team was immense and showed the influence of that programme in the recognition through Welsh Government and CCRD to extend the programme. The Programme was exemplar and something to be used as best practice. The Executive Member advised that he had been present at the Awards Evening and it was fantastic to see the other employers that the Authority had been up against. This work provided a great opportunity with Merthyr Tydfil which would lead us into CCRD and provide that expansion to work through the regions with authorities who wished to join. It was felt that this was a real opportunity to move the programme across the 10 authorities providing real apprenticeships, working with real manufacturers which provided excellent opportunities and employment rates.

The Leader added that the opportunity acknowledged the recognition and respect for the Council in terms of what had been achieved in the last 3-4 years. The hard work and commitment had created something that would be a template used across South East Wales for many years. The Programme would continue to benefit the young people in our communities and the Leader wished to congratulate the Executive Member, Corporate Director and the Team on their hard work.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 namely; the submission of two proposals, one to City Deal and the other to Welsh Government by the end of summer 2020 be endorsed. The approval provided a strategic context and clear focus to support a partnership and collaborative approach to implementing specific actions and associated Employment and Skills delivery.

No. 11

INTEGRATED RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT PILOT

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Business and Regeneration.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that the purpose of the report was to seek views on the Integrated Responsive Transport (IRT) Pilot project in Blaenau Gwent. The Corporate Director noted that Welsh Government had identified Blaenau Gwent as an area that would benefit from a pilot scheme and informed that this project would be operated across three local authority areas in Wales - Pembrokeshire Conwy and Blaenau Gwent. These Authority's would benefit from piloting a new type of public transport which would run services outside of usual running times. There would be 2 buses procured as part of the project and would initially operate in the Ebbw Fach and Ebbw Fawr valleys. The Corporate Director added that there had always been concerns around public transport in Blaenau Gwent and this pilot provided an opportunity to test the demand for particular routes and services. It was hoped that this would then aim to provide a greater level of flexibility for users

The project would also link in with the transport strategy for Blaenau Gwent and provide the relevant data to improve the Council's understanding of travel patterns and where appropriate enable us to enhance and adapt transport services to serve the current and future needs of residents.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development welcomed the report as it identified the trust placed in this Council by Welsh Government to run a pilot scheme. The Executive Member felt that Blaenau Gwent was an excellent area to undertake this pilot as the topography of the area was diverse.

The Executive Member also felt that public transport should be controlled by the Public Sector as we are in a good position to understand the needs of our communities. The pilot would provide the opportunity to respond to demand.

The Leader felt it was important that this pilot be publicised well for all residents whether they have access to Social Media or not. It was paramount that in order for the pilot to be successful all our communities are involved. The Executive Member confirmed that initial discussions had commenced on how the pilot would be marketed and concurred that it was important that all resident's needs are met.

The Executive Member for Social Services added that there was also a need to talk to other providers in terms of links to the new Grange Hospital in order for residents to access this hospital. In response, it was confirmed that dialogue would be undertaken with partners in the health sector and consideration would be given to Town Centre, places of employment and access issues.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 that approval was given to progress with the pilot project and introduce IRT to Blaenau Gwent.

No. 12

STRATEGIC HOUSING: CCRCD VIABILITY GAP FUNDING

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that the report outlined the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) Viability Gap Fund opportunity, provided an Update on the current position in responding to the CCRCD Viability Gap Fund opportunity; including identification of potential development sites and sought approval to progress business case and associated workr to determine viability gap and support an application to CCRCD.

The Corporate Director further spoke to the report and outlined the CCRCD Viability Gap Funding opportunity, revenue funding and the fund timeline. In terms of Blaenau Gwent's position and sites it was advised that potential sites had been identified in the private sector and these would be considered with the owners to determine interest in the initiative.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development welcomed the report and was pleased to see the investment as housing was the key driver in economy.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1; the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) Viability Gap Fund opportunity be noted; including the current position within Blaenau Gwent in respect of identifying potential development sites. Also approval be given for the continued exploration of the identified sites in order to determine the viability gap; and where appropriate progress business case(s) and associated work to support an application submission to CCRCD Viability Gap Fund.

