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**THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND**

Dydd Mercher, 14 Gorffennaf 2021 Dydd Mercher, 14 Gorffennaf 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

**PWYLLGOR GWAITH**

A meeting of the Pwyllgor Gwaith will be held in Ystafell y Weithrediaeth, Canolfan Ddinesig, Glynebwy on Dydd Mercher, 21ain Gorffennaf, 2021 at 10.00 am.

Yours faithfully

Michelle Morris  
Managing Director

**AGENDA**

**Pages**

**1. CYFIEITHU AR Y PRYD**

Mae croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, mae angen o leiaf 3 diwrnod gwaith o hysbysiad ymlaen llaw os dymunwch wneud hynny. Darperir gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd os gwneir cais.

**2. YMDDIHEURIADAU**

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

Derbyn ymddiheuriadau.

### **DATGANIADAU BUDDIANT A GODDEFEBAU**

Derbyn datganiadau buddiant a goddefebau..

#### **COFNODION**

#### **4. CYFARFOD ARBENNIG O'R PWYLLGOR GWEITHREDOL 7 - 10**

Ystyried cofnodion y cyfarfod arbennig o'r Pwyllgor Gweithredol a gynhaliwyd ar 9 Mehefin 2021.

#### **5. CYFARFOD ARBENNIG O'R PWYLLGOR GWEITHREDOL 11 - 14**

Ystyried cofnodion y cyfarfod arbennig o'r Pwyllgor Gweithredol a gynhaliwyd ar 23 Mehefin 2021.

#### **EITEMAU ER PENDERFYNIAD - MATERION GWASANAETHAU CORFFORAETHOL**

#### **6. BLAENRAGLEN GWAITH 2021-22 ARFAETHEDIG Y PWYLLGOR GWEITHREDOL 15 - 46**

Ystyried yr adroddiad.

#### **7. GRANTIAU I SEFYDLIADAU 47 - 48**

Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Adnoddau.

#### **8. STRATEGAETH GWEITHLU 2021-2026 49 - 76**

Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol.

#### **EITEMAU ER PENDERFYNIAD - MATERION ADFYWIO A DATBLYGU ECONOMAIDD**

#### **9. BUDDSODDIAD BWRDEISOL CYMUNEDOL 77 - 86**

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

#### **EITEMAU ER PENDERFYNIAD - MATERION ADDYSG**



10. **PWYLLGOR DIOGELU GWASANAETHAU ADDYSG LLYWODRAETH LEOL** 87 - 158

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Addysg.

#### **EITEMAU ER PENDERFYNIAD – YR AMGYLCHEDD**

11. **TROSGLWYDDO ASEDU CYMUNEDOL – CAE DEIGHTON A GERDDI SIRHYWI, TREDEGAR – CYNGOR TREF TREDEGAR** 159 - 168

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

12. **ADRODDIAD SAFLE – ANIFEILIAID SY’N CRWYDRO** 169 - 178

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

#### **EITEMAU MONITRO - GWASANAETHAU CORFFORAETHOL**

13. **ADRODDIAD CYLLID A PHERFFORMIAD DIWEDD BLWYDDYN 2020/21** 179 - 234

Ystyried adroddiad y Rheolwr Gwasanaeth Perfformiad a Democrataidd.

#### **EITEMAU MONITRO - ADFYWIO A DATBLYGU ECONOMAIDD**

14. **DATBLYGU MODEL YNNI BUSNES I ALLUOGI PARCIAU BUSNES I SICRHAU CANLYNIADAU SERO-NET** 235 - 244

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

15. **ADFERIAD COVID-19 - ECONOMI** 245 - 250

Ystyried adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

#### **EITEMAU MONITRO - YR AMGYLCHEDD**

16. **CYNLLUN REOLI RISG LLIFOGYDD (2016- 2022)** 251 - 280

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

**17. ADRODDIAD CYNNYDD ANSAWDD AER LLEOL 281 - 286**

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

**EITEMAU MONITRO – ADDYSG**

**18. CYFARWYDDIAETH ADDYSG – CYNLLUN ADFER AC ADNEWYDDU 287 - 312**

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Addysg.

**19. ADRODDIAD PERFFORMIAD A MONITRO YMDDIRIEDOLAETH HAMDDEN ANEURIN (EBRILL 2020 – MAWRTH 2021) 313 - 322**

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Addysg.

**20. RHAGLEN GWELLA YSGOLION 2021 323 - 346**

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Addysg.

**EITEMAU MONITRO - GWASANAETHAU CYMDEITHASOL**

**21. GWYBODAETH PERFFORMIAD DIOGELU AR GYFER GWASANAETHAU CYMDEITHASOL AC ADDYSG – 1 EBRILL I 31 MAWRTH 2021 347 - 382**

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Addysg a Chyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol.

**22. EITEM(AU) EITHREDIG**

Derbyn ac ystyried yr adroddiad dilynol sydd ym marn y swyddog priodol yn eitem(au) eithriedig gan roi ystyriaeth i'r prawf budd cyhoeddus ac y dylai'r wasg a'r cyhoedd gael eu heithrio o'r cyfarfod (mae'r rheswm dros y penderfyniad am yr eithriad ar gael ar restr a

gedwir gan y swyddog priodol).

## **EITEMAU ER PENDERFYNIAD - MATERION YR AMGYLCHEDD**

23. **CANOLFAN GWEITHREDIADAU – DIWEDDARIAD  
PROSIECT AC ACHOS BUSNES AMLINELLOL** 383 - 444

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

24. **GWAITH YCHWANEGOL CYNNAL A CHADW  
PRIFFYRDD 2021-2022** 445 - 450

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

To: N. Daniels (Cadeirydd)  
J. Collins  
D. Davies  
J. Mason  
J. Wilkins

All other Members (for information)  
Manager Director  
Chief Officers

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**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

**REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

**SUBJECT: SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 9<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2021**

**REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER**

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

**Deputy Leader/Executive Member –  
Regeneration & Economic Development  
Councillor D. Davies**

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

**Executive Member – Environment  
Councillor J. Wilkins**

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

**WITH: Managing Director  
Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services  
Corporate Director Social Services  
Corporate Director Education  
Chief Resources Officer  
Solicitor  
Press Officer**

**DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<p><b><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></b></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <p>Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance Interim Chief Officer Commercial</p>	
No. 3	<p><b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></b></p> <p>The following declarations of interest was reported:-</p> <p>Mr. R. Crook, Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services Item No. 5 – Community Renewal Fund</p>	
No. 4	<p><b><u>EXEMPT ITEM</u></b></p>	
	<p><b><u>DECISION ITEMS – REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS</u></b></p>	
No. 5	<p><b><u>COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND</u></b></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p>	

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services and Corporate Director Social Services.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services outlined the key points of the report which provided detail on the updated position in respect of the Community Renewal Fund (CRF) and associated local project assessment process, the proposed project shortlist which would form the Blaenau Gwent CRF application to UK Government and sought approval to endorse BGCBC involvement in the Regional Employability Project Proposal (CELT). The Corporate Director also noted the updated position in respect of the UK Levelling Up Fund and a BGCBC submission preparation.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community also gave an overview of the discussions at the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. The Corporate Director felt that all concerns raised had been addressed and the report and projects submitted were supported.

At the invitation of the Leader, the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services detailed the shortlisted projects as well as projects which had that not been shortlisted.

In response to a question raised in relation to allocated amounts to specific bids, the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services confirmed that the amounts detailed in the report were for the specific project.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development welcomed the report and wished to express thanks to the officers and the panel who had worked hard to ensure the bids had been submitted within the tight timescales. The Executive Member felt that there would be an opportunity for collaboration going forward and partnership working could be explored.

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report which contained information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted and Option 2 as detailed in the report be approved.

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**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

**REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

**SUBJECT: SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 23<sup>rd</sup> JUNE, 2021**

**REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER**

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

**Deputy Leader of the Council/Executive Member –  
Regeneration & Economic Development  
Councillor D. Davies**

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

**Executive Member – Environment  
Councillor J. Wilkins**

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

**WITH: Corporate Director Education  
Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services  
Chief Officer Resources  
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance**

**DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

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

<p><b>No. 2</b></p>	<p><b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b></p> <p>The following apologies for absence were received:-</p> <p>Managing Director  Chief Officer Commercial  Corporate Director Social Services</p>	
<p><b>No. 3</b></p>	<p><b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest and dispensations raised.</p>	
	<p><b><u>MINUTES</u></b></p>	
<p><b>No. 4</b></p>	<p><b><u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2021.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
	<p><b><u>DECISION ITEM – EDUCATION MATTERS</u></b></p>	
<p><b>No. 5</b></p>	<p><b><u>PROPOSAL TO CONSULT ON AN INCREASE IN PEN-Y-CWM SPECIAL SCHOOL CAPACITY</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the joint report of the Corporate Director Education and Service Manager – Education and Transformation.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Education advised that the report provided a detailed overview of the statutory consultation undertaken by Education Directorate on the proposal to extend the capacity of Pen-y-Cwm Special School. Following the consultation, a determination was now sought from the Executive Committee in line with the proposal to proceed to Statutory Notice stage.</p>	

The Corporate Director spoke to the report and noted the elements of school reorganisation and stated that in order to increase capacity at Pen-y-Cwm Special School a formal consultation needed to be undertaken as the Council had proposed an increase in pupil capacity by over 10% (from 120 to 175). An overview was provided of the public engagement, written responses and the Corporate Director noted the data of the correspondence received in terms of the level of support for the proposal:-

- Fully support the proposal - 9 (82%)
- Partially support the proposal - 1 (9%)
- Do not support the proposal - 1 (9%)

It was further reported that the social media engagement had been extensive, which demonstrated the large degree of support. The Corporate Director also referred to the consultation undertaken with the Youth Forum, the School Council and Estyn. In terms of the thematic analysis, the Corporate Director outlined the primary themes which had arisen from the analysis of responses, as follows:-

- Specialist provision/facilities – 17
- Increased Demand – 16
- Long-term Impact –15

In conclusion, the Corporate Director recognised that there had been a relatively low response rate to the consultation exercise, however, the low response was not unusual where there are high levels of support. It was felt that the consultation demonstrated that there was widespread support to increase current capacity at Pen-Y-Cwm Special School.

The Executive Member for Education welcomed the positive response received as there are a number of benefits in extending capacity, in particular the increased capacity would allow more children to be taught closer to their homes.

**RESOLVED** that the report be accepted with associated documents and agreed to proceed to Statutory Notice (Option 1).

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# Agenda Item 6

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 03.06.21

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 03.06.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

Report Subject: **Proposed Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021-22**

Portfolio Holder: **All Portfolio Holders**

Report Submitted by: **Cllr Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member Corporate Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
X	27.05.21	28.05.21			July 2021	21.07.21	29.07.21	

1. **Purpose of the Report**
  - 1.1 To present the Executive Forward Work Programme for 2021-22 (Appendix 1) and to seek approval from Committee.
  
2. **Scope and Background**
  - 2.1 The Executive Work Programme is a key aspect of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and supports the requirements of the Constitution.
  - 2.2 The topics set out in the Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's Corporate Plan, agreed by the Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2020, corporate documents and supporting business plans.
  - 2.3 All Scrutiny Committees and the Council Forward Work Programmes have been aligned to the Executive Forward Work Programme.
  - 2.4 As the document is fluid there is flexibility to allow for regular review between the Chair and the Committee.
  
3. **Options for Recommendation**
  - 3.1 The Work Programmes have been endorsed by the relevant departments of the Council, and all Scrutiny Committees and the Council will agree their work programmes as part of the June / July cycle of meetings.
  - 3.2 **Option 1**  
To agree the Forward Work Programme for Executive Committee for 2021/22.  
  
**Option 2**  
To suggest any amendments prior to agreeing the Forward Work Programme.

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Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

**Blaenau Gwent**

County Borough Council

# **DRAFT Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22**

**Chair:** Councillor Nigel Daniels, Leader of the Council

**Vice-Chair:** Councillor David Davies, Deputy Leader of the Council

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

**Executive Meeting Date:** Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**Report Submission Deadline Date to Liz Thomas:** Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021

\*Reports received after this date will be included on the next agenda of Executive

Decision: 6 Items Monitoring: 4 Items Information: 0
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Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
<b>DECISION ITEMS</b>				
<b>Portfolio:</b> Leader / Corporate Services				
Forward Work Programme 2020/21	<b>Decision</b> To approve the Forward Work Programme for 2021/22, recognising the fluidity of the programme.	Chair	June 2021	29.07.21
Grants to Organisations (if any)	<b>Decision</b> To agree the Grants to Organisations.	Rhian Daly	N/A	N/A
<b>Portfolio:</b> Environment				
Litter and Fly-tipping Strategy	<b>Decision</b> To endorse the strategy, prior to approval at Council.	Dave Watkins	Community Services – 12.04.21	Council 29.07.21
Highways Capital Works Programme	<b>Decision</b> To undertake a review of the activity undertaken in the previous year 2020/21 and to consider the options for work for 2021/22.	Carl Powell	Community Services – 07.06.21	N/A
Charitable Land, former Ysgol Gymraeg, King Street, Brynmawr	<b>Decision</b> To endorse the report prior to approval at Council.	Lee Williams	N/A	29.07.21
<b>Portfolio:</b> Education				
School Organisation Policy (2021-2024)	<b>Decision</b> To approve the Blaenau Gwent School Organisation Policy 2021-2024.	Claire Gardner	Education and Learning – 20.04.21	N/A



## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
<b>MONITORING ITEMS</b>				
<b>Portfolio:</b> Leader / Corporate Services				
Communications Strategy Monitoring	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To consider the performance of the Communication Strategy, focus on the impact of the strategy during COVID19 Pandemic.	Bernadette Elias	Corporate Overview – 16.04.21	N/A
Commercial Strategy Monitoring	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To consider performance of the Commercial Strategy, focus Strategic Commercial Board element. In depth look at each of the 5 elements.	Bernadette Elias	Corporate Overview – 16.04.21	N/A
<b>Portfolio:</b> Education				
Self-evaluation (SE)	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to contribute to the development of the SE report for LGES and to determine the actions arising from the SER are appropriate and aligned to the service needs for children and young people.	Lynn Phillips	Education and Learning – 20.03.21	N/A
COVID 19 Update	<b>Update</b> To provide Members with update in relation to schools and Covid-19.	Lynn Phillips	Education and Learning – 20.03.21	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

**Executive Meeting Date:** Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021

**Report Submission Deadline Date to Liz Thomas:** Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021

\*Reports received after this date will be included on the next agenda of Executive

Decision: 5 Items  
Monitoring: 8 Items  
Information: 2 Items

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
<b>DECISION ITEMS</b>				
<b>Portfolio:</b> Leader / Corporate Services				
Grants to Organisations	<b>Approval</b> To agree the Grants to Organisations.	Rhian Daly	N/A	N/A
Workforce Strategy	<b>Decision</b> To consider and endorse the workforce strategy including change in circumstances following COVID and future working arrangements, prior to approval at Council.	Andrea Prosser	Corporate Overview – 16.07.21	Council – 29.07.21
<b>Portfolio:</b> Deputy Leader / Regeneration and Economic Development				
Community Municipal Investments	<b>Decision</b> To agree to the proposals to take forward Community Municipal Bonds in Blaenau Gwent.	Amy Taylor	Regeneration – 30.06.21	N/A
<b>Portfolio:</b> Education				
Safeguarding Policy 2021	<b>Decision</b> To consider and approve the annual update of the Local Government Education Services Safeguarding policy 2021.	Sarah Dixon	Joint Safeguarding – 14.07.21	N/A
<b>Portfolio:</b> Environment				
Central Depot new Build / Relocation / Business Plan	<b>Approval</b> To consider the business plan and options for the relocation of the Central Depot.	Dave Watkins	Community Services – 19.7.21	Council – 29.7.21
<b>MONITORING ITEMS</b>				
<b>Portfolio:</b> Leader / Corporate Services				
Joint Finance and Performance report	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to receive the end of year report for 2020/21, for consideration.	Gemma Wasley	Corporate Overview – 16.07.21	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
<b>Portfolio: Education</b>				
Education Directorate Recovery and Renewal	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To ensure that Members are aware of arrangements to support schools and learners recovery and renewal activity from the pandemic and to monitor progress (Strategy overview).	Luisa Munro-Morris / Claire Gardner/ Michelle Jones	Education and Learning – 22.06.21	N/A
Aneurin Leisure Trust Performance and Monitoring	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to consider the content of the six monthly ALT performance report and to discuss areas for future monitoring arrangements.	Joanne Sims	Education and Learning – 22.06.21	N/A
Improving Schools Programme 2021	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide Members with an overview of inspection arrangements, an update on any inspection report findings (when available) and progress within schools which are school causing concern or subject to Council intervention.	Lynn Phillips/ Luisa Munro-Morris / Michelle Jones	Education and Learning – 22.06.21	N/A
<b>Portfolio: Deputy Leader / Regeneration and Economic Development</b>				
Development of Business Energy Model to enable Business Park to achieve Net Zero Outcomes	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To ensure Members are aware of the project being undertaken in conjunction with Welsh Government Smart Living Team and monitor progress	Amy Taylor	Regeneration – 30.06.21	N/A
COVID 19 Recovery - Economy	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To ensure that Members are aware of arrangements to support the economy recovery and renewal activity from the pandemic and to monitor progress.	Owen Ashton	Regeneration – 30.06.21	N/A
<b>Portfolio: Environment</b>				
Update on Flood Risk Management Plan	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To report progress on the Flood Management Plan.	Carl Powell Wayne Jervis	Community Services – 19.07.21	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
<b>Portfolio:</b> Social Services / Education				
Safeguarding Performance Information Social Services and Education	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide members with Safeguarding Performance and Self-Evaluation information and to influence areas of focus.	Damien McCann/ Lynn Phillips	Joint Safeguarding – 14.07.21	N/A
<b>INFORMATION ITEMS</b>				
Annual Air Quality 2019/20	<b>Information</b> To receive the annual report for Members' information.	Dave Thompson	Community Services – 07.06.21	N/A
Adult Safeguarding Performance Information	<b>Information</b> To receive Safeguarding Performance information relating to Adult Services and to influence areas of focus.	Alyson Hoskins / Andrew Day	Joint Safeguarding – 14.07.21	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

**Executive Meeting Date:** Monday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021

**Report Submission Deadline Date to Liz Thomas:** Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021

\*Reports received after this date will be included on the next agenda of Executive

Decision: 0 Items  
Monitoring: 3 Items  
Information: 0 Item

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
<b>MONITORING ITEMS</b>				
<b>Portfolio:</b> Leader / Corporate Services				
Revenue Budget Provisional Outturn 2020/21	<b>Budget Monitoring</b> To provide members with the Revenue Budget Provisional Outturn 2020/21.	Rhian Hayden	Joint Budget – 26.07.21	N/A
Capital Expenditure Provisional Outturn 2020/21	<b>Budget Monitoring</b> To provide members with the Capital Expenditure Provisional Outturn 2020/21.	Rhian Hayden	Joint Budget – 26.07.21	N/A
General Reserves Provisional Outturn 2020/21	<b>Budget Monitoring</b> To provide members with the General Reserves Provisional Outturn 2020/21.	Rhian Hayden	Joint Budget – 26.07.21	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

**Executive Meeting Date:** Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021

**Report Submission Deadline Date to Liz Thomas:** Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021

\*Reports received after this date will be included on the next agenda of Executive

Decision: 8 Items  
Monitoring: 12 Items  
Information: 1 Item

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
<b>DECISION ITEMS</b>				
<b>Portfolio: Leader / Corporate Services</b>				
Grants to Organisations	<b>Approval</b> To agree the Grants to Organisations.	Rhian Daly	N/A	N/A
Assessment of Performance	<b>Decision</b> To consider and endorse the Assessment of performance against the Corporate Plan prior to approval by Council.	Gemma Wasley	Corporate Overview – 10.09.21	Council – 30.09.21
<b>Portfolio: Education</b>				
Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy To be published by 1st October	<b>Decision</b> To consider and approve the draft Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy 2022/23, prior to publication on 1/10/2021.	Claire Gardner	Education and Learning – 07.09.21	N/A
Education Accessibility Strategy	<b>Decision</b> To consider and approve draft Education Accessibility Strategy 2021-2024.	Claire Gardner	Education and Learning – 07.09.21	N/A
Inclusion Strategy	<b>Decision</b> To consider and approve the draft Inclusion Strategy 2021 – 2022.	Luisa Munro-Morris / Rob Smith / School Rep	Education and Learning – 07.09.21	N/A
<b>Portfolio: Deputy Leader / Regeneration and Economic Development</b>				
Renewable Energy Generation Project – Hydro Power	<b>Decision</b> To agree the proposals to take forward hydro generation projects	Amy Taylor	Regeneration - 15.09.21	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Aneurin Bevan report	<b>Decision</b> To approve the report findings.	Owen Ashton / Moe Forouzan	Regeneration - 15.09.21	N/A
Ebbw Vale Placemaking Plan	<b>Decision</b> To approve the proposals for placemaking in Ebbw Vale.	Amy Taylor	Regeneration - 15.09.21	N/A
<b>MONITORING ITEMS</b>				
<b>Portfolio: Leader / Corporate Services</b>				
Communications Strategy Quarterly Monitoring	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To consider the performance of the Communication Strategy focus on the impact of the strategy during COVID19 Pandemic	Bernadette Elias	Corporate Overview – 10.09.21	N/A
Commercial Strategy Quarterly Monitoring	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To consider performance of the Commercial Strategy, focus Strategic Commercial Board element. In depth look at each of the 5 elements	Bernadette Elias	Corporate Overview – 10.09.21	N/A
Review of staff attendance 2020/21, as at end of March 2021	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To undertake an annual review of staff sickness absence.	Andrea Prosser	Corporate Overview – 10.09.21	N/A
<b>Portfolio: Education</b>				
Self-Evaluation Report	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To ensure that Members contribute to the development of the self-evaluation report for Local Government Education Services.	Lynn Phillips	Education and Learning – 07.09.21	N/A
Outcomes of Self Evaluations	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide members with an overview of the findings from the 2019 20 self- evaluation process and key issues to be addressed.	Michelle Jones	Joint Safeguarding – Sept TBC	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
MyConcerns	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide members with an overview of the MyConcerns model and the progress made to date in its implementation	Michelle Jones	Joint Safeguarding – Sept TBC	N/A
Prevent Action Plan and Thematic Review	<b>Monitoring</b> To provide members with an overview of the work undertaken to mainstream Counter Terrorism’s Prevent Extremism objectives in respect of Local Government Education Settings.	Helena Hunt	Joint Safeguarding – Sept TBC	N/A
Keeping Learners Safe	<b>Monitoring</b> To provide members with an overview of the revised keeping learners safe guidance, how it is discharged and how the LA assures itself that the safeguarding arrangements across LGES settings give no cause for concern.	Michelle Jones Sarah Dixon Helena Hunt	Joint Safeguarding – Sept TBC	N/A
<b>Portfolio: Deputy Leader / Regeneration and Economic Development</b>				
Regeneration Directorate Performance report	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to monitor and challenge the performance data for the Directorate.	Richard Crook Ellie Fry	Regeneration – 15.09.21	N/A
Decarbonisation Plan	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To enable Members to monitor performance of the Decarbonisation Plan.	Michelle Morris	Regeneration - 15.09.21	N/A
<b>Portfolio: Social Services</b>				
Safe Reduction of Children Looked After Strategy Monitoring	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to be informed of progress in relation to the strategy 2020-25.	Tanya Evans	Social Services – 22.07.21	N/A
<b>INFORMATION ITEMS</b>				



## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Welsh Language Annual Report	<b>Information</b> To receive the annual report.	Andrew Parker	Corporate Overview – 10.09.21	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

**Executive Meeting Date:** Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021

**Report Submission Deadline Date to Liz Thomas:** Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021

\*Reports received after this date will be included on the next agenda of Executive

Decision: 3 Items Monitoring: 16 Items Information: 3 Items
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Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
<b>DECISION ITEMS</b>				
<b>Portfolio:</b> Leader / Corporate Services				
Grants to Organisations	<b>Approval</b> To agree the Grants to Organisations.	Rhian Daly	N/A	N/A
Welsh Language Promotion Strategy	<b>Decision</b> Policy review and development.	Andrew Parker	Corporate Overview - 22.10.21	N/A
<b>Portfolio:</b> Deputy Leader / Regeneration and Economic Development				
Tredegar Place Making Plan	<b>Decision</b> To approve the proposals for placemaking in Tredegar.	Amy Taylor	Regeneration – 03.11.21	N/A
<b>MONITORING ITEMS</b>				
<b>Portfolio:</b> Environment				
Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) 2020/21 annual report	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Annual report of the implementation of the Environment Act and the Council's Biodiversity duties throughout 2020/21 and consideration of the proposed actions for 2021/22.	Chris Engel	Community Services – 04.10.21	N/A
Community Services Directorate Performance report	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to monitor the performance of the Directorate.	Richard Crook Clive Rogers	Community Services – 04.10.21	N/A
Waste and Recycling Performance 2020/21	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to monitor the performance.	Matthew Stent	Community Services – 04.10.21	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
<b>Portfolio:</b> Leader / Corporate Services				
Medium Term Financial Strategy / Bridging the Gap	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide Members with an update on the MTFs / Bridging the Gap programme.	Rhian Hayden Bernadette Elias	Corporate Overview – 22.10.21	Council 25.11.21
COVID 19 Recovery - Workforce	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To ensure that Members are aware of arrangements to support the workforce recovery and renewal activity from the pandemic and to monitor progress.	Andrea Prosser	Corporate Overview – 22.10.21	N/A
Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/22	<b>Budget Monitoring</b> To provide members with an expenditure forecast at the end of quarter 1 across all portfolios for 2021/22.	Rhian Hayden	Joint Budget – 27.09.21	N/A
Forecast Capital Expenditure 2020/21	<b>Budget Monitoring</b> To provide details of each portfolio's forecast capital expenditure against allocation at the end of quarter 1	Rhian Hayden	Joint Budget – 27.09.21	N/A
Forecast of General and Earmarked Reserves	<b>Budget Monitoring</b> To present report at the end of quarter 1 detailing the actual and forecast use of general and ear marked reserves.	Rhian Hayden	Joint Budget – 27.09.21	N/A
<b>Portfolio:</b> Education				
Provisional KS4 School Performance	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide a summary of performance in line with accountability changes to ensure that children and young people achieve in line with expectations, particularly at KS4.	Luisa Munro-Morris/Michelle Jones	Education and Learning – 19.10.21	N/A
Education Directorate Recovery and Renewal	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To ensure that Members are aware of arrangements to support schools and learners to recovery from the pandemic and to monitor progress (Summer term 2021 progress on an agreed theme).	Luisa Munro-Morris / Claire Gardner/ Michelle Jones	Education and Learning – 19.10.21	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Improving Schools and School Inspections	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide Members with an update on any inspection report findings (when available) and progress within schools which a school causing concern or subject to Council intervention. (Overview 2020/21 academic year)	Lynn Phillips/ Luisa Munro Morris / Michelle Jones	Education and Learning – 19.10.21	N/A
<b>Portfolio: Deputy Leader / Regeneration and Economic Development</b>				
Lime Avenue Business Units and Box Works Closure report	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to receive the closure report.	Nick Landers	Regeneration – 03.11.21	N/A
<b>Portfolio: Social Services</b>				
Children's and Community Grant	<b>Budget Monitoring</b> Provide update on the CCG	Tanya Evans	Social Services – 07.10.21	N/A
Developing a BG MYST Team	<b>Monitoring</b> Provide update on the development of a BG MYST Team	Tanya Evans	Social Services – 07.10.21	N/A
COVID 19 Recovery - Community	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To ensure that Members are aware of arrangements to support the community recovery and renewal activity from the pandemic and to monitor progress.	Michelle Church / Ceri Bird	Social Services – 07.10.21	N/A
Director of Social Services Quarter 1 and 2 update	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to receive the quarterly update of the Director of Social Services Annual report.	Damien McCann	Social Services – 07.10.21	N/A
<b>INFORMATION ITEMS</b>				
Annual Health and Safety Report	<b>Information</b> To provide an update on performance of the Annual Health and Safety report.	Andrea Prosser	Corporate Overview – 22.10.21	N/A
STEM Programme	<b>Information</b> To provide information on the programme.	Beth McPherson	Regeneration – 03.11.21	N/A
Kickstart Employment Placement	<b>Information</b> To provide information on the programme. Members.	Beth McPherson	Regeneration – 03.11.21	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

**Executive Meeting Date:** Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021

**Report Submission Deadline Date to Liz Thomas:** Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021

\*Reports received after this date will be included on the next agenda of Executive

