

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council



Leisure and Culture Strategy 2019 - 2029

*'Building on our proud heritage and strong communities to enhance the lives of residents for a brighter future'*

## Foreword

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PICTURE  
OF  
LEADER

PICTURE  
OF  
LEISURE /  
CULTURE  
OFFICER

TO BE INSERTED AT IN FINAL STRATEGY DOCUMENT

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

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The Leisure and Culture Strategy is the first combined strategy for culture, leisure and physical and mental wellbeing in Blaenau Gwent. It replaces the previous Sport and Active Living Strategy 2014 and sits alongside other Council strategy documents that include the Corporate Plan, the Health and Wellbeing Plan 2018 -2023, a Strategy for the Future Direction of the Arts Service in Blaenau Gwent and the Leisure Library Strategy 2018.

The Leisure and Culture Strategy will set out the direction for our five core community services:



The Strategy aims to deliver a range of sustainable cultural, sporting and wellbeing activities across the five core services within the local community over the next ten years, by establishing an overarching ambition and performance outcomes for the service delivery within Blaenau Gwent.

The ambition is to be realised through a series of long-term objectives over the next ten years, with key priorities for action and delivery within the next five (5) years which will be monitored closely and reviewed annually. The strategy is intended as a high-level document to identify strategic and overarching issues; however, it also

provides an Action Programme of key areas of work to be delivered, identifying those organisations or person(s) responsible for ensuring that this work is undertaken.

The Strategy will be implemented and monitored to ensure that the key ambitions, objectives and actions are delivered. The strategy pulls together national and local priorities across a range of areas that shape culture, leisure and physical activity, to produce a co-ordinated approach to the service provision.

The Strategy is an important way forward in the delivery of service developments within Leisure and Culture provision, which will have longer term benefits for our residents and visitors.

The Strategy will enable Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to achieve value for money at a time when finances become more limited; though the needs, expectations and aspirations of our community members and partners are increasing. We believe this strategy sets clear ambitions for strong, sustainable and joined-up service provision which has no end. At its core is a staged approach on a long-term collaborative journey with committed partners, to allocate resources and targeted development work to ensure a sustainable future for lifelong participation in Sport, Culture and Physical Activity.

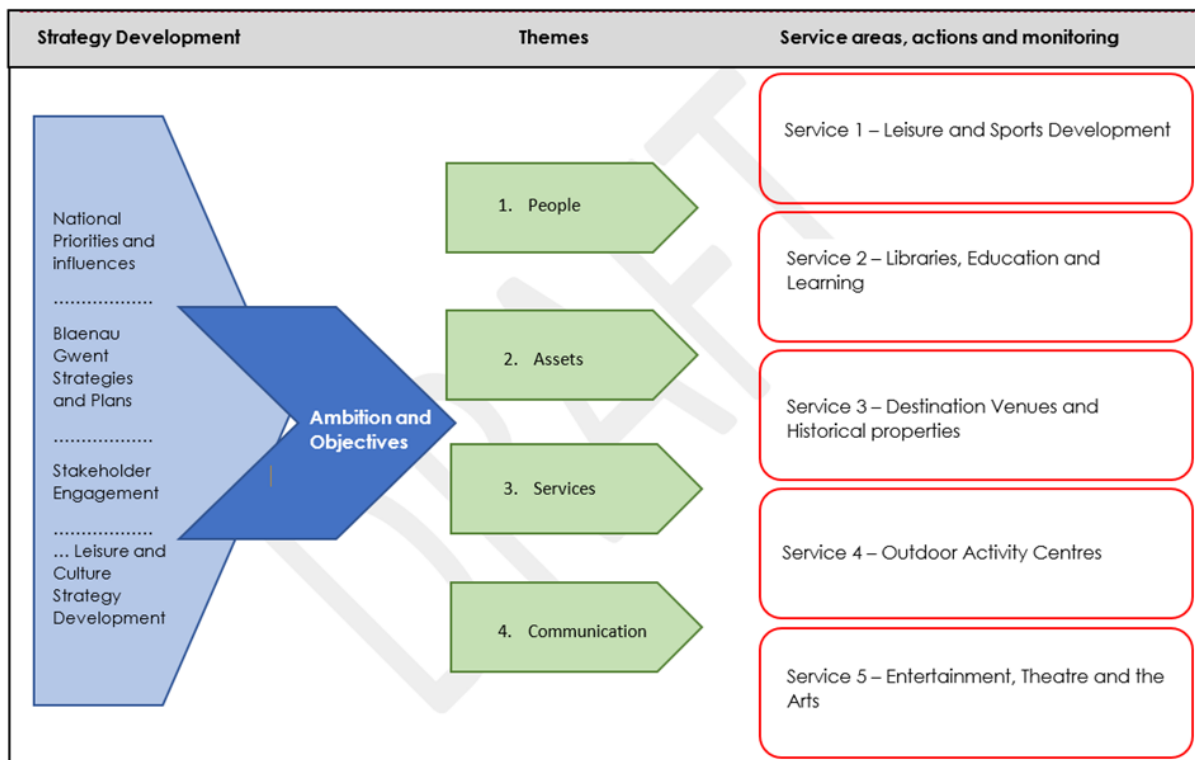
Any organisation may contribute towards achieving the ambitions and objectives set out in this strategy and are encouraged to utilise the strategy for their own businesses, organisations and societies so that together we may all build on our proud heritage and strong communities to enhance the lives of residents in Blaenau Gwent for a brighter future.

## STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

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This strategy has been developed in the context of national priorities and influences set against our local strategies and plans.

We have undertaken stakeholder engagement to help inform our priorities over the period of this strategy focussing on four key themes of 'People', 'Assets', 'Services' and 'Communication' which are applied to each of our five service areas to identify innovative service developments and investments to meet the expectations of our residents over the next ten years.



## WHERE WE ARE NOW

There are many strategies, policies and existing plans that impact on the Leisure and Culture Strategy. This strategy will aim to acknowledge these and map out the inter relationships between such plans and strategy documents and how these will impact on the delivery of the leisure and culture strategy to ensure it provides a meaningful impact.

### Blaenau Gwent as a place

Blaenau Gwent is a place of heritage and dramatic change, with a sense of its past but its eyes firmly on the future. It is relatively small geographically, being at most 15 miles north to south, and 8 miles east to west. It is defined physically by high hillsides dividing the three main valleys. These valleys are home to towns and villages which seem to merge together into one. However, each community proudly maintains its own character and traditions.

Although the towns give the county borough a busy, urban feel, Blaenau Gwent is actually a largely rural area. Wherever you are, beautiful countryside is never far away.

In the last 20 years the people of Blaenau Gwent have faced challenges including the closure of coal mines in the 1980s and the closure of Ebbw Vale Steelworks in 2002, leading to huge job losses.

This is highlighted by a 5% reduction in the population between 1991 and 2011 which is in contrast to Wales overall which has seen a 4% increase. Currently, 49% of Blaenau Gwent working residents commute outside the borough to work and commuting distances have increased.

This period has however also seen significant structural and environment improvement, following major levels of capital investment, and the greening of our valleys as nature recovers from the long-term scarring caused through our historical industries. To reduce the effect of pit and steelwork closures, significant effort has been geared to re-focusing towards the manufacturing and services industry, which now makes up a significant part of the local economy.

The Blaenau Gwent Well-being Assessment, published in May 2017, provides a more detailed picture of local well-being.

## Local Context

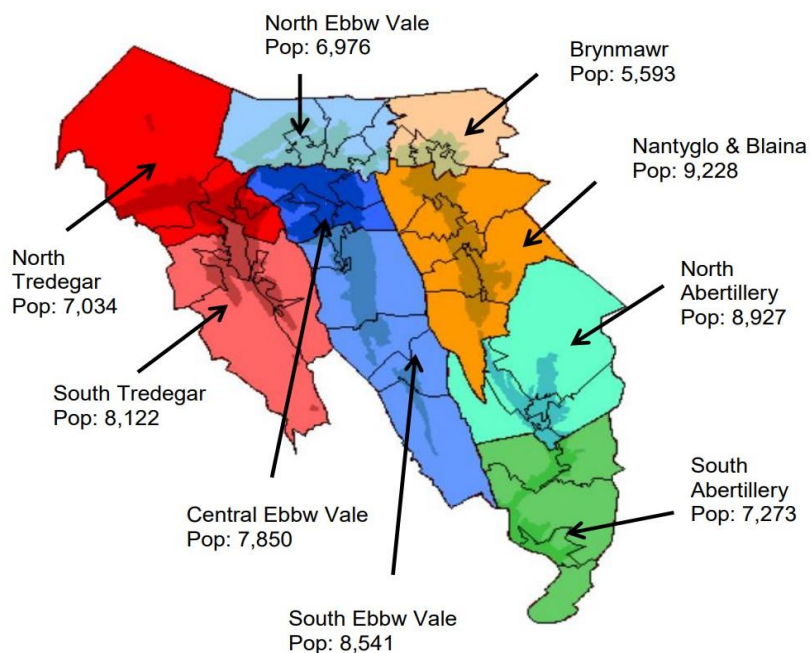
Blaenau Gwent facts and figures and key considerations

Some of the key facts to be considered in future planning and delivery of leisure opportunities are captured below:

- In 2015, the population of Blaenau Gwent was 69,544. This makes the area one of the smallest local authority areas in Wales.
- The population of the area is falling; however, the rate of decline is more stable than at any point since 1921 (when the population was over 125,000).
- The population is expected to continue to fall with a 1.2% decrease in the next 10 years.
- The population density in Blaenau Gwent was 638 people per square kilometre, compared with 149 per square kilometre for Wales as a whole.
- Analysis shows that many parts of the area have density levels similar to city areas. Blaenau Gwent, like the majority of places in the UK, has an overall population which is ageing.
- Generally, this is because less people are being born and those people that are alive are living longer.
- 28% of all people who live within Blaenau Gwent stated they had a limiting long-term health problem or illnesses, where day-to-day activities were limited. This was higher than Wales overall (23%) and was the 2nd highest level in Wales (behind Neath Port Talbot with 29%).
- The Blaenau Gwent's Black and Ethnic Minority population in 2011 was just under 1,900 which is 1.5% of the population. However, the number had increased from 1,300 in 2001. This gives the area one of the lowest levels of people from black and minority ethnic groups in Wales.

- Just over 41% of the Blaenau Gwent population stated they have no religion, which is above the Welsh average of 37%. This is a notable increase compared to 2001, with respective levels of 25% and 19%.
- Blaenau Gwent is the area in Wales with the highest percentage of small areas in the most deprived 10% (23.4%).
- There are 233 looked after children and 89 children on the Child Protection Register in Blaenau Gwent.
- 40% of adults across Blaenau Gwent reported drinking above the guidelines on at least one day in the past week, including 25% who reported drinking more than twice the daily guidelines (sometimes termed binge drinking) - this is broadly comparable with data across Wales.

There are four neighbourhood areas which align to our valleys, towns and neighbourhoods. The map below summarises the four areas, with Sirhowy coloured red, Ebbw Fawr coloured blue, Upper Ebbw Fach coloured orange and Lower Ebbw Fach coloured green.



- Obesity levels are increasing in Wales. Leisure has an important role to play in combating this but services and programmes will need to link with a range of health led initiatives and be targeted appropriately.
- Health and Wellbeing is a key focal area for current leisure services. Sport, physical activity and other forms of leisure clearly have a role to play in improving the health and wellbeing of Blaenau Gwent's residents. The "Active Wales" Physical Activity Action Plan identifies the need to develop strong local, formal and informal partnerships, target young people, focus on reducing the number of sedentary adults and increase the frequency of



participation as key areas for local action. These priorities are reflected in our plan.

