



**30th January 2021**

Dear Councillor.

You are hereby summoned to attend **BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL'S FINANCE MEETING at 6:30 pm on WEDNESDAY 10<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2021.**

**The meeting will be held remotely in accordance with the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020**

**Any members of the public who also wish to attend on this basis please contact the Clerk so that arrangements may be made for them.**

Members of the public have the right to ask questions at Council meetings and to speak in Welsh or English, provided that at least 3 working days' notice in writing of the question has been provided to the Clerk.

### **Agenda**

1. To receive any questions from the public.
2. To receive and accept apologies.
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Members are invited to declare any interests they may have in any items on the Agenda.
4. To receive a presentation from Rob Murray (Planning and Public Protection Service TCBC) regarding consultation on the preferred strategy concerning the Torfaen Replacement Local Development Plan 2021.
5. **Council Meetings:** To confirm the minutes of the Council Finance Meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2021.
6. To receive and note a letter received from the Deputy Director Local Government Finance regarding the Preparation and Publication of Statutory Financial Accounts for 2020-21
7. To discuss potential Town Council projects for allocation into the Project Action Plan 2020/21. Relevant updates or new projects as notified.

- Lyndsey Harris – Blaenavon Connect Project.

**8. Responsible Finance Officer's Update:** To receive the January 2021 financial update.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Warren". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping underline.

Kevin Warren. MInstLM. FCMI.  
Clerk to the Council.



**BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL FINANCE MEETING**  
**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10th FEBRUARY 2021.**

**The meeting was held remotely in accordance with the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020.**

**In attendance:**

Councillor: L. Cowles (In the Chair)

Councillors in attendance: G. Davies, E. Harvey, J. Huybs, A. Jones, A. Parry, N. Horler, S. Bright, J. Skyrme, L. Evans, J. Denley-Jones.

**Officers:** Mr K. Warren (Clerk), L. Harris (Admin Officer)

**Visitors:** Mr R. Murray (TCBC), Mr. G. Parry (Member of the Public)

The Council Finance meeting was opened at 6:30pm by the Chairman Councillor Liam Cowles who welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

**1. To receive any questions from the public.**

None received.

**2. Apologies**

None received.

**Resolved:** No Apologies

**3. Declaration of interests**

None declared.

**4. To receive a presentation from Rob Murray (Planning and Public Protection Service TCBC) regarding consultation on the preferred strategy concerning the Torfaen Replacement Local Development Plan 2021.**

Mr Murray informed members that Torfaen have updated a new Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) which is out for public consultation. The aim is to make people aware of the updates to the strategy and for members of the public to get involved and inform the updated plan.

Mr Murray explained that the initial consultation was published on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2020, the deadline has been extended until the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2021 due the CV19 lockdown restrictions. Electronic documents are available to view online, but it is a statutory requirement for documents to be made available for viewing by members of the public.

The overall aim of the plan is to ensure that the most efficient use is made of limited land resources, whilst at the same time providing social and cultural services and stimulating the local economy, for the benefit of present and future generations within Torfaen.

He presented the key areas priorities within the plan.

### **Sustainable Development**

To ensure that the plan responds to Climate Change and the environmental challenges now and in the future, it is required to be developed incorporating Sustainability Appraisal.

- Planning's purpose is to deliver sustainable development.
- LDPs must take into account sustainability and well-being objectives.
- Sustainability Appraisal tests policies and allocations to ensure they reflect sustainable development objectives at every stage of plan preparation.

### **The 7 Well-being of Goals and 5 ways of working – Future Generations Act 2015**

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.
- A globally responsive Wales

### **Torfaen Replacement Local Development Plan (2018-2033)**

- Replaces the existing LDP (2006-2021)
- Looking for people to get involved tell them what issues need tackling and what is needed for the future of Torfaen.