Decision: 3 Items  
Monitoring: 17 Items  
Information: 5 Items

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
<b>DECISION ITEMS</b>				
<b>Portfolio:</b> Leader / Corporate Services				
Grants to Organisations	<b>Approval</b> To agree the Grants to Organisations.	Rhian Daly	N/A	N/A
<b>Portfolio:</b> Education				
Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) Monitoring existing plan and draft 10-year plan <i>Please note report and Plan will need to be translated to Welsh by the Directorate.</i>	<b>Decision</b> Members to consider performance against the Education Directorate's current WESP (2012 -20); and to approve the draft BG 10-year WESP, prior to submission to WG in January 2022.	Claire Gardner	Education and Learning – 30.11.21	N/A
Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy	<b>Decision</b> To consider and approve the draft updated Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy 2022/23 prior to publication.	Luisa Munro-Morris / Sarah Dixon	Joint Safeguarding – 10.12.21	N/A
<b>MONITORING ITEMS</b>				
<b>Portfolio:</b> Leader / Corporate Services				
Communications Strategy Quarterly Monitoring	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To consider the performance of the Communication Strategy focus on the impact of the strategy during COVID19 Pandemic	Bernadette Elias	Corporate Overview – 03.12.21	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Commercial Strategy Quarterly Monitoring	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To consider performance of the Commercial Strategy, focus Strategic Commercial Board element. In depth look at each of the 5 elements	Bernadette Elias	Corporate Overview – 03.12.21	N/A
Joint Finance and Performance report	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to receive quarters 1 and 2 for consideration.	Gemma Wasley	Corporate Overview – 03.12.21	N/A
Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/22	<b>Budget Monitoring</b> To provide members with an expenditure forecast at the end of quarter 2 across all portfolios for 2021/22.	Rhian Hayden	Joint Budget – 22.11.21	N/A
Forecast Capital Expenditure 2021/22	<b>Budget Monitoring</b> To provide details of each portfolio's forecast capital expenditure against allocation at the end of quarter 2	Rhian Hayden	Joint Budget – 22.11.21	N/A
Forecast of General and Earmarked Reserves	<b>Budget Monitoring</b> To present report at the end of quarter 2 detailing the actual and forecast use of general and ear marked reserves.	Rhian Hayden	Joint Budget – 22.11.21	N/A
<b>Portfolio: Environment</b>				
Civil Parking Enforcement – Annual Review	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to receive the annual review.	Clive Rogers	Community Services – 15.11.21	N/A
Overview of arrangements with Powys County Council	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To receive a report on the current collaboration with Powys County Council.	Dave Thompson	Community Services – 15.11.21	N/A
<b>Portfolio: Deputy Leader / Regeneration</b>				
Energy Prospectus Annual Review	<b>Performance Monitoring</b>	Amy Taylor	Regeneration – 08.12.21	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
	To provide members with information on the progress made since approval of the Energy Prospectus			
Tredegar Heritage Initiative	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to receive the closure report.	Amy Taylor	Regeneration – 08.12.21	N/A
<b>Portfolio: Education</b>				
Management of Pupil Places and the School Estate 2020/21	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the management of pupil places and the school estate throughout the 2020/21 academic session.	Claire Gardner	Education and Learning – 30.11.21	N/A
Education Directorate End of Year 2021 report	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide Members with the first annual strategic overview report from the Corporate Director on progress made and key areas for future development.	Lynn Phillips	Education and Learning – 30.11.21	N/A
Safeguarding Performance Information Social Services and Education	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide members with Safeguarding Performance and Self-Evaluation information and to influence areas of focus.	Damien McCann/ Lynn Phillips	Joint Safeguarding – 10.12.21	N/A
Safeguarding Business Plan – Progress	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide members with a progress update in respect of the safeguarding business plan	Michelle Jones	Joint Safeguarding – 10.12.21	N/A
Safeguarding Vulnerable Learners	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide members with an update on strategies being used to safeguard vulnerable learners, and to provide relevant performance data	Luisa Munro-Morris / Sarah Dixon	Joint Safeguarding – 10.12.21	N/A
<b>Portfolio: Social Services</b>				
Regional Partnership Board	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to be informed of the decisions taken by the Regional Partnership Board	Damien McCann	Social Services – 18.11.21	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Future model of assistive technology / telecare provision	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to be informed of proposals to provide an enhanced telecare / assistive technology offer to promote independence and meet personal outcomes.	Alyson Hoskins	Social Services – 18.11.21	N/A
<b>INFORMATION ITEMS</b>				
Pupil Attendance	<b>Information</b> Members to receive the pupil attendance performance of Blaenau Gwent's.	Luisa Munro-Morris / Lisa Adams	Education and Learning – 30.11.21	N/A
Pupil Exclusions	<b>Information</b> Members to receive the data and associated outcomes.	Luisa Munro-Morris / Lisa Adams	Education and Learning – 30.11.21	N/A
National Adoption Service Annual Report	<b>Information</b> Members to be informed about National and Regional progress of Adoption services	Tanya Evans	Social Services – 18.11.21	N/A
Adult Safeguarding Performance Information	<b>Information</b> To receive Safeguarding Performance information relating to Adult Services and to influence areas of focus.	Alyson Hoskins / Andrew Day	Joint Safeguarding – 10.12.21	N/A
Quality Assuring Safeguarding in Education	<b>Information</b> To provide Members with an overview of the QA arrangements undertaken in the 20/21 academic year, the key areas of learning and the arrangements for the 21/22 academic year	Michelle Jones	Joint Safeguarding – 10.12.21	N/A



## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

**Executive Meeting Date:** Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022

**Report Submission Deadline Date to Liz Thomas:** Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021

\*Reports received after this date will be included on the next agenda of Executive

Decision: Monitoring: Information: 1 Item
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Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
CURRENTLY NO ITEMS				
<b>INFORMATION ITEMS</b>				
Pest Control – Annual Performance Report	<b>Information</b> To receive the annual report for Members' information.	Andrew Long	Community Services – 17.01.22	

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

**SPECIAL Executive Meeting Date:** Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022 TO BE CONFIRMED

**Report Submission Deadline Date to Liz Thomas:** Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022

\*Reports received after this date will be included on the next agenda of Executive

Decision: 1 Item

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
<b>DECISION ITEMS</b>				
<b>Portfolio:</b> Leader / Corporate Services				
Revenue Budget 2022/23	<b>Decision</b> Members to consider the proposed Revenue Budget for 2022/23.	Rhian Hayden	Joint Budget – 31.01.22	

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

**Executive Meeting Date:** Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022

**Report Submission Deadline Date to Liz Thomas:** Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022

\*Reports received after this date will be included on the next agenda of Executive

Decision: 2 Items Monitoring: 7 Items Information: 2 Items
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Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
<b>DECISION ITEMS</b>				
<b>Portfolio:</b> Leader / Corporate Services				
Grants to Organisations	<b>Approval</b> To agree the Grants to Organisations.	Rhian Daly	N/A	N/A
<b>Portfolio:</b> Education				
School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education <b>Statutory deadline for the policy to be published by 15<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>Pre-Decision</b> To consider and approve the draft School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education 2023/24.	Claire Gardner	Education and Learning – 01.02.22	N/A
<b>MONITORING ITEMS</b>				
<b>Portfolio:</b> Leader / Corporate Services				
CCTV Annual Monitoring Performance reporting	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to consider the annual report.	Andrew Parker	Corporate Overview – 04.02.22	N/A
<b>Portfolio:</b> Education				
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme Bands B progress and education project overview	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise progress in line with the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools Band B programme, along with associated Education projects.	Claire Gardner / Luisa Munro-Morris	Education and Learning – 01.02.22	N/A
Education ICT Strategy	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise progress in line with the development of the Education ICT Strategy, and associated projects.	Luisa Munro-Morris/ Claire Gardner	Education and Learning – 01.02.22	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Education Directorate Recovery and Renewal	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To ensure that Members are aware of arrangements to support schools and learners to recovery and renewal from the pandemic and to monitor progress (Autumn term 2021 progress on an agreed theme)	Luisa Munro-Morris / Claire Gardner / Michelle Jones	Education and Learning – 01.02.22	N/A
<b>Portfolio:</b> Deputy Leader / Regeneration and Economic Development				
Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To update on the current performance of the Aspire programme and associated external business engagement.	Tara Lane	Regeneration – 09.02.21	N/A
<b>Portfolio:</b> Social Services				
Safe Reduction of Children Looked After Strategy Monitoring	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to be informed of progress in relation to the strategy 2020-25.	Tanya Evans	Social Services – 20.01.22	N/A
Integrated Care Fund (ICF) update	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to be informed of the progress made in relation to ongoing sustainability of grant funded(ICF) services	Alyson Hoskins	Social Services – 20.01.22	N/A
<b>INFORMATION ITEMS</b>				
Corporate Parenting Progress Report	<b>Information</b> Members to be informed of the progress made against the Corporate Parenting Action Plan	Tanya Evans	Social Services – 20.01.22	N/A
Youth Service Performance	<b>Information</b> Members to receive the performance and impact of the Youth Service and comparing with the latest Welsh Government benchmarking data.	Joanne Sims	Education and Learning – 01.02.22	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

**Executive Meeting Date:** Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022

**Report Submission Deadline Date to Liz Thomas:** Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022

\*Reports received after this date will be included on the next agenda of Executive

Decision: 2 Items Monitoring: 14 Items Information: 8 Items
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Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
<b>DECISION ITEMS</b>				
<b>Portfolio:</b> Leader / Corporate Services				
Grants to Organisations	<b>Approval</b> To agree the Grants to Organisations.	Rhian Daly	N/A	N/A
<b>Portfolio:</b> Education				
Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan 2022/23	<b>Decision</b> To consult Members on the draft EAS Business Plan for 2022/23.	Luisa Munro-Morris / Michelle Jones	Education and Learning – 15.03.22	N/A
<b>MONITORING ITEMS</b>				
<b>Portfolio:</b> Leader / Corporate Services				
Strategic Equality Plan	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to be informed of the progress made to date against the priorities within the SEP and approve actions moving forward.	Andrew Parker	Corporate Overview – 18.03.22	N/A
Joint Finance and Performance report	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to receive quarter 3 for consideration.	Gemma Wasley	Corporate Overview – 18.03.22	N/A
Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/22	<b>Budget Monitoring</b> To provide members with an expenditure forecast at the end of quarter 2 across all portfolios for 2021/22.	Rhian Hayden	Joint Budget – 07.03.22	N/A
Forecast Capital Expenditure 2021/22	<b>Budget Monitoring</b>	Rhian Hayden	Joint Budget – 07.03.22	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
	To provide details of each portfolio's forecast capital expenditure against allocation at the end of quarter 3.			
Forecast of General and Earmarked Reserves	<b>Budget Monitoring</b> To present report at the end of quarter 3 detailing the actual and forecast use of general and ear marked reserves.	Rhian Hayden	Joint Budget – 07.03.22	N/A
<b>Portfolio: Deputy Leader / Regeneration</b>				
Regeneration Directorate Performance report	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to monitor and challenge the performance data for the Directorate.	Richard Crook Ellie Fry	Regeneration – 23.3.22	N/A
Annual Industrial Property Performance update 2020/2021	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To monitor the priorities and activities being delivered and what outcomes have been achieved i.e. constrained units updates, occupancy figures, new property developments.	Moe Forouzan/Paul Miles	Regeneration – 23.3.22	N/A
Destination Management – Annual Performance Review 2020/21	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To monitor the priorities and activities being delivered and what outcomes have been achieved and influence areas of focus.	Owen Ashton Moe Forouzan	Regeneration – 23.3.22	N/A
<b>Portfolio: Environment</b>				
Community Services Directorate Performance report	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to monitor the performance of the Directorate.	Richard Crook Clive Rogers	Community Services – 04.04.22	N/A
Fly Tipping Fines 2021/22	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to receive an end of year report on fly tipping fines for 2021/22.	Andrew Long	Community Services – 04.04.22	N/A
<b>Portfolio: Social Services</b>				

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Implementation of Liberty Protection Safeguard legislation	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to be informed of the progress of implementation of the new legislative frame work from April 22	Alyson Hoskins	Social Services – 03.03.22	N/A
Regional Partnership Board	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to be informed of the decisions taken by the Regional Partnership Board	Damien McCann	Social Services – 07.04.22	N/A
COVID 19 Recovery - Community	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To ensure that Members are aware of arrangements to support the community recovery and renewal activity from the pandemic and to monitor progress.	Michelle Church / Ceri Bird	Social Services – 07.04.22	N/A
<b>Portfolio: Education / Social Services</b>				
Safeguarding Performance Information Social Services and Education	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide members with Safeguarding Performance and Self-Evaluation information and to influence areas of focus.	Damien McCann/ Lynn Phillips	Joint Safeguarding – 25.03.22	N/A
<b>INFORMATION ITEMS</b>				
Annual Air Quality 2020/21	<b>Information</b> To receive the annual report for Members' information.	Dave Thompson	Community Services – 04.04.22	N/A
Inspire to Achieve / Work	<b>Information</b> Members to receive the performance in line with targets and spend.	Joanne Sims	Education and Learning – 15.03.22	N/A
Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) Annual Return 2019/20	<b>Information</b> Members to receive the Annual Assessment from Welsh Government which highlights Blaenau Gwent's performance against the Welsh Public Library Standards.	Joanne Sims	Education and Learning – 15.03.22	N/A
My Support Team	<b>Information</b> Members to be informed of the progress of the team in returning children from residential placements	Tanya Evans	Social Services – 03.03.22	N/A

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Living Independently in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Strategy	<b>Information</b> Members to be informed of the progress made against the priorities within the strategy	Alyson Hoskins	Social Services – 07.04.22	N/A
Adult Safeguarding Performance Information	<b>Information</b> To receive Safeguarding Performance information relating to Adult Services and to influence areas of focus.	Alyson Hoskins / Andrew Day	Joint Safeguarding – 25.03.22	N/A
My Concerns	<b>Information</b> To provide members with an update on the progress made to date in its implementation	Michelle Jones	Joint Safeguarding – 25.03.22	N/A
Safer Schools	<b>Information</b> To provide members with an overview of the safer schools approach, its impact upon learners and schools and key areas of learning	Helena Hunt / Sarah Dixon / Michelle Jones	Joint Safeguarding – 25.03.22	N/A



## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

**Executive Meeting Date:** To be confirmed Items

**Report Submission Deadline Date to Liz Thomas:**

\*Reports received after this date will be included on the next agenda of Executive

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
<b>DECISION ITEMS</b>				
<b>Portfolio:</b> Leader / Corporate Services				
Global Resettlement Programme	<b>Decision</b> To consider the new items of the Global Resettlement Programme.	Bernadette Elias		N/A
Counter Terrorism – Chanel Duties	<b>Decision</b> Review of Local Authority Plan to implement responsibilities.	Bernadette Elias Andrew Parker		N/A
Corporate Joint Committees				N/A
Litter and Dog Bin Strategy	<b>Decision</b> To consider the strategy prior to approval.	Dave Watkins	Community Services – TBC	N/A
Progress Update on Silent Valley		Richard Crook	Community Services – TBC	N/A
Climate Assembly Recommendations		Michelle Morris (Andrew Parker)	Regeneration - 30.06.21	Executive or Council

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

**Executive Meeting Date:** FWP 2022/23

**Report Submission Deadline Date to Liz Thomas:**

\*Reports received after this date will be included on the next agenda of Executive

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
<b>Portfolio:</b> Leader / Corporate Services				
Communications Strategy Quarterly Monitoring	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To consider the performance of the Communication Strategy focus on the impact of the strategy during COVID19 Pandemic	Bernadette Elias	Corporate Overview – 29.04.22	
Commercial Strategy Quarterly Monitoring	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To consider performance of the Commercial Strategy, focus Strategic Commercial Board element. In depth look at each of the 5 elements	Bernadette Elias	Corporate Overview – 29.04.22	
Progress of the Agile Working Policy	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To consider progress of the Agile Working Policy.	Andrea Prosser	Corporate Overview – 29.04.22	
Recovery - Workforce	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To ensure that Members are aware of arrangements to support the workforce recovery and renewal activity from the pandemic and to monitor progress.	Andrea Prosser	Corporate Overview – 29.04.22	
Self-evaluation (SE)	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to contribute to the development of the SE report for LGES and to determine the actions arising from the SER are appropriate and aligned to the service needs for children and young people.	Lynn Phillips	Education and Learning – 26.04.22	

## Executive Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Schools organisation policy review	<b>Decision</b> To provide Members with the opportunity to consider and approve the School Organisation Policy post annual review.	Claire Gardner	Education and Learning – 26.04.22	
Improving Schools	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To provide Members with an update on any inspection report findings (when available) and progress within schools that are causing concern or subject to Council intervention.	Lynn Phillips/ Luisa Munro Morris / Michelle Jones	Education and Learning – 26.04.22	
<b>Portfolio: Leader / Corporate Services</b>				
Performance Information on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Quarterly Report	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Members to consider the activity of Blaenau Gwent Council as part of the overall CCRCDD and influence areas of focus.	Ellie Fry	Regeneration – 04.04.2022	
Community Benefits (Annual Performance Report 2021-22)	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> Performance Monitoring report for Members.	Bethan McPherson / Laura Bull	Regeneration – 04.04.2022	
Recovery - Economy	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> To ensure that Members are aware of arrangements to support the economy recovery and renewal activity from the pandemic and to monitor progress.	Owen Ashton	Regeneration – 04.04.2022	

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**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

**REPORT TO:** **THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**REPORT SUBJECT:** **GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS – 21st July 2021**

**REPORT AUTHOR:** **RHIAN HAYDEN**

**LEAD OFFICER/ DEPARTMENT:** **CHIEF OFFICER RESOURCES, RESOURCES**

**ABERTILLERY**

**Abertillery Ward – Councillor J. Holt**

- |    |  |      |
|----|--|------|
| 1. | Abertillery Excelsiors AFC             | £100 |
| 2. | Abertillery Excelsiors Junior FC       | £100 |
| 3. | Abertillery Workmens Welfare Institute | £150 |

**Six Bells Ward – Councillor D. Hancock**

- |    |                              |      |
|----|------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Retired Police Dogs of Gwent | £50  |
| 2. | Friends of Six Bells Park    | £300 |

**EBBW VALE**

**Cwm Ward – Councillors D. Bevan & G. Davies**

- |    |                |      |
|----|----------------|------|
| 1. | Gayden Barrass | £150 |
|----|----------------|------|

**NANTYGLO & BLAINA**

**Blaina Ward - Councillor L. Winnett**

- |    |                                 |      |
|----|---------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Blaina Community Sports Club    | £200 |
| 2. | Nantyglo FC                     | £200 |
| 3. | Blaina Bowls Club               | £100 |
| 4. | Aberystroth Archaeology Society | £100 |
| 5. | Cwmcelyn Methodist Church       | £50  |
| 6. | Cwmcelyn Angling Club           | £100 |

**CHIEF OFFICER RESOURCES**

# Agenda Item 8

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 09.07.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**  
Date of meeting: **21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**  
Report Subject: **Workforce Strategy 2021-2026**  
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	10.06.21 01.07.21	06.07.21			16.07.21	21.07.21	29.07.21	

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give Members of the Executive Committee opportunity to consider and challenge the draft Workforce Strategy 2021-2026 (Appendix 1).

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Council's Organisational Development Strategy 2015 -2020 had a strategic focus on preparing the Council and its workforce for transformation and change, and successfully promoted the 'one Council' approach, supported the transformation of the organisation in response to financial efficiency which included the review of services and the introduction of new and alternative service delivery models and workforce downsizing. Headline achievements of the Strategy are attached as appendix 2.
- 2.2 In March the Council agreed to introduce a new Council Operating Model and Working Arrangements the report is attached as appendix 3. This New Operating Model will introduce modern working practices, will seek to enhance employees' working experience, maximise performance and productivity and deliver the greatest value to the organisation, in terms of improving service delivery, as well as realising financial gains. The New Operating Model will also introduce new Community Hubs improving customer access to Council Services and develop the Democratic Hub at the Council's General Offices in Ebbw Vale.
- 2.3 The new Workforce Strategy will be a key enabler in delivering the Council's ambition, the New Council Operating Model and key priorities. It is a five-year strategy focussed on the future, integrating the Council's vision, objectives and financial planning arrangements. It links service outcomes with the workforce required to deliver them and an on-going understanding of how the workforce should look in the future through continual review, re-alignment and measurement of how outcomes are achieved. It will support the workforce to transition from responding to the emergency situation in relation to the pandemic COVID-19 and act as a key lever to facilitate culture change, capacity and skills, continuation of transformational change and performance improvement. The Strategy will aim to ensure we have the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right level, and at the right cost.

The Workforce Strategy is a 5-year strategy with an annual action plan for delivery.

The Strategy will cover all Council employees including school based staff appointed by governing bodies.

The Strategy clearly uses the Council's vision and organisational ambition and sets out:

- What the Council needs to look like
- Describe the Council's future service delivery model
- Outlines workforce priority outcomes for the next 5 years
- Includes the action plan for 2021/22

### 3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 This report will be considered by the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021, any feedback will be provided verbally to the Executive Committee.

3.2 **Option 1:** To support the proposed draft Workforce Strategy 2021 – 2026 to progress for endorsement at Council.

3.3 **Option 2:** Members to consider the draft Workforce Strategy 2021-2026 and make suggestions/amendments for improvement prior to progression to Council for endorsement.

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

#### 4.1 **Corporate Plan Priorities**

The New Workforce Strategy aligns to the Corporate Plan and will support the delivery of priorities.

#### 4.2 **Statutory Responsibilities**

The Workforce Strategy has been drafted in accordance with, and to comply with key legislations such as, the Equality Act 2010 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

#### 4.3 **Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

The Workforce Strategy will promote and support workforce wellbeing.

### 5. **Implications Against Each Option**

#### 5.1 **Impact on Budget**

There is no impact on budget with the introduction of the new Workforce Strategy.

#### 5.3 **Human Resources**

The workforce is critical and the most important the resource the Council has in delivering services to the community. This Workforce Strategy demonstrate the Councils commitment to its workforce and aims to create a good place to work – developing a workforce that feels connected to and can meet the current and future needs of our community is critical in the Council's ability to deliver ambitious outcomes for the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent.



## 6. **Supporting Evidence**

### 6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

The Strategy contains data that gives a position in terms of the current workforce.

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

Members of the public may be attracted to an employer that demonstrates strategic commitment in its workforce. The Strategy will support enhancing the reputation of the Council as an employer.

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

There has been engagement with the Wider Corporate Leadership Team and Elected Members in development of this strategy. There has been a workforce survey and a pulse survey (2020) which has supported the direction of the Strategy.

There has been formal consultation with the trade unions and suggestions and amendments have been taken on board and influenced the draft Workforce Strategy.

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

The Strategy is a 5-year commitment aiming to create a good place to work.

### 6.5 **Collaboration / partnership working**

Continued collaboration at a local, regional and national level to ensure that delivery actions in the Strategy are modern and in line with any legislative changes.

### 6.6 **Integration (across service areas)**

The Workforce Strategy will continue to promote a 'one Council' approach.

### 6.7 **EqIA**

The Workforce Strategy will actively promote equality of opportunity and diversity in the workforce and as an organisation.

## 7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

The Strategy will have an annual delivery plan and this will be monitored on an annual basis by the Corporate Management Team and Corporate Overview Scrutiny.

## 8. **Background Documents /Electronic Links**

Appendix 1 – Workforce Strategy 2021 – 2026

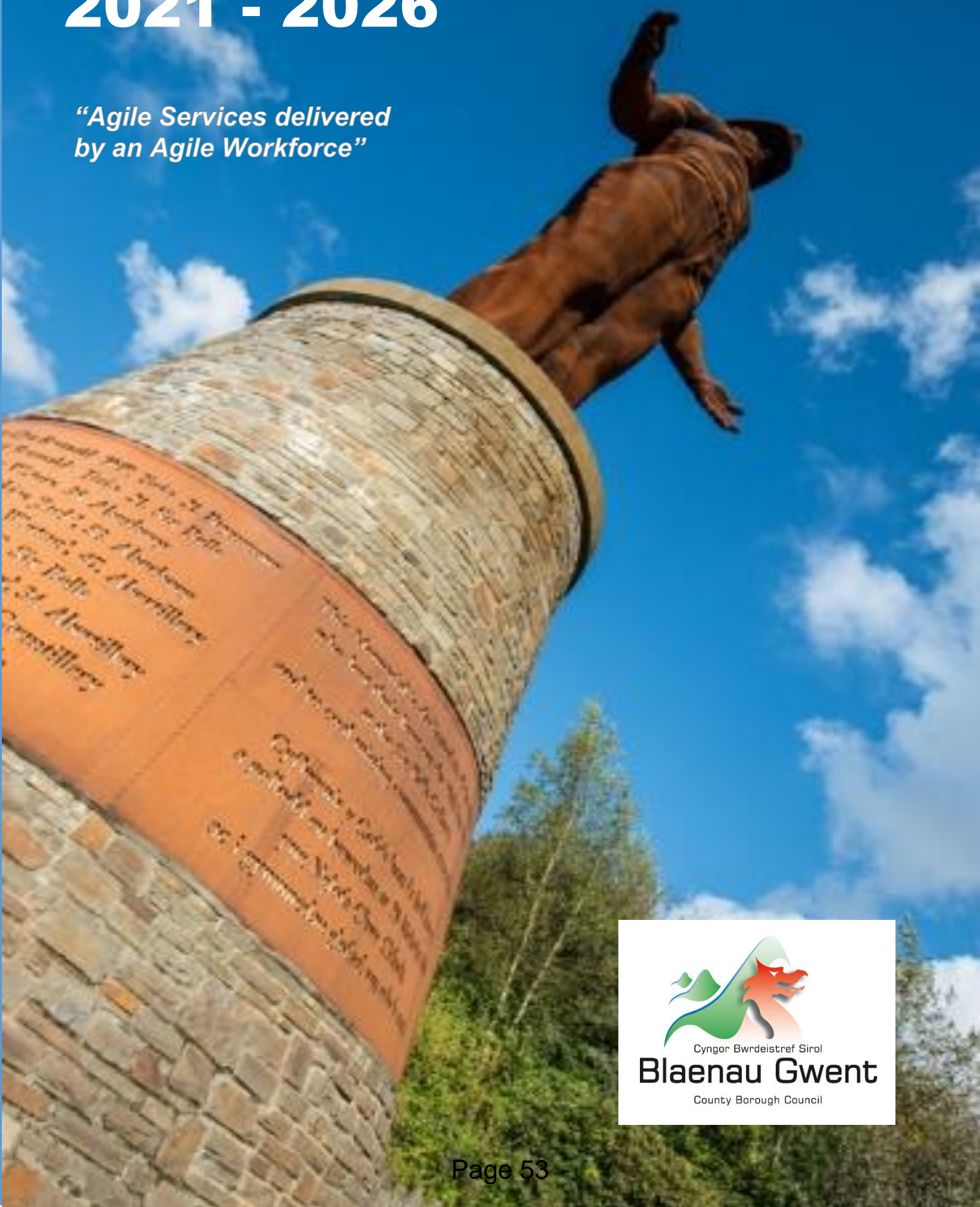
Appendix 2 – Organisational Development Strategy 2015 -2020 Headline Achievements

Appendix 3 - New Council Operating Model & Working Arrangements report to Council March 2021

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# Workforce Strategy 2021 - 2026

*“Agile Services delivered  
by an Agile Workforce”*



## FOREWARD

This Workforce Strategy aims to build on existing good practice and continuing to promote the Council as a good place to work – developing a workforce that feels connected to and can meet the current and future needs of our community. The Council is the major employer in Blaenau Gwent and any action which impacts on the workforce will also directly impact the community and levels of aspiration, income and employment. It provides and commissions some of the most important services to the community, working with a range of other public, private and voluntary organisations in ensuring that public services are delivered to high standards.

The Workforce Strategy demonstrates the Council's commitment and investment in its workforce and wants staff to feel engaged and motivated so that the best services can be delivered to the residents of Blaenau Gwent.

There are clear drivers for change focussed on agility and sustainability by reducing environmental impact as well as property related costs that can be reinvested into front line services, improve resilience, organisational and individual outcomes, customer focus, and create a better work life and corporate social responsibility.

This is a five-year strategy focussed on the future, integrating the Council's vision, objectives, financial planning arrangements and improving the Council as an employer. This includes working with services to achieve ambitions for the community and schools to become sector leading.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we live, work and travel. Many of our people have worked away from the office during lockdown. This Strategy will support the workforce to transition from responding to the emergency situation and act as a key lever to facilitate culture change and continue with transformational change and performance improvement.



Handwritten signature of Nigel Daniels in black ink.

Councillor Nigel Daniels  
Leader of the Council

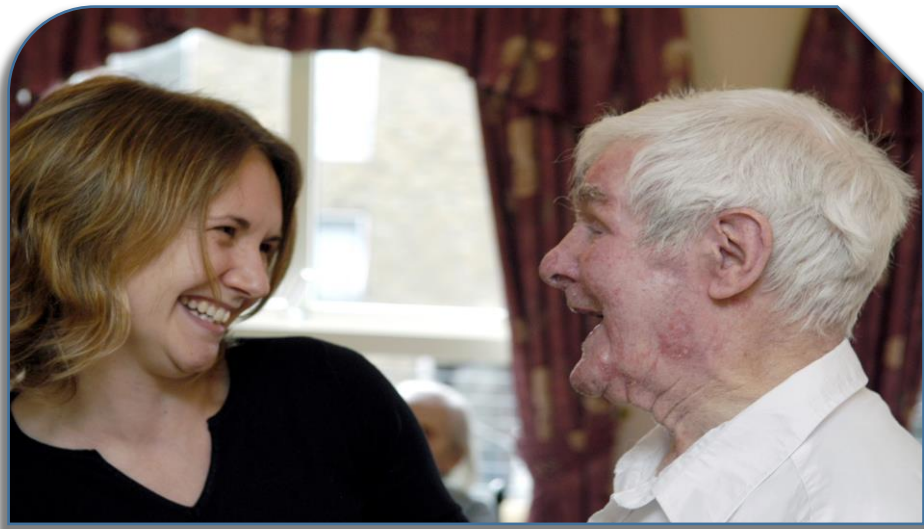


Handwritten signature of Michelle Morris in black ink.

Michelle Morris  
Managing Director

## AIMS OF THE STRATEGY

- The workforce voice will be heard and have influence in shaping the future of the Council
- The right people with the right skills, in the right place, at the right level and at the right cost
- An agile collaborative workforce delivering high quality services to the residents of Blaenau Gwent
- Safe working situations/environments and promotion of workforce health and well being
- The workforce demonstrates expected behaviours, standards and culture in line with the Council's values
- The workforce will be performance/outcome and results focussed with recognition of effort and accountability
- The workforce has the opportunity to develop and learn
- Promote diversity and equality

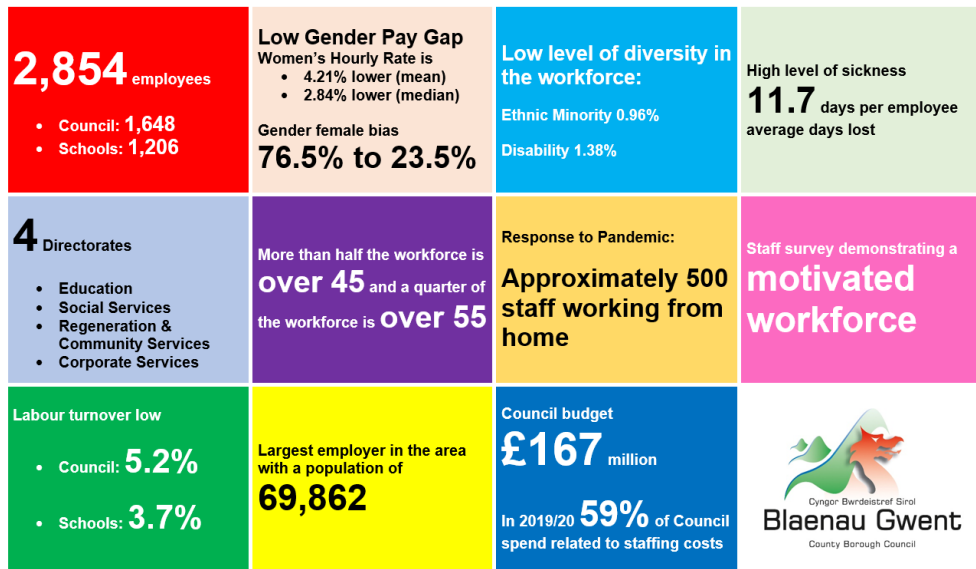


## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

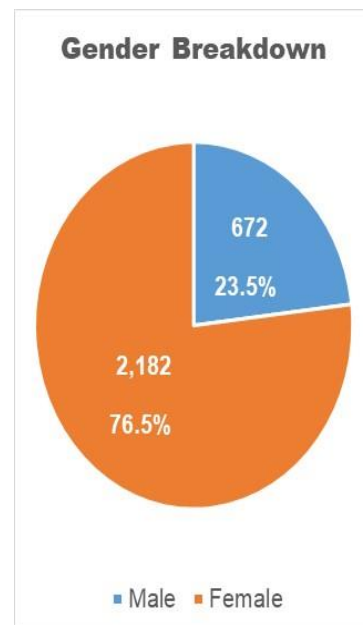
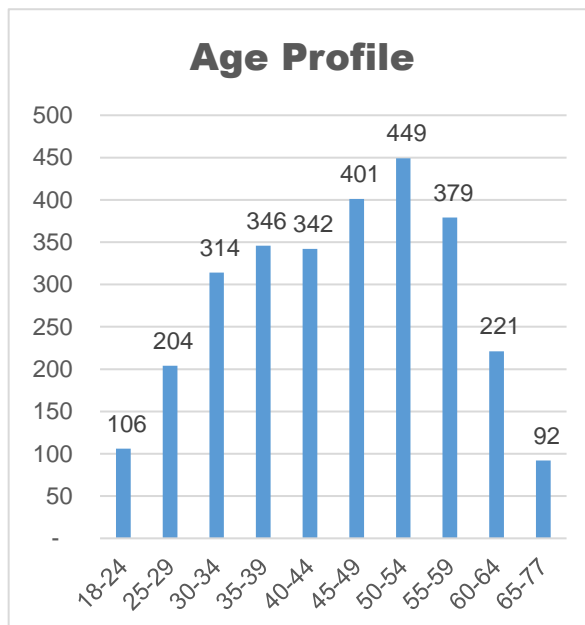
Blaenau Gwent serves a population of just under 70,000 with 62.1% of whom are of working age and 24.7% who are economically inactive. It is expected that funding will continue to be a challenge over the next 5 years, while demand for services and demographic pressures continues to increase. The Council has strived to realise efficiencies by for example; the introduction of a Commercial Strategy, financial efficiency, optimising income generation, redesigning services, reviewing service delivering models and reshaping the workforce. 2020/2021 has been a challenging year in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing to deliver services to the residents of Blaenau Gwent.



