**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 2025. It is provided for the information of all constituents and for no other purpose.

**Councillor: Tommy Smith**

**Party: Labour**

**Ward: Sirhowy Ward**

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| **Section 1 – Roles and Responsibilities** |
| Chair of the People Scrutiny Committee which incorporates and scrutinise issues relating to 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/Full Council for consideration. |
| **Section 2: Constituency Activity** |
| General update for residents in respect of my role as your BGCBC councillor representing the Sirhowy Ward:  Since May 2022, I have dealt with over 1400 general enquiries from constituents across the Sirhowy Ward and written over 600 letters on behalf of constituents, this figure does not include the general e-mails that I write daily.  I have attended 99 council meetings. This figure does not include my attendance at pre-agenda setting meetings, meetings with cabinet members or other work-related meetings with organisations such as Gwent Police, ABUHB, Registered Social Landlords (RSL’s).  I have also attended numerous meetings with organisations such as school governing bodies, meetings in the community, ward councillor surgeries, councillor member training sessions incorporating all aspects of work undertaken at BGCBC and also some sessions held by the Welsh Local Government Association.  Due to the volume of enquiries received via phone calls, WhatsApp, social media etc I am not able to give an accurate figure of the numbers I have dealt with.  I have also reported many issues via the MCS (My Council Services) app on behalf of constituents. |

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| **Section 3: Cabinet and Scrutiny Activities** |
| The People Scrutiny Committee has continued its work to scrutinise and challenge across a wide-ranging work programme, with committee members using skills and experience to put forward recommendations to Cabinet for consideration.  In Children's and Adult Services, the Committee has examined a varied work programme in critical areas such as, the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2023/24, CIW – Fostering Services, Social Services Staff Capacity and Grant Funding, the Committee continues to monitor this work.  In Education, the Committee have scrutinised reports and made recommendations to the Cabinet in areas that include, Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy, Improving Schools Programme, The Future of School Improvement Services in Blaenau Gwent LA, Sustainable Communities for learning, Attendance, Exclusions and Elective Home Education, Key Stage 4 Results, Members have also worked with officers to re-establish the ‘Getting to Know Our Schools Sub-Group’. Members of the Committee have visited schools across Blaenau Gwent talking to headteachers and senior leaders to get a greater understanding of the school estate.  The Committee agreed that both departments have responded well to external audits and developed solid action plans to address any external recommendations received. |
| **Section 4: Training and Development** |
| I am confident in my role as a chair / scrutiny member and ward councillor. But where possible, I have undertaken further training for personal development, and I will continue to undertake training opportunities wherever possible to further develop my skills in the Council but also within the community. |
| **Section 5: Initiatives, Special Activities and Issues** |
| I am Chair of governors at Glanhowy Primary School, school governor at St Joseph’s RC School and Secretary at Tredegar Moose Lodge No. 1. I work with all community centres within my ward and community groups and have recently managed to secure funding for residents of Scwrfa Road to create a community garden with raised beds, wild flowers and a small orchard for residents to enjoy.  In the ward, I continue to hold councillor surgeries twice a month to engage with residents across Sirhowy. |
| **Signature of Councillor: T. Smith**  **Date:10/06/2025** |