

DRAFT AGENDA

ID	2222
Committee	Pwyllgor Craffu Trosolwg Corfforaethol
Date	22/01/2021
Attendees	<p>Cynghorwyr Stewart Healy (Cadeirydd)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Martin Cook (Is-gadeirydd)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Peter Baldwin (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Garth Collier (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Malcolm Cross (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Gareth A. Davies (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr D. Lyn Elias (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr John Hill (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Hedley McCarthy (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Clive Meredith (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorydd John P. Morgan (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Lee Parsons (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Greg Paulsen (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Tommy Smith (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Stephen Thomas (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Michelle Morris (Swyddog)</p> <p>Damien McCann (Swyddog)</p> <p>Richard Crook (Swyddog)</p> <p>Rhian Hayden (Swyddog)</p> <p>Anne-Louise Clark (Swyddog)</p> <p>Lynn Phillips (Swyddog)</p> <p>Clive Rogers (Swyddog)</p> <p>Bernadette Elias (Swyddog)</p> <p>Andrew Parker (Swyddog)</p> <p>Gemma Wasley (Swyddog)</p> <p>Liz Thomas (Swyddog)</p> <p>Gwasanaethau Democrataidd (Notify)</p> <p>Leeann Turner (Secretary)</p> <p>Pob Cynghorydd (Notify)</p> <p>Louise Bishop (Notify)</p> <p>Sean Scannell (Notify)</p> <p>Steve Berry (Swyddog)</p> <p>Andrea Jones (Swyddog)</p>

Item ID	4211
Item Title	Cyfieithu ar y Pryd
Summary	Mae croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, mae angen o leiaf 3 diwrnod gwaith o rybudd os dymunwch wneud hynny. Darperir gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd os gwneir cais.

Item ID	4212
Item Title	Ymddiheuriadau
Summary	Derbyn ymddiheuriadau.

Item ID	4213
Item Title	Datganiadau Buddiant a Goddefebau
Summary	Ystyried unrhyw ddatganiadau buddiant a goddefebau a wnaed.

Item ID	4214
Item Title	Cofnodion Pwyllgor Craffu Trosolwg Corfforaethol
Summary	Derbyn cofnodion y cyfarfod o'r Pwyllgor Craffu Trosolwg Corfforaethol a gynhaliwyd ar 11 Rhagfyr 2020. (Dylid nodi y cyflwynir y cofnodion er pwyntiau cywirdeb yn unig)

Item ID	4246
Item Title	Polisi Diogelwch Gwybodaeth
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Adnoddau.

Item ID	4247
Item Title	Diwygiadau arfaethedig i'r Polisi Trais yn erbyn Menywod, Cam-drin Domestig a Thrais Rhywiol
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol.

Item ID	4248
Item Title	Polisi Defnydd Derbyniol
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Adnoddau.

Item ID	4249
Item Title	Polisi Cydraddoldeb Traws
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol.

Item ID	4276
Item Title	Map Ffordd Buddsoddiad TGCh
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Masnachol, y Prif Swyddog Adnoddau a'r Prif Swyddog Gweithredu (SRS).

Item ID	4250
Item Title	Blaenraglen Gwaith: 5 Mawrth 2021
Summary	Derbyn yr adroddiad.

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 11TH DECEMBER, 2020

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S. HEALY (CHAIR)

Councillors: M. Cook
 P. Baldwin
 G.A. Davies
 L. Elias
 J. Hill
 H. McCarthy
 J.P. Morgan
 G. Paulsen
 T. Smith
 S. Thomas

AND: Corporate Director of Social Services
 Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services
 Corporate Director of Education
 Chief Officer – Commercial
 Chief Officer - Resources
 Head of Organisational Development
 Head of Governance & Partnerships
 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>The following apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <p>Councillor G. Collier Councillor M. Cross Councillor C. Meredith Councillor L. Parsons Head of Community Services</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>CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 11th September, 2020 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>TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REVIEW REPORT - 1ST APRIL 2020 TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2020</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 2020/21 financial year.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report which provided Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the Treasury Management activities carried out by the Authority under delegated powers of the Chief Officer Resources during the period 1st April to 30th September, 2020 in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. The Chief Officer noted that despite the financial climate in relation to the pandemic, the Authority had performed well in terms of its Treasury Management activities during the first half of the year and outlined the work undertaken as detailed in the report.</p>	

	<p>The Chief Officer Resources advised that the interest payments made had been minimised as far as possible with the average rate of interest of 0.67% being below the benchmarked rate which showed good performance. The Council had also not been exposed to any financial losses as a result of the current difficult economic climate.</p> <p>At this juncture, the Chair invited questions/observations from Members.</p> <p>A Member asked if the Authority still invested in fossil fuel and the Chief Officer Resources confirmed that there were no direct investments with fossil fuel companies. The Chief Officer noted previous discussions and informed that the pension fund had changed the strategy to move away from investments in fossil fuels and the Council's own Investment Strategy was being reviewed.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2, Members scrutinised the treasury management activity undertaken during the 2020/2021 financial year and no comment was provided prior to its submission to full Council.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT</u> <u>01/04/2019 – 31/03/2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development which was presented to give Members the opportunity to scrutinise and challenge information and recommendations to mitigate concerns and risks on the Authority's Health and Safety and Fire Safety at work performance for 2019/20.</p> <p>The Head of Organisational Development advised that the report would normally be presented during the July to September period, however due to the emergency response to the pandemic it had been delayed. The report provided the Committee with an opportunity to scrutinise and challenge recommendations made to mitigate concerns and risks on the Authority's Health and Safety and Fire Safety at work performance for 2019/20. The Officer added that overall performance was good and these findings were detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.</p>	

	<p>The Appendix outlined good performance along with areas of concerns and actions to be undertaken to address these matters. It was added that the report did not include any of the Health and Safety response to the emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This information would form part of the report reviewing for 2020/2021.</p> <p>The Head of Organisational Development referred to the appendix and a correction of the figures for Social Service – there had been 50 accidents which was still a decrease on the year before.</p> <p>The Committee noted the information accordingly.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1, Members of the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee supported the detailed report and the actions recommended to mitigate areas of concern.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>PREPARATIONS FOR EU TRANSITION</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Governance & Partnerships and the Policy Officer which was presented to provide Members with an update on the preparatory work undertaken during the EU Transition Period.</p> <p>The Head of Governance and Partnerships spoke to the report which provided an update on the preparatory work undertaken during the EU Transition Period. The Officer noted that the UK had left on the 31st January, 2020 and entered a transition period until 31st December, 2020. The Head of Governance and Partnerships advised that there still remained a level of uncertainty on the full implications of exiting the EU would have on local authorities. The Officer Core Planning Group had continued to meet during the pandemic to facilitate EU transition preparations and regular information had been received from the Welsh Local Government Association and Welsh Government in relation to the overall national picture. The Officer added that information from the Home Office regarding the EU Settlement Scheme was also being received and the Local Authority was represented on the WLGA Brexit Coordinator network.</p>	

The Head of Governance and Partnerships continued that the core officer planning group developed an impact and risk assessment to identify and respond to the local risks and opportunities associated with leaving the EU. An action plan had been established for Blaenau Gwent which was linked to the Action Plan developed by Welsh Government.

The Officer further spoke to the report and gave a detailed overview of the key activities, expected public outcomes and forward planning as detailed in the report.

At this juncture the Chair invited questions from Members.

In response to a question raised about the financial implications, the Head of Governance and Partnerships advised that the worst case scenario was being planned for as the Authority was not sure on the deal to be received. The Officer added that the scenarios were based on known evidence and intelligence gathered. It was anticipated that the outcome of the deal would be felt in phases.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services added that the Authority was uncertain of the impact on local businesses or the financial impact, however, any implications would be in the medium term and it would be monitored. The Corporate Director noted that a key issue for the Authority was the shared prosperity fund. This would be divided via the UK Government, therefore it was important to ensure there was local democracy.

Another Member noted the importance of the overlap of projects funded via Europe which would need to be continued.

The Head of Governance and Partnerships added that all this information would be provided as it developed via reports to this Committee.

A Member asked if there were groups working within communities.

	<p>The Head of Governance and Partnerships confirmed that there were groups which worked within our communities. The Core Officer Planning Group supported individuals to engage in the settlement scheme via community groups, education settlings and also digital support via libraries.</p> <p>The Policy Officer added that as at 30th September, 2020 980 EU Nationals had applied to the Settlement Scheme. The deadline was 30th June, 2021 and work would continue to ensure people were registered.</p> <p>Another Member anticipated that the next report could provide opportunities for Blaenau Gwent and the Officer advised that part of the Core Officer Working Group was to look for opportunities and to understand where they are and any associated risks.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2, progress made during the transition period be noted and specific comments or recommendations prior to the report being presented to the Executive for approval and update reports be received as part of its forward work programme.</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY PERFORMANCE MONITORING</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial which was presented for Members to consider the performance of the Communication Strategy with focus on the impact of the strategy during COVID-19 Pandemic from March to September 2020.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Commercial spoke to the report which outlined the performance and impact of the Communication Strategy during COVID19 Pandemic and outlined the key points as contained in the report.</p> <p>A Member noted the excellent work undertaken by the Communications Team, however he had hoped that there would be a more proactive approach from the Leader of the Council.</p>	

	<p>The Member advised that Leaders of neighbouring authorities had been featured in news reports during the pandemic, although the Leader of the Blaenau Gwent Council had not been seen during these unprecedented times. The Member added that as Leader it was important that key messages were given by the Leader to ensure our communities had confidence in the Council and was able to put a name to the face.</p> <p>The Chair felt that there had been no reason for the Leader of the Council to take part in Welsh news reports. The Member referred to the high cases of Covid-19 in Blaenau Gwent and asked was this not a reason for the Leader of the Council to address our residents, as other Leaders had done in Merthyr Tydfil, Newport, Torfaen and Rhondda Cynon Taff.</p> <p>Another Member concurred with the comments raised and stated it was not just about television appearances but also about radio and newspaper articles. The Member was of the opinion that public confidence during these uncertain times was critical and although the work of the Communications Team was outstanding there was a need for political input. The public preferred to see comments from a political point of view not a Council's spokesperson.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1, the performance of the Communication Strategy be noted, particularly on the impact of the strategy during COVID19 Pandemic. The period covered will be from March to September 2020.</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>COMMERCIAL STRATEGY PERFORMANCE MONITORING</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial which was presented for Members to consider the performance of the Commercial Strategy and focus on the impact of the strategy on the period from March to September 2020.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1, the performance of the Commercial Strategy during the period March 2020 – September 2020 be noted.</p>	

No. 10 **SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE**

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 the sickness absence performance for 2019/20.

The Head of Organisational Development advised that the report provided Members with an opportunity to scrutinise and challenge the sickness absence performance for 2019/20. It also outlined the continued actions to support improvement in attendance and recognised the positive attendance of the majority of the workforce.

The Head of Organisational Development added that the overall year end outturn figure for the Council of 13.91 days per full time equivalent employee which was 13.48 days excluding Covid-19 sickness. This was an increase from the previous year's outturn of 12.66 days and exceeded the target set of 11 days. This information was further detailed in the appendices attached to the report. The Officer further referred to historical measures put in place to improve attendance and ongoing measures in an attempt to address attendance.

A Member raised concerns around the continued increase in sickness within the Authority and referred to the work of the Task and Finish Group which had seen little improvement in the figures. However, although there was a pandemic which would affect sickness levels it was felt that sickness levels remained very high across the Council.

The Head of Organisational Development advised that the Policy had been fundamentally reviewed and it was concluded that it was fit for purpose by the Task and Finish Group. The iTrent HR system provides detailed information to managers to enable the management of sickness absence.

In response to further concerns around sickness levels and performance it was advised that the information was presented to CLT on a quarterly basis and formed part of the Performance and Finance report which was presented to Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis.

	<p>A further question was raised in relation to individual departments sickness levels being monitored, the Head of Organisational Development advised that each Directorate would be reviewing the top 20 cases. Last year reports were considered at the respective Scrutiny Committees with an overarching report presented to the Executive.</p> <p>A Member asked if Blaenau Gwent could work in collaboration with a neighbouring Authority to ascertain how they addressed sickness levels. It was confirmed that this exercise was undertaken as part of the Task and Finish Group work.</p> <p>In response to a request to bring further reports through the political process, it was stated that the Authority was responding to Covid-19 at present and capacity would be an issue.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1, the Scrutiny Committee having scrutinised the sickness absence performance information and the ongoing actions to support improved attendance within the Council identify any further areas for improvement in order to drive forward performance improvement.</p>	
<p>No. 11</p>	<p><u>MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY</u> <u>2021/2022 TO 2025/2026</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources which was presented to Members to gain approval of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and provides Members with the latest assessment of the Council's financial position over the next 5 years.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report and provided a detailed overview of the key points as outlined in the report and appendices.</p>	

	<p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1, as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considered and agreed the MTFS; • noted the forecast funding gap for the period of the MTFS; • the cost pressures identified at Appendix 1 of the MTFS be noted; and • the progress update within the Strategic Business Reviews attached at Appendix 2 of the MTFS be noted. 	
<p>No. 12</p>	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME –</u> <u>22ND JANUARY, 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chair of the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>A Member requested a report on consultancy fees be presented to a future Committee. It was advised that this had been requested and agreed at the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. However, the Member felt that as this was a corporate issue the overarching report should be presented to the Corporate Services Committee. The Member was aware that a report had also been requested by the Social Services Scrutiny Committee, therefore it was suggested that information be presented to respective Scrutiny Committees with an overarching report to the Corporate Services Committee.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources agreed to this course of action.</p> <p>Another Member referred to CCTV progress reports and noted that it had not been included on the FWP. The Chief Officer Resources advised that these reports were planned on the Forward Work Programme, however it would be presented later in the year and not the January meeting.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2, the Forward Work Programme be agreed for the meeting 22nd January 2021, as presented.</p>	

Agenda Item 5

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A
Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **22 January 2021**
Report Subject: **Information Security Policy**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Nigel Daniels, Leader of the Council & Executive Member Corporate Services**
Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer Resources**

Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	7/1/21	11.01.21			22/01/21		28/01/21	Information Governance Forum – 18/12/20

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To provide Members with an opportunity to scrutinise the revised Information Security Policy and recommend its adoption by the Council.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The attached document is the proposed Information Security Policy for the Council which sets out the approach the Council has adopted to develop, manage and improve Information Security to ensure our valuable information resources are properly protected.
 - 2.2 The draft Policy has been revised and updates / replaces a number of the Council's current policies including:-
 - Information Security Policy Statement
 - Antivirus Policy
 - Clear Desk Policy
 - Disposal of IT Equipment Policy
 - Information Assets Protection Policy
 - Third Party Access Policy
 - 2.3 The Policy applies to all Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council employees, Schools, volunteers, Members, contractors, third parties and all other authorised users with access to the Council's information assets.
 - 2.3 The Policy identifies the general principles of Information Security i.e. confidentiality, integrity & availability, explains the roles and responsibilities of all parties with access to the Council's information and details the Council's expectations in ensuring that information remains secure.
 - 2.4 The Policy emphasises that all security breaches must be reported immediately.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1:** (preferred option) The Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee considers the attached policy and recommends the Council approves the Policy.

Option 2: The Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee comment and suggest amendments/additions to the Policy prior to recommendation to the Council.

3.2 The Policy was considered by the Information Governance Forum on 18 December 2020 and CLT on 7 January 2020, both supported the proposed policy.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 **Statutory Responsibility:**

Information Security takes full account of a range of legislation, including the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation, governing the manner in which information and data is managed and protected.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 *Impact on Budget*

There is no direct impact upon the budget as a result of implementing this policy, however, compliance with the policy will minimise data breaches and avoid financial penalties that could be imposed by the Information Commissioner.

5.2 *Risk*

Failure to comply with the Information Security Policy could result in loss or unintended disclosure of the Council's information assets resulting in significant reputational damage and imposition of financial penalties.

Development and implementation of and compliance with the Information Security Policy will mitigate this risk by ensuring all parties understand their responsibilities and the Council's expectations.

5.3 *Legal*

Information Security takes full account of a range of legislation, including the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation, governing the manner in which information and data is managed and protected.

5.4 *Human Resources*

The Policy applies to all Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council employees, Schools, volunteers, Members, contractors, third parties and all other authorised users with access to the Council's information assets.

Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

- 6.1 *Performance Information and Data*
n/a
- 6.2 *Expected outcome for the public*
Development, implementation and compliance with the Information Security Policy will provide assurance to the public that their personal, sensitive information held by the Council is secure and used appropriately.
- 6.3 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*
The Policy was developed in consultation with the Council's Information Governance Forum.
- 6.4 *Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)*
Compliance with the Policy will minimise the likelihood of data breaches. The Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains appropriate.
- 6.5 *Preventative focus*
Compliance with the Policy will minimise the likelihood of data breaches.
- 6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working*
n/a
- 6.7 *Integration (across service areas)*
The Policy applies to information users in all service areas.
- 6.8 *EqlA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)*
The Policy has no impact on protective characteristics.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 Compliance with the policy will be monitored through the Council's performance management arrangements. Data Breaches will be reported to the Data Breach Group who will determine whether incidents should be reported to the Information Commissioners Office.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Information Security Policy

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Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

Information Security Policy



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Issued: February 2021 Review: January 2022

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1.0 AIMS OF POLICY

1.1 SCOPE

- 1.1.1 This policy applies to all Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council employees, schools, volunteers, members, contractors, third-parties and all authorised users with access to our information assets. They are referred to as 'users' throughout this policy.
- 1.1.2 It sets out the approach Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council have adopted to develop, manage and improve Information Security and ensure that our valuable information resources are properly protected against loss or compromise.
- 1.1.3 Where this policy refers to other standards, procedures and guidelines they must be read in conjunction with this policy.
- 1.1.4 Within the context of Information Security, the term 'information' includes data and any form of communication recorded or transmitted in transcript, verbally, manually or electronically. In terms of tangible assets, Information Security principles extend to paper documents, computer files, electronic records, data sticks, CDs, drives or any other storage or processing medium.
- 1.1.5 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council recognise that users access various social media platforms, the internet and forums both as part of their business-operation and within their personal lives. In conjunction with this policy all users are expected to read, understand and adhere to the Social Media policy.