## What do we currently look like?



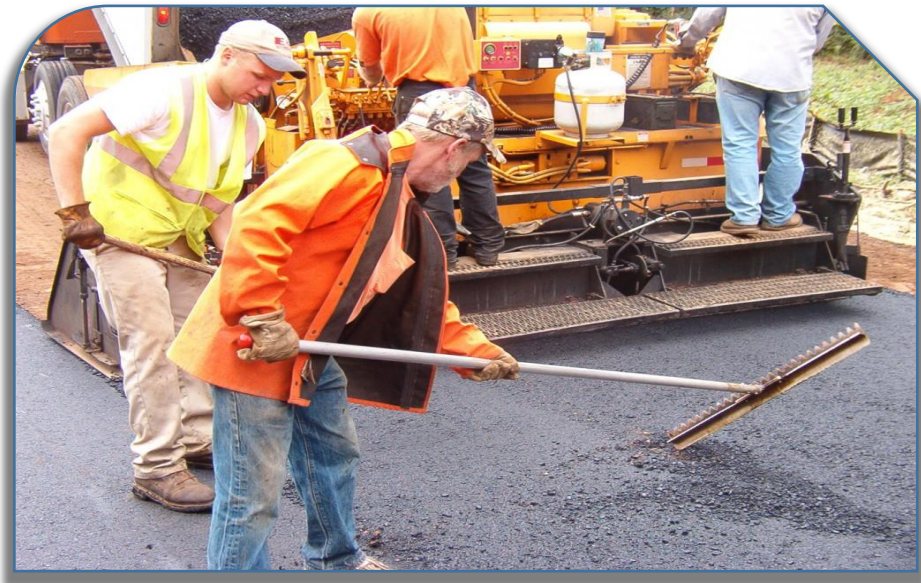
Workforce Profile		
Age Profile	See graphic below	31.3.21
Gender Profile	See graphic below	31.3.21
Turnover (Quarter 4)	4.69% (9% target)	1.4.20 - 31.3.21
Disability (Quarter 4)	1.38%	31.3.21
Ethnic Origin (Quarter 4)	0.96%	31.3.21
Sickness (Quarter 4)	11.67	1.4.20 - 31.3.21



## Workforce Engagement

The Council recognises the critical need to communicate and engage staff in service delivery, transformation, change, new commercial thinking and financial efficiency. This is currently undertaken through a number of methods:

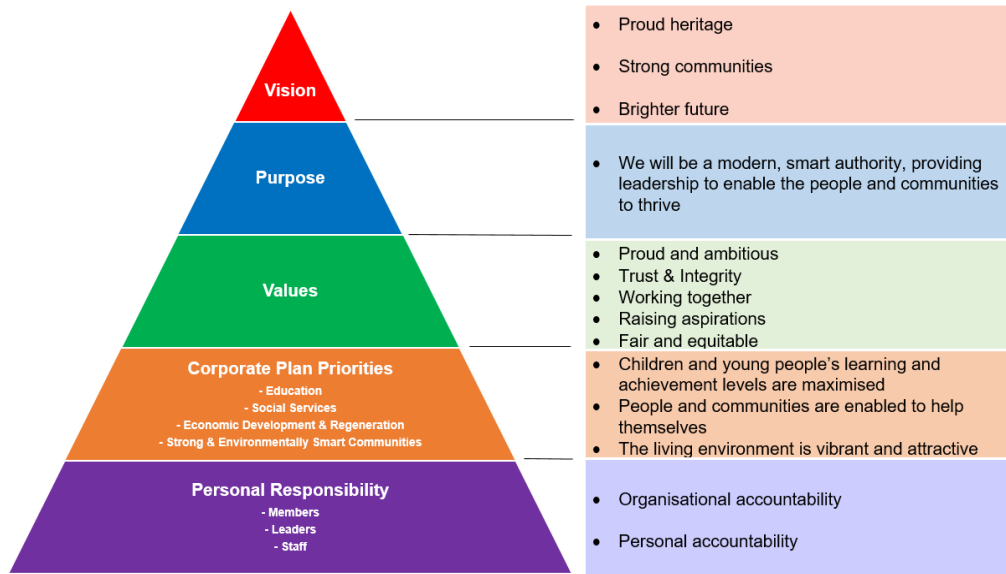
- Regular one to one performance coaching
- Annual performance review
- Team meetings
- Staff meetings
- Management team meetings
- Wider Leadership group
- Regular newsletter from the Managing Director
- Staff newsletter
- Managers brief
- Engagement in financial planning
- A dedicated engagement and consultation framework with trade unions
- Bi-annual staff surveys and pulse surveys



## WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

### The Council's Vision and Organisational Ambition

The Council's primary role is to facilitate the delivery of services that are high quality and the future model of service delivery is aiming to be sustainable, affordable and demonstrate the best value for money maintaining customer focus. The Council wants to be proactive, looking to embrace potential national, regional, partnership and local opportunities over the next few years to better meet the needs of the community. The Council has a clear ambition with a vision for the future articulating the organisational purpose, values and accountability.





## WHAT DOES THE COUNCIL NEED TO LOOK LIKE?

To meet the challenges ahead the Council will not be able continue as it is and will need to prioritise planning and how its budget is spent. The organisation has significantly changed over the past few years and will need to continually change and will look differently in the future in creating agile services delivered by an agile workforce. The following list is not exhaustive but outlines some ambitions:

- Engaged, motivated and resilient – workforce well engaged and resilient to meet challenges
- Customer focus – ensuring the best customer service at all times
- Digitally competent
- Demonstrate leadership – demonstrable, visible, fair and proactive leadership ensuring staff are supported, but where there is poor performance it is identified and managed effectively
- Working in a safe, healthy and supportive environment – enabling staff to perform at their best
- One Council – internal and external collaboration
- Commercially minded, agile and business focussed with delivering services in different ways, tight management of spend, trading where possible, using technology
- Outcome focussed and high performing – identifiable outcomes for our residents with everyone working to 100%
- Council priorities and values – staff are clear about the direction of the organisation and how they contribute and the values that need to be demonstrated



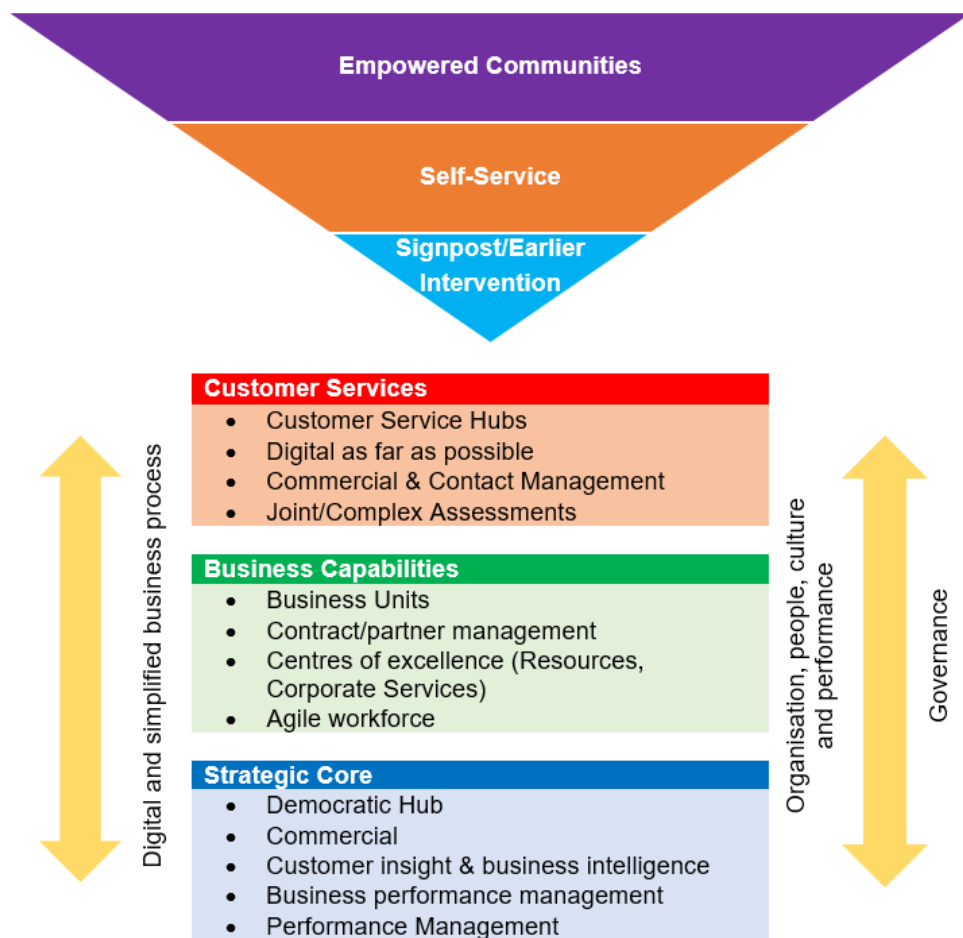
## THE FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

The Council’s future delivery model will see the Council’s role focus on community leadership. Building community capacity through empowerment and cross-public sector collaboration. Promotion of early intervention and self service will support the reduction of dependence on the Council. A strong strategic core will enable the delivery of modern customer focussed services.

This will be achieved by:

- Promoting self-assessment and enabling self service
- Designing services around the customer
- Developing strong strategic capability
- Improving business processes and capabilities by taking a commercial approach and optimising the opportunity of digital technology

The following diagram illustrates the future service delivery model:



## HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE?

### Workforce Strategy Priority Outcomes

#### *Healthy Culture, Effective Leadership*

- Leadership development
- 'Sparkly Leaders' to motivate and develop workforce
- Constructive partnership working with elected leaders to generate and deliver solutions
- Elected Members Development Programme
- Promotion of diversity and equality in everything
- Work in social partnership with trade unions

#### *Excellence in management across the Council*

- Development of managerial skills
- Consistent, robust and easy to follow HR policies
- Positive employee relations
- Commercial and financially astute in all we do
- Performance management and accountability
- Workforce policies and practices embraced, embedded and consistently applied

#### *A highly motivated and engaged workforce*

- Suggestions and feedback are valued – organisational listening and action
- Modern ongoing opportunities to engage
- Equipped to be flexible to respond to future challenges
- Staff empowered to make decisions and participate in service delivery and development

#### *Evidence based decision making, planning and delivery*

- Accurate workforce data, management information
- Optimisation of digital
- Workforce profiling and planning to assess future needs

#### *Modern Employer of Choice*

- Recruitment and retention align to workforce plans
- Reward and recognition align to workforce plans
- Employee engagement levels increase as staff identify the Council as a good place to work
- Career development and talent management
- Workforce health, well being and safety is prioritised



## WORKFORCE STRATEGY: ACTION PLAN 2021/2022

The first action plan of the Workforce Strategy will focus on the transition from responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and transition to a future working model – “**Agile Services delivered by an Agile Workforce**”.

### *Healthy Culture, Effective Leadership*

- Engagement and planning for future working model
- Leadership Development Model
- Transitional Leadership training/development
- Strategic Leadership and Managing an agile workforce training and development

### *Excellence in management across the Council*

- Implementation of key strategies; Commercial, Digital and Communication
- Agile working policy and guidance
- Review of other HR policy to support agility in the workforce

### *Modern Employer of Choice*

- Implementation of the agile and flexible working model
- Review and improvements to recruitment processes
- Increase the offer of the staff benefits scheme
- Implementation of modern agile designed workspace
- Initiatives to increase the diversity in the workforce


### *A highly motivated and engaged workforce*

- Workforce engagement and communication plan and implementation – future Council Operating Model
- Learning and development for the workforce to support delivery of the future working model

### *Evidence based decision making, planning and delivery*

- Development and implementation of digital solutions to support delivery of modern HR/Payroll service
- Review information requirements in line with key strategies e.g. Carbon Neutral ambitions
- Health, Safety and wellbeing to support through continued pandemic and transition to future working model
- Support schools causing concern

# OD Strategy 2015-2020 Progress

<p><b>Organisational Design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative service delivery models; Leisure Trust, Shared Resource Service for IT, Hosted services e.g. South East Wales Adoption Service and Blaenau Gwent/Caerphilly Workforce Development Service</li> <li>Fundamental review of senior management structure and organisational design</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pay &amp; Reward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of Foundation Living Wage April 2018</li> <li>New NJC Pay Spine April 2019</li> <li>Pay Policy based on performance implemented in schools</li> <li>All equal pay claims resolved</li> </ul>	<p><b>Performance Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance Coaching to include 360 degree appraisal for managers</li> <li>Implementation of employee and manager self-serve for the iTrent HR/Payroll system</li> <li>Annual reviews of sickness absence – improvements to processes and policy</li> </ul>	<p><b>Culture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership Development Programme 2016/17 aimed at shifting managers to leaders</li> </ul>
<p><b>Engagement &amp; Consultation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff surveys used to identify organisational areas for development and improvement</li> <li>Reintroduction of Managers Brief and Staff Newsletter</li> <li>Manager's Conference October 2019</li> <li>Embedded Trade Union Consultation and Engagement Framework</li> </ul>	<p><b>Employee Relations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal industrial action and claims to employment tribunals</li> <li>Trade unions engaged in transforming Blaenau Gwent projects and service reviews</li> <li>Fundamental review of Trade Union Facilities Arrangement, Engagement and Consultation Framework</li> </ul>	<p><b>Organisation Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core competency Framework in place</li> <li>All Wales public sector platform in place</li> <li>Supporting professionalization of the workforce in social care</li> <li>Apprenticeship options integrated into recruitment and development approaches across the organisation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Wellbeing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managers toolkit to support managers managing stress/mental health</li> <li>Range of wellbeing and family friendly policies for staff</li> <li>Fundamental review and improvements in occupational health provision</li> </ul>
<p><b>Improving Performance in Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership arrangement strategically shaping the approach to human resource management in schools</li> <li>Significant review of policies and alignment to Council policy</li> <li>New delivery models; Ebbw Fawr 3-16 Learning Community, Abertillery 3-16 Learning Community, Riverside Special Education Needs School 3-16</li> </ul>	<p><b>Equality and Diversity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender pay reporting in place – the Council has a female bias this includes at a senior management level</li> <li>Recruitment processes has guaranteed interview for those with a disability</li> <li>Positive Disability Award awarded by the Department for Work and Pensions</li> <li>Various awareness training e.g. religion, Violence Against Women, Domestic and Sexual Abuse, Mental Health, etc</li> </ul>	<p><b>Elected Members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance review process in place with a competency framework</li> <li>Elected Member induction</li> <li>Elected Member mentoring framework</li> </ul>	 <p>Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol <b>Blaenau Gwent</b> County Borough Council</p>

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## APPENDIX 3

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 15.03.2021

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 15.03.2021

**Committee:** **Council**

Date of Meeting: **25<sup>th</sup> March, 2021**

Report Subject: **New Council Operating Model & Working Arrangements**

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

Report Submitted by: **Managing Director**

Report Authors: **Michelle Morris, Gina Taylor, Andrea Prosser & Gemma Wasley.**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	12.03.21						25.03.21	

### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report proposes and seeks approval for a new Operating Model and Working Arrangements for the Council which will support the achievement of the decision made to permanently vacate the Civic Centre; create a new Democratic Hub, at the General Offices, and a network of Community Hubs co-located with libraries.

### 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Since March 2020 the Council has been operating under emergency arrangements introduced across the UK as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic. During this extended period the advice from Government has been that, where staff can, they must work from home in order to prevent workplace and community transmission of the virus. This has meant that office based staff and Elected Members have been working remotely for the last 12 months and the organisation has had to shift to new working arrangements based on digital platforms, with offices closed and staff only attending offices where it is necessary – for example to access equipment or files, or in response to difficulties working from a home base for an extended period of time.
- 2.2 In early 2021 the mass vaccination of the population and the positive impact of the most recent lock-down, has seen a fall in infection rates across the UK and there are early signs that we will be able to move out of lock-down from the Spring onwards. However, we now know that we will have to adapt to living our lives with the virus present in our communities and so it will not be a case of simply returning to normal, we can for example expect social distancing to continue for some time. It is widely accepted that what we will



move to as a society is a 'new normal' and that the way we live and work will be very different, and has the potential to be better. Welsh Government has already signalled an ambition within Wales and a commitment to 30% of the workforce working from home or remotely. The vision being to reduce the numbers commuting to work and keeping more people working in their local communities. The Council has an opportunity, now, to be at the forefront of delivering this national ambition by making a step change in how we work, how we deliver services and to improve access to council businesses and services for our residents.

- 2.3 In the early summer we took the opportunity to pause and reflect on how the Council had responded to the initial surge in the virus. From this we identified that staff and Elected Members had responded admirably to the challenge of remote working and the investment that had previously been made in technology had stood the Council in good stead. The realisation that we can run our business and deliver services in a very different way, be more in line with modern working practices and reduce our costs and impact on the environment has opened up new opportunities for us to make a step change now and not to simply return to how we operated before. A survey of staff conducted late in 2020 shows that staff have responded positively to home working and consider that the Council has handled the change well. This shows support from staff to continue working in a more agile and flexible way and the positive impact this has had on productivity and a reduction in staff absence due to sickness. It is also notable that the Council has reduced its costs in relation to running buildings and business travel, with a subsequent decrease in carbon generated as a result of Council operations.
- 2.4 Linked to the Council's ambition emerging out of the first wave of the pandemic, a number of reports were considered by Council in 2020 regarding the possible acquisition of a site in Ebbw Vale and the opportunity to develop alternative arrangements for its democratic and customer services, which would remove reliance on the Civic Centre.
- 2.5 On 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2020 Council first considered a report regarding the potential purchase of Festival Park and agreed that detailed negotiations be undertaken with the current owners with a view towards agreeing Heads of Terms for acquisition of the site for refurbishment/redevelopment and that a Business Case be prepared for acquisition and future use, for consideration by Council in September 2020. It was also agreed that a Member Working Group be established to work on the Business Case alongside officers.
- 2.6 A Special Council meeting was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020 to consider the Business Case and it was agreed that the report be approved with the recommended option, as outlined in the business case, to proceed with the purchase Festival Park subject to funding approval from Welsh Government and the finalisation of the purchase arrangements be delegated to the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services in consultation with the Leader/Deputy Leader. It was also agreed that a further report relating to the commercial negotiations be presented to Council, prior to the finalisation of any purchase arrangements.
- 2.7



At the Ordinary Meeting of the Council on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020 a further report was considered and recommended that the position previously agreed at Council, to proceed with acquisition of Festival Park, had been reconsidered by the Member Working Group, and that it should now be left to private investors who had expressed an interest in the site to take it forward. Also that the Council should take forward the other aspects agreed at Council (October 2020) to develop the democratic facility at the General Offices (GO), community hubs in town centres, and vacate and demolish the Civic Centre. A capital allocation of £180,000 was agreed to fund the cost of the required works at the GO and the Community Hubs and a further £650,000 for demolition of the Civic Centre. The subsequent sale of land was expected to generate a capital receipt that would cover this cost.

2.8

Since the decision of Council in November the Member Working Group has worked with Officers and Trade Union representatives to develop a model for new working arrangements, based on agile working, which will allow the organisation to operate out of its remaining offices at Anvil Court, ViTCC, General Offices and other appropriate Council buildings. These proposals are detailed in Section 5 of this report. Work has also progressed the Democratic Hub and Community Hubs, and this report also provides an update on the new hubs and these are detailed in Section 5.

### 3. **Options for Recommendation**

#### 3.1 **Option One (Preferred)**

Council approves the new Operating Model based on Agile Working, Democratic Hub and Community Hubs, and confirms work can now proceed to decommission the Civic Centre.

#### 3.2 **Option Two**

Council does not approve the new Operating Model based on Agile Working, Democratic Hub and Community Hubs, and does not confirm that work can now proceed to permanently vacate and demolish the Civic Centre.

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

4.1 This supports the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan priority to be an efficient organisation and to operate using modern working practices in a way which supports our workforce, effective service delivery and improves access to Council business for our residents. It also supports the priority to regenerate the site in Ebbw Vale opening up the opportunities for investment in new homes and community facilities in the centre of the community.

4.2 The proposals also support delivery of our ambition set out in the Decarbonisation Plan to reduce our carbon emissions to a point where our impact is net zero carbon.

4.3 Finally, this will support the delivery of the Bridging the Gap Programme which seeks to reduce the cost of our corporate property estate through a

process of rationalisation and introduction of more modern and efficient workplaces.

## 5. Implications Against Each Option

### 5.1 Budget Implications

The Financial Plan is attached at Appendix 1 and details the potential costs and funding, based on a number of assumptions. In summary the financial implications are:

#### Capital Costs

Total capital costs of development of the Democratic & Community Hubs, decommissioning / demolition of the Civic Centre and refurbishment of Anvil Court / VITCC are estimated to cost £1.2m.

The Council has already agreed capital funding of £180,000 to support the delivery of the Democratic Hub and Community Hubs and has agreed that the costs for the demolition of the Civic Centre will be offset by capital receipts generated from the sale of the site which is estimated to achieve in excess of £650,000.

It is proposed that the remaining capital requirement be funded by a contribution from revenue, utilising the Transformation budget for 2021/2022.

#### Revenue Costs

Total revenue costs of the new operating model are assessed as £1.47m in the first year reducing to £1.1m in year 2 and £1.05m in subsequent years.

The revenue financial plan shown at Appendix 1, indicates that over a five year period there are potential savings of £1.46m compared to current budgets. However, this will be subject to the:

- agreed home/agile working / set up allowances
- the outcome of job evaluation (Community Hubs)
- the timescale and cost for decommissioning the civic centre
- Termination costs (if applicable)

The assessment of revenue costs & funding is analysed below:-

#### Democratic Hub

There are no additional revenue implications arising from the Democratic Hub.

#### Community Hub

There will be a revenue cost relating to the operation of the Community Hubs of approximately £151,000 per year (subject to job evaluation). These costs will be largely met by re-purposing 4 posts resulting in a budget transfer of £107,000, a cost pressure of £25,000 which has been agreed as part of the 2021/22 Revenue Budget and repurposing of £19,000 budget.

### Agile Working

The estimated revenue costs of providing a home/agile working allowance to around 750 staff is £322,000 (including an allowance for set up costs) in year 1 and £171,000 per annum thereafter. It is proposed to fund these costs through re-purposing the budgets for mileage and operating costs of the Civic Centre.

It is proposed that the savings / cost reductions identified by moving to the new operating model will be built into the Workplace Transformation project within the Bridging the Gap programme.

## 5.2 Workforce

- Agile Working – this will impact on working and contractual arrangements for c.750 staff who are currently office based at locations in the borough including (but not exclusively) Civic Centre, Anvil Court, ViTCC, Depot and General Offices. Proposals will impact all staff which will involve a varying of their contracts of employment and will designate posts as either homeworker, agile worker or service/community based worker. This will involve statutory consultation and reaching a joint agreement with trade unions, a new Agile Working Policy and the designation of posts. The new policy which will require scrutiny and Council endorsement will include allowances to support permanent and agile workers and this will be subject to negotiation with the trade unions. There will also be the need to ensure those permanent and agile workers have appropriate workstations at home and take into account the health, safety and well-being of workers, including reasonable adjustments, where staff are not able to work from home. It will be critical to engage the workforce and their representatives along this journey.
- Community Hubs – there will be the deletion of 4 posts within the existing Commercial Services structure, and the creation of 4 new posts to run the Hubs. There is a risk of redundancy if not all staff are able to be redeployed into other posts within the Council.
- Democratic Hub – no workforce implications.

## 5.3 Legal

There will be a requirement to reach a formal agreement with the trade unions regarding the change to terms and conditions and the payment of home/agile working allowance.

An Equality Impact Assessment will also be completed prior to the full implementation of the change programme, and will be signed off by the Programme Board.

## 5.4 Risks

**Workforce** - If there is no joint agreement to the new Agile Working policy and variation of the contract the Council will need to consider the impact on timelines and contractual obligation. However, the trade unions have worked with Officers on these proposals and have co-produced the new working arrangements and this reduces the risk that an agreement will not be achieved.

**Cost Reduction** – If there is not close management of the programme then there is a risk that the cost reductions will not be achieved. A Programme Board is established to provide leadership for the work and this is supported by lead officers for each workstream to ensure that the work progresses and that outcomes are delivered.

**Behaviours required to sustain new working arrangements not achieved** – If there is not a permanent change to how we work as an organisation then the move to new arrangements will not work successfully. The proposals are however informed by the change in work practices achieved successfully over past 12 months and the recent staff survey shows that the majority of staff support the new arrangements and consider they have been more productive.

**Insufficient capacity to deliver the changes** – This programme represents a significant change to working arrangements, for staff and Members, on a permanent basis and will need careful implementation. If there is insufficient capacity it could result in desired outcomes not being fully delivered. If further capacity is required the Council would have the option to allocate funding from the Transformation Fund.

**Further surge in Covid 19** – if there was an increase in cases and/or another lockdown then the timescales for delivery would be impacted.

**Increase in numbers of posts allocated as Homeworkers or Agile Workers, above/below the assumed levels** – if there is an increase in number of posts categorised as agile workers then there is flexibility to accommodate this increase (up to the c.400 desk capacity available); if there is an increase in number of home workers then this will make additional office capacity available.

**Risk of lost opportunity** – the Council has an opportunity to build on the positive work done over the past 12 months and to make a step change in how it works and delivers services. There is a risk that if this is not agreed now the organisation will simply move back to operating as it did before and these benefits will not be achieved.

## 6. Supporting Evidence

### 6.1 Agile Working

The new working arrangements will support the closure of the Civic Centre and put in place a model of agile working to enable staff to work either at home, in Council buildings or in the service or community. It is planned to roll

this out from May onwards, dependent on the relaxation of Welsh Government guidance on working from home. It is intended to implement the change on an incremental basis, accepting that while some coronavirus restrictions continue i.e. social distancing, this will limit the capacity within offices.

The Agile working arrangements will be a contractual change and place job roles in one of 3 categories - Homeworker, Agile Worker or Service Based Worker. Those posts designated as home or agile workers will receive a home/agile working allowance to compensate for the costs associated e.g. heating, electricity, broadband.

Home Worker - Home is the base and all work can be carried out from home. An appropriate workstation and tools to do the job will be required (if necessary facilitated by the Council) and there will be no need to access an office to work on a frequent basis. There will be a need for occasional attendance at an alternative base for e.g. team meetings/ training. Estimated c.370 Staff (Example - Support Services).

Agile Worker - Home is the base with time split time between home and office working i.e.3 days' home working and 2 days in office. Work is carried out at home and in the office. Agile workers will not have a dedicated desk in the office but will book desk space (using a booking system) for the days' they are in the office. They will also require an appropriate workstation and tools to do the job at home (if necessary facilitated by the Council). They will be required to attend meetings in the office. Estimated c.390 Staff (Example - support for democratic processes, Social Workers, Public Protection).

Service Based - Work is carried out 100% from a base in a building or in the community. Some roles would require desk space – but no fixed workstation. These workers cannot work from home due to the nature of the job. Estimated c. 950 staff (Examples - Social Services Cwrt Mytton, Extra Care, Flying Start, schools, refuse, cleansing).

An assessment of the office space available shows that there are 271 desk spaces in AC and the GO, 24 at the Depot and 122 at the ViTCC providing an overall desk space availability of **417** (including shared space with the ABUHB).

As the initial appraisal identifies c.390 Agile staff will need to be accommodated under this model, for 2 or 3 days a week, then it is apparent that the Council could operate on a reduced office footprint, with an average of 160 staff in the office on any one day.

There will be a requirement to refurbish offices to ensure that the layout supports new working arrangements and provides access to the digital platforms (i.e. MS Teams) including facilitating a blended approach to meetings.

## 6.2 Democratic Hub

A new Democratic Hub would provide a similar level of space as in the Civic with enhanced functionality for blended meetings and improved public access.

A phased approach is being used for planning purposes i.e. temporary arrangements working with Covid 19 restrictions from May 2021 and then permanent Democratic Hub arrangements when restrictions in the community are relaxed sufficiently. While social distancing remains a requirement it will be necessary for some Members, and Officers, to continue to participate remotely using a blended solution based on MS Teams. The new Democratic Hub will continue to offer an agile approach to meetings by providing hybrid meetings when restrictions are lifted as part of the requirements of the Local Government and Elections Bill.

The first floor of the GO will be the Democratic hub including flexible office and meeting space for Members and Officers. The new Hub will enable the Council to meet the requirements of the Local Government and Elections Bill e.g. on broadcasting, and provide improved facilities for public access to formal meetings and council business.

The existing fixtures and fittings from the Civic Centre will be used, wherever possible, and some investment will be required in new audio-visual equipment to support delivery of the requirements of the Bill and to facilitate improved working arrangements for Members.

