**BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**COUNCILLORS ANNUAL REPORT**

This is the report by the Councillor named below regarding their key activities over the year ending 30th April 2023. It is provided for the information of all constituents and for no other purpose.

*Completion instructions: Councillors are free to include as much or as little information as they wish in each section, however the report is to be kept to this* ***2 page maximum*** *format.*

**Councillor: Tommy Smith**

**Party: Labour**

**Ward: Sirhowy**

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| **Section 1 – Roles and Responsibilities** |
| Chair of the People Scrutiny Committee incorporating education and social services. The committee has continued its work to scrutinise and challenge across a wide-ranging work programme, using skills and experience to put forward recommendations to Cabinet for consideration.  Scrutiny Member of the Corporate & Performance Committee  Chair of Gwent Public Service Board Scrutiny Committee.  Board member director of Silent valley waste management services for BGCBC.  LEA school governor and Chair at Glanhowy Primary School Tredegar.  As well as my Scrutiny and chairing roles I also undertake other responsibilities within the council. |
| **Section 2: Constituency Activity** |
| In the community I continue to work with my ward colleagues on behalf of constituents by taking up case work on a daily basis and acting as an advocate on behalf of some of the local residents but also by working with other partners including Tai Calon and other social housing landlords, Gwent Police and with other partner agencies and Blaenau Gwent council officers to resolve issues that might affect individuals or the wider community. |

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| **Section 3: Cabinet and Scrutiny Activities** |
| In children's services, the Committee has examined a varied work programme scrutinising reports on critical areas such as The Childcare Offer, National Adoption Service, Corporate Parenting, and regular reporting of the safe reduction of children looked after.  A notable development has been the introduction of a four-bed children's residential home and further four-bed emergency accommodation in the Sirhowy ward – whilst considering the reports and information I was mindful to work with residents that I represent to ensure that residents views were taken into consideration and that officers and ward members of the ward where fully engaged “funded by the Welsh Government capital funding” in a time of diminishing council budgets. Members felt that the project would allow children looked after to live within their communities for education purposes and to live as close to friends and family as possible while in the care of Blaenau Gwent – with the support of the director of children’s services and the cabinet member I was able to engage with residents via a drop-in session and setting up a resident group.  Adult services reports include work on areas such as the Integrated Care Fund, Living Independently, and the setting up of a cost-of-living working group to help support families through the current financial crisis.  In Education, the Committee have scrutinised reports and made recommendations to the Cabinet in areas that include home-to-school transport, ALN provision and strategies, Education and safeguarding, schools' admissions policy, and the improving schools' programme. Members also scrutinised a report on the Estyn Inspection and deliberated on an end-of-year report from the Director of Education.  By working with officers and members the People Scrutiny Committee has responded well to external audits and developed solid action plans to address the recommendations received. |
| **Section 4: Training and Development** |
| I have undertaken several training opportunities they include the WLGA Leadership Programme, WLGA One to One coaching and attend weekly development and briefing sessions within the Council relating to a wide variety of topics.  Also attended Leadership in Health & Safety via Caerphilly CBC, Corporate Safeguarding Training Adult and Children’s services BGCBC, Member Development Training BGCBC, Personal development training on waste and management and various areas of the management of this site by being a board member of Silent Valley Waste Services.  I also intend taking up further training opportunities that are available to me over the coming year to further develop my skills in the council but also within the community. |
| **Section 5: Initiatives, Special Activities and Issues** |
| I continue to volunteer in the community, I am Treasurer of Tredegar Twinning Association and a Board member of Tredegar Moose number one lodge – I also work with community groups and community centres within the Sirhowy ward to support the wider community. |
| **Signature of Councillor: Tommy Smith**  **Date: 23rd October, 2023** |