



Blaenau Gwent

Assessment of Performance 2017/18

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Purpose of the Report and How It's Set Out

Well-being Objectives 2017/18

Create a better, enhanced environment and infrastructure that will benefit our communities, businesses and visitors;

Continue to improve learner outcomes and well-being so that all children and young people thrive and realise their full potential

We will be a modern, smart Authority, providing leadership to enable people and communities to thrive;

Take a preventative and early intervention approach to support the most vulnerable ensuring, where appropriate, they are protected and supported to achieve personal outcomes and well-being;

Maximise the employability of local people through skills development at a local and regional level;

Enabling older people to feel valued and empowered to maximise their independence and lead healthy and engaged lives;

Support citizens to take an active and empowered role in their communities to provide resilience.

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Purpose of the Report and How it's Set Out

The purpose of the report is to present the performance of the Council at the end of the reporting period 2017/18. This sets out the key activities and measures used to monitor our performance for the year against the Well-being/Improvement Objectives 2017/18:

- ✓ Create a better, enhanced environment and infrastructure that will benefit our communities, businesses and visitors;
- ✓ Maximise the employability of local people through skills development at a local and regional level;
- ✓ Continue to improve learner outcomes and well-being so that all children and young people thrive and realise their full potential;
- ✓ Take a preventative and early intervention approach to support the most vulnerable ensuring, where appropriate, they are protected and supported to achieve personal outcomes and well-being;
- ✓ Enabling older people to feel valued and empowered to maximise their independence and lead healthy and engaged lives;
- ✓ We will be a modern, smart Authority, providing leadership to enable people and communities to thrive; and
- ✓ Support citizens to take an active and empowered role in their communities to provide resilience.

In order to meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the report also includes, at appendix 1, evidence of how the Well-being/Improvement Objectives have been reflected as part of the Council's Corporate Plan 2018/22 and how these will be monitored as part of the Council's business planning process.

On an annual basis, all Councils are required to report against a prescribed set of national indicators. Appendix 2 provides detailed analysis of not only how the Council has performed, but also how we compare to others across Wales.

Create a better, enhanced environment and infrastructure that will benefit our communities, businesses and visitors

BRAG Status: Amber - Issues have been identified with an area that will/may negatively impact on performance.

This Well-being Objective was agreed to be in place from April 2017 to March 2018. The progress against the Well-being Objectives up until March 2018 is set out below

As part of the development of our Corporate Plan 2018/22 the Well-being Objectives were revised in April 2018. Reference is made at appendix 1 to show alignment into the organisational business planning and tracking of actions.

Why this Well-being Objective is Important

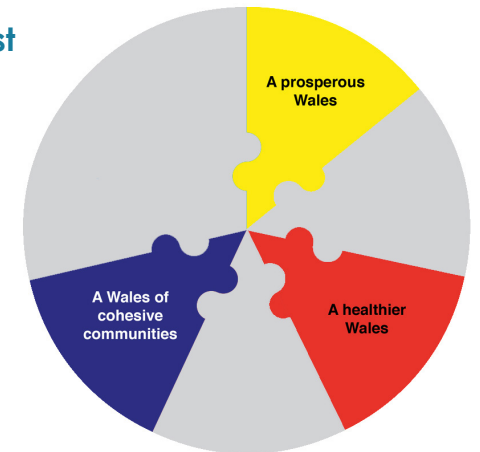
The Council recognises that there are important economic, environmental and social reasons for improving our environment and infrastructure. Blaenau Gwent is one of the smallest local authorities in Wales but it has huge potential, with new ideas and smart thinking we will work together to achieve success.

Personal well-being can be heavily influenced by both the physical and social attributes of an area where a person lives and works. Developing the rich and distinctive culture and heritage of this area could also bring wider benefits to the community. It can contribute to better health through physical and mental well-being; building an identity of the local area and its industrial past through education and information and there is also a potential to generate income and support the economy through more effective and joined up tourism across the local area.

As part of our extensive engagement programme, 'Blaenau Gwent We Want', undertaken throughout 2016/17, both the environment and community were recognised by people as being assets or being special about Blaenau Gwent particularly our landscape and parks. A tidy and clean environment was important to people who responded and was one of the areas where people felt they had a role to play in and where most improvement was needed.

Key Actions Identified to Implement the Well-being Objective

- Improve and challenge the implementation of the Waste and Recycling Collaborative Change Programme.
- Develop a Highways Asset Management Plan in line with Welsh Government and Auditing guidelines for implementation.
- Technical Services to deliver Strategic Infrastructure & City Deal.
- Develop profiles for Ward areas, town centres and the industrial estates to understand the required effort and demand required in order to provide service provision.



Key Actions Summary of Achievements

A review of the Collaborative Change Programme work packages has been completed which resulted in a number of these being closed and new packages created which ensured we delivered service improvement to increase recycling across the borough. Significant capital funding of £1.82m was secured from Welsh Government in 2017/18 to support Waste Services. Work has been undertaken over the year to procure a Regional Food Waste Disposal Contract. This has now been completed with the contract signed in March 2018.

Throughout 2017/18 work continues to progress on the development of the Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) which is a requirement of the Welsh Government. The Plan is used as evidence to determine any grant funding from Welsh Government. Progress against the HAMP includes: the addition of highways infrastructure following the de trunking of sections of the A465; and also additional adoptive highways associated with new developments. We continue to work with Welsh Government and CSS Wales in the development of HAMPs and in line with respective timescales. Consultants are providing support to developing the HAMP and have advised on the new code of practice for Highway maintenance.

The £2.1m investment highway capital improvement programme is being tendered with a start date for implementation May 2018 through to potential completion by 2019. The service has continued to participate in the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, particularly with the Regional Transport Authority (RTA).

Progress to develop ward profiles to support the efficiency of the service has commenced and 'Mobile Worker', as part of the 'My Council Services App' has been implemented within street cleansing and waste services. The 'My Council Services App' has been developed in order to provide an end-to-end process for customers so that they can report incidents such as fly tipping and street cleansing and these would then be recorded and tracked through the process.

Within the Regeneration Section, the Evolutive CRM system is being used to provide the Economic Development Team with information on Blaenau Gwent businesses including demand and business engagement.

Summary of where performance can be improved

The Local Authority has a statutory requirement to achieve recycling targets on an annual basis. The statutory recycling target for 2016/17 was 58%, and Blaenau Gwent achieved 57%. As the statutory target was not achieved, Senior Officers and the Leadership met with the Cabinet Secretary and Minister in December 2017 to discuss recycling performance and the progress made through the Collaborative Change Programme 2. Proposals to improve or plan to improve performance for 2017/18 onwards were discussed and presented. The Cabinet Secretary decided to impose a fine of £78,000 to the Council for the failure to achieve the statutory target. For 2017/18 the statutory target set by Welsh Government was 58% and Blaenau Gwent achieved 56%.

There are significant opportunities for the implementation of the 'My Council Services App' and 'Mobile Worker App' within the Neighbourhood Services Section. This information, including data and mapping, can be used to improve the understanding of the required effort needed to deliver demand led services. Throughout the year a number of data quality issues were identified with the reporting of fly tipping, a number of which have been resolved but further progress is required for 2018/19.

The Evolutive CRM System is under development and issues remain with the quality of some of the data. Significant work is required to correct these issues and the resource required to map the demand and profiles across all the areas is greater than first expected. This will be an area of focus for 2018/19.

What will be done to make these improvements?

In order to work to reduce the amount of waste and to increase the recycling rate, a number of proposals for 2018/19 are being put in place such as: side waste enforcement; black bag sorting at the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC); a revised work programme for WRAP (the Waste and Resources Action Programme); the development of future household waste recycling centre infrastructure; communications and marketing campaigns; use of a bespoke rear lane collection vehicle; and implementation of a revised trade waste service.

The Council will continue to play an active role in the Regional Transport Authority (RTA), particularly with there being a focus through the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD).

'My Council Services App' and 'Mobile Worker' needs to be implemented across the Neighbourhood Services Section and this will include: highways; the mapping of street furniture assets; improved use within street cleansing; and further implementation within waste. The accuracy of the data within the Evolutive CRM System needs to be quality assured. Once this has been undertaken, consideration can then be given to the implementation of the system across the whole of Regeneration Services.

Well-being Objective Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	2017/18 Target	Actual 2016/17	2017/18 Actual *	Improvement Trend Compared to 2016/17	Wales Ranking
Percentage of streets that are clean	96	95.5	95.1	Declined	19
Percentage of fly tipping incidents cleared in 5 days	95	88.4	69.09	Declined	21
Percentage of A roads in poor condition	2.5	2.3	2.6	Declined	5
Percentage of B roads in poor condition	5	5.1	5.6	Declined	18
Percentage of C roads in poor condition	7.5	6.4	6.1	Improved	6
Percentage of food establishments that meet food hygiene standards	100	89.8	91.55	Improved	20
Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted	58	56.7	56**	Declined	22
Percentage of waste sent to landfill	2	2.2	4**	Declined	12
Percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless	1	New PI	50.17	Improved	*
Percentage of empty private properties brought back into use	N/A	3.51	1.9	Declined	*
Number of new homes created as a result of bringing empty properties back into use (higher figure is better)	N/A	New PI	9	Declined	*
Percentage of all planning applications determined in time	N/A	New PI	97.71	N/A	4
Percentage of planning appeals dismissed	N/A	New PI	80	N/A	6
Number of library visits per 1,000 population	4,800	4,652	4,434	Declined	14
Number of visits to leisure centres per 1,000 population	10,000	10,219	10,611	Improved	2

*National comparison data not yet available

** Unverified figure

Continue to improve learner outcomes and well-being so that all children and young people thrive and realise their full potential

BRAG Status: Green - The area is performing to plan; all performance factors are within the acceptable variance levels.

This Well-being Objective was agreed to be in place from April 2017 to March 2018. The progress against the Well-being Objective up until March 2018 is set out below

As part of the development of our Corporate Plan 2018/22 the Well-being Objectives were revised in April 2018. Reference is made at appendix 1 to show alignment into the organisational business planning and tracking of actions.

