

T: 01495 356139 Ext./Est: 6139

E: committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Contact:/Cysylltwch â: Democratic Services



THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

16th July 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

A meeting of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council will be held in Remotely Via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 23rd July, 2020 at 10.00 am.

Yours faithfully

Michelle Morris
Managing Director

AGENDA

Pages

1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation will be provided if requested.

2. APOLOGIES

To receive.

We welcome correspondence in the medium of Welsh or English. / Croesawn ohebiaith trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**
To consider any declarations of interest and dispensations received.
4. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
To receive.
5. **ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL** 9 - 56
To consider and if thought fit, approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd April, 2020.
6. **ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL** 57 - 72
To consider and if thought fit, approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th February, 2020.
7. **SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL** 73 - 90
To consider and if thought fit, approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd March, 2020.
8. **PLANNING, REGULATORY & GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE** 91 - 118
To confirm the minutes of the Planning, Regulatory & General Licensing Committee held on 6th February, 2020.
9. **SPECIAL PLANNING, REGULATORY & GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE (GENERAL LICENSING MATTERS)** 119 - 124
To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th February, 2020.
10. **STATUTORY LICENSING COMMITTEE** 125 - 128
To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th February, 2020.
11. **PLANNING, REGULATORY & GENERAL LICENSING** 129 - 144

COMMITTEE

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th March, 2020.

12. **PLANNING, REGULATORY & GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE** 145 - 168

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th June, 2020.

13. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** 169 - 180

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 29th January, 2020.

14. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** 181 - 194

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th March, 2020.

15. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** 195 - 208

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th June, 2020.

16. **SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** 209 - 218

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th July, 2020.

17. **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE** 219 - 226

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th November, 2019.

18. **AUDIT COMMITTEE** 227 - 232

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th November, 2019.

19. **SPECIAL CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** 233 - 244

To confirm the Minutes of the Special Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee held on 19th November, 2019.

20. **JOINT EDUCATION & LEARNING AND SOCIAL** 245 - 252

SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To confirm the Minutes of the Joint Education & Learning and Social Services Scrutiny Committee (Safeguarding) held on 2nd December, 2019.

21. SPECIAL CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 253 - 264

To confirm the Minutes of the Special Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee held on 5th December, 2019.

22. SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 265 - 274

To confirm the Minutes of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 13th January, 2020

23. EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 275 - 282

To confirm the Minutes of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 15th January, 2020.

24. COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 283 - 290

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 16th January, 2020.

25. REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 291 - 304

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd January, 2020.

26. JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (BUDGET MONITORING) 305 - 310

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th January, 2020.

27. AUDIT COMMITTEE 311 - 316

To confirm the Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 28th January, 2020.

28. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

To receive questions, if any, from Members.

29. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

To receive questions, if any, from the public.

30. **COVID-19 EMERGENCY - TRANSITION TO THE NEXT PHASE** 317 - 326

To consider the report of the Managing Director.

31. **THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE 2020/2021 REVENUE BUDGET AND UPDATE ON BRIDGING THE GAP PROPOSALS** 327 - 342

To consider the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

32. **ESTABLISHING THE BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL CONTACT TRACING SERVICE** 343 - 350

To consider the report of the Chief Officer Commercial.

33. **FORWARD LOOKING PLAN - CORPORATE PLAN REFRESH 2020/22** 351 - 366

To consider the report of the Managing Director.

34. **CAPITAL STRATEGY 2020/2021** 367 - 382

To consider the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

35. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT - TREASURY STRATEGY STATEMENT, INVESTMENT STRATEGY & MRP POLICY STATEMENT 2020/2021 (INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS)** 383 - 420

To consider the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

36. **PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020/21** 421 - 530

To consider the report of the Head of Organisational Development.

37. **STATUTORY PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT LEAVE** 531 - 534

To consider the report of the Head of Organisational Development.

38. **SCHEDULE OF MEMBERS REMUNERATION 2020-21** 535 - 552

To consider the report of the Head of Organisational Development.

39. **STATEMENT OF PAYMENTS MADE TO MEMBERS
IN 2019/2020** 553 - 558
- To consider the report of the Head of Organisational Development.
40. **FUNDING OPTIONS - ABERBEEG ROAD** 559 - 564
- To consider the report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services.
41. **ANNUAL CYCLE OF MEETINGS 2020/2021** 565 - 578
- To consider the report of the Service Manager Performance and Democratic.
42. **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** 579 - 584
- To receive the report of the meeting held on 29th January, 2020.
43. **STANDARDS COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT** 585 - 588
- To consider the report of the Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance (Monitoring Officer).
44. **MEMBERSHIP REPORT** 589 - 590
- To consider the attached report.
45. **TIME OF FUTURE COUNCIL MEETINGS**
- To consider.
46. **EXEMPT ITEMS**
- To receive and consider the following reports which in the opinion of the proper officer are exempt items taking into account consideration of the public interest test and that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting (the reasons for the decision for the exemptions are available on a schedule maintained by the proper officer).
47. **SERVICE REVIEW** 591 - 622
- To consider the report of the Chief Officer Commercial.

To consider the report of the Corporate Director of
Regeneration & Community Services.

To: Councillor M. Moore (Chair)
Councillor J. Holt (Deputy Chair)
Councillor P. Baldwin
Councillor D. Bevan
Councillor G. Collier
Councillor J. Collins
Councillor M. Cook
Councillor M. Cross
Councillor N. Daniels
Councillor D. Davies
Councillor G. A. Davies
Councillor G. L. Davies
Councillor M. Day
Councillor P. Edwards
Councillor L. Elias
Councillor D. Hancock
Councillor K. Hayden
Councillor S. Healy
Councillor J. Hill
Councillor W. Hodgins
Councillor M. Holland
Councillor J. Mason
Councillor H. McCarthy
Councillor C. Meredith
Councillor J. Millard
Councillor J. C. Morgan
Councillor J. P. Morgan
Councillor L. Parsons
Councillor G. Paulsen
Councillor K. Pritchard
Councillor K. Rowson
Councillor T. Sharrem
Councillor T. Smith
Councillor B. Summers
Councillor B. Thomas
Councillor G. Thomas
Councillor S. Thomas
Councillor H. Trollope
Councillor J. Wilkins
Councillor D. Wilkshire
Councillor B. Willis
Councillor L. Winnett

All other Members (for information)
Manager Director
Chief Officers

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – 2ND APRIL, 2020</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>DEMOCRATIC OFFICER</u>

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M. MOORE (THE CHAIR,
PRESIDING)

- Councillors
- P. Baldwin
 - D. Bevan
 - J. Collins
 - M. Cook
 - N. Daniels
 - D. Davies
 - G. A. Davies
 - M. Day
 - P. Edwards
 - L. Elias
 - D. Hancock
 - K. Hayden
 - S. Healy
 - J. Hill
 - W. Hodgins
 - M. Holland
 - J. Mason
 - H. McCarthy, B.A. (Hons)
 - C. Meredith
 - J. C. Morgan
 - J. P. Morgan
 - L. Parsons
 - G. Paulsen
 - K. Pritchard
 - K. Rowson
 - T. Sharrem
 - T. Smith
 - B. Summers
 - G. Thomas
 - S. Thomas

H. Trollope
J. Wilkins
B. Willis
L. Winnett

AND: Managing Director
Chief Officer Resources
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
Head of Governance and Partnerships

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
-----	<u>CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC</u> Due to the COVID 19 pandemic and in order to adhere to U.K and Welsh Government guidance, this meeting was conducted via telephone conference.	
1.	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
2.	<u>APOLOGIES</u> Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors G. Collier, M. Cross, G. L. Davies, J. Holt, J. Millard, B. Thomas and D. Wilkshire.	
3.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u> There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.	

4.	<p><u>CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL</u></p> <p>It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Mandy Moore be re-elected Chair of the Council and that Councillor Julie Holt be re-appointed Deputy Chair of the Council for the ensuing year.</p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p>	
5.	<p><u>LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</u></p> <p>It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Nigel Daniels be re-elected Leader of the Council and that Councillor David C. Davies be elected Deputy Leader for the ensuing year.</p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p>	
6.	<p><u>GROUP OFFICERS</u></p> <p>The Independent Group Officers for the ensuing year were reported as follows:</p> <p>Councillor N. Daniels – Leader Councillor D. Davies – Deputy Leader Councillor J. Wilkins – Secretary Councillor M. Moore – Group Chair Councillor J. Holt – Group Vice-Chair</p> <p>It was reported that the Labour Group Officers for the ensuing year would be:</p>	

	<p>Councillor S. Thomas - Leader Councillor H. Trollope - Deputy Leader Councillor T. Sharrem - Group Chair Councillor M. Cross – Group Vice-Chair Councillor K. Hayden – Secretary Councillor H. McCarthy – Treasurer</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p><u>MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE</u></p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously RESOLVED that the following be appointed:</p> <p><u>Leader of the Council/Executive Member Corporate Services</u> Councillor N. Daniels</p> <p><u>Deputy Leader of the Council/Executive Member – Regeneration & Economic Development</u> Councillor D. Davies</p> <p><u>Executive Member – Environment</u> Councillor J. Wilkins</p> <p><u>Executive Member – Social Services</u> Councillor J. Mason</p> <p><u>Executive Member – Education</u> Councillor J. Collins</p> <p>It was noted that changes to the Executive membership had been made in line with the principle of succession planning.</p> <p>The Leader of the Council paid tribute and acknowledged the work undertaken by the former Deputy Leader/Executive Member – Environment, Councillor Garth Collier during his time in the role. Appreciation was expressed to Garth for the help, support and tireless work he had undertaken – the successes within the Environment Directorate could be attributed to Garth and also classed as his successes.</p> <p>The Leader of the Labour Group echoed these comments.</p>	

Item Nos. 8 and 9 were considered simultaneously.

8.

CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR AND MEMBERSHIP OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

It was proposed and seconded that the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair be held by the following and upon a vote being taken this was unanimously RESOLVED:

Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee

Chair Councillor S. Healy

Vice-Chair Councillor M. Cook

Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

Chair Councillor J. Hill

Vice-Chair Councillor P. Edwards

Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Chair Councillor M. Moore

Vice-Chair Councillor C. Meredith

Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee

Chair Councillor H. Trollope

Vice-Chair Councillor J. Holt

Social Services Scrutiny Committee

Chair Councillor S. Thomas

Vice-Chair Councillor K. Rowson

FURTHER RESOLVED that the following be appointed:

Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee

15 Members - Proportionality 10:4:1

1. Chair Councillor S. Healy

2. Vice-Chair Councillor M. Cook

3. Councillors P. Baldwin

4. M. Cross

5. G. A. Davies

- | | |
|-----|--------------|
| 6. | P. Edwards |
| 7. | J. Hill |
| 8. | H. McCarthy |
| 9. | C. Meredith |
| 10. | J. Millard |
| 11. | J. P. Morgan |
| 12. | K. Prichard |
| 13. | L. Parsons |
| 14. | G. Paulsen |
| 15. | D. Wilkshire |

Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 15 Members - Proportionality 10:4:1

- | | | |
|-----|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Chair | Councillor J. Hill |
| 2. | Vice-Chair | Councillor P. Edwards |
| 3. | Councillors | G. Collier |
| 4. | | M. Cross |
| 5. | | G. A. Davies |
| 6. | | M. Day |
| 7. | | L. Elias |
| 8. | | M. Holland |
| 9. | | H. McCarthy |
| 10. | | J. Millard |

-
- | | |
|-----|--------------|
| 11. | J. C. Morgan |
| 12. | J. P. Morgan |
| 13. | L. Parsons |
| 14. | K. Rowson |
| 15. | B. Willis |

Community Services Scrutiny Committee - 15 Members
- Proportionality 10:4:1

- | | | |
|-----|-------------|------------------------|
| 1. | Chair | Councillor M. Moore |
| 2. | Vice-Chair | Councillor C. Meredith |
| 3. | Councillors | P. Baldwin |
| 4. | | M. Cook |
| 5. | | G. L. Davies |
| 6. | | S. Healy |
| 7. | | W. Hodgins |
| 8. | | J. Holt |
| 9. | | H. McCarthy |
| 10. | | J. Millard |
| 11. | | G. Paulsen |
| 12. | | K. Pritchard |
| 13. | | T. Sharrem |
| 14. | | B. Summers |
| 15. | | L. Winnett |
-

**Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee –
15 Members - Proportionality 10:5**

- | | | |
|-----|-------------|------------------------|
| 1. | Chair | Councillor H. Trollope |
| 2. | Vice-Chair | Councillor J. Holt |
| 3. | Councillors | D. Bevan |
| 4. | | G. Collier |
| 5. | | M. Cook |
| 6. | | M. Day |
| 7. | | L. Elias |
| 8. | | W. Hodgins |
| 9. | | C. Meredith |
| 10. | | J.C. Morgan |
| 11. | | J. P. Morgan |
| 12. | | L. Parsons |
| 13. | | B. Summers |
| 14. | | T. Smith |
| 15. | | S. Thomas |

**** Would also include 2 Members of religious bodies and between 2 – 5 parent governors with voting rights only when dealing with education matters.***

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|--|
| 1. | Mr. T. Baxter | Diocesan Education Body
(R.C. Church) |
| 2. | Mr. A. Williams | The Church in Wales |

3. Vacancy Youth Forum Representative

Social Services Scrutiny Committee
15 Members - Proportionality 10:5

1. Chair Councillor S. Thomas
2. Vice-Chair Councillor K. Rowson
3. Councillors D. Bevan
4. G. Collier
5. G. A. Davies
6. G. L. Davies
7. P. Edwards
8. L. Elias
9. K. Hayden
10. J. Holt
11. M. Moore
12. G. Paulsen
13. B. Summers
14. T. Sharrem
15. T. Smith

Public Service Board Scrutiny Committee – 15
Members - Proportionality 10:4:1 (to include
Corporate Overview Members and Chairs of Scrutiny
Committees)

1. Chair Chair of Corporate Overview
Scrutiny Committee
Councillor S. Healy

2.	Vice-Chair	<u>Vice-Chair of Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee</u> Councillor M. Cook
3.		<u>Chair of Social Services Scrutiny Committee</u> Councillor S. Thomas
4.		<u>Chair of Community Services Scrutiny Committee</u> Councillor M. Moore
5.		<u>Chair of Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee</u> Councillor H. Trollope
6.		<u>Chair of Regeneration Scrutiny Committee</u> Councillor J. Hill
7.	Councillors	P. Baldwin
8.		M. Cross
9.		G. A. Davies
10.		P. Edwards
11.		C. Meredith
12.		J. Millard
13.		J. P. Morgan
14.		G. Paulsen
15.		K. Pritchard

Item Nos. 8 and 9 were considered simultaneously.

9. **STANDING COMMITTEES AND STANDING SUB-COMMITTEES**

Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously RESOLVED that the following be appointed:

Planning, Regulatory & General Licensing Committee
15 Members - Proportionality 10:5

- | | | |
|-----|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Chair | Councillor D. Hancock |
| 2. | Vice-Chair | Councillor W. Hodgins |
| 3. | Councillors | D. Bevan |
| 4. | | G. L. Davies |
| 5. | | M. Day |
| 6. | | S. Healy |
| 7. | | J. Hill |
| 8. | | C. Meredith |
| 9. | | K. Rowson |
| 10. | | T. Smith |
| 11. | | B. Thomas |
| 12. | | G. Thomas |
| 13. | | D. Wilkshire |
| 14. | | B. Willis |
| 15. | | L. Winnett |

***Ward Members to be invited re: planning site meetings without voting rights.**

General Licensing Sub-Committee (Rolling Rota)
3 Members (No proportionality)

1. Chair Councillor D. Hancock
or
2. Vice-Chair Councillor W. Hodgins

Plus 2 other Members of the Planning, Regulatory & General Licensing Committee

Statutory Licensing Committee
15 Members - Proportionality 10:5

- | | | |
|-----|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Chair | Councillor D. Hancock |
| 2. | Vice-Chair | Councillor W. Hodgins |
| 3. | Councillors | D. Bevan |
| 4. | | G. L. Davies |
| 5. | | M. Day |
| 6. | | S. Healy |
| 7. | | J. Hill |
| 8. | | C. Meredith |
| 9. | | K. Rowson |
| 10. | | T. Smith |
| 11. | | B. Thomas |
| 12. | | G. Thomas |
| 13. | | D. Wilkshire |
| 14. | | B. Willis |
| 15. | | L. Winnett |

Statutory Licensing Sub-Committee (Rolling Rota)
3 Members – (No proportionality)

1. Chair Councillor D. Hancock

or

2. Vice-Chair Councillor W. Hodgins

Plus **2 other Members of the Statutory Licensing Committee**

Democratic Services Committee
15 Members - Proportionality 10:5

1. Chair Councillor M. Cross

2. Vice-Chair Councillor B. Summers

3. Executive Member - Corporate Services
Councillor N. Daniels

4. Councillors G. Collier

5. G. A. Davies

6. G. L. Davies

7. M. Day

8. L. Elias

9. K. Hayden

10. M. Holland

11. H. McCarthy

12. J. C. Morgan

13. L. Parsons

14. K. Pritchard

15. T. Sharrem

***Chair and Vice-Chair of Scrutiny Committees to be invited without voting rights**

Audit Committee

15 Members - Proportionality 10:4:1

Chair	To be confirmed
1. Vice-Chair	<u>Chair of Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee</u> Councillor S. Healy
2.	<u>Deputy Leader of the Council</u> Councillor D. Davies
3.	<u>Chair - Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee</u> Councillor H. Trollope
4.	<u>Chair - Social Services Scrutiny Committee</u> Councillor S. Thomas
5.	<u>Chair – Regeneration Scrutiny Committee</u> Councillor J. Hill
6.	<u>Chair - Community Services Scrutiny Committee</u> Councillor M. Moore
7.	<u>Chair - Democratic Services Committee</u> Councillor M. Cross
8.	<u>Chair – Planning, Regulatory & General Licensing Committee</u> Councillor D. Hancock
9.	Councillor G. L. Davies
10.	Councillor W. Hodgins
11.	Councillor J. Holt

12. Councillor J. Millard
13. Councillor K. Rowson
14. Councillor B. Summers
15. Councillor L. Winnett

Audit Committee Appointments Panel 3:2

1. Councillor D. Davies
2. Councillor S. Healy
3. Councillor J. Hill
4. Councillor S. Thomas
5. Councillor H. Trollope

**Standards Committee - 9 Members –
(3 County Borough Councillors
5 Independent Members
1 Community Council Member)**

1. Town Councillor Jacqueline Thomas
2. Mr. J. B. Evans
3. Mr. Stephen Williams
4. Mr R. Alexander
5. Mr. J. Price
6. Miss H. Roberts
7. Councillor K. Hayden
8. Councillor M. Moore
9. Councillor G. Thomas

Shortlisting – JNC Officers
7 Members – Proportionality 5:2

1. Leader / Executive Member - Corporate Services
2. Deputy Leader / Executive Member – Regeneration & Economic Development
3. Executive Member for appropriate Portfolio
4. Chair of appropriate Scrutiny Committee
5. Vice-Chair of appropriate Scrutiny Committee
6. Councillor J. C. Morgan
7. Councillor T. Sharrem

Substitutes

1. Councillor S. Healy
2. Councillor J. Hill
3. Councillor H. McCarthy
4. Councillor K. Hayden

Appointments Committee – JNC Officers
15 Members - Proportionality 10:5

1. Chair – Leader
 2. Vice-Chair – Deputy Leader
 3. Executive Member for appropriate Portfolio
 4. Chair of appropriate Scrutiny Committee
 5. Vice-Chair of appropriate Scrutiny Committee
 6. Councillors D. Bevan
 7. M. Cook
-

- | | |
|-----|--------------|
| 8. | M. Cross |
| 9. | S. Healy |
| 10. | J. Hill |
| 11. | H. McCarthy |
| 12. | C. Meredith |
| 13. | M. Moore |
| 14. | J. C. Morgan |
| 15. | T. Smith |

N.B. Appointments to be made by group leader as required. Executive Member of Appropriate Portfolio(s) Scrutiny Chair of Appropriate Portfolio(s)

Substitutes

1. Councillor M. Moore
2. Councillor B. Summers
3. Councillor K. Hayden
4. Councillor L. Winnett

**Shortlisting – Managing Director/Chief Executive
7 Members – Proportionality 5:2**

1. Leader of the Council
2. Deputy Leader of the Council
3. Leader of the Largest Opposition Group
4. Deputy Leader of the Largest Opposition Group
5. Councillor J. Collins
6. Councillor J. Mason
7. Councillor J. Wilkins

Officer additions if appropriate

Substitutes

1. Councillor S. Healy
2. Councillor J. Hill
3. Councillor J. C. Morgan
4. Councillor H. McCarthy

Appointments Committee – Managing Director/Chief Executive - 15 Members - Proportionality 10:5

1. Chair – Leader
2. Vice-Chair – Deputy Leader
3. Leader of the Largest Opposition Group
4. Deputy Leader of the Largest Opposition Group
5. Councillors J. Collins
6. M. Cook
7. M. Cross
8. S. Healy
9. J. Hill
10. H. McCarthy
11. J. Mason
12. C. Meredith
13. M. Moore
14. J. Wilkins
15. L. Winnett

N.B. Appointments to be made by group leader as required. Executive Member of Appropriate Portfolio(s) Scrutiny Chair of Appropriate Portfolio(s)

Substitutes

1. Councillors P. Edwards
2. J. Holt
3. J. C. Morgan
4. K. Hayden

Appeals Committee

****1 Member to be selected from the following to Chair the Committee***

Chair of Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee
Chair of Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Chair of Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Chair of Community Services Scrutiny Committee
Chair of Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee

**** 1 Member to be selected from the following Majority Group Members:***

- Councillors
1. G. Collier
 2. D. Hancock
 3. J. Holt

**** 1 Member to be selected from the following Labour Group Members:***

- Councillors
1. D. Bevan
 2. T. Smith
 3. D. Wilkshire

**** On a Rolling Rota***

Substitute Members

- Councillors
1. M. Cook

2. W. Hodgins
3. B. Willis
4. L. Winnett

**Investigating & Disciplinary Committee
(JNC & Chief Officers)**

- Councillors
1. D. Davies - Chair
 2. G. A. Davies
 3. P. Edwards
 4. C. Meredith
 5. S. Thomas

10.

**SPECIAL AND AD HOC COMMITTEES/
CONSULTATION**

Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously,
RESOLVED that the following be appointed:

**Cross Party Member Development Working Group
5 Members**

1. Leader / Executive Member – Corporate Services
Councillor N. Daniels
2. Deputy Leader/ Executive Member – Regeneration &
Economic Development
Councillor D. Davies
3. Councillor S. Healy
4. Councillor J. Holt
5. Councillor H. Trollope

Public Service Board (PSB)

1. Leader of the Council/Executive Member Corporate Services

Consultation with Trade Unions

1. Leader/Executive Member Corporate Services
2. Deputy Leader/Executive Member – Regeneration & Economic Development
3. Appropriate Portfolio Member(s)

CONSULTATION TOWN /COMMUNITY COUNCILS

1. Leader / Executive Member - Corporate Services
Councillor N. Daniels
2. Executive Member - Regeneration & Economic Development
Councillor D. Davies
3. Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins
4. Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins
5. Executive Member – Social Services
Councillor J. Mason
6. Councillor M. Cook
7. Councillor M. Cross
8. Councillor J. Hill
9. Councillor M. Moore
10. Councillor L. Winnett

Fostering Panel (Social Services)

1. Councillor J. Holt

Substitute: Councillor K. Rowson

Blaenau Gwent Care and Repair – Agency Board

1. Executive Member - Social Services
Councillor J. Mason
2. Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins

50+ Network

1. Executive Member – Social Services
Councillor J. Mason
2. Chair – Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Councillor S. Thomas
3. Vice-Chair – Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Councillor K. Rowson
4. Councillor G. Thomas

Education Admissions Forum

1. Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins
2. Chair – Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee
Councillor H. Trollope

Schools Forum

1. Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins
2. Chair – Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee
Councillor H. Trollope

Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education

1. Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins

2. Chair – Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee
Councillor H. Trollope

3. Councillor J. Holt

Scrutiny Schools Wellbeing Group (formerly School Standards Monitoring Group)

1. Chair – Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee
Councillor H. Trollope

or

2. Vice-Chair – Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee
Councillor J. Holt

3. Councillor M. Cook

4. Councillor L. Elias

5. Councillor C. Meredith

6. Councillor B. Summers

7. Councillor D. Bevan

8. Councillor J. C. Morgan

9. Councillor T. Smith

*** Chair and Vice-Chair to attend separate meetings**

****A rolling membership from the above list – 3 or 4 members to attend each meeting.**

Self-Evaluation Panel

1. Leader of the Council
Councillor N. Daniels

2. Deputy Leader of the Council
Councillor D. Davies

-
3. Executive Member - Education
Councillor J. Collins
 4. Chair of Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee
Councillor H. Trollope
 5. Lead Member – Safeguarding
Executive Member – Social Services
Councillor J. Mason

HoV Waste Programme Joint Committee

1. Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins
2. Executive Member – Regeneration & Economic Development
Councillor D. Davies

Tomorrow Valley Project

1. Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins
2. Executive Member – Corporate Services
Councillor N. Daniels

Local Authority Liaison Committee

Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins

Executive Member – Regeneration & Economic Development
Councillor D. Davies

Sirhowy Ward Members

Rassau Ward Members

Beaufort Ward Members

Brynmawr Ward Members

Constitution Working Group

1. Leader of the Council
Councillor N. Daniels
2. Deputy Leader of the Council
Councillor D. Davies
3. Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor S. Thomas
4. Deputy Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor H. Trollope
5. Chair of Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee
Councillor S. Healy
6. Vice-Chair of Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee
Councillor M. Cook
7. Chair of the Council
Councillor M. Moore
8. Deputy Chair of the Council
Councillor J. Holt
9. Councillor P. Edwards
10. Councillor J. Hill

Freedom of the Borough – Cross Party Working Group

1. Councillor J. Hill
2. Councillor J. Holt
3. Councillor G. Thomas
4. Councillor D. Bevan

5. Councillor K. Hayden

Grants Working Group –
16 Members – Proportionality 10:5:1

**** 1 Member from each Ward on a political
proportionality basis.***

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | Councillors L. Parsons | (Llanhilleth Ward) |
| 2. | N. Daniels | (Abertillery Ward) |
| 3. | J. Hill | (Brynmawr Ward) |
| 4. | T. Sharrem | (Cwmtillery Ward) |
| 5. | L. Winnett | (Blaina Ward) |
| 6. | G. Thomas | (Beaufort Ward) |
| 7. | G. Paulsen | (Badminton Ward) |
| 8. | G. L. Davies | (Cwm Ward) |
| 9. | M. Cross | (Sirhowy Ward) |
| 10. | D. Hancock | (Six Bells Ward) |
| 11. | J. Millard | (Ebbw Vale South
Ward) |
| 12. | B. Summers | (Ebbw Vale North
Ward) |
| 13. | M. Moore | (Tredegar Central and
West Ward) |
| 14. | J. C. Morgan | (Georgetown Ward) |
| 15. | D. Wilkshire | (Rassau Ward) |
| 16. | K. Rowson | (Nantyglo Ward) |

**Advisory Panel for the Appointment of Local Authority
Governors**

1. Executive Member – Education (Chair)
Councillor J. Collins
2. Councillor M. Cook
3. Councillor J. Holt
4. Councillor C. Meredith
5. Councillor B. Summers
6. Councillor H. Trollope
7. Councillor J. C. Morgan

Substitutes:

1. Councillor L. Elias
2. Councillor L. Parsons
3. Councillor T. Smith
4. Councillor D. Bevan

Observer: A representative of the Blaenau Gwent School
Governors' Association (BGSGA)

**Destination Management Group (1 representative from
each valley)**

1. Councillor P. Edwards
2. Councillor M. Moore
3. Councillor L. Parsons

Digital Inclusion

1. Councillor J. Holt
-

2. Councillor H. Trollope

Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee

1. Councillor K. Rowson

Community Asset Transfer Steering Group

1. Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins

Tredegar Heritage Initiative

1. Councillor D. Davies
2. Councillor M. Moore
3. Councillor M. Cross
4. Councillor H. Trollope
5. Councillor J. C. Morgan

Tredegar Town Council Representative – T. Smith

Cost Pressure Sub-Group

1. **Leader of the Council/Executive Member – Corporate Services**
Councillor N. Daniels
2. **Deputy Leader of the Council/Executive Member Regeneration & Economic Development**
Councillor D. Davies
3. **Executive Member – Social Services**
Councillor J. Mason
4. **Executive Member – Education**
Councillor J. Collins
5. **Executive Member – Environment**
Councillor J. Wilkins

6. **Chair – Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor S. Healy

7. **Vice-Chair – Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor M. Cook

Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Board

1. Leader or Deputy Leader
2. Executive Member – Regeneration & Economic Development
3. Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services

Corporate Parenting Board

1. Executive Member – Social Services
Councillor J. Mason
2. Chair of Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Councillor S. Thomas
3. Councillor J. Holt
4. Councillor K. Rowson
5. Councillor D. Bevan

Resettlement Programme

1. Councillor J. Mason
 2. Councillor J. Collins
 3. Councillor J. Millard
 4. Councillor H. McCarthy
 5. Councillor H. Trollope
-

	<p><u>MEMBERS' CHAMPIONS</u></p> <p><u>Community Safety</u> Councillor C. Meredith</p> <p><u>Children & Young People</u> Councillor J. P. Morgan</p> <p><u>Older Persons</u> Councillor K. Rowson</p> <p><u>Equalities and Diversity</u> Councillor M. Moore</p> <p><u>Armed Forces</u> Councillor B. Thomas</p> <p><u>Natural Environment & Biodiversity</u> Councillor L. Parsons</p> <p><u>Digital Champion</u> Councillor J. Holt</p> <p>LEAD MEMBER(S)</p> <p><u>Lead Member - Safeguarding</u> Executive Member - Social Services</p>	
11.	<p><u>COUNCIL'S REPRESENTATIVE ON OTHER BODIES</u></p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously, RESOLVED that the following be appointed:-</p> <p><u>Adult Learning Wales (formerly Workers' Educational Association Wales, YMCA Wales Community Council)</u> Scrutiny Chair – Education & Learning</p>	

Age Concern Gwent – Executive Committee Membership

Executive Member – Social Services

The Alliance

Executive Member – Regeneration & Economic Development

Scrutiny Chair – Regeneration

Aneurin Bevan Community Council – Local Committee

1. Councillor J. Millard
2. Councillor P. Edwards
3. **Vacancy**

Aneurin Bevan Health Board – Independent Review Panel to meet Continuing Health Care Needs

Scrutiny Chair – Social Services

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board – Stakeholder Reference Group

Executive Member – Social Services

Aneurin Leisure Trust

Councillor W. Hodgins
Councillor L. Parsons

Aneurin Leisure Trust – Community Chest Panel

Councillor M. Cook

Brecon Beacons National Park – National Park Authority & Site Visits

Councillor J. Hill

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal – Regional Scrutiny Committee

Chair of Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

Substitute: Scrutiny Vice-Chair of Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Cabinet

Leader of the Council

CSC (Compound Semi-Conductor Board Part of the IQE Investment through City Deal)

Deputy Leader/Executive Member – Regeneration & Economic Development
Executive Member – Environment

Duke of Beaufort's Breconshire Estate Commoner's Association

Councillor B. Thomas

EAS - Education Achievement Service for South East Wales

Executive Member – Environment

Substitute: Executive Member – Regeneration & Economic Development

EAS – Joint Executive Group

Executive Member – Education

EAS – Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Councillor S. Healy

Councillor M. Cook

G.A.V.O. – Executive Committee & Local Committee

Executive Member – Social Services – Councillor J. Mason

G.A.V.O. - Be Proud of your Community Gwent Awards (Formerly - Gwent Best Kept Village Committee)

Councillor L. Parsons

Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

Scrutiny Chair – Community Services

Councillor M. Moore

Substitute: Scrutiny Vice-Chair – Community Services

Councillor C. Meredith

Gwent Archives Joint Committee

Executive Member – Regeneration & Economic Development

Councillor J. Millard

Gwent Police Crime Panel

(formerly Gwent Police Authority)

Councillor C. Meredith

Councillor L. Winnett

Gwent Regional Partnership Board

Executive Member – Social Services

Heads of the Valleys Programme Board

Executive Member – Regeneration & Economic Development

Joint Council for Wales Employers Side

Executive Member – Corporate Services

Monmouth School Farm Endowment Trust

Councillor B. Thomas

National Adoption Service Governance Board

Executive Member – Social Services

PATROL Adjudication Joint Committee

Scrutiny Chair – Community Services

Councillor M. Moore

Sub:- Scrutiny Vice-Chair - Community Services

Councillor C. Meredith

**Reserve Forces & Cadets Association for Wales –
Local Government Representation**

Councillor B. Thomas

Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd

Non Executive

Councillors M. Cook & B. Summers

Shareholder Representatives

Leader of the Council

Executive Member - Environment

South Wales Fire Authority

Councillor W. Hodgins

South East Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party

Executive Member – Environment

Tai Calon Board

Councillor M. Day

Councillor G. A. Davies

Vision in Wales (formerly Wales Council for the Blind)

Executive Member – Social Services

Scrutiny Chair – Social Services

Welsh Local Government Association

Leader of the Council

WLGA Executive Board

Leader of the Council

WLGA Council and Voting

Leader of the Council

Substitute:- Deputy Leader of the Council

WLGA – All Wales Social Services Policy Group

Executive Member – Social Services

WLGA – Environment Champion

Executive Member – Environment

WLGA – Officer Appointment – Finance Working Group

Chief Officer Resources – Rhian Hayden

WLGA Corporate Affairs – Public Private Partnership Ltd – Management Board

Executive Member – Corporate Services

WLGA – Cultural Affairs & Leisure – South Wales Regional Committee

Executive Member – Environment

Wales Council for the Deaf

Executive Member – Social Services

Welsh Joint Education Committee

Executive Member – Education

**Youth Offending Service Local Management Board –
Blaenau Gwent & Caerphilly**

Executive Member – Social Services

**LEA REPRESENTATION ON SCHOOL GOVERNING
BODIES**

Abertillery 3-16 Learning Community

Mr. R. Bevan

Councillor J. Holt

Councillor N. Daniels

Councillor M. Cook

Vacancy

All Saints R.C. Primary

Mr. N. Price

Mrs. P. Mitchell

Beaufort Hill Primary

Vacancy

Vacancy

Mr. R. Lynch

Blaen-y-Cwm Primary

Councillor Lyn Elias

Ms. Megan Morgan

Ms Natasha Tepielow

Vacancy

Bryn Bach Primary

Mr. Gemma Badham

Councillor Malcolm Cross

Mrs Diane Rowberry

Brynmawr Foundation

Ms Stephanie Hopkins

Councillor John Hill

Canolfan Yr Afon
(The River Centre)

Vacancy

Ms. Lisa Adams

Mr. Stephen J. O'Reilly

Coed-y-Garn Primary

Councillor Keri Rowson

Mr. Kenneth Jones

Vacancy

Cwm Primary

Councillor Derrick Bevan

Mrs Kathryn Cross

Ms. Natalie Marshall

Deighton Primary Tredegar

Councillor Haydn Trollope

Councillor Bernard Willis

Mr. Phillip Griffiths

Mrs Amanda Hulbert

Ebbw Fawr Learning Community

Councillor Derrick Bevan

Councillor Jonathan Millard

Mrs Gina Taylor

Councillor Clive Meredith

Councillor Dai Davies

Georgetown Primary

Tredegar

Councillor Mandy Moore

Councillor John C. Morgan

Ms Donna Hardman

Glanhowy Primary,

Tredegar

Miss Joanne Davies

Councillor Tommy Smith

Ms. Tara Lane

Penycwm Special

Ms. Dawn Wilcox
Mrs Jennifer Morgan
Mrs Nicola Probert

Rhos-y-Fedwen Primary

Councillor D. Wilkshire
Councillor G. A. Davies
Councillor P. Edwards

Sofrydd Primary

Mrs Gill Clark
Pat Smail
Deborah Field

St. Illtyd's Primary

Mrs Keri Jones
Vacancy
Councillor Joanne Collins

St. Joseph's R.C. Primary

Councillor Malcolm Cross

St Marys Brynmawr CIW Primary

Vacancy

St. Mary's RC Primary Brynmawr

Vacancy
Mrs Angela Davies

Tredegar Comprehensive

Councillor John C. Morgan
Councillor Haydn Trollope
Mr Adrian Tuck
Ms. Melanie Rogers
Mr. Andrew Pearsall

Willowtown Primary

Vacancy
Councillor David C. Davies
Mrs Sian Barrett

	<p><u>Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, Blaina</u> Councillor John Hill Councillor Peter Baldwin Mrs Tracey Dyson</p> <p><u>Ystruth Primary</u> Councillor Mrs. Lisa Winnett Councillor Garth Collier Vacancy</p>	
12.	<p><u>EMERGENCY GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS DURING COVID 19 OUTBREAK</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance (Monitoring Officer).</p> <p>At the invitation of the Chair, the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance presented the report, the purpose of which was to establish temporary emergency Governance arrangements in order that decisions may continue to be taken to delay and mitigate the spread and impact of Corona Virus within the community whilst protecting the workforce and residents, particularly those who were most vulnerable.</p> <p>As the virus was spreading quickly, the measures taken by the Council to date as part of its emergency response was, amongst other things, to move to the delivery of only critical services.</p> <p>In terms of the decision making process there was a need to respond quickly to these changes. Blaenau Gwent's local scheme of delegation, contained in Section 13 of the Constitution, already delegated a wide range of operational issues to officers. However, most policy determinations and major decisions which had a wider impact were reserved to the Executive for decision but given that Council meetings had been cancelled for the foreseeable future there was a need to put in place temporary emergency steps to effectively respond to the potential</p>	

impact of COVID 19, and to continue to deliver critical services and protect local communities and staff.

It was, therefore, proposed that the Managing Director or her nominated deputy (being any officer comprised of the Corporate Leadership Team) should have temporary delegated power to make Executive decisions on behalf of the Council. In addition, a temporary Emergency Committee be established in order to consider significant issues which may arise and which may fall outside the Council's current agreed policy or budget framework. This Committee would consist of 5 Members and in the event that a Member of this Committee became unavailable, a substitute would be able to be nominated. The remit of this Committee was detailed in paragraph 3.1 of the report.

It was noted that the statutory power to permit such delegation was contained within section 15(2) of the Local Government Act 200, which provisions enabled a Council to arrange for functions of the Executive to be discharged by a Committee or officers of the Authority.

The Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance concluded by recommending that Option 1 be endorsed.

The Leader of the Council said that it was absolutely necessary to support the report and the recommendation to establish an Emergency Committee. Named representatives would be forwarded to Democratic Services and the Managing Director following the meeting. Flexibility for substitutes would ensure optimum attendance. He concluded by advising that he would propose that Option 1 be endorsed at the appropriate juncture.

The Leader of the Labour Group supported the Leader's comments and advised that he would also submit a named representative following the meeting.

It was, thereupon, proposed and unanimously supported that Option 1 be endorsed.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and that Option 1 be endorsed, namely:

- In respect of the exercise of Executive Functions as outlined in the Council's Constitution, the Council temporarily delegated power and responsibility for exercising Executive functions (which have not already been delegated by virtue of existing arrangements within the Council's Constitution) to the Managing Director (and in her absence or incapacity to any of her nominated deputies being any officer of the Corporate Leadership Team) to make decisions and undertake any actions required to ensure critical services continued to operate based on business continuity plans, in order to ensure the Council and its residents were protected.
- In order to ensure there was appropriate involvement of Elected Members, there would be established (without further report) an Emergency Committee of Elected Members comprising the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Labour Group, two Independent Elected Members and one Labour Elected Member, who would be consulted on decisions which may fall outside the Council's current budget or policy framework. Any urgent decisions which were required to be taken which were outside the Council's current policy and budgetary framework, must be taken in accordance with the existing provisions of Paragraph 15.5 of the Council's Constitution, with the additional proviso that the Emergency Committee must be consulted prior to any such decision being taken.
- In addition, the Managing Director (or her nominated deputy) should make all reasonable efforts to contact the Leader and/or other Members of the Emergency Committee to inform him/her of the circumstances and of her/his decisions as soon as reasonably practicable.
- In the event that a Member of the Emergency Committee became unavailable, they may nominate

	<p>a substitute. The Emergency Committee may conduct its business by email, telephone or using any digital means at their disposal. It was not intended that there be a minimum “quorum” for this Committee. The details of the communication arrangements may be agreed between the Managing Director and the Leader of the Council or their nominated substitutes. The arrangements would continue until further notice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In terms of existing delegated powers i.e. those which were delegated in the Constitution to named Directors/Senior Officers, for the avoidance of doubt, the Managing Director should be entitled to exercise any functions otherwise delegated to a Chief Officer in the event of that officer’s absence or inability to exercise specific delegated powers, or in an emergency. - All decisions taken as a result of this temporary delegation should be recorded on a “Decision Notice” and (unless deemed “Exempt Information” by the Council’s Monitoring Officer) displayed for public access purposes on the Council’s website, as soon as was reasonably practicable. 	
<p>13.</p>	<p><u>FEES & CHARGES 2020/2021 – TRADE WASTE AND MARKETS</u></p> <p>Members considered the report of the Chief Officer Commercial.</p> <p>The Leader of the Council proposed that Option 1 be endorsed. The Leader of the Labour Group also confirmed his support for the report.</p> <p>It was, thereupon, unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely:</p>	

	<p>The proposed fees and charges for Trade Waste and Markets, the extract from the Fees and Charges Register 2020/2021 be approved. Details were summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade Waste – A reduction in the annual fee for the Duty of Care Notice from £49.50 to £25.00. • Markets – A fee uplift of 2% which would increase the pitch fee between £0.40 and £2.00 depending on the pitch size. 	
<p>14.</p>	<p><u>EXEMPT ITEM</u></p> <p>To receive and consider the following report which in the opinion of the proper officer was an exempt item taking into account consideration of the public interest test and that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting (the reason for the decision for the exemption was available on a schedule maintained by the proper officer).</p>	
<p>15.</p>	<p><u>RECRUITMENT</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 15, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Managing Director.</p> <p>At the invitation of the Chair, the Managing Director spoke briefly to the report which had been presented to seek approval to the proposed redesign and recruitment of the role of the Corporate Director of Education and to confirm</p>	

the temporary 'acting up' arrangements put in place as a matter of urgency due to the pending retirement of the current Corporate Director of Education.

The Managing Director concluded by advising Members that the preferred recommendation was Option 1 as detailed within the report.

The Executive Member for Education commenced by placing on record her appreciation to the retiring Corporate Director of Education, Lynette Jones for the dedication and commitment she had given to the role over the years, and said that education was in a far different place as a result of her efforts. The Executive Member expressed her very best wishes to Lynette on her forthcoming retirement.

The Executive Member continued by stating that given the current circumstances a timescale for the permanent recruitment process was unable to be provided but this would be undertaken as soon as reasonable and practical to do so. She was confident that the interim Corporate Director was more than capable of taking forward education during this turbulent time.

The Executive Member for Education concluded by referring to the wonderful response received from the Education Team in light of the current situation and expressed her appreciation to officers for the work undertaken during this difficult time.

The views of Members were, thereupon, sought in relation to the report.

Member No. 1

A Member commenced by stating that she had been surprised at the preferred option that was being recommended. She explained that during the time that education was in special measures, the role of Corporate Director had been advertised on the lower rate of pay and whilst numerous applications had been received, a successful appointment had not been made. As a consequence, the Council had unanimously agreed to re-

advertise the job for a second time with a market supplement to attract the right calibre of candidate and on this occasion a successful appointment was subsequently made.

The successful candidate on the second occasion had been Lynette Jones who had done an amazing job turning education around and playing a major part in helping education out of special measures.

The Member pointed out that having to undertake this recruitment process twice had cost the Council a considerable amount of money and if this course of action was repeated by removing the current market supplement it would again be a waste of time and money.

In addition, she expressed her concern that Education was a large portfolio and if additional duties were to be included within the role i.e. client side of Leisure and Culture this could be problematic on times as in the current climate when focus was solely needed on education alone. The Member concluded by stating that she did not agree with the recommended proposal.

Member No. 2

Another Member stated that he would also be endorsing Option 2 for the same reasons outlined by his colleague above and said that whilst education had progressed, it was not 'out of the woods yet'. Members had to remember that times had moved on since the last appointment and current salaries had increased for example, the salary of a head teacher in Blaenau Gwent was over £100,000 and the average salary for a secondary head teacher was £125,000. Therefore, the right calibre of candidate would not be secured for the salary that was on offer.

In the meantime, whilst the Head of Education Transformation was doing an excellent job but the substantive post should be filled as soon as possible because when 'normality' resumed children would have been out of school for a considerable period of time and some would have missed their opportunity to improve their

grades and would have to receive predictive grades. He concluded by proposing that Option 2 be endorsed. This proposal was seconded.

Member No. 3

Another Member said that during 2012 education had been placed in special measures, and during that time the Council had appointed numerous Directors of Education including sharing a Corporate Director with another local authority. However, it was not until the current Corporate Director had been appointed that clarity was brought to the table and Lynette had played a major part in helping education out of special measures. He continued by stating that he would not wish the Council to go through this unpleasant experience again and, therefore, warned against approving Option 1 because the Council needed to secure the best candidate for the role.

The Member concluded by placing on record his appreciation to the retiring Corporate Director of Education, Lynette Jones for the work undertaken during her time in the role.

Member No. 4

A Member said that he had witnessed the turmoil and carnage that special measures had brought to the Council and pointed out that it had not only affected education but the whole of the Council and it was not until Lynette Jones was appointed that the Council had found stability. He had concerns that the authority would not attract the right candidate under Option 1 and asked whether the Executive Member – Education was confident that if this option was approved that the Council would attract the right calibre of candidate for the role.

The Executive Member – Education stated that given the tremendous amount of work undertaken by Lynette, education and Council was in a very different position from where it had been and she was confident that good quality candidates would be attracted to apply for the role.

Leader of the Labour Group

The Leader of the Labour Group said that it was important to state that the comments made by the Members of the Labour Group had been borne out of experience and took into account the Recovery Board's and Welsh Government's views to attract the right candidates to Blaenau Gwent as Education had been one of the main priorities for the Group during that time.

The Leader of the Labour Group stated that whilst he proposed that Option 2 be endorsed, he confirmed that the Labour Group did support the interim 'acting up' arrangements that had been put in place.

Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council commenced by stating that he understood some of the comments that colleagues from the Labour Group had made but advised that to proceed with the recruitment process at this present time would be unwise. He agreed with the sentiments of the Executive Member for Education i.e. that Blaenau Gwent itself was now in a far better position particularly in education and he paid tribute and expressed his appreciation to Lynette Jones who was one of the hardest workers and most driven people he had ever come across, and the successes in education were Lynette's successes. Blaenau Gwent was appropriately placed to attract people to live and work in the area.

All factors had been taken into account by the Managing Director and she would not do anything to place the authority in a precarious position and Members needed to have faith and confidence in her. Whilst the Executive Member was new in the role she had also considered all factors and she was very much in unison with the Managing Director.

The Leader continued by advising that the market supplement could be used a 'fall back' position if an appointment was unable to be made. If the role was

advertised immediately with a market supplement, Members needed to consider the message that this may send to the other Corporate Directors.

The Leader concluded by stating that at the appropriate juncture he would be strongly supporting Option 1.

As the meeting was teleconferenced and an amendment had been tabled, it was agreed a recorded vote be undertaken in respect of amended Option 2 only:

Option 2:

- **That the Council proceed to recruit to the role of the Corporate Director of Education as it currently stood with a market supplement and no additions to the job description.**
- **The temporary ‘acting up’ arrangements be supported.**

In Favour – Councillors P. Baldwin, D. Bevan, K. Hayden, H. McCarthy, J. C. Morgan, T. Sharrem, T. Smith, S. Thomas, H. Trollope, B. Willis and L. Winnett.

Against – Councillors J. Collins, M. Cook, N. Daniels, D. Davies, G. A. Davies, M. Day, P. Edwards, S. Healy, J. Hill, W. Hodgins, M. Holland, J. Mason, C. Meredith, M. Moore, J. P. Morgan, L. Parsons, G. Paulsen, K. Pritchard, K. Rowson, B. Summers, G. Thomas and J. Wilkins.

This proposal was not carried.

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report which related to information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the Authority be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the following proposals be approved:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The role of Corporate Director of Education be redesigned, salary range £80,046 – £88,048 per annum (Pay Award Pending).• The current market supplement be removed with immediate effect.• The Head of Education Transformation be temporarily appointed from the 30th March, 2020 pending the recruitment process for a permanent appointment. | |
|--|--|

A Member expressed his appreciation to the Chair for managing the meeting under difficult circumstances.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – 6TH FEBRUARY, 2020</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>DEMOCRATIC OFFICER</u>

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M. MOORE (THE CHAIR,
PRESIDING)

Councillors P. Baldwin
 D. Bevan
 G. Collier
 J. Collins
 M. Cross
 N. Daniels
 D. Davies
 G. A. Davies
 G. L. Davies
 M. Day
 P. Edwards
 L. Elias
 D. Hancock
 K. Hayden
 S. Healy
 J. Hill
 W. Hodgins
 M. Holland
 J. Holt
 J. Mason
 H. McCarthy, B.A. (Hons)
 C. Meredith
 J. Millard
 J. C. Morgan
 J. P. Morgan
 L. Parsons
 G. Paulsen
 K. Pritchard
 K. Rowson

T. Sharrem
T. Smith
B. Summers
B. Thomas
G. Thomas
S. Thomas
H. Trollope
D. Wilkshire
B. Willis
L. Winnett

AND: Managing Director
Corporate Director of Social Services
Corporate Director of Education
Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services
Chief Officer Resources
Chief Officer Commercial
Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
Press and Publicity Officer

<u>No.</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1.	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
2.	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Cook and J. Wilkins.</p>	
3.	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	

4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Condolences

- Condolences were expressed to the family of former Councillor David White who had sadly passed away.

Members and officers stood in silence as a mark of respect.

Congratulations

- Congratulations were extended to Denis and Audrey Osland from Abertillery who would be celebrating their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on 6th February, 2020.

RESOLVED that a letter of congratulations be sent.

5 – MINUTE BOOK – NOVEMBER 2019 – JANUARY 2020

16.

The Minute Book for the period November 2019 – January 2020 was submitted for consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved and confirmed as a true record of proceedings.

17. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

The following question was submitted by Councillor H. Trollope, Deputy Leader of the Labour Group and responded to by Councillor J. Mason, Executive Member for Social Services:

Question

“Would the Executive Member for Social Services make a statement and explain his support for maintaining the status quo with regard to Home to School and Home to College Transport (current level of provision) in September 2018 contrasted against

his support for the Executive decision taken on Assisted Transport in Social Services the previous week”.

Response

The Executive Member said he believed that there were fundamental differences between these two decisions, the Council had a statutory duty to provide Home to School Transport, whereas there was no statutory duty to provide Assisted Transport. Social Services only had a duty to meet those needs that could not be met by the person’s own resources or community resources.

The decision taken by the Executive in September 2018 was not to increase the current policy limit to the statutory limits laid down for Home to School Transport provided by Welsh Government and Home to College Transport, the decision had been not to agree to a phased reduction of the Post 16 travel grant. This decision was taken to ensure children’s safety, and that all children and young adults within Blaenau Gwent had the best possible opportunities to learn and develop skills for the future regeneration of the area.

The Assisted Transport Policy implementation was supported by both Social Services Scrutiny and Executive and the decision taken by Executive was simply charging 11 individuals who were not eligible for free transport but were unable to make their way to Community Options and needed to use the Council’s transport, and Executive had agreed this charge should be the equivalent to the cost of making their way in by public transport. Out of the 149 assessments undertaken, only one citizen had stopped attending Community Options, this reflected the consultation and solutions found by the team for those attending and their carers.

Supplementary Question

“Had a full impact assessment been undertaken with service users and families because it was obvious from the comments made in the South Wales Argus dated 29th January, 2020 that the individual concerned had felt let down and was experiencing on-going problems”.

Response

The Executive Member confirmed that a full impact assessment had been attached to the reports that had been submitted to both the Executive and Scrutiny Committee, which fully covered the points raised.

However, he extended an offer to arrange a meeting with himself, the Member and the Corporate Director at a convenient time to discuss the case concerning the individual.

Councillor Trollope thanked the Executive Member and accepted the offer to meet.

18. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no questions submitted by members of the public.

19. REVENUE BUDGET 2020/2021 TO 2024/2025

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report which had been presented to Members to:

- Provide an update on the positive provisional local government settlement for 2020/2021 and the impact upon the Council's budget.
- Consider and agree the detailed budget for 2020/2021 and indicative budget for 2021/2022.
- Agree the level of Council Tax increase for the 2020/2021 financial year.

The following salient points were, thereupon, highlighted in further detail:

Scope and Background:

- The Provisional Settlement contained details of the revenue funding the Welsh Authorities could expect to receive in 2020/2021 in order to allow them to set their budgets and determine levels of Council Tax for that year. It also provided details of the Capital funding that Authorities could expect to receive to fund their Capital Programmes. It was noted that indicative figures for the 2021/2022 financial year and beyond had not been provided at this stage.
- The positive provisional settlement combined with the opportunities identified in the Bridging the Gap Programme meant that the Council was able to invest in key priorities, avoid cuts to services and enhance its financial resilience.

National Position (All Wales)

- The overall headline increase in the Aggregate External Finance (AEF) quoted by Welsh Government was 3.9%, after taking into account transfers into the settlement. Compared to the Welsh average increase of 4.3%, this placed Blaenau Gwent in the bottom third of the all-Wales table.
- There had been four transfers into the settlement as follows:
 - £39.112m for the teachers' pension grant
 - £12.018m for the teachers' pay grant
 - £1.9m for NHS funded nursing care
 - £151k for the Coastal Risk Management Programme

It would be a matter for each council to decide whether to passport all or some of this funding to the relevant budget holders.

- Certain specific Revenue Grants data had only been published on an all-Wales basis totalling £982m, therefore, the full impact of this was not yet known for Blaenau Gwent.
- Funding for certain grants had increased, for example Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant, PDG

Access and Social Care Workforce and Sustainability Pressures Grant. In addition, there was a new grant for Additional Learning Needs but some grants had decreased for example, the Sustainable Waste Management Grant.

- Further details of the specific grants would be published alongside the final Revenue Support Grant (RSG) on 25th February, 2020.
- The non-hypothecated general capital funding for 2020/2021 would be £198 million (including £20 million for public highways refurbishment grant) an increase of £15 million over that announced in the Final Budget last year.

Blaenau Gwent Position

- The headline increase for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council after allowing for transfers was 3.9% (£4.3m) compared to the all Wales increase of 4.3%.
- Details of the Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) – the formula on which Welsh Government based the distribution of funding was provided in paragraphs 2.22 – 2.24 of the report.
- The Authority remained the highest receiver of Aggregate External Finance (AEG) on a per capita basis.

Table 1 – MTFs Funding Gap (as at 12th December, 2019)

- The figures included within Table 1 of the report were based upon a number of assumptions including a:
 - Cash flat level of funding from Welsh Government for 2020/2021 onwards.
 - Council Tax increase of 4% per annum.

Service Cost Pressures and Growth

- The provisional settlement increase in funding of £4.3m (3.9%) for 2020/2021 for Blaenau Gwent was better than the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) modelled position of 0%.

- Following this provisional settlement, the existing and new service cost pressures had been reviewed and updated. These pressures now totalled £2m for the 2020/2021 financial year (an increase of £1m). The changes to those cost pressures and growth items agreed by Council in December 2019 included:
- Teachers Pay and Pensions – the settlement only provided funding to cover the increase in costs for a 7-month period. The resulting cost pressure for the remaining 5-months of the financial year was assessed as £760,000.
 - Sustainable Waste Management Grant (£1.8m All Wales reduction in grant) – resulting in a cost pressure of £35,000, on top of the current year’s cost pressure of £50,000 (£85,000 in total).
 - Sustainable Social Services Grant – there had been a significant increase in the settlement for this specific grant for 2020/2021. This should allow the service to manage costs/budgets without the requirement for an increase in its core funding. The previously agreed cost pressure of £392,000 could, therefore, be reduced or removed.
 - Transformation Budget – it would be prudent to establish a Transformation Budget that could be utilised for example, to implement/deliver transformational projects and investments across the Council. It was anticipated that by establishing this budget, this would reduce the requirement to utilise earmarked reserves. It was proposed that this budget be set at £500,000.
- It was also proposed that the revised cost pressures and growth items be agreed and built into the Council’s budget from 2020/2021.

Treatment of Grants and Responsibilities Transferring into the Settlement

- It was noted that two grants transferring into the settlement, namely the Pay Award for Teachers and the NHS Funded Nursing Care would become un-hypothecated and the Council would have to consider whether it would want to continue to support this activity formerly funded by specific grant and additional funding or use the resources for other purposes. It was noted that if the Council did not agree to passport funding in this way, there would be a new cost pressure incurred within these budgets.
- It was, therefore, proposed that the grants transferring into the settlement be passported to relevant budgets from 2020/2021.

Impact upon the Individual Schools Budget (ISB)

- By passporting the grants transferred into the settlement (£1.075m Teachers Pay and Pensions) and agreeing to fund the schools cost pressures (£1.6m) i.e. (£760,000 for 5-months teachers' pay and pensions and £395,000 for an increase in pupil demographics) would result in an increase to the ISB of 5% - this was slightly above the increase the Council would receive of 4.9%.

Table 3 – Revised Funding Gap (Assuming Grants were Passported)

- For 2020/2021 the revised funding gap stood at £21,000 increasing to £2,342,000 in 2021/2022.

Table 4 – Estimated Achievement of Bridging the Gap Strategic Reviews

- It was noted that the Bridging the Gap Strategic Reviews had been scrutinised by the relevant Scrutiny Committees and had been agreed by Council in December 2019 as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

- It was proposed to factor in the estimated lower level achievement of the proposals into the budget which would result in the funding gap/surplus for:
 - 2020/2021 financial year (£1,444,000) surplus
 - 2021/2022 financial year being (£37,000) surplus

Transfer to Earmarked Reserves

- It was proposed that the achievement of Bridging the Gap proposals which exceeded the budget requirement be transferred into an earmarked reserve to support medium term financial planning, specifically for the later years of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Leader of the Council – Statement

The Leader of the Council said that it was with a combination of pleasure and relief that he proposed that the budget (with one minor amendment) be endorsed. It was the first time in 12 years that local government had been in a position to have a settlement and budget proposal that did not involve the consideration of cuts to services and job losses. This was a very positive settlement for Blaenau Gwent and he hoped that this was a ‘step change’ in the way local government was funded. It was noted that other Council Leader’s from across Wales had indicated that services had been in melt down for the majority of the year.

In proposing the endorsement of the budget the Leader said he wanted to acknowledge and thank Welsh Government for the positive settlement. The Leader advised that Julie James, the Minister for Housing and Local Government in her opening line at her first meeting at the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) had stated that she wanted to “reboot the relationship between local government and Welsh Government” and between her, Rebecca Evans, Minister for Finance and Trefnydd, and the First Minister, Mark Drakeford, they had been true to their word and had acknowledged the precarious predicament that local government was in. It was noted that all Leaders had urged the Minister at that meeting to consider the way in which local government was funded and hoped that there would be a ‘step change’.

The Leader continued by stating that the positive settlement and the work undertaken by officers in respect of the Bridging the Gap Strategic Reviews had allowed the Council to be in this position today - budget setting had been approached in a different way which included producing an indicative budget for the 2021/2022 financial year which had been a significant achievement. The production of a 2-year budget provided a level of certainty for staff, residents and services provided and was also a major factor for the Council's short and long term financial sustainability and resilience.

At this juncture, the Leader gave advance notice that he would be proposing that Option 1 be endorsed with one minor amendment. In addition, further to the comments made by the Chief Officer Resources with regard to the un-hypothecated nature of grants he proposed that these be transferred into the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and be passported directly to schools i.e. the grant covering Teachers Pay and Pensions together with the funding of the cost pressures for schools. This would result in a positive uplift of £2.2m to the Individual Schools Budget.

Amendment – Paragraph 3.1.7 – the Leader proposed a minor amendment to paragraph 3.1.7 of the report i.e. that Members agree a Council Tax increase of **3.9%** and not 4% as outlined in the report.

In proposing this level of Council Tax, it would provide the certainty to be able to produce a 2-year budget this year which was well within the parameters of a legal budget and would allow Council to enter into 2021/2022 assumptions within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in a surplus position.

The Leader of the Labour Group – Statement

The Leader of the Labour Group commenced by stating that he agreed with the proposal made to passport grants directly to schools and also endorsed the comments made relating to the Welsh Government.

He pointed out that he had indicated a number of years ago that Welsh authorities had not endured the same level of austerity and cuts as English authorities and the First Minister had made promises to look at the funding of local authorities and was hopeful for the future.

The Leader of the Labour Group continued by referring to the recent comments made in the press regarding the 'surplus' nature of the Joint Scrutiny Committee which had been convened to discuss the Revenue Budget and suggested that as political group meetings were held to receive briefings in respect of the budget, a discussion take place with the Leader of the Council regarding the future of this meeting.

He noted that the Leader had proposed a 3.9% Council Tax increase for 2020/2021 and said that the Council had complained for the last 12 years that it had suffered horrendous budget cuts but pointed out also suffering were the members of the public that had to endure annual council tax increases. Whilst the entrepreneurial nature of local authorities regarding income and charging was supported, in 2014 the Labour Group had put forward a 2.6% council tax increase and said that this positive settlement should be passported onto the residents. He felt confident for next year's settlement and proposed two amendments in respect of Option 1:

Amended Proposal:

Paragraph 3.1.4 – Transformation Budget (£500,000) – be reduced to £400,000.

Paragraph 3.1.7 – the level of Council Tax be increased to 2.9% - this would result in a £366,000 funding gap.

The above proposal could be funded by:

£100,000 from the Transformation Budget – 1%

£266,000 from the predicted Surplus (£1.4m) – 0.1%

This amended proposal was seconded.

The Leader of the Council acknowledged the point being made by the Leader of Labour Group and said that discussions had taken place regarding the council tax level. He expressed his concern regarding a reduction in any of the budget figures put forward as there were future challenges on the horizon, the full extent of which were not known at this stage i.e. the impact of Brexit, cost and demand for services provided, the U.K spending review and future settlements (it was hoped that these would also be positive). In

addition, the Council had to be mindful of the impact of the increase in the minimum revenue provision from 2022/2023.

Therefore, the Council needed to create a buffer zone to continue to protect jobs and services. A 3.9% increase in the level of Council Tax (if endorsed) was a 1% reduction on the previous year. He was convinced that a Transformational Budget of £500,000 would cease the requirement to use earmarked reserves (historically £14m had been used from these earmarked reserves) and this would create far more of a buffer for the Council moving forward into a surplus position.

The Leader concluded by stating that he would be far more content if the budget was accepted as presented and proposed that the initial proposals be endorsed.

This proposal was seconded.

The Leader of the Labour Group said that he still maintained that the estimated 'lower level' achievement range in respect of Bridging the Gap proposals would generate more income and he was optimistic that next year the Council would also receive a positive settlement as he believed there was a change in the thinking behind the way local government was funded.

He noted other local authorities could potentially be setting higher council tax rates and alluded to the work that had been undertaken between 2013 – 2016. He believed that the people of Blaenau Gwent were being penalised due to the size of the authority area and said that where some relief could be provided to residents, the Council should do so as they may also be affected by increasing service charges.

The Leader of the Council proposed that Option 1 be endorsed with the amendment that the level of Council Tax increase to 3.9%.

This proposal was seconded.

The Leader of the Labour Group proposed that the following amendment i.e. that the level of Council Tax increase by 2.9%.

This proposal was seconded.

A vote was, thereupon, taken in respect of the **proposed amendment i.e. that the level of Council Tax increase by 2.9%.**

This proposal was not carried.

A vote was, thereupon, take in respect of the **original proposal to increase the level of Council Tax increase to 3.9%.**

This proposal was carried.

The Leader of the Council expressed his appreciation to the Chief Officer Resources and her team for the incredible amount of work undertaken and to the Managing Director, Corporate Leadership Team and Senior Managers and Budget Holders throughout the process. He requested that it be put on record that part of the reason the Council had managed to produce this budget was due to the work undertaken in respect of the Bridging the Gap Programme, which would need to continue at pace to ensure that the Council remained well placed to meet those future challenges as an organisation.

The Leader of the Labour Group endorsed the comments above.

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that a report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that:

- The 2020/2021 revenue budget and high level indicative budget for 2021/2022 be agreed.
- The potential further change in the Final Revenue Support Grant (RSG) Settlement be noted.
- The outcomes within the BGCBG provisional RSG Settlement and its impact upon the Medium Term Financial Strategy be noted.
- The updated cost pressures and growth items (£2m in total) identified in Appendix 3 of the report for inclusion in the Council's budget be agreed. This included the establishment of a cross cutting Transformation budget of £500,000 to be utilised to implement/deliver opportunities for Blaenau Gwent.

- The grants be transferred into the settlement and the “passporting” of expenditure from these former specific grants/additional funding into the Council’s budget be approved.
- Any achievement of the Bridging the Gap proposals which exceeded the in-year budget requirement be transferred into an earmarked reserve to support medium term financial planning, specifically for the later years of the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved.
- A Council Tax increase of 3.9% for 2020/2021 be approved.

20. MEMBERSHIPS REPORT

Consideration was given to:

(a) Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council

to appoint a replacement representative for Councillor Julie Holt.

The Leader reported that the Independent Group had no current nominations to submit for this vacancy and offered the Labour Group to provide a nomination.

(b) Advisory Panel for Local Authority School Governors

The following recommendations were made by the Panel on 17th December, 2019 to appoint:

Councillor D. Davies – ***Ebbw Fawr Learning Community***
 Councillor P. Edwards – ***Rhos-y-Fedwen Primary School***
 Councillor H. Trollope – ***Tredegar Comprehensive School***
 Ms. Sian Barrett – ***Willowtown Primary School***

(c) The following recommendations were made by the Panel on 31st January, 2020 to appoint:

Councillor D. Bevan – ***Cwm Primary School***

Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the above appointments be endorsed.

A Member stated that given the important nature of the business discussed at these meetings, requests had been made for a clerk to be provided at future Panels to minute the proceedings.

The Leader of the Council advised that discussions had taken place with the Executive Member – Education on this matter and he would liaise with Democratic Services Team regarding this request.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – 2ND MARCH, 2020</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>DEMOCRATIC OFFICER</u>

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M. MOORE (THE CHAIR,
PRESIDING)

- Councillors
- P. Baldwin
 - D. Bevan
 - M. Cook
 - N. Daniels
 - D. Davies
 - G. A. Davies
 - G. L. Davies
 - M. Day
 - P. Edwards
 - L. Elias
 - D. Hancock
 - K. Hayden
 - S. Healy
 - J. Hill
 - M. Holland
 - J. Holt
 - J. Mason
 - H. McCarthy, B.A. (Hons)
 - C. Meredith
 - J. C. Morgan
 - J. P. Morgan
 - L. Parsons
 - K. Rowson
 - T. Sharrem
 - T. Smith
 - B. Summers
 - B. Thomas
 - S. Thomas
 - H. Trollope

J. Wilkins
 B. Willis
 L. Winnett

AND: Corporate Director of Social Services
 Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services
 Chief Officer Resources
 Chief Officer Commercial
 Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance

<u>No.</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1.	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
2.	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <p>Councillors G. Collier, J. Collins, M. Cross, W. Hodgins, G. Paulsen, K. Pritchard, G. Thomas, D. Wilkshire, Managing Director and Corporate Director of Education.</p>	
3.	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>Item No. 5 – Fees and Charges Register 2020/2021:</p> <p>A Member referred to the Licensing fees and charges which had been included within the 2020/2021 Fees and Charges Register and acknowledged that Council would only be able to make a recommendation to the Licensing Committee in respect of these particular charges. However, she expressed her concern that should any Member of the Licensing Committee wish to discuss or ask questions relating to these charges (prior to the Licensing Committee taking place) this would result in pre-determination. The Member</p>	

concluded by stating that these fees and charges should have been considered by the Licensing Committee prior to submission to Full Council.

The Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance advised that it was a matter for the Licensing Committee to determine these particular fees and charges. However, the officer confirmed that it would be appropriate for Members of the Licensing Committee to discuss and ask pertinent questions in respect of these charges (as long as no Member expressed a particular opinion) as this would not amount to pre-determination. Any comments made could then be reported to the Licensing Committee to consider when determining the fees and charges.

The Member advised that the questions that she had wanted to pose around the Licensing fees and charges would result in pre-determination and felt that Members should not be placed in a predicament where they had to censor the questions that they wanted to ask for fear of pre-determination. She concluded by stating that going forward the licensing fees and charges should be considered by the Licensing Committee before they were submitted to Council for consideration as part of the Fees and Charges Register.

The Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance confirmed that the ideal scenario would have been for the fees and charges to have been considered by the Licensing Committee in the first instance, however, due to the meeting scheduled this had not been possible. The officer reiterated and concluded by stating that Members of the Licensing Committee were allowed to pose unbiased questions in respect of the Licensing fees and charges but it was the remit of the Licensing Committee to make the decision and not Council i.e. Council would only be able to make a recommendation to the Licensing Committee

The Member advised that she would raise her questions at the Licensing Committee.

The following declaration of interest was, thereupon, reported:

**Item No. 5 – Corporate Fees and Charges Register 2020/2021 –
Commercial Trade Waste & Markets Fees and
Charges**

Councillor P. Edwards

4. REVENUE BUDGET 2020/2021

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report which presented the Revenue Budget and Council Tax proposals for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council for the next financial year 2020/2021 including the precepts approved by other statutory authorities that would impact upon the local level of Council Tax and included the relevant statutory resolutions.

It was noted that the Council Meeting on 6th February, 2020 had considered the provisional Revenue Settlement and since that time details of the final settlement had now been received from Welsh Government. The Chief Officer Resources advised Council that there had been no significant changes to the details between the provisional and final settlement that she needed to specifically draw Members' attention to as the Revenue Settlement Grant remained at £116m. There had been one slight increase in the level of funding for specific revenue grants however, this information was still only available on all Wales basis and the impact of this specifically on Blaenau Gwent was still unknown.

Options for Recommendation

The Chief Officer Resources continued by outlining the options for recommendation contained in Section 3 of the report and advised that:

- Council at its meeting on 6th February, 2020 had agreed a Council Tax increase of 3.9% for the 2020/2021 financial year.
- The term 'special items' related to the precepts for Town/Community Councils and £506,143 was the total value of these precepts.
- Details of the Full Council Tax including Police and Community Precepts for all areas of Blaenau Gwent could be found in the final table of Section 3 of the report.

Implications Against Each Option

The financial implications for the 2020/2021 budget setting process were summarised below:

- A Council Tax increase of 3.9% (Blaenau Gwent element). This was a 1% reduction compared to the current financial year.
- A budget requirement for the Council of £151,732 million (including Community Councils).
- Bridging the Gap efficiencies had been built into the revenue budget of £1,465 million.
- Cost Pressures amounting to £1.16 million and Growth Items amounting to £0.89 million had been built into the revenue budget.

Budget Requirement

- Table 1 attached at Appendix 1 of the report provided a summary of the resulting portfolio estimates taking into account the Bridging the Gap proposals, cost pressures and growth items. In addition, £1.7m would be transferred into the Council's reserves. This resulted in a statutory budget requirement of £151,732,365. Discretionary rate relief of £208,000 needed to be added to the budget requirement to give the total net revenue budget for 2020/2021 of £151,940,365.

Reserves

- The Council had agreed a target level for general reserves, being 4% of the last reported actual net revenue expenditure.
- Assuming the 2019/2020 quarter 3 forecast remained until the year end, the forecast level of general reserves would be £6.079 million (4.5%). This level of reserves was above the 4% target level specified within the reserves protocol.

Section 25, Local Government Act 2003

The above legislation required the Chief Officer Resources to report on the following points:

- ***The robustness of the estimates included in the budget*** - the Chief Officer Resources was able to conclude that the estimates had been compiled with the most up to date information available and were suitably robust. Cost pressures had been considered during the budget setting process and for the medium term.
- ***The adequacy of the Authority's reserves*** - paragraph 5.1.12 demonstrated that the Authority was looking to achieve a sustainable position for the forthcoming year and in the medium term. The reserves protocol would continue to review reserves in order to ensure that General Reserves were kept at a sustainable level in the medium term

Members were then given to the opportunity to raise questions and comment on the report.

The Leader of the Council advised that the 3.9% Council Tax increase had already been agreed by Council at its meeting on 6th February, 2020. Traditionally this meeting received the additional elements that made up the sum total of the Council Tax and for the Chief Officer Resources to provide reassurances to Council in respect of the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of Council reserves. The Leader concluded by stating that at the appropriate juncture he would propose endorsement of the report.

The Leader of the Labour Group commented on the robustness of the estimates and commended the work undertaken to achieve this.

Town/Community Council Precepts

The Leader of the Labour Group referring to the Town/Community Council precepts detailed on Page 10 of the report and said that clearly the precept level for Abertillery & Llanhilleth was quite substantially higher than the other Town Council precepts. He continued by stating that he was aware that when Tredegar Town Council took over responsibilities for example, Deighton Playing Fields and the Public Conveniences these were separate and distinct areas of service from that which the Council provided and requested an assurance that Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community Council was not duplicating the services provided by the Council.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community Council was not duplicating the services provided by the Council.

Options for Recommendation

The Leader of the Labour Group referred to the considerable number of recommendations contained in Section 3 of the report all of which were prefaced with 'to be noted'. He sought clarity that if the report was supported that the Labour Group that only the factual elements of the report would be supported and this did not negate the proposal of the Labour Group to increase Council Tax by 2.9% at the Council meeting on 6th February, 2020.

The Chief Officer Resources confirmed that Members would be 'noting' all that had been agreed previously at Council on 6th February, 2020 and would be accepting the precepts that had been advised by the police and town/community councils.

The Leader of the Labour Group confirmed that as only points of fact were required to be noted he was content to support the recommendations contained within the report.

Discretionary Council Tax Allowance

A Member referred to the recent flooding of properties in Cwm and Llanhilleth and asked whether there was any possibility that the Council could follow along the similar lines of other authorities and provide a discretionary council tax allowance to those residents who had been affected by these recent events.

The Leader of the Council commenced by stating that specific funding packages were available from the Welsh Government for those residents in affected areas. In terms of Council Tax allowances, he was aware that the Managing Director was having discussions with officers from the Resources Department to ascertain what support could be provided. He said that he had seen the horrific nature that the flooding had caused in both Cwm and Llanhilleth and in some other local authority areas i.e. Rhondda-Cynon-Taff it had been reported that residents would be displaced for a considerable period of time. The Leader concluded by confirming that if the Council could

assist those residents within the affected areas this support would be provided.

A Member said that it was the opportune time to commend the Council on the first class job it had done responding to the flooding incidents in Llanhilleth and said that if any further support could be made available this would be welcomed.

The Leader of the Council proposed that the recommendations contained in the report be endorsed. This proposal was seconded.

Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously,

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and it was noted that:

- 3.1 The Council agreed at its meeting on 6th February, 2020 a Council Tax increase of 3.9% for the 2020/2021 financial year. As a result, the Blaenau Gwent Council element of the full council tax charge would be:

Valuation Bands (£)								
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1,141.24	1,331.45	1,521.65	1,711.86	2,092.27	2,472.68	2,853.09	3,423.71	3,994.33

- 3.2 At its meeting on 2nd March, 2020 the Council calculated the following amounts for the year (2020/2021) in accordance with regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Act 1992:

- 3.3 The Council Tax base was the number of chargeable dwellings in each area adjusted for a number of items e.g. discounts payable, multiplied by the assumed collection rate which for 2020/2021 was 95%.

- a) The amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3, of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax base for the year was:

20,662.45

b) The amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amount of its Council Tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate were:

	£
Abertillery & Llanhilleth	4,638.15
Brynmawr	1,689.96
Nantyglo & Blaina	2,695.12
Tredegar	4,704.71

c) For the year 2020/2021 the Gwent Office of Police and Crime Commissioner had stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council (totalling £5,640,022), in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown:

Gwent Office of Police and Crime Commissioner								
Valuation Bands (£)								
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
181.97	212.30	242.63	272.96	333.62	394.28	454.93	545.92	636.91

3.4 That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2020/2021 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

- a) £217,235,415 - Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimated for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (d) of the Act.
- b) £65,503,050 - Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimated for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) and (c) of the Act.
- c) £151,732,365 - Being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeded the aggregate at (b), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.
- d) £208,000 - Being the amount the Authority estimated in relation to Sections 47 and 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 1 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, for discretionary non-

domestic rate relief.

- e) £116,063,000 - Being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimated would be payable for the year into its Council fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant and additional grant.
- f) £1,736.36 - Being the amount at (c) above plus the amount at (d) above and less the amount at (e) above, all divided by the amount at 3.2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
- g) £506,143 - Being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- h) £1,711.86 - Being the amount at (f) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (g) above by the amount at 3.2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item related.
- i) The amounts given by adding to the amount at (h) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 3.2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate were:

	£
Abertillery & Llanhilleth	1,763.61
Brynmawr	1,737.30
Nantyglo & Blaina	1,743.29
Tredegar	1,741.28

- j) The amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (h) and (i) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in section 5(1) of the Act, was applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that

proportion was applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands were:

	The County Borough Tax including Community Precepts								
	Valuation Bands								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Abertillery & Llanhilleth	1,175.74	1,371.70	1,567.65	1,763.61	2,155.52	2,547.44	2,939.35	3,527.22	4,115.09
Brynmawr	1,158.20	1,351.24	1,544.26	1,737.30	2,123.36	2,509.44	2,895.50	3,474.60	4,053.70
Nantyglo & Blaina	1,162.19	1,355.90	1,549.59	1,743.29	2,130.68	2,518.09	2,905.48	3,486.58	4,067.68
Tredegar	1,160.85	1,354.33	1,547.80	1,741.28	2,128.23	2,515.19	2,902.13	3,482.56	4,062.99
Ebbw Vale	1,141.24	1,331.45	1,521.65	1,711.86	2,092.27	2,472.69	2,853.10	3,423.72	3,994.34

k) That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (c) and (j) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2020/21 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

	The Full Tax of the County Borough Tax including Police and Community Precepts								
	Valuation Bands								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Abertillery & Llanhilleth	1,357.71	1,584.00	1,810.28	2,036.57	2,489.14	2,941.72	3,394.28	4,073.14	4,752.00
Brynmawr	1,340.17	1,563.54	1,786.89	2,010.26	2,456.98	2,903.72	3,350.43	4,020.52	4,690.61
Nantyglo & Blaina	1,344.16	1,568.20	1,792.22	2,016.25	2,464.30	2,912.37	3,360.41	4,032.50	4,704.59
Tredegar	1,342.82	1,566.63	1,790.43	2,014.24	2,461.85	2,909.47	3,357.06	4,028.48	4,699.90
Ebbw Vale	1,323.21	1,543.75	1,764.28	1,984.82	2,425.89	2,866.97	3,308.03	3,969.64	4,631.25

5. **CORPORATE FEES AND CHARGES REGISTER 2020/2021**

Councillor P. Edwards declared an interest in this item (specifically trade waste and markets fees and charges) as he was Chair of the Ebbw Vale Business Forum but remained in the meeting whilst this item was considered.

Members considered the report of the Chief Officer Commercial.

At the invitation of the Chair, the Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report which had been submitted to Members to approve the fees and charges to be applied for the 2020/2021 financial year, including the core fees and charges to be operated by the Aneurin Leisure Trust.

It was noted that the Bridging the Gap Programme had included a Strategic Business Review on Fees and Charges to ensure that the Council was maximising its income by ensuring the fees and charges were set at a level that covered the costs of delivering the goods and services it provided where appropriate.

Fees and charges generate approximately £14m per annum in income and contributed towards funding the cost of delivering Council services, of which £2m related to commercial services. This helped the financial resilience of the Council and the Fees and Charges Register was reviewed on a regular basis in line with the Council's agreed income policy and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Amendment

The following amendment was made to the Fees and Charges relating to School Meals contained on Page 43 of the report. The charges which had been reduced and should read as follows:

<i>Education – School Meals – Adults Per Meal. Fee Effective from September</i>
--

Staff - £3.43

Student - £3.43

Education – School Meals – Children Secondary Age Child (Years 7 to 11) & Primary Age Child (Nursery to Year 6). Fee Effective from September. Fee Per Meal.

Secondary - £2.60

Primary – £2.34

Trade Waste Charges

The Chief Officer Resources advised that further work in the form of a business review needed to be undertaken in respect of charges for Trade Waste in the next few weeks. Once this work had been completed a report would be submitted to the March meeting of the Council for consideration.

Members were advised that the current fees and charges had been reviewed to:

- Ensure all fees and charges included on the register were relevant for 2020/2021.
- Reflect changes in local and national policy and charges.
- Reflect a minimum increase of 2% uplift in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- Consider if fees and charges could be increased in line with the principles of the Strategic Business Review, and this included considering an annual uplift of 5.5% where applicable.

Impact on Budget

- The Medium Term Financial Strategy and the 2020/2021 budget assumed an inflationary uplift of 2% per annum for fees and charges and the Strategic Business Review assumed an estimated achievement of £200,000 for 2020/2021 of which £95,000 was estimated to be achieved through increasing discretionary fees by 5.5% where there was scope within the market without having a significant impact on demand.
- The fees and charges register proposed 2%, 5.5% uplift for a range of fees which were detailed in Paragraph 5.1.3 (a) and (b) of the report together with other proposed fees at Paragraph 5.1.3 (c):

Members were then given the opportunity to raise questions and comment in respect of the report.

Fees & Charges – Markets/Bulky Waste Collection

The Leader of the Council advised that at the same time a review of the Trade Waste charges was to be undertaken, a similar review would also be undertaken in respect of the fees and charges for

Markets. In addition, he clarified that the 5.5% proposed increase for Bulky Waste Collection should be removed (from paragraph 5.1.3 (b)) because the charge for this service would remain at the 2019/2020 prices as outlined in paragraph 5.1.3(c).

RESOLVED accordingly.

Education – Charges for Out of County Placements within the Special School

A Member advised that upon a recent visit to this particular school he was made aware of capacity issues. He, therefore, requested a guarantee that children from Blaenau Gwent would be prioritised before any vacancies were filled by out of county placements.

The Chief Officer Resources confirmed that Blaenau Gwent children were given priority and it was only if vacancies remained within the establishment that these would be filled by out of county placements.

Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Fees and Charges

Reference was made to paragraph 5.1.4 of the report which advised that the Licensing fees had been out to consultation and this process had concluded on 13th February, 2020. A Member requested that all Members of the Council be provided with a copy of the consultation report which was due to be presented to the Licensing Committee and advised that he wished to speak at this Committee before Members made a decision in respect of Hackney Carriage/Private Hire fees and charges.

This request was noted accordingly.

Licensing Fees

A Member asked whether a matrix had been used to determine the level of increase in licensing fees because there were considerable increases proposed for a number of areas.

The Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services advised that a cost recovery model had been approved nationally by all Directors of Environmental Health across Wales and this was the standard measure that had been applied across all charges.

In reply to a question regarding the amount of funding lost in previous years by not using the model, the Corporate Director advised that the commercial element of services was being examined further to identify costs and the model was then applied to reflect the cost of service delivery.