- The National Vision for Sport highlights the importance of 'hooking' children on sport. It also identifies the need for strengthening partnership working and developing sustainable opportunities within the community. These objectives are reflected in our strategy.
- Economic Development and Tourism – developing and growing tourism is critical for the region and leisure makes a significant contribution. It is estimated that tourism generates £XX for the South Wales Valley's economy and supports an estimated xx jobs in the region. Ensuring the leisure offer remains 'fresh' and appealing is a key priority. 'Turning the Tide - Visitor Economy Strategy', recognises XXXX. This in turn will contribute towards a more sustainable economy. [Awaiting information]
- Educational Attainment and Employment – the latest figures from Sport Wales show that sport alone provides more than 23,000 jobs in Wales (an increase of almost 20% from the previous survey). Sport and leisure can provide opportunities to acquire key life skills, which can contribute to increased educational attainment or development of softer skills, such as confidence which can be key to enhancing employment prospects.
- Social and Community Development and Cohesion – Sport Wales acknowledges the potential of sport to enhance social capital – 23% of all voluntary, community and not-for-profit organisations are sport and recreation bodies. Involvement in leisure can also provide a 'feel good' factor, civic pride and for many can represent the only form of 'community engagement' that they experience.

## Future Challenges

While we believe the future is positive, it is not without its challenges. Increased health issues place increased financial pressure on the local health services alongside an ageing population. With many residents working outside of the Borough the local economy is under threat and requires continual injection of support to maintain the status quo. This also presents us with the opportunity of becoming an affordable place to live and commute. With the small population within Blaenau Gwent it is incumbent on every service provider to appeal to wider audiences from neighbouring authorities through to tourists attracted to the area. With its wealth of cultural history, the development of the tourism product will be a key focus for the Council over the next 10 years.

## Current service and operating environment

Since 2014 the Leisure and Culture services have been operated by an outsourced Leisure Trust on behalf of the Council. This includes most of our major leisure and cultural assets; the sports centres at Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, and Abertillery; libraries at Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, Cwm, Brynmawr, Blaina and Abertillery; learning action centres at Ebbw Vale and Brynmawr; Bedwellty House, Parc Bryn Bach, and the Metropole in Abertillery.

Despite the critical importance of all these leisure and cultural services and facilities provided by the Council to the health of local people the statutory obligations generally only relate to the provision of library services and learning services, and therefore, places increasing pressure on the Council to find new and innovative ways to provide services in the future.

Importantly, as part of the new strategy, the Council have undertaken a review of the Trust's performance over the first five years of their operation to ensure that arrangements have the best possible chance of success over the next ten years.

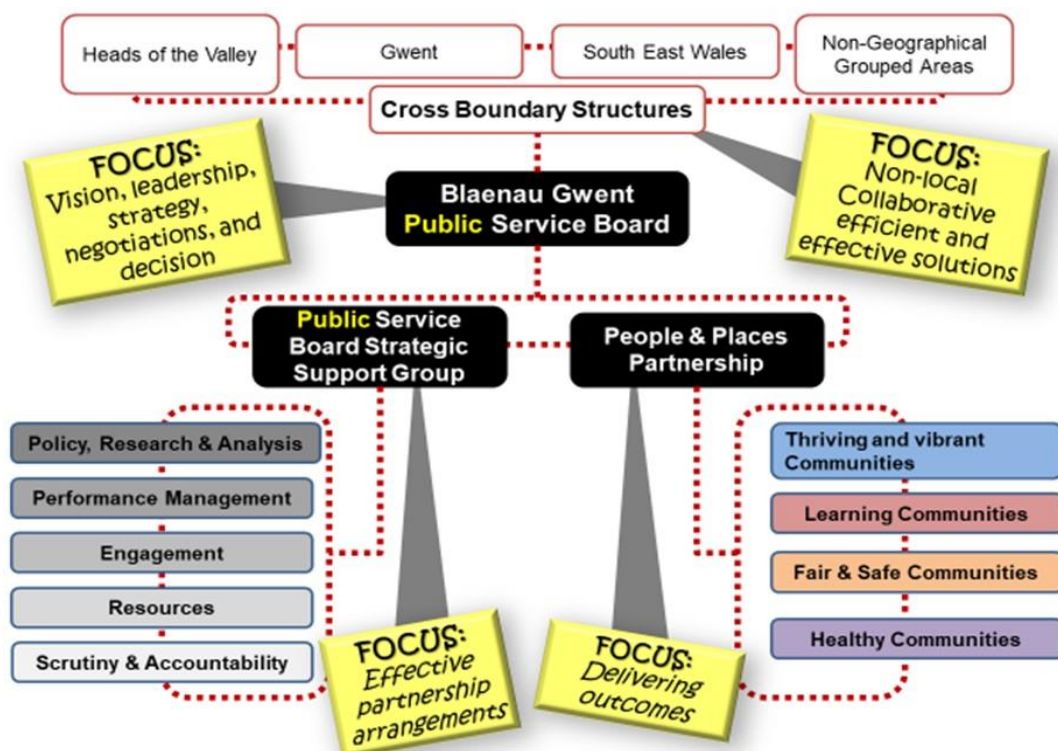
The Council recognises that it faces some significant challenges in terms of its current building assets, with ageing stock and infrastructure investment required, and ensuring that future investments are evidence based and clearly support key objectives in maximising the benefit for local people.

The Council also recognise that in order to have a strong influence on activity levels, and therefore, health and wellbeing of residents, further partnership working and a collaborative approach is required.

This is set in the context of ensuring that services remain accessible to all parts of the community, with targeted interventions in the most deprived areas.

## Partnerships

The Council will focus during the period of this strategy on working with existing partners and facilitating effective new partnerships to provide the greatest impact increasing participation for all continuing to improve outcomes through our strategic partnership's framework.



## Commercial approaches-external funding partners encouraging innovation

Given the limited financial resources available to the Council we will be seeking out development partners, neighbouring authority links and external funding partners to assist with longer term investments within the Blaenau Gwent area, so that community assets may continue to be developed and maintained for the next 10 years and beyond. Commercial developments will become the priority for the longer-term sustainability of the service, regardless of the organisation that operates these services.

## Delivering wider social, education and economic objectives

The importance of leisure in meeting the wider objectives of the council should not be under-estimated. A vibrant leisure offer is important to meet wider health, social, wellbeing, economic and educational priorities. This is reflected in the recent broadening of the scope and remit of the Leisure, Libraries and Culture Service to ensure that planning and delivery contributes to wider council targets. The re-shaped service should include outreach work programmes to target disengaged members of the community. This may include the use of leisure to support young people's personal and social development, empowerment and access to information and resources that will enable them to move from dependants to independent, as well as supporting and reintegrating socially isolated older members of the community.

## Key messages from some of our partners:

We consulted and engaged with a number of key local stakeholders and partner organisations in developing this strategy:

- A number of partners said that they would like to work more closely with the council, to have more formal partnership arrangements in place, including meeting and reporting mechanisms.
- Partners highlighted the potential for future joint working and collaboration on projects as part of a multi-agency approach to delivering services in the future.
- The importance of volunteering was mentioned by a number of partners; with some organisations able to offer training and support for staff and volunteers and some suggesting the idea of reward programme to encourage volunteers.
- Partners would be keen to integrate health and community facilities into new developments in the future to achieve good health and well-being outcomes. (housing, arts)
- Partners mentioned the value of invest to save projects so that capital ideas could be progressed and implemented. Strong internal processes will be needed to support contract management.

- Marketing, social media presence and communications systems such as online bookings and databases were mentioned by a number of partners, and some are keen to work together to improve marketing.
- The possibility of sharing of some other central resources such as HR and IT were also mentioned by some partners.
- Partners are keen to mentor young people into employment and training.
- The housing company is concerned with the fitness and health of young people.
- Partners wish to keep their staff fit and healthy and the housing company is concerned with the health and well-being of tenants and keeping people safe in their homes for longer is a priority
- The cost of taking part in leisure is an issue for the client groups of some partners
- There is a need for more safe outdoor play areas - particularly in relation to social housing - and the housing company would be keen to create more community gardens and play areas on the outdoor spaces on their existing developments (funding would be needed).
- There is a need to review dual use arrangements with schools, which aren't felt to work very well, and more dialogue with the headteachers forum is important.
- There is a need to rationalise or reconfigure the library service to make it more sustainable. A strong volunteer base will be needed, and friends' groups should be explored.
- Some partners would like to explore partnering with other cultural trusts in order to deliver joint programming and gain economies of scale and strategic alliances.
- Partners were keen that asset maintenance should be better planned in the future.
- Partners were keen to work together to plan and aspire for the future, and not let past performance be an inhibitor to future achievements.

We are very grateful to all our partner organisations who contributed to the development of the strategy and look forward to working together to deliver the strategy over the next ten years.

## OUR AMBITION AND PRIORITIES

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### Our Ambition

Our ambition for the Leisure and Culture Strategy is to set out the council and its partners' aspirations, direction and priorities for leisure and culture over the next ten years, with a focus on deliverable priorities over the next five-year period.

It is intended to develop the leisure and culture offer already available to residents and visitors across the borough, to increase the number of people engaged in the range of services and involved in the delivery of leisure and culture opportunities, and to increase the profile and importance of leisure and culture participation for all members of the community.

'By 2024 Blaenau Gwent aims to have established a strong reputation for collaborative working across a range of quality service delivery models, that provide accessible leisure opportunities attracting high levels of participation to improve the happiness, mental health and physical wellbeing of residents and visitors alike'

### Our Priorities



1. Increasing participation for all



2. Improving physical and mental health and well-being



3. Developing effective collaboration with partners



4. Maintaining and building upon the existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities

## **1. Increasing participation for all**

By increasing participation rates in our leisure and culture services for all demographic groups, encouraging known groups with lower than average rates of participation, we will support growth and efficiency in an inclusive and sustainable manner, whilst at the same time reducing inequality and disadvantage.

We recognise that this will require some inward investment into the asset infrastructure, to provide an opportunity for increased usage and better maintenance of assets, to improve the financial performance that will support and offset those statutory services that inevitably are cost based only and less able to contribute to income targets.

## **2. Improving physical and mental health and well-being**

We know from national research how important physical and mental health is ensure we live full and active lives. An active body and mind can often add years to people's lives.

By supporting initiatives from existing and future partners we can collectively help to increase activity levels across Blaenau Gwent and help in the prevention and management of many conditions and diseases including coronary heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and the growing issue of childhood obesity.

People can engage with leisure and culture in many different ways at every stage of their lives; and each encounter can have a positive impact upon health and wellbeing.

## **3. Developing effective collaboration with partners**

Over the next five years we will continue to focus on more effective ways to deliver our services working, not just with the existing service providers, but with new people, organisations and local investors who can add benefit to the development of the local services and facilities for the enjoyment of all residents of Blaenau Gwent, along with visitors attracted the area.

Regular interaction between partners is essential to help ensure success however the Council does wish to retain influence over council led services, to ensure a consistency of approach, quality assurance and to facilitate the transparency of delivery that is fundamental to the success of the strategy.

We recognise the need to support and help to develop a network of volunteers and staff involved in delivering culture and leisure in Blaenau Gwent, and to help all individuals develop their talent, skills and confidence.

## 4. Maintaining and building upon the existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities

We live in a very challenging financial climate and working together is vital in maintaining existing provision in the most efficient manner. It is imperative therefore that the leisure and culture services become even more customer and business focussed over the period of this strategy to ensure that the commercial performance can be sustained long term and ultimately without any (or with significantly reduced) service subsidy from the Council.

There is much success to build upon following investment in leisure and culture in the past and we are committed to exploring further investment opportunities in our services in the future.