1.2 INTENTION

- 1.2.1 Information Security is different to 'Information Governance' which embraces a much broader set of administrative procedures necessary to manage the entire life of information from origin, through processing, to disposal. However, Information Security is an integral component of Information Governance and for this to be effective, a consistent, well organised and properly administered information structure must be established in all working environments throughout the organisation.
- 1.2.2 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council adopts the view that information should be open unless its sensitive or personal. This is because sharing of information is critical to our day to day business decision making and helps other agencies use our information to develop innovative solutions and inform policy making. Open Data principles do not apply to sensitive or personal information, and it's critical that security arrangements are in place to prevent accidental sharing of this.
- 1.2.3 Every aspect of carrying out our business involves Information Security considerations, therefore it remains the responsibility of all people who work for or partner with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to safeguard our information resources and ensure that all necessary protective measures are in place to prevent its loss or damage.
- 1.2.4 In applying this policy, it is also important that the breadth of protective security principles relating to information, IT, personnel and physical security are fully integrated to create

sufficient depth and resilience to complement business continuity requirements and guard against all prevailing threats.

1.2.5 Finally, Information Security must take full account of a range of legislation (including DPA and GDPR) governing the manner in which information and data is managed and protected. A common theme is 'confidentiality' and, to remain legally compliant, obligations are placed upon staff to ensure that information is protected.

1.3 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1.3.1 The organisation cannot function without information, processes and networks that combine to create a complicated data infrastructure. From this it is important to identify the more sensitive operational, financial or business information that requires specific protection and to develop measures to prevent, detect and mitigate loss or compromise.

1.3.2 There is always a need to balance the needs of the business operation with the need to keep sensitive and confidential data secure. Every attempt will be undertaken to do this electronically and seamlessly, but there is still a need to adopt measures that preserve:

- Confidentiality – ensuring that information is accessible only to those authorised to have access, and protecting assets against unauthorised disclosure. Unauthorised access will not be tolerated.
- Integrity – safeguarding the accuracy and completeness of information, and protecting assets from unauthorised or accidental modification
- Availability – ensuring that authorised users have access to information and associated assets to carry out their duties effectively.

1.3.3 Another significant aim is to reinforce 'confidentiality' and 'need to know' principles. Information supplied in confidence, used to support business operations or connected with other sensitive business activities, must be treated in a confidential manner and only imparted to others in the official course of duties on a strict 'need to know' basis. This requirement is supported by legislation including:

- Data Protection Act 2018 / GDPR - requires personal data to be properly safeguarded and not disclosed unless properly authorised and justified. It also requires us to state the legal basis under which we gather, retain and use data along with allowing the data subject the right access to see the information and ensure its accuracy.
- Computer Misuse Act 1990 (and amendments within The Serious Crime Act 2015) – renders it illegal to gain access to or use a computer without authority.
- Freedom of Information Act 2000 - provides for disclosure of non-personal data, subject to exemptions including the prevention and detection of crime.

1.3.4 You must act honourably at all times and protect the reputation of the council.

1.4 THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES

In adopting relevant protective measures, the nature of threats and vulnerabilities must be considered.

- 1.4.1 Much of the work of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is of interest to others and, while the organisation must operate as an open public service, it is important to protect sensitive assets and guard against undesirable elements including cyber-attacks and, in some cases, the media.
- 1.4.2 As well as external vulnerabilities, the organisation and its users must avoid, deter, and counter unauthorised or illegal internal activity including any deliberate or accidental act or omission which could lead to loss of or compromise information.

1.5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1.5.1 All Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council users have a duty of care to ensure security is maintained. When data is processed as part of a business requirement they must ensure it is safe and secure at all times and is only distributed to the correct people.
- 1.5.2 Any security issues identified or suspected must be reported to the Data Protection Officer through the escalation procedures (dataprotection@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk) as well as the Information Security Officer via security@blaenau-gwent.co.uk
- 1.5.3 All users are responsible for ensuring their Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council equipment including laptops, mobiles and tablets are secure and are never left unattended, particularly in public places.

1.6 CHALLENGES & REPRESENTATIONS

- 1.6.1 Challenges and representations concerning this policy should be directed to the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) and Information Security Officer at security@blaenau-gwent.co.uk

1.7 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 1.7.1 Information has uses beyond the normal day to day job, and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council operates a policy of opening up key data for others to use for a variety of different reasons, not least of all to inform critical decisions on the levels of service provision.
- 1.7.2 However, much of the information in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is sensitive because of its operational, business or personal content, and where this is the case strict rules of confidentiality apply.
- 1.7.3 Sensitive and personal information is available to relevant staff and partner agencies to do their jobs, and is provided for official use only. Communication of sensitive or personal information to anyone not authorised to receive it is **strictly not permitted**, and disciplinary action will be taken against anyone who wilfully uses or discloses this information.

1.7.4 All printing of documents must be kept to a minimum, and only printed if there is an absolute business need.

1.8 NEED TO KNOW

1.8.1 As an employee of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council it is normal for you to encounter personal, confidential information. You will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement to this effect – normally as part of your employment contract. It goes without saying that this confidentiality must be protected. This includes information that is stored and displayed electronically, held in documents or publications and over the telephone or in conversations. Therefore, users must not discuss or divulge any information to anyone else, other than those who have to a need to know and must not use information for any other purpose than it was intended.

1.9 CLEAR WORKSTATION PRACTICES

1.9.1 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council works in a very agile way, and as a result much of its information is electronic. However, where paper documents are used they must be managed in a way that prevents unauthorised access to sensitive information. This includes securing physical information in appropriate cabinets when not in use, particularly outside normal working hours. It's also important to make sure that paper documents taken away from the office are stored separately from desirable items like laptops or other mobile devices.

1.10 CLEAR SCREEN PRACTICE

1.10.1 Password protected screen savers must be activated when you leave your laptop or mobile device to prevent unauthorised access to information or systems. Be aware that mobile devices are desirable and can be the target for thieves. Make sure they are all password protected and that screen locks are activated if they haven't been accessed for 30 seconds.

1.11 SYSTEMS ACCESS AND PASSWORDS

1.11.1 Users and third parties are only permitted access to files and systems for which they have been specifically authorised. Access permissions are set up at the time of employment, and must be reviewed when there is a restructure, change of job or change of system. It's the responsibility of the manager to ensure this is done, and it's your personal responsibility to inform your manager immediately if you find you have access to anything you shouldn't see. Having unauthorised access to information does not entitle you to view it.

1.11.2 Passwords and other security processes are in place as part of the normal security arrangements and no attempt must be made to bypass them.

1.11.3 Passwords must not be divulged to others, nor written down.

1.11.4 Your password should not comprise of obvious names or dates that could easily be associated with you.

1.12 CORPORATE ASSETS (SOFTWARE/HARDWARE)

- 1.12.1 You will be prevented from loading unauthorised software onto any Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's systems or devices. This is a critical part of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's security arrangements and you must not attempt to alter/amend/compromise the security in any way.
- 1.12.2 Anti-Virus software runs on either a server or workstation and monitors network connections looking for malicious software. All computer devices connected to the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council network shall have anti-virus software installed, configured so that the virus definition files are current, routinely and automatically updated, and the anti-virus software must be actively running on these devices. All files on computer devices will be scanned periodically for viruses.
- 1.12.3 You must not prohibit anti-virus or updates on any software from running, or bypass, exploit or deliberately avoid updates from running, as this will be deemed to be a violation of this policy and subject to disciplinary. This is not restricted to antivirus software and includes patches and updates to all software and hardware owned by the Council.
- 1.12.4 Approved/licenced software and/or Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's corporate information must not be downloaded, copied, shared, compromised, deleted, or distributed in any way that may have the potential to cause the council harm.
- 1.12.5 If you require additional software as part of your role, please raise with the SRS Service Desk.
- 1.12.6 Line of business systems (email, HR/Payroll etc) must only be used for business purposes.
- 1.12.7 The internet is a business tool, and activity is monitored. Please refer to the Acceptable Use Policy for more information.
- 1.12.8 Email and messaging services (including but not limited to Microsoft Teams, Skype, etc) are business tools, and all communications should be conducted in a professional manner as you are representing Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. Spam (chain email) is not to be forwarded on, and any suspicious email (phishing email) should not be opened, and referred to security@blaenau-gwent.co.uk for investigation.
- 1.12.9 You will be provided as part of your role computer equipment, and potentially a mobile phone. You must look after these devices and not leave them unattended, or unlocked. You must not attach/connect any unapproved third party hardware to your Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council equipment. If you require access to additional equipment or require third party hardware to be connected to your devices, you must request this via SRS Service Desk.
- 1.12.10 Corporate equipment should not be used to store personal information.
- 1.12.11 The Social Media policy should be referred to prior to presenting the council on any social media platform, and should be read in conjunction with this policy.

1.13 OVERSIGHT OR EAVESDROPPING

- 1.13.1 When discussing or processing issues of a sensitive nature on Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council premises or in public, extra care must be taken to avoid oversight of mobile computing devices, or eavesdropping on conversations.
- 1.13.2 When working remotely, be mindful of meetings and telephone conversations you are having in the home environment. Make sure that your door is shut when discussing confidential/corporate issues so that members of your family/third parties are not able to hear the detail of that conversation.
- 1.13.3 When attending a confidential call through MS Teams, either in the office or working remotely, a headset connected to your laptop must be used for the call. This is to avoid eavesdropping of calls and the two-way conversation being heard by third parties.

1.14 DISPOSAL OF DEVICES AND INFORMATION

- 1.14.1 Mobile devices must be disposed of by the SRS when they become obsolete. The SRS have a contract for this that ensures devices are wiped and correctly disposed of using approved methods. You must not attempt to dispose of mobile devices yourself. Please contact SRS Service Desk for old equipment to be collected.
- 1.14.2 All sensitive/corporate paper documents must be shredded using the onsite Confidential Waste bins provided and not put in the general paper waste facilities.
- 1.14.3 All printing of documents must be kept to a minimum, and only printed if there is an absolute business need.
- 1.14.4 This section of the policy should be read in conjunction with the Record Retention and Disposal Policy.

1.15 BREACHES OF SECURITY

- 1.15.1 Any security incident or occurrence that has the potential to compromise the organisation, staff, information or other assets, must be reported immediately to –
- Your Line Manager;
 - The Data Protection Officer - dataprotection@blaenau-gwent.co.uk
 - Information Security Officer - security@blaenau-gwent.co.uk

1.16 CONTRACTORS/THIRD PARTIES

- 1.16.1 Contractors and Third Parties must agree to adhere to this policy before access to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's Information Assets or Sites is provided.
- 1.16.2 All contractors and third parties must sign a Non Disclosure Agreement prior to accessing Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's sites, systems or network.

- 1.16.3 Contractors and Third Parties' access to Information Assets or Sites must be the minimum necessary to achieve business purposes.
- 1.16.4 Contractors and Third Parties must connect to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council network in a secured way.
- 1.16.5 Contractors and Third Parties that breach Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's policies, procedures or contractual clauses will be subject to termination of contract or criminal proceedings if deemed appropriate.
- 1.16.6 On termination of contract, Contractors and Third Parties must relinquish any assigned software licences and passwords to 3rd party systems and must also return any Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council or related asset(s) issued during the contract, including-
- Information Assets (paper records, laptops, files, removable media, hard drives, mobile phones, End User Devices etc.);
 - Access control software, hardware tokens, ID, passes etc.

1.17 REMOTE WORKING/MOBILE DEVICES

- 1.17.1 When working remotely users must make all reasonable efforts to secure the data and assets of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. Remote users should not leave their equipment unlocked or unattended at any time.
- 1.17.2 Remote workers must keep Information Assets in a locked area, cupboard or safe, out of plain sight, out of the reach of children and animals, away from any sources of heat, cold, or liquid.
- 1.17.3 When working remotely, be mindful of meetings and telephone conversations you are having in your environment. Make sure that your door is shut or nobody can eavesdrop when discussing confidential/corporate issues so that members of your family/third parties are not able to hear the detail of that conversation.
- 1.17.4 Users must immediately report any incidents that involves loss, theft, or compromise of an asset or loss or corruption of data.

1.18 PHYSICAL SECURITY

- 1.18.1 All visitors to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council must sign in at reception and be accompanied throughout the duration of their visit. Users are encouraged to challenge people they don't recognise to ensure they are authorised to access sites.
- 1.18.2 To ensure the physical security of Information Assets users should –
- Keep Information Assets in a locked area, cupboard or safe, out of plain sight, out of the reach of children and animals, away from any sources of heat, cold, or liquid.
 - When using public transport Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Information Assets must not be left unattended.

- When transported in a car or vehicle, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Information Assets must be out of plain sight and not left unattended. Equipment should not be left in a vehicle overnight.
- Take reasonable care when transporting Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Information Assets in hand luggage, bags, and backpacks and not leave them unattended.

1.18.3 As part of your role, users will be issued with an ID badge/access card. This card will provide you entry only into the areas you are permitted. Users should not try to gain access to areas where their card does not provide access. Under no circumstances should a user allow another person to use their ID card to gain access into a building/area.

1.18.4 Lost cards should be reported immediately to a line manager and access to the card should be disabled.

1.19 HOME DRIVES & STORAGE OF FILES/DATA

1.19.1 Each employee of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council will have access to their own storage area, called a “Home Drive”. Home Drives are part of the corporate network and are to be used for business purposes only.

- Personal photographs and files/data are not to be stored in this location.
- Files/data relating to your operational performance, or staff records can be stored here to avoid other persons viewing this information.
- All files/data relating to normal business activity should be saved on the network drives.

1.20 COMPLIANCE

1.20.1 If a Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Employee, Members, Contractor or Third Party breaches this policy, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council may:

- Restrict or terminate the User’s right to use Information Assets;
- Withdraw or remove any material uploaded by that User in contravention of this policy;
- Disclose information to law enforcement and regulatory agencies and take legal action;
- Take such other action as it deems appropriate, including up to and including dismissal through the disciplinary procedure.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council reserves the right to monitor employee, members, contractor, and third party activity across all Information Assets owned by the council.

2.0 COMPLIANCE WITH THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME

2.1 This Policy will comply with the organisation's Welsh Language Scheme in terms of dealing with the Welsh speaking public, impact upon the public image of the organisation and the implementation of the Language Scheme.

3.0 IDENTIFICATION SECTION

Policy Title:	Information Security Policy
Policy Owner:	Senior Information Risk Owner
Department Responsible:	All
Links to other Policies/Procedure:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data Protection Policy• Acceptable Usage Policy• Information Governance Polices• Social Media Policy• Record Retention & Disposal Policy• Cyber Security Incident Response Policy
Policy Implementation Date:	1 February 2021
Next policy review date:	January 2022

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Agenda Item 6

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **22nd January 2021**
Report Subject: **Proposed amendments to the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Policy**
Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member Corporate Services**
Report Submitted by: **Andrea J. Prosser – Head of Organisational 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)
x	26.11.20	11.01.21			22.01.21		28.01.21	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give Scrutiny Members the opportunity to scrutinise, challenge and give views on the proposed revisions to the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence policy (VAWDASV) (“the existing policy”) (Appendix 1) in accordance with the draft amended Domestic Abuse, Violence and Sexual Violence Policy (“the amended policy”) (Appendix 2).

2. Scope and Background

2.1 Title of policy

The amended policy is entitled: “Domestic Abuse, Violence and Sexual Violence Policy” which represents a change from “Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Policy”. It is a requirement of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (“VAWDASV”) that all devolved public sector employers have a work place policy for Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. The amended policy fulfils that requirement but the title of the amended policy makes clear that this policy is not exclusive to women, in recognition that men, women and non-binary individuals are victims of violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence. This demonstrates that the amended policy is free from gender bias and that all individuals suffering from domestic abuse/violence are covered, and supported by, a policy which is applicable to them, irrespective of gender.

2.2 Scope of policy

The amended policy applies to Council and school based employees.

2.3 Key changes to the Policy

The aim of the amendments is to ensure that effective and practical support mechanisms are in place across the Authority to assist victims of domestic abuse/violence and include;

- Definitions and key legislation
- Leave, up to 5 days paid safe leave and other supportive measures for victims
- Details the role of the manager

3. **Options for Recommendation**

The Corporate Leadership Team considered this report on the 26th November 2020 and support the proposed amendments to the Policy.

3.1 **Option 1:** (preferred option) Members of the Committee to consider the revisions to Policy and recommend approval to Council.

3.2 **Option 2:** Members of the Committee suggest further amendments/additions to the Policy.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 **Statutory Responsibilities**

As outlined at 2.1 above, it is a requirement of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (“VAWDASV”) that all devolved public sector employers have a work place policy for Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

4.2 **Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

The amended policy, by offering increased support to victims of domestic abuse/violence helps to promote the following aspects of the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan:

- Safe and friendly communities
- To encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the places that they live, learn, work and play.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget**

There is no direct cost to the amendment of this policy. There will be costs associated where a member of staff needs to take safe leave and the post will need to be covered.

5.2 **Risk**

Failure to amend the policy would mean non-compliance by BGCBC with Welsh Government’s request for Local Authorities to become role models, helping to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse, in terms of following Neath Port Talbot’s example and other good practice which exists e.g. Joint Council for Wales (JCW) Joint Statement on Domestic Abuse, GMB’s Work to Stop Domestic Abuse, Workplace Policy, and Unison’s Domestic Violence and Abuse: a Trade Union issue – a Unison Guide.

5.3 **Legal**

As above, it is a requirement of VAWDASV that all devolved public sector employers have a work place policy for Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

5.4 **Human Resources**

The amended policy, by enabling BGCBC to act as a role model, in terms of providing increased practical support to employees who are affected, in accordance with good practice could: improve employee well-being; aid employee recruitment and retention; reduce absences from work resulting from acts of domestic abuse/violence; and assist in improving any performance issues.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Statistical Information from the British Crime Survey Statistical Bulletin indicates the following:

Domestic abuse:

- Will affect 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men in their lifetime
- Leads to, on average, two women being murdered each week and 30 men per year
- Accounts for 16% of all violent crime (Source: Crime in England and Wales 04/05 report), however it is still the violent crime least likely to be reported to the police
- Has more repeat victims than any other crime (on average there will have been 35 assaults before a victim calls the police)
- Is the single most quoted reason for becoming homeless (Shelter, 2002)
- In 2010, the Forced Marriage Unit responded to 1735 reports of possible Forced Marriages.