Grounds and Playing Fields

A Member referred to the proposed increase to £120 per match for grounds and playing fields and asked for clarification whether it was this fee or a different fee that would be charged if the ground had undergone a community asset transfer to another organisation.

The Leader of the Council advised that the clubs who had undergone a community asset transfer would be able to set their own grounds fees.

Another Member said he was of the understanding that playing fields fees applied to grounds that had not undergone a community asset transfer. He asked whether the fees for playing fields were retained by the Council or Aneurin Leisure Trust.

The Leader of the Council said that his understanding was that the fees were set and retained by the Aneurin Leisure Trust particularly for 3G elements and grounds/pitches.

The Member pointed out that fees and charges for playing fields were not listed within the Aneurin Leisure Trust proposed fees and charges appended at appendix 2. He requested clarification in respect of who was responsible for playing fields particularly school playing fields.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services confirmed that the Aneurin Leisure Trust retained the fees for pitches that they operated. However, there were some areas of shared responsibility and undertook to pursue the matter and report back to Members including providing clarity around the responsibility for the playing field at Tredegar Comprehensive School.

RESOLVED accordingly.

Social Services Fees and Charges

A Member expressed his concern that the Council as a caring authority was proposing above inflation increases for the fees and charges for social services. He particularly expressed concern regarding the 7% proposed increase for Private Provider Care Charges and said that this would impact upon the elderly and more vulnerable in the community that needed these types of services.

The Corporate Director of Social Services explained that in terms of the cost of Private Provider Care Charges, the services that were commissioned needed to take into account the increase in the National Living Wage of 6% and pension contributions for the forthcoming financial year and the Council was obliged to fund this. However, he assured Members that before any of the fees were increased, service providers were required to demonstrate how this funding would be utilised.

Licensing Fees – Pre-Determination

The Leader of the Labour Group referred to the earlier question that had been raised regarding the potential for Members of the Licensing Committee to pre-determine the licensing fees and suggested that Licensing Committee Members abstain from voting on the fees and charges (albeit it would be a recommendation made by Council to the Licensing Committee) in order that they could fully take part and make a decision at the Licensing Committee at a later date on this matter.

The Chair of the Licensing Committee advised that the Licensing Committee could only make a recommendation regarding the level of licensing fees and charges, the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services had been provided with delegated powers (as outlined in the Council's Constitution) to make the final decision in relation to this matter.

In reply to another concern raised regarding Members voting for the fees and charges for Trade Waste and Markets, the Leader of the Council pointed out that the fees and charges relating to these areas had been deferred as outlined earlier and would be reported back to the March meeting of the Council for consideration and approval with implementation from 1st April, 2020. With regard to the Licensing fees and charges although the Licensing Committee was the statutory body

to determine these charges he saw no reason why the Council could not make a recommendation to that Committee.

The Leader of the Council, thereupon, proposed that the report be endorsed subject to the caveats discussed earlier in the meeting in terms of Trade Waste, Markets and Bulky Waste.

This proposal was seconded.

The Leader of the Labour Group advised that all Members of the Labour Group would abstain from voting.

Upon a vote being taken it was

FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Fees and Charges Register for 2020/2021 which included the core price increase for Aneurin Leisure Trust be approved subject to:-

- The fees and charges in respect of Trade Waste and Markets be deferred pending a further review. The findings of the review be presented to the Council Meeting scheduled to be held on 26th March, 2020.
- The Bulky Waste Collection fees and charges to remain at 2019/2020 prices.

FURTHER RESOLVED to recommend that the Licensing fees and charges be agreed in principle and recommended to the Licensing Committee for consideration.

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: PLANNING, REGULATORY & GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE – 6TH FEBRUARY, 2020

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR B. SUMMERS (CHAIR)

Councillors M. Moore
D. Bevan
G. L. Davies
D. Hancock
W. Hodgins
J. P. Morgan
K. Pritchard
K. Rowson
T. Smith
B. Thomas
G. Thomas
D. Wilkshire
B. Willis
L. Winnett

WITH: Service Manager Development & Estates
Team Manager Development Management
Team Leader Built Infrastructure
Team Leader Development Management
Planning Officer
Solicitor Commercial Services
Solicitor
Communications, Marketing and Customer Access Manager

AND: Public Speakers

Mr. Terry Morgan (Agent) & Councillor G. Collier (Ward Member) – Application No. C/2019/0310 Retention and extension of raised decking area

Deborah Biggs (Objector) – Application No. C/2019/0330 Change of use of existing buildings from Education and Training Centre to B2 Industrial Use for the recycling and

recovery of WEEE (Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment) and associated materials and products

David Meehan (Applicant) – Application No. C/2019/0280
Variation of condition 3 of planning permission DNS/3213639
(30MW solar park, access road and ancillary development)
to extend the life of the permission from 30 years to 40 years

Ellie Morgan (Applicant) & Councillors T. Smith and B. Willis
(Objectors) – Application No. C/2019/0269
Change of Use from former butchers to bar and restaurant with
internal adaptations and 3 No. external lights.

John Preston (Objector) & Jonathan Pritchard (Agent) –
Application No. C/2019/0346 Affordable housing development
of 23 dwellings including new access road, landscaping and
associated engineering and drainage works

Ryan Shepherd (Applicant) – Application No. C/2019/0273
Change of use to nursery, bin storage, escape stair,
landscaping and associated parking

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
No. 2	<u>APOLOGIES</u> No apologies for absence were reported.	
No. 3	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u> The following declarations of interest were reported: Councillor L. Winnett – Item No. 4 Appeals, Consultations and DNS – Update February 2020 (App. No. C/2019/0090 Star Fields off Mountain Road, Ebbw Vale	

	<p>Councillor M. Moore – Item No. 7 Planning Applications Report (App. No. C/2019/0280 Wauntysswg Farm, Abertysswg, Rhymney, Tredegar)</p> <p>Councillors T. Smith & B. Willis – Item No. 7 Planning Applications Report (App. No. C/2019/0269 10 Castle Street, Tredegar)</p> <p>Councillor D. Bevan – Item No. 7 Planning Applications Report (App. No. C/2019/0308 – 30 Marine Street, Cwm, Ebbw Vale)</p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>APPEALS, CONSULTATIONS AND DNS UPDATE – FEBRUARY 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Development & Estates, whereupon:-</p> <p><u><i>Application No. C/2019/0090 Star Fields off Mountain Road, Ebbw Vale</i></u></p> <p>Councillor L. Winnett declared an interest in this matter.</p> <p>A Member expressed concern that a decision had been taken under delegated powers to grant a Lawful Development Certificate (as listed in Item No. 6) and asked whether this would prejudice the appeal process.</p> <p>In response the Service Manager Development & Estates explained that there were two separate issues ongoing at the site, i.e. the use of the premises for dog breeding, which was the subject of the appeal, and the enforcement issues in relation to unauthorised tipping activities on site. In terms of the status of the buildings, as part of the Lawful Development Certificate application the developer was given the opportunity to evidence that the buildings had been operational for a period exceeding 4 years, and the evidence provided proved that was the case. However, the Lawful Development Certificate does not cover the use of the premises, and this would be determined through the planning appeal process.</p> <p>A Member questioned the existence of the buildings preceding 10 years, and the Officer explained that the developer demonstrated that the buildings had been on</p>	

	<p>site for a period exceeding 4 years, as required by the Lawful Development Certificate. The 10 year period referred to by the Member was in relation to all other development.</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>PLANNING APPEAL UPDATE: LAND OFF CAMBRIDGE GARDENS, BEAUFORT – C/2018/0224</u></p> <p>The report of the Team Leader Development Management was submitted for consideration.</p> <p>The Service Manager Development & Estates presented the report which provided the decision of the Planning Inspectorate in respect of a planning appeal against the refusal of planning permission for the construction of 15 dwellings.</p> <p>He reported that the Planning Inspector agreed with the Council’s assessment, and whilst acknowledging the site benefits from planning permission for 10 dwellings, increasing the number of houses would have a significant impact on the safety of highway users. The Inspector concluded that there were no material planning considerations that outweighed the significant highway safety risks associated with the proposed access and that the proposals were contrary to policy DM1 (3 a & c) of the Blaenau Gwent LDP. The Inspector therefore dismissed the appeal.</p> <p>A Member asked whether a record was kept of the number of times the Planning Inspector agreed with the Council’s assessment, and the Officer undertook to provide these figures.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information relating to the appeal decision for planning application C/2018/0224 be noted i.e. the Planning Inspectorate had determined that the appeal be dismissed.</p>	
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>LIST OF APPLICATIONS DECIDED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS BETWEEN 28TH NOVEMBER, 2019 AND 20TH JANUARY, 2020</u></p>	

	<p>The Committee considered the report of the Senior Business Support Officer.</p> <p>The Service Manager Development & Estates went through the report, and Officers clarified points raised by Members.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the list of applications decided under delegated powers between 28th November, 2019 and 20th January, 2020 be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>PLANNING REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager Development Management.</p> <p>The Service Manager Development & Estates explained the following planning applications to Members with the aid of slides.</p> <p><u>Application No. C/2019/0310 – 1 Hawthorn Glade, Tanglewood, Blaina, NP13 3JT – Retention and Extension of Raised Decking Area</u></p> <p>The Service Manager Development & Estates presented the application which sought permission to retain and extend a raised decking area within the rear garden. He confirmed that one letter of objection had been received listing a number of issues, which were listed at section 3.9 of the report. However, the main issue concern was that the visual impact of the decking was overbearing, and would have an adverse impact on the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties.</p> <p>At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor G. Collier (Ward Member) addressed the Committee. He said the Tanglewood development was set on a steep sloping hillside in the community of Blaina. No. 1 Hawthorne Glade was a four bedroomed house situated on a corner plot adjoining Tanglewood Drive, and was occupied by the applicant, his wife and 2 young children.</p> <p>The proposed development was for the retention and extension of raised decking over a very odd shaped rear</p>	

garden. The existing garden had approximately a 50% flat area with the rest sloping steeply (approx. 45 degrees) down to the existing fence-line which sat within the boundary plot (see fig 1.4). The development, if approved, would provide a flat area over the whole of the existing garden area, thus allowing full use of the whole garden area to be enjoyed by the family.

Councillor Collier referred to the Officer recommendation for refusal which stated that:

‘By virtue of its scale and mass, the retention of the raised decking is considered to be an unduly dominant feature that has an adverse visual impact upon the street scene.’

He said he believed this concern could be addressed by planting of Leyland spruce trees, or similar, which would give a completely different appearance to what currently existed.

‘The structure would cause material harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties by having an overbearing impact and causing loss of privacy.’

He said he did not believe this to be a justifiable reason to refuse the application. The very nature of the landscape at this development (the steeply sloping mountainside) meant the properties of Woodland Walk overlooked Beech Tree Crescent, and Hawthorn Glade overlooked Woodland Walk.

He concluded that he believed from day one that the proposal had been seen as “we can’t have this type of development in Blaenau Gwent”, instead of seeing it as an opportunity to provide what the applicant was aiming to achieve, namely having a flat garden area at the rear of his home.

He asked the Committee to approve the application with the proviso that landscaping take place on the owners’ land bordering Tanglewood Drive.

Mr. Terry Morgan the agent acting on behalf of the

applicant also addressed the Committee. He said the LDP document referred to future housing needs, and that new developments should contain a mixture of housing styles and satisfy the needs of modern day family life, and he said this application sought to do just that. He then referred to Note 7 of the SPG Householder Design Guidance, which stated that decking should not impact on neighbouring properties. However, Mr. Morgan pointed out that the adjacent dwelling had no habitable room windows overlooking the decking, and therefore the decking would not have a detrimental impact to the privacy of the neighbouring property, and that throughout the Tanglewood development many of the houses had habitable rooms overlooking side elevations, due to the sloping nature on the mountainside.

Mr. Morgan said the decking would cover a steep area of garden which was previously unmanageable and difficult to maintain, and enable the family to utilise the whole garden area. He said the best quality materials had been used, and landscaped screening could be provided in order to soften the visual impact on the highway if required. For these reasons he asked that the Planning Committee favourably consider the application.

In response to the point raised regarding the provision of landscaped screening, the Service Manager Development & Estates advised that in his opinion the provision of landscaped screening would not outweigh the scale and visual impact on the locality.

A Member, who was also a Ward Member, said she disagreed that the development was out of character for the area, as there were many different styles of houses in the area, and also 3 storey townhouses. She said a site visit would be beneficial to fully assess the impact, however, it was her opinion that the development was acceptable, subject to the provision of landscaped screening along with the fenceline on land within the applicant's ownership.

Another Member said from looking at the photographs there seemed to be a fair distance between the edge of the decking and the neighbouring garden.

In response the Officer said the development was not yet completed, and it was intended that the decking would run along the boundary line of the neighbouring property.

The Member said it was also his view that the application would be acceptable should landscaped screening be provided.

Another Member also agreed that a site meeting be convened in order to view the impact of the development.

A discussion ensued regarding the structural stability of the decking, when the Officer explained that no structural advice had been sought as it would have meant additional expense for the applicant, the development was considered unacceptable and recommended for refusal.

A discussion ensued, and upon a vote being undertaken it was

RESOLVED that the application be **DEFERRED** pending a fact finding site meeting to assess the scale and impact of the development on neighbouring properties.

Application No. C/2019/0330 – Unit 2, Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate, Tafarnaubach – The Change of Use of Existing Building from Education and Training Centre to B2 Industrial Use for the Recycling and Recovery of WEEE (Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment) and Associated Materials and Products

The Team Leader Development Management presented the application which sought permission for a change of use of existing buildings from an Education and Training Centre to B2 Industrial Use. The Officer went through the application and highlighted points contained therein.

At the invitation of the Chair, Deborah Biggs (Public Speaker) addressed the Committee. Ms. Biggs said she represented the residents of Siloam Close who objected to the application on the grounds that the unit was in an elevated position overlooking residential properties, and directly backing onto her garden, and meant that people entering and exiting the building would be able to look directly through the windows of her property. The previous

use of the unit as an Education & Training Centre had not caused any issues due to the nature of the business and opening times.

She also expressed concern regarding the proposed location of the weighbridge very close to her garden, and the noise that would be generated from the proposed plastic granulator. She had previously worked in a similar factory, and in her experience, the activities were very loud. Residents were also concerned that the recycling facility would have a detrimental impact on the value of their properties.

Ms. Biggs also reported that she had visited the applicant's other site in Rhymney and it was very untidy and dirty outside. She said when building their property, it had to be positioned so that no habitable windows overlooked other properties, however, this premises directly overlooked her garden/windows. Whilst she understood the need for recycling facilities in the Borough, this unit was too close to residential properties, and there were plenty of other more suitable vacant units in the area. She requested a site meeting for the Committee to fully assess the impact of the development on the properties at Siloam Close.

In response the Team Leader Development Management said all the issues raised had been responded to within the report. In relation to the issue of overlooking, the Officer pointed out that the unit had been in operation for many years and the potential for overlooking was always there.

The Officer also reported that she had visited the site in Rhymney and was not of the opinion that it was an 'eyesore', however, this issue of the state of another site was not a material planning consideration for the Committee when determining this application. If the application was approved, there was a condition attached to erect a 2m high fence on the boundary to provide screening and also some noise mitigation, and a condition to also limit the external storage of materials.

In terms of the proposed use as a recycling facility, the Officer confirmed that B2 use and waste management facilities were considered acceptable in primary employment sites. However, whilst she accepted that the

application would not have an unacceptable impact on the residential properties subject to the imposition of conditions, she recommended that the use of the unit be restricted to that outlined in the application and for no other purposes to ensure there would be no different impact on residents that might not be acceptable.

The Officer also reported that whilst she did not consider it necessary to restrict the operational hours of the site on an industrial estate, she felt it necessary to prohibit granulating of plastic and vehicle movements outside the hours of 8 am to 6pm Monday to Friday, and 8 am to 1 pm on Saturdays. The Environmental Health Officer had not raised any concerns regarding the application, but should any noise issues arise in the future, noise mitigation measures would be put in place. Environmental Health also confirmed there were no concerns in terms of on air quality. The Officer pointed out that the recycling activities would also be permitted by NRW.

A Member said he had been contacted by a number of residents expressing concern regarding the proposals, particularly the location of the weighbridge, and the associated traffic. He also referred to the timing of the consultation undertaken during the busy Christmas period, and asked that determination of the application be deferred and that a site visit be arranged for Members to assess the impact of the development on residential properties.

In response the Officer confirmed that consultation was undertaken on the run-up to the Christmas period. In respect of concerns regarding the amount of vehicle movements associated with the facility, this was not considered to be excessive on an existing Industrial Estate.

A discussion ensued and

Upon a vote being taken it was

RESOLVED that the application be **DEFERRED** pending a fact finding site meeting to assess the impact of the development on nearby residential properties.

Application No. C/2019/0280 – Wauntysswg Farm, Abertysswg, Rhymney, Tredegar, NP22 5BQ – Variation of Condition 3 of Planning Permission DNS/3213639 (30MW Solar Park, Access Road and Ancillary Development) to Extend the Life of the Permission from 30 to 40 Years

Councillor M. Moore declared an interest in this item and left the meeting while the application was being considered.

The Team Manager Development Management presented the application for a variation of Condition 3 of a DNS Planning Permission to extend the life of permission of the development for a further 10 years, i.e. from 30 to 40 years. The Officer was satisfied that the principle of the solar park being temporary and fully reversible had been established by the Welsh Minister and that would remain the case whether the operational life was 30 or 40 years. Caerphilly CBC had also reached a similar view in approving the planning application they received to vary condition 3 on 5th December, 2019. She was therefore of the view that the proposed extension was acceptable when the benefits of the prolonged contribution to renewable energy and emissions targets was weighed against the continuation of the adverse impacts on the landscape and the setting of Tredegar Cholera Cemetery SAM over the additional 10 year period.

At the invitation of the Chair the Public Speaker (David Meehan) addressed the Committee. He gave a background to the work of the company which delivered many projects across the UK and Ireland. He explained that since the DNS application was submitted in July 2018, solar technology had improved significantly with solar parks now able to produce double the energy compared to five years ago. Therefore, with these improvements and maintenance, it was now considered possible for the lifespan of the solar park to increase from 30 to 40 plus years, whilst remaining temporary and fully reversible.

The applicant said global warming was very much on the political agenda and extension of the solar park would provide benefits in terms of contributing to Welsh Government renewable energy and emissions targets. It

would also provide safe, stable and affordable electricity for approximately 8,250 homes and abatement of an additional 160,000 tonnes of CO2. The rural diversification and increased revenue from the energy sector would boost the local economy for an additional 10 years; and result in an increased community fund of up to £150,000. The continued maintenance of the site would result in the further job opportunities, and also provide a net gain in biodiversity through the ecological mitigation put in place and the reduced intensity of agricultural use of the site.

A Member asked why the application had come before the Planning Committee when the Authority refused the original planning application.

The Team Manager Development Management explained that the original DNS application approved by the Minister was for a 30 year period. However, the decision to extend this period comes back to the LPA.

Another Member said the application should be referred to the Minister for determination.

The Service Manager Development & Estates said the Planning Committee were obliged to determine the application, or an appeal for non-determination could be lodged. It was a question of whether the Planning Committee was of the opinion that an extension of the solar park for 10 years would have material impact on the landscape to warrant refusal of the application.

A discussion ensued when Officers clarified points raised by Members.

Members stated that the Planning Committee refused the original application, and said an extension of the development for a further 10 years was unacceptable.

Upon a vote being taken it was

RESOLVED that planning permission be **REFUSED**. Authority was delegated to officers to issue a reason for refusal based on the concerns expressed by Members at the meeting.

Councillor G. Thomas left the meeting at this juncture.

Application No. C/2019/0269 – 10 Castle Street, Tredegar, NP22 3DE – Change of Use from Former butchers to Bar and Restaurant with Internal Adaptions and 3 No. External Lights

Councillors T. Smith and B. Willis declared an interest in this item on the grounds of pre-determination, as they objected to the proposal.

The Service Manager Development & Estates presented the application which sought permission for the change of use of 10 Castle Street, Tredegar to a restaurant/bar with external lighting. The property was located within the Tredegar District Town Centre but outside the Primary Retail Area. The proposed use of the premises falls to be considered against Policy DM5 of the LDP and further advice contained in the Council's Hot Food and Drink Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance, which stated that in order to minimise the impact and viability of Town Centres, A3 uses should be directed outside the primary retail areas, and the number of A3 uses should be no greater than 25% of the total number of retail units outside the Primary Retail Area. Therefore, approval of the application would be contrary to the SPG threshold, as it would increase the percentage of A3 premises within Primary Retail Area to 25.5% which was 0.5% above the 25% threshold indicated in the adopted SPG.

The Officer reported that this view had been reached on the basis of the results of a Town Centre survey undertaken in September 2019 by the Development Plans Team. Following detailed examination, the survey highlighted however that one of the A3 units included within the 'current' number of A3 uses was one that was currently under investigation by the Department as being potentially an unauthorised use.

As a result, the issue for Members to consider when determining the application was the extent to which the current proposal would exceed the SPG threshold, which was marginal (0.5%), however, if the unauthorised unit was excluded from the survey results, the current proposal would fall within the threshold limit advised in the SPG and

the policy objection based on Guidance 1 of the SPG would fall away.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillors T. Smith and B. Willis expressed their objections to the application. They reported that some time ago Tredegar Heritage Initiative funded a project to restore this premises, which was classed as a retail outlet with 2 flats above. They asked if the proposal included disabled access and toilet facilities, and whether there was sound proofing in place to prevent noise emanating from the premises.

They expressed concerned that the applicant, whilst rightly applying for a Licence to serve food and drink, did not wait for the planning application to be considered prior to opening the premises to the public, and in their opinion the applicant had a total disregard for the Planning Committee process. In terms of the criteria outlined in Policy DM5 of the LDP, it stated that 'A3 uses will not be permitted where they harm the vitality, viability and retail mix of the area as a result of a proliferation of this type of use'. The Ward Members felt that granting planning permission would harm the viability of other similar premises in the area that had received substantial investment.

The Ward Members refuted the applicant's statement that they had invested in the premises, as it was the previous owner who had received THI funding to refurbish the building into a retail unit, but unfortunately vacated within 6 weeks to take up another retail unit in the Town. They said this premises should remain a retail unit, and asked that the Planning Committee refuse the application.

The Ward Members also noted the issues raised by Tredegar Town Council and asked whether these had been addressed.

In response the Service Manager Development & Estates confirmed that a building control application had been submitted, however, building control issues were not for the Committee's consideration.

Councillor K. Rowson left the meeting at this juncture.

At the invitation of the Chair, Ellie Morgan (applicant) addressed the Committee and apologised to Members if they felt she had disregarded the Planning Committee process in any way. She confirmed that she had made a request to the Planning Department to carry on with the proposal and was informed that in doing so it would be at my own risk.

She referred to the report, particularly section 3.2 the external consultation responses and said sound proofing was not asked for, however, disabled access and toilet facilities were in place. A Building Regulations application had been submitted, and fire regulations had been passed. She felt that bringing the building into use would add vitality to the Town Centre, and it was intended to open 4 nights a week until 11.00 p.m. It was also intended for the premises to be more of a restaurant than drinking establishment, and it was currently operating at approximately 80% dry sales and 20% wet sales which was pleasing. Since opening, the applicant confirmed that there had been no issues of anti-social behaviour.

Ms. Morgan concluded that Tredegar was becoming a very attractive place to visit for food and drink, and hopefully the proposal would add to that portfolio. In relation to the Ward Members' comments that the previous owner had received the grant funding for refurbishment, she confirmed that was the case, however, she had also heavily invested in the premises to undertake the necessary changes. She wanted the premises to be a nice place for everyone in Tredegar and wider area to enjoy, and also reported that residents from the flats above were coming down to socialise.

In response to comments regarding the THI funding, the Service Manager Development & Estates pointed out that if the development was in contravention of the terms of the funding, this was a matter for THI to consider. He also said issues of sound proofing and investment made into the premises were all non-material planning considerations.

The Officer also referred to the fact that this was a retrospective planning application, and stressed to Members that retrospective applications should be considered in the same way as a "normal" planning

application, and did not mean that the applicant had disregard for the planning process. He pointed out that Members had agreed a site visit to consider a retrospective planning application previously on the agenda. He concluded that the issues were finely balanced, but the application should be determined on material planning grounds only.

A Member said he supported the proposal, and stated that if the premises in The Circle was unauthorised the proposal would fall within Guideline 1 of the SPG. However, if the premises were deemed as authorised, the Guideline would only be exceeded by 0.5%.

Another Member said the proposal was in contravention of the LDP and for this reason should be refused.

A discussion ensued when a Member said there had been no issues of anti-social behaviour linked to the premises since its opening.

Another Member proposed that the application be refused on the grounds that it was in contravention of Guideline 1 of the SPG, and the excessive number of licence premises already in the area.

A vote was thereupon taken:

4 Members supported the proposal to refuse the application; and

6 Members supported approval of the application.

Councillor L. Winnett abstained from the voting process.

It was therefore

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions outlined in the report.

Application No. C/2019/0346 – Site of Former Sheltered Housing at Glanffrwd Court and Adjacent Land at Cae Melyn and Rhiw Wen, Ebbw Vale – Affordable Housing Development of 23 Dwellings

Including New Access Road, Landscaping and Associated Engineering and Drainage Works

Councillor M. Moore declared an interest in the application and left the meeting while the item was being considered.

The Team Leader Development Management presented the application which sought permission for the construction of 23 residential units, all of which would be social housing. The proposed development would be accessed via the existing Rhiw Wen Road with two new arms, and associated footways.

The Officer went through the application and highlighted points contained therein. She confirmed that 14 e.mails/letters of objection had been received from residents, and these mainly related to the loss of trees and green open space, which was currently used by children in the area to play.

The Officer confirmed that the proposal would result in the removal of 29 trees of low/moderate value and 1 high value tree. None of these trees are subject to a Tree Preservation Order and could be removed by the landowner at any time. A landscaping scheme had been submitted proposing the planting of 53 replacement trees throughout the site, and in addition a native planted buffer was proposed on the western boundary would also include tree planting.

In relation to the concerns raised regarding the loss of green space, the Officer confirmed that 33% of the overall green space within the site would be lost, however, this was not considered excessive, and the green spaces which are proposed to be developed are not protected or identified within the LDP for amenity or leisure use. However, in relation to the proposed landscaping for the remaining green space at Rhiw Wen, it was proposed to have a footpath crossing this parcel of land with ornamental planting, which would result in a further loss of space for children to play. The Officer agreed that this area could be landscaped differently to ensure some simple grassed space remained for children to play as they always have.

At the invitation of the Chair, Mr. John Preston, an objector to the application, addressed the Committee. He was a resident of Rhiw Wen which he said was a very pleasant place to live. Whilst he was happy with the development of Glanffrwd Court, residents were concerned regarding the proposed new development of Rhiw Wen, particularly the removal of 30 trees. They understood it was necessary to remove some 21 trees to build 21 properties, the proposal removal of a further 9 trees to accommodate just 2 properties was excessive, and would have a detrimental impact on the amenity of residents and also impact on wildlife.

He understood that additional housing was needed in the area, however, there were currently 2 large scale residential developments being undertaken in close proximity to the site. He expressed concern regarding the loss of green space to the front of Rhiw Wen which was currently enjoyed by children in the area, and pointed out that traffic would also greatly increase, particularly with the proposed construction of a new road through the green space at Rhiw Wen, which would put children at risk who currently play on this area.

Mr. Preston concluded that flooding was also an issue in the area, and stated that the existing trees soaked up surface water from underground culverts. He asked whether any plans had been submitted to ensure that no future flooding occurred.

At the invitation of the Chair, Mr. Jonathan Pritchard (Agent) addressed the Planning Committee. He introduced himself to the Committee and explained that he was a planning consultant for Stride Treglown, the agents and architects for the project, and acting on behalf of Tai Calon Community Housing.

He said the proposals before the Committee represented the first new housing development by Tai Calon. This was significant in that it represented the start of an anticipated programme of further development works to replace outdated assets, and make a valuable contribution to providing high quality, affordable homes that meet the needs of current and future generations, in sustainable communities across the County Borough.

The proposals for the site sought permission for 23 residential properties with a mix of dwelling types as identified by the Council's housing department as being required to meet local need including wheelchair accessible bungalows, ground floor flats and a range of family housing.

A community's need for affordable housing was a material consideration, and in the latest annual monitoring report the Council were on course to miss its affordable housing target. Readily deliverable windfall housing sites, such as this, was therefore essential to address the chronic undersupply of housing land necessary to meet identified local need.

In terms of the key planning matters, he said the layout of the proposed development had been designed to mitigate tree loss as much as possible. A Tree Protection, Retention and Removal Plan clearly sets out the proposed details. Where tree removal was necessary, replacements are proposed and as per recommended Condition 16, an advanced stock of tree would be planted. A significant net gain in tree planting was proposed overall with 53 new trees to be provided.

The layout and orientation of the proposed homes met recognised standards in terms of separation distances, window positions and the scale of development, ensuring that amenity concerns are addressed. The properties have been designed using a distinctive and complimentary palette of materials that would provide a quality modern addition to the streetscene. The proposed new roads had also been designed to adoptable standards, suitable car parking space has been provided, in accordance with the Council's guidance, and new pedestrian crossing facilities would be provided, which would benefit the whole community.

The drainage strategy for the site would follow best practice requirements, while the culvert noted in the Officer's report had been confirmed as being located underneath the existing carriageway and does not pass through the site.

In relation to the green space, the plans would affect just a third of the open space in the immediate area and, as required by recommended Condition 15, the landscape details would be reviewed to make the identified green space area more useable in response to residents' comments.

The nature of 100 percent affordable housing developments was such that they relied on grants and a long term approach taken by housing associations in order to proceed. He said Members would no doubt feel disappointed that requested planning obligations cannot be provided, if developments from social landlords are not progressed, housing targets for those most in need would not be met and a balance is required on this important matter.

He regretted that some local residents had not been able to support the plans and appreciated that, for some, the proposals would be a notable change from what they have been used to, introducing new neighbours into the community. However, the applicant has sought to address concerns, and as part of the pre-application consultation process, the number of objections has reduced. He said it should also be considered that while 14 objections have been raised, there were 23 groups of people, be they families / couples or individuals, who would benefit from this scheme.

He concluded that the Planning Officer's report sets out all the issues and concluded that the proposals are considered to comply with all relevant development plan policies. Of major importance to the Council's Development Strategy was the delivery of sustainable linked communities, and developments such as this would make an important contribution to this aim, and the objective of meeting the current and future social housing needs of local people.

A number of Members expressed concern regarding the access arrangements, and also the loss of green space amenity.

Another Member commented that the proposed development was a vast improvement to the previous

Glanffrwd Court development, and also pointed out that none of the trees were subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

In relation to the concerns regarding access to the site, the Team Leader Built Infrastructure confirmed that the scheme complied with the Authority's highway design criteria, and there was no requirement for a second access. He also confirmed that any construction traffic, delivery of materials etc would be controlled through the requirement of a construction management plan.

A Member referred to the type of housing proposed and said bungalows were needed in the Borough. She also asked whether it was possible to replant the existing trees elsewhere on the development.

In response the Team Leader Development Management said the possibility of replanting would be looked at within the revised tree planting scheme, however, it would be difficult during construction, and they may not survive being out of the ground.

The Officer also pointed out that there was no formal existing play area at the site, however, following discussion with the applicant the landscaping scheme would be redesigned to provide a grassed area which would allow for an area of open space for children to play.

In response to a question raised regarding the provision of electric charging points, the Officer confirmed that parking spaces were proposed for the flats, but there were no charging points proposed.

Upon a vote being taken it was

RESOLVED that planning permission be **APPROVED** subject to the conditions outlined in the report.

Councillors W. Hodgins, D. Hancock, and D. Wilkshire left the meeting at this juncture.

Application No. C/2019/0273 – The Bridge Hotel and Flat, Station Approach, Pontygof, Ebbw Vale – Change

of Use to Nursery, Bin Storage, Escape Stair, Landscaping and Associated Parking

The Team Manager Development Management presented the application which sought permission for the change of use of a former public house/restaurant to a nursery that would provide spaces for up to 100 children between the ages of 12 weeks and 12 years. It was proposed that the nursery would employ 17 full-time staff and 8 part-time staff and operate from 8.00 a.m. to 6.00pm

The proposed conversion of the building would require minimal external works, namely the provision of an external fire escape on the south elevation of the building and an enclosed bin storage area near the foot of the fire escape.

The Officer referred to the external consultation undertaken with NRW which highlighted that the site falls largely within Flood Zone C2, as defined by the Development Advice Maps associated with TAN 15, which raised significant concerns and objections to the development from a planning policy perspective, in particular national planning policy and advice and policies SP7 and DM1 of the adopted LDP.

The proposed nursery facility represented an educational facility, which TAN 15 para 5.1 identified to be a highly vulnerable use, and therefore clearly conflicted with national and local planning policy and TAN 15 advice. It was therefore recommended that planning permission be refused for flood risk reasons.

At the invitation of the Chair, Mr. Ryan Shepherd (the Applicant) addressed the Committee. He said his family had owned The Bridge Hotel since 1988, and had been looking at different options for the building since the closure of the public house. The proposed development had gained significant support from the Families First service and local Councillors. He said the building had been there for many years, and the proposed development required very little changes.

He expressed concern that the application had been recommended for refusal on the grounds of flood risk, as

the river had never flooded. He was also confused that the Council had granted permission for an educational facility in the former Stewards House and Pontygof School. He said this conflicted with the recommendation and felt that the fact that the building would not, and had never flooded, as significant.

He urged Members to favourably consider the application which would provide an excellent nursery facility and employment, rather than the building be left empty and unused.

The Team Manager Development Management explained that a change of use application had to be considered under planning policy guidance, and TAN 15 defined how to treat existing or new buildings in the context of flood risk, and granting permission would be contrary to the guidance set out in national and local flood risk policies.

In relation to NRW's response relating to a Flood Consequence Assessment, the Officer confirmed that a FCA had not been submitted with the application, however, the agent had submitted a copy of a report (River Ebbw Integrated Catchment Model) which outlined a survey undertaken on the River Ebbw. The agent contended that this report was significant in its effect on the site.

The Officer did not accept this view, particularly as NRW made no reference to the report in their planning consultation response. Their response clearly advised that the development proposal had been considered in light of their DAM and that the development falls largely within a defined Flood Zone C2.

The Officer referred to the Applicant's comments regarding the former Stewards House and Pontygof School, and said this was addressed within section 5.1.17 of the report. However, the Officer pointed out that since planning permission was granted for Canolfan-y-Afon, the approach to flood risk had changed significantly and potential flooding was now the subject to far greater scrutiny at both national and local planning policy levels. She concluded that there was no justifiable reason to recommend a similar approach be taken to the current proposals, particularly as

the proposed use would involve a comparatively intensive use of the entire building by potentially 100 children between the ages of 12 weeks to 12 years.

In response to a question raised by a Member regarding evidence of whether the site had flood previously, the Officer said this was not a consideration for the Planning Committee. Planning Authority Members are responsible for taking a strategic view on the issue and taking advice from NRW, and the fact there was no historical flooding in the area was not justification to go against the flood risk advice and guidance.

A Member said the Authority has a safeguarding duty and due to the proposal for a nursery facility, the Authority had no option other than to accept the advice provided by NRW and accept the Officer's recommendation for refusal.

Another Member asked whether the application could be deferred in order to seek a review of the flood plans.

In response the Service Manager Development & Estates said this was not for the Local Planning Authority to instigate, it was for the Applicant to consider obtaining an FCA for submission to NRW to challenge the DAM maps.

The Team Manager Development Management said her recommendation was based on the advice and guidance contained within strategic national and local policies, which stated that LPA's should not allow new development that may cause flood risk, and it was the responsibility of the LPA to make a policy decision on the proposal.

The Service Manager Development & Estates said he would be unable to put his name to a decision to grant permission until the process of an FCA and amended DAM maps had been undertaken through the NRW.

Following a brief discussion, a vote was undertaken and it was

RESOLVED that planning permission be **REFUSED**, for the reason outlined in the report.

Application No. C/2019/0308 – 30 Marine Street, Cwm, Ebbw Vale – Conversion of Existing 3 Bed 2 Storey Terraced House into a 5 Bedroom House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) and to Demolish Existing Garage to Provide a Car Parking Space

Councillor D. Bevan declared an interest in this application on the grounds of pre-determination.

The Service Manager Development & Estates presented the application which sought permission to change the use of the property from a 3 bedroom dwelling to a 5 bedroom house in multiple occupation (HMO). The use of the property as a HMO was a conforming use in this residential area, which could be accommodated without having an unacceptable impact on the amenity of local residents.

Councillor Bevan said the main objection was the number of HMO's in the area, and the increase in anti-social behaviour as a result, and the inadequate parking provision.

Councillor D. Bevan left the meeting while the application was being considered.

A number of Members agreed with the objections, and expressed concern that the number of HMO's in the Borough was increasing. One Member commented that this type of development could spread like cancer through a community. In relation to this application, they felt that the provision of off-street parking was insufficient for a 5 bedroom property.

In response the Team Leader Built Infrastructure explained that a development of this nature generally required the provision of one parking space per bedroom, up to a maximum of 3 spaces, plus one visitor space. However, the applied sustainability criteria outlined in the SPG allowed a reduction in the number of parking spaces required based on the credentials of development, i.e. proximity to and frequency of local transport, walking distance to local shops, schools and other community facilities. When this criteria was applied, the provision of one parking space was deemed to be sufficient. There was also public car parking within 80m of the property.

	<p>A Member expressed concern regarding the lack of public transport links within Cwm, and the Officer confirmed that this was taken into account when applying the criteria, but one parking space was still deemed sufficient.</p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was</p> <p>RESOLVED that planning permission be <u>REFUSED</u> on the grounds of inadequate parking provision and over-capacity of the dwelling. Officers were given delegated authority to issue a decision on such basis.</p>	
No. 8	<p><u>ANY AREAS FOR MEMBER TRAINING/BRIEFINGS</u></p> <p>No areas for Members Training/Briefings were raised.</p>	
No. 9	<p><u>EXEMPT ITEM</u></p> <p>To receive and consider the following report which in the opinion of the proper officer was an exempt item taking into account consideration of the public interest test and that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting (the reason for the decision for the exemption was available on a schedule maintained by the proper officer).</p>	
No. 12	<p><u>ENFORCEMENT CLOSED CASES BETWEEN 29TH NOVEMBER, 2019 AND 21ST JANUARY, 2020</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Service Manager Development.</p>	

	<p>RESOLVED that the report which related to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority) be accepted and the recommendations contained therein be accepted.</p>	
<p>-----</p>	<p><u>MARTIN WOODLAND – SOLICITOR</u></p> <p>The Chair took the opportunity to report that this was the last meeting for Martin as he was leaving the Authority.</p> <p>Members said this was a great loss to the Authority, and thanked him for his hard work and support provided to them over the years, and wished him all the very best in his new venture.</p>	

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>SPECIAL PLANNING, REGULATORY AND GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE – 11TH FEBRUARY, 2020</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>LEADERSHIP AND DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER</u>

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR B. SUMMERS (CHAIR)

Councillors D. Bevan
 G.L. Davies
 D. Hancock
 W. Hodgins
 J.P. Morgan
 K. Pritchard
 K. Rowson
 T. Smith
 B. Thomas
 B. Willis
 L. Winnett

WITH: L. Griffin, Team Manager – Licensing & Commercial
 H. Jones, Senior Licensing Officer
 M. Woodland, Solicitor

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
No. 2	<u>APOLOGIES</u> Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mandy Moore, G. Thomas and D. Wilkshire.	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>ACTIVITIES REPORT FOR QUARTER 3 OF 2019/20</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager Licensing.</p> <p>The Team Manager Licensing and Commercial advised that the report outlined the work of the Licensing Team for the third quarter from 1st October to 31st December, 2019 in respect of general licensing duties.</p> <p>The Team Manager noted that six complaints had been received during quarter 3 in relation to taxi drivers and referred Members to the summary of complaints and outcomes as detailed in the report. She further outlined the key points in relation to the Operational and Management Reports.</p> <p>At this juncture questions were invited from Members.</p> <p>In response to a question raised in relation to displaying identification for scrap metal collectors, it was advised that ID Badges must be displayed in the vehicle window. However, ID Badges are only issued to applicant and any persons employed would not have identification.</p> <p>The Member added that he had received complaints that scrap metal collectors had entered gardens without permission. The Team Manager suggested that any such complaints be report to the Licensing Team for investigation.</p> <p>A discussion ensued around the lack of multi-agency approach to police scrap metal collectors in a similar way to taxis, street traders, etc. A Member noted the importance of an enforcement policy for scrap metal collectors and indicated that they had examples of people trespassing onto private property to take scrap.</p>	

The Team Manager Licensing and Commercial advised that there were very complaints received in respect of scrap metal collectors and that a multi-agency approach would need to include the Police and Natural Resource Wales. The Team Manager continued that the Team's work programme was based on data and was evidence based, therefore if complaints were received for scrap metal collectors then consideration could be given to add this function to the Licensing Team's work programme.

In response to further issues raised around scrap metal collectors, the Team Manager encouraged Members to report complaints to the Licensing Team and also ask their constituents to report complaints in order for incidents to be recorded.

Another Member stated that residents are informed to report these incidents to the Police and asked if the Licensing Team worked with the Police as she felt that this evidence would be available from them. The Team Manager advised that dialogue was regularly undertaken with the Police in terms of licensing matters and stated that no such complaints had been received recently that she was aware of. It was agreed as an action point that a request would be made to Gwent Police to identify if any complaints had been received directly by them in respect of this area of work.

The Member added that residents are encouraged to report matters to the Police and felt that they would not report complaints to both the Council and Police. The Team Manager reiterated that licensing matters are reported to the Council by the Police and she had not been aware of any significant increase in complaints against scrap metal collectors, however the Team Manager reiterated that this matter would be discussed with the Police to identify if complaints were being received by them.

Another Member referred to busking in Tredegar Town Centre and asked if a policy could be drafted to move on the individual as he had caused a great nuisance in the Town Centre. The Member added that a Ward colleague had contacted Caerphilly Council who had a policy in place and suggested the Authority work with Caerphilly to establish a policy for Blaenau Gwent.

The Senior Licensing Officer advised that Caerphilly Council did not have a Policy and was not aware a policy in any Gwent authorities. The issue of buskers was normally a more significant issue in larger city authorities such as Newport and Cardiff. The Senior Licensing Officer advised that the Council did not need a policy on everything and suggested that guidance could be developed in line with any complaints received.

The Member stated that it was a nuisance and he had received a number of complaints. The Team Manager reiterated that these complaints should be reported to the Licensing Team and that she was not aware of any recent founded complaints. The Member was aware that the busker caused a great deal of nuisance to taxi drivers and it was suggested that the officer speak with the taxi drivers in the Town Centre or the Police. The Team Manager stated that a request would be made of Gwent Police to identify if any complaints had been received. She advised that caution needed to be applied here that the Licensing Team were not seen to be canvassing for complaints, therefore she would not approach the taxi drivers direct but encouraged the Member to ask the taxi drivers to report any issues to the Licensing Team direct if they received further reports of issues.

The Team Manager Licensing and Commercial reaffirmed that the Licensing Team would raise the issue of busking and scrap metal collector complaints with the Police to see if any complaints had been received and consideration would be given to the inclusion of any proactive work in these areas in the work plan for 2020/21 accordingly.

The Team Manager – Licensing and Commercial advised that following discussions with the Chair it had been agreed that the Activities Report would be presented to Committee on a 6 monthly at the end of Quarter 4.

	<p>The Team Manager added that any matters of significant importance would be brought to the Committee separately.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee noted the activity report for this quarter.</p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>AREAS FOR MEMBERS TRAINING/BRIEFINGS</u></p> <p>No area for members trainings or briefings were requested.</p>	

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>STATUTORY LICENSING COMMITTEE – 11TH FEBRUARY, 2020</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>LEADERSHIP AND DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER</u>

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR B. SUMMERS (CHAIR)

Councillors D. Bevan
 D. Hancock
 W. Hodgins
 J.P. Morgan
 K. Pritchard
 K. Rowson
 T. Smith
 B. Thomas
 B. Willis
 L. Winnett

WITH: L. Griffin, Team Manager – Licensing & Commercial
 H. Jones, Senior Licensing Officer
 M. Woodland, Solicitor

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
No. 2	<u>APOLOGIES</u> Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mandy Moore, G. Thomas and D. Wilkshire.	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>ACTIVITIES REPORT FOR QUARTER 3 OF 2019/20</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager Licensing.</p> <p>The Team Manager Licensing and Commercial advised that the report outlined the work of the Licensing Team for the third quarter from 1st October to 31st December, 2019 in respect of statutory licensing duties. The Team Manager spoke to the report and outlined the key points in relation to the Operational Report and Management Report.</p> <p>The Team Manager Licensing and Commercial referred Members to the date for the implementation of the minimum pricing unit which had now been confirmed as 2nd March, 2020. The Team Manager also mentioned the Gambling Support Services Project Pilot in Blaenau Gwent and noted that Blaenau Gwent would be one of the first authorities to engage in the exploration of the take up of training and would work with ARA and CAB to develop a Social Media Toolkit. The toolkit would be used to improve general public awareness of gambling related support services and it was planned to roll out training to frontline staff in a supporting role.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Team Manager for the informative overview of the report and invited questions from Members at this juncture.</p> <p>A Member referred to the ‘Dine in for One or Two’ meal offers in supermarkets and asked if the cost of wine in these packages would also be affected by the minimum pricing as it would increase the cost of wine.</p>	

The Team Manager Licensing and Commercial advised that Trading Standards was leading the Minimum Pricing processes and agreed to take this question back in order for this to be taken into consideration.

In response to a question raised in relation to the large increase in the number of temporary licences it was advised that the increased numbers had been due to the Rugby World Cup.

The Team Manager – Licensing and Commercial advised that discussions had been undertaken around the frequency of the Activities Report. It had been agreed that Quarter 4 would be presented as agreed, however the reports would then be presented on a 6 Monthly basis. The Team Manager added that any matters of significant importance would be reported separately to Committee to keep Members informed accordingly.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee noted the activity report for this quarter.

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: PLANNING, REGULATORY & GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE – 12TH MARCH, 2020

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR B. SUMMERS (CHAIR)

Councillors D. Bevan
G. L. Davies
D. Hancock
W. Hodgins
M. Moore
J. P. Morgan
K. Pritchard
K. Rowson
T. Smith
B. Thomas
G. Thomas
D. Wilkshire
B. Willis
L. Winnett

WITH: Service Manager Development & Estates
Team Manager Development Management
Team Manager Built Infrastructure
Team Leader Development Management
Specialist Environmental Health Officer
Planning Officer
Press & Publicity Officer

AND: Mr. Martin Woodland - Advisor

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>There were no apologies for absence received.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE INFORMATION</u> <u>QUARTER 3 – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2019</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Development & Estates.</p> <p>The Service Manager outlined the Council's current performance as follows:</p> <p>Figure 1 – the Council was ranked 1st in terms of its performance for determining applications in time i.e. within 8 weeks or within the period agreed by the applicant. This equated to 100% of applications, compared to the Welsh average of 86%.</p> <p>Figure 2 – the Council was ranked 5th for this measure in order of performance as on average it took 60 days from registration to decision for the Council to determine an application, whilst the Welsh average was 87 days.</p> <p>Figure 3 – 38% of Planning Committee decisions had been made contrary to the officer recommendation. The Welsh average was 10%.</p>	

	<p>A Member referred to Figure 3 and pointed out that only 3 decisions had been made contrary to officer recommendation which was quite a minute number.</p> <p>The Service Manager advised that the Council was consistently in the bottom two in terms of this performance measure. It was noted that a review of the scheme of delegation for enforcement matters had been undertaken the previous year and it was the intention to undertake a similar review in respect of the scheme of delegation for planning applications in the next few months.</p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the Quarter 3 Performance Information contained therein be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>APPEALS, CONSULTATIONS AND DNS UPDATE MARCH 2020</u></p> <p>Members considered the report of the Service Manager Development & Estates, whereupon:</p> <p>Councillor D. Wilkshire joined the meeting at this juncture.</p> <p><u>C/2019/0090: APP/X6910/A/19/3243676 – Star Fields, Off Mountain Road, Ebbw Vale</u></p> <p>A Member expressed her appreciation to the Service Manager and officers for the excellent response submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in respect of this particular appeal.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>LIST OF APPLICATIONS DECIDED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS BETWEEN 21ST JANUARY 2020 TO 21ST FEBRUARY 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Senior Business Support Officer, whereupon:</p>	

C/2020/0002 – Tesco Stores Ltd., Castle Street – Retention of Fast Charger

A Member enquired whether there were any guidance notes or a policy available covering the installation of electric charging points in order to provide clarity on whether planning permission was required or not as this could prevent an influx of retrospective applications being received. It was noted that there was not a 'universal' type of charger.

The Service Manager Development & Estates confirmed that whilst there was not a specific planning policy that related to electric charging points, regionally work was being undertaken in relation to the feasibility of rolling out of charging points across some developments.

In reply to a question, the Service Manager confirmed that only some types of charger required planning permission and building regulations may be amended to require mandatory consent for some new developments. Potentially there could be a change to the building regulations later in the year but draft guidance on this matter was awaited from Welsh Government.

Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the list of applications decided under delegated powers between 21st January to 21st February, 2020 be noted.

No. 7 PLANNING REPORT

Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager Development Management.

The following planning applications were explained to Members with the aid of slides:

Councillor G. Thomas joined the meeting at this juncture.

Application No. C/2019/0330 – Unit 2, Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate, Tafarnaubach – The Change of Use of Existing Buildings from Education and Training Centre to B2 Industrial Use for the Recycling and Recovery of WEEE (Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment) and Associated Materials and Products

The Team Leader Development Management explained that this was a follow up report in relation to the original planning application which had been presented and discussed in detail at the February 2020 meeting of the Committee.

Members had raised concern regarding the potential impact of the proposal on nearby residents. It had, therefore, been resolved that a decision on the application be deferred pending a fact finding site visit. The follow up report had addressed the concerns that had been raised at that meeting.

It was noted that a Swept Path Analysis had been undertaken which demonstrated that heavy goods vehicles (HGV's) would be able to turn safely within the curtilage of the site. The Highway Authority had confirmed that the traffic movements associated with the proposed use was comparable to those for the previous use of the building and had raised no objection in respect of this matter.

The views of the Committee were, thereupon, sought and Members commented/raised questions as follows:

- **Litter** - A Member pointed out that with residential properties being located so close to the site, it was the issue of litter that the residents were more concerned about rather than the small amount of flammable liquids being stored at the site.
- **Screening** – Would sound proof screening be provided?

The Team Leader Development Management confirmed that a condition had been proposed within the original report which required the submission of details of fencing for both visual and noise mitigation

purposes.

The Specialist Environmental Health Officer advised that details of the submitted fencing would need to be considered by Environmental Health to ensure that the structure would provide satisfactory noise mitigation and that they would advise the Planning Officer accordingly. It was noted that the approved fencing would need to be erected before the proposal became operational.

- **Future Variation of Conditions/Change of Use -** A Member requested that if there were variations to any of these conditions or a change of use to vary the operation at the premises, that the application be automatically considered by the Committee.

The Service Manager Development & Estates said that he was unable to provide this guarantee. Any application received would be included in the weekly list which was circulated to all Members and Ward Members retained the option to 'call in' the application.

- **Weighbridge –** To address a concern raised, the Team Leader gave details of the proposed location of the weighbridge.
- **Vehicular Noise -** It was confirmed that in order to protect the amenity of nearby residents, vehicles would be restricted to entering and leaving the site during specified times between the hours of 08.00 and 18.00 Monday to Friday and 08.00 and 13.00 on Saturdays. It was noted that the company would not operate on a Sunday.

A Member said that in his opinion the applicant had been very accommodating in terms of the operational times and had also agreed to prohibit the activity on bank holidays. He concluded by stating that he supported the application.

- **Loading and Unloading of Vehicles -** It was confirmed that vehicles would be loaded and unloaded outside of the building.

- **Dust & Fumes** – Members were advised that the processes involved in the operation did not produce airborne dust at the site. All recycling processes would be carried out within the buildings.

A Member commented that the applicant was putting measures in place to protect the amenity of nearby residents.

- **Pallets** - The Team Leader Development Management advised that she was unable to provide a guarantee regarding the extent of the number of pallets that would be stock piled. However, these would be located at the rear of the building and would not be visible from the road and they would be screened from residents.

It was proposed and seconded that the officer recommendation i.e. that planning permission be granted be endorsed subject to minor changes to conditions regarding the extent of the fencing and hours that vehicles entering the site.

Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously,

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that planning permission be **GRANTED**, subject to the conditions outlined in the original report of the Team Manager Development Management.

Application No. C/2019/0310 – 1 Hawthorn Glade, Tanglewood, Blaina, NP13 3JT – Retention and Extension of Raised Decking Area

It was noted that late correspondence had been received from the applicant in support of the application.

The Team Manager Development Management advised that this application had been presented to the last meeting of the Committee and sought to retain and extend a raised decked area within the rear garden of the above detached residential property. It was noted that the decision on the application had been deferred at the last Committee pending a fact finding site visit.

The Team Manager reminded the Committee that the officer recommendation was for refusal for the following reasons:

- By virtue of its scale and mass, the retention of the raised decking was considered to be an unduly dominant feature that had an adverse visual impact on the street scene and was contrary to the Local Development Plan principles and Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- The structure would cause material harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties by having an overbearing impact and causing loss of privacy.

The Team Manager advised that the fact that neighbouring properties had not objected to the application did not abdicate Planning Committee from responsibility and it was not acceptable in the absence of an objection to approve a development that was clearly unacceptable for legitimate planning reasons and contrary to planning policies and SPG advice

At the site visit Members were able to view the full impact of the structure as erected together with the impact that any further extension would have. The development was wholly unacceptable and it undermined the adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance for Household development, note 7 'Raised decks, balconies and retaining walls' and was in direct conflict with long standing and good planning practice. Members needed to consider the reputation of the authority in this regard of planning principles.

Additional late correspondence had been received from the applicant and officers had responded to each of the points raised. It was noted that most of the points had been adequately covered in the original report which had been presented to the previous Committee. The one additional comment to be made was that whilst officers fully appreciated health issues that the applicant may be suffering, these were not a material planning consideration.

Therefore, based on careful consideration that the impact of the development; the precedent of approving a development of such magnitude and the impact upon the adjoining neighbouring property, officers had concluded that planning permission should be refused.

The views of Members of the Committee were, thereupon, sought in relation to the application.

- A Member welcomed the fact finding site visit as Members were able to view the structure from a different perspective as compared to how it looked in photographs and said that the decking would make the garden area more usable. It was noted that Tanglewood contained a variety of properties and other similar developments could be found at the site.

She continued by pointing out that as the development was unfinished it would look more obtrusive than in its finished state and if a condition was imposed that appropriate screening be provided (i.e. planting) this would conceal the structure from view.

The Member concluded by proposing that the application be approved subject to the provision of external screening.

- Another Member said that whilst he accepted that the applicant's health issues were not a material planning consideration, as part of the requirements of the Health and Wellbeing Act and Disability Act, the applicant's current and future health conditions did need to be considered.

He referred to the objection received that the development was of an overbearing nature on neighbours but pointed out that the adjacent neighbours had not complained.

The Supplementary Planning Guidance were 'guidelines' only and not policy and with this type of construction becoming increasingly popular (due to

the topography of the area) there ought to be a review of this guidance to take into consideration decked areas. He concluded by stating that providing the applicant undertook an extensive screening programme he would be content to support the application. Other Members supported these comments.

The Service Manager Development & Estates advised that Members had an obligation to bring unauthorised development to the attention of the Planning Department and those unauthorised developments should not be used to set a precedent.

- A Member pointed out that the topography of the area was known when the property had been purchased. Screening would take a number of years to develop unless mature specimens were planted. He was of the view that the development was unacceptable as it looked unsightly, particularly from the approach into the site and there were a variety of alternative ways that this could have been achieved.

The Service Manager Development & Estates asked Members to confirm if they were satisfied that the decking was structurally sound should planning permission be granted.

- A Member said that as the applicant had gone to such expense he would have ensured that the structure was safe, particularly as he had children. This was a matter for building regulations.

The height of the garden was higher than the decking and with the screening this provide the neighbouring properties with far more privacy than they had currently. The Member concluded by proposing that planning permission be granted.

The Team Manager Development Management clarified the following points:

- Personally she was not convinced that the structure could be effectively screened bearing in mind that if

the application was approved approval was being granted for a further extension of that structure.

- Numerous comments had been made about decking and the need for guidance. Welsh Government required that any decking 300mm (1ft) elevated required planning permission and took the view that anything over that threshold would have an impact on neighbours. In terms of this application the overall height was 3.5m and this needed to be borne in mind.
- The authority did have guidance in place i.e. Household Design Guide which had been approved and adopted by this Committee. This guidance related to raised decks, retaining walls and balconies. Therefore, if this application was approved it would be in direct conflict of that guidance which had been used in the decision making process in the County Borough including appeal decisions and enforcement notices had been served on the basis of that guidance.
- Usability of garden – the correct approach would have been for advice to be sought from officers who could have advise on other options.
- A lack of objection to the proposal was not a reason to undermine good planning practice.
- Expense and structural stability – the expense incurred by the applicant was not a material issue for the Committee, the application had to be considered on its planning merits. With regard to structural stability if Members were mind to approve the application the Team Manager would advocate that the decision be deferred pending the applicant providing structural stability information before a final decision was made.
- The Team Manager said that whilst she respected the right for Members to take a contrary view to the officer recommendation for refusal, she asked the Committee to think about the credibility of officer's advice given to other residents in the County

Borough and how approving this application would undermine this.

Recommendation:

A Member proposed that the application be approved subject to appropriate planting of shrubbery to screen the area and that structural information be supplied.

The Chair confirmed that if structural information was required the application should be deferred pending that information.

Following a discussion for clarification, the Service Manager advised that once planning permission had been granted it could not be revoked without following a complex legal process.

A further discussion ensued when a Member asked whether there was an opportunity for dialogue to take place between the parties to slightly amend the structure.

The Team Manager advised that there were three options available to Members:

- Approve the application to retain and extend the decking subject to a condition regarding appropriate screening.
- Defer determination of the application pending a structural stability report and determine at that stage what conditions might be appropriate.

It was noted that officers had not requested the applicant to provide the required structural information due to the unnecessary expense that this would have incurred for the applicant as the application was being recommended for refusal.

- Refuse the application.

The officer advised that refusal would allow the applicant to appeal and an independent Planning Inspector scrutinise the refusal. It was noted that in the event that planning permission was refused the

applicant could alternatively resubmit an application free of charge and at that point there would be an opportunity for dialogue to take place.

In reply to a question, it was confirmed that the other half of the decking would impact on a neighbouring property. The Team Manager referred Members to paragraph 1.6 of the report i.e. in addition to the retention of the decking to the south, this application sought to extend the unauthorised decking, returning it along the full length of the rear (western) neighbouring boundary for a length of 17m x 6.5m wide (at its widest point). In effect, the resultant decking would warp around the garden in a 'L' shape.

A Member said that the site meeting had been very informative and Members had provided with the opportunity to view the structure. He proposed that the officer recommendation for refusal be endorsed.

Another Member proposed an amendment i.e. that planning permission be approved subject to appropriate screening being provided. This amendment was seconded.

A recorded vote was, thereupon, taken in respect of the amendment i.e. that planning permission be approved subject to appropriate screening being provided.

In Favour of the Amendment – Councillors L. Winnett, G. Thomas, B. Thomas, W. Hodgins, J. P. Morgan, K. Rowson, D. Hancock

Opposed to the Amendment – Councillors B. Summers, M. Moore, D. Bevan, G. L. Davies, K. Pritchard, T. Smith, D. Wilkshire, B. Willis

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that planning permission be **REFUSED** for the reasons outlined in the report of the Team Manager Development Management.

8.	<p><u>ANY AREAS FOR MEMBER TRAINING/BRIEFINGS</u></p> <p>Visit to Neighbouring Planning Authority:</p> <p>A Member referred to the previous discussions that had taken place to visit a neighbouring planning authority.</p> <p>This point was noted.</p> <p>Houses of Multiple Occupation:</p> <p>A training event in respect of HMO's i.e. House of Multiple Occupation would be held during June.</p> <p>Supplementary Planning Guidance:</p> <p>Refresher training on the above was requested.</p>	
9.	<p><u>EXEMPT ITEM</u></p> <p>To receive and consider the following report which in the opinion of the proper officer was an exempt items taking into account consideration of the public interest test and that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting (the reason for the decision for the exemption was available on a schedule maintained by the proper officer).</p>	
10.	<p><u>ENFORCEMENT CLOSED CASES BETWEEN 22ND JANUARY 2020 AND 27TH FEBRUARY 2020</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Development & Estates.</p>	

RESOLVED that the report which related to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority) be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.	
--	--

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: PLANNING, REGULATORY & GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE – 25TH JUNE, 2020

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR D. HANCOCK (CHAIR)

Councillors D. Bevan
M. Cook (*substituting for Councillor B. Thomas*)
G. L. Davies
M. Day
J. Hill
W. Hodgins
C. Meredith
K. Rowson
T. Smith
G. Thomas
D. Wilkshire
B. Willis
L. Winnett

WITH: Service Manager Development and Estates
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
Team Manager Development Management
Team Manager Built Infrastructure
Team Leader Development Management x 2
Solicitor
Communications, Marketing and Customer Access
Manager

AND: Head of Policy and Performance)
Service Manager Performance and) Observers
Democratic)

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. Healy and B. Thomas.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>APPEALS, CONSULTATIONS AND DNS UPDATE JUNE 2020</u></p> <p>Members considered the report of the Service Manager Development & Estates.</p> <p>The Service Manager explained that this was the standard report which provided details of the present caseload in respect of Appeals, Consultations and DNS. One of the main challenges experienced during the Covid-19 lockdown period had been the difficulty in supplying the Planning Inspector with background information for these cases and, as a result a number of these appeals had been held in abeyance. However, the process had now recently been reactivated and officers were in the process of preparing and submitting statements on behalf of the Council in respecting the appeals detailed in the report. It was noted that the appeal relating to Star Fields, Mountain Road, Ebbw Vale was the subject of a separate report on the agenda (Item No. 5).</p>	

	<p>Members who wished to submit their own individual representations in respect of any of the appeals would be required to quote the planning inspectorate appeal reference number detailed on the report.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>PLANNING APPEAL UPDATE: CHANGE OF USE OF STABLE BUILDING (BUILDING 4), OUTBUILDING AND CONTAINERS FOR STORAGE PURPOSES; AND THE CHANGE OF USE OF STABLE (BUILDING 1) TO DOG BREEDING KENNELS AT STAR FIELDS, OFF MOUNTAIN ROAD, EBBW VALE – REF: (C/2019/0090)</u></p> <p>Members considered the report of the Team Leader Development Management.</p> <p>The Service Manager – Development and Estates spoke briefly to the report and explained that the previous Planning Committee had refused permission for the above proposal based on the grounds that the main building was a large and prominent feature and was sited within a Special Landscape Area.</p> <p>However, the Inspector had acknowledged that after the Decision Notice for refusal had been issued, the Council had issued a Certificate of Lawfulness of Existing Use of Development (CLEUD) in relation to the appeal site which confirmed the lawfulness of the six substantially completed structures on site but did not extend to the lawful use of the buildings.</p> <p>Therefore, the Inspector noted that the granting of the CLEUD represented a material change in circumstances since the planning application had been determined and that he had to have regard to it. This had directed the Inspector to allow the appeal and whilst the Inspector noted that some of the structures on site had an unkempt visual appearance, given that a CLEUD had been issued he advised that in the event that he was to dismiss the appeal the structures were likely to remain in place.</p>	

In relation to the separate application for costs, the Planning Inspector had acknowledged that the lawfulness of the structures was not verified at the time the decision was taken to refuse the planning application and that whilst he found that the buildings did not harm the Special Landscape Area he had acknowledged that they did have a visual impact from public viewpoints. The reason for refusal was, therefore, not without foundation and the Council had provided sufficient evidence to substantiate its reason for refusal and dismissed the application for costs.

In reply to a concern raised regarding the location of the proposal, the Service Manager confirmed that it was Mountain Road, Ebbw Vale and not Mountain Road, Rassau.

A Member expressed her appreciation to the previous Planning Committee for taking the decision to vote against the proposal and to the organisations who had taken the time to write to the Planning Department and the Planning Inspectorate expressing their concerns relating to the proposal. She also acknowledged and welcomed the view from the Inspector's report that the grounds for refusal had been reasonably substantiated.

The Member continued by welcoming the conditions to restrict noise levels and a condition prohibiting the sale and purchase of dogs at the site. She advised that when Lucy's Law came into force, the appellant would not be lawfully able to use the premises for this purposes - puppies would have to be sold from the place that they had been bred.

She continued by referring to Condition no. 8 i.e. that within 2 months of the date of the decision letter (8th April, 2020) a Waste Management Plan specifying the method of disposal of all waste produced was required to be submitted in writing to the local planning authority for approval and enquired whether this document had been received by the local planning authority, within the specified timescale.

The Team Manager Development Management confirmed that a form of correspondence had been submitted but at this point in time she would need to check if this was the

actual Waste Management Plan. The Team Manager undertook to pursue this matter and contact the Member following the meeting to confirm whether the Plan had been approved and also implemented within the specified timescale.

For clarification, the Service Manager – Development and Estates advised that the Planning Inspector's condition stipulated that if no Waste Management Plan was approved within 2 months of the date of the decision, the use of the site should cease until such time as a Waste Management Plan approved by the local planning authority was implemented. This meant that the grant of planning permission would remain in any event.

In reply to a question, the Service Manager confirmed that the Certificate of Lawfulness of Existing Use of Development (CLEUD) application was an entirely separate matter and the Council had not been in a position to hold this application in abeyance because the Certificate of Lawfulness hinged on matters of fact i.e. if the applicant was able to prove on the balance of probability that buildings had been on site for a certain period of time, the Council had an obligation to determine the application and was duty bound to issue a certificate.

It was, thereupon, unanimously,

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the two separate appeal decisions in relation to planning application C/2019/0090 be noted, namely:-

- The appeal was allowed and planning permission was granted for the change of use of stable (building 4), outbuilding and containers for storage purposes; and the change of use of stable (building 1) to dog breeding kennels, at Star Fields, off Mountain Road, Grid Ref 317718 209001, Ebbw Vale, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref C/2019/0090, dated 29 May 2019, subject to the conditions set out in the schedule to the decision letter.
- The application for an award of costs was refused.

No. 6

LIST OF APPLICATIONS DECIDED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS BETWEEN 24th FEBRUARY TO 12th JUNE, 2020

Consideration was given to the report of the Senior Business Support Officer, whereupon:-

The Service Manager Development and Estates advised that the report covered the period between 24th February to 12th June, 2020 i.e. the Covid-19 lockdown period. He said that it had been a very challenging time for the planning service and paid tribute to the efforts of officers during this this period. Three officers namely, the Team Manager - Eirlys Hallett, Team Leader - Steph Hopkins and Planning Officer - Jo White who covered the Ebbw Fach Valley had been redeployed onto other Covid related duties and said that it was worth noting that those officers had continued to carry their caseload assisted by the efforts of other staff to deal with applications in their absence. Members noted that on this particular report there were close to 80 applications that had been determined and whilst it had not been 'business as usual' officers had managed to continue providing the planning service as best they could.

The Chair congratulated officers on their continued efforts to deliver the planning service during this unprecedented and challenging time.

C/2020/0026 – Unit 58 Festival Park Shopping Centre, Ebbw Vale

In reply to a concern raised, the Service Manager undertook to discuss a matter outside of the remit of the Planning Committee with the Member following the meeting.

C/2019/0278 – Land East of Blaina Road, Brynmawr

In reply to a question, it was confirmed that the grant of planning permission did provide provision for housing at the bottom end of the site but he was unaware of any further discussion with officers regarding implementing this part of the consent.

	<p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the list of applications decided under delegated powers between 24th February to 12th June, 2020 be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>PLANNING REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager Development Management.</p> <p><u>Application No. C/2020/0106 – PCI Pharma Services Unit 23-24 Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate Tredegar - Construction of New Packaging Line Building, Retaining Wall and Covered Pedestrian Walkway Linking New Packaging Line Building with New Car Park</u></p> <p>At the invitation of the Chair, the Team Manager Development Management gave details of the planning application which related to the proposed construction of a large new packaging line building within the existing PCI Pharma Services Ltd complex (formerly known as Penn Pharmaceuticals) located on the eastern edge of the Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate, Tredegar. The current application also related to some associated development, namely a bridge/covered pedestrian walkway that would link the new building with a recently constructed car park to the north of the existing complex and an extended section of reinforced concrete retaining walling. It was noted that at this stage it was unknown whether the extended section of the retaining walling would be required.</p> <p>Over recent months PCI, had embarked upon what they explain to be ‘an expansion of its facility to enhance its highly potent drug manufacturing and development capabilities, including both clinical and commercial supply which would support the growth of the business’ and during the last 12 months planning permission had been granted by the Authority for two separate developments on the site namely, the construction of a large new pharmaceutical containment facility building with a new large car parking area to the north of the existing complex</p>	

and a new replacement laboratory facility. Such developments and the current proposal were viewed by the company as the first phase of a growth programme which would potentially see a significant increase to their workforce over the next five years.

Members were advised that the car parking provision would provide 183 spaces and would cover the parking needs of this current development plus the two separate developments that had already been granted planning permission.

Details of the proposals were viewed on the images contained in paragraphs 1.5, 1.8 and 1.11 of the report and this included the elevation of the building and a section as viewed from the west showing relative levels of car park, bridge/walkway, proposed building and existing buildings at the rear of existing complex.

On the basis of the scale of the development, the proposed application was classed as a 'major' planning application which required determination by the Planning Committee. In this context the application details had been the subject of a statutory pre-application consultation process and the application had been supported by numerous supporting documents detailed in Paragraph 1.13 of the report. In addition, the company had undertaken significant discussions with the Team Manager at the early stage of the development.

Highways - In terms of consultation, the Highways Authority had raised no objection to the scheme provided that the new car park area previously approved be available for use before the proposed building was brought into use. It was also confirmed that the provision of new cycle parking and the submission of a Travel Plan should be secured by the imposition of suitably worded conditions.

It was noted that the company had already started if not finished work on the car park already although the CFM2 building had yet to be constructed. It was the intention of the company to build CFM2 and the other building as a joint contract and it was anticipated that work would commence on both buildings shortly.

Drainage - The applicant/developer had also been advised of the need to secure a separate approval for Sustainable Drainage and should contact Caerphilly CBC who were processing applications on behalf of Blaenau Gwent.

Landscape – Officers were satisfied that the recent application to extend car parking facilities north of this site included a landscape condition for hedgerow and tree planting to help address any negative visual impact concerns from the sensitive landscape area to the north. Further advised that the site levels of the development area being much lower than the northern extent of the site and the sites existing industrial development meant the current proposal did not raise any additional visual impact concern.

Planning Policy – It was noted that the Team Manager Development Plans had raised no objections in principle but had provided a list of policies contained in the Local Development Plan that should be considered.

External Consultation – Members were advised that no observations had been received from the Town Council in relation to the proposal and Welsh Water had confirmed the development would require approval of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

The Team Manager Development Plans continued by advising that that the proposal was acceptable in principle and there were no significant issues to be considered. The company currently employed a significant amount of people (over 400) and it was anticipated that an additional 50 jobs would be created as a result of this particular proposal.

In determining the application, the following five issues were looked at i.e. highways/parking; drainage; impact on visual amenities; structural and renewal energy outlined in paragraphs 5.8 to 5.20 inclusive.

The following correction was made to paragraph 5.15 of the report i.e. that the nearest residential property would

be positioned approximately **70 metres** from the building and not 700 metres as detailed in the report.

A Construction, Design and Management Plan would address issues of amenity during the construction phase and this had been forwarded to the Environmental Health Department who had raised no concerns.

The current application plans indicated that the retaining wall may need to be further extended (eastwards) to accommodate one further chiller. Whilst section details have been provided which confirm the height of the required wall, and the intended profile of the proposed groundworks, no structural details had been provided for the retaining walls which exceed 1-5 metres in height. However, the officer was content that this was a matter that could be dealt with by planning condition, particularly as works beyond what had been previously approved may not be required. A condition could similarly be imposed to require details of the additional chiller.

The Team Manager Development Management concluded by stating that the potential impact of the proposal had been carefully assessed against relevant national and local planning policies and guidance and found to be acceptable. The officer was satisfied that the matters of technical detail which have yet to be finalised could be addressed by the imposition of suitably worded conditions and requested that delegated powers be granted to officers to add to or amend conditions if deemed necessary. She concluded by recommending that the planning permission be granted, subject to the conditions listed within the report.

The views of Members were, thereupon, sought in relation to the proposal.

- A Ward Member thanked the officer for the report and said that he welcomed the proposed development which would not only benefit Tredegar. He supported the application in its entirety and concurred with the officer recommendation for approval.

- Another Member said that this was a very exciting development and supported the proposal.
- Reference was made to the car park which was north of building and a Member pointed out that there were always cars parked on the highway in this area. He stated that if it was nearer to park on the highway than to travel to the car park people would continue to do so and asked whether consideration had been given to implementing traffic management plans to address this issue.

The Team Manager Development Management said that she was not aware of any Traffic Management proposals but pointed out that the company had embarked on major car park proposals because they were aware of the issue of employees parking on the highway and the company had also made arrangements for overflow parking facility in the premises of an adjacent building. It was hoped that this scheme which would provide a bridge and covered walkway would entice employees to drive to the rear of the building and these use facilities, thus alleviating the problems experienced at the front of the building. The Team Manager concluded by advising that there may be an opportunity to address this issue in terms of the detail within the Travel Plan when received this document was received.

- A Member said that this was a fantastic opportunity for Blaenau Gwent especially within pharmaceutical industry at this time. He pointed out that when chillers had been installed previously in another development they had been accompanied by a noise impact assessment/statement and asked if this would be a requirement in this instance.

The Team Manager Development Management advised that in the case the Member was referring to a noise impact assessment had been requested by environmental health due to the close proximity of the proposal to residential properties. In terms of this proposal, there was some distance between the site and the new housing development – the nearest house was the farm house itself.

These chillers were proposed to be located at the rear of the site at the rear of the building and would be shielded by the building itself. It was noted that two chillers had already been approved for the site and this issue had not been raised previously and therefore, it would now be difficult to request a noise impact assessment for this particular proposal.

- Another Member said that this excellent proposal which would create much needed jobs for the area. The new car park would alleviate the congestion on the highway and he concluded by stating that he fully supported the proposal.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that planning permission be **GRANTED**, subject to the conditions outlined in the report of the Team Manager Development Management.

FURTHER RESOLVED that delegated powers be granted to officers to add to or amend conditions, if deemed necessary.

Application No. C/2020/0027 – Regain Building & Basement Garden, Mill Lane, Victoria, Ebbw Vale, NP23 6GR - Two Storey Building (B1 Use) Linked To Regain Building with Associated Infilling Of Basement Garden, Access, Parking and Other Infrastructure, And Additional Parking Areas and Service Access to Regain Building

Members were advised that the above proposal was classed as a 'major' development and as such needed to be determined by the Committee.

The Service Manager Development and Estates, gave details of the proposed development which sought planning permission for a two storey building that would be linked to the existing Regain building. The building would form part of the National Digital Exploitation Centre which would help and support companies looking to test and develop their digital concepts as well as provide training in digital practices. The research and development facility

would be delivered by Thales (a private company currently occupying the original Regain building) in collaboration with the University of South Wales.

The Centre's educational outreach element would also provide students with real-life experience in the digital sector. The proposed building would have a B1 use that complemented the existing use of the Regain building. The educational element would be ancillary to the main B1 uses of the existing and proposed buildings as a whole.

Details of the size and height and proposed layout of the proposed development were provided as outlined in paragraph 1.2 of the report.

In terms of site history, it was noted that a number of previous applications received related to the land reclamation of the former Corus Site.

Consultation - With regard to internal consultation, the Highways Authority had raised no objection to the proposal subject to the provision and retention of the cycle and car parking areas. No objections had been raised in terms of ground stability subject to the grounds stabilisation works or from a landscaping perspective as proposed development included a robust approach to enhancing the development through the use of tree and shrub planting.

External consultees had raised no objection to the proposal subject to appropriate conditions being attached to any grant of planning permission.

No letters of support or objection had been received from members of the public. A Ward Member had, however, confirmed that he had no issue to raise in respect of the proposed development.

It was noted that the B1 use would conform with employment related policies outlined in the Local Development Plan however, 'The Works Design and Masterplan' Supplementary Planning Guidance specifically designated the application site as an open basement structure that was to be retained. As such, the infilling and loss of the basement was not in accordance with the SPG LDP Supplementary Planning Guidance. As

such the application had been advertised as a development that did not accord with the provisions of the LDP (i.e. a 'departure application').

Turning to the issue of the basement structure itself, consultation had taken place with the Local Development Plans Manager and although there would be a loss of open space it was 'not technically an open space' because it had been fenced off for health and safety purposes and was not a locally protected form of open space. Therefore, on balance attaching less weight to the loss of the basement than would have otherwise would have done, given the economic benefits associated with the development the report was in favour of proposal and loss of basement structure. It was noted that there was another basement on the other side of the development.

It was noted that the expansion of the digital business with the links to education met the strategic objectives within the Local Development Plan and the proposals would make a contribution to the Works Site and not conflict with the overall aims of the Local Development Plan.

In terms of layout and scale it was felt that the building would be better sited further forward on the site making a stronger link to Lime Avenue however, officers had been informed that the building had been set back because its connected to existing Regain building and the need for surveillance around the building. This would lead to car parking becoming the most prominent feature on the thoroughfare through The Works but this was the compromise that would have to be made to deliver the scheme. In addition, the building line did not conform with Lime Avenue Units again due to the link with the existing Regain Building.

The Highways Authority had raised no objection to the proposed development subject to the provision and retention of the cycle and car parking areas, and the submission and approval of the details relating to the proposed highway junction and reconfiguration of the existing on street parking. Minor issues regarding charging points would also need to be addressed.

The proposed employment incorporated appropriate hard and soft landscaping details that would provide an appropriate visual setting and allow the development to integrate adequately with the street scene and surrounding area.

A separation distance of over 30 metres would be maintained between the nearest residential property, Lime House, and the proposed employment building. It was considered that this separation distance was sufficient to prevent an unacceptable impact on the amenity of the occupiers in terms of overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing.

Drainage - As the proposed development had a construction area of greater than 100 square metres, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) would need to be used to dispose of surface water and a separate consent would be required from the SuDS Approval Body.

Ground Stability and Contamination - The Council's Specialist Environmental Health Officer had raised no objection to the proposed employment building. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) had, however, recommended conditions that would protect controlled waters from the mobilisation of contamination as a result of uncontrolled surface water infiltration into the ground and/or piling or any other foundation designs using penetrative methods. An initial ground investigation report had confirmed that there were elements of contamination on site but nothing that would exceed statutory limits at present but there was always potential to find other further contamination as ground excavation works took place.

The Service Manager stated that whilst the proposal was not in accordance with the Local Development Plan or the associated Supplementary Planning Guidance i.e. that the loss of the basement garden would be detrimental in terms of open space provision and the character of the area, he felt that this would not be unacceptably so. The proposed employment building would bring significant economic benefits and was considered appropriate to the local context in terms scale and appearance. He, therefore, concluded by recommending that planning permission be granted.

The views of Members were, thereupon, sought in relation to the application.

- A Member expressed his concern regarding the loss of the basement structure as it was part of the heritage of the site and requested that this heritage should be marked in some manner.

The Service Manager said it was a concern and this was the reason that the Supplementary Planning Guidance had sought retention of as many of the basements in recognition of the previous site activities. However, it was difficult to find a suitable use for the basement whilst protecting public safety and said that going forward an alternative solution would have to be identified. He concluded by stating that he would liaise with Technical Services the options to mark the heritage of site of the basement should Members approve the application.

- A Member commented that it was sad that the proposal would only create an additional two jobs and that the of the whole organisation only employed 8 people.

The Service Manager said that whilst employment numbers were relatively low given the size of the building with the links to education and training it would be a hive of activity and would receive a considerable amount of visitors to the centre. It was hoped that this would be a seed business for other technology companies to grow around it because this was an international company.

- In reply to a point raised in respect of screening, the Service Manager advised that the landscaping details submitting were acceptable and it would be important that a robust landscaping scheme was secured by condition.
- Another Member said that these were exciting times involving education and research and the Service Manager and his team had done an excellent job but said that whilst he fully supported the application he

had some concerns. He concurred with the previous comments made regarding the loss of the basement structure and said that this should be marked in some way so that people could remember the heritage of the site.

He continued by explaining that a number of years ago issues arose with the foul sewer and that there were voids that ran underneath the shafts where water continually ran. He was mindful of the proposed works and raised concern that these works could potentially adversely affect the waterways and cause flooding in another area.

The Service Manager advised that there was an abandoned sewer on the site and Technical Services was in discussion with Welsh Water to identify its exact location. With regard to drainage this would be dealt with via a SuDS scheme. In addition, previous remediation schemes had dealt with a considerable amount of the contamination but if unforeseen contamination was encountered during the works there would be a process that would be triggered to deal with this. This element had been covered by a condition.

The Team Leader Development Manager advised that the contamination the levels were not significant enough to cause problems for the construction and end use. With regard to ground stability there was a requirement for drilling and grouting which would be controlled by a condition. However, when the future application received consultation would take place with the engineers and Natural Resources Wales to ensure that any implications of that drilling and grouting would not have any significant environmental affects.

- Another Member said that whilst there was slight deviation away from the Local Development Plan the site was earmarked for leisure, housing and was high on the agenda for economic development. He concluded by stating that he fully supported the application.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that planning permission be **GRANTED**, subject to the conditions outlined in the report of the Team Manager Development Management.

Application No. C/2020/0095 - Former Tredegar General Hospital, Tredegar Health Centre and Bedwelty Park, Park Row, Tredegar, NP22 3NG - Reserved Matters Application Relating to Access (Revised from that Approved Under Outline Planning Permission), Landscaping, Appearance, Scale And Layout Of Planning Permission C/2020/0037 (Demolition of Tredegar Health Centre, Partial Demolition of Tredegar General Hospital and Erection Of A New Class D1 Health and Wellbeing Centre)

At the invitation of the Chair, the Team Leader Development Management gave details of the above reserved matters application. It was noted that outline planning permission had been granted for the demolition of the existing Health Centre, partial demolition of Tredegar General Hospital and construction new Health and Wellbeing Centre and associated works in November 2019. The access arrangements were approved at outline stage but all other matters were reserved for future consideration.

The applicant had now chosen to submit revised access details in respect of the proposal which needed to be considered alongside the other reserved matters of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping. It was noted that Conservation Area Consent had also been granted in November 2019 for the demolition works because the site fell within Tredegar Townscape Conversation area and Bedwelty House and Park Conservation area. There were also a number of listed buildings in the vicinity which included a number of listed buildings associated with Bedwelty House and Park and Saron Chapel.