### Delivery Themes

To deliver this vision we aspire to identify what we want, how we will get there and who will be involved. This has been captured within four overlapping themes across each service area as follows:



## Key Objectives

Whilst the strategy covers a ten year period from 2019 to 2029, over the first five years we plan to:

- Develop a financial sustainability plan for Leisure Services, in line with the requirements of the Council's medium-term financial strategy (MTFS);
- Explore invest to save initiatives to reduce revenue implications across our leisure and culture services;
- Review delivery options for Leisure and Culture Services;
- Initiate a fundamental review to modernise community library and learning provision;
- Undertake a review of future options for Sports Centres, particularly Tredegar Sports Centre;
- Secure investment in sports and cultural facilities e.g. the 21st Century Schools Programme;
- Transfer responsibilities for sports grounds to local sports clubs ;



## DELIVERY

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The Council already adopts a mixed model of delivery – directly delivering some services while for others Alternative Delivery Models have been established. For example, traditional Leisure, Culture and Learning Services are now delivered across Blaenau Gwent by a Charitable Trust limited by guarantee. The amount of services the Council directly delivers may decrease further depending on the future financial position. In time, the Council may act as a commissioner of services ensuring that they are responsive to local needs, centred around the person and community based. It will also look to become a more commercial organisation which generates income and delivers cost reductions. This in turn will help to make local services more sustainable and raise money to re-invest in our priorities.

In some instances, it might be appropriate for the Council to move into more of an enabling role supporting community groups and social enterprises to gain the skills and competencies to be able to retain and deliver services locally themselves (i.e. Community Asset Transfers). The council will also look to deliver services in collaboration with other councils in the future. There will also be a role for the Council in developing a renewed sense of place in the area and building pride in the borough, which could involve influencing and supporting partner organisations to work to common goals to meet the needs and aspirations of the community. The Council's role over time may be less about doing things to and for residents and communities and more about creating the capacity, interest, expertise and enthusiasm for individuals and communities to do things for themselves.

## MONITORING

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It is important that people can see what progress the Council is making against the priorities outlined in this Strategy and hold us properly to account.

We recognise that to maintain and improve opportunities for local residents, it is important to monitor our performance and manage the overall delivery of the key actions.

To monitor performance, a set of specific indicators will be developed. The indicators and targets will need to be agreed with key partners and set in accordance with some of the additional research planned (mapping and auditing), ensuring targets take account of baseline (current position) and ensuring they can be realistically achieved.

Also, it is vital that those employed within these services understand how their contribution to achieving our shared priorities is valued and the positive impact they can have on people's lives through the effective and efficient delivery of services.

It is essential that during the next ten years service providers demonstrate a range of good practice outcomes to future generations set alongside the strategy objectives. We need to be pushing the boundaries of the possible each year and enhancing

the collaborations that take place locally to enhance lives and support community cohesion and wellbeing.

Moving forwards we will also introduce measurements demonstrating the impact of leisure and culture on the socio-economic lifestyles of the local community.

## RISK

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There are some significant risks associated with delivery of the leisure and culture strategy which will be regularly updated and reviewed:

- Impact on culture – cuts are affecting non-statutory services such as culture and leisure facilities;
- Competition from other local leisure and culture destinations;
- Consequences of the economic challenge facing future generations;
- Impact on income - poverty in Wales is higher than UK average;
- Impact on affordability of services;
- Impact on health - people who experience poverty or who live in deprived areas have fewer years of life free from illness or disability;
- Impact on children – children in low-income households have poorer mental and physical health;
- Growing skills gap – there is likely to be an increase in the skills gap as professional and managerial jobs grow and semi and unskilled jobs reduce;

## CONSULTATION

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In accordance with the Future Generations Act, following the completion of the draft strategy a wider consultation process will take place for feedback and final collaboration on the completion of the leisure and culture strategy. This consultation process will include a number of strategic partners alongside local community users and groups that are involved in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the strategy. Once this consultation is completed the final strategy will be put forward for approval by the Council Executive and Scrutiny Committees.

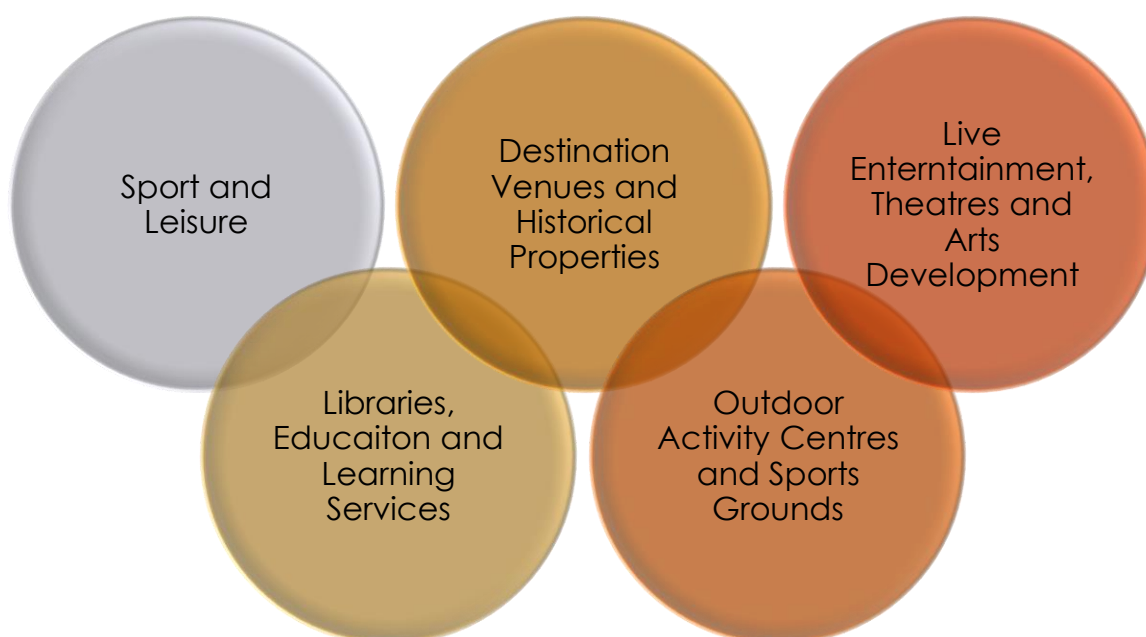
We welcome any feedback you might have about the Leisure and Culture Strategy 2019 - 2029. If there is any information you think could be considered for, or if you require this document in a different format e.g. large print, Braille, audio version, etc please contact us using the information below.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

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The Leisure and Culture Strategy is the first combined strategy for culture, leisure and physical and mental wellbeing in Blaenau Gwent. It replaces the previous Sport and Active Living Strategy 2014 and sits alongside other Council strategy documents that include the Corporate Plan, the Health and Wellbeing Plan 2018 -2023, a Strategy for the Future Direction of the Arts Service in Blaenau Gwent and the Leisure Library Strategy 2018.

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Any organisation may contribute towards achieving the ambitions and objectives set out in this strategy and are encouraged to utilise the strategy for their own businesses, organisations and societies so that together we may all build on our proud heritage and strong communities to enhance the lives of residents in Blaenau Gwent for a brighter future.

The strategy has been developed by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in conjunction with FMG Consulting and alongside key partners that include:

- Aneurin Leisure Trust
- Arts Wales
- Museums Archives and Libraries Division (MALD)
- CADW – Welsh Government
- Disability Sport Wales
- The Future Generations Commission
- Sport Wales
- UKactive
- Tai Calon Housing Trust
- The Local Health Board - Aneurin Primary Health Care Trust
- Local education providers, particularly schools.

### 3. WHERE WE ARE NOW

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There are many strategies, policies and existing plans that impact on the Leisure and Culture Strategy. This strategy will aim to acknowledge these and map out the inter relationships between such plans and strategy documents and how these will impact on the delivery of the leisure and culture strategy to ensure it provides a meaningful impact.

#### Blaenau Gwent as a place

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Although the towns give the county borough a busy, urban feel, Blaenau Gwent is actually a largely rural area. Wherever you are, beautiful countryside is never far away.

#### A short history

Before the early 1800s, the area that is now Blaenau Gwent was a quiet, rural area dominated by tiny villages and farmland. Welsh was the only language, and English was little understood.

The start of the industrial revolution sparked transformational change as people looked to take advantage of the plentiful supply of resources that could be found. In the first instance this took the form of ironworks, quickly followed by coal mining and steel making.

As the industries grew, so did the demand for labour and the population of Blaenau Gwent grew remarkably. Between the early 19th and early 20th century the population rose from around 1,200 to well over 120,000.

As our communities thrived, so did the need for services required to deal with this social and cultural explosion, examples being education, health, shops and leisure opportunities. This led to the growth of a network of communities and neighbourhoods, which make up the villages and towns that we know today.

The strong commitment to social justice and a solid work ethic in Blaenau Gwent is demonstrated by campaigns for improvements in standards of living. Examples of this include the first ever board of health which marks Blaenau Gwent as the birthplace of the NHS, campaigns for electoral reform, abolition of company-run shops, and reductions in working hours, many of which still influence the way people live their lives today. The community spirit is a legacy of these achievements and will feature heavily within the Strategy.

## Present day Blaenau Gwent

The period from the late 1980s saw the formation of Blaenau Gwent as it is known today. In 1996 it changed from a district of Gwent County to a county borough council, following local government reorganisation.

In the last 20 years the people of Blaenau Gwent have faced challenges including the closure of coal mines in the 1980s and the closure of Ebbw Vale Steelworks in 2002, leading to huge job losses.

This is highlighted by a 5% reduction in the population between 1991 and 2011 which is in contrast to Wales overall which has seen a 4% increase. Currently, 49% of Blaenau Gwent working residents commute outside the borough to work and commuting distances have increased. We cannot underestimate the effect of these issues. Even so, in the last 20 years the area has seen significant structural and environment improvement, following major levels of capital investment, and the greening of our valleys as nature recovers from the long-term scarring caused through our historical industries. To reduce the effect of pit and steelwork closures, significant effort has been geared to re-focusing towards the manufacturing and services industry, which now makes up a significant part of the local economy.

The Blaenau Gwent Well-being Assessment, published in May 2017, provides a more detailed picture of local well-being<sup>1</sup>.

## National Context

The Leisure and Culture Strategy has been developed at a time of significant financial constraint for Blaenau Gwent Council and change within the public sector. Financial austerity has been a feature of the UK Government's agenda for a number of years and as a result we continue to face cuts to the budget received from Central Government.

By the end of the decade the budget will have been cut in real terms by 7% since 2010 resulting in £1.2bn less to spend on vital public services in Wales. For Blaenau Gwent this has meant Welsh Government funding has remained static since 2010/11, which equates to a real term reduction of £7m. As a result, tough decisions need to be made on priorities for spending, ensuring vital services are maintained for the most vulnerable in our communities.

There may be a secondary financial impact with the UK's decision to leave the European Union with the loss of European Funding from Blaenau Gwent in future years making the financial horizon increasingly challenging.

Local government needs to be equipped with the powers, capability and capacity to address the challenges we all face and deliver the public services our citizens need, ensuring public money is used efficiently and effectively. Regional collaboration is critical to local government and in the future we will undoubtedly see increased levels of regional working. Other strategic collaborations include

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<sup>1</sup> Opener to 2.3 is an extract from the Wellbeing Plan 2018

areas like Health, Education and Social Services which remain important in our efforts to improve well-being<sup>2</sup>.

We have a rich heritage in this area and our buildings and countryside are part of Blaenau Gwent's attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit. Our local environment should be used to help improve the health and wellbeing of our families and communities and be enhanced for future generations to continue to enjoy. There is also a real desire to see the communities where people live kept clean, tidy and useable, creating areas that people can be proud of.

The Council are determined to improve the economic outlook for Blaenau Gwent as good quality, well paid employment is a key factor for people to live healthier and happier lives. We are seeking to improve the health and wellbeing of residents through the delivery of effective leisure, culture, historical and tourism services in the area, integrating collaborative working and cross utilisation of facilities by residents and visitors to the area with improved market engagement strategies, better marketing and communications, a transparent approach to service delivery and an open reporting mechanism that will provide confidence to partners and stakeholders.

This strategy has been developed through extensive consultation with both regional and local groups, organisations and service users to establish the priorities for the next ten years.