No. 13

ECONOMY – POST COVID-19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Councillor J. Wilkins declared an interest in this meeting, however she remained in the meeting during discussions.

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Regeneration and Development.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services welcomed the positive report which set out the proposed strategy that Blaenau Gwent would adopt in response to COVID19. The strategy supports the sectors and businesses in the County Borough and provided a progress update on the ongoing work taking place locally which fed into regional initiatives.

The Corporate Director stated that the COVID19 pandemic and lockdown had greatly affected many business and employment across Wales and the UK. The trading of most companies had been disrupted which caused both short and long term issues in many sectors. The report looked at data collated from various organisations and applied modelling to look at the possible unemployment figures for Blaenau Gwent. It also gave consideration to businesses which needed assistance and which could enhance the future local economy. The Corporate further provided a detailed overview of the information contained in the report.

The COVID unemployment modelling had been applied across different sectors and gave actual figures for unemployment in the Borough and noted that the worst case scenario would be just over 4,200 additional unemployed with 1,700 new employment expected over the same period. There were also a number of trends and actions emerging from the data and work could commence on initiatives that may need to be developed which would allow Blaenau Gwent businesses to adapt to the new ways of working which were outlined by the Corporate Director.

The Corporate Director further outlined the short and long term actions to be taken forward across the sectors as detailed in the report.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development welcomed the work and advised that the report cut across a number of Service Areas. The Economic Development Team was a small section and had been supported by Revenues and Benefits to protect and support businesses by issuing grant funding. The contact with businesses had been maintained throughout lockdown and he wished to pass thanks to staff for their hard work.

The Executive Member continued that a great deal of jobs and businesses had been affected by the pandemic and the challenge continued as there was no end date. He was confident that the support was in place to protect whatever we are able to and continue to bring investment to Blaenau Gwent.

The Leader reiterated the efforts of officers during this period and informed that he had also been approached by individuals giving compliment to the work of the Economic Development Team to ensure their survival. The staff in Economic Development were tremendous and provided a great support during uncertain times.

The Leader added that the Regeneration and Economic Development reports considered had all be of excellent standard. It demonstrated the commitment and expertise in this area led by the Executive Member. The matters considered were important to the public and highlighted that these serious concerns could be addressed which had tested all authorities across Wales. It was a test to a serious politician and the Leader felt that the Authority had positioned itself well to address these issues.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be approved to continue working with partners to focus on the initiatives that would bring the most benefit post-COVID to BG. Those that would improve employment opportunities and support businesses to progress with digital improvements and a mix of home, virtual and shared space working.

DECISION ITEMS - EDUCATION MATTERS

No. 14 **REVISED LA GOVERNOR POLICY**

Consideration was given to the report of the Strategic Education Improvement Manager.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and information contained therein be approved.

No. 15 **BLAENAU GWENT – POST 16 PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Corporate Director Education.

The Education Transformation Manager outlined the report which was presented to seek approval to establish a Blaenau Gwent Post 16 Partnership Board. There was a strong partnership arrangement between the Council and Coleg Gwent in place which had matured during recent years. The Council and Coleg Gwent had a systematic approach in place to share data at a strategic and operational level and this would be further developed with the establishment of a Post 16 Partnership Board. The Board included representation from the Education Directorate, Coleg Gwent, work based learning providers and Blaenau Gwent secondary school settings. There would also be representation from colleagues in Regeneration to encompass the broader skills and economic development agenda.

The Learning Zone delivered an annual performance report to the Council which was included on the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee's forward work programme and featured on the Member Briefing Programme.

The Executive Member for Education welcomed the report which demonstrated the commitment of stakeholders. The Executive Member stated that there was a strong relationship between secondary schools and Coleg Gwent and this would further strengthen by the partnership. It was also positive to see that the Regeneration Team would participate in the Board as this would realise a multitude of benefits for young people.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development concurred with the comments raised and felt that working with Coleg Gwent and Aspire would maximise opportunities for our young people.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and information contained therein be approved.