The proposed health and wellbeing centre would be predominantly built on the site of the former Tredegar general hospital building, with the original 1904 twin gabled building retained as part of the proposed

development and incorporated into the new health and wellbeing centre. This would be achieved by wrapping a new split level two storey building around the sides and rear of the existing twin gable building. This chosen development option was referred to as 'The Heart' at outline application stage. The primary access to the building would be from Park Row and a secondary access would also be provided to the rear of building.

The Team Leader continued by showing images of the proposed development and the site layout. Landscaping would be provided on the boundary of the site on Market Street and Park Row.

Councillor D. Bevan left the meeting at this juncture.

Reference was made to C/2020/0037 Variation of condition 1 and removal of condition 8 of outline planning permission C/2019/0237 to allow a revised bat migration strategy - this was a new approval which included the provision of a temporary bat house with the permanent bat migration measures now included within roof space of new Health and Wellbeing Building.

Consultation - In terms of consultation, the responses from internal consultees had been included at paragraph 3 of the report. With regard to the concerns raised by the Team Manager – Natural Environment over the lack of proposals to improve connectivity and green infrastructure links between the proposed health and wellbeing centre and Bedwellty Park, discussions had taken place with the applicant regarding the potential to include soft and hard landscaping measures to improve the connectivity and this had been included as a planning condition should the proposal be approved.

No objections to the proposal had been raised by CADW or the Heritage Advisory Service.

One member of the public had responded to the public consultation, stating that whilst the proposed health and wellbeing centre would be a wonderful facility for local people, the land within Bedwellty Park should not be sold or leased to Aneurin Bevan Health Board.

A representation had also been received from a Ward Member concerned about the lack of public consultation regarding revised access and parking details and the impact of large vehicles during demolition and construction phases. It was noted that these matters had been addressed in Section 5 of the report.

The proposed building respects the original 1904 building in terms of design and would complement that building. The proposal would also re-establish the link and inter relationship between the general hospital site and Bedwellty Park, which had been lost over the decades as the original general hospital changed its aspect towards Park Row through alterations and additions to the building.

The Highway Authority had raised no objection to a new vehicular access from Park Row which would be created to serve a new car parking area. In total, the proposal would provide 83 parking spaces, which was 13 more than what was indicatively proposed at outline application stage. A full travel plan and car parking phasing plan had been requested by the Highway Authority to address the health centre demolition and parking implications on the local area and this would be secured via condition.

The Team Leader Development Management concluded by recommending approval of the proposal to the Committee subject to conditions.

The views of the Members of the Committee were, thereupon, sought.

- A Member welcomed the development because it was much needed in Tredegar and supported the proposal. However, he had an element of concern regarding the number of car parking spaces. Whilst this number had been increased to 83, as part of the initial consultation a number of years ago the number of proposed car parking spaces had been 103. He requested that his concerns be recorded in respect of the car parking provision especially as the facility would be very well used incorporating two G.P. practices and the offshoots of these practices.

Another Member asked the following series of questions:

- As heavy plant hire had now been brought on to the site at what stage in the demolition was the contractor at?
- The Member requested that his disappointment be noted that the land at the rear of hospital was not being incorporated into the project – the original hospital was to be called a ‘health and wellbeing centre’ and to have such a centre incorporated and have to access a beautiful park for health and wellbeing purposes would have been the icing on the cake.
- How was the site going to be managed during the construction phases as there would be two surgeries operating out of the site together with a pharmacy? In addition, there would be an impact on the residents living in Park Row and Market Street and this would need to be managed.

The Member concluded by expressing his appreciation to the Health Board and Planning Department for including and respecting the heritage of the Tredegar and the 1904 building by incorporating this into the new health centre development.

The Team Manager Built Infrastructure advised that in respect of parking at the time that outline planning permission had been applied for concern had been raised that 70 car parking spaces would be insufficient. Based on that and information in terms of staff movements/use i.e. not all the staff would be on site at any one time and some would be based in the community together with the sustainability scoring for the development he was content that 83 spaces was sufficient to accommodate this activity. He, thereupon, provided details of a comparative site in Brynmawr that had opened in the last 2 years which was working very well in terms of car parking.

With regard to the new access point concerns had been raised by residents that with one access onto Market Street that people may be tempted to go

against the one-way system and travel back onto Park Row. The applicant had taken this point on board and this had been the reason why the access point car park had been changed.

Regarding construction officers had been contacted by applicant who had advised that demolition was on-going and there was currently one access point provided for access and egress of demolition vehicles. Highways officers would be visiting the site the following week so the situation was being monitored during the demolition works. With regard to maintaining the car parking provision throughout the course of the works, this was a very valid point and the applicant had been requested to submit a phased car parking plan to ensure that adequate parking was available on site at all times throughout the demolition and construction phases of the works.

- The Team Leader Development Management confirmed that the contractor was keen to get on site as soon as possible but had been held back by a condition on the outline planning permission that required full approval of reserved matters. If approval was received for the reserved matters the contractor could begin work on the demolition relatively quickly.

The construction method statement had not yet been approved. This was still yet to be considered.

With regard to the connectivity of the land to rear the Team Manager Natural Environment had shared the view of the Member and wished to see the use of the land to improve connectivity within the park. As the applicant had some issues regarding funding timelines and the legal status of the land and land ownership he had been keen to progress with the scheme. However, this issue had been discussed further with applicant and they were keen and willing to consider soft and hard landscaping measures so there could be key linkages with the park and wider area. Condition no. 7 as recommended would allow officers to explore this opportunity further.

	<p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that planning permission be GRANTED, subject to the conditions outlined in the report of the Team Manager Development Management.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p><u>EXEMPT ITEM</u></p> <p>To receive and consider the following report which in the opinion of the proper officer was an exempt items taking into account consideration of the public interest test and that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting (the reason for the decision for the exemption was available on a schedule maintained by the proper officer).</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p><u>ENFORCEMENT CLOSED CASES BETWEEN 1ST MARCH AND 15TH JUNE, 2020</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 12, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Development & Estates.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report which contained information relating to a particular individual be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p> <p><u>Appreciation</u></p> <p>Appreciation was expressed to the Service Manager Development and Estates and his team for the work undertaken to provide the service during this challenging</p>	

<p>time. Appreciation was also expressed to the Head of Democratic Services and her team for work undertaken to allow the democratic process to be undertaken on a virtual basis.</p>	
---	--

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 29th JANUARY, 2020

REPORT OF: LEADERSHIP AND DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

**PRESENT: Leader of the Council/
Executive Member Corporate Services
Councillor N.J. Daniels (CHAIR)**

**Executive Member – Regeneration and
Economic Development
Councillor D. Davies**

**Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins**

**Executive Member – Social Services
Councillor J. Mason**

**WITH: Corporate Director Education
Corporate Director Social Services
Chief Officer Resources
Chief Officer Commercial
Service Manager Public Protection
Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
Press Officer**

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	

<p>No. 2</p>	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received for:</p> <p>Councillor G. Collier, Deputy Leader/Executive Member for Environment Managing Director Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services</p> <p>The Leader reported that Councillor S. Thomas had been invited to the meeting to present the views of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee in relation to Item No. 10 (Progress Report – Social Services Assisted Transport Provision). However, he was unable to attend and Councillor K. Rowson, the Vice-Chair was in attendance on his behalf.</p>	
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>	
	<p><u>MINUTES</u></p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Executive Committee held on 18th November, 2019 were submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
	<p><u>GENERAL MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>CONFERENCES/COURSES</u></p> <p>To consider invitations to attend the following:-</p> <p>Reception and Briefing by The Army Engagement Team at Coleg Gwent - Thursday, 13th February, 2020</p>	

RESOLVED that approval be granted for Councillor B. Thomas, Armed Forces Champion, to attend.

Social Services Policy Group (SSPG) Learning Workshop and Meeting - 19th and 20th February, 2020

RESOLVED that approval be granted for Councillor J. Mason, Executive Member Social Services, to attend.

The Leader of the Council reported that since the preparation of the report, the following invitations had also been received. He confirmed that no costs would be incurred for the events:-

Inaugural Concert of the British Legion Band in Wales – 9th February, 2020 – Monmouthshire

Lord Lieutenant of Gwent Award – 12th March, 2020 – Raglan Barracks, Newport

RESOLVED that approval be granted for Councillor Brian Thomas, Armed Forces Champion to attend.

DECISION ITEMS – CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS

No. 6 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 11th MARCH, 2020

Consideration was given to the report of the Leader/Executive Member for Corporate Services.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the forward work programme for 11th March, 2020 be noted.

ORDER OF AGENDA

It was agreed that Item No. 10 (Progress Report – Social Services Assisted Transport) would be considered next on the agenda, and that Item No. 7 (Revenue Budget 2020/2021 to 2024/2025) would be considered last.

DECISION ITEMS – SOCIAL SERVICES MATTERS

No. 10 **PROGRESS REPORT – SOCIAL SERVICES ASSISTED TRANSPORT PROVISION**

Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Social Services.

At the invitation of the Leader, the Corporate Director of Social Services presented the report which provided an analysis of current demand, and outlined recommendations for future potential charges for citizens accessing transport based on comparable public transport costs. The report followed the introduction of the Assisted Transport Policy from April 2019, with the undertaking of eligibility assessments for new and existing citizens. It was agreed that following completion of these assessments, feedback would be provided to the Executive.

In terms of the background, he reported that in January 2019 Social Services transported 190 citizens ‘to and from’ community options venues, on average 120 citizens a day. Historically, assisted transport was provided to citizens attending community options without any formal assessment of need to use such transport, i.e. there has been automatic entitlement regardless of an individual’s situation.

The Corporate Director said one of the key aims of the Directorate was to maximise citizens’ independence and minimise dependency to enable individuals to live and travel independently within their communities. Social Services does not have a statutory duty to provide transport, but does have a duty to meet that need if the need cannot be met by an individual’s own resources or community resource. Further, in line with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 we adopted the principle of undertaking a strength based assessment which considered the resources of citizens, including access to their own mobility vehicle, bus pass or benefit entitlement.

The Corporate Director referred to sections 2.4 and 2.5 of the report which stated that in April 2019 demand had reduced, and the Department were able to relinquish 1 vehicle, making the current budget allocation for community options transport £321k.

He said Members will also note that 149 assessments have been undertaken by Social Workers to determine eligibility, and the details of these were outlined in section 7 of the report. However, since the preparation of the report the figures have changed, and there were now 101 individuals accessing community options independently. 24 individuals have been deemed eligible and would have free transport; and 14 originally were deemed as exceptional circumstances, but this had unfortunately recently reduced to 11 due to three people passing away, and it was these 11 individuals we are asking to charge for the use of community options transport.

The Corporate Director referred Members to section 4.3 of the report which captured some of the views of citizens currently accessing the service independently. He confirmed that in order to accommodate this and support parents the opening hours have been extended either side of the day, to make the service more flexible.

He then referred to the options outlined in the report, and recommended Option 1. This was in line with the Council's Income Policy 2014 which recommended full cost recovery where appropriate. He said Option 2 sought to charge a cost equivalent to public transport costs for accessing the vehicles. Both these Options would enable the Directorate to reduce the current fleet from 8 to 4 vehicles and ensure a more sustainable model for the future. However, Option 3 which recommended the 'status quo' prior to April 2019 could result in an estimated additional cost to the budget of approximately £90k should every citizen currently accessing the service through alternative means return to using community option assisted transport.

The Corporate Director concluded that if a charge for the 11 individuals using community options assisted transport was not introduced, then it would be unfair to the other 135 individuals either eligible under the policy for free transport or those currently making their own way to and from community options independently.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor K. Rowson, Vice-Chair of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee reported the reasons for the alternative recommendation presented by the Scrutiny Committee.

He said those of the Committee who voted for the alternative recommendation did so because they felt that the previous decision on Home to School and Home to College Transport had set a

precedent for the administration.

They argued that by voting for Option 1 or 2 they would be unfairly penalising some of the most vulnerable people in our community. They also claimed that the good work undertaken by the Department in compiling the information was not the only side of the story, and that huge pressure would be brought upon some of the families of service users.

Finally, they argued that given the Council's much better financial settlement with a £4 million uplift in funding, the proposed saving of approximately £100,000 could not be sufficiently justified in this instance, as there was the potential for users to stop attending community options completely, and this could affect their wellbeing.

The Executive Member for Social Services said this was a very comprehensive report and was evidence of the level of engagement undertaken by the Senior Management Team in Adult Services. He had followed progress and the discussions undertaken on the Policy since 2017, to ensure that all service users had been treated fairly, and with all questions in relation to safeguarding, isolation and loneliness being answered.

He then referred to the Options outlined in the report, and said whilst Option 1 followed the Council's Income Policy, i.e. full cost recovery, he felt this Option could cause unnecessary financial hardship, and as a result could not support this Option.

In relation to Option 3, the Executive Member said whilst he had taken the views of the Scrutiny Committee on board, he could not support the alternative recommendation, and he said he was surprised that since 2015, there had been no reference at any meetings to revert to the status quo.

He said Option 2 reflected the Council's policy to ensure that our citizens retain their independence, and would assist the most vulnerable people who access our services to travel in a method of their own choosing. As a result, he concluded that Option 2 was his preferred Option, and believed it was a reasonable compromise and recognised the level of engagement and consultation that had been undertaken, and the positive feedback received by the Department.

The Leader commended the Department on presenting a clear and

understandable report. In relation to the comments of the Scrutiny Committee he said it was difficult to compare this with the Home to School and Home to College Transport. In January 2019 discussions were around potential budget cuts and savings that were being submitted year on year for consideration. Following in-depth consultation and lengthy discussions of the outcomes of that consultation, along with other mitigating factors, it was decided that the Home to School/College Transport would no longer be put before Council for potential savings as part of the budget setting process. This decision provided piece of mind to parents and grandparents, but would also save Officer time in having to compile the data in preparation for the budget setting process.

The Leader then sought clarification that in January 2019 when the review of social services assisted transport was undertaken, whether the potential for a charging policy was always intended.

In response the Corporate Director confirmed that when the Social Services Assisted Transport Policy was approved in January 2019, it was also agreed that Officers would look at potential costings for the service on a full cost recovery basis or alternatively costs comparable to public transport, in order to develop charges for those citizens eligible to continue to access transport. If Members did not want to implement a charging system, then the decision could have been taken to not proceed with the review at that time.

The Executive Member for Regeneration & Economic Development commended the way in which the review had been managed. He said the key issue moving forward was to ensure access to the service for the benefit of the community, and he was confident that this would continue.

The Executive Member for Education supported the comments made and said the amount of engagement that had been undertaken was very pleasing, and supported Option 2.

The Vice-Chair of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee confirmed that he also supported Option 2.

Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive note the progress made in assessing the needs of citizens in line with the

	<p>Assisted Transport Policy, including the outcomes of the assessments. The Executive recommend that only those citizens who remain eligible for assisted transport continue to receive support free of charge. Those citizens who are deemed ineligible but have exceptional circumstances continue to receive support but at a charge based on similar costs illustrated earlier in the report, reflecting public transport rates. The charges would be based on the future configuration of transport required to deliver the future model of Community Options services (Option 2).</p>	
	<p><u>DECISIONS – ENVIRONMENT MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>REVIEW OF BLAENAU GWENT HOMES ALLOCATION POLICY</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Team Manager Housing Solutions and Compliance.</p> <p>The Service Manager Public Protection presented the report which outlined the proposed policy and operational changes to the Blaenau Gwent Homes Allocation Scheme, following the recent review of the scheme and consultation process. The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein, the proposed changes to the Policy were detailed in Appendix 3.</p> <p>In relation to the consultation exercise undertaken, a query was raised regarding Member engagement, and the Officer apologised that all Members had not been directly consulted on the proposals. However, the report had been considered by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee and they fully supported the proposed changes to the Scheme.</p> <p>The Leader confirmed that the Executive Member for Environment was also fully supportive of the proposals.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive approve the proposed policy changes to the Blaenau Gwent Homes Housing Allocation Scheme for implementation on the 1st April, 2020 (Option 1).</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEMS – REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS</u></p>	

<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY REVIEW</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.</p> <p>The Executive Member Regeneration & Economic Development presented the report which outlined the key principles and requirements of the guidance from Welsh Government in preparing a Local Housing Strategy, and also highlighted the potential opportunity for collaborative working with other Local Authorities on a regional basis.</p> <p>The Local Housing Strategy set out the Council's long term housing vision in terms of the type of housing we are looking to build over the next 5 years. He said housing was currently at the top of the political agenda, impacting across all Portfolios, and the Local Housing Strategy was a very important document for the Council. Looking at the longer term there was opportunity to pursue a more regional approach and section 2.12 of the report outlined the opportunities for collaborative working. However, in moving towards a collaborative approach, the Executive Member stressed the importance of ensuring local needs are met.</p> <p>The Executive Member concluded that the Scrutiny Committee had considered the report and endorsed the preferred Option 2.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive endorse BGCBC to work collaboratively with Gwent wide Local Authorities to investigate the possibility of producing a Regional Housing Strategy and local (Blaenau Gwent) action plan (Option 2).</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEMS – CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>At the invitation of the Leader the Chief Officer Resources presented the report which provided an update on the positive provisional local government settlement for 2020/21 and its impact on the Council's budget; proposed the detailed budget for 2020/21 and indicative budget for 2021/22; and proposed the level of Council Tax increase</p>	

for the 2020/21 financial year in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein. The positive provisional settlement combined with the opportunities identified in the Bridging the Gap programme meant the Council would be able to invest in key priorities, avoid cuts to services and enhance its financial resilience. Further details of the specific grants for Local Government would be published alongside the final RSG settlement in February 2020.

In response to a question raised by the Leader, the Officer said there were significant financial challenges in the latter years of the MTFs, therefore it would be prudent to establish a Transformation Budget which could be utilised to invest in projects and investigate potential options for savings in future years, and bridge the significant gaps in funding.

The Leader sought assurance that the grants being transferred into the RSG would become un-hypothecated, and the Officer confirmed that they would become un-hypothecated, and it would be for the Council to decide where this funding would be allocated.

The Leader said he was confident that the Council would make the right decision. He thereupon recommended that the Executive note the report at this stage, and that a formal decision be made at Council on the 6th February, 2020.

RESOLVED accordingly.

MONITORING ITEMS - SOCIAL SERVICES

No. 11 REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Social Services.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the decisions of the Regional Partnership Board be supported (Option 1).

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 11TH MARCH, 2020

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

**PRESENT: Leader of the Council/
Executive Member Corporate Services
Councillor N.J. Daniels (CHAIR)**

**Deputy Leader/Executive Member for Environment
Councillor G. Collier**

**Executive Member – Regeneration and
Economic Development
Councillor D. Davies**

**Executive Member – Social Services
Councillor J. Mason**

WITH: Managing Director
Corporate Director Education
Corporate Director Social Services
Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services
Chief Officer Resources
Chief Officer Commercial
Service Manager Accountancy
Solicitor
Press Officer

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	

<p>No. 2</p>	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received for:</p> <p>Councillor J. Collins, Executive Member – Education</p> <p>Andrea Jones, Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance</p>	
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The Leader of the Council declared an interest in Item 26 - Service Review and upon seeking legal advice remained in the meeting.</p>	
	<p><u>MINUTES</u></p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Executive Committee held on 29th January, 2020 were submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
	<p><u>GENERAL MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>CONFERENCES/COURSES</u></p> <p>To consider invitations to attend the following:-</p> <p>Launch of the Capital Ambition 2.0 at Cardiff & Vale College, Cardiff – Thursday, 6th February, 2020</p> <p>RESOLVED that approval be granted for Councillor D. Davies, Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development, to attend.</p> <p>Overseas Trip to Turkey – 10th-12th February, 2020</p>	

RESOLVED that approval be granted for Councillors G. Davies and J. Hill to attend along with Steve Smith, Head of Planning, Ellie Fry, Head of Regeneration and Rob Davies, Environmental Health.

St. David's Concert, St. Michael's Church, Abertillery – Sunday, 1st March, 2020.

RESOLVED that approval be granted for Councillor M. Moore, Chair of the Council to attend.

The Leader of the Council reported that since the preparation of the report, the following invitation had also been received. He confirmed that no costs would be incurred for the event:-

Military Preparation School Award Ceremony – 13th April, 2020

RESOLVED that approval be granted for Councillor Brian Thomas, Armed Forces Champion to attend.

DECISION ITEMS – CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS

No. 6 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 22ND APRIL, 2020

Consideration was given to the report of the Leader/Executive Member for Corporate Services.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the forward work programme for 22nd April, 2020 be noted.

No. 7 GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS

Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The following additional grants were reported:-

ABERTILLERY

Llanhilleth Ward- Councillor H. McCarthy

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. | Llanhilleth Bowls Club | £150 |
| 2. | Ebbw Fach Aberbeeg Community Group | £119.71 |

3.	Aberbeeg Community Centre	£100
4.	Llanhilleth Institute Food Bank	£300

EBBW VALE

Badminton Ward – Councillor G. Paulsen

1.	One Life Autism Group	£100
----	-----------------------	------

NANTYGLO & BLAINA

Blaina Ward – Councillor G. Collier

1.	Cwmcelyn Tenants & Residents Association	£200
2.	Abertillery BG RFC – Under 8s Rugby Team	£100

Blaina Ward – Councillor J. Morgan

1.	Nantyglo FC	£200
2.	Blaina Bowls Club	£200
3.	Blaina Community Sports Club	£100
4.	Blaina Community Centre	£135
5.	Nantyglo & Blaina Air Training Corps	£150
6.	Aberystroth History & Archaeology Society	£100
7.	Monday Night Dance Club	£50
8.	Ystruth Ladies Hut	£50
9.	Riverside Flats	£50
10.	Ystruth Primary PTA	£250

TREDEGAR

Georgetown & Central & West Ward – Councillor K. Hayden & J. Morgan & S. Thomas & H. Trollope & B. Willis

1.	Glanhowy PTA (Autism)	£300
2.	Tredeggar Women & Girls AFC	£200
3.	Reliance Bus Preservation Society	£300
4.	Planet Fitness	£200
5.	Tredeggar Methodist Church	£200
6.	St Georges Luncheon Club	£400
7.	Saron Chapel	£838.55
8.	Tredeggar Central Baptist Church	£400

FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted.

No. 8 **STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2020 TO 2024**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Governance & Partnerships; Service Manager, Policy & Partnerships and the Professional Lead for Engagement, Equality & Welsh Language.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee endorses the proposed Strategic Equality Plan prior to approval by Council (Option 1).

No. 9 **COMMERCIAL STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial.

At the invitation of the Leader, the Chief Officer Commercial presented the report and outlined the critical themes to being like a commercial organisation. Focussing on the customer experience for existing and new services and to reduce inefficiencies in the system for customers. Delivering quality services and ensure that the supply chain worked effectively to help control costs and enhance the Council's reputation.

From a commercial perspective there was a need to explore new opportunities, commission the right services in the right way to ensure value for money and delivering better outcomes for the benefit of communities.

With regard to reviewing and monitoring arrangements the Chief Officer Commercial made a correction to paragraph 2.6 of the report and confirmed that reporting on delivery of the work programme would be presented to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis and not on an annual basis as stated in the report.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development welcomed the report and said that it was good to see the Commercial Strategy come to fruition with focus on an efficient Council and shaping the investment portfolio.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee agrees the Commercial Strategy and associated work programme (Option 1).

No.10 CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial and Communications and Marketing Manager.

The Chief Officer Commercial presented the report which was aligned to the Council's Commercial Strategy and was designed to support the delivery of the Council's priorities, vision and values.

The Chief Officer Commercial made a correction to paragraph 2.7 of the report and confirmed that reporting on delivery of the work programme would be presented to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis and not an annual basis as stated in the report.

The Chief Officer Commercial reported that the communications landscape had changed significantly over recent years and it was critical that the strategy reflected customer expectations. There were now multiple channels to reach audiences, including the traditional press, and stressed that it was important to use the best channels in the best possible way to reach customers.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee agrees the Communications Strategy and associated work programme (Option 1).

DECISION ITEMS – REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

No.11 EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PLAN 2020-2023

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services and the Team Manager Connected Communities.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development presented the report and gave an update on the development of the Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan.

Enhancing the skills and work readiness of individuals was critical to gain employment through initiatives such as City Deal and Tech Valleys. Predicting skills for the future was challenging and necessary to capitalise on opportunities, future proof employment and significantly improve the economy in Blaenau Gwent.

The Plan focused on five priority areas namely;

- Business and Enterprise
- Learning and Skills
- Social Mobility, Inclusion and Employability
- Education and Schools
- Procurement and Community Benefits

The Corporate Director for Regeneration & Community Services commented on the benefits of engagement with partners and the opportunity to incorporate their comments into the plan as appropriate.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee approve the Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan (Option 2).

DECISION ITEMS – ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

No.12 LOCAL NATURE RESERVE DESIGNATION AND DECLARATION

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community Services.

The Executive Member for Environment presented the report.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services said that Blaenau Gwent had seven designated Local Nature Reserves and were bringing five forward for designation and declaration.

Declaration and designation would contribute to the Council's Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan and help restore the impact of climate change to improve the environment.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee designate and declare five Local Nature Reserves: Sirhowy Hill Woodlands, Beaufort Hill Ponds & Woodland, Parc Bryn Bach, Garden City and Central Valley (Option 2).

<p>No.13</p>	<p><u>STREET LIGHTING SERVICE REVIEW</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>The Executive Member for Environment presented the report and gave an update on the Street Lighting Review.</p> <p>The Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services commented that there was a challenging financial position, however, in response to industry need, street lighting had been increased at some industrial estates. Insurance claims were now being pursued regarding damage to street furniture and a new solar lantern pilot system was being explored.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee accept the information contained in the report (Option 1).</p>	
<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS – CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS</u></p>		
<p>No.14</p>	<p><u>REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING – 2019/20</u> <u>FORECAST OUTTURN TO 31ST MARCH 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report which provided the forecast financial outturn position across all Portfolios for the financial year 2019/2020 (as forecast at 31st December 2020) and referred to the information related to the actions taken forward to move towards a balanced out turn position.</p> <p>The Chief Officer said that a comparison between Corporate Services Quarter 3 and 4 showed a favourable variance due to the increase in forecast expenditure for Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Education showed a favourable variance. Social Services showed the forecast variance had reduced due to an increase in the number of placements with independent Fostering agencies. Education showed a reduced forecast adverse variance. Economy showed a slight reduction in variance due to the temporary solicitor post being extended to March 2020. Environment showed a slight improvement due to additional fees & charges and the reallocation of costs for asbestos works.</p>	

The Managing Director commented on the improved position from last year but figures still showed vulnerabilities. It was important to keep focus into the new financial year to move towards balancing the budget.

The Leader welcomed the good position of the budget which showed excellent collective budgetary control.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes was received. The action plans attached at Appendix 4 to address the forecast adverse variances as at the end of December 2019 be noted.

No.15 CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, FORECAST FOR 2019/2020 FINANCIAL YEAR

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Chief Officer Resources provided Members with an overview of each Portfolio's actual and forecast capital expenditure against funding approvals for the 2019/20 financial year as at 31st December 2019.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee support Option 1; namely:-

- the appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report be provided;
- the appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council be continued; and
- the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding be noted.

No.16 USE OF GENERAL AND EARMARKED RESERVES 2019/20

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee:-

- Note the planned forecast increase of the General Reserve to 4.54% (above 4% target level) for 2019/2020 and future years strengthening the Council's Financial Resilience.
- Considered the impact the £0.064m forecast adverse variance for 2019/2020 would have on the General Reserve target; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to challenge budget overspends and implement appropriate service Action Plans, where required. 	
No.17	<p><u>POSITION STATEMENT ON THE COUNCIL'S CCTV SYSTEM</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources, the Head of Community Services and the Head of Governance and Partnerships.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee support Option 1; namely:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the position statement on the overt CCTV function; • Include the draft Policy and Strategy Framework for CCTV on the 2020/21 Forward Work Programme for endorsement; and • Receives the annual monitoring report. 	
No.18	<p><u>CORPORATE SERVICES WORKFORCE SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Managing Director and the Head of Organisational Development.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee agree the report and proposed arrangements to support the improvement in attendance (Option 2).</p>	
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS – REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS</u></p>	
No.19	<p><u>TECH VALLEYS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee note and endorse the work of the Tech Valleys Programme (Option 1).</p>	

<p>No.20</p>	<p><u>REGENERATION WORKFORCE SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services and the Head of Organisational Development.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee agrees the report and proposed arrangements to support the improvement in attendance (Option 2).</p>	
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS – ENVIRONMENT MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No.21</p>	<p><u>FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEME FOCUSED AUDIT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Public Protection.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee approves the content of the action plan detailed in Appendix 2 (Option 1).</p>	
<p>No.22</p>	<p><u>ACTIVITIES REPORT – PEST CONTROL TREATMENT SERVICE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Public Protection.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee approve the report as provided (Option 2).</p>	
<p>No.23</p>	<p><u>COMMUNITY SERVICES WORKFORCE SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services and the Head of Organisational Development.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee agrees the report and proposed arrangements to support the improvement in attendance (Option 2).</p>	

	<u>MONITORING ITEMS – SOCIAL SERVICES MATTERS</u>	
No.24	<u>LIVING INDEPENDENTLY IN THE 21ST CENTURY STRATEGY – ANNUAL PROGRESS UPDAE 2019/20</u> Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Adult Services. RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive endorse the report and the evidence provided to support progress in the 8 priority areas, and for us to continue to provide progress updates on an annual basis to the scrutiny committee as outlined in this report (Option1).	
No.25	<u>SOCIAL SERVICES WORKFORCE SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE</u> Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Social Services and the Head of Organisational Development. RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee agrees the report and proposed arrangements to support the improvement in attendance (Option 2).	
	<u>EXEMPT ITEMS – DECISION ITEMS – ENVIRONMENT MATTERS</u>	
No.26	<u>SERVICE REVIEW</u> Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt. RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended). The Leader of the Council declared an interest in this item but upon seeking legal advice remained in the meeting. Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial. The Chief Officer Commercial spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained within the report.	

The Deputy Leader commented that with the improved working relationships and a clear way forward he supported option 2.

The Leader said that the creation of the Strategic Partnership Board would be key to the successful delivery of the service and go a long way to eradicate past issues.

RESOLVED that the report which contained information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted and option 2, namely that Executive Committee scrutinised the report and attached appendices and make recommendations to pursue Route B.

No.27 CEMETERY BURIAL CAPACITY

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager (Leisure & Street Scene).

The Executive Member Environment presented the report which was to establish a medium to long term approach to cemetery provision in Blaenau Gwent.

RESOLVED that the report which contained information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted and option 2, namely that a more detailed feasibility appraisal including costs and land options at cemeteries with limited burial capacity be undertaken. This relates to cemeteries with identified capacity less than 20 years.

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 24th JUNE, 2020

REPORT OF: LEADERSHIP AND DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

**PRESENT: Leader of the Council/
Executive Member Corporate Services
Councillor N.J. Daniels (CHAIR)**

**Deputy Leader of the Council / Executive Member –
Regeneration and Economic Development
Councillor D. Davies**

**Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins**

**Executive Member – Social Services
Councillor J. Mason**

**Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins**

**WITH: Managing Director
Corporate Director Education
Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
Corporate Director Social Services
Chief Officer Commercial
Chief Officer Resources
Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
Press Officer**

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u>	

	<p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>There were no apologies for absence received.</p> <p>The Leader welcomed everyone to the first formal meeting of the Council since the lockdown measures were enforced.</p> <p>He also offered thanks to officers for the hard work that had been undertaken over the recent months in order to ensure critical services continued to be provided and asked that the Executive's thanks be communicated to staff.</p> <p>The Managing Director responded that she would ensure the message was relayed to staff.</p> <p>The Leader also asked that as an Authority, our respects were given to those people who have lost loved ones in Blaenau Gwent and to those in neighbouring authorities and asked for a moment of reflection.</p>
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The Executive Member for Environment declared an interest in Item 11 - Business Rates Relief – Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief – 2020/21 and, having taken legal advice from the Monitoring Officer, remained in the meeting but took no part in the decision in respect of item 11. The reasons for the declaration of interest are recorded on a schedule maintained by the Proper Officer.</p>
	<p><u>MINUTES</u></p>
No. 4	<p><u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Executive Committee held on 11th March, 2020 were submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>

DECISION ITEMS – CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS

No. 5

COVID-19 EMERGENCY – TRANSITION TO THE NEXT PHASE

Consideration was given to the report of the Managing Director.

At the invitation of the Leader, the Managing Director presented the report which confirmed the Council’s strategic response to the Covid-19 Emergency and to outline the next steps as Wales moved to the next phase of the pandemic, with easing of lockdown restrictions and a gradual restarting of services.

The Officer highlighted that in relation to the national emergency, the Council had set up its emergency planning arrangements in March 2020, as detailed in paragraph 2 of the report.

Section 3 of the report detailed some of the work that the Council had been undertaking during lockdown and that the focus had shifted to the delivery of only critical services with other available resources being redeployed to support the emergency response, those of which are detailed in paragraph 3.1 of the report.

The response to the emergency also involved school closures and school hubs were established to provide support to keyworkers. She reported that there had been good partnership working with schools, and the Council had continued to support families eligible for Free School Meals. The Council was currently supporting over 2000 families per week via direct payments.

The Managing Director then referred to paragraphs 3.4 to 3.9 which detailed the decisions the Council had made during the pandemic, e.g. the establishment of locality response teams to support vulnerable people in the community; and the support to the local business community through various Welsh Government grants. As an organisation the Council had also changed the way it operated, e.g. home working and the effective use of new technology, which had also been adopted by Members.

Highlighted in paragraph 3.10 of the report was how the pandemic had affected the workforce in the Council with high levels of absence at the start of the outbreak at around 18%, however, the most up-to-date figures showed that staff absence had reduced and was just

below 3% of staff not available for work, largely owing to those who are shielded and unable to work from home.

Section 5 detailed the transition into the next phase, and how the Council could re-start its services whilst still being aware that the pandemic is not over. A Recovery Co-ordination Group had been established to lead the recovery work in Gwent the first meeting of which is on 24th June 2020 and Blaenau Gwent would then be establishing its own group.

As part of the next steps the Council would undertake a refresh of its corporate priorities to include what had been learnt over the last few months and the good practice to carry forward into the future.

The Managing Director concluded by highlighting that the Council needed to focus on the positive things that had happened, which included working with our partners and communities and referred to the recommendations in Section 7.

The Deputy Leader / Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development commented that the support that had been provided to businesses from the Regeneration Section had been fantastic, however, there was still a lot of work to do, and noted that the differences in the easing of lockdown between England and Wales had been confusing for businesses, e.g. when furlough would cease and the lifting of lockdown measures for those people on the shielded list.

He also highlighted the need for those staff who had been redeployed to be returned to their substantive posts as soon as possible to enable services to restart.

The Leader noted that it was an excellent report, and a brief snapshot of what officers and Members have been undertaking.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive approved recommendation:

- the approach to moving to the next phase of the pandemic and recovery;
- the refresh of the Corporate Priorities to ensure a clear focus on what the Council wants to deliver over next 18 months;

- the proposal to use the disruption of the pandemic to reflect on how we work as an organisation and with our communities, partners, workforce and trade unions, informing a position on the 'new normal' to support delivery of the refreshed priorities;
- supported the development of a wider place-based discussion with partners on the community impact of the pandemic and how the BG Public Service Board could respond and support recovery through its collective priorities and work programme;
- supported the development of an Economic Recovery Plan through engagement with the BG Enterprise Board and Regional Forums – identifying the responding to the impact on local businesses in order to support economic recovery; and
- Continue to ensure that Blaenau Gwent is an active participant in regional forums – such as G10 and Cardiff Capital City Region – to support recovery and development of the Borough.

No. 6

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE 2020/21 REVENUE BUDGET AND UPDATE ON BRIDGING THE GAP PROPOSALS

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

At the invitation of the Leader the Chief Officer Resources presented the report which detailed an initial forecast of the impact of Covid-19 on the 2020/2021 revenue budget and to provide an update of progress made against the Bridging the Gap Programme.

The Officer went through the report and highlighted the detail in Section 5 and referred to Appendix 1 that provided an overall forecast on a portfolio by portfolio basis and noted that the report showed a worst case scenario. The forecast included estimated claims to the Welsh Government hardship fund and the new Social Services hardship fund.

The Chief Officer Resources then referred to Section 5.6 and the overall summary in Appendix 2 - Bridging the Gap proposals and that of the target of £1.465m, the Council is forecasting to achieve £1.2m or 83% of that target. Many of those proposals were income related.

The Officer noted that as a Council we would also need to look to identify if there are areas in our own budgets to mitigate some of the costs that had been incurred and noted that paragraph 5.7.1 of the report identifies some additional income.

The Leader thanked the Chief Officer Resources for a comprehensive report and noted that the finance was an important priority on the WLGA agenda, and the WG, WLGA and Councils were working well together and had one consensus view that was to focus on the financial situation which had prevailed throughout.

The Leader commented that from a positive political view, the interaction and the relationship between WG and LG had vastly improved. However, he noted that the funding sources from WG would not be available in the long term and agreed that the Council needed to look at its own budgets. He noted that the management of the financial position during the pandemic at both a local level and across Gwent and wider had gone very well. He commended the Chief Officer Resources and her team in being able to respond to the demand of the WG deadlines and all returns had been submitted on time.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive considered the current forecast position and provided appropriate challenge to the financial assumptions included in the report; and that progress made against the Bridging the Gap programme for 2020/2021 be noted. (Option 1)

No. 7 **TEST, TRACE AND PROTECT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Managing Director.

At the invitation of the Leader the Chief Officer Commercial presented the report that detailed the arrangements put in place to establish Contact Tracing in Blaenau Gwent, as part of the regional response to the Welsh Government's Test, Trace and Protect Plan (TTP).

The Officer referred to Section 3 and gave an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the service. She also provided information on the operational details of the service.

She noted that the initial work would focus on the testing of staff and residents in Care Homes and to date the level of testing has been quite low, however, it was anticipated that figures would rise as lockdown measures were eased; and it was noted that it was likely that the service would continue until March 2021.

The Leader then, in light of the announcement over the last few days that there would be a strong potential that a testing facility would be placed at the Marine Colliery Site in Cwm, and asked that an officer provide a brief statement.

The Managing Director responded that a request had been made over the last few days, whereby Welsh Government (WG) and the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) had contacted the Council to source potential sites in the borough for a drive-through testing centre. The Council had welcomed their interest to have a testing centre in the area, and WG and ABUHB were showed potential sites and Marine Colliery in Cwm was selected, mainly because of its size. Officers were now working through the plans to make sure the site would be suitable and testing should start next week. She noted that drive-through centres were part of a National approach to testing, through a national system, and it linked neatly into the work of the local contact tracing, any results would be fed into the team. This was positive news for Blaenau Gwent and officers had worked at pace over the last few days and expected a formal announcement over the next few days.

The Leader thanked the Chief Officer Commercial and other officers involved for the work they had done on the Test, Trace and Protect project, which would be crucial to the further easing of lockdown measures.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive noted and endorsed the establishment of Contact Tracing in Blaenau Gwent, as part of the regional approach in Gwent and in support of the national Test, Trace and Protect Plan. (Option 1)

MONITORING ITEMS – CORPORATE SERVICES

No. 8

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING – 2019/20 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN

Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.

At the invitation of the Leader the Chief Officer Resources presented the report that detailed the Provisional outturn position at the end of 2019/2020; the significant adverse variances within portfolios; the provisional outturn for Fees and Charges; and the progress on the achievement of the Financial Efficiency Projects for 2019/2020.

The Officer referred to paragraph 5.1.3 which highlighted the overall position across all portfolios.

She noted that the provisional outturn of £0.48m favourable variance was a significantly improved position to the forecast at December 2019; and also highlighted the costs incurred as a result of the severe floods in February 2020.

The Chief Officer Resources then referred to Appendix 1 and gave a brief overview of the variances for each Directorate.

She also referred to paragraphs 5.1.25 – 5.1.27 which detailed the Fees and Charges.

Finally, she drew Members attention to paragraph 5.1.29 and the Financial Efficiency Projects and the target of £3.35m and that 98% (£3.28m) had been achieved.

The Leader thanked the Chief Officer Resources for the report, and noted the remarkable turnaround from December 2019; and reiterated how well the Council had done over the last 2 to 3 years in managing its budget. He continued that it showed that Directorates working together can achieve the targets that were set. The continued commitment to the financial strategy had put the Council in a good position to achieve the budget at the end of the year.

He noted that adverse variances would continue into the current financial year and sought clarification that the Cost Pressure sub group would continue to meet to continually monitor those issues.

The Chief Officer Resources confirmed that the Cost Pressure sub group would continue to meet.

The Executive Member Social Services commented on financial position and congratulated the Social Services Directorate on achieving its favourable variance.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and that the Executive considered and approved the report and provided appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report. (Option 1)

No. 9	<p><u>CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, PROVISIONAL OUTTURN FOR 2019/29 FINANCIAL YEAR</u></p>												
	<p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources. At the invitation of the Leader the Chief Officer Resources presented the report that detailed the provisional financial outturn position to the end of March 2020 across all portfolios (subject to audit); and any significant adverse and/or favourable variances.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources referred to paragraphs 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 that overall budget holders had maintained spending within the overall total for the approved capital schemes; and that future year funding of £59m consisting of external grants and the Authority's own funded would be carried forward into the future financial year.</p> <p>The Leader noted that this was another very positive report.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report; • Continued to support appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council; and • Noted the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding. (Option 1) 												
	<p><u>DECISION ITEMS – CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS</u></p>												
No. 10	<p><u>GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS</u></p>												
	<p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The following additional grants were reported:</p> <p><u>ABERTILLERY</u></p> <p><u>Abertillery Ward- Councillor N. Daniels</u></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td>Old Tyleryans RFC</td> <td>£100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td>Abertillery Belles FC</td> <td>£100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.</td> <td>Abertillery & District Museum Society</td> <td>£50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.</td> <td>Bishop Street Allotments</td> <td>£50</td> </tr> </table>	1.	Old Tyleryans RFC	£100	2.	Abertillery Belles FC	£100	3.	Abertillery & District Museum Society	£50	4.	Bishop Street Allotments	£50
1.	Old Tyleryans RFC	£100											
2.	Abertillery Belles FC	£100											
3.	Abertillery & District Museum Society	£50											
4.	Bishop Street Allotments	£50											

5.	Adam Street Allotments	£50
6.	Abertillery Netball Club	£100
7.	Abertillery BG RFC	£100
8.	Abertillery Bowls Club Ltd	£100
9.	Abertillery Cricket Club	£100
10.	Abertillery Town Band	£100
11.	Abertillery Bluebirds FC	£100
12.	Abertillery Ladies Orpheus	£75
13.	Abertillery Excelsiors FC	£100
14.	Abertillery Excelsiors Juniors FC	£100
15.	Ebbw Fach Choir	£75

Abertillery Ward- Councillor J. Holt

1.	Adam St. Community Allotments	£100
----	-------------------------------	------

Abertillery Ward- Councillor M. Cook

1.	Abertillery Cricket Club	£100
2.	Abertillery Bowls Club	£100
3.	Abertillery Bowls Club Junior Section	£100

Cwmtillery Ward- Councillor J. Wilkins

1.	Abertillery Excelsiors FC	£150
2.	Abertillery BG RFC	£150
3.	Abertillery Bowls Club	£100
4.	Abertillery Netball Club	£100
5.	Abertillery Belles FC	£150
6.	Abertillery Town Band	£50
7.	Abertillery Business & Professional Ladies Ass.	£50
8.	Wyndam Vowles Community Centre	£50
9.	Abertillery Cricket Club	£50
10.	Six Bells Bowls Club	£50

BRYNMAWR

Brynmawr Ward- Councillor J. Hill

1.	Showstoppers	£100
2.	Ebbw Vale Works Museum	£100

	3. BGFМ Limited	£100
--	-----------------	------

EBBW VALE

Badminton Ward – Councillor G. Paulsen

	1. Ebbw Vale Cricket Club	£150
	2. Ebbw Vale Mini & Junior Rugby	£100

Rassau Ward – Councillor G.A. Davies

	1. Special Movers	£200
--	-------------------	------

Cwm Ward – Councillors G. Davies & D. Bevan

	1. Waunlwyd OAP Associaton	£300
	2. New Cwm Institute	£300
	3. Cwm Pigeon Club	£100
	4. 1 st Cwm Scout Group	£200
	5. Waunlwyd Youth & Community Centre	£200
	6. Waunlywd OAP Luncheon Club	£100
	7. TK's & Community Group	£300

NANTYGLO & BLAINA

Blaina Ward – Councillors J. Mason & K. Rowson

	1. Nantyglo OAP Association	£200
	2. Winchestown OAP Association	£200
	3. Wesleyan Methodist Church	£200
	4. Holy Trinity St. Anne's Church	£200
	5. BGFМ Limited	£200
	6. Coed Cae Interact Club	£200
	7. Abertillery BG RFC	£200

RESOLVED subject to the foregoing that the report be accepted and the grants contained therein be approved.

No. 11	<u>BUSINESS RATES RELIEF – RETAIL, LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY RATES RELIEF – 2020/21</u>
---------------	--

The Executive Member Environment declared an interest in this item and, having taken legal advice from the Monitoring Officer, remained in the meeting but took no part in the decision in respect of item 11.

Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.

At the invitation of the Leader the Chief Officer Resources presented the report for the Executive to consider and adopt, on behalf of the Council, the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief – 2020/21 scheme(RLHRR), as a section 47 discretionary rate relief for 2020/21.

The Chief Officer Resources referred to Appendix 1 that provided the criteria and guidance for the operation and delivery of the scheme.

She concluded that Welsh Government had yet to confirm the actual funding allocation for Blaenau Gwent, but had provided an estimate of £3.5m for delivery of the scheme. It was anticipated that 300 businesses may benefit from the scheme if adopted and that in order that assistance may be given to rate payers the Council must resolve to adopt the scheme at a discretionary rate relief scheme in line with s47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

The Leader noted that this scheme would be a welcome relief to a number of organisations.

The Deputy Leader / Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development commented this topic was an area that retail businesses in Blaenau Gwent had campaigned for many years and hoped that the rates relief would continue moving forward.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive adopted the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief – 2020/21 scheme on behalf of the Council, to supplement the Council’s discretionary rate relief scheme. (Option 2)

No. 12 **EXEMPT ITEM(S)**

DECISIONS ITEMS – REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

No. 13 **EBBW VALE HI TEC TEST FACILITY**

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.

At the invitation of the Leader, the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services presented the report.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development commented that it had been agreed that this would be done in stages and then the final decision to go ahead with project would be made and noted that the Council had moved in that direction. He noted that in recent days the national government had discussions regarding redesigning of cars, etc. and that discussion fitted with this agenda. Also organisations would be supporting the Council who know the industry, and that there are some unique selling points, not least the area.

The Executive Member proposed option two and agreed that the Council should look for funding to develop the project further.

The Executive Member for Social Services sought clarification on the funds that had been committed to the project and enquired if those figures could increase.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services responded that those figures would increase and the key would be to receive CCRC support for the next stages. Funds would be required for planning applications, etc., it would also be expected that partners would contribute at least equally.

The Managing Director commented that the Council would not be able to undertake this project on its own, it would be about developing

the project in partnership and the next stage would be to submit a Strategic Outline Business Case to the CCRC, the research would provide the project with credibility and expert evidence, and receiving agreement for development funding would allow the Council to develop those partnerships to move forward. This would be a key step on how the project would be received and how much support and funding would be made available.

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report which contained information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted and Option 2, namely to extend the land Option and to continue with the Soft Market Testing and submit the project to CCRC for development funding.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**
SUBJECT: **SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 8TH JULY, 2020**
REPORT OF: **DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER**

PRESENT: **Leader of the Council/**
Executive Member Corporate Services
 Councillor N.J. Daniels (CHAIR)

Deputy Leader/Executive Member –
Regeneration & Economic Development
 Councillor D. Davies

Executive Member – Education
 Councillor J. Collins

Executive Member – Environment
 Councillor J. Wilkins

Executive Member – Social Services
 Councillor J. Mason

WITH: Managing Director
 Corporate Director Environment & Regeneration
 Interim Corporate Director of Education
 Corporate Director of Social Services
 Chief Officer Commercial
 Service Manager Accountancy
 Communications, Marketing & Customer Access Manager
 Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u>	

	It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>An apology for absence was received from the Chief Officer Resources.</p>
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>
	<u>MINUTES</u>
No. 4	<p><u>EXECUTIVE – 24TH JUNE, 2020</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Executive Committee held on 24th June, 2020 were submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>
	<u>DECISIONS – ENVIRONMENT MATTERS</u>
No. 5	<p><u>FUNDING OPTIONS – ABERBEEG ROAD</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Environment & Regeneration.</p> <p>The Executive Member for Environment presented the report which provided options for funding repairs to Aberbeeg Road. Flooding in February caused damage to the road which resulted in the road being closed to all traffic. However, the road was now open but restricted by means of traffic lights to one lane and assigned a 7.5 tonne weight limit.</p> <p>She said Aberbeeg Road continued to be a strategic link for the Borough and following a meeting with the Heads of the Valley Road Contractor, they informed the Council that they intend to undertake a significant temporary traffic switch at Brynmawr as part of their ongoing works, and Aberbeeg Road was an intended diversion route. As a result, the repairs needed to be undertaken as a matter of</p>

urgency. Also the 7.5 tonne weight restriction was not being adhered to which risked further damage to the road.

The Executive Member then went through the options detailed within the report and the implications associated with each option. She confirmed that the preferred option was Option 2.

She concluded that the call-in procedure as set out in the Council's Constitution would not apply in this instance as the decision was urgent, and likely to be delayed by the call-in process.

The need to undertake repairs to Aberbeeg Road at the earliest time was in order to mitigate the impact associated with the diversion route planned for closure works on the Section 2 A465 at Brynmawr, commencing later this Summer, and prevent Heavy Goods Vehicles illegally using Aberbeeg Road.

The Leader of the Council referred to the financial element of the report and said he agreed with the preferred Option 2, which he felt provided sufficient time prior to July 2021 and commencement of works on the Big Arch.

In response the Executive Member for Regeneration & Economic Development said he also supported Option 2, and stressed the importance of Aberbeeg Road being fully open to support businesses and residents during the HoV works. In terms of the Big Arch, this had been ongoing for some time, and he was confident that the allocated funding would come through, however, in the short term repairs to Aberbeeg Road was a priority.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive approve Option 2, namely to utilise the BGCBC Capital Programme Big Arch allocation (£1,000K) - An application to CADW for consent to undertake remedial works has been delayed and works can't progress until consent is awarded resulting in actual works on site delayed until July 2021/22 at the earliest – the funding will be reviewed / reinstated prior to CADW approval and works on site. If Welsh Government subsequently agree the flood funding for the scheme then the £405k can then be 'repaid' to this capital allocation.

JOINT MONITORING ITEMS – ENVIRONMENT AND EDUCATION MATTERS

No. 6

WATER SUPPLY QUALITY IN SCHOOLS

Consideration was given to joint report of the Corporate Director Environment & Regeneration and the Interim Corporate Director of Education.

At the invitation of the Leader of the Council the Interim Corporate Director of Education presented the report which updated the Executive on the current position of the water supply quality issues in schools, following the announcement by Welsh Government that schools would reopen on 29th June, 2020.

He said the safety of our children and staff was the priority and of paramount importance in dealing with the school water supply issues, and it should also be recognised that the majority of the school water quality test results have indicated low levels of localised contamination, and this has been managed effectively and allowed a large proportion of schools to reopen as planned.

National Guidance in respect of COVID-19 resulted in schools being closed from Monday, 23rd March, however, some schools within the Borough remained open as childcare hubs for key workers and vulnerable learners. Following the Welsh Government announcement on 3rd June that schools were to reopen on 29th June, risks to the water supplies from the unprecedented period of closure, along with low water usage within schools was identified. A water hygiene testing regime was immediately introduced to check the water quality within schools prior to allowing the schools to reopen. Bearing in mind the timing of the WG announcement on 3rd June, meant that Council's effectively had three weeks to prepare for schools to reopen. This timescale was extremely challenging given that testing of the water systems for levels of Total Viable Count (TVC) and/or Legionella contamination were required.

Section 2.2 of the report stated that the Council had taken a very pro-active and responsible approach to school reopening from a health and safety perspective, including water testing. Further to the WG announcement on 3rd June that schools were to reopen on 29th June, the Council's resources were mobilised immediately. A plan was established and contractors commenced sampling/testing on 9th June. A programme of sampling/testing was agreed with the Council's water hygiene contractor to visit all schools as soon as possible, and the final school samples were collected on 18th June.

Of the 29 school sites sampled/tested, the large majority of sites identified varying elevated levels of TVC bacteria contamination, ranging from localised contamination to full system contamination. Localised contamination e.g. a tap outlet could be dealt with by flushing disinfecting and pasteurising, and a full system contamination required chlorination. Six schools were identified with full system TVC contamination, and these were highlighted in Section 2.4.1 of the report.

These schools required chlorination of their water systems, and in order to mitigate the situation, 26 portable hand washing units were purchased and bottled water was made available for drinking purposes, and this pro-active action allowed the schools to reopen as planned on Monday 29th June.

On 25th June, notification was provided that the test results for 3 schools were positive for Legionella contamination, and these schools were highlighted in section 2.4.3. of the report. Following discussions with the Executive Member and Headteachers on 26th June, the decision was taken to close these schools. These schools had a full system chlorination, and following a retest would not be able to open for a further 12 days until an all clear Legionella test result had been received.

The Interim Corporate Director then went through Section 2.4 of the report in detail and highlighted points contained therein. He said the report covered the fact the mitigating measure put in place, i.e. portable hand washing units and provision of bottled water had enabled schools to reopen.

He said it was also important to advise that communication took place with Welsh Government on 27th June, and as a consequence WG have requested confirmation of satisfactory health and safety checks, including water supply testing, from all 22 LA's in Wales. It was also important to report that colleagues in Health and Safety and Environmental Health are satisfied with the temporary arrangements currently being implemented in the affected schools.

The Interim Corporate Director said he was pleased to update that all Blaenau Gwent schools would be open from w/c 13th July, which was a significant achievement in light of the challenges faced. He said the corporate response had been outstanding and the Council

had taken a responsible approach to reopening schools which meant that circa 3,400 pupils were able to access catch-up sessions, and it was intended that this figure would increase this week in line with the current position.

He said the Council had generated positive outcomes in delivering the level of school provision in such unprecedented circumstances, however, there were lessons to be learned and therefore a review would be undertaken and the outcomes would be reported back to the Executive and appropriate Scrutiny Committees in due course.

The Executive Member for Education thanked the Interim Corporate Director for his comprehensive overview. She wanted to pointed out that every decision had been taken with the safety of children and staff in mind, and unfortunately this meant a few of our schools were unable to open on the 29th June. However, they were still provided with learning continuity digitally and that had been in place since March, and a huge amount of hard work has been undertaken to ensure schools are open next week to provide an opportunity for all pupils to check in and catch up.

The Executive Member said as soon as the water supply issues were identified, the Council notified Welsh Government of the situation, and as a result of the Council being open and transparent Welsh Government have requested that all LA's in Wales confirm the status of their health and safety checks, including water supply tests. Following this it became apparent that this was not just a Blaenau Gwent issue, and that we have been one of the more proactive LA's in advance of schools reopening, and that this approach has not been actively implemented consistently across LA's. Taking our approach the Council were able to identify and address the issues, and given the very challenging timescale of 3 weeks' notice to reopen schools, she felt that the Council had taken all appropriate measures and been open and transparent in its approach.

Also to achieve reopening of 26 out of 29 schools, with the remaining schools reopening next week, was a huge achievement in light of the challenges faced and she thanked all involved for their hard work in achieving a positive outcome.

The Executive Member concluded that given the unprecedented nature of the situation there were lessons to be learned, and she

confirmed that measures were already in place to enable a learning culture should we find ourselves in a similar situation with regards to an extended period of school closures, the Council would be able to apply those lessons learned.

The Executive Member for Regeneration & Economic Development said the work that had been undertaken was an excellent example of a 'One Council' approach, and that the safety of our children was at the forefront every step of the way. He thanked Officers and the Executive Members of both the Education and Environment Portfolios. He said whilst there are lessons to be learned he pointed out that this was an immense task and something that had never occurred before.

The Executive Member for Social Services concurred with these comments and also thanked everyone involved for their hard work. He also reported that he had received telephone calls from parents praising the Council's response.

The Leader of the Council said the health and safety of children and staff was paramount throughout these events. He then referred to section 7.3.3 which mentioned communication, and he said the Council had been very good over the last 3 years in its management of communication. However, the report seemed to lack reflection of the method of communication with parents, and he asked the Interim Corporate Director to explain how that was done and whether there had been any parental or professional concerns over the level of engagement undertaken.

In response the Interim Corporate Director said the communication mechanism had been very effective and thanked colleagues within the Corporate Communications team for their support. He said any communications sent to staff, parents and pupils was co-constructed with schools, and taken as a shared responsibility in constructing those comments. The important point was that any correspondence had been agreed in a co-constructed way and that the relationship between the Council and schools was strong in terms of consistently getting key messages out to key stakeholders across the board.

At the invitation of the Leader, the Corporate Director Regeneration & Economic Development reported that prior to the lockdown period revised guidance had been received on various issues, including

dealing with a Legionella outbreak in schools, so from the outset the Council had been implementing the Health and Safety Executive's approved code of practice, and undertook an enhanced range of flushing etc throughout the lockdown period.

On the 3rd June when the announcement was made that schools would be reopening, all technical aspects of reopening were considered, and due to the fact that schools had been closed for the longest period of time and with record temperatures during that period, the water quality was identified as a potential risk. As a result, Contractors were appointed, and commenced testing on 9th June, and this was completed on 18th June, which was a huge achievement. The testing and sampling process was detailed in Section 2.2 of the report.

A rolling programme of results were coming in, and as soon as we had that information we were able to take the necessary action and retest, and implement mitigation measures to enable schools to reopen.

The Corporate Director reported that colleagues within Education, Technical Services and Environment had worked together to develop alternative temporary arrangements to allow schools to reopen, and these were subject to a robust level of challenge by Health and Safety, and they were satisfied with the temporary arrangements.

He said the Executive Member of Education had referred to WG's request for all LA's to confirm their health and safety status, and he had also reached out to the Technical Services network to enquire what others had been doing, and whilst the response had been limited, he was aware of two other LA's who had schools not open due to similar challenges, so this situation was not unique to Blaenau Gwent.

The Executive Member for Environment thanked the Corporate Director for his update, and also the Interim Corporate Director of Education and Executive Member for Education. She said it was clear that health and safety guidance had been followed rigorously across Departments.

She pointed out that the meeting had commenced by mentioning the flood damage that had occurred, and then moved onto the

COVID-19 outbreak. She said we were not yet fully sure of the impact of COVID-19 on us all, and the possibility of a further spike was real, however, she welcomed the lessons learned review in order to prepare for that eventuality. In terms of looking forward it was not just about schools but other buildings both in Council control and others, and work was ongoing with that.

The lessons learned review would no doubt bring up good practice, and highlight not only what could have been done better, but also the positive outcomes, and provide a balanced overview. She concluded that communication was vital, and welcomed the update provided by the Interim Corporate Director on that issue.

The Executive Member for Regeneration & Economic Development said the number of tests taken was significant and pointed out that the testing centre was also undertaking testing of other LA's, so there were slight delays which also caused issues.

In response the Leader said he had heard comments regarding the timeliness of when testing was commenced, but he was satisfied with the explanation.

The Managing Director also commended the work of Officers across the Council, schools and also the Aneurin Leisure Trust over the past few weeks. She said it was very much a team effort in dealing with lots of issues in order to get our schools reopened safely. 26 of our 29 schools were able to reopen, and those not open, albeit for good reason, would reopen next week so all pupils would have the opportunity to catch up prior to the Summer holidays.

The Managing Director said she was firmly of the view that the decision taken to not open those schools was difficult, but it was the right decision based on the safety of our pupils and staff, and the Trade Unions were fully supportive of this decision.

However, moving forward we need to be a learning organisation and identify good practice, and also to understand what has happened over this 3 month period and why our procedures and working practices put us in that position at the beginning of June. As a result, it was intended to undertake a lessons learned review to pick up on good practice areas, and that this should be done by an independent organisation with the necessary expertise to advise

the Council where improvements were needed. Such reviews were not unusual and had proved to be very beneficial for the Council in the past. However, the Managing Director said this needed to be progressed quickly as schools would be closing on the 17th July for the Summer period, and we needed to be prepared and have robust procedures in place should further lockdown arrangements be required. Work on this would commenced shortly, and the outcomes would be reported to Executive and the Scrutiny process.

The Leader of the Council said he would like to echo the comments made. In terms of the lessons learned review, he expressed concern that the word 'enquiry' had been mentioned. He said using this word was to the detriment of staff morale. He said reviews had been common practice over the last 3 years to take stock of what we have done, in order to continually improve on every aspect of the Council's work. He said collectively across the Council staff had been amazing in dealing with this, and the amount of work that had been undertaken in such a short period of time, to reopen 26 schools to approximately 3,400 pupils was not to be underestimated, and the fact that a review would be undertaken was no reflection on this excellent work. The review was an opportunity to continue to improve, and in the event of a second wave of COVID-19, he said the Council has a duty of care to ensure the procedures we have in place and implemented this time are right, or whether they needed to be adjusted slightly.

He said the report was very comprehensive, and the Council had been open and transparent throughout this period. He assured that the outcomes of the review would be reported back through the political process and everyone would see that the actions taken were in the best interests of our children and staff.

He concluded by requesting that the Managing Director relay the Executive's comments to staff, as it was important they know that the Executive are fully supportive of them, and appreciate the work that has been done.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive approve Option 2, namely to manage the contamination risks, implement mitigating measures; and control the risks within health and safety regulations and guidelines.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 5TH NOVEMBER, 2019</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>DEMOCRATIC OFFICER</u>

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M. CROSS (CHAIR)

Councillors M. Cook
 N. Daniels
 G. A. Davies
 P. Edwards
 K. Hayden
 M. Holland
 J. Holt
 J. Millard
 J. C. Morgan
 K. Pritchard

ALSO: **Scrutiny Chairs & Vice-Chairs**
 Councillors C. Meredith
 G. Paulsen

AND: Head of Governance & Partnerships (Statutory Head of
 Democratic Services
 Service Manager – Performance & Democratic
 Organisational Development Manager – Payroll/Health
 & Safety

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1.	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
2.	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received for:-</p> <p>Councillors J. Hill, W. Hodgins, K. Rowson and J. Wilkins.</p>	
3.	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
4.	<p><u>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 1st July, 2019, whereupon:-</p> <p><u>Apologies</u></p> <p>It was noted that Councillor Julie Holt had submitted her apologies for the above meeting.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the Minutes be received as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
5.	<p><u>DRAFT REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES 2020/2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development.</p>	

At the invitation of the Chair, the Organisational Development Manager spoke to the report and highlighted the following salient points contained therein:-

- The report detailed the main determinations of the 2020/21 draft annual report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW).
- As part of the consultation process Panel Members had met with the Heads of Democratic Services and Chairs of Democratic Services Committee. The position generally expressed by both officers and Members remained, particularly in the context of austerity, that the basic workload discharged by all elected Members was substantial and exceeded 3 days per week.
- When making financial determinations for the Annual Report the Panel had determined that there should be an increase in the basic salary level in 2020/2021 of £350 per year which equated to 2.5%.
- It was noted that this basic salary in the sum of £14,218 should be paid by each principal authority in Wales from 1st April, 2020 to each of its elected Members unless an individual Member opted personally and in writing to receive a lower amount.
- No additional increases would be paid to senior salary holders in 2020/2021 – these Members would receive the basic salary element increase.
- There was no change to the reimbursement of Costs of Care, this remained at a maximum of £403 per month upon production of receipts from the carer. It was noted that the IRPW were currently undertaking a review of this provision with a view to encouraging a greater take up by those Members who had caring responsibilities.
- Previously it had been the decision of each principal Council in how the cost of care was published. However, for 2020/2021 the IRPW had removed this option and stipulated that ‘the Panel had decided that

the relevant authorities should only publish the total amount reimbursed during the year’.

The views of Members were, thereupon, sought in relation to the report.

- **Reimbursement of Costs of Care** - the Chair commended the continued inclusion of the reimbursement of the costs of care for those Members who had caring responsibilities within the draft proposals.

The Head of Governance & Partnerships (Statutory Head of Democratic Services) advised that this issue had been discussed at length at the IRPW consultation event. It was noted that there was generally a low take up in Wales for reimbursement of the costs of care and the IRPW as outlined above was undertaking a review of this provision with a view to encouraging a greater take up by those Members who had caring responsibilities.

Those Members who felt they needed this support was urged to contact the Head of Governance & Partnerships (Statutory Head of Democratic Services).

- **Supporting the Work of Elected Members** – a Member referred to Paragraph 2.9.1 of the report i.e. that the Panel did not consider it appropriate that Members should be required to pay for internet related services to enable them to discharge their council duties and asked whether there should be an upper limit applied to this provision (for example £10-15 per month).

The Chair pointed out that there were currently problems being experienced in some parts of Wales in terms of internet connections and suggested that this pertinent point be discussed with Panel Members.

The Head of Governance & Partnerships confirmed that certain parts of Wales did experience issues with internet access and broadband speeds. However, the

Panel did not consider it appropriate that elected Members should be required to pay for internet related services to enable them to discharge their council duties and the Member's comment would be raised as part of the consultation process on the draft proposals.

This was action was AGREED accordingly.

- **Payments to Members of Town and Community Councils** – in reply to a point raised, the Head of Governance & Partnerships advised that the Town and Community Councils would be aware of this aspect of the report and would have had the opportunity to comment and make observations to the IRPW in respect of the draft proposals.

It was noted that the IRPW was eager to meet with representatives of Town and Community Councils through the Council Liaison Meeting and arrangements would be made for the representatives to attend a future Liaison Meeting.

Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously,

The Committee AGREED to recommend to Council, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely the determinations as set out in the draft Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales report be noted.

6. DEMOCRATIC ARRANGEMENTS AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS REPORT

The report of the Service Manager Performance & Democratic was submitted for consideration.

At the invitation of the Chair, the Service Manager Performance & Democratic spoke in detail to the report which provided Democratic Arrangements and Scrutiny Progress covering the period April to September 2019.

The Service Manager concluded by drawing Members' attention to the reducing level of attendance at Scrutiny

Committees compared to the 1st and 2nd quarters of this year and compared to the same quarter the previous year.

The views of Members were, thereupon, sought in relation to the report.

- **Mobile Iron App** – a Member expressed his concern that the intranet was only available for those who had access to a laptop and enquired whether the same service could be provided for Members who accessed information on iPads.

The Service Manager undertook to investigate this matter.

- **Modern.Gov** – a Member expressed his concern that he was unable to access the agenda paperwork for the authority via the Council's website.

The Head of Governance & Partnerships (Statutory Head of Democratic Services) explained that technical issues were being experienced with the Moder.Gov 'app' at present and work was being undertaken with the SRS to rectify this issue. However, agenda paperwork was still accessible publicly via the internet.

Councillor J. Millard joined the meeting at this juncture.

- **Webcasting** – the Chair commended the approach to webcasting and said he hoped that meetings of the Council could be webcast in the future.

Another Member added that in previous years the Council had webcast meetings as a pilot approach and said that he would also welcome meetings being webcast in the future.

- **Member Attendance at Scrutiny Committees/Members Briefings** – a Member expressed his concern regarding the number of Scrutiny Committees/Members Briefings that had been cancelled or rescheduled recently and asked that this matter be addressed.

The Head of Governance & Partnerships (Statutory Head of Democratic Services) undertook to pursue the matter.

A brief discussion ensued when another Member also expressed his concern regarding the low level of attendance at Members Briefings and at Scrutiny Committees.

The Chair suggested that attendance levels be discussed within respective political group meetings.

- **My Council Services App** – in reply to a request, the Head of Governance & Partnerships undertook to pursue whether there was an option available to report several issues at once on the My Council Services App rather than individual service requests being submitted. The importance of the using of this app to report issues was noted as this app was able to capture and record vial information.

The Committee AGREED to recommend to Council, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the information contained with the report be noted and the report be recommended to Council for approval.

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE**

SUBJECT: **AUDIT COMMITTEE – 19TH NOVEMBER, 2019**

REPORT OF: **DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER**

PRESENT: Mr. Peter Williams (CHAIR)

Councillors S. Healy
 G. Collier
 M. Cross
 L. Elias
 J. Hill
 J. Holt
 L. Parsons
 K. Rowson
 B. Summers
 S. Thomas
 J. Wilkins

WITH: Chief Officer Commercial
 Head of Governance & Partnerships
 Audit Manager
 Data Protection & Governance Officer
 Solicitor – Commercial Services

AND: **Wales Audit Office**
 Mike Jones

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
----	<u>CONDOLENCE</u> The Audit Committee expressed condolences to the Head of	

	Internal Audit on the recent death of her father.	
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received for Councillors H. Trollope and L. Winnett.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declaration of interest was reported:</p> <p>Councillor L. Parsons - <u>Item No. 8 – Wales Audit Office – Delivering with Less – Leisure Services</u></p>	
No. 4	<p><u>AUDIT COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Audit Committee held on 10th September, 2019 were submitted for accuracy points.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
----	<p><u>ORDER OF AGENDA</u></p> <p>It was agreed that Item No. 8 be considered at this juncture.</p>	
No. 8	<p><u>WALES AUDIT OFFICE – DELIVERING WITH LESS – LEISURE SERVICES</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Commercial.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Commercial presented the report which outlined the findings of the Wales Audit Office review on Delivering with Less –Leisure Services reported in May 2019.</p> <p>The Officer went through the report and highlighted points</p>	

contained therein. She confirmed that the proposals for improvement had been taken on board and included in the second phase of the ongoing Leisure and Culture Review.

A Member referred to Page 95 of the WAO report which stated that the 'review lacked timely and meaningful scrutiny Member involvement'; and asked how it was intended to improve the process moving forward.

In response the Officer confirmed that since phase one of the review, a Members' Working Party was established by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee and the outcomes of that work had been reported back to the Committee. Reports on the current phase continue to be reported through the democratic process.

The Member referred to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held the previous week where two major pieces of work were considered, namely the Waste Management & Recycling Strategy; and the Strategic Business Case for the Development of a Second HWRC. He said both were controversial issues affecting the County Borough, and expressed concern that only a small number of Members had had the opportunity to scrutinise and make a decision on these strategic issues. He said the Leader of the Council in May 2017 gave assurance that Joint Committees would be convened to consider such items affecting the Council, like the Leisure Services Review, and expressed concern that this was not currently happening, resulting in approximately only 48% of Members having an input in major issues.

In response the Head of Governance & Partnerships said the only constituted Joint Committees under the Council's Constitution was Safeguarding and Budget Monitoring. She said balance was needed around the remit of Scrutiny Committees and the rationale for 'opening up' certain issues to all Members. However, she pointed out that if a Scrutiny Committee was 'opened up' to all Members, it was not a constituted Joint Committee in the same way as Safeguarding and Budget Monitoring, and only Members of the host Committee would have voting rights.

	<p>The Member said he understood the process, but where demand was significant with major pieces of work affecting the Council, all Member Scrutiny Committees should be convened, as per the Leader’s commitment in May 2017.</p> <p>Another Member said the Officer had indicated that the Second Phase of the Leisure Services Review would be reported to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee for consideration by Members.</p> <p>A Member said a more ‘joined up’ approach was needed and said a Cross Party Working Group should be established, along with Officers to meet with the Leisure Trust Board.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the content of the Wales Audit Office review and findings on Delivering With Less – Leisure Services be accepted and the Management Response be endorsed, as it provided assurance that the proposals for improvement would be fully endorsed.</p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Audit Manager presented the final Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2018/19, which provided an assessment of the effectiveness of the Authority’s governance arrangements. The Officer spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein.</p> <p>In response to a question raised by a Member, the Officer confirmed that any recommendations for development are made in the statement and would be actioned throughout the year, and progress against recommendations would be included in the 2019/20 AGS.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the AGS be approved and adopted.</p>	
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES 2018/19</u></p>	

	<p>Consideration was given to report of the Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance.</p> <p>The Solicitor presented the report which informed the Audit Committee of the Council's performance with regard to complaints to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. He spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein, and said he was pleased to report that Blaenau Gwent Council had the lowest number of service complaints received by the Ombudsman in Wales.</p> <p>In response to a question raised by a Member, the Officer explained that the Council had adopted a Local Resolution Policy whereby the Head of Legal & Corporate Compliant would seek to resolve any issues prior to them escalating to formal procedures.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Audit Committee acknowledge that the process for monitoring of complaints was robust and the performance information provided reflected these practices.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>AUDIT PLAN PROGRESS REPORT – JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2019</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Audit Manager presented the report which updated the Audit Committee on the progress against the Internal Audit Plan for the period 1st July to 30th September, 2019. The Officer spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein.</p> <p>RESOVLED that the report be accepted and the progress on activities for the period 1st July to 30th September, 2019 be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>WALES AUDIT OFFICE REVIEW: SERVICE USER PERSPECTIVE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Head of Governance &</p>	

Partnerships.

The Head of Governance & Partnerships presented the report which outlined the findings of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) review on Service User Perspective: Community Engagement reported in May 2019. The Council's Management Response was attached at Appendix 2, and the report had also been positively received by the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the content of the Wales Audit Office review and findings on Service User Perspective: Community Engagement, and the Council's Management Response be noted.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: SPECIAL CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19TH NOVEMBER, 2019

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S. HEALY (CHAIR)

Councillors: G. Paulsen
 P. Baldwin
 M. Cook
 M. Cross
 P. Edwards
 J. Hill
 C. Meredith
 M. Moore
 L. Parsons
 J. Wilkins

Leader of the Council / Executive Member for Corporate Services

Councillor N. Daniels

AND: Chief Officer – Commercial
 Chief Officer - Resources
 Head of Organisational Development
 Head of Governance & Partnerships
 Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

ALSO: Dave Rees – Branch Chair - Unison

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	

No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H. McCarthy and D. Wilkshire.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>Councillor Phil Edwards declared an interest in Item 10 - Bridging The Gap – Income Recovery Strategic Business Review.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 4th September, 2019 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 4TH SEPTEMBER, 2019</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee held on 4th September, 2019 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><u>Forward Work Programme - CCTV</u></p> <p>In response to a Members question in relation to a progress update regarding CCTV, the Head of Governance and Partnerships said that a joint position statement with colleagues could be provided to the December meeting. The number of police requests to view evidence which lead to prosecutions would be provided as part of the report to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny in January 2020.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>SPECIAL CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Special Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 26th September, 2019 were submitted.</p>	

	<p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 7	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 26TH SEPTEMBER, 2019</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee held on 26th September, 2019 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><u>Health & Safety Annual Report</u></p> <p>In response to a Member’s question regarding the timescale for a more detailed breakdown of accidents/incidents e.g. violence and aggression against staff, the Head of Organisational Development said that a further breakdown of the data on violence and aggression towards staff in the Council and schools for 2018/19 would be provided to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny in January 2020.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 8	<p><u>EXECUTIVE DECISION SHEET FOR THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Executive Decision Sheet.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Executive Decision Sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 9	<p><u>BRIDGING THE GAP – FEES AND CHARGES STRATEGIC BUSINESS REVIEW</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial which was presented to update Members on the Strategic Business Review on Fees and Charges.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Commercial spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member referred to bulky waste items and raised concerns around the health and safety aspect of items being left on pavements and roadsides for long periods before collection. The Chair advised that this item be referred to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee.</p>	

A Member commented that she welcomed the full cost recovery model and calculator which could provide an alignment of fees and charges.

In response to a Member's enquiry regarding the 700 lines of fees and charges, the Chief Officer Commercial said that a phased approach would be used to review and apply the full cost recovery calculator. She was working with Budget Holders and Finance Business Partners regarding market testing and the identified figures would show where there was an opportunity to do full cost recovery.

The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee considered and scrutinised the proposed approach and appendix 1.

No. 10 **BRIDGING THE GAP – INCOME RECOVERY STRATEGIC BUSINESS REVIEW**

Councillor Phil Edwards declared an interest in this item and remained and took part in discussion at the meeting.

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources which was presented to provide Members with an opportunity to scrutinise the work undertaken as part of the Income Recovery Strategic Business Review.

The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.

In response to a Member's enquiry regarding prompt payment of invoices and how invoices were sent, the Chief Officer Resources said that currently no early payment discount was offered and the majority of invoices were sent through the post, occasionally some were sent electronically. With regard to removal of bulky waste, payment was made in advance to avoid issuing invoices and the Council were looking to offer more services in this way where appropriate.

A Member commented on the good work of the Credit Union to support residents and requested that the Credit Union be invited to present at a Member Briefing Session. The Chair

	<p>advised that a Members Briefing Session would be arranged in the new year.</p> <p>A Member commented on collaboration work with the Citizen's Advice Bureau and the increased number of residents seeking advice around money management and debt and raised concerns if proposed cuts were to be implemented in future.</p> <p>In response to a Member's question regarding supporting and engaging with individuals, the Chief Officer Resources said that a pilot scheme was to be implemented within the Flying Start Hub in Cefn Golau to identify and test the most suitable method of engagement and develop appropriate ways in which the Council could support them.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2, namely that Committee scrutinised and provided specific comment on the findings and the proposed actions prior to recommending to Council.</p>	
<p>No. 11</p>	<p><u>BRIDGING THE GAP – THIRD PARTY EXPENDITURE STRATEGIC BUSINESS REVIEW</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial which was presented to update Members on the Strategic Business Review on Third Party Expenditure.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Commercial spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>In response to a Member's enquiry, the Chief Officer Commercial said that a baseline had been established in July to September. The Strategic Business Review on Third Party Expenditure would streamline the systems used to monitor and manage contractual arrangements with suppliers and the overall impact of the expenditure would be monitored through the Bridging the Gap programme.</p> <p>A Member enquired regarding discount for prompt payments. The Chief Officer Commercial said that with approximately 7,000 suppliers it was important that prompt payment was made as a portion of that money would go back into the local economy.</p>	

	<p>In response to a Member’s question regarding procurement of the annual insurance premium, the Chief Officer Commercial said that the Council would always seek value for money. There were guidance rules and regulations to follow when procuring services, however, it was not always about price there were other considerations such as quality, social value and other responsibilities with spending the public pound. An analysis of the data could identify the Council’s investment in the local economy.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1, namely that Members accept the report on the Strategic Business Review on Third Party Expenditure and appendix 1 and recommend to Council for approval.</p>	
<p>No. 12</p>	<p><u>BRIDGING THE GAP – WORKPLACE TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIC BUSINESS REVIEW</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial which was presented to update Members on the Strategic Business Review on Workplace Transformation.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Commercial spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>In response to a Member’s enquiry regarding the most up to date operating programme, the Chief Officer Commercial explained that licenses had to be purchased to run operating systems and current licences would no longer be supported in 2021. The operating system was being upgraded to Windows 10 and Office 2016 as preparation for deploying Office 365.</p> <p>A Member enquired regarding the asset register. The Chief Officer Commercial said that a critical part of the review process was to have a full asset register to control the IT estate more effectively going forward.</p> <p>A Member enquired if surplus laptops could be donated to charities. The Chief Officer Commercial said that some laptops would be at the end of life and others would be used for repairs to existing laptops. If at the end of the process</p>	

	<p>there were surplus laptops the Officer could explore this option.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that the Committee considered and scrutinised the proposed approach and appendix 1.</p> <p>Councillor Martin Cook left the meeting at this juncture.</p>	
<p>No. 13</p>	<p><u>COUNCIL TAX – REMOVAL OF EMPTY PROPERTY DISCOUNT ALLOWANCE FOR PRESCRIBED CLASS C DWELLINGS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources which was presented to provide details of the current policy with regard to the Council Tax discounts.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member enquired if a levy could be imposed once a long term empty property had been sold. The Chief Officer Resources said that this proposal could be explored but the focus was to get properties back into habitable use. Grants were currently available to bring properties back to a habitable level.</p> <p>In response to a Member’s question regarding collection rates, the Chief Officer Resources said that collection rates were approximately 95%.</p> <p>A Member enquired if prior notification would need to be given. The Chief Officer Resources said that if Committee agreed the proposal, engagement with landlords and owners/occupiers would need to be undertaken before 2020.</p> <p>The Chief Officer commented that the Welsh Government was changing the funding formula and would no longer take into account the discounts for Class C properties. The Council could see a reduction in funding of approximately £480,000.</p>	

	<p>The Chair noted paragraph 6.3 which referred to the many positive results in encouraging empty homes back into use.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that the Scrutiny Committee considered and recommend that Council approve to set the current discount for Class A, B & C dwellings at 0% with effect from the 1st April 2020.</p>	
<p>No. 14</p>	<p><u>SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development which was presented to provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise and challenge sickness absence performance 2018/19 and the proposed actions for improvement.</p> <p>The Head of Organisational Development spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>The Chair invited the Branch Chair – Unison to address the Committee.</p> <p>The Branch Chair commented that as a result of the 9 year austerity measures local authorities had received lower settlements from the Welsh Government which meant that Councils had to do more with less and as a result staff workloads had increased considerably. He pointed out that 95% of staff took no sick leave and it would be unfair to allow the minority of staff to bring down the Authority’s reputation with the public and press.</p> <p>The Sickness Absence Policy was fit for purpose, however, Managers needed to use it more effectively. If sickness absence figures were high in a particular area Managers needed to understand the reasons behind those figures and address issues promptly in their one to one sessions with staff. Those staff who prioritised and remained in work needed to be appreciated.</p> <p>Unison had invested in mental health by paying for courses for staff to attend and had been working tirelessly with Organisational Development and the Chief Officer Commercial to identify areas where sickness absence was high. He pointed out that the Authority had an ageing</p>	

workforce with some front line staff having physical roles such as lifting people. He stressed that a strategy needed to be developed if staff were expected to work up to 67 years of age, although he was mindful of the overall picture as Blaenau Gwent was a small authority.

The Chair enquired regarding electronic HR/Payroll system iTrent. The Head of Organisational Development said that managerial self-service was rolled out in April 2018 and the electronic system and the manual sickness absence recording system were run in parallel for a period of time to support managers. A sickness absence dashboard had been developed and would be operational before the new year which would allow enhanced analysis of sickness trends.

In response to the Chair's question regarding quarterly reviews of sickness absence, the Head of Organisational Development explained that managerial information was developed monthly and that there would be detailed discussions at Directorate Management Teams on a quarterly basis.

The Branch Chair commented that the Counselling Service had been decommissioned due to budget savings and wanted to look at ways to resume this service possibly through Occupational Health as Counselling was a valuable and beneficial service for staff regarding well-being issues etc. The Head of Organisational Development said that plans were in place to review the Occupational Health contract and would look at the opportunity as part of that arrangement.

A Member referred to the Managerial actions arising from the Corporate Leadership Team Engagement and commented on the effectiveness of managers and felt that managers not following the managerial actions should be taken to task. Another Member felt that the system was robust and monthly meetings with second line managers should be held to support Managers in the first instance.