## UKactive - The inactivity crisis

In 2014 leisure industry leaders UKactive released the 'Turning the Tide on Inactivity' Report that created a catalyst for change within the UK. The UKactive research institute provided evidence that physical inactivity accounts for nearly 1/5 of premature deaths in the UK, with projections showing that inactivity levels are due to increase by a further 15% by 2030.

The report also found that inactivity levels were ten per cent higher in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived. At the time Local authorities were spending on average less than 3% of annual public health budgets on physical inactivity interventions.

Physical inactivity represents 10% of total societal costs when compared against other top-tier public health concerns including sexual health, smoking, obesity and drug and alcohol misuse. On average, it is costing the economy in each local authority £18 million per 100,000 people every year. It was calculated that if every local authority was able to reduce inactivity levels by one per cent year on year over a five-year period they would save local taxpayers £44 per household. More importantly, they would improve the health and wellbeing of the local community<sup>3</sup>.

This report secured Government and industry support and provided a new focus for leisure providers and local authorities, as the burden of inactivity is placing increased

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<sup>2</sup> Extract from the Blaenau Gwent Corporate Plan 2018-2023 message from the Leader, cut down to one page

<sup>3</sup> Extract from UKactive turning the tide on inactivity report

pressure on already strained resources and is unsustainable. Several local authorities have acknowledged this already and are championing collaborations between their leisure, open spaces and public health teams to promote active lifestyles.

Urgent action is required to get more people, more active, more often. This includes taking an innovative and alternative approach to activity delivery to include simple lifestyle changes such as walking and cycling as adopted modes of transport, for children to become physically literate from the earliest possible age, and for an industrial scale shift across society to embed physical activity into people's daily lives and routines.

The leisure and Culture strategy is written against this prevalent backdrop that recognises the positive impact physical activity and leisure engagement has on physical and mental health and wellbeing.

## The Wellbeing for Future Generations (Wales)

The Wellbeing for Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 challenges public bodies to make:

“Transformational Change to the way they do their business”, with “decisions that focus on the long-term implications of their actions”. Its vision is “to help create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future”.

The context of the act in this strategy is ensure the sport and leisure facilities landscape is fit for the well-being of future generations - modern, inclusive, attractive, accessible and efficient; meeting local needs; raising levels of participation in sport and physical activity and contributing to greater success on the international stage.

A future infrastructure where there is a collective responsibility and approach to provide appropriate opportunities - shared by a wide range of organisations involved in the planning, provision and management of sports and leisure facilities (Voluntary and Private Sectors, Schools, Colleges and Universities, alongside Local Government and other public-sector bodies).

The act and stakeholder feedback focussed on embedding the **‘5 ways of working’** in any future strategy or approach taken by the local authority or service delivery partner as a means to success in meeting the Act. The 5 ways of working are:

### 1. Long-term

The importance of balancing short-term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs

### 2. Integration

Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies

### 3. Involvement

The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves



#### 4. Collaboration

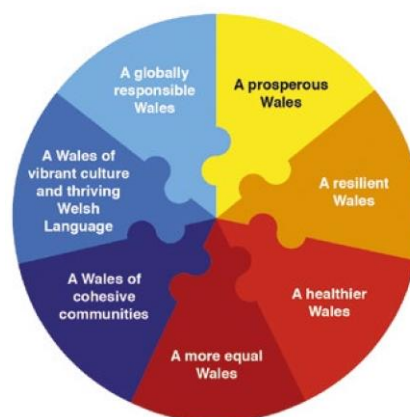
Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives

#### 5. Prevention

How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives

These should be considered alongside how best to maximise the **7 wellbeing goals** that have been set out as:

1. A Prosperous wales
2. A Resilient wales
3. A Healthier wales
4. A more equal wales
5. A Wales of cohesive communities
6. A wales of vibrant culture and welsh language
7. A globally responsible wales



The essence of the act seeks to encourage collaboration and to tackle some of the key issues surrounding wales over the coming years which include infrastructure and people – personal developments, skills for the future, volunteer skills development, energy management, climate change, health and wellbeing, tackling social loneliness and isolation, community housing and social prescribing.

There already exists a Memorandum of Understanding between the public health board and sports/arts council to work collaboratively to tackle inactivity, social isolation, mental health and wellbeing issues, with positive results being recorded from this work. This approach needs to be widened to maximise the impact across the County Borough.

Collaborative working already exists within arts and leisure for Blaenau Gwent with the **Active Gwent Board** that includes neighbouring authorities in Caerphilly, Newport, Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire and Torfaen working together to deliver the local plan for sport 2018-2019, alongside the 'Art is a Possible' discrete project through the Arts Council.

It is critical to future proof the services against the unknown that may occur in the future, such as the removal of the steelworks which had a significant impact on the local community – what risks exist locally that the leisure and culture strategy need to mitigate against.

## Sport Wales

The vision for Sport in Wales is to **'unite a proud sporting nation, where every child is hooked on sport for life** and Wales is a **nation of champions**.

This vision is supported by clearly defined priorities.

**1. Sporting innovation:** Wales has a sports sector that embraces collaboration, encouraging new ways of delivering opportunities to increase participation and improve elite performance.

**2. Skills for life in sport:** Every child and young person is provided with the skills and confidence from an early age to be physically literate through high quality, engaging sporting experiences.

**3. Sporting communities:** We have communities with sport at the heart of them, offering joined up opportunities for every child and young person to undertake at least five hours of safe, high quality sport every week and sustaining their engagement throughout their adult life.

**4. Sporting Excellence:** We are a nation that excels in nurturing sporting talent and delivers ongoing success on the international stage.

**5. Growing a Skilled and Passionate workforce:** All those involved in sport, whether in a professional or voluntary capacity, are supported to pass on their skills and passion for sport to the people of Wales.

The aim of this strategy is to shape what this vision will mean for sport and leisure services in Blaenau Gwent and how we will align our approach to that of the national vision. We will need to evidence current performance and set out how we will contribute to this vision in our strategy.

The Sport Wales corporate strategy sets out a new regional way of working which will change the way we engage with Sport Wales and encourage greater collaboration between regional partners. The first Regional structure will be adopted early in North Wales, with Gwent lined up to be the next region. During the next 10 years this new structure will provide new opportunities for joint working on a regional level and will encourage greater collaboration of shared good practice to positively impact on outcomes across leisure, health and communities. The regional structures will have a flexible delivery plan to enable better local decision-making powers and bespoke outcomes prescribed for region.

Sport Wales recognise that Gwent is already successfully working on a regional basis with the 5 Authorities combined to deliver the Active Gwent Board which offers a good standard of reporting outcomes. For a small authority there is good work being delivered including the street games and a strong young ambassador programme at Aneurin Leisure.

There is an 'active and healthy' action plan in development which sets out prosperity for all.

A new sport wales strategy is being launched in April 2019.

Sport Wales community strategy sets out:

**'An active, healthy and inclusive Wales, where sport, physical activity and active recreation provide a common platform for participation, fun and achievement, which binds communities and the nation and where the**

**outstanding environment of Wales is used sustainably to enhance confidence in ourselves.<sup>14</sup>**

The strategy has been developed to set out clear priorities and focus energy to enable a dramatic shift in the range and number of people involved in sport.

Amongst other outcomes that are set out in the strategy, an ideal sporting community would include;

- Schools which embrace sport's power to positively improve a pupil's wellbeing, ability to learn, grow and develop as young adults;
- Modernised offers, such as short, sharp variations of sports; responding to growing time pressures and lifestyle choices of the Welsh population
- A broad range of quality providers, collaborating effectively to maximise investments for sports participation and minimise wasteful duplication.
- A confident embrace of technology, marketing and PR approaches as a means of attracting participants and recruiting the workforce;
- A diverse, passionate and skilled workforce; paid and voluntary, to encourage, inspire and support participants

Investing in thriving clubs, where quality, varied and sustainable provision becomes the norm, has to be a key focus for Sport Wales, where notable successes has been delivered in this area.

There are five key priority areas for community sports. These are:

- Local decisions – creating opportunities by meeting local demand
- Quality Education – creating opportunities by developing skills, enjoyment and confidence
- Committed workforce – creating opportunities by attracting and investing in the right people, in the right places
- Appropriate facilities – creating opportunities through providing inspirational environments and programming

One of the key areas of focus for facility infrastructure changes moving forwards is to develop a much wider, more appealing offer through more informal and recreational opportunities, capable of engaging children, young people and adults of all abilities, and successfully attracting people to re-join the world of sport. A particular challenge will be to address the decline in the number of young girls and women taking part<sup>5</sup>.

Sport Wales will use five key measures to assess the sector's progress over the period of their new strategies:

1. children doing three occasions of sport in a week (extracurricular and within the wider community setting)
2. club membership;
3. 16-24 adult participation (three occasions per week)
4. school key stage 3 attainment;

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<sup>4</sup> Extract 2.1 of the Inquiry into Participation Levels in Sport In Wales Report

<sup>5</sup> Extract from the Executive Summary of the Sport Wales Community Strategy

5. number of adults volunteering in Wales.

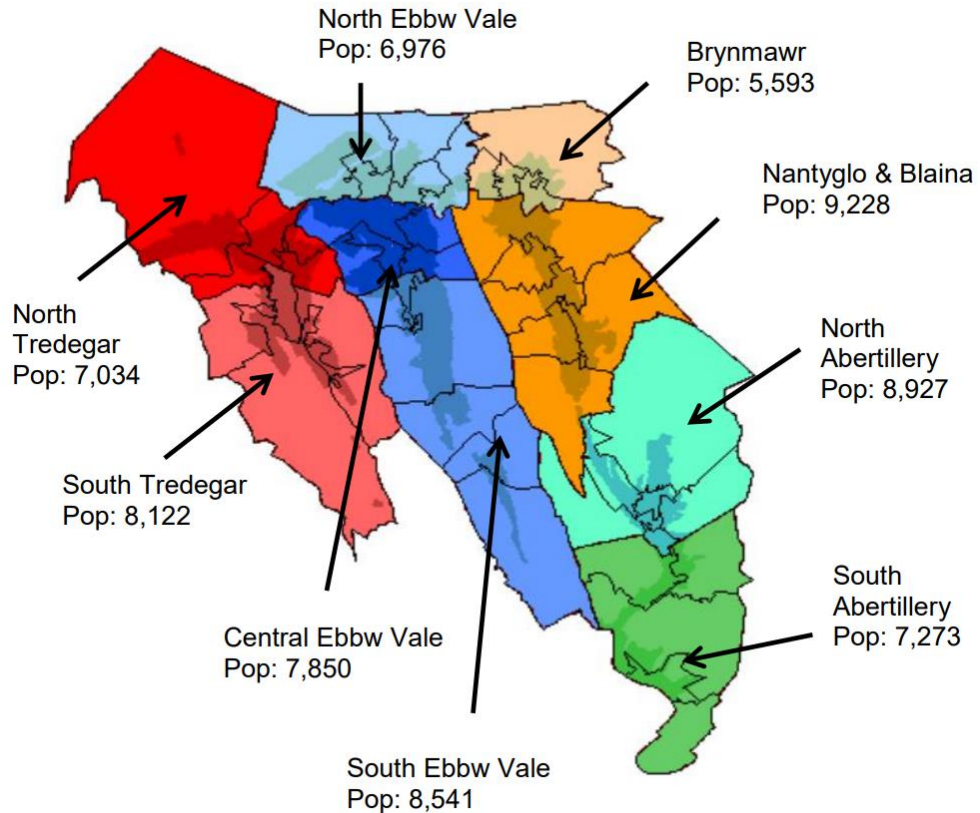
## The Local Context

Blaenau Gwent facts and figures and key considerations

Some of the key facts to be considered in future planning and delivery of leisure opportunities are captured below:

- In 2015, the population of Blaenau Gwent was 69,544. This makes the area one of the smallest local authority areas in Wales.
- The population of the area is falling; however, the rate of decline is more stable than at any point since 1921 (when the population was over 125,000).
- The population is expected to continue to fall with a 1.2% decrease in the next 10 years.
- The population density in Blaenau Gwent was 638 people per square kilometre, compared with 149 per square kilometre for Wales as a whole.
- Analysis shows that many parts of the area have density levels similar to city areas. Blaenau Gwent, like the majority of places in the UK, has an overall population which is ageing.
- Generally, this is because less people are being born and those people that are alive are living longer.
- 28% of all people who live within Blaenau Gwent stated they had a limiting long-term health problem or illnesses, where day-to-day activities were limited. This was higher than Wales overall (23%) and was the 2nd highest level in Wales (behind Neath Port Talbot with 29%).
- The Blaenau Gwent's Black and Ethnic Minority population in 2011 was just under 1,900 which is 1.5% of the population. However, the number had increased from 1,300 in 2001. This gives the area one of the lowest levels of people from black and minority ethnic groups in Wales.
- Just over 41% of the Blaenau Gwent population stated they have no religion, which is above the Welsh average of 37%. This is a notable increase compared to 2001, with respective levels of 25% and 19%.
- Blaenau Gwent is the area in Wales with the highest percentage of small areas in the most deprived 10% (23.4%).
- There are 233 looked after children and 89 children on the Child Protection Register in Blaenau Gwent.
- 40% of adults across Blaenau Gwent reported drinking above the guidelines on at least one day in the past week, including 25% who reported drinking more than twice the daily guidelines (sometimes termed binge drinking) - this is broadly comparable with data across Wales.