Why this Well-being Objective is Important

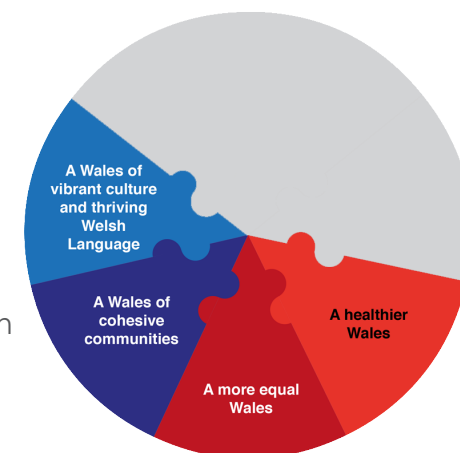
The Council's Vision Statement for Education is, 'to secure excellent achievement and well-being through a partnership, school-led, self improving school to school, system approach'. The aim is to deliver benefits including: a focus on improving teaching and learning; progression and continuity between schools; reducing variation within and between schools; and working collaboratively to achieve ambitious outcomes for all learners.

A full range of partners work with Blaenau Gwent schools in order to support improvements to the learning, achievement and well-being of children and young people in Blaenau Gwent. Through our engagement activity with the community, 'Blaenau Gwent We Want', education and skills were common themes with children and young people most likely to say that this was important.

This Well-being Objective incorporates the aims of the Improvement Objective, 'Ensure that Education Standards are Raised Particularly at Key Stage 4.

Key Actions Identified to Implement the Well-being Objective

- Take a lead role in the Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnership, representing the 10 Directors of Education as a member of the Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnership (LSKIP) Board.
- Implement the Vision for Education that guides continual improvement.
- Embed effective processes to hold the Education Achievement Service (EAS) sufficiently to account to secure continual improvement.
- Provide effective, efficient and economical high quality provision to secure continual improvement.
- Improve the quality of school provision through effective monitoring, evaluation and intervention of identified schools, including schools causing concern.
- Develop and implement strategies to improve pupil well-being.



Key Action Summary of Achievements

During the year, a decision was made regarding the lead for the Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnership. The lead representative for the Education has now passed to Newport City Council, whilst the lead role for Blaenau Gwent on the Board now sits with the Corporate Director for Regeneration and Communities. Functions are therefore now shared between Newport and Blaenau Gwent.

Cluster Plans for improvement which involve the feeder Primaries and Secondary school, have been devised and have demonstrated their effectiveness as evidenced by pupil outcomes improving in 2018 for 11, 14 and 16 year olds. Cluster plans therefore demonstrate the emergence of greater school-to-school working. Cluster Plans for the use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant for Looked After Children are in place for 2018; they are also in place for the use of schools' Education Improvement Grant. The Ebbw Fawr Learning Community works closely with primary schools in the cluster and has formed a partnership with the Learning Community to form the Ebbw Fawr Learning Community Alliance. Primary schools in the Tredegar cluster work in very close partnership with the Comprehensive school which has delivered training to the cluster primaries; both St Illtyd's in the South and Ystruth in the North work in close partnership with the Abertillery Learning Community. The Brynmawr Cluster has formed a loose alliance and has submitted plans to the EAS to support them further in this work. Schools are therefore viewing themselves now as part of a much wider learning community as they continue to support one another in their work. This approach is also in line with the National Strategy for Education.

The Council now devises cluster performance profiles to underpin the Council's work with partners to improve outcomes and wellbeing for learners. Each Cluster of schools in Blaenau Gwent has a nominated Champion for Professional Learning and another for Wellbeing. These initiatives are clearly school-led and in line with the Council's vision for education.

Processes to hold the EAS effectively to account and also to improve the quality of monitoring, evaluation and intervention in identified schools have been further developed via the client-management function located in Blaenau Gwent. This has helped to bring about continued improvement as evidenced by increases in pupil outcomes, particularly in Key Stage 4 as well as improvements in school categorisation, school inspection judgements and the reduction in NEETs.

Pupil outcomes for our 11, 14 and 16 year old pupils (GCSEs) improved in 2018. Performance at the expected level and at the higher +1 levels improved. Performance gaps with Wales narrowed.

The proportion of pupils in Key Stage 4 achieving 5 GCSEs including a GCSE in English and Maths increased from 41.1% in 2017 to 44.7% in 2018. The performance at GCSE of pupils entitled to free school meals also improved by 2.8 percentage points on the previous year.

The proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades of A*/ A in GCSEs also increased by 4.3 percentage points (pp) from 7.5% to 11.8%. The proportion of pupils attaining A* -C in GCSE Maths (combined) increased by 2.4pp to 52.6% and GCSE Science increased by +6.8pp to 45.4%.

However, the proportion of pupils attaining GCSE A* - C in English declined by -0.9 pp. This remains a key area for further improvement. The proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) reduced from 2% to 1.5% in 2018.

Outcomes at A Level for post-16 learners remain at approximately 74% for grades A*-C but these figures are for all learners attending Coleg Gwent; further disaggregation will be required to evaluate value-added for post-16 learners in Blaenau Gwent. School inspection judgements under the new inspection framework in 2018 continue to be good overall with no primary school in follow up and good judgements awarded under the new framework. School categorisation reveals that all primary schools have been categorised as either Green or Yellow.

One secondary school was removed from follow-up evidencing strong progress in all areas. However, one secondary was judged to be adequate and needing significant improvement and hence subject to Estyn monitoring.

Work to develop the new Six Bells School (part of the Abertillery Learning Community) remains on track. Work is progressing well on the Ystruth remodelling project. Work to develop vocational provision at the River Centre has been challenging due to the need to identify sufficient revenue funding but a feasibility study of a range of options is underway.

Band A 21st Century Schools Programme will complete on time and within budget. Band B planning is progressing well and is now in line with 'affordability' decisions taken by the Council. The ICT infrastructure Plan, based on schools' decisions regarding 'affordability' is also progressing well. All schools have signed up to the plan and work is commencing to project implementation.

The Brynmawr Foundation School 3G pitch project plan has been devised but is currently on hold due to the need for the school to address other key priorities at this point in time.

A series of workshops have been held with schools and an officer appointed to support them with the new GDPR requirements. Schools are working in accordance with the vision for education and taking a school-led approach to this key area. Schools are therefore well prepared and supported to work within the new GDPR regulations (May 2018).

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) has been approved by Welsh Government and in the process of being implemented. The new Class Size Grant has been fully implemented via a range of school-led initiatives. The new School Maintenance grant has also been fully implemented. The new 30 hour childcare arrangements/ school admission arrangements are fully implemented. Surplus places continue to reduce. Restructuring the Youth Service, in line with the MTFs has taken place, improving the quality of provision whilst securing a significant savings.

Estyn reported an improvement in well-being at one secondary school which is now strong and the setting has made significant improvement overall. Improvements were also made at two other comprehensive schools and a decline was seen in one.

The Well-being Core Group has produced the Well-being Policy and Practice Guide which is in place across schools. The Well-being Core Group is informing improved practice and sharing good practice with Head Teachers.

A high proportion of both pupils and parents of primary age pupils (in pre-inspection questionnaires), expressed positive views about their schools demonstrating good levels of well-being. Taken overall, pupil outcomes, provision and leadership for well-being are good as evidenced in Estyn school inspection reports.

Primary school attendance has improved over the 3 year period and a greater proportion of schools are placed in quarter 1 and 2 for attendance. Unauthorised absence has continued to reduce which places Blaenau Gwent primary schools 2nd in its family of schools.

Secondary attendance has improved over the 3 year period and persistent absenteeism has reduced placing Blaenau Gwent 1st in its family of local Authorities and 2nd across the South East Wales Consortia (SEWC) region. Unauthorised absence has reduced and Blaenau Gwent is now located below national averages. The rate of secondary school attendance exceeds that of the all Wales averages.

Good progress has been made through the comprehensive Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Provision Improvement Plan. Excellent stakeholder engagement was achieved in the design and implementation of the strategic ALN proposals for secondary pupils presenting with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Summary of where performance can be improved

Continue to support schools to work with other schools, across a range of aspects, and in accordance with the Vision for Education, National Strategy to create a self-improving system and National Mission for Education in Wales. Continue to support our schools to learn from the best to secure equity and excellence.

Overall a greater emphasis needs to be given in each secondary school to improving progress in English and Maths between Key Stage 2 and 3, particularly for those pupils entitled to Free School Meals.

There is a need to continue to work with schools and our partners as well as the EAS to improve two secondary schools in particular.

There is a need to continue to improve primary attendance in order to meet targets, particularly in identified schools as well as to accelerate the work to reduce persistent absentees.

What will be done to make these improvements?

- Continue to support schools to secure good outcomes in school inspections.
- Continue to support schools to improve so that the proportion of schools categorised as green and yellow continue to increase.

- Work to improve the accuracy of teacher assessment, tracking of performance and the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 3 in English and Maths and in identified schools.
- Continue with work to ensure that the work of the EAS and Local Government Education Services (LGES) services located in the Council are aligned and effectively support improvement in key identified areas.
- Schools are supported to organise themselves in groups, clusters or learning communities to improve pupil outcomes and wellbeing and/or to maximise resources and/or professional learning opportunities.