A Member again referred to training on the iTrent system. The Head of Organisational Development said that a whole raft of iTrent training had been completed in 2018 and again in 2019. Refresher training for managers would be rolled

	<p>out in early 2019 with an emphasis on pushing ownership of sickness absence to the individual.</p> <p>A Member referred to bullet point 7 of the 2018/19 Top Trigger Case review ‘lack of evidence that sickness absence documentation being completed’ and enquired if sickness levels had increased due to better recording. The Head of Organisational Development agreed that this could be a contributory factor, however, there were a number of reasons for increased sickness absence figures such as peaks at the time of service change programmes.</p> <p>The Chair invited to the Leader of the Council/Executive Member for Corporate Services to address the Committee.</p> <p>The Leader of the Council/Executive Member for Corporate Services commented that this report be debated at the Executive Committee and high levels of sickness absence was a serious issue for the Authority, he mirrored the Branch Chair’s comments and supported the Member’s view that line Manager’s needed support from senior Manager’s to address potential issues. In relation to absence monitoring, from January 2020 each Scrutiny Committee would have individual sickness review reporting as part of their Forward Work Programme for consideration. He undertook to relay the views of the Scrutiny Committee back to the Executive and Corporate Leadership Team.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the Scrutiny Committee endorse the report and proposed arrangements to support the improvement in attendance.</p>	
<p>No. 15</p>	<p><u>TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REVIEW REPORT – 1ST APRIL 2019 TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2019</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources which was presented to give Members the opportunity to scrutinise the Treasury Management activities carried out by the Authority during the first half of the 2019/20 financial year.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein which</p>	

	<p>included that the Authority had performed well in terms of Treasury Management.</p> <p>A Member enquired regarding fixed term loans. The Chief Officer Resources responded that the Authority had a mixture of fixed, temporary, long and short term loans.</p> <p>A Member referred to the policy of not investing in fossil fuels. The Chief Officer Resources explained that the Authority did not have a specific policy regarding this, however, the Authority was part of Torfaen Pension Scheme and they had begun to change their policy due to environment and climate change issues.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that Members scrutinised the activity undertaken during the first half of the 2019/20 financial year and do not consider any amendments to the Treasury Strategy moving forward prior to its submission to full Council.</p>	
<p>No. 16</p>	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 5TH DECEMBER, 2019</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chair of the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the meeting on 5th December, 2019 be approved.</p>	

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: JOINT EDUCATION & LEARNING AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SAFEGUARDING) – 2ND DECEMBER, 2019

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S. THOMAS (CHAIR)

Councillors: H. Trollope
 M. Cook
 G.A. Davies
 P. Edwards
 K. Hayden
 W. Hodgins
 J. Holt
 J. Millard
 J.C. Morgan
 K. Pritchard
 K. Rowson
 T. Smith
 B. Summers

AND: Corporate Director of Social Services
 Head of Education Transformation
 Service Manager for Development & Commissioning
 Service Manager, Children’s Services (Safeguarding)
 Safeguarding in Education Manager
 Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	

No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D. Bevan, L. Elias, C. Meredith, A. Moore, G. Paulsen and T. Sharrem.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>JOINT EDUCATION & LEARNING AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SAFEGUARDING)</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Joint Education & Learning and Social Services Scrutiny Committee (Safeguarding) Meeting held on 15th July, 2019 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 15TH JULY, 2019</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Joint Education & Learning and Social Services Scrutiny Committee (Safeguarding) held on 15th July, 2019 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><u>Item 6 – Safeguarding Performance Information for Social Services and Education</u></p> <p>A Member suggested that to capture the information regarding in year transfers graphs be included with the data. The Education Transformation Manager said that regarding out of county pupils no detailed information was available, although the Department did try to pursue this information with schools and other local authorities.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	

<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>EXECUTIVE DECISION SHEET FOR THE JOINT EDUCATION & LEARNING AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SAFEGUARDING)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Executive Decision Sheet.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Executive Decision Sheet be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND EDUCATION – 1ST APRIL TO 30TH JUNE 2019</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager, Children’s Services and the Strategic Education Improvement Manager, which was presented to provide Members with safeguarding performance information from the Council with a focus on analysis from Children’s Social Services and Education from 1st April to the 30th June, 2019.</p> <p>The Service Manager, Children’s Services spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p><u>Impact on Budget</u></p> <p>With reference to court applications and legal costs, the Service Manager said that the number of court applications was stable and the Safeguarding Team were now working at full capacity and both had a positive impact on the budget, although it was sometimes necessary to commission an external consultant for Court appearances. The Director of Social Services commented that market testing had been undertaken and work was ongoing to see if other local authorities could provide Blaenau Gwent with this service.</p> <p>A Member requested that for future reporting graphs be located near to the relevant text for clarification. The Service Manager said that the format of the report would be looked at for clarification purposes.</p> <p><u>Social Services</u></p> <p>A Member enquired if the police were the highest source of referrals. The Service Manager said that the Detective</p>	

Sergeant (DS) role in the Information Advice and Assistance service (IAA) was making positive contributions to the safeguarding process. Referrals from police had not reduced but the quality of information received had improved which resulted in better decision making through preventative services such as the Early Action Together programme. The Member also enquired regarding Leisure Trust referrals. The Service Manager confirmed that all staff were trained in level 1 safeguarding to recognise signs of abuse and some referrals from police may have originated from Leisure Trust staff. The Head of Education Transformation commented that the Leisure Trust had lead officers for safeguarding but referrals may be low as most leisure provision was open access and assured Members that arrangements were secure.

Categories of abuse

In response to a Member's question regarding the main category of abuse, the Service Manager said that the main category was neglect, this was the highest form due to reasons such as parenting, home or being exposed to vulnerabilities re poverty lack of finances. The second highest was emotional abuse, mental health abuse would present as emotional abuse so the secondary category would go hand in hand. Although challenging preventative measures were used through partnership working, education and informing parents of the impact of emotional abuse on the child.

A Member pointed out an error on page 37, Fig 2.4 Breakdown of children on child protection register, the information relating to Unknown should read Male.

Councillors Martin Cook and Wayne Hodgins left the meeting at this juncture.

Education Information

The Safeguarding in Education Manager presented the Education information.

A Member enquired regarding the high number of restrictive physical interventions during the Autumn term. The Head of Education Transformation explained the Autumn term

generally was the longest term; however, the trend was consistent with previous reporting information. The Directorate was looking at trends and would provide commentary to support the data presented within future reports.

A Member commented that Members needed to be confident that physical intervention incidents were being reduced and that it was important that performance data be submitted in a timely manner for Members consideration of up to date information.

The Safeguarding in Education Manager assured Members that they could be confident that the performance data was correct and that work was being undertaken to try to reduce restrictive physical interventions.

In relation to Elected Home Educated (EHE) pupils, the Head of Education Transformation said that lengthy Scrutiny discussions had taken place and the Council was working in line with Welsh Government requirements.

With reference to Operation Encompass a Member enquired if referrals passed onto schools was actioned. The Safeguarding in Education Manager said that Operation Encompass allowed schools to be aware that an incident had occurred and respond appropriately to that pupil's situation. Feedback from teachers had been positive, they found the information helpful in raising their awareness and understanding of pupils circumstances.

In response to a Member's question regarding trends for September 2018 to September 2019 for Elected Home Educated pupils (EHE), the Head of Education Transformation said that the Education Service would be aware of the reasons parents choose to home educate with many parents deciding on this approach at the start of the academic year. Six secondary age pupils had become EHE in April to July 2019, the Education Welfare Service would have reviewed the reasons why the pupils had been removed.

A Member enquired how many pupils were EHE as at December 2019. The Head of Education Transformation

Head of
Education
Transforma

	<p>said that as the figure changed regularly he would forward this information onto Members directly.</p> <p>A Member commented that home visits for EHE pupils were currently once a year and enquired what progress the Directorate had been made regarding this issue. The Director of Social Services said that current Welsh Government regulations stated once a year home visits. A letter had been sent to the Welsh Government with a view to strengthen safeguarding in EHE pupils from all the regional Directors of Education and Directors of Social Services and there was a consultation on a new proposal, he hoped that the number of home visits would change in future and he would take Members views forward. It was noted that Social Workers would undertake visits if there were safeguarding concerns.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that the approach and information detailed in the report be accepted.</p>	tion
--	---	------

No. 8	<p><u>ADULT SAFEGUARDING REPORT – 1ST APRIL TO 30TH JUNE 2019</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Adult Services which was presented to provide Members with safeguarding performance information relating to Adult Services from 1st April to the 30th June, 2019.</p> <p>The Service Manager for Development & Commissioning spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>In response to a Member’s question regarding the Intermediate Care Fund (ICF), the Director of Social Services said that funding had been secured up to March 2021 and discussions were underway for securing funding beyond this point but there were no guarantees.</p> <p>A Member referred to domestic abuse cases for this quarter and enquired if they were the same or different issues reported in the last quarter. The Service Manager said that some issues were similar, however, it was difficult to report as some issues overlapped. The majority of cases were internal and timelines had been strengthened, for example</p>	
-------	--	--

	<p>where a theft had occurred and the police were involved if no evidence could be found this would then become an internal issue.</p> <p>A Member enquired if there had been any prosecutions. The Service Manager said that one individual at risk was being managed and presented to the police. If there were allegations against a carer the Agency would need to suspend that carer and replace with another.</p> <p>A Member referred to the high number of unknowns on the person alleged responsible table. The Service Manager explained that this was due to no specific individual being identified, for example a neighbour may have reported a fall by a service user or a carer may be concerned about a family member taking money. There would be a screening process to gather evidence and map and monitor effectively, but no proof may have been found.</p> <p>Another Member referred to the sources of referrals. The Service Manager explained that there could be several referrals from different sources regarding the same individual, this would be classed as one referral so no duplication would take place.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2, namely that the report be accepted as provided and recommend approval at the Executive Committee.</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>QUALITY ASSURING SAFEGUARDING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES (LGES)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Strategic Education Improvement Manager which was presented to seek Members views on the revised quality assurance protocol for safeguarding arrangements in Local Government Education Services (LGES).</p> <p>The Safeguarding in Education Manager spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member raised concerns regarding transfers of pupils from one school to another and out of county transfers and commented that it was incumbent on the school to pass on</p>	

transfer information and felt that the Admission Policy was not being implemented by schools correctly i.e. completing the transfer forms fully. The Head of Education Transformation said that the Admission Policy was renewed annually and was presented to Education & Learning Scrutiny Members for consideration, however, he would work to ensure that implementation of the policy would be carried out more effectively. Members acknowledged this course of action.

Another Member also raised concerns in relation to transfer information not being passed onto schools. He commented that staff and pupils could be at risk of violence and aggression if information was not passed on. He also enquired what support was in place for school staff who had allegations made against them. The Head of Education Transformation said that a task and finish group led by the Chief Officer Commercial to discuss violence and aggression against staff was to be arranged and one key point for discussion would be school-based staff.

A Member commented that a policy should be considered that if a parent was banned from one school they should be banned from all schools in the borough due to safeguarding issues.

The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1, namely that Members scrutinised the revised protocol and contributed to the continuous assessment of effectiveness.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: SPECIAL CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 5TH DECEMBER, 2019

REPORT OF: LEADERSHIP AND DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S. HEALY (CHAIR)

Councillors G. Paulsen
 P. Baldwin
 M. Cook
 G.L. Davies
 P. Edwards
 J. Wilkins
 D. Wilkshire

AND: Managing Director
 Corporate Director Social Services
 Corporate Director Education
 Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
 Chief Officer Commercial
 Chief Officer Resources
 Service Manager - Accountancy
 Head of Community Services
 Head of Partnerships and Governance
 Service Manager: Policy and Partnerships
 Communications, Marketing and Customer Access Manager

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C. Meredith, L. Parsons and J. Hill.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 19TH NOVEMBER, 2019</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee held on 19th November, 2019 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><u>CCTV</u></p> <p>A request was made for Members to view the quality of the images produced by the new CCTV system. The Head of Partnerships and Governance advised that this could be arranged as long as the relevant legal and data protection processes had been followed.</p> <p>Another Member referred to a visit arranged for Members to the call centre in Newport who at that time operated CCTV for the Authority. The visit allowed Members to have sight of the quality and images from all areas of the Borough. The Member recognised the need for legal and data protection check, however he advised that Elected Members are subject to confidentiality pledges when they are elected and therefore felt that Members could be trusted to view images.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>The Chief Officer Resources stated that there was not an issue with trust, however due to data protection laws individuals were permitted to have their information protected. The Chief Officer added that the images were not 'live streaming' and could no longer be viewed at a call centre, therefore the recording would need to be downloaded to a DVD and any individuals in the footage would need to be pixilated out by IT officers before it was viewed. The Chief Officer agreed to give consideration to the request to ascertain what could be provided to Members.</p> <p>This course of action was AGREED.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	R Hayden
No. 5	<p><u>MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND BRIDGING THE GAP</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources and the Chief Officer Commercial.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report which outlined the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and provided the proposed approach the Council would undertake to address financial challenges over the next 5 years. The Chief Officer added that the MTFS was a key element in the Council's strategic planning work which supported the Council's financial resilience and sustainability. The MTFS together with the Bridging the Gap Programme proposed the approach the Council would take to address financial challenges over the next 5 years.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>The Chief Officer Resources informed that there had been a delay in the announcement of the Local Government Settlement due to the General Election on 12th December, 2019. It had originally been expected at the end of November, however the final settlement was now due on 16th December, 2019. This delay had caused implications for the budget setting process and planning the actual budget reductions to set a balanced budget for 2020/2021, however the MTFs would be revised following the announcement.</p> <p>The Chief Officer referred Members to the information detailed in the report and appendices which outlined the budget gap of £16.2m over the next 5 years. Also, the progress against the Strategic Business Reviews was noted with the overall financial achievement towards the budget gap currently assessed between £5.4m and £7.9m over the period of the MTFs. The Chief Officer further noted the estimated financial achievement of the Strategic Business Reviews would result in a residual funding gap at between £8m to £10m over the next five years. However, for 2020/2021 proposals had been developed across all portfolios to mitigate funding gaps.</p> <p>A Member raised concerns around the continued reduction in the budgets and felt that the Council services and frontline staff could not be reduced any further. The Member noted the Council's commitment to prioritise Education and Social Services and had hoped that the monies provided to schools could be increased or at least maintained. The Member further reiterated his concerns around the reductions in staff and advised that the reduced budget settlements would be a concern to staff as in some cases jobs had been lost.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources advised that job losses were a concern to everyone, however it was paramount the Authority lived within its means and spend prioritised accordingly.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>The Committee AGREED the report be accepted and Option 1; namely that the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considered and agreed the MTFS; • noted the forecast funding gap for the period of the MTFS; and • agreed the proposals within the Strategic Business Reviews attached at Appendix 1 of the MTFS. 	
No. 6	<p><u>STAFF SURVEY 2019 – SUMMARY RESULTS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Managing Director.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Commercial advised that the report outlined the high level findings of the 2019 Staff Survey along with management actions related to the results. The Chief Officer added that the Authority had undertaken staff surveys every two years since 2014 in order to ascertain levels of staff engagement with the priorities of the Council. It also provides an opportunity to monitor their levels of well-being. During 2019 the survey was carried out between January and March and it was noted that participation this year has increased. The Chief Officer Commercial further outlined the activities which had been undertaken following an analysis of the data from the results.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Commercial further noted the headline findings from the survey as detailed in the report which included an improved response rate, improvement in staff satisfaction with staff feeling more motivated in their role and more informed. There was an increase in communication across the Authority, staff felt they were more able to strike a work/life balance and staff felt more inclined to speak positively about the Council to others outside work.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>The Chair asked the reason there were some signs of a reduction in frequency of staff 1-2-1s and team meetings.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Commercial advised that the 1-2-1s should be recorded and therefore there was a need for managers to be aware that when performance conversations are carried out that they are recorded. Part of the employment deal with employees is that they are entitled to have those discussions.</p> <p>A Member referred to the high number of staff within the Regeneration & Community Services and Social Services Departments who would not have access to email to participate in the survey and asked how these employees were encouraged to complete the survey.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that the Department had a number of the workforce on split work patterns and discussions had been undertaken on how these employees could be engaged. The Corporate Director Social Services added that it was difficult to reach some staff that were not office based and a number of ways in which both Departments could engage with these employees were being considered.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Commercial added that although the survey suits some staff there was a need to look at how it could be offered in different ways to accommodate all staff.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair welcomed the positive report and was encouraged to see that staff were happy and empowered. He asked if the Authority engaged with school based staff.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Commercial advised that school based staff were not included at the moment, however there was no reason they could not participate and added that discussions could be undertaken with schools to ascertain best way to circulate the survey for completion.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>The Committee AGREED, that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely the Committee endorsed the report prior to the report being presented to the Executive.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>QUARTER 1 AND 2 (APRIL TO SEPTEMBER) JOINT FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Governance and Partnerships.</p> <p>The Head of Partnerships and Governance advised that the Joint Finance and Performance report outlined quarters 1 and 2 which covered April to September 2019. The Officer advised that the report had been enhanced to provide a more user friendly format and it would continue to be a 'live' document to take into account feedback received.</p> <p>At this juncture the Chair went through and the following questions/points were raised accordingly.</p> <p>A Member referred to the alignment of the Public Service Board and Regional Partnership Board and asked if the Public Services Scrutiny Committee had been aligned appropriately to give the appropriate timelines for matters being considered.</p> <p>The Head of Partnerships and Governance advised that the cycle of meetings had been developed to align the Scrutiny Committee with scheduled Public Service Board meetings which were held on a quarterly basis this gave a coherent reporting path. The alignment of Public Service Boards and the Regional Partnership Boards were around how their work streams being aligned to the Integrated Well-Being Programme. This was a good example of where two boards could come together and discussions would progress via the Public Service Board and once approved be presented to the Scrutiny Committee.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>The Member further noted the collaborative work in the report which referred the joint working arrangements of the SRS and advised that this was not the only collaborative work being undertaken across the Council.</p> <p>The Managing Director advised that the report captured work for quarters 1 and 2 and did not document all partnership work only areas where work had been carried out in the specific quarters. The Managing Director added that there was a great deal of collaborative work across the Council and in all services including City Deal, Tech Valleys and the Valleys Task Force. It was felt that it would be beneficial to report all collaborative and partnership working, however it was noted that progress reports on the City Deal were regularly presented to Scrutiny a report was scheduled to be presented to the next Council meeting on 12th December, 2019.</p> <p>Further to a request made for a Members Briefing on collaborative and partnership work arrangements across the Council, it was advised that a regeneration member briefing session could be arranged, to discuss collaborative work undertaken by the Directorate. A further request was made for late morning start and the Head of Partnerships and Governance agreed to accommodate this request.</p> <p>A Member noted the capital bid achieved for Social Services and asked if a report would be presented to inform Members on the project being pursued.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Social Services advised that the capital bid had been around the childcare offer and schools had been identified to work with in their existing settings. The Corporate Director confirmed that a report would be presented to the Social Services Scrutiny Committee at the appropriate time.</p> <p>The Member recognised the amount of good work undertaken in Social Services. The Chair concurred with these comments and expressed thanks to the Corporate Director and staff on the work undertaken.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>The Corporate Director Education referred to the persistent absenteeism in schools and noted the primary school levels of 1.6% was below the Wales average which was positive and in terms of secondary schools of 4.1% this equated to all Wales average. The Corporate Director also noted the increase in green schools within Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>In response to a question raised in relation to the amount of red schools, the Corporate Director advised that there were two red schools, however the Authority was working intensively with these schools. The Member added that work on these schools had been ongoing for 2 years and there had been a number of head teachers in post over this period.</p> <p>The Corporate Director advised that the current head teacher was focussed and would continue the work put in place. The Corporate Director advised that a good discussion had ensued as part of the Improving Schools report presented to the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>A Member wished to compliment the Corporate Director Education on the work she had achieved. The Member noted that he had worked closely with the Corporate Director and was aware of her commitment for change in Education in Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>The Member further asked how Blaenau Gwent compared to the family of schools within our area.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Education advised that the Education system in Wales was going through a significant system of reform around the curriculum and qualifications. The family of schools were developed to compare data with similar schools, however this was no longer being used and although performance information could be compared it no longer identified schools. However, the Corporate Director advised that schools in Blaenau Gwent were performing similarly to schools across the region.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that there was a number of community groups who worked in specific areas which supported the delivery of the Authority's strong and environmentally smart communities. There was also work ongoing around the biodiversity and low carbon agenda which also linked to the active travel initiative.</p> <p>In response to a question raised around the use of solar panels, the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that there was currently a £4.1m refit programme to install solar panels in new builds and existing buildings if the appropriate space was available.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services also referred to the increased number of start-up businesses coming to Blaenau Gwent which placed Blaenau Gwent in the top quarter in terms of performance for this area.</p> <p>A Member referred to the Regulatory Proposals section and asked for the reason eight updates/reports had not been received.</p> <p>The Head of Partnerships and Governance noted that the information related to external regulatory work and advised that there could be a number of reasons. If the matter had been closed or incorporated into normal business planning and activity. However she noted the point and would make sure it was updated for the next quarter.</p> <p>Another Member referred to the Corporate Risk Register presented and noted the 2 schools currently in receipt of Council Intervention which had failed to make progress for 2 years.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>The Corporate Director Education advised that this had been identified as a risk and progress would be identified and reported accordingly.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, that the report be accepted and Option 2; namely the information be accepted as presented.</p>	
No. 8	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 8TH JANUARY, 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chair of the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The Chair reported that the meeting scheduled in January 2020 would be cancelled, therefore the items presented on the Forward Work Programme would be presented to the February Committee with the exception of Organisational Development Policies which was scheduled to be presented to the March meeting.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted.</p>	

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 13TH JANUARY, 2020**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S.C. THOMAS (CHAIR)

Councillors: K. Rowson
D. Bevan
G.A. Davies
M. Day
P. Edwards
L. Elias
K. Hayden
J. Holt
J. Millard
J.P. Morgan
G. Paulsen
T. Sharrem
T. Smith

AND: Corporate Director of Social Services
Head of Adult Services
Service Manager, Provider Services
Service Manager, Children’s Services
Mary Welsh, Manager Community Options
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	

No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M. Moore.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 28th November, 2019 were submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><u>Item 6 – Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2019/20 (Quarter 1 & 2)</u></p> <p><u>Adult Services</u> - a Member proposed an amendment to the second paragraph:-</p> <p>‘The Member commented that the only respite beds available for adults with physical disabilities had been in Cardiff and enquired regarding the number of respite beds available in Blaenau Gwent for adults with physical disabilities who had elderly parents caring for them. The Head of Adult Services said that in Blaenau Gwent there were no respite beds for adults with physical disabilities. In these cases respite beds would be commissioned in other Authorities on a case by case basis to meet specialist needs’.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>EXECUTIVE DECISION SHEET FOR THE SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Executive Decision Sheet.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Executive Decision Sheet be noted.</p>	

No. 6

**PROGRESS REPORT – SOCIAL SERVICES ASSISTED
TRANSPORT PROVISION**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Adult Services which was presented to provide an update on the outcome of assessments undertaken during 2019, for eligibility to Assisted Transport.

The Head of Adult Services spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.

Of the 149 assessments undertaken the Chair commented that one person had ceased accessing the Community Options Service and potentially there could be others. The Head of Adult Services reassured Members that through ongoing communication no other citizens had indicated a wish to cease accessing the Community Options provision.

A Member referred to taxi fares from Trefil and pointed out that mobility vehicles could be withdrawn at any time. The Head of Adult Services said that taxi fares from Trefil were being looked at. With regard to mobility vehicles if an individual's circumstances change then the exceptional circumstances element of the policy would be invoked and the citizens circumstances reviewed.

A Member enquired regarding the operating hours of the vehicles and whether alternative uses could be found when not in operation. The Service Manager, Provider Services said the vehicle operating hours were 8.00 am to 10.30 am and then started again at 3.00 pm and confirmed that vehicles were parked up in between these hours. Alternative uses had been looked at but would have cost implications due to increased drivers contracted hours. The current Community Options budget was not sufficient to cover an increase in drivers contracted hours.

The Chair commented that the Authority did not have a Corporate Transport Policy, an Executive decision had been made to keep home to school transport and felt that a two tier transport policy was operating with vulnerable people being penalised.

The Head of Adult Services said that the Service had positive feedback regarding the flexible approach to citizens

accessing Community Options using own transport and not being reliant on the Local Authority transport runs. They also confirmed that the relevant equality policies had been considered to ensure people were being treated fairly.

Another Member also raised concerns that the Authority was running a two tier transport policy with regard to home to school transport and commented that the Authority was now in an improved financial position and these transport services should be provided for vulnerable people in the community.

Another Member enquired regarding cost implications for assisted transport. The Head of Adult Services said the costs of providing assisted transport was approximately £321,000 currently. She also highlighted the potential inequalities that could happen if the Council decided not to charge for provision for those continuing to use the Local Authority transport when those who had already opted to make own arrangements for transport via taxi's were paying to attend following their social care review.

A Member pointed out that not many taxi's could accommodate wheelchair users.

In response to a Member's question regarding development of a Corporate Policy for reviewing the leasing costs of vehicles, the Head of Adult Services said that existing vehicle leases within Social Services had recently been renegotiated and savings made. The Head of Service reminded Members that the report presented to them outlined the new model for the service with anticipated reduction in fleet and staffing from 8 to 4 vehicles. This would result in further savings being made.

A Member said it was important to sustain this provision so that vulnerable people had access to assisted transport to enable them to attend day centres and felt that a balance needed to be maintained.

A Member enquired if mental health views had been captured in the report and further enquired regarding the low number of wheelchair adapted taxis. The Head of Adult Services confirmed that the views of people who experienced mental health issues had been captured in the

report and agreed there were not enough wheelchair adapted taxis in Blaenau Gwent.

With regard to the 6 objections received to date regarding the outcome of assessments, the Head of Adult Services said that some of the reasons for objection had included that family members may be using the mobility vehicle to travel to work or the cost of alternative transport for example taxis. She added that for some of these citizens they had been considered under the exceptional circumstances policy and would be eligible to continue to use the assisted transport provision to attend Community Options, however, dependent on the outcome of the proposals being presented they may be charged.

A third option was proposed and seconded by Members that the status quo be maintained prior to the implementation of the Assisted Transport Policy and that all citizens accessing Community Options who are assessed as requiring transport, are offered Local Authority Community Options Transport, free at the point of contact.

Upon a vote being taken, the following votes were recorded:-

Option 1 (3 votes)

Members note the progress made in assessing the needs of citizens in line with the Assisted Transport Policy including the outcomes of the assessments. **Plus**, Members recommend that only those citizens who remain eligible for assisted transport continue to receive support **free of charge**. And that those citizens who are deemed **ineligible** but have **exceptional circumstance** continue to receive support but at a charge based on a full cost recovery model. The full cost recovery charges will be based on the configuration of transport required to deliver the future model of Community Options services.

Option 2 (4 votes)

Members note the progress made in assessing the needs of citizens in line with the Assisted Transport Policy including the outcomes of the assessments. **Plus**, Members recommend that only those citizens who remain eligible for

assisted transport continue to receive support **free of charge**. And that those citizens who are deemed **ineligible** but have **exceptional circumstance** continue to receive support but at a charge based on similar costs illustrated earlier in the report reflecting public transport rates. The charges will be based on the future configuration of transport required to deliver the future model of Community Options services.

Option 3 (6 votes)

Community Options revert back to the previous situation (i.e. the status quo prior to the implementation of the Assisted Transport Policy in January 2019) and that all citizens accessing Community Options who are assessed as requiring transport, are offered Local Authority Community Options Transport, free at the point of contact.

The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and to recommend Option 3 Community Options revert back to the previous situation (i.e. the status quo prior to the implementation of the Assisted Transport Policy in January 2019) and that all citizens accessing Community Options who are assessed as requiring transport, are offered Local Authority Community Options Transport, free at the point of contact.

No. 7

CORPORATE PARENTING PROGRESS REPORT

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Children's Services and Service Manager, Children's Services which was presented to inform Members of the progress made by Blaenau Gwent Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) throughout 2019 to improve outcomes and services for our Children Looked After (CLA).

The Service Manager, Children's Services spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.

In response to a Member's question regarding the use of unregistered care facilities, the Director of Social Services said that the Authority only used unregistered care facilities on a temporary basis until a suitable registered facility could be found.

	<p>A Member requested an update on capacity within the 14+ team. The Service Manager, Children’s Services confirmed that the Safeguarding Manager was now in place and the team were at full capacity and were able to progress outstanding issues.</p> <p>A Member enquired regarding the 10 young people in the Blaenau Gwent Corporate Traineeship Programme established in 2017, the Service Manager said that 2 young people were engaged, 1 in Housing Solutions and 1 in Tai Calon and the other 8 had either moved on to paid employment or undertaken further training. The Service Manager would provide Members with further details on their current status.</p> <p>A Member enquired regarding mental health and well-being support for young people. The Service Manager said that recruitment of a Psychologist in the Placement Team had been unsuccessful as applicants were reluctant to accept a short term contract, however, other options for access to psychology were being explored. The Task and Finish Group which included key partners such as the Aspire programme were still looking at this area of work even though no psychologist was in place.</p> <p>With regard to the Looked After Children (LAC) reference no longer used, a Member requested that the reference Children Looked After (CLA) be used consistently in future reports.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1, namely that Members acknowledge progress made throughout 2019 and feel confident that the Local Authority and its partners are doing well to improve outcomes for our looked after children as part of our corporate parenting responsibilities.</p> <p>Councillor Jonathan Millard left the meeting at this juncture.</p>	<p>Service Manager Children’s Services</p>
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP UPDATE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Social Services which was presented to update Members on the work and decisions taken over the last 6</p>	

	<p>months by the Regional Partnership Board, developed under statutory guidance Part 9 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWB Act).</p> <p>The Director of Social Services spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member raised serious concerns that home assessments to safely discharge people from hospital were being carried out after a patient was discharged. The Director said that an individual would have been declared medically fit before being discharged from hospital and a planned model of discharge to return home would need to be prepared. The Head of Adult Services commented that sometimes patients agreed to be discharged from hospital before the Home Service was made aware of the discharge and this could lead to delays in home assessments.</p> <p>A Member enquired regarding mental well-being for children and young people. The Director said he recognised the Member's concerns as often young people visited their GP and then the next step would be they were referred to specialist intervention provided by CAMHS. The Authority were looking to develop something in between to work in Blaenau Gwent and across Gwent.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1, namely to scrutinise the report and to support the decisions of the Regional Partnership Board.</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>SOCIAL SERVICES WORKFORCE SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development and Director of Social Services which was presented to provide Members of specific scrutiny committees the opportunity to scrutinise and challenge relevant Directorate sickness absence performance and the proposed actions for improvements.</p> <p>The Director of Social Services spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p>	

Members welcomed the report but raised concerns regarding high sickness levels in the Directorate and refresher training for managers on the iTrent system. The Director explained that reducing sickness absence levels remained a priority for the Council and CLT were working towards developing an action plan to reduce sickness levels. The Directorate had a duty of care towards staff and protecting vulnerable people who used their services. Provider Services would always have a higher than average sickness absence level than the general Council due to the nature of the services they provide, i.e. staff with flu would need to be absent for a period of 48 hours before visiting service users to prevent the spread of infections.

A Member raised concerns with the number of staff on sick leave due to mental health issues. The Director responded that over the last 5-10 years the numbers of staff on sick leave due to stress and anxiety had increased, but it was important to note that staff formed relationships with service users and may be affected by bereavements. Well-being courses were being piloted to make staff and managers more resilient.

A Member enquired if the Council provided mental health care for employees. The Director explained that staff with stress and anxiety would be referred to Occupational Health to try to intervene early to prevent sickness absence occurring.

Another Member raised concerns that only 45% return to work interviews were being carried out and recorded. The Director stressed that return to work interviews were important to establish the reasons why staff were on sick leave. However, there were some difficulties due to employees shift patterns, whereby some staff did not see their line manager for up to 2 days. The Council had a Corporate Sickness Absence Policy which worked well for staff who work 9-5 and office based, however, there were some anomalies i.e. provider staff who work shift patterns.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the report and proposed arrangements to support the improvement in attendance be approved.

No. 10	<u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 13TH FEBRUARY, 2020</u>
---------------	---

Consideration was given to the report of the Chair of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the Social Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the meeting on 13th February, 2020 be approved.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 15TH JANUARY, 2020**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR H. TROLLOPE (CHAIR)

Councillors: J. Millard
D. Bevan
L. Elias
W. Hodgins
J. Holt
J.C. Morgan
K. Pritchard
K. Rowson
T. Smith
S. Thomas

Co-opted Member

A. Williams

AND: Corporate Director of Education
Head of Education Transformation
Service Manager for Inclusion
Press & Publicity Officer
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	

<p>No. 2</p>	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Cook, G.A. Davies, C. Meredith and B. Summers.</p> <p><u>Co-opted Member</u> T. Baxter</p>	
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 4th December, 2019 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 4TH DECEMBER, 2019</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 4th December, 2019 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><u>Item 8 – Improving Schools Programme</u></p> <p>A Member raised concern that the action had been marked as completed when no response had been received. The Scrutiny & Democratic Officer advised Members that the Head of Democratic Services had spoken with the Executive Member for Education and it was advised that the Executive Member would contact the Leader of the Labour Group directly.</p> <p>The Leader of the Labour Group confirmed he had not had any contact with the Executive Member for Education to date. A Member commented that all Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Members should receive a response.</p> <p>The Leader of the Labour Group agreed with his colleague’s view that all Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee</p>	

	<p>Members should have all the information and suggested that the Chair write to the Executive Member for Education to avoid this situation arising in future.</p> <p>The Chair agreed with this course of action.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>EXECUTIVE DECISION SHEET FOR THE EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Executive Decision Sheet.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Executive Decision Sheet be noted.</p>	
	<p><u>ORDER OF AGENDA</u></p> <p>It was agreed that Item 8 – 21st Century Schools Programme – Gateway Review be considered at this juncture.</p>	
No. 8	<p><u>21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME – GATEWAY REVIEW</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Education Transformation which was presented to provide an opportunity for Members to scrutinise the 21st Century Schools programme, particularly the outcome of the Welsh Government facilitated Gateway Review (September 2019).</p> <p>The Head of Education Transformation spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member enquired regarding recouping the costs of the sewer diversion and the highway infrastructure. The Head of Education Transformation said that the sewer diversion had cost £1.3m and the Welsh Government had contributed £650,000 towards the costs. In relation to the highway infrastructure a Welsh Government capital maintenance grant of circa £400,000 had been used to ease revenue cost pressures and confirmed that a total of £800,000 had also been put back into the Council’s capital programme from Welsh Government bids.</p>	

A Member requested clarity in relation to the Welsh Medium School. The Head of Education Transformation said that discussions had been held regarding revenue implications and the Welsh Government had confirmed that no further revenue support would be available at this time. A presentation would be presented to an informal Executive/CLT in February and following the discussions a report would be presented to this Committee to inform Scrutiny Members of the situation.

The Member commented that Welsh education was a priority for the Authority and this issue needed to be progressed. The Head of Education Transformation said the Welsh Government had confirmed that £6m capital for this project could be carried forward. The Band B priority projects were secondary school remodelling, Bro Helyg remodelling as well as a replacement primary school in the Ebbw Fawr valley. A business case was soon to be submitted to the Welsh Government and will include further refurbishment works in other primary schools if resources allow. Remodelling of schools impacted on pupil attendance and behaviour and work with the Planning Department regarding S106 agreements ensured that future capacity levels in schools was linked to residential developments in the area.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2, namely that the report be accepted as provided.

Councillor Jonathan Millard left the meeting at this juncture.

No. 7

PUPIL EXCLUSIONS

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education which was presented to provide opportunity for Members to scrutinise exclusion data for Blaenau Gwent at Primary and Secondary schools for the academic year 2018/19.

The Service Manager for Inclusion spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.

Councillors John C. Morgan and Steve Thomas left the meeting at this juncture.

In response to a Member's question regarding the reason for exclusions under the 'Other' category, the Service Inclusion Manager felt that there should not be an 'Other' category as it showed no clarity for the reason for exclusion.

A Member enquired if there was a link between the decrease in exclusions and the examination results and referred to the comparative data with Blaenau Gwent rated 13 out of 22 for 5 days or less exclusions. The Director of Education said that figures compare favourably particularly in KS4. The Service Manager for Inclusion said that persistent disruptive behaviour was one of the main reasons for exclusions and there was an ongoing need to minimise exclusions. Regarding managed moves, managed pupil moves was an agreement between two schools and the parent/carers to give a pupil a fresh start and was based on Welsh Government guidance. The River Centre provided a full curriculum and specialist placements were closely managed. The school also provided home tuition to some pupils with special medical needs.

A Member requested comparison data for previous years in relation to paragraph 6.1.7 exclusions by month and paragraph 6.1.8 exclusions by year group as a percentage. The Service Manager for Inclusion agreed to provide the comparison data to Members.

A Member referred to the low number of exclusions in primary schools and what support was available. The Service Manager for Inclusion said that in the first instance support would be provided through the Education Psychologist allocated to the school. A Pastoral Support Plan could be used which supports an action focused multi-agency approach. Should it be necessary the school could consider the appropriateness of requesting consideration of change of placement. He added that Primary schools had been successful at keeping exclusions low.

The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Members scrutinise the information detailed within the report, thereby contributing to continuous self-

Service
Manager
Inclusion

	<p>evaluation prior to making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>EDUCATION WORKFORCE SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development and the Corporate Director of Education which was presented to provide Members of specific scrutiny committees the opportunity to scrutinise and challenge relevant directorate sickness absence performance and the proposed actions for improvement.</p> <p>The Director of Education spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member enquired if holding annual workforce meetings was adequate. The Director said that workforce meetings were kept under review and sickness performance data was also discussed at Strategic Headteachers meetings. Organisational Development worked closely with Headteachers and were guided by Occupational Health and GP advice.</p> <p>A Member welcomed the report being presented to each Scrutiny Committee but had concerns that the Sickness Absence Policy was not being adhered to, he was aware that some Managers were not using the iTrent system. He also felt that individual schools should not be identified in the report. The Director would take this point back to colleagues.</p> <p>A Member referred to sickness absence within the Authority being a key risk and enquired if high levels of sickness had an impact on school performance and enquired regarding iTrent sickness triggers. The Director said this did provide challenges and could be linked to well-being. A successful iTrent pilot had been carried out and 39% of return to work interviews had been recorded on the system, however, further improvement needed to be undertaken.</p> <p>The Director informed Members that some school based support staff such as catering and cleaning staff were employed by a different Directorate. As individual Workforce Sickness Absence Performance reports would</p>	

	<p>be considered at each Scrutiny Committee Members comments would be considered for future reporting.</p> <p>A Member commented that clarity was needed regarding which directorate employed which staff and pointed out that special circumstances may need to be considered when dealing with special schools.</p> <p>Reference was made to the estimated sickness absence costs. The Director said that costs to the Authority for the six month period were estimated at £398,718 and did not include supply costs i.e. on-costs, cover arrangements etc. and this would need to be looked at in detail.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1, namely that having scrutinised the absence performance information and proposed arrangements to improve attendance rates within the Education Directorate identify any further areas for improvement in order to drive forward performance improvement.</p> <p>Councillor Jonathan Millard re-joined the meeting at this juncture.</p>	Director of Education
No. 10	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 26TH FEBRUARY, 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chair of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>A Member requested that a six month update on projected results for all schools be added to the forward work programme. The Director of Education would lodge a request with the EAS for the report to be prepared and presented to a future meeting.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the meeting on 26th February, 2020 be approved.</p>	

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: COMMUNITY SERVICE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
16th JANUARY, 2020**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. WILKINS (CHAIR)

Councillors C. Meredith
G.L. Davies
L. Elias
S. Healy
W. Hodgins
J. Holt
H. McCarthy
T. Sharrem
B. Summers

WITH: Corporate Director Community Services &
Regeneration
Head of Community Services
Service Manager Community Services
Team Leader Waste & Fleet Management
Communications, Marketing & Customer Access
Manager
Ecologist
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer/Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p>	

	<p>Apologies for absence were received for Councillors M. Cook and G. Paulsen.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>Councillor W. Hodgins declared an interest in the following item:</p> <p>Item No. 7 Local Nature Reserve Designation and Declaration.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on 5th December, 2020 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 5th DECEMBER, 2019</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on 5th December, 2019 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><i><u>Bridging the Gap – Trade Waste Service – Strategic Business Review</u></i></p> <p>A Member referred to the responses listed on Appendix 6 and expressed concern regarding the number of responses received from Education. The Service Manager Community Services undertook to investigate.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>EXECUTIVE DECISION SHEET</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Executive Decision Sheet.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Executive Decision Sheet be noted.</p>	

No. 7

LOCAL NATURE RESERVE DESIGNATION AND DECLARATION

Consideration was given to report of the Head of Community Services.

At the invitation of the Chair, the Ecologist presented the report which sought approval for the designation and declaration of five Local Nature Reserves, namely Beaufort Hill Ponds & Woodland, Central Valley, Garden City, Parc Bryn Bach and Sirhowy Hill Woodlands.

Blaenau Gwent currently had seven designated Local Nature Reserves totalling 120.3 hectares. Declaration and designation of the sites contributed to the Council's Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-22) which was developed in order to comply with the requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein.

A Member said he welcomed the report and supported the proposed areas. However, in designating these areas, public opinion was that the Council was responsible for future maintenance, and with limited resources the Council was struggling to maintain existing rights of way etc.

In response the Officer confirmed that the areas were within Council ownership and already part of our day to day work. The Council were already working in partnership with community groups to maintain and enhance these areas, and Welsh Government were also looking to get more people involved, and promoting nature recovery issues through grant funded projects, e.g. A Resilient Greater Gwent.

A Member said he fully supported the proposals and was happy to support Option 2.

Another Member referred to Parc Bryn Bach and expressed concern that designating the area may have a detrimental impact on any future proposals and subsequent planning applications submitted. He therefore proposed that the report

be amended, and that Parc Bryn Bach be removed at this time, pending discussions with Aneurin Leisure Trust.

The Officer said Parc Bryn Bach was already designated a SINC area so Development Management Procedure 14 would apply in terms of any future planning applications.

The Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services explained that designation of LNR would not preclude any future development. However, such designation would have the advantage of enhancing and protecting the area, and also provide opportunities to access resources to support this work.

A Member referred to the funding secured from the Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being Grant to deliver 12 sub-projects across the five Local Authority areas in Greater Gwent, and asked how much had been allocated for Blaenau Gwent.

The Ecologist confirmed that the amount was approximately £210k for the 5 Greater Gwent Local Authority areas. Blaenau Gwent would receive approximately £40k, however, it was a project running on agile terms and the whole project budget had yet to be allocated.

A discussion ensued regarding maintenance when the Officer said designation of LNR was about ensuring protection of these areas. Maintenance of pathways etc., would always be challenging in terms of the budget, but it was about prioritising, and partnership working, and hopefully funding could be directed towards these issues.

The Chair asked whether designation of LNR would be subject to public consultation, and the Officer confirmed that the legislation did not require public consultation, but it would form part of the LDP Deposit Plan process.

The Chair then referred to the Options for Recommendations, and a Member proposed Option 2, with an amendment that Parc Bryn Bach be removed from the list pending further discussions with ALT.

The proposal was seconded.

	<p>A vote was then taken on the proposed amendment and 4 Members voted in favour of the amendment.</p> <p>Another Member proposed that Option 2 be supported, as outlined in the report, and this was seconded.</p> <p>A vote was then taken on Option 2 and 5 Members voted in favour.</p> <p>The Committee therefore AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and Option 2 be supported, as outlined in the report, namely to designate and declare five Local Nature Reserves; Sirhowy Hill Woodlands, Beaufort Hill Ponds & Woodland, Parc Bryn Bach, Garden City and Central Valley.</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>STREET LIGHTING SERVICE REVIEW</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>The Team Leader Waste & Fleet Management presented the report which provided an update on the Street Lighting Review, which was requested following a Members' Briefing in February 2019. The review consisted of three overarching priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 1 – Financial diligence • Priority 2 – Stock management and assets; and • Priority 3 – Legislative drivers and performance of the service. <p>The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member referred to section 2.4 of the report which outlined the outputs against Priority 2, and asked whether the remaining stock could be used to undertake in-house repairs etc.</p> <p>In response the Officer explained that the Engineering Team had significantly reduced over the years, and the type of work undertaken had changed to more reactive minor repairs, and with major works being contracted out.</p>	

However, he confirmed that redundant stock was used where possible, if it was not obsolete.

A Member referred to insurance claims and asked what process was undertaken previously, and whether the Council had any outstanding claims.

The Officer said there was no system in place previously. The issue was raised at a Members' briefing session, so the Team looked at the system used by Cardiff City Council, and mirrored that approach. The first test case was successful, with almost full cost recovery, and other cases would be looked at.

A Member referred to the Solar LED lanterns introduced in Newtown, Ebbw Vale and the Officer reported that unfortunately the amount of sunlight in the Borough was insufficient to power the lanterns, but alternative technology was being considered.

A discussion ensued regarding capacity within the Team, and the Refit Programme, when the Officer confirmed that moving to LED lanterns would reduce maintenance requirements, and enable the Team to respond to other work.

A Member pointed out that the reduction in maintenance may impact on future staffing levels. He also stated that changing to LED lanterns should impact significantly on the budget.

In response the Head of Community Services said in theory it should, but energy prices were increasing at a faster rate than the return of implementing energy saving initiatives. However, the cost of not undertaking these works would prove more expensive in the future.

A further brief discussion ensued when the Officer clarified points raised by Members.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 1).

No. 9

COMMUNITY SERVICES WORKFORCE SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE

Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.

The Head of Community Services presented the report which outlined the Directorate's sickness absence performance and the proposed actions for improvement. He said whilst sickness levels remained high it was important to note that the majority of employees have little or no sickness absence and attend work regularly, and the vast majority of Council employees have excellent attendance levels, as data indicated that 2,463 employees attended work every day during the period from April 2018 to March 2019 with the Council having an attendance level of 94.3%.

In terms of actions for improvement, the Officer said whilst there was evidence of managerial action in managing sickness the Directorate acknowledged that better use of the iTrent system was required. A number of actions had been agreed, as outlined in Section 4.1 of the report, and these would be monitored by the Directorate Management Team, and sickness absence would continue to be a regular item on the Management Team Agenda.

A Member said more information was needed in terms of recording return to work meetings on the iTrent system.

In response the Officer said the report was populated by Organisational Development, and it was the first time for the report to be presented in this format. He confirmed that return to work meetings were taking place, but in some instances were not being reported through the iTrent system. He confirmed that the Member's comments would be raised with OD.

A discussion ensued when the Corporate Director said it was important to note that return to work meetings were being undertaken, and Managers were complying with the Attendance Management Policy. However, there were some areas within the Directorate that were unable to access the system, and this was being looked at, but he assured that

	<p>return to work meetings were being undertaken, albeit not recorded on iTrent.</p> <p>The Chair said the format of the report needed further consideration to ensure we get the information needed, and it would also be interesting to see what other Scrutiny Committees thought of the format.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and having scrutinised the sickness absence performance information and proposed arrangements to improve attendance rates within the Regeneration & Community Services Directorate discussed further areas for improvement in order to drive forward performance improvement (Option 1).</p>	
<p>No. 10</p>	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 27TH FEBRUARY, 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled for the 27th February, 2020.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted.</p>	

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 23RD JANUARY, 2020

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR L. PARSONS (CHAIR)

Councillors M. Cross
 M. Day
 H. McCarthy, B.A. (Hons)
 M. Moore
 J. C. Morgan
 K. Pritchard
 K. Rowson
 B. Willis

AND: Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services
 Head of Regeneration
 Service Manager – Development & Estates
 Business and Regeneration Manager
 Scrutiny Officer

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P. Edwards, J. Hill, J. Millard and M. Holland.</p>	

<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 9th December, 2019 were submitted.</p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously,</p> <p>AGREED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 9TH DECEMBER, 2019</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 9th December, 2019 was submitted, whereupon:</p> <p><u>Action Sheet – 14th November, 2019 – Leisure and Culture Service Review</u></p> <p>A Member expressed his disappointment that the Chair of Community Services Scrutiny Committee had declined the request to allow all Scrutiny Members to participate in the discussion relating to the Leisure and Culture Service Review at the Committee’s meeting in February 2020.</p> <p>It was noted that at the time that the original proposal to establish the Leisure Trust had been presented, a meeting of the relevant Scrutiny Committee had been opened up to all Scrutiny Members to discuss the proposal (with only those Members appointed to the Committee allowed to vote on the proposal).</p> <p>The Member continued by pointing out that a Working Group had undertaken a considerable amount of work over the last 12 – 18 months in respect of this issue and that it was unfortunate that as the Members of the Working Group were not Members of the Community Services Committee, they would be unable to participate or provided with the</p>	

	<p>opportunity to provide feedback to the newly established Task and Finish Group on the work undertaken to date.</p> <p>It was noted that the Wales Audit Office had commented previously that the review of Leisure Services lacked timely and meaningful Scrutiny Member involvement.</p> <p>The Member concluded by reiterating his disappointment that the request for a Joint Scrutiny Committee had been declined and suggested that even if the Members of the original Working Group were not invited to the Committee at the very least, the Chair - Councillor P. Edwards should be invited to attend that meeting.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Officer suggested that a proposal be made to the Chair of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee i.e. that Councillor P. Edwards (Chair of the Working Group) be invited to the February Committee to participate in the discussion in respect of the Leisure and Culture Services Review.</p> <p>The Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services confirmed that the work undertaken by the Working Group had been incorporated within the final Leisure and Culture Services Review report.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	<p>Liz Thomas</p>
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>REGENERATION WORKFORCE SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the joint report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services and the Head of Organisational Development.</p> <p>The Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services presented the report which provided Members with the opportunity to scrutinise and challenge the sickness absence performance and the proposed actions for improvement for the directorate.</p> <p>The Corporate Director advised that this was the first report of this nature that had been presented to Committee (each</p>	

department would be producing a similar report to be presented to their respective Committees) and it was acknowledged that the report was 'work in progress' as further work needed to be undertaken with colleagues in Organisational Development to shape and focus the report to ensure that the statistics and information contained therein related to the Regeneration Service only. It was noted that currently information relating to the Community Services Service had also been included within the report.

The Corporate Director spoke in detail to the report and highlighted points contained therein. He emphasised that the vast majority of Council employees had excellent attendance levels as data indicated that 2463 employees had attended work every day during the period from April to March 2019 with the Council having an attendance level of 94.3%. It was the front line service areas that experienced higher levels of absence.

As a Directorate, sickness absenteeism was discussed at every monthly management meeting. An independent review of the top ten absences had been undertaken which had confirmed that managers were adhering to and applying the Attendance Management Policy.

The Corporate Director continued by stating that whilst there was evidence of managerial action in managing sickness the Regeneration Service acknowledged that better use of the iTrent system was required as at present only 16.48% of return to work meetings were recorded on the iTrent system. It was noted that not every department had access to this system, particularly front line managers and whilst return to work meetings were being held, they could not always necessarily be recorded. Therefore, work was required to improve this position.

Members were then given the opportunity to raise comments/questions in respect of the report.

Attendance Levels - a Member referred to the fact that the vast majority of Council employees had excellent attendance levels as the data indicated that 2463 employees attended work every day and said that this was to be commended. He

asked whether these members of staff were commended for their excellent attendance levels.

The Corporate Director acknowledged this valid point and agreed that excellent attendance levels should be celebrated and undertook to pursue this matter at both the departmental management meeting and with Corporate Leadership Team.

Chronic Sickness – in reply to question relating to ‘chronic sickness’, the Corporate Director confirmed that this was largely attributed to stress. It was reported that the Council was currently rolling out mental health training for managers in order to better equip them to have appropriate discussions with individuals. It was noted that mental health and stress was a major issue across all organisations.

iTrent System – concern was expressed that not all managers had access to this system in order to record sickness information and said that this issue needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Report Content – a Member commended and congratulated officers on the report and said it was beneficial that detailed costings had been supplied.

However, concern was expressed that as the graphs had not been printed in colour Members were unable to decipher this information clearly.

Mental Health – a Member referred to the number (46) employees who had lost working days due to mental health illness and as the Council had a duty of care to employees enquired whether there was a procedure in place via occupational health to assist staff suffering with problems of stress and anxiety.

The Corporate Director advised that the Council had increased its training programme in respect of mental health for its managers and this training also highlighted potential ‘triggers’ that could lead to such absences. He pointed out that most staff who were suffering with this condition wanted to attend work and the occupational health advisors needed to be reminded of this. The approach taken needed to be both sympathetic to the business need and the individual.

**Richard
Crook**

**Richard
Crook/Liz
Thomas**

	<p>Musculoskeletal & Injuries and Work/Non Work Related Mental Health - a request was made that further information be provided in future reports in relation to Musculoskeletal & Injuries and Work/Non Work Related Mental Health.</p> <p>Attendance Management Strategies – a Member asked that further information be supplied in respect of the strategies that were being implemented in order to reduce sickness absence.</p> <p>The Corporate Director undertook to pursue this matter.</p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously that,</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the sickness absence performance information and proposed arrangements to improve attendance rates within the Regeneration and Community Services Directorate had been scrutinised and further areas for improvement in order to drive forward performance improvement had been identified.</p>	<p>Richard Crook/OD</p> <p>Richard Crook</p>
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>TRANSPORT STRATEGY</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Head of Regeneration.</p> <p>The Head of Regeneration presented this initial report which sought Members views on the content and scope of the proposed transport strategy for Blaenau Gwent. The officer explained that further projects in relation of Metro Plus was on the cusp of being developed and the regional transport work with neighbouring authorities would shortly be drawing to a conclusion. Therefore, it was now the opportune time to develop a local strategy for the next 5 years.</p> <p>The Head of Regeneration, thereupon, spoke in detail to the following paragraphs in the report which outlined:</p> <p>Paragraph 2.2 – the scope of the strategy and the elements which should be included.</p>	

Paragraph 2.3 – the main strategic recommendations that needed to be considered around developing a long term vision for the strategy that commits to long-term planning.

Paragraph 2.4 – operational improvements and new opportunities that could be explored and utilised.

It was noted that relevant stakeholders would also be consulted as part of the process. The Head of Regeneration emphasised that the strategy would not only relate to connectivity for trains but would also include buses, taxis and community transport – i.e. various vehicular movements and the areas/services that required improved access e.g. links were needed to the Rassau and Tafarnaubach Industrial Estates, G.P. surgeries. Discussions would also have to take place with third party organisations e.g. GAVO in order to plug any gaps in the network.

The Head of Regeneration concluded by requesting that discussions primarily focus around paragraph 2.2 i.e. the scope of the strategy and elements that should be included.

Members, thereupon, commented as follows:

- The importance of links to transport people to work.
- Transport links were required to care homes as a matter of urgency as people living in these care settings felt isolated specific mention was made to Red Rose Nursing Home where the nearest bus service was located outside the hospital.
- The provision of bus routes should be a priority.

The Head of Regeneration advised that on occasions commercial bus routes were not available, therefore, alternative forms of transport and options needed to be investigated, for example GAVO 'book a bus' for specialist journeys that were not necessarily commercially viable. There were a number of digital sites available that provided information on the different forms of transport that were available but this needed to be made easier for people to use.

- A Member expressed his concern regarding the digital aspect of booking a service and said that some older people did not have access to and use IT facilities.

Another Member suggested that enquiries be made with local bus companies to ask whether they could change their routes to include care homes as there should be direct bus routes provided to these facilities.

The Head of Regeneration undertook to pursue this matter with the Transport Section.

Ellie Fry

- A proactive approach should be taken to obtain data from subsidised transport companies.
- As young people undertaking apprenticeships had difficulty accessing job placements, particularly due to access and cost whether there was a system available whereby older persons could voluntarily give up their bus pass to a young person undertaking an apprenticeship in order to provide an opportunity for them to access their placement.

The Head of Regeneration said that she hoped that this initiative could be encouraged. Rassau and Tafarnaubach Industrial Estates were classed as 'Business Improvement Districts' and all these initiatives would be examined for people and young people to access work easier including 'book a bus' for people who worked shifts.

- A Member expressed his concern that the lack of public transport was affecting recruitment (especially of young people) for businesses located within the Heads of the Valleys corridor.

He continued by referring to the report contained in the Information Pack 'Cardiff City Regional Transport Authority' and the work being undertaken as part of these arrangements and said that as this related to the Transport Strategy a precise of this report should have been provided to Members.

He expressed his concern that the information report was portraying that the main project was the Abertillery spur for the railway. However, a comprehensive plan should be provided for the whole of the County Borough which should include the provision of a light railway from Llanhilleth to Brynmawr, connectivity within the

County Borough from east to west and west to east. Also connectivity to and from Abergavenny to Hirwaen and transportation to and from the industrial estates. The Member concluded by suggesting that a Task and Finish Group be established to undertake a piece of work in respect of the transport provision as there numerous ideas that could be captured together with the local knowledge of Members.

The Chair advised that a meeting of the Town Centre Task and Finish Group was due to commence imminently and the issue of transport could be included as part of that agenda. However, subsequently if it was felt that there was a need for an individual Task and Finish Group in relation to transport this would be reported to the next Committee meeting.

**Liz
Thomas**

The Head of Regeneration advised the report contained in the information pack was a precise of the Regional Transport Authority meetings that had taken place.

- A Member said that in preparing the Local Transport Strategy in addition to the requirements of the County Borough, officers should also take into account the work and projects that other local authorities were pursuing.
- The Ebbw Valley Railway was re-opened in 2008 and at that time it was intended that there be an Abertillery to Newport line. However, as time had now moved on a Member wondered whether this would now do the town more harm than good. He enquired whether officers had looked at the consequences if an Abertillery spur was provided?

The Head of Regeneration advised that a report would be produced by experts who would assess elements such as the socio economic and environmental aspects of the scheme.

With regard to Abertillery there was a need to make the town a vibrant place where people wanted to live and encourage people to make use of lower rents outside of Cardiff and also to attract businesses.

- A Member suggested that further work should be undertaken to promote the area and suggested that tourism officers could provide leaflets at Cardiff Central Station in order to promote the benefits of Blaenau Gwent. It was also suggested that a tourist information point be provided at the highest point on the Heads of the Valleys and information be provided at Bryn Bach Park as this was located close to the Heads of the Valleys.
- Another Member said that the reintroduction of the railway line had been a great success and had exceeded all expectations. However, he expressed his concern regarding the cost implications of providing an extra mile of railway track to Abertillery and hoped that this would not be detrimental to the overall strategy – there was, therefore, a need to look at the bigger picture.

He continued by referring to the regeneration of Tredegar Town Centre and that its profile had been raised by a Ministerial visit that had been held that day to the town and in particular to the TA Centre. He commended the officers involved in the regeneration projects and requested that officers pass on congratulations and appreciation to Nick Landers and his team for the work undertaken.

- Concern was expressed that there was no transport link within the Tredegar valley and asked whether work could be undertaken in conjunction with Caerphilly Council to provide a rail link to Bryn Bach Park.
- A suggestion was made that investigations take place into whether people who was in receipt of concessionary travel cards could also benefit using alternative forms of transport such as taxis.

The Head of Regeneration reported that Transport for Wales were introducing a digitised system for tickets which should make route planning easier.

- Reference was made to the three old tunnels that linked Sirhowy to Ebbw Vale and that one tunnel entrance

Ellie Fry

	<p>was located behind the car park at the Works Site and suggested that this history and artefacts could be incorporated as part of the strategy.</p> <p>The Corporate Director said that transport was currently a major topic nationally and one of the main reasons this strategy was required was in order that the Council could bid for funding to provide affordable and local connectivity throughout the County Borough.</p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously that,</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Local Transport Strategy be started in 2020 following the publication of the direction for local rail travel and tied in with the Wales Transport Strategy and future CCR Transport Strategy.</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>TECH VALLEYS</u></p> <p>The report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services was submitted for consideration.</p> <p>Members were advised that Welsh Government announced the Tech Valleys programme in the summer of 2017 and this was a £100 million Welsh Government commitment over ten years to create 1,500 sustainable jobs focused on Blaenau Gwent and hinterland. In 2027 the South Wales Valleys and Blaenau Gwent in particular, would be a globally recognised centre for development for new technologies, to support cutting edge industry.</p> <p>As part of the wider review of the governance of the Enterprise Zone programme in Wales, Welsh Government had decided to wind up the Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone Board and in respect of Blaenau Gwent introduced the Tech Valleys Advisory Group – the role of which was outlined in paragraph 2.3 of the report.</p> <p>Councillor H. McCarthy, B.A. (Hons) left the meeting at this juncture.</p>	

	<p>The Corporate Director, thereupon, gave details of the projects totalling in the region of £18.5m that had been included as part of the programme (outlined in paragraph 2.6 of the report) and in addition, details of two further business cases outlined in paragraph 2.7.</p> <p>At this juncture, Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It was pleasing to hear details of all the projected ideas and said that inward investment was paramount for the authority succeeding and improve people’s perception and it was hoped that this would come to fruition. ➤ Industry in Schools (STEM) – it was hoped that this pilot project could be rolled out to all schools in order to provide equal opportunity and delivery for all pupils in the County Borough. <p>The Chair advised that the Cardiff City Region Director had spoken at length at a recent meeting regarding STEM and that every authority had been sent an invite for schools to go to Sandhurst STEM Training but that no positive responses had been received from Blaenau Gwent. This had been discussed with the Executive Member.</p> <p>The Corporate Director confirmed that the original bid that had been submitted required a pilot to be undertaken in the first instance and subsequently, this would be rolled out to all schools throughout the County Borough.</p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously that,</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the work of the Tech Valleys Programme be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 5TH MARCH, 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on 5th March, 2020.</p>	

Members were advised that the Information Item – ‘Annual Monitoring of the Regeneration Business Plan’ had been withdrawn.

The following items would be presented to the April Committee:

- Destination Management Report.
- Report relating to the establishment of a Task and Finish Group relating to Public Transport.

Bi-annually an update be provided in respect of:

- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Member Briefings be convened in relation to:

- Tech Valleys.
- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal.

The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the following items be submitted to the scheduled meeting on 5th March, 2020:

- Review of Asset Management Disposal Policy
- Targeted Regeneration Funding (TRI) Update
- Employment and Skills Plan
- Crowd Funding

**Liz
Thomas**

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

**REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE JOINT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (BUDGET MONITORING)**

**SUBJECT: SPECIAL JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
(BUDGET MONITORING) –
28TH JANUARY, 2020**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S. HEALY (CHAIR)

Councillors G. Paulsen
D. Bevan
G.L. Davies
M. Day
P. Edwards
L. Elias
W. Hodgins
J. Hill
J. Holt
C. Meredith
M. Moore
J.P. Morgan
L. Parsons
K. Pritchard
K. Rowson
B. Summers
J. Wilkins

Mr. T. Baxter (Co-opted Member)

WITH: Managing Director
Corporate Director of Social Services
Corporate Director of Education
Corporate Director Regeneration & Community
Services
Chief Officer Resources
Chief Officer Commercial
Service Manager Accountancy
Communications, Marketing and Customer Access
Manager
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer/Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from: -</p> <p>Councillors M. Cross, J.C. Morgan, S. Thomas, T. Smith, M. Cook</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>	
No. 4.	<p><u>JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (BUDGET MONITORING)</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18th November, 2019 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>REVENUE BUDGET 2020/2021 TO 2024/2025</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources presented the report which provided an update on the positive provisional local government settlement for 2020/21 and its impact upon the Council's budget. The report also proposed the detailed budget for 2020/21 and indicative budget for 2021/22; and proposed the level of Council Tax increase for the 2020/21 financial year, in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy assumptions.</p> <p>The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein. She said the positive provisional</p>	

settlement and the opportunities identified in the Bridging the Gap programme meant the Council would be able to invest in key priorities, avoid cuts to services and enhance its financial resilience moving forward. However, further details of the specific grants for Local Government would be published alongside the final RSG settlement in February 2020.

A Member commended Officers on the positive report. He said this was a very important part of the budget setting process and expressed concern that no Labour members were in attendance.

In response to a question raised by a Member regarding the cost pressure for the review of the LDP, the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services explained that whilst the LDP Review strategy had been agreed, there were various other stages to be undertaken and these were likely to continue for a further 2 years.

The Co-opted Member said the positive settlement for Blaenau Gwent was very good news, in particular the increase in education funding, and the fact that primary pupil numbers had increased. He said the report seemed to indicate that Blaenau Gwent was recovering from its economic decline.

However, whilst the increase in pupil population was positive, he hoped that this would be supported financially. He also referred to the shortfall in teachers' pay and pensions and the potential impact on individual school budgets (ISB). He also said that a list of schools showing those in a surplus/deficit position would be beneficial for Members to scrutinise.

The Co-opted Member then referred to the complexity of school funding, and said it was difficult to plan for the year ahead and set accurate budgets with a number of grants being distributed throughout the year.

The Chief Officer Resource confirmed that the comments in relation to the teachers' pay and pensions would be noted. However, if Members of the Council agree to fund the cost pressure for teachers' pay and pensions for the remaining 5

months, this would result in an increase to the ISB of approximately 5%.

The Corporate Director for Education also confirmed that the unpredictable allocation of grant funding had been raised with Welsh Government by the Local Authority and the EAS.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the Bridging the Gap Programme when the Managing Director confirmed that keeping up the pace of the workstreams was a clear incentive for CLT. However, it would be sensible to utilise any achievement exceeding the budget requirement in a more business-like way, rather than having to make cuts, and whilst it was pleasing to set an indicative budget for the next 2 years, the latter years of the MTFS would be challenging unless we deliver the Bridging the Gap programme.

The Chair and Members said this was a very positive report, and commended Officers for their work and prudent financial management.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and supported Option 1, namely:

- i. Members recommend to Executive and Council the 2020/2021 revenue budget and high level indicative budget for 2021/2022 (as per Appendix 5 and para 6.4.1);
- ii. Note the potential for further change in the Final RSG Settlement (paras 2.8 – 2.19);
- iii. Note the outcomes within the BGCBC provisional RSG Settlement and its impact upon the Medium Term Financial Strategy (paras 2.20 – 2.26);
- iv. Recommend to Executive and Council the updated cost pressures and growth items (£2m in total) identified in Appendix 3 (parags 5.1.6 – 5.1.8) for inclusion in the Council's budget. This includes the establishment of a cross cutting Transformation budget of £500k to be utilised to implement/deliver opportunities for Blaenau Gwent;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>v. Recommend to Executive and Council ‘passporting’ expenditure from these former specific grants/additional funding in to the Council’s budget (paras 5.1.11 – 5.1.18); <li>vi. Recommend to Executive and Council that any achievement of Bridging the Gap proposals which exceeds the in-year budget requirement be transferred into an earmarked reserve to support medium term financial planning, specifically for the later years of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (para 5.1.28); <li>vii. Recommend to Executive and Council a Council Tax increase of 4% for 2021/21 (para 5.1.3) as per the MTFS assumptions. 	
--	---	--

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: AUDIT COMMITTEE – 28TH JANUARY, 2020

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: Mr. Peter Williams (CHAIR)

Councillors S. Healy
 G. Collier
 G.L. Davies
 J. Hill
 K. Rowson
 B. Summers
 H. Trollope
 J. Wilkins

WITH: Audit and Risk Manager
 Professional Lead – Internal Audit
 Corporate Health & Safety Advisor
 Team Leader Performance
 Data Protection & Governance Officer
 Solicitor x 2
 Apprentice

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
----	<p><u>CONGRATULATIONS</u></p> <p>Members of the Committee extended congratulations and best wishes to Martin Woodland, Solicitor on his new appointment with Caerphilly County Council and thanked him for his legal advice and professionalism over the years.</p>	

No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received for Councillors M. Cross, L. Elias, D. Hancock, J. Holt, L. Parsons, S. Thomas and L. Winnett.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest and dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>AUDIT COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 19th November, 2019 were submitted for accuracy points.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>AUDIT PLAN PROGRESS REPORT – OCTOBER 2019 TO DECEMBER 2019</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Professional Lead – Internal Audit presented the progress report against the Internal Audit Plan for the period 1st October to 31st December 2019.</p> <p>In response to a Member’s question regarding the ongoing timeline for some reviews, the Professional Lead said that there was a continuous process and Members were informed of tasks from start to finish. In relation to Bedwellty House and Park the Professional Lead confirmed that the account was up to date and due for signing.</p> <p>In relation to Performance Indicators a Member commented on</p>	

the low number of return to work interviews carried out by managers. The Professional Lead advised Members that the agreed action with CLT was that workforce sickness absence performance reports be presented to individual scrutiny committees and this was currently being undertaken.

A Member referred to the percentage of Agreed Actions completed after 6 months and said that 70% was low and Managers needed to improve on this percentage. The Professional Lead explained that there was only 6 staff in the section and a bereavement had contributed to the sickness absence figures. She added that the figure would be stable by the end of the year.

A Member enquired regarding the backup and retention follow up review in relation to Digital and IT. The Professional Lead said that 6 weaknesses had been identified, 2 had been fully implemented, 1 had been partly implemented and 3 had not been implemented. There had been some staff changes in the department which had led to a delay in implementing changes, however, the retention of documents had moved on slightly. The outstanding weaknesses had been risk assessed and the audit process continued.

In response to a Member's question regarding legal implications for backup and retention follow up audits, the Data Protection & Governance Officer explained that it would not be viewed as a breach of security, but would be a breach of compliance.

A Member enquired regarding Insurance, the Audit and Risk Manager said that an Action Plan had not yet been prepared but would be ready by the next Committee meeting. With regard to the audit review of Housing Benefits a progress report would also be presented to the next Committee meeting.

In relation to the systems audit of Corporate Health & Safety a Member commented on the number of accidents not recorded. The Audit and Risk Manager explained the audit findings had been carried out in conjunction with Health and Safety Advisors. The Health and Safety Advisor said that discussions had taken place regarding Accident Reporting and the agreed actions had now been implemented. He also confirmed that an error in the

	<p>official Risk Assessment Guidelines available to all staff had contained an error and this had now been rectified.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the progress on activities for the period October to December 2019 be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>WALES AUDIT OFFICE CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE FOR THE AUDIT OF BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL'S ASSESSMENT OF 2018-19 PERFORMANCE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Head of Governance and Performance.</p> <p>The Team Leader Performance presented the Wales Audit Office Certificate of Compliance following the audit of the Council's assessment of 2018-19 performance.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the compliance certificate dated November 2019 be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTRE - DECOMMISSIONING</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>Upon receipt of advice from the Solicitor, it was confirmed that the two Members who had been contacted by a member of the public in relation to the decommissioning of the Business Resource Centre could remain in the meeting and take part in any discussion that ensued as Members confirmed they had not offered comment on issues brought to their attention by this</p>	

member of the public and Members confirmed that they had directed this person to an appropriate Council Officer to discuss issues.

At this juncture, the Audit and Risk Manager presented the report and the findings contained therein.

A lengthy discussion ensued when numerous Members expressed their concern regarding the detailed findings and requested that the Managing Director and relevant officers from the Regeneration, Community Services and Social Services Directorates and Health & Safety Advisors be invited to attend a Special Audit Committee to provide responses to Members' questions in respect of this report.

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be **DEFERRED** pending a Special Meeting of the Audit Committee being convened to discuss this matter.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 30

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 16.06.2020

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 16.06.2020

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **23rd July, 2020**

Report Subject: **Covid-19 Emergency – Transition to the Next Phase**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Michelle Morris, Managing Director**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	11.06.20	16.06.20				24.06.20	23.07.20	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to confirm the Council's strategic response to the Covid-19 Emergency and to outline the next steps as Wales moves to the next phase of the pandemic, with easing in lockdown restrictions and a gradual restarting of services. The report was considered and endorsed by Executive at its meeting on 24 June 2020.

2. Background

- 2.1 The World Health Organisation declared a global health emergency in relation to coronavirus on 31 January 2020.
- 2.2 The declaration of a national health emergency led to the establishment of Emergency Planning arrangements in the region, under the Civil Contingencies Act 2005. The Gwent Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) was convened for its first meeting on 14 March. The SCG is chaired by Gwent Police and includes the Local Health Board, all five local authorities and Category One Responders.
- 2.3 In accordance with our Emergency Planning arrangements the GOLD Group was established in Blaenau Gwent and commenced meetings on 19 March. This comprises of all members of the Corporate Leadership Team, supported by the Civil Contingency Manager and Communications Manager. The strategic aim of GOLD remains to delay and mitigate as far as practicable the spread and impact of Coronavirus within our community
- 2.4 Heads of Service and Service Managers were convened as the Emergency Response Team, to support GOLD, with the Aneurin Leisure Trust, Tai Calon and Joint Trade Unions also members of the Team. These Groups continue to meet to ensure the proper management of the emergency response in Blaenau Gwent.

- 2.5 On 23 March 2020, the UK Government announced an unprecedented UK-wide 'lockdown' in order to limit the spread of the Covid-19 virus. This resulted in the Council moving to the delivery of Critical Services only (as defined in the Emergency Management Plan) and the closure of schools and offices, with most staff now working from home.
- 2.6 The lockdown restrictions remain in place and in recent weeks there has been a divergence in approach being taken by the UK Government and Welsh Government. In Wales Government has adopted a cautious approach seeking to balance the need to protect the Country from further surges in the Pandemic against the need to get the economy moving again. What is clear that when the gradual relaxation takes affect it will not be a case of simply 'returning to normal'. *Much as we might want it to, 'normal' life will not be possible for many months – possibly years.*
- 2.7 The Welsh Government has set out its strategy for leading Wales out of the coronavirus pandemic, publishing both a framework and roadmap <https://gov.wales/leading-wales-out-coronavirus-pandemic> <https://gov.wales/unlocking-our-society-and-economy-continuing-conversation>.
- 2.8 The approach in Wales is based on a red/amber/green framework for moving out of lockdown over an undefined period of time, with decision being based on the progress of the pandemic and the important need to reduce the R Number. The Test, Trace and Protect Plan – published on the 13 May – establishes arrangements for community testing and contact tracing which need to be in place to support any relaxation of restrictions. This Service went live in Wales on 1 June.

3. Blaenau Gwent's Response to Covid-19

- 3.1 Since lockdown began the Council has shifted its sole focus to the emergency response. This has resulted in delivery of only critical services with other available resources being redeployed to support the response. There has been a particular focus on Adult Social Services, supporting some of the most vulnerable in our community, refuse collection and recycling and public protection, with Councils taking on significant new enforcement responsibilities under the Coronavirus legislation.
- 3.2 The response has involved school closures and the creation of School Hubs to support key workers, by providing childcare for their children, and vulnerable learners, with schools also sustaining distance learning with the remaining pupils. School Hubs continue to be provided at seven locations (including four secondary schools and Pen-y-Cwm Special School).
- 3.3 The Council has continued to support families eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). Initially meals were provided at some local locations and then the service shifted to the delivery of food boxes to families. Since the end of April families now receive direct payments to cover the cost of providing meals and this provision will continue through the summer holidays. Over 2000 families are being supported in Blaenau Gwent through this service.

- 3.4 The creation of locality response teams has been a critical part of the Council's response. Some 3521 residents in the Borough have been identified as shielded, due to health issues, and as a result received letters from Government advising them to remain in their homes and to protect themselves from infection. Originally the advice was to 15 June but has recently been extended to 16 August. All these residents have been contacted by the Council to offer support and 570 have been registered for food boxes which are being delivered weekly. In addition, the Council has also identified a further 1353 residents who are vulnerable (over 70 or living alone) and have offered support to them through the lockdown. Over 500 people have been helped through the locality response teams with some people having multiple contacts mainly to arrange shopping, collection of prescriptions and befriending calls. This work has been supported by community and voluntary activity which continues to support the distribution of food boxes (to families eligible for FSM) and those who are shielded or vulnerable.
- 3.5 Unprecedented support has also been provided to local businesses, enabling them to access Government financial support schemes, with the aim of protecting our local economy from the worse impact of the Pandemic. Up to the 5 June the Council had facilitated the payment of 1,212 grants totalling £13.56m. in addition to this a number of businesses have also been supported to apply for funding through the Economic Resilience Fund (administered by Business Wales). The Council also took the decision to provide a one month rent free period to tenants renting our industrial premises, support has continued to provide rent holidays to help them through the lockdown period. The purpose of this has been to sustain local businesses and employment.
- 3.6 At the start of lockdown, the Council moved from a position where staff attended offices to work, albeit based on an agile working model which enabled some home working, to a position where staff now work entirely from home with very low attendance in the office. This has been supported by the rapid deployment of Microsoft TEAMS which is enabling the Council to work in a totally different way based on running virtual teams and meetings. This technology is being used highly effectively across the Welsh public sector including the regional work of the Cardiff City Deal and Gwent Strategic Co-ordinating Group. In response to this situation the Council temporarily closed the Civic Centre and General Office.
- 3.7 The decision was also taken to suspend formal council and committee meetings at the end of March. The AGM was held, virtually, on 2 April and Emergency Governance arrangements were agreed including establishing an Emergency Committee. Some formal business will be convened in June and July to deal with issues arising from the emergency response and other urgent business. Executive, Planning and Full Council are all scheduled to meet virtually before the Summer Recess. Technology and support has been deployed to all Elected Members to enable them to participate in these meetings.
- 3.8 Through the lockdown period Elected Members have undertaken their roles while working remotely. There has been a particular focus on community leadership and Members have worked with Officers to provide links into the community and to ensure that those in need of support were properly identified. The two Groups have continued to meet and the Managing Director has held weekly briefings in

order to ensure Members are kept informed and engaged in the work of the Council during lockdown.

- 3.9 The Welsh Government and local government have had a shared commitment to work in partnership. This shared leadership has been demonstrated and strengthened during this crisis and there has been an unprecedented level of dialogue and engagement and openness, with regular bilateral meetings between Ministers and WLGA spokespersons and weekly meetings between all 22 leaders and Ministers. The Leader of the Council has participated in these weekly Leaders meetings with the WLGA and Ministers, as well as continuing to participate in the Cardiff City Deal and other regional forums.
- 3.10 There has been a significant impact on the Council's workforce with high levels of absence in the early weeks of the pandemic as individuals self-isolated or were in receipt of shielding letters. The highest level of absence was 18%, however this has now reduced down to just over 7%, with staff being able to return to work. Those working in non-critical services have been available for redeployment with many moving into key roles in the locality teams, school hubs, supporting families eligible for FSM and, most recently, into the new contact tracing team. As services re-start then there will be a gradual return to substantive roles. There has been some requirement to bring in agency staff to cover staff who are not able to work and to support new measures in the workplace arising from social distancing. Some Council staff have been furloughed under the Government Scheme to mitigate some of the impact from loss of income and to support those who have to shield and cannot work.

4.0 Impact of Covid-19 on Blaenau Gwent

- 4.1 The latest ONS data shows that up to the 30 May there were 60 deaths in Blaenau Gwent from Covid-19. This comprised of 36 deaths in hospitals (60%), 22 in care homes (36%) and 2 at home (4%). This is based on the number of deaths that have Covid-19 identified as the cause of death on death certificates.
- 4.2 The pandemic has also had an unprecedented impact on the economy and on employment in the Borough. Many workers have been furloughed under the Government's Job Retention Scheme and large numbers have lost their jobs which has resulted in a sharp increase in the numbers claiming Universal Credit (UC) and other benefits. Total caseload for claims being is 9267 (UC=2520, HB=6747) an increase of UC cases of 535 between April to June.
- 4.3 As a result of the consequential impact of Covid-19 on economic activity, there has also been an increase in applications for council tax support. For the period 1 March 2020 to 31 May 2020, the CTRS live claims has increased by 3.1% (277) with approximately 375 new claims outstanding (7% increase).
- 4.4 The Housing Options Team has seen an increase in the number of clients presenting as homeless since the start of the Covid-19 outbreak. Up to the end of May there were 260 live cases with 41 households placed in temporary accommodation. This is an increase of some 100 cases in just two months.

- 4.5 The financial consequences of the pandemic for local business and the public sector is not yet fully known. Certainly the impact on the Council's financial position alone is significant with the additional costs of dealing with the emergency and the loss of income presenting a severe financial risk. The Welsh Government published its Supplementary Budget on 27 May, £189 million has been made available to support local authority budgets, including £40 million for adult social care pressures, £40 million for free school meal provision, and £78 million to account for lost income during the crisis. While this support is welcomed it is not possible to predict, at this stage, what the full financial cost will be for the Council. This is dealt with in more detail in another item on this agenda.

5. Transition to the Next Phase

- 5.1 In an emergency the Council would normally deal with the response and then move into recovery phase to support the community back to normal. What is clear is that dealing with Covid-19 is very different and while the peak experienced in the Spring has now passed the pandemic is not over. The relaxation of lockdown will be supported by measures, such as social distancing, community testing and contact tracing, to enable us to return to work, school and other activities whilst still living with the pandemic. The clear expectation is that many of these measures will be with us for months and until a vaccine or treatment are found. So we need to be able to continue to respond to the pandemic, while moving to the next phase and at the same time supporting some elements of recovery.
- 5.2 It has been agreed that a Recovery Co-ordination Group (RCG) should now be established to lead the Recovery work in Gwent. The nature of this emergency means we expect to run both response and recovery side by side. This will place a further demand on resources.
- 5.3 It is also the case that so much about the way we live our lives has changed and we will not simply return to normal once Covid-19 is under control. There is the opportunity for the Council to build on the positive work of the past three months with the expectation being that we do not seek to return to the way things were before but harness the positive aspects of the response to strengthen and modernise the Council, adopting new working practices and challenging how we did things before, in order to map out an ambitious future, create a stronger organisation and to sustain the strong relationships forged with our communities and partners.
- 5.4 The Council will continue to respond to the emergency but is now re-starting some services in line with the relaxation of lockdown. It will not be a case of delivering services as we have done before, service delivery will have to change to take into account the national framework which will for the foreseeable future involve mandatory social distancing alongside a clear direction to work from home, where possible; the phased 'restart' of wide range of public services and of the economy; and continued proactive work to prevent the further spread of the virus whilst also planning for potential future 'peaks.'
- 5.5 The Council has set out the conditions that will need to be in place for service delivery to re-start:

- Services will only be brought back when Government Legislation/Guidance supports this;
- Critical Services need to be prioritised and re-starting services cannot undermine critical service delivery – this will include the new services stood up to respond to the virus e.g. locality and contact tracing teams;
- Risk assessments, in conjunction with the trade unions, will need to be completed to ensure that it is safe for staff and service users;
- Those who are shielded or vulnerable will need to stay locked down at least until mid-August and until further advice from Government;
- Where new ways of working have proved effective these should be built into new ways of delivering services.

5.6 Services which have already been introduced include the HWRC, Bulky Waste Collection, Parks, Grounds Maintenance and Highways Maintenance. Service delivery models have been adjusted to ensure that social distancing is adhered to and that the working environment is safe for staff and service users. A standard procedure is now in place in advance of services being re-started that requires a full risk assessment to be in place and consultation with the trade unions. The decision for services to restart is taken at GOLD/CLT in consultation with the Leader and appropriate Executive Member. The mitigation being put in place is having an impact on the cost of service delivery with additional staff required in many cases.

5.7 The Minister of Education announced on 3 June that schools can re-open in Wales on the 29 June, with the end of term extended to 27 July. Work is underway with head teachers to plan for the return of pupils for this brief period before the summer holiday. Certainly this is not a return to normal for schools with social distancing meaning that no more than a 30% of pupils will be in school at any one time and attendance remaining optional for this term. This will provide an opportunity for teachers to check in with pupils and to plan for their return in September. However, with social distancing expected to be a requirement for the foreseeable future the shape of learning will change with distance learning being a core part of delivery going forward. The Council is currently repurposing and distributing laptops to some 1400 pupils who do not currently have access to ensure none are digitally excluded.