## 6.3 Community Hubs

The Hubs will be located in the main libraries at Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar. As these libraries are open 4 days a week there is capacity to offer an outreach/surgery style service in Blaina, Cwm and Llanhilleth once a week. The Hubs will:

- Provide a face to face counter service dealing with requests from residents to pay, register, ask, tell, apply, book and check the status of their request across a range of services including benefits, council tax and community services;
- Help to residents wanting to self-serve using computers based in the libraries through the My Council Services application or through direct support where necessary;
- Signpost/connect residents to other council services including housing, parking and environmental health;
- Signpost/connect residents to services delivered by partners including support from Job Centre Plus, Citizens Advice Bureau, Integrated Health and Well-being network activities and voluntary/community based provision. This has been the approach of the Locality Response Team and have proved very successful;
- For more complex service queries requiring access to council officers, options for booking appointments will be offered. This will include access to surgery style appointment so residents can access planning

officers, building control officers, support around welfare benefits, employment services and business advice.

The timescales for implementation will be determined by the relaxation of current restrictions and the full re-opening of libraries.

**6.4 Expected Outcomes for Residents**

The new arrangements will improve customer access to the Council and to council services through the Community Hubs. These will be based conveniently in our main communities and remove the requirement for travel to Ebbw Vale for those needing to speak directly to an officer.

**6.5 Involvement**

There has been staff consultation regarding home and agile working and work is in progress to ensure that statutory consultation takes place with the workforce regarding the implementation of new terms and conditions.

**6.6 Thinking for the long term**

The new working arrangements will establish how the council will work in the future and will enable it to consolidate its property portfolio, reduce its carbon impact and to align with Welsh Government's ambition to modernise delivery of public services in Wales.

**6.7 Preventative Focus**

The new working arrangements will support preventative models of service delivery.

**6.8 Collaboration/Partnership Working**

It is anticipated that partners will be part of service delivery through the Community Hubs.

**6.9 Integration**

The new working arrangements will be delivered in an integrated way across all Services.

**7. Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The delivery of this programme will be overseen by a Programme Board comprised of the Corporate Leadership Team. Project/Workstream Leads have been identified for each element of the work including Agile Working, Democratic Hub, Community Hubs, Office Re-configuration, Decommissioning Civic Centre.

7.2 The financial benefits delivered by the Programme will be reported as part of the Bridging the Gap Programme.

**Background Papers:**

**Minutes of Festival Park Member Working Group  
Staff Survey**





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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: 09.07.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**  
Date of meeting: **21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**  
Report Subject: **Community Municipal Investment**  
Portfolio Holder: **Councillor D Davies, Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development**  
Report Submitted by: **Amy Taylor, Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
02.02.21	21.05.21	06.07.21			30.06.21	21.07.21		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To seek approval to take forward Community Energy Investment as a financial instrument to fund low carbon energy generation infrastructure and technology to provide energy and heat to Blaenau Gwent residents and businesses.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1. The Council has the opportunity to become part of a nationwide EU funded pilot exploring using Community Municipal Investment (CMI) to fund infrastructure for the Council. The pilot project, known as SocialRES aims at closing non-technological research gaps that impede the widespread uptake of social innovation business and service models in the European energy sector.
- 2.2. Through research and pilot studies, the EU funded project will set the basis for a better understanding of the socio-economic, socio-cultural, socio-political and gender factors that influence the behaviour of consumers in the energy system.
- 2.3. The Council first approved an Energy Prospectus in December 2019. Within the prospectus there were a series of projects identified that would assist the Council in reducing its carbon footprint and fuel poverty in the Borough. One of the main barriers to delivery of the projects within the prospectus is availability of capital funding and as the Council does not have significant capital reserves it has to explore alternative methods of funding such investment.

- 2.4. A Community Municipal Investment (CMI) is a bond or loan instrument issued by a Local Authority directly to the public via an internet based crowdfunding platform. Due to the low-cost nature of crowdfunding CMIs can be issued via a proven, low risk, easy to use online process at rates which aims to undercut market borrowing rates and terms, while also providing a competitive investment product for local savers and investors.
- 2.5. The bonds are targeted at people living within the region of the issuing authority but are also available to people living across the UK. CMIs are built to prioritise individual investment but are compatible with the requirements of institutional investors such as pension funds. The Blaenau Gwent Community Bond would be focussed on low carbon energy generation schemes highlighted in the Energy Prospectus 2019.
- 2.6. The pilot scheme works by the Council issuing a community bond to fund circa £2m of the project costs. The bond is issued to residents and investors from Blaenau Gwent and the country to receive a percentage return on their capital for the investment. The scheme would be administered by Abundance, who are a separate Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) registered company, on behalf of the Council. Legal & General (and the UK pension funds it represents) are exploring opportunities with Abundance to help supplement interest from retail investors.
- 2.7. Abundance is an FCA regulated investment platform founded in 2012 with a mission to help turn members of the public into real stakeholders in things they care about. The platform connects businesses and public sector bodies alike with investors large and small by issuing direct investments with social or environmental benefits.
- 2.8. Ordinary people get the chance to build a portfolio of investments they truly believe in, allowing anybody to invest from as little as £5. Abundance has previously raised over £100 million on their platform from over 6,500 investors towards Community and Social schemes.
- 2.9. In 2016 Abundance launched the first Local Authority Green ISA bond with Swindon Borough Council, which funded two 5MW solar parks with the participation of more than 1,600 investors. Since then, Abundance has been working to find ways to help more Local Authorities finance public infrastructure through crowdfunding opportunities.
- 2.10. West Berkshire Council worked with Abundance Investment to launch bonds seeking up to £1m to invest in energy and wider environmental projects. They saw both Local people and others from across the UK investing in their Green Energy Bonds. Local investors on average invested more individually than

other investors. The total of £1million was raised over a period of three months.

2.11. Participation in this research and development pilot project will also directly address rural challenges and opportunities including:

- Participation opportunities in low carbon measures for the public;
- Measurement of citizen engagement in reducing carbon emissions as part of the Trinity College Dublin research study of resident's attitudes towards the Council in building a low carbon future;
- Promote and reinforce public support for the Blaenau Gwent Decarbonisation Plan;
- Support delivery of low carbon, reduced cost and locally generated energy and the development of the local foundational and circular economy;
- Access to low carbon energy for businesses and communities;
- Job creation in low carbon industries

### **3. Options for Recommendation**

3.1 The Regeneration Scrutiny Committee considered this report and supported Option One at its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

#### *Option One – Proceed with Launching a Community Bond (preferred option)*

3.1. Proceed with the SocialRes Project and work towards development of a Community Bond offer.

3.2. This will include undertaking initial due diligence of the legal agreements and overall approach but funding is available through abundance in order to carry out the required evaluation (See section 5.1).

3.3. By pursuing this option the Council would gain access to lower cost, financial investment to support with development of pipeline projects outlined in the Energy Prospectus 2019.

3.4. This can be used to replace or alongside Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) funding. If the pilot is successful further bond offers can be considered in the future.

#### *Option Two – Do Nothing*

3.2 Do nothing. There are no benefits identified with Do Nothing.

#### *Preferred Option*

It is recommended that Executive

- Endorses Option One as the preferred way to proceed;
- Due diligence commences alongside the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance together with the Chief Officer Resources;
- Endorses the launch of Community Municipal Bonds subject to due diligence and final sign off of the necessary agreements delegated to the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance in consultation with the Chief Officer for Resources; and
- That the Chief Officer Resources is delegated to determine the date of the formal launch of the bond, bond length period and bond issue rate so long as it is below the PWLB rate.

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

- 4.1. SocialRes complies with the well-being five ways of working, supports the well-being goals and associated activities are expected to have a positive impact on all groups and people with protected characteristics.
- 4.2. This project would link to the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2022 in creating strong and environmentally smart communities. It has the potential to assist in helping the Council realise its ambition to be a carbon neutral organisation by 2030. The project will also protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities through development of an excellent low carbon local energy generation infrastructure including energy supply that can support the needs of the whole community.
- 4.3. The resulting low carbon infrastructure development opportunities listed in the Energy Prospectus 2019 such as hydro generation, solar and wind projects will also act to support a fairer sustainable economy and community by improving skills and promoting greater understanding and acceptance of low carbon energy generation and participation and ownership of climate emergency resolution.
- 4.4. Through the SocialRes Project, the Council also demonstrates its ambition as an innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities. By acting as a strong and effective partner, collaborating where possible the SocialRes project will deliver financial, business and community benefits to both Blaenau Gwent Council and the wider South Wales region.

#### **5. Implications Against Each Option**

##### **5.1 *Impact on Budget***

- 5.1.1 The pilot includes up to £20,000 of external European funding for internal and external costs in setting up the bond. The due diligence is supported with external research from Trinity College Dublin on the success or otherwise of the bond issue so that there is a clear post implementation review of the project; the bond must be used for low carbon / green initiatives to qualify for the pilot.
- 5.1.2 Other authorities who are taking part in the pilot are Leeds City Council, Kingston Council, Warrington Council and West Berkshire Council. They will be using the proceeds of the bond to fund their own green initiative schemes.
- 5.1.3 In order to raise funds through bond issue, the Council would need to review its treasury management policy and ensure that it includes the ability to raise funds in this way. If not a change would need to be made to allow this.
- 5.1.4 A worked example of the financial benefits associated with this approach are shown in **Appendix 1**.
- 5.1.5 Each of the projects considered for utilisation of the funding will be subject to a business case for investment. Each business case will consider whole life cost of the investment including capital and revenue costs associated with any installation and ongoing maintenance. These will be considered in line with the Council's Commercial Strategy.

## 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

- 5.2.1 Throughout the Project a risk register will be developed and maintained, with any high risks being reported within Regeneration Services Business Plan.
- 5.2.2 Risks of proceeding with Community Municipal Bonds include:
- Lack of uptake from investors – bonds are open to investors both within and outside of Blaenau Gwent;
  - As a result of COVID-19 there may be less appetite for public investment when financial situations are uncertain
- 5.2.3 Risks of Do Nothing would include:
- Disjointed delivery of low carbon infrastructure could lead to missed opportunities and delayed delivery of projects within the Energy Prospectus;
  - The Council would need to continue using PWLB for borrowing to support delivery of large scale projects; and
  - The Council would have less options for low cost funding to shape the future low carbon direction of the energy market for both supply and demand.

### 5.3 **Legal**

- 5.3.1 The SocialRes Collaboration Agreement set out the Terms and Conditions of the EU Horizon 2020 funded grant offer, conditions of award and ownership of assets including Intellectual Property Rights on behalf of Abundance Investment.
- 5.3.2 The Council would be a subcontractor to the EU Horizon 2020 SocialRes project, and would not be held to the terms and conditions of Horizon 2020 funding.
- 5.3.3 The Council would retain full rights to the IP generated and assets generated through involvement in the project alongside Abundance Investment. When the Council issue the bond, we will need to sign an engagement letter with Abundance Investment acting as arrangers and agent of the bond, but through this the Council will also retain rights to any IP / assets generated alongside Abundance Investment.
- 5.3.4 The agreement defines the need for confidentiality of sensitive commercial, financial and data protection measures to safeguard residents who participate in purchase of Community Municipal Bonds.
- 5.3.5 A comprehensive Due Diligence exercise has been carried out by Association of Public Sector Excellence Energy (APSE), EY, Cornwall Insights, Geldards Solicitors and James Goudie QC for West Berkshire Council.
- 5.3.6 Blaenau Gwent Council Legal Department would also carry out due diligence of the project and low carbon energy generation schemes as part of any legal and financial modelling prior to launching bonds to fund low carbon technologies in Blaenau Gwent.

### 5.4 **Human Resources**

- 5.4.1 There are no immediate staffing/workforce implications. These will however be better understood once due diligence and review of the legal agreements has been completed. The project is being Project Managed by existing resources from within the Regeneration Section and we will seek support from other relevant departments where necessary.

## 6. **Supporting Information**

### 6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Once the project is established a performance framework will be developed and reported accordingly.



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

The public will also benefit from better environmental and infrastructure management, supporting localised renewable energy generation and data management of public service provision to drive down costs and improve efficiency through technological development.

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

6.3.1 Abundance Investment will carry out consultation via a focus group of Blaenau Gwent residents to identify if residents would be supportive of the bond issue, which would allow Blaenau Gwent and UK residents to invest in green climate positive investments that are secure and low risk paying a competitive rate of interest.

6.3.2 The project will seek to bring together a range of partners including developers, community stakeholders and the Council to work collaboratively to assist Blaenau Gwent to meet its low carbon aspirations and to develop the community bond offer in line with local conditions and requirements identified through the consultation process.

6.3.2 Blaenau Gwent Council are already working across business and industrial energy communities through the Welsh Government Smart Living Programme, Tech Valleys Business Improvement Grant Pilot and with residents through social and private sector low carbon initiatives and each of these and other established fora will be consulted and engaged as part of any development of the local community municipal bond offer.

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

6.4.1 The project may also assist the Council with balancing its short term needs to identify areas for potential financial efficiency (reduced energy costs) alongside its long term business and community needs for a sustainable, low carbon future through local the development of energy generation.

6.5 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

6.5.1 The project is being delivered through a partnership approach. The collaboration agreement will set out the formal partnership arrangements and this will be overseen by Trinity College Dublin as the organisational research lead for the duration of the pilot project under the co-ordination of the EU funding requirements of the European Horizon 2020 programme.

6.5.2 Other Authorities including West Berkshire have gone through the process of due diligence and issuing a bond offer so it is hoped that by using their experiences, lessons learned and our understanding of local conditions we can deliver a successful pilot in Blaenau Gwent.

6.5.3 In 2020, the UK was scheduled to host COP26, a global climate change conference. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic this has been re-scheduled to November 2021 and this offers an opportunity for Councils including Blaenau Gwent to showcase during COP. The Green Finance Institute are looking to provide support to get as much PR as possible to support the projects.

## 6.6 ***Integration (across service areas)***

6.6.1 A range of service areas across the Council will need to be engaged with the SocialRes project including Legal, Finance and Technical Services, Procurement, Communications, in addition to the wider Regeneration Services Department.

6.6.2 Discussions have taken place with Resources and in principle they are supportive of the project. This however is subject to the necessary due diligence taking place prior to a bond offer being agreed.

## 7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1. The project will be externally reviewed by Trinity College Dublin in accordance with EU grant conditions. Abundance Investment are regulated by the Financial Services Authority in accordance with UK Government.

### **Background Documents / Electronic Links**

- *Appendix 1*

## Appendix One

The table below shows a representative example of bond repayment based upon £1 million over a period of 5 years.

Period end date (for interest calculation)	Interest Payment Date	Days in Period	Balance Brought Forward	Interest Due	Principal Repayment Due	Total Debt Service Due	Balance Carried forward
15 October 2020	31 October 2020		£0.00	*	£0.00	*	£1,000,000.00
15 April 2021	15 April 2021	182	£1,000,000.00	£5,983.56	£97,329.61	£103,313.17	£902,670.39
15 October 2021	15 October 2021	182	£902,670.39	£5,430.86	£97,913.59	£103,344.45	£804,756.80
15 April 2022	15 April 2022	182	£804,756.80	£4,815.31	£98,501.07	£103,316.38	£706,255.73
15 October 2022	15 October 2022	182	£706,255.73	£4,249.14	£99,092.08	£103,341.22	£607,163.66
15 April 2023	15 April 2023	182	£607,163.66	£3,633.00	£99,686.63	£103,319.63	£507,477.03
15 October 2023	15 October 2023	182	£507,477.03	£3,053.20	£100,284.75	£103,337.95	£407,192.28
15 April 2024	15 April 2024	182	£407,192.28	£2,449.85	£100,886.46	£103,336.30	£306,305.83
15 October 2024	15 October 2024	182	£306,305.83	£1,842.87	£101,491.77	£103,334.64	£204,814.05
15 April 2025	15 April 2025	182	£204,814.05	£1,225.52	£102,100.73	£103,326.24	£102,713.33
15 October 2025	15 October 2025	182	£102,713.33	£617.97	£102,713.33	£103,331.30	£0.00
					£1,000,000		

Through the due diligence we would determine the value that would be most appropriate for Blaenau Gwent's bond offer

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# Agenda Item 10

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 09.07.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

Report Subject: **Local Government Education Services Safeguarding Policy**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Joanne Collins, Executive Member Education**

Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education**  
**Sarah Dixon, Safeguarding In Education Manager**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
24.06.21		05.07.21			14.07.21	21.07.21		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the Local Government Education Services Safeguarding Policy following its annual review.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Education Directorate Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy was originally adopted in April 2015 and has been reviewed on an annual basis. The attached draft policy has been reviewed and updated for the 2021-2022 academic year.
- 2.2 In order to fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities, the Council is required to provide model policies and procedures for maintained schools on all aspects of child protection. The policies and procedures must be consistent with Welsh Government guidance and local arrangements. The attached draft policy covers all practitioners in Blaenau Gwent's Education Directorate and educational settings. Employees of commissioned services are required to follow their organisation's safeguarding policies e.g. Education Achievement Service, Gwent Ethnic Minority Service, Youth Offending Service and Shared Resources Service (SRS). These policies are quality assured on an annual basis by the Safeguarding in Education Manager prior to the commencement of each academic year.
- 2.3 All education and training providers in Wales are inspected by Estyn and a new framework was introduced in the Autumn term 2017. Safeguarding will be inspected under inspection area four, 'Care, Support and Guidance' and as such the model policy is cognisant of the Local Government Education Services (LGES) framework.
- 2.4 The inspection of local authority education services for children and young people covers the statutory functions of the local authority, including the local authority youth service.

2.5 Children in Wales (CIW) and Estyn jointly inspect care and education in regulated non-school settings eligible for funding for part-time education. These joint inspections evaluate the care provided for all children up to the age of twelve and the education of three and four year old children that do not receive education in a maintained setting for children aged three and four years old.

### 3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 This report will be considered by the Joint Education and Learning and Social Services (Safeguarding) Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021, any feedback from Scrutiny will be provided verbally to the Executive Committee.

3.2 Members are asked to consider and approve the reviewed Safeguarding Policy.

Option 1 – to approve the draft policy as presented in appendix 1; or,  
Option 2 - make amendments to the draft policy prior to approval.

### 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**

All schools have statutory duties to operate in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This is a statutory duty under section 175 of the Education Act 2002.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the responsibilities in terms of the promotion of well-being, places a duty on local authorities to arrange or provide for services which contribute to the prevention of abuse or neglect and ensures all agencies give sufficient priority to safeguarding.

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019) are national procedures which guide safeguarding practice. They are applicable for all practitioners and managers working in Wales.

#### 4.2 **Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan**

This report is in line with the following objectives as set out in the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan of:

- Blaenau Gwent wants everyone to have the best start in life; and,
- Blaenau Gwent wants safe and friendly communities.

### 5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

There are no direct financial implications.

## 5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

Failure of educational establishments to adopt rigorous arrangements for safeguarding poses significant potential risk to children and other education users. Settings are required to have safeguarding policies and procedures in place, reviewed annually, in accordance with local and national guidance. Providing a safeguarding policy for adoption by all education settings ensures that an appropriate policy is available to mitigate risk.

## 5.3 Legal

Under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, Local Authorities, governing bodies of maintained schools and FE institutions must have regard to Welsh Government Circular 272/2021, 'Keeping Learners Safe', for the purpose of meeting their duties, and should exercise their functions in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the responsibilities in terms of the promotion of well-being, places a duty on local authorities to arrange or provide for services which contribute to the prevention of abuse or neglect and ensures all agencies give sufficient priority to safeguarding.

## 5.4 Human Resources

There are no direct staffing or workforce implications arising from this report.

## 6. Supporting Evidence

### 6.1 Performance Information and Data

The Local Government Education Services Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed. Updates have been made to reflect Keeping Learners Safe (KLS) guidance, which was updated in April 2021 and which now identifies the requirement where guidance 'must' or 'should' be followed and aligns to the Wales Safeguarding Procedures

The main changes are to the following areas of the policy:

- Amendments to the role of the designated safeguarding person (DSP) and further clarity to the training requirements, including the expectation of the council for governor safeguarding training.
- Updated guidance reflecting the KLS guidance on responding to concerns that a child is at risk and reporting a child at risk
- Reference to the roll-out of 'MyConcern'; a safeguarding software package purchased by the Council for use across the school estate
- Reference to the recent ministerial statement on sexual harassment and abuse in education settings including the establishment of a named single point of contact in each setting
- Basic training requirements for all staff, volunteers clarified further, and,
- Annual return of settings self-evaluation document to the Safeguarding in Education Manager who in turn will provide an analysis to DMT in the Autumn term of the main findings and any key areas for improvement

Adoption of the policy is monitored through the safeguarding matrix, which is overseen by the Safeguarding in Education Manager

**6.2 Expected outcome for the public**

Learners are provided with a safe learning environment, with the policy supporting settings to respond appropriately to concerns.

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

This policy has been consulted upon with Education DMT, Social Services, Youth Service, Early Years, Organisational Development and Community Safety.

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

Ensuring that the Council and its education settings operate robust safeguarding practices, informed by policy, is essential to the wellbeing of all learners in Blaenau Gwent.

**6.5 Preventative focus**

Having an effective policy in place supports educational establishments to adopt practice to keep learners safe and identify concerns early.

**6.6 Collaboration / partnership working**

Gwent Safeguarding is the statutory multi-agency partnership Board responsible for making sure safeguarding is at the core of all services provided across the region.

Education forms part of this multi-agency partnership.

**6.7 Integration (across service areas)**

Within the context of the legal framework and associated guidance, it is important that education settings, schools and governing bodies ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place and arrangements regarding safer recruitment are rigorously followed in order to safeguard children.

**6.8 EqIA**

An equality impact assessment has been completed and there are no positive or adverse impacts in relation to the revised safeguarding policy.

**7. Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The adoption of this policy will be monitored by the safeguarding in education manager through the safeguarding matrix.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

Appendix 1 – Education Directorate LGES Safeguarding Policy

Keeping Learners Safe

[Keeping learners safe | GOV.WALES](#)



**Education Directorate  
Local Government Education Services  
Safeguarding Policy**

**June 2021**



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

**Blaenau Gwent**

County Borough Council

### Contact Information

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Sarah Jones – Protection of Adults at risk (POVA) Coordinator		<a href="mailto:Sarah.Jones@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk">Sarah.Jones@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk</a>
Strategic Safeguarding Lead for Education Directorate SSL – Michelle Jones		<a href="mailto:Michelle.Jones@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk">Michelle.Jones@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk</a>
Deputy – Claire Gardner		<a href="mailto:Claire.Gardner@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk">Claire.Gardner@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk</a>
South East Wales Emergency Duty Team (SEWEDT) - after 5pm, weekends and Bank Holidays.	0800 328 4432.	
Domestic Abuse	01495 291202	<a href="mailto:info@pheonixdas.co.uk">info@pheonixdas.co.uk</a>
Modern Day Slavery/Trafficking – Training and Victim Support (BAWSO)	0800 731 8147 01633 213213	<a href="http://www.bawso.org.uk">www.bawso.org.uk</a>
Gwent Safeguarding		<a href="http://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk">www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk</a>
Executive Member – John Mason		

With regard to Safeguarding across the Council as a whole The Local Authority Designated Officer is the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Manager in Social Services. Sarah Dixon, the Safeguarding in Education Manager, covers the responsibilities laid out in WG circular no 009/2014, 'Safeguarding children in Education: - Handling allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff'. Sarah Dixon is the first point of contact with schools, education settings and education directorate staff for advice regarding safeguarding and child protection issues arising in education settings in relation to adults who work with children."

<b>Document version</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date of issue</b>	<b>Changes made</b>
1.0	Sarah Dixon	April 2015	Updated to reflect changes in WG Guidance, Keeping Learners Safe 158/2015
2.0	Sarah Dixon	May 2016	Update to reflect changes in legislation: Counter Terrorism and security Act 2015
3.0	Sarah Dixon	May 2017	Annual review and updated to reflect changes in contact details and the change to Information, Advice and Assistance team.
4.0	Sarah Dixon	Aug 2018	Annual review. Updated to reflect changes in contact details and Local Government Education Services (LGES) framework
5.0	Sarah Dixon	June 2019	Annual review. Updated to reflect changes in contact details.
6.0	Sarah Dixon	June 2020	Annual review. Updated with reference to the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and to include details of safeguarding data collection, BG Youth Service policy and COVID 19 procedures
7.0	Sarah Dixon	June 2021	Updated to reflect changes in WG Guidance, Keeping Learners Safe 272/2021 and the use of My Concerns software package

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Safeguarding children and adults at risk of abuse is everybody's responsibility.**

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is committed to ensuring that everyone living within the County Borough is safe and protected and that our statutory responsibilities to safeguard and protect children, young people and adults at risk are effectively met. This is reflected in the wellbeing plan. Objectives include Blaenau Gwent having safe and friendly communities and everyone having the best start in life.

Children are defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Education services provide support to young people up to the age of 25 years. This policy covers all children and adults at risk.

All Local Government Education Services (LGES) are required to have safeguarding policies and procedures in place. The Council seeks assurance from its commissioned services that these policies and procedure are in place and this is validated by the Safeguarding in Education manager on an annual basis. Settings will need to assure themselves that commissioned services and those activities which extend beyond the school day (and not in the direct control of the setting) have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place.

It is recommended that the policy format recorded in Keeping Learners Safe (Welsh Government circular 272/2021) is used as the basis for all establishments, organisations and services linked to Education. This format can be adapted to meet the needs and requirements of those linked to Education and can be used as the starting point for specifically constructed policies to suit their roles and responsibilities in working with and supporting children and young people.

Other information for children, parents, staff, volunteers and governors could be added as appendices to the main policy. This could include methods of internal recording of concerns and guidance and advice to children, staff and parents in raising concerns.

The policy should be dated and also notification when the next formal review is intended. Where appropriate the date of approval by the Governing Body or Management would be important to be recorded on the policy.

Basic items from the policy could be included in school/ education setting and or organisation's publications for parents and children. A full copy of the policy must be made available to parents on request, but a nominal cost may be incurred.

Safeguarding arrangements have continued to flex as the pandemic has progressed. At this stage the annex for responding to Covid has been removed from this year's policy report but should future situations arise in relation to Covid the Safeguarding in Education Manager will issue timely advice for safeguarding arrangements to education settings through the Safeguarding bulletins which will continue to be published. As such, moving forwards safeguarding will be a key theme of the Council's recovery and renewal action plan.

## SCOPE

For the purposes of this policy, 'workforce' is defined as those engaged by the Council, including permanent and temporary employees, students, volunteers, workers employed by employment agencies, contractors and consultants. Where the term 'practitioner' is used, it describes anyone in paid employment and unpaid volunteers.

This policy covers all education settings within Blaenau Gwent.

While practitioners and contractors are likely to have varied levels of contact with children, young people and adults at risk as part of their duties, everyone should be aware of the potential indicators of abuse and neglect and be clear about what to do if they have concerns.

All education settings must have their own safeguarding policies and procedures which are in keeping with this document and local, regional and national procedures and guidance. An example policy template can be found at appendix 1.

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requiring local authorities and non-maintained settings to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the well-being and welfare of the children on their care.
- Children Act 1989/2004
- Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014
- The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015
- Wales Safeguarding Procedures <https://safeguarding.wales/>

## WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

Safeguarding means preventing and protecting children and adults from abuse or neglect and educating those around them to recognise the signs and dangers.

The Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 defines abuse and neglect:

**'Abuse'** means physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse and includes abuse taking place in any setting, whether in a private dwelling, an institution or any other place. 'Financial abuse' includes:

- Having money or other property stolen;
- Being defrauded;
- Being put under pressure in relation to money or property;
- Having money or other property misused.

**‘Neglect’** means a failure to meet a person’s basic physical, emotional, social or psychological needs which is likely to result in an impairment of the person’s well-being for example, impairment of the person’s health

A full glossary of terms can be found in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures <https://safeguarding.wales/glossary.html>

## **PREVENTATIVE APPROACH**

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council wants safe and friendly communities. With regard to this, the council is committed to the development of approaches to ensure organisations meet the same Council objective. Local Government Education Services will be expected to respond to the needs of children/adults at risk, understand how to establish a positive culture of safeguarding and adhere to the principles of partnership working, promoting prevention and early intervention.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SAFEGUARDING IN EDUCATION**

### **Overview**

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults who may be at risk of harm.

All practitioners working for or on behalf of the Council have a **“duty to report”** any concerns they may have for the welfare and/or protection of children and adults at risk. The process to follow to make reports is contained in Appendix 5.

The Council promotes safer recruitment policy and practice. Safe recruitment procedures will be implemented in accordance with local, regional and national guidance. Education settings will implement the relevant Recruitment and Selection Policy and the Manager’s Guide to Volunteers in the Workplace.

Practitioners working with children and young people are required to undergo a DBS check, at the appropriate level, which is updated on a three year rolling programme. Education settings must maintain a record of DBS checks, recording the certificate number and date of issue. To ensure compliance with GDPR, original/photocopied certificates should not be retained. All school governors should undergo a DBS check at the appropriate level, upon appointment and renewed at the start of each term of office.

Where practitioners have safeguarding concerns or suspicions about other practitioners or contractors these should be reported through safeguarding procedures. Practitioners should also be aware of the statutory protection provided by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (“PIDA”) that protects employees against victimisation if they speak

about concerns about conduct or practice within a school which is potentially illegal, corrupt, improper, unsafe or unethical, or which amounts to malpractice.

All practitioners will be made aware of their safeguarding responsibilities as part of their induction to their employment. Additional training will be undertaken appropriate to the practitioner's role and responsibilities.

Any person responsible for, or working with, children or adults at risk in any capacity, whether paid or unpaid, is considered both legally and morally, to owe them a duty of care. This includes a duty to behave in a manner that does not threaten, harm or put people at risk of harm from others.

All practitioners have a responsibility to conduct themselves in their private lives in a manner that does not compromise their position in the workplace or call into question their suitability to work with children or adults at risk.

Each local government education setting/school is responsible for nominating a Designated Senior Person (DSP) and deputy DSP with responsibility for safeguarding. All DSP's will be invited to termly DSP meetings with the Safeguarding in Education Manager.

## **The Role of the Governing Body in Schools**

The Council's agreed statutory partnership agreement sets out the responsibilities of school's governing bodies, which are summarised below:

Governing Bodies of schools are accountable for ensuring effective policies and procedures are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and monitoring its compliance with them

Governing Bodies must ensure that their schools:

- Have effective child protection policies and procedures in place that are:
  - In accordance with local authority guidance and locally agreed interagency procedures
  - Inclusive of services that extend beyond the school day (e.g. community activities on school premises)
  - Reviewed at least annually
  - Made available to parents/carers upon request
  - Provided in a format appropriate to the understanding of children, particularly where schools cater for children with additional needs
- Operate safe recruitment procedures in line with Local Authority policy and 'Keeping Learners Safe' guidance. Safe recruitment procedures must take account of the need to safeguard children and young people, including arrangements to ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff



and volunteers who will work with children, including relevant DBS checks and professional registration (if required).

