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Contact:/Cysylltwch â: Democratic Services



THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

8th October 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee will be held in virtually via Microsoft Teams - if you would like to attend this meeting live via Microsoft Teams please contact committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk on Tuesday, 13th October, 2020 at 9.30 am.

Please note that a pre and post meeting will be held 30 minutes prior to the start and following the conclusion of the meeting for members of the committee.

Yours faithfully

Michelle Morris
Managing Director

AGENDA

Pages

1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required

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

should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation will be provided if requested.

2. **APOLOGIES**

To receive.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

To receive.

4. **REVIEW INTO WATER SUPPLY QUALITY IN SCHOOLS**

5 - 18

Due to the need to consider the following item as a matter of urgency, the Chair of the Committee has confirmed that the following matter can be considered under the Provisions of Paragraph 4(b), Section 100(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972.

REASON FOR URGENCY

For the Committee to consider the review and the implementation of appropriate changes to monitoring processes.

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services and the Interim Corporate Director Education.

To: Councillor M. Moore (Chair)
Councillor C. Meredith (Vice-Chair)
Councillor P. Baldwin
Councillor M. Cook
Councillor G. L. Davies
Councillor S. Healy
Councillor W. Hodgins
Councillor J. Holt
Councillor H. McCarthy
Councillor J. Millard
Councillor G. Paulsen
Councillor K. Pritchard
Councillor T. Sharrem
Councillor B. Summers
Councillor L. Winnett
T. Baxter
A. Williams

All other Members (for information)
Manager Director
Chief Officers

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Agenda Item 4

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: **Community Services Scrutiny Committee *Opened up to Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee***

Date of meeting: **13th October 2020**

Report Subject: **Review into Water Supply Quality in Schools**

Portfolio Holder: **Executive Member for Environment
Executive Member for Education**

Report Submitted by: **Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services and Interim Corporate Director of Education**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	22/9/2020				13/10/20	14/10/20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on the outcome of the review undertaken by Integrated Water Services (IWS) resulting from the water quality issues experienced in our schools during the period of Covid19 shutdown.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 The Council has taken a pro-active and comprehensive approach to managing the reopening of schools from a Health and Safety perspective, including water testing in accordance with the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) L8 and Health & Safety Executive (HSE) specific advice. Importantly, the safety of our children and staff is the priority and is of paramount importance in dealing with the school water supply issues across the school estate.
- 2.1.2 In accordance with national guidance in respect of Covid19 schools were closed from Monday 23rd March to 29th June 2020. Normally schools are only closed for a period of five to six weeks through the summer holiday period and the closure period was unprecedented.
- 2.1.3 In order to learn from the reopening process implemented by the Council, and to place the Council in a more robust position should a further extended period of school closure be experienced an Independent review has been undertaken.

2.2 Procurement

- 2.2.1 Quotations for undertaking the review were obtained from the following three firms, obtained from the NPS Legionella framework.

1. Healthy Building International
2. Integrated Water Services
3. Second Element

2.2.2 Integrated Water Services (IWS) was the firm selected to undertake the review, based on cost and their compliance with the tender brief.

2.3 Scope and Findings of the Review

2.3.1 It was proposed by IWS that the scope of the review would include selecting twelve school sites from the total of twenty-nine school sites.

2.3.2 The following schools were selected by IWS to be included within the review.

1. Blaen-y-Cwm Primary School
2. Bryn Bach Primary School
3. Brynmawr Foundation School
4. Canolfan yr Afon (Riverside) School
5. Coed-y-Garn Primary School
6. Ebbw Fawr Primary / Pen-y-Cwm Special School
7. Ebbw Fawr Secondary School
8. St Mary's Church in Wales Primary School
9. Sofrydd Primary School
10. Tredegar Comprehensive School
11. Willottown Primary School
12. Ystruth Primary School

2.3.3 The summary details of the IWS review are included in Appendices 1 and 2. The key recommendations identified from the IWS report are detailed below:

- (i) Investigate a suitable on-line monitoring Legionella program. To allow data information to be stored accessed and audited more efficiently.
- (ii) Undertake more intensive training of staff involved in the Legionella monitoring testing program, particularly in the area of water system flushing.
- (iii) Review our Legionella risk assessments to ensure that they are sufficiently up to date to comply with the legislation.
- (iv) Analyse the IWS information, and implement areas of good practice.
- (v) Reconsider suitability of "normal" Legionella Risk Management Policy in the light of the on-going Covid19 situation, particularly in the area of system flushing.

2.3.4 An action plan to take forward the recommendations is shown in Appendix 3

2.3.5 The summary details of the IWS review are included in Appendices 1 and 2, Appendix 1 is the Legionella Management Review, which specifically refers to the findings from the analysis of the twelve schools selected in the IWS review. Appendix 2 is the Water Supply Quality Review based on the water management procedures implemented during the period of the shutdown to allow our schools to reopen.

- 2.3.6 The IWS review suggests schools should not be closed due to high TVC results. The Council's view at that time however, is that high TVC sample results could indicate Legionella contamination, and disinfection and resampling was carried out until the Legionella test results were obtained. TVC samples on hot water systems are carried out for e-coli and other dangerous bacteria that can be harmful from handwashing and ingestion.
- 2.3.7 It needs to be recognised that the Legionella Control legislation is not necessarily prescriptive and as such its implementation by different organisations may vary, albeit still comply with the legislation. The common view of Technical, H&S and Environmental Health officers, in consultation with Education colleagues, was that the approach to reopening schools was managed in an effective and safe manner. It is also acknowledged however, that there are lessons to be learned from the COVID situation, which will strengthen our practices and procedures moving forward. These learning points feature in the action plan included in Appendix 3.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Options

- 3.1.1 The options for consideration are:
- 3.1.2 Option 1 – Accept the current Legionella monitoring process that is in place, in compliance with the ACOP L8 regulations.
- 3.1.3 Option 2 – Implement appropriate review changes, particularly in light that Covid19 which is still prevalent within the country, and localised lockdowns may result in school full or partial closures, which could result in further water quality issues.
- 3.1.4 Option 2 is the preferred option.
- 3.1.5 Appendix 3 identifies an action plan for implementation of the above recommendations. It is also proposed that progress made against the action plan will be monitored by a six monthly update report to CLT.

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

4.1 Evidence

- 4.1.1 The actions to keep maintain our water quality systems supports the Corporate Plan to maintain education objectives, and meet the authority's statutory responsibilities and wellbeing goals.

5. Implications

5.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

5.1.1 The impact on the budget of implementing Option 2 could be that specialist Legionella software will need to be procured and also staff resources may need to be increased to undertake the higher level of monitoring and training required. The staff resource requirements will be reviewed once the revised system is in place.

5.1.2 The additional revenue costs will be identified as a cost pressure within the Corporate Landlord budget, pending consideration of additional revenue funding being allocated in the 2021/2020 budget review process.

6.0 Risk including Mitigating Actions

6.1 Water Quality Risks Causing Elevated Bacteria Contamination Levels

6.1.1 The risks of individuals being affected by legionella and other water bacteria in our schools is low, if the ACOPS L8 regulations and the Health and Safety processes are in compliance with the regulations. The Council took a risk based management to the reopening of schools. There were a number of risk mitigation factors utilised that enabled the safe reopening of schools e.g. portable handwashing units were deployed in those affected schools. It is important to recognise that no cases of sickness were reported throughout the period of school reopening.

6.1.2 The risks in schools are considered to be very low and therefore increasing the amount of monitoring and testing needs to be reviewed in that context, including cost of both financial and staff resources required. Legionella health and safety risk management is one of a large number of statutory risks that we have to manage e.g. electrical, fire alarms, emergency lighting, lifts inspections, and asbestos, which all have a cost to the authority in both financial and staff time.

6.1.3 It also needs to be recognised that throughout the Covid19 shutdown daily discussions were taking place between Technical, Health and Safety and Environmental Health officers to review and manage the potential health risks from water contamination, in order to ensure that the risks to children and staff were mitigated within health and safety requirements.

6.2 Legal

6.2.1 The testing and mitigation measures that are in place are in compliance with the Health and Safety Executive Approved Code of Practice (L8) and HSE Guide 274.

6.3 Human Resources

6.3.1

The Council's corporate response team have worked extensively to deliver a positive outcome in challenging circumstances, and in the light of the emergency response to the COVID 19 pandemic.

7.0 Supporting Evidence

7.1 Review Documents

- 7.1.1 The review undertaken by IWS is included in the two supporting documents Appendices 1 and 2.

7.2 Preventative focus

- 7.2.1 The important fact is that no known cases or water related sickness has been reported. Although some schools have been used for the period of shutdown as childcare hubs, this provides a strong indication that the Council's proactive management of the situation has worked effectively.

7.3 Integration (across service areas)

- 7.3.1 The team involved with the management of this water contamination situation includes officers from Education, Property Services, Health and Safety and Environmental Health Departments in the Council.

7.4 Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.4.1 Statutory procedures are already in place to monitor and control the quality of our water systems, however, they will be reviewed on the basis of risk and the effects that long periods of shutdown of buildings can have on the quality of the water. However, it does need to be recognised that the normal longest period of our schools is for five/six weeks in the summer, and no issues of contamination have been experienced that schools are closed during the traditional summer holiday period.

Background Documents

Appendix 1 – IWS Letter - Legionella Management Review Blaenau Gwent

Appendix 2 – IWS Letter – Water Supply Quality Review Blaenau Gwent

Appendix 3 – Action Plan

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01 September 2020

Re: Legionella management Review Blaenau Gwent

Following on from the recent log book audit reviews of twelve schools for Blaenau Gwent, we have completed an audit form for each school. We have observed significant gaps in your Legionella management plans across all schools. In its current form, Blaenau Gwent would not be deemed compliant with current Guidance based on the information provided from this Audit.

The Group Legionella Policy has not been provided, no clear lines of communication have been provided for the group or any schools, training records for staff involved have been provided however in many cases this requires updating. These documents are required to be compliant with HSG 274 as a matter of urgency.

Legionella Risk Assessments are out dated and were not provided in each case and the reviews provided are insufficient to provide clear details of the water systems specific information and the requirements needed under the HSG 274 Part 2. A new Legionella Risk Assessment would be recommended for each site. Schematic drawings should be renewed and assist with providing drinking water

There is a Hydrotherapy Pool present on EBBW FAR Primary School and no Risk Assessment or records have been provided for this and it is unclear if the pool is operating within current guidance, it was stated in the LRA review that quarterly bacterial analysis is being taken however records for this have not been presented.

EBBW Far primary has a water softener and no records for looking after this equipment have been provided.

There is a contractor carrying out monthly tasks across the sites and records are available in paper form for monthly and 3 monthly tasks however when there has been a non-conformance it is unclear if / or follow up actions have been taken to resolve the issues and some non-conformances have been repeated month after month suggesting that compliance with HSG 274 is not happening. To assist with compliance we would recommend on line log books to assist, currently there are 29 schools in the scheme and obtaining information in paper form from each school is difficult. An on line log book would gather all information in one place and provide a list of defects each month that can be actioned and signed off when completed. When discussing works with members involved in the L8 programme there is definitely confidence that works have been carried out however providing paper work has been a challenge and therefore would be deemed non compliant.

It has not been specified on the paperwork or in the LRA Reviews which outlets are sentinel points in the water systems, this is a requirement under HSG 274. Schematic diagrams of the water system would assist with this task.

Little used outlet flushing documents have not been provided in some cases and when they have been provided there is insufficient evidence in the reports to specifically state which taps have been flushed, outlet flushing records should state which little used outlets have been flushed & for how long and not a generic statement with a single tick and in some cases on unbranded A4 paper.

Calorifiers do not appear to be internally inspected as part of the regime despite this being an annual task under the HSG 274 part 2, inspection paperwork from the contractor state visual inspection only, suggesting no internal inspections are carried out.

Disinfection Certificates / paperwork provided by the contractor does not state which disinfectant has been used or what PPM level is achieved during disinfection, PH was not noted either, this should be visible for auditing.

TMV servicing records are present however they do not appear to be in line with annual frequencies required and it is also not clear from the paperwork if these are failsave checks only or full service and calibrations / Strainer cleans as guidance advises.

Temperature monitoring records provided are incomplete for the year July 2019- July 2020

Shower descaling records are inconsistent and some hard to reach areas are not recorded as being flushed / descaled, see reports for specific sites.

Following the schools shutdown and subsequent reopening in June 2019 legionella samples were taken from each school and results reported and disinfections carried out where elevated results had been found. TVCC samples were also taken from both hot and cold systems and elevated results actioned. The benefit of TVCC samples from hot systems is unclear.

Kind regards,

Darren Edwards WM Soc | Business Development Manager
IWS Water Hygiene

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01 September 2020

Re: Water Supply Quality Review Blaenau Gwent

Point 2.1.4 Suggests schools could be closed due to high TVC counts. This approach can be deemed as over cautious. Re-sampling & disinfection of the systems is a satisfactory approach to avoid any kind of closure.

Point 2.1.5 states that TVC is a general bacteria count which at high levels could prevent water from being used as drinking water, it was noted during my review that many TVC samples had been taken from hot water systems, this is unusual and generally TVC sample analysis from cold water systems would be deemed necessary and hot system TVC samples would be inconclusive. Ecoli & coliforms was not noted in any sample analysis.

Legionella analysis taken does not state if it is pre or post flush, To ensure the sample is representative of the water flowing around the system and not just of the area downstream of the fitting, samples should be taken from separate hot and cold outlets rather than through mixer taps or outlets downstream of TMVs or showers. Samples should be clearly labelled with their source location and if collected pre- or post-flushing, This can have a major impact on the end result.

The HSG 274 states that following Legionella positive counts a Legionella Risk Assessment review should be carried out, I can see no evidence that this has taken place. Disinfection works have been carried out in many cases however should there be little used outlets or blind ends (dead leg pipework) or any other system issues not identified the water systems can quickly re-colonise with bacteria and render disinfections ineffective.

It has been stated in the report that due to high bacteria counts found in the water system that schools would not open due to this analysis, in this circumstance point of use bacteria filters could be installed on local outlets / spray heads to eliminate risk and allow schools to reopen whilst an engineering solution for the high bacteria counts is found.

During my review of the Blaenau Gwent Log books, schematic drawings had not been provided, accurate schematic drawings would be able to identify suitable drinking water outlets and subsequent labelling of outlets would ensure accurate TVCC sampling for drinking water purposes.



During shutdown periods (school holidays and the covid outbreak as examples) all little used outlets should be flushed and no records have been provided, a suitable flushing regime could potentially prevent bacteria proliferating in the water systems.

It was stated in point 6.1.1 that flushing of water systems is the recognised action taken to reduce system bacteria control however records detailing this have not been provided.

Kind regards,

Darren Edwards WM Soc | Business Development Manager

IWS Water Hygiene

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ACTION PLAN - APPENDIX 3

	Recommended Actions	Action Timescale	Action Owner	Progress Update
1	Investigate a suitable on-line monitoring Legionella program. To allow data information to be stored accessed and audited more efficiently.	End of March 2021	HoCS	
2	Undertake more intensive training of staff involved in the Legionella monitoring testing program, particularly in the area of water system flushing.	End of March 2021	HoCS/HoOD	
3	Review our Legionella risk assessments to ensure that they are sufficiently up to date to comply with the legislation.	End of December 2020	HoCS	
4	Analyse the IWS information, and implement areas of good practice	End of December 2020	HoCS/HoOD	
5	Reconsider suitability of “normal” Legionella Risk Management Policy in the light of the on-going Covid19 situation, particularly in the area of system flushing.	End of October 2020	HoCS/HoOD/HoPP	

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