There are four neighbourhood areas which align to our valleys, towns and neighbourhoods. The map below summarises the four areas, with Sirhowy coloured red, Ebbw Fawr coloured blue, Upper Ebbw Fach coloured orange and Lower Ebbw Fach coloured green.



- Obesity levels are increasing in Wales. Leisure has an important role to play in combating this but services and programmes will need to link with a range of health led initiatives and be targeted appropriately.
- Health and Wellbeing is a key focal area for current leisure services. Sport, physical activity and other forms of leisure clearly have a role to play in improving the health and wellbeing of Blaenau Gwent's residents. The "Active Wales" Physical Activity Action Plan identifies the need to develop strong local, formal and informal partnerships, target young people, focus on reducing the number of sedentary adults and increase the frequency of participation as key areas for local action. These priorities are reflected in our plan.
- The National Vision for Sport highlights the importance of 'hooking' children on sport. It also identifies the need for strengthening partnership working and developing sustainable opportunities within the community. These objectives are reflected in our strategy.
- Economic Development and Tourism – developing and growing tourism is critical for the region and leisure makes a significant contribution. It is estimated that tourism generates £XX for the South Wales Valley's economy and supports an estimated XX jobs in the region. Ensuring the leisure offer remains 'fresh' and appealing is a key priority. 'Turning the Tide - Visitor Economy Strategy', recognises XXXX. This in turn will contribute towards a more sustainable economy. [AWAITING INFORMATION]
- Educational Attainment and Employment – the latest figures from Sport Wales show that sport alone provides more than 23,000 jobs in Wales (an increase of

almost 20% from the previous survey). Sport and leisure can provide opportunities to acquire key life skills, which can contribute to increased educational attainment or development of softer skills, such as confidence which can be key to enhancing employment prospects.

- Social and Community Development and Cohesion – Sport Wales acknowledges the potential of sport to enhance social capital – 23% of all voluntary, community and not-for-profit organisations are sport and recreation bodies. Involvement in leisure can also provide a 'feel good' factor, civic pride and for many can represent the only form of 'community engagement' that they experience.

## The Future Challenges

While we believe the future is positive, it is not without its challenges. Increased health issues place increased financial pressure on the local health services alongside an ageing population. With many residents working outside of the Borough the local economy is under threat and requires continual injection of support to maintain the status quo. This also presents us with the opportunity of becoming an affordable place to live and commute. With the small population within Blaenau Gwent it is incumbent on every service provider to appeal to wider audiences from neighbouring authorities through to tourists attracted to the area. With its wealth of cultural history, the development of the tourism product will be a key focus for the Council over the next 10 years.

## Current Service and Operating Environment

Since 2014 the Leisure and Culture services have been operated by an outsourced Leisure Trust on behalf of the Council. This includes most of our major leisure and cultural assets; the sports centres at Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, and Abertillery; libraries at Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, Cwm, Brynmawr, Blaina and Abertillery; learning action centres at Ebbw Vale and Brynmawr; Bedwellty House, Parc Bryn Bach, and the Metropole in Abertillery.

Despite the critical importance of all these leisure and cultural services and facilities provided by the Council to the health of local people the statutory obligations generally only relate to the provision of library services and learning services, and therefore, places increasing pressure on the Council to find new and innovative ways to provide services in the future.

Importantly, as part of the new strategy, the Council have undertaken a review of the Trust's performance over the first five years of their operation to ensure that arrangements have the best possible chance of success over the next ten years.

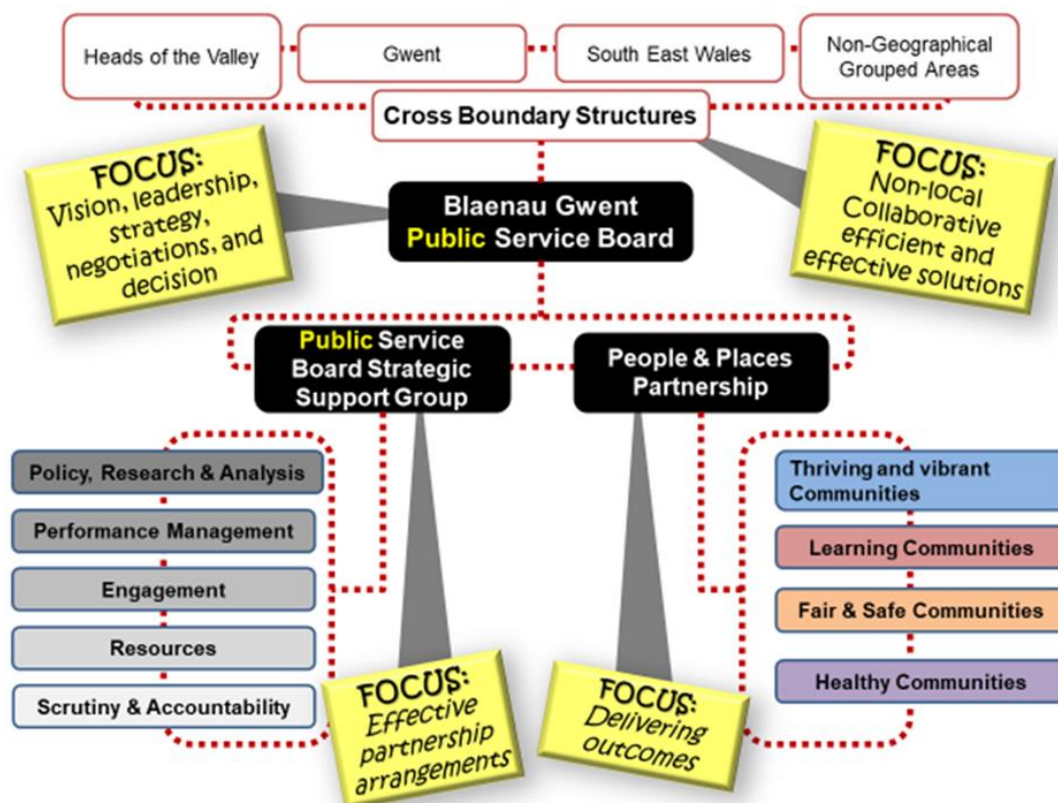
The Council recognises that it faces some significant challenges in terms of its current building assets, with ageing stock and infrastructure investment required, and ensuring that future investments are evidence based and clearly support key objectives in maximising the benefit for local people.

The Council also recognise that in order to have a strong influence on activity levels, and therefore, health and wellbeing of residents, further partnership working and a collaborative approach is required.

This is set in the context of ensuring that services remain accessible to all parts of the community, with targeted interventions in the most deprived areas.

## Partnerships

The Council will focus during the period of this strategy on working with existing partners and facilitating effective new partnerships to provide the greatest impact increasing participation for all continuing to improve outcomes through our strategic partnerships framework.



## Community Asset Transfer (CAT)

CAT has become a more popular way to deliver services in recent years because of decreasing budgets to operate a range of community-based services, not all can be sustained. The opportunity to transfer assets from the Council to local community groups and volunteers when the costs of maintaining the service in-house are no longer viable, provides much needed support for local assets that have a community following.

CAT will continue to be considered where finances and sustainability demands it.

## Subcontracted services

Where services are subcontracted to professional organisations, a transparent delivery and reporting mechanism needs to be adopted to provide valuable insight

into the operation and performance of the contract. The Council will want to influence subcontractors' approach to the delivery of these services to ensure they meet the specification of the leisure and culture strategy and will want to be provided with evidence that this is happening on the ground.

### Visitor numbers and participation

The leisure and culture services we provide through our partner organisations will continue to be monitored, reviewed and assessed regularly and will have a direct impact on how the leisure and culture strategy is delivered.

### Commercial approaches-external funding partners encouraging innovation

Given the limited financial resources available to the Council we will be seeking out development partners, neighbouring authority links and external funding partners to assist with longer term investments within the Blaenau Gwent area, so that community assets may continue to be developed and maintained for the next 10 years and beyond. Commercial developments will become the priority for the longer-term sustainability of the service, regardless of the organisation that operates these services.

### Delivering wider social, education and economic objectives

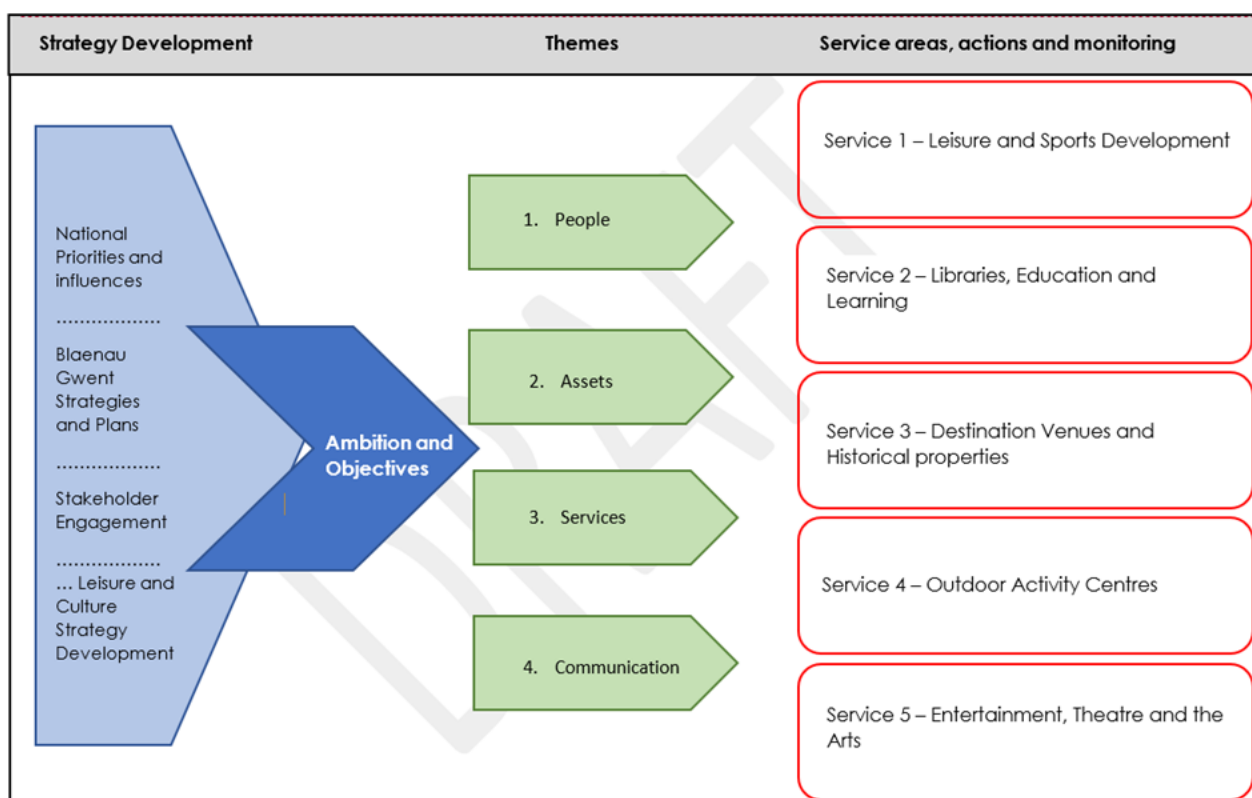
The importance of leisure in meeting the wider objectives of the council should not be underestimated. A vibrant leisure offer is important to meet wider health, social, wellbeing, economic and educational priorities. This is reflected in the recent broadening of the scope and remit of the Leisure, Libraries and Culture Service to ensure that planning and delivery contributes to wider council targets. The re-shaped service should include outreach work programmes to target disengaged members of the community. This may include the use of leisure to support young people's personal and social development, empowerment and access to information and resources that will enable them to move from dependants to independent, as well as supporting and reintegrating socially isolated older members of the community.