Well-being Objective Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	2017/18 Target	Previous Year Performance	Actual Performance	Improvement Trend Compared to last year	Wales Ranking
Percentage of pupils achieving the expected outcome at the end of the Foundation Phase*	FSM - 77.1 Non FSM – 88.5	86.0 – all pupils FSM – 77.2 Non FSM – 89.4	2018 Outturn 81.1- All Pupils 71.7 - FSM 84.7- Non-FSM	Declined Declined Declined	N/A
Percentage of pupils achieving the expected outcome at the end of Key Stage 2	FSM – 79.7 Non FSM - 93	88.4 – all pupils FSM – 80.1 Non FSM – 91.8	2018 Outturn 88.6- All Pupils 79.2 - FSM 91.1- Non-FSM	Improved Declined Declined	N/A
Percentage of pupils achieving the expected outcome at the end of Key Stage 3	FSM – 76.6 Non FSM – 88.1	83.4 – all pupils FSM – 70.4 Non FSM – 88.0	2018 Outturn 85.7 - All Pupils 71.4 - FSM 89.5- Non-FSM	Improved Improved Improved	N/A
Percentage of Year 11 pupils achieving 5 GCSEs at grades A*- C, or equivalent, including English or Welsh first language and Maths	FSM – 36.7 Non FSM – 54.7	2017 Outturn 41.1 - All Pupils 22.8 - FSM 47.0 - Non-FSM	2018 Provisional 44.7	N/A	22
Percentage of pupil attendance in primary schools	94.9	2016 Outturn 94.5	2017 Outturn 94.6	Same	20

*The decrease in the FPI between 2017 and 2018 is due to a change in policy and recalibration of the Foundation Phase outcomes

Performance Indicator	2017/18 Target	Previous Year Performance	Actual Performance	Improvement Trend Compared to last year	Wales Ranking
Percentage of pupil attendance in secondary schools	94.5	2017 Outturn 93.7	2017 Outturn 92.9	Declined	15
Percentage of Year 11 leavers not in Education, Training or Employment	N/A	2016 Outturn 2.49%	2017 Outturn 1.5	Imrpoved	14
Percentage of pupils with 5 A* - A results at Key Stage 4 Blaenau Gwent	N/A	2016 Outturn 10.1	2017 Outturn 7.5	Declined	N/A
Percentage of pupils with 5 A* - A results at Key Stage 4 Wales	N/A	2016 Outturn 15.9	2017 Outturn 16.8	Improved	N/A
Percentage of pupils with 5 A* - A results at Key Stage 4 Difference	N/A	2016 Outturn -5.8	2017 Outturn -9.3	Declined	N/A
School Categorisation – Overall Support (Red)	N/A	2017 Outturn 2 (8%)	2017 Outturn 2 (8%)	Remained the same	N/A
School Categorisation – Overall Support (Amber)	N/A	2017 Outturn 4 (16%)	2017 Outturn 4 (16%)	Remained the same	N/A
School Categorisation – Overall Support (Yellow)	N/A	2017 Outturn 15 (60%)	2017 Outturn 11 (44%)	Improved	N/A
School Categorisation – Overall Support (Green)	N/A	2017 Outturn 4 (16%)	2017 Outturn 8 (32%)		N/A
School Categorisation – Overall Support (Top 2)	N/A	2017 Outturn 19 (76%)	2017 Outturn 19 (76%)	Remained the same	N/A

We will be a modern, smart Authority, providing leadership to enable people and communities to thrive

BRAG Status: Amber - Issues have been identified with an area that will/may negatively impact on performance

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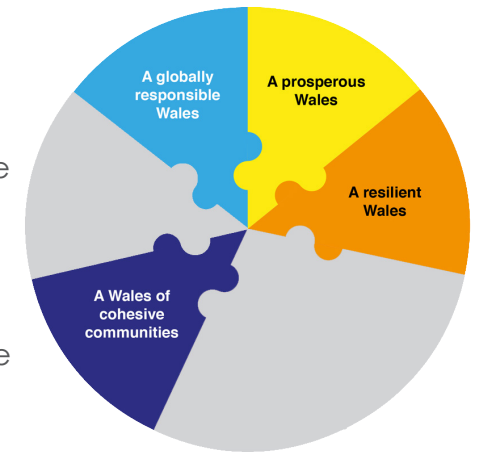
As part of the development of our Corporate Plan 2018/22 the Well-being Objectives were revised in April 2018. Reference is made at appendix 1 to show alignment into the organisational business planning and tracking of actions.

Why this Well-being Objective is Important

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places sustainable development at its core. There is a statutory duty on the Council and other bodies in the public service sector (covered by the Act) to: think about the long-term; work better with people and communities and each other; look to prevent problems; and take a more joined-up approach.

This Act will fundamentally shape the way we implement this Objective to achieve the sustainable development

principle and use the five ways of working. The Council agreed to: work to maximise people's independence; strive for communities to achieve the best possible outcomes; understand the needs of the community; identify the best service delivery model; collaborate with partners; have resilient budget planning; simplify processes and engage stakeholders. Through our engagement activity with the community, 'Blaenau Gwent We Want', we know that some people have said they would like to share their views with service providers to help improve local services and democracy. We want to work with the public to involve them more in the future.



Key Actions to Implement the Well-being Objective

- Review and implement the Organisational Development Strategy in line with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Support the Council to reduce sickness absence and promote attendance.
- Support the development and implementation across the Council of key strategic policy and legislation (including Welsh Language).
- Review of the democratic arrangements including support for Members.
- Continue to develop and implement the overall communications plan for the Council.
- Deliver the Customer and Digital Project.
 - Effective financial management;
 - A revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS); and
 - Plans for budget setting for future years, in support of the political manifesto / priorities, clearly setting out service implications and based on the MTFS.

Key Action Summary of Achievements

The Corporate Plan was endorsed by Council in April 2018 and the review of the Organisational Development Strategy will be undertaken following this endorsement. A staff survey will also be undertaken to inform the strategy in autumn 2018. 95% of the Organisational Delivery Plans have been successfully implemented throughout 2017/18.

The average number of days lost owing to sickness per Council employee for 2017/18 was high at 11.23 days however; this improved by 1 day per employee and will remain a priority moving forward. This rate of absence is comparable to Council's across the Gwent region. An Elected Member task and finish group has been established to review the Managing Attendance Policy and to make recommendations for improvement. This will be aligned to the annual review of staff sickness absence reported to Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee in autumn 2018 as part of their agreed work programme.

Support continues to be provided to support the organisation to understand and meet its requirements under the Welsh Language Standards, including the Welsh Language Monitoring Report for 2017/18. The Council has also has a statutory obligation to report produce a Welsh in Education School Plan (WESP) document in line with Section 84 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The WESP sets out the Council's strategic approach and direction in the development and delivery of Welsh-medium provision and Welsh education.

An annual progress update against the Strategic Equality Plan has been undertaken. Significant work been done to support services to meet the actions set out in the Plan, including the development of a LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) Forum. The Regional Violence Against Women And Sexual Violence Strategy is also in place.

A significant piece of work was undertaken to introduce Public Spaces Protection Orders to address persistent anti-social behaviour in public places. The Council is also actively participating in the national resettlement programme.

A comprehensive review of the democratic arrangements has been undertaken with a focus on managing and modernising procedures. This includes the consideration of the provision of webcasting. The Council will be re submitting for the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Level 1 Member Development Charter owing to the progress being made over the past year, including the development of a Member Competency Framework aligned to the Personal Development Review (PDR) process, development of arrangements for members sitting on outside bodies and the introduction of a mentoring programme.

It was agreed to develop an interim Communications Strategy which will be reviewed by the Chief Commercial Officer when in post. An organisational Communications Delivery Plan is in place to support the Strategy. Communications activity has supported the engagement programmes of the organisation. The Council has made a move towards using more digital media to communicate effectively including social media and the website.

The Customer Digital Board continues to meet with a highlight report included as a regular item. A cross Department Digital group has been set up and the first meeting included a demonstration of the 'Mobile App', encouraging use by the group members, consideration of a draft Digital Strategy and consideration of what services could be offered from libraries.

All statutory and most local deadlines continued to be achieved e.g. submission of grant claims, monthly returns to HMRC (PAYE & VAT) etc. As at quarter 3 the 2017/18 financial forecast monitoring reports were produced and considered by the Joint Budget Scrutiny and Executive Committee during February 2018 as part of their agreed work programme. These related to the revenue budget including FEPS, the capital programme, reserves position and identified current cost pressures faced.

Action plans identified to mitigate forecast adverse variances continue to be monitored and the Cost Pressure sub group continue to meet quarterly to consider identified / emerging cost pressures. The use of general reserves exceeded original expectations for 2017/18; however, the amendment to the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) has allowed the general reserve to be replenished. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was updated during the quarter and at its meeting on 25th January 2018, Council agreed its 2018/19 budget which included the award of some significant cost pressures to address a number of budget issues. The Council is not planning to use general reserves in 2018/19. Throughout the period, budget holders were supported in developing action plans to address in year cost pressures and the development of outline business cases for future service change/savings.

The council has completed its initial accounts for 2017/18 which were published within the required timescale; however the accounts for 2016/17 and 2017/18 will remain unsigned by the WAO as a result of ongoing investigations.

Summary of where performance can be improved

A review to be undertaken on consideration of a thematic approach as part of the Organisational Strategy aligned to the Delivery Model. As part of the agreed work programme of the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee will be provided to recommend improvements to the Managing Attendance Policy including procedures and the approach to managing attendance.

Compliance continues to progress against the Welsh Language Standards.

A review of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process is being undertaken to assess if the organisation policy is fit for purpose and ensures the Council is meeting its specific duties effectively.

Work needs to be undertaken to more align the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act to the democratic processes and to also use the Sustainable Development principles as part of the decision making process. In their recent review of the Council's Scrutiny function, the WAO identified that the Council needed to, 'provide further training on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act for scrutiny members to improve their understanding and consideration of the Act when undertaking scrutiny activity'. In response to this, the Council will include training on the Act as part of the Member Development Programme, to include how Members will have a full understanding of the Act and to consider the implementation of the Act against Council priorities.

Moving forward a review of the strategic intent and direction for the communications function will be undertaken including how it supports the

Customer standards for the Customer and Digital Project still need to be agreed and more data analysis is required in order to make informed decisions on services moving forward.

For the MTFs the Council is looking to cover a three year period. Where there is an identified funding gap we need to review the format of information provided to members detailing service implications to make these implications clearer for both members and the public.

The preparation and publication of the Council's statutory annual accounts will be brought forward on an incremental basis over the next years in line with statutory requirements.

What will be done to make these improvements?

- In Organisational Development undertake a review of policy and procedures in order to make improvements.
- Implement a leadership development programme to support a change in culture across the organisation
- To continue to seek opportunities for collaboration and partnership working across the region in order to improve financial resilience
- The council has committed to being a more commercial organisation in order to support financial resilience and protect front line service delivery.
- Support managers to manage attendance in their service areas.
- A position statement in relation to compliance of the Welsh Language Standards is being developed to provide a fuller organisational insight into areas which will need to be progressed.
- An annual review of the Scrutiny function takes place at the end of the cycle and this will inform activity moving forward. This will include further development of the managing and modernising agenda.
- The strategic intent and direction for the communications function will be set.
- Continued support to public engagement activity throughout the year including development and implementation of the Engagement Strategy.
- Further rollout of the Council's 'Mobile App' in 2018/19 and other modules associated to the App, such as lone worker, booking and payments.
- The provisional outturn for the year will be considered by the Joint Budget Scrutiny and Executive Committee during September 2018 as part of their identified work programme.
- The development of outline business cases for future service change/savings will be undertaken throughout the year.
- A review of the Resources Service will be undertaken to ensure an effective use of resources continues.