5.8 The re-opening of Council Offices is also being considered with planning being done to determine how offices could open safely and in a way that complied with social distancing and safe management of shared spaces. Government guidance currently requires staff who can work from home to do so, and the successful use of technology should be sustained to enable this to continue. It is now confirmed that offices will not open before the Autumn, and it is evident that when offices do re-open it will be with a significant reduction in capacity (50-60%) to accommodate the 2M social distancing, so home working will remain with staff moving to a blend of home and office working, with any attendance in the office being on a rota basis.

- 5.9 Return to formal Council business is being considered for the autumn and at present it is not known when Committees will be able to meet in person. Dependencies being further relaxation of lockdown restrictions and the completion of risk assessments to demonstrate that the workplace is safe for Elected Members, staff and the public. The Executive, Planning Committee and Full Council are scheduled to meet before the summer recess but this will be done using Microsoft TEAMS. Scrutiny Briefings will also be held to enable new Committee Members to meet virtually and to agree their Forward Work Programmes.
- 5.10 It is recommended that the next steps are for the Council to refresh its corporate priorities to ensure it builds in the commitment needed to build that stronger future. Ensuring that the good practice is becomes part of the way the Council works in the future.

6. Place Shaping – Blaenau Gwent

- 6.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has been devastating globally and will have a significant detrimental impact on the economy and the way we live, work, learn and socialise for the foreseeable future. The Council has had to respond to this unprecedented situation and has done so at pace, bringing an innovative approach to problem solving and changes in service delivery, ensuring that the health and well-being of our residents and communities has been the driver for our decision making and actions.
- 6.2 Despite the impact that the pandemic has had, it is possible to identify positive experience and good practice from the way the Council and community has responded in Blaenau Gwent. It is clear there is a real opportunity to hold onto these positives and to not simply return to normal but to build on our work to create a stronger and more resilient organisation and community.
- 6.3 The areas where this can be demonstrated include the way the Council has adopted new technology and modern working practices at pace, enabling it to continue operating with staff and Elected Members almost entirely working from home. The targeted support provided to the more vulnerable in our communities with services coming together into multi-functional teams and working very effectively with partners and community and voluntary groups. The strong use of data and information to build our business intelligence about our community and the increase in digital service delivery and contact to ensure we can continue to deliver services in a way that is safe for staff and residents. There has been strong support for local businesses – which will need to continue – and a step change in how we communicate with our residents about service changes and the decisions being made by the Council, resulting in a real sense of a better connection with the community and an appreciation of the work of key front-line staff.

- 6.4 The next steps will be really important now to ensure we use this experience to build that stronger organisation and Place in Blaenau Gwent, rather than simply reverting to normal.
- 6.5 The Council also needs to take a community leadership role in identifying the impact of the pandemic on the community and the interventions that need to be put in place to support recovery – this includes recovery for the local economy. Recognising that this is a task that will be delivered in partnership with other organisations across the Region. In support of this a Community Impact Assessment is being prepared to inform the work of the Council and wider Public Service Board.
- 6.6 Strengthening the ‘Place’ needs to draw on the wider partnership with public sector partners, through the BG Public Service Board, and the business community, through the BG Enterprise Board. Agreeing our collective priorities for the recovery and re-purposing of the Borough.
- 6.7 Blaenau Gwent also needs to continue to be part of the wider regional and national work to recover and create a stronger future. This work should lead into the wider G10 discussions (bringing together public sector leaders from across the region) and the work of the Cardiff City Deal. This will be supported by work undertaken by the regional partners on Horizon Scanning which will inform the recovery work across Gwent.

7. **Recommendations**

- 7.1 Approve the approach to moving to the next phase of the pandemic and recovery;
- 7.2 Approve the refresh of the Corporate Priorities to ensure a clear focus on what the Council wants to deliver over next 18 months;
- 7.3 Approve the proposal to use the disruption of the pandemic to reflect on how we work as an organisation and with our communities, partners, workforce and trade unions, informing a position on the ‘new normal’ to support delivery of the refreshed priorities;
- 7.4 Support the development of a wider place-based discussion with partners on the community impact of the pandemic and how the BG Public Service Board could respond and support recovery through its collective priorities and work programme;
- 7.5 Support the development of an Economic Recovery Plan through engagement with the BG Enterprise Board and Regional Forums – identifying the responding to the impact on local businesses in order to support economic recovery;
- 7.6 Continue to ensure that Blaenau Gwent is an active participant in regional forums – such as G10 and Cardiff Capital City Region – to support recovery and development of the Borough;

8. Implications Against Each Option

8.1 **Finance** – the response to Covid-19 has come at a significant cost to the public sector and places severe pressure on the Council's revenue budget. Welsh Government has given a commitment to meeting the costs of the response and put aside funding in its Supplementary Budget. Currently Councils are making monthly claims in arrears to recover these costs. Additional funding has also been provided for Social Care to support both in-house and external providers, and the Council has also made claims against this fund. The most significant risk is around loss of income and again some funding has been provided by WG but it is not known how much of the loss of local government this will cover and how long the funding can continue. A more detailed report on the financial impact of the pandemic is provided separately on this agenda.

8.2 **Risks** – the most significant risks at present are:

- the financial risk to the Council and how this will affect our longer term financial resilience;
- the risk to the local economy from the recession arising from the pandemic and the resultant impact on employment and income across the region;
- the risk that the Council will have reduced capacity and resource to support delivery of its corporate priorities and statutory obligations.

8.3 **Legal** – the Council will need to continue to fulfil its obligations under the Civil Contingencies 2005 Act to respond to the on-going emergency situation and, in parallel, to undertake recovery. Additional responsibilities have also been placed on the Council as a result of the Coronavirus Act 2020 with particular pressure on Public Protection around enforcement and the requirement to support contact tracing.

8.4 **Human Resources** – there will be a continued impact on the workforce as those staff who are 'shielded' will need to remain so until the middle of August and some will not be able to work from home due to the nature of their jobs. In addition, there are staff who are vulnerable or living with a vulnerable person who will also not be available for work during this period. At present there are 200 staff at home who are not able to work. The continued absence of these staff and the need to introduce new working practices i.e. social distancing, in the workplace also means there has been an increase in agency staff required to sustain and re-start services.

9. Supporting Evidence

8.1 Expected outcome for the public - the transition to recovery is critical for the wider community to ensure that life can return to some normality, following the first wave of the pandemic, with a return to work and school being an important aspect ensuring that everyone can do this safely.

8.2 Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation) – there has been some engagement through the lockdown period, particularly with parents as we seek to re-open schools, and the business community to ensure the level of support needed to protect employment within the Borough.

- 8.3 Thinking for the Long term (forward planning) – this report sets out how the Council is aiming to not simply seek to return to normal, but how it can build a stronger position as we emerge from lockdown. This is particularly relevant to building stronger and more resilient communities, and embedding new ways of working into how the Council does business in the future.
- 8.4 Collaboration / partnership working – strong partnership working has been a feature of the response to the pandemic and it is intended to continue and build on this positive work through the recovery work of the Gwent Recovery Co-ordinating Group (RCG), the Public Service Board and wider regional working through the Gwent G10 Partnership.
- 8.5 Integration (across service areas) – through the pandemic the Council has worked as a single organisation and across services and partnerships to deliver an effective emergency response. It is intended to take the learning from this and to build this into the way the organisation works going forward.

Agenda Item 31

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 13.7.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 13.7.20

Committee: Council

Date of Meeting:

23rd July, 2020

Report Subject:

The Impact of Covid-19 on the 2020/2021 Revenue Budget and Update on Bridging the Gap Proposals

Portfolio Holder:

**Councillor N. Daniels –
Leader/Executive Member –
Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by:

R Hayden – Chief Officer Resources

Report Written by:

**G Taylor – Service Manager
Accountancy, D McAuliffe – Senior
Business Partner**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	11/06/2020					24/06/2020	23/07/20	Gold CLT – 7/5/20

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an initial forecast of the impact of Covid-19 on the 2020/2021 revenue budget and to provide an update of progress made against the Bridging the Gap Programme.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 This report forecasts the impact of Covid-19 on the 2020/2021 revenue budget. It provides a forecast of revenue cost implications – both in terms of expenditure and income generated by the Council. The report has been informed by the March 2020 monthly return to Welsh Government (WG) in relation to the hardship fund, the WLGA loss of income survey (completed in April 2020) and following discussions with budget holders.
- 2.2 The information provided to the WLGA covered the period to the end of June 2020 and so the main assumption in this report is that the current lockdown period extends to the end of June. Therefore, it has been assumed that some “normal” budget activity will resume from 1st July 2020. Future forecasts will be updated to take account of any revisions to the current situation.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1 (Recommended Option)**

3.2 It is recommended that Council considers and agrees the current forecast position

3.3 It is recommended that Council note the progress made against the Bridging the Gap programme for 2020/2021.

3.4 **Option 2**

3.5 Do not accept the report.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 This report supports the Council Priority, "Efficient Council", as it is part of the financial planning and reporting arrangements which support the Councils' financial resilience.

5.1 **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1.1 Appendix 1 provides an overall forecast on a portfolio by portfolio basis, taking the following into account: -

- additional / reduced expenditure - net increase of £2.4m and
- additional / reduced income – net decrease of £1.6m

5.1.2 This forecast takes into account all known Covid-19 related financial issues. More detailed budget monitoring reports will be produced at a later stage, in line with the annual reporting timetable.

5.1.3 In addition, the forecast includes an estimate of claims to the WG hardship fund and the new Social Services hardship fund, to forecast a net impact on the Council's revenue budget.

5.1.4 The forecast indicates that there is a revenue budget cost pressure of £4m at this point in time, this is before any reimbursement of costs from the WG Hardship fund or support for loss of income. The report assumes all the additional costs incurred for the Council's response to COVID 19 is fully funded, this cost pressure will reduce to £1.465m. However initial indications from Welsh Government indicates that ICT costs will be 50% funded.

5.1.5 Whilst Welsh Government have indicated that funding of £78m is available across Wales to fund loss of income, at this stage it is unclear how this funding will be administered and awarded (criteria for claim). Appendix 1 forecasts that the loss of income to the Council's portfolios for the period April 2020 to June 2020 could be as high as £1.7m (£1.1m external income and £0.6m internal income). The most significant loss of external income is within the Catering Service and school meal income which generates around £90,000 per month (term time).

5.1.6 £1.7m loss of income has been factored into the net revenue budget cost pressure identified in 5.1.4.

5.2 **Detailed points of analysis – additional expenditure**

5.2.1 Appendix 1 forecasts that additional costs of £2.737m will be incurred as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Further comment on significant areas of expenditure are shown below.

Corporate Services

5.2.2 Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) - As a result of the consequential impact of Covid-19 on economic activity, there has been an increase in applications for council tax support. For the period 1 March 2020 to 31 May 2020, the CTRS live claims has increased by 3.1% (277) with approximately 375 new claims outstanding (7% increase).

This is reflective across Wales, whereby the increase in CTRS caseload in April 2020 was estimated to be 3%. However, there has also been an increase in Universal Credit applications, which could lead to an overall increase in CTRS claims of up to 10%.

The budget for CTRS in the 2020/2021 financial year is £9.3m, within the Corporate Services Portfolio.

A 7% increase in claimants would suggest a budgetary cost pressure of £162,000 to June 2020. It has been assumed that caseload will start to fall from July 2020, however if case numbers continue at the higher level this would result in a cost pressure of £650,000 for the full year. At this stage, these costs cannot be reclaimed from the Hardship fund. This significant area of cost pressure has been identified as an issue with WG.

5.2.3 IT systems costs for electronic mail and electronic invoicing have been incurred in the sum of £38,000, these have been incurred to support home working.

Social Services

5.2.4 The majority of Covid-19 costs arise in the Adult Care sector. Currently estimated at £1.43m, this is the single largest cost element of the Covid-19 response, affecting both internal services (staff overtime £30k) and the external adult care sector - domiciliary/nursing/residential care and Supported Living (these have been estimated to be approximately 10% of the current budget, a cautious estimate of £1.4m). These costs will be re-claimed from the Hardship fund.

5.2.5 Employee costs for six month fixed term contracts will be incurred in Children's Services. These costs are being reclaimed from the Hardship fund since they relate to staff covering staff absences due to Covid-19.

Environment

- 5.2.6 It is forecast that the costs of waste collection will rise by £0.5m resulting from the introduction of social distancing measures for staff. This has resulted in additional staff (including agency staff estimated at £180,000) and additional vehicle related costs. These costs will be re-claimed through the Hardship fund.
- 5.2.7 It is forecast that the cost of providing free school meals through a direct payment to families will cost £0.4m. The additional costs above the Council's free school meals budget will be re-claimed through the Hardship fund. Welsh Government are extending this scheme through the summer of 2020 and it is assumed that any costs incurred will continue to be re-claimed from the Hardship fund.

Homelessness

- 5.2.8 The Council has block booked homelessness placements to ensure that there is accommodation available to those who present as homeless at a cost of £26,000 for the period.

5.2.9 ***Cross cutting areas of expenditure***

Some areas of expenditure relate to a number of portfolios and have therefore been categorised as cross-cutting expenditure eg ICT, Personal Protective Equipment and sanitiser products. The forecast level of expenditure total £0.37m and includes the cost of ICT provided to Members of £27,000. It has been assumed that these cost can be re-claimed from the Hardship fund.

5.3 **Detailed points of analysis – loss of income**

- 5.3.1 Appendix 1 forecasts that there will be a loss of income of £1.7m (£1.1m external income and £0.6m internal income) as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Further comment on significant areas of expenditure are shown below.

Corporate Services

- 5.3.2 Council Tax Collection data for April and May 2020 compared to the same period in 2019 indicates an overall reduction in the collection rate of 2.6%, and this is reflective of the position across Wales.
- 5.3.3 Whilst this does not directly impact on the portfolio budgets, Council Tax forms part of the overall funding package that the Council estimates when setting its budget. Reduced collection would impact upon the Council's cash flow and the Surplus on Collection budget of £1.2m within the Corporate Services Portfolio could be affected. It is difficult to quantify at this point in time and will depend upon the 'bounce back' of the wider economy, as lockdown is eased and people return to work their ability to pay their Council Tax and other bills should improve. Therefore, it has been assumed that the £1.2m Surplus on Collection will be achieved, However the increased risk of non-collection of council tax will increase the probability of higher levels of bad debt write-off.

- 5.3.4 The forecast also includes a loss of income from court costs arising from prosecutions and land searches (£13,000) and marriage ceremonies at registrar venues of £24,000.

Social Services

- 5.3.5 The forecast includes a loss of income from domiciliary and respite care of £50,000.

Economy

- 5.3.6 The forecast assumes a loss of income from industrial units of £68,000 for the month of April 2020 only i.e. a one month rent free period for tenants. It also forecasts a loss of rental at the General Offices of £10,000 for the period April 2020 to June 2020. The forecast assumes the 2 month rent deferral will be collected by the end of the financial year.

Environment

- 5.3.7 The four largest elements in this portfolio relate to the forecast loss of income from pupils who pay for school meals (£240,000), the assumed loss of income for school catering and cleaning through service level agreements (£640,000) and the loss / delay of income from the disposal of recycling waste and trade waste operations (£217,000 – this may be recouped in the latter part of the year if market prices improve).
Other areas include the loss of income from bulky waste collection, grounds maintenance, littering and dog control orders (£171,000).

Infrastructure

- 5.3.8 The forecast loss of income includes Technical Service support to other authorities (£96,000 – this may be recouped towards the year-end) and highways permits, RASWA, civil parking enforcement and markets (£90,000).

Planning

- 5.3.9 The forecast loss of income relates to fees for planning applications and development services (£93,000). Following the lifting of lockdown, it is possible that deferred applications may be received and the income generated to the budgeted level.

Licensing

- 5.3.10 The forecast loss of income of £10,000 primarily relates to the decision not to increase taxi licenses for the 2020/2021 financial year (£7,000).

5.4 Grant Funding

- 5.4.1 In relation to specific grants, the base assumption is that full expenditure can be recorded against specific grants. However, there will be some areas where

goods and services will not be delivered within the 2020/2021 financial years. This will be monitored throughout the year and no doubt will lead to discussions with grant providers.

5.4.2 A further issue arises where the Council passports grants to third party recipients, where those recipients cannot provide services for example where their staff have been furloughed through the central government scheme. There will be many examples of this scenario in Social Services and in grants passported to the Leisure Trust (where the majority of staff are furloughed or re-deployed). Off the record discussions suggest that some government bodies (e.g. Sports/Arts Councils) will allow some flexibility and not re-claim grant in these circumstances.

5.5.1 **Service Level Agreements**

The base assumption is that schools and the Leisure Trust will pay for all service level agreements that they have signed up to – apart from school catering and school cleaning and a cost pressure has been included of £0.6m in the potential loss of income figure of £1.79m.

5.6 **Bridging the Gap proposals**

5.6.1 The target for the financial achievement of the Strategic Business Reviews in 2020/2021 is £1.465m. Many of the proposals relate to income generation / maximisation and therefore these areas have been factored into the fees and charges information contained within Appendix 1. An overall summary of progress within each proposal is attached as Appendix 2 which also provides an update on progress for each Bridging the Gap proposal.

5.6.2 Appendix 2 forecasts that £1.217m (83%) will be achieved, at this point in time. For many of the income related proposals, the base assumption assumes that the lockdown will continue to the end of June 2020.

5.7 **Current Mitigations:-**

Additional income:-

5.7.1 Based on income receipts in April 2020, the forecast indicates that there will be increased income to the end of June 2020 from the Meals on Wheels Service (£30,000) and from Burial fees (£100,000). At this stage, there is no indication of the financial impact arising from the operation of the Crematorium Joint Committee.

Reduced expenditure: -

Education

5.7.2 The forecast relates to a reduction of 25% in the payments made to home to school contract providers, (£121,000).

Environment

- 5.7.3 It is forecast that there will be reduced expenditure for school meals catering, primarily for school meal provisions (£160,000) and in staff sickness cover for school meal catering and school cleaning (£22,000).

Infrastructure

- 5.7.4 The lockdown period has had an impact on the ability to undertake road maintenance. However, at this stage, it is likely that the budget will be fully committed by the year end.

Cross cutting areas

- 5.7.5 The period of lockdown has led to a significant increase in home working. Consequently there will be a reduction in claims for mileage costs, which at this stage has been estimated at £20,000. In addition, there will be a slow down in filling non-business critical vacant posts. However, the financial consequence has not been calculated at this point in time.

Re-purposed schools / locality hubs

- 5.7.6 At this stage, there has been minimal direct expenditure coded to the re-purposed schools /locality hubs service areas, apart from costs for protective clothing. This is primarily due to the fact that existing staff have been “re-deployed” for this specific purpose.

Furlough of Council staff

- 5.7.7 Councils across Wales are considering the potential to apply for furlough funding for certain categories of staff – primarily those areas that are directly linked to income generation e.g. for directly provided leisure services. This is an area that Blaenau Gwent is progressing to minimise costs.

Potential Mitigations:

- 5.7.8 All Council budgets will be reviewed to determine whether the budget can be reprioritised to mitigate additional costs and loss of income, examples include:
- budgets linked to vacant posts
 - Supplies and Services budgets – reduced costs of printing, stationery etc
 - Utilities – reduced costs as a result of closure of buildings.

Management Fees

- 5.7.9 The base assumption is that the full management fee will be paid to the Leisure Trust (where majority of staff are furloughed through the central government scheme and re-deployed) and the Education Achievement Service. It is proposed to revisit the 2020/21 Management Fee to ensure there is no double funding from the public purse (via Job Retention Scheme or the Council). This is on the basis that the Trust’s loss of income from visitors is likely to be offset by the

furlough payments to be received from the central government scheme (albeit the scheme does not contribute towards the Trust's running costs, however, the Trust should see some reduction in this area). Discussions relating to the financial implications of Covid-19 on the Trust are ongoing at this stage - the quarter 1 management fee paid to the Leisure Trust for 2020/21 was £753,000.

School Budgets

- 5.7.10 The base assumption is that schools will fully utilise the £45m of funding distributed through the individual Schools Budget (ISB). There is an argument to be made that as schools are currently closed for mainstream education, schools have not incurred expenditure on areas such as supply teaching and other areas of discretionary spend. Following this argument to a conclusion, would suggest that there is scope to ask schools to return elements of funding to the LEA. However, it has been suggested by some schools that there is the potential for increased teacher supply costs in the short to medium term, resulting from Covid-19 staff sickness. Consideration should also be given for the potential for schools to ask for reciprocal arrangements in relation to service level agreements.
- 5.7.11 Councils within the Greater Gwent area have been canvassed for their view in relation to schools budgets. Responses suggest that whilst school funding is on the radar, no conclusions or firm decisions have as yet, been arrived at.

The Transformation Fund

- 5.7.12 Council agreed on 6th February 2020 to create a cross cutting budget of £492,000 within the 2020/2021 revenue budget, for implementing/delivering opportunities within the Council. This forecast assumes this budget has been fully committed however to date, no requests for funding have been received for consideration.
- 5.7.13 In addition, a cross-cutting Commercial & Contract Management budget of £496,000 was created within the 2020/2021 revenue budget to consider requests for funding in areas where budget holders are unable to maintain contract prices within budget frameworks. To date, no requests for funding have been considered, however, this has been assumed as fully committed in the current forecast.

Pension increase/anticipated pay award

- 5.7.14 The Council anticipated an annual 1% increase in employers local government pension fund contributions. However, the Council was able to secure a pension increase "holiday" for 2020/2021. In addition, the 2020/2021 budget anticipated a 2% pay award for non-teaching staff. However, indications are that a pay award will be agreed at a higher level (the minimum increase being 2.75%). The net difference will enable a budget differential of @£30,000, which could be used as mitigation for cost pressures, unless a higher pay award is agreed.

5.7.15 Consideration could be given to the introduction of some emergency measures for example reducing/delaying non-essential expenditure.

5.8.1 **Capital Programme:**

For information, the loss of income survey to the WLGA, forecasted that there would be an additional capital cost of £440,000, to the capital programme for the following schemes:-

21st Century Schools Schemes
Household Waste Recycling
Industrial Units & Constrained Units
Sports Pitches
Schools Maintenance Projects

5.8.2 It is forecast that these costs will arise from project delay and additional site management requirements.

5.9 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

5.9.1. There is a risk that the lockdown will continue into the long term and consequently the net revenue and capital cost pressures could increase. This risk will be mitigated by further budget monitoring and the identification / justification of the costs to be re-claimed from Welsh Government's hardship fund. Across Wales, unfunded cost pressures could place significant pressure on reserves and ultimately financial resilience.

5.9.2. There is a risk that not all of the costs claimed from the Welsh Government's hardship fund will be approved. This risk will be mitigated by continued dialogue through professional bodies and with the WLGA.

5.10 **Legal**
n/a

5.11 **Human Resources**

5.11.1. The majority of Accountancy staff who were initially re-deployed to front line services have been recalled to assist in the production of this report and to assist in the ongoing compilation of financial information for various bodies.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

6.2.1 The report forecasts the financial implications for the Council in providing services to the communities of Blaenau Gwent, arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

6.3.1 The report has been produced in conjunction with portfolio budget holders.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

6.4.1 *This report highlights the financial impact of COVID 19 on the Council's 2020/21 budget should additional support from WG re loss of income / CTRS not be forthcoming.*

The Council will need to plan for this potential event by identifying additional cost reductions / increased income to ensure the Council's remains financially resilient.

6.5 *Preventative focus*
n/a

6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working*
n/a

6.7 *Integration(across service areas)*
n/a

6.8 ***EqlA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***

6.8.1 All proposals will be Equality Impact Assessed.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 *State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements*

Wider Corporate Leadership Team, political groups, Joint Budget Scrutiny, Executive and Council

Background Documents /Electronic Links

--



Appendix 1 v2.pdf



Appendix 2 -
BTG.xlsx

APPENDIX 1

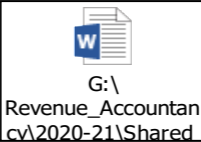

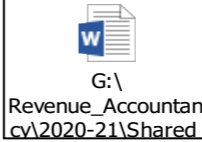
IMPACT OF COVID-19

SUMMARY OF PORTFOLIOS






BASED ON ASSUMED LOCKDOWN PERIOD APRIL 2020 TO JUNE 2020

Item	Original Estimate 2020/2021	Forecast additional expenditure	Forecast reduced expenditure	Forecast additional income	Forecast reduced income	Forecast out turn 2020/2021	variance 2020/2021 favourable/(adverse)
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
SUMMARY							
Corporate Services and Financial Management and Strategy							
Corporate Services	4,619,170	28,900	0	0	37,000	4,685,070	(65,900)
Financial Management & Strategy	12,223,040	175,000	0	0	0	12,398,040	(175,000)
	16,842,210	203,900	0	0	37,000	17,083,110	(240,900)
Social Services							
Children's Services	13,121,990	0	0	0	0	13,121,990	0
Adult Services	26,154,420	1,415,000	0	0	50,000	27,619,420	(1,465,000)
Business Management / Corporate Recharges	5,945,050	15,000	0	0	0	5,960,050	(15,000)
	45,221,460	1,430,000	0	0	50,000	46,701,460	(1,480,000)
Education	57,751,660	0	(121,000)	0	0	57,630,660	121,000
Economy	1,233,010	0	0	0	78,000	1,311,010	(78,000)
Environment, Infrastructure and Aneurin Leisure Trust							
Environment	16,586,430	922,000	(182,000)	(130,000)	1,268,830	18,465,260	(1,878,830)
Infrastructure	8,939,250	0	0	0	186,000	9,125,250	(186,000)
Aneurin Leisure Trust	4,383,090	0	0	0	0	4,383,090	0
	29,908,770	922,000	(182,000)	(130,000)	1,454,830	31,973,600	(2,064,830)
Planning	1,117,580	0	0	0	93,000	1,210,580	(93,000)
Licensing	70,370	0	0	0	10,740	81,110	(10,740)
cross cutting	0	181,000	(20,000)	0	0	161,000	(161,000)
Total Expenditure	152,145,060	2,736,900	(323,000)	(130,000)	1,723,570	156,152,530	(4,007,470)
							<i>TRUE</i>
LESS forecast claims to Welsh Government		(1,142,000)				(1,142,000)	1,142,000
SOCIAL SERVICES EXTERNAL SECTOR		(1,400,000)				(1,400,000)	1,400,000
OTHER							
NET BUDGETARY IMPACT						153,610,530	(1,465,470)

This page is intentionally left blank

Saving Proposal	Approved Estimated Achievement £ 1,465,000	Forecast to be Achieved £	Favourable / (Adverse) Variance £	Update
Overall Savings target				
1 Third Party Expenditure	550,000			 <p>G:\Revenue_Accountan cv\2020-21\Shared</p>
a Contract Management - Removing of Inflation applied to the Draft Estimates	500,000	500,000	0	
b Early Settlement Terms / Increased use of the Procurement Card	50,000	50,000	0	
2 Fees & Charges	200,000			 <p>G:\Revenue_Accountan cv\2020-21\Shared</p>
a Stretched Income Targets	105,000	47,000	(58,000)	
b Increase in Fees & Charges of 5.5% from April 2020	95,000	74,000	(21,000)	
3 Property & Asset Review	130,000			 <p>G:\Revenue_Accountan cv\2020-21\Shared</p>
Corporate Landlord - Reduction in the Rates & Maintenance Budgets following the CAT transfer / Selling/demolition:				
a Worcester St - £13,630 Brynmawr District Office - £24,730 Greenacre - £1,600	73,000	73,000	0	
b Corporate Landlord - Reduction in the Rates & Maintenance Budgets re: Buildings to be sold: Bryngwyn Primary & Queen St Primary - £18,000	18,000	4,500	(13,500)	
d Increase income re: Land and other charges	3,760	0	(3,760)	
e Net reduction in Alt management fee	28,000	0	(28,000)	

Saving Proposal	Approved Estimated Achievement	Forecast to be Achieved	Favourable / (Adverse) Variance	Update
e Energy Costs - Reduction in budget due to efficiency savings identified following implementation of RE:FIT	7,240	7,240	0	
4 Growth Strategy	220,000	220,000	0	
a Council Tax - Increase in collection following the removal of the Empty Property Discount	170,000			
b Council Tax Income	50,000			

Saving Proposal	Approved Estimated Achievement	Forecast to be Achieved	Favourable / (Adverse) Variance	Update
5 Industrial Portfolio Review - Review of service charges and insurance to pass onto Tenants - Increase income through Investment of capital funding to upgrade units	100,000	0	(100,000)	 G:\ Revenue_Accountan cv\2020-21\Shared
6 Commercial Waste Service review - implementation 1/4/2020	23,000	0	(23,000)	 G:\ Revenue_Accountan cv\2020-21\Shared
7 Low Carbon Removal of the Carbon Reduction Commitment Budget	138,000	138,000	0	 G:\ Revenue_Accountan cv\2020-21\Shared
8 Work Place Transformation Cost reduction Measures - ICT Budget - Rationalising systems - Managing Suppliers - Review of printing, scanners, postage etc - Review of telephony	50,000	50,000	0	 G:\ Revenue_Accountan cv\2020-21\Shared
9 Income Recovery Review of Income Recovery activities	54,000	54,000	0	 G:\ Revenue_Accountan cv\2020-21\Shared
TOTAL APPROVED SAVINGS	1,465,000	1,217,740	- 247,260	

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 32

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 15.7.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 15.7.20

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **23rd July, 2020**

Report Subject: **Establishing the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Contact Tracing Service**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr N Daniels, Leader / Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Anne-Louise Clark, Chief Officer Commercial**

Report Written by: **Anne-Louise Clark, Chief Officer Commercial**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	16/07/2020						23/07/2020	

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To seek agreement to the establishment of a Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Contact Tracing Service.

2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 On 13th May Welsh Government (WG) published their Test, Trace and Protect overarching plan which is supported by the Public Health Wales (PHW) Public Health Protection Response Plan. These plans clearly outline that Local Health Boards and Local Authorities' are central in the strategy to set up regional and local contact tracing structures in our efforts to get out and stay out of lockdown. The overall purpose of the plan and the creating of a new service is to "find, prioritise, act and report". As evidenced elsewhere around the world a successful and effective contact tracing service can make a significant contribution to the R rate, the resilience and sustainability of our vital services needed to support those in need, to aide economic recovery and to allow our residents to realise a new freedom in these uncertain times. Its importance therefore cannot be overestimated or exaggerated. This is a critical element of our response and recovery plans with Local Authorities being at the heart of a local service.

 - 2.2 To meet the Welsh Government Test, Trace and Protect Plan contact tracing started in Gwent on 1st June 2020. A sub-group of the Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) which has led on the Gwent response to the declaration of the pandemic emergency was set up in May to coordinate this work. This group is chaired by Caerphilly CBC and contains representatives from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) and the 5 Local Authorities Blaenau Gwent (BG), Caerphilly (CCBC), Monmouthshire (MCC), Newport (NCC) and Torfaen (TCBC). The group has also been supported by the Shared Resource Service (SRS) for IT. The group worked effectively together to set this service up in 4 weeks.

- 2.3 For 2 weeks an interim system specifically developed by the SRS was used to contact trace locally whilst a national system was being developed and implemented. On 9th/10th June the teams switched over to the national system.
- 2.4 As at 10th June 2020 there are over 120 people successfully redeployed, trained and contact tracing in Gwent. The service is able to be covered 8am-8pm 7 days a week. Redeployments have come from across the 6 partner organisations to create the service. All partners agree that this is not a sustainable model for the long term as organisations return to business as usual and services resumed. It was agreed that this interim solution be in place for 3 months up to 31st August to allow for the development of the longer term strategy to be developed, agreed and implemented.
- 2.5 The Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council team commenced contact tracing on 10th June 2020 when the national data management system went live. Redeployees from across the organisation and from Tai Calon have come together to create a team of 30 people contact tracing and contact advising. The interim arrangement has been line managed by Commercial Services with Project Management support from the Regeneration and Community Services. Regional support is provided through the Public Protection Team.

3. Future operating model

- 3.1 In late June a business case was submitted to Welsh Government outlining the proposed operating model for the Gwent Contact Tracing Service (GCTS) to cover the ABUHB area. On 6th July Welsh Government confirmed a £9.6m funding envelope for the service up to 31st March 2021.
- 3.2 The model for the GCTS is based on an integrated model whereby the Local Authorities take lead responsibility for their respective local teams and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) take lead responsibility for the Regional response. A Regional Programme Management function will be led and hosted by one of the Local Authorities to provide support for the regional response. The Regional Programme Management function will also provide data management resources, training and support with the National Data Management System for the local contact tracing teams.
- 3.3 In line with the workforce modelling included in the business case and the funding available from Welsh Government Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council need to agree the establishment a local team. This team will be employed directly by BGCBC with funding being drawn from the ABUHB. This funding is available for staffing and non-staffing costs. BGCBC are also able to claim for costs already incurred during the establishment of the interim arrangements.
- 3.4 Based on the experiences of providing the interim solution the team structure will be made up of three new roles:

1. Team Manager to provide operational leadership and management
2. Contact tracers and contact advisors
3. Shift Co-ordination providing daily support to the contact tracers and advisors.

3.5 If there is agreement to establish the service, there will be a phased recruitment enabling redeployed staff to return to their substantive posts. Based on the current model and using redeployed staff the service will be at 50% in July and August. The service will be at 75% capacity from 1st September 2020 and 100% capacity from 1st October 2020. At full capacity the service will consist of:

- Team Manager x 1 FTE
- Contact Tracers x 6 FTE
- Contact Advisors x 30 FTE
- Shift Co-ordination and supervision x 2

3.6 Epidemiological expertise (Clinical lead or Infection Control Lead) will be provided by ABUHB and could be a Senior EHO role with expertise in Infection Control.

4. Governance Arrangements

4.1 Appendix 1 provides details of the governance arrangements highlighting that the Strategic Co-ordinating Group are key to the successful delivery of the GCTS.

4.2 The development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to be finalised. This will layout the partnership arrangement for both the legal and financial aspects of the partnership. It is proposed that the Chief Officer – Commercial is given delegated authority to sign off the final MOU following due diligence checks, in consultation with the Executive Member for Corporate Services.

4.3 The new Service will be performance managed locally in line with the Council's Performance Management Framework.

5. Options

5.1 Option 1: (Preferred option) Council agrees the proposals for the establishment of the local authority Contact Tracing Team, as part of the Gwent regional service.

5.2 Option 2: Council defer the agreement pending more information or amendments.

6. Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

6.1 This report supports the Council Priority, Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities, the delivery of operational plan for Contact Tracing set out by the Gwent SCG and the partnership arrangements in the Gwent Contact Tracing Service business case submitted to Welsh Government in June 2020. It also supports the Blaenau Gwent well-being plan - Blaenau Gwent want to encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the places that they live, learn, work and play. - A place where people live longer with better health, a place where healthy behaviours is the 'norm'.

7. Implications Against Each Option

7.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

WG have confirmed £9.6m funding for the regional service to 31 March 2021, therefore there is no direct impact on the Council's budget as the service will be fully funded by Welsh Government. This report supports our efficient council priority by ensuring that we are getting the best impact from the funding available from Welsh Government by creating a well-managed Contact tracing service that supports the regional response.

7.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

A sustainable contact tracing service for the residents of Blaenau Gwent is critical to the management of life during the COVID19 pandemic. The risks associated with not being able to deliver this service are significant including risks to life, livelihood and access to education. This service sits within the governance arrangements across Gwent and is accountable to the SCG and ultimately to Welsh Government. This level of governance ensures robust oversight, with the ability to escalate issues rapidly if required.

7.3 Legal

The Memorandum of Understanding between the Gwent Contact Tracing Service and the ABUHB is a legally binding agreement designed to protect all parties both legally and financially.

7.4 Human Resources

The workforce model is detailed in the body of the report. Additional costs for staffing and any non-staffing costs will be met from the funding from Welsh Government.

7.5 *Expected outcome for the public*

The report describes the establishment of a new service designed to help protect the public from exposure to the COVID19 infection through delivering effective test, trace and protect infection control arrangements.

7.6 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

Ongoing review of the performance of the Gwent Contact Tracing Service will be reported to the SCG and Welsh Government. Regular reports will also be provided to the Executive and Council as part of the recovery plan monitoring.

7.7 *Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)*

The decision for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to create a team to support the Gwent Contact Tracing Service is in line with the Welsh Government Test, Trace and Protect overarching plan which is supported by the Public Health Wales (PHW) Public Health Protection Response Plan. It is vital that our residents and business can re-start their lives safely during the COVID19 pandemic. This service is an essential element of protecting our residents and preventing further lock down situations.

7.8 *Preventative focus*

As above the Gwent Contact Tracing Service is in line with the Welsh Government Test, Trace and Protect overarching plan and supported by the PHW Public Health Protection Response Plan. This service is an essential element of preventing further lock down situations.

7.9 *Collaboration / partnership working*

The establishment of the local Blaenau Gwent Contact Tracing team is part of the wider Gwent effort and as such collaboration and partnership working are at the heart of the ways of working. The integrated model provides a resilient approach working across 5 LA's and the Health Board. Each shift is supported by multi-disciplinary teams focussed on delivering outcomes for the residents and businesses across Gwent.

7.10 *Integration(across service areas)*

The shared goals in the Memorandum of Understanding identify that the integrated approach builds a strong delivery model. Internally the services links across a number of professional disciplines.

7.11 *EqIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)*

A full impact assessment will be undertaken following the agreement to establish the new service.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

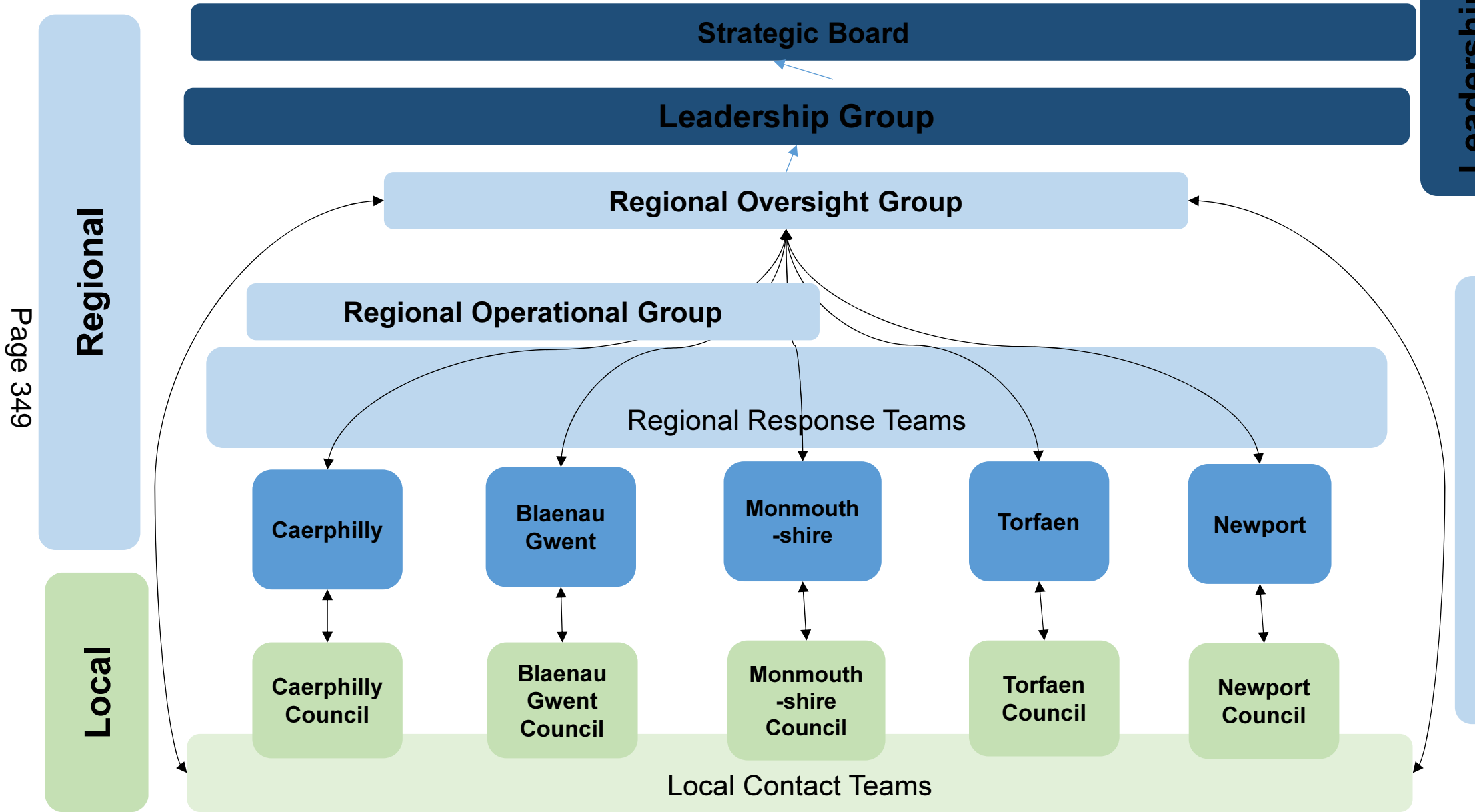
- 8.1 The monitoring of the service will be through the SCG and Welsh Government monitoring arrangements. Then locally using the Council's Performance Management Framework.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix

1. Governance structure

Test, Trace, Protect - Regional and Local Governance Structure for Gwent



This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 33

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 13.7.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 13.7.20

Committee: Council

Date of Meeting: **23rd July, 2020**

Report Subject: **Forward Looking Plan - Corporate Plan Refresh 2020/22**

Portfolio Holder: **Leader / Executive Member Corporate Services – Cllr Nigel Daniels**

Report Submitted by: **Michelle Morris, Managing Director**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	28/05/20 (virtual)	8 th July 2020					23/07/20	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide members with the Corporate Plan 2020/22, reviewed as part of the response and learning to date from COVID 19 and what the Council is aiming to achieve by the end of the Plan in 2022. Planned activity up to 2022 is included within the Forward Looking Corporate Plan, attached at appendix 1.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 Blaenau Gwent's Corporate Plan

In April 2018, Council approved the Corporate Plan which includes the priority areas of the Council covering the four year period 2018/22. All Council planning is aligned to the Corporate Plan.

- 2.2 In order to comply with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the priority areas act as both the Council's Well-being and Improvement Objectives.

2.3 Current Position

As part of the Council's annual Assessment of Performance, written in October 2019, we identified that our ambitious programme of activity was in the early stages of development and implementation.

- 2.4 As part of this we were honest in that we may need to make some changes to the Corporate Plan moving forward.

- 2.5 This has resulted in some amendments being made to the Outcome Statements in order to better demonstrate the contribution different areas across the Council will contribute to achieving them, enhancing our one Council approach. The overall emphasis of each Outcome Statement (Well-being Objective) has not changed.

The global pandemic has also provided the opportunity to consider if everything previously prioritised was still important and if any areas of

- 2.6 importance needed to be highlighted e.g. climate change. At the Executive on 24 June it was agreed that a refresh of our corporate priorities should be undertaken to reflect the impact of the pandemic and ensure the focus of business planning up to 2022 delivers on the outcomes needed to support the community and local economy.
- 2.7 From these considerations, the Corporate Plan 2020/22 Outcome Statements are:
- **Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities**
 - **Support a fairer sustainable economy and community**
 - **To enable people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities**
 - **An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities**
- 2.8 As mentioned above, the supporting activity beneath each outcome statement has not changed and are still aligned to our business planning, monitoring and reporting processes.
- 2.9 There are new areas of activity identified in this refresh including our ambition to become a low carbon Council and Borough; the opportunity to accelerate agile working and the successful deployment of technology to improve how we work and the impact we have, as an organisation, on the environment.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
To include Recommendation(s) / Endorsement by other groups, e.g. CMT/Committees/Other groups)
- 3.1 CLT have undertaken a review of the Corporate Plan 2020/22.
- 3.2.1 **Option 1**
Approval of the Forward Looking Corporate Plan 2020/22 for publication.
- 3.2.2 **Option 2**
Recommend amendments to the Forward Looking Corporate Plan 2020/22 before approval and publication.
4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 4.1 The document is the Council's Corporate Plan, setting out the most important areas for implementation in the short to medium term.
- 4.2 **Legislative Requirements**
- 4.2.1 The Council is currently under two pieces of legislation:–
- Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009; and
 - Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

4.2.2 Both of these legislations have placed separate duties onto Local Authorities:-

- The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 requires the Council to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. We have a statutory duty to develop Improvement Objectives on an annual basis. Councils are required to set out their planned activity for the coming year and seek approval as soon as practicably possible at the beginning of the financial year.
- The Council's duties have been broadened with the introduction of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which requires us to produce Well-being Objectives and a Well-being Statement. The Forward Looking Corporate Plan also acts as our Well-being Statement.

4.2.3 In order to not have two planning documents, the Welsh Government has stated that the Act should not be an additional layer to existing planning activity and therefore we use our Well-being Objectives as our Improvement Objectives.

4.2.4 The Act requires that, each year, the Council must review its Well-being Objectives as part of the arrangements for reporting on them. In doing so, the Council will need to consider whether they are still appropriate or not.

4.2.5 The Forward Looking Plan is subject to review Audit Wales who determines if the Council has met its statutory requirements.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

There is a statutory requirement to have an agreed and published Forward Looking Plan as practically possible after the beginning of the financial year.

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

Work is to be undertaken to align the Medium Term Financial Strategy to the Corporate Plan.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

If the Plan is not approved and published then we will fall foul of our statutory requirements and will be subject to external audit.

5.3 ***Legal***

There are no specific legal implications as a result of the development of this Plan.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no specific staffing or workforce implications as a result of the Plan. The Corporate Plan emphasises the need to work with partners as well as with communities (utilising all available resources) in pursuing the achievement of the Council priorities.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

An ongoing process of gathering a wide-range of information to understand the issues that are most important to people in our area has taken place (via programmes of public engagement). We have also looked at future trends to make sure we consider the things that will affect how we work in the longer term.

6.1.2 It is important that we can demonstrate progress against the Council priorities outlined in the Plan and be held to account against them.

6.1.3 The suite of Key Performance Indicators which underpin the priority areas will be reviewed to ensure they show progress of the priority areas moving forward.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

The Corporate Plan identifies the key areas of activity for the Council over the next two years. These will have direct benefits for the people of Blaenau Gwent.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

Engagement remains a key priority for the Council and these proposals are intended to continue this work and ensure that all services are focussed on their customers and communities through strong engagement and communication.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The Plan addresses the need to balance short and long term needs within the community and to improve the overall resilience and sustainability of the Council.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The Plan aims to work in a preventive way, identifying need before it escalates.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The Outcome Statements have been written to identify contributions from across different service areas and this will help us to deliver our 'One Council' approach by working together to deliver better outcomes for our communities.

6.7 ***Integration(across service areas)***

The Plan references the need to be clear about the Council's role in the delivery of services now and in the future and how it can work with its communities, partners and businesses to improve the overall well-being of the area.

- 6.8 ***EqIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***
An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and no negative impact on the protected characteristics have been identified.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements

- 7.1 The business planning process is aligned to the Corporate Plan and feeds the information within the Joint Finance and Performance report.
- 7.2 Progress of the Corporate Plan is highlighted within the Joint Finance and Performance report.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 Forward Looking Corporate Plan 2020/22*

This page is intentionally left blank



Blaenau Gwent Corporate Plan 2020/22

Foreword

On 31st January 2020, the World Health Organisation declared a global health emergency in relation to coronavirus. This led the Council to establish emergency planning arrangements.

In an emergency the Council would normally deal with the response and then move into the recovery phase, what is clear however, is that dealing with Covid-19 will be very different with many measures having to remain in place until a vaccine or treatment are found. As part of this, the Council need to be able to respond to the pandemic, whilst moving to the next phase and supporting some elements of recovery. The nature of this emergency means we expect to run both response and recovery side by side. This will place a further demand on resources.

It is also the case that so much about the way we live our lives has changed and we will not simply return to normal once Covid-19 is under control. This provides an opportunity for the Council to build on the positive work of the past few months with the expectation being that we do not seek to return to the way things were before but harness the positive aspects of the response to strengthen and modernise the Council, adopting new working practices and challenging how we did things before, in order to map out an ambitious future, create a stronger organisation and to sustain the strong relationships forged with our communities and partners.

The Council will continue to respond to the emergency but is now re-starting some services in line with the relaxation of lockdown. It will not be a case of delivering services as we have done before, service delivery will have to change to take into account the national framework which will for the foreseeable future involve mandatory social distancing alongside a clear direction to work from home, where possible; the phased 'restart' of wide range of public services and of the economy; and continued proactive work to prevent the further spread of the virus whilst also planning for potential future 'peaks.'

The Covid-19 pandemic has been devastating globally and will have a significant detrimental impact on the economy and the way we live, work, learn and socialise for the foreseeable future. The Council has had to respond to this unprecedented situation and has done so at pace, bringing an innovative approach to problem solving and changes in service delivery, ensuring that the health and well-being of our residents and communities has been the driver for our decision making and actions.

Despite the impact that the pandemic has had, it is possible to identify positive experience and good practice from the way the Council and community has responded in Blaenau Gwent. It is clear there is a real opportunity to hold onto these positives and to not simply return to normal but to build on our work to create a stronger and more resilient organisation and community.

The next steps will be really important now to ensure we use this experience to build a stronger organisation and place in Blaenau Gwent.

Introduction

Blaenau Gwent is a place like no other. At the head of the Gwent Valleys Blaenau Gwent provides a unique and lofty environment to live, work and play. With a heritage that is firmly based on an industrial past, we are a place that is changing to respond to new economic opportunities.

The Tech Valleys Vision, Valleys Regional Park and Cardiff Capital Regional City Deal combined with new transport links including the soon to be completed Heads of the Valley Road and rail routes to Cardiff bring a bright future. Together with the amazing location and surrounding parkland our people and communities make Blaenau Gwent great. Our people have influenced on the local, national and international stage in art, sport and politics for many generations – putting Blaenau Gwent on the map for all the right reasons.

The role of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and its partners is to maximise on the assets we have, doing more with less and doing it better. It is right that we recognise the challenges we face. The decline of heavy industry continues to impact on employment prospects and intergenerational opportunities. We face issues with health and wealth inequality, the rise of online shopping and the impact on our town centres and social issues affecting our families and young people.

As a Council we face increasing demand for some of our services with reductions to our budgets. But we are tackling these issues head on with our partners, businesses and the local community. We are looking at how we spend our money to achieve the best outcomes for our residents, we are supporting new and existing businesses, we are looking at our assets to achieve new income streams and we are removing barriers to enable residents to access what they need. All in all, we are looking forward to a positive future.

Our Core Vision and Values

Our core Vision and Values reflect who we are as a Council, how we do things and how we are shaping the future by ensuring that these apply to everything we do.

The Council's Vision:

**Proud Heritage
Strong Communities
Brighter Future**

Members wanted a vision that reflects both the rich heritage and past industry of the area, of which our communities are fiercely proud, but which also shows our commitment to moving forward by embracing new and emerging technologies that will better equip our communities and in turn lead to a more prosperous future for Blaenau Gwent.

The Council's Core Values:

**Proud and
Ambitious**

**Trust and
Integrity**

**Working
Together**

**Raising
Aspirations**

**Fair and
Equitable**

Corporate Plan Refresh 2020/22

As part of the Council's annual Assessment of Performance, written in October 2019, we identified that our ambitious programme of activity was in the early stages of development and implementation. As part of this we were honest in that we may need to make some changes to the Corporate Plan moving forward. This has resulted in some amendments being made to the Outcome Statements within the Corporate Plan in order to better demonstrate the contribution different areas across the Council will contribute to achieving them, enhancing our one Council approach. The overall emphasis of each Outcome Statement (Well-being Objective) has not changed.

Corporate Plan 2020/22 Outcome Statements:

- **Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities**
- **Support a fairer sustainable economy and community**
- **To enable people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities**
- **An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities**

The political leadership are keen that the priorities in the plan align with what local people have told us is important to them, in particular they want strong and clean communities and to see the economy grow for the well-being of future generations. We will continue to invest in our neighbourhoods so that they are places where people are proud to live and have prioritised economic development and regeneration to bring jobs, growth and opportunity to local people and businesses. Education and Social Services continue to be priorities as we work to improve standards in our schools so that all children and young people reach their full potential and we continue to look after the most vulnerable people in our communities against increasing demand for these services. Another priority is to make sure the services we provide are of a high standard and value for money, where more people are satisfied and services are more accessible for and responsive to the needs of citizens.

Through focusing on delivering the Corporate Plan we can begin to transform Blaenau Gwent into a more prosperous and welcoming area that celebrates its heritage and plays its part on the regional and national stage. It is also a key part of building a more confident and capable Council. It is about achieving real outcomes for the people of Blaenau Gwent and is underpinned by solid and sustainable plans, ensuring the Council can be held to account for what it has promised to deliver.

The Council's Outcome Statements and Activity 2020/22

With reduced funding and increasing demand on services the Council can no longer do everything it has done in the past. We must focus on those actions that will have the greatest impact.

Outcome Statement 2020/22	Corporate Plan Activity
Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase rates of recycling to enable us to achieve national targets • To re-invest in environmental services to address the issues created by fly-tipping, dog fouling, littering, grass cutting, street cleansing and pest control • To re-invest in highways maintenance particularly improvements to our residential roads, streets and pavements • To improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors • To work with partners to provide a variety of homes • To develop an excellent digital infrastructure including internet and mobile network connectivity that can support the needs of the whole community. • To develop a portfolio of potential energy opportunities to deliver economic, business and community benefits • To improve the quality of our school buildings to help learners achieve great outcomes • To be a carbon neutral Council by 2030

Outcome Statement 2020/22	Corporate Plan Activity
Support a fairer sustainable economy and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support all learners to achieve improved outcomes • To improve pupil outcomes, progress and wellbeing. • Improve skills and promote digital participation • To work with partners to provide effective employment support and access to skills development (Apprenticeships) • To increase the start-up business rate, retention and growth of local businesses and attract new inward investment • To actively participate in partnerships such as Tech Valleys and CCRCDC to attract investment • To work with partners to develop a new vision for our town centres ensuring their long term future

Outcome Statement 2020/22	Corporate Plan Activity
<p>To enable people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve accessibility, provision of information and advice to enable people to support their own wellbeing • To work with people and families to make sure they have a say in achieving what matters to them • To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater • To put effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect people from harm • To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering integrated responsive care and support with partners • To continue our programme of public engagement and respond in a timely and effective way to feedback • To build a collaborative culture between services, partners and communities working together and with people directly to shape and deliver services. i.e. (Community Asset Transfers). • To develop a partnership approach to maximising income reducing the impacts of Poverty.

Outcome Statement 2020/22	Corporate Plan Activity
<p>An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To demonstrate clear and visible leadership to deliver a viable and resilient Council • We will deliver online services that are simple and convenient, improving the relationship between residents, business and the council • To ensure effective forward financial planning arrangements are in place to support the Council's financial resilience • To support and develop a workforce that has the capacity and capability to be productive and responsive to future demands • To develop a more commercial organisation to generate income and deliver cost reductions to make local services sustainable and raise money to re-invest in our priorities • To be a strong and effective partner and collaborate where possible to deliver financial, business and community benefits • COVID 19 – safe working environment for our staff and service users • We will work in an agile way, capturing learning and seeking continuous improvement

Legislative Requirements

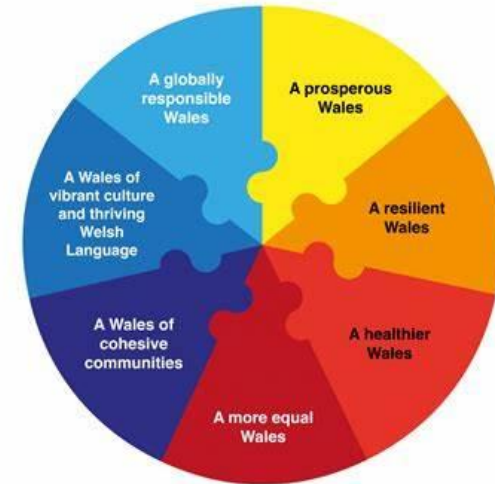
The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is ground-breaking legislation which aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The vision of this legislation is expressed in the seven National well-being goals.

In order to meet the statutory legislative requirements, the Council has implemented the following:

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: 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. The report uses the Outcome Statements within the Council's Corporate Plan as its Well-being Objectives.

The **Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (Section 15)**, places a duty on all Local Authorities in Wales to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. As part of this, the Council is required to develop a Corporate Plan. The report also uses the Outcome Statements within the Council's Corporate Plan as its Improvement Objectives.

The Act also puts a duty on public bodies to apply the sustainable development principle which states they **'must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'**. The sustainable development principle is made up of the following five ways of working, pictured below:



Contact Information

This document is available electronically and in hard copy by request.

Corporate Performance Team
Corporate Services
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Municipal Offices
Civic Centre
Ebbw Vale
NP23 6XB
Phone: 01495 311556
Email: pps@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Providing Feedback

We welcome any feedback you might have about the Council's Corporate Plan 2020/22. 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 Corporate 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.

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 Corporate Plan 2020/22 has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment screening.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 34

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 13.7.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 13.7.20

Committee: Council
Date of Meeting: 23rd July, 2020

Report Subject: Capital Strategy 2020/2021

Portfolio Holder: Councillor N. Daniels – Leader/Executive Member – Corporate Services
Report Submitted by: Rhian Hayden – Chief Officer Resources

Report Written by: Joanne Watts – Business Partner

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	21.1.2020				12.02.2020		23.7.2020	

1. **Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give members the opportunity to consider the Capital Strategy (attached at Appendix 1), to be adopted for the financial year 2020/2021, following the annual review.

2. **Scope and Background**

- 2.1 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, revised in 2017, introduced the concept of a Capital Strategy with effect from April 2019. Appendix 1 to this report is the proposed Capital Strategy for this Council.
- 2.2 The capital strategy is intended to give a high level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. The development of a capital strategy allows flexibility to engage with full council to ensure that the overall strategy, governance procedures and risk appetite are fully understood by all elected members.

The Strategy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that the Council's Corporate Plan priorities continue to be delivered.

3. **Options for Recommendation (Refer to Appendix 4)**

3.1 Option 1 (Preferred Option)

Members agree the Capital Strategy attached as Appendix 1.

3.2 Option 2

Members do not agree the Capital Strategy attached as Appendix 1.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 The Capital Strategy is linked to the Corporate Plan and Well-being Plan and will inform the way in which long term service objectives are delivered.

4.2 The capital Strategy is intended to take a long term view which reflects the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)**

5.1.1 The detailed financial implications of the Capital Strategy are contained within the Capital Programme, Treasury Management Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

5.2.1 The identification and mitigation of risk is contained within the Capital Strategy document.

Legal

There are a number of statutory requirements relating to capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity that the Council must adhere to.

Human Resources

N/A

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

6.1.1 The Performance information is contained within Appendix 1 – Capital Strategy

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

6.2.1 The Capital Strategy will detail the financial implications for the Council in providing capital investment for the communities of Blaenau Gwent.

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

Corporate Leadership Team will consider the long term implications of capital investment and how the governance arrangements in place through full Council, enable decisions to be made by elected members..

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

The Capital Strategy summarises the capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management arrangements of the Authority, for the long term.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

The Capital Strategy will assist in the prevention of projects outside of the Council's service objectives and priorities proceeding.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

The future development of the Capital Strategy, particularly in relation to commercial investments, will require a collaborative / partnership approach.

6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

The future development of the Capital Strategy will require an integrated approach across all services.

6.8 **EqIA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)** **N/A**

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The Capital Strategy will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis and reported to full Council.

However, monitoring reports are submitted to Corporate Overview / Joint Budget Scrutiny during the financial year as follows::

- Capital Programme – quarterly
- Treasury Management report – 6 monthly

Background documents /electronic links
corporate plan

Medium Term Financial Strategy

<http://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/documents/s4314/CO1912D8%20MTFS%20-%20Report%20Final%20-%20125%20December%202019.pdf?LLL=0>

Treasury Management Strategy

[G:\Corporate Accountancy\New Structure\Capital Strategy\2020-21\Treasury Strategy Statement 2020-Appendix A v8.doc](G:\Corporate_Accountancy\New Structure\Capital Strategy\2020-21\Treasury Strategy Statement 2020-Appendix A v8.doc)

Capital Programme

http://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/documents/s1538/CO1910D13%20Capital%20Programme%20v11_Final.pdf?LL

2017/2018 Statement of Accounts

Strategic Asset Management Plan

Constitution

Local Well-being Plan 2018-2023

BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL – CAPITAL STRATEGY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.2 Part 1, Section 3 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003 requires that the Authority shall determine and keep under review how much it can afford to borrow. The Act is supported by the Prudential Framework for local authority capital investment and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Code).
- 1.3 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, revised in 2017, introduced the concept of a Capital Strategy with effect from April 2019.
- 1.4 The Capital Strategy will be the mechanism through which the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan are delivered.

2. DETERMINING A CAPITAL STRATEGY

- 2.1 In order to demonstrate that authorities take capital expenditure and investment decisions, in line with service objectives and properly takes account of:-
 - Stewardship
 - Value for money
 - Prudence and
 - Sustainability and affordability

Authorities should have in place a capital strategy that sets out the *long-term context* in which capital expenditure and investment decisions are made, primarily to deliver the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan. This will enable due consideration *to both risk and reward* and *impact* on the achievement of priority outcomes. The capital strategy should form a part of the authority's integrated revenue, capital and balance sheet planning.
- 2.2 As local authorities become increasingly complex and diverse it is vital that those charged with governance understand the long-term context in which investment decisions are made and all the financial risks to which the authority is exposed. For example, when local authorities have increasingly wide powers around commercialisation, more authorities being subject to group arrangements and the increase in combined authority arrangements, it is no longer sufficient to consider only the individual local authority but also the residual risks and liabilities to which it is subject.
- 2.3 The capital strategy is intended to give a high level overview of how:-
 - capital expenditure
 - capital financing
 - treasury management activity

contribute to the provision of services, along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. The development of a capital strategy allows flexibility to engage with full Council to ensure that the overall strategy, governance procedures and risk appetite are fully understood by all elected members.

- 2.4 The capital strategy should be tailored to the authority's individual circumstances but should include capital expenditure, investments and liabilities and treasury management. The capital strategy should include sufficient detail to allow all members to understand how stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability will be secured and to meet legislative requirements on reporting.
- 2.5 In considering how stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability can be demonstrated, local authorities should have regard to the following key areas where material.

3. LINKS TO THE CAPITAL STRATEGY

- 3.1 The report has links to the strategic themes of the Authority, taking into account cross-cutting issues where relevant. It has specific links to the following documents:

a) The Council's Corporate Plan 2018/2022

The Corporate Plan is the prime document which outlines what the Council aims to achieve. The current Plan covers the period 2018/ 2019 to 2021/2022. The core vision, core values and priorities in the Council Plan are:-

Our Core Vision

Proud Heritage, Strong Communities, Brighter Future

Our Core Values



Our Council Priorities



7

- 3.2 The key objective of this Capital Strategy is to ensure that the capital funding available to the Council is spent on projects that assist the Council to deliver the priorities in the Corporate plan, including maintaining, replacing or / and upgrading existing assets. This is why the Corporate Plan features strongly in the allocation of resources in the capital programme. There are several other key strategic documents which align with the Council Plan. These guide how the Council works on specific aspects affecting the Council.

b) Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Capital Strategy is closely linked to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), primarily with respect to the affordability of the capital programme. The MTFS is agreed by Council on an annual basis and forms part of the annual budget setting report.

c) Treasury Management Strategy

The Treasury Management Strategy links to the Capital Strategy in determining the Council's approach to borrowing and investments, including borrowing to fund capital expenditure. The Treasury Management Strategy is closely related to the Prudential Code and Prudential Indicators. The Council has an integrated Treasury Management Strategy and has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public Services. The Treasury Management Strategy deals with borrowing and investment arising as a consequence of all the financial transactions of the Council, not exclusively those arising from capital spending.

d) Statement of Accounts

Capital expenditure incurred during the year is reflected in the Balance Sheet within the Statement of Accounts, ensuring that stewardship of assets is demonstrated. The accurate monitoring and recording of capital expenditure ensures that this document is free from material error. The Statement of Accounts is externally audited at the end of each financial year to certify that it presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council.

e) Strategic Asset Management Plan 2017/2022

The Strategic Asset Management Plan sets out how the Council manages and treats its property and land, ensuring that it is well placed to manage expectations, budgets and services going forward.

f) Regulatory Framework of Capital Spend

The Procurement Strategy, along with the Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations (part of the Council's Constitution), looks at who can supply goods and services to the Council and how these goods and services should best be obtained to secure value for money.

More generally, prudent financial management contributes to the following Well-being Goals within the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 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 responsible Wales.

4 **CAPITAL EXPENDITURE**

4.1 Capital expenditure is defined as costs incurred by the Council in acquiring new property, plant and equipment (PPE); or costs incurred by enhancing existing PPE asset base. Capital expenditure can also be incurred in instances where the asset is owned by a third party but the Council has provided the third party with a grant. In such instances the expenditure is recorded as if incurred directly by the Council.

4.2 In accordance accounting definitions, expenditure can be capitalised when it relates to:

- *The acquisition or creation of a new fixed asset* - capitalisation will depend on the creation of rights to future economic benefits controlled by the Authority;
- *The enhancement of an existing fixed asset* - capitalisation will depend on the works substantially increasing the value of the asset, extending its useful life or increasing its use in service provision.

4.3 The Council's current asset base could be classed into two distinct areas:-

- *operational assets* i.e. those assets relating to day to day activities that will ensure the Council meets (primarily) its statutory requirements and
- *development assets* i.e. those assets which will help the Council achieve strategic aims and generate income

4.4 The Authority has a de-minimus limit for capital expenditure of £50,000. Previously, the de-minimus level was set much lower at £10,000, but was revised upwards, following the 2012/2013 external audit of accounts. The Policy will be reviewed in 2020/21

Capital expenditure that is below this de-minimus limit, is charged to a revenue budget. There are however, some exceptions including Highways capital expenditure, and Health & Safety capital expenditure. In these cases items that individually fall below this de-minimus level are allowable as capital expenditure because they are aggregated together and treated as one single item of expenditure in the year.

4.5 The Authority's core capital programme is considered by Council annually on a rolling basis and is funded from a variety of sources including capital receipts, Prudential Borrowing, General Capital Grant and Supported Borrowing Approvals. Both of the two latter funding streams are confirmed annually by Welsh Government as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement.

4.6 Changes to the programme from one year to the next include:-

- New policy directives
- New proposed schemes

- Revised scheme profiling
- Slippage and
- Changes in expenditure projections

4.7 The Authority's forecast of capital expenditure for the next three financial years, as laid out in the 2019/2020 Treasury Management Strategy is as follows:-

Capital Expenditure £000's					
	2018/19 Actual	2019/2020 Revised Estimate	2020/2021 Estimate	2021/2022 Estimate	2022/2023 Estimate
Total	13,896	19,950	22,500	18,550	13,600

The capital programme usually covers a three year period. However, the current capital programme covers the financial years 2019/20 to 2025/2026, primarily to incorporate Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

Governance arrangements are as follows:-

4.8 The capital programme is considered annually by full Council as part of the revenue budget setting process.

4.9 The capital programme is monitored in-year through:-

- Regular forecast expenditure reports to budget holders
- Quarterly forecast expenditure reports to the Joint Budget Monitoring Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee.
- Actual outturn expenditure is incorporated into the Council's annual Statement of Accounts, which is reported to the Audit Committee and subject to external audit.

4.10 If additional resources are identified, a revised capital programme will be reported to full Council for consideration. If the value of bids exceed the amount of available resources, a prioritisation methodology is followed, in order to match bids to available resources. Currently that methodology incorporates the following key elements:-

- Links to the Council's Corporate Plan
- Links to national priorities
- Statutory scheme or non-statutory scheme
- An existing legal or contractual commitment
- The availability of external grant funding
- The likelihood of revenue saving generation / cost avoidance
- National Wellbeing Goals/ Sustainability Principles

- 4.11 The bidding process is underpinned by a number of check and challenge stages, prior to the drafting of a report for Council's consideration.

5. **CAPITAL EXPENDITURE FINANCING**

- 5.1 All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources - government grants and other contributions; the Council's own resources - revenue contributions, reserves and capital receipts; or debt - borrowing supported and unsupported; leasing.

- 5.2 A detailed explanation of each of the main sources of funding is shown below:-

- **General Capital Grant** – This is a sum of money which is provided by the Welsh Government as part of the annual settlement. The Council is free to use the capital grant on any capital project it wishes.
- **Supported Borrowing** – The Council will borrow internally / externally to fund the expenditure. The revenue costs arising from the borrowing (Interest Costs and Minimum Revenue Provision) are funded by the Welsh Government through the annual revenue settlement, hence the term "Supported Borrowing".
- **Unsupported Borrowing** – the Council borrows internally / externally but is required to finance the revenue costs from its own resources. Projects funded by means of unsupported borrowing tend to be projects which deliver revenue savings or generate additional income and these savings are used to meet the additional revenue costs arising from the borrowing.
- **Specific Capital Grants** – The Council will be awarded capital grants which partly or fully fund the cost of a project. Capital grants usually come with restrictions surrounding the expenditure which can be funded and by when the expenditure must be incurred.
- **Revenue Contribution** – Services can make a contribution from their revenue budgets to fund projects and should deliver revenue savings/avoid future costs or generate additional income. These contributions tend to be as a match funding to a project which is mainly funded from a specific capital grant.
- **Capital Receipts** – The funds generated from the sale of assets can be used to contribute to the funding of the capital programme. These are usually generated from the sale of surplus assets (normally land or buildings).
The Council's long standing policy on usable capital receipts is that they are immediately invested internally. This helps to improve the Council's cash flow position and reduces the level of external loans that need to be raised,

which in turn reduces external interest charges from the money market. This approach is consistent with what is regarded as good practice in terms of strategic level treasury management and overall, produces savings in debt servicing costs for the Council.

However, as approved sums of usable capital receipts are subsequently used to finance part of the annual capital programme each year, appropriate allowance then needs to be made for the use of these receipts in determining the estimated level of external borrowing required for that year. Hence usable capital receipts are released on a controlled basis and the annual estimates for external interest charges are adjusted accordingly. Any request to earmark a capital receipt for a different purpose will require a report to full Council.

- **Reserves** – Funding held in reserve, e.g. unapplied capital receipts, can be used to support the capital programme.

5.3 The financing of the forecast capital expenditure shown in paragraph 4.7 above, is detailed below

Capital Expenditure £000's	2018/19 Revised Estimate	2019/20 Estimate	2020/21 Estimate	2021/22 Estimate	2022/23 Estimate
Total	13,896	19,950	22,500	18,550	13,600
Financed by:					
Grants, Capital Receipts, revenue and other sources	9,207	14,977	19,627	16,077	11,127
Net financing need for the year from Un-hypothecated Supported Borrowing and Prudential Borrowing	4,689	4,973	2,873	2,473	2,473

5.4 Debt (including leases) is a source of finance that is used to fund a capital scheme and is repayable over time. The Council sets aside a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) every year for the repayment of existing debt. MRP forms part of the debt management budget and is monitored by Corporate Finance. As part of the annual Treasury Management Strategy, which is approved by full Council before the start of the new financial year), a MRP statement is presented as an appendix to the Strategy annually. This sets out the MRP Policy that is to be adopted by the Council at the start of the next financial year. The full MRP statement is set out in Appendix A of the Treasury Management Annual Strategy. The Council agreed to a significantly revised policy in December 2017.

5.5 The Authority's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and capital receipts used to replace

debt. The Council's estimated CFR is set out in Appendix A of Treasury Management Annual Strategy and is illustrated below.

Capital Financing Requirement					
	<u>2018/19</u> <u>Revised</u> <u>Estimate</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>2019/20</u> <u>Estimate</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>2020/21</u> <u>Estimate</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>2021/22</u> <u>Estimate</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>2022/23</u> <u>Estimate</u> <u>£000</u>
CFR at start of financial year	160,950	165,028	169,311	173,557	175,422
CFR at end of financial year	165,028	169,311	173,557	175,422	173,887
Movement in CFR	4,078	4,284	4,246	1,865	-1,535

6. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy defines treasury management as “The management of the organisation’s borrowing; investments and cash flows; its banking; money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks”.
- 6.2 Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account. Investment balances tend to be high at the start of the financial year as revenue income is received before it is spent, but reduce in the long-term as capital expenditure is incurred before being financed.
- 6.3 Due to decisions taken in the past, the Council currently has £157m debt outstanding as at 31 March 2019, at an average interest rate of 2.85%. In addition, £43,000 was earned on investments at an average rate of 0.62%.
- 6.4 The Annual Treasury Management Strategy is approved by Full Council prior to the start of the new financial year and sets out the Council’s Borrowing Strategy; Investment Strategy and respective prudential indicators.
- 6.5 The Council is required to receive and approve, as a minimum, three main reports each year, which incorporate a variety of policies, estimates and actuals.

The Treasury Strategy - the first, and most important report covers:

- The capital plans (including prudential indicators)
- the treasury management strategy (how the investments and borrowings are to be organised) including treasury indicators; and
- an investment strategy (the parameters on how investments are to be managed).
- a minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy (how residual capital expenditure is charged to revenue over time);

A mid year treasury management report – This will update members with the progress of the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and an assessment of whether the treasury strategy is being met or whether any policies require revision.

An annual treasury report – This provides details of a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations compared to the estimates within the strategy.

Pre-scrutiny of the Strategy and monitoring of the Strategy throughout the year is carried out by the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee.

7. COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

- 7.1 A number of local authorities are investing in non-treasury management investment, for example commercial property, either via a fund manager or direct purchase of property in order to generate enhanced treasury returns above the rate of inflation. The returns generated from this type of investments can support revenue budgets in an environment when Welsh Government revenue support funding has declined year on year.
- 7.2 At present the Council does not invest in commercial property either directly (through property acquisitions) or indirectly (through a fund manager). However, the Council is seeking to develop an investment strategy in line with a more commercial approach and so this type of investment will be considered in the future.
- 7.3 With a financial rate of return being the main objective, the Council would need to fully identify the Local Authority powers underpinning any investments i.e. economic regeneration activity. In addition, the Council would need to understand that there is a degree of higher risk on commercial investment than with treasury investments. The principal risk exposures include a decline in the property market and capital being tied up in the medium/ long-term. In order to balance the three basic principles of security, liquidity and yield, consideration would need to be given to the proportion of commercial investments made.
- 7.4 Any potential commercial investment would need due diligence and expert independent external advice. Legal advice would also be required from within the Council and where necessary, externally.

8. POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS ARISING FROM THE CAPITAL STRATEGY

- 8.1. The Capital Strategy will enable the Council to focus its energy and resources to the priorities in the Corporate Plan. In addition, transparent governance

arrangements will enable improved decision making processes and financial planning into the longer term.

- 8.2. By adopting a more commercial approach, the Council will be able to secure additional revenue streams to mitigate future enforced budget reductions.
- 8.3. The level of annual savings required over the period of the medium term financial strategy will continue to be challenging with the potential to impact on the capital programme. If the funding gap is difficult to achieve, this risk could be mitigated by a further review of the capital programme to assess the feasibility of reducing capital financing costs affecting revenue. This would involve reducing capital expenditure and the associated borrowing requirement, therefore reducing interest and loan repayment costs.
- 8.4. The Council's Capital Strategy is based on an assumed level of funding from Welsh Government and from external grants and capital receipts. Given the continued uncertainty over budgets and the changes to grant funding, currently received from the European Union, there is a risk that this assumed level of grant funding may not be received. This risk can be mitigated through regular reviews of the current capital programme.
- 8.5. The Council has used internal borrowing (as opposed to external borrowing) for a number of years to fund a proportion of capital expenditure. If interest rates increase sharply in the medium term there is a risk that long term capital financing costs will impact on the affordability of new capital schemes and the revenue budget. This risk can be mitigated by regular reviews of interest rate forecasts and engagement with the Council's external treasury management advisor.
- 8.6. The strategy acknowledges the importance of maintaining existing Council assets. There is a risk that a replacement programme is not sufficient and that the standard of the assets falls to such a point that a greater level of investment is required in order to maintain services. This risk can be mitigated by ensuring that the capital programme delivers a balanced programme of enhancing current assets and developing new assets.
- 8.7. External borrowing results in a significant interest cost each year. The majority of the Council's loans are fixed and are not affected by any interest rate rises. However, any sharp rise in interest rates may impact on the affordability of future projects which are funded from new borrowing. This risk is mitigated to some extent through the Treasury Management Strategy which illustrates a mix of short term, medium term and long term loans.

9. **KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

- 9.1 The Council employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions.
- 9.2 Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council tests the market through regular competitive tendering. This ensures that performance management arrangements are in place, as laid out in the contract specification. The Council currently employs Link Asset Services as treasury management advisers. This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite. Performance
- 9.3 Key relevant staff will undertake training as and when opportunities arise or whenever there are changes in regulations. Treasury management training for members has and will continue to be provided by officers and treasury management advisors on an annual basis in the future.

Agenda Item 35

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 13.7.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 13.7.20

Committee: Council

Date of Meeting:

23rd July, 2020

Report Subject:

Treasury Management – Treasury Strategy Statement, Investment Strategy & MRP Policy Statement 2020/2021 (including Prudential Indicators)

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor N. Daniels – Leader/Executive Member - Corporate Services

Report Submitted by:

Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer Resources

Report Written by:

Joanne Watts Principal Accountant

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	21.1.20				03.03.2020		23.07.20	

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to give Members the opportunity to consider the Treasury Strategy, Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy (including prudential indicators) for adoption for the 2020/2021 financial year.

1.2 The suspension of formal meetings of the Council due to the coronavirus lockdown has resulted in a delay in Council considering this report and consequently there has been some minor changes to the strategy to reflect recent economic data, however the strategies have not changed significantly since it was scrutinised by Corporate Overview on 3rd March 2020.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management that requires an annual Treasury Strategy Statement (TSS) to be approved in advance of the relevant financial year. Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee has scrutinised the TSS prior to recommendation for formal approval by Council .

- 2.2 The Code also recommends that Council creates and maintains a Treasury Management Policy Statement (TMPS), stating the policies and objectives of its treasury management activities. Although the Code does not require authorities to seek approval of the TMPS, it is attached as Appendix B for information.
- 2.3 In accordance with the Code, the Treasury Strategy Statement includes the Annual Investment Strategy. It is important to note that although it is called the Annual Investment Strategy, it is kept under review throughout the year and any changes required are reported to Council at that time.
- 2.4 Local Authorities are required to prepare, before the start of each financial year, a statement of their policy on making revenue provision to cover debt repayments (known as MRP or Minimum Revenue Provision) in respect of that financial year and submit it to full Council for approval. The MRP statement for 2020/21 is therefore also included as part of the Treasury Strategy Statement (last page of Appendix A). The Treasury Management Policy Statement is also attached for information as Appendix B.
- 2.5 From 2019/20 onwards the revised codes of practice introduced a requirement for all local authorities to prepare a Capital Strategy report, which is intended to provide: -
- a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services
 - an overview of how the associated risk is managed
 - the implications for future financial sustainability
- 2.6 The Capital Strategy for Blaenau Gwent CBC is subject to a separate report.

3. Options for Recommendation

Option 1 (preferred option)

- 3.1 Council agree the Annual Treasury Strategy Statement & Annual Investment Strategy & MRP Policy Statement for 2020/2021 financial year and the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators contained therein (APPENDIX A).

Option 2

- 3.2 Council does not agree the Annual Treasury Strategy Statement & Annual Investment Strategy & MRP Policy Statement for 2020/2021 financial year and the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators contained therein (APPENDIX A).

4. Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

- 4.1 The report is written under legislation (the Local Government Act 2003), Welsh Government guidance and CIPFA codes of practice.
- 4.2 This report also supports the Corporate Plan Priority of being an efficient Council.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

- 5.1.1 The Authority will comply with the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2017 and in doing so will strive for effective risk management and control, whilst at the same time pursuing best value.
- 5.1.2 The Treasury Strategy Statement & Annual Investment Strategy and MRP Policy Statement for 2020/2021 financial year will be adhered to at all times with the prime objectives being firstly the security and secondly the liquidity of investments. It will seek to minimise the revenue costs of debt whilst maintaining a prudent level of debt redemption.
- 5.1.3 The revenue cost of debt arises through the Minimum Revenue Provision (or MRP) set aside for debt repayment. The revised MRP Policy agreed by Council in December 2017, enabled lower levels of MRP to apply for the period 2017/2018 to 2021/2022. Budget forecasts for MRP from 2022/2023 will subsequently increase and will be factored into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 5.2.1 *Risk including Mitigating Actions*
The main risk in relation to Treasury Management is that of credit risk and protecting the Authority's cash. This is effectively managed through the Authority's risk averse Treasury Management policy that seeks to protect the capital sum rather than maximise investment returns.
- 5.3 *Legal*
N/A
- 5.4 *Human Resources*
 - 5.4.1 There are no direct staffing implications to report. Staff directly involved with Treasury Management activities will continue to receive consultancy advice, training and professional/technical updates during the year.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

- 6.1.1 *Performance Information and Data*

This report sets out the Authority's prudential indicators for the 2020/2021 financial year, against which performance can be monitored throughout the year. It also sets out the borrowing and investment strategy and MRP policy that will be adhered to for the year.

6.1.2 The Prudential Code was developed by CIPFA, as a professional Code of Practice to support local authorities in taking their decisions on capital investment.

6.1.3 The key objectives of the Prudential Code are to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital investment plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable. A further key objective is to ensure that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice and in a manner that supports prudence, affordability and sustainability.

6.1.4 To demonstrate that local authorities have fulfilled these objectives, the Prudential Code sets out the indicators that must be used, and the factors that must be taken into account. The Code does not include suggested indicative limits or ratios.

6.1.5 The Treasury Strategy Statement attached as Appendix A includes the prudential indicators that are required to be calculated for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and that are recommended for approval by Council

6.1.6 The Treasury Management Code requires that the Council nominate a Committee to be responsible for the effective scrutiny of Treasury Management Strategy and policies. For Blaenau Gwent CBC this role is undertaken by the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee.

6.2 *Expected outcome for the public*

The Council's Treasury Management activities support delivery of services to the public.

6.3 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

Members of the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee and Council are involved in the development and monitoring compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

6.4 *Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)* n/a

- 6.5 *Preventative focus*
The Authority's Treasury Management policy prioritises protecting the capital sum rather than achieving higher rates of interest.
- 6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working*
n/a
- 6.7 *Integration(across service areas)*
n/a
- 6.8 *EqIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)*
n/a

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements

- 7.1 As the nominated scrutiny Committee, Corporate Overview will receive three reports in every annual cycle:-
- A Treasury Management Policy report prior to the start of every financial year
 - A mid-year progress report on Treasury Management activity
 - An end of year out turn report on Treasury Management activity.
 -
- Full Council will receive these reports subsequently.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix A*
- *Appendix B*

This page is intentionally left blank

BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Treasury Management Strategy Statement Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement

2020/2021

INDEX

1	INTRODUCTION	3
1.1	Background	3
1.2	Statutory Requirements	3
1.3	CIPFA requirements	4
1.4	Reporting Arrangements	5
1.5	Treasury management consultants	6
1.6	The role of the S151 Officer	7
2	THE CAPITAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2020/2021-2022/2023	8
2.1	CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	8
2.2	The Council's Borrowing Need (CAPITAL FINANCING REQUIREMENT)	9
2.3	Affordability prudential indicators	10
2.4	Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	10
3	TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR 2020/21	11
3.1	Current portfolio position	11
3.2	Treasury Management Prudential Indicators	12
3.3	Prospects for interest rates	14
3.4	Borrowing strategy	16
3.5	Policy on borrowing in advance of need	18
3.6	Debt rescheduling	18
3.7	Strategy on the use of useable capital receipts	20
4	ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY	20
4.1	Background	20
4.2	Definition of Investments	21
4.3	Creditworthiness Policy	22
4.4	Arrangements for Corporate Bank	26
4.5	Monitoring of credit Arrangements	26
4.6	Liquidity of Investments	27
4.7	Investment Monitoring Reports	27
5	ANNUAL MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION (MRP) STATEMENT	27

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Council is required to operate a balanced budget, which broadly means that cash raised during the year will meet cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operation is to ensure that this cash flow is adequately planned, with cash being available when it is needed. Surplus monies are invested in low risk counterparties or instruments commensurate with the Council's low risk appetite, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering investment return.