## 4. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

This strategy has been developed in the context of national priorities and influences set against our local strategies and plans.

We have undertaken stakeholder engagement to help inform our priorities over the period of this strategy focussing on four key themes of 'People', 'Assets', 'Services' and 'Communication' which are applied to each of our five service areas to identify innovative service developments and investments to meet the expectations of our residents over the next ten years.



## Services Included

### Leisure and Sports Development

Residents of Abertillery, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar have direct access to affordable and accessible sports facilities and services. These include a wide range of facilities, programmes and services provided by a local charitable community Trust called Aneurin Leisure Trust.

The Trust operates three leisure centres, all are located within school sites.

Ebbw Vale Leisure Centre was built in 2013 and is considered the flagship site for the County Borough, while the two school sites provide community-based activities, which include swimming alongside a range of indoor and outdoor sports facilities delivered via artificial grass pitches, fitness suites, sports halls and studios.

Tredegar Sports Centre is a welcoming and accessible community sports facility that focusses on group bookings, clubs and societies. The centre has many sports activities and classes run by qualified instructors. Tredegar Sports Centre is the oldest of the sites and will require significant investment if it is to remain open as it is nearing the end of its useful life an assessment will need to be undertaken. Servicing a population catchment of just 19,000 it may not be possible to maintain the facility in its current form over the term of this strategy.

Abertillery Sports Centre has a more modern mix of facilities than Tredegar also in a local community setting and acts as the main hub for sport in the area. The centre has many sports and activities and includes an impressive outdoor full size 3G pitch. Whilst the main building is in reasonable condition it does require some reinvestment within the period of this strategy to ensure that it remains a popular destination for local people.

Schools and colleges remain a priority for engagement with younger residents influencing long-term attitudes towards activity, behaviour and lifestyle patterns. Undoubtedly there is a need for a modern infrastructure to engage and inspire activity levels amongst younger residents.

The 21st Century Schools Programme is critical to achieving this aim and may provide a funding solution to the requirements of the school based provision on secondary school sites.

The Sports Development Service delivers a range of community programmes for target groups, which include disability sport programmes, exercise referral schemes (delivered through NERS), the Welsh Government Funded Free Swimming Initiative for over 60s and under 16s children, Dragon Sport targeting primary school children, Fit and Fed projects tackling deprivation impact during the school holidays alongside learning and employment opportunities through the Coaches for the Future Scheme.

## Libraries, education and learning

The six libraries within Blaenau Gwent offer local communities a range of books across a selection of interest areas, including e-books and e-magazines, alongside educational, training and employment support services and workshops for people of all ages and abilities.

The libraries offer free wi-fi and computer access, with most libraries offering attractive IT rooms with ten or more computers and they provide a range of educational sessions to help customers get to grips with all the latest technologies.

While some of the libraries have had to be located into smaller venues in the last few years to facilitate reduced demands and decreasing service budgets, they continue to be supported by loyal community members and volunteers who expect these facilities to remain open to the local catchment area.

Other community groups make use of these community facilities to include Macmillan Cancer Support and the Adult and Community Learning (ACL) service, while local community groups house a number of local museum and historical pieces of local relevance in adjoining suites under a separate tenancy agreement.

What is clear is that during the period of this strategy there will be a continued need to work even more closely with local partners including identifying opportunities for service integration and co-location, building on the services current success.

## Destination venues and historical properties

Bedwellty House and its surrounding 26-acre Parc in Tredegar dates back to 1822 when Samuel Homfray, Richard Fothergill and Matthew Monkhouse owned the Tredegar Iron Company and built this (now) historical attraction.

Following the decline of the iron industry both the Parc and House were gifted to the



Bedwellty Park Fountain at the side of Bedwellty House, 1951.



Bedwellty House in 1998.

Council to be utilised as a public Parc.

The history of Bedwellty House is linked to the early political career of Aneurin Bevan who was elected to Tredegar Urban District Council in 1922, spending much of his time in the Council Chamber within Bedwellty House, and later became the parliamentary candidate for Ebbw Vale in 1929.

When the Labour Party won the 1945 General Election Bevan was appointed as Secretary of State for Health. He is recorded as having said of the NHS, "All I am doing is extending to the entire population of Britain the benefits we had in Tredegar for a generation or more. We are going to 'Tredegar-ise' you."

The house and Parc are now open to the public and provide events spaces for weddings, conference, meetings and events as well as maintaining the historical base for the Tredegar Town Council Chambers and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Registrar's department.

Bedwellty House presents a development opportunity and is considered one of the Councils best assets. The House, as well as the venue for local Town Council meetings is widely used by the local community including as a hub for dementia sufferers as well as a stroke society and healthy walks. More recently the venue is being used more for special events and weddings and has become the administrative headquarters for the Leisure Trust.

## Outdoor activity centres and sports grounds

Parc Bryn Bach is set in 340 acres of natural idyllic grass and woodland with a stunning 36-acre lake at its heart. It is an ideal setting for a range of adventure activities for visitors and has developed a diverse activity experience and outdoor education learning programme delivered from the main visitor centre overlooking the lake.

The Parc exemplifies the rich and attractive wealth of outdoor recreational space available in and around the County Borough, which includes opportunities for cycling, camping, canoeing, walking, hiking, fishing and rock climbing to name a few.

There are many physical and social rewards attributable to outdoor activities, some goal-directed activities require physical and mental agility which provides by return a wealth of positive emotional and spiritually rewards including increased self-esteem and improved mental health.

Outdoor activities provide alternative forms of activity to formal leisure and sport activities housed within leisure centres, and are frequently used as a medium for education and team building.

Parc Bryn Bach is home to the Blaenau Gwent Scouts Group, the Model Boat Club and offers opportunities for further physical and service developments.

The Parc Bryn Bach has tremendous development potential which will be a key objective of the new Leisure and Culture strategy.

## [Sports Ground information to be included]

### Entertainment Theatre and the Arts

Originally the 'Metropole Theatre and Dance Hall', the 'Met' dates back to 1892 where it serviced a much larger community of 40,000 when coal mining was the core industry at that time. The venue was famous locally and drew in international names such as Charlie Chaplin. Over the years the mining industry disappeared, and the town's prosperity declined, so the venue was used as an indoor market and later a cinema. In the late 1990's the Met fell into disrepair and the building had to close due to structural problems.

The Met Theatre reopened in 2007 following a major refurbishment, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government. The 216 seat Victorian theatre exudes character with restored Victorian grandeur, original timber roof structures imported from Canada, iron columns and decorative panels, the Met delivers a range of diverse programmes that include dramas, musical theatre shows, rock and pop music events and children's theatrical performances.

The Met is now a leading arts and cultural hub for shows and performances with the Arts Development Service operating from the venue, it has become a place for meetings and conferences and home to the 'Head for Arts' programme which the Arts Council consider to be an exemplar model for successful collaborative community Arts programming across the Heads of the Valley's area.

The building's excellent facilities and place within the Community were recognised by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors who awarded the 'Building Which Most Benefits A Community' all-Wales award in 2008.

All staff at the Met are Dementia Friendly Trained and the venue is completely accessible to every member of the community.

The Arts Development Service is almost entirely grant funded to deliver community-based arts and wellbeing activities.

In these continuing times of austerity, it is beholden on the Arts Development and Theatre teams to ensure all commercial generating activities are explored, and that the service deficit is minimised over the course of the next 10 years. This will not be an easy objective given the size and scale of the theatre operation in Blaenau Gwent. However inward investment, commercial support in the form of corporate sponsorship and service developments to include increased catering provision could enhance the customer experience and improve bottom line performance, enhancing and not detracting from the already exceptional work being carried out by the local team.



The Beaufort Theatre in Ebbw Vale and Market Hall Cinema have been transferred to local Community Groups. These venues still play a significant role for their respective communities and are included in the strategy to ensure that the future of these venues can be secured as a community based cultural service and also to encourage ongoing partnership working between individual community cultural providers.

The Beaufort theatre offers a 338-seater auditorium and Ballroom. The theatre is also host to nine voluntary arts organisations who present annual productions there.



## 5. LEISURE AND CULTURE MAP



## 6. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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We consulted and engaged with a number of key local stakeholders and partner organisations in developing this strategy, including:

- Aneurin Leisure Trust;
- Tai Calon Social Housing;
- MALD (Museums, Archives & Libraries Division);
- CADW Historic Environment Service;
- The Local Health Board; and
- Local schools.

This section summarises the key messages from these partners. There is further detail about the stakeholder engagement in Appendix 1.

### **Key messages from some of our partners:**

- A number of partners said that they would like to work more closely with the council, to have more formal partnership arrangements in place, including meeting and reporting mechanisms.
- Partners highlighted the potential for future joint working and collaboration on projects as part of a multi-agency approach to delivering services in the future.
- The importance of volunteering was mentioned by a number of partners; with some organisations able to offer training and support for staff and volunteers and some suggesting the idea of reward programme to encourage volunteers.
- Partners would be keen to integrate health and community facilities into new developments in the future to achieve good health and well-being outcomes. (housing, arts)
- Partners mentioned the value of invest to save projects so that capital ideas could be progressed and implemented. Strong internal processes will be needed to support contract management.
- Marketing, social media presence and communications systems such as online bookings and databases were mentioned by a number of partners, and some are keen to work together to improve marketing.
- The possibility of sharing of some other central resources such as HR and IT were also mentioned by some partners.



- Partners are keen to mentor young people into employment and training.
- The housing company is concerned with the fitness and health of young people.
- Partners wish to keep their staff fit and healthy and the housing company is concerned with the health and well-being of tenants and keeping people safe in their homes for longer is a priority
- The cost of taking part in leisure is an issue for the client groups of some partners
- There is a need for more safe outdoor play areas - particularly in relation to social housing - and the housing company would be keen to create more community gardens and play areas on the outdoor spaces on their existing developments (funding would be needed).
- There is a need to review dual use arrangements with schools, which aren't felt to work very well, and more dialogue with the headteachers forum is important.
- There is a need to rationalise or reconfigure the library service to make it more sustainable. A strong volunteer base will be needed, and friends' groups should be explored.
- Some partners would like to explore partnering with other cultural trusts in order to deliver joint programming and gain economies of scale and strategic alliances.
- Partners were keen that asset maintenance should be better planned in the future.
- Partners were keen to work together to plan and aspire for the future, and not let past performance be an inhibitor to future achievements.

We are very grateful to all our partner organisations who contributed to the development of the strategy and look forward to working together to deliver the strategy over the next ten years.