In addition, approximately 400 people commit suicide each year who have attended hospital for domestic abuse injuries in the previous six months, 200 of these attend hospital on the day they go on to commit suicide.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

Members of the public external to the Authority may be attracted to an employer, which endorses good practice and acts as a role model by providing increased support for victims of domestic abuse/violence. This may also contribute positively to the Council's reputation among members of the public.

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

Consultation, engagement and participation regarding the amended policy has been internal to the Council, along with the Trade Unions who are supportive of the amended policy.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

The amended policy is intended to provide increased support to all Council and school based employees and the clear aim and aspiration of the amended policy is that, long-term (and short-term), victims of domestic abuse/violence will be assisted by it, particularly by the additional supportive measures proposed.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

The amended policy aims to train staff regarding how to identify victims of domestic abuse/violence, where possible, so that if they seek support and assistance, they can receive it as soon as possible with the aim of preventing further domestic abuse/violence.

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

The amended policy promotes collaboration in terms of multi-agency / partnership working, which would be necessary, for example, if information had to be shared in terms of safeguarding vulnerable children.

6.7 Integration (across service areas)

The additional support proposed by the amended policy is intended (among other aims and aspirations) to try to reduce absences from work resulting from acts of domestic abuse/violence and assist in improving any performance issues by offering practical support to employees who are affected. This could positively impact on all service areas.

6.8 EqIA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)

The amended policy promotes equal opportunity.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 It is recognised that due to confidentiality issues and sensitivities around cases of violence, domestic abuse and/or sexual violence, monitoring and evaluation is not always easy. However, the following information may be recorded and shared with the Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse Team in Welsh Government:

- How the Policy has been promoted and staff awareness raised;
- Details of planned training and/or numbers of staff who have completed training; and
- The number of hits on the Blaenau Gwent intranet page hosting the workplace policy.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 - Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence Policy (“existing policy”)

Appendix 2 - Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Policy (“amended policy”)



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Policy



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: May 2018 Review: May 2020

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

Domestic abuse is a serious social and criminal problem that accounts for almost a quarter of all violent crime and has significant human and financial consequences for individuals, families, communities and society as a whole.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council recognises that its employees will be amongst those affected by domestic abuse either as: a survivor of domestic abuse, an individual who is currently living with domestic abuse, someone who has been impacted by a domestic homicide or as an individual who perpetrates domestic abuse.

The Council believes that domestic violence is unacceptable and a breach of human rights since everyone has the right to live free from fear and abuse. We are committed to developing a workplace culture in which there is zero tolerance for domestic violence, sexual violence and domestic abuse in all its forms and recognises that the responsibility for such abuse lies with the perpetrator.

The Council is committed to reducing domestic abuse and this policy sets out the actions that will be taken in responding to employees who are experiencing domestic abuse and where there are concerns that an employee may be the perpetrator of domestic abuse.

By developing an effective Workplace Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy and working to mitigate the risks related to domestic abuse, we will create a safe workplace and we will also send out a strong message that domestic abuse is unacceptable.

Through the effective implementation of this Workplace Policy and its commitment to partnership working to tackle domestic abuse and domestic violence, the council is able to demonstrate its commitment to tackling this issue. The Council wishes to be the employer of choice – it believes that this domestic abuse policy will help it to retain valued staff and improve employee performance and morale.

2. EQUALITY STATEMENT

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council acknowledges that domestic violence and abuse can occur in all areas of society. The Council recognises that domestic abuse is an equalities issue and that some employees may face additional barriers and issues in seeking help because of their ethnic background, religion, age, sexual orientation, disability or gender which might make them feel particularly vulnerable when talking about their situation.

Any employee training on the subject of domestic violence will incorporate an appreciation of these issues and how to effectively manage them.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has completed an Equalities Impact Assessment on this workplace policy which is available on request.

3. INTRODUCTION

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council recognises that domestic violence and abuse is a significant issue in today's society. Statistics indicate that every year across the UK at least three million women experience violence/abuse and many more are living with the legacies of past abuse. Two women a week are killed and one in six men is affected, and it is also known that 90% of children are in the same or adjacent room when domestic abuse is occurring.

It is further recognised that whilst the majority of victims are women, men are also subjected to domestic violence and/or abuse, as are women and men in same sex relationships.

The Council acknowledges that some of its employees will be amongst those affected – either as an individual who is living with domestic violence and/or abuse or as an individual who perpetrates violence and/or abuse.

Blaenau Gwent Local Service Board has identified tackling domestic abuse as a priority in the Single Integrated Plan, under the Fair and Safe Theme. The responsibility for the delivery of the LSB commitments rests with the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Forum. The Forum has an Action Plan that sets out the breadth of activity commissioned to tackle this issue.

4. POLICY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This Policy sets out the approach of the Council to its employees experiencing domestic violence or abuse.

The Council and the Trade Unions are committed to ensuring support is available to employees who are experiencing or surviving domestic violence or abuse.

The main aims and objectives of this policy are to:

- Increase awareness of the main issues associated with domestic violence and abuse.
- Positively assist and support employees who are experiencing or surviving domestic violence and abuse.
- Provide guidance and assist managers in supporting employees who are experiencing domestic violence and abuse in their personal lives – whether as a victim or as a perpetrator.
- Reduce absences from work resulting from domestic violence and abuse; and assist in improving performance by offering practical support to employees who are affected.
- Help everyone (including managers and elected members) recognise potential victims or perpetrators of domestic violence and/or abuse and to provide a supportive environment for them.
- Reinforce that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is committed to the principle that domestic violence and abuse is unacceptable behaviour and that everyone has a right to live free from fear and abuse.

There is currently no legislation which enables an employer to intervene if made aware that an employee is experiencing domestic violence and/or abuse, however the Council does have a responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to provide a safe working environment. Additionally, Equality legislation places an onus on Public Sector organisations to demonstrate fair treatment for all in the delivery of policy and services.

5. SCOPE

All employees of the Council have the potential to be either a survivor or a current victim of domestic violence/abuse. Likewise, it is possible that perpetrators of domestic violence/abuse are employed by the Council. This policy applies to all workers who may benefit from increased awareness of the scale of the issue and what support is available.

6. DEFINITION

The definition of abuse, violence against women and sexual violence which informs this policy and procedure is set out in the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. This addresses all forms of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence however particular forms of violence are disproportionately experienced by women and girls.

Domestic Abuse and Violence – Home Office

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. (For example, this can include abuse and violence perpetrated by sons, daughters, grandparents or any other person who has a close or blood relationship with the victim).

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Violence against women – United Nations

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

Sexual Violence – United Nations

Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting.

The Council recognises that domestic abuse is rarely confined to a single incident and typically forms a pattern of coercive or controlling behaviour.

Domestic violence/abuse can manifest itself through a variety of actions such as:

- Physical assault or threats of physical assault (e.g. slapping, pushing, kicking, punching, stabbing or destruction of personal property);
- Sexual assault or threats of sexual assault;
- Emotional or psychological abuse (e.g. intimidation, verbal abuse, humiliation, not allowing friends or relatives to visit);
- Denial of rights or restriction of personal freedom (e.g. with-holding money or medical help);
- The imposition of social isolation or movement deprivation.

7. IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/ABUSE ON THE WORKPLACE

Domestic abuse can lead to a variety of problems such as low self esteem, social exclusion, disturbed patterns of eating and sleeping, lack of confidence, depression, extreme anxiety, alcohol and substance misuse, self harm and suicide. The social and economic consequences of domestic violence can include homelessness, loss or separation from family friends, isolation, loss of employment, debt and destitution.

In adopting this policy the Council recognises that domestic abuse is not a private matter and can impact greatly on an individual's working life. Research shows that 75% of domestic abuse victims are targeted at work. It is often possible for perpetrators to use workplace resources, such as telephones, e-mail and other means, to threaten, harass or abuse their current or former partner.

It is known that domestic abuse can affect performance and productivity. The effects of domestic abuse can include decreased productivity, lateness, stress, absenteeism, errors and increased employee turnover. This can have an impact on financial resources and service delivery.

Colleagues may also be affected; they may be followed to or from work, or subject to questioning about the victim's contact details or location. They may have to cover workers while they are off work, try to fend off the abuse and may fear for their own safety.

8. EMPLOYEES EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/ABUSE

Employees who make it known to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council that they are experiencing domestic violence/abuse will be treated in a sympathetic and supportive manner. They will not be judged by other employees and will be encouraged to help themselves out of their abusive circumstances, having due regard for their personal safety and that of their children, where applicable.

Employees can seek advice and support from their line manager. Organisational Development provides a range of supportive and signposting services as set out at [Appendix 1](#), which include:

- [Occupational Health Service](#)
- Trade Union representatives should also be able to provide advice and support □ Other specialist service providers
- [Live Fear Free](#)

Employees who recognise or suspect that a colleague is living in an abusive situation at home should speak in confidence to their line manager. Employees should recognise that they are NOT counsellors and should be wary of promising more than they can deliver in terms of support. They should also consider their own wellbeing, as they may be putting themselves in danger if the abuser becomes aware of their support.

9. THE ROLE OF MANAGERS

Managers should appreciate how difficult it may be for an employee to discuss their personal circumstances and should always offer support in a sensitive and non-judgemental manner. They should also remember that, very often, signs of abuse will not be visible and that an individual may leave their abusive environment only to return again sometime in the future.

Where a manager suspects that an employee is experiencing domestic violence/abuse, they can contact their Organisational Development Business Partner for advice before any discussion takes place with the employee. Any discussion about the employee's situation should take place in private and any questions should be asked with care and sensitivity. Employees should never be pressured into disclosing any personal information that they do not feel comfortable sharing.

Managers may consider implementing reasonable measures which would protect the safety of employees who are experiencing domestic violence/abuse. For example, employees who are concerned for their safety while travelling between work and home, or whilst at work, may benefit from a temporary change of hours or place of work.

Managers should offer ongoing support to employees who are experiencing domestic violence/abuse including time off, for example, for counselling, visits to a solicitor or support agencies, for re-housing or re-organising childcare.

Employees who are experiencing domestic violence/abuse may demonstrate poor punctuality, attendance, work performance and productivity. Managers should be aware that these factors may be symptoms of domestic violence/abuse and take appropriate steps to try and establish this prior to instigating any disciplinary procedures.

10. THE ROLE OF ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Organisational Development Division provides a range of supportive services accessible for potential victims of domestic violence/abuse. Organisational Development Business Partners can also support managers in the management of cases of domestic violence/abuse.

11. THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY MANAGER (POLICY TEAM LEADER)

To raise awareness of the policy and to organise and develop training in conjunction with the Organisational Development Division.

12. THE ROLE OF THE TRADE UNION

The Trade Union Representative will provide support to their members in dealing with cases of domestic abuse/violence.

13. CONFIDENTIALITY AND SECURITY

Discussions between a manager and an employee who is experiencing domestic violence/abuse will be treated in confidence. However, in some circumstances this confidence

may need to be broken in order to protect children or Adults at Risk in conjunction with Corporate Safeguarding policies, or where the employer needs to act to protect the safety of employees.

In circumstances where the Council has to breach confidentiality it will seek specialist advice before doing so. If it decides to proceed in breaching confidentiality after having taken advice, it will discuss with the employee why it is doing so and it will seek the employee's agreement where possible.

As far as possible, information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

Improper disclosure of information i.e. breaches of confidentiality by any member of staff will be taken seriously and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Employees experiencing domestic abuse may choose to be accompanied at meetings by a colleague, trade union representative or a friend.

Employees should be reminded never to divulge personal information about colleagues to callers. On occasions, an employee who is being subjected to domestic violence and/or abuse may ask for telephone calls or personal visits to be directed through a colleague. This should happen only where the colleague is comfortable with such action and any such calls/visits should be reported to the appropriate line manager with the individual's consent.

14. RIGHT TO PRIVACY

The Council respects employees' right to privacy. Whilst the Council strongly encourages victims of domestic abuse to disclose domestic abuse for the safety of themselves and all those in the workplace, it does not force them to share this information with us if they do not want to. The Council does however require perpetrators of domestic abuse to declare any related prosecutions.

15. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

The Council will not discriminate against anyone who has been subjected to domestic abuse both in terms of current employment or future development. If an employee discloses domestic abuse during disciplinary procedures in relation to performance, absenteeism, etc, then this will be taken into account. If it is felt that the issue can be resolved by addressing the support or safety needs of the employee the disciplinary process may be suspended.

16. PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Where a manager is aware that an employee is perpetrating abuse during working hours the matter should be discussed urgently with the Organisational Development Division.

Domestic abuse perpetrated by employees will not be condoned under any circumstances nor will it be treated as a purely private matter. The Council recognises that it has a role in encouraging and supporting employees to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds.

The Council views the use of violence and abusive behaviour by an employee, wherever this occurs, as a serious matter and as such may invoke disciplinary proceedings in line with Council or School Policy.

Where appropriate, action may need to be taken to minimise the potential for perpetrators to use their position or work resources to find out details or the whereabouts of their partners. This may include a change of duties or withdrawing access to certain computer programmes.

If a colleague is found to be assisting an abuser in perpetrating the abuse, for example, by giving them access to facilities such as telephones, e-mail or fax machines this will be taken seriously and as such may invoke disciplinary proceedings in line with Council or School Policy.

Any individual who is cautioned or convicted of a criminal offence may be subject to the Council's or Schools Disciplinary Procedure. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and School Governing Bodies therein reserves the right to consider implementing its Disciplinary Procedure should an employee's activities outside work have an impact on their ability to perform the role for which they are employed, or where their actions are likely to bring the Council or School into disrepute. This applies particularly to those individuals who work with the public, with children or with Adults at Risk. Any individual who is violent to or abusive of, their partner and who is concerned by this behaviour should seek support and help from an appropriate source, such as Occupational Health and other specialist services.

17. IMPLEMENTATION

A training programme in line with VAWDASV National Training Framework will be delivered to all Managers to raise awareness of domestic/ violence/abuse and the understanding of this policy and guidance.

Managers are responsible for raising the awareness of all employees of the policy.

All employees will be made aware of the policy and supporting information by means of the Council newsletters/publications, noticeboards, leaflets and the Intranet.

18. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy links with the following Council policies:

- Work-life Balance/Family Friendly policies
- Managing Attendance
- Management of Violence and Aggression in the Workplace
- Health and Safety
- Schedule of Leave
- Bullying and Harassment
- Capability Policy
- Disciplinary Code
- Alcohol and Drug Policy
- Strategic Equality Scheme
- Safeguarding

19. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

It is recognised that due to confidentiality issues and sensitivities around cases of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, monitoring and evaluation is not always easy. However the following information will be recorded and shared with the Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse Team in Welsh Government:

- How the Policy has been promoted and staff awareness raised;
- Details of planned training and/or numbers of staff who have completed training; and
- The number of hits on the Blaenau Gwent intranet page hosting the workplace policy.

20. HELP AND SUPPORT

- **Occupational Health (Workforce Wellbeing)**

For details contact your Business Partner in the [Organisational Development Division](#).

- **Trade Unions**

Contact your Trade Union Representative

- **All Wales Academy**

Welsh Government has developed an e-learning module to raise awareness regarding violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. This is available on the All Wales Academy, our online learning platform. It is anticipated that it will take approximately 45 minutes to complete the course.

Please click on the link below or paste it into your browser:

<https://learning.wales.nhs.uk/course/view.php?id=219>

Your login/username will be your personal reference number (found on your pay slip) prefixed with BGCBC e.g. **BGCBC123456** and your initial password is **Welcome1%**

If you are asked to enter an enrolment key it is **Blaen15%**

A helpdesk is available to assist with any username/password issues.

Email: elarning@wales.nhs.uk

Telephone: 01443 848636

- **Phoenix Domestic Abuse Services**

Phoenix Domestic Abuse Services is a registered charity established in 2002 to provide a free and confidential information and support service to those affected by domestic abuse within the borough of Blaenau Gwent.

Helpline: 01495 291202

Email: info@phoenixdas.co.uk

Website: <http://www.phoenixdas.co.uk>

- **Live Fear Free**

Live Fear Free is a Welsh Government website, providing information and advice for those suffering with domestic abuse, sexual violence and other forms of violence against women.

Helpline: 0808 8010 800 (24 hour, 365 days per year)

Email: info@livefearfreehelpline.wales

Website: <http://www.livefearfree.gov.wales/>

- **The Dyn Project**

The Safer Wales Dyn project provides support to Heterosexual, Gay, Bisexual and Trans men who are experiencing Domestic abuse from a partner. The Safer Wales Dyn helpline lets you speak confidentially to someone who can listen to you without judging your situation. We can give you support to deal with the problems faced and tell you if there are any services already available in your area. All calls to this line are free & confidential.

Helpline: 0808 801 0321 (Mon: 10am-4pm, Tues: 10am-4pm, Wed: 10am-1pm)

Email: support@dynwales.org

Website: <http://www.dynwales.org/>

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Domestic Abuse, Violence & Sexual Violence Policy



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: October 2020 Review: October 2025

Version Control

This document is intended for:

- Council staff only School-based staff only Council & School-based staff

Version	Key Changes	Approved By
November 2020	Awarding up to 5 days paid Safe Leave as a supportive measure for staff experiencing Domestic Abuse, Violence and Sexual Violence.	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.

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1. Policy Statement

Domestic abuse, violence and sexual violence (“domestic abuse/violence”) are serious social and criminal problems that account for almost a quarter of all violent crime and have significant human and financial consequences for individuals, families, communities and society as a whole.

We recognise that some of our employees will be amongst those affected by abuse either as a survivor or currently living with domestic abuse/violence, , someone who has been impacted by a domestic homicide or as an individual who perpetrates domestic abuse/violence. We are committed to developing a workplace culture in which there is zero tolerance for domestic abuse/violence in all its forms and recognise that the responsibility for such abuse lies with the perpetrator.

We will endeavour to take all possible steps to help combat the reality of domestic abuse/violence through prevention, protection and support for those employees affected by these issues.

Through the effective implementation of this policy and its commitment to multi-agency and partnership working to tackle domestic abuse/violence, we are committed to tackling this issue.

2. Scope

This policy applies to Council and School based employees.