Well-being Objective Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	2017/18 Target	Actual 2016/17	Actual 2017/18	Improvement Trend Compared to 2016/17	Wales Ranking
Number of working days lost to sickness absence per employee	9	12.1	11.23	Improved	18
Percentage of people that agree their local Council provides high quality services	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Take a preventative and early intervention approach to support the most vulnerable ensuring, where appropriate, they are protected and supported to achieve personal outcomes and well-being

BRAG Status: Amber - Issues have been identified with an area that will/may negatively impact on performance

This Well-being Objective was agreed to be in place from April 2017 to March 2018. The progress against the Well-being Objective up until March 2018 is set out below.

As part of the development of our Corporate Plan 2018/22 the Well-being Objectives were revised in April 2018. Reference is made at appendix 1 to show alignment into the organisational business planning and tracking of actions).

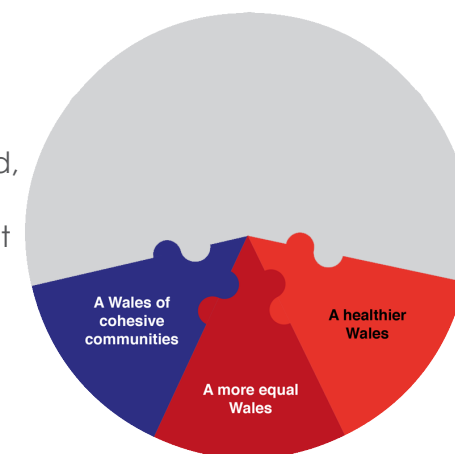
Why this Well-being Objective is Important

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 was a response to the Welsh Government review of Social Services in 2010 (Sustainable Social Services) which recognised that without radical change to the way we worked, services would become unaffordable in the near future as a result of demographic pressures and the changing expectations of the public at a time of financial austerity. There are a number of key themes that underpin the Act and these include: a focus on people; well-being, prevention and early intervention; partnership and integration; accessibility; and new methods of service delivery. In Children's Services the Integrated Services Team uses a prevention and early intervention approach to support families to remain in universal services to reduce the need for escalation into Social Care.

As a whole the aim of this Objective will be to support vulnerable people of all ages to maximise, maintain and sustain their independence. Through our engagement activity with the community, 'Blaenau Gwent We Want', the importance of social activities and having more social activities throughout the borough was a common theme as well as that anti-social behaviour needed to be dealt with better.

Key Actions to Implement the Well-being Objective

- Support the development and implementation across the Council of key strategic policy and legislation (including equalities, violence against women (VAWDASV), community safety and cohesion).
- Continue to provide high quality professional support services across the Council to enable all agreed priorities to be delivered, and to ensure vulnerable children and adults are kept safe.
- All Teams to contribute to improve outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC).
- All teams to contribute to the safe reduction in the numbers of Looked After Children (LAC).
- Ensure Families First, Flying Start, Early Years and Play targets the most vulnerable families in Blaenau Gwent who do not meet the criteria for a care and support plan under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.



- All teams to ensure the children and young people of Blaenau Gwent are safeguarded.
- Monitoring and ensuring the effectiveness of the Youth Service and how it contributes to the broader inclusion and well-being agendas.

Key Action Summary of Achievements

The Corporate Parenting Board has developed an action plan to support LAC. The priorities within the action plan have been developed to support the 7 Definitions of well-being as identified under the Act, plus one additional action decided upon at a local level. The action plan is regularly monitored to ensure we are addressing all elements of our LACs well-being.

Children's Services have developed a three year strategy to safely reduce the numbers of LAC. This strategy has an action plan which is monitored on a quarterly basis, progress includes:

- The development of a Supporting Change Team to work with children and families on the 'edge of care'. There is already strong evidence that this team is being effective in keeping children out of the LAC system and in so doing achieving e cost avoidance.
- The Regional Partnership Board agreed to fund the development of a Gwent-wide residential provision (Resource Hub) supported by an outreach attachment and trauma based service and an outreach skills for living team for care leavers (as part of a step-up and a step-down model).
- The Families First Structure has been embedded and has been well received by Families First staff and partner agencies. Families First also has its own duty system whereby referrals are taken directly and decisions made on all referrals within 24 hours. This streamlining of the referral process means families do not have to wait for support.

Legal Services have supported Social Services to manage the numbers of LAC. Staff have worked to adjust their priorities and react to requests for support appropriately, and there has been excellent feedback from departments who have expressed appreciation to the teams for their professional support and advice. With regards to case numbers the end of the year was steady with no further increase but it is noted that there were several challenging cases which took a lot of staff resource and time.

Blaenau Gwent has adopted the national approach to advocacy. This includes ensuring every child who comes into the care system or is placed on the child protection register has a face to face meeting with an independent advocate who can explain the various ways in which they can access advocacy to ensure their voice is heard. Blaenau Gwent is one of 4 Gwent authorities to develop a regionally commissioned advocacy service from June 2017.

In September 2017, a toolkit was produced by the Safeguarding Team on "Safeguarding and the safe use of Social Media". This was created in response to the identification of the issue to the Corporate Parenting Board and to raise awareness of online safety with children and young people. The 14 Plus Team has received training in relation to self harm as this was an escalating issue for our older children. A new risk assessment for our 14 plus children, that includes self-harm, has been developed which was taken from the Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) safety plan.

Care Inspectorate Wales recently undertook a core inspection of children's services. A draft report has been received which identified the positive work of the Directorate and did not identify any significant safeguarding concerns. During this year, despite significant workload pressures, all child protection referrals received a response within 24 hours. 90.78% of assessments were completed within statutory timescales, an increase from last year which was 84.53%. 93.7% of initial child protection conferences were held within the 15 day timescale as required under the All Wales Child Protection Procedures. 98.6% of core group meetings, which pull together a detailed child protection plan, were held within 10 working days of initial conference. Reports on safeguarding have been provided during the year to the Joint Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee as part of their agreed work programme. This has given members the opportunity to look in depth at the safeguarding activity across the Council and give appropriate challenge in order to make improvements to the service.

The Matrix approach to capturing safeguarding information and the close working arrangements between Education and Social Services Departments are effective. Recent work to counter potential terrorism and extremist behaviours has progressed well, for example, the Safer School Partnership. System test processes to test the robustness of our safeguarding processes have been devised and are being implemented.

The Childcare Offer successfully went live on 4th September 2017. The team continues to develop and refine the referral processes and are finalising the online applications system. Audit/sampling processes have now been established in order to comply with Welsh Government regulations and have carried out our 20% sampling figure. There have been a lower number of applications than expected across Wales and Welsh Government have increased areas to roll out the pilot in other authorities. Blaenau Gwent have been asked by Welsh Government to become a host authority for Torfaen and this is currently being explored.

A rapid review of Flying Start has been instructed by Welsh Government and detail is expected in June 2018. Blaenau Gwent has also been given permission by Welsh Government to increase our outreach numbers to 5% of the budget, rather than 1.5% of the uplift from 2012 budget. This will mean our outreach numbers could increase from 12 children to 53 children per year. We have been working with Generic Health Visitors and Families First to insure we target the most needy 0-3 children in Blaenau Gwent in line with our outreach policy but also looking at expanding the programme into other vulnerable areas in Blaenau Gwent in 2018/19.

The Youth Service have reported positive outcomes for young people with an impact report presented to both Scrutiny and Executive Committees as part of their agreed work programmes. 16% (1976 young people) of 11-25 year olds were registered (Reach) and supported by the Youth Service, with an additional 1695 anonymous young people also being supported. Out of the 1976 individuals, 24% (470 young people) gained 1069 nationally recognised accreditations which is an increase of 4% from last year. Since 2012, the service has seen a year on year increase in young people gaining accredited outcomes.

Within the 11-25 age group, the Youth Service has supported 41% (998 individuals, compared to 56% last year, 1389 individuals), 39% of all 11-13 year olds (761 individuals compared to 17% last year, 349 individuals), 8% of 17-19 year olds (189 individuals compared to 15%, 366 individuals, last year) and 0.5% of 20-25 year olds (28 individuals, compared to 2%, 113 individuals last year).

Over the last year, both core and external funding has been secured to continue a variety of projects to meet identified needs which include Inspire 2 Achieve, Inspire 2 Work, Health and Wellbeing, Duke of Edinburgh, Detached and Outreach Youth Workers, Positive Futures, Open for Youth Nights, Youth Clubs, Youth Information Service (including the 'BYG' Editorial group), Young Ambassadors (YAMs), the 11-18 Counselling Service, the Young Reps Volunteering Programme and the school holiday programme. The delivery of the two ESF operations 'Inspire to Achieve' (11-24 at risk of NEET young people) and 'Inspire to Work' (16-24 NEET young people) have now both been approved and operational for two and one year(s) respectively.

NEETs data is now at the lowest levels within the County Borough at 1.5% and above the Welsh average.

Summary of where performance can be improved

Working with the newly developed Supporting Change Team to support LAC through supporting the implementation of the LAC Reduction Strategy.

Parallel planning is used to support children to not drift into the LAC system.

Within Legal Services, moving from a reactive to a proactive approach and embedding this in practice. This should reduce the demand on Legal Services in future. Legal will work with Social Services to embed and strengthen the preventative agenda it is anticipated this will have a positive impact on the numbers needing court intervention, reducing the cost for needing external support and enabling more capacity and quality of service.

Despite the good work being done via the Corporate Parenting Action Plan to improve outcomes for LAC there have been some disappointing outcomes in relation to education. We have not achieved completion of Personal Education Plans of LAC within timescales 100% of the time. School attendance levels of LAC although high is slightly lower than last year. The number of unplanned school moves have increased, albeit for good reason in some cases (i.e. move on to adoptive placement and there has been a rise in the number of LAC who are excluded from school).

A report has been developed to run a pilot scheme to recruit specialist professional Foster Carers for LAC with complex needs. The report describes the current difficulties faced in the recruitment of Foster Carers and outlines the proposed pilot scheme to address these difficulties. The report also identifies potential savings.

The service is awaiting a formal evaluation of the Families First restructure undertaken by Worcester University, and will look to implement recommendations made to improve service delivery. We are also awaiting the outcome of the rapid review of Flying Start by Welsh Government and will implement any recommendations to improve service delivery.

There is a need to revisit and strengthen our performance balanced scorecard within Children's Services in relation to safeguarding and other areas of practice within the department.

The South East Wales Adoption Service has undertaken a number of recruitment campaigns throughout the year. This has increased the numbers of adopters available for our LAC with a plan for adoption; however, it does not yet meet demand.