## 7. OUR AMBITION

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### Our Ambition

Our ambition for the Leisure and Culture Strategy is to set out the council and its partners' aspirations, direction and priorities for leisure and culture over the next ten years, with a focus on deliverable priorities over the next five-year period.

It is intended to develop the leisure and culture offer already available to residents and visitors across the borough, to increase the number of people engaged in the range of services and involved in the delivery of leisure and culture opportunities, and to increase the profile and importance of leisure and culture participation for all members of the community.

'By 2024 Blaenau Gwent aims to have established a strong reputation for collaborative working across a range of quality service delivery models, that provide accessible leisure opportunities attracting high levels of participation to improve the happiness, mental health and physical wellbeing of residents and visitors alike'

### Our Priorities



1.1. Increasing participation for all



1.2. Improving physical and mental health and well-being



1.3. Developing effective collaboration with partners



1.4. Maintaining and building upon the existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities

## 1. Increasing participation for all

By increasing participation rates in our leisure and culture services for all demographic groups, encouraging known groups with lower than average rates of participation, we will support growth and efficiency in an inclusive and sustainable manner, whilst at the same time reducing inequality and disadvantage.

We recognise that this will require some inward investment into the asset infrastructure, to provide an opportunity for increased usage and better maintenance of assets, to improve the financial performance that will support and offset those statutory services that inevitably are cost based only and less able to contribute to income targets.

## 2. Improving physical and mental health and well-being

We know from national research how important physical and mental health is ensure we live full and active lives. An active body and mind can often add years to people's lives.

By supporting initiatives from existing and future partners we can collectively help to increase activity levels across Blaenau Gwent and help in the prevention and management of many conditions and diseases including coronary heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and the growing issue of childhood obesity.

People can engage with leisure and culture in many different ways at every stage of their lives; and each encounter can have a positive impact upon health and wellbeing.

## 3. Developing effective collaboration with partners

Over the next five years we will continue to focus on more effective ways to deliver our services working, not just with the existing service providers, but with new people, organisations and local investors who can add benefit to the development of the local services and facilities for the enjoyment of all residents of Blaenau Gwent, along with visitors attracted the area.

Regular interaction between partners is essential to help ensure success however the Council does wish to retain influence over council led services, to ensure a consistency of approach, quality assurance and to facilitate the transparency of delivery that is fundamental to the success of the strategy.

We recognise the need to support and help to develop a network of volunteers and staff involved in delivering culture and leisure in Blaenau Gwent, and to help all individuals develop their talent, skills and confidence.

## 4. Maintaining and building upon the existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities

We live in a very challenging financial climate and working together is vital in maintaining existing provision in the most efficient manner. It is imperative therefore that the leisure and culture services become even more customer and business focussed over the period of this strategy to ensure that the commercial performance can be sustained long term and ultimately without any (or with significantly reduced) service subsidy from the Council.

There is much success to build upon following investment in leisure and culture in the past and we are committed to exploring further investment opportunities in our services in the future.

### Delivery Themes

To deliver this vision we aspire to identify what we want, how we will get there and who will be involved. This has been captured within four overlapping themes across each service area as follows:



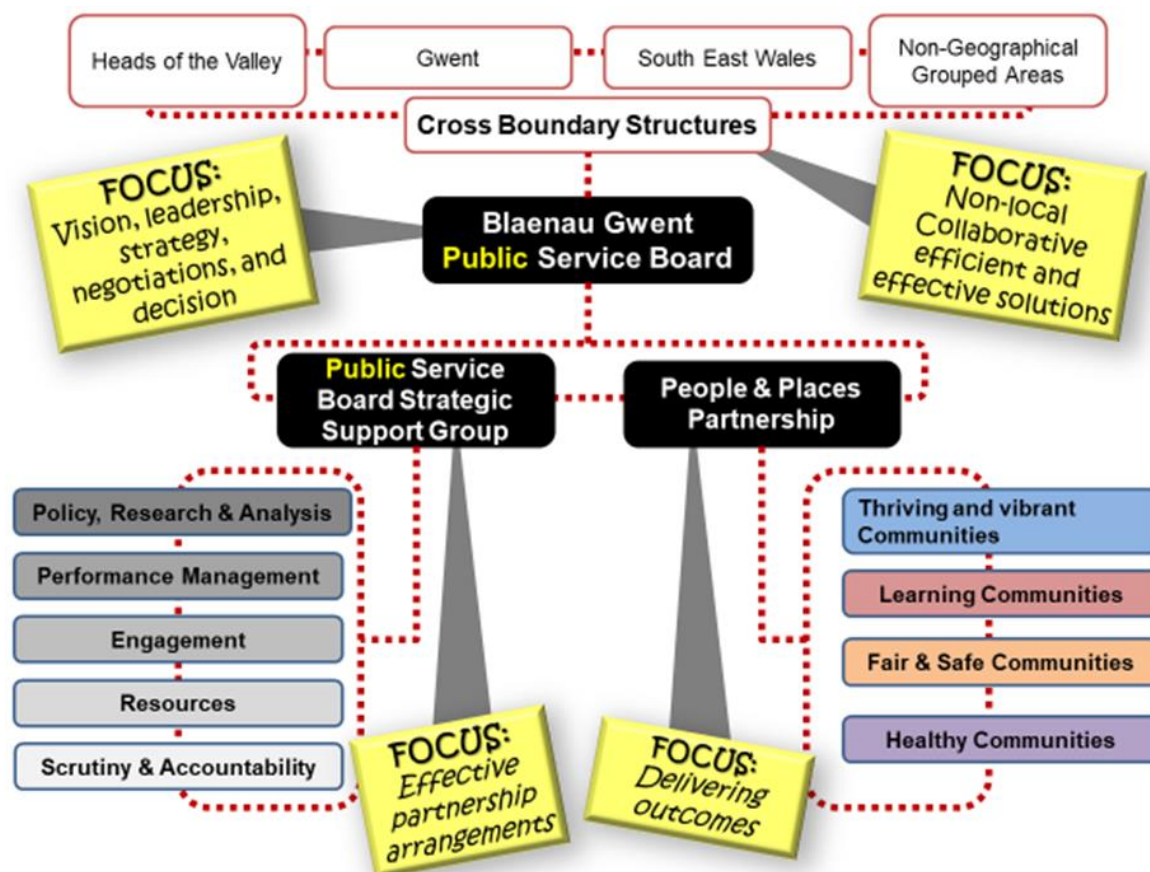
## Key Objectives

Whilst the strategy covers a ten year period from 2019 to 2029, over the first five years we plan to:

- Develop a financial sustainable plan for Leisure Services, in line with the requirements of the Council's medium-term financial strategy (MTFS);
- Explore invest to save initiatives to reduce revenue implications across our leisure and culture services;
- Review delivery options for Leisure and Culture Services;
- Initiate a fundamental review to modernise community library and learning provision;
- Undertake a review of future options for Tredegar Sports Centre;
- Secure investment in sports and cultural facilities via the 21st Century Schools Programme;
- Transfer responsibilities for sports grounds to local sports clubs by March 2019;

## 8. PARTNERSHIPS

The Council will focus during the period of this strategy on working with existing partners and facilitating effective new partnerships to provide the greatest impact increasing participation for all continuing to improve outcomes through our strategic partnerships framework shown below.



The Council current work with a range of partners:

- Natural Resources Wales were recommended as a partner to engage with by Future Generations Commission given the outdoor space available for recreation and leisure in Blaenau Gwent.
- GP surgeries for NERS referral programme - There are two Neighbourhood Care Networks (NCNs) in Blaenau Gwent. There are five practices which operate in the Blaenau Gwent East Cluster area
- Aneurin Trust local health board
- Valley Task Force (outdoor recreation, links to skills and prosperity)

- Neighbouring local authorities for partnerships in public bodies such as the Active Gwent Board that includes Caerphilly, Newport, Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire and Torfaen.
- Aneurin Leisure Trust
- The Future Generations commission local liaison office
- Arts Council Wales
- Wales Arts for Health Network
- The Welsh NHS Federation

In addition to this our delivery partner Aneurin Leisure currently work with a range of sport, culture, arts, and health organisations including:

- Chief Culture and Leisure Officers Wales Group – this focusses on all aspects of policy and strategic issues across leisure and culture.
- Gwent Chief Leisure Officer Group for Culture and Leisure – a collaboration with 5 Gwent LAs working very closely together to improve sports participation)
- Bookstart Cymru Strategic Board
- SCL (Society of Chief Librarians)
- Sporta South West and Wales Group
- Sporta UK HR Group

Anerin Leisure are also working with the Welsh Government Future Generations Commissioners Office on a potential collaboration across Arts.

### **Regional**

- Heads of the Valleys Taskforce
- Coleg Gwent Franchise Group
- Head 4 Arts Development
- Integrated Autism Service Gwent
- Blaenau Gwent
- Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board Strategic Steering Group
- Blaenau Gwent Integrated Partnership Board (Health related)
- Blaenau Gwent Poverty Implementation Group
- Neighbourhood Cluster networks of general Practitioners \* 2 in Blaenau Gwent

- DISP (Digital Inclusion Strategic Group)
- EYDCPP (Early Years Blaenau Gwent)
- Age Cymru/Carers Group

**Memberships:**

- Sporta South West and Wales
- Arts & Business Cymru
- IoD Wales
- South Wales Chamber of Commerce



## 9. MANAGING PERFORMANCE AND RISK

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It is important that people can see what progress the Council is making against the priorities outlined in this Strategy and hold us properly to account.

We recognise that to maintain and improve opportunities for local residents, it is important to monitor our performance and manage the overall delivery of the strategy key actions.

To monitor performance, a set of specific indicators will be developed. The indicators and targets will need to be agreed with key partners and set in accordance with some of the additional research planned (mapping and auditing), ensuring targets take account of baseline (current position) and ensuring they can be realistically achieved.

The monitoring of the strategy will take place using the council's corporate performance management framework. Once developed, the indicators and actions will be included as part of the delivery plan for leisure and culture.

The overall monitoring of the strategy delivery, and agreed indicators will take account of:

**INPUTS** - resources being invested in the service, activities, and the services being provided with this resource;

**OUTPUTS** - including numbers of users, and outcomes of what is being achieved.

To align with the council's corporate performance management framework the strategy will be monitored quarterly, reporting as appropriate.

Monitoring and review is very much an ongoing process to inform decisions and shape changes to delivery, as opposed to a reflection at the end of delivery.

Regular reporting will include a report on progress overall, with a designation of 'red', 'amber' or 'green' status, and a review of reasons for divergence from agreed targets.

The monitoring and reviewing process will involve collecting and collating data from the following areas:

- Strategy review meetings;
- Residents opinions from corporate consultation exercises and leisure related surveys;
- Financial and attendance management data relating to formal facilities and programmes;
- National data (such as the Sport Wales Active Wales Survey);
- Consultation with delivery staff;

- Relevant evidence and data from key partners; and
- Monitoring returns submitted to external funders

An annual strategy review report will be produced to outline overall progress and key changes to agreed actions.

Also, it is vital that those employed within these services understand how their contribution to achieving our shared priorities is valued and the positive impact they can have on people's lives through the effective and efficient delivery of services.

It is essential that during the next ten years service providers demonstrate a range of good practice outcomes to future generations set alongside the strategy objectives. We need to be pushing the boundaries of the possible each year and enhancing the collaborations that take place locally to enhance lives and support community cohesion and wellbeing.

Moving forwards we will also introduce measurements demonstrating the impact of leisure and culture on the socio-economic lifestyles of the local community.