DECISION ITEMS - ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

No. 16 INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN'S PLAY PROVISION

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community Services.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that the report provided an update to the children's play area sites and sought endorsement for the current work programme of the installation of the play equipment in sites which was identified following an extensive review of play areas undertaken and reported to Council in December 2018. The report outlined the rationale for the installation of new children's play equipment purchased following funding received from Welsh Government through the All Wales Play Opportunities Grant (AWPOG). This funding was received at the end of the 2019/2020 financial year and a decision made under delegated authority due to being in lockdown to reallocate the funding originally identified for the Splash Park project. The Corporate Director advised that the decision to reallocate the funds was made as the Festival Park was no longer in a position to take forward the Splash Park project and the Council had to inform Welsh Government of how the funds would be used by the end of March 2020 or the funding would be withdrawn.

It was reported that an initial AWPOG grant of £117,000 was received in 2019/20 to support the implementing of the Play Sufficiency Action Plan. In March 2020 the Council was notified by Welsh Government of a further allocation of AWPOG funding and Parc Bryn Bach, Tredegar had recently benefited from new grant funding from Welsh Government from the Valleys Regional Parks as part of the Discovery Gateway Project. The new facility had been well received by visitors to the park.

The Corporate Director continued that the report identified the play area sites in areas of priority was based around play value, site access and usage levels. The play area sites identified and prioritised were detailed in Appendix 1 of the report. It was added that the 2018 Play Area Review identified a number of play areas that had little or no play value and it had been agreed with the Executive Member for Environment that further consultation would be undertaken with the respective Ward Members to discuss options for sites.

The Executive Member for Environment welcomed the investment into children's play area as during lockdown these areas were critical to children's well-being.

The Leader added that the original review undertaken in 2018 had been a Financial Efficiency Project (FEP) identified as part of the budget setting process. The review was agreed in 2019 and a great deal of work had been undertaken which continued against all recent challenges. The Leader felt that the continuation of this work recognised the Council's commitment to play and the Health and Wellbeing Agenda remained.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed for the installation of the already purchased play equipment into the sites as identified in the report and support further dialogue at a ward level in respect of the future of children's play areas in line with the "Play Area Review" undertaken in December 2018.

No. 17 **PUBLIC PROTECTION – PRIMARY AUTHORITY SCHEME**

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Public Protection

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that the report informed Members of the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act (RES Act), which impacts on the administration of the Council's enforcement functions in respect of Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards. The report proposed the adoption of a policy where suitable businesses trading across local authority boundaries, start-up businesses or a single business could be given the opportunity to enter a legal Primary Authority Relationship with Blaenau Gwent Council in respect of regulatory functions. The Corporate Director noted that the Executive are asked to approve the adoption of Primary Authority partnerships in principle and an associated local policy for Primary Authority.

The Corporate Director provided an overview and explanation of a Primary Authority as set out in the report.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 namely;

- The Draft Policy contained in Appendix 1 be adopted and delegate authority to the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services, to enter Primary Authority relationships on behalf of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council for the purpose of the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 (RES Act).
- the Primary Authority scheme be offered to appropriate businesses on a cost recovery basis for the Local Authority as detailed in the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act.
- the adoption of the policy would help to ensure legal compliance, embrace the principles of better regulation and support local businesses. The Adoption of the policy would contribute to the Council's aims to develop a vibrant economy in Blaenau Gwent where businesses of all sizes access support to meet their regulatory requirements and enhance business growth and the associated benefits to our residents and communities.

- Adoption of Option 1 does not compel the service to enter any Primary Authority partnerships but merely permits such an agreement, if deemed appropriate in line with the Draft Policy shown in Appendix 1.

No. 18 **REVIEW INTO WATER SUPPLY QUALITY IN SCHOOLS**

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services and the Interim Corporate Director Education.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services informed that the purpose of the report was to update Members on the outcome of the review carried out by Integrated Water Services (IWS) in light of the water quality issues experienced in our schools during the period of closure due to COVID-19.