Within the Youth Service, funding for the Families First Sexual Health project ceased which impacted on the number of young people supported throughout the year. ESF Inspire 2 Achieve funding has since been secured which has enabled Youth Workers to operate in future from secondary school sites. Despite the changes in provision, positive outcomes for young people have still been achieved.

The Youth Service is dependent upon external revenue funding. The Council has supported the service to maintain provision for young people vulnerable to becoming NEET in 2018/2019. Blaenau Gwent has led on the regional ESF bid for the Inspire to Achieve and Work programmes and the positive announcement for funding the Inspire to Achieve/Work project is encouraging, however, the ESF funding was for an initial period of 3 years, with the recent approvals to extend for until 2022.

Focus areas this year include gathering disengaged young people's feedback about pre and post 16 advice, support and curriculum choice, ETE LAC focus group.

What will be done to make these improvements?

- Close communication and relationship between Legal and Social Services to understand the needs and provide advice, maintaining trust and confidence.
- The 2018/19 Corporate Parenting Action Plan will look to address areas such as Personal Education Plans, attendance in schools and also to reduce unplanned school moves.
- If the scheme to recruit specialist Foster Carers is agreed and successful, we will look to initially recruit four specialist Foster Carers. They will commit to LAC with more complex needs and will treat fostering like a profession by ensuring 1 carer (if they are a couple) does not take work outside the home. We will look to recruit two child and parent placements. These placements are used to assess a parent's ability to look after their children within a safe environment when safeguarding concerns have been identified.
- Implement the extension to the Inspire 2 Achieve/Work initiatives, in line with project targets, particularly sustaining the level of NEET reduction. A staffing extension report will be produced in summer 2018.
- Ensure the Youth Service contributes to the broader inclusion and well-being agendas and meets the needs of young people.
- Delivery of actions from the recent CIW inspection

Well-being Objective Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	2017/18 Target	Actual 2016/17	Actual 2017/18	Improvement Trend Compared to 2016/17	Wales Ranking
Percentage of children satisfied with their care and support	N/A	76%	94	Improved	*
Percentage of child assessments completed in time	85	84.53	90.78	Improved	*
Percentage of children in care who had to move 3 or more times (3 or more placements)	12	12.32	9.44	Improved	
The percentage of assessments completed for children within statutory timescales	95	84.53	90.78	Improved	*
The percentage of children seen by a registered dentist within three months of becoming looked after	80	53.97	34.69	Declined	*
The percentage of looked after children registered with a GP	80	69.95	60.59	Declined	*
The percentage of re-registrations of children on local authority child protection registers	0	0	0.68	Declined	*
The average length of time for all children who were on the child protection register during the year	N/A	170.99	256.61	Declined	*
Percentage of children achieving the core subject indicator at key stages 2 and 4	N/A	57.50 16.67	65.38 14.81	Improved Declined	*
Percentage of looked after children who, during the year to 31st March have experienced one or more changes in school during periods of being looked after that were not due to transitional arrangements	17.5	23.62	6	Improved	*
The percentage of children supported to remain living with their family	75	68.41	62	Declined	*
The percentage of looked after children who returned home from care during the year	N/A	13.83	8.5	Declined	*
The percentage of all care leavers who are in education, training or employment at 12 months and 24 months after leaving care	N/A	40 40	68.75 80	Improved Improved	*
The percentage of all care leavers who have experienced homelessness during the year	N/A	27.03	6.12	Improved	*

*National comparison data not yet available

Maximise the employability of local people through skills development at a local and regional level

BRAG Status: Green - The area is performing to plan; all performance factors are within the acceptable variance levels.

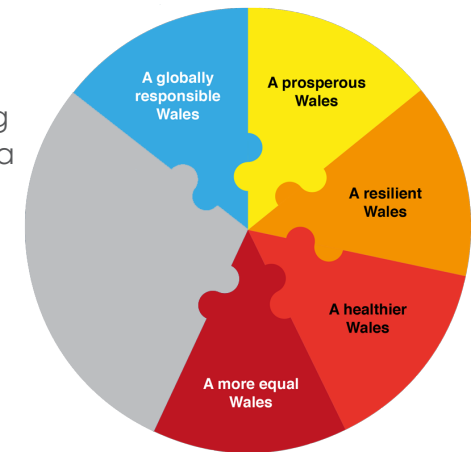
This Well-being Objective was agreed to be in place from April 2017 to March 2018. The progress against the Well-being Objective up until March 2018 is set out below.

As part of the development of our Corporate Plan 2018/22 the Well-being Objectives were revised in April 2018. Reference is made at appendix 1 to show alignment into the organisational business planning and tracking of actions.

Why this Well-being Objective is Important

It is widely recognised that increasing employability makes a fundamental contribution to reducing and tackling poverty and hence the economic status of the area. The benefits of getting people into work and engaging in a work culture, not only impacts on health and other social skills but also contributes further to the local economy.

Supporting people to obtain and retain their employment and secure long term employment reduces reliance upon support services aligned to social well-being and poverty. Working together locally, regionally and nationally to improve the skills base and hence employability of people within the area is a key objective for Blaenau Gwent. Through our engagement activity with the community, 'Blaenau Gwent We Want', employment and income were important to people particular the quality and access to jobs locally.



Key Actions to Implement the Well-being Objective

- Development of a Blaenau Gwent Investment Programme.
- Develop and implement a Strategic Plan for Enterprise in Blaenau Gwent.
- Ensure effective participation and influence in the development of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal.
- Respond to the Ministerial decision in relation to the Circuit of Wales.

Key Action Summary of Achievements

The Regeneration thematic Priorities have been agreed and the supporting documents are on track for delivery and are contained in the Council forward work programme for 2018/19. These are:

- Housing;
- Skills and employability;
- Enterprise and Innovation (including energy and digital); and
- Town Centres.

The Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) have agreed a strategic business plan and work continues with regard to each theme. Some thematic groups under the CCRCD are in the early stages of development but projects continue to be developed and progressed. The Council participates fully in this with representation including the Leader of the Council, the Managing Director and the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services along with officers from across a number of service areas in order to ensure influence into the programme and bring investment into Blaenau Gwent. The Corporate Director is also the Lead Director for Skills, Employability and Worklessness as part of City Region, and has led on the development of the Regional £30m Skills for the Future. This will be considered by the CCRCD for approval along with the development of the City Region Employability Strategy.

Officers continue to participate in the work of the City Deal through coordinating the activity of the Community Benefits work stream and developing the principles of a regional approach. This has been mirrored on a local level and work will continue into 2018/19.

As a Council we also participate and contribute to all City Deal work streams to ensure the outcomes are delivered within the footprint of Blaenau Gwent.

During 2017/18 targeted skills funding was secured through Welsh Government by the Enterprise Zone to provide an additional £50,000 of resources for 10 companies in Blaenau Gwent to upskill their workforce. Additional to this, the training hub was launched in March 2017 which has enabled us to facilitate 8 bespoke training sessions to support industry demands e.g. abrasive wheel training.

In July 2017, Welsh Government announced £100m over 10 years to develop the Tech Valleys initiative. This was subsequently followed by an announcement in May 2018 that the Welsh Government will invest £25m over the next 3 years to support Blaenau Gwent and wider areas to be recognised as a centre of technology, particularly in the automotive sector. The investment is intended to stimulate job creation and leverage public and private sector investment into the area. To support this, work is being undertaken in partnership with Welsh Government to establish a vision for Tech Valleys, as well as developing an Enterprise Plan.

The Shared Apprenticeship Programme (Aspire) has secured additional funding to extend the programme and continues to recruit on an annual basis. The programme is effective in engaging businesses with Apprenticeship opportunities. The Programme continues to meet its target. Support to inward investors continues, along with securing funding for new industrial units at the Works.

The work through the Thriving and Vibrant work stream, to coordinate and enhance the offer around employability, has demonstrated an improvement in the economic inactivity rate in Blaenau Gwent with a reduction in the gap with the Welsh Average, according to recent statistics 2017/18. The Shared Apprenticeship programme has continued to develop and grow through developing relationships and a partnership approach with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council to deliver a Heads of the Valleys shared apprenticeship programme.

Aspire hosted a successful learner awards evening in November 2017, where apprentices and host companies were recognised for their commitment and hard work through-out the year. The programme also delivered a Lego engineering competition with the local comprehensive schools, facilitated through the strong partnership with Eden Education. The competitions enable us to promote apprenticeships within engineering and advanced manufacturing as a potential pathway and the intrinsic link to stem. This, coupled with the successful Inspiration event which saw over 463 year 9 pupils attend a showcase of 25 companies, has increased the awareness of local and regional employment opportunities along with the associated skills that are needed to secure employment.

The employment liaison project successfully supported and advised 37 local companies, assisted 390 individuals and secured employment opportunities for 30 local residents. The project also facilitated 190 training opportunities with the assistance of local training providers and Welsh Government funding. Further training needs were met through the team successfully delivering 256 CSCS safety cards in order to enable local residents to access construction related employment opportunities.

The inaugural meeting of the Blaenau Gwent that works group has been held. This is a strategic group made up of key training and employability partners across the local authority to explore and coordinate current employment support provision, reduce duplication and identify gaps to enable the Authority to respond to inward investor and indigenous company growth demands.

BG Effect was awarded grant funding of £60,000 over a three year period from the Waterloo Foundation in July 2017, based upon a successful bursary fund also supported by the Waterloo Foundation and administrated by the Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council. In Blaenau Gwent, the grant scheme is known as the BG Effect Business fund. The grant scheme is focused upon the provision of financial support to individuals' or groups seeking to start a new business or social enterprise within the Blaenau Gwent area and was fully committed for 2017/18.

The Blaenau Gwent business hub was launched in 2017. This is a platform that enables local businesses and entrepreneurs to exchange and access a range of business support tools.

Blaenau Gwent's Post 16 provision is provided in partnership with Coleg Gwent at the Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone in Ebbw Vale. The Learning Zone's Self-Assessment Report recognises that there is an effective partnership approach between the Council and Coleg Gwent, which is resulting in improvements to the participation rates of Post 16 learners, a broadening of the learning offer and increasing attainment levels for both academic and vocational learners. The 'A' Level A*-E pass rate is over 99% and well above the national average and the vocational learning success rate (retention/attainment) is 88%. The ALIS tertiary benchmarking data places the Learning Zone in the top 8% of Post 16 learning institutions for added value across the UK.