### **Important Contextual Changes for Torfaen since the last plan**

#### **Local**

- Housing / Employment markets now picking up, especially in Cwmbran.
- Removal of Severn Bridge Tolls / Pressure for Bristol
- Continuing need for affordable housing.
- Torfaen Active Travel Plan

- Impact of Grange University Hospital, Cwmbran just opened with up to 3,000 staff working across all shifts.
- Greater emphasis on need to prevent, adapt, and mitigate for Climate Change.
- Covid 19

### **Other Things to Consider - National Policy**

- Avoiding flood risk areas
- Balance between housing and jobs
- Minimising the need to travel reducing reliance on the private car.
- Prioritise the use of previously developed land within existing settlement first before sites on the edge of settlements, etc.
- Locating new development in Sustainable Settlements and supporting Green Infrastructure.

### **Torfaen - 17 Objectives**

- |                                |                                      |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>1. Employment</i>           | <i>10. Climate Change</i>            |
| <i>2. Community Facilities</i> | <i>11. Landscape</i>                 |
| <i>3. Flooding</i>             | <i>12. Previously Developed Land</i> |
| <i>4. Placemaking</i>          | <i>13. Water</i>                     |
| <i>5. Education</i>            | <i>14. Soil</i>                      |
| <i>6. Tourism</i>              | <i>15. Housing</i>                   |
| <i>7. Heritage</i>             | <i>16. Transport</i>                 |
| <i>8. Minerals</i>             | <i>17. Waste</i>                     |
| <i>9. Green Infrastructure</i> |                                      |

### **Key Priorities of the Preferred Strategy**

**Placemaking** - The RLDP will ensure high quality developments are secured in the right locations with appropriate services and recreation opportunities available to promote strong communities across all age groups.

**Renewable Energy** - The RLDP will set ambitious targets and identify Local Search Areas for renewable energy generation and promote energy saving measures and low/zero carbon energy sources within new development.

**Climate Change** - The RLDP will seek to address the causes of and impacts of climate change by protecting Green Infrastructure and flood plain resources, maximising efficiency of land use and development and requiring sustainable construction and energy measures.

**Health** - The RLDP will seek to promote health and healthy lifestyles by maximising opportunities for walking and cycling, provision of high-quality developments and useable green infrastructure.

**Education** - Where necessary, the RLDP will ensure the provision of additional educational facilities to support development.

**Green Infrastructure** - The RLDP will ensure that the county borough's landscape and green infrastructure resources are protected and maximised for multifunctional benefit.

**Heritage** - The RLDP will seek the conservation and enhancement of the built environment, in particular the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site and the five designated Conservation Areas.

**Ecology and Biodiversity** - The RLDP will identify and protect international, national, regional, and local species and habitats as well as the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal and Afon Llwyd corridors.

**Leisure and Recreation** - The RLDP will protect formal leisure facilities and the various typologies of open space throughout the county borough. New provision will be sought in conjunction with development via planning obligations.

**Transport and Active Travel** - The RLDP will prioritise walking and cycling as modes of 'active' travel both within and connecting to new development which will be located in order to reduce car-based journeys.

**Town Centres** - The RLDP will identify a hierarchy of town centres within which a variety of retail, business and community uses will be encouraged.

**Minerals** - The RLDP will seek to safeguard existing mineral resources and promote secondary and recycled aggregates as an alternative to high quality minerals.

**Waste** - The RLDP will promote the sustainable management of waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy and support for the principles of the circular economy and locational principle of treatment installations close to source.

### **Key Issues**

#### **How Much Housing and Jobs (2018-2033)?**

- The existing plan is still being implemented at the moment and under the current Torfaen LDP approx. 4,350 dwellings are likely to have been already permitted before it expires on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.
- Taking this forward it is recommending a target of 4800 new dwellings for the new plan. This is approximately 320 each year to provide the new and affordable homes that people need in the future. This new housing is to be developed in association with approximately 2600 new jobs providing the local jobs for people to limit the need for commuting to and from other areas.

#### **Where would the new development go?**

The Strategy takes forward a number of sites within the existing settlement boundaries. However not all new development can be incorporated on these sites and the existing brownfield opportunities available.

Therefore, to incorporate the need for new sites that are viable for new development, the new strategy identifies 4 strategic sites including an Eastern Expansion of Cwmbran around the

new hospital development at Llanfrechfa Grange to deliver the new homes and jobs needed for the future.

## **Housing**

### **Strategic Sites**

- The RLDP Preferred Strategy makes provision for 5,600 dwellings to meet a requirement of 4,800 dwellings over the period 2018 to 2033 primarily within and around the existing settlements and with a focus on placemaking and sustainable development.

These dwellings are proposed as follows:

- 250 dwellings in North Torfaen
- 1,750 dwellings in Pontypool
- 2,800 dwellings in Cwmbran

This is made up from:

- Sites already permitted or under construction.
- Windfall allowance
- Small sites (9 or less dwellings)
- New site allocations

The indicated development sites for Llanfrechfa and Craig-y-felin were displayed for members to view.

### **Torfaen RLDP Strategic Policies**

#### **Creating Sustainable Places and Placemaking**

S1 - Strategic Sustainable Growth

- **2,685 new jobs**; and
- **5,600 homes** to meet a housing requirement of **4,800** homes.

S2 - Spatial Distribution of Development

S3 - Strategic Sites (*100+ dwellings or 10ha employment land*)

- **Pontypool College**, Pontypool
- **Llantarnam Business Park**, Cwmbran
- **Llanfrechfa Strategic Action Area**, Cwmbran; and
- **Craig-y-felin Strategic Action Area**, Cwmbran.

S4 - Managing Settlement Form: Urban Boundaries

S5 - Sustainable Placemaking and Design Context

S6 - Climate Change

#### **Creating Healthy & Social Places**

S7 - Sustainable Transport

S8 - Delivery of Homes - **Allocate 5,600 homes** (including **15% flexibility**) to meet a **housing requirement of 4,800 homes**

S9 - Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

S10 - Retail Centres & Development  
S11 - Promoting Healthier Places#

### **Creating Productive & Enterprising Places**

S12 - Employment Land Strategy - 50ha of land for Employment & Business Purposes (B1, B2 & B8)  
S13 - Sustainable Minerals Management  
S14 - Sustainable Waste Management  
S15 – Energy

### **Protecting and Enhancing Distinctive & Natural Places**

S16 - Green Infrastructure  
S17 - Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built, and historic environment

### **The Next Steps**

- Consultation on RLDP Preferred Strategy (Also supporting Integrated Sustainability Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Candidate Sites Assessment Report)
- 8+ Weeks Consultation on RLDP Preferred Strategy and other documents
- Consultation until 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021 (Reviewed to allow extra time due to Covid19 lockdown)
- Seeking everyone's involvement in looking at the work done so far and how it develops further to the final (Deposit) Plan which will be finalised in Summer 2021.

Mr Murray ended his presentation and asked members if they had any questions.

Cllr Davies asked Mr Murray what percentage of sites on the LDP were green field and brown field?

Mr Murray said that he didn't have an exact figure for this and said the majority would be brown field sites as every effort is made to minimise using green field as much as possible. He estimated that the percentage was roughly 55-60% brown field site.

Cllr Davies asked with reference to transport links; would the new South Wales Metro be part of the plan?

Mr Murray answered that he was disappointed with plans for the metro as it doesn't consider Torfaen in its improvements as it will still rely on the heavy rail industry. There are some improvements being made with the new Park & Ride, but there doesn't seem to be a great deal of benefit from the metro within Torfaen. Work is commencing on the cross-rail network increases between Newport and Cardiff due to cancellations of the M4 relief road.

It has been highlighted the links to Torfaen being key for the area. Newport has become a regeneration hub in the area with high levels of investment. The importance of the links



North and South of Cardiff in addition to the links East and West to provide has been put forward.

Cllr Skyrme commented that she was encouraged that the plan picked up on the 15-minute towns concept, which for the people Blaenavon is something particularly important.

As a community with limited access to services and investments the concept of being able to access these for leisure, education, or retail it was encouraging to see that this is being addressed in the LDP.

Mr Murray added that they are mindful that facilities within the borough need to be sustainable and work better in larger communities like Cwmbran and Pontypool, but they have looked at the 15 minute commute for access to facilities.

Deprivation with people having no access to cars is an issue but encouragement is to use local services for transport. He went on to say that efforts have been made to ensure that the network is there so that these facilities can be accessed to the people Blaenavon.