- Ensure that the head teacher/principal and all other permanent practitioners who work with children undertake appropriate training to equip them with the knowledge and skills that are necessary to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, which is kept up to date with refresher training
- Ensure that any agency staff who work with children have the relevant pre-employment checks and DBS checks in place
- Give clear guidance to volunteers/temporary staff providing cover during short-term absences and who will be working with children and young people on the organisation's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities.
- Ensure that the governing body remedies, without delay, any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements that are brought to its attention.
- Provide a copy of the school's safeguarding self-evaluation to the Safeguarding in Education Manager annually at the start of each academic year.
- Ensure that data for the safeguarding matrix is provided twice a year to the Safeguarding in Education Manager
- Ensure that the DSP and deputy DSP undertake inter- agency training at least every three years and the Chair of governors and the Safeguarding governor also undertake safeguarding training.
- Ensure that there is a designated person for relationship and sexuality education, who is appropriately trained.

It is the expectation of Blaenau Gwent council that the designated safeguarding governor and the chair of governors undertake training in inter-agency working that is provided by or to the standards agreed by the Safeguarding Children Board, as well as refresher training to keep their knowledge and skills up to date, in addition to basic safeguarding training. Training should be refreshed at a period not exceeding three years

It is also the expectation of Blaenau Gwent council that all members of governing bodies undertake relevant safeguarding and child protection training. This should be within the first term of starting the role to ensure they have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their wider safeguarding responsibilities. As a minimum, governors should complete the Keeping Learners Safe modules which support practitioners in education settings to understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

The Governing Body of a school controls the use of the school premises both during and outside school hours, except where a trust deed allows a person other than the governing body to control the use of the premises, or a transfer of control agreement has been made. Governors can enter into transfer of control agreements in order to share control of the school premises with another body, or transfer control to it. The

other body, known as the 'controlling body', will control the occupation and use of the premises during the times specified in the agreement.

Transferring control of the premises to local community groups, sports association and service providers can enable school facilities to be used without needing ongoing management or administrative time from school staff.

Where the governing body provides services or activities directly under the supervision or management of school staff, the school's arrangements for child protection will apply. Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, the governing body must confirm that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safeguarding children and child protection and there are arrangements to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate.

### **Responsibilities of Head Teachers/ Managers**

Head teachers/Managers should foster a nurturing culture within settings and promote open communication between staff and pupils on safeguarding matters.

Head teachers/Managers must ensure that all practitioners (including supply staff and volunteers):

- Fully implement and follow the safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the governing body or proprietor
- Have both time and access to sufficient resources to enable them to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussion and other inter-agency meetings as well as contributing to the assessment of children. Ensure
- Understand the procedures for safeguarding children, feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and be confident that such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with Welsh Government Procedures for Whistleblowing in Schools (Model Policy).
- As part of their induction, are given a written statement about the setting's policy and procedures, and the name and contact details of the DSP.
- Understand and comply with pre-employment, DBS and Professional Registration requirements
- Receive appropriate safeguarding training (Staff, volunteers and governors)

Head teachers/ Managers should also:

- Provide timely updates to the Safeguarding in Education Manager in line with the safeguarding data protocol (Appendix 11)
- Participate in the Quality Assurance processes in a timely manner
- Ensure that the safeguarding processes are reviewed annually and shared with staff, the governing body and the Safeguarding in Education manager through the provision of the safeguarding self-evaluation document to the latter, annually, at the start of each academic year.

## **Role of the Designated Person in schools and educational settings**

The Designated Senior Person (DSP) for safeguarding fulfills an essential role in developing and implementing policies that help to safeguard adults and children from all forms of abuse and create a safe environment.

Each education setting must identify a DSP with lead responsibility for managing all safeguarding concerns. The DSP must be available to discuss safeguarding concerns; should be consulted, when possible, as to whether to raise a safeguarding concern with the local authority; and will manage any immediate actions required to ensure the individual at risk is safe from abuse. All practitioners should know who to contact in their education setting for advice and they should not hesitate to discuss their concerns no matter how insignificant they may appear.

The DSP need not be a teacher, but must be a senior member of the leadership team with the status and authority within the organisation to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources to safeguarding matters and directing other staff. The DSP could also be a single appointment within the senior team and need not carry other duties.

Each DSP should have at least one deputy who has equal status and access to the same training. The number of deputies will depend on the education setting, and should reflect the proportion of work involved and the size and scale of the education setting. Larger education settings should have a team of staff working together and split-site education settings should have a DSP available on each site.

The DSP should possess the necessary skills and qualities for the role, which will have a strong focus on communication with learners and professionals. This can be a demanding role and will require a level of expertise, knowledge, resources and support.

Handling individual cases may be a responsibility delegated to other members of staff, but it is important that a senior member of staff take overall responsibility for this area of work. The DSP should always be kept informed of the progress and the outcome of all cases. All staff taking on these responsibilities should be fully trained and skilled in their responsibilities.

In education settings with a high number of safeguarding concerns, consideration should be given to appointing a full-time DSP with relevant skills and experience. An alternative arrangement might involve the delegation of day-to-day responsibilities while the DSP retains overall responsibility, as described above.

The DSP should have adequate support, training and supervision to undertake their role effectively. The supervision should support the DSP with the emotional impact of their

role and provide an opportunity for reflection on their practice. This could be done on an individual or group basis but the DSP should be provided with an opportunity for individual support where necessary.

The DSP must know how to recognise and identify the signs of abuse, neglect and other types of harm, irrespective of whether it is online or offline, and know when it is appropriate to make a report to the local authority (or police where the child/children are in immediate danger).

The DSP role involves providing advice and support to other staff, record-keeping, working with family members or carers, making referrals to children's services and attending statutory meetings, as well as liaising with the SCB and working with other agencies as necessary. The DSP role is not to investigate allegations, but they must keep the headteacher informed of all safeguarding concerns raised in the school or college. The Council has purchased the MyConcern software package for schools to better facilitate the sharing of information in a timely manner

The DSP should also consider how safeguarding more widely can be addressed and ensure preventative measures are adopted in the education setting. This part of the role will include building relationships with other agencies, as well as ensuring staff and learners are informed about risks and how to access support. This will form part of the whole-school (setting) approach and learning through the new curriculum.

The DSP will take responsibility for the education setting's safeguarding and child protection practice, policy, procedures and professional development, working with other agencies as necessary. The DSP should ensure the education setting's safeguarding policy is updated and reviewed annually, and work with the governing body or proprietor regarding this.

The DSP is responsible for ensuring that parents/carers see copies of the child safeguarding policy. This may help avoid the potential for later conflict by alerting them to the role of the education setting and the fact that reports may be made to the local authority where there are safeguarding concerns. Many education settings include information about this at induction meetings for new parents/carers, in their prospectus and on their website.

As well as the education setting's safeguarding policy, there are other policies that have relevance to safeguarding, and the DSP may be involved in monitoring the effectiveness of these other policies to ensure there is consistency and coherence in the way the school effectively safeguards their children.

The DSP should ensure the education setting completes the School Safeguarding Self-Evaluation to support a whole-setting approach to safeguarding, as well as to provide a benchmark against which to seek to continually improve safeguarding approaches and structures. The audit tool should be regularly reviewed to ensure that there is constant reflection, learning and updating of processes within the education setting.

The principles outlined in the responsibilities of the DSP should be adopted as effective practice in all education settings.

The head teacher/ Manager should ensure that the DSP:

- Is given sufficient time and resources to carry out the role effectively, which should be explicitly defined in the post holder's job description.
- Has access to required levels of training and support to undertake the role, including ongoing professional development and regular participation at DSP meetings.
- Has time to attend and provide reports and advice to case conferences and other interagency meetings as required

### **Safeguarding training**

The DSP must have regular training in safeguarding to meet the requirements of the role. This will require a higher level of training than for other staff in education settings, and will include more specialist training in different types of abuse as well as the skills required to respond so the DSP has a good understanding of current issues and skills. The DSP should receive prompt training in inter-agency procedures that enables them to work in partnership with other agencies, and gives them the knowledge and skills needed to fulfil their responsibilities. They should also undertake refresher training to keep their knowledge and skills up to date.

It is the role of the DSP, working with the headteacher, to ensure all practitioners:

- have access to and understand the education setting's safeguarding policy, especially new or part-time staff who may work with different education settings
- have induction and refresher training covering safeguarding
- understand the causes of abuse, neglect and other kinds of harm
- understand the different types of abuse
- are able to recognise the signs and indicators of abuse, neglect and other kinds of harm
- know how to respond effectively when they have concerns
- know how to respond to a disclosure appropriately
- know how to communicate effectively with children and young people, including using skills such as empathy
- know that they have a responsibility to report any concerns immediately as they arise.

The DSP must keep a record of all staff training, including the dates, details of the provider and a record of staff attendance.

All staff should attend refresher training preferably within two years, but should not exceed three years between training; due to the changing nature of online safety it is recommended that this be renewed regularly.

The Keeping learners safe modules ([210419-keeping-learners-safe-module-guidance.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)) support all staff in education settings to understand their safeguarding responsibilities as set out in this guidance.

All governors, including the chair of governors, and safeguarding governor should be given access to safeguarding and child protection training to ensure a basic and consistent level of awareness. This training includes, but is not limited to, the Keeping learners safe modules ([210419-keeping-learners-safe-module-guidance.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)). Governing bodies are responsible for ensuring the education setting policies and procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements, and all governors should know what to do if they have concerns about a child.

In addition to the safeguarding Children and/or adults training, all staff must complete Group 1 training on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) as outlined in the National Training Framework and training on Preventing Extremism. Links to online PREVENT training are contained in Appendix 8. Further training on wider safeguarding issues should be accessed according to the needs of the setting.

### **Responding to Concerns that a child is at risk**

All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment and to identify children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or harm irrespective of where this happens (online or offline, on or off the education setting premises). All staff then have a responsibility to take appropriate action, working with other services as needed. In addition to working with the DSP, staff members should be aware that they might be asked to support social workers to take decisions about individual children

Early identification and intervention are key to meeting the needs of children by preventing or delaying circumstances that might lead to social services' intervention. Addressing low-level well-being problems early can stop issues escalating. Therefore, prevention, identification and early intervention are key, and equipping teachers and other school staff with the necessary knowledge to identify problems, together with support in the form of consultation, liaison and advice from more specialist services is key to the whole-school (setting) approach.

Everyone in the education system who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children, as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children to prevent issues from escalating. Staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children

Education settings should consider how they could build relationships with other services to ensure early referrals and offers of support to children and families are made before their needs escalate.

The DSP should provide support to staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties and liaise closely with other services such as children's social care and family support services.

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures provide common standards to guide safeguarding and child protection practice and a framework within which individual reports of a child at risk, actions, decisions and plans are made and carried out. They are an integral part of the framework for safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children. The DSP should ensure that everyone working in the education setting is aware of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and knows how to access a copy of the procedures.

Staff should always speak to the DSP in the first instance to discuss their concerns, but it is important to remember that anyone can contact the local authority children's social services to raise a concern at any time. Where a concern about the well-being of a child is identified staff members should always act in the best interests of the child.

A child, parent, carer, relative or member of the public who expresses concerns about a child's well-being to anyone working in the education setting must never simply be asked to make a direct report to social services or the police. These concerns should be shared with the DSP. If the individual wishes to make a report, this report should not change the actions of the DSP; a report must still be made by the DSP if it is felt that the child is at risk.

Every education setting must have a suitable system in place to support effective data collection of children suspected to be at risk. 'My Concern' is the software package for use in Blaenau Gwent. This package will support staff to log concerns and the DSP to identify patterns of abuse, neglect, or other kinds of harm.

Where a staff member has concerns but would like further advice on these concerns they should have a discussion with the DSP. Concerns must be shared with social services through a report, supported by the DSP. The DSP can advise on and manage the process. Whether the actual making of the report is done by the DSP or the staff member will depend on the arrangements in place at the individual education setting.

All agencies involved in safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children must have policies and procedures specifying arrangements for the retention, storage and destruction of electronic and paper case records. The policies should ensure that case records are stored safely and able to be retrieved as required.

If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, the staff member must write a record of the conversation as soon as possible, distinguishing clearly between fact, observation, allegation and opinion, noting any action taken in cases of possible abuse or neglect, and signing and dating the note.

All education settings must reassure and inform children there is a safe environment to talk about matters that affect them. Displaying information of national children's

helplines and peer support schemes, in visible and easily accessible places, can encourage them to share concerns and receive help. These posters provide support to children to speak out when they have a concern. Education settings should display these posters on their premises in clear view of children as effective practice.

## **Reporting a child at risk**

Partners must inform the local authority where they have reasonable cause to believe a child to be at risk.

The DSP should act as a point of contact and a source of support, advice and expertise for schools and colleges when deciding whether to make a report to the local authority. The DSP should also take a lead in liaising with relevant agencies unless there are immediate concerns and staff should make contact directly.

Where the DSP has reasonable cause to suspect that a child attending the education setting is at risk, a report must be made to the local authority as soon as possible. However, if there are immediate concerns about a child's safety or a criminal offence against a child is suspected, the emergency services must be contacted without delay to protect the child/children from risk of serious harm.

Where staff members have concerns that a child is at risk of abuse, neglect or other harm they must raise these with the DSP. The DSP must then decide whether it is appropriate to make a report to social services and/or the police. It is important to note any staff member can also report concerns to local authority social services or to the police directly; however, liaison with the DSP is advisable in all cases where possible

Concerns should always lead to help and support, either through a report to social services, or direct support through the education setting or other service such as family support services. The DSP should share the following information with the staff member making the report and the headteacher or principle:

- proposed initial action, including signposting or that no further action will be taken
- who will be taking action.

Staff members must also be aware of wider safeguarding concerns and report these to the DSP.

Where the concerns relate to cases of suspected abuse or allegations of abuse against staff, guidance is available in Safeguarding children in education: handling allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff ([Handling allegations of abuse against teachers and staff | GOV.WALES](#)), and the process is set out in the Disciplinary and dismissal procedures for school staff: Revised guidance for governing bodies (see [gov.wales/disciplinary-and-dismissal-procedures-school-staff](#)). The relevant process is set out in the example template policy (appendix 1, under the heading, 'What to do if a child tells you they have been abused by a practitioner (including volunteers)').



All practitioners and contractors have a responsibility to share their concerns in accordance with this policy and to undertake relevant training.

**Children** - Further guidance and the relevant Multi Agency Referral Form to make a report can be found through the Gwent Safeguarding website, at <https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Children/Report/Report-a-child-at-risk.aspx>

**Adults** - Further guidance and the appropriate referral form for reporting an adult at risk can be found through the Gwent Safeguarding website <https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Adults/Report/Report-an-adult-at-risk.aspx>

## **Example policy template for schools/education settings**

### **Child Protection Policy for (Name of School /Setting)**

#### **1. Introduction**

The school/setting fully recognises the contribution it makes to safeguarding.

There are three main elements to our policy: -

- Prevention through the culture, teaching and pastoral support offered to learners
- Procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse - because of our contact with children and adults at risk, our staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse; and
- Support to learners who may have been abused.

Our policy applies to all practitioners, (staff and volunteers) working in the school/education setting. In the case of schools, it is the Governing Body's policy. It is recognised by this school/setting that all practitioners that come into contact with children and adults at risk can often be the first point of disclosure. This first point of contact is an important part of the safeguarding process, and it is essential that all practitioners are aware of and implement the school's/ setting's procedures as noted in this policy.

#### **2. Prevention**

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult helps to safeguard learners.

The school/setting will therefore: -

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children and adults at risk feel secure, are encouraged to talk and share their concerns and are listened to;
- Ensure that children and adults at risk know that there are adults in the education setting whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty Include in the curriculum, activities and opportunities for relationships and sexuality education which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and to know to whom to turn for help; and
- Include in the activities and in the curriculum, material which will help children and adults at risk develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills.
- build relationships with other agencies and ensure early and appropriate referrals for support and intervention are made before risks escalate.

- take a whole-school (setting) approach to well-being which will incorporate safeguarding and preventative measures to support children and families.

### 3. Procedures

At this school/setting we will follow the Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019, <https://safeguarding.wales/> and other guidance and protocols that have been endorsed and agreed by Gwent Safeguarding [www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk](http://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk) .

The school/ setting will: -

- Ensure it has a designated senior person (DSP) and deputy for safeguarding, who have undertaken the appropriate training.
- Recognise the role of the designated senior person and arrange support and training. The school/setting will look to Council's Safeguarding in Education Manager and Gwent Safeguarding for guidance and support in assisting the school's designated senior person.
- Ensure that all practitioners, along with every governor, know: -
  - the name and contact details of the DSP and their role, the local authority point of contact and the designated governor for safeguarding
  - that they have an individual responsibility for reporting children at risk and protection concerns to social services, or to the police, within the timescales agreed with the Regional Safeguarding Board
  - how to take forward those concerns when the DSP is unavailable
  - that advice can be sought from the Social Services Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA), and /or the Safeguarding in Education Manager if necessary when a report is being considered. When out of hours, advice will be sought from the South East Wales Emergency Duty Team (SEWEDT)
- Ensure that all practitioners are aware of the need to be alert to signs of abuse and know how to respond to a learner who may disclose abuse.
- Ensure that staff members are aware of wider safeguarding concerns and report these to the DSP. Staff will be made aware of the information on wider safeguarding issues contained in Keeping Learners Safe and Wales Safeguarding Procedures.
- Ensure that members of staff who are EWC registrants are aware of the Code of Professional Conduct and Practice for registrants with the Education Workforce Council (see [www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/fitness-to-practise/code-of-professional-conduct-and-practice-pdf.html](http://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/fitness-to-practise/code-of-professional-conduct-and-practice-pdf.html) ) and the expectation within the Code that the registrant has regard to the safety and well-being of learners in their care and related content
- Ensure that all practitioners will be offered and expected to attend appropriate training and updates as arranged/directed by the school/setting.

- Ensure that parents/carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school/college/education setting and staff for safeguarding and child protection by setting out its obligations in the school brochure and/or other forms of communication
- Provide training for all practitioners so that they: -
  - Understand their personal responsibility;
  - Are cognisant of agreed local procedures and their duty to respond
  - Are aware of the need to be vigilant in identifying suspected cases of abuse; and
  - Know how to support a person who discloses abuse or neglect
  - Understand the role online behaviours may have in each of the above
- Notify Social Services if: -
  - a learner on the child protection register is excluded either for a fixed term or permanently; and
  - there is an unexplained absence of a learner on the child protection register of more than two days' duration from school (or one day following a weekend).
- Work to develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters including attendance at initial and review child protection conferences and core groups and the submission of written reports to the conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children and adults at risk (noting date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to report the matter to agencies immediately.
- Ensure that all records and files are kept secure and in locked locations. The DSP is responsible for the security, compilation and storage of all records and should be able to access and produce them in times of need. It is the responsibility of the DSP to ensure that any transfer of records is conducted via MyConcern software package or using the Authority's agreed protocol and procedures for the 'Transfer of Sensitive Information' (Appendix7)
- Adhere to the procedures set out in the Welsh Government's Disciplinary and dismissal procedures for school staff: Revised guidance for governing bodies ([disciplinary-and-dismissal-procedures-for-school-staff\\_0.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)). Ensure that all recruitment and selection procedures follow national and local guidance and the Council's Recruitment and Selection policy. Schools will seek advice and guidance from the Council's Organisational Development Department on recruitment and selection.
- In schools, designate a governor for safeguarding who will oversee the school's policy and practice. This governor will feed back to the Governing Body on safeguarding matters as and when required, and will be required to write an annual report to the Governing Body on the school's safeguarding activities

#### **4. Supporting those at Risk**

At this education setting/school we recognise that children/adults at risk who are at risk, suffer abuse, or witness violence may be deeply affected by this.

At this education setting/school we will endeavour to be patient and supportive to the person at risk.

This education setting/school will endeavour to support people through: -

- The content of the activities and the curriculum to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation
- The ethos of the school/setting which: -
  - promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment; and
  - Gives pupils/adults at risk a sense of being valued
- The setting/school's behaviour policy, which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the setting. All practitioners will agree on a consistent approach that focuses on the behavioural outcome of the child but does not damage the individual's sense of self-worth. The setting will endeavour to ensure that the learner knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but that they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred
- Liaison with other agencies who support the student such as Social Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services, the Educational Psychology Service, Education Welfare Service and advocacy services; and
- Keeping records and notifying Social Services as soon as there is a recurrence of a concern.

When a learner on the child protection register leaves, we will transfer information to the new school /setting immediately using MyConcern (where MyConcern is not used in both settings, the Safeguarding File – Transfer of records proforma will be used) using the procedure outlined in appendix 7, Safeguarding File – Transfer of Records). The DSP will be central to this process, and if not already done, will inform Social Services of the move.

#### **5. Behaviour**

This setting/school has a behaviour policy which clearly states our values and expectations. This is a separate policy which is reviewed on a regular basis by the Governing Body

#### **6. Bullying**

The setting/school's policy on Bullying has been set out in (a separate document/ the behaviour policy etc.) (It would be useful to note any guidance from the Authority within any documentation.) This policy/information is reviewed annually by Governors

### **7. Physical Intervention**

The setting/school's policy on physical intervention has been set out in (a separate document) ) It is reviewed annually by the governing body and is consistent with the Welsh Government guidance on Safe and Effective intervention – use of reasonable force and searching for weapons 097/2013

### **8. Keeping Safe Online**

The school/setting's policy on Online Safety has been set out in (a separate document)

### **9. Children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)**

This school/setting recognises that statistically children and young people with additional learning needs are most vulnerable to abuse. Practitioners who deal with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and or emotional and behaviour problems need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse. The school's policy on ALN has been set out in (A separate document).

### **10. Care Experienced Children**

This school/setting recognises that Children Looked After (CLA) are often the most vulnerable. Advice and guidance can be sought from the Local Authority's Education Coordinator for Children Looked After.

### **11. Community Cohesion – Preventing Extremism**

This school/setting is committed to providing a safe environment for all of our students and practitioners. There is no place for extremist views of any kind in our setting. Where we become aware of information involving identification of potential instances of extremism and radicalisation, we will refer to Children's/Adult Services in the same way as for all safeguarding concerns. The Local Authority has 'Secure and Shelter' (Lockdown) procedures that may be activated in response to any number of situations and includes the requirement to carry out practice procedures (appendix 9).

Our policy statement for community cohesion is attached as appendix 8: Community Cohesion – Preventing Extremism.

### **12. Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDA&SV)**

The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 aims to improve arrangements for the prevention of gender based violence, abuse and sexual violence.

The protection of victims and support for people affected is underpinned by the 'Ask and Act' duty placed on public service staff to ask potential victims about the possibility that they may be experiencing VAWDASV and act so as to reduce suffering and harm.

The regional VAWDASV board has also prioritised a 'whole school approach' to training and support in order to continue a preventative agenda to domestic abuse. This approach is relevant for all education settings.

Every school should have a designated lead responsible for supporting learners with relationships and sexuality education. There is extensive guidance available on preventing and responding to child sexual abuse, including 'Keeping Learners Safe' [Keeping learners safe | GOV.WALES](#) and [guidance-for-education-settings-on-peer-sexual-abuse-exploitation-and-harmful-sexual-behaviour.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

The school/setting's policy on VAWDASV has been set out in (a separate document/ the schools VAWDASV policy etc.).

The school participates in Operation Encompass. The purpose of Operation Encompass is to safeguard and support these children and young people who have witnessed and/or been present at the time of a domestic abuse incident. Operation Encompass aims to ensure that appropriate practitioners are made aware at the earliest possible stage in order to provide relevant and tailored support to children and young people in a way that means they feel safe and included.

### **13. Modern Slavery**

Modern slavery describes forced labour practices with the perpetrator – the slave master- trapping and controlling the victim. The most common form of modern slavery is sexual exploitation. Labour exploitation is the second most common form of slavery occurring most frequently in the agricultural, food, hospitality and construction sectors. Victims may be vulnerable UK or foreigner citizens. Police, Local Authorities, the National Crime Agency and the Gangmasters Labour and Abuse Authority who encounter a potential victim of modern slavery or human trafficking have a duty to notify the Home Office under Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Modern slavery is a hidden, pervasive crim targeted towards those individuals most vulnerable. The Council and BAWSO are first responding organisations to cases of slavery. Training and victim support regarding Modern Slavery can be found at BAWSO, [www.bawso.org.uk](http://www.bawso.org.uk)

### **14. Safer Schools' Partnership**

The Safer Schools' partnership allows the safe and legal sharing of information that will ensure children can be safeguarded where they are identified as being at risk of or involved in crime and anti-social behavior. This is a multi-agency risk assessment approach. Specific advice on this can be sought from the Safeguarding in Education Manager/Strategic Safeguarding Lead for Education.

### **15. Transfer of school records**

Where children are transferred to or from this school, we will ensure appropriate record keeping of the transfer of safeguarding records through the use of My Concern software package. Where My Concern is not used in both settings, the Safeguarding File – Transfer of records proforma will be used. (See appendix 7).

### **16. Out of Hours**

After 5pm and on weekends and bank holidays, the South East Wales Emergency Duty Team can be contacted on 0800 328 4432

### **17. Information for staff/volunteers**

#### **a) What to do if a person tells you they have been abused or harmed:**

A person may confide in any practitioner. Practitioners to whom an allegation is made should remember: -

- Yours is a listening role, do not interrupt the when they are freely recalling events. Limit any questions to clarifying your understanding of what is being said. Any questions should be framed in an open manner so not to lead;
- In schools, you must report to the **Designated Senior Person (DSP) for safeguarding** immediately (or in their absence, their Deputy), to inform them of what has been disclosed. In the unlikelyhood of both being absent, seek out the most senior person in the school;
- For other education settings, the process outlined in the setting's own procedures must be followed.
- Make a note of the discussion, as soon as is reasonably practical (but within 24 hours) to pass on to the DSP. The note which should be clear in its use of terminology, should record the time, date, place, and people who were present and should record answers/responses in exactly the way they were said as far as possible. This note will in most cases be the only written record of what has been disclosed, and as it is the initial contact, an important one in the process. Remember, your note of the discussion may be used in any subsequent formal investigation and/or court proceedings. It is advised that you retain a copy in a safe place;
- Do not give undertakings of absolute confidentiality. You will need to express this in age/developmental related ways as soon as appropriately possible during the disclosure. This may result in the person 'clamming up' and not completing the



disclosure, but you will still be required to share the fact that they have a shared a concern with you to the DSP. Often what is initially shared is the tip of an iceberg;

- That a person may be waiting for a case to go to criminal court, may have to give evidence or in the case of a child, may be awaiting care proceedings.
- You may have a future role in terms of supporting or monitoring the person, for example, contributing to an assessment or in the case of a child, implementing child protection plans. You can ask the DSP for an update on concerns shared, but they are restricted by procedures and confidentiality and may be limited in their response. The level of feedback will be on a need to know, but whatever is shared is strictly confidential and not for general consumption with others.
- When making a report about an 'adult at risk', consent is not required to make the report, but it would be helpful to know if the adult at risk consents to the adult safeguarding process.

**b) What to do if a person tells you they have a practitioner concern (including volunteers):**

*If an allegation of abuse is made against a practitioner, this must be reported in accordance with the information below.*

***Where there is a practitioner concern, reports to Children's/adult services are made in the same way as for all safeguarding concerns***

Where there is an allegation/concern about a practitioner, you should refer to the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and the authority's guidance which takes into account the Welsh Government's guidance circular 002/2020 Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures for School Staff and Welsh Government guidance circular 009/2014 Safeguarding Children in Education: Handling allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff. (A summary of procedures is included in appendix 6: Professional Allegations/Concerns).

If a safeguarding allegation/concern about a practitioner is made, this must be reported to the Head Teacher/ manager.

If the concern is about the Head Teacher, this must be reported to the Chair of Governors and if the concern is about a manager, it must be reported to the next line manager.

The matter must also be discussed with the Safeguarding in Education Manager. In the absence of the Safeguarding in Education Manager, do not delay, contact the Social Services Information, Advice and Assistance Team.

If there is an allegation against a Local Authority Officer then this must be communicated to the Corporate Director for Education (Interim), Lynn Phillips Tel:

01495 355603/ 07772379795 and the Strategic Safeguarding Lead (SSL) for the Education Directorate, Michelle Jones Tel: 01495 355823 mobile 07881815904

If the concern is about the SSL, then the Corporate Director for Education is to be contacted. If there is a concern about the Corporate Director for Education, then this should be referred to the Chief Officer/Head of Paid Service.

Upon receipt of an allegation/concern about a practitioner in a school, the Head teacher/manager (or where appropriate, the Chair of Governors), will:

- obtain details of the allegation in writing, signed and dated
- Keep a record of dates, times, location and names of potential witnesses.
- Not investigate the allegation, or interview pupils, or discuss the allegation with the member of staff, but should consider, in consultation with the Senior Officer, whether the allegation requires further investigation and if so by whom.
- inform the Chair of Governors / manager
- Contact the Safeguarding in Education Manager who, together with Children's Services will give urgent consideration as to whether or not there is sufficient substance to the allegation to warrant an investigation: The outcome will either be:
  - i. without foundation
  - ii. internal disciplinary procedures
  - iii. a report under the safeguarding procedures
- In the case of adults at risk, further advice can be sought from the Protection of Adults at risk (POVA) Coordinator, Sarah Jones (01495 354613)

Pending the outcome of this process, interim safeguarding arrangements will be necessary. This will require a risk assessment to be completed and documented by the Head teacher/Chair of Governors/manager. This should ensure that there is no contact between the person who is the subject of the allegation and the person who has been accused of the allegation. Interim safeguarding measures should also be put in place regarding the contact that takes place between any other child(ren)/adult at risk and the person against whom the allegation has been made.

The sharing of information about an allegation must be handled sensitively and must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to safeguard.

Information about the child, adult at risk or family must not be shared with the individual against whom the allegation was made or anyone representing them.

The matter must be treated confidentially and will not be discussed with practitioners.

When a report has been made to the Local Authority, consideration will be given to the report by the statutory authorities, who can conclude their considerations at any stage in the safeguarding process. Once the statutory authorities have completed their consideration of the allegation, the matter is referred back to the governing body to consider any actions required by the employer. The Safeguarding in Education Manager will consult with the Headteacher and chair of governors to discuss next steps at the conclusion of the involvement of statutory services ([Handling allegations of abuse against teachers and staff | GOV.WALES](#))

Each establishment, organisation or service will keep and maintain records which detail allegations of abuse against any practitioner working for them, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, whatever the outcome. There are clear requirements of when this information is to be shared with legal or statutory organisations such as DBS and the Education Workforce Council (EWC). Advice and guidance for the sharing of this specific information **must** be sought from Organisational Development.

### **c) Confidentiality**

The school/setting and practitioners are fully aware of confidentiality issues if a person divulges that they are or have been abused. A person may only feel confident to confide in a practitioner if they feel that the information will not be divulged to anyone else. However, practitioners have a professional responsibility to share relevant information with the designated statutory agencies when a child is experiencing child welfare concerns or an adult is an 'adult at risk'.

It is important that each practitioner deals with this sensitively. When responding, practitioners should explain that they must inform the appropriate people who can help, but they will only tell those who need to know in order to be able to help. Practitioners should reassure the person and tell them that their situation will not be common knowledge within the setting. Be aware that it may well have taken significant courage to disclose the information and they may also be experiencing conflicting emotions, involving feelings of guilt, embarrassment, disloyalty (if the abuser is someone close) and hurt.

Ensure that only those with a professional involvement, i.e. the DSP and Head teacher/Manager, have access to safeguarding records. At all other times, they should be kept secure and separate from the person's main file.

## **18. Training**

The school/setting will ensure that the designated senior person and deputy will have received initial training when starting their role and continued professional updates as required. Specific updates as suggested by national and local requirements will be central to the DSP/deputy DSP development. DSP training will be inter-agency training and refresher training will take place on a regular basis, not exceeding a three year period.

All practitioners will receive safeguarding training and will be regularly updated during the year as appropriate from the DSP. All practitioners will receive specific awareness raising training within a 3-year period.

Members of school governing bodies should also receive awareness raising training and the Chair of governors and the nominated governor for safeguarding should undertake multi- agency safeguarding training.

In addition to the safeguarding Children and/or adults training, all staff must complete Group 1 training on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) as outlined in the National Training Framework and should also be trained through the Home Office Workshop to Raise Awareness (WRAP) of the Prevent programme. Links to online PREVENT training are contained in Appendix 8.

All educational settings and partners working with children and adults at risk in Blaenau Gwent must keep records of training and carry out regular audits to ensure that all practitioner training for safeguarding is kept up to date. Educational establishments and partner agencies will be required to provide information on practitioner training to the Council and the Safeguarding Board upon request.

**The Designated Senior Person** for safeguarding at this school/setting is:-

.....

**The Deputy Designated Senior Person** for safeguarding at this school/setting is:-

.....

**The designated governor** for safeguarding at this school is:-

.....

**The Council's Safeguarding in Education Manager** is:-

[Sarah.Dixon@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:Sarah.Dixon@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk) 07815 005241

**Social Services** can be contacted as follows:-

Telephone- **01495-315700** / Out of hours number **0800 328 4432**

**This policy was updated on \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_**

**This policy was presented and accepted by the Governing Body on \_\_\_\_\_**

**This staff were made aware of this policy and or updates on \_\_\_\_\_**

**This policy will be reviewed on \_\_\_\_\_**

## Example policy template for Early Years, Childcare and play

### **Safeguarding Policy for (Name of Setting)**

.....(setting) believes that children have the right to be completely secure from both the fear and reality of abuse, and we are committed to safeguarding all children in our care from harm. The practitioners at ..... (setting) fully recognises the contribution it makes to safeguard children and complies with Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019, Gwent Safeguarding Children's Board and Blaenau Gwent authority's safeguarding policy.

We recognise the key role that.....(setting) can play in working with children and their families to seek early help to address any emerging concerns to help prevent problems from escalating, in preventing abuse by providing our children with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection. Our setting will therefore:

- establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, respected and valued, where children are encouraged to talk and are always listened to;
- ensure that all children know there is an adult in the setting whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
- encourage positive emotional health and well-being, self-esteem and self-assertiveness;
- promote a caring, safe and secure environment;
- have regard to the characteristics, culture and beliefs of the child and their family (including, for example language) whilst recognising the paramountcy of safeguarding the individual;
- liaise and work together with all other support services and those agencies involved in early intervention services and the safeguarding of children and young people;
- providing continuous support to a child about whom there have been concerns;

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of National and Gwent Children's Safeguarding Boards' guidance and protocols that seek to protect children, namely:

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requiring local authorities and non-maintained settings to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the well-being and welfare of the children on their care.
- Children Act 1989. Children and Family (Wales) Measure 2010
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- The Equality Act 2010
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

- Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014
- Domestic abuse (Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019
- The UNCRC seven core aims for children and young people in Wales
- Relevant Welsh Government guidance on safeguarding children

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working at .....  
(setting).

We aim to:-

- Ensure that all children are never placed at risk while in the care of .....(setting);
- Support child's health and development in ways that foster security, confidence and independence;
- Ensure that the child's best interests are paramount and as far as reasonably practicable, have regard to the child's views, wishes and feelings, so that they receive the care and support they need before a problem escalates;
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times;
- Ensure parents are fully aware of our safeguarding/child protection policies and procedures when they register with the setting and are kept informed of all updates when they occur;
- Practitioners should always seek to be transparent with people they are working with about circumstances where they may need to share information with social services and/or the police;
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents;
- Ensure that all staff have regard to this guidance when fulfilling their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse - safeguarding and promoting the welfare, health and well-being of children in their care;
- Ensure that all staff regularly revise Safeguarding issues and procedures and sign a declaration that they have understood and will adhere to the setting's policies and procedures;
- That practitioners understand their duty to seek early help to address any emerging concerns to help avoid problems escalating;
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm;
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff;
- To develop a structured procedure within .....(setting) which will be followed by all members of staff;

- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters including attendance at initial and review child protection conferences and core groups and support with the submission of written reports.
- To ensure that all adults within the setting, who have access to the children, have been checked as to their suitability (including visitors);
- Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) CIW will be notified of any allegations made against staff, managers, any volunteers, students and/or outside agencies in the setting.

**Safe recruitment**

..... (the setting) operate safe recruitment procedures and ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out on new practitioners and volunteers who will work with children, including disclosure and barring checks (DBS) in line with current guidance. We abide by CIW requirements in respect of references and suitability checks for practitioners and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the nursery or has access to the children. All practitioners and temporary practitioners/volunteers providing cover during short-term absences and who will be working with children are given clear guidance of the setting’s arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities during induction.

**Children with additional learning needs**

We recognise that statistically children and young people with behavioural difficulties and disabilities have an increased risk of being abused compared with their non-disabled/non sensory impaired peers. We also recognise that adults who support children and young people with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and or emotional and behaviour problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

**Appointed Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) and their responsibilities.**

The setting’s Designated Safeguarding Person is  
 ..... who will be responsible for supporting practitioners in liaising with Social Services, Gwent Safeguarding Children’s Board and CIW regarding any child protection matter.

The setting’s Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person is  
 .....who will be responsible for supporting practitioners in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

The Designated Safeguarding Person and their Deputy will:

- act as a source of advice and support within ..... (the setting) and provide a point of contact for practitioners who have concerns or information that child or young person may be suffering abuse;
- co-ordinate any necessary reports to Social Services, **however** individual practitioners have a duty to report and the responsibility for raising concerns, completing report information, informing Social Services and involvement in any safeguarding processes that follow after a report is made. (e.g. requests for information, attending case conferences etc.)
- support those practitioners in our setting who have been involved with a child who has suffered, or was at risk of suffering harm, who may find the situation stressful and upsetting.
- ensure that .....(the setting) contributes fully to the safeguarding processes e.g. by providing reports, attending meetings or conferences when needed;
- ensure that all practitioners and parents/carers are aware of and have access to our setting's safeguarding policy and procedures and the Wales Safeguarding Procedures;
- disseminate safeguarding information gained from training and other sources to all practitioners in our setting and ensure that newly appointed practitioners are aware of their child protection/safeguarding responsibilities;
- inform CIW of any allegations that have been made against managers, practitioners and volunteers.

**Practitioner commitment**

The .....(setting) is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities in respect of child protection and safeguarding through the provision of support and training to practitioners. Therefore, .....(setting) will ensure that:-

- all practitioners have up to date safeguarding training so that they understand their roles and responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of harm, abuse and neglect
- implement safe recruitment practices for all practitioners, students and volunteers, including verified references and full and up to date enhanced DBS checks
- all practitioners and volunteers are given a copy of the Safeguarding policy during their induction, and have its implications explained to them.
- all practitioners are alert to children's needs including any potential or suspected risk of abuse or harm and understand what action they should take
- any practitioner, student or volunteer under investigation for the alleged abuse of a child, will be subject to the provisions of the setting's Disciplinary Policy
- all practitioners and volunteers receive regular staff meetings and supervision where opportunities to discuss Safeguarding/Child Protection issues will be made and further support provided if necessary;



- all practitioners are aware of any early intervention services that could help prevent any problems escalating;
- All practitioners should familiarise themselves with the culture and beliefs of those families they work with. Practitioners should not be afraid to ask about particular behaviours and the reasons for them in a sensitive manner and should never overlook potential harmful practices on the basis of cultural sensitivity;
- all practitioners are aware of their statutory requirements in respect of the disclosure or discovery of child abuse and the procedure for doing so. All students and volunteers are instructed to report the disclosure or discovery of abuse to the DSP or setting's manager.
- All visitors/contract/external workers will sign a visitor's book and be formally identified before accessing the setting. They will be accompanied whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use.

### **Supporting Practitioners**

We recognise that all practitioners working in the setting who has been involved with a child who has suffered, or is at risk of suffering harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support the practitioner by providing opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the Designated Safeguarding Person and to seek further support if needed.

### **Recognising Child Abuse**

Child abuse can manifest itself in a variety of different ways, some overt and others much less so. A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, an institution or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely by a stranger.

### **Indicators of abuse (although this is by no means an exhaustive list)**

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Aggressive behaviour
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries
- Inappropriately clothed

### **Types of Harm**

- **Physical abuse** - hitting, slapping, over or misuse of medication, undue restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;

- **emotional/psychological abuse** - threats of harm or abandonment, coercive control, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks, witnessing abuse of others;
- **sexual abuse** - forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, including: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways;
- **financial abuse** - this category will be less prevalent for a child but indicators could be: not meeting their needs for care and support which are provided through direct payments; or complaints that personal property is missing.
- **neglect** - failure to meet basic physical, emotional or psychological needs which is likely to result in impairment of health or development.
- **Identity Neglect** – not recognising or addressing the child or young person’s needs in terms of (for example) culture, religion, gender and sexuality.
- **Emotional Neglect** – It also includes not saying anything kind, expressing positive feelings or congratulating a child’s successes, not showing any emotions in interactions with a child

A full glossary of terms can be found in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures:  
<https://safeguarding.wales/glossary.html>

**What to do if a practitioner has a concern**

The action that ..... (the setting) take to safeguard children will be in line with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

It is not the role of any practitioner in our setting to investigate and attempt to seek out evidence on matters relating to safeguarding concerns and they must not attempt to do so. Practitioners in our setting all have a role in assisting social services and/or the police and/or CIW by providing information for safeguarding/child protection enquiries. They recognise that sharing information for the purposes of safeguarding is essential and that safeguarding the individual overrides the need to keep information confidential.

Practitioners in our setting will inform the Designated Safeguarding Person of:

- any concerns that a child or young person is suffering or is likely to be suffering some form of abuse;
- any allegations of abuse against a practitioner;
- any disclosures of abuse.

*Any child currently on the Child Protection Register who is absent without explanation for two days will be referred to the social services team.*

Not all child protection information results in a report to Social Services, but small

pieces of information may be significant on their own to create a wider picture.

The practitioner who is making the report should seek to obtain consent from parent or carer. This supports positive working relationships between children/young persons and their families. The child and parent/s wish not to report may be over-riden if it is considered by practitioners that there is still a need for a report.

It may not be appropriate to seek parent consent:

- ❖ the possibility that the child would be put at further risk;
- ❖ the possibility that a child would be threatened or otherwise coerced into silence;
- ❖ a strong likelihood that important evidence would be destroyed/lost;
- ❖ the parent identified as the alleged abuser
- ❖ the child in question not wishing the parent to be involved at that stage and is competent to take that decision;
- ❖ it is in the public interest.

Practitioners should discuss whether it is appropriate to seek consent from the child and parents with their agency's designated safeguarding person (DSP). If the decision is made not to seek consent this decision must be recorded.

Information that should be included in a report:

- Date of disclosure/concern
- Date and time of the record being made
- Name, address and date of birth of the child/children
- Details about the **cause for concern** regarding risk of harm
- A factual report of what happened, what was witnessed or said – use the child's own words!
- Detailed description of any injuries sustained and any allegations, for example sexual abuse, their sources, timing and location
- A note of any other people involved, family circumstances
- Whether the child is safe currently or is in need of immediate protection and actions taken so far
- Whether consent has been obtained and if not, why not
- Any discussions held with the parent/s (where deemed appropriate)
- Name of the person making the report and their job title
- Signature

The Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) should be informed and given the record. The member of staff should contact Social Services via telephone, to express their concern and Social Services will advise if a report should be made.

- Note the time of the telephone call to Social Services;
- Note the name of the person that is dealing with the telephone call;
- Note the actions to be taken;

If a report is to be made the DSP will support the practitioner (report maker) in completing the Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF) and processing the report.

Further guidance and the relevant Multi Agency Referral Form to make a referral can be found through the Gwent Safeguarding website, at

<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Children/Report/Report-a-child-at-risk.aspx>

**\*Remember to create the Picture** so that the person reading the report gets a clear understanding of why you have concerns about a child or children. Make it factual – how you are involved, what did you see, what did you hear, what happened, where did it happen, when did it happen, who else is involved and why you are reporting.

### **Third Party Information**

Practitioners ‘must not leave it to the member of public to contact social services or just advise the person to contact social services directly’. The practitioner has a Duty To Report concerns raised by a member of the public. Practitioners have a responsibility to report any concerns they are alerted to by the general public – both in their work and private lives. When making a report that comes from a third party or the public Practitioners must:

- Record exactly what has been said by the member of public
- Give the information provided to them
- Establish what evidence the member of public has regarding the risk of harm. For example - have they witnessed the abuse, spoken to the individual who is at risk of harm, or heard something?
- Explain that whilst respecting any wish to remain anonymous this may not always be possible, for example if a crime is suspected.

Where possible, members of the public should be encouraged to provide contact details.

### **The Prevent Duty**

As a registered childcare provider we are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, and have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

As a childcare provider, we as a setting, understand our role in identifying the possible risk to children in our care who may be vulnerable to radicalisation by others, whether in their own family or outside.

.....(setting) is committed to:

- Taking appropriate action when observing concerning behaviour
- Training practitioners so that they are able to identify families and children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation
- Build children's resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values.
  1. Democracy
  2. Rule of law
  3. Independent liberty
  4. Mutual respect and tolerance
- Assist in promoting children's learning in their personal, social and emotional development and understanding of the world
- Report any concerns following our setting's safeguarding procedures

### **Allegations against a practitioner**

If an allegation of any form of child abuse is made against a practitioner, the following procedure will be adhered to:-

- All allegations of abuse of children by a professional or practitioner must be taken seriously and treated accordingly
- All practitioners are made aware and understand that they can approach social services or the police, independently, to discuss any worries they have about abuse, neglect or harm and that they should always do so if;
  - ❖ They have concerns that their manager, designated practitioners or proprietors may be implicated;
  - ❖ They have concerns that the manager, designated practitioners or proprietor will not take the matter seriously and/or act appropriately to protect the child; or
  - ❖ They fear intimidation and/or have immediate concerns for their own or for the service user's safety
- All allegations and suspicions of professional abuse must be referred to Social Services, CIW or to the Police. The setting will follow their safeguarding procedures and submit a report.
- All allegations and concerns must be recorded, dated and signed.
- The setting will have high regard to;
  - ❖ Any concerns about a practitioner's behaviour towards their own children/family members;

- ❖ If there are concerns about the practitioner's behaviour towards children unrelated to their employment or voluntary work;
- ❖ When an allegation is made about historical abuse;
- A responsible senior manager from Social Services will meet with the setting's manager for an initial discussion and establish if further action is to be taken. Social Services will provide guidance and inform the setting's manager on how to proceed.
- If further action is to be taken, the responsible senior manager will arrange a strategy discussion with the police to consider any immediate action to be taken to protect the child, and to arrange a strategy meeting.
- At any point after an allegation is made the setting's manager may decide to suspend the practitioner.
- The practitioner should be informed that an allegation has been made at the earliest opportunity. Details of what can be shared will be discussed during the strategy discussion.
- The child's parents/carers will be informed of details of the allegations and the procedures to be followed.
- On no account should the allegation be discussed and direct questioning should be avoided if the police wish to interview the practitioner
- During the strategy discussion, a decision will be made regarding a Professional Strategy Meeting (PSM). If a PSM is to be held, this will be convened by Children's Services. The PSM should develop an action plan with time scales in order to avoid any necessary delay.
- The practitioner will be informed that the child protection enquiry will be carried out in accordance with child protection procedures. The practitioner will be reassured that every effort will be made to preserve confidentiality, however information gained which is relevant to disciplinary or criminal proceedings may be disclosed for this purpose.
- If the practitioner is a member of a trade union or other professional association they should be advised to contact that organisation. They can request copies of the minutes of the Professional Strategy Meeting if they so wish.
- At the conclusion of the investigation the member of staff must be informed, in writing, within 5 working days about the allegation that was made, the procedures followed and the outcome.
- Arrangements should be made to keep the child and their parents/carers informed of the outcomes.
- Where a practitioner is dissatisfied with the enquiries/investigation, or the outcome reached, they should be informed of grievance, complaints or appeals procedures which may be applicable.

### **Record Keeping**

Children's records are freely accessible to parents. However, a written request must be made for personal files on the children as we must take into account data protection rules when disclosing records that refer to third parties.

The designated safeguarding person will ensure that:

- a chronological record of concerns about a child is maintained even if there is no need to make an immediate report;
- all such records are kept confidentially and secure.
- A file is maintained with copies of safeguarding reports, child protection conference minutes, observations, feedback from Social Services, record of injuries, reasons of absence, copies of emails are headed with the child's name, Social Workers name and contact, Health Visitors name and contact and kept within the child's file.

### **Safe Caring**

All practitioners will make:-

- Every effort will be made to avoid or minimise time when practitioners, students or volunteers are left alone with a child. If practitioners are left alone with a child, the door of the room should be kept open and another practitioner should be informed
- If a child makes inappropriate physical contact with a practitioner this will be recorded fully in the Incident Record Book
- Practitioners will never carry out a personal task for children that they can do for themselves. Where this is essential, a practitioner will help a child whilst being accompanied by a colleague. Unless a child has a particular need, a practitioner should not accompany children into the toilet. Practitioners are aware that this and other similar activities could be misconstrued.
- Practitioners will be mindful of how and where they touch children, given their age and emotional understanding. Unnecessary or potentially inappropriate physical contact will be avoided at all times.

### **Confidentiality**

Practitioners cannot keep confidential a disclosure or allegation of abuse and must refer the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Person and/or other senior member of staff. It is important that each practitioner deals with this sensitively. When responding, the practitioner should explain that they must inform the appropriate people who can help, but they will only tell those who need to know in order to be able to help. Practitioners should reassure the child/young person and tell them that their situation will not be common knowledge within the setting. Be aware that it may well have taken significant courage to disclose the information and they may also be experiencing conflicting emotions, involving feelings of guilt, embarrassment, disloyalty (if the abuser is someone close) and hurt.

All reports should be made with the knowledge that during any subsequent investigation, the source (i.e. the setting) will be made known to the family.

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know.

Other practitioners may need to be alerted to concerns about a child or young person, possibly in order to monitor the concern or to gather further evidence prior to a report being made, or to assist in providing appropriate support to a child or young person once a report has been made. Information should only be shared on a strict need to know basis.

### **Relevant Telephone Numbers**

<b>Social Services IAA Team</b>	<b>01495 315700</b>
<b>Social Services out of hours service</b>	<b>0800 328 4432</b>
<b>Gwent Police</b>	<b>01633 838111</b>
<b>Care Inspectorate Wales</b>	<b>0300 7900 126</b>

**This policy was updated on \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_**

**Staff were made aware of this policy and or updates on \_\_\_\_\_**

**This policy will be reviewed on \_\_\_\_\_**



## Policy template for Blaenau Gwent Youth Service



### Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy

***Blaenau Gwent Youth Service is committed to safeguarding the welfare of the young people who engage with us through creating and maintaining an environment where young people are listened to and are able to talk safely about any concerns that they may have.***

#### Legislation

Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child states that children have:

*‘the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse by those looking after them.’*

It further states that protective measures should, as appropriate, include:

*‘effective procedures for prevention, identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow up of instances of child maltreatment.’*

The Children Act 1989 (updated in 2004 following the Victoria Climbié Inquiry) legislates for Children in England & Wales. The principles of the Act are to ensure that the welfare and developmental needs of children and young people under the age of 18 are met. This also includes the need to be protected from harm.

Part V of the Act relates to this and states that in addition to **Social Services** only the **Police** and the **NSPCC** have the legal right and responsibility to investigate concerns about child abuse.

However, when working with children and young people **you have a duty of care** and should report any concerns that you may have. If any person has knowledge, concerns or suspicions that a child or young person is suffering, has suffered or is likely to be at risk of harm, it is their responsibility to ensure that the concerns are referred to one of

the agencies that have a statutory duty to make enquiries and intervene when necessary.

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019, takes into account the above legislation and should be used as the main basis for all child protection in Wales. **A copy of this document is available via <https://safeguarding.wales/> and the South East Wales Safeguarding Board (<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Home.aspx>) and can be downloaded as an App. It is the responsibility of all staff to familiarise yourself with the documents and it's location.** This policy does not replace this document but provides you with the necessary information and guidance needed to assist you with your duty of care to safeguard young people. This policy sits underneath the **Corporate Child Protection Policy**, which is available via your line manager.

### **Definitions of Abuse and Neglect**

All practitioners should be aware of the definitions of abuse and neglect in the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014, as well as the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect. This is essential in order to communicate concerns about harm in a meaningful way.

S.130 (4) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines a **child at risk** as a child who:

1. Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm;
2. Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs).

The Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 defines abuse and neglect:

**'Abuse'** means physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse and includes abuse taking place in any setting, whether in a private dwelling, an institution or any other place. 'Financial abuse' includes:

- Having money or other property stolen;
- Being defrauded;
- Being put under pressure in relation to money or property;
- Having money or other property misused.

**'Neglect'** means a failure to meet a person's basic physical, emotional, social or psychological needs which is likely to result in an impairment of the person's well-being for example, impairment of the person's health

**'Harm'** means abuse or the impairment of (a) physical or mental health, or (b) physical, intellectual, emotional, social, or behavioural development, (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment)

## Types of Harm

- **Physical abuse** - hitting, slapping, over or misuse of medication, undue restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;
- **emotional/psychological abuse** - threats of harm or abandonment, coercive control, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks, witnessing abuse of others;
- **sexual abuse** - forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, including: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways;
- **financial abuse** - this category will be less prevalent for a child but indicators could be: not meeting their needs for care and support which are provided through direct payments; or complaints that personal property is missing.
- **neglect** - failure to meet basic physical, emotional or psychological needs which is likely to result in impairment of health or development.

Pointers for Practice: Signs and Indicators of Possible Abuse, Neglect and Harm In a Child <https://safeguarding.wales/chi/cp/c1p.p2.html?highlight=pointers>

A full glossary of terms can be found in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures: <https://safeguarding.wales/glossary.html>

## Safeguarding

If you have a concern that a young person may be at risk of harm (e.g their safety or welfare), but are not in immediate danger or at significant risk then this has to be noted and passed onto your line manager. This may be something that you have heard, seen or had disclosed to you. These cases can be difficult to judge and therefore should be discussed with your line manager, as soon as possible, with action to be taken within the next 24 hours.

## Child Protection

If you have a concern, or a young person has made a disclosure that makes you believe that an individual may be at risk of significant or immediate harm you must respond urgently to secure their safety and inform your line manager as soon as possible to inform them of your course of action.

## **Safeguarding Young People and Staff**

*(taken from the Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019)*

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales Act 2014, specifies the duty to report both adults and children at risk or where there is reasonable cause to suspect are at risk of harm. You have a duty to report concerns, suspicions, observations or disclosures made to you regarding safeguarding/child protection which involves a member of staff. Note the date, time, location and who was present and report to your line manager. Notes should also be kept of meetings/discussions with clear agreement about what action is to be taken and by whom. If the decision is made that no further action is to be taken, this should also be recorded with the reasons for the decision. These notes should be kept in a confidential file should they be required at a later date. Should there be serious concerns, agencies must not make their own internal decisions about whether it is a disciplinary issue or a child protection matter. These complex considerations should only take place with the involvement of social services and the police. The police have the statutory powers and responsibility for determining whether a criminal investigation is to be undertaken.

## **Informing Young People**

As a youth worker it is important to let young people know, where possible before they make a disclosure, that if you have concerns for their wellbeing that you may need to pass that information on to ensure that they are kept safe from harm. Should a concern need to be referred on, be open and honest with the young person, keeping them informed, as much as possible, of the process and steps taken to secure their safety and/or wellbeing.

## **Informing Parents/Carers**

Where possible parents should be informed that a report to Social Services is being made. Consent should be given by the parent/carer for this to happen. If the parent does not consent, yet the concern is still of enough significant for a report to Social Services then a report should still be submitted. It should be made clear on the form the reasons for consent not being given or reasons that parents could not be contacted to inform them of the report.

## **Sharing Information Among Professionals**

A failure to share information is a common finding of practice reviews.

Effective sharing and exchange of information between professionals is essential in order to safeguard children and young people.

The law is rarely a barrier to disclosure of information. There is no restriction in the Data Protection Act or any other legislation that prevents concerns regarding individuals being highlighted and shared between agencies for the purpose of protecting children. The Bichard and Carlile reports both confirm the need to be aware that concerns from a number of sources, which individually may not be of any significance, can build up a picture which may suggest a child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm and therefore requires professionals to act to protect them.

Whenever possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties, but in the public interest in child protection always overrides the public interest in maintaining confidentiality or obtaining consent from families. A child's safety is the paramount consideration in weighing these interests.

Any discussion relating to a young person's welfare should be noted. Note the date, time and who was present at the meeting/discussion. At the end of the meeting/discussion there should be a clear agreement about what action is to be taken and by whom. If the decision is made that no further action is to be taken, this should also be recorded with the reasons for the decision. All concerns about a child or young person's welfare should be documented whether or not further action is taken. These notes should be kept in a confidential file should they be required at a later date.

Pointers for Practice: Seven Golden Rules for Information-Sharing

<https://safeguarding.wales/chi/cp/c3p.p5.html?highlight=information-sharing>

<https://safeguarding.wales/adu/ap/a3pt1p.p7.html?highlight=information-sharing>

## **Supervision**

In addition to regular supervision for staff, where there is a safeguarding/child protection concern, line managers should make additional provision for staff to ensure that procedures have been followed and that support and guidance is given to the referring member/s of staff.

## **Training**

All staff will be expected to keep up to date with child protection policies and procedures. Where this necessitates training then staff will be required to attend. Training in respect of safeguarding and child protection will be ongoing and identified by the youth service. Staff will be informed of when this will take place and will be expected to treat this as a diary priority.

## **Youth Work Staff Located Offsite**

All staff should adhere to the Child Protection/Safeguarding procedures of the youth service. Where a youth provision is based within another setting e.g. schools, then staff should obtain and familiarise themselves with the child protection procedures of that

setting and have available the name and contact details of the designated safeguarding person. Should a safeguarding/child protection issue be raised, staff should firstly seek advice from their line manager. Following this, the designated safeguarding person at the setting should be informed of the concern and any action taken.

### **Youth Work Staff Working in Out of Hours Provision**

Staff working out of hours should adhere to the Child Protection/safeguarding procedures of the youth service. Where concerns are raised then the procedures for Out of Hours Service should be followed.

### **Protection of Adults at risk (PoVA)**

As youth workers we provide services to young people aged 11-25 years. This means that we may come into contact with adults who may need intervention from Social Services. Just as with safeguarding/child protection, we have the same duty of care for adults at risk. This means that staff should act if they:-

- Witness abuse;
- Receive information about abuse, suspected abuse or concerns about the care or treatment of a vulnerable adult;
- Have concerns or suspicions about possible abuse or inappropriate care

As with younger aged young people, adults at risk have the same rights to be fully informed and involved in the safeguarding process and make decisions about their safety and welfare. Adults at risk, if they have the mental capacity, should also have their wishes respected if they seem able to make an informed decision about action and/or intervention unless:

- There is a statutory duty to intervene e.g. a crime has been committed or may well be
- It is in the public interest e.g. another person/s are being put at risk
- It is suspected that they are under the undue influence or someone else

### **Who are Adults at Risk?**

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act states that an 'adult at risk' is an adult who:

- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect;
- has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs);
- as a result of those needs, is unable to protect him/herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

This definition may include a person who:

- Has learning disabilities
- Has mental health problems
- Is an older person with support/care needs
- Is physically frail or has a chronic illness
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Misuses drugs or alcohol
- Has social or emotional problems
- Has an autistic spectrum disorder

**Abuse** can be physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial (includes theft, fraud, pressure about money, misuse of money). It can take place in any setting, whether in a private dwelling, an institution or any other place.

**Neglect** describes a failure to meet a person's basic needs which is likely to result in an impairment of the person well-being. It can take place in a range of settings, such as private dwelling, residential or day care provision.

The following behaviours could place the adult at risk of abuse or neglect (this list is **not** exhaustive):

- Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV)
- Modern Slavery
- Domestic abuse and violence against men
- Criminal exploitation
- Financial abuse
- Institutional abuse
- Discrimination and hate crime e.g. racial, homophobic, disability
- Forced marriage
- Abuse by another vulnerable adult
- Abuse by children

Pointers for Practice: Signs and Indicators of Possible Abuse and Neglect in an Adult at risk <https://safeguarding.wales/adu/ap/a1p.p2.html?highlight=pointers>

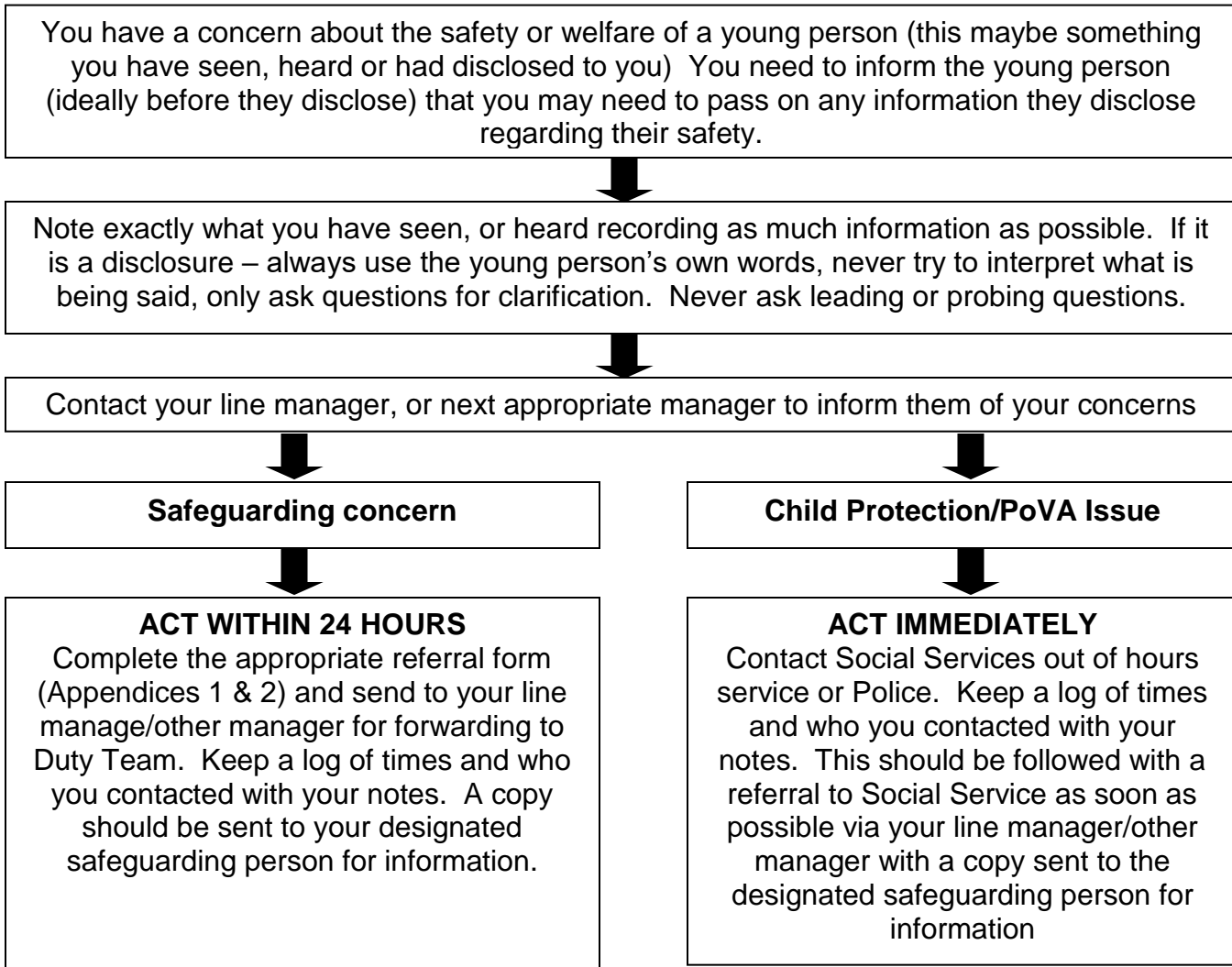
When making the decision to report an adult at risk, you should apply the same procedures as safeguarding/child protection and may need to refer to **the Wales Safeguarding Procedures**. **It is the responsibility of all staff to familiarise yourself with these procedures and how to access them, <https://safeguarding.wales/>**

The referral numbers for adults at risk are the same as Child Protection. Links to the relevant forms are found here:

<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Children/Report/Report-a-child-at-risk.aspx>  
<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Adults/Report/Report-an-adult-at-risk.aspx>

## Full time provision - Safeguarding/Child Protection Procedures

### Flow chart



### Useful Numbers

Joanne Sims	Youth Service Manager	01495 357866 07772 755435
Claire Madden	Youth Service Development Officer/ Designated Child Protection Officer	01495 357863 07581 628601
Ben Arnold	NEETS Projects Manager	01495 357864 07791 443612
Greg Morgan	Detached Youth Development Officer	01495 355674 07970 208727
Julia Swallow-Edwards	Inspire 2 Achieve Team Lead	01495 355690 07817 760771

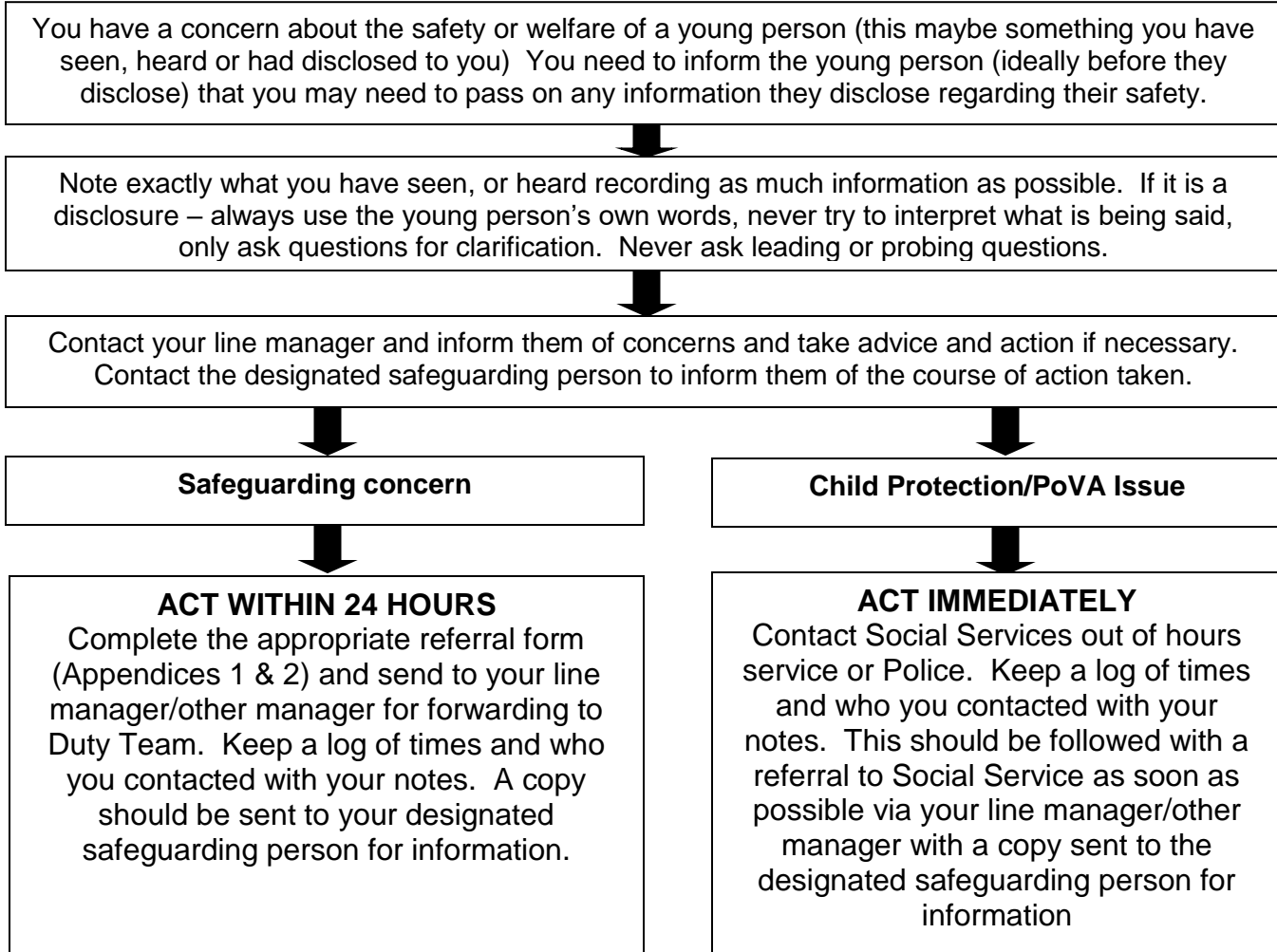




**Blaenau Gwent Youth Service**

**Full time Provision located Offsite – Child Protection/Safeguarding Procedures**

**Flow chart**



**Useful Numbers**

Joanne Sims	Youth Service Manager	01495 357866 07772 755435
Claire Madden	Youth Service Development Officer/ Designated Child Protection Officer	01495 357863 07581 628601
Ben Arnold	NEETS Projects Manager	01495 357864 07791 443612
Greg Morgan	Detached Youth Development Officer	01495 355674 07970 208727
Julia Swallow-Edwards	Inspire 2 Achieve Team Lead	01495 355690 07817 760771

Liam Thomas

Engagement and Progression Coordinator 01495 355690  
07854 937489

Social Service Referral Telephone Number

01495 315700

Out of Hours Social Services Telephone Numbers

0800 3284432  
01495 767045

Police

01633 838111

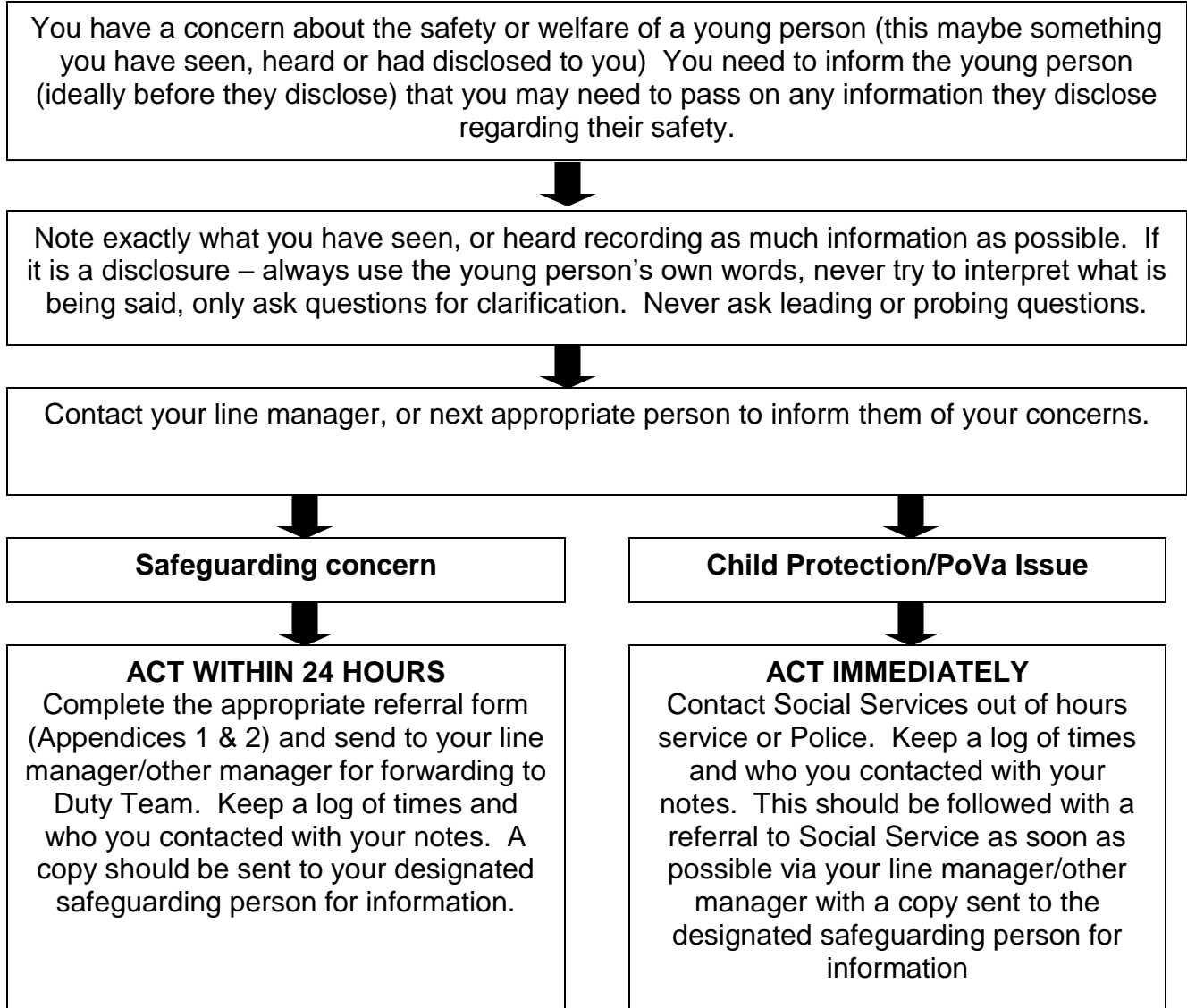
NSPCC Helpline (for professional advice)

0808 800 5000

**Blaenau Gwent Youth Service**

**Out of Hours Provision – Child Protection/Safeguarding Procedures**

**Flow chart**



**Useful Numbers**

Joanne Sims	Youth Service Manager	01495 357866 07772 755435
Claire Madden	Youth Service Development Officer/ Designated Child Protection Officer	01495 357863 07581 628601
Ben Arnold	NEETS Projects Manager	01495 357864 07791 443612
Greg Morgan	Detached Youth Development Officer	01495 355674

07970 208727

Julia Swallow-Edwards Inspire 2 Achieve Team Lead 01495 355690  
07817 760771

Liam Thomas Engagement and Progression Coordinator 01495 355690  
07854 937489

Social Service Referral Telephone Number 01495 315700

Out of Hours Social Services Telephone Numbers 0800 3284432  
01495 767045

Police 01633 838111

NSPCC Helpline (for professional advice) 0808 800 5000

## Types of Harm

All practitioners should be aware of the definitions of abuse and neglect in the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014, as well as the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect. This is essential in order to communicate concerns about harm in a meaningful way.

A full glossary of terms can be found in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures <https://safeguarding.wales/glossary.html>

S.130 (4) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines a **child at risk** as a child who:

3. Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm;
4. Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs).

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act states that an 'adult at risk' is an adult who:

- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect;
- has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs);
- as a result of those needs, is unable to protect him/herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

## Types of Harm

- **Physical abuse** - hitting, slapping, over or misuse of medication, undue restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;
- **emotional/psychological abuse** - threats of harm or abandonment, coercive control, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks, witnessing abuse of others;
- **sexual abuse** - forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, including: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways;
- **financial abuse** - this category will be less prevalent for a child but indicators could be: not meeting their needs for care and support which are provided through direct payments; or complaints that personal property is missing.
- **neglect** - failure to meet basic physical, emotional or psychological needs which is likely to result in impairment of health or development.

A full glossary of terms can be found in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures: <https://safeguarding.wales/glossary.html>

## How to make a Report

### LISTEN

If you are concerned because of something a child or adult at risk is saying, you should not attempt to take any action directly but **you should**:

- Stay calm
- Listen carefully, do not directly question him or her, instead use open questions; what, where, when, who?
- Never stop them talking if they are freely recalling significant events
- Tell them what you will do next and who you will inform (see below)
- Never promise to keep what you have been told secret or confidential
- Make a note of the discussion, taking care to record what was said, when and where it happened and who else was present

### SHARE

Any safeguarding concerns should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Person in the respective service area. With the support of the Designated Safeguarding Person the decision to report a concern to Social Services will be made and responsibility for reporting will be agreed i.e. the staff member or the Designated Safeguarding Person will make the report.

Should the concerns relate to a professional, the same procedure will apply. Educational settings must also contact the safeguarding in education manager

Reports in relation to a concern about a child, young person or adult should be made to Social Services as soon as possible and certainly **within 24 hours**.

Social Services Information, Advice and Assistance Service can be contacted on:

**01495 315700**

Outside office hours, reports should be made to the South East Wales Emergency Duty Team or if there is immediate risk, to the Police.

The Emergency Duty Team can be contacted on: **0800 328 4432**

Practitioners and providers should be aware that they **cannot remain anonymous** when making a report.

The Duty Worker taking the report should be given as much information as possible if it is available to the reporter. This will include the following:

- Full name of the subject of the concern
- Their date of birth or age
- Their address
- The nature of the concern
- Who may be responsible
- Their name and relationship (if any)
- What happened
- When and where
- What has been done in response
- Whether or not the Police have been informed
- The names and relationship of those with caring responsibility
- The names and ages of any other adults living in the household
- The names of any professionals known to be involved e.g. school, GP
- Any information affecting the potential safety of staff
- The allocated social worker or team if known/if applicable

<b>RECORD</b>
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All telephone reports should be confirmed in writing within two working days.

- For Children, a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) should be used:

<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Children/Report/Report-a-child-at-risk.aspx>

- For an Adult, a Duty to Report form should be used.

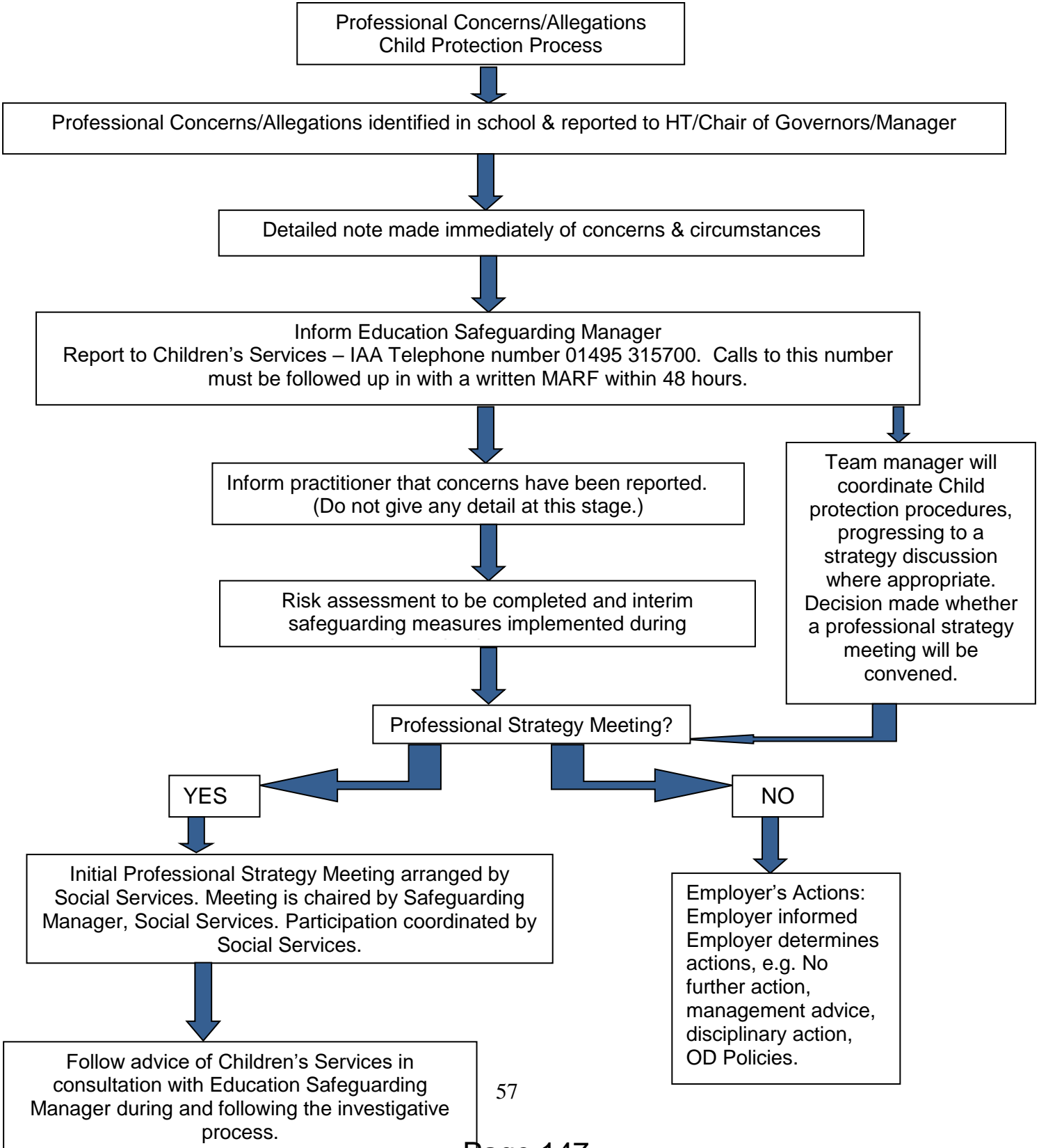
<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Adults/Report/Report-an-adult-at-risk.aspx>

<b>LISTEN, SHARE, RECORD</b>
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# PROFESSIONAL CONCERNS/ALLEGATIONS

**This Flowchart should be used as a brief checklist of procedure for professional concerns/allegations**  
Detailed procedures are outlined in Wales Safeguarding Procedures, section 5  
Also refer to Safeguarding Children in Education: Handling Allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff 009/2014



**Safeguarding File - Transfer of Records**

A receiving school must be made aware of the existence of a Child’s Safeguarding file prior to the child transferring from their original school.

The confidential Safeguarding File must be securely transferred to the new school either in Person, or via secure mail that requires a signature of receipt. This Transfer of Records form should be completed and forwarded with the file to the new school. Either the Head teacher or the Designated Senior Person for safeguarding should sign receipt for the file.

Sending Schools should retain a copy of the signed` Transfer of Records forms as evidence of the transfer, and ensure appropriate signatures are obtained.

<b>Child Name</b>	
<b>DOB</b>	

<b>Name of sending school/setting:</b>		
<b>Date record ended at this school/setting (pupil end date):</b>		
<b>Name of receiving school/setting:</b>		
<b>Date of contact with new school/setting</b>		
<b>Has sensitive and urgent information been shared with new school/setting?</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>If No, why not?</b>

<b>Name of DSP sending records</b>		
<b>Date file sent</b>		
<b>File passed to (name):</b>		

This section to be completed by the receiving school if file delivered by hand.

<b>Receiving School/setting</b>	
<b>Signed</b>	
<b>Print name and position</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

This section to be completed by the sending school with the postage receipt reference if file sent via secure post as proof of sending.

<b>Reference number of postage receipt</b>	
<b>Name and address of recipient</b>	
<b>Date of postage</b>	

## **Community Cohesion – Preventing Extremism**

Our school/setting is committed to providing a safe environment for all of our children, staff and any visitors. There is no place for extremist views of any kind in our school/setting.

Community cohesion is the term used to describe how everyone in a geographical area lives alongside each other with mutual understanding and respect. A cohesive community is where a person has a strong sense of belonging. It is safe, vibrant and able to be resilient and strong when tensions occur.

Those involved in supporting terrorism look to exploit and radicalise vulnerable people, including children and young people. Since July 2015, the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 introduced a statutory duty on us ‘to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’

We are aware that young people can be exposed to extremist influences or prejudiced views from an early age which spring from a variety of sources including the internet. At times students, visitors or parents may themselves reflect or display views that may be considered as discriminatory, prejudiced or extremist, including using derogatory language; this will always be challenged and where appropriate dealt with.

Education is a powerful deterrent against this and we will strive to equip young people with the knowledge, skills and resilience to challenge and discuss such issues in a facilitated and informed way. This way our students are enriched, understand and become tolerant of difference and diversity where they can thrive, feel valued and not marginalised.

We have a clear safeguarding framework on how to manage and respond to issues where a pupil develops or expresses extreme views and ideologies, which are considered inflammatory and against the community cohesion ethos of our school. Where such cases are identified a Multi-Agency Referral Form is to be completed and submitted to Children’s Services. The Local Authority Lead Officer for PREVENT should also be contacted.

### **Safeguarding Channel Panel**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults is everyone’s responsibility. We are committed to working with our partners to protect and support our students, and where a Multi-Agency Referral Form leads to one of our Students needing safeguarding, we will support the Channel programme.

Channel is a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people by identifying individuals at risk; assessing the nature and extent of that risk; and developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

Channel is about ensuring that vulnerable children and adults of any faith, ethnicity or background receive support before their vulnerabilities are exploited by those that would want them to embrace terrorism, and before they become involved in criminal terrorist related activity.

## **Training**

We are committed to ensuring that all staff in our school have access to the Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) and are encouraged to make use of other counter-terrorism related training modules and the reference material below.

## **Key Points of Contact**

..... School's/Setting's Safeguarding Lead

### **Helena Hunt**

Prevent Lead for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council  
Email: [Helena.hunt@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:Helena.hunt@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk) Tel: 07791 875737

## **Reference Material**

### [Respect and resilience: developing community cohesion | GOV.WALES](#)

Included within this guidance is a self assessment tool, to support schools to assess their levels of compliance with best practice in the creation of a safe learning community, and to keep learners safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

Prevent Duty Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

Channel Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance>

E-learning training on:

PREVENT Awareness:

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>

PREVENT Referrals:

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/preventreferrals>

Channel Awareness:

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/channelawareness>

Website: <http://educateagainsthate.com> Resources for parents and teachers

**Secure and Shelter Procedure (example)**

Secure and Shelter (Lockdown) procedures may be activated in response to any number of situations, but some of the more typical might be:

- A reported incident / civil disturbance in the local community (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils in the school)
- An intruder on the school site (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils)
- A warning being received regarding a risk locally of air pollution (smoke plume, gas cloud etc.)
- A major fire in the vicinity of the school
- The close proximity of a dangerous dog roaming loose

The school's secure and shelter plan is as follows:

Signal for secure and shelter	
Signal for all clear	

**Actions - dependent upon the cause of the activation of Safe and Secure (amend as required)**

- *Who sounds the alarm / other form of notification (specify)*
- **Pupils who are outside of the school buildings** are brought inside as quickly as possible and return to their *classroom / other location (specify)* (outside staff will be informed by a senior member of staff)
- **Those inside the school** should remain in their classrooms and check corridors and toilets for pupils or staff
- All external doors and, as necessary, windows are closed (depending on the circumstances, internal classroom doors must also be closed).
- If the cause of the secure and shelter is air pollution, close air vents and switch off extractor fans / air conditioning.
- Blinds should be drawn and pupils sit quietly
- Once in lockdown mode, staff should notify the office immediately of any pupils not accounted for via the internal telephone system and instigate an immediate search for anyone missing
- Staff should encourage the pupils to keep calm

- The school office will establish communication with the Emergency Services
- If it is necessary to evacuate the building, the fire alarm will be sounded and the usual fire evacuation procedure will then take place
- Parents will be notified as soon as it is practicable via Parentmail and the website (only when appropriate via guidance from Emergency Services)
- Pupils will not be released to parents during a safe and secure situation.

All situations are different, once all staff and pupils are safely inside, senior staff will conduct an on-going risk assessment based on advice from the Emergency Services.

This can then be communicated to staff and pupils. Emergency Services will advise as to the best course of action in respect of the prevailing threat.

### **All Clear**

Once the incident has been assessed as safe all classrooms will be either visited by a senior member of staff or via classroom telephone and told the situation is under control and the class can resume activities as normal.

### **Emergency Services**

It is important to keep lines of communication open with Emergency Services as they are best placed to offer advice as a situation unfolds. The school site may or may not be cordoned off by Emergency Services depending on the severity of the incident that has triggered the Lockdown.

Emergency Services and Corporate Communications will support the decision of the Headteacher with regarding the timing of communication to parents.

### **Safe and Secure Drill**

It is of vital importance that the school's Safe and Secure procedures are familiar to all members of the school staff. To achieve this, a drill should be undertaken at least once a year.

Staff will ALWAYS have advance notice of a Safe and Secure drill, therefore if the signal occurs without warning staff must assume it is NOT A DRILL.

Parents will be notified as soon as it is practicable of the drill via Parentmail and the website

## Associated Policies, Guidance and Advice

- Wales Safeguarding Procedures – 2019  
<https://safeguarding.wales/>
- [Keeping learners safe | GOV.WALES](#)
- Recruitment and selection policy  
[http://intranet/organisational-development-\(hr\)/schools-hr/recruitment.aspx](http://intranet/organisational-development-(hr)/schools-hr/recruitment.aspx)
- [Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence \(VAWDASV\) educational toolkit | GOV.WALES](#)  
[guidance-for-governors\\_0.pdf](#)
- <https://gov.wales/handling-allegations-abuse-against-teachers-and-staff>  
[Disciplinary and dismissal procedures for school staff | GOV.WALES](#)
- Blaenau Gwent Corporate Safeguarding Policy  
[http://intranet/media/130044/Corporate\\_Safeguarding\\_Policy\\_May\\_2017docxv3.pdf](http://intranet/media/130044/Corporate_Safeguarding_Policy_May_2017docxv3.pdf)
- <https://gov.wales/whistleblowing-schools-guidance-governors>  
Blaenau Gwent Whistleblowing policy  
<http://intranet/media/92682/Whistleblowing-Policy-for-School-based-staff.pdf>
- Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004  
[https://www.basw.co.uk/system/files/resources/basw\\_14350-5\\_0.pdf](https://www.basw.co.uk/system/files/resources/basw_14350-5_0.pdf)
- Procedures for reporting misconduct and incompetence in the education workforce in Wales-Welsh Government 168/2015 (replaces 018/2009)  
<http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/23182/1/150608-reporting-misconduct-en.pdf>
- <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/safe-and-effective-intervention-use-of-reasonable-force-and-searching-for-weapons.pdf>
- <https://gov.wales/children-missing-education>
- <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/educational-records-school-reports-and-the-common-transfer-system-the-keeping-disposal-disclosure-and-transfer-of-pupil-information.pdf>
- Teaching Drama: guidance on Safeguarding Children and Child protection for managers and drama teachers- National Assembly for Wales circular 23/2006  
<http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/7299/1/clwych-drama-guidance-e.pdf%3Flang%3Den>
- The Control of School Premises (Wales) Regulations 2008  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2008/136/made>  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2008/136/note/made>

### Gwent Safeguarding:

<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Home.aspx>

### Services for people from Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) backgrounds:

- [BAWSO](http://www.bawso.org.uk/) <http://www.bawso.org.uk/>

### Domestic Abuse:



- <https://gov.wales/live-fear-free>
- <https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/VAWDASV/VAWDASV.aspx>
- [info@phoenixdas.co.uk](mailto:info@phoenixdas.co.uk)

### **Modern Slavery**

<https://gov.wales/live-fear-free/slavery>

### **Keeping learners safe and secure online**

[Keeping safe online - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)

### **Sexual harassment and abuse in education settings**

<https://gov.wales/written-statement-sexual-harassment-and-abuse-education-settings-guidance-for-education-settings-on-peer-sexual-abuse-exploitation-and-harmful-sexual-behaviour.pdf> (gov.wales)

## Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Safeguarding Data Protocol

### Introduction

The governing body of a maintained school is responsible for the conduct and standards of the school; the Council shares the responsibility for standards in schools and discharges these responsibilities for the overall provision of education services in Blaenau Gwent.

The Council provides governing bodies with support through strategic support services that help to create a level of common policy planning and practices that schools share. As part of this, support is provided through the commissioned service known as the South East Wales Education Achievement Service (SEWEAS).

In order to manage the improvement process, there is a need to share information on a timely basis to ensure that appropriate monitoring, evaluation and reporting occurs and where appropriate timely intervention takes place.

The Council and its schools take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously and the purpose of this protocol is to articulate the timeframes in which the data will be shared

### Background

This protocol sets out good practice for the exchange of safeguarding information between schools and the local authority in the discharge of statutory functions.