The council has responded fully to the Ministerial response in relation to the Circuit of Wales and with the agreement of Tech Valleys, the Council is fully participating in this.

Summary of where performance can be improved

The preparation and agreement of the supporting documents for the four regeneration priorities will ensure clear alignment of regeneration activity with the CCRC, Valleys Task Force and Tech Valleys.

The Regional Skills Plan for 2017/18 has been agreed and will provide the framework for the Blaenau Gwent Skills and Employability Plan which is due for preparation during 2018/19. A number of projects within the skills and employment theme are being developed and implemented such as Aspire and BG Effect along with the development of a Future Skills Hub, with the acquisition of a building on Letchworth Road to facilitate this.

Delivery of the Investment Programme Plan, including investment with the new board.

What will be done to make these improvements?

- The service needs to agree strategies under the four Regeneration Themes, planned for January 2019.
- The Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Board is to be established September 2018.
- Tech Valleys involvement in governance arrangements moving forward.

Well-being Objective Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	2017/18 Target	Actual 2016/17	Actual 2017/18	Improvement Trend Compared to 2016/17	Wales Ranking
Number of adults in receipt of day services offering employment opportunities	N/A	33	19	Declined	N/A
Number of adults who received care and support who were in employment during the year	N/A	1	1	Same	N/A

Enabling older people to feel valued and empowered to maximise their independence and lead healthy and engaged lives

BRAG Status: Green - The area is performing to plan; all performance factors are within the acceptable variance levels.

This Well-being Objective was agreed to be in place from April 2017 to March 2018. The progress against the WBO up until March 2018 is set out below.

As part of the development of our Corporate Plan 2018/22 the Well-being Objectives were revised in April 2018. Reference is made at appendix 1 to show alignment into the organisational business planning and tracking of actions

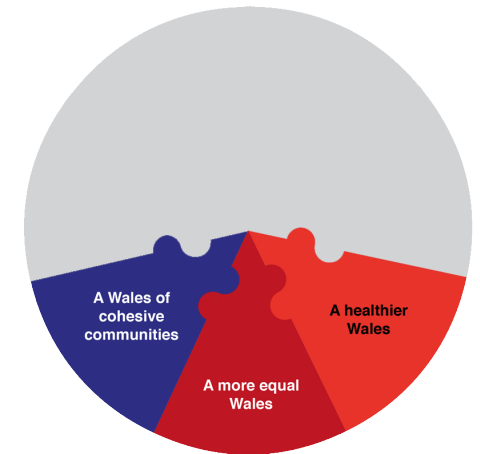
Why this Well-being Objective is Important

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 was a response to the Welsh Government review of Social Services in 2010 (Sustainable Social Services) which recognised that without radical change to the way we worked, services would become unaffordable in the near future as a result of demographic pressures and the changing expectations of the public at a time of financial austerity.

There are a number of key themes that underpin the Act and these include: a focus on people; wellbeing, prevention and early intervention; partnership and integration; accessibility; and new methods of service delivery. Also, a Population Needs Assessment has been carried out to assess the needs for care and support, and the support needs of carers in the local authority areas and this information will be used to inform future service delivery.

Key Actions to Implement the Well-being Objective

- All Adult Services Teams contribute to improve outcomes for vulnerable adults (and their carers) living in Blaenau Gwent.
- All Adult Services teams and our partner agencies ensure that vulnerable adults of Blaenau Gwent are safeguarded.
- Ensure that our Information Advice and Assistance /preventative services and community based opportunities support the most vulnerable citizens in Blaenau Gwent who do not meet the criteria for a care and support plan under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
- Progressing Alternative Methods of Service Delivery across both Health and Social Care through integrated / outcomes based commissioning models to meet personal outcomes and support personal well-being.



Key Action Summary of Achievements

The West Health and Social Care hub (Vitcc Tredegar) opened fully in January 2018 and Health staff from the Community Resource Team (CRT) joined the team in March 2018. The facility is now fully operational 7 days each week between 6am and 11pm.

Adult Service has been successful in securing additional Integrated Care Funding (ICF) to increase our capacity to support our unpaid and family carers via the GP Carers Scheme (across all services) and Learning Disability Transition (children to adulthood) within the All Age Disability Team.

We have piloted our new Emergency Care @ Home Service for a further 6 months in order to embed the initial learning of the project.

As a Social Services department we have continued to invest in the knowledge and learning of staff through outcomes training and collaborative working with Social Care Wales.

We have received positive feedback from the Older Persons Commissioner into the outcomes that Older People experience in Care Homes across Blaenau Gwent.

Following a review of the domestic abuse/safeguarding support worker post, funding has been secured for another 12 months on a fixed term contract. A review of this innovative post has identified that we have had a positive impact as a key resource within the safeguarding team and is supporting the service to deliver its requirements within the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 for preventative services. It is enhancing the 'front door' screening arrangements and the support worker role has actively progressed to meeting the identified need. This post along with the Supporting People funded Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) Mind (mental health) post and IAA Hafan (safeguarding) post have both provided positive outcomes for both citizens and wider Adults Services. We are currently working with colleagues in Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) including primary care, secondary care and Public Health Wales to further develop a model for Social Prescribing / Community Connectors to support the prevention agenda.

The community transport consultation will commence in April 2018. The service is scoping service reviews for the following service areas in line with the financial efficiency programme (Cwrt Mytton / Augusta House/ Supported Living Service and Community Options).

Summary of where performance can be improved

We realise that further engagement with our colleagues and services provided by Health is key to the next development of IAA and therefore a priority is to proceed to phase 3 of the service at the Vitcc Tredegar which will include the scoping of a fully integrated health and social care IAA team. This service will include an integrated IT infrastructure and we are awaiting a response from Welsh Government on an ICF capital bid we have submitted to develop the provision at the Vitecc and a number of our Well-being Hubs.

Work is progressing to progress on the Community Meals Service development as this is subject to the wider review.

What will be done to make these improvements?

- Emergency Care @ Home now embedded into core business and is being launched on 1st September 2018. A bid has been submitted on a Gwent wide basis to the Welsh Government Transformation fund to further expand on the project. This will result in a Gwent wide hospital discharge service – Home First.
- We have secured £185k Communities First legacy funding to employ four additional Community Connectors as part of a development of a well-being network and community hub model. Partnership working with Social Services, ABUHB and Public Health is progressing.
- The consultation on community transport will be taken to Scrutiny Committee.
- We are currently finalising our Community catering enterprise at Lake View, Nantyglo.

Well-being Objective Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	2017/18 Target	Actual 2016/17	2017/18 Actual *	Improvement Trend Compared to 2016/17	Wales Ranking
Percentage of adults satisfied with their care and support	N/A	N/A	86.8	Declined	*
Number of people kept in hospital while waiting for social care per 1,000 population aged 75+ (DToC)	5	1.38 (8 DToC)	1.55 (15 DToC)	Declined	*
Percentage of carers that feel supported	100	100	80	Declined	*
The percentage of adults who have received support from the information, advice and assistance service (IAA) and have not contacted the service again during the year	N/A	89.95	83.66	Declined	*
The percentage of adults who completed a period of re-ablement and: • have a reduced package of care and support six months later • no package of care six months later	N/A N/A	80.95 69.81	93.33 76.04	Improved Improved	*
Average age of adults entering residential care homes	N/A	82.15	84.49	Improved	*
The percentage of adult protection enquiries completed within statutory timescales	100	100	90.47	Declined	*
Average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant	TBD	247.2	253	Declined	18

*National comparison data not yet available

Support citizens to take an active and empowered role in their communities to provide resilience

BRAG Status: Green - The area is performing to plan; all performance factors are within the acceptable variance levels.

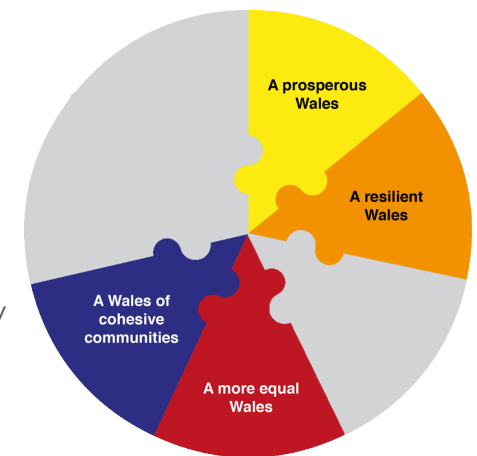
This Well-being Objective was agreed to be in place from April 2017 to March 2018. The progress against the Well-being Objective until March 2018 is set out below.

As part of the development of our Corporate Plan 2018/22 the Well-being Objectives were revised in April 2018. Reference is made at appendix 1 to show alignment into the organisational business planning and tracking of actions.

Why this Well-being Objective is Important

Our Well-being Objective that sets out, 'we will strive to be a modern, smart Authority, providing leadership to enable people and communities to thrive' recognises that involving people in decisions that affect them locally is important.

We are committed to engaging our stakeholders, maximising people's independence and striving to enable our communities to achieve the best possible outcomes. Through our engagement activity with the community, 'Blaenau Gwent We Want', our communities were very special to people, in particular our community spirit with a number saying that people are friendly and happy to help each other out. There were many people who were prepared to give up some of their own time to help improve Blaenau Gwent for future generations and who would like to help out more in their community or volunteer with a local organisation.



Key Actions to Implement the Well-being Objective

- Support the development and implementation of the collective (Public Service Board) duties of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Support the development and implementation across the Council of key strategic policy and legislation (including equalities).
- Maximise opportunities of C2BG within the Customer and Digital project.
- Establish with Public Service Board (PSB) and Welsh Government the transitional arrangements for Communities First which secures the legacy of Communities First and prepare a plan for a new approach to building resilient communities.
- Review strategic asset management plan and community asset transfer policy.

Key Action Summary of Achievements

The Well-being Plan for Blaenau Gwent was approved by Council and the PSB in April 2018. The plan was informed by extensive engagement work involving local people through the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' programme. The PSB has established its strategic delivery programme for the coming year with identified PSB leads. The focus is on working together on Universal Credit, the importance of the first 1000 days in the life cycle, maximising opportunities for prosperity and getting people active through Blaenau Gwent on the move. The supporting partnership arrangements have also been reviewed by the PSB and performance management arrangements to support the plan are being progressed. GSWAG continues to support the five PSBs and the recent bid to the Welsh Government PSB support fund was successful. The projects funded for 2017/18 have progressed well and are being finalised with some elements informing a national approach.