3. Policy Aims and Objectives

We recognise that domestic abuse/violence are significant issues in today’s society and that we have a duty of care to ensure our employees work in a safe environment where risks to health and well-being are considered and dealt with effectively. In conjunction with the Joint Trade Unions we are committed to ensuring support is available to employees who are experiencing or surviving acts of domestic abuse/violence.

The main aims and objectives of this policy are to:

- Positively assist and support employees who are experiencing acts of domestic abuse/violence.
- To increase awareness of the training available and issues associated with all forms of violence and abuse.
- Provide guidance and assist managers in supporting employees who are victims of acts of domestic abuse/violence in their personal lives, and in terms of offering access to counselling and other support to employees perpetrating domestic abuse/violence who seek help from us.

- Reduce absences from work resulting from acts of domestic abuse/violence; and assist in improving any performance issues by offering practical support to employees who are affected.
- Help everyone (including managers and elected members) through training and understanding to recognise potential victims or perpetrators of acts of domestic abuse/violence and to provide a supportive environment for them.
- Reinforce the commitment to the principle that any form of violence or abuse is unacceptable behaviour and that everyone has a right to live free from fear and abuse.

4. Definitions and Key Legislation

It is a requirement of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (“VAWDASV”) that all devolved public sector employers have a work place policy for Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. This policy fulfils that requirement but is not exclusive to women, also including men and non-binary individuals. This policy covers: all forms of gender based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence in recognition that both men, women and non-binary individuals are victims of violence; threats of violence or harassment arising directly or indirectly from values, beliefs or customs relating to gender or sexual orientation; and also forced marriage.

The definition of abuse, violence against women and sexual violence, as set out in VAWDASV, addresses all forms of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence; however women and girls disproportionately experience particular forms of violence.

Domestic Abuse and Violence – Home Office

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. (For example, this can include abuse and violence perpetrated by sons, daughters, grandparents or any other person who has a close or blood relationship with the victim).

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Domestic violence/abuse can manifest itself through a variety of actions such as:

- Physical assault or threats of physical assault (e.g. slapping, pushing, kicking, punching, stabbing or destruction of personal property);
- Sexual assault or threats of sexual assault;

- Emotional or psychological abuse (e.g. intimidation, verbal abuse, humiliation, not allowing friends or relatives to visit);
- Denial of rights or restriction of personal freedom (e.g. withholding money or medical help);
- The imposition of social isolation or movement deprivation.

We recognise that domestic abuse/violence is rarely confined to a single incident and typically forms a pattern of coercive or controlling behaviour.

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Violence against women – United Nations

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

Sexual Violence – United Nations

Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting.

Gender-based violence

'Violence, threats of violence or harassment arising directly or indirectly from values, beliefs or customs relating to gender or sexual orientation; female genital mutilation; forcing a person (whether by physical force or coercion by threats or other psychological means) to enter into a religious or civil ceremony or marriage (whether or not legally binding)'.

Honour based abuse

Honour based abuse is a collection of practices used to control behaviour within families in order to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

Key Legislation

We acknowledge key legislation relevant to violence at work, including:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995
- Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996
- Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) 2015 Act
- Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014
- Equality Act (2010)

5. Impact of Domestic Abuse/Violence on the Workplace

Domestic abuse/violence can lead to a variety of problems such as low self-esteem, social exclusion, disturbed patterns of eating and sleeping, lack of confidence, depression, extreme anxiety, alcohol and substance misuse, self-harm and suicide. The social and economic consequences of domestic abuse/violence can include homelessness, loss or separation from family friends, isolation, loss of employment, debt and destitution.

In adopting this policy we recognise that domestic abuse/violence is not a private matter and can impact greatly on an individual's working life. It is often possible for perpetrators to use workplace resources, such as telephones, e-mail and other means, to threaten, harass or abuse.

It is known that domestic abuse/violence can affect performance and productivity. The effects can include decreased productivity, lateness, stress, absenteeism, errors and increased employee turnover. This can have an impact on financial resources and service delivery.

Colleagues may also be affected; they may be followed to or from work, or subject to questioning about the victim's contact details or location. They may have to cover employees while they are off work, try to fend off the abuse and may fear for their own safety.

6. Employees experiencing Domestic Abuse/ Violence

Employees who make it known to us that they are experiencing domestic abuse/violence will be treated in a sympathetic and supportive manner. They should not be judged by other employees and will be encouraged to help themselves out of their abusive circumstances, having due regard for their personal safety and that of their children, where applicable.

Employees can seek advice and support from their manager. In addition, we provide a range of supportive and signposting services, which include:

- [Occupational Health Service](#)
- [Employee Assistance Programme](#) offering counselling services
- Trade Union representatives should also be able to provide advice and support
- Other specialist service providers
- [Live Fear Free](#) helpline

Further details can be found in the [Help and Support](#) section.

Employees who recognise or suspect that a colleague is living in an abusive situation at home should speak in confidence to their manager. Employees should recognise that they are NOT counsellors and should be wary of promising more than they can deliver in terms of support. They should also consider their own wellbeing, as they may be putting themselves in danger if the abuser becomes aware of their support.

7. Leave, Time Off Work and other Supportive Measures for Victims

We are committed to supporting any employee experiencing domestic abuse/violence as follows:

Safe Leave

Safe Leave – up to 5 days paid safe leave pro rata is available to employees experiencing domestic abuse/violence for reasons including, but not limited to:

- Seeking Safe Housing
- Visiting legal advisors or support agencies for re-housing, to make alternative childcare arrangements, including meetings with schools, or other relevant appointments.
- Financial support

In addition, managers should also explore other measures supportively and sympathetically, which may include:

- Financial support, to prevent financial coercion, i.e. paying the victim's wages into a different bank account.
- Temporary or permanent changes to working times and patterns.
- Changes to specific duties, for example to avoid potential contact with an abuser in a customer-facing role.
- Redeployment or relocation.
- Measures to ensure a safe working environment, for example changing a telephone number to avoid harassing phone calls.
- Using other existing policies, including flexible working.
- Access to counselling/support services in paid time and the Occupational Health Service.
- Access to courses developed to support survivors of domestic abuse/violence, for example, The Freedom Programme or assertiveness training.

Managers will respect the right of staff to make their own decision on the course of action at every stage, subject to us being able to accommodate them via the above supportive measures.

8. The Role of Managers

Managers should appreciate how difficult it may be for an employee to discuss their personal circumstances and should always offer support in a sensitive and non-judgemental manner.

The role of the manager is to:

- Identify employees experiencing difficulties as a result of domestic abuse/violence where possible (for example, using regular performance coaching, or by fostering an open management culture that enables team members to disclose sensitive issues);
- Provide support in the first instance, including specific advice on the options available, but also recognising the limitations of their role (referring to professional counsellors or experts where necessary);
- Protect confidentiality in all instances (excepting the requirements of Safeguarding and/or protecting other employees);
- Refer individuals to the appropriate internal or external source of help and support;
- Ensure that the safety of all employees in the team is protected;
- Enable the affected employee to remain productive and at work during a difficult period in their domestic life, for example by utilising the available policies;
- Raise awareness of the policy to all employees;
- Keep training up to date in line with the National Training Framework relating to VAWDASV.

Where a manager suspects that an employee is experiencing domestic abuse/violence, they can contact the Organisational Development Team for advice before any discussion takes place with the employee. Any discussion about the employee's situation should take place in private and any questions should be asked with care and sensitivity but employees should never be pressured into disclosing any personal information that they do not feel comfortable sharing. In agreement with the staff member, another member of staff may be appointed as a nominated point of contact for the employee to support them further. This person will also provide guidance for line managers and union representatives who are approached by staff who are being abused.

Managers may consider implementing reasonable measures, which would support employees who are experiencing domestic abuse/violence as per section 7 above.

Employees who are experiencing domestic abuse/violence may demonstrate poor punctuality, attendance, work performance and productivity. Managers should be aware that these factors may be symptoms of violence and/or abuse and take appropriate steps to try and establish this prior to instigating any formal procedures.

9. Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse/Violence

Where a manager is aware that an employee is perpetrating abuse during working hours the matter should be discussed urgently with the Organisational Development Team.

Domestic abuse/violence perpetrated by employees is not accepted under any circumstances. We recognise that we have a role in encouraging and supporting employees to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds.

We view the use of violence and abusive behaviour by an employee, under any circumstances, as a serious matter and as such will likely invoke the disciplinary procedure.

Where appropriate, action will need to be taken to minimise the potential for perpetrators to use their position or work resources to establish details or the whereabouts of their potential victims. This can include a change of duties or withdrawing access to certain computer programmes.

If a colleague is found to be assisting an abuser in perpetrating abuse, for example, by giving them access to facilities such as telephones or e-mail, this will be taken seriously and as such is likely to invoke the disciplinary procedure.

Any individual, who is prosecuted, convicted or cautioned in respect of a criminal offence, may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure. We therein reserve the right to implement the Disciplinary Procedure should an employee's activities outside work have an impact on their ability to perform the role for which they are employed, or where their actions are likely to bring the Council/School into disrepute. Any individual who is violent to others or abusive should seek support and help from an appropriate source.

10. Training & Awareness Raising

We are committed to ensuring all managers are aware of domestic abuse/violence and its implications in the workplace.

All employees will be made aware of this policy and supporting information by means of newsletters/publications, noticeboards, and the Intranet.

A training programme in line with VAWDASV National Training Framework is delivered as part of an ongoing rolling programme to raise awareness of violence and/or abuse and the understanding of this policy and guidance.

All employees are required to undertake the VAWDASV training, available at a level in-line with their role. Managers should confirm with new employees that they have completed the training appropriate to their role as part of their induction/probationary period.

Information, briefings or awareness raising sessions will ensure that all managers are able to:

- Identify, where possible, if an employee is experiencing difficulties because of domestic abuse/violence.
- Respond to disclosure in a sensitive and non-judgemental manner.
- Provide initial support – be clear about available workplace support.
- Discuss how the organisation can contribute to safety planning.
- Signpost to other organisations and sources of support.
- Understand that they are not counsellors.

11. Confidentiality

Discussions between a manager and an employee who is experiencing domestic abuse/violence will be treated in confidence. However, in some circumstances this confidence may need to be broken in order to protect children or adults at risk in conjunction with Corporate Safeguarding policies, or where the employer needs to act to protect the safety of employees.

In circumstances where we have to breach confidentiality, we will seek specialist advice before doing so. If we decide to proceed in breaching confidentiality after having taken advice, we will discuss with the employee why we are doing so and will seek the employee's agreement where possible.

As far as possible, information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

Improper disclosure of information i.e. breaches of confidentiality by any member of staff will be taken seriously and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Employees experiencing domestic abuse/violence may choose to be accompanied at meetings by a colleague or trade union representative.

Employees are reminded of the importance of not divulging personal details of other employees, such as addresses, telephone numbers or shift patterns. This is paramount when dealing with honour based abuse cases.

If an employee does not wish to discuss the detail of the domestic abuse/violence with their manager, the manager should advise them of other specialist agencies they can speak with as outlined in the help & support section of this policy.

All employees are encouraged to report if they suspect a colleague is experiencing or perpetrating abuse. Employees should speak to their manager about their concerns in confidence. In dealing with a disclosure from a colleague, managers should ensure that the person is made aware of this policy and that there is internal and external support available.

12. Right to Privacy

We respect employees' right to privacy. Whilst we strongly encourage victims of domestic abuse/violence to disclose for the safety of themselves and all those in the workplace, we will not force them to share this information if they do not want to. We do however; require perpetrators of domestic abuse/violence to declare any related prosecutions, convictions or cautions.

13. Equality Statement

We acknowledge that domestic abuse/violence can occur in all areas of society. We recognise that domestic abuse/violence is an equalities issue and that some employees may face additional barriers and issues in seeking help because of their ethnic background, religion, age, sexual orientation, disability or gender, which might make them feel particularly vulnerable when talking about their situation.

Any training on the subject of domestic abuse/violence will incorporate an appreciation of these issues and how to overcome the barriers presented to these individuals.

We will not discriminate against anyone who has been subjected to domestic abuse/violence both in terms of current employment or future development. If an employee discloses domestic abuse/violence during disciplinary procedures in relation to performance, absenteeism, etc. this will be taken into account. If it is felt that, the issue can be resolved by addressing the support or safety needs of the employee the disciplinary process may be suspended.

14. Performance Measures

It is recognised that due to confidentiality issues and sensitivities around cases of violence, domestic abuse and/or sexual violence, monitoring and evaluation is not

always easy. However, the following information may be recorded and shared with the Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse Team in Welsh Government:

- How the Policy has been promoted and staff awareness raised;
- Details of planned training and/or numbers of staff who have completed training; and
- The number of hits on the Blaenau Gwent intranet page hosting the workplace policy.

15. Data Protection

When an individual experiences domestic abuse/violence and is receiving support, any personal data collected will be processed in accordance with the relevant data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which we become aware of the issue is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of providing the necessary support.

16. Help and Support

- **Occupational Health & Employee Assistance Programme**

For details on Occupational Health, employees should contact their Manager or Organisational Development Team. Further information can also be found on the Organisational Development page of the intranet.

The Employee Assistance Programme employs professionally qualified Counsellors and Information Specialists, who are experienced in helping people to deal with all kinds of practical and emotional issues such as Wellbeing, family matters, relationships, debt management, workplace issues, and much more.

Telephone: **0800 174319**

- **All Wales Academy**

Welsh Government has developed an e-learning module to raise awareness regarding violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. This is available on the All Wales Academy, the Council's online learning platform and is a mandatory training requirement. It is anticipated that it will take approximately 45 minutes to complete the course.

Please click on the link below or paste it into your browser:

<https://learning.wales.nhs.uk/course/view.php?id=219>

Your login/username will be your personal reference number (found on your pay slip) prefixed with BGCBC e.g. **BGCBC123456** and your initial password is **Welcome1%**

If you are asked to enter an enrolment key, it is **Blaen15%**

A helpdesk is available to assist with any username/password issues.
Email: elarning@wales.nhs.uk
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- **Phoenix Domestic Abuse Services**

Phoenix Domestic Abuse Services is a registered charity established in 2002 to provide a free and confidential information and support service to those affected by domestic abuse within the borough of Blaenau Gwent.

Helpline: 01495 291202
Email: info@phoenixdas.co.uk
Website: <http://www.phoenixdas.co.uk>

- **Live Fear Free**

Live Fear Free is a Welsh Government website, providing information and advice for those suffering with domestic abuse, sexual violence and other forms of violence against women.

Helpline: 0808 8010 800 (24 hour, 365 days per year)
Email: info@livefearfreehelpline.wales
Website: <http://www.livefearfree.gov.wales/>

- **The Dyn Project**

The Safer Wales Dyn project provides support to Heterosexual, Gay, Bisexual and Trans men who are experiencing Domestic abuse from a partner. The Safer Wales Dyn helpline lets you speak confidentially to someone who can listen to you without judging your situation. We can give you support to deal with the problems faced and tell you if there are any services already available in your area. All calls to this line are free & confidential.

Helpline: 0808 801 0321 (Mon: 10am-4pm, Tues: 10am-4pm, Wed: 10am-1pm)
Email: support@dynwales.org
Website: <http://www.dynwales.org/>

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Agenda Item 7

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **22 January 2021**
Report Subject: **Acceptable Usage Policy**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Nigel Daniels, Leader of the Council & Executive Member Corporate Services**
Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer Resources**

Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	7/1/21	11.01.21			22/01/21		28/01/21	Information Governance Forum – 18/12/20

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To provide Members with an opportunity to scrutinise the revised Acceptable Usage Policy and recommend its adoption by the Council
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The attached document is the proposed acceptable Usage Policy for the Council which provides guidance and an overview of the Council's expectations on the acceptable usage of systems, resources and work spaces.
 - 2.2 The draft Policy has been revised and updates / replaces the Council's current policies:-
 - Email Acceptable Use
 - Internet Acceptable Use
 - 2.3 The Policy applies to all Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council employees, Schools, volunteers, Members, contractors, third parties and all other authorised users with access to the Council's information assets.
 - 2.4 It identifies the general principles and mandatory controls that are required and applies to all information, hardware devices and data within Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 **Option 1:** (preferred option) The Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee considers the attached Acceptable Usage Policy and recommends the Council approves the Policy.

Option 2: The Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee comment and suggest amendments/additions to the Policy prior to recommendation to the Council.

3.2 The Policy was considered by the Information Governance Forum on 18 December 2020 and CLT on 7 January 2020, both supported the proposed policy.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 **Statutory Responsibility:**

This policy contains mandatory controls that are required in order to meet regulation and standards including:

- Data Protection Act 2018 / GDPR - requires personal data to be properly safeguarded and not disclosed unless properly authorised and justified. It also requires us to state the legal basis under which we gather, retain and use data along with allowing the data subject the right access to see the information and ensure its accuracy.
- Computer Misuse Act 1990 (and amendments within The Serious Crime Act 2015) – renders it illegal to gain access to or use a computer without authority.
- Freedom of Information Act 2000 - provides for disclosure of non-personal data, subject to exemptions including the prevention and detection of crime.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 *Impact on Budget*

There is no direct impact upon the budget as a result of implementing this policy however compliance with the policy will help to keep the Council's information assets safe, minimise data breaches and protect the Council's reputation.

5.2 *Risk*

Unacceptable Usage of the Council's assets may result in loss or compromise of information assets and have a detrimental impact upon the reputation of both individuals and the Council.

Development and implementation of and compliance with the Policy will mitigate this risk by ensuring all parties understand their responsibilities and the Council's expectations.

5.3 *Legal*

This policy contains mandatory controls that are required in order to meet regulation and standards including:

- Data Protection Act 2018 / GDPR
- Computer Misuse Act 1990 (and amendments within The Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Freedom of Information Act 2000

5.4 *Human Resources*

The Policy applies to all Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council employees, Schools, volunteers, Members, contractors, third parties and all other authorised users with access to the Council's information assets.

Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action.