The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, essentially the longer term cash flow planning to ensure that the Council can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer term cash may involve arranging long or short term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses. On occasion any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.

Treasury management is defined as:

"The management of the local authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks. "

The Authority has not engaged in any commercial investments and has no non treasury investments

1.2 Statutory requirements

The Local Government Act 2003 (the Act) and supporting regulations requires the Council to 'have regard to' the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice to set Prudential and Treasury Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

The Act therefore requires the Council to set out its Treasury Strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy. The Treasury Strategy details the expected activities of the Treasury function in the forthcoming financial year (2020/21). The Investment Strategy sets out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.

Statutory Instrument WSI 2008 no. 588 section 3 lays down that:

“A local authority must calculate for the current financial year an amount of minimum revenue provision which it considers to be prudent.”

Along with the above duty, the Welsh Assembly Government issued guidance in March 2008 (and further updated in November 2018) which requires that a Statement on the Authority’s policy for its annual MRP should be submitted to the full Council for approval before the start of the financial year to which the provision will relate. The Annual MRP Policy Statement is therefore included at section 5.

1.3 CIPFA requirements

In December 2017, CIPFA issued revised Prudential and Treasury Management Codes. As from 2019/2020, all local authorities will be required to prepare an additional report, a Capital Strategy report, which is intended to provide the following: -

- a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services
- an overview of how the associated risk is managed
- the implications for future financial sustainability

The aim of this report is to ensure that all elected members on the full council fully understand the overall strategy, long term policy objectives, governance procedures and risk appetite entailed by this Strategy.

The Capital Strategy will include capital expenditure, investments and liabilities and treasury management in sufficient detail to allow all members to understand how stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability will be secured.

The primary requirements of the Treasury Management Code are as follows:

1. Creation and maintenance of a Treasury Management Policy Statement which sets out the policies and objectives of the Council’s treasury management activities.
2. Creation and maintenance of Treasury Management Practices which set out the manner in which the Council will seek to achieve those policies and objectives.
3. Receipt by the full council of an annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement - including the Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy - for the year ahead, a Mid-year Review Report and an Annual Report covering activities during the previous year.
4. Delegation by the Council of responsibilities for implementing and monitoring treasury management policies and practices and for the

execution and administration of treasury management decisions, which in this Council is the Chief Officer Resources.

5. Delegation by the Council of the role of scrutiny of treasury management strategy and policies to a specific named body. For this Council the delegated body is the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee.

1.4 Reporting Arrangements

The Council is required to receive and approve, as a minimum, three main reports each year, which incorporate a variety of policies, estimates and actuals.

The Treasury Strategy Statement (this report) - The first, and most important report covers:

- The capital plans (including prudential indicators)
- the treasury management strategy, how the investments and borrowings are to be organised, including treasury indicators; and
- an investment strategy (the parameters on how investments are to be managed).
- a minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy (how residual capital expenditure is charged to revenue over time);

A mid year treasury management report – This will update members with the progress of the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and an assessment of whether the treasury strategy is being met or whether any policies require revision.

An annual treasury report – This provides details of a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations compared to the estimates within the strategy.

Scrutiny

The above reports are required to be adequately scrutinised before being recommended to the Council. This role is undertaken by the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee.

The table below sets out these reporting requirements:

Area of Responsibility	Council/ Committee	Frequency
Treasury Management Strategy / Investment Strategy / MRP policy	Full council	Annually before the start of the financial year
Treasury Management Strategy / Investment Strategy / MRP policy – mid year outturn report	Full Council	Mid year
Treasury Management Strategy / Investment Strategy / MRP policy – updates or revisions at other times	Full Council	Ad hoc
Annual Treasury Outturn Report	Full Council	Annually by 30 September after the year end.
Scrutiny of Treasury Management Strategy	Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee	Annually before the start of the financial year.
Scrutiny of Treasury Management performance	Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee	Mid year & annually by 30 September after the year end.

1.5 Treasury Consultants

The Council currently uses Link Asset Services as its external treasury management advisors. The Council recognises that responsibility for Treasury Management decisions remains with the Authority at all times and will ensure that undue reliance is not placed upon our external service providers.

It also recognises that there is value in employing external providers of treasury management services in order to acquire access to specialist skills and resources. The Council will ensure that the terms of their appointment and the methods by which their value will be assessed are properly agreed and documented, and subjected to regular review.

The contract with Link Assets Services expires on 30th April 2021.

1.6 The role of the S151 Officer

The role of the S151 Officer in relation to Treasury management has been embodied in the CIPFA Code of Practice for many years. The 2017 revised Code, further enhanced this role in relation to the following areas:-

- preparation of a capital strategy to include capital expenditure, capital financing, non-financial investments and treasury management, with a long term timeframe ensuring that the capital strategy is prudent, sustainable, affordable and prudent in the long term and provides value for money
- ensuring that due diligence has been carried out on all treasury and non-financial investments and is in accordance with the risk appetite of the authority
- ensure that the authority has appropriate legal powers to undertake expenditure on non-financial assets and their financing
- ensuring the proportionality of all investments so that the authority does not undertake a level of investing which exposes the authority to an excessive level of risk compared to its financial resources
- ensuring that an adequate governance process is in place for the approval, monitoring and ongoing risk management of all non-financial investments and long term liabilities
- provision to members of a schedule of all non-treasury investments including material investments in subsidiaries, joint ventures, loans and financial guarantees
- ensuring that members are adequately informed and understand the risk exposures taken on by an authority
- ensuring that the authority has adequate expertise, either in house or externally provided, to carry out the above
- creation of Treasury Management Practices which specifically deal with how non treasury investments will be carried out and managed,

2. The Capital Prudential Indicators 2020/2021 – 2022/2023

The Council's capital expenditure plans are the key driver of treasury management activity. The output of the capital expenditure plans are reflected in prudential indicators, which are designed to assist members overview and confirm capital expenditure plans.

2.1 Capital expenditure

This prudential indicator is a summary of the Council's capital expenditure plans, both those agreed previously, and those forming part of this budget cycle. The actual capital expenditure that was incurred in 2018/2019 and the estimates of capital expenditure to be incurred for the current and future years that are recommended for approval are:

Capital Expenditure £000's					
	2018/2019 Actual	2019/2020 Revised Estimate	2020/2021 Estimate	2021/2022 Estimate	2022/2023 Estimate
Total	13,896	19,950	22,500	18,550	13,600

Note

Actual figures for 2018/19 & estimated figures for 2019/2020 represent total gross capital expenditure (i.e. include all expenditure financed from grant).

Estimated figures for 2020/21, 2021/22 & 2022/23 are based on the Authority's approved capital programme plus external funding approvals received at this stage and estimated spend

The table below shows how the above capital expenditure plans are planned to be financed.

Capital Expenditure £000's	2018/2019 Actual	2019/2020 Revised Estimate	2020/2021 Estimate	2021/2022 Estimate	2022/2023 Estimate
Total	13,896	19,950	22,500	18,550	13,600
Financed by:					
Grants, Capital Receipts, revenue and other sources	9,207	14,977	19,627	16,077	11,127
Net financing need for the year from USB and PB	4,689	4,973	2,873	2,473	2,473

** USB – Unhypothecated Supported Borrowing – borrowing that is supported through the Revenue Support Grant.

PB – Prudential Borrowing – borrowing that is not supported through the Revenue Support Grant.

2.2 The Council's borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement)

The second prudential indicator is the Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR is simply the total historic outstanding capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for from either revenue or capital resources. It is essentially a measure of the Council's underlying borrowing need. Any capital expenditure, which has not immediately been paid for (i.e. is borrowed for), will increase the CFR.

The CFR does not increase indefinitely, as the minimum revenue provision (MRP) is a statutory annual revenue charge which broadly reduces the borrowing need in line with each assets life.

The CFR includes any other long term liabilities (e.g. finance leases). Whilst these increase the CFR, and therefore the Council's borrowing requirement, these types of scheme include a borrowing facility and so the Council is not required to separately borrow for these schemes. The Council currently has £0.414m of such schemes within the CFR.

The CFR projections recommended for approval are shown in the table below:

Capital Financing Requirement					
	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2022/23</u>
	<u>Revised</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Estimate</u>
	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Estimate</u>
	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£001</u>
CFR at start of financial year	160,950	165,028	169,311	173,557	175,422
CFR at end of financial year	165,028	169,311	173,557	175,422	173,887
Movement in CFR	4,078	4,284	4,246	1,865	-1,535
<i>Movement in CFR represented by:</i>					
Net Financing need for the year (above)	4,689	4,973	2,873	2,473	2,473
New Finance Leases	85	150	2,049	150	150
less MRP	-696	-839	-676	-758	-4,158
	4,078	4,284	4,246	1,865	-1,535

2.3 Affordability prudential indicators

The previous sections cover the overall capital and control of borrowing prudential indicators, but within this framework prudential indicators are required to assess the affordability of the capital investment plans. These provide an indication of the impact of the capital investment plans on the Council's overall finances. The Council is asked to approve the following indicators:

2.4 Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream.

This indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income) against the net revenue stream.

Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream					
	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Revised Estimate	2020/21 Estimate	2021/22 Estimate	2022/23 Estimate
	%	%	%	%	%
General Fund	3.33%	3.49%	3.22%	3.04%	5.25%

Note:

The estimates of financing costs for 2020/2021 include current commitments and the proposals in the budget report to be presented to Council in February

The net revenue stream for 2021/2022 & 2022/2023 are based on the following assumptions, which have been used as the basis for the Authority’s medium term financial strategy (MTFS).

- *RSG & NNDR – per MTFS assumption to remain static for 2021/2022 & 2022/2023*
- *Council Tax -assumes 4% increase for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 (per MTFS).*
- *Council Tax Base – remains at 2019/2020 level*

3.0 Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/2021

The capital expenditure plans set out in Section 2 provide details of the capital activity of the Council. The treasury management function ensures that the Council’s cash is organised in accordance with the relevant professional codes, so that sufficient cash is available to meet this capital activity. This will involve both the organisation of the cash flow and, where capital plans require, the organisation of appropriate borrowing facilities. The strategy covers the relevant treasury / prudential indicators, the current and projected debt positions and the annual investment strategy.

The suggested strategy for 2020/2021 in respect of the following aspects of the treasury management function is based upon the treasury officers' views on interest rates, supplemented with leading market forecasts provided by the Council's treasury advisor, Link Asset Services.

The Strategy covers:

- 3.1 *the current treasury portfolio position;*
- 3.2 *Treasury management prudential Indicators for 2020/2021 to 2022/2023*
- 3.3 *prospects for interest rates;*
- 3.4 *the borrowing strategy;*
- 3.5 *policy on borrowing in advance of need;*
- 3.6 *debt rescheduling;*
- 3.7 *strategy on the use of usable capital receipts;*

3.1 Current Treasury Portfolio Position

The Council's treasury portfolio position at 31 March 2019, with forward projections are summarised below. The table shows the actual external debt (the treasury management operations), against the underlying capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement - CFR), highlighting any over or under borrowing.

Treasury Portfolio Position					
	2018/19 actual £000	2019/20 estimate £000	2020/21 estimate £000	2021/22 estimate £000	2022/23 estimate £001
<i>External Debt:</i>					
Debt	157,199	157,430	155,934	160,649	158,742
Other Long Term Liabilities	225	193	1,773	1,550	1,339
Gross Debt as at 31 March	157,424	157,623	157,707	162,199	160,081
The Capital Financing Requirement	165,028	169,311	173,557	175,422	173,887
Under / (Over) Borrowing	7,604	11,688	15,850	13,223	13,806

The Council is currently maintaining an under-borrowed position. This means that the capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement), has not been fully funded with loan debt, as cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. This strategy is prudent as investment returns are low and it minimises counterparty risk.

Within the prudential indicators there are a number of key indicators to ensure that the Council operates its activities within well defined limits. One of these is that the Council needs to ensure that its gross debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2019/2020 and the following two financial years. This allows some flexibility

for limited early borrowing for future years, but ensures that borrowing is not undertaken for revenue purposes.

The Chief Officer Resources reports that the Council complied with this prudential indicator in the current year and does not envisage difficulties for the future. This view takes into account current commitments, existing plans, and the proposals in the budget report.

3.2 Treasury Management Prudential Indicators for 2020/21 – 2022/23

The following section sets out the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators that are recommended for approval.

3.2.1 Adoption of CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management

In December 2017, CIPFA issued revised CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services

3.2.2 Treasury management limits on activity

There are four debt related treasury activity limits. The purpose of these are to restrain the activity of the treasury function within certain limits, thereby managing risk and reducing the impact of any adverse movement in interest rates. However, if these are set to be too restrictive they will impair the opportunities to reduce costs / improve performance. The indicators are:

- **Upper Limit on Fixed Interest exposure**

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has always adopted a risk averse strategy in relation to variable rate debt, and should interest rates rise the Authority would wish to continue with its strategy of maintaining a stable long term portfolio by drawing longer term fixed rate funding. In order to be consistent with this strategy, the upper limit on fixed rate exposures for 2020/2021, 2021/2022 & 2022/2023 should be set at 100% of its net outstanding sums.

- **Upper Limit on Variable Interest Exposure**

In order to give the flexibility to enable debt rescheduling opportunities to be undertaken, the upper limit on variable rate exposures for 2020/21, 2021/2022 & 2022/2023 should be set at 30% of its net outstanding sums.

- **Range of Exposures**

This means that the Chief Officer Resources will manage fixed interest exposures within the range 70% to 100% and variable rate exposures within the range 0% to 30%. This is a continuation of current practice.

- **Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing**

It is recommended that the Council sets upper and lower limits for the maturity structure of its borrowings as follows:

The amount of projected borrowing that is fixed rate and maturing in each period, as a percentage of total projected borrowing that is fixed rate, is illustrated in the table below. This is a continuation of the current practice.

	Upper Limit	Lower Limit
Under 12 months	20%	0%
12 months & within 24 months	20%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	50%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	75%	0%
10 years and above	95%	5%

3.2.3 Authorised Limit

This is a key Prudential Indicator that represents a control on the maximum level of borrowing. This represents a limit beyond which external debt is prohibited and reflects the level of external debt which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term.

This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003. The Government retains an option to control either the total of all councils' plans, or those of a specific council, although this power has not yet been exercised.

It is recommended that the Council approves the following Authorised Limits for its Total External Debt Gross of Investments for the next three financial years.

Authorised limit for external debt				
	2019/2020 £000	2020/2021 £000	2021/2022 £000	2022/23 £000
Borrowing	170,435	181,060	182,982	181,128
Other long term liabilities	173	2,182	1,950	1,705
Total	170,608	183,242	184,932	182,833

3.2.4 Operational Boundary

The proposed Operational Boundary for external debt is based on the same estimates as the Authorised Limit but reflects directly the Chief Officer Resources' prudent estimate of the most likely but not worst case scenario. It excludes the contingency included within the Authorised Limit (to allow for example for unusual cash movements), and equates to the maximum of external debt projected by this estimate. The Operational Boundary represents a key management tool for in year monitoring by the Chief Officer Resources.

It is recommended that the Council approves the following Operational Boundary Limits for the next three financial years.

Operational Boundary for external debt				
	2019/2020 £0	2020/2021 £0	2021/2022 £0	2022/23 £0
Borrowing	154,941	164,600	166,347	164,662
Other long term liabilities	157	1,984	1,773	1,550
Total	155,098	166,584	168,120	166,212

3.2.5 Actual External Debt

The Council's actual external debt as at 31 March 2019 was £157.2 million (including temporary borrowing), comprising 99.8% borrowing and 0.2% other long term liabilities. It should be noted that actual external debt is not directly comparable to the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary, since the actual debt reflects the position at one point in time.

3.3 Prospects for Interest Rates

As part of their service, the Council's treasury advisor for 2020/2021, Link Asset Services assist the Council to formulate a view on interest rates. The following table illustrates this :

Link Asset Services Interest Rate View								
	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22
Bank Rate View	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
3 Month LIBID	0.45	0.40	0.35	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30
6 Month LIBID	0.60	0.55	0.50	0.45	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40
12 Month LIBID	0.75	0.70	0.65	0.60	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55
5yr PWLB Rate	1.90	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.10	2.10
10yr PWLB Rate	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.30
25yr PWLB Rate	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.70	2.70
50yr PWLB Rate	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.50	2.50

HRA rates are approx. 1% lower than those quoted in the table

The above forecasts have been based on the recent events - the response of the central banks have been flexible and bold and have provided the liquidity and support to the markets. This has been aided by massive fiscal support from Government. The cut in interest rates to 0.1% by the Bank of England, the addition of a further quantitative easing; and the promise of further fiscal help for businesses and households has seen gilt yields fall significantly.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has reduced Bank Rate to 0.1% in response to the coronavirus crisis and it is anticipated the bank rate will remain unchanged for approximately the next 2 years.

Bond yields / PWLB rates.

During the first half of 2019-20 to 30 September, gilt yields plunged and caused a near halving of longer term PWLB rates to completely unprecedented historic low levels, but then jumped up by 100 bps on 9.10.19 when HM Treasury added 100 bps to the PWLB rates with immediate effect. In the current climate, the cut in interest rates to 0.1% by the Bank of England; the addition of a further Quantitative Easing; and the promise of further fiscal help for businesses and households has seen gilt yields tumble. It is anticipated though that gilt yields will start to creep up in around a year's time as investors become more optimistic.

PWLB rates are subject to ad-hoc decisions by **H.M. Treasury** to change the margin over gilt yields charged in PWLB rates. Currently there is a PWLB consultation paper deadline set for the end of July. The hope is that general fund non-commercial scheme borrowing rates will revert to those available currently for HRA borrowing, which could see longer term borrowing rates at reduce to less than 1%.

Economic and interest rate forecasting remains difficult with so many influences weighing on UK gilt yields and PWLB rates. The above forecasts, (and MPC decisions), will be liable to further amendment depending on how economic data and developments in financial markets transpire over the next year.

Investment and borrowing rates

Investment returns are likely to remain low during 2020/21 with them possibly reducing a little from their current position.

Borrowing interest rates were on a major falling trend during the first half of 2019-20 but then jumped up by 100 bps on 9.10.19. The policy of avoiding new borrowing by running down spare cash balances has served local authorities well over the last few years. However, the unexpected increase of 100 bps in PWLB rates required a major rethink of local authority treasury management strategy and risk management.

Currently there is a PWLB consultation paper deadline set for the end of July. The hope is that in the current crisis, general fund non-commercial scheme borrowing rates will revert to those available currently for HRA borrowing, which could see longer term borrowing rates at <1%, once the outcome of the consultation is known, it is at that time the authority will consider undertaking longer term borrowing.

While this authority will not be able to avoid borrowing to finance new capital expenditure, to replace maturing debt, there will be a cost of carry, (the difference between higher borrowing costs and lower investment returns).

3.4 The Borrowings Strategy

The Council is currently maintaining an under-borrowed position. This means that the capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement), has not been fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. This strategy is prudent as investment returns are low and it minimises counterparty risk.

Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer term stability of the debt portfolio. With short term interest rates currently much lower than long term rates, it is likely to be more cost effective in the short term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short term loans instead.

By doing so, the Authority is able to reduce borrowing costs and reduce overall treasury risk. The benefits of short term borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long term borrowing rates are forecast to rise. Link Asset Services will assist the Authority with this cost of carry and breakeven analysis.

The Authority may also consider arranging forward starting loans during 2019/2020, where the interest rate is fixed in advance, but the cash is received in later years. This would enable certainty of cost to be achieved without suffering a cost of carry in the intervening period.

In addition, the Authority will borrow short term loans to cover cash flow shortages.

The borrowing strategy to be adopted will therefore be:

(Each strand of the strategy will be considered together and decisions made based on the most advantageous position for the Authority at that time).

To utilise the Authority's overdraft facility:

- to fund unexpected daily cash deficits;
- to fund temporary cash shortfalls where there are no other sources of funding available within the marketplace.

To borrow over the short term:

- to fund temporary cash shortfalls;
- to maintain a suitably balanced maturity profile;
- to make short term savings required in order to meet budgetary constraints;

in anticipation of securing longer term loans at more attractive rates.

To borrow over the long term:

to reduce the Authority's average cost of borrowing;
to maintain a stable, longer term portfolio;
to maximise the potential for future debt rescheduling.

If appropriate to avoid all new external borrowing:

to maximise savings in the short term;
to run down temporary investment levels;
to minimise exposure to interest rate and credit risk.

Sensitivity of the forecast – In normal circumstances the main sensitivities of the forecast are likely to be the two scenarios noted below. Council officers, in conjunction with the treasury advisers, will continually monitor both the prevailing interest rates and the market forecasts, adopting the following responses to a change of sentiment:

- *if it were felt that there was a significant risk of a sharp FALL in long and short term rates, e.g. due to a marked increase of risks around relapse into recession or of risks of deflation, then long term borrowings will be postponed, and potential rescheduling from fixed rate funding into short term borrowing will be considered.*
- *if it were felt that there was a significant risk of a much sharper RISE in long and short term rates than that currently forecast, perhaps arising from a greater than expected increase in world economic activity or a sudden increase in inflation risks, then the portfolio position will be re-appraised with the likely action that fixed rate funding will be drawn whilst interest rates were still relatively cheap.*

Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution will be adopted with the 2020/2021 treasury operations. The Chief Officer Resources will monitor interest rates in the financial markets and adopt a pragmatic approach to changing circumstances reporting any changes to the above strategy to Council at the next available opportunity.

3.5 Policy on borrowing in advance of need

The Council will not borrow more than or in advance of its needs purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. Any decision to borrow in advance will be within forward approved Capital Financing Requirement Estimates, and will be carefully considered to ensure value for money can be demonstrated and that the Council can ensure the security of such funds.

In determining whether borrowing will be undertaken in advance of need the Council will;

- ensure that there is a clear link between the capital programme and maturity profile of the existing debt portfolio which supports the need to take funding in advance of need
- ensure the ongoing revenue liabilities created, and the implications for the future plans and budgets have been considered
- evaluate the economic and market factors that might influence the manner and timing of any decision to borrow
- consider the merits and demerits of alternative forms of funding
- consider the alternative interest rate bases available, the most appropriate periods to fund and repayment profiles to use.
- consider the impact of borrowing in advance on temporarily (until required to finance capital expenditure) increasing investment cash balances and the consequent increase in exposure to counterparty risk, and other risks, and the level of such risks given the controls in place to minimise them.

3.6 Debt Rescheduling

As short term borrowing rates will be considerably cheaper than longer term rates, there may be potential for some residual opportunities to generate savings by switching from long term debt to short term debt. However, these savings will need to be considered in the light of the size of premiums incurred, their short term nature, and the likely cost of refinancing those short term loans, once they mature, compared to the current rates of longer term debt in the existing debt portfolio.

The reasons for any rescheduling to take place will include: -

- the generation of cash savings and / or discounted cash flow savings
- helping to fulfil the strategy outlined in paragraph 3.4 above
- enhance the balance of the portfolio (amend the maturity profile and/or the balance of volatility).

Variations in risk will be considered when evaluating such opportunities, in order to ensure that the Authority's risk averse strategy is maintained.

All rescheduling will be reported to Council as part of the mid-year and Annual Treasury Outturn reports.

3.7 Strategy on the use of Usable Capital Receipts

The long standing policy on usable capital receipts is that they are immediately invested internally, thereby helping to improve the Authority's cashflow position and reducing the level of external loans that need to be raised. This in turn reduces

external interest charges from the money market. This approach is consistent with what is regarded as good practice in terms of strategic level treasury management and overall produces savings in debt servicing costs for the Authority. However, as approved sums of usable capital receipts are subsequently used to finance part of the annual capital programme each year, appropriate allowance then needs to be made for the use of these receipts in determining the estimated level of external borrowing required for that year. Hence usable capital receipts are released on a controlled basis and the annual estimates for external interest charges are adjusted accordingly.

4.0 Investment Strategy

4.1 Background

CIPFA has extended the meaning of 'investments' to include both financial and non-financial investments. This report deals solely with financial investments, (as managed by the treasury management team). Non-financial investments, essentially the purchase of income yielding assets, are covered in the Capital Strategy, (a separate report).

In setting its investment strategy the Council has to comply with various legislation and Codes of practice, being:

- Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003
- Welsh Assembly guidance on investments
- 2017 revised CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice
- CIPFA Treasury Management Guidance Notes 2018

The Council's investment priorities are:

1. The security of the capital sum – ensuring that our investments are safe and not at risk of being lost;
2. The liquidity of its investments – ensuring that our investments are easily accessible i.e. not tied up for long periods of time;
3. Return on investment – once security and liquidity have been satisfied then and only then will the Council seek the maximum return on its investment.

The Borrowing of monies purely to invest or on-lend and make a return is unlawful and this Council will not engage in such activity.

The Council maintains only temporary, short term investments (i.e. for periods of less than a year, although it very rarely invest for periods of longer than a few months) and investments will accordingly only normally be made with reference to the cash flow requirements, including the investing of sums borrowed at prevailing low interest rates in anticipation of capital spending.

This is because the Council does not have large cash balances to invest over a longer period of time. It needs its cash on a short term basis in order to be able to manage its daily cash flow requirements.

4.2 Definition of Investments – Specified and non-specified

The Local Government Act 2003 refers to specified and non-specified investments. The Welsh Assembly Government's Guidance on Local Government Investments, effective from 1st April 2010, defines the following:-

Specified Investments:

An investment is a **specified** one if **all** of the following apply:-

- (a) it is denominated in sterling and any payments or repayments in respect of it are payable only in sterling

(b) the investment is not a long-term one i.e. one which is due to be repaid within 12 months of the date on which the investment was made or one which may require to be repaid within that period

(c) the making of the investment is not defined as capital expenditure by virtue of regulation 20(1)(d) of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Wales) Regulations 2003 [SI 3239 as amended]

(d) the investment is made with a body or in an investment scheme of * high credit quality or with one of the following public sector bodies:

i. the UK Government

ii. a local authority in England or Wales (as defined in section 23 of the 2003 Act) or a similar body in Scotland or Northern Ireland

iii. a parish or community council.

* High credit quality is defined in the creditworthiness policy in 3.0

Non-specified Investments:

(i) An investment is non-specified if it does not meet the above definition.

As this Council maintains only short term investments (i.e. less than 365 days) then by definition it will only invest in specified investments.

4.3 Creditworthiness policy

In accordance with the guidance from the Welsh Government and CIPFA, and in order to minimise the risk to investments, the Council applies minimum acceptable credit criteria in order to generate a list of highly creditworthy counterparties which also enables diversification and thus avoid a concentration of risk. The key ratings used to monitor counterparties are the Short Term and Long Term ratings derived from the three credit rating agencies, Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's (S&P).

Counterparties for investment purposes are selected using specific criteria, as follows:

Banks - high credit quality – the Council will only use banks which:

- are UK banks; and/or
- are non-UK and domiciled in a country which has a minimum sovereign Long Term rating of AAA (any non UK transactions would be undertaken in Sterling).
- and have, as a **minimum**, the following Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's credit ratings (where rated):

Table 1:

	Fitch	Moody's	S&P
Long Term	A-	A3	A-
Short Term	F1	P-1	A-1

Long term rating – covers maturities of up to five years. It provides an assessment of the ongoing stability of the institutions prospective financial condition. **A** indicates high credit quality and low expectation of credit risk. The + or – suffixes are appended to a rating to denote the relative status within the long term rating category. The Moody's and S&P definitions are similar to Fitch. The Moody's numerical suffix indicates a rating at the higher end of the scale (1) to the lower end of the scale (3), with 1 having higher credit quality than 3.

Short term rating – covers obligations which have a maturity of less than one year. This rating places greater emphasis on the liquidity necessary to meet financial commitments. Rating **F1 (Fitch)** is the highest short term credit quality rating. It indicates the strongest capacity for timely payment of financial commitments. The Moody's and S&P definitions are similar to Fitch.

- **Part nationalised UK bank** – Royal Bank of Scotland Group (NatWest, Royal Bank of Scotland, Ulster Bank). This bank can be included provided it continues to be part nationalised or it meets the ratings in Banks above.
- **The Council's own banker (Barclays)** – Since under existing arrangements excess surplus funds can be held overnight with the Council's Bank, unexpected credit rating downgrades to the Bank could result in these short-term investments technically being placed with a counterparty that does not meet the minimum approved credit criteria specified above. The S&P short term rating for Barclays is A-2, and has been since 2012. A-2 means that S&P consider Barclays capacity to meet its financial commitment on its obligations as satisfactory. Fitch and Moody's both consider this to be strong. The minimum credit rating for Barclays will therefore be A-2 (S&P) with F1 for Fitch and P-1 for Moody's. Whilst this will mean that Barclay's S&P credit ratings will be slightly lower than those required for other institutions (as detailed above), investments with Barclays will be restricted to the overnight (or over weekend) sweep facility (where surplus balances are "swept" into an interest bearing account) up to a maximum of £6 million.

Should Barclays' credit ratings improve and meet the credit criteria required for other institutions (above), then the investment periods for meeting the minimum criteria will once again be applied. See below for contingency arrangements in relation to the Authority's bank.

Table 2:

	Fitch	Moody's	S&P
Long Term	A-	A3	A-
Short Term	F1	P-1	A-2

- **Building societies** - The Council will *use only* the Nationwide Building Society, unless their short term credit ratings fall below the minimum specified in table 1 above for banks.
- **AAA rated Money market funds (MMFs)** – Triple A rated MMFs are considered to be highly credit rated.
- **UK Government** - The Debt Management Account Deposit Facility DMADF of the Debt Management Office (DMO). The DMO is legally and constitutionally part of HM Treasury and as an Executive Agency of Her Majesty's Treasury it operates at arm's length from Ministers. The DMO is considered to be highly credit rated.
- **UK Local authorities**, Police Authorities, parish councils etc

Use of additional information other than credit ratings

Additional requirements under the Code require the Council to supplement credit rating information. Whilst the above criteria relies primarily on the application of credit ratings to provide a pool of appropriate counterparties for officers to use, additional operational market information must be applied before making any specific investment decision from the agreed pool of counterparties. Ratings will therefore not be the sole determinant of the quality of an institution and the assessment will therefore also take account of information that reflects the opinion of the markets, as follows:

Credit default swaps (CDS)

The Council will engage with its Treasury advisors, Link Asset Services, to maintain a monitor on market pricing such as “credit default swaps (CDS)” and overlay that information on top of the credit ratings.

CDS spreads offer a timely market perception of the risk attached to the relevant institution. These can, on occasion, pre-empt actions by the credit rating agencies whose ratings can lag behind market reaction to changes in the credit institutions situation. Since they are traded instruments, they carry in them market perception related to that entity's credit quality. In order to “measure” the CDS data, Link use a benchmark system which allows the CDS spread of an institution to be compared against a predetermined benchmark rate. This data is then used to assess whether the market is indicating that an institution's credit quality is a cause for concern.

Where there is a cause for concern then the counterparty will be either downgraded in terms of investment period or removed from the approved list.

Credit Rating Agency Comments

➤ **Rating Watch negative (or on review for possible downgrade)**

Where the credit rating agencies have placed counterparties on “rating watch negative” or “on review for possible downgrade”, then this indicates that there is a reasonable probability of a rating change in a relatively short period (a few weeks). If the counterparty is on negative rating watch, then it will be downgraded in terms of the investment period or removed from the list.

➤ **Negative Outlook**

This indicates the direction a rating is likely to move over a one to two year period. As the maximum fixed investment period for the Council is 6 months, then this will have no impact on the approved list.

Time and monetary limits applying to investments.

The table below shows the time and monetary limits for institutions on the Council’s counterparty list are as follows:

	Long term Rating (Fitch, Moody’s, S&P)	Short term rating (Fitch, Moody’s, S&P)	Money Limit	Time Limit
Banks - higher quality	AA, Aa2, AA	F1+, P-1, A-1+	£6m	6 months
Banks - medium quality (including Nationwide BS)	A-, A3, A-	F1, P-1, A-1	£4m	3 months
Banks – part nationalised	N/A	N/A	£4m	3 months
Council’s banker (not meeting Banks - medium)	A-, A3, A-	F1, P-1, A-2	£6m	overnight
DMADF	AAA	N/A	unlimited	6 months
Local authorities – per Authority	N/A	N/A	£6m	3 months
	Fund rating		Money Limit	Time Limit
Money market funds – per MMF	AAA		£6m	liquid

Country and Group Limits

The Council has determined that it will only use approved counterparties from non UK countries with a minimum sovereign rating of AAA from Fitch (Aa2 Moody’s, AAA S&P).

In addition, no more than £6m will be placed with any non-UK country at any time.

For financial institutions included within the same banking group, the counterparty limit will apply to the group.

Lloyds Banking Group

- Halifax Lloyds Bank Bank of Scotland

RBS Group

- National Westminster Royal Bank of Scotland Ulster Bank

4.4 Contingency Arrangements for the Authority's Corporate Bank

If credit agency ratings change and the Authority's Corporate Bank fails to comply with the approved Investment Policy criteria specified above, then delegated authority, to agree appropriate and reasonable interim contingency arrangements prior to approval by Full Council, is granted to the Members and Officers listed below:

- a. Nominated Members: Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council, Chair of Corporate Overview Scrutiny.
- b. Nominated Officer: Statutory Section 151 Officer (Chief Officer Resources)

The Statutory Section 151 Officer and at least two of the three nominated Members, must approve unanimously the appropriate and reasonable interim contingency arrangements.

4.5 Monitoring of credit ratings

Welsh Assembly guidance states that the Annual Investment Strategy must state how credit ratings are to be monitored and what action is to be taken when ratings change.

The responsibility for constructing and amending the Council's approved counterparty investment list is delegated to the Chief Officer Resources and is contained within the Treasury Management Practice Schedules. All investments will be made in accordance with this list and the limits therein.

Credit ratings for individual counterparties can change at any time. The Chief Officer Resources is responsible for applying the stated credit rating criteria above, and will add or delete counterparties as appropriate to / from the approved

counterparty list when there is a change in the credit ratings of individual counterparties or in banking structures. The Authority is alerted to changes in credit ratings through its Treasury Advisors, Link Asset Services.

- If a downgrade results in the counterparty/investment scheme no longer meeting the Authority's minimum criteria, its further use as a new investment will be withdrawn immediately.
- If a body is placed on negative rating watch (i.e. there is a reasonable probability of a rating change and the likelihood of that change being negative) and it is currently near at the minimum acceptable rating for placing investments with that body, then no further investments will be made with that body.

The only exception permitted to these criteria will be the contingency arrangement for the Authority's bank described in section 4.4

4.6 Liquidity of Investments

Welsh Assembly guidance states that the Annual Investment Strategy is to specify the maximum periods for which funds may be committed and the minimum amount to be held in investments during the financial year.

The maximum period for which funds may be committed is 365 days but the actual period of investment will depend upon future cash flow requirements and will comply with the maximum period permitted in the table above.

As the Authority only maintains temporary, short term investments with reference to its cash flow requirements, then the minimum amount of investment to be held during the financial year will be nil.

4.7 Investment monitoring reports

The Council will report on its investment activity as part of its mid-year and Annual Treasury Outturn Report.

5. Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement

The Secretary of State recommends that before the start of each financial year a local authority prepares a statement of its policy on making MRP in respect of that financial year and submits it to full Council.

Under regulation 21 of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Wales) Regulations 2003, local authorities are required to charge to their revenue

account for each financial year MRP to account for the principal cost of their debt in that financial year.

For 2007/8 and subsequent financial years, the detailed calculation has been replaced with a requirement that local authorities calculate an amount of MRP which they consider to be prudent. Local Authorities are legally obliged to “have regard” to such guidance (i.e. set a prudent MRP) – which is exactly the same duty as applies to other statutory guidance including the Prudential Code and CIPFA Treasury Management Code.

The broad aim of prudent provision is to ensure that debt is repaid over a period reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits, or, in the case of borrowing supported by Revenue Support Grant (RSG), reasonably commensurate with the period implicit in the determination of that grant.

The legislation does not define what constitutes a “prudent provision”. However the MRP guidance issued by the Secretary of State (WG) interprets the term and provides some ready-made examples of acceptable methods for calculating a prudent level of MRP.

In December 2017, Council approved an amended MRP policy to be applied from 2017/18 and beyond, as follows:

MRP on Supported Borrowing – this will be based on a 2% straight line approach and will be applied retrospectively back to 1st April 2007.

MRP on Unsupported Borrowing – this will be based on Option 3 of the statutory guidance that allows for MRP provision using the asset life methodology on an annuity basis. This will be applied retrospectively back to 1st April 2007. It is applied to particular items of capital expenditure and spreads the expenditure over the useful life of the asset. MRP is chargeable in the first financial year after the relevant asset becomes operational. The annuity method MRP will be the amount presumed to be the principal element of the equal amounts that would be payable each year in respect of a loan at a specified rate of interest that would reduce the outstanding principal amount to zero at the end of the estimated useful life. The annuity method can be argued as providing a fairer charge than equal instalments as it takes into account the time value of money. The interest rate to be used in the annuity calculation is the average PWLB annuity rate for a loan with a term equivalent to the estimated life of the asset. Estimated life periods will be determined under delegated powers. To the extent that expenditure is not on the creation of an asset and is of a type that is subject to estimated life periods that are referred to in the guidance, these periods will generally be adopted by the Council. However, the Council reserves the right to determine useful life periods

and prudent MRP in exceptional circumstances where the recommendations of the guidance would not be appropriate.

MRP on Finance Leases - Option 3 will apply in a modified form, to ensure that the MRP for Finance Leases is equal to the rental payable each year, with the following exception.

Capital Receipts – In circumstances where it is prudent to do so and to protect Council Tax payers from unnecessary MRP charges, capital receipts received under finance lease arrangements (where there is a head and sub lease agreement) will be used to reduce the Council's overall borrowing requirement, rather than making a conventional MRP charge to revenue.

Loans to other bodies – where loans are made to other bodies for their capital expenditure, no MRP will be charged. However, the capital receipts generated by the annual repayments on those loans will be put aside to repay debt instead.

Application of retrospective sum – the retrospective application of the supported and unsupported borrowing option back to 1st April 2007 results in a sum of £15.5 million that is to be applied for a 5 year period from 2017/18 to 2021/22 in order to reduce the MRP charge for those years.

In November 2018, Welsh Government issued further guidance, to apply from April 2019. In summary, the changes are as follows:-

- Changing the method of calculation of MRP cannot lead to retrospective application
- MRP cannot be a negative amount
- MRP can only be nil under certain circumstances

JW 14/1/2020 (updated 2nd July 2020)

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX B Treasury Management Policy Statement

1. This organisation defines its treasury management activities as: “The management of the authority’s investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks”.
2. This organisation regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the organisation.
3. This organisation acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management, and to employing suitable comprehensive performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.”

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 36

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 7.7.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 7.7.20

Committee: Council

Date of Meeting: 23rd July, 2020

Report Subject: Pay Policy Statement 2020/21

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Nigel Daniels, Leader of the Council / Executive Member Corporate Services

Report Submitted by: Andrea Prosser, Head of Organisational Development

Report Written by: Lee McDonald, HR Development Officer

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
17/2/20	Virtually on 28/2/20 & 02/07/20						26/07/20	Trade Unions virtually on 28/2/20

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 (appendix 1) in order to comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Localism Act 2011, Chapter 8 (Sections 38 to 43), requires Local Authorities to prepare a Pay Policy Statement which must articulate the Authority's policies in respect of a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce, particularly its senior staff (Chief Officers) and its lowest paid employees.

 - 2.2 The Statement must comply with the following:
 - Be prepared for each financial year, the first of which was approved for the financial year 2012/13.
 - Be approved by Full Council each year.
 - Be published on the Council's website.
 - Come into force and be complied with [S41 (2)] from the date of its approval and be subject to a review on a minimum of an annual basis in accordance with the relevant legislation prevailing at that time.

2.3 In “performing its functions” under S38 of the Act the Authority must also have due regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State and must as a minimum statutory requirement include the following:

- Set out the policies relating to the remuneration of its Chief Officers and its lowest paid employees.
- Set out the relationship between its Chief Officers and employees who are not Chief Officers.
- State its definition of “lowest paid employees” and the reasons for adopting it.
- Set out its policies on remuneration for the highest paid employees alongside their policies and remuneration towards its lowest paid employees.

2.4 The Act does not require Authorities to use their Pay Policy Statement to publish specific numerical data on pay and rewards. However the Council should consider how information set out within the Pay Policy Statement fits with data on pay and rewards required to be published under the Code of Recommended Practice on Data Transparency and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

2.5 The Council uses the nationally negotiated pay spine referred to as the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) as the basis for its local grading structure. This determines the salaries of the large majority of the workforce. The NJC two year national pay deal for 2018/19 and 2019/20 which included a new pay spine from 1 April 2019 is in place and a new pay deal is currently being negotiated for 2020/21.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 *To include Recommendation(s) / Endorsement by other groups, e.g. CMT/Committees/Other groups)*

The Pay Policy Statement has been circulated to CLT – virtually on 28 February 2020.

3.2 **Option 1:** To consider and approve the Pay Policy Statement (preferred option).

3.3 **Option 2:** Not to approve the Pay Policy Statement.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

The Pay Policy Statement will assist the Council to secure and maintain a suitable workforce which is required to deliver and develop its statutory responsibilities and also services covered in the Corporate Plan and Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

The Pay Policy Statement sets out the pay appropriate to various staff groups within the Council. Any financial implications linked to pay awards are negotiated nationally and are still pending for 2020/21.

5.2 ***Risk***

The risk of not adopting the Pay Policy Statement is that the Council will not comply with its statutory obligations in line with the Localism Act 2011 and be in breach of the National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service as set out by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.

5.3 ***Legal***

Approving the Pay Policy Statement ensures the Council complies with the requirements set out under the Localism Act 2011. This report supports the responsibility for the Council to produce an annual Pay Policy Statement under the Localism Act 2011.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

The Pay Policy Statement provides transparency in relation to the Council's approach to setting the pay of the workforce, particularly senior staff and lowest paid employees and meets the statutory duty of implementing national agreements on pay.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 ***Expected outcome for the public***

Producing an annual Pay Policy Statement provides the public with information to ensure the Council is open and transparent with regards to pay.

6.2 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The involvement/roles and responsibilities of employees are detailed in the Pay Policy Statement and appendices.

6.3 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The Council is committed to providing quality services which offer value for money. The Pay Policy Statement seeks to ensure the Council attracts, retains and motivates the best employees with the right skills.

6.4 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The Pay Policy Statement has been updated in collaboration with key staff in Organisational Development.

6.5 ***EqIA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***

A full Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the implementation of the new NJC pay spine and there is no adverse impact has been identified.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 The Pay Policy Statement will be reviewed and updated by the Organisational Development Division on an annual basis.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Pay Policy Statement 2020/2021

Pay Policy Statement

2020/2021



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Version Control

This document is intended for:

- Council staff only School-based staff only Council & School-based staff

Version	Key Changes	Approved By
2020/21	New policy for 2020/2021	Council

This document may be reviewed and amended at any time and without consultation in response to legal requirements, in line with best practice or in response to an organisational requirement and where the changes do not affect the spirit or intent of the document.

Contents

1. Introduction from the Leader of the Council & Managing Director	4
2. Purpose	5
3. Legislative Framework	5
4. Scope of the Policy.....	6
5. Key Principles	6
6. Pay Structure	7
7. Job Evaluation.....	8
8. Honoraria and Secondment	8
9. Market Supplements	8
10. Accountability and Decision Making.....	8
11. Chief Officer Remuneration.....	9
12. Remuneration at the Lowest Level.....	12
13. The Foundation Living Wage	13
14. Off Payroll Working in the Public Sector - IR35 Intermediaries Legislation	13
15. Pay Relativities within the Council.....	13
16. Gender Pay Gap	14
17. Publication.....	15
18. Review of the Policy	15

- Appendix 1: Local Government Services Employees Pay Scales
- Appendix 2: Chief Officer Pay Scales
- Appendix 3: Soulbury National Pay Scales
- Appendix 4: Annual Leave And Holiday Pay – A Manager’s Guide
- Appendix 5: Retirement Options Policy
- Appendix 6: Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 Statement Of Policy - Exercise Of Discretionary Functions
- Appendix 7: Redundancy Policy
- Appendix 8: In The Interests Of The Efficiency Of The Service Policy

1. Introduction from the Leader of the Council & Managing Director

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council recognises the interest in public sector pay and is committed to being open, transparent and accountable. As the Leader of the Council and Managing Director we want to ensure that our council tax payers have access to information about how we pay staff.

The Council is one of the largest employers in the area and it is important that we offer good quality employment on reasonable terms and conditions and fair rates of pay. This has a beneficial impact on the quality of life within the community as well as on the local economy.

We are committed to providing quality services which offer value for money and this Pay Policy Statement seeks to ensure we can attract, retain and motivate the best employees with the right skills.

The Council is committed to taking an open and transparent approach to pay and will publish a Pay Policy Statement annually on the Council's intranet and website.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nigel Daniels".

Councillor Nigel Daniels
Leader of the Council



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Morris".

Michelle Morris
Managing Director

2. Purpose

- 2.1 Under Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council has the power “to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as the Council thinks fit”. This Pay Policy Statement sets out the Council’s approach to Pay in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 - 43 of the Localism Act 2011 and with regard to the Welsh Government guidance 'Pay Accountability in Local Government in Wales' issued in May 2017. The purpose of this Pay Policy Statement is to provide transparency in relation to the Council’s approach to setting the pay of its workforce, particularly its senior staff (or ‘chief officers’) and its lowest paid employees. Local Authorities are required to produce and publish a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year detailing:
- The Council’s policies in relation to all aspects and elements of the remuneration of Chief Officers;
 - The approach to the publication of and access to information relating to all aspects of the remuneration of Chief Officers;
 - The Council’s policies in relation to the remuneration of its lowest paid employees (including the definition adopted and reasons for it);
 - The relationship between the remuneration of Chief Officers and other employees.
- 2.2 The Council is a large complex organisation with a multi-million pound budget providing and/or commissioning a wide range of essential services. The general approach to remuneration levels may, therefore, differ from one group of employees to another to reflect specific circumstances at a local, regional or national level. It will also need to be flexible, when required, to address a variety of changing circumstances, whether foreseeable or not.
- 2.3 The Council will develop an annual Pay Policy Statement and will seek to align reward systems with business objectives. As required by legislation, following approval by Full Council this Pay Policy Statement will come into immediate effect and will be subject to review on a minimum of an annual basis in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance prevailing at the time.

3. Legislative Framework

- 3.1 In determining the pay and remuneration of its employees, the Council will comply with all relevant employment legislation.
- 3.2 With regard to the Equal Pay requirements contained within the Equality Act 2010, the Council, through the use of an equality proofed Job Evaluation scheme for staff under the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) terms and conditions which directly relates salaries to the requirements, demands and responsibilities of the role, will aim to ensure that there is no pay discrimination within its pay structures and that all pay differentials can be objectively justified.

4. Scope of the Policy

- 4.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires Authorities to develop and make public their Pay Policy Statement on all aspects of Chief Officer remuneration and that pertaining to the 'lowest paid' in the Council, explaining the relationship between the remuneration for Chief Officers and other groups.
- 4.2 The provisions in the Localism Act 2011 do not apply to the staff of local authority schools and as such they are not included within the scope of this Pay Policy Statement.
- 4.3 The provisions of the Localism Act 2011 do not detract from the Council's autonomy in making decisions on pay that are appropriate to local circumstances and which deliver value for money for local taxpayers.

5. Key Principles

5.1 Transparency, accountability and value for money

- 5.1.1 The Council is committed to an open and transparent approach to its Pay Policy Statement which will enable the taxpayer to access, understand and assess information on remuneration levels across all groups of Council employees. The following are attached as appendices:

- Appendix 1: Local Government Services Employees Pay Scales
- Appendix 2: Chief Officer Pay Scales
- Appendix 3: Soulbury National Pay Scales
- Appendix 4: Annual Leave and Holiday Pay – A Manager's Guide
- Appendix 5: Retirement Options Policy
- Appendix 6: Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 Statement Of Policy - Exercise Of Discretionary Functions
- Appendix 7: Redundancy Policy
- Appendix 8: In the Interests of the Efficiency of the Service Policy

5.2 Development of a Pay and Reward Strategy

- 5.2.1 The primary aim of a reward strategy is to attract and retain suitably skilled employees so that the Council can perform at its best. The biggest challenge for the Council in the current circumstances is to maximise productivity and efficiency within current resources. The Pay Policy Statement is therefore a matter of striking an often difficult balance between setting appropriate remuneration levels which will facilitate a sufficient supply of appropriately skilled individuals to fill the Council's wide range of roles, and ensuring that the burden on the taxpayer and a financially challenged organisation does not become greater than can be fully and objectively justified.

- 5.2.2 In this context, it does need to be recognised that, in particular, remuneration levels at the more senior grades need to enable the Council to attract a suitably wide pool of talent from which to recruit, often when in competition with other public and private sector employers from outside, as well as within, Wales. Remuneration levels are also important in retaining suitably skilled and qualified individuals once in post. The Council has an Organisational Development Strategy 2015-2020 with a dedicated theme on Pay and Reward aiming to ensure that pay and conditions of service are modern, flexible, sustainable and affordable. This Strategy is currently under review and will consider pay and reward under broader organisational workforce themes.
- 5.2.3 In addition, the Council is a major employer in the area and as such it must have regard to its role in the economic well-being of the people of Blaenau Gwent. The Council also has a role in setting standards on pay and conditions to other employers in the area for similar reasons.
- 5.2.4 In designing, developing and reviewing its Pay Policy Statement, the Council will seek to balance the above factors appropriately to maximise outcomes for the organisation and the community it serves, while managing pay costs and maintaining sufficient flexibility to meet future needs.

6. Pay Structure

- 6.1 The Council uses the nationally negotiated pay spine referred to as the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) as the basis for its local grading structure. This determines the salaries of the large majority of the workforce. The NJC two year national pay deal for 2018/19 and 2019/20 which included a new pay spine from 1 April 2019 is in place and a new pay deal is currently being negotiated for 2020/21.

A locally revised pay and grading structure for employees employed under the National Joint Council for Local Government Services was implemented on 1 April 2019, which consisted of:

- 11 bands - Grades 1-11
- Each grade providing the opportunity for incremental progression
- Overlapping spinal column points on certain grades

A copy of the pay scales effective from 1 April 2019 is attached at appendix 1.

We are currently awaiting the outcome of the pay negotiations for 2020/21.

- 6.2 In addition to the NJC arrangements referred to above, the Council recognises other nationally negotiated arrangements including the JNC for Chief Executives, Chief Officers and the Soulbury Agreement. The details of which are outlined in appendices 2 and 3.
- 6.3 In line with TUPE regulations some staff from merged organisations may retain their former employer's terms and conditions of service. Such arrangements would be outside of the Council's Collective Bargaining arrangements.

- 6.4 All other pay related allowances such as overtime and standby are the subject of either nationally or locally negotiated rates, having been determined from time to time in accordance with collective bargaining and/or as determined by Council Policy.
- 6.5 New appointments will normally be made at the minimum point of the relevant grade, although this can be varied where necessary due to business or market conditions to secure the best candidate.

7. Job Evaluation

- 7.1 Job evaluation is a systematic way of determining the value/worth of a job in relation to other jobs within an organisation. The remuneration for staff on NJC for Local Government Services terms and conditions is determined by an ongoing analytical job evaluation scheme. The scheme used is the Greater London Provincial Council scheme (GLPC) and it is the most commonly used scheme amongst local authorities in Wales. The scheme was implemented with effect from 1 April 2012 as part of the Council's Single Status Agreement.
- 7.2 The concept of equality was central to the Pay and Grading Structure and the changes to terms and conditions were subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) by Northgate as part of the Council's pay modelling and negotiations with the Trade Unions.

8. Honoraria and Secondment

- 8.1 There may be occasions when an employee is asked to act up into a post at a higher grade or where they carry out additional duties over and above that of their substantive post for a period of time. In such circumstances an additional payment may be granted in line with the Council's Policy. This Scheme is applicable for all employees.

9. Market Supplements

- 9.1 Job evaluation enables the Council to set appropriate remuneration levels based on internal job size relativities within the Council. However, from time to time it may be necessary to take account of the external pay market in order to attract and retain employees with particular experience, skills and capacity. In these circumstances the Council's Market Supplement Policy will apply. In exceptional circumstances outside the policy it will be a matter for Council's consideration.

10. Accountability and Decision Making

- 10.1 In accordance with the statutory requirements and the Constitution of the Council, policies relating to the recruitment, pay, terms and conditions of employees of the Council, except teachers, are the responsibility of the Council.

11. Chief Officer Remuneration

11.1 Definition of Chief Officer and Pay Levels

11.1.1 For the purposes of this statement, 'Chief Officers' are as defined within Section 43 of the Localism Act. The posts falling within the statutory definition are set out below. The pay and grading structure for these posts is attached at appendix 2.

Post	Range	Salary (1/4/19)	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing Director/Head of Paid Service 	JNC CE	£98,739 £101,215 £103,684 £106,149 £106,486	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Director of Social Services Corporate Director of Education* Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services 	JNC CO	£80,046 £82,051 £84,052 £86,047 £88,048	Statutory and Non Statutory Chief Officers directly reporting to the Managing Director. *Interim Structure in place and Market Supplement for Corporate Director removed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Officer – Commercial Chief Officer – Resources (Statutory 151 Officer) 	JNC 5	£71,180 £72,964 £74,744 £76,516 £78,297	Statutory and Non Statutory Chief Officers directly reporting to the Managing Director.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Children's Services Head of Adult Services 	JNC 5	£71,180 £72,964 £74,744 £76,516 £78,297	Directly reporting to Corporate Director of Social Services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance (Monitoring Officer) Head of Education Transformation Head of Community Services Head of Regeneration & Development Head of Governance & Partnerships (Head of Democratic Services) Head of Organisational Development 	JNC 3	£62,036 £63,588 £65,143 £66,690 £68,238	Directly reporting to Statutory and Non Statutory Chief Officers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Manager Inclusion Service Manager Accountancy 	JNC 2	£56,032 £57,437 £58,835 £60,234 £61,635	Directly reporting to Statutory and Non Statutory Chief Officers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Manager Public Protection* Service Manager Performance & Democratic Service Manager Policy & Partnerships Service Manager Transformation & Digital (Vacancy) Service Manager Customer Experience & Benefits Service Manager Revenues & Charging Assessments. 	JNC 1	£50,031 £51,283 £52,535 £53,780 £55,031	*The Service Manager Public Protection is in receipt of annual honoraria payment of £6,606 in addition to normal salary for undertaking additional responsibility.

- 11.1.2 The Council employs Chief Officers under JNC terms and conditions which are incorporated within their contracts. The JNC for Chief Executives and Chief Officers negotiates on national (UK) annual cost of living pay increases for this group and any award of the same is determined on this basis. Chief Officers employed under JNC terms and conditions are contractually entitled to any national JNC determined pay rises and this Council will therefore pay these as and when determined, in accordance with current contractual requirements. Any other proposal to determine or vary the remuneration of Chief Officers (or those to be appointed as Chief Officers) must be approved by Full Council.
- 11.1.3 The Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 provides an Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRP) with powers to make recommendations in relation to any policy in an authority's Pay Policy Statement which relates to the salary of the Head of the Paid Service (Managing Director), or any proposed change of salary of the Head of the Paid Service. The Council must therefore consult the IRP about any proposed changes to the salary of the Head of Paid Service (except one which is commensurate to a change affecting the authority's other staff more generally) and have regard to their recommendations. The Welsh Local Government Association will notify the Independent Remuneration Panel of national pay awards on behalf of the Council.
- 11.1.4 The Local Government (Wales) Act 2015 temporarily extends the power of the IRP, under section 143A of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 to cover salaries payable to Chief Officers (using the Localism Act definition) as well as Heads of Paid Service. If the authority chooses not to follow the advice of the Panel it may become subject to a Ministerial direction to reconsider the position. The Act also allows authorities to reduce (but not increase) the salary payable to the Head of Paid Service in advance of a recommendation from the IRP, so long as the contract under which the salary is payable does not prevent the authority from changing the salary after receiving a recommendation. During 2019/20, there has been no requirement for the Council to make a referral to the IRP.
- 11.1.5 In addition to agreeing the parameters for setting the pay of Chief Officers, Full Council will be given the opportunity to approve salary packages for any new posts that come within the scope of this Pay Policy Statement and as defined within the Act as being £100,000, or greater, per annum. For this purpose, salary packages will include salary, bonuses, allowances routinely payable, any expenses/allowances chargeable to UK income tax, any other benefits in kind to which the officer is entitled as a result of their employment and any increase in or enhancement of the Chief Officer's pension entitlement where the increase or enhancement is as a result of a resolution of the Council.
- 11.1.6 No bonus or performance related pay mechanism is applicable to the Managing Director or Chief Officers' pay; although an increment is awarded annually up to the maximum of the scale for the post.

11.2 Recruitment of Chief Officers

11.2.1 The Council's policy and procedure in relation to the recruitment of Chief Officers is set out in the Council's Constitution. When recruiting to these posts the Council will take full and proper account of its Equality of Opportunity Policy. The determination of the remuneration to be offered to any newly appointed Chief Officer will be in accordance with the pay structure and relevant policies in place at the time of recruitment.

11.2.2 Where the proposed remuneration of a Chief Officer's post is £100,000 or greater, per annum it will be publicly advertised externally, as set out in the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (Wales)(Amendment) Regulations 2014. There is however a facility within the regulations to make temporary appointments of up to 12 months, without the need to advertise externally.

11.3. Additions to Salary for Chief Officers

11.3.1 The Council does not apply any bonuses or performance related pay to its Chief Officers.

11.3.2 The Council does pay all reasonable travel and subsistence expenses on production of receipts and in accordance with JNC and local conditions. The Council pays the HMRC recommended mileage rate of 45p per mile.

11.3.3 Annual leave and bank holiday entitlements can be found in appendix 4.

11.3.4 The Council has a statutory duty to appoint a Returning Officer for specified Elections and Referenda. The Managing Director undertakes this role and is paid for discharging these functions in accordance with prescribed fees.

11.4 Payments on Termination for Chief Officers

11.4.1 The Council's approach to statutory and discretionary payments on termination of employment of Chief Officers (and all other employees), prior to reaching normal retirement age is set out within the following policies:

- Retirement Policy (appendix 5)
- Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 Statement Of Policy - Exercise Of Discretionary Functions (appendix 6)
- Redundancy Policy (appendix 7)
- In the Interests of the Efficiency of the Service Policy (appendix 8)

In line with Council's agreed Redundancy Policy, redundancy payments are based on actual weekly earnings up to a maximum spinal column point 46 (£930.90 per week as at 1 April 2019). Staff who do not have access to their Pension will receive a redundancy payment based on the statutory calculator multiplied by 2 up to a maximum of 60 weeks. Those who are able to access their Pension will receive a redundancy payment based on the statutory calculator up to a maximum of 30 weeks and will have immediate access to unreduced payment of their LGPS benefits.

The Council does not increase the total membership of active members of the pension scheme or award additional pension.

11.4.2 Where Chief Officers (definition in section 11.1.1) are terminated and are recommended to receive severance payments, of £100,000 or greater, the business case for this must go to Full Council for approval. Council Members must be made aware of any statutory or contractual entitlements due to the employee and the consequences of a non-approval by Council. The following components of a severance package will be included when determining whether the package exceeds £100,000:

- Salary paid in lieu
- Lump sum redundancy/severance payment and
- Cost to the authority of the strain on the pension fund arising from providing early access to an unreduced pension.

11.4.3 Decisions relating to any other payments falling outside the provisions or the relevant periods of contractual notice will be taken by those officers and Members authorised to do so by the Council's Constitution.

11.4.4 The Council will not normally re-employ or re-engage in any way a former employee who on ceasing to be employed by the Council is in receipt of a severance package or settlement. Only in exceptional cases would the Council consider re-engagement where the circumstances were supported by a critical business case.

12. Remuneration at the Lowest Level

12.1 The lowest paid persons employed under a contract of employment with the Council are employed on full time (37 hours) equivalent salaries in accordance with the minimum spinal column point currently in use within Grade 1 of the Council's grading structure. As at 1 April 2019, spinal column point 1 is £9.00 per hour (pending pay award for 2020/21) – incremental progression will also apply.

12.2 The Council runs an apprenticeship scheme and payments are made in line with the shared apprenticeship scheme.

12.3 The relationship between the rate of pay for the lowest paid and Chief Officers is determined by the processes used for determining pay and grading structures as set out earlier in this Pay Policy Statement.

13. The Foundation Living Wage

- 13.1 The Council agreed to implement the Foundation Living Wage with effect from 1 April 2018 and guaranteed that no member of staff in the Council will earn less than the Foundation Living Wage. The Foundation Living Wage is independently calculated each year by the Resolution Foundation and overseen by the Living Wage Commission. By paying the Living Wage employers are voluntarily ensuring that their employees can earn a wage which is enough to live on as determined by the Living Wage Foundation.
- 13.2 The UK Living Wage rate of £9.30 per hour will be implemented in line with the 2020/21 pay award and will be effective from 1 April 2020. This will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that no member of staff in the Council will earn less than the Foundation Living Wage.

14. Off Payroll Working in the Public Sector - IR35 Intermediaries Legislation

- 14.1 The Intermediaries Legislation ensures that individuals who work through their own or even another personal service company (PSC) pay employment taxes in a similar way to an organisation's own employees. This is relevant to those individuals providing services to the Council who if they were not engaged through a personal service company (PSC) or other intermediary would be employed by the Council directly.
- 14.2 This new measure, "Off-payroll working in the public sector" moves responsibility to the Council for deciding if the off-payroll rules for engagements in the public sector apply. This measure makes the Authority responsible for deducting and paying associated employment taxes and National Insurance Contributions (NICs) to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).
- 14.3 The legislation applies to all payments on or after 6 April 2017 regardless of when the contract started.

15. Pay Relativities within the Council

- 15.1 The statutory guidance under the Localism Act recommends the use of pay multiples as a means of measuring the relationship between pay rates across the workforce and that of senior managers, as included within the Hutton Report 'Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector' (2011). The Hutton Report explored the case for a fixed limit on dispersion of pay through a requirement that no public sector manager can earn more than 20 times the lowest paid person in the organisation. The report concluded that the relationship to median earnings was a more relevant measure and the Government's Code of Recommended Practice on Data Transparency recommends the publication of the ratio between the highest paid salary and the median average salary of the whole of the Council's workforce.

15.2 The multiples of pay for Blaenau Gwent which will be published annually are set out below:

- (a) The multiple between the lowest paid full time equivalent employee and the Managing Director is 1:6.13
- (b) The multiple between the lowest paid employee and average Chief Officer is 1:3.99
- (c) The multiple between the median full time equivalent earnings (excluding teachers) and the Managing Director is 1:4.93
- (d) The multiple between the median full time equivalent earnings (excluding teachers) and average Chief Officer is 1:3.21

For comparison purposes, the multiples of pay for Blaenau Gwent quoted in the Pay Policy Statement 2019/20 are set out below:

- (a) The multiple between the lowest paid full time equivalent employee and the Managing Director is 1:6.37
- (b) The multiple between the lowest paid employee and average Chief Officer is 1:4.58
- (c) The multiple between the median full time equivalent earnings (excluding teachers) and the Managing Director is 1:4.95
- (d) The multiple between the median full time equivalent earnings (excluding teachers) and average Chief Officer is 1:3.56

16. Gender Pay Gap

16.1 We are an employer required by law to carry out Gender Pay Reporting under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

16.2 The gender pay gap is an equality measure that shows the difference in average earnings between women and men.

16.3 The UK gender pay gap is just over 17% (2019).

16.4 At Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council we are confident that men and women are paid equally for doing equivalent jobs across the business. The gender pay gap at Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council shows that the workforce is predominantly female with women occupying a high percentage of jobs across all four pay quartiles. The pay gap in Blaenau Gwent is significantly lower than the national average and has further improved reducing from 2.94% at the lower (mean).

Gender Pay Gap Report – 31 March 2019

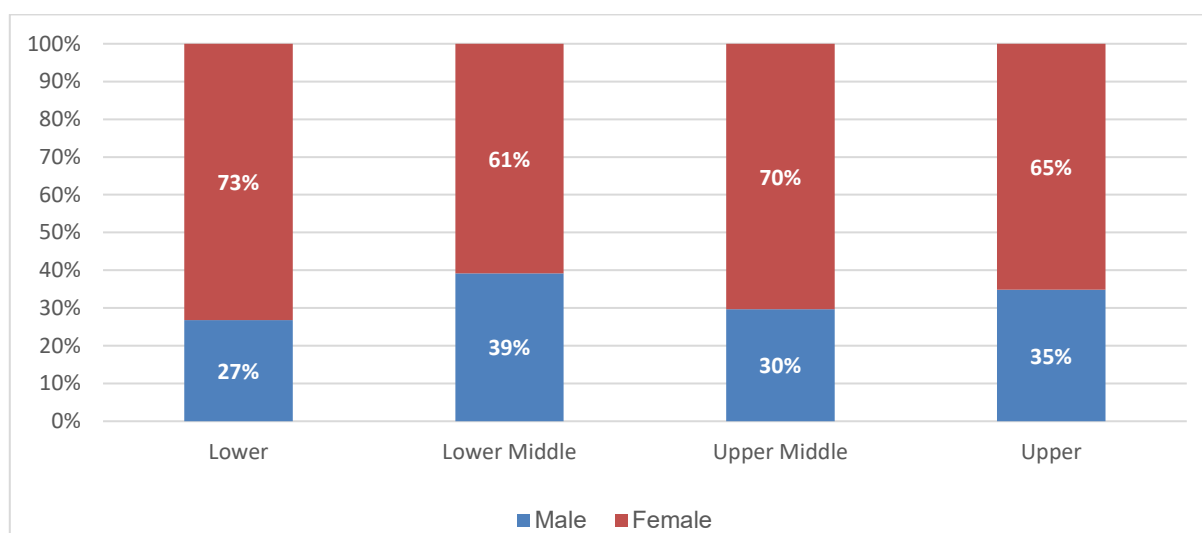
Hourly Rate – Gender Pay Gap

Women's Hourly Rate is:	2.78% Lower (mean)	-0.51% Lower (median)
-------------------------	-----------------------	--------------------------

Pay Quartiles – Gender Pay Gap

How many men and women are in each quarter of the employee's payroll:

	Men	Women
Upper Quartile:	35%	65%
Upper Middle Quartile:	30%	70%
Lower Middle Quartile:	39%	61%
Lower Quartile:	27%	73%



17. Publication

- 17.1 Upon approval by Full Council, this statement will be published on the Council's Website by..
- 17.2 The Council's Annual Statement of Accounts contributes to the transparency on Council spend as it includes information on posts where the full time equivalent salary is at least £60,000.

18. Review of the Policy

- 18.1 This Policy outlines the current position in respect of pay and reward within the Council and it will be reviewed to ensure that it meets the principles of fairness, equality, accountability and value for money for the citizens of Blaenau Gwent. The Policy will be reviewed at least annually and reported to Full Council for approval in line with statutory requirements.

Pay and Grading Structure - 1st April 2019

Grade	New Spinal Point	Salary	Weekly	Monthly	Hrly rate
1	1	£17,364	£333.01	£1,447.00	£9.00
	2	£17,711	£339.66	£1,475.92	£9.18
2	2	£17,711	£339.66	£1,475.92	£9.18
	3	£18,065	£346.45	£1,505.42	£9.36
	4	£18,426	£353.38	£1,535.50	£9.55
3	4	£18,426	£353.38	£1,535.50	£9.55
	5	£18,795	£360.45	£1,566.25	£9.74
	6	£19,171	£367.66	£1,597.58	£9.94
4	7	£19,554	£375.01	£1,629.50	£10.14
	8	£19,945	£382.51	£1,662.08	£10.34
	9	£20,344	£390.16	£1,695.33	£10.54
	10	£20,751	£397.96	£1,729.25	£10.76
	11	£21,166	£405.92	£1,763.83	£10.97
	12	£21,589	£414.04	£1,799.08	£11.19
5	14	£22,462	£430.78	£1,871.83	£11.64
	15	£22,911	£439.39	£1,909.25	£11.88
	17	£23,836	£457.13	£1,986.33	£12.35
	18	£24,313	£466.28	£2,026.08	£12.60
	19	£24,799	£475.60	£2,066.58	£12.85
	20	£25,295	£485.11	£2,107.92	£13.11
6	21	£25,801	£494.81	£2,150.08	£13.37
	22	£26,317	£504.71	£2,193.08	£13.64
	23	£26,999	£517.79	£2,249.92	£13.99
	24	£27,905	£535.16	£2,325.42	£14.46
	25	£28,785	£552.04	£2,398.75	£14.92
	26	£29,636	£568.36	£2,469.67	£15.36
7	26	£29,636	£568.36	£2,469.67	£15.36
	27	£30,507	£585.07	£2,542.25	£15.81
	28	£31,371	£601.64	£2,614.25	£16.26
	29	£32,029	£614.25	£2,669.08	£16.60
	30	£32,878	£630.54	£2,739.83	£17.04
8	30	£32,878	£630.54	£2,739.83	£17.04
	31	£33,799	£648.20	£2,816.58	£17.52
	32	£34,788	£667.17	£2,899.00	£18.03
	33	£35,934	£689.15	£2,994.50	£18.63
	34	£36,876	£707.21	£3,073.00	£19.11
9	34	£36,876	£707.21	£3,073.00	£19.11
	35	£37,849	£725.87	£3,154.08	£19.62
	36	£38,813	£744.36	£3,234.42	£20.12
	37	£39,782	£762.94	£3,315.17	£20.62
	38	£40,760	£781.70	£3,396.67	£21.13
10	39	£41,675	£799.25	£3,472.92	£21.60
	40	£42,683	£818.58	£3,556.92	£22.12
	41	£43,662	£837.35	£3,638.50	£22.63
	42	£44,632	£855.96	£3,719.33	£23.13
11	43	£45,591	£874.35	£3,799.25	£23.63
	44	£46,572	£893.16	£3,881.00	£24.14
	45	£47,562	£912.15	£3,963.50	£24.65
	46	£48,540	£930.90	£4,045.00	£25.16

**Chief Executive and Chief Officer
Pay and Grading Structure**

Scale / points range	Point	Salary effective from 01.04.18	Salary effective from 01.04.19
Chief Executive	Min	96,803	98,739
	2nd	99,231	101,215
	3rd	101,651	103,684
	4th	104,068	106,149
	Max	104,398	106,486

Scale / points range	Point	Salary effective from 01.04.18	Salary effective from 01.04.19
Chief Officer (100%)	Min	78,476	80,046
	2nd	80,442	82,051
	3rd	82,404	84,052
	4th	84,360	86,047
	Max	86,322	88,048

Scale / points range	Point	Salary effective from 01.04.18	Salary effective from 01.04.19
JNC1 - (62.5%)	Min	49,050	50,031
	2nd	50,277	51,283
	3rd	51,505	52,535
	4th	52,725	53,780
	Max	53,952	55,031
JNC2 - (70%)	Min	54,933	56,032
	2nd	56,311	57,437
	3rd	57,681	58,835
	4th	59,053	60,234
	Max	60,427	61,635
JNC 3 - (77.5%)	Min	60,820	62,036
	2nd	62,341	63,588
	3rd	63,866	65,143
	4th	65,382	66,690
	Max	66,900	68,238
JNC 4 - (80%)	Min	62,778	64,034
	2nd	64,353	65,640
	3rd	65,921	67,239
	4th	67,489	68,839
	Max	69,056	70,437
JNC 5 - (88.925%)	Min	69,784	71,180
	2nd	71,533	72,964
	3rd	73,278	74,744
	4th	75,016	76,516
	Max	76,762	78,297

APPENDIX 3

SOULBURY PAY AGREEMENT: 2018 and 2019

Educational Improvement Professionals

SCP	1.9.18	1.9.19
1	34,749	35,444
2	35,993	36,713
3	37,168	37,912
4	38,359	39,127
5	39,543	40,334
6	40,727	41,542
7	41,971	42,811
8	43,168*	44,032*
9	44,563	45,455
10	45,807	46,724
11	47,035	47,976
12	48,223	49,188
13	49,569**	50,561**
14	50,769	51,785
15	52,095	53,137
16	53,293	54,359
17	54,495	55,585
18	55,674	56,788
19	56,891	58,029
20	57,519***	58,670***
21	58,727	59,902
22	59,780	60,976
23	60,939	62,158
24	61,978	63,218
25	63,089	64,351
26	64,173	65,457
27	65,282	66,588
28	66,405	67,734
29	67,532	68,883
30	68,656	70,030
31	69,771	71,167
32	70,903	72,322
33	72,036	73,477
34	73,197	74,661
35	74,353	75,841
36	75,544	77,055
37	76,715	78,250
38	77,899	79,457
39	79,066	80,648
40	80,233	81,838
41	81,406	83,035

42	82,578	84,230
43	83,749	85,424
44	84,925	86,624
45	86,099	87,821
46	87,274	89,020
47	88,454	90,224
48	89,623****	91,416****
49	90,797****	92,613****
50	91,972****	93,812****

Notes:

Salary scales to consist of not more than four consecutive points based on the duties and responsibilities attaching to posts and the need to recruit and motivate staff.

*normal minimum point for EIP undertaking the full range of duties at this level.

**normal minimum point for senior EIP undertaking the full range of duties at this level.

***normal minimum point for leading EIP undertaking the full range of duties at this level.

****extension to range to accommodate structured professional assessments.

Young People's / Community Service Manager

SCP	1.9.18	1.9.19
1	36,040	36,761
2	37,219	37,964
3	38,398	39,166
4	39,601*	40,394*
5	40,824	41,641
6	42,016	42,857
7	43,236**	44,101**
8	44,622	45,515
9	45,387	46,295
10	46,568	47,500
11	47,742	48,697
12	48,918	49,897
13	50,086	51,088
14	51,265	52,291
15	52,446	53,495
16	53,630	54,703
17	54,820	55,917
18	56,003	57,124
19	57,179	58,323
20	58,380***	59,548***
21	59,604***	60,797***
22	60,857***	62,075***
23	62,134***	63,377***
24	63,438***	64,707***

Notes:

The minimum Youth and Community Service Officers' scale is 4 points.

Other salary scales to consist of not more than four consecutive points based on duties and responsibilities attaching to posts and the need to recruit retain and motivate staff.

*normal minimum point for senior youth and community service officers undertaking the full range of duties at this level (see paragraph 5.6 of the Soulbury Report).

**normal minimum point for principal youth and community service officer undertaking the full range of duties at this level (see paragraph 5.8 of the Soulbury Report).

***extension to range to accommodate discretionary scale points and structured professional assessments.

Trainee Educational Psychologists

SCP	1.9.18	1.9.19
1	23,415	23,884
2	25,129	25,632
3	26,841	27,378
4	28,556	29,128
5	30,269	30,875
6	31,983	32,623

Assistant Educational Psychologists

SCP	1.9.18	1.9.19
1	28,783	29,359
2	29,959	30,559
3	31,134	31,757
4	32,303	32,950

Educational Psychologists - Scale A

SCP	1.9.18	1.9.19
1	36,446	37,175
2	38,296	39,062
3	40,146	40,949
4	41,994	42,834
5	43,844	44,721
6	45,693	46,607
7	47,434	48,383
8	49,175	50,159
9	50,806*	51,822*
10	52,439*	53,488*
11	53,961*	55,040*

Senior and Principal Educational Psychologists

SCP	1.9.18	1.9.19
1	45,693	46,607
2	47,434	48,383
3	49,175*	50,159*
4	50,806	51,822
5	52,439	53,488
6	53,961	55,040
7	54,586	55,678
8	55,754	56,869
9	56,911	58,050
10	58,089	59,251
11	59,243	60,428
12	60,420	61,628
13	61,617	62,849
14	62,774**	64,029**
15	63,986**	65,266**
16	65,186**	66,490**
17	66,395**	67,723**
18	67,602**	68,954**

Salary scales to consist of not more than four consecutive points based on the duties and responsibilities attaching to posts and the need to recruit retain and motivate staff.

*Normal minimum point for the principal educational psychologist undertaking the full range of duties at this level.

**Extension to range to accommodate discretionary scale points and structured professional assessments.

Annual Leave & Holiday Pay A Manager's Guide



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: October 2018 Review: October 2020

CONTENTS

1. PURPOSE & SCOPE	3
SECTION 1 - TYPES OF WORKERS	3
2. DEFINITION OF WORKERS	3
Permanent Employees	3
Fixed Term Employees	3
Term-Time Employees	4
Temporary Employees	4
Relief Employees	4
Part Time Employees	5
Agency Workers	5
3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES	5
SECTION 2-ABSENCE	5
4. SICKNESS LEAVE ENTITLEMENT	5
5. ANNUAL LEAVE ENTITLEMENT	6
6. PAYMENT FOR ANNUAL LEAVE ON TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT	7
7. SICKNESS WHILST ON ANNUAL LEAVE	7
8. ANNUAL LEAVE AND SICK LEAVE ENTITLEMENT	8
9. ANNUAL LEAVE FOR PHASED RETURN TO WORK AFTER SICKNESS ABSENCE	10
SECTION 3-REMUNERATION FOR ANNUAL LEAVE & SICKNESS LEAVE	
(PERMANENT & FIXED TERM STAFF)	11
10. DEFINITIONS	11
11. ADDITIONAL PAYMENTS/ENHANCEMENTS	11
12. SALARIED EMPLOYEES	12
13. FOUR WEEKLY EMPLOYEES	12
14. USE OF TEMPORARY STAFF	14
15. USE OF RELIEF STAFF	14
16. MORE THAN ONE JOB	15
17. CALCULATING ANNUAL LEAVE	15
APPENDIX 1 - GUIDANCE FOR CALCULATING ANNUAL LEAVE	16
ANNUAL LEAVE CALCULATIONS 25 DAYS	20
ANNUAL LEAVE CALCULATIONS 30 DAYS	21
BANK HOLIDAY CALCULATIONS- 10 DAYS	22
APPENDIX 2 – HOLIDAYS WHILST ON SICK LEAVE	23

1. PURPOSE & SCOPE

This document aims to provide guidance on a consistent approach to the way in which annual leave and sickness pay is calculated across the Authority.

It is important that such entitlements are paid in accordance with legislation and ensures that the Authority is delivering the most efficient service possible.

In terms of the legal context the Working Time Regulations (WTR) (1998) sets out parameters regarding working hours, statutory entitlement to paid leave for most workers and a number of other related issues. It is against this background that the guidance has been developed.

SECTION 1 - TYPES OF WORKERS

2. DEFINITION OF WORKERS

Permanent Employees

A permanent employee is a full time or part time individual who is employed by the Authority on a permanent contract. The employee will have full employment rights in line with current legislation, as outlined in their statement of particulars. There is no expected end date of their employment and they will accrue continuous service.

Permanent employees will accrue all relevant entitlements and benefits in line with the Council's terms and conditions i.e. sick pay and annual leave.

Fixed Term Employees

A fixed-term contract is one that ends on a specified date or on the occurrence of a particular event such as the loss of funding or the completion of a task. A fixed term employee can be a temporary replacement for an absent employee whose contract will terminate upon the return of the regular employee. After four years' continuous service in a fixed term position the manager should refer to the Fixed Term Regulations for further guidance, as the employee will be entitled to permanent status.

Employees recruited on such a contract should be done so on the basis that there is a fixed period for which the work is expected to last and that the weekly hours are definitive e.g. to cover maternity leave or an externally funded project.

Fixed term employees will be entitled to the same benefits as a permanent worker, i.e. annual leave and sick pay.

Term-Time Employees

A term-time contract is defined by an employee working only during periods that coincide with the school terms and is not required to work during school holidays. Term-time employees will be employed based on the number of weeks they work per year and remuneration will be calculated on a pro rata basis which will be inclusive of their annual leave entitlement.

Term-time employees will not be permitted to take leave during school time but will be entitled to the same other benefits of the Authority such as sick pay.

Temporary Employees

Temporary contracts will have no expectation of permanence as the termination date or the event on which the employment will terminate is not known. An employee on a temporary contract will accrue continuous service from the start date of that contract.

Temporary employees will be entitled to sick pay, annual leave and the range of other benefits the Authority offers, where applicable.

An employee should be recruited on a temporary contract if the work is expected to be of a temporary nature but the end date is not known e.g. to cover a period of sickness of a permanent employee. Contractual hours should be stipulated for the purposes of a temporary contract.

Relief Employees

Relief employees should be recruited as a way of dealing with a variable need for work i.e. short term absences. Employees of this nature should only be used on an ad hoc basis and will not work regularly and consistently. No contractual or implicit hours should be stipulated as part of a relief contract.

Relief employees should only be paid at the bottom of the grade and will not move through any grade increments. They will not be entitled to annual leave, sick pay or bank holiday entitlements. A relief employee will not benefit from the range of entitlements to which other employees of the Council are entitled.

If relief employees are allowed to build up regular and consistent hours then this will become a risk to the Authority i.e. annual leave, sickness pay and redundancy liability.

Relief employees should be regularly monitored by managers and termination paperwork completed routinely when the employee is no longer required, to ensure there is an accurate record of all current employees.

Part Time Employees

A part time employee will be defined as such if they work fewer hours than the Council's normal full time hours (37 hours per week). Part time employees will not be treated less favourably than comparable full time workers, nor will they be entitled to any benefits which exceed a full time equivalent.

Agency Workers

The Council has a contract to source all agency workers. All requests for agency workers must be approved by DMT and sent to the OD Division to be progressed to advert. Please refer to the [Agency Worker – Manager's Handbook](#) for further information. All administration relating to annual leave and sick pay will be administered by the contractor directly. It should be understood that Agency Workers are not employees of the Council.

3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

When recruiting, a manager should carefully decide the type of contract that would best suit the required need to ensure efficiency of the service. Due consideration should be given throughout the duration of any contract that is not permanent to ensure that it is still fit for purpose and meets the need of the service. Managers should change the nature of the contract if the situation changes e.g. a relief employee who has started to pick up regular shifts as a result of sickness should be terminated as a relief employee and given a temporary contract.

SECTION 2-ABSENCE

4. SICKNESS LEAVE ENTITLEMENT

Permanent, Fixed Term, Term-Time and Temporary employees of the Authority are entitled to the following sick pay benefits, dependent on their length of service:

1st year – 1 month full pay and (after 4 months service) 2 months half pay

2nd year – 2 months full pay and 2 months half pay

3rd year – 4 months full pay and 4 months half pay

4th and 5th year – 5 months full pay and 5 months half pay

After 5 years – 6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

Sickness entitlement is calculated on a rolling 12 month basis, which starts on the first day of sickness absence looking back a calendar year.