The PSB Scrutiny Committee has been established and training delivered to members. A forward work programme is under development for the committee aligned to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

There is a strong Council commitment to involving and engaging the public and there have been a number of programmes such as Blaenau Gwent We Want, Blaenau Gwent Budget Challenge and Street Scene. This information has been used to shape strategies and service delivery.

Under phase 1 of the senior management review the Chief Commercial Officer post has been established which includes responsibility for The Council's Contact Centre, C2BG. The scope of this new role offers the opportunity to progress C2BG as part of the focus on the customer and to develop our digital public services.

Activity to secure the future arrangements of Communities First through the Legacy Funding has been completed with the funding approved on the 23rd March 2018. Welsh Government approval has been given for the project proposals submitted to them and an offer letter is in place for the Legacy Funding going forward. A significant amount of partnership working was required to complete the work and will need to continue in order to monitor and evaluate the impact of the funds.

The Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) 2017/22 was approved in January 2018. The Strategy identifies the key strategic policy and resource influences affecting the Council and sets out the broad direction for strategic asset management within the Council over the next five years.

The Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy has been agreed and the Council is actively working with community groups to support successful transfers.

Summary of where performance can be improved

The PSB continues to develop and use the Sustainable Development principles and 5 ways of working to make a difference and deliver the Well-being Plan. There is a strong focus on preventative work.

Building on the recent good work on public engagement the Council is in the process of developing an engagement strategy which will be underpinned by the National Principles for Engagement. The recent WAO Review on 'Levers of Change' has been used to inform its development, and will include a focus on further developing internal engagement. The intention is to take the Strategy through the democratic process in 2018.

Through service redesign there has been more of a focus on the customer and this has been supported by C2BG and will be further enhanced through continued development of the Council's Website, the new CRM system and implementation of a new telephone system.

A review of Disposal and Acquisition of Land and Property Policy is scheduled for autumn 2018 and will develop linkages to the SAMP. As the SAMP evolves it will reflect the property requirements of the Council's emerging Commercial Strategy.

What will be done to make these improvements?

- Continue to play an active role as a statutory partner of the PSB. PSB Leads have been established to take forward the strategic delivery programme for 2018/19.
- The PSB Scrutiny Committee will now begin to have the opportunity to monitor progress of the delivery programme.
- The review of the partnership arrangements to progress.
- Agreement and implementation of the Corporate Engagement Strategy in 2018 for the organisation which includes Staff, Elected Members and public engagement.
- Confirm a scope for the next phase of the Customer and Digital Programme.
- Development of a Communications Strategy including an approach for customer and digital.
- As part of the SAMP a detailed action plan is prepared on a yearly basis identifying SAMP priorities and key issues and how they will be progressed.

Well-being Objective Performance Indicators

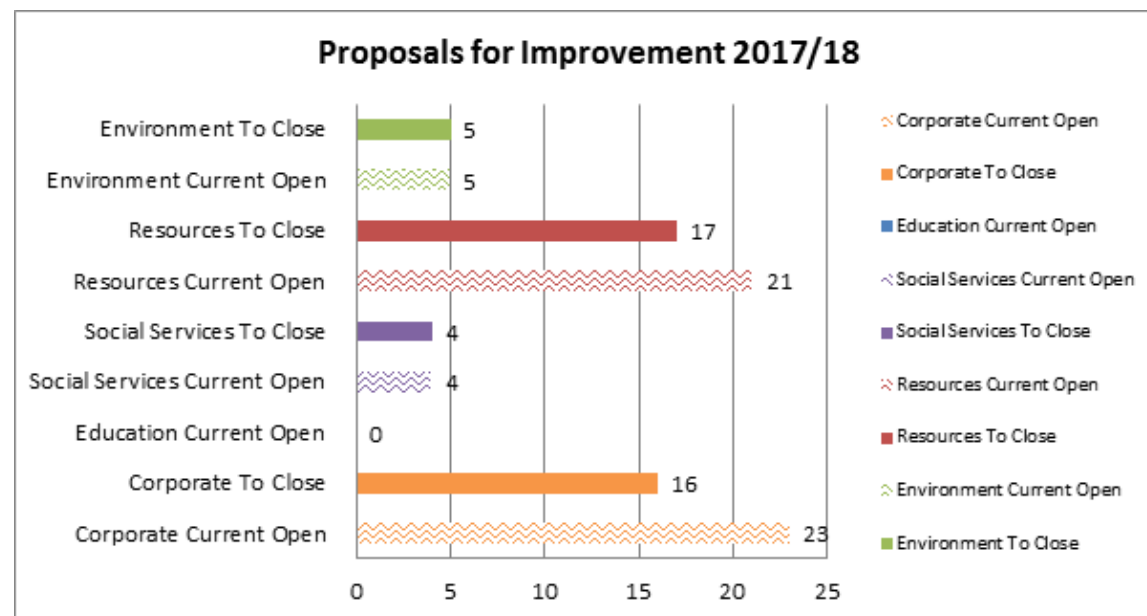
No performance indicators were identified against this Well-being Objective.

Examples of where Sustainable Development Principles have been implemented across the Council

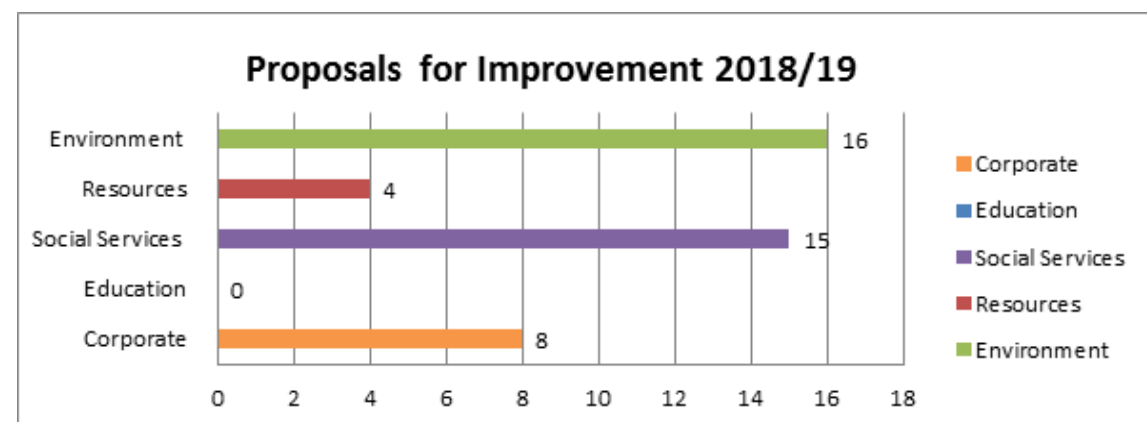
<p>Thinking for the long term</p>	<p>The Council is working to establish long term thinking throughout its directorate and service planning and examples include: a long term business plan for Waste and recycling; implementation of the Destination Management Plan to encourage visitors to the area; development of an energy programme; investment in the Highways, establishing a three year budget setting process and development of a 3 year Safeguarding Strategy.</p>
<p>Taking an integrated approach</p>	<p>The Council works to take an integrated approach when setting its priorities to support cross cutting working. Examples include: development of frontline services into one integrated service that creates flexibility across a range of key community facing areas; schools and partners work together to contribute to raising the standards and improving the well-being of learners; integration of digital channels across the Revenues and Benefits Sections</p>
<p>Taking a preventative approach</p>	<p>The Council looks to take a preventative approach to stop needs from escalating. Examples include: Providing a strong focus on our rates of recycling, ReFit programme in place with the Council and schools to provide energy efficiency measures to reduce energy costs, consolidating Neighbourhood Services with the professional arm of Infrastructure and Property Services to bring synergy, flexibility, resilience and sustainability to these key areas, the Corporate Parenting has a clear emphasis on prevention and intervention and the work of the Integrated Services Team has a preventative focus at its centre, the Youth Service works to implement the Early Identification Process to ensure that young people at risk of becoming not in employment, education or training (NEET) are known and supported and upskilling people who are in work and have lower skill levels, supporting people and our partners to get people into work and retain employment.</p>
<p>Collaborating</p>	<p>The Council actively participates in collaborative arrangements in order to provide improved and resource efficient services. Examples include: Being an active partner in the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Strategy, working on our biodiversity and natural landscape with Natural Resources Wales, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Groundwork Wales and local community groups, the joint procurement of large scale waste contracts through the Collaborative Change Programme; working with the EAS, active participation in regional networks, collaborative arrangements for the Council's IT service through the SRS.</p>
<p>Involvement</p>	<p>The Council engages with the public, partners, staff and members to ensure that the services it provides are fit for purpose. Examples include: Blaenau Gwent We Want Engagement Programme, Street Scene Engagement, continued participation with the RTA and CCRC and close links with CLAW (consortium LA Wales) and CSS Wales, development of a Corporate Engagement Strategy and staff survey, ensuring people have a voice and control over their care and support to achieve the outcomes that are important to them, participating in the national Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme, Access for all Forum, 50+ Forum and Youth Forum.</p>

Wales Audit Office Proposals for Improvement 2017/18

The Council monitors all proposals for improvement it receives from the external auditors on a quarterly basis through the Finance and Performance Report. Each of the proposals are monitored through the relevant business plan. Periodically, a review of the open proposals is undertaken and presented to CLT who decide which proposals can close as they have been completed or have moved to business as usual. In 2017/18, the Council had 53 proposals for improvement open. During this period, 42 were closed leaving 11 remaining open for monitoring throughout 2018/19.



For 2018/19 the Council, to date, has received three new WAO reports and one CIW report and these contain, in total, an additional 32 proposals for improvement. These additional 32 proposals alongside the 11 that are remaining open will mean the Council has a total of 43 proposals for improvement to monitor (subject to receiving additional proposals for improvement from any outstanding auditor reports).