## Risk

There are some significant risks associated with delivery of the leisure and culture strategy which will be regularly updated and reviewed:

- Impact on culture – cuts are affecting non-statutory services such as culture and leisure facilities the most, creating a barrier to cultural participation - with children in deprived communities missing out the most. At a time when the creative industries sector is rapidly expanding this could have a detrimental impact on the future growth of the sector and damage potential employment opportunities for young people in these industries<sup>6</sup>
- Competition from other local leisure and culture destinations;
- Consequences of the economic challenge facing future generations;
- Impact on income - poverty in Wales is higher than UK average, and rates have stayed the same for the past 12 years;
- Impact on affordability of products and services - 23% of households in Wales, about 291,000 households, live in fuel poverty;
- Impact on health - people who experience poverty or who live in deprived areas have fewer years of life free from illness or disability and are likely to die sooner. According to Public Health Wales obesity is more prevalent in areas where people experience poverty, and more adults die as a result of smoking and alcohol misuse in these areas compared to the least deprived areas. Unemployment, especially long-term unemployment, is also a contributing factor towards mental health conditions in adults (24%), smoking (43%), physical inactivity (60%). Even more worryingly it increases mortality rate by 20-25% in the 10 years following the loss of a job

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<sup>6</sup> Future Generations Report

- Impact on children – 29% of children live in poverty. Children in low-income households have poorer mental and physical health and achieve worse school results than those in better-off families, increasing the risk of staying in poverty across generations. They are also at greater risk of multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) which can lead to greater likelihood of health-harming behaviours during their lives, and affecting the life chances of the next generation;
- Growing skills gap – there is likely to be an increase in the skills gap as professional and managerial jobs grow and semi and unskilled jobs reduce, leading to intense competition for jobs. For children and young people growing up in poverty they will be most affected as they are at risk of achieving poor educational results, have lower skills and aspirations, and are also more likely to be low paid, unemployed and welfare dependent in adulthood;
- Cost of providing services – Wales' high levels of poverty and social need mean we are spending £3.6 billion every year to provide services that deal with the social consequences through the health, education, social care and criminal justice systems. This means £1 in every £5 of spending on public services is poverty-related and impacts on equalities. Children, lone parent families, women, disabled people, people from non-white ethnicities, asylum seekers and refugees are all at a greater risk of poverty than the rest of the population. Therefore, a failure to address the drivers of poverty will continue to have an un-equalising effect on Welsh society;

## 10. CONSULTATION

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In accordance with the Future Generations Act, following the completion of the draft strategy a wider consultation process will take place for feedback and final collaboration on the completion of the leisure and culture strategy. This consultation process will include a number of strategic partners alongside local community users and groups that are involved in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the strategy. Once this consultation is completed the final strategy will be put forward for approval by the Council Executive and Scrutiny Committees.

We welcome any feedback you might have about the Leisure and Culture Strategy 2019 - 2029. If there is any information you think could be considered for, or if you require this document in a different format e.g. large print, Braille, audio version, etc please contact us using the information below.

## References

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In Final Strategy

## Appendix 1 – Draft Delivery Plan

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### Delivery Plan Overview

The Council already adopts a mixed model of delivery – directly delivering some services while for others Alternative Delivery Models have been established. For example, traditional Leisure, Culture and Learning Services are now delivered across Blaenau Gwent by a Charitable Trust limited by guarantee. The amount of services the Council directly delivers may decrease further depending on the future financial position. In time, the Council may act as a commissioner of services ensuring that they are responsive to local needs, centred around the person and community based. It will also look to become a more commercial organisation which generates income and delivers cost reductions. This in turn will help to make local services more sustainable and raise money to re-invest in our priorities<sup>7</sup>.

In some instances, it might be appropriate for the Council to move into more of an enabling role supporting community groups and social enterprises to gain the skills and competencies to be able to retain and deliver services locally themselves (i.e. Community Asset Transfers). The council will also look to deliver services in collaboration with other councils in the future. There will also be a role for the Council in developing a renewed sense of place in the area and building pride in the borough, which could involve influencing and supporting partner organisations to work to common goals to meet the needs and aspirations of the community. The Council's role over time may be less about doing things to and for residents and communities and more about creating the capacity, interest, expertise and enthusiasm for individuals and communities to do things for themselves<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Services in the future extract from Corporate Plan 2018-2023

<sup>8</sup> Services in the future extract from Corporate Plan 2018-2023

## Delivery Plan – Service Wide

Theme	Priority	Objectives	Outcomes
People	Developing effective collaboration with partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalise existing relationships with key partners and identify future partners ensuring that the leisure and culture agenda is represented.</li> </ul>	
	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the volunteer programme across the services creating incentives and a rewards programme to support volunteer commitments in support of the future sustainability of services.</li> </ul>	
	Developing effective collaboration with partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To facilitate appropriate governance arrangements to support the implementation of the strategy we will focus on identification and support of key community advocates such as community group leaders, local clubs and associations.</li> </ul>	
	Increasing participation for all	<p>Grow a skilled and passionate workforce by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing an effective apprenticeship programme that works across all service areas and provides skilled work</li> </ul>	

		<p>for school leavers and those in NEET.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a skills development programme to further enhance employee skills in customer service standards, health and safety, tourism and marketing, so that every member of staff is able to engage with and cross promote services.</li> <li>• To achieve the Gold standard “Insport” gradings for the Councils inclusive work. Blaenau Gwent are currently averaging a Bronze Standard.</li> </ul>	
<b>Assets</b>	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<p>Local People Managing Local Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will work with communities where there is interest for communities to take greater control of leisure and culture assets and encourage improvement of facilities under their ownership/management.</li> </ul>	Protecting important local assets and services. ‘Local people managing local services’.
	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate opportunities for co-location and service integration within the leisure and culture service.</li> </ul>	Improved efficiency of delivering community services.
	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide inward investment into maintaining and enhancing existing and new leisure facilities by establishing an asset invest to save protocol with our partners.</li> </ul>	Improved efficiency of delivering community services to support further targeted intervention where higher levels of subsidy are required.

	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify capital investment and operational efficiency opportunities to improve the financial performance of the leisure and cultural facilities.</li> <li>• Establish an annual planned preventative maintenance programme seeking to reduce our carbon footprint.</li> <li>• Continue to invest in inclusivity developments to ensure access to services is available to all.</li> <li>• Identify co-location and service integration opportunities through collaboration with local service delivery partners.</li> </ul>	
	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a carbon reduction programme across the assets and share best practise with partner organisations.</li> </ul>	Reduced cost of running the service.
<b>Services</b>	Improving physical and mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessing harder to reach communities and target groups BME/Women/Teenage girls through the relationship with the Social Services Department based at Parc Bryn Back, delivering cultural and leisure programmes with the local social housing group.</li> </ul>	
	Improving physical and mental health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will promote active travel with strong linkages with the local transport to provide more active and sustainable means.</li> </ul>	

	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will make the most out of digital opportunities to improve access to services.</li> </ul>	
	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will work to remove the barriers to accessing facilities and activities through targeted pricing and free taster sessions.</li> </ul>	
<b>Communications</b>	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will facilitate improved co-ordination, signposting and linkages between our partners ensuring the wealth of information currently available is provided efficiently and via multiple sources including social media channels, celebrating and raising awareness of our collective successes.</li> </ul>	
	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will ensure that marketing and communications are embedded as a central element to the delivery of our priorities aligning to national and local leisure and cultural events and campaigns to maximise their impact across Blaenau Gwent.</li> </ul>	
	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will capture and disseminate opportunity data (the what, when, where of physical activity sessions) to ensure lack of information is not a barrier to participation.</li> </ul>	



## Delivery Plan – Leisure and Sports Development

Themes	Priority	Objectives	Outcomes
<b>People</b>	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing Physical Literacy from an early age in nurseries, schools, community centres and leisure centres.</li> <li>• Affordable children's programmes and activities.</li> <li>• Delivery of Hooked on Sport Programmes and school sport programmes.</li> <li>• Dragon Sport participation</li> <li>• One More programmes delivered through secondary schools</li> <li>• Sports festival development</li> <li>• Improve the hooked on sports, school sports survey results year on year.</li> </ul>	<p>Measurement of success against 'Sport Wales' national performance framework outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children doing three occasions of sport in a week (extracurricular and within the wider community setting)</li> <li>2. Increase in Club membership.</li> <li>3. 16-24 adult participation (three occasions per week)</li> <li>4. School key stage 3 attainment;</li> <li>5. Number of Adults volunteering in Wales.</li> </ol>
<b>Assets</b>	<p>Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.</p> <p>Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review, with our key partners, future options for Tredegar Sports Centre.</li> <li>• Review the school use agreements with our partners to ensure they are still fit for purpose.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved efficiency in delivery of services.</li> <li>• Improved health and wellbeing for the community.</li> </ul>

<b>Services</b>	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide informal places for activity including continued development of street games and the young ambassador programme.</li> <li>• Provide affordable children's programmes and activities.</li> <li>• Deliver 'Hooked on Sport' Programmes and school sport programmes.</li> <li>• Deliver 'Dragon Sport' and 'One More' programmes in secondary schools.</li> <li>• Sports festival development</li> <li>• Further develop health referral services.</li> <li>• Further develop health referral services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Communications</b>	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparency of performance information</li> </ul>	
	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced and targeted marketing for each leisure centre</li> <li>• On-line joining functionality for memberships</li> <li>• Online booking functionality for classes and courses</li> </ul>	
	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased social media engagement with local community members creating referrals and increased participation.</li> </ul>	

## Delivery Plan – Libraries, Education and Learning Development

Themes	Priority	Objectives	Outcomes
<b>People</b>	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce a volunteer led project reading to socially isolated or vulnerable people in the community on a regular basis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved health and wellbeing targeting vulnerable people.</li> </ul>
<b>Assets</b>	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review co-location and service integration opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Services</b>	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to deliver the positive programmes to tackle social exclusion, inactivity through the Active Gwent Board and aim to widen the impact across the County Borough.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Communications</b>	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on becoming a 'Go to' provider of digital support in the community' through ongoing investment in modern equipment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase use and access to the service.</li> </ul>
	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a coordinated approach to marketing by working with our partners and focussing on improvement in joint initiatives and digital</li> </ul>	

		communication such as social media.	
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## Delivery Plan – Destination Venues and Historical Properties

Themes	Priority	Objectives	Outcomes
<b>People</b>	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the volunteer programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Assets</b>	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review internal and external commercial options for investment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved sustainability.</li> </ul>
<b>Services</b>	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the venue for more weddings and special events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved sustainability.</li> </ul>
<b>Communications</b>	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a more extensive events programme at the venue using the historical appeal and grounds to develop a rich cultural programme of activities for the community including concerts and picnics in the Parc, events and historical readings and plays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

## Delivery Plan – Outdoor Activity Centres and Sports Grounds

Themes	Overarching Aim	Objective	Outcomes
<b>Assets</b>	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver CAT transfer of sports grounds in line with current Council policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Assets</b>	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To enhance the natural appeal of Bryn Bach Parc (and others) protecting and developing the natural resources and utilising these as active recreation opportunities to get more people active</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To review commercial opportunities at Parc Bryn Bach as a 'leisure destination' attraction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Services</b>	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Services - continue to support the Centre of Excellence for Mental Health at Parc Bryn Bach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Communications</b>	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing the promotion of Bryn Bach Pak to attract new visitors to the area as a destination venue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the website and technology platform to enable online booking of activities in advance of arrival – to secure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

		engagement from customers when sought	
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## Delivery Plan – Live Entertainment, Theatre and Arts Development

Themes	Priority	Objectives	Outcomes
<b>People</b>	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a co-ordinated approach to volunteering, ensuring it is more representative of the community including more students and those who are recently retired helping their transition into the third age.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An appropriately skilled volunteer workforce complimenting existing paid staff is in place to support delivery of the strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>Assets</b>	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to invest and develop facilities inclusively for all.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm, following review, the future governance and management arrangements for the Metropole Theatre and Arts Centre.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Services</b>	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Head for Arts' Programme development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Communications</b>	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce a ' Metropole User Group' and utilise the wider Leisure Trust customer database to promote events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