Periods of absence in respect of industrial injury arising out of, or in the course of, employment with the Authority will not be counted for the purpose of calculating entitlement to sick pay.

All sickness and absence periods must be submitted as part of the Manager's weekly sick returns to Payroll.

The [Attendance Management Policy](#) can be found on the intranet for guidance on how to manage short term and long term employee absence. This policy applies to all types of employees. Employee guidance on reporting sick can also be found on the Council's intranet site in the Organisational Development section.

5. ANNUAL LEAVE ENTITLEMENT

Annual leave is required to be taken by arrangement within the leave year, which should commence on the 1st of the month in which the employee's birthday falls.

Annual leave entitlement for a full time employee is 25 days for those with less than 5 years' continuous service and 30 days for those with more than 5 years' continuous service.

Annual leave and bank holiday entitlements will be calculated on a pro-rata basis for part time staff. All part time staff should be given their entitlement in hours and minutes.

One day of annual leave entitlement is required to be taken at the Christmas closure by all staff who would ordinarily be expected to work on the designated day; this will be prorated for part time employees.

All annual leave should be taken during the year in which it is accrued. A maximum of five days may be carried over from one entitlement year to the next (prorated for part time staff).

Each calendar year employees are entitled to 8 statutory bank holidays and 2 extra statutory bank holidays. For a full list of statutory and extra statutory bank holidays please refer to the Council's [intranet site](#).

Part time staff should be given a pro rata entitlement for bank holidays in hours and minutes as per the guidance contained within this document, which will be added to their annual leave entitlement. Part time workers whose normal rota day falls on a bank holiday will be expected to deduct their normal working hours for that day from their entitlement.

Term-time only staff will not be permitted to take any leave during term time; they are instead paid a pro rata amount of annual leave included in their monthly salary, in order to take leave outside term time.

6. PAYMENT FOR ANNUAL LEAVE ON TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

If an employee leaves the Authority's employment part way through their entitlement year their annual leave entitlement will be calculated on a pro rata basis up until their termination date (based on completed months only). Staff will be encouraged to take the annual leave to which they are entitled before terminating with the Authority. Only in exceptional circumstances will staff be entitled to be paid for any accrued annual leave that they are unable to take, or if the line manager cannot accommodate the taking of the leave, before the date of termination. There must be a sound business case in such situations. Any accrued but untaken flexi time will not be paid upon termination; managers will be expected to manage all leave in the notice period.

If, on the date of termination an employee has taken annual leave in excess of their pro rata entitlement, then they will be required to reimburse the Authority by means of deduction from their salary in respect of any excess annual leave taken.

It is important that all annual leave is managed appropriately so that the risk of outstanding annual leave or taking more than accrued is limited.

7. SICKNESS WHILST ON ANNUAL LEAVE

Where an employee falls sick or is injured whilst on annual leave, the employee can report sick and take replacement annual leave at a later time as long as the following conditions are adhered to:

- The total period of incapacity must be fully certified by a qualified medical practitioner. The Authority reserves the right to request further evidence of incapacity in certain instances.
- The employee must contact the manager by telephone on the first day of any known period of incapacity during the annual leave period.
- The employee must submit a written request no later than 10 days after returning to work, setting out how much of the annual leave period was affected by sickness and the amount of leave that the employee wishes to be credited back to their entitlement.
- Where an employee is abroad when taken ill, evidence must still be produced by the employee by way of medical certificate or proof of a claim on an insurance policy for medical treatment.
- All costs of medical certification are to be incurred by the employee.

If an employee satisfies all of the above conditions then the Authority will credit the number of days lost to illness back to their current entitlement year. The leave must then be re-taken within their current entitlement year wherever practical. Where carryover of leave is necessary, only the statutory element of any untaken leave may be carried over (see next section "Annual Leave Entitlement and Sick Leave" for full details). Where it is found that an employee has deliberately requested the replacement of annual leave under false circumstances they will be dealt with via the Council's [Disciplinary Code](#).

If an employee is ill or injured before the start of planned annual leave, the Authority will agree to the employee postponing the leave to another mutually agreed time (in that leave year wherever possible). The employee must submit this request in writing to their line manager alongside medical certification confirming that the employee is unfit for work.

The Authority may require an employee to take all or part of their replacement annual leave on particular days, in line with the Working Time Regulations (1998).

All periods of sickness absence resulting from these circumstances will be treated in accordance with the Authority's normal policy on sickness absence and employees will be expected to adhere to of the [Sickness Absence Notification Procedure for Employees](#).

8. ANNUAL LEAVE AND SICK LEAVE ENTITLEMENT

An employee who is absent due to sickness will continue to accrue their contractual annual leave entitlement. However, only annual leave up to the statutory entitlement (28 days in total which includes bank holidays) as provided by the Working Time Regulations (1998) can be carried over from one leave year to the next. This will be prorated for part time employees. Any leave carried over must be taken in the following year and the Council may require an individual to take the leave on particular days.

Example 1 - Full Time Equivalent

Employee A is entitled to 40 days leave (30 days annual leave + 10 bank holidays).

Employee A has taken 5 days annual leave and shortly after returning to work is then sick for nine months, returning 2 weeks before the end of the leave year.

Although the employee has 35 days in total left only 28 days can be carried over to the following leave year.*

Employees who are sick must only be allowed to carry over 5 days annual leave if they have previously taken their statutory allowance of 28 days, inclusive of bank holidays, and do not return before their next entitlement year.

Example 2 - Full Time Equivalent

Employee B is entitled to 40 days leave (30 days annual leave + 10 bank holidays).

Employee B has taken 30 days annual leave and is then sick until the next leave year.

Although the employee has 10 days left in total, only 5 days can be carried over to the following leave year.

**Where an employee returns to work following long term sick leave, any annual leave accrued should be taken in the same leave year where practicable. The Authority may require an individual to take all or part of the accrued leave on particular days in the interest of service delivery.*

8.1 TRAVELLING/TRIPS WHILST ON SICK LEAVE

Employees are not encouraged to go on holiday whilst on sick leave where this may be **detrimental** to their recovery. Employees who wish to go on holiday or who have pre-booked holidays must seek the written permission, or otherwise, of their Line Manager before embarking on the holiday. For this reason the employee must ensure that they give their Line Manager sufficient notice of their intention to travel. Under normal circumstances the Line Manager will not withhold permission provided that, where requested, the employee submits a letter from their doctor in support of the holiday. The Council reserves the right to refer the employee to the Occupational Health Advisor/Physician for confirmation.

If an employee is on sick leave and goes on holiday without seeking the appropriate approval this will be dealt with in line with the Authority's Disciplinary Code.

Employees on sick leave should be aware that if they participate in activities that are inconsistent with their stated reasons for being sick or activities that worsen or prolong their absence, which could include travel and holidays, the Authority reserves the right to stop statutory sick pay and/or occupational sick pay, and in some cases this could result in Disciplinary action.

8.2 ANNUAL LEAVE WHILST ON SICK LEAVE

The Council encourages employees to utilise annual leave during sickness periods wherever possible, and where their absence permits, which may **assist** recovery and wellbeing. Therefore, an employee on sick leave may request to take their accrued annual leave entitlement while on sick leave. This must be approved by the employee's GP (to confirm that the trip will not hinder the employee's recovery) and evidence of this submitted to the line manager who will then approve any dates and deduct the annual leave from the employee's entitlement. This will not impact on the employee's entitlement to paid or unpaid sick leave. However, it will be deducted from the annual leave allowance and not be classed as sick leave.

It is the responsibility of the line manager to inform payroll that an employee is on annual leave instead of sick leave (via the sick returns) during this time to ensure the employee is paid the correct rate of pay.

A process flowchart is attached as [appendix 2](#).

9. ANNUAL LEAVE FOR PHASED RETURN TO WORK AFTER SICKNESS ABSENCE

Phased returns are used for a variety of reasons when someone has been absent due to sickness. Where agreed (normally in line with Occupational Health), a phased return to work will be managed according to the particular worker and their particular circumstances. The Authority does not expect staff to use their annual leave entitlement during this time. However, the employee and their line manager may agree that accrued annual leave can be used to arrange a period of part time working at the end of the phased return. For advice on specific cases please contact the OD Division.

Managers must inform the Payroll Section of the agreed pattern of work during the period of phased return.

SECTION 3-REMUNERATION FOR ANNUAL LEAVE & SICKNESS LEAVE (PERMANENT & FIXED TERM STAFF)

10. DEFINITIONS

Overtime - generally means any work over the basic contractual 37 working hours per week.

Additional hours - any work over the contracted basic working hours of part-time workers i.e. those whose contract is less than 37 hours per week. Overtime only becomes applicable to part time workers once these additional hours, added to the contracted hours, exceed the normal working hours of full-time staff i.e. more than 37 hours per week.

Important note – If overtime/additional hours are consistently and regularly worked and paid over a prolonged period e.g. 12 weeks, they must be included when calculating annual leave/sick pay.

However, if the nature of the work involves predictable peaks and troughs e.g. seasonal work, a longer reference period may be used. The key is that the period used should be an accurate reflection of the overall average hours worked by the individual. If you have any queries about using a longer reference period please speak to your OD Service Partner or Advisor.

If employees regularly and consistently work overtime/additional hours this should be covered by a separate temporary or fixed term contract.

11. ADDITIONAL PAYMENTS/ENHANCEMENTS

Case Law and Employment Appeal Tribunals in 2014 have necessitated a revision of how certain additional payments are treated. The basic principle is that if an employee regularly and consistently receives additional payments as part of their role then these payments need to be included when calculating holiday pay. This is because the individual should not be at a financial detriment because they happened to be on leave or sick.

It should be stressed that this principle hinges on whether the payments are regular and consistent. If so then consideration also needs to be given whether these payments should be included in the contracted salary.

Any additional contractual payments must also be included in the calculation of holiday/sick pay, providing the employee receives payment for these hours. If time is taken in rather than pay then this would not be included.

Example – where employees are contractually required to be on standby or sleep in these payments must be included in holiday/sick pay calculations if they are worked and paid consistently and regularly.

However, if an employee receives a payment for standby and they are called out to attend and then given the next day off because they have been called out, only the standby payment should be included in the calculation, as the call out payments have been covered by taking the next day off.

12. SALARIED EMPLOYEES

Salaried employees (monthly paid) will be paid their contractual hours whilst absent due to sickness in line with the entitlements detailed above.

No salaried employee should exceed 37 hours per week except in exceptional circumstances. These instances should be discussed with the OD Division and at SMT.

If an employee has committed to working additional hours and then subsequently reports sick when the hours were due to be worked, they will not be paid for the additional hours.

Additional hours should only be paid for sickness if an individual works regular and consistent additional hours. In these instances sick pay should be calculated using a 13 week average. Please see examples below.

Staff should not accrue annual leave entitlement for additional hours worked. They will instead just be paid for the additional hours they worked. If they take a week's annual leave their pay will not be inclusive of any average hours worked.

13. FOUR WEEKLY EMPLOYEES

Four weekly paid employees will be paid their contractual hours whilst absent due to sickness, in line with the entitlements detailed above.

Four weekly paid employees should not exceed 37 hours of work per week in the same role unless in exceptional circumstances. Such instances should be discussed with the OD Division and at SMT.

Four weekly paid employees will not accrue an annual leave entitlement for additional hours worked and any paid annual leave will not account for an average of additional hours worked, unless the additional hours are regular and consistent.

In cases where staff work on a rota basis all sickness will be paid based on contractual hours only (inclusive of sleep-ins if contractual) from the first day of absence. No additional hours will be paid.

If employees pick up extra shifts they should not be included in any entitlement calculations based on average hours worked. Additional hours should only be averaged for staff who work consistent and regular additional hours.

Average hours calculations for four weekly employees will be averaged over 12 weeks.

Examples of Additional Hours

Week No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Contractual Hours	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
Additional Hours	2	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	3

In this instance the additional hours are not consistent and regular and therefore should not be included in any calculations for sick pay; nor should they be averaged for an additional annual leave entitlement.

Week No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Contractual Hours	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
Additional Hours	2	2	2	2	-	2	2	2	2	-	2	2

In this instance it is clear to see that this particular staff member is regularly picking up an extra 2 hours per week. This may be to cover staff sickness or an unfilled vacancy on a short term basis. However, in these circumstances an average calculation should be used to calculate the entitlement to sick pay and the individual should be given a temporary or fixed term contract to fulfil these hours in line with the guidance set out at the beginning of this document.

In terms of annual leave, employees should have their annual leave entitlement recalculated to account for the duration of the additional hours based on a pro rata calculation.

Ordinarily employees should be given their annual leave to take as and when it suits themselves and the service. However, the Authority recognises that in line with business needs, and in exceptional circumstances only, individuals may need to be paid for the additional annual leave they have accrued to avoid

further staff shortages. Please seek advice from the OD Division in these cases, which must be agreed in advance with the employee. In these instances the annual leave will be calculated using a 12 week average.

14. USE OF TEMPORARY STAFF

Temporary staff should be recruited in line with the guidance set out at the beginning of this document. Temporary workers should be recruited to fill a gap, usually for a short term period, with a set number of hours to work per week.

Sickness pay should be based on contractual hours only and will not include any additional hours that that may have been scheduled to work. Sick pay should only be based on an average calculation if an individual has been consistently and regularly working over and above their contractual hours. Managers must regularly monitor and review working hours and if such a situation should arise changes should be made as soon as possible, with the contract being amended accordingly.

Annual leave entitlements in these cases should be calculated at the outset of the employment and based on a pro rata calculation for the expected duration of the contract. The calculations should also be inclusive of a bank holiday pro rata entitlement.

15. USE OF RELIEF STAFF

Relief workers should be recruited in line with the guidance set out at the beginning of this document. Such workers should only be used on an ad hoc basis and should not be relied upon to fill an ongoing gap in capacity. A pool of relief workers for any given service area can be common practice although they should not be offered regular hours, as this would constitute a temporary contract.

Relief workers will not be entitled to any sick pay and will not be paid for any shift that they are unavailable to work due to sickness.

Relief workers will not be entitled to accrue any annual leave or bank holiday entitlement.

Relief workers should be paid in accordance with the Authority's usual terms and conditions dependent on the shift they are scheduled to work i.e. a bank holiday or sleep in shift. They will not be paid more than a permanent member of staff for such shifts.

16. MORE THAN ONE JOB

If members of staff work in different roles across the authority, it is a managerial responsibility to ensure that individuals do not breach the Working Time Regulations as we are one employer and staff are entitled to the appropriate rest periods.

Individuals should report sick in line with the reporting procedures for each role they are unfit to attend.

Staff are not permitted to take annual leave in one role in order to pick up additional shifts in another.

17. CALCULATING ANNUAL LEAVE

The Authority has developed a simple to use online annual leave calculator that will enable the user to identify the appropriate leave entitlements for both full and part time employees.

The calculator can be accessed on the intranet [here](#).

Guidance and ready reckoners for the manual calculation of annual leave can be found in appendix 1.

APPENDIX 1 - GUIDANCE FOR CALCULATING ANNUAL LEAVE

To assist the calculation of annual leave a number of ready reckoners have been devised. They are attached below, with guidance notes and can also be accessed on the Council's [Intranet site](#).

This guidance is only to be used for staff working 52 weeks per year.

Please use this guidance in conjunction with the annual leave and bank holiday calculation tables.

Useful Information

- If a member of staff works the same number of hours each day, for five days (Mon-Fri), there is no need to calculate the pro rata entitlement, as it will always equate to 25 days (less than 5yrs service) and 30 days (more than 5yrs service), and the leave entitlement can be taken in days (e.g. 25hrs per week, 5hrs per day, Mon-Fri).
- A pro rata monthly annual leave entitlement for full time staff (37 hrs) working a normal 5 day week (7hrs 24mins per day) is:
 - 2 days for an employee with less than 5 years service.
 - 2.5 days for an employee with more than 5 years service.

Calculating a Pro Rata Entitlement for Part Time Staff

In order to calculate an employee's entitlement to annual leave you need to ensure that you have:

- the weekly contracted hours for the employee
- the number of days/pattern worked each week
- the number of hours the employee is required to work each day
- the employee's birth month
- whether the employee has more or less than 5 years service
- the table for annual leave and bank holidays calculations

Annual leave entitlements run from an employee's birth month, therefore, if your birthday falls in June your leave entitlement would run from 1st June to 31st May each year.

To calculate leave entitlement, you need to:

- Use the annual leave and bank holiday calculations table to locate the number of hours worked per week and identify the entitlement/pro rata entitlement.
- Add the annual leave and bank holiday entitlement together for the full entitlement.

- Calculate the bank holidays that will fall on the employee's working days and the hours the employee is due to work on these days and total these hours.
- Deduct the number of hours that need to be used for bank holidays and deduct from the full entitlement.
- The number of hours remaining is the employee's entitlement to annual leave.

Scenario: Employee with more than 5 years service working 30hrs per week, 7hrs 30mins per day Tuesday-Friday, birth month June

- Using the annual leave (30 days) and bank holiday calculations table locate the number of hours worked per week (30) and identify the pro rata entitlement (Annual leave = 180hrs Bank holiday = 60 hrs).
- Add this figure together which gives you a total of 240 hrs, this is a full year's entitlement.
- Next you need to deduct all bank holidays that fall on the working day and deduct them depending on the number of hours due to work on that day. In this case the employee works Tues-Fri, (7hrs 30mins per day) so only the Bank holidays at Christmas and Good Friday (4 days) would need to be deducted at 7hrs 30mins each, therefore 30 hrs needs to be deducted for bank holidays.
- There is a total of 210hrs remaining for annual leave.

As the employee works the same number of hours each day (7hrs 30mins) this leave entitlement can be divided equally by 7.5 and would equate to 28 days.

How to determine if an annual leave entitlement is in days or hrs/mins

- If the part time employee works the same number of hours each day then the leave can be calculated in days **assuming** the remaining total can be divided equally.
(E.g. If 120hrs remaining for annual leave and the employee works five hrs per day then divide 120 by 5 which converts to 24 days leave).
- Annual leave will have to be calculated in hrs and mins if the employee does not work the same number of hours each day.

When to recalculate a leave entitlement

It is important to note that an employee's leave entitlement will need to be recalculated as a result of:

- An increase / reduction in weekly working hours
- Change to working pattern (working day, daily hours, etc) as this may affect the deduction of hrs for bank holiday entitlement
- The employee reaching 5 years continuous service
- Termination of employment part way through a leave year

Calculating the additional entitlement for a full time employee who reaches 5yrs service part way through their leave year

Please note this calculation is for staff that are full time.

If an employee reaches 5yrs service part way through their leave year, they will be entitled to a pro rata amount of the additional 5 days. To calculate a pro rata additional entitlement, you need to:

- Divide the full additional entitlement of 5 by 12 to get a monthly entitlement (0.4).
- Identify the number of complete months that remain in the leave entitlement after the date of 5yrs service.
- Multiple the number of complete months remaining by 0.4.
- This figure will be the additional entitlement that the employee will receive when they reach 5yrs service.
- The following full leave year their leave will be increased to 30 days.

Scenario: Full time employee with a leave year that runs from February January reaches 5 years service on 10th March

- Identify the number of completed months that remain in the leave entitlement after the date of 5yrs service = 10 (months) April – January.
- Multiply the number of full months remaining by 0.4.
- On 10th March this employee will receive an additional 4 days leave.
- The following full leave year their leave will be increased to 30 days.

Calculating the additional entitlement for a part time employee who reaches 5yrs service part way through their leave year

If an employee reaches 5yrs service part way through their leave year, they will be entitled to a pro rata amount of the additional leave (this will vary depending on their weekly hours). To calculate a pro rata additional entitlement, you need to:

- Use the annual leave calculation table (25 days/less than 5 yrs service) to locate the number of hours worked per week and identify the entitlement in hours.
- Use the annual leave calculation table (30 days/more than 5 yrs service) to locate the number of hours worked per week and identify the entitlement in hours.
- Calculate the difference in entitlement (this is the pro rata amount for a full year's additional entitlement).
- Divide the full additional entitlement by 12 to get a monthly entitlement.
- Identify the number of completed months that remain in the leave entitlement after the date of 5yrs service.
- Multiple the number of full months remaining by the monthly entitlement.
- This figure will be the additional entitlement that the employee will receive when they reach 5yrs service.
- The following full leave year their leave will be increased to the full entitlement identified on the annual leave calculation (30 days/more than 5 yrs service).

Scenario: Part time employee (20hrs) with a leave year that runs from February – January reaches 5 years service on 10th March

- Use the annual leave calculation table (25 days/less than 5 yrs service) to locate the number of hours worked per week and identify the entitlement in hours = **100hrs**.
- Use the annual leave calculation table (30 days/more than 5 yrs service) to locate the number of hours worked per week and identify the entitlement in hours = **120hrs**.
- Calculate the difference in entitlement (this is the pro rata amount for a full year's additional entitlement) = **20hrs**.
- Divide the full additional entitlement by 12 to get a monthly entitlement = **1.5hrs**.
- Identify the number of completed months that remain in the leave entitlement after the date of 5yrs service = **10 months**.
- Multiply the number of full months remaining by the monthly entitlement = **15hrs**.
- This figure will be the additional entitlement (**15hrs**) that the employee will receive when they reach 5yrs service.
- The following full leave year their leave will be increased to the full entitlement identified on the annual leave calculation (30 days/more than 5 yrs service).

Calculating a leave entitlement for a portion of a year

To calculate a leave entitlement for a portion of the year (e.g. new starter starting part way through leave year or employee terminating):

- Calculate the full annual leave entitlement.
- Calculate the number of completed months the employee works in the leave year.
- Divide the full entitlement by 12 and multiply by the number of completed months the employee has/will work.

Scenario: Employee with more than 5 years service working full time normal hours (37 hrs / 7hrs 24mins per day), birth month June, terminating 15th November

- Full annual leave entitlement would be 30 days.
- Completed months worked 1st June – 31st October = 5 months.
- Divide the full entitlement by 12 and multiply by the number of completed months (5) the employee has worked.
- Pro rata entitlement would be 12.5 days.
- As this individual is terminating you would need to deduct any leave already taken. (If there is a shortfall then the amount would need to be reclaimed in the final salary, alternatively if there is leave remaining this can be paid or taken prior to termination).

ANNUAL LEAVE CALCULATIONS 25 DAYS

HOURS WORKED PER WEEK	ANNUAL LEAVE HOURS (DECIMAL)	ANNUAL LEAVE HOURS (HRS & MINS)	HOURS WORKED PER WEEK	ANNUAL LEAVE HOURS (DECIMAL)	ANNUAL LEAVE HOURS (HRS & MINS)
1	5.00	5	26	130.00	130
2	10.00	10	27	135.00	135
3	15.00	15	28	140.00	140
4	20.00	20	29	145.00	145
5	25.00	25	30	150.00	150
6	30.00	30	31	155.00	155
7	35.00	35	32	160.00	160
7.4	37.00	37	33	165.00	165
8	40.00	40	34	170.00	170
9	45.00	45	35	175.00	175
10	50.00	50	36	180.00	180
11	55.00	55	37	185.00	185
12	60.00	60			
13	65.00	65			
14	70.00	70			
15	75.00	75			
16	80.00	80			
17	85.00	85			
18	90.00	90			
18.5	92.50	92.30			
19	95.00	95			
20	100.00	100			
21	105.00	105			
22	110.00	110			
23	115.00	115			
24	120.00	120			
25	125.00	125			

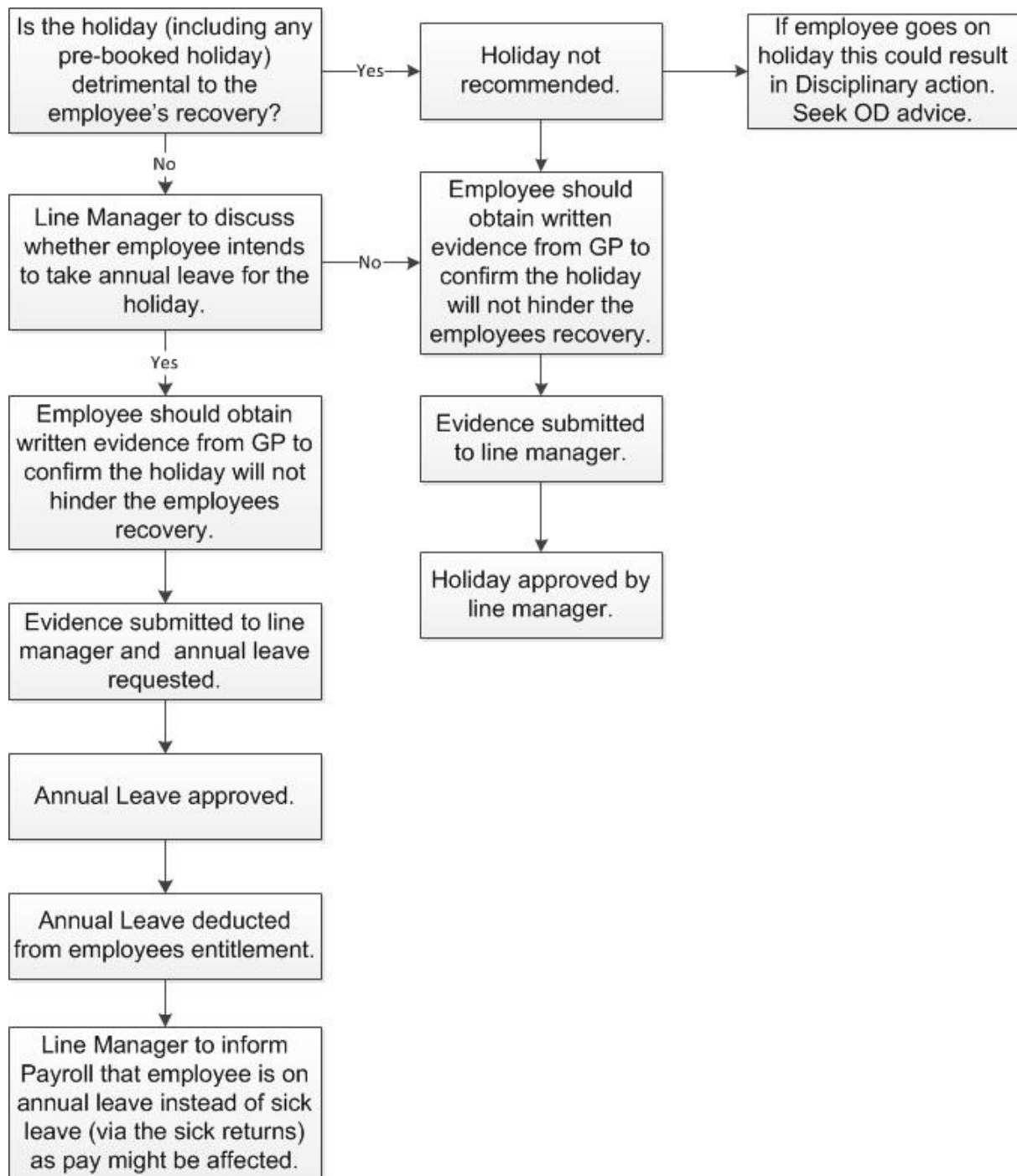
ANNUAL LEAVE CALCULATIONS 30 DAYS

HOURS WORKED PER WEEK	ANNUAL LEAVE HOURS (DECIMAL)	ANNUAL LEAVE HOURS (HRS & MINS)	HOURS WORKED PER WEEK	ANNUAL LEAVE HOURS (DECIMAL)	ANNUAL LEAVE HOURS (HRS & MINS)
1	6.00	6	26	156.00	156
2	12.00	12	27	162.00	162
3	18.00	18	28	168.00	168
4	24.00	24	29	174.00	174
5	30.00	30	30	180.00	180
6	36.00	36	31	186.00	186
7	42.00	42	32	192.00	192
7.4	44.40	44.24	33	198.00	198
8	48.00	48	34	204.00	204
9	54.00	54	35	210.00	210
10	60.00	60	36	216.00	216
11	66.00	66	37	222.00	222
12	72.00	72			
13	78.00	78			
14	84.00	84			
15	90.00	90			
16	96.00	96			
17	102.00	102			
18	108.00	108			
18.5	111.00	111			
19	114.00	114			
20	120.00	120			
21	126.00	126			
22	132.00	132			
23	138.00	138			
24	144.00	144			
25	150.00	150			

BANK HOLIDAY CALCULATIONS- 10 DAYS

HOURS WORKED PER WEEK	BANK HOLIDAY HOURS (DECIMAL)	BANK HOLIDAY HOURS (HRS & MINS)	HOURS WORKED PER WEEK	BANK HOLIDAY HOURS (DECIMAL)	BANK HOLIDAY HOURS (HRS & MINS)
1	2	2	26	52	52
2	4	4	27	54	54
3	6	6	28	56	56
4	8	8	29	58	58
5	10	10	30	60	60
6	12	12	31	62	62
7	14	14	32	64	64
8	16	16	33	66	66
9	18	18	34	68	68
10	20	20	35	70	70
11	22	22	36	72	72
12	24	24	37	74	74
13	26	26			
14	28	28			
15	30	30			
16	32	32			
17	34	34			
18	36	36			
18.5	37	37			
19	38	38			
20	40	40			
21	42	42			
22	44	44			
23	46	46			
24	48	48			
25	50	50			

APPENDIX 2 – HOLIDAYS WHILST ON SICK LEAVE



Retirement Options Policy

(Local Government Pension Scheme only)



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: November 2017 Review: August 2019

CONTENTS

1. POLICY STATEMENT	3
2. PURPOSE	3
3. SCOPE	3
4. ADVICE TO EMPLOYEES CONSIDERING THEIR RETIREMENT OPTIONS	4
A. RETIREMENT (FROM NATIONAL PENSION AGE (NPA)).....	4
B. CURRENT TRANSITIONAL PROTECTION ARRANGEMENTS	4
C. WORKFORCE PLANNING	5
5. FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT - REGULATION 35	6
A. ELIGIBILITY	6
B. OPTIONS	6
C. PENSION IMPLICATIONS	6
D. CONDITIONS OF SERVICE	6
E. APPLICATION	7
F. PROCEDURE	7
5. OTHER POLICIES/GUIDELINES	8
6. FURTHER INFORMATION	8
RETIREMENT OPTIONS - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	9
FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT REQUEST FORM	11

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Retirement is an important step in a person's life; Blaenau Gwent is committed to ensuring that the transition from work to retirement is as smooth as possible for its employees.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to lay down the principles and practices that will govern Blaenau Gwent's approach to employee retirements.

Blaenau Gwent recognises the contributions of a diverse workforce, including the skills and experience of older employees. It believes that employees should, wherever possible, be permitted to continue working for as long as they wish to do so.

The intention of the policy is to promote equality and fairness and to give managers and employees, where possible, the flexibility to plan retirements.

3. SCOPE

This policy has been developed in line with the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006, which came into force on 1 October 2006, and the Local Government Pension Scheme Changes 2014. It also reflects the changes following the abolition of the default retirement age with effect from 1 October 2011.

These provisions apply to all Blaenau Gwent employees with the exception of teaching staff. Any reference to pension entitlements will only apply to individuals who participate in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

4. ADVICE TO EMPLOYEES CONSIDERING THEIR RETIREMENT OPTIONS

A. RETIREMENT (FROM NATIONAL PENSION AGE (NPA))

With effect from 1 October 2011, the Default Retirement Age has been removed and employees will no longer have a contractual retirement date of age 65.

An employee can now choose to retire from at any time between age 55 and 75 and receive their pension benefits immediately, although there may be a reduction in the benefits if payment is taken before your NPA, as it's being paid earlier. If you take it later than your NPA it's increased because it's being paid later.

Your Normal Pension Age (NPA) is simply the age when you can retire and take the pension you have built up in full – for the pension built up from 1 April 2014 your NPA is the same as your State Pension Age (but with minimum of age 65).

Employees who have contributed to the pension scheme will be entitled to a lump sum and an annual pension upon retirement, and they can take up the option to convert an element of their annual pension into a tax-free lump sum. At state retirement age employees will receive the basic flat-rate state pension if sufficient National Insurance contributions have been paid.

If an employee wishes to work after NPA they will continue paying into the LGPS, building up further benefits. They can receive their pension when they retire or reach the eve of their 75th birthday, whichever comes first. If the employee retires at or after NPA they can, if they wish, defer drawing their pension but must draw it before age 75. An employee will continue to accrue pension benefits if they continue working beyond NPA and the pension will be uplifted in line with regulations.

B. CURRENT TRANSITIONAL PROTECTION ARRANGEMENTS

The 85 year rule, which allowed members to retire before the age of 65 with unreduced benefits provided their age and membership added up to 85 was removed with effect from 1 October 2006.

However there are currently transitional protection arrangements in place for employees who were members of the LGPS prior to this date. The following table will help you work out your general position in relation to the 85 year rule, however, you should be aware that the rules governing how the 85 year rule protection applies, and the level of that protection, are quite complex.

If you would not satisfy the 85 year rule by the time you are 65	All your benefits are reduced if you choose to draw your pension before your Normal Pension Age. The reduction will be based on how many years before your Normal Retirement Age (protected Normal Pension Age for pension built up before 1 April 2014) and new Normal Pension Age (linked to State Pension Age) for pension built up from 1 April 2014) you draw your benefits.
If you will be age 60 or over by 31 March 2016 and choose to draw your pension before your Normal Pension Age	Provided you satisfy the 85 year rule when you start to draw your pension, the benefits you build up to 31 March 2016 will not be reduced.
If you will be under age 60 by 31 March 2016 and choose to draw your pension before your protected Normal Pension Age	Provided you satisfy the 85 year rule when you start to draw your pension, the benefits you've built up to 31 March 2008 will not be reduced.
If you will be aged 60 between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2020 and meet the 85 year rule by 31 March 2020	Some or all of the benefits you build up between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2020 will not have a full reduction.

C. WORKFORCE PLANNING

With the removal of the default retirement age (Age 65), it is important that the Authority is in a position to plan its workforce requirements to meet future business needs.

The Authority encourages its managers to hold regular workplace discussions with all employees to discuss performance, development and training needs. The discussions also need to include both the Authority's and the employee's future plans and expectations. This will be an opportunity for employees to discuss any future plans or proposals for retirement and in turn allow the manager to plan for such an event.

Organisational Development are able to provide advice and support to managers to assist in workforce planning for their service area as a whole. Further information and advice can be provided by our Organisational Development Advisor.

5. FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT - REGULATION 35

The Authority relies upon the knowledge and skills of its employees. A flexible approach to retirement may mean that those employees who would otherwise retire completely can choose to explore other options which can benefit both the employee and the Authority. The Authority is actively promoting Work Life Balance options and managers will take this into consideration when considering any application for flexible retirement.

A. ELIGIBILITY

Employees can apply for flexible retirement from age 55 years onwards, (providing you have met the 2 year vesting period in the scheme).

B. OPTIONS

There are a number of flexible retirement options available as follows:

- working flexible hours leading up to retirement;
- retiring and returning to work part time in current post; or
- full-time/part time in a lower graded post with reduced responsibilities (assuming a suitable position is available).

C. PENSION IMPLICATIONS

An employee reducing their hours or moving to a less senior position at or after age 55 can, provided there is a business case to support this, draw some or all of the benefits accrued, to help ease him/her into retirement, although the benefits may be reduced for early payment. The employer however has the discretion to waive the reduction in whole or in part.

Employees can continue paying into the LGPS on their reduced hours or in the new role, building up further benefits in the scheme up to the eve of their 75th birthday.

D. CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

An employee's terms and conditions of service will remain unchanged as there is continuity of employment i.e. holidays, occupational sick pay, etc.

- Where an employee receives pension and returns to the Authority in a lower graded post the appointment will be made on the first point of the new scale.

- Where an employee returns to the Authority in the same role on reduced hours the salary point will remain unchanged, however the salary, holidays, etc will be pro-rata to the number of hours agreed in the application.

E. APPLICATION

Applications must be made using the Flexible Retirement Request Form, identifying the preferred flexible retirement option. This must be made to the appropriate officer who is their respective line manager/service manager and copied to the Organisational Development Division.

F. PROCEDURE

- On receipt of the Flexible Retirement Request Form the financial implications in relation to the early release of the pension will be considered along with any service delivery issues by the directorate to ensure that:
 - there is no detrimental effect on service delivery
 - any flexible working arrangements are fair and equitable to all employees in the team
 - any flexible working arrangement is reviewed to ensure its effectiveness on both sides
 - there is a viable business case to present to the Early Retirement Panel for approval
- The Early Retirement Panel will review the business case and make a decision whether the flexible retirement is a viable option for the Authority. Once considered at the Early Retirement Panel, the employee and their line manager/service manager will be notified of the outcome.
- If the application is successful, agreement will be reached with the employee and their line manager/service manager regarding the start date and review date for the new arrangements.
- If the application is unsuccessful, the employee will be provided with an explanation why the request has been denied. The decision of the Panel is final and there is no right of appeal.

If an employee is interested in pursuing flexible retirement, they can contact the Organisational Development Division for more details.

5. OTHER POLICIES/GUIDELINES

These provisions should be applied in accordance with other Blaenau Gwent Policies with particular reference to the following:

- Worklife Balance Policies
- Recruitment and Selection Charter
- In the Interest in Efficiency of the Service Policy
- Redundancy Policy
- Attendance Management Policy

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information, copies of appropriate forms and guidance can be obtained from:

Organisational Development Division

Municipal Offices, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale, NP23 6XB

Tel: (01495) 355008

Fax: (01495) 355787

E-mail: hr.division@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Resources Division

Municipal Offices, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale, NP23 6XB

Contact: Loren Cosh– Pensions and Technical Officer

Tel: (01495) 355994

Fax: (01495) 356133

E-mail: loren.cosh@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Torfaen Pension Scheme Administrators

Torfaen County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Pontypool, NP4 6YB

Tel: (01495) 766266

Fax: (01495) 766275

E-mail: pensions@torfaen.gov.uk

Retirement Options

Frequently Asked Questions



Q How much notice will I have to give if I want to retire?

You will need to give sufficient notice of your intention to retire to assist the Authority in planning its workforce requirements. In cases where employer consent is required, the retirement will need to be approved by an early retirement panel, so appropriate notice would be required to ensure that up to date retirement figures can be requested, a report created and approved within this timescale.

The Authority encourages its managers to hold regular workplace discussions with staff, and this will also be an opportunity to discuss any proposals for retirement and to allow your manager to plan for such an event.

Q I am 56 years of age, can I retire?

It is possible to retire from the age of 55 and receive benefits immediately although these benefits will be reduced due to them being paid for a longer period of time. The earliest age that you could access your pension in full, would be your NPA, before this you may suffer a reduction in your benefits for early payment, depending on your service.

Q I have been unwell recently; can I finish on Ill Health?

In line with the Attendance Management policy, the Authority will make a decision in relation to the grounds for termination of your employment. Following this you will need to be assessed by an Independent Registered Medical Practitioner and satisfy the criteria to qualify for the release of your pension, i.e. "you must be incapable of undertaking your current role until the age of 65".

For further information in relation to termination of employment on the grounds of ill health please contact the Organisational Development Division.

Q I am 52 and would like to retire, what do I need to do?

In line with the pension regulations, employees would not receive release of their pension benefits before the age of 55. If you wanted to finish work you would have to voluntarily resign and your pension contributions would be frozen until such time that you are eligible to draw upon them. The earliest age you can draw your pension if you no longer work for the authority is age 55 providing you have paid pension contributions from 1 April 2014 onwards. If you left the pension scheme prior to 1 April 2014 your earliest retirement date will be your NPA, although there may be a reduction in your pension for early payment.

If you were made redundant, then you would receive the relevant redundancy payment, and any pension contributions would be frozen until you reach pensionable age.

Q Can I just retire when I want to? Will my age impact on my benefits?

An employee's pension can be released from the age of 55. Any retirements before the age of 60 are known as Regulation 31. As part of the request for retirement the Authority will need to consider the financial implications (if any) in relation to the early release of your pension. It is necessary for the retirement to be considered at a Retirement Panel, the panel will review the business case and make a decision on the retirement.

You can also choose to retire from age 55 and receive pension benefits immediately, although there may be a reduction in the pension for early payment if full service hasn't been achieved.

If you continue to work after NPA, you will continue to pay into the LGPS, building up further benefits. You will receive your pension when you retire or reach the eve of your 75th birthday, whichever come first.

Q I'm not ready to retire completely, what are my options?

If you are over the age of 55 there are a number of flexible retirement options available, such as working flexible hours, reduced hours or undertaking a lower graded post with reduced responsibilities, assuming there is a suitable position available.

Provided there is a viable business case to support your request, you can draw some or all of the benefits you have built up, although the benefits may be reduced for early payment. Again, a report would need to be considered by the Early Retirement Panel to ensure there is a viable business case before the request is approved, so sufficient notice would be required.

Q I'm approaching age 65, but don't want to retire.

The default retirement age was abolished from 1 October 2011, and there is no longer a contractual retirement age, therefore you will not need to submit a request to work beyond age 65. It is anticipated that you would have communicated your intentions to continue working to your manager during ongoing workplace discussions.

If you work beyond age 65 you will continue to pay into the Local Government Pension Scheme and build up further benefits. Your pension will be released when you retire or reach the eve of your 75th birthday, whichever comes first.

Flexible Retirement Request Form



PLEASE COMPLETE FORM AND RETURN TO YOUR LINE MANAGER

Name:

Address:

Staff Number:

Directorate:

Division/Section:

Post Title:

National Insurance Number:

Date Of Birth:

Current Pattern Of Work:

Proposed Flexible Working Option:

Employee's Signature:

Date:

Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013

Statement Of Policy - Exercise Of Discretionary Functions



The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) 2014 effective from 1 April 2014 introduces or amends a number of discretionary elements over which the Council as the employing body can exercise its discretion.

These policy discretions are, where appropriate, as close to the discretions previously applied by the Council and have been the subject of consultation with the trades unions.

In accordance with Regulation 60 of the above regulations the Council must formulate, approve, publish and keep under review changes to the Council's Policy in relation to the exercise of its employer discretions under regulations:

- 16(2)(e) and 16(4)(d) (funding of additional pension);
- 30(6) (flexible retirement);
- 30(8) (waiving of actuarial reduction); and
- 31 (award of additional pension).

In addition and in accordance with Paragraphs 2(2) of Schedule 2 to the Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions, Savings & Amendment) Regulations 2014 the Council must also prepare a written statement on whether, in respect of benefits relating to pre 1 April 2014 membership, to 'switch on' the 85 year rule for a member who voluntarily retires (leaves employment) and elects to draw their benefits on or after the age of 55 and before the age of 60 thereby agreeing to waive in full or part any actuarial reduction applied to the member's benefits.

The Council is required to send a copy of this Statement to the Pensions Administering Authority by no later than 30 June 2014 and publish it in a place that is easily accessible to all of its eligible scheme employees. There is also the requirement to keep this Policy Statement under review and make such revisions as are appropriate following a change of policy.

Where a revision is made a copy of the revised statement must be supplied to the Pension Administering Authority before the expiry of one month beginning with the date that any such revision is made. The Council must also publish its revised statement ensuring that it is equally accessible.

In preparing, or reviewing and making revisions to its statement, the Council must have regard to the extent to which the exercise of its discretionary powers, unless properly limited, could lead to a serious loss of confidence in the public service.

This document outlines Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's policy on the employer discretions specified in LGPS 2014, effective from 1 April 2014.

PART A – Formulation of COMPULSORY policy in accordance with Regulation 60 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013

Regulation 16 – Additional Pension Contributions

Where an active Scheme member wishes to purchase extra annual pension of up to £6,500* (figure at 1 April 2014) by making Additional Pension Contributions (APCs), the employer can choose to (voluntarily) contribute towards the cost of purchasing that extra pension via a Shared Cost Additional Pension Contribution (SCAPC).

The Scheme employer may resolve to fund in whole or in part any arrangement entered into by an active scheme member to pay additional pension contributions by way of regular contributions in accordance with *Regulation 16(2)(e)*, or by way of a lump sum in accordance with *Regulation 16(4)(d)*.

The Scheme employer may enter into an APC contract with a Scheme member who is contributing to the MAIN section of the Scheme in order to purchase additional pension of not more than the additional pension limit (£6,500 from 1 April 2014 subject to annual increase in line with the Pensions (Increase) Act 1971). The amount of additional contribution to be paid is determined by reference to actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's policy concerning the whole or part funding of an active member's additional pension contributions - Regulation 16(2)(e) and 16(4)(d)

The Council's policy is not to establish a Shared Cost Additional Pension Contribution Scheme for its employees either on the basis of regular ongoing contribution or by a one off lump sum. This would be a cost pressure and as such the Council will not exercise this discretion on the basis of affordability.

Regulation 30(6) – Flexible Retirement

An active member who has attained the age of 55 or over and who with the agreement of their employer reduces their working hours or grade of employment may, with the further consent of their employer, elect to receive immediate payment of all or part of the retirement pension to which they would be entitled in respect of that employment as if that member were no longer an employee in local government service on the date of the reduction in hours or grade (*adjusted by the amount shown as appropriate in actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State – separate policy required under Regulation 30(8)*).

As part of the policy making decision the Scheme employer must consider whether, in addition to the benefits the member may have accrued prior to 1 April 2008 (which the member must draw), to permit the member to choose to draw all, part or none of the pension benefits they built up after 31 March 2008 and before 1 April 2014 and all, part or none of the pension benefits they built up after 1 April 2014.

Due consideration must be given to the financial implications of allowing an employee to draw all or part of their pension benefits earlier than their normal retirement age.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's policy concerning flexible retirement

The Council currently has a policy in place to consider applications for Flexible Retirement which is linked to the Council's policies on retirement and flexible working. The Authority relies upon the knowledge and skills of its employees and as such this policy provides the opportunity for retaining skills and experience as part of a transition towards retirement.

Flexible Retirement allows scheme members age 55 and over to apply to transfer to a lower graded post or to reduce hours of employment and at the same time access their retirement benefits. Both the transfer to a lower graded post or reduction in hours of work and the early release of retirement benefits is an employer discretion.

The Council currently operates a Flexible Retirement Scheme and as such this arrangement will continue. The business case in respect of a flexible retirement request will be considered at the Council's Early Leavers Panel.

Regulation 30(8) – Waiving of Actuarial Reduction

Where a Scheme employer's policy is to consent to the immediate release of benefits in respect of an active member who is aged 55 or over, those benefits must be adjusted by an amount shown as appropriate in actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State (commonly referred to as actuarial reduction or early payment reduction).

A scheme employer (or former employer as the case may be) may agree to waive in whole or in part and at their own cost, any actuarial reduction that may be required by the Scheme Regulations.

Due consideration must be given to the financial implications of agreeing to waive in whole or in part any actuarial reduction.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's policy concerning the waiving of actuarial reduction

The business case in respect of Early Retirements will be considered in line with the terms of reference of the Council's Early Leavers Panel. Waiving of actuarial reduction protections in such cases will not normally be considered. Only in exceptional circumstances where there is a clear financial or operational advantage for the Authority in so doing or on compassionate grounds would this be considered. This would require authorisation by the Chief Finance Officer and the Head of Organisational Development or their nominated representative.

Regulation 31 – Award of Additional Pension

A Scheme employer may resolve to award

(a) an active member, or

(b) a member who was an active member but dismissed by reason of redundancy, or business efficiency, or whose employment was terminated by mutual consent on grounds of business efficiency,

additional annual pension of, in total (including any additional pension purchased by the Scheme employer under Regulation 16), not more than the additional pension limit (£6,500 from 1 April 2014 subject to annual increase in line with the Pensions (Increase) Act 1971).

Any additional pension awarded is payable from the same date as any pension payable under other provisions of the Scheme Regulations from the account to which the additional pension is attached.

In the case of a member falling within sub-paragraph (b) above, the resolution to award additional pension must be made within 6 months of the date that the member's employment ended.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's policy concerning the award of additional pension

The Council's policy is not to fund additional pension at whole cost to the employer given the substantial costs associated with introducing an equitable scheme. This would be a cost pressure and as such the Council **will not exercise** this discretion on the basis of affordability.

Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions and Savings) Regulations 2014 Schedule 2 – paragraphs 2 and 3

Where a scheme member retires or leaves employment and elects to draw their benefits at or after the age of 55 and before the age of 60 those benefits will be actuarially reduced unless their Scheme employer agrees to meet the full or part cost of those reductions as a result of the member otherwise being protected under the 85 year rule as set out in previous regulations.

So as to avoid the member suffering the full reduction to their benefits the Scheme employer can 'switch on' the 85 year rule protections thereby allowing the member to receive fully or partly unreduced benefits but subject to the Scheme employer paying a strain (capital) cost to the Pension Fund.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's policy concerning the 'switching on' of the 85 year rule

The business case in respect of early retirements will be considered in line with the terms of reference of the Council's Early Leavers Panel. 'Switching on' of the 85 year rule protections in such cases **will not normally be considered**. Only in **exceptional** circumstances where there is a clear financial or operational advantage for the Authority in so doing or on compassionate grounds would this be considered. This would require authorisation by the Chief Finance Officer and the Head of Organisational Development or their nominated representative.

The discretions contained within this Policy Statement are applicable to all eligible members of the Scheme. The Scheme rules allow for a revised statement to be issued at least one month in advance of the date that any new policy takes effect.

The revised statement must be sent to the Pensions Administering Authority and published in a place that is accessible to all of its eligible scheme members.

The policies made above have regard to the extent to which the exercise of the discretions could lead to a serious loss of confidence in the public service and will be exercised reasonably and only used when there is a real and substantial future benefit to the Council for incurring the extra costs that may arise.

The Council retains the right to change this Policy Statement at any time and only the version which is current at the time a relevant event occurs to an employee will be the one applied to that employee.



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Redundancy Policy



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: July 2019 Review: July 2021

CONTENTS

1. Policy Statement	1
2. Scope of the Policy.....	1
3. Definition of Redundancy	1
4. Measures to Avoid Redundancy	2
5. Notification to the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform	2
6. Consultation	3
7. Selection	4
8. Suitable Alternative Employment.....	5
9. Formal Notification of Redundancy	6
10. Right of Appeal.....	7
11. Compensation	8
12. Withholding Redundancy Payments.....	8
13. Continuity of Service	8
14. Business Case/Approval Mechanism	9
15. Employee Support and Advice	9

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Blaenau Gwent Council is focused on continuous improvement in times of financial challenge and continues to be committed to providing job security for all employees however, the challenging financial situation that Local Government faces may impact on the staffing establishment of the Council.

In order to minimise the impact of reductions in staffing levels the following procedure will be adopted for all employees of the Council. In all circumstances the instigation of this policy will involve consultation and engagement with the trade unions.

In any redundancy situation the Council will ensure that the process is fair and equitable for all concerned and will ensure that all parties are consulted and communicated with at all stages of the process.

2. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy will apply to all members of staff employed at Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council including all school based employees, Teachers and Headteachers **regardless of length of service or contract type**. The policy complies with all relevant legislation and works within the guidelines set out within the ACAS code of practise.

Governing bodies are not obliged to adopt this policy. In such cases where Governing Bodies choose to develop their own policy, legislation must be adhered to and full consultation must take place with all relevant Unions and Professional Associations. Should Governing bodies chose not to adopt this Policy any calculations over and above the agreed payments laid out in this document are to be funded from within the School budget.

It is important that School Governors understand their legal responsibilities for declaring a post(s) redundant and the protocols to be followed in relation to the Council's Corporate Redundancy Panel as the compensating body.

3. DEFINITION OF REDUNDANCY

Redundancy is defined in law as a dismissal for one of the following reasons:

- cessation of business;
- cessation of business at the employee's place of work;
- a reduction or cessation of work; and
- anticipation of a reduction or cessation of work.

In cases where the business or part of the business transfers to another provider, employees are not necessarily redundant and would normally transfer to another employer on their terms and conditions, commonly referred to as "TUPE" regulations (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment).

In the case of schools, redundancy will usually occur because pupils numbers have fallen, resulting in budgetary reductions, which make support for the current level of staffing impossible. There may be other reasons from time to time, for example, a school closure.

Statutory Framework: the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the Staffing of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2006 refer to education legislation which reinforces the provision for School Governing Bodies to appoint and dismiss staff. The contract of employment however is between the Council and the employee for Community Schools. For Voluntary Aided Schools the contract of employment is between the Governing Body and the employee.

4. MEASURES TO AVOID REDUNDANCY

Blaenau Gwent Council will consult with the Trade Unions with a view to establishing whether the proposed job losses can be achieved by means other than compulsory redundancies. Similarly Governors should always seek resolutions, which avoid the need for compulsory identification of a member of staff as being surplus to requirement at the school. Consideration will be given to the following alternative options, subject to the Council's immediate urgent operational considerations:

- natural wastage;
- restricting further recruitment of new staff other than where this is essential i.e. front line service;
- restricting the use of sub-contract temporary and casual staff, including termination where practical, of temporary or contract staff;
- reducing the amount of overtime working in the particular service;
- inviting applications for consideration for early retirement, flexible retirement and/or voluntary redundancy (crossmatching);
- requests to job share or part time working;
- redeploying individuals to alternative posts.

5. NOTIFICATION TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS, ENTERPRISE AND REGULATORY REFORM

It is a legal requirement to notify the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (DBERR) in writing of a proposal to make 20 or more employees redundant within a 90 day period. The OD Division will coordinate this return.

Consultation will start at the earliest opportunity and within the statutory requirements. These are:

- 45 days if 100 or more employees are to be made redundant;
- 30 days for 20-99 employees; and
- for less than 20 employees no notification is required.

6. CONSULTATION

Employees and relevant recognised Trade Unions should be made aware of the proposals for organisational change, and the reasons, at the earliest opportunity. Failure to consult could result in a finding of unfair dismissal by an Employment Tribunal. Before starting any redundancy process, advice should be sought from Organisational Development. A flowchart detailing the consultation process is attached at [Appendix 3a](#).

In the case of Schools, as soon as a budgetary problem is identified, that could lead to a potential redundancy situation, the Headteacher should liaise with Schools Finance and the Organisational Development Teams. If after discussions there is an agreement that there is a redundancy situation, the Trade Unions must be informed and the consultation process commenced. Such action will ensure that the correct support, advice and guidance is provided throughout the process.

Employees have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or their trade union representative at all stages of the process.

Timescales for Statutory Consultation

There are minimum statutory timescales that indicate when formal consultation should begin. Where possible consultation should allow for further consideration of any counter-proposals and alternatives to redundancy:

- at least 45 days if 100 or more employees are to be made redundant; and
- at least 30 days for 20-99 employees.

The Council will consult with the Trade Unions even if it is proposed that only one employee who: a) belongs to a trade union or b) is affected by collective bargaining, will be made redundant. Consultation must include discussions on ways to:

- avoid or reduce redundancies;
- mitigate its consequences; and
- consider redeployment.

Staff will also receive information through the organisational and directorates staff communication/engagement framework.

Disclosure of Information

The Council has a statutory duty to disclose in writing to the appropriate representatives the following information:

- the reasons for the proposed redundancies;
- the number and descriptions of employees whom it is proposed to dismiss; including agency staff who are contracted for more than 3 months work;
- total number of employees employed in the same place of work;
- the proposed method of selection;
- the proposed method of carrying out the dismissal taking into account any agreed procedure including timescales; and
- method of calculating redundancy payment.

School specific information regarding disclosure is detailed in the Schools Consultation Process ([Appendix 5](#)).

7. SELECTION

Where the redundancy applies to a job held by one individual, the post would be redundant without the need for selection.

Where there are multiple redundancies or a reduction in posts within a group of employees the “pool” of employees from which the redundancies will be drawn must be defined. This might be one team within a Department, a group of employees doing the same job, usually working to the same or similar job description, or those performing a particular function across a number of departments, managers should seek advice from Organisational Development if the selection pool is not clear. [Appendix 2](#) details the grounds that will not be used as criteria when selecting staff for redundancy.

Consultation for employees on Maternity leave will also take place and further guidance on this should be sought from the OD Division.

Selection Criteria

The criteria used for redundancy selection must be fair, clear, objective and non-discriminatory, precisely defined and capable of being applied in an independent way. The criteria must be applied fairly and consistently to all employees at Blaenau Gwent who have been identified as at risk.

If the Council is faced with making compulsory redundancies the selection criteria will be agreed with the trade unions. The criteria applied, will as far as possible, be measurable and supported by documentary evidence. The following list gives examples of the criteria that the organisation may apply.

- Attendance records; including Number of Occasions and Number of days
- Disciplinary records; (Agreed period of time)
- Capability
- Job Knowledge and Skills
- Flexibility
- Timekeeping (Discretionary)

Standard mandatory criteria will be used in all cases and additional discretionary criteria will be used where appropriate dependent on roles identified. The selection criteria will, in all cases, be agreed with the Departmental Manager and Trade Union representatives prior to any consultation meetings taking place. [Appendix 4a](#) details the compulsory and discretionary criteria.

School Based Staff

The criteria outlined in the Redundancy Selection Matrix can be applied to school support staff. For teaching staff the relevant matrix appears in [appendix 5](#). Should the Governors chose to use criteria other than those recommended in this Policy, they must consult with the Trade Union with a view to reaching agreement on the revised criteria.

The Complete Closure of the Relevant Service

As far in advance of the proposed termination date as possible, the appropriate officer, in consultation with the OD Division, will notify all employees as a result of a service or establishment closure where there will be compulsory redundancies proposed.

Management in consultation with the OD Division will then enter into immediate consultation on an individual basis with those employees affected.

In the course of the consultation employees will be informed of the basis of their selection and invited to make representations on their proposed dismissal. Management will give full consideration to any such representations before a confirmed selection for redundancy is made by the appropriate officer in consultation with the OD Division.

Where selection has been confirmed, those selected for redundancy will be given notice of termination in accordance with contractual and/or statutory requirements.

School closures will be subject to the relevant statutory consultation requirements. At the appropriate time all post holders in the school to be closed will be identified as “at risk” of redundancy and be dealt with in accordance will necessary stages of this policy. Representation and appeals procedures will rest with the Governing Body of the closing school.

8. SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT

The Council will make every effort to establish whether there is suitable alternative employment available and offer such employment to the individual(s) concerned. In the case of school based staff this will be in conjunction with the Headteacher and Governing Body. Records of such actions should be maintained. If “suitable alternative employment” is not available redundancy will apply.

The following factors must be considered in determining whether a particular post offers “suitable alternative employment”:

- relevance of an employee’s skills, qualifications, abilities and experience to the requirements of the post;
- the practicality and cost of re-training;
- provide similar earnings including hours of work;
- have similar status; and
- not involve unreasonable additional inconvenience.

The Council will give prior consideration for suitable alternative employment to employees at risk of redundancy provided the employee’s skills and abilities match the essential criteria of the post or will do so with reasonable training. Please see the redeployment policy for guidance. For school based staff historically there has been a high success rate of identifying suitable alternative employment between schools, and Governing Bodies will be requested to maintain their co-operation in facilitating suitable alternative arrangements to mitigate redundancy situations. Crossmatch opportunities will be explored in any redundancy situation.

Trial Period

All posts offered for re-deployment will be subject to a trial period. The length of the trial period will be agreed with the employee prior to a post being taken up, and will generally relate to the complexity and any change of duties undertaken. Detail of trial periods can be found in the [Redeployment Policy](#).

If an employee refuses an offer of alternative employment which the Council deems suitable and the refusal is considered to be unreasonable, the individual will lose their entitlement to a redundancy payment, and potential early access to their pension benefits.

Trial period arrangement should also apply to school based staff where appropriate for a trial to take place.

Ring Fencing

Ring fencing would only normally occur in the following situations:

- **Restructuring:** in a restructuring situation the Authority may, in certain cases where there is a reduction to the overall number of posts consider ring fencing as part of this process.
- **Recruitment:** an employee including school based staff on the “at risk” list who expresses an interest, and meets the essential person specification criteria, will be interviewed. In the event of more than one employee applying for a vacant post, all who meets the essential person specification criteria will be interviewed.

No appointments to ring fenced posts will be made unless:

- A candidate demonstrates sufficiently that they fully possess the requirements of the posts, as laid down in the person specification and as determined by the selection procedure (s).
- A candidate can reasonably be expected to fully meet the requirements of the posts within a reasonable period, with the provision of appropriate training and support. In such cases a “trial period” will apply.
- Where no suitable candidate is found from the “at risk” list, the post may be advertised externally.

Cross matching within Schools

The Organisational Development Division will in liaison with Headteachers maintain a list of school based staff who have expressed an interest in potential redundancy to facilitate crossmatch for staff identified as “at risk”. The list will be referred to in all compulsory redundancy situations.

9. FORMAL NOTIFICATION OF REDUNDANCY

In accordance with this policy, and following a period of consultation notification of redundancy will be given, providing employees with appropriate notice of their employment being terminated.

The notice period will be an individual's contractual or statutory notice period, whichever is **greater**. Wherever possible notice should be worked and not paid in lieu. In those exceptional circumstances where full notice is not worked the balance will be paid in lieu except when a termination date is mutually agreed prior to the contractual date. Then any balance in lieu is not applicable.

	Continuous Service	Statutory Notice
All staff	1 month but less than 2 years 2 years but less than 12 years 12 years or more	1 week 1 week of each year of continuous employment Not less than 12 weeks (unless the contract provides for a greater period)
Teachers	Subject to contract under continuous service	2 months Notice in Autumn and Spring Terms 3 months during the Summer Term Notice to be given no later than 31 st October, 28 th February and 31 st May to take effect at the end of the specified period.
Headteachers	Subject to contract under continuous service	3 months notice in Autumn and Spring Terms* 4 months during the Summer Term* Notice to be given no later than 30 th September, 31 st January and 30 th April to take effect at the end of the specified period.

In cases where notice is not formally provided to the employee by the deadline the Governing Body will be obliged to employ them for an extra period or make payment in lieu of notice, to ensure that the necessary notice periods are complied with. Headteachers are only considered surplus to requirements in the event of a school closure.

10. RIGHT OF APPEAL

The employee has the right of appeal if they believe the redundancy is unjustified or that the selection for redundancy is unfair.

Stage 1 Appeal

Should an employee wish to appeal against their scoring and/or selection then this should be heard in the first instance by a Senior Officer within the department and a member of the OD Division.

Stage 2 Appeal

If an employee wishes to appeal against the decision to dismiss on the grounds of redundancy following their notice being issued the appeal letter should be sent to the OD Division in line with the timeframes set out in the appeals procedure for dismissals.

School based staff

[Appendix 5](#) outlines the appeals process for school based staff, which stipulates specific rights for representation and appeal at Governing Body Panels.

11. COMPENSATION

Clearly, where there is a redundancy, there will be entitlement to redundancy pay and other benefits. Compensation for loss of employment due to redundancy will not be calculated on less favourable terms than in accordance with statutory entitlement laid down in existing legislation. All employees who receive redundancy payments will be given a written notification of their redundancy pay. [Appendix 1](#) details the calculation of redundancy pay.

12. WITHHOLDING REDUNDANCY PAYMENTS

If an employee under notice of redundancy receives an **offer** of work in local government, or a related employer, to commence before the fifth Monday following the date of termination, there will be no entitlement to a redundancy payment. Related employers are those covered by the Redundancy Modification Order.

13. CONTINUITY OF SERVICE

Continuity of service for all employees including school based staff **will not** be broken if the employee receives and accepts an offer of employment with an organisation covered by the **Redundancy Modification Order** before their employment ends with Blaenau Gwent and they start their new job before the 5th Monday following the date of termination of employment. In this situation they will not be entitled to a redundancy payment.

Where a redundancy payment is made, continuity of service will be broken for the purposes of calculating future redundancy payments. However, there is an entitlement to count previous service for notice periods, annual leave, sickness payments and maternity leave, provided that the break has not exceeded 2 years.

In the case of an employee who has more than one job with the Authority, continuity of service will be based on the redundant post. However, if at the time of redundancy the employee is employed under only one contract but in the past has had one or more overlapping contracts the length of service can be counted back to the start of the first contract if the service has been continuous.

14. BUSINESS CASE/APPROVAL MECHANISM

Any termination on the grounds of redundancy or a crossmatch redundancy whereby the Council exercises its discretion must be supported by a business case.

This business case will include consideration of service delivery changes and the financial consequences of any redundancy payment and pension recovery payback over a period no greater than 5 years.

In the case of schools there will be a full consultation process in liaison with the Headteacher, Organisational Development Division and Trade Unions which will result in the school's redundancy protocols being instigated and relevant panels being held as detailed in [Appendix 5](#). An important consideration will be that the redundancy will not be formally declared until the business case for release of compensation has been approved by the Corporate Redundancy Panel, as the compensating body. It is therefore important that there is an early justification for a robust business case and the Headteacher may be required to attend the Corporate Redundancy Panel in support of their business case.

15. EMPLOYEE SUPPORT AND ADVICE

Organisational Development can support redundancy situations and where appropriate signpost to relevant bodies, details of additional support are outlined below:

Time off for attending interviews

Subject to the Council's operational needs and with approval of the relevant line manager, employees will be granted reasonable time off with pay during their notice period to look for work or to seek retraining opportunities in accordance with current legislation.

React Funding

Any member of staff facing redundancy will be able to access government funding for re-training. In addition to this there is an employer subsidy available to potential new employers (subject to eligibility).

Support under the ReAct II scheme is available for individuals who:

- have become unemployed in the last six months as a result of redundancy, are currently unemployed, and who have not been in continuous employment for 6 weeks or more since being made redundant;
- are currently under notice of redundancy;
- have not undertaken any publicly funded training since being made redundant, including the work-based learning suite of programmes.

In any redundancy situation all members of staff will have full access to information regarding REACT funding. In addition to this staff will be granted reasonable time off to attend any appointments with their react advisors. React advisors can also support CV creation and interview technique training depending on requirements.

Business Set Up Support

Staff under notice of redundancy who are thinking of setting up their own business will also have access to specialist advisors for advice and support. Any member of staff facing a redundancy and wishing to receive this advice can request this directly with their Manager who will make the necessary arrangements with the OD Division.

Job Centre Plus/Careers Wales

Job Centre Plus and Careers Wales are able to offer individuals advice on job search, CV compilation, interview techniques. Depending on the scale of redundancies the Council will seek to provide this service in-house. This will be determined in line with Department Managers the OD Division and individuals facing redundancy.

APPENDIX 1: STATUTORY REDUNDANCY PAYMENTS

Currently, statutory redundancy payments depend on:

- length of continuous service by the employing authority/ies;
- how continuous service relates to a particular age band; and
- weekly pay.

Discretionary Payments

The Council exercises its discretion in line with the relevant Pension regulations and guidance. The following discretions will apply:

Redundancy payments will be based on actual earnings as opposed to “statutory” limits however an upper limit of SCP 46 will apply to all redundancies. For staff employed under teacher conditions the cap will be an equivalent amount on the teachers pay scales according to the Teacher’s Pay and Conditions Document.

Payments

Staff who do not have access to their Pension

- A redundancy payment based on the statutory calculator multiplied by 2 up to a maximum of 60 weeks.

Staff who are able to access their Pension

- A redundancy payment based on the statutory calculator up to a maximum of 30 weeks.
- Will have immediate access to unreduced payments of their LGPS/TPS benefits.

Taxation

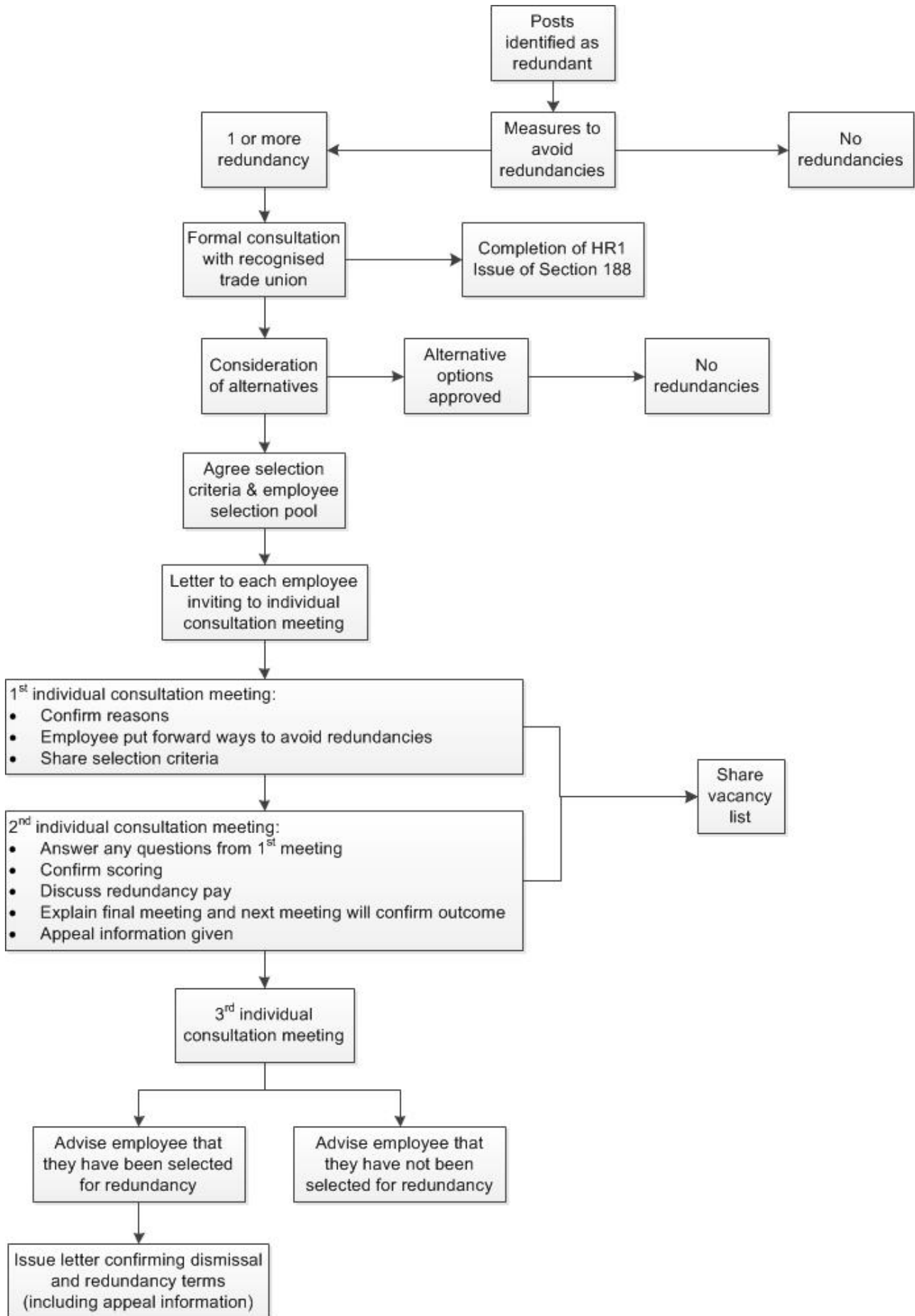
Where a discretionary award exceeds £30,000 the excess is subject to a tax deduction at the individual’s marginal rate. The component subject to assessment is the award of redundancy.

APPENDIX 2: INAPPROPRIATE REDUNDANCY SELECTION CRITERIA

The following grounds shall **not** be used as criteria when selecting staff for compulsory redundancy:

- participation in trade union activities, or membership or non-membership of a trade union
- having requested flexible working arrangements
- having taken lawfully organised industrial action lasting eight weeks or less (or more than eight weeks in certain circumstances)
- having asserted a statutory employment right
- maternity-related reasons, or in relation to other rights for working parents (for example adoption leave and paternity leave)
- having exercised, or sought to exercise, the right to be accompanied at a disciplinary or grievance hearing
- a reason relating to the member of staff's rights under the Working Time Regulations 1998
- a reason relating to the member of staff's rights under the National Minimum Wage Act 1998
- a reason relating to member of staff's rights under the Maternity and Parental Leave etc Regulations 1999
- a reason specified in the Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- a reason specified in the Fixed-term Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002
- having made a protected disclosure within the meaning of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- having taken action on health and safety grounds as a designated or recognised health and safety representative, or as an member of staff in particular circumstances
- having taken part (or proposed to take part) in consultation on specified health and safety matters, or taken part in elections for representatives of member of staff safety

APPENDIX 3A: CONSULTATION PROCESS



APPENDIX 3B: REDUNDANCY PROCEDURE – FLOWCHART FOR SCHOOL BASED STAFF

In the Annual General Meeting, the Governing Body elects a Redundancy Panel and a Redundancy Appeals Panel.



Governing Body/Head Teacher identify a potential staff reduction, after identifying the needs of the school. The OD Division can be contacted for advice. Consultation begins with trade unions and staff.



Skills & Experience Matrix distributed to all relevant teaching staff for completion. Summary Matrix to be completed by Headteacher. Redundancy Selection Matrix completed for support staff tailored to relevant selection pool and summary matrix completed by Headteacher.



Redundancy Panel uses criteria to identify staff as surplus to requirements, using the summary matrix.



Headteacher notifies staff that they have been identified as surplus to requirements and that they have the right of representation to the Redundancy Panel. LEA confirms the decision of the panel.



If required, the Redundancy Panel considers representations. The member of staff has a right to be present at a formal hearing where the right to natural justice will apply.



If the representations are rejected, the employee should be notified in writing and informed of their right of appeal.



If there is an appeal, the Redundancy Appeals panel will conduct a complete re-hearing of the case.



The decision of the Redundancy Appeals Panel is final subject to authorisation by the Corporate Redundancy Panel.



The Corporate Director of Education must be officially notified of the decision at the Corporate Redundancy Panel.

APPENDIX 3C: REDUNDANCY PROCEDURE – FLOWCHART FOR NON SCHOOL BASED STAFF

Following 1st consultation meeting with staff in line with the Council's Redundancy Policy, agree job description for post to ensure appropriate detail and information is transferred to matrix.



Agree a timeframe to complete the matrix; the date the scoring will be based on; the date the matrix will be finalised and a timetable of all meetings, in order to give all interested parties clear information.



Ascertain which system the information is to be checked against, i.e. iTrent and establish OD contact to ensure continuity throughout the process. The same manager is to be involved throughout the process.



Arrange pre-meeting with OD and an independent officer to quality assure the scoring.



Arrange 2nd consultation meeting to explain the matrix scores with staff, give the right to appeal the decision as set out in the Policy.



Following the expiry of the appeal period, arrange 3rd consultation meeting to confirm the staff not selected for redundancy and discuss the options with the staff that have been selected for redundancy that are now at risk.



Following the decision by the corporate redundancy panel; issue final notice letter to the unsuccessful staff giving right of appeal against dismissal.

Redundancy Selection Matrix

Proposal:

Officer Lead:

Effective date of scoring:

Number of Redundancies:

Number of staff in Selection Pool:

Selection Pool Description:

Employee Name:

Designation:

Grade:

Length of Service (Mandatory)

Score:

The Council uses length of service as part of the selection criteria and recognises that this cannot be used as the only qualifying factor in selection for redundancy. The Council's aim is to apply this as part of the selection criteria for redundancy. In addition to this the council will also apply length of service as a factor in a tie-break situation. Where there is a tiebreaker in respect of the scoring, final selection will be made by reference to length of Service, where the person with the longest continuous (unbroken) local government service will be retained.

1 Day – 1 years service	5
1 year – 3 years service	10
3 years – 5 years service	15
5 years – 10 years service	20
10 – 15 years service	25
15 years or more	30

Attendance Record (Mandatory)

For the purpose of attendance records the Council will score the Attendance Record criteria over a 4 year period with effect from the date of marking. All individuals within the selection pool including those not selected for redundancy will be subject to further scoring for selection. The Council reserves the right to revisit the scoring at any point during the notice period.

Please note that consideration is required upon absences that could fall within the remit of the Equality Act 2010. Further advice and guidance is available from Organisational Development, and is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>

In cases whereby absences maybe linked to a work related accident, these should be considered separately.

Occasions of Absence (Mandatory)

Score:

7 or more periods of absence	0
5 - 6 periods of absence	10
3 - 4 periods of Absence	20
1 – 2 periods of Absence	30
No Absences	40

Occasions of Absence are the number of times a person has been off sick over the previous 4 years i.e. 1 period of 4 weeks absence and 1 period of 2 days absence would be 2 occasions. This must be formally recorded and available for review by the employee.

Days of Absence (Mandatory)

Score:

41 or more days	0
31 – 40	5
21 – 30	10
11 – 20	15
1 – 10	20
Nil	25

Days of absence are the total amount of days lost to absence.

Disciplinary Record (Mandatory)Score:

Only disciplinary warnings that are current and do not expire prior to the date of termination will be used when scoring this section.

Final Written Warning	0
First Written Warning	10
Nothing on Record	20

Capability (Mandatory)Score:

Has entered into stage 3 of the capability process and is being considered for re-deployment, further monitoring or dismissal.	0
Has entered into stage 2 of the capability process and is currently working to a development plan to improve performance.	5
Has entered into stage 1 of the capability process and is currently working to a development plan to improve performance.	10
(Evidenced) Issues of performance being addressed through, supervision, performance management and training. As defined in the Capability Policy.	15
Nothing on Record	20

Job Knowledge Skills (Mandatory)Score:

Tailored to each Selection Pool (maximum of 20 points).

Essential Qualifications & Experience:

- This would be Essential Criteria from the agreed JD.
- Maximum of 10 points if staff are also being scored in undertaking duties across the council.
- If the individuals going through the matrix are static members of staff (i.e. office based) the maximum point scored for this section should be 20 points.

Flexibility (Mandatory)Score:

- Tailored to each Selection Pool (maximum of 10 points).
- Transferable skills across the Directorate/Council e.g. managing staff, budgets, IT skills (maximum of 10 points).

Timekeeping (Discretionary) Score:

Timekeeping criteria will only be applied when the selection pool are required to work varying shift patterns.

8 or more	0
5 – 7	5
2 – 5	10
No lateness	15

Maximum Points Achievable: Actual Points Achieved:

Scoring Manager Signature:

Print Name: Date:

Quality Assured Signature:

Print Name: Date:

Employee Signature:

Print Name: Date:

I can confirm that I :

Agree Disagree with the scoring of the matrix

If disagree, please stipulate the grounds in which you are disagreeing.
NB: by completing this section, an appeal against the scoring of your matrix will be raised.

Supporting Evidence

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying most of the page. It is intended for providing supporting evidence for the text on the previous page.

APPENDIX 4B: REDUNDANCY SELECTION MATRIX (MANAGER'S GUIDE)

**Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Redundancy Selection Matrix**

Please note that the date of scoring will need to be agreed with the Manager and Trade Union/Representative prior to the exercise taking place. All employees in the selection pool should be marked at the same effective date.

Proposal:

Officer Lead:

Effective date of scoring:

Number of Redundancies: Number of staff in Selection Pool:

Selection Pool Description:

Employee Name:

Designation: Grade:

Length of Service (Mandatory) Score:

The Council uses length of service as part of the selection criteria and recognises that this cannot be used as the only qualifying factor in selection for redundancy. The Council's aim is to apply this as part of the selection criteria for redundancy. In addition to this the council will also apply length of service as a factor in a tie-break situation. Where there is a tiebreaker in respect of the scoring, final selection will be made by reference to length of Service, where the person with the longest continuous (unbroken) local government service will be retained.

When calculating Service points, the Local Government continuous service date is required to be used. Please note the reference to Service being used in a tie-break situation. This would only apply to staff being assessed in the same selection pool.

1 Day – 1 years service	5
1 year – 3 years service	10
3 years – 5 years service	15
5 years – 10 years service	20
10 – 15 years service	25
15 years or more	30

Attendance Record (Mandatory)

For the purpose of attendance records the Council will score the Attendance Record criteria over a 4 year period with effect from the date of marking. All individuals within the selection pool including those not selected for redundancy will be subject to further scoring for selection. The Council reserves the right to revisit the scoring at any point during the notice period.

In this circumstance explanation and agreement with Trade Union/Representative/Manager/ Individual that any absence taken within the notice period may alter the scoring further, and this will be discussed on a case by case basis.

Please note that consideration is required upon absences that could fall within the remit of the Equality Act 2010. Further advice and guidance is available from Organisational Development, and is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>

In cases whereby absences maybe linked to a work related accident, these should be considered separately.

Occasions of Absence (Mandatory)

Score:

7 or more periods of absence	0
5 - 6 periods of absence	10
3 - 4 periods of Absence	20
1 – 2 periods of Absence	30
No Absences	40

Occasions of Absence are the number of times a person has been off sick over the previous 4 years i.e. 1 period of 4 weeks absence and 1 period of 2 days absence would be 2 occasions. This must be formally recorded and available for review by the employee.

Days of Absence (Mandatory)

Score:

41 or more days	0
31 – 40	5
21 – 30	10
11 – 20	15
1 – 10	20
Nil	25

Days of absence are the total amount of days lost to absence.

Disciplinary Record (Mandatory)Score:

Only disciplinary warnings that are current and do not expire prior to the date of termination will be used when scoring this section.

Final Written Warning	0
First Written Warning	10
Nothing on Record	20

The above is self explanatory and any current warnings on file will determine the score.

Capability (Mandatory)Score:

Has entered into stage 3 of the capability process and is being considered for re-deployment, further monitoring or dismissal.	0
Has entered into stage 2 of the capability process and is currently working to a development plan to improve performance.	5
Has entered into stage 1 of the capability process and is currently working to a development plan to improve performance.	10
(Evidenced) Issues of performance being addressed through, supervision, performance management and training. As defined in the Capability Policy.	15
Nothing on Record	20

The above is in line with the Capability Policy and should the employee have commenced this process, the scores must reflect this.

Job Knowledge Skills (Mandatory)Score:

Tailored to each Selection Pool (maximum of 20 points).

Essential Qualifications & Experience:

- This would be Essential Criteria from the agreed JD.
- Maximum of 10 points if staff are also being scored in undertaking duties across the council.
- If the individuals going through the matrix are static members of staff (i.e. office based) the maximum point scored for this section should be 20 points.

Examples are the flexibility to cover other roles within the department i.e. Recreational Assistant covering a Duty Manager, a Home Carer covering Duty Planner. Consideration can also include covering different areas of work within the department or being able to work across functions.

Where possible this should be objective and would relate to specific skills required for the role. This could include qualifications, skills, and specialist skills. This may also relate to particular tasks in the department that all employees within the selection pool should have had equal opportunity to train/carry out.

The criteria for this section must be mutually agreed with the Manager and the Union/representatives.

Flexibility (Mandatory)Score:

- Tailored to each Selection Pool (maximum of 10 points).
- Transferable skills across the Directorate/Council e.g. managing staff, budgets, IT skills (maximum of 10 points).

The criteria for this section must be mutually agreed with the Manager and the Union/representatives.

Timekeeping (Discretionary)Score:

Timekeeping criteria will only be applied when the selection pool are required to work varying shift patterns.

8 or more	0
5 – 7	5
2 – 5	10
No lateness	15

This should only be applied if the individuals affected work set shift patterns/times and also if the criteria is applied across the selection group.

Maximum Points Achievable: Actual Points Achieved:

Scoring Manager Signature:

Print Name: Date:

Quality Assured Signature:

Print Name: Date:

Employee Signature:

Print Name: Date:

I can confirm that I :

Agree Disagree with the scoring of the matrix

If disagree, please stipulate the grounds in which you are disagreeing.