How we keep track of what we are doing - *Monitoring and Governance*

Monitoring	As part of our ongoing arrangements we will monitor the implementation of the Corporate Plan and Well-being Objectives using our well-structured performance management framework which includes business planning, reporting and self-evaluation.
Performance Management Framework	This sets out the requirements and accountability for all levels of performance management across the Council.
Self-Evaluation	On an annual basis Officers are expected to undertake a self-evaluation of their service. The evidence from this is then used to shape the business planning priorities moving forward.
Performance Management System	The a performance management system utilised by the whole Council. The system includes the majority of Council planning and holds information in one place in order to avoid duplication. Council activetworks, collaborative arrangements for the Council's IT service through the SRS.
Performance and Finance Report	The Financial Efficiency Projects identify service change in order to achieve both significant financial savings and transformational change within the Council.
'Other' Internal Performance Reporting	The Council also reports progress and challenges as part of the quarterly and annual report of the Director of Social Services and through internal Education and Regeneration and Community Services processes.
Financial Efficiency Programme	The Council has developed the Plan to cover the period 2016/20 to ensure that equality is at the heart of service delivery and to benefit our communities.
Annual Governance Statement	The Financial Efficiency Projects identify service change in order to achieve both significant financial savings and transformational change within the Council.
Strategic Equality Plan	The Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board has key representation from a range of public service bodies operating in the area. The Board has a role to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in the area by strengthening joint working.
External Audit and Inspection	the Council has been subject to a number of reviews by external regulators including the Wales Audit Office (WAO), Estyn and the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). As part of our arrangements we monitor each proposal for improvement as part of our business planning arrangements and through the Performance and Finance Report.
Elected Members	clear democratic arrangements in place to support effective decision making.

Resources

The Well-being Objectives have been produced at a time of significant financial constraints and radical change within the public sector. The Council is reviewing its financial management and planning to enable it to develop a new approach to effectively demonstrate how we use resources to deliver sustainable long term outcomes to both current and future generations. This is especially difficult against a backdrop of annual resource allocations from central Government. Consequently, there will be a need to adapt to ongoing changes during the lifetime of these Objectives and further review them accordingly.

Council Expenditure and Savings Expenditure

Revenue Expenditure 2017/18 (£'000)	Revised Budget	Forecast Expend.	Variance March 2018	Comments
Council Total	144,616,060	145,299,417	(683,357)	The provisional out turn of a £0.683m adverse variance is a significant improvement on the forecast adverse variance of £1.4m reported at quarter 3. Action plans to address cost pressures (as monitored by the Cost Pressure Sub Group) and additional grant funding from Welsh Government have contributed to this much improved financial position. The Council planned to secure budget cuts of £4.8m through financial efficiency projects and successfully delivered a level of 98% against this target. The Council also planned to raise £9.1m through fees and charges and successfully raised £9.5m.

Revenue Expenditure 2017/18 (£'000)	Revised Budget	Forecast Expend.	Variance March 2018	Comments
Council Total	8,631,365	8,615,159	16,206	The favourable variance of £16,000 on a programmed spend of £8.6m demonstrates sound financial management, despite unexpected challenges within some projects.

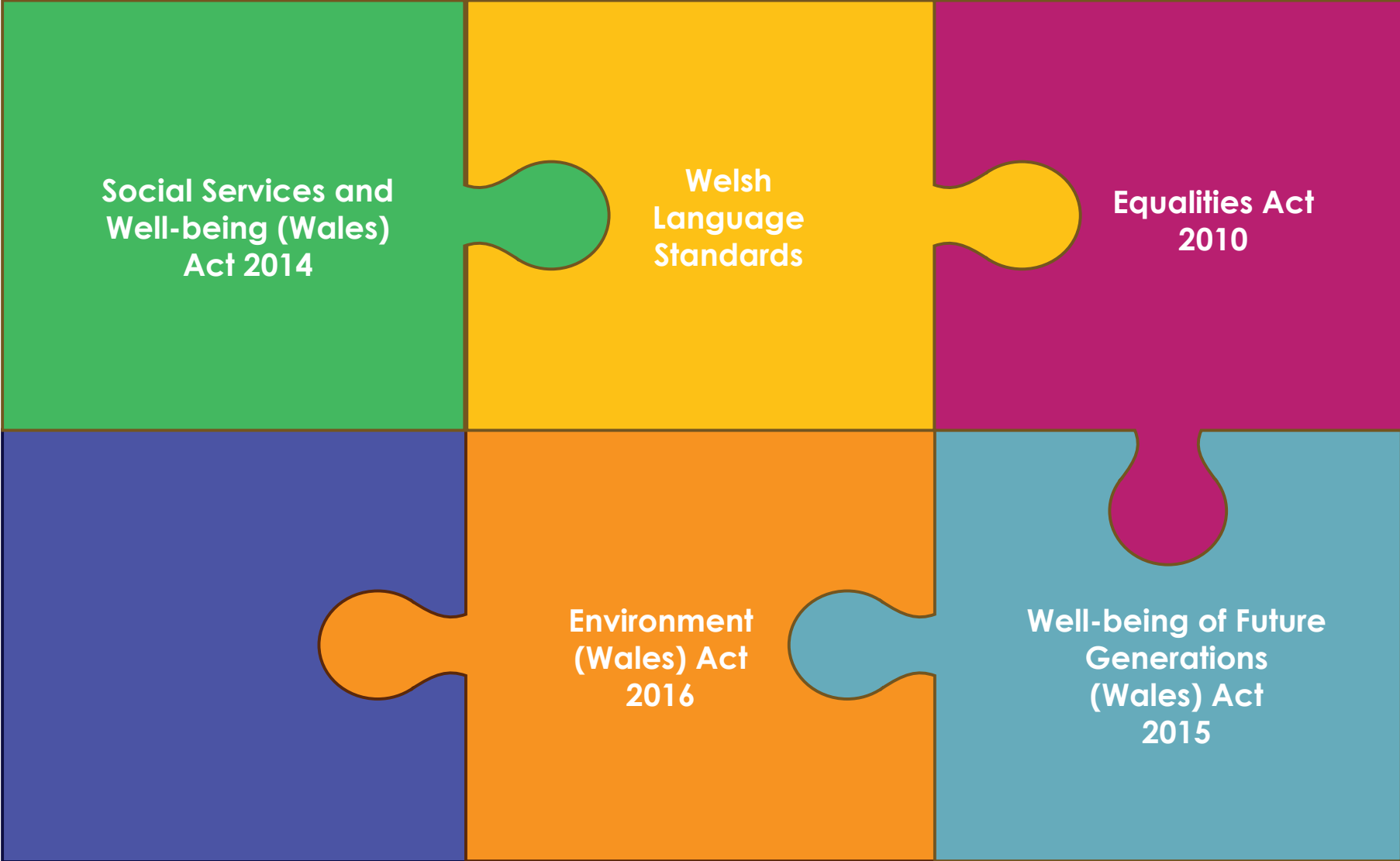
Legislative Duty and Well-being Statement

Local authorities have a general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (Section 15), places a duty on all Local Authorities in Wales to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 also places individual duties on public bodies. The legislation is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and creating a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

Also, as part of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 all Public Bodies have a duty, under section 7 of the legislation, to publish a Well-being statement at the same time that they publish their Well-being Objectives. As part of this duty an annual report must be developed which documents the previous year's progress against implementing the Well-being and Improvement Objectives. The Objectives have been written to support the achievement of the Well-being Goals and their success will be dependent on the successful delivery of the Well-being Objectives and their supporting actions and measures.

The delivery of the Sustainable Development Principles supporting the Well-being Goals will be evidenced within the Council's business plans that will work to implement the Corporate Plan.

Key Acts That Drive Our Business



Contact Information

This document is available electronically at <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/council/performance/> and in hard copy by request.

Corporate Performance Team
Corporate Services and Strategy
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Municipal Offices
Civic Centre
Ebbw Vale
Blaenau Gwent NP23 6XB

Phone: 01495 311556

Email: pps@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Providing Feedback

We welcome any feedback you might have about the Council's Assessment of Performance 2017/18. Your views are important to us and we want to know what information you would like to see and how you would like to see it reported. Please contact the team on the details above if you would like to give feedback on the plan, if there is any information you think could be considered for inclusion in the future, or if you require this document in a different format e.g. large print, Braille, audio version, etc.

Fersiwn Gymraeg

Yn unol â Chynllun Iaith Gymraeg y Cyngor, bydd fersiwn Gymraeg o'r Cynllun Gwella ar gael ar wefan y Cyngor.

This document acts as Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's Well-being Statement, prepared under section 7 of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and related guidance issued by the Welsh Government.

- This Assessment of Performance outlines the Council's responsibility to publish an assessment of performance for the financial year 2016/17 as outlined in section 15 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.
- The Council is satisfied that the information given in this plan is accurate based on the information available at the time of publication.
- This Council's Assessment of Performance 2017/18 has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment screening.

BRAG Rating System

The Council uses a BRAG rating system to assess progress against actions and measures, the definitions are provided in the table below:

Status	Definition
Blue	The areas has been completed; all performance factors been achieved.
Green	The area is performing to plan; all performance factors are within the acceptable variance levels.
Amber	Issues have been identified with an area that will/may negatively impact on performance.
Red	Significant issues have been identified that requires corrective action.

Glossary

ABUHB – Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

ALIS – A-Level Information System

ALN – Additional Learning Needs

ASD – Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Aspire – Apprenticeship Scheme

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal – A £1.28 billion programme working across 10 Local Authorities to deliver a range of programmes to increase connectivity, improve physical and digital infrastructure as well as business governance.

CIW – Care Inspectorate Wales

CLAW – Consortium of Local Authorities in Wales

CLT – Corporate Leadership Team

CRM system – Client Relationship Management System

CSS Wales – County Surveyor's Society

EAS – Education Achievement Service

eFSM – Free School Meals

EqIA – Equality Impact Assessment

ESF Programme – European Social Fund

Estyn – Education Inspectorate

ETE – Education, Training and Employment

FADEs – Education Self Evaluation process

FEPs – Financial Efficiency Projects

GSWAG – Gwent Strategic Well-being Assessment Group

HMRC (PAYE & VAT) – Her Majesty Revenue and Customs

HWRC – Household Waste Recycling Centre

IAA – Information, Advice or Assistance

ICF – Intermediate Care Fund

Inspire 2 Achieve – Programme to support young people, aged 11-16, to improve attendance, attainment, behaviour, health and wellbeing.

LGBT Forum – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Forum

LGES framework – Local Government Education Services

Mobile Worker App - This allows the frontline workforce to receive and respond to work requests in real-time using a mobile handset.

My Council Services App - An online and mobile IT platform that enables you to report incidents or make requests to your local council

NC levels – National Curriculum levels

NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training

PDR process – Personal Development Review

PSB – Public Service Board

SEBD - Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties

SEWC region – South East Wales Consortia

VAWDASV – Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

WAO/WAO – Wales Audit Office

WRAP – Waste and Resources Action Programme