Cllr Jones commented that there is still a long way to go before results are achieved and it is felt within Blaenavon that we are not included. Cllr Jones further explained that in his capacity as a Borough Councillor, he is continually raising this issue with the leader at Torfaen and also senior management.

Mr Murray replied saying that plans need to be viable. The heads of the valleys costs are significantly higher to develop sites and the returns are much lower which incurs problems attracting developments for housing and employment. The hope would be support and investment from the Welsh Government which has proven difficult because of competing objectives.

Cllr Cowles thanked Mr Murray for his presentation. Mr Murray thanked members for inviting him to the meeting and reminded them that the deadline for the plan is 26th March 2021 and he will update the Clerk if the deadline is extended due to lockdown restrictions.

**Resolved:** Members thanked Mr Murray for the presentation and noted its content.

**5. To confirm the minutes of the Council Finance Meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2021 as a true and accurate record.**

The minutes were read for accuracy with no amendments being offered.

It was proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Denley-Jones that the minutes be approved.

**Resolved:** Minutes accepted as a true record.

**6. To receive and note a letter received from the Deputy Director Local Government Finance regarding the Preparation and Publication of Statutory Financial Accounts for 2020-21.**

The Clerk explained to members that he received the letter on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2021 and forwarded it to members for their perusal together with a covering email prior to the meeting. Mr Warren explained the essence of the letter outlined the extensions afforded to Councils in 2020 relating to the annual return submission dates to Audit Wales, have been carried over into 2020/21.

It was further explained by Mr Warren that he would be submitting the annual return to members by the middle of May 2021 for their perusal and subsequently for sign off to Audit Wales by the end of May 2021.

To facilitate this, Mr Warren has arranged the internal audit to take place during the second week of April 2021 and requested the letter be noted by members.

Cllr Skyrme proposed the letter be noted this was seconded by Cllr Jones.

**Resolved:** Members noted the letter received from the Deputy Director Local Government Finance.

**7. To discuss potential Town Council projects for allocation into the Project Action Plan 2020/21. Relevant updates or new projects as notified.**

**Lyndsey Harris – Blaenavon Connect Project.**

Blaenavon Connect - New community group for older residents.

Lyndsey explained to members how the project would provide activities, events and to offer support to enrich the lives over the older generation within the town.

The project was developed in response to the recent and ongoing effects of the pandemic in 2020. Government restrictions and lockdowns meant that communities had to isolate within their households and all group and social activities ceased periodically throughout 2020.

Conversations between the Healthy Blaenavon Officer (HBO) and the local GP's practice had shown that there is an increasing amount of people over 60 living in Blaenavon who are suffering with increased anxiety and isolation during the pandemic.

The second wave has exacerbated this and is likely to have a long-term effect on their future social interactions and wellbeing. Lyndsey went on to explain that the council have supported members of the community with projects, food banks and support for medical supplies. The focus now needs to turn to the ongoing and long-term effects of the pandemic.

It was proposed that a new Community Group within Blaenavon be created called 'Blaenavon Connect'. Initial activities would be provided and supported by Officers and Councillors following socially distanced regulations, with the hope that the group activities would commence later in the year when restrictions are eased.

Research into events and activities created would be guided by a core group of members who are existing members of the Intergenerational Group who the council have worked with quite

closely over the past year, together with other people within the community who the council have set up links with through the fare share project and community calls. The initial research would be done as part of a smaller initial project called the:

### **Reconnect Project**

The group will initially connect with individuals from the community who will provide key information for activities, support, and events they would like to become part of.

The idea is for a letterbox parcel to be posted to individuals (10-15) which will contain an item to aid their wellbeing as a thank you for completing the survey. Items suggested were colouring books and a gratitude journal.

The survey would inform the Council on residents needs and ideas to use as a guide for planning activities that can take place later in the year when restrictions are lifted.

A discussion took place amongst members whereby items for the letterbox were discussed and the idea of opening the group up to a broader network of people in isolation.

Cllrs Davies and Skyrme added the possibility of linking people with devices and online meetings was a positive to tackle the issue of isolation and had the potential of future projects.

Cllr Denley-Jones proposed the project be accepted; this was seconded by Cllr Skyrme.

All members were in agreement.

**Resolved:** Blaenavon Connect project was approved by members.

### **8. Responsible Finance Officer's Update: To receive January 2021 financial update.**

Lyndsey Harris (Administrator) forwarded members the January 2021 financial reports electronically in advance of the meeting which detailed the following areas:

- Income and Expenditure
- Credit Card Payments
- Cheque Payments
- Bacs Payments
- Cash Book Transactions
- Bank Reconciliation
- Project Revenue
- Project Expenditure
- Budget
- VAT
- Bank Statements

Mr Warren (RFO) presented to members each of the above areas of finance and highlighted any relevant information. Members were invited to ask any questions in relation to the areas referenced.

Members were happy with the presentation with one question raised from Cllr Davies regarding to the possibility of the RFO looking into alternative suppliers to tender for the Christmas Tree hire for 2021.

The RFO agreed that he would look into quotes from some alternative suppliers and report back to members when received.

Cllr Davies added the increased budget for 2021/22 meant that there was potential to significantly raise the project work within the town.

The RFO explained that there is a £15,000 budget allocated to projects in addition to carried over funds as a result of the pandemic. Mr Warren encouraged members to put forward project proposals.

Cllr Davies questioned whether the spending was effective in response to the increased poverty and isolation caused by the pandemic and should the council be looking at alternative strategies at a local level?

Members noted Cllr Davies comments.

**Resolved:** Financial update for January 2021 accepted by members.

**9. Any other matters.**

Cllr Davies informed members that training for the Vocal Eyes platform was available on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 at 6.30pm and invited members to email him if they wanted to be invited to the training session.

**Resolved:** Members noted the update.

The meeting was ended at 19.36pm

**Chairman Signed:** *L. J. Cooney*

**Date:** 11 / 3 /21.



BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL  
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## Blaenavon Town Council

### Finance Update

January 2021



# BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL

## Bank Reconciliation 2020 - 21

### Bank Reconciliation

JAN

#### Opening Balance

Current Account	£130,350.77
Cash in Hand	£21.45
	<hr/>
	<b>£130,372.22</b>

Add Receipts in Period	£143.00
Less Payments in Period	£15,247.55
	<hr/>

Balance at End of Period	<b>£115,267.67</b>
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#### Balances at Bank

Current Account	£115,246.22
Cash in Hand	£21.45
	<hr/>
	<b>£115,267.67</b>

Clerk

Sign

*K. Clarke*

Date

11/2/21

Chairman

Sign

*L. J. Coates*

Date

11/2/2021

# BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL

## Income & Expenditure Statement 2020/2021



Period

JAN

	ACTUAL		BUDGET		VAR
<b>INCOME</b>					
BTC	£ -		£ -		£0.00
PRECEPT	£ -		£ -		£0.00
VAT RECEIPTS	£ -		£ -		£0.00
REVENUE	£ 143.00		£ -		£143.00
HBO	£ -		£ -		£0.00
OTHER RECEIPTS	£ -		£ -		£0.00
	<b>£ 143.00</b>		<b>£ -</b>		<b>£143.00</b>
<b>XPENDITURE</b>					
SALARY	£ 5,751.89		£ 5,751.89		£0.00
ELECTION COSTS	£ -		£ -		£0.00
ESTABLISHMENT COSTS	£ 1,151.47		£ 1,151.47		£0.00
COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCE	£ 150.00		£ 150.00		£0.00
HOSPITALITY	£ -		£ -		£0.00
PROJECTS	£ 2,461.22		£ 2,461.22		£0.00
GRANTS	£ 5,250.00		£ 5,250.00		£0.00
VAT	£ 482.97		£ 482.97		£0.00
	<b>£ 15,247.55</b>		<b>£ 15,247.55</b>		<b>£0.00</b>

CLERK

SIGN

*K. Llaner*

DATE

11/2/21

CHAIRMAN

SIGN

*L. J. Cooney*

DATE

11/12/2021









DATE

11/2/21

DATE

11/2/2021