NB: by completing this section, an appeal against the scoring of your matrix will be raised.

Supporting Evidence

Manager to provide supporting evidence as to the rationale behind the points awarded e.g. sickness absence records, rationale for scoring in the job knowledge and skills and flexibility.



APPENDIX 5: ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

Consultation Process

The Governing Body, usually through the Headteacher, has a duty to consult with the staff and trade unions. Any proposals on alternative options at consultation stage will also be considered by the Headteacher and Governing Body. The Headteacher should call a meeting at the earliest opportunity and invite the relevant Trade Unions. The purpose of the meeting is to inform all staff of the possibility of one or more redundancies and to explore the way in which this may be prevented, such as the methods of natural wastage, staff reducing hours, voluntary retirement etc. If these possibilities do not resolve the need for redundancies, then a compulsory process should be implemented. It is vital that any staff members who are absent are kept informed of the situation and consulted.

Establishment of Committees

At the Annual General Meeting, the Governing Body should elect or appoint two committees: the Redundancy Committee and the Redundancy Appeals Committee. It is recommended that each committee consists of at least three people, with five as a maximum, an odd number being recommended to produce a clear result in the event of a vote being taken on any issue.

It is strongly recommended that the Chair of Governors does not sit on either of the committees, as it is normal practice for him/her to be involved in the redundancy process with the Headteacher throughout. It is also important that staff members do not sit on either of these committees, as impartiality could not be ensured.

Establishment of Criteria

The Governing Body should have clearly defined criteria for selection of posts to be declared surplus to requirement at the school. These should be agreed by the Governing Body and publicised within school, with a statement giving a commitment to a fair, consistent, objective and non-discriminatory selection process.

Should the governors choose to use criteria other than those recommended by the Council, they must consult the trade unions, with a view to reaching agreement on the revised criteria.

The Council, however, recommends that Governors adopt the procedures within this document, which have been agreed with the recognised trades unions.

Selection Process

Background Information

In selecting criteria for identification of a post to be declared 'surplus to requirement' at a school, governors must take care to avoid use of criteria which would discriminate under the terms of the Equality Act 2010.

Clearly the process should identify a post - which is filled by an individual - but should not be aimed at justifying the selection of an individual per se.

Assessment of Needs

In order to identify the specific areas of surplus capacity, an assessment of needs should be carried out across the whole school. The Headteacher will be required to:

- Identify current and projected pupil number trends;
- Identify current and future curriculum needs;
- Identify any organisational and management requirements of the school.

In Secondary Schools a curriculum audit should be completed, which will identify the needs of the school within each subject area. Clearly this cannot be achieved until the options process has been completed and projected pupil numbers are known.

It is imperative that this information is documented accurately, as it will form the basis of any potential redundancies and could be challenged at a later date. Please be aware that this process has to be carried out in a timely manner, in order to ensure that notice periods will be adhered to.

Having identified the needs of your school, it is advisable that you contact your Council representatives in Resources and Organisational Development for advice.

Selection Criteria

In the event that all options have been unsuccessful in avoiding a compulsory redundancy situation, the adopted selection criteria must be used to identify the appropriate 'surplus' post(s).

The relevant forms (Skills and Experience Matrix) to be issued to all teaching staff within the Primary and Secondary sector respectively are attached. These forms identify the relevant agreed set of criteria for teaching posts within each sector, which will enable the Headteacher and governors to match the needs of the school with the skills and experience of the teaching staff.

Due to the number and diverse nature of support staff posts within schools, a set of criteria has not been agreed in its entirety for such staff. However, it has been agreed with the trade unions that the template in this Policy at [Appendix 4a](#) is used in all cases and is added to, according to the needs of the post. It should be pointed out that such criteria must be drawn up and agreed with the trade unions prior to any redundancy negotiations beginning.

A copy of the relevant form must be issued to all relevant staff for completion, with an explanation of its purpose. In order to ensure that all staff are fully aware of the process, a copy of this policy must be issued with the appropriate form.

It is imperative that any staff who are absent are also made aware and participate in the process. Please contact the Organisational Development Service Partner, who will advise you on the most appropriate course of action.

It is imperative that all staff are afforded sufficient time to complete the form and are provided with any necessary advice and guidance on its completion. All staff members should be made aware of the support that is available through the line management and Trade Union, in the completion of the form. On completion of the form, staff should meet with their line manager to discuss and agree its content.

Skills and Experience Matrix – Completion of the Form

The purpose of the Redundancy Selection Matrices is to enable relevant teaching and support staff to demonstrate the skills, knowledge, experience, etc that they have, which meet the current and future needs of the school. Staff should be aware that the data will be collected and used as part of an exercise to match their skills and experience to the current and future needs of the school. It is, therefore, important that all staff invest sufficient time and effort into its completion, as it forms the basis of the decision-making regarding the redundancy.

On completion of the form, the individual will meet with his or her line manager, in order to discuss the content, so that any discrepancies can be highlighted. At this meeting, documents such as job descriptions, person specifications, training records etc. should be available for supporting information. On agreement of the content of the form, the member of staff and line manager sign the bottom. All completed and signed forms should be returned to the Headteacher.

In the event of a member of staff being unable to complete the form, it will fall to a line manager to undertake this task, with the appropriate consultation. In such cases, the completed form will be sent to the individual for their information. They will then be given the opportunity to make any amendments and additions, within a given timescale. Support from the line manager will be available to assist in this process.

Failure to return the form will result in the original version being used in the process. The member of staff will be informed that this is the case.

Completion of the Summary Matrix

On receipt of the completed forms, the Headteacher or School Management Team member(s) must transfer the information onto the appropriate Summary Matrix sheet (see appendices). It is important that the information is anonymised when transferred onto the Summary Matrix, in order to ensure a fair process throughout. The Teacher No or Staff No should be completed at the top of each Criteria Matrix form and then transferred onto the Summary Matrix sheet.

In Secondary Schools, the completed forms will form the basis of any 'bumping' that can be achieved within the various subject areas. Headteachers should use the information provided on the Criteria Matrix too see whether internal staff movement within subject areas can be achieved, in order to remove surplus capacity. When this process has been exhausted, a clear picture will have emerged of where the surplus capacity remains. It must be stressed that consultation with staff is imperative during this process.

On completion of the 'bumping' process, the Summary Matrix will be completed for the subjects in which there is surplus capacity only.

Support and guidance throughout the process will be available from the Organisational Development Service Partner.

The Role of the Panel

A member of the OD Division and/or the Governor's Support Division will attend all relevant meetings to guide governors through the process and deal with the administration and consultation with the Trade Unions.

In the event that a sufficient number of staff members volunteer to accept redundancy, the panel members will be required to approve the redundancy on these grounds. However, in the event of more staff volunteering for redundancy than the number of surplus posts, the process below should be carried out, but for the volunteers only.

At the Redundancy Panel hearing, the Headteacher will explain the process adopted to date and what has been identified as the current and future needs of the school. The appropriate documentation is then issued for discussion. The Headteacher will then circulate and explain the anonymised Criteria Matrix and Summary Matrix sheets, which provide all necessary information on the relevant staff members. The panel members will then be required to match the skills and experience of the individual staff members to the needs of the school.

It should be noted that, in Secondary schools, information should be provided only for the areas of surplus capacity.

Only Part 1 of the form should be considered at this stage. If the information does not identify the required 'surplus' posts, the length of service should be considered as the deciding factor. In this case, the person with the shortest length of service with the Authority will be selected for redundancy.

Following the Hearing

Following the Redundancy Hearing, the Headteacher and Chair of the Panel should arrange to meet with the selected individual to communicate the outcome and the right to appeal, as per this policy. The meeting should also be an opportunity for the individual to ask any questions about the process and to discuss any other relevant issues.

The decision of the Redundancy panel will be communicated in writing by the Council, within seven calendar days.

As outlined the employee has the right to appeal against the decision of the Redundancy panel, in the form of a Representation Hearing. Following the outcome of the Representation Hearing, the employee has one final right to appeal to the Redundancy Appeal Panel. This is a complete rehearing of the case, with a fresh panel of Governors who have no prior knowledge of the case.

Council Panel Meeting

On completion of the process, the final authorisation is granted by the Council via a panel of Officers, comprising of representatives from Resources and Organisational Development. The decision is based on the presentation of a sound business case. Please refer to the section on Business Case/Approval Mechanism.

Representation Hearings

The purpose of this meeting is to receive representations from the member(s) of staff identified as 'surplus to requirement'. These should be on the basis of incorrect identification e.g. "I am a geographer not an historian", "I have skills in the area of x" etc.

The teacher should be encouraged to bring a colleague or trade union representative to the meeting.

Procedurally the meeting should follow this course:

- All panel members are asked to confirm that they are able to act impartially. A Chair should be elected for the duration of the Hearing.
- The Headteacher will outline the reason for the proposed redundancy (ies) and the criteria used in identifying the post in question.
- The staff member (colleague or trade union representative) may ask questions of the Head Teacher.
- Members of the Panel may seek clarification of points from the Head Teacher.
- The staff member (colleague or trade union representative) makes their representation.
- The Headteacher may ask questions of the staff member.
- The Panel may ask questions of the staff member (colleague or trade union representative).
- Both parties may sum up their case, the Head Teacher summing up first.
- The Headteacher and staff member (colleague or trade union representative) shall leave the room whilst the Panel consider the representations made to them.

- At this point advice to the panel may be offered by the relevant Support Officer in attendance.
- The parties shall return and the decision of the panel given verbally including notification of the right of appeal to the Redundancy Appeals Committee, if the representation has been rejected.

The decision of the panel will be communicated in writing to the staff member within seven calendar days and arrangements to exercise the right of appeal will be outlined in that letter.

Appeal Hearing

The Appeal Hearing should follow the pattern of the Representation hearing, but it is a complete rehearing of the case with a fresh panel of governors, who have no knowledge of the arguments and cases put previously.

The remit of this meeting is wider than that of the representation meeting. Not only might the committee hear argument on wrong identification but also on whether a genuine redundancy situation exists.

Once more the staff member is encouraged to have a colleague or trade union representative with them.

The procedure for the meeting follows that of the Representation Hearing:

- All committee members are asked to confirm that they are able to act impartially. A Chair should be elected for the duration of the Hearing.
- The Headteacher will outline the reason for the declaration and the criteria used in identifying the post in question.
- The teacher (colleague or trade union representative) may ask questions of the Headteacher.
- Members of the Committee may seek clarification of points from the Head Teacher.
- The staff member (colleague or trade union representative) will make their representation.
- The Headteacher may ask questions of the staff member.
- The Committee may ask questions of the staff member (colleague or trade union representative).
- Both parties may sum up their case, the Headteacher summing up first.
- The Headteacher and staff member (colleague or trade union representative) shall leave the room whilst the Committee consider the representations made to them.

- At this point advice to the Committee may be offered the relevant officer.
- The parties shall return and the decision of the Committee given verbally.

The decision of the Committee will be communicated in writing to the staff member within seven calendar days.

The decision of the appeals committee is final.

Redundancy/Appeal Committee

In the event of a compulsory redundancy being identified, the member of staff has the right to make representations to the Schools Redundancy Committee and then appeal against the decision to the Schools Appeal Committee. In circumstances where the employee wishes to exercise this right of representation, initially to the redundancy Committee, they have a period of 7 calendar days to inform the Chief Education Officer, in writing of their intentions and why. The 7 days takes effect from the date on which the employee is informed of the decision in writing.

The outcome of the representation hearing will be communicated to the individual within 7 calendar days. In the event that the employee is not satisfied with the outcome of representation hearing they have a right to appeal to the Redundancy Appeal Committee. In this case the employee will have 7 calendar days to notify the Chief Education Officer, in writing, if they wish to appeal against the representation decision to this Committee.

At the Annual General Meeting the governing body should elect or appoint two panels: the Redundancy Committee and the Redundancy Appeals Committee. It is recommended that each committee consist of at least 3 people, with 5 as a maximum.

It is strongly recommended that the Chair of Governors does not sit on either of the Committees, as it is normal practice for them to be involved in the redundancy process with the Head teacher throughout. It is also important that staff members do not sit on either of these Committees, as impartiality could not be ensured.

Teachers Redundancy Selection Matrix

Name of School:

Proposal:

Headteacher:

Effective date of scoring:

Number Of staff in Selection Pool:

Selection Pool Description:

Employee Name:

Designation:

Grade:

Schools should determine criteria that are relevant to their own school and the circumstances of the reduction in staffing in the School, Faculty or Department. Any changes to the template should be made in consultation with relevant Trade Unions.

Specific Skills and Experience (Mandatory)

Please provide information to support your matrix in the supporting evidence column. **Please complete the matrix electronically as the rows will then expand with the information included.**

Relevant Teaching Skills	Supporting Evidence (For completion by employee and agreed by a nominated manager)	Score Guide (Scoring to be completed by nominated manager – not for completion by employee)	Score (for completion by Manager)
Foundation/ Nursery		Experience of having taught in last 3 years = 3 Experience of having taught in last 5 years = 2 Experience but not in last 5 years=1 No Experience = 0	
KS2		Experience of having taught in last 3 years = 3 Experience of having taught in last 5 years = 2 Experience but not in last 5 years=1 No Experience = 0	
KS3		Experience of having taught in last 3 years = 3 Experience of having taught in last 5 years = 2 Experience but not in last 5 years=1 No Experience = 0	
KS4		Experience of having taught in last 3 years = 3 Experience of having taught in last 5 years = 2 Experience but not in last 5 years=1 No Experience = 0	
Subjects Taught (please list):		Not scored	

Specialist Relevant Skills – Examples	Supporting Evidence (For completion by employee and agreed by a nominated manager)	Score Guide (Scoring to be completed by nominated manager – not for completion by employee)	Score
Degree in relevant subject taught		3	
Crosscutting skills/Added Value (relating to the curriculum)		3	
Subject Leadership/ Key Stage Leadership/ Year management role/ Leadership Role/ TLR Post Holder		Experience in any of these areas in the last 3 years = 3 Experience in last 5 years = 2	
Literacy, numeracy and digital competency		Expert/Uses in practice and has taught others = 3 Confident/Intermediate user = 2 Basic use = 1	
Science/Technology		Expert/Uses in practice and has taught others = 3 Confident/Intermediate user = 2 Basic use = 1	
Wider curriculum contribution		Up to 3 points (Criteria to be school specific and agreed with Trade Unions)	

Training and Development	Supporting Evidence (For completion by employee and agreed by a nominated manager)	Score Guide (Scoring to be completed by nominated manager – not for completion by employee)	Score
Post-graduate qualification		Working towards - 1 Achieved - 3	
Other relevant qualifications		Working towards - 1 Achieved - 3	
Contribution towards a self improving schools		Up to 3	

Maximum Points Achievable:

Actual Points Achieved:

Scoring Manager Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

Quality Assured Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

Employee Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

I can confirm that I :

Agree Disagree with the scoring of the matrix

If disagree, please stipulate the grounds in which you are disagreeing.

NB: by completing this section, an appeal against the scoring of your matrix will be raised.

TIEBREAKER SITUATION

In the event of more than one teacher achieving the same score in the application of the above criteria; the decision may be concluded by using the attendance record.

Attendance Record (Mandatory)

For the purpose of attendance records the School will score the Attendance Record criteria over a 4 year period with effect from the date of marking. All individuals in the tiebreak situation will be subject to further scoring for selection. In the event that not all employees have been employed for a period of 4 years, a period of the last rolling 12 months will be applied. The School reserves the right to revisit the scoring at any point during the notice period.

Please note that consideration is required upon absences that could fall within the remit of the Equality Act 2010. Further advice and guidance is available from Organisational Development, and is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>

In cases whereby absences maybe linked to a work related accident, these should be considered separately.

Page 525

Occasions of Absence (Mandatory)

Score:

7 or more periods of absence	0
5 - 6 periods of absence	10
3 - 4 periods of Absence	20
1 – 2 periods of Absence	30
No Absences	40

Occasions of Absence are the number of times a person has been off sick over the previous 4 years i.e. 1 period of 4 weeks absence and 1 period of 2 days absence would be 2 occasions. This must be formally recorded and available for review by the employee.

Days of Absence (Mandatory)

Score:

41 or more days	0
31 – 40	5
21 – 30	10
11 – 20	15
1 – 10	20
Nil	25

Days of absence are the total amount of days lost to absence.

In the event that the Attendance Record does not resolve the tie-break situation then length of service will be included.

Length of Service

Where there is still a tiebreaker in respect of the scoring, final selection will be made by reference to length of Service, where the person with the longest continuous (unbroken) local government service will be retained.

Maximum Points Achievable:

Actual Points Achieved:

Scoring Manager Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

Quality Assured Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

Employee Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

I can confirm that I :

Agree Disagree with the scoring of the matrix

If disagree, please stipulate the grounds in which you are disagreeing.

NB: by completing this section, an appeal against the scoring of your matrix with be raised.

In the Interests of the Efficiency of the Service Policy



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: November 2017 Review: November 2019

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. DEFINITION OF EFFICIENCY	2
3. COMPENSATION.....	2
4. DISCRETIONARY PAYMENTS.....	3
5. BUSINESS CASE/APPROVAL MECHANISM.....	3
6. EMPLOYEE SUPPORT AND ADVICE.....	3

1. INTRODUCTION

Blaenau Gwent Council recognises that the people we employ are our most valuable asset and critical in developing modern, high quality, efficient and responsive customer focused public services.

Whilst it is the Council's intention to develop and provide a stable work environment and security of employment for all its employees, it must ensure that it provides a viable, high quality, value for money service to the Community. In this respect circumstances may arise where changes in the market, technology, organisational and/or statutory requirements necessitate the need for changes in staffing requirements for a service which may lead to termination of contracts "in the interests of the efficiency of the service".

2. DEFINITION OF EFFICIENCY

Termination on the grounds of efficiency unlike redundancy is not a dismissal, it is a mutual agreement of termination of a contract of employment by both parties i.e. employee and the Council. This is also considered to be in the best interests of both parties.

Compensation on terminating employees on these grounds is entirely at the Authority's discretion. The discretion will not be exercised as an alternative to dealing with the matter of inadequate performance through properly presented procedures.

3. COMPENSATION

Clearly where there is a termination on the grounds of efficiency, there will be entitlement to compensation for the loss of the employment.

4. DISCRETIONARY PAYMENTS

The Council exercises its discretion in line with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997 (as amended) and the Local Government (Early Retirement of Employment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2000, 2006 and 2008 (as amended) – generally called the Discretionary Compensation Regulations. Individuals who terminate on the grounds of efficiency:

a) **Aged over 55 years**

Individuals will have immediate access to an unreduced payment of their LGPS benefits.

b) **Aged under 55 years**

Individuals may receive a compensation payment equivalent to that calculated for redundancy as outlined in the Council's Redundancy Policy for those staff who do not have access to their pension.

5. BUSINESS CASE/APPROVAL MECHANISM

Any termination on the grounds of Efficiency whereby the Council exercises its discretion must be supported by a business case.

This business case will include consideration of service delivery changes and the financial consequences of any efficiency compensation and pension recovery payback over a period no greater than 5 years.

6. EMPLOYEE SUPPORT AND ADVICE

Employee Assistance Programme

Support is available through the Council's Employee Assistance Programme (Care first) on **telephone number 0800 174319**. Further information is available on the [intranet](#).

Additional Support

Managers may consider offering support to employees (e.g. help with CV's, retraining, personal support/accessibility). Organisational Development can advise on these options.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 37

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 7.7.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 7.7.20

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **23rd July, 2020**

Report Subject: **Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Daniels Leader of the Council/Executive Member – Corporate Services.**

Report Submitted by: **Andrea J Prosser – Head of Organisational Development.**

Report Written by: **Keira Smith – Senior HR Business Partner.**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
X	25/2/20& 02/07/20						23/07/20	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the legislative changes that the Authority are required to implement as a result of the introduction of the Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Regulations 2020; and to seek approval to offer a provision that is above the statutory minimum requirement.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The UK Government has introduced 'Jack's Law' which is a new legal right to paid parental bereavement leave. This is the first in a number of employment reforms as set out in the Government's Good Work Plan, with the aim of making '*the UK the best place in the world to work*'.

2.2 The Law

- 2.2.1 With effect from 6th April 2020, parents who suffer the loss of a child under the age of 18 or those who suffer a stillbirth from 24 weeks of pregnancy, irrespective of how long they have worked for their employer, will be entitled to 2 weeks' statutory leave.
- 2.2.2 Parents will be able to take the leave as a single block of 2 weeks or 2 separate blocks of one week each, taken at different times across the first year after their child's death. This means they can match their leave to the times they need it the most, which could be in the early days or over the first anniversary (must be taken within 56 weeks of child's death). This provision can also be added to the end of maternity leave.

- 2.2.3 Parents with at least 26 weeks' continuous service with their employer and weekly average earnings over the lower earnings limit will also be entitled to Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay (SPBP), paid at the statutory rate of £151.20 per week, or 90% of average weekly earnings where this is lower. Employers will not be required to request 'proof' from an employee requesting to take leave i.e. birth or death certificate.
- 2.2.4 As well as birth parents, the entitlement also extends to adults with parental responsibility, e.g. adoptive parents, those fostering to adopt, legal guardians and many foster parents. This includes those who have lived with the child for a period of at least 4 weeks before the child dies and has day to day responsibility for the child; and a parents partner if they live together in an 'enduring family relationship'. If more than one child dies, the parental bereavement leave is in respect of each child.
- 2.3 The Government acknowledges in its consultation response that statutory parental bereavement leave and pay is the minimum employers will have to provide and encourages employers to enhance their offering.
- 2.4 This provision will be applicable to Corporate and School based staff.
- 2.5 **Council's Current Provision**
- 2.5.1 The Council currently offers 5 days bereavement leave (pro rata) for the loss of a son or daughter, irrespective of age, on full pay, to be taken at or around the time of the bereavement. The leave can be taken in a block or as separate days. The leave also extends to step, half and in-law relatives.
- 2.5.2 There is no data that we can analyse to accurately determine the number of times this provision has been utilised by staff in circumstances where they have lost a son or daughter however, anecdotally, it is felt that this is a fairly low number and it is not often used.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

Organisational Development (OD) outlined a number of options for implementation which were considered by Corporate Leadership Team (CLT). OD and CLT endorse the implementation of Option 1 (preferred option) as detailed below. Unison and GMB have also confirmed their support for Option 1.

- 3.1 **Option 1 (preferred option)** – Council approves the implementation of Option 1, with effect from 6th April 2020, on the basis that it meets the legislative requirements whilst putting us ahead of the statutory minimum requirement, which is encouraged by the Government, is consistent with what we offer in other provisions, would incur minimal additional cost and we would be seen to be a modern employer of choice which is linked to the proposals for the new Workforce Strategy.

Option 1	Considerations	• Benefits
<p>Amend our entitlement to 2 weeks leave on full pay, irrespective of age or length of service, or those who suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks' of pregnancy</p> <p>That the provision is extended to include in-law and step relatives to ensure consistency with our other provisions of leave (which we would be unable to reclaim in respect of the SPBP).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will incur an additional cost for the Authority (minimal but exact amount unknown) • Above what is required by the Act. • Front line staff will need to be covered for the additional leave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links to Workforce Strategy of being a modern employer of choice which promotes the wellbeing of our employees. • Would expect additional cost to be minimal given the frequency this provision is utilised and that the statutory payment can be reclaimed for the two weeks. • Consistent Provision for all employees (regardless of age) which would mean fairness in the entitlements for all staff.

3.2 **Option 2** – Council declines to approve option 1 and the statutory minimum requirement is implemented with effect from 6th April 2020.

3.3 In terms of other Local Authorities, Newport have confirmed that they are reviewing their policy and are likely to pay two weeks full pay. Monmouthshire, Bridgend and Powys all confirmed that they are in a similar position as Newport; whilst Torfaen and Caerphilly have confirmed that they will pay full pay for 2 weeks and will not be including a qualifying period.

3.4 This approach will also be recommended to Governing Bodies for adoption in Schools.

3.5 For the purposes of meeting the statutory effective date as set out in the Regulations, this report has been progressed straight to Council and has not be presented to Scrutiny for consideration.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 Statutory changes required by legislation but adopting option 1 would link to our Corporate Plan and Workforce Strategy of being a modern employer of choice.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 Implications of the preferred option are outlined in the above table.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 N/A – Statutory changes required by legislation. Supporting evidence relating to Option 1 is outlined in table above.

7 **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The revised policy will be monitored regularly and reviewed in line with OD's Policy Schedule.

Agenda Item 38

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 9.7.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 7.7.20

Committee: Council

Date of Meeting: **23rd July, 2020**

Report Subject: **Schedule of Members Remuneration 2020-21**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Daniels
Leader of the Council**

Report Submitted by: **Andrea J Prosser
Head of Organisational Development**

Report Written by: **Richard Bridge
Organisational Development Manager – Payroll /
Health & Safety**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
✓	02/07/20						✓	

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To consider and agree the Schedule of Members Remuneration for 2020-21.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 To comply with Part 8 (sections 141 to 160) and schedules 2 and 3 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) regulations the Council is required to produce annually a schedule of payments it intends to make to its members and co-opted members.

2.2 The proposed schedule for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is provided at Appendix 1.

2.3 This report outlines the information that the Schedule should contain including the arrangements for the payment of salaries, allowances and fees to all members and co-opted members.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1 (**preferred option**) – to agree and publish the Schedule of Members Remuneration for 2020/21.

3.2. Option 2 – to make suggestions to amend the Schedule although the process is prescriptive in line with the legislation quoted above.

4. Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

4.1 In agreeing and publishing the Schedule of Members Remuneration, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is complying with its statutory responsibilities

under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the requirements of the IRPW aligning to the priority of being an efficient Council.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 *Impact Upon Budget*

5.1.1 Option 1 - It is estimated that the publication costs will be approximately £1,200. There are no other direct financial implications as a result of this report - the remuneration levels of Members of the Council for 2020/21 are identified in the attached Appendix 1.

5.1.2 Option 2 - No publication costs will be incurred under this option.

5.2 *Risk*

5.2.1 Option 1 – There are no significant risks for the Council with this option.

5.2.2 Option 2 (**preferred option**)– Non-compliance with the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) could result in reputational damage for the Council.

To mitigate this risk, agreeing and publishing the Schedule of Members Remuneration is proposed (option 1).

5.3 *Legal*

5.3.1 **Option 1** – This option ensures the Council complies with statutory responsibilities.

5.3.2 **Option 2** – This would result in non-compliance within the statutory requirements.

5.4 *Human Resources*

5.4.1 There are no Human Resources implications that impact upon the report other than the time required to produce and maintain the Schedule of Members Remuneration throughout the year.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

6.1.2 The Schedule should confirm that the Council's maximum limit of Senior Salaries has not been exceeded and include a declaration of whether:

- A statement of the basic responsibility of a councillor is in place.
- Role descriptions of senior salary office holders is in place.
- Records are kept of councillor attendance.

6.1.3 It is also statutory to set out arrangements for the payment of salaries, allowances and fees to all members and co-opted members and must include

a statement of allowable expenses together with details of the duties for which they may be claimed.

6.1.4 The Council must as soon as practicable after determining its Schedule for the year and no later than 31st July of the year to which the Schedule relates, make arrangements for its publication within the Council's area and in addition forward the Schedule to the IRPW.

6.2 *Expected Outcome for the public*

6.2.1 Publication provides taxpayers and citizens with information about the remuneration of their elected members.

6.3 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

6.3.1 The IRPW consulted with Councils and elected members prior to determining remuneration levels to be paid, this included visiting all 22 Welsh councils

6.3.2 The Schedule of Members Remuneration will be published on the Councils website.

6.4 *Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)*

6.4.1 It is a requirement that similar information is published on an annual basis.

6.5 *Preventative focus*

6.5.1 Not relevant to this report.

6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working*

6.6.1 Not relevant to this report.

6.7 *Integration (across service areas)*

6.7.1 Not relevant to this report.

6.8 *EqlA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)*

6.8.1 Not relevant to this report.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 *State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements*

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 – Schedule of Members Remuneration 2020/21*
- <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-02/annual-report-2020-to-2021.pdf>

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

MEMBERS' SCHEDULE OF REMUNERATION

This Scheme is made under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 with regard to Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Regulations which apply to payments made to members and co-opted members of local authorities.

1. Basic Salary

- 1.1 A Basic Salary shall be paid to each elected Member of the Authority.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Regulations, the rate of the Basic Salary shall be reviewed annually as determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
- 1.3 Where the term of office of a Member begins or ends other than at the beginning or end of a year, their entitlement to the Basic Salary will be pro-rata.
- 1.4 No more than one Basic Salary is payable to a Member of the Authority.

2. Senior Salaries & Civic Salaries

- 2.1 Members occupying specific posts shall be paid a Senior Salary as set out in **Schedule 1**.
- 2.2 In accordance with the Regulations, the rates of Senior Salaries and Civic Salaries shall be reviewed annually as determined by the Annual or Supplementary Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
- 2.3 Only one Senior Salary or Civic Salary is payable to a Member of the Authority.
- 2.4 A Member of the Authority cannot be paid a Senior Salary and a Civic Salary.
- 2.5 All Senior and Civic Salaries are paid inclusive of Basic Salary.
- 2.6 A Senior Salary may not be paid to more than the number of members specified by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in its Annual Report and cannot exceed fifty percent of the total membership of the authority, except to include a temporary Senior Salary office holder providing temporary cover for the family absence of the appointed office holder.
- 2.7 A Member of the Authority in receipt of a Senior Salary **cannot** receive a salary from any National Park Authority (NPA) or Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) for which they have been nominated.
- 2.8 Where the term of Senior Salary or Civic Salary of a Member begins or ends other than at the beginning or end of a year, their entitlement to the Salary will be pro-rata.

3. Election to Forgo Entitlement to Allowance

- 3.1 A Member may, by notice in writing delivered to the Proper Officer of the authority, personally elect to forgo any part of their entitlement to any salary, allowance or fee payable under this Scheme from the date set out in the notice.

4. Suspension of a Member

- 4.1 Where a Member of the Authority is suspended or partially suspended from their responsibilities or duties as a Member of the Authority in accordance with Part III of the

Local Government Act 2000 (Conduct of Members), or regulations made under the Act, the part of the Basic Salary payable to them in respect of that period for which they are suspended will be withheld by the Authority (Section 155 (1) of the Measure).

- 4.2 Where a Member in receipt of a Senior Salary is suspended or partially suspended from being a Member of the Authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 (Conduct of Members), or regulations made under the Act, the Authority must not make payments of the Member's Senior Salary for the duration of the suspension (Section 155 (1) of the Measure). If the partial suspension relates only to the specific responsibility element of the payment, the Member may retain the Basic Salary.

5. Repayment of salaries, allowances or fees

- 5.1 Where payment of any salary, allowance or fee has been made to a Member of the Authority or Co-opted Member in respect of any period during which the Member concerned:

- (a) is suspended or partially suspended from that Member's/Co-opted Member's duties or responsibilities in accordance with Part 3 of the 2000 Act or regulations made under that Act;
- (b) ceases to be a Member of the Authority or Co-opted Member; or
- (c) is in any other way not entitled to receive a salary, allowance or fee in respect of that period,

the Authority will require that such part of the allowance as relates to any such period be repaid.

6. Payments

- 6.1 Payments of all allowances will be made by the Chief Officer Resources by direct bank credit in instalments of one-twelfth of the Member's annual entitlement on the 15th day of each month.
- 6.2 Where payment has resulted in a Member receiving more than their entitlement to salaries, allowances or fees the Authority will require that such part that is overpayment be repaid.
- 6.3 All payments are subject to the appropriate Tax and National Insurance deductions.

7. Reimbursement of Costs of Care

- 7.1 Reimbursement of costs of care shall be paid to a Member or Co-opted Member, who has caring responsibility for dependent children or adults, or a personal care requirement, provided the Member incurs expenses in the provision of such care whilst undertaking 'approved' council duties.
- 7.2 Reimbursement of costs of care applies in respect of children who are aged 15 or under and other persons for whom the Member or Co-opted Member can show that care is required. If a Member or Co-opted Member has more than one dependent the Member may claim more than one allowance, provided the Member can demonstrate a need to make separate arrangements for care.
- 7.3 Eligible Members may claim reimbursement of costs of care for actual and receipted costs up to a maximum amount not exceeding that determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales as set out in **Schedule 1**. All claims for reimbursement of costs of care should be made in writing to Payroll Team detailing times, dates and reasons for claim. Receipts are required for both informal and formal care arrangements.

8. Family Absence

- 8.1 Members are entitled under the provisions of the Family Absence for Members of Local Authorities (Wales) Regulations 2013 to a period of family absence, during which if they satisfy the prescribed conditions they are entitled to be absent from authority meetings.
- 8.2 When taking family absence Members are entitled to retain a basic salary irrespective of their attendance record immediately preceding the commencement of the family absence.
- 8.3 Should a senior salary holder be eligible for family absence they will be able to continue to receive their senior salary for the duration of the absence.
- 8.4 If the authority agrees that it is necessary to make a substitute appointment to cover the family absence of a senior salary holder the Member substituting will be eligible if the authority so decides to be paid a senior salary.
- 8.5 If the paid substitution results in the authority exceeding its maximum number of senior salaries, an addition to the maximum will be allowed for the duration of the substitution.

9. Co-optees' payments

- 9.1 A Co-optees' daily fee (with a provision for half day payments) shall be paid to Co-optees, provided they are statutory Co-optees with voting rights.
- 9.2 Co-optees' payments will be capped at a maximum of the equivalent of 10 full days a year for each committee to which an individual may be co-opted.
- 9.3 Payments will take into consideration travelling time to and from the place of the meeting, reasonable time for pre meeting preparation and length of meeting (up to the maximum of the daily rate).
- 9.4 The Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance (Monitoring Officer) is designated as the "appropriate officer" and will determine preparation time, travelling time and length of meeting, the fee will be paid on the basis of this determination.
- 9.5 The Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance (Monitoring Officer) can determine in advance whether a meeting is programmed for a full day and the fee will be paid on the basis of this determination even if the meeting finishes before four hours has elapsed.
- 9.6 A half day meeting is defined as up to 4 hours.
- 9.7 A full day meeting is defined as over 4 hours.
- 9.8 The daily and half day fee for the Chairpersons of the Standards Committee and Audit Committee, as determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, is set out in **Schedule 1**.
- 9.9 The daily and half day fee for other statutory Co-optees with voting rights, as determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, is set out in **Schedule 1**.

10. Travel and Subsistence Allowances

10.1 General Principles

- 10.2 Members and Co-opted Members are entitled to claim travelling expenses when travelling on the Authority's business for 'approved duties' as set out in **Schedule 2**. Where Members travel on the Authority's business they are expected to travel by the most cost effective means. In assessing cost effectiveness regard will be given to journey time. A Member who does not travel by the most cost effective means may have their claim abated by an appropriate amount.
- 10.3 Where possible Members should share transport.
- 10.4 The distance claimed for mileage should be the shortest reasonable journey by road from the point of departure to the point at which the duty is performed, and similarly from the duty point to the place of return.
- 10.5 The rates of Members' Travel and Subsistence Allowances are set out in **Schedule 3** and are subject to annual review by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
- 10.6 Where a Member is suspended or partially suspended from their responsibilities or duties as a Member of the Authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 (Conduct of Members), or regulations made under the Act, any travel and subsistence allowances payable to them in respect of that period for which they are suspended or partially suspended must be withheld by the Authority.

11. Travel by Private Vehicle

- 11.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales has determined that the maximum travel rates payable should be the rates set out by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs for the use of private cars, motor cycles and pedal cycles plus any passenger supplement.
- 11.2 The mileage rates for private vehicles as determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales are set out in **Schedule 3**.
- 11.3 Where a Member makes use of their private vehicle for approved duty purposes, the vehicle must be insured for business use. Proof of appropriate insurance must be provided to the Authority on request.

12. Travel by Public Transport

12.1 Rail/Coach Travel

Unless otherwise authorised rail tickets will be second-class.

12.2 Taxi Fares

Taxi fares will only be reimbursed where their use has been authorised for cases of urgency, where no public transport is reasonably available, or a Member has a particular personal need. Re-imbusement will be upon receipt only.

12.3 Air Fare

Travel by air is permissible if it is the most cost effective means of transport. Authorisation of the Head of Democratic Services is required and tickets will be purchased directly by the Council.

12.4 **Travel Abroad**

Travel abroad on the Authority's business will only be permitted where authorised by Head of Democratic Services. Travel and accommodation will be arranged directly by the Council.

12.5 **Other Travel Expenses**

Members are entitled to reimbursement of toll fees, parking fees, overnight garaging and other necessary travel associated expenses. Re-imbursement will be upon receipt only.

13. **Overnight Accommodation**

13.1 Overnight stays will only be permitted where the Authority's business extends to two days or more, or the venue is at such a distance that early morning or late night travel would be unreasonable. All overnight stays must receive prior authorisation from the Head of Democratic Services.

13.2 Overnight accommodation will be booked directly by the Council. Wherever possible the overnight accommodation will be pre-paid or invoiced.

13.3 Direct booking of overnight accommodation by a Member will only be permitted in the event of an emergency. Reimbursement will only be made upon the production of a receipt and will be at a level deemed reasonable and not in excess of the rates set out in **Schedule 3**.

14 **Subsistence Allowance**

14.1 The day subsistence rate to meet the costs of meals and refreshments in connection with approved duties (including breakfast when not provided as part of overnight accommodation) is set out in **Schedule 3**. The maximum daily rate covers a 24 hour period and can be claimed for any meal that is relevant, providing such a claim is supported by receipt(s)

14.2 No provision is made for subsistence claims within the County Borough.

15. **Claims and Payments**

15.1 A claim for travel and subsistence allowances must be made in writing within two months of the end of the calendar month in which entitlement to allowances arises and must be accompanied by the relevant receipts.

15.2 Allowances will be paid by the Chief Officer Resources by direct bank credit.

16. **Pensions**

16.1 The Authority shall enable its Members who are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

17 **Supporting the work of Authority Members**

17.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales expects Members to be provided with adequate support to carry out their duties and that the support provided should take account of the specific needs of individual Members. The Authority's Democratic Services Committee is required to review the level of support provided to Members and should take proposals for reasonable support to the full council.

17.2 All elected Members & Co-opted Members should be provided with adequate telephone, email and internet facilities to give electronic access to appropriate information.

17.3 Such support should be without cost to any Member. Deductions must not be made from Members' salaries as a contribution towards the cost of support which the Authority has decided is necessary for the effectiveness and or efficiency of Members.

18 Compliance

18.1 In accordance with the Regulations, the Authority must comply with the requirements of Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in respect of the monitoring and publication of payments made to Members and Co-opted Members as set out in **Schedule 4**.

Members & Co-opted Members are reminded that expense claims are subject to both internal and external audit.

SCHEDULE 1

SCHEDULE OF REMUNERATION 2020-21

MEMBERS ENTITLED TO BASIC SALARY	ANNUAL AMOUNT OF BASIC SALARY
The following named elected members of the authority	£14,218
1. J P. Morgan	“
2. G. Collier	“
3. K. Rowson	“
4. N L. Parsons	“
5. B. Thomas	“
6. M. Day	“
7. R. Summers ****	“
8. M. Cook	“
9. G. Paulsen***	“
10. K. Pritchard	“
11. J. Holt	“
12. P. Edwards	“
13. G A. Davies	“
14. C. Meredith**	“
15. J. Millard	“
16. M. Holland	“
17. G. Thomas	“
18. G L. Davies	“
19. L. Winnett*	“
20. D. Bevan	“
21. T. Sharrem **	“
22. K. Hayden	“
23. J C. Morgan **	“
24. H. McCarthy	“
25. P. Baldwin **	“
26. D. Wilkshire	“
27. M. Cross **	“
28. T. Smith	“
29. B. Willis	“
30. L. Elias	“
31. W. Hodgins	“
* Denotes relinquished amount of £90 per annum	
** Denotes relinquished amount of £125 per annum	
*** Denotes relinquished amount of £200 per annum	
**** Denotes relinquished amount of £268.08 per annum	

	SENIOR SALARIES ENTITLEMENTS (includes basic salary)		ANNUAL AMOUNT OF SENIOR SALARY
	ROLE	MEMBER	
1.	Leader / Executive Member – Corporate Services	N. Daniels	£44,450
2.	Deputy Leader / Executive Member - Regeneration & Economic Development	D. Davies	£31,450 (Relinquished £2800 per annum)
3.	Executive Member – Education	J. Collins	£27,450
4.	Executive Member – Environment	J. Wilkins	£27,450
5.	Executive Member – Social Services	J. Mason	£27,450
6.	Chairperson of Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee	S. Healy	£22,918
7.	Chairperson of Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee	H. Trollope	£22,918
8.	Chairperson of Regeneration Scrutiny Committee	R J. Hill	£22,918
9.	Chairperson of Community Services Scrutiny Committee	A. Moore	£22,918
10.	Chairperson of Planning, Regulatory & General Licensing Committee	D. Hancock	£22,918
11.	Leader of the Opposition / Social Services Scrutiny Committee	S. Thomas	£22,918 (Relinquished £180 per annum)
12.	Not Used		
13.	Not Used		
14.	Not Used		
15.	Not Used		
16.	Not Used		
17.	Not Used		
A maximum of 17 senior salaries for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council may be paid and this has not been exceeded.			

ENTITLEMENT TO CIVIC SALARIES		ANNUAL AMOUNT OF CIVIC SALARY
ROLE	MEMBER	
Civic Head (Mayor / Chair)	Not Used	
Deputy Civic Head (Deputy Mayor / Chair)	Not Used	

ENTITLEMENT AS STATUTORY CO-OPTees		AMOUNT OF CO-OPTees ALLOWANCES
ROLE	MEMBER	
Chairperson Of Standards Committee	R. Alexander	£256 Daily Fee £128 ½ Day Fee
Chairperson of Audit Committee		£256 Daily Fee £128 ½ Day Fee
Statutory Co-optees - Standards Committee, Education	H. Roberts J. Price J. Evans S. Williams J. Thomas A. Williams T. Baxter	£198 Daily Fee £99 ½ Day Fee
Statutory Co-optees -ordinary members of Standards Committee who also chair Standards Committees for Community Councils	Not Used	£226 Daily Fee £113 ½ Day Fee

Reimbursement of costs of care	
All Members	Up to a maximum of £403 per month

Members Support – what is provided in terms of telephone, internet or email (see Determination 6)	
Telephone Support for Executive Members	
Telephone Support for Chairs of Committees	
Telephone Support for all other Members	
Access to Email for Executive Members	
Access to Email for Chairs of Committees	
Access to Email for all other Members	
Internet Support for Executive Members	
Internet Support for Chairs of Committees	
Internet Support for all other Members	

SCHEDULE 2

Approved duties: -

- attendance at a meeting of the Authority or of any committee of the Authority or of any body to which the Authority makes appointments or nominations or of any committee of such a body;
- attendance at a meeting of any association of authorities of which the Authority is a member;
- attendance at any other meeting the holding of which is authorised by the Authority or by a committee of the Authority or by a joint committee of the Authority and one or more other Authorities;
- a duty undertaken for the purpose of or in connection with the discharge of the functions of Executive;
- a duty undertaken in connection with the discharge of any function of the Authority which empowers or requires the Authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises;
- attendance at any training or developmental event approved by the Authority or its Cabinet;
- Any other duty approved by the authority, or any other duty of a class so approved, undertaken for the purpose, of or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the authority or any of its committees.

SCHEDULE 3

Mileage Rates

All sizes of private motor vehicle Up to 10,000 miles Over 10,000 miles	45 pence per mile 25 pence per mile
Private Motor Cycles Pedal Cycles	24 pence per mile 20 pence per mile
Passenger supplement	05 pence per mile

Subsistence Allowance

The day subsistence rate is up to a maximum of £28 and covers a 24 hour period and can be claimed for any meal if relevant provided such a claim is supported by receipts.

Re-imbusement of alcoholic drinks is not permitted.

Overnight Stay

The maximum allowances for an overnight stay are £200 for London and £95 for elsewhere. A maximum of £30 is available for an overnight stay with friends or relatives whilst on approved duty.

SCHEDULE 4

Compliance

- The Authority will arrange for the publication on the council's website the total sum paid by it to each Member and Co-opted Member in respect of salary, allowances, fees and reimbursements not later than 30 September following the close of the year to which it relates. In the interests of transparency this will include remuneration from all public service appointments held by elected Members.
- The Authority will publish on the council's website a statement of the basic responsibility of a councillor and role descriptors for senior salary office holders, which clearly identify the duties expected.
- The Authority will publish on the council's website the annual schedule of Member Remuneration not later than 31 July of the year to which the schedule refers.
- The authority will send a copy of the schedule to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales not later than 31 July of the year to which the schedule refers.
- The Authority will maintain records of Member/Co-opted Members attendance at meetings of council, cabinet and committees and other approved duties for which a Member/Co-opted Member submits a claim for reimbursement.
- The Authority will arrange for the publication on the council's website of annual reports prepared by Members.
- When the Authority agrees a paid substitution for family absence it will notify the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales within 14 days of the date of the decision of the details including the particular post and the duration of the substitution.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 39

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 9.7.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 7.7.20

Committee: Council

Date of Meeting:

23rd July, 2020

Report Subject:

Statement of Payments Made to Members in 2019/2020

Portfolio Holder:

**Councillor Nigel Daniels
Leader of the Council**

Report Submitted by:

**Andrea J Prosser
Head of Organisational Development**

Report Written by:

**Richard Bridge
Organisational Development Manager
– Payroll / Health & Safety**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
✓	02/07/20						✓	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.2 To consider and agree the publication of the Statement of Payments made to Members for 2019/2020.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report identifies the reporting requirements for the publication of the annual schedule of payments made to members for 2019/20 to comply with part 8 (sections 141 to 160) and schedules 2 and 3 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) regulations.

- 2.2 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, in compliance with Part 8 (sections 141 to 160) and schedules 2 and 3 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) regulations, is required to produce annually a schedule of payments it has made to its members and co-opted members (Appendix 1).

3. Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 Option 1 (**preferred option**) – to publish Statement of Payments Made to Members during 2019/20 in compliance with relevant legislation (preferred option).
- 3.2 Option 2 – not to publish Statement of Payments Made to Members for 2019/20

4. Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

- 4.1 In publishing the Statement of Payments to Members annually, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is complying with its statutory responsibilities

under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the requirements of the IRPW.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 *Impact Upon Budget*

5.1.1 **Option 1 – Publication of Statement of Payments to Members**

The estimated cost of publication is £1,200 this includes the Welsh language translation. There are no other financial implications resulting directly from this report.

The payments made by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to Members during 2019/20 totalled £723,476.70 and in addition, pension contributions for those members of the local government pension scheme were £83,969.79

5.1.2 **Option 2 – Not to publish the Statement of Payments to Members**

There would be no costs associated with this option.

5.2 *Risk*

5.2.1 **Option 1 - Publication of Statement of Payments to Members**

No significant risks identified for the Council with this option.

5.2.2 **Option 2 – Not to publish the Statement of Payments to Members**

Not publishing the statement would leave the Council non-compliant with Part 8 (sections 141 to 160) and schedules 2 and 3 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the IRPW and would result in reputational damage for the Council.

To mitigate this risk Option 1 is recommended.

5.3 *Legal*

5.3.1 **Option 1 - Publication of Statement of Payments to Members**

This option ensures the Council complies with statutory responsibilities.

5.3.2 **Option 2 – Not to publish the Statement of Payments to Members**

This would result in non-compliance with statutory requirements.

5.4 *Human Resources*

5.4.1 There are no Human Resources implications that impact upon the report other than the time required to produce the Statement of Payments to Members.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

6.1.1 The Schedule must be in accord with the determinations of the IRPW and should contain the following information:

- Basic Salary
- Senior Salary
- Co-opted Member Fee
- Reimbursement of Cost of Care

- Travel Allowance
- Subsistence Allowance
- Pension Contributions
- Payments received from other Public Bodies

The above are reported on a gross basis but are subject to relevant tax, national insurance regulations and pension contributions.

6.1.2 For 2019/20 the format of the Statement has been prescribed by the IRPW to ensure consistency of reporting across organisations.

6.1.3 This schedule should be published in the local authority area and on the Council's website by 30th September 2020 and submitted to IRPW.

6.1.4 The payments made by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to Members during 2019/20 totalled £723,476.70 and in addition, pension contributions were made equalling £83,969.79

6.2 *Expected Outcome for the public*
Publication provides taxpayers and citizens with information about the remuneration of their elected members.

6.3 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

6.3.1 The IRPW consulted with Councils and elected members prior to determining remuneration levels to be paid, this included visiting all 22 Welsh councils.

6.3.2 The Statement of Payments will be published in a local newspaper and on the Councils website.

6.4 *Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)*
It is a requirement that similar information is published on an annual basis.

6.5 *Preventative focus*
Not relevant to this report.

6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working*
Not relevant to this report.

6.7 *Integration (across service areas)*
Not relevant to this report.

6.8 *EqIA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)*
Not relevant to this report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 *State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements*
Compliance with requirements are monitored by the IRPW.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 – Statement of Payments made to Members for 2019/20*
- *Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales 2019/20*
https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/irp-annual-report-2019-2020_0.pdf

Statement of Payments Made to Members of BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL in 2019/20
Datganiad o Daliadau a Wnaed i Aelodau CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL BLAENAU GWENT yn 2019/20

Councillor Name Enw'r Cynghorydd	Role or Title Swyddogaeth neu Deitl	Basic Salary Cyflog Sylfaenol	Senior Salary - Executive Members ¹ Cyflog Uwch - Aelodau'r Gweithrediaeth ¹	Civic Salary Cyflog Dinesgig ¹	% Opted to forgo %Wedi dewis iildio	Travel allowance Costau Teithio	Subsistence allowance Costau Cynhaliath	Reimbursement of care costs ² Ad-daliadau costau gofal ²	Total Cyfanswm	Pension Contributions Cyfraniadau Pensiwn	Payments from other public bodies Taliadau oddi wrth cyrrff cyhoeddus eraill		
											Name of Public body	Enw'r corff	Amount Paid Swm a Delir
Peter Baldwin	Elected Member	13,743.00			0.90%				13,743.00				
Derrick Bevan	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04				
Garth Collier	Deputy Leader		31,100.04						31,100.04	7,308.48			
Joanne Collins	Chair to 23/05/2019 Executive Member from 24/05/2019	3,276.01	23,137.07		0.11%				26,413.08	6,207.10	South Wales Fire Authority		Awaiting Data
Martin Cook	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04		Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd		7,250.00
Malcolm Cross	Elected Member to 23/05/2019 Chair (U/P) from 24/05/2019	13,743.00			0.90%				13,743.00				
Nigel Daniels	Leader		44,100.00						44,100.00				
David Davies	Executive Member		24,299.88		10.33%				24,299.88	5,710.44			
Gareth Davies	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04				
Gareth Davies	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04	3,258.96			
Malcolm Day	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04				
Phillip Edwards	Chair to 23/05/2019 Elected Member from 24/05/2019	11,854.94	2,956.66		2.11%				14,811.60	3,480.70			
David Elias	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04				
Denzil Hancock	Chair to 23/05/2019 Elected Member from 24/05/2019	11,854.94	3,276.01			324.00			15,454.95				
Keith Hayden	Elected Member	13,868.04				323.10			14,191.14	3,258.96			
Stewart Healy	Elected Member to 23/05/2019 Chair from 24/05/2019	2,013.10	19,292.03						21,305.13	5,006.73	Gwent Police & Crime Panel		Awaiting Data
Richard Hill	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04		Brecon Beacons National Park Authority / Silent Valley		Awaiting Data / 8700.00
Wayne Hodgins	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04	3,258.96			
Mark Holland	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04	3,258.96			
Julie Holt	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04	3,258.96	South Wales Fire Authority		Awaiting Data
John Mason	Executive Member		27,099.96			945.60			28,045.56				
Harley Mccarthy	Chair (U/P) to 23/05/2019 Elected Member from 24/05/2019	11,854.94	2,013.10						13,868.04	3,258.97			
Clive Meredith	Executive Member to 23/05/2019 Elected Member from 24/05/2019	11,748.05	3,915.72		0.79%				15,663.77	3,680.95			
Nathan Millard	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04	3,258.96	Gwent Police & Crime Panel		Awaiting Data
Shanda Moore	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04				
John Morgan	Elected Member	13,743.00			0.90%				13,743.00				
John Morgan	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04				
John Parsons	Elected Member to 23/05/2019 Chair from 24/05/2019	1,996.44	19,292.03		0.08%	788.40			22,076.87	5,002.82			
Gregory Paulsen	Elected Member	13,668.12			1.44%				13,668.12	3,212.04			
Paul Pritchard	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04	3,258.96			
Keri Rowson	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04				
Timothy Sharrem	Elected Member	13,743.00			0.90%				13,743.00	3,229.56			
Thomas Smith	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04	3,258.96			
Robert Summers	Chair		22,299.96		1.19%				22,299.96				
Brian Thomas	Elected Member	13,868.04				406.35	9.45		14,283.84				
Godfrey Rhys Thomas	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04	3,258.96	South Wales Fire Authority		Awaiting Data
Stephen Thomas	Leader of the Opposition		22,388.04		8.00%				22,388.04				
Haydn Trollope	Chair		22,568.04						22,568.04	5,303.52			
Joanna Wilkins	Elected Member to 23/05/2019 Chair from 24/05/2019	2,311.34	18,806.70						21,118.04		Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd		1,450.00
David Wilkshire	Elected Member	13,868.04							13,868.04				
Bernard Willis	Elected Member	13,868.04				172.80			14,040.84				
Lisa Winnett	Elected Member	13,778.04			0.65%				13,778.04	3,237.84	Gwent Police & Crime Panel		Awaiting Data
Total / Cyfanswm		430,556.76	286,545.24	-		2,960.25	9.45	-	720,071.70	83,969.79			8,700.00
Co-opted Member Name Enw Aelod Cyfetholedig	Committee Pwyllgor	Total Allowance Paid Cyfanswm Lwfans a delir				Travel allowance Costau Teithio	Subsistence allowance Costau Cynhaliath	Reimbursement of care costs Ad-daliadau costau gofal	Total Cyfanswm				
Ronald Alexander	Chair Standards	256.00							256.00				
Jeffrey Price	Standards	99.00							99.00				
Helen Roberts	Standards	198.00							198.00				
Alan Williams	Education & Learning	891.00							891.00				
Peter Williams	Chair Audit	1,664.00							1,664.00				
Stephen Williams	Standards	297.00							297.00				
Total / Cyfanswm		3,405.00				-	-	-	3,405.00				

¹ Inclusive of the Basic Salary / Gan gynnwys y cyflog sylfaenol

² If publishing care reimbursements anonymously, include a total.

Os yn cyhoeddi ad-daliadau gofal yn ddi-enw, rhwng gyfanswm

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 40

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 15.7.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 15.7.20

Committee: Council

Date of Meeting: 23rd July 2020

Report Subject: Funding Options - Aberbeeg Road

Portfolio Holder: Cllr J Wilkins, Executive Member Environment

Report Submitted by: Richard Crook, Corporate Director Regeneration and Economic Development

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	18.06.20					08.07.20	23.07.20	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Council, pursuant to paragraph 15.5.3 of the Constitution, of an urgent decision taken by the Executive on 8th July 2020 under the provisions of paragraph 15.5 of the Constitution. The proposals contained in the report were outside the current budget approved by Council, and would normally be presented back to Full Council for consideration, but the requirement for work to commence without delay meant that a decision was taken by the Executive under the urgency provisions. This report explains the situation in more detail.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report was presented to the Executive to seek approval to undertake remedial works to a damaged section of the A4046 following storm Dennis in February 2020. As Members will recall, Longitudinal cracking was reported to the Authority and following an inspection by the Borough's Engineers the road was closed to vehicular traffic on public safety grounds while a site investigation was undertaken to determine the cause of the failure.
- 2.2 The site investigation report has identified the remedial works required and also a recommendation to continue to close the northern lane of the carriage. And as a result of this advice the highway is currently restricted by means of traffic lights to one lane of traffic and assigned a 7.5tons weight limit.
- 2.3 The A4046 is a strategic highway for vehicles and provides a southerly access to and from Ebbw Vale to Newport and the M4 - the restriction has resulted in a lengthy detour for vehicles over 7.5T via the A467 to Brynmawr.
- 2.4 Following a meeting with the Heads of the Valley Road contractor we were informed they probably intend to undertake a significant temporary traffic switch at Brynmawr in August, as part of their ongoing works. The current

proposed traffic switch requires significant diversionary routes – including the A4046. The potential unavailability of the A4046 as a diversionary route for the proposed Heads of the Valleys works will result in additional traffic movements being displaced onto local roads and the potential for increased traffic disruption at Brynmawr.

- 2.5 A provisional programme for the proposed traffic switch works at Brynmawr has been provided to the Council indicating a start on the weekend of 15/16th of August for an estimated duration of 12 weeks (completion mid-November). The Aberbeeg works is programmed to take 12 weeks and will initially overlap the HOV works at the initial stages of their contact.
- 2.6 Although we have a 7.5T weight restriction on the road HGV's are still using this section of the highway as a short cut to and from Ebbw Vale and any delays, if the council were to wait for HOV to complete their works could create the risk of not only working during the winter months but increase HGV traffic that may result in further damage/slippage to Aberbeeg Road and lead to a full closure.
- 2.7 Progress/Timescale to date:
- Storm Dennis / Structural Damage to Aberbeeg Rd – 18th Feb 2020
 - Mobilisation of Specialist Drilling Investigation Works - 20th Feb 2020
 - Receipt of Consultants Report – 4th March 2020
 - Discussions with Site Investigation Consultant and agreed to re-open the southern lane of the road under lights but with a weight restriction of 7.5T - 27th March 2020
 - COVID – Interruptions to Investigation activities
 - location of BT Plant plotted on site - W/E 24th April 2020
 - Amend the design / structural calculations to suit position of BT services
 - BT approval of designs in relation to their apparatus – 22nd May 2020
 - Waiver to standing orders and appoint a Contractor direct - Waivers £75,00 to EU Threshold (CPR10.3) – 1st June 2020
 - Estimate from contractor received - 16th June 2020
 - Approval of Funding subject to Executive decision - 8th July 2020
 - Commencement Work anticipated - 20th July 2020
 - Duration of work approx. 12 weeks

3. Decision made by the Executive

- 3.1 The Executive agreed to Option 2, to utilise the BGCBC Capital Programme Big Arch allocation (£1,000K) – this option was the preferred option on the basis that an application to Cadw for consent to undertake remedial works has been delayed and works can't progress until consent is awarded resulting in actual works on site delayed until July 2021/22 at the earliest. At this stage the funding will be reviewed / reinstated prior to Cadw approval

and works on site. If WG subsequently agree the flood funding for the scheme, then the £405K can then be 'repaid' to this capital allocation.

4. **Implications Against Each Option**

4.1 An application for 'Flood Recovery' funding for £605k [initial estimate cost of repairs including ongoing traffic management costs] has been submitted to Welsh Government but no decision on the amount of funding allocated to the Authority has been received from WG to date. Following receipt of Contractor rates the revised estimate for these works are now costed at £405K.

4.1.1 The Executive considered the following options for funding the required works:-

4.1.2 Option1: Utilise the Highway Capital Programme funding (current funding provision of £737K) - reduce the amount of Highway works undertaken this financial year – no reductions necessary if awarded funding from Welsh Government.

4.1.3 Option 2: Utilise the BGCBC Capital Programme Big Arch allocation (£1,000K) - An application to Cadw for consent to undertake remedial works has been delayed and works can't progress until consent is awarded resulting in actual works on site delayed until July 2021/22 at the earliest – the funding will be reviewed / reinstated prior to Cadw approval and works on site. If WG subsequently agree the flood funding for the scheme then the £405K can then be 'repaid' to this capital allocation.

4.1.4 Option 3: To Utilise the Capital Programme Contingency Fund – When the current Capital Programme was agreed a sum of £2m was left unallocated between the period 2019/20 to 2025/26 for allocation at a later date when future priorities arise. The £405K could be funded from this in the short term. If WG subsequently agree the flood funding for the scheme then the £405K can then be 'repaid' to the capital programme.

4.1.5 Option 4: One off Prudential Borrowing of £405K could be undertaken to finance these works, this will require savings of approximately £25,000 per annum over a 20-year period to be identified.

4.2 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

The £405K will be vired from the Big Arch capital scheme to Aberbeeg Road. In the event WG subsequently agree the flood funding for the scheme then the £405K can be 'repaid' to the capital programme and the Big Arch scheme be fully reinstated.

4.3 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

- 4.3.1 1) Will substantially reduce the funding available for highway resurfacing works this financial year unless we secure WG funding for Flood Recovery
- 4.3.2 2) The remedial works to the Big Arch has been delayed with works not expected to start until July 2021- no immediate impact this year but will have to be review prior to our application to Cadw to ensure we have sufficient funding to undertake the works next year. If funding isn't allocated in relation to the flood recovery then there would be a risk of insufficient funding available going forward to complete the Big Arch project (the Authority is contractually obliged to complete this project under terms and conditions associated with grant funding made available to the Authority on The Works project) and to avoid an enforcement notice from Cadw relating to the temporary structure under the arch.
- 4.3.3 3) Should the WG flood funding not materialise there will be £405k less funding available for allocation in the capital programme at a later date, this could result in other priority schemes being unable to go ahead.
- 4.3.4 4) There isn't a sufficient revenue budget available to fund the savings required.
- 4.3.5 Preferred option (2) – Utilise the BGCBC Capital Programme Big Arch allocation (£1,000K).

4.4 ***Legal***

4.4.1 Call-in Urgency

The call-in procedure set out in the Constitution under Clause 7.25.2 Call-in Urgency did not apply since the decision taken by the Executive was urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would, for example, seriously prejudice the Council's or other public interests.

4.4.2 The need to undertake repairs to Aberbeeg Road at the earliest time is in order to mitigate the impact associated with the diversion route planned for closure works on the Section 2 A465 at Brynmawr, commencing later this summer, and prevent the Heavy Goods Vehicles illegally using the Aberbeeg Road (7.5T weight limit imposed following a site investigation).

4.4.3 The works to be issued via a Waiver to Standing Orders - £75k to EU Threshold (CPR10.3)

4.5 **Human Resources**

No staffing issues - All works to be undertaken by the Infrastructure Section of the Environment Department and the appointed contractor.

5. **Supporting Evidence**

5.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Re-open the A4046 at Aberbeeg Road to all vehicles.

5.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

Re-open the A4046 at Aberbeeg Road to all vehicles.

5.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

Members / Public to be informed of the works

5.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

To maintain a strategic highway for vehicles and provide a southerly access to and from Ebbw Vale to Newport and the M4.

5.5 **Preventative focus**

NA

5.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

NA

5.7 **Integration(across service areas)**

NA

5.8 **EqIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)**

NA

6. **Monitoring Arrangements**

6.1 *State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements*

Re-opening of a strategic highway for vehicles and provide a southerly access to and from Ebbw Vale to Newport and the M4.

7. **Background Documents / Electronic Links**

NA

Agenda Item 41

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 15.7.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 15.7.20

Committee: **Council**
Date of Meeting: **23rd July, 2020**
Report Subject: **Annual Cycle of Meetings 2020/21**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr N Daniels, Leader / Executive Member
Corporate Services**
Report Submitted by: **Gemma Wasley, Service Manager Performance
and Democratic**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	16.07.20						23.07.20	

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present the Annual Cycle of Committee meetings for 2020/21 and a decision-making process which, if required, would take place during the proposed August recess.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The report presents the Annual Cycle of Committee meetings for 2020/21 for Members' consideration. As part of the cycle a proposed recess is included which would cover the period 1st - 31st August 2020 inclusive, and the report details a process for decision-making to ensure that urgent matters can be dealt with during the proposed recess period should it be required.
 - 2.2 The agreement of the Annual Cycle of formal meetings forms part of the overall governance arrangements for the Council and supports the democratic process.
 - 2.3 The proposed cycle of meetings is attached at Appendix 1 for consideration.
 - 2.4 Reflecting the cycle of meetings in 2019/20, efforts to align specific committees to specific days have been made. There will be no more than two committee meetings held in any one day.
 - 2.5 Scrutiny Committee meetings are held on a six weekly basis, as in the previous year.
 - 2.7 The Public Services Board (PSB) Scrutiny Committee is to be scheduled into the cycle of meetings in line with the Public Services Board, which will reflect the requirements under the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
 - 2.8 Flexibility is to be expected in the implementation of the cycle, including the relevant Chair considering the business to be undertaken and responding accordingly.

- 2.9 Owing to the nature of the current global pandemic, COVID 19, and social distancing measures it is important to note that the intention is to continue with virtual democratic meetings for the time being.
- 2.10 As further Welsh Government guidance is received regarding the potential lifting of restrictions around of COVID 19 we will look in future to move to offering the option of holding both virtual and physical meetings, supporting the Local Government Bill requirement for remote attendance.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option One

That Council:

- (i) Approve the proposed annual cycle of meetings attached at Appendix 1; and
- (ii) Approve the following decision making process to deal with any urgent business during the August recess:-
 - a. the Leader and Deputy Leader in conjunction with appropriate Executive Members and Officers deal with any urgent items from 1st - 31st August 2020 (i.e. a Special Meeting of the Executive would be convened at short notice recognising that the matter was urgent and the call-in procedure would apply). The Managing Director / Head of Paid Service in conjunction with the Leadership would determine if a matter was urgent; and
 - b. decisions should be limited to urgent matters and recorded on a decision schedule presented to the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council. No controversial or sensitive matters should be dealt with during this period.

Option Two

That Council:

- (i) Consider and make amendments to the proposed annual cycle of meetings attached at Appendix 1, prior to approval; and
- (ii) Approve the decision making process for urgent business in the August recess as set out in option one.

4. Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

The report supports the Corporate Plan's priority 'Efficient Council'. It also supports the requirements under the Local Government (Wales) Measure and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 *Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)*

There are no costs related to the establishment of the cycle of meeting.

- 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***
There is a risk to organisational reputation and the decision-making process should the cycle of meetings not be approved.
- 5.3 ***Legal***
Guidance is sought and provided by the Monitoring Officer when developing the Annual Cycle of meetings, as necessary.
- 5.4 ***Human Resources***
There are no staffing implications associated with the proposals in the report.
6. **Supporting Evidence**
- 6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***
Monitoring of each committee is undertaken by the Performance and Democratic Team and is used as an evidence base for making suggested amendments to future committee cycles.
- 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***
The Cycle of Meetings when published will enable the members of public, being aware of the scheduled of meetings, to become involved in the democratic process.
- 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
The proposed Annual Cycle of Meetings has been developed in consultation with Elected Members and officers.
- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
The Annual Cycle of Meetings supports the decision making process of the Council to deliver its business.
- 6.5 ***Preventative focus***
The Cycle of Meetings has been drafted to reflect organisational business with an aim to reduce the need to arrange ad hoc special meetings, unless this is required for urgent business.
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
The range of meetings in the cycle covers the spectrum of Council business various elements of which are done in collaboration both internally and externally.
- 6.7 ***Integration(across service areas)***
The range of meetings in the cycle covers the spectrum of Council business.
- 6.8 ***EqIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***
There are no negative impacts on the protected characteristics associated with this report.
7. **Monitoring Arrangements**
- 7.1 The cycle of meetings is regularly monitored by the Performance and Democratic Team.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 – Annual Cycle of Meetings 2019/20*

SEPTEMBER 2020

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	1	2 Executive Committee <i>Reporting deadline 11th August 2020</i>	3 Planning, Regulatory and General Licensing Committee	4
7	8	9 Regeneration Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 14th August 2020</i>	10	11 Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 26th August 2020</i>
14 Planning, Regulatory and General Licensing Committee (<i>General Licensing Matters</i>)	15 Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 28th August 2020</i>	16	17 Social Services Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 1st September 2020</i>	18
21 Community Services Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 4th September 2020</i>	22	23	24 Council <i>Reporting deadline 4th September 2020</i>	25
28 Joint Budget Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 11th September 2020</i>	29 Audit Committee	30		

OCTOBER 2020

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
			1 Planning, Regulatory and General Licensing Committee	2
5	6	7	8 Joint Education and Learning and Social Services Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 21st September 2020</i>	9
12 Planning, Regulatory and General Licensing Committee (<i>General Licensing Matters</i>)	13	14 Executive Committee <i>Reporting deadline 22nd September 2020</i>	15	16
19 Community Services Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 2nd October 2020</i>	20	21 Regeneration Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 12th October 2020</i>	22	23 Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 7th October 2020</i>
26 HALF TERM BREAK	27 HALF TERM BREAK	28 HALF TERM BREAK	29 HALF TERM BREAK	30 HALF TERM BREAK

NOVEMBER 2020

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
2	3 Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 16th October 2020</i>	4	5 Social Services Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 20th October 2020</i>	6
9 Planning, Regulatory and General Licensing Committee (<i>General Licensing Matters</i>)	10	11	12	13
16	17 Audit Committee	18	19	20
23 Joint Budget Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 6th November 2020</i>	24	25	26 Council <i>Reporting deadline 6th November 2020</i>	27
30 Democratic Services Committee <i>Reporting deadline 13th November 2020</i>				

DECEMBER 2020

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	1	2 Regeneration Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 13th November 2020</i>	3 Planning, Regulatory and General Licensing Committee	4
7 Community Services Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 20th November 2020</i>	8	9 Executive Committee <i>Reporting deadline 17th November 2020</i>	10 Social Services Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 24th November 2020</i>	11 Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 25th November 2020</i>
14 Planning, Regulatory and General Licensing Committee (<i>General Licensing Matters</i>)	15 Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 27th November 2020</i>	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25 CHRISTMAS BREAK
28 CHRISTMAS BREAK	29 CHRISTMAS BREAK	30 CHRISTMAS BREAK	31 CHRISTMAS BREAK	

JANUARY 2021

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
				1 CHRISTMAS BREAK
4	5	6 Regeneration Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 11th December 2020</i>	7 Planning, Regulatory and General Licensing Committee	8
11 Planning, Regulatory and General Licensing Committee (<i>General Licensing Matters</i>)	12 Audit Committee	13 Executive Committee <i>Reporting deadline 15th December 2020</i>	14	15
18 Community Services Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 18th December 2020</i>	19	20	21 Social Services Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 5th January 2021 (could extend deadline slightly)</i>	22 Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 6th January 2021 (could extend deadline slightly)</i>
25	26 Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 8th January 2021</i>	27	28 Council <i>Reporting deadline 8th January 2021</i>	29

FEBRUARY 2021

MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
1		2		3		4	Planning, Regulatory and General Licensing Committee	5	
8	Planning, Regulatory and General Licensing Committee (<i>General Licensing Matters</i>)	9		10	Regeneration Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 22nd January 2021</i>	11	Joint Education and Learning and Social Services Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 25th January 2021</i>	12	
15	HALF TERM BREAK	16	HALF TERM BREAK	17	HALF TERM BREAK	18	HALF TERM BREAK	19	HALF TERM BREAK
22		23	Audit Committee	24	Executive Committee <i>Reporting deadline 2nd February 2021</i>	25		26	

MARCH 2021

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1 Community Services Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 12th February 2021</i>	2	3	4 Planning, Regulatory and General Licensing Committee	5 Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 17th February 2021</i>
8 Planning, Regulatory and General Licensing Committee (<i>General Licensing Matters</i>)	9 Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 19th February 2021</i>	10	11 Social Services Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 23rd February 2021</i>	12
15 Joint Budget Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 26th February 2021</i>	16	17	18	19
22 Democratic Services Committee <i>Reporting deadline 5th March 2021</i>	23	24 Regeneration Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 5th March 2021</i>	25 Council <i>Reporting deadline 5th March 2021</i>	26
29 EASTER BREAK	30 EASTER BREAK	31 EASTER BREAK		

APRIL 2021

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
			1 <i>EASTER BREAK</i>	2 <i>GOOD FRIDAY</i>
5 <i>EASTER MONDAY</i>	6 <i>EASTER BREAK</i>	7 <i>EASTER BREAK</i>	8 <i>EASTER BREAK</i>	9 <i>EASTER BREAK</i>
12 Community Services Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 26th March 2021</i>	13	14 Executive Committee <i>Reporting deadline 19th March 2021</i>	15 Planning, Regulatory and General Licensing Committee	16 Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 31st March 2021</i>
19 Planning, Regulatory and General Licensing Committee (<i>General Licensing Matters</i>)	20 Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 2nd April 2021</i>	21	22 Social Services Scrutiny Committee <i>Reporting deadline 6th April</i>	23
26	27 Audit Committee	28	29	30

MAY 2021

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
3 BANK HOLIDAY	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27 Council Annual General Meeting <i>Reporting deadline 7th May 2021</i>	28
31 SPRING BANK HOLIDAY				

This page is intentionally left blank

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

29TH JANUARY, 2020

PRESENT: Mr. R. Alexander (CHAIR)

Councillors K. Hayden & M. Moore

Mr. S. Williams
Mr. J. Price
Miss. H. Roberts
Town Councillor J. Thomas

WITH: Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance (Monitoring
Officer)
Data Protection & Governance Officer

1. **SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION**

No requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.

2. **WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and the following apologies for absence were reported:

Councillor G. Thomas and Mr. J. Evans.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.

A discussion ensued when the Chair expressed a view that that other Local Authorities appeared to have a higher volume of requests for dispensations compared to Blaenau Gwent.

The Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance said this was a long standing trend at Blaenau Gwent, the reasons for which had been considered previously. Members were trained on the availability of dispensations as part of their induction process and refresher training was also provided. Application forms for dispensations were available to Members along with guidance on when to apply.

The Officer said dispensations became important when there was a narrow margin in the balance of political representation between parties, particularly when voting on issues which were contentious etc. However, this was not

such a pressing issue in Blaenau Gwent due to the clear majority of Independent Members. The grounds upon which dispensations can be applied was also limited, and as a result Members in Blaenau Gwent were more inclined to declare an interest, and not participate if necessary.

The Officer said whilst she was able to raise awareness of the availability of dispensations, she could not influence Members to apply. The grounds for dispensations were narrow and the Officer said the majority of issues discussed with Members in terms of declarations of interest did not fall into the category of possible dispensations. However, she would look to see where the profile of dispensations could be strengthened.

4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the Standards Committee held on the 5th July, 2019 were submitted.

It was AGREED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.

5. **OMBUDSMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT (CONDUCT ELEMENT)**

The Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance referred to the annual report issued by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales in relation to service complaints and Member Code of Conduct complaints.

The Ombudsman Annual Letter was issued in the Summer, and the Officer confirmed that it had been reported to the Audit Committee and Council for consideration.

The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein, particularly P.58 which provided comparative data for 2018/19 and 2017/18 in relation to Code of Conduct complaints received. For both years there was no evidence found of a breach of the Code of Conduct against any Members of the Local Authority.

The Standards Committee also have a role in overseeing the conduct of Town and Community Councils, and details of these were also outlined on P.58 of the report.

The Officer said in terms of benchmarking, the rate of complaints received in Blaenau Gwent was generally lower than other Local Authorities.

The Chair referred to the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Bill and the potential impact on Standards Committees.

In response the Officer said it was likely to impact more on Health Authorities rather than LA's.

A Member asked regarding the situation for 2019/20, and the Officer confirmed that a number of complaints had been lodged with the Ombudsman in relation to Town & Community Councils, and 1 complaint in relation to the Local Authority had been withdrawn.

6. **CONSIDERATION OF EXAMPLES FROM OMBUDSMAN'S CASEBOOK**

The Head of Corporate & Legal Compliance said at the last meeting there was discussion around the types of complaints lodged with the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman published the findings of individual cases and this information was collated into a Code of Conduct Casebook. Copies of the Casebook was circulated to Members and discussion ensued regarding the case summaries highlighted therein.

The Officer said there was no right of appeal for a complainant in the event of a Member being found not in breach of the code of conduct, there was a review process that could be undertaken independently, but no formal right of appeal.

A further discussion ensued when a Member said the Ombudsman's Casebook was very useful for Members, and it was AGREED that this would become a standing item for discussion on future agendas.

7. **UPDATE RE: OTHER COUNCIL STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

The Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance said at the last meeting she had been tasked with making enquiries of other Local Authorities' Standards Committees in terms of how they operated and the frequency of meetings.

The Officer reported that following discussions with other Monitoring Officers, and looking at other Council websites, the frequency of meetings was varied. Cardiff City Council met more often as they had more business to deal with and also requests for dispensations, and those Authorities with a high number of Town & Community Councils also met more often. However, our neighbouring Authorities seemed to be on a par with Blaenau Gwent, and other Councils had also signed up to a local resolution procedure.

In relation to previous discussions around Members observing Council meetings, the Officer reported that none of the Standards Committees that she had made enquiries of undertook this practice. Some Councils had indicated that they would not encourage their Standards Committee

Members to observe meetings as it could prejudice future Standards Committee hearings, in terms of a Member potentially becoming a witness to any complaints arising out of the observed meetings.

The Officer said it was the responsibility of the Monitoring Officer to observe behaviour at meetings, and she assured that any issues of conduct would be given immediate priority. She also pointed out that the majority of breaches occurred outside the formal meeting environment.

The Chair reported that at the last meeting he also undertook to provide feedback as a Member of the Vale of Glamorgan Standards Committee and the South Wales Fire & Rescue Standards Committee. He reported that both Authorities had adopted the procedure of requiring Standards Committee Members to attend other meetings. The Vale of Glamorgan Standards met approximately 4 or 5 times a year, and their Members were expected to attend 2 Council meetings per annual cycle and 2 meetings of the Town & Community Council. Whereby the South Wales Fire & Rescue Standards were more in the development stage and have asked Members to attend 1 other meeting of the Authority. He had attended 1 meeting, and was due to attend another shortly.

Another Member said her experience of other Standards Committees was the same as Blaenau Gwent in terms of the frequency of meetings. She also took on board the Officer's comment that observing meetings may prejudice Members involvement should any issues of conduct arise.

A discussion ensued when the Officer said she did not feel it was necessary for Members to attend meetings as this was part of her role. However, she would suggest Members could attend in the event of any recurring problems. She also reported that the Authority may introduce webcasting of meetings in the future, and this would enable Members to observe meetings through the Council's website.

It was AGREED that this issue would be discussed again in the future.

8. **FUTURE WORK PLAN/TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

The Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance reported that the maximum term of office for Mr. J. Evans and Mr. J. Price would be coming to an end on the 25th July, 2020. She confirmed that the recruitment process would commence in the Spring, with a meeting in June to consider applications.

In relation to training, the Officer confirmed that a training session to include new Members would be held in September.

9. **AOB / DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

A Member referred to the Local Government and Election (Wales) Bill and the potential impact on Standards Committees, in terms of the requirement to produce annual reports, and suggested that an update on the provisions of the new legislation be received.

In response the Officer confirmed that the Authority had responded to a number of areas during the consultation period. She said it was proposed that Group Leaders assume more responsibility for conduct within their political groups, and the Officer said it was her view that the reason why the number of conduct issues were low in Blaenau Gwent was due to the fact that Group Leaders already worked closely with the Managing Director, and herself as the Monitoring Officer, and the Head of Democratic Services, to monitor behaviour and have early conversations to resolve issues.

The vast majority of the Bill was around democracy, however, she undertook to look at those issues that would directly impact on the Standards Committee, and also circulate a summary of the main provisions of the Bill to Members.

It was AGREED that the next meeting be held early June 2020.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 43

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Council**

Date of meeting: **23rd July, 2020**

Report Subject: **Standards Committee Appointment**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor N. Daniels, Leader / Executive Member
Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Andrea Jones, Head of Legal & Corporate
Compliance (Monitoring Officer)**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
Yes	Yes for information						Yes	Standards Committee

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Council approval of a new appointment to the Blaenau Gwent Standards Committee.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 In order to comply with legislative requirements, Council is required to approve all new appointments to the Standards Committee.

In July 2020, two Independent (see definition explained below) Members namely Mr J Price and Mr J Evans will have served the maximum term permitted under regulations and must therefore stand down as members of the Standards Committee. Therefore, two vacancies were advertised in anticipation of the departures, and interviews were held on 14th July 2020. The vacancies must be filled in order to comply with the composition requirements for a Standards Committee.

The vacancies in question can only be filled by an 'Independent Member'. For clarity, in terms of a Standards Committee, an independent member means a member who is not –

- (a) an Elected Member of the County Borough Council,
- (b) an officer, or
- (c) the spouse of a member or an officer of the relevant authority concerned, any other relevant authority, or a community council.

- 2.2 Of the candidates interviewed, one candidate met the minimum criteria for appointment, namely Mr Francis Roy Lynch. There now remains one vacancy, and this will be re-advertised as soon as possible.

- 2.3 It is therefore recommended that Mr Lynch be appointed as a member of the Standards Committee, as from 23rd July 2020.

The term of office will initially be for 6 years; however, the relevant Regulations enable members to sit for a further consecutive term of up to 4 years. A report will be brought before Council prior to the end of the initial term, in order for the re-appointment to be considered.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1:** (Preferred option)

Approve the appointment outlined above to the Standards Committee, and re-advertise the second vacant appointment which has not been filled.

Option 2: Do not appoint and re-advertise both positions.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

Establishment and maintenance of a Standards Committee is a statutory responsibility.

5. **Implications and risks against Each Option**

Option 1 is preferred as the Council is then taking positive steps to comply with legislative requirements.

Option 2 would mean that the Council is non-compliant until further steps are taken to recruit.

There are no financial implications associated with the report other than the costs of future recruitment.

5.3 **Legal**

The appointment aims to prevent the risk of non-compliance with statutory obligations. The appointment will ensure the Council complies with statutory requirements and guidance on Standards Committee membership.

5.4 **Human Resources**

N/A

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

The changes are necessary to maintain an effective Standards Committee that promotes and upholds the high standards of conduct required of members.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

An effective Standards Committee that conforms with the requirements of the Standards Committee (Wales) Regulations 2001 and the Standards Committees (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006, and promotes confidence in effective democracy and accountability.

- 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
The Standards Committee supports involvement as it provides an opportunity for challenge.
- 6.4 ***Thinking for the long term (forward planning)***
This will ensure the Council meets its current statutory obligations and plans for the longer term, providing stakeholders with assurance around its governance arrangements.
- 6.5 ***Preventative focus***
The appointment will assist to prevent the risk of operating ultra vires (outside the law).
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
N/A
- 6.7 ***Integration(across service areas)***
N/A
- 6.8 ***EqIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***
N/A
7. **Monitoring Arrangements**
The Standards Committee is kept under review to ensure it complies with any changes in legislation and codes of practice. Any further amendments will be put before full Council for formal approval.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 44

Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: Council

Date of Meeting: **23rd July, 2020**

Report Subject: **Memberships Report**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor N. Daniels – Leader/
Executive Member – Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Democratic Services**

Report Written by: **Democratic Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
							23/07/20	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present a list of Memberships for consideration and determination by Members of the Council.

2. Scope

2.1 ANEURIN BEVAN COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL

To appoint a replacement representative on the above.

2.2 ADVISORY PANEL FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNORS

- (a) To ratify the following appointments made at the panel meeting held on 25th February, 2020:-

Soffrydd Primary – Debra Fields
Pat Smail

- (b) To ratify the following appointments made at the panel meeting held on 10th July, 2020:-

- St. Mary's CIW – Claire Gardner
- Abertillery Learning Community – Richard Bevan and Daryl Tovey
- Glanhwy Primary – Joanne Davies
- Georgetown Primary – Councillor John C Morgan
- Tredegar Comprehensive – Councillor John C Morgan

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 To consider the above.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank