

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 2013. 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: Steve Thomas

Party: Labour

Ward: Tredegar Central & West & Ward

Section 1 – Roles and Responsibilities

I work alongside the Leader and deputise for him in his absence. I bring different skills and interests to the Executive. I work up detailed policies to complement the strategic vision and be available to all Members for advice and guidance. My portfolio which includes deputising, the Executive Business Manager Role, Local Service Board, Lead Member for Corporate Assessment Actions, Culture, Customs and Practices of Council, Business Transformation, Workplace Transformation (includes rationalisation of buildings/ agile working), Simpson Review – Collaboration, Remuneration Panel and Asset Management Strategy

I am actively pursuing culture change within the Authority and regularly meet with Members who seek advice in relation to their Executive Portfolio or on a Scrutiny matter.

Section 2: Constituency Activity

Representing the multi community Ward of Tredegar Central and West comprising of Ashvale, Gwent Way, Town Centre, Bedwellty Pits and Cefn Golau areas. I have arranged for constituents to visit me at my office in order to discuss issues with the relevant Members/officers and arranged site meetings where required. I have contacted and held meetings with Tai Calon on numerous housing issues for constituents and in some instances the wider Community. If any problems are raised by my constituents I endeavour to resolve the matter, over with last year I have written numerous letters and emails with regard to Ward matters.

Section 3: Executive and Scrutiny Activities

I lead the work of the Executive and participate in the Executive's collective decision making and to respond to Scrutiny as appropriate. Members and Officers frequently request meetings with the Leadership in order to discuss strategic and Council matters. I attend Fortnightly meetings with the Education Commissioner and Executive/CMT Members. During the last year I have attended approximately 600 meetings, these meetings includes WLGA Meetings, Circuit of Wales, Strategic Management Board for Education, Local Service Boards. I have met with Ministers to discuss Local Government, Regeneration, Social Services and Education issues.

Section 3: Executive and Scrutiny Activities (Cont/d)...

I have had meetings with elected Members, Trades Unions, Chief Executives and senior officers from neighbouring authorities, external organisations, collaborative meetings with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. I have met with Fire & Rescue Authority and Aneurin Bevan Health Authority representatives and the Police Commissioner in order to be kept fully informed of issues with our partners. I also Chair the Local Service Board and work closely with our partners for Blaenau Gwent and the wider area.

The Leadership also meet regularly for Council business including Regulators meetings with representatives from Wales Audit Office and Inspectors and Welsh Government officials in relation to Education. I have arranged Executive/CMT 'off agenda' meetings to have pre informal discussions on council matters. I regularly meet with the Chief Executive, Corporate Directors in relation to Corporate Assessment, regulatory issues and general council issues.

I have regular dialogue with key members of Scrutiny in order to discuss issues in relation to Portfolio and other matters.

Section 4: Training and Development

I pursued with Daniel Hurford of the WLGA mentoring sessions for the Executive and CMT with Ian Bottrill and John Schlutz. I also attend these sessions and have individual sessions with them both and the Leader and on some occasions the Chief Executive. In all I attended around 15 change sessions and further sessions are arranged in the future to discuss Scrutiny and the Peer Review. I am currently seeking sessions to be rolled out to Scrutiny Members and further sessions for the Executive Members.

I have requested and attended various Members Briefings when I am free from other commitments.

Section 5: Initiatives, Special Activities and Issues

I hold fortnightly meetings with budget holders, the Executive Member and the Chief Finance Office to monitor budgets and give considerations to the continued budget savings to be made by the Council. I am in the process of establishing other processes with regard to governance in order to tackle the issues around performance monitoring across the Authority.

During the work undertaken within the Executive/CMT 'Off Agenda' sessions it was felt that in order to continue to move the authority forward and to respond to a succession of poor inspections, that we would have to enhance and quicken the 'change' process within the authority. In response to this I have been prominent in implementing the 'Coalition for Change' which will become a vehicle for informing the Council's strategy and vision. The idea behind this is to drive forward improvements which will lead to better service delivery. This team will support and develop future phases of activity, ensuring all key stakeholders are regularly updated on its work and outputs.

I have made arrangements for further meetings to be arranged with Ian Bottrill and key individuals to discuss Scrutiny and meet with the Leadership from an English Authority who has taken forward changes that could prove beneficial for Blaenau Gwent.

Signature of Councillor: S Thomas

Date: 25th October, 2013