6. Supporting Evidence

- 6.1 *Performance Information and Data*
n/a
- 6.2 *Expected outcome for the public*
Development, implementation & compliance with the Acceptable Usage Policy will provide assurance to the public that their personal, sensitive information held by the Council is secure and used appropriately.
- 6.3 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*
The Policy was developed in consultation with the Council's Information Governance Forum.
- 6.4 *Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)*
Compliance with the Policy will ensure that the Council's Information Assets are secure and the Council's reputation maintained. The Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains appropriate.
- 6.5 *Preventative focus*
Compliance with the Policy will minimise the likelihood of Unacceptable Usage of the Councils assets.
- 6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working*
n/a
- 6.7 *Integration (across service areas)*
The Policy applies to users in all service areas.
- 6.8 *EqIA*
The Policy has no impact on protective characteristics.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1 Compliance with the policy will be monitored through the Council's performance management arrangements.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Acceptable Usage Policy

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1.0 Aims of Policy

1.1 Scope

1.1.1 This policy applies to all Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council employees, Schools, volunteers, members, contractors, third parties and all authorised users with access to our information assets. They are referred to as 'users' throughout this policy.

1.1.2 This policy contains mandatory controls that are required in order to meet regulation and standards including:

- Data Protection Act 2018 / GDPR - requires personal data to be properly safeguarded and not disclosed unless properly authorised and justified. It also requires us to state the legal basis under which we gather, retain and use data along with allowing the data subject the right access to see the information and ensure its accuracy.
- Computer Misuse Act 1990 (and amendments within The Serious Crime Act 2015) – renders it illegal to gain access to or use a computer without authority.
- Freedom of Information Act 2000 - provides for disclosure of non-personal data, subject to exemptions including the prevention and detection of crime.

1.1.3 It is intended to provide you with guidance and understanding of acceptable usage of systems, resources and workspaces within the organisation.

1.1.4 This policy and the statements contained within apply to all information, hardware devices and data, within Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

1.1.5 Where this policy refers to other standards, procedures and guidelines they must be read in conjunction with this policy.

1.1.6 Failure to comply with certain statements within this document may result in the council being subject to penalty fines or regulatory action and could lead to disciplinary action being taken.

1.2 Roles and Responsibilities

- 1.2.1 All Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council users have a duty of care to ensure security is maintained. When data is processed as part of a business requirement they must ensure it is safe and secure at all times and is only distributed to the correct people.
- 1.2.2 Any security issues identified or suspected must be reported to the Data Protection Officer through the escalation procedures (dataprotection@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk) as well as the Information Security Officer via security@blaenau-gwent.co.uk
- 1.2.3 All users are responsible for ensuring their Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council equipment including laptops, mobiles and tablets are secure and are never left unattended, particularly in public places.

1.3 Challenges & Representations

- 1.3.1 Challenges and representations concerning this policy should be directed to the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) and Information Security Officer at security@blaenau-gwent.co.uk

1.4 Clear Workstation Practices

- 1.4.1 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council works in a very agile way, and as a result much of its information is electronic. However, where paper documents are used they must be managed in a way that prevents unauthorised access to sensitive information. This includes securing physical information in appropriate cabinets when not in use, particularly outside normal working hours. It's also important to make sure that paper documents taken away from the office are stored separately from desirable items like laptops or other mobile devices.
- 1.4.2 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council users should not leave any documents on their desks or workstations overnight.

1.5 Clear Screen Practice

- 1.5.1 Password protected screen savers must be activated when you leave your laptop or mobile device to prevent unauthorised access to information or systems. Be aware that mobile devices are desirable and can be the target for thieves. Make sure they are all password protected and that screen locks are activated if they haven't been accessed for 30 seconds.

1.6 Corporate Assets (Software / Hardware)

- 1.6.1 Use of corporate systems is granted subject to the users understanding & acceptance of the following statements:
- 1.6.2 Individuals must undergo security awareness education upon hire and at least annually. It is the responsibility of management to ensure this is completed.

- 1.6.3 Any security issues identified or suspected must be reported to the Data Protection Officer through the escalation procedures (dataprotection@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk) as well as the Information Security Officer via security@blaenau-gwent.co.uk
- 1.6.4 Data created & stored on corporate systems remains the property of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
- 1.6.5 Corporate resources or devices are not to be used for personal use or business use that implicates illegal activity.
- 1.6.6 Monitoring and auditing may be performed on systems and user activity.
- 1.6.7 Access credentials including but not limited to passwords, door entry cards, PINs and ID badges must not be shared, divulged, published, copied or written down.
- 1.6.8 It is a disciplinary offence to attempt to circumvent or by-pass information security controls and policies.
- 1.6.9 Corporate devices, including workstations, PCs, laptops, and mobile phones must be screen locked or logged off when not in use or unattended.
- 1.6.10 You must not attach/connect any unapproved third party hardware to your Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council equipment. If you require access to additional equipment or require third party hardware to be connected to your devices, you must request this via SRS Service Desk.
- 1.6.11 You will be prevented from loading unauthorised software onto any Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's systems or devices. This is a critical part of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's security arrangements and you must not attempt to alter/amend/compromise the security in any way.
- 1.6.12 Approved/licenced software and/or Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's corporate information must not be downloaded, copied, shared, compromised, deleted, or distributed in any way that may have the potential to cause the council harm.

1.7 Email

- 1.7.1 Use of Email systems is granted subject to the users understanding & acceptance of the following statements:-
- 1.7.1 Email access may be revoked at any time if access is abused or is no longer necessary.
- 1.7.2 Email is primarily for business communication and purposes.
- 1.7.3 Email traffic and content is subject to monitoring and should not be considered private.
- 1.7.4 Users using corporate email represent the business in their behaviour and communications. Individuals must not discuss, divulge, publish or post information that may compromise the council's interests or bring the council into disrepute.
- 1.7.5 Email encryption method must be used when transferring confidential data externally. Please contact the SRS Service Desk if you require assistance with the email encryption process.
- 1.7.6 The forwarding of chain-mails, unsolicited 'spam' emails or suspicious email is prohibited.

1.8 Internet

- 1.8.1 Internet access is granted subject to the users understanding & acceptance of the following statements:-
- 1.8.2 Internet access to certain websites is granted to users for business use.
- 1.8.3 Internet websites may be blocked depending on their content or category.
- 1.8.4 Internet access to certain websites is based on job roles or department requirements. As such, some individuals will have different access to others.
- 1.8.5 Internet access may be revoked at any time if it is abused or is no longer deemed necessary.
- 1.8.6 Occasional personal internet use is allowed at the discretion of management, and personal browsing should only be undertaken at the end of the users working day/shift.
- 1.8.7 Internet usage, traffic and content is subject to monitoring.
- 1.8.8 Individuals using corporate internet connections represent the business in their behaviour and communications. Individuals must not discuss, divulge, publish or post information that may compromise the council's interests or bring the council into disrepute.
- 1.8.9 Users will only access appropriate content using Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council technology and not intentionally visit sites or news groups that are obscene, indecent or advocate illegal activity.

- 1.8.10 Do not attempt to bypass Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council web filters.
- 1.8.11 Users will use social media appropriately by making themselves aware of the Social Media policy.
- 1.8.12 Users will not put Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council information including anything that is sensitive / personal information onto online forums, blogs or social networking sites.
- 1.8.13 Users will only use approved Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council social media accounts for official business and where appropriate, use Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council branding and a professional image or persona on such accounts.
- 1.8.14 Users must be aware that their social media content may be available for anyone to see, indexed by Google and archived for posterity.

1.9 Remote Working / Mobile Devices

- 1.9.1 When working remotely users must make all reasonable efforts to secure the data and assets of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. Remote users should not leave their equipment unlocked or unattended at any time.
- 1.9.2 Remote workers must keep Information Assets in a locked area, cupboard or safe, out of plain sight, out of the reach of children and animals, away from any sources of heat, cold, or liquid.
- 1.9.3 When working remotely, be mindful of meetings and telephone conversations you are having in your environment. Make sure that your door is shut or nobody can eavesdrop when discussing confidential/corporate issues so that members of your family/third parties are not able to hear the detail of that conversation.
- 1.9.4 Users must immediately report any incidents that involves loss, theft, or compromise of an asset or loss or corruption of data.

1.10 User IDs and passwords

- 1.10.1 Users will protect usernames, staff numbers, ID badges and passwords appropriately.
- 1.10.2 Users will create secure passwords following best practice guidance.
- 1.10.3 Users will not logon to/or attempt to access any Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council system using another user's credentials.

1.11 Unacceptable use

- 1.11.1 Users will not trade or canvass support for any organisation on official premises, whether it is for personal gain from any type of transaction or on behalf of external bodies.
- 1.11.2 Users will not send messages or material that solicit or promote religious, political or other non-business-related causes, unless authorised by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

- 1.11.3 Users will not create or transmit any offensive, obscene or indecent images, data or any data capable of being resolved into obscene or indecent images or material on Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council corporate assets or network.
- 1.11.4 Users will not create or transmit any material which is considered to facilitate harassment, bullying and/or victimisation of a user within Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
- 1.11.5 Users will not provide unauthorised views or commitments that could appear to be on behalf of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.
- 1.11.6 Users will not use any type of applications and/or devices to circumvent management or security controls.
- 1.11.7 Users will not access personal webmail accounts on Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council equipment.
- 1.11.8 Users will not download photographs, music, video or other media-related files for non-business purposes or store such files on network drives
- 1.11.9 Users will not access or try to access data or physical areas within Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council where the user knows or ought to know that they should have no access
- 1.11.10 Users will not carry out hacking activities
- 1.11.11 Users will not intentionally or recklessly introduce any form of spyware, computer virus, data-interception, password-detection or other potentially malicious software onto Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's network, systems, corporate devices, etc
- 1.11.12 Users will not use any information that they access or obtain as part of their role for any other purpose other than what their role permits.

1.12 Monitoring

- 1.12.1 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council records and monitors the use of its assets (hardware and software) under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (2000) for the purposes of:
- 1.12.2 The effective and efficient planning and operation of its assets (hardware and software)
- 1.12.3 Investigation, detection and prevention of infringement of the law, this policy or other council policies
- 1.12.4 Investigation of alleged misconduct by users

1.13 Compliance

- 1.13.1 If a Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Employee, Members, Contractor or Third Party breaches this policy, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council may:
- Restrict or terminate the User's right to use Information Assets;

- Withdraw or remove any material uploaded by that User in contravention of this policy;
- Disclose information to law enforcement and regulatory agencies and take legal action;
- Take such other action as it deems appropriate, including up to and including dismissal through the disciplinary procedure.

Version Control

Author	Version	Date	Comment
Information Security Manager	2021_1	January 2021	

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Agenda Item 8

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: **Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee**

Date of Meeting: **22nd January 2021**

Report Subject: **Trans Equality Policy**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Daniels Leader / Executive Member – Corporate Services.**

Report Submitted by: **Andrea J Prosser – Head of Organisational 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)
09/12/20	10/12/20	11.01.21			22/01/21		28/01/21	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to scrutinise, challenge and give views on the proposed Trans Equality Policy, prior to being submitted to Full Council for approval to implement.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Trans Equality Policy has been developed to supplement existing policies and to ensure that employees who do not identify with their birth assigned gender have the right to equal treatment and protection from discrimination at work, and managers are clear about their individual roles and responsibilities for supporting colleagues who are transitioning whilst in the workplace.
- 2.2 The implementation of the Trans Equality Policy will evidence that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is committed to supporting employees undergoing, or planning to undergo, gender reassignment and transition. It will also show the Council and Schools aim to eliminate discrimination based on Gender Identity, whilst creating a culture of respect for human rights and where our employees feel valued.
- 2.3 This Policy has been developed in respect of all employees of the Council, including School based employees and subject to approval will be recommended to School Governing Bodies for adoption.
- 2.4 The Trans Equality Policy has been developed in line with the Equality Act 2010, and the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

3. Options for Recommendation

The Corporate Leadership Team considered this report and Policy on the 10th December and support the approval and implementation of the Policy.

- 3.1 **Option 1: (preferred option)** Members of the Committee to consider the Policy and recommend approval to Council.

3.2 **Option 2:** Members of the Committee suggest further amendments/additions to the Policy.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 **Statutory Responsibilities**

As outlined at 2.4 above, this policy has been developed to supplement existing policies and is in line with the Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against, or treat someone unfairly because of gender reassignment. The policy has also been developed in line with the Gender Recognition Act 2004, which places a proactive duty on public organisations to promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations and eliminate unlawful discrimination between individuals who have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment and individuals who do not.

4.2 **Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

The policy, by offering increased support to Trans Employees helps to promote the following aspects of the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan:

- Safe and friendly communities
- To encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the places that they live, learn, work and play.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget**

There is no direct cost to the implementation of this policy.

5.2 **Risk**

Should Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council not implement a Trans Equality Policy, it could prove more difficult to evidence at an Employment Tribunal that an employee has not been discriminated against based on gender reassignment, which is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

5.3 **Human Resources**

The implementation of the Trans Equality Policy, would evidence that the Council and Schools are a Trans-Inclusive Workplace, enabling Trans employees to feel supported. The policy aims to provide support and guidance to the Trans employee and manager alike to support during this process.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

Consultation, engagement and participation regarding the development of the policy has been internal to the Council, along with the Trade Unions who are supportive of the policy.

6.2 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

The policy is intended to provide increased support to all Council and school based employees and the clear aim and aspiration of the policy is that, long-term (and short-term), Trans employees will be supported and assisted by it.

6.3

EqlA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)

The newly developed policy supplements existing policies in promoting equal opportunity.

7 Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 In Wales, the Equality Act 2010 (Wales) Regulations 2011 places a specific legal duty upon public authorities that requires the Authority to have effective arrangements in place to monitor equality and have in place systems to gather, analyse and publish employment monitoring data. No information will be published, or used in any way that identifies an individual.

7.2 The policy will be monitored regularly and reviewed in line with OD's Policy Schedule.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Trans Equality Policy

Appendix 2 – EqlA

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Trans Equality Policy



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: xx Review: xx

Version Control

This document is intended for:

- Council staff only School-based staff only Council & School-based staff

Version	Key Changes	Approved By

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.

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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Trans Equality Policy has been developed to ensure that employees who do not identify with their birth assigned gender have the right to equal treatment and protection from discrimination at work, and managers are clear about their individual roles and responsibilities for supporting colleagues who are transitioning whilst in the workplace.
- 1.2 For the purpose of this policy, 'we', 'us' and 'our' refers to the Council and Schools.
- 1.3 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is committed to supporting employees undergoing, or planning to undergo, gender reassignment and transition.
- 1.4 We will seek to not only eliminate all discrimination based on Gender Identity, but also create a working environment based on good relations between all employees, with a shared commitment to respecting diversity and difference. In addition, we will seek to ensure that its work environment enables employees to work to their full potential, provide a place where there is a culture of respect for human rights, and where employees feel valued.
- 1.5 This Policy is based on the principle that we will ensure that no transgender person will be treated less favourably on the grounds that they are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. We respect an individual's right to self-identify as male, female, or non-binary and we commit to recognising all employees as the gender in which they choose to present.
- 1.6 This policy has been developed in line with ACAS Guidance on Gender Reassignment, the Equality Act 2010, and alongside the Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024.

2. Definition

- 2.1 Although it is difficult to identify an exact number of individuals within the UK, there is a large number of individuals whose gender identity does not match their birth assigned gender, also known as Gender Dysphoria.
- 2.2 The term 'Trans' is used as a generic term referring to individuals who identify as transgender, transsexual, and transvestite and we will not discriminate against employees on the grounds of any of the identities under the trans umbrella.
- 2.3 Trans or 'transgender' describes individuals whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth. They are umbrella terms covering individuals who:
 - are intending to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender reassignment at any stage;
 - identify as having a gender different from that which they were assigned at birth and are planning or have had medical interventions such as hormones or surgery;

- identify as having a gender different from that which they were assigned at birth, but who are not planning any medical intervention; and/or,
 - Are non-binary – that is, they are not solely male or female. They may define themselves as both, neither or something entirely different. They may or may not have medical interventions to align their body with their non-binary gender identity.
- 2.4 Some Trans individuals want their body to match their gender identify, and will undergo a process of gender reassignment. However, the term transgender also covers those who cannot, or have decided not to undergo medical treatment. When referring to ‘gender identity’, this covers both the identities of individuals living in the gender of their birth sex, and the identities of transgender individuals. We recognise there is no right or wrong way to transition and are committed to supporting each individual in their decisions.
- 2.5 Trans individuals will self-identify. How they choose to describe themselves must be respected. If in doubt, always ask the individual how they wish for you to address them.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all employees and potential employees of the Council and School based employees.

4. Legislation

- 4.1 This policy has been developed in line with the legal obligations under The Equality Act 2010 and the Gender Recognition Act 2004.
- 4.2 The Equality Act 2010 (EqA 2010) makes gender reassignment a protected characteristic in its own right, and defines gender reassignment as applying to someone who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process (or part of a process) to realign their gender by changing physiological or other attributes of their sex.
- 4.3 The EqA 2010 makes it clear that it is not necessary for an individual to have obtained medical intervention to gain protection; it is a personal process of moving away from a person’s birth gender to their preferred gender.
- 4.4 The term “transgender” is applied when someone has the protected characteristics of gender reassignment.
- 4.5 The EqA 2010 protects individuals based on gender reassignment from direct and indirect discrimination and harassment. This includes discrimination by association and discrimination against individuals perceived to have the protected characteristics of gender reassignment. All employees have a duty to respect others in line with the EqA 2010.

- 4.6 The Gender Recognition Act 2004 (GRA 2004) provides Trans individuals (aged over 18) with the opportunity to obtain legal recognition in their acquired gender by being issued with a gender recognition certificate (GRC). Anyone with a GRC will be legally recognised as their acquired gender, this means the person will acquire the rights and responsibilities of their acquired gender from the date of recognition. However, not all Trans individuals will choose to apply for a GRC and it is not our policy to ask a member of staff or job applicant if they have a GRC, or to ask to see a GRC. Asking a colleague or job applicant if they have, or asking to see, a GRC is not permitted; and could be regarded as harassment, and will be dealt with under the relevant Council/ Schools policies.
- 4.7 The GRA 2004 also places a proactive duty on public organisations through the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations and eliminate unlawful discrimination between individuals who have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment and individuals who do not.

5. Equality

- 5.1 We will not discriminate on the grounds of gender identity in the way we recruit and select employees and will ensure that transgender employees have equal access to all forms of training and development opportunities. We will ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of gender identity in relation to dismissal of employees. Abuse, harassment or bullying (e.g. name-calling, derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour and intrusive questions) will be treated seriously, and should be dealt with under the relevant Dignity at Work Policy and Disciplinary Policy. Harassment also includes persistent and/or malicious use of the incorrect pronoun or “dead naming” (i.e. calling someone by their birth/pre-transition name after they have changed their name).
- 5.2 We recognise that stereotyped gender roles can be harmful to Trans individuals, who may feel constrained to behave in ways, or work in areas that are traditionally considered appropriate for their registered sex at birth (or appropriate for their role during and after gender transition). Encouragement and support will be given to any employee who is trying to step outside the constraints of stereotypes in any area of our work.
- 5.3 Transgender employees have equal rights and equal access to benefits. This includes equal recognition of their partner and family, and they must not be discriminated against on the grounds of gender or marital/civil partnership status.

Such Benefits include:

- Paternity Leave and Parental leave
- State pensions (received at a date relating to their age and gender once Gender Recognition Certificate received)
- Passing on pensions rights to partner/children

6. Support

- 6.1 Employees planning to undergo gender reassignment are encouraged to speak to their manager or someone else in confidence, as early as possible before they wish to transition in order that we can provide the necessary support.
- 6.2 The first step will be to work together, with the help of Organisational Development, to develop a plan of how the employee's transition to a new gender will be accommodated in the workplace. This may take some time and will usually involve a number of discussions at which the employee's needs and feelings will be explored together with all of the work implications.

Things for managers to consider include:

- The expected timescales of any medical or surgical procedures (if the employee is proposing to undergo surgery)
 - The amount of time off that may be required for treatment and/or possible side effects from any medication
 - The expected point or phases of change of name, personal details and gender
 - Whether the employee wishes to inform colleagues themselves or would prefer others to do this
 - Discussing with the employee changes to their employment records
 - What other support the employee may need
 - Use of single sex facilities
 - Any other matters, which may include redeployment, suitable alternative employment and retirement on medical grounds in exceptional circumstances.
- 6.3 It should be noted, however, that there is no requirement for a Trans individual to inform their employer of their gender reassignment status and we will not in any way penalise any employee for failing to make their transitioning status known to their manager, colleagues or Organisational Development, or for any delays in making this information known.
- 6.4 Equally, the employee transitioning should appreciate that they cannot expect that we will be able to make reasonable adjustments on their behalf if we are unaware of their status.

7. Adjustment of Records

- 7.1 For the purposes of the Data Protection Act 2018, gender reassignment and any information relating to an individual's gender history would constitute 'sensitive data' which can only be processed for certain specified reasons, as set out in the Act.
- 7.2 We will respect any request for anonymity and will seek to update our records to include the chosen name and gender identified by the individual upon request, whether or not we are in receipt of any legal notice of change, and will agree for this change to take place at an agreed time.

- 7.3 As transgender individuals have not been able to gain legal recognition of their 'new' gender in the past, it may be necessary for some records (e.g. relating to pensions) to include a reference to legal sex.
- 7.4 After transition, any new records for the individual shall refer only to the new name and acquired gender. Records pre-dating transition will be updated. Wherever possible, details of previous name and gender should be deleted, as it would be discriminatory not to do so unless their retention is justified and proportionate.
- 7.5 Managers should be mindful that it is inappropriate to request evidence of name and gender change and unlawful to disclose an employee's transgender status without their consent.
- 7.6 If legal notice in the form of a Gender Recognition Certificate; Statutory Declaration of Name Change or Deed Poll is provided, then access to records showing the change of name and any other details associated with an employee's transgender status (i.e. records of absence for medical treatment) should be restricted to appropriate employees who 'need to know' for specific reasons. This refers to those directly involved in the administrative process i.e. the individuals Line Manager, Organisational Development, Payroll or Pensions section. Failure to update and maintain records to reflect the employees' transition could result in unlawful disclosure of the employees' transition.

8. Time off Work

- 8.1 A Trans employee undergoing medical and surgical procedures relating to gender reassignment may require time off from work. There are specific rules under the Equality Act 2010 governing those undergoing gender reassignment. Employees undergoing this procedure should not be treated less favourably than they would be treated if absent due to sickness or injury.
- 8.2 Managers should be aware that it might not be straightforward for Trans employees to provide evidence of medical appointments. For example, provision of a letter from a gender identity clinic may in itself be quite revealing and intrusive. Therefore, medical proof should not necessarily be a requirement for consideration of time off work to be granted.
- 8.3 The manager should show the same flexibility as for someone undergoing any other treatment or operation. For individual appointments, employees should follow the normal policy for medical appointments. As a matter of good practice, managers should offer flexibility to employees who take annual leave or rearrange working hours in order to attend additional appointments i.e. electrolysis. Managers should remember that it would constitute unlawful discrimination if they treat an employee that is undergoing gender reassignment less favourably than someone absent for some other medical reason.
- 8.4 Complications may arise as a result of medical treatment for gender reassignment resulting in prolonged incapacity for work. As with any long-term illness, the employee will be supported and monitored by their manager, with advice from Occupational

Health and Organisational Development. If incapacity continues beyond normal expectations for the process undergone, the relevant Attendance Management Policy will give guidance to managers on how to proceed. This will include options to consider reasonable adjustments; redeployment; retirement on medical grounds; or the potential for dismissal, in the same way as any other person who becomes unfit for employment due to ill health.

- 8.5 We will provide support for employees returning after a break caused by medical and surgical treatment, and will adopt a flexible approach which endeavours (whenever possible) to meet the individual needs of employees who are recuperating. It may be appropriate to discuss a phased return to work in accordance with the relevant Attendance Management Policy.
- 8.6 Time off related to an employee's transition will not be taken into account when considering them for promotion, pay progression or in relation to a redundancy situation.

9. Period of Transition

- 9.1 An employee who has taken the decision to go through the transition process can request a meeting with their manager and/or a member of Organisational Development to inform them of their decision. Whilst there is no statutory requirement, they may wish to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.
- 9.2 Topics that could be discussed are provided below, however this is not an exhaustive list and the employee must feel comfortable at all times, and a Support plan is attached (please see Appendix 2).

Toilet / Changing Facilities

A Trans employee should be free to select the facilities appropriate to the gender in which they present. For example, when a Trans individual starts to live in their acquired gender on a full time basis they should be afforded the right to use the facilities appropriate to the acquired gender role. A Trans employee should be granted access to 'men only' or 'women only' areas according to the sex in which they permanently present. Under no circumstances should they be expected to use the facilities of their former gender.

For non-binary individuals, this might mean using a combination of different facilities or gender-neutral or accessible facilities.

Dress Code

Managers should allow flexibility in dress codes to accommodate the process of transition from one sex to another. All Trans employees can expect to have any requests treated in the utmost confidence and will be responded to in confidence. It is essential that the individual grants permission before their status is discussed with any third party. Where uniforms are worn, a workplace uniform that corresponds to the employees chosen identity will be provided at a time agreed with the employee if applicable.

Communication

Managers should not inform colleagues, elected members, service users or the public that an employee is intending to undergo; is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment, without the employees' explicit agreement.

Occupational Health/Employee Assistance Programme

Employees who intend to transition will be offered the opportunity for a referral to the Occupational Health Service for advice and support. We also offer an Employee Assistance Programme, for which details are available on the intranet, for those who wish to discuss their transition with an independent service.

- 9.3 The employee undergoing transition will have the right to request a meeting with colleagues in their area of work at which their status as a transitioning employee is explained. At this meeting, the manager will support the employee. The transitioning employee may choose if they wish to answer questions from other employees. If such a meeting takes place, then all those involved will be bound by the same rules of confidentiality given above. The status of the employee undergoing transition will not be discussed with any third party without the prior consent of the employee who is changing gender. Failure to observe these rules of confidentiality may result in formal action under the relevant Disciplinary Policy.
- 9.4 Following the date chosen by the transitioning employee, any remaining information will be changed to reflect their new gender identity; employee lists, organisational charts, post trays, door signs, and all other relevant information will be changed. The name of the employee who has undergone transition will not be inappropriately withheld from any list; omission can be embarrassing. Other considerations for discussion could include identification passes, contact details, email addresses, formal records, website references, or any other matter raised by the employee undergoing transition.
- 9.5 For employees working alongside the person, there may be some training and support needs. It may be useful to look at these on two levels – specific issues regarding the employee and broader awareness about gender reassignment. During the meeting, it is recommended that managers should:
- Include sufficient information to convey the facts
 - Not go into too much detail
 - Respect the wishes of the transgender employee and their right to medical confidentiality in terms of discussing detailed personal matters
 - Pitch the information at a level and style appropriate to the audience involved
 - Remember to include the name that the employee wishes to be known by in their new gender.
 - Remind employees of their duty to maintain confidentiality and that we are committed to creating a working environment in which all employees are treated fairly and with dignity and respect.
 - Provide details of how colleagues might seek further information, should they need to

10. Recruitment

- 10.1 In most cases, the gender of an individual has no bearing on their ability to do their job. We are committed to ensuring that there is no discrimination against potential employees in the recruitment process. There is no obligation for a Trans individual to disclose their status as a condition of employment. Moreover, non-disclosure, or subsequent disclosure, will not be grounds for dismissal.
- 10.2 If an employee has transitioned prior to joining us and has disclosed this, we should not mention their transsexual history. This includes employees selected for promotion. Indeed, this could constitute a criminal offence in the case of someone who has obtained a Gender Recognition Certificate. Any forms and documents relating to transgender status that are provided during the interview and resulting procedures will be considered confidential and should be restricted to appropriate employees and the individual themselves.
- 10.3 Where there is a genuine occupational requirement for a job to be carried out by a particular sex, it will be necessary for the Trans individual to disclose their status to the panel. Exemptions are as follows:
- If the job involves conducting personal searches pursuant to statutory powers. If the issue does arise then we must consider whether another employee could carry out the tasks.
 - If the job involves working in a private home, where there would be close physical or social contact, or knowledge of the intimate details of a person's life and we can show that individuals would object.

These exceptions will not apply where the individual has obtained a Gender Recognition Certificate. Where an employee intending to undergo gender reassignment currently holds a position in a single sex role or environment prior to a change of gender, it could be beneficial for all involved if discussions take place around redeployment. In these circumstances, options should be discussed early in order to agree a satisfactory arrangement.

Redeployment/Retirement

- 10.4 A employee who is undergoing gender reassignment may ask for support to search for redeployment opportunities, or for ill-health retirement. This will include options to consider reasonable adjustments; redeployment; retirement on medical grounds, or where all other options have been exhausted, potential dismissal. Prior to any discussions regarding dismissal, please seek advice from Organisational Development.
- 10.5 An employee may seek support to change jobs, if they feel working in a different role may support them as a transgender individual. Management may support this, where suitable alternative roles are available, as a reasonable adjustment as required under the Equality Act 2010.
- 10.6 Alternatively, the employee may wish to apply for internal vacancies when roles they deem suitable are advertised.

References and Certificates

- 10.7 Where we receive a reference request for an existing employee who has transitioned, we will respect the employee's privacy and only respond using the employee's correct name and gender in the reference.
- 10.8 Disclosure on sickness absence will not include time taken off for medical appointments related to transition. This information is strictly confidential and managers must be very careful how they record this information in order to avoid a disclosure of the information.
- 10.9 When we request a reference, we will make the request using the prospective employee's correct name and gender since transitioning. Previous names or gender identity will not be mentioned unless the Trans individual specifically asks (in writing) for this to be done.

Qualifications/Professional Registration

- 10.10 If the manager has to keep evidence of professional status or qualifications, they should discuss with the employee concerned how to retain such evidence on file – if, for example, certificates are in the employee's original name – so as not to compromise or breach disclosure of protected information.

Disclosure and Barring Service

- 10.11 If disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is required as part of the recruitment process, applicants must disclose any previous names and/or gender to the DBS. Trans applicants may make use of the special application procedure established by the DBS so that their previous name is not disclosed to us.

11. Monitoring

- 11.1 In Wales, the Equality Act 2010 (Wales) Regulations 2011 places a specific legal duty upon public authorities that requires the Authority to have effective arrangements in place to monitor equality and have in place systems to gather, analyse and publish employment monitoring data. No information will be published, or used in any way that identifies an individual.

12. Responsibilities

- 12.1 We will ensure that:
- Equality for Trans employees is included in their Gender Equality Scheme and where equality policies refer to discrimination on grounds of sex; this also refers to discrimination on grounds of gender identity and gender reassignment in line with the Gender Reassignment Regulations and The Equality Act.
 - Trans issues are included in all equality training, as far as reasonably practicable.

- Employees and managers are aware of our statutory responsibilities in relation to gender reassignment (and other relevant legislation) as an employer and service provider.

13. Dignity at Work

- 13.1 We will seek to provide a supportive environment for those who make claims of discrimination or harassment. This includes challenging discriminatory behaviour by employees, managers or service users. Acts of discrimination (direct or indirect) on the grounds of gender identity, harassment, victimisation or abuse will be treated seriously, and will not be tolerated. Any employees witnessing any discriminatory behaviour towards a trans employee, including harassment or bullying must report it to us. All complaints will be treated in confidence.
- 13.2 Employees who feel they are being discriminated against on grounds of gender identity by other employees/ members of the public/ service users should raise the matter under the relevant Dignity at Work Policy.

Appendix 1 – Support and Advice

Support and advice is available from the following organisations:

https://www.beaumontsociety.org.uk/	Beaumont Society is a support network supporting the better understanding of transgender, transvestism and gender dysphoria.
www.facebook.com/groups/tsmucardiff	T*MSU (Trans + Social Meet Up) is a mutual support and social group for all Gender Diverse / Trans *gender, their family, friends, supporters and allies, in and around Cardiff .
https://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/	Equality and Advisory Support Service (EASS) has a helpline that advises and assists individuals on issues relating to equality and human rights, across England, Scotland and Wales
https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en	Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is a statutory body with responsibility for protecting, enforcing and promoting equality rights across all protected characteristics
https://www.gires.org.uk/	Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES) provides information for trans individuals, their families and the professionals who care for them.
http://www.gendertrust.org.uk/	Gender Trust supports all those affected by gender identity-related issues in their work.
http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/	Gendered Intelligence work predominantly with the transgender community and those who impact on transgender lives. They particularly specialise in supporting young transgender individuals aged eight to 25.
https://www.inclusiveemployers.co.uk/	Inclusive Employers are leading UK inclusion and diversity experts, working with employers to create inclusive workplaces.
https://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk/	Mermaids provide support specifically for families and children on gender identity matters.
http://www.pflag.co.uk/	Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) is a support organisation that provides free support to parents, family and friends of LGBT individuals in the UK.
https://www.pinktherapy.com/	Pink Therapy is an independent therapy organisation working with gender and sexual diversity clients.

www.stonewallcymru.org.uk	<p>Stonewall Cymru is the all-Wales Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Charity. Their aim is to achieve equality for LGBT individuals at home, at school and at work.</p>
www.reporthathe.victimsupport.org.uk/rainbow-bridge/	<p>Rainbow Bridge is a Victim Support run service that specifically supports victims of domestic abuse who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender.</p>
https://www.facebook.com/breaking.binary/	<p>Breaking the Binary provides a safe space for non-binary individuals of all identities in South Wales.</p>
https://www.lgbtcymru.org.uk/	<p>The LGBT Cymru Helpline is a free and professional caring service for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender individuals in Wales aiming to offer support and information to the LGBT community. Offering a free telephone helpline, and low cost Counselling service.</p>

Appendix 2 – Support Plan

TRANSITIONING SUPPORT PLAN

This is a template support plan. Depending on your circumstances, one or more steps may not be required. Equally, one or more additional steps may need to be considered.

The process of drawing up this action plan should be led by the employee and no action must be taken without the agreement of the employee. You should ask questions, listen, and understand the needs, concerns and wishes of the transitioning employee and seek further advice as necessary to ensure the employee is effectively supported during their transition.

Previous name/title/pronouns	
New name/title/pronouns	
Role	
Line manager/point of contact (if different)	

Actions	Details	Date completed
Expected timescale		
Return to work following transition		
Consider need for temporary change to job role	Nature of change (duties/hours/location) Phased return?	
Consider need for permanent change to job role	Nature of change (duties/hours/location)	
Consider confidentiality	Who is responsible? Consider what information the employee wants disclosed (see below)	
Consider data protection	Consider lawful and specific conditions for processing Consider data protection principles e.g. data minimisation, purpose limitation What old records need to be retained (if any)? Privacy notice required? Ensure information is handled in strict confidence and in accordance with the Authority's Data Protection policy Identify which, if any, pre-transition records need to be retained	
Informing managers:	Who will tell them?	

Actions	Details	Date completed
HR business partner senior manager line manager (if not point of contact)	Will employee be there? When? Where? What will they be told?	
Informing close colleagues (add description/list of colleagues told)	Who will tell them? Will employee be there? When? Where? What will they be told? Method of communication (in person?, by email)?	
Informing other employees	Who will tell them? Will employee be there? When? Where? What will they be told? Method of communication (in person?, by email)?	
Informing third parties (e.g. suppliers, customers, clients, contractors (add description/list))* *Only where relevant	Who will tell them? Will employee be there? When? Where? What will they be told? Method of communication (in person?, by email)?	
Consider whether support and information from external organisations is required/desirable	What support? What information? What are the best organisation(s) to provide this?	
Use of facilities: toilets showers changing rooms other	Which facilities? From when? Who else needs to be aware/informed?	
Dress/uniform: Is new uniform required?	Is new uniform required? If yes, from when?	

Actions	Details	Date completed
Is there any expected flexibility in uniform required?		
Consider need for occupational health/employee assistance programme referral	If yes, by whom?	
Consider need for absence	How long and when? Any staff cover required?	
Consider need for ongoing support	Agree frequency and timing of meetings with the transitioning employee With whom?	
Consider if any training on transgender equality is required	If yes, for whom? Training organised and delivered?	
Identify which records and systems need to be amended to show a change of name/gender	Complete table below	

Records and systems

Changes required	Who will do this?	When?	Date completed
Internal			
OD (HR & Payroll) records			
ID/Name badge			
Email address			
IT systems (computer logins, intranet, other)			
Staff lists			
Staff rota if applicable			
Other			
External/third party			
HMRC			
Pension provider			
Payroll provider			
Qualifications/certificates			

Disclosure and Barring Service			
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Meetings

Date	Comments	Actions	Date of next meeting

Medical appointments and absences

Date	Description/reason

UNDERSTANDING EACH PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

For further information and definitions on related issues e.g. discrimination, harassment, and victimisation please consult the Equality Glossary provided with this toolkit.

Race	For the purpose of the Equality Act 2010 ' <i>race</i> ' includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. A racial group can be made up of two or more different racial groups (e.g. Black Britons).
Disability	Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, which would include things like using a telephone, reading a book or using public transport.
Sex (e.g. inequality between males & females)	It is unlawful to discriminate against people because of their gender. We should prevent discrimination in recruitment and selection, determining pay, training and development, selection for promotion, discipline and grievances, countering bullying and harassment. Many employers have also found that making changes to their working practices makes good business sense and helps them attract the best people, including provisions for flexible working for people with caring responsibilities.
Age	The Act protects people of all ages. However, different treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if you can justify it, i.e. if you can demonstrate that it is a proportionate means of meeting a legitimate aim. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination.
Sexual Orientation	Legal protection from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation applies to everyone, whatever their sexual orientation. This form of discrimination includes being treated less favourably because; you are lesbian, gay, bisexual or straight; people think you are lesbian, gay, bisexual or straight; or you are associated with someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or straight, for example a friend, relative or colleague. The law applies to direct and indirect discrimination as well as to harassment and victimisation.

Religion/Belief	In the Equality Act, religion includes any religion. It also includes a lack of religion, in other words employees or jobseekers are protected if they do not follow a certain religion or have no religion at all. Additionally, a religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or a lack of such belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief. Humanism is a protected philosophical belief but political beliefs would not be protected.
Gender reassignment status	The Act provides protection for transsexual people. A transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change their gender. The Act no longer requires a person to be under medical supervision to be protected – so a woman who decides to live permanently as a man but does not undergo any medical procedures. It is discrimination to treat transsexual people less favourably for being absent from work because they propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment than they would be treated if they were absent because they were ill or injured. Medical procedures for reassignment such as hormone treatment should not be treated as a ‘lifestyle’ choice.
marriage and civil partnership	Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.
pregnancy and maternity	A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. During this period, pregnancy and maternity discrimination cannot be treated as sex discrimination.
Welsh Language	The Welsh Language Act 1993 places a legal duty on public authorities to promote the use of the Welsh Language and to treat the Welsh and English languages equally. It offers the public the right to choose which language to use in their dealings with the Council. It recognises that Members of the public can express their views and needs better in their preferred language. It recognises that enabling the public to use their preferred language is a matter of good practice, not a concession. It sets out how the Council will implement that principle in the provision of bilingual services to the public in Wales, taking account of the developing linguistic nature of the County Borough.

Equality Impact Assessment Template Form

Description of Assessment *(Please specify below)*

EQIA Screening on Policy – “Trans Equality Policy”

Responsible Directorate *(Please specify below)*

Organisational Development

Responsible Officer *(Please specify below)*

Assessment Date *(Please specify below)*

Staff Involved in Assessment *(Please specify below)*

PART 1: SCREENING EXERCISE TO IDENTIFY ADVERSE IMPACT

Does this ‘Option’ have a <u>positive or an adverse impact</u> on any of the following protected characteristics? <i>(please complete all)</i>	<i>If yes</i>	Please describe what the impact will be?	What is the significance of the impact?	If low, please explain this ‘significance’ rating. <i>(if ‘high’ please complete template below)</i>
Race	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low	
Disability	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low	

Sex	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	→	Positive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low	
Age	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low	
Sexual Orientation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low	
Religion and Belief	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low	
Gender Reassignment Status	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	→	Positive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low	
Pregnancy and Maternity	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low	
Welsh Language	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low	

PART2: ‘High Significance’ Adverse Impact Template Form

For each protected characteristics where an adverse impact has been identified and this impact has a high significance, a template form must be complete. Therefore, if an option is identified as having a highly significant adverse impact on ‘Race’ and ‘Religion and Belief’ a template form must be complete for each protected characteristics.

Which Protected Characteristics

Sex

Gender Reassignment Status

Please briefly explain why you have identified this protected characteristic as having a high ‘significance’ rating

Sex – In line with the Gender Reassignment Act 2004, it is felt this policy will have a positive impact on those who have obtained legal recognition, in the form of a Gender Reassignment Certificate. BGCBC is committed to not discriminating against people because of their gender, including Trans employees. This policy covers recruitment and selection, pay progression, selection for promotion, countering bullying and harassment, and redundancy selection.

Gender Reassignment Status – The Trans Equality Policy will have a highly positive impact on those who identify under the Trans umbrella. The Policy is based on the principle that we will ensure that no transgender person will be treated less favourably on the grounds that they are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. The policy outlines a number of supportive actions, along with making it apparent that any employee undergoing a gender reassignment process should not be treated less favourably than they would be treated if absent due to sickness or injury.

Please briefly explain how the identified impact is likely to affect people?

The policy impact is unlikely to affect other people, other than those who identify as Trans.

What further information do you think is necessary understand, support or mitigate the impact of this ‘option’? *E.g. collection of secondary evidence, undertaking primary research, consulting/engaging with affected people*

As the impact is positive there is less research to undertake to understand the impact concerned. BGCBC will continue to work with external agencies and partners who are able to provide specialist support, expertise, and guidance in relation to the remit of the policy.

What possible action can be taken to reduce or mitigate [any potential](#) adverse impacts of this options(and any associated effects)?

This policy has a positive impact, and therefore there are no mitigation actions.

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Agenda Item 9

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Corporate Overview Scrutiny**

Date of meeting: **22nd January 2021**

Report Subject: **ICT Investment Roadmap**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member
Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Anne-Louise Clark, Chief Officer Commercial;
Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer Resources;
Matt Lewis, Chief Operating Officer, SRS**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	07/01/21				22/01/21	24/02/21	25/03/21	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Corporate Overview Scrutiny with a full set of proposals on investment options required to maintain a stable and resilient ICT infrastructure.

The proposals are broken down into three categories which aim to describe the current challenges and future options. This is designed to help decision making required for the SRS Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council capital refresh.

1. Desktop estate;
2. Network and telephony estate
3. Contract register.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 There has not been, in the history of the SRS, nor indeed the internet, such a massive and sudden shift in the way we all expect to use and rely on technology as now. With so many of us unable to meet in person, due to COVID-19, our way of working has suddenly shifted from direct contact to having meetings and working virtually overnight.
- 2.1.2 Whether it is holding team meetings, running Emergency Response Team (ERT) meetings, social services settings, teaching children remotely or making sure our staff are coping in partial lockdown, people are using their technology in a way and to an extent they have never done before.
- 2.1.3 The current situation, which seems set to continue for some time in 2021, has introduced millions to a technology which up to this point was, really, just limited to

those who already worked virtually. This will undoubtedly have a major impact on the strategy of the SRS and indeed of Blaenau Gwent.

2.1.4 Due to the above reasons, all partners including Blaenau Gwent rely more heavily on the technology infrastructure than ever before and this paper sets out the component parts of the technology estate within Blaenau Gwent and the capital investment required to maintain it.

2.2 **The benefits of maintaining the infrastructure**

2.2.1 There are many benefits from maintaining the technology estate in Blaenau Gwent and they include but are not limited to:

- the SRS needs to continually improve the technology estate to ensure that it is flexible enough to deliver the changing demands upon it. March 2020 is a good example of this when we had to switch Blaenau Gwent across to remote working and Teams over a single weekend. This was possible because of a programme of improvement that had been put in place and was ready for an event such as this.
- to continue to achieve Public Sector Network (PSN) accreditation the technology hardware estate has to be able to be “patched” and upgraded to the latest versions to ensure the estate is secure. You have to have PSN accreditation to deliver services such as Revenues and Benefits.
- user devices such as laptops and desktops have a useful life expectancy of between 3-5 years, when a standard device is used past that time it becomes a regular support issue for the user.
- the technology estate is what connects everyone together and delivers everything you see on your device. If network, server and storage estates are left past their useful life then the entire provision starts to slow down, to become unable to host the newest systems and becomes a performance issue for the entire organisation.
- it is typical that the older a technology estate is the more expensive it becomes to procure support contracts for it. This means that every year we retain the existing estate it gets more expensive to support and there will be a point in the next two years where the majority of it is unsupported by vendors.

2.3 **Component parts of the technology estate**

2.3.1 Figure 1 over the page is a diagram of the technology estate to assist members in understanding which areas of the estate this capital request covers.

2.3.2 There are many component parts involved overall and we could simply describe all locations as either “edge sites” or “core sites”. For example, we would call Ebbw Vale Civic Centre, Abertillery Learning Centre, Blaina Library or Anvil Court an “edge site”, this simply means that is not the central site where all IT services are delivered from, it is on the edge of the network. A “core site” is a location such as the data centre where all of the services are delivered from.

- 2.3.3 If we used example Blaenau Gwent locations such as Ebbw Vale Civic Centre, Abertillery Learning Centre, Blaina Library or Anvil Court then it would include:
- laptops / desktops and other devices that people use in their day to day work at those locations to access services;
 - the WiFi network they connect to when in those locations provided by the Cisco Wireless Access Points that you may have noticed on ceilings or walls;
 - an edge switch is a network switch in the edge location. So, in those locations there is an edge switch that connects those locations to Blaenau Gwent.
 - PSBA means Public Sector Broadband Aggregation and very simply the broadband connection that is used to connect Blaenau Gwent locations together.
 - the items in the data centre and below are not part of this capital request.

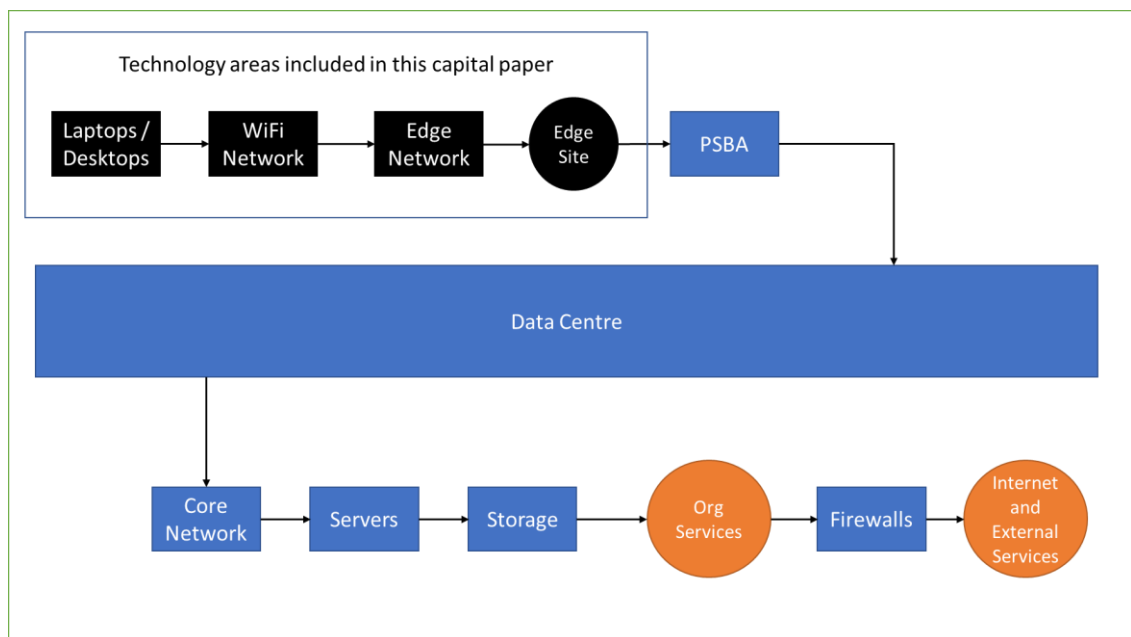


Figure 1 Technology estate component parts

Desktop estate

2.4

The SRS MTFP provides an estimated investment that Blaenau Gwent should make in their desktop estate. This amount is not factored into the MTFP itself. The life span of the current desktop estate has been a critical element of ICT Delivery Group meetings over the year in the Council and a desktop replacement process began in quarter 3 of 2019.

2.4.1

Planning the desktop replacement is currently done on an estate of 1,451 devices.

2.4.2

This is based on the number of devices requested by the Council to deliver services and meet the needs of staff and elected members.

SRS advise partners to refresh their laptop/desktop estate every five years.

2.4.3

Performance is hampered after year six and this can lead to interruptions in service delivery and emergency replacement of devices.

2.4.4

The current cost of a standard laptop is £510 per device which would suggest a budgetary number of £123k per year is needed to be factored into departmental budgets or a core budget to replace 241 devices per year.

2.4.5 This excludes the software support such as Office 365, it is purely a hardware replacement cost for laptops. A separate budget might need to be considered for display screens if Blaenau Gwent wished to do so or fund on a break fix basis, these are standard catalogue items and cost £140 each.

2.5 **Network estate**

2.5.1 Edge switch network

Blaenau Gwent has 120 network edge switches and 144 wireless access points across their corporate infrastructure. The end of life points of these switches, as set by the support available from Cisco for updates and patches, range from January 2020 to November 2021. The recommendation from the SRS is to replace key building infrastructure in 2020-21 financial year which equates to 67 edge switches and 22 wireless access points. The cost of this is currently estimated at £70k (increased from £58k due to dollar rate fluctuation since the initial quotes). The recommendation from the SRS is to replace the remaining infrastructure in 2021-22 financial year which equates to 53 edge switches and 122 wireless access points. The cost of this is currently estimated at £148k. If these are not replaced, then the risks in section 5.2 will be realised.

2.5.2 Telephony Part 1: The telephony estate in Blaenau Gwent is outdated and whilst it can currently still be supported it is becoming more difficult to maintain and support, this year costing approximately £43k for telephony hardware. The SRS Strategic Board has agreed a proposal to move to the use of Teams telephony. This would replace all of our existing telephony, voicemail and conferencing needs. Any telephony hardware support contract, voicemail support contracts and rentals of any handsets would be able to be removed. Based on Blaenau Gwent's view, there could be costs for headsets for using with Teams telephony which would be an additional capital spend. The cost of a license is £57 per year per person and the total cost is dependent on the number of staff that Blaenau Gwent require, this is a revenue cost.

2.5.3 Telephony Part 2: The SRS were asked to find a solution to replace the contact centres and switchboard functionality which are critical to the operation of Blaenau Gwent. Blaenau Gwent has had a demonstration of a product that appears to meet all these needs and the product set offers improved functionality and flexibility including the ability for contact centre leads to manage the contact centre queues directly through a simple interface. The solutions would be procured using a Welsh Government framework called Connecting Wales and the estimated revenue costs are estimated to be ~£30k a year.

2.6 Contracts register

2.6.1 Taking forward the investments outlined in this report provides the opportunity to reduce expenditure on key software and hardware support contracts that are managed on our behalf by SRS and some that are managed directly by ourselves. The total reduction is approximately £100k and will be built into the SRS budget process.

2.6.2 PSBA Contracts

Blaenau Gwent currently funds over 80 PSBA connections at a cost of £187k a year. With the review of our strategic property assets it is likely that the number of PSBA connections will be reduced further reducing our costs. PSBA lines are typically able to be cancelled and the bill will reflect that change within one month and the SRS are working with Blaenau Gwent as part of the Estate's Strategy to identify what those cost differences could be.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 **Option 1:** That the Committee scrutinise and comment on the proposals and recommend the ICT infrastructure investment to Executive prior to approval by Council.

3.2 **Option 2:** That the Committee scrutinise and comment on the proposals and do not recommend the ICT infrastructure investment Executive prior to Council.

4. Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

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 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 also places individual duties on public bodies. The legislation is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and creating a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

Investment to secure resilient and future proofed ICT infrastructure is vital for all public sector organisations and this supports these objectives and the Corporate Plan priority 'An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities'. It is a critical organisational investment strategy for the future sustainability of the organisation. It is designed to secure the best use of our resources and to create ways of working that are fit for the 21st Century.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 **Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)** **Capital**

The infrastructure investment proposals require an initial capital investment across the desktop and network estate of £464,000 in the first 2 years followed by an annual investment of £166,000 thereafter.

The recent desktop replacement programme for the initial tranche has been funded by reserves however this is not sustainable in the longer term.

It is, therefore, proposed that an annual allocation of £166,000 is agreed as part of the Council's capital programme from 2021-22 onwards with the balance for years 1 & 2 (£132,000) funded from the ICT Reserve.

Revenue

Revenue Costs for the implementation of Teams Telephony and Contact Centre are estimated to be £77,000 per annum. This will be funded from the established revenue budget however there is expected to be some transitional costs incurred whilst transferring from current provision to new, it is proposed that these cost be funded by the ICT Reserve.

The table below identifies the annual impact on capital and revenue.

		Revenue or Capital	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Desktop Estate	Phase 1 - 20%	Capital	123000				
	Phase 2 - 20%	Capital		123000			
	Phase 3 - 20%	Capital			123000		
	Phase 4 - 20%	Capital				123000	
	Phase 5 - 20%	Capital					123000

			2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Network Estate	Network Refresh	Capital	70000	148000	43000	43000	43000
	Teams Telephony	Revenue	54000	54000	54000	54000	54000
	Teams Contact Centre	Revenue	23000	23000	23000	23000	23000

Total Capital	193000	271000	166000	166000	166000
Total Revenue	77000	77000	77000	77000	77000

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

The performance of our ICT infrastructure is built into the management fee and the partnership arrangement with the SRS. Performance is reported to Council on an annual basis and the maintenance of a resilient infrastructure underpins our ability to deliver critical services to our communities. The risks associated with underperformance against ICT expectations will be mitigated through implementation of these recommendations.

There are major risks currently associated with the provision and why a decision is required at this time.

- Blaenau Gwent's infrastructure in many areas is over 10 years old and requires to be replaced. Without this being done there is a high risk of the ICT equipment failing.

- If the infrastructure is not upgraded, then there is a risk that Blaenau Gwent will lose their PSN accreditation.
- The upheaval around transition time between infrastructures will create issues around availability and performance for a short period.
- Operating costs in continuing with the current provision will continue to increase.
- Dollar rate fluctuations are occurring by the day and prices keep changing as we have seen between draft one and draft two of this report.
- Nightingale installations take priority over business as usual for many suppliers which has created delay in costing and design work and will continue to do so.
- The PSBA stopped work on business as usual (BAU) in March and only recently started accepting BAU work again which has delayed our costings and design work.
- The social distancing measures will undoubtedly cause complications in the implementation phases of the work.