### Principles

The Council has a dedicated Safeguarding in Education Manager who will manage the information and the return of the data from schools. Data is to be returned twice a year, by end of October and April each year. These exact dates will be communicated to schools by the Safeguarding in Education Manager at the commencement of the academic year

### Protocol

The information required is detailed below. The request for information will be generated by a member of Business Support and all information will be sent to the Business Support officer using the return email address [Timothy.Griffiths@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:Timothy.Griffiths@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk) by the dates specified.

The Safeguarding in Education Manager will maintain effective oversight of the information and use it to inform training and support programmes.

Any identified trend which requires immediate intervention will be managed by the Safeguarding in Education Manager.

<b>Training:</b>	<p><i>Dates of safeguarding training that have taken place since the previous data submission for the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole school staff training – individual staff names to be confirmed</li> <li>• Designated and Deputy Designated Senior Person, including title of course</li> <li>• Chair of governors and lead governor for safeguarding</li> <li>• Individual governors</li> </ul> <p><i>Date of PREVENT training and who received this training.</i>  <i>Date of VAWDASV training and who received this training</i></p>
<b>Policy adoption:</b>	<p><i>Policy adoption dates will be required only where policies have been reviewed and distributed to schools since the previous adoption date:</i></p> <p>Safeguarding policy  Online Safety Policy  Internet and Social Networking policy  Appropriate use of the internet  Anti-bullying policy  Physical Intervention  Safer recruitment policy  Volunteer Guidance  Whistle Blowing Policy  Time-out policy  Strategic Equity Plan  Partnership Agreement</p>
<b>Governors</b>	<p><i>Confirmation of DBS certificate number and issue date</i>  <i>Date of safeguarding training</i></p>
<b>Volunteers:</b>	<p><i>Confirmation of DBS certificate number and issue date</i>  <i>Reference details</i>  <i>Date of safeguarding training</i></p>

## Training

Any training requirements for reporting of the data should be made to the Safeguarding in Education Manager.

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# Agenda Item 11

Date Signed off by Monitoring Officer:

Date Signed off by Section 151 Officer: 09.07.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

Report Subject: **Community Asset Transfer – Deighton Field & Sirhowy Gardens, Tredegar – Tredegar Town Council**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Joanna Wilkins, Executive Member Environment**

Report Submitted by: **Director of Regeneration and Community Services – Richard Crook**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
22.6.21	1.7.21	06.07.21				21.07.21		Community Asset Transfer Steering Group & Corporate Asset Management Working Group

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval to undertake the Community Asset Transfer of Deighton Fields and Sirhowy Gardens shown as Appendix 1 and 2 on a 99-year lease to Tredegar Town Council at nil consideration.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 In 2015 Education had declared that the Deighton Field – shown at Appendix 1 - was no longer required for education purposes and they would no longer maintain the area. As there was no alternative funding in place to maintain the area the Council was forced to consider the future of the space.
- 2.2 Tredegar Town Council approached the Council with a view to taking on the area and allowing its continued use for sport and recreation. Whilst it was recognized that this was a positive outcome it could not be advanced via community asset transfer as Town Councils were not eligible at that time to advance transfers under the then approved Policy.
- 2.3 As a result, the proposal was dealt with as a request to Council and after due process and consideration the Town Council were allowed to take control of the land under a two year licence which was entered into July 2016.
- 2.4 In 2017 the Town Council further enquired about a second area – shown at Appendix 2 – Sirhowy Gardens at Beaufort Road, Tredegar. Sirhowy Gardens were created in 2005 by Tredegar Development Trust Ltd. with the

support of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. The area provides an open green space in the Sirhowy area and was intended to have been maintained by the Development Trust.

- 2.5 The Trust was dissolved in 2005 and the land reverted back to the Council. The Council had continued to maintain the area since then but in the absence of any dedicated budget and with pressures on existing budgets this has been limited in its scope.
- 2.6 The Town Council recognized the limitations on maintenance and felt that by taking on the area they could again ensure its continued use as a garden and undertake a more frequent maintenance regime than that undertaken by the Borough Council. The proposal was approved and a new 2 year licence covering both areas was entered into in February 2018.
- 2.7 In July 2018 the Council altered its Community Asset Transfer Policy and it now allows Town Councils to take on facilities under community asset transfer.
- 2.8 Tredegar Town Council have now submitted proposals to take the two sites on under the CAT procedure. They have asked for a 99-year lease on the basis that this will protect them from loss to the community and justify monies spent year on year as well as preventing any change of use.
- 2.9 They will continue to operate the facilities as they are now but may seek funding to improve the Deighton Field to potentially include toilets and changing facilities.
- 2.10 As the sites have both been under the control of the Town Council and are funded directly from their revenue funding a simpler application than normal was facilitated,
- 2.11 The proposals have been circulated to the CAT Steering Group, Local Members and Executive Member. They would also normally be circulated to the Town Council but as they are the ones making the application that was not done in this case.
- 2.12 Two members of the Steering Group came back to support the application as did one of the local Members. No adverse feedback was received.
- 2.13 The proposals were also advertised under the Local Government Act 1972 S123 as a loss of public open space. No representations were received as a result of the advert.
- 2.14 An earlier version of this report and appendices has been circulated to Corporate Asset Management Working Group Members. No objections were received and two queries relating to school use (of Deighton) and public liability insurance on the sites were answered.

2.15 The Town Council had been advised that officers were prepared to recommend to Executive that a 99-year lease be agreed but wanted to establish if there were a willingness to consider a break clause in the lease to protect the Council's interest should either of the sites be considered for alternative uses in the future. The Town Council confirmed they did not wish to consider a break clause and wished to proceed with the 99-year lease.

2.16 There are no plans for alternative uses for either area and it is recognized that the Town Council's main drivers in taking the areas on has been to ensure they are protected from any redevelopment and remain available for the public to utilise. Given the intentions of the Town Council and the nature of the organization the Team Manager Estates and Asset Management is prepared to recommend the transfer of the two areas on a 99-year lease with no break clauses.

### 3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 The Options presented for consideration are as follows: -

3.2 **Option 1** – Terminate existing licences and take the two areas back into Council control. The Council has no requirements nor budget for the two areas.

3.3 **Option 2** – Permit the transfer of the two areas on a 99-year lease but only subject to a rolling 10 year break clause.

3.4 **Option 3** – Permit the transfer of the two areas on a 99-year lease with no break clause.

3.5 The preferred option is **Option 3**.

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

#### 4.1 **BGCC Corporate Plan/Well-Being Objectives 2018-2022**

4.2 In 2018 the Council developed a new core vision:  
Proud Heritage, Strong Communities, Brighter Future

4.3 Under this vision sits the plan to forge 'Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities'. Linking this to the Well Being Plan, the council will work to:

- Create safe and friendly communities
- Look after and protect the environment
- Encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in places that they live, learn, work and play.

- 4.4 One of the ways that BGCC will achieve this is to *'take a strategic approach to the management of our land and property services in different ways (Community Asset Transfers)'*
- 4.5 The council will do this by encouraging *'Communities to work with the Council to ensure services are retained locally (Community Asset Transfers)'*.
- 4.6 The Corporate Plan also lays out BGCC's aim to be an ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities. One of the ways this will be achieved is *'To be a strong and effective partner and collaborate where possible to deliver financial, business and community benefits'*.
- 4.7 With the proposed transfer to the Town Council, this proposal will ensure that BGCC meets its Corporate Plan 2018-22 to:
- Think for the long term
  - Take an integrated approach
  - Take a preventative approach
  - Collaborate
  - Involvement
- 4.8 The proposals for Deighton Field and Sirhowy Gardens therefore will help meet priorities and objectives in both the Corporate Plan and Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan.

## 5. **Implications Against Each Option**

### 5.1 ***Impact on Budget***

- 5.2 As the facilities have been the responsibility of Tredegar Town Council for the last two years there are no financial savings for the Council.
- 5.3 The Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy sets out that any transfer of premises would usually be by way of lease or licence. It is proposed that the lease would be at nil consideration or one peppercorn. This would allow the Group to devote resources to operating the changing room and pitches as well as investigating external funding opportunities.
- 5.4 Should the Council be minded to dispose of the property at an undervalue, it will need to comply with the Local Government Act 1972, General Disposal Consent (Wales) 2003 – Disposal of Land in Wales for Less than Best Consideration, which came into effect on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003 and removes the requirement for Authorities to seek specific consent for any disposal and undervalue where the Authority considers that the disposal is in the interest of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the whole or part of its



area, or any persons resident or present in the area and the undervalue is £2,000,000.00 Million Pounds (two million pounds) or less.

5.5 As the proposed long term lease is in excess of 7 years, the Council will need to comply with these requirements. The amount of undervalue of the disposal being certified by a qualified valuer in accordance with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors – professional standards, who has confirmed that the unrestricted market value of the sites would be £880,000 - £780,000 Deighton and £100,000 Sirhowy. However, given the location and proposed restrictions the value of each site would be £2 - £1 for each site.

5.6 It is this which is the opportunity cost of the Council entering into the lease.

5.7 The Council will also need to consider any State Aid implications of the transfer. The council had considered that the unrestricted market value of the sites is £880,000 however the value, given the restrictions of the activities and occupation which would be placed on the property operating in accordance with the activities of a Town Council as set out in the support information for Tredegar Town Council is considered to be nominal.

5.8 In summary the assessments confirm that state aid is not applicable – either because the value is nominal or due to the proposals not constituting state aid.

5.9 In light of this it is felt that transfer of the properties to Tredegar Town Council under a nil consideration would not overly expose the Authority to any implications arising from any future State Aid intervention and that the risk of any future action regarding such a transfer would be minimal.

5.10 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The proposal is considered low risk for the Council given the status of the Town Council and that they have been operating the two facilities without any known incidence since 2017.

5.11 The only risk identified would be the potential return of the two areas which would then become the responsibility of the Council.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Tredegar Town Council will be expected to provide data on user groups and expenditure if requested by the Council.

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

The continuation of public open space for formal and informal exercise on well-maintained areas with the possibility of further investment to create enhanced facilities at Deighton with toilet and changing room facilities.

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

6.4 The proposals have been circulated to the CAT Steering Group, Local Members and Executive Member. They would also normally be circulated to the Town Council but as they are the ones making the application that was not done in this case.

6.5 Two members of the Steering Group came back to support the application as did one of the local Members. No adverse feedback was received.

6.6 The report was presented to Regeneration and Community Services Leadership team on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021 where it was supported. It was further presented to Corporate Leadership team on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 and cleared for presentation to Executive.

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

The proposal will ensure continued use and maintenance of two green spaces within Tredegar for many years and lead to potential investment and improvement of the areas.

6.8 ***Preventative focus***

Provision of space for informal and formal recreational opportunities will aid physical and mental health and wellbeing.

6.9 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The Council has regular meetings with all of the Town Councils to discuss areas of concern or collaboration.

6.10 ***Integration (across service areas)***

The proposals will help to meet a number of Council priorities across a broad range of activities.

6.11 ***EqlA***

The facilities will be open to all.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 It would also be expected that Tredegar Town Council will maintain their strong links with the Authority and make available any information which they can regarding the operation and hoped for success of the venture.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- Appendix 1 – Deighton TTC
- Appendix 1 – Sirhowy Gardens

PROJECT

:

TITL

APPENDIX 1 - DEIGHTON SPORTS GROUND

E:

Lease to Tredegar Town Council



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol  
**Blaenau Gwent**

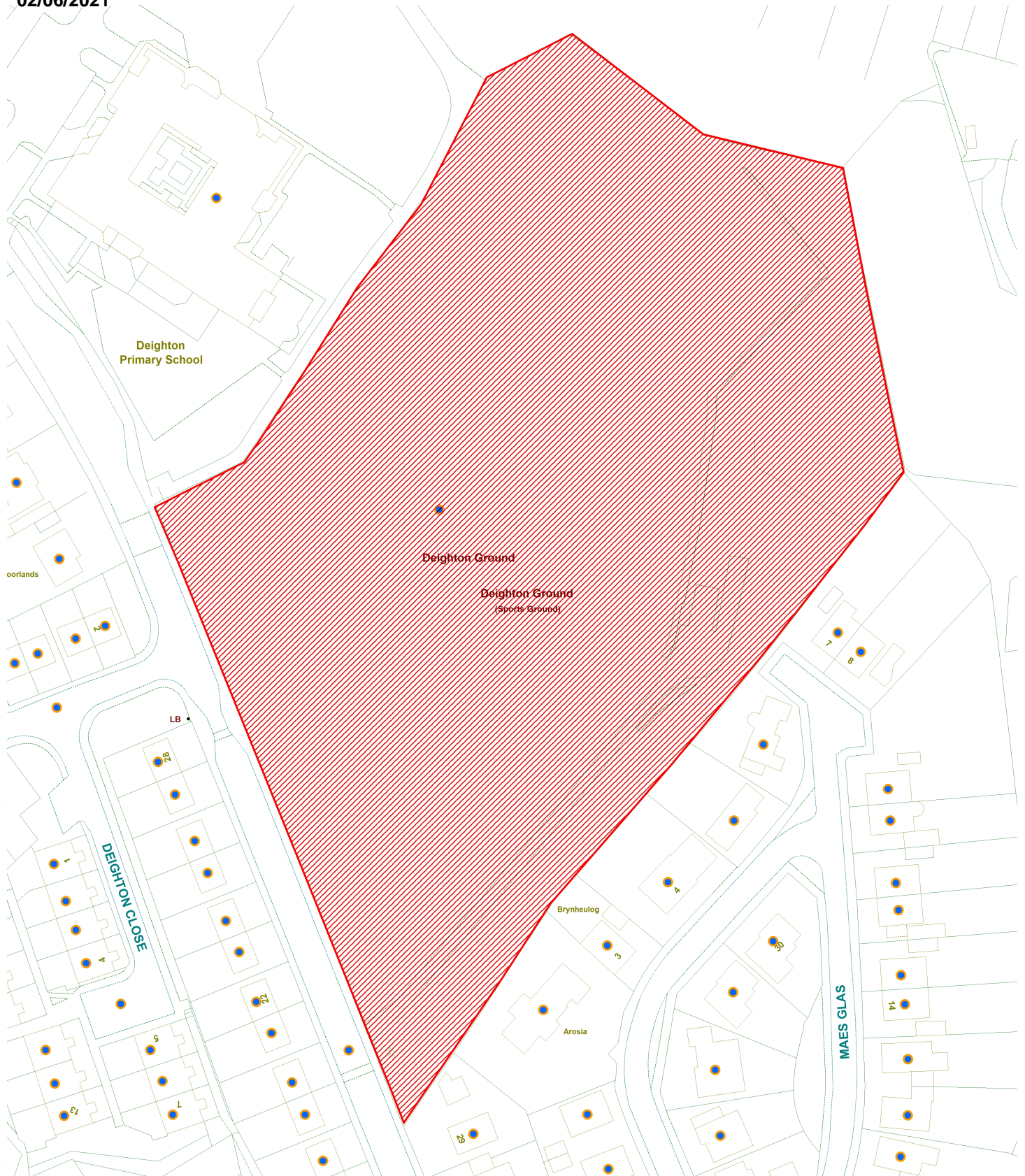
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Date :  
02/06/2021

Map Reference : SO1409NW

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PROJECT

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TITL APPENDIX 2 - SIRHOWY GARDENS  
E: Lease to Tredegar Town Council



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol  
**Blaenau Gwent**

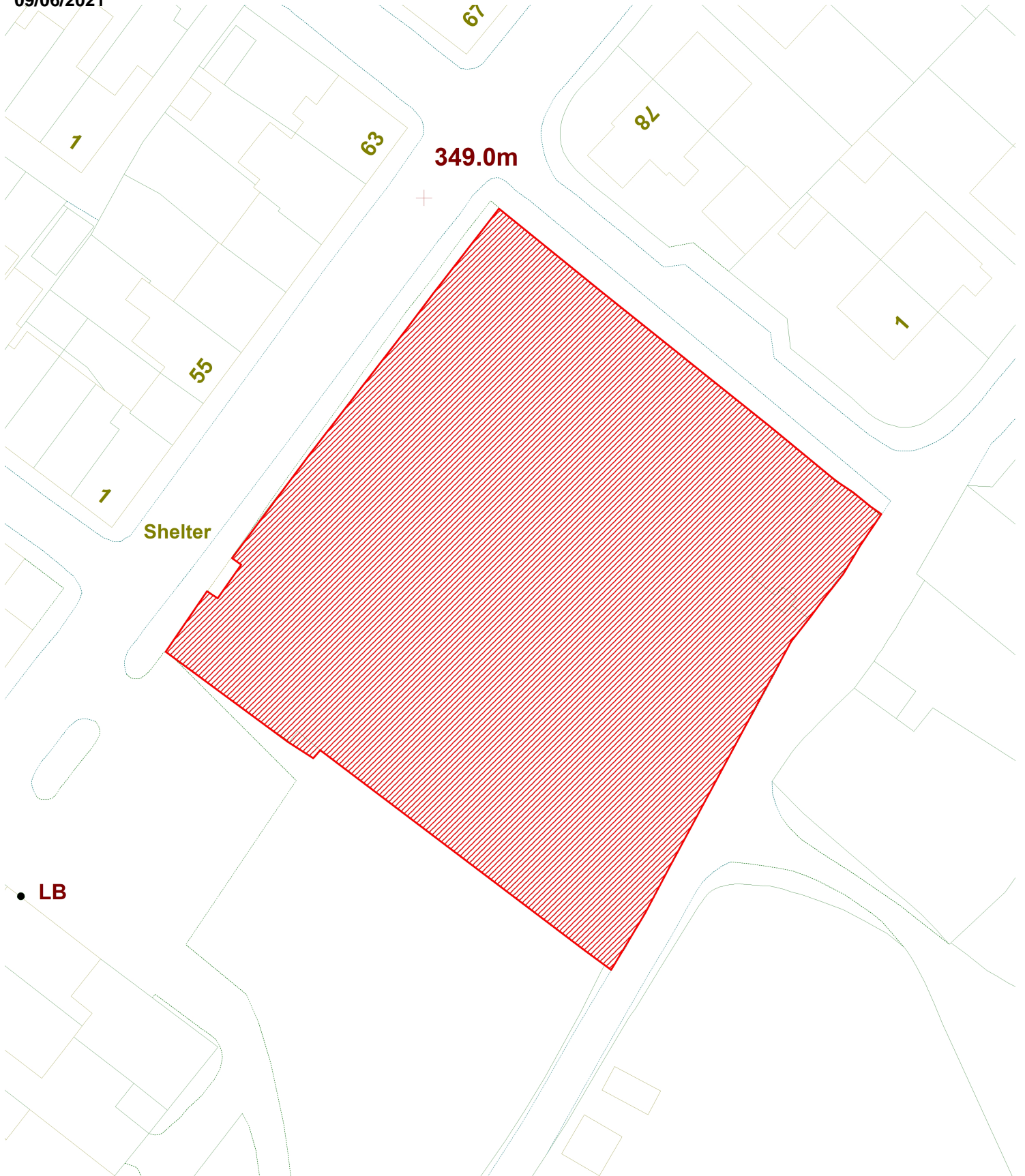
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Date :  
09/06/2021

Map Reference : SO1410SE

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# Agenda Item 12

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 09.07.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**  
Date of meeting: **21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**  
Report Subject: **Position Report – Straying Animals**  
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Joanna Wilkins / Executive Member  
Environment**  
Report Submitted by: **Corporate Director – Regeneration & Community  
Services  
Matthew Stent – Service Manager  
[Neighbourhood Services]**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
22/06/21	23/06/21	06.07.21			19/07/21	21.07.21		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide Members with an overview on the issue of straying animals within the County Borough. The report will outline the scale of the issue, including identifying geographical locations where the problem is often reported and set out an Action Plan from which officers / Stakeholders operate to resolve incidents. **This report is a multi-departmental report and the Action Plan clearly sets out those responsible for each action.**

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Straying animals has been a recurring issue within the County Borough for many years, however, instances / reports on this issue appear to have risen over recent months. Reports of straying animals are indicated in 10.2 but perhaps more significantly have also made National news headlines of late.
- 2.2 Historically the Local Authority could utilise its Animal Impounding Service to remove straying animals, which were often the source of complaints either because of their persistent or recurring nature, road safety or because of the welfare concerns around the animals themselves. However, since the termination of this service, officers ultimately have to rely on informal action to ensure animals are removed.
- 2.3 The cessation of the Animal Impounding Service was agreed as part of the Revenue Budget Savings 2014/15. If this service were to be restored now, it would cost in the region of £100,000 per year [2 FTE's, vehicle, plant] not including premises for storage of animals **[for clarity, this report is not recommending this service is restored].**
- 2.3 In the majority of instances, the Council are contacted by the public to report the animals, the Contact Centre attempt to contact the relevant Farmers in the locality and the animals are removed. However, very often, ownership cannot be determined or contact cannot be made with the farmer, resulting

in the animals being ushered off the Highway by the Police or Council operatives and as a result, they can often end up returning to a location or just moving the problem elsewhere.

- 2.4 An initial meeting was held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> May with Officers and the Executive to discuss the issue and how best to resolve it. Subsequent meetings have been held, with many service areas of the Council represented, along with Gwent Police [Working Group]. Due to the wide and varying input required from all areas and stakeholders, it was agreed to formulate an Action Plan and present this to Community Service's Scrutiny Committee in July 2021.
- 2.5 The Working Group agreed that this issue cannot be resolved without working closely with Farmers, landowners, Commoners and other stakeholders, including the Police. Following some initial discussions with the Police and Farmers, it seems the primary cause of straying animals is as a result of broken / damaged fence lines.
- 2.6 Estates receive some reports/complaints but the majority of complaints are via the contact centre. Estates only action repairs to those fence lines that the Council are responsible for and/or notify our tenants if the issue is with land they currently occupy. We do not notify private land owners but we do provide Land Registry information to other departments of land owners if requested. However, following recent discussions, it is evident that as soon as repairs are carried out, they are damaged again soon thereafter.
- 2.7 The working Group have identified some offenders when it comes to who is damaging fence lines, dog walkers and off road bikers being the main offenders.
- 2.8 Gwent Police have held its first meeting with Stakeholders [including Blaenau Gwent] to discuss the issue around off road bikes and more recently have carried out a number of Gwent wide Operations to take enforcement action on the matter.
- 2.9 The Working Group looked at what processes other Local Authorities have to deal with this same issue [Appendix 2] and also agreed a set of actions [Action Plan – Appendix 1], both of which are attached to this report.

### 3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 Option 1- That Members approve the approach / Action Plan set out in this report.
- 3.2 Option 2- That Members make recommendations for changes to the approach / Action Plan set out in this report.

### 4. **Recommendation(s)/Endorsements by other Groups**

- 4.1 Corporate Leadership Team and Regeneration & Community Services Leadership Team have considered this report.



4.2 This report will be considered by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and any feedback will be provided verbally to the Executive Committee.

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

5.1 Well-being Plan, Objective 2 – Blaenau Gwent wants safe and friendly communities. The prevention of straying animals ensures members of the public feel safe so that animals are not roaming on open spaces and near public Highways.

5.2 Corporate Plan – Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities Priority objective It is felt that by dealing proactively with problematic / hotspot locations of damaged fence lines where recurrent offending behaviour often occurs will result in fewer incidents occurring.

6. **Implications Against Each Option**

6.1 **Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)**

6.2 No one service area holds a specific budget for dealing with this issue so any costs associated with any ongoing actions would come from the relevant service area Revenue budget. If the extra costs could not be managed within existing budgets, then this would be reported to CLT accordingly. Many of the actions involve additional staff resource, so there will likely be an impact of other service delivery in some service areas resulting in delays.

7. **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

7.1 Reputational risk- Straying animals does generate a number of complaints from Members and the public. It often results in damage to open spaces, concerns about the welfare of the animals themselves, street cleansing issues and public safety concerns around road safety. Failing to tackle the problem proactively could lead to significant reputational damage to the Authority.

8. **Legal**

8.1 There are a number of legal provisions available to deal with the issue of straying livestock which are outlined below. Discussion with the Legal Section has identified that this issue is not straightforward when it comes to the Authority's potential liability. If the Authority are taking steps to remove the stray animals and the fences are maintained, the Authority are acting with reasonable care. If fences etc are subsequently damaged/removed by others (bikers, walkers etc), and animals stray onto the highway this intervening act may break the causal chain and the Authority may not be liable.

8.2 Other legal provisions include:

- Animals Act 1971- Under the Animal Act 1971, where livestock strays onto land in the ownership of another person (including the Local Authority), the landowner can detain the livestock whilst ownership of

the straying animals is being established and reclaim any reasonable costs in doing so. The land owner can claim the costs of any damage, and sell the animal at a market or public auction after 14 days, unless steps are being taken by the owner of the livestock to pay any money owed **[Whilst the Animals Act covers liabilities for animals where the owners are known, it doesn't cover those where the owners cannot be found. As such, should an unowned sheep stray onto a highway and cause damage or injury, this would fall under the common law of negligence.]**

- Town Police Clauses Act 1847- If any cattle (including horses, asses, mules, sheep, goats, and swine) are straying in any street within the limits of the Act then a constable or officer of police, or any person residing within the limits of the Act, may seize and impound the cattle until the reasonable expenses incurred in impounding the cattle are paid.
- Highways Act 1980- Section 155 of the Highways Act 1980 states if any horses, cattle, sheep, goats or swine are at any time found straying or lying on or at the side of a highway their keeper is guilty of an offence; but this subsection does not apply in relation to a part of a highway passing over any common, waste or unenclosed ground.

## 9. **Human Resources**

9.1 Dealing with complaints, visiting sites, attending call outs, repairing fence lines identifying owners and posting notices is time consuming.

## 10. **Supporting Evidence**

### 10.1 **Performance Information and Data**

#### 10.2 Service Requests

From 1<sup>st</sup> Feb to 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021 there were a total of 2189 calls:

- 78% - Ebbw Vale [e.g. Bypass road near Tesco is common place]
- 12% - Tredegar
- 10% - Blaina / Abertillery [e.g. Roseheyworth Ind Est]

## 11 **Expected outcome for the public**

11.1 Improved proactive response to service requests in relation Straying animal incidents.

## 12 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

12.1 Relevant internal colleagues in Estates, Community Safety, Regeneration, Planning, Public Health, Technical Services, C2BG, legal, as well as Gwent Police have been consulted on the content of this report.

## 13 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

13.1 The process outlined in this report is necessary to ensure long-term improvements in response to the issue of straying animals and to create safer public open spaces / Highways.

- 14        **Preventative focus**
- 14.1     The process will help to change cultural attitudes to straying animals by ensuring a more proactive approach by all relevant stakeholders.
- 15        **Collaboration / partnership working**
- 15.1     The process will involve working with local Farmers, Commoners, The Police, NRW and many internal service areas of the Council to ensure the effective containment and removal of animals from public areas / highways.
- 16        **Integration (across service areas)**
- 16.1     The scheme contributes to relevant well-being and environment Agendas.
- 17        **EqlA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)**
- 17.1     The proposals will no adverse effects against the protected characteristics.
18.       **Monitoring Arrangements**
- The scheme will be monitored by Neighbourhood Services Managers and by way of relevant reports to the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services, CLT and Scrutiny Committee, as necessary, but with an Annual Review.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

Appendix 1 – Action Plan

Appendix 2 - Local Authority comparison

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**Straying Animals - Action Plan June 2021**

No.	Action Description	Action Owner	Expected Outcome	Timescales	Budget / Staff Resource Implications	Risk / RAG status
1	What would be the current cost for an Impounding Service?	Neigh. Services	To identify the cost associated with implementing a new Impounding Service	Short Term	£80,000 - £100,000 per year [2 FTE's, vehicle, cattle trailer, not including premises]	Complete
2	Updated Farmers / Commoners / Landowners / NRW List [BGCBC and Police to have access] - est. single points of contact for each stakeholder	BG	All stakeholders aware of relevant contact details	Medium Term	Within current resources	In progress
3	Data gathering - no of reports / requests / GIS overlay	C2BG	To identify problematic areas	Short Term	1st Feb - 7th May = 2189 calls Ebbw Vale - 78% Tredegar - 12% Blaina / Abertillery - 10%	Complete
4	Reporting mechanism for farmers / public / Members [e.g. App / MCS / "What3words"]	BG	Investigate means of easier / improving reporting of location of sheep and fence repairs	Medium Term	Within current resources	In progress
5	Establish a full register of land and boundary fenceline ownership [inc. mapping of BG land, common land NRW land etc.	Estates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Priority 1 - Identify land in BG ownership which backs on to the various Commons having fence line maintenance responsibility and map on a GIS overlay (note BG not necessarily legally responsible for fencing all boundaries but have taken management decisions to fence certain areas)</li> <li>Priority 2 - Identify land in third party ownership which backs on to the various Commons having fence line maintenance responsibility and map on a GIS overlay (note may not be able to identify all land and boundary responsibilities if not registered at Land Registry).</li> <li>Priority 3 - Identify owners and fencing responsibility of hotspot areas when identified.</li> <li>Outcome - This will enable responsibility to be quickly identified and the appropriate response determined.</li> </ul>	Medium Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff time in researching ownership information (desk top)– suggest 3 days per common for 5 commons.</li> <li>Costs of obtaining land ownership conformation from Land Registry (difficult to determine until number of registered owners are identified (suggest 5 commons @ £250.00 per common).</li> <li>Staff time in walking BG land boundaries adjacent commons and preparing reports on outcomes (2-3 days per common for 2 people).</li> <li>Impact: Day to day estate management, dealing with queries, plan preparation, land ownership information, asset valuation and annual WAO audit, decanting – knock on to other officers and services.</li> <li>Impact: Staff involved will not be able to support Bridging the Gap initiatives, Land Review, rating, growth strategy.</li> </ul>	In progress
6	Meetings convened on a local level with Farmers / Commoners / Police to remove sheep from Highway / repair fencelines - Questioning current effectiveness of fencing? using different types/methods of securing boundaries to be considered to target harden. repeat locations and reduce the opportunity of repeat issues. Gwent Police designing out crime officer may be able to assist in this.	Neigh. Services	A protocol established for the collection of straying animals. Offer some support to farmers in the recovering of straying animals	Short Term	Within current resources	In progress
7	Identify Current "Hot Spots" across the Council - to be mapped and signage erected [inc. rights of way]	C2BG / Estates / Neigh. Services	Target resources to try and elivaitte the problem	Short Term	Within current resources	In progress
8	Fully Establish the legal position for dealing with straying animals [BG /NRW / Police / SEWTRA / WG [Trunk Roads] etc.]	Legal	Everyone would be clear about their responsibility	Short Term	Within current resources	In progress
9	Establish multi-agency meeting with Police, NRW, other LA's etc. Every 3 months?	Comm. Safety	Regular updates between Organisations leading to quicker response	Medium Term	Within current resources	
10	Liaise with NFU for advice?	P.Health	Position on tagging of sheep and livestock established	Short Term	Within current resources	In progress
11	Develop a Good Practice Guide for Farmers and Commoners i