The Corporate Director felt that the Council had taken a pro-active and comprehensive approach to the reopening of schools from a Health and Safety perspective, including water testing in accordance with the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) L8 and Health & Safety Executive (HSE) specific advice. The safety of the children and staff across all school sites was a priority to the Council.

The Corporate Director continued that normally schools are only closed for a period of five to six weeks during the summer holidays. This period of school closures was unprecedented and lessons had been learned for the future across the school estate.

The Corporate Director advised that Integrated Water Services (IWS) was the firm appointed to undertake the review. The scope of the review included selecting 12 school sites from the 29 schools sites in the Borough. The Corporate Director noted the schools as detailed in the report and referred the Executive to the key recommendations identified by IWS. The Review findings are shared in full as part of the appendices and nothing identified within the review demonstrated that the Council did anything to put the pupils and staff at risk. The Council accepted the criticism in the Review and an action plan have been produced.

The Executive Member for Environment added that although this matter was specific to schools it was an issue that related to all Council buildings. The review had been requested by the Executive Member and the findings are attached in its entirety in order for the Council to learn from the exercise.

The Education Transformation Manager concurred that the Council faced unprecedented times and challenges. The Council was compliant with the Approved Code of Practice L8 and had been monitoring maintenance and testing regimes throughout the emergency response period. The work undertaken was a good example of strong partnership working with issues responded to in a timely and effective manner. As result, the schools were well informed and supported with no illnesses resulting from the water quality issues in schools, and minimal disruption to our schools, all of whom were able to open to learners during the summer-term. All relevant officers worked tirelessly to address the water testing outcomes and will take on board the recommendations going forward.

The Executive Member for Education welcomed the opportunity to develop the processes in place. She concurred that the Council had been over cautious to ensure the safety of our pupils and school staff which demonstrated that their wellbeing was at the forefront of the Council.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development added that Blaenau Gwent was not unique in these findings. As an Authority we are in unprecedented times and were unaware that schools would be closed for such a long period of time. The work required was identified and carried out quickly with no safeguarding issues due to the health and safety issues. The schools were able to open as departments worked together for the benefit of our children.

The Leader reiterated that this Executive had asked for the review to be undertaken and it had been presented in an open and transparent nature. The Leader stated that in previous years this review would not have been presented, however it was important for everyone to have sight of the information and understand that the criticisms had been addressed by ensuring the appropriate processes was in place going forward. The Leader concurred that Blaenau Gwent was not unique in these matters but both politically and professionally it was felt that the Council needed to be transparent with this review.

In response a question raised in relation to discussions at the Special Community Services Scrutiny Committee, it was informed that the review caused a great deal of debate, however the report and action plan had been accepted with an additional recommendation raised for the Executive's consideration. It was proposed that the Action Plan detailed in Appendix 3 be applied across all Council buildings in respect of Health and Safety being a Corporate responsibility and the Policy be presented to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee to be considered accordingly prior to any changes being approved by full Council.

The Leader and the Executive welcomed the recommendation and it was agreed to be included in the recommendation.

RESOLVED accordingly.

The Leader wished to thank all officers involved in the water testing exercise and the safe reopening of schools. There was a great deal of work undertaken during that time and this seems to have been forgotten in some quarters. However, the Leader wished to pass thanks on behalf of the Executive on the work carried out as staff worked above and beyond the normal working day.

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing that the report be accepted and Option 2 be approved to implement appropriate review changes, particularly in light that Covid19 which was still prevalent within the Country, and localised lockdowns may result in school full or partial closures, which could result in further water quality issues.

MONITORING ITEMS - CORPORATE SERVICES

**No. 19 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING – 2020/2021
FORECAST OUTTURN TO 31ST MARCH, 2021
(AS AT 30TH JUNE, 2020)**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Chief Officer Resources advised that the report provided the forecast financial outturn position across all portfolios for the financial year 2020/2021 as forecast at 30th June 2020. The Chief Officer spoke to the report and gave a detailed of the forecast financial position to the end of March 2021 across all portfolios, the forecast outturn for Fees & Charges and the progress on the achievement of the Bridging the Gap Projects for 2020/2021.

The Chief Officer Resources also drew Member attention to the impact on the budget and outlined the funds received. The variances would be further revised at the end of Quarter 2 and would be more refined in line with the specific grants.

The Leader asked that a Cost Pressure Sub Group be arranged as soon as possible in order to discuss ongoing budget pressures. The Leader also asked that if monies in the transformation fund was to be used it be brought to politicians for agreement.

The Leader asked if there was any progress with WG agreeing that Covid related pressures could be capitalised. He stated that he continually raised it at the WLGA and asked that the Chief Officer Resources raise in treasury meetings. The Chief Officer Resources advised that there was no further information on this decision, however there had been some movement in the Scottish Government therefore she would continue to pursue.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and provided appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report. Consideration was given to the action plans attached at Appendix 4, developed to address the forecast adverse variances at the end of June 2020.

<p>No. 20</p>	<p><u>CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, FORECAST FOR 2020/2021 FINANCIAL YEAR (AS AT 30TH JUNE, 2020)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report be provided. • Continued to support appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council. • the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding be noted. 	
<p>No. 21</p>	<p><u>USE OF GENERAL AND EARMARKED RESERVES 2019/2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of general and earmarked reserves for 2019/2020 be noted. • The draft increase of the General Reserve in 2019/2020 to £6.348m, being 4.69% of net revenue expenditure (above the 4% target level) be noted. • the impact the £0.454m favourable variance for 2019/2020 would have on the General Reserve target; and • To continue to challenge budget overspends and implement appropriate service Action Plans, where required. • Maintenance of general reserves at an adequate level is crucial to the Council being able to meet future liabilities arising from risks for which specific provision has not been made. 	
<p>No. 22</p>	<p><u>SUPPORTING FINANCIAL RESILIENCE – AUDIT WALES FOLLOW UP REVIEW</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted in principle, subject to the report being submitted for further consideration to the December meeting of the Executive.</p>	

No. 23	<u>POSITION STATEMENT ON THE COUNCIL'S CCTV SYSTEM (APRIL TO AUGUST 2020)</u>	
	<p>Consideration was given to the joint report of the Chief Officer Resources, the Head of Community Services and the Head of Governance and Partnerships.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive considered the information provided in the position statement on the CCTV function during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	
	<u>MONITORING ITEM – ENVIRONMENT</u>	
No. 24	<u>WASTE AND RECYCLING PERFORMANCE 2019-20</u> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>The Executive Member welcomed the report and referred to the Welsh Local Authority comparison positions of 2018/19 to 2019/20 which had seen Blaenau Gwent raised in rank position to rank 11 from 19. She wished to thank the public and officers on this phenomenal improvement which was a great achievement compared to the position the Authority was in 3 years ago.</p> <p>The Leader concurred with the comments and advised that these improvements demonstrated the commitment this administration have in the important issues that matter to our communities. The Leader added that this Authority was moving in the right direction in all services provided.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	

MONITORING ITEMS – EDUCATION

No. 25 **BLAENAU GWENT EDUCATION SERVICES**
DRAFT SELF-EVALUATION FINDINGS

Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Corporate Director Education.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted in principle, subject to the report being submitted for further consideration to the December meeting of the Executive.

MONITORING ITEMS – SOCIAL SERVICES

No. 26 **SOCIAL SERVICES RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Social Services.

The Executive Member for Social Services wished to thank all officers in of Social Services on their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pressures faced by staff have been challenging, however Teams have continued to provide an outstanding service.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and information contained therein be noted.

No. 27 **SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR**
SOCIAL SERVICES – 1ST APRIL, 2019 TO 31ST MARCH, 2020

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Social Services.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and information contained therein be noted.