5.3 ***Legal***

Changes in service delivery that might emerge through the deployment of the recommendations in this plan will be reviewed from a legal perspective. Due diligence will be undertaken for any related procurement.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

Where changes in service delivery or roles as a result of this plan are identified normal human resources processes and policies will be applied including consultation with the Trade Unions.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Key performance information and data will include:

- Delivery of the planned activities within timescales and budget;
- Regular reports on progress;
- Visibility of the overall programme and impacts on service delivery;
- Risks and any programme changes will be managed by the Chief Officer Commercial.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

Through the delivery of this plan the Council will maintain and develop the ICT infrastructure to ensure continuity of service delivery, strengthened capacity to deliver digital solutions and improved ways of working. This strategy will also contribute to the resilience and sustainability of the organisation therefore protecting front line services.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

Any changes to service delivery models will be consulted on in the usual way.

- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
This programme is at the heart of the development of a resilient and fit for future ICT infrastructure for Blaenau Gwent and recognises the critical nature of continuous investment in digital products and services.
- 6.5 ***Preventative focus***
This strategy is designed to support the needs of the Council now and in the future. It is designed to build ICT resilience and to prevent the unanticipated expenditure.
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
There are opportunities through this programme to seek value for money opportunities across the SRS partnership.
- 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
This strategy takes a whole council approach and promotes transparency across key elements of the ICT infrastructure ensuring systems can be supported and services delivered effectively and efficiently.
- 6.8 ***EqIA***
All service changes arising for this strategy will be screened to ensure there is no adverse impact on any protected characteristics.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 The implementation of this programme of work will be monitored by the Chief Officer Commercial and supported by the Digital Programme Officer in partnership with the SRS. Feedback on the delivery of the outcomes will be through the financial management arrangements for the capital investment programme.

What are the key outcomes expected from these investments:

- Deliver a fit for purpose infrastructure
- Retain PSN accreditation.
- Deliver a secure infrastructure.
- Deliver a flexible infrastructure capable of a blended service of on premise and remote.
- Minimise failures and disruption for the partners due to an ageing infrastructure.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Blaenau Gwent Planning document.



Blaenau Gwent Future Planning Pack



Mission

To use shared technology platforms to consolidate the demand and broker the supply of all types of services to the Public Sector.

Vision

To be more efficient through the use of technology.

Values

When people are sharing their practice, they add value to the common purpose of the SRS.

Strategic Aim #1

INNOVATING WITH EXPERTS: improve services to provide a solid foundation upon which partner organisations can operate.

Strategic Aim #2

MODERNISING THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE: ensure the investment in technology is focused on delivery of the corporate priorities of the partner organisations.

Strategic Aim #3

POWERING UP THE CLOUD: provide a collaborative platform for public sector organisations to share common ground.



Blaenau Gwent Future Planning Pack

Audience	List of partners: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.
Document Status	Draft
Document Version	1.0
Issue Date	
Prepared By	Matt Lewis (COO)
Date Agreement Approved	
Date Agreement Approved	

Key Documents	List of key documents associated with this strategy
Name	Comment
MTFP	Managed through the Finance and Governance Group and used to agree annual budgets.
Performance framework	Agreed by the Strategic Board.
RAID Log	Managed by the SRS after each Strategic Board, Finance and Governance Group and business and Collaboration Group meeting.
SLA	The Service Level Agreement document is agreed by the strategic Board in June each year.

Version	Date	Name	Comment
1.0	19/4/2020		Initial draft



Blaenau Gwent Future Planning Pack

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Blaenau Gwent Future Planning Pack

1. Purpose of the document

This document seeks to provide Blaenau Gwent with the set of information relating to future planning. It includes the investment options required.

The document is broken down into four categories which aim to help describe the future options Blaenau Gwent have over investments and help decision making required for the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Blaenau Gwent capital refresh:

- Desktop estate
- Network estate (including VPN, firewall, edge and core networking, PSBA and telephony)
- Server estate (including server hardware, storage devices and disaster recovery)
- Contract register



Blaenau Gwent Future Planning Pack

2. Investment Roadmap

		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Desktop Estate	Phase 1 - 20%	£123k				
	Phase 2 - 20%		£123k			
	Phase 3 - 20%			£123k		
	Phase 4 - 20%				£123k	
	Phase 5 - 20%					£123k

		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Network Estate	Network Phase 1	£58k				
	Network Phase 2		£134k			
	Teams Telephony	£54k	£54k	£54k	£54k	£54k
	Teams Contact Centre	£23k	£23k	£23k	£23k	£23k

		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Server Estate	Server Phase 1	£15k				
	Server Phase 2		£30k			
	Server Phase 3			£20k		
	Storage Phase 1	£45k				
	Storage Phase 2		£50k			

The investment numbers below relate to the alternative data centre project being worked up as a business case with the Finance and Governance Board. Some of these items replace the need for the above investments and they are marked as such, until the business case is approved, these investments should be classed as not yet agreed.

		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Data Centre Business Case (Indicative for info and timeline)	PSBA (DC Bus Case)	£30k				
	Shared Core Network		£25k	£25k	£25k	£25k
	Shared Firewall		£25k	£25k	£25k	£25k
	Shared Storage		£37k	£37k	£37k	£37k
	Shared Compute		£25k	£25k	£25k	£25k



Blaenau Gwent Future Planning Pack

3. Supporting document

There are a number of key supporting documents which are available and have been through various SRS meetings. The most relevant is included as appendix one, this is the annual agreed budget document.

The document describes all revenue based costs and how they are calculated.

4. Desktop Estate

The MTFP provides an estimated investment that Blaenau Gwent should make in their desktop estate but is clear that this is not an amount factored into the MTFP itself. The desktop estate has also been discussed as part of the Delivery Group meetings over the last twelve months in Blaenau Gwent as part of the desktop replacement process.

Desktop estates rise and fall throughout the year as more or less staff are engaged or different services are delivered, an example being the COVID-19 tracing function starting in June 2020. This will increase the numbers of devices in Blaenau Gwent and therefore the numbers of Office 365 licences, the numbers of McAfee licenses and so on.

Planning is currently done on an estate of 1,451 devices being used and is a number driven directly by Blaenau Gwent requirements. We typically advise partners to refresh their laptop / desktop estate every five years. When year six arrives, the devices really start to struggle and performance is hampered as we are starting to see now. Partners may choose a longer period of time to sweat these assets over which is not an issue, it is important to recognise we will continue to support them in year six but performance issues can be expected.



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If we were to plan a replacement of one sixth of the desktop estate each year for budget purposes, then at the start of each financial year we would meet to agree, using a RAG status, the devices that would be replaced that year. Some years there may be less and some more, but for budgetary purposes we would advise a plan of 241 devices per year. The current cost of a standard laptop is £510 per device which would suggest a budgetary number of £123k per year needing to be factored into departmental budgets or a core budget.

This excludes the software support such as Office 365, it is purely a hardware replacement cost for laptops. A separate budget might need to be considered for display screens if Blaenau Gwent wished to do so or fund on a break fix basis, these are standard catalogue items and cost £140 each.

5. Network Estate

PSBA

There is PSBA capital work required as part of the data centre move requested by the Strategic Board, Michelle Morris for Blaenau Gwent, at the January 2020 Board meeting. For Blaenau Gwent this is in relation to the PSBA configuration required in the new data centre location removing the current risks around Ebbw Vale as agreed in the business case to transfer into the SRS.

We are working to an assumption that the equipment we need will now be funded by WG. There is a consultancy cost to the work which is wrapped into the data centre move business case being finalised with the Finance and Governance Board.



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Firewall

There is firewall capital work required as part of the data centre move requested by the Strategic Board at the January 2020 Board meeting. For Blaenau Gwent this is in relation to moving from Ebbw Vale to a new data centre location and being part of a shared investment that is part of the data centre business case.

There is a consultancy cost to the work which is also wrapped into the data centre move business case being finalised with the Finance and Governance Board.

Core switch networking

There is a core network switch replacement required as part of the data centre move requested by the Strategic Board at the January 2020 Board meeting. For Blaenau Gwent this is in relation to moving from Ebbw Vale to a new data centre location and being part of a shared investment that is part of the data centre business case.

There is a consultancy cost to the work which is also wrapped into the data centre move business case being finalised with the Finance and Governance Board.

Edge switch networking

Blaenau Gwent have 120 network edge switches and 144 wireless access points across their corporate infrastructure, this does not include BG Learning or Education, both of which should be off the corporate network by September 2020.

The end of life points of these switches, as set by the support available from Cisco for updates and patches, range from January 2020 to November 2021.



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The recommendation from the SRS is to replace key building infrastructure in 2020-21 financial year which equates to 67 edge switches and 22 wireless access points. The cost of this is currently estimated at £58k.

The recommendation from the SRS is to replace the remaining infrastructure in 2021-22 financial year which equates to 53 edge switches and 122 wireless access points. The cost of this is currently estimated at £134k.

Cisco pricing is incredibly volatile at the moment due to global supply chain issues and dollar rate fluctuations. However, there could be an option to reuse equipment being replaced in the School estate. Some of the equipment is still supportable and could be rehomed into a corporate environment. The only risk is timeline as the EdTech work keeps slipping with school closures etc due to COVID-19 and we will have no certainty on availability and volume until August 2020.

VPN

The capability across all SRS partners will change to use Microsoft Always On VPN. This has not been implemented yet for any partner due to it only recently being approved under PSN to be used. Blaenau Gwent could be the first which enable removal of Mobile Iron etc.

Telephony

The telephony estate in Blaenau Gwent is outdated and whilst can currently still be supported it is becoming more difficult to maintain and support, this year costing approximately £43k for telephony hardware and a further contract and upgrade cost for voicemail and so on.

The contact centre Blaenau Gwent use is the same on as Torfaen and Monmouthshire so a step change together is required for contact centre or



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one partner will be left with a high cost system. The proposal for Teams telephony has been agreed as a Strategic Board recommendation and the paper shows the below costs of licensing purely as indicative.

Part 1: The cost of a telephony license in Office 365 is shown below if you were to license all employees. However, if for example, the number of extensions used by current staff for external calling functionality was around 50%, then only these people would require a telephony license as internal calling is replaced by Teams only functionality included in current licensing. This is a challenge to the organisations to review their external calling needs. The Monmouthshire cost is also shown below which is more indicative of what Blaenau Gwent would pay when they have Office 365 licensing. The current Blaenau Gwent cost below is prior to having Office 365 licensing as you currently do not have it.

This would replace all of your existing telephony, voicemail and conferencing needs. Any telephony hardware support contract, voicemail support contracts and rentals of any handsets would be able to be removed. Based on Blaenau Gwent’s view, there could be costs for headsets etc for using with Teams telephony.

Authority	Teams		
	Per Month Cost	12 Month Cost	12 Month Cost (50% utilisation example)
<i>Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (as not currently licensed for Office 365)</i>	£12,356	£148,282	£74,141
<i>Monmouthshire County Council</i>	£8,908	£106,908	£53,454



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Part 2: The SRS were asked to find a solution to replace the other two parts of the telephony requirement. Contact centre and switchboard functionality are critical to the operation of each Authority.

The SRS has and the Business and Collaboration Board have had a demonstration of a product that appears to meet all these needs and we now need to assess with contact centre leads if it covers all of the key functionality of the Cisco / Unify and PSBA contact centres currently in place. The product set offers functionality and flexibility to partners that they have sought for a considerable amount of time in some areas, such as the ability for partners to manage the contact centre queues directly through a simple interface. This product integrates into Teams in Office 365 and management consoles etc can be delegated to organisational leads.

The costs are per Office 365 tenant, this means that we can utilise a single installation and license for the four local authorities due to our decision to manage you all in OneWales.

The design and deployment costs are approximately £25k for all four local authorities and the annual license fee is then approximately £75k and would cover all four local authority contact centres.

6. Server Estate

Server hardware

Blaenau Gwent's physical server estate is relatively small at less than ten physical hosts with multiple virtual servers residing on them which forms the server estate.

All servers are out of warranty with the manufacturer, however they are in support contracts with CDW.



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The recommendation from the SRS is to replace three physical hosts in 2020-21.

Storage devices

Blaenau Gwent's file storage infrastructure is out of warranty but in support, very similar to above. Due to the ability to maintain and support these devices the SRS would recommend replacing two of those storage systems.

Costs for 20-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23

The currently estimated costs for server and storage capacity in 2020-21 is £60k.

The currently estimated costs for server and storage in 2021-22 is £80k.

The currently estimated costs for server and storage in 2022-23 is £20k.



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7. Contracts Register

Software / hardware support contracts

The savings items listed below are realised if the above projects go according to the timelines.

		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Possible savings	Enterprise Vault	£12k				
	Mcafee Mail Filter		£20k			
	VPN		£8K			
	Egress		£8K			
	MobileIron		£36k			
Possible cost avoidance	VPN Contract Change		£34k			

The contracts register is an annually updated document and fluctuates by the year. In 20-21 the cost of Blaenau Gwent contracts is £17k less than the cost of contracts in 19-20. That variance is taking as a saving prior to budget setting by each partner each year.

The tab in appendix one called “contracts” shows all currently budgeted spend for contracts that the SRS manages for Blaenau Gwent.

Of the £421k in 20-21 budget, £339k relates to the Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Agreement in readiness for Office 365. If the numbers at the time of purchase match the numbers estimated back in 2019 then there is sufficient budget in place to fund the Office 365 license cost. This will need to be reviewed prior to implementation but £339k is in line with the cost of partners who have already migrated to Office 365 with similar volumes. Blaenau Gwent are currently consuming free E1 Office 365 licenses which expire on September 17th 2020, which means a decision on the way forward is required prior to August 17th.



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The current Enterprise Agreement does not include Microsoft Teams telephony licenses.

Of the remaining £82k there are some items that could be removed when Blaenau Gwent move to Office365 with some additional work such as:

- Enterprise Vault is currently £12k a year and provides email archiving. Blaenau Gwent could decide they either no longer want archiving, as Gwent Police did and removed everything older than twelve months, or you could decide to put it all into Office 365. Either way this support contract would go.
- Part of the £20k McAfee contract is mail filtering which is free in Office 365.
- Around £8k is associated with VPN costs which could be removed if Blaenau Gwent chose to use Microsoft Always On VPN which is included in the O365 agreement. The only caveat here is that no partner currently uses this and it would need to be implemented for Blaenau Gwent from scratch.
- There are also examples of contracts paid in BG that could be removed such as Egress which could be replaced by Office 365 email encryption and Sharepoint Online document sharing through OneDrive. These are currently being investigated as projects in Newport which will help progress Blaenau Gwent quicker.

The remainder of the contract costs represent items that are needed in 20-21.

PSBA contracts

Blaenau Gwent currently funds over 80 PSBA connections at a cost of £187k a year. All PSBA connections are shown with their building name and street name in the “PSBA” tab in appendix one.



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The SRS is entirely dependent on Blaenau Gwent's estate strategy for ensuring these sites are all required and actively used.

8. Security Issues

The SRS wants to ensure that some of the investment areas required in the areas of information security are highlighted, they are for BG to make decisions through Rhian Haydn as SIRO on the Information Security Leadership Board.

The SRS are aware of a requirement for a Security Incident and Event Management System (SIEM) which comes with an investment cost in the tens of thousands but until it is defined it is unknown.

The other key area is anything being identified out of PSN certification work and penetration testing. The cost of penetration testing is included in the annual revenue budget.

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Agenda Item 10

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: **Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **22nd January 2021**
Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme: 5th March 2021**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member
Corporate Services**
Report Submitted by: **Cllr Stewart Healy, Chair of the Corporate
Overview Scrutiny Committee**

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	x	11.01.01			22.01.21			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present to Members the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 5th March 2021 for discussion and agreement.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Scrutiny Work Programmes are key aspects of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and support the requirements of the Constitution.
 - 2.2 The topics set out in the Forward Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's revised Corporate Plan, corporate documents and supporting business plans.
 - 2.3 Effective work programmes are essential to ensure that the work of scrutiny makes a positive impact upon the Council's delivery of services.
 - 2.4 The Committee's Forward Work Programme was agreed in September 2020, recognising the fluidity of the document to enable the Committee to respond to urgent and emerging issues, and included timescales when reports will be considered by the Committee. The work programme is managed and implemented by the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer under the direction of the Chair and Committee.
 - 2.5 The forward work programme for the forthcoming meeting will be presented to Committee on a 6 weekly cycle in order that Members can consider the programme of work; request information is included within the reports, as appropriate and / or make amendments to the work programme.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1:** The Scrutiny Committee consider the Forward Work Programme for the meeting 5th March 2021, and

- Make any amendments to the topics scheduled for the meetings;
- Suggest any additional invitees that the committee requires to fully consider the reports; and
- Request any additional information to be included with regards to the topics to be discussed.

3.2 **Option 2:** The Scrutiny Committee agree the Forward Programme for the meeting 5th March 2021, as presented.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme – Meeting on 5th March 2021

Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

Dates / Deadlines	Topic	Purpose	Lead	Executive / Council
Friday 5th March 2021 Deadline: 17 th February 2021	1. Treasury Management – Strategy Statement 2021/22	Budget Monitoring To present the Treasury Management Strategy, Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy recommended for adoption in the 2020/21 financial year.	Rhian Hayden	Council by 31 March 2021
	2. Capital Strategy Review	Performance Monitoring To consider the implementation of the Capital Strategy 2020/21.	Rhian Hayden	Executive
	3. Global Resettlement Programme	Pre Decision To consider the new items of the Global Resettlement Programme.	Bernadette Elias	Executive Council
	4. CCTV Annual Monitoring report Updated position	Performance Monitoring The will incorporate the result of the scheduled reviews of the DPIA's and who has responsibility for which aspect of CCTV. Performance monitoring to include viewing, data protection and working cameras.	Rhian Hayden / Clive Rogers / Bernadette Elias	Executive
	5. Strategic Equality Plan	Performance Monitoring Members to be informed of the progress made to date against the priorities within the SEP and approve actions moving forward.	Andrew Parker	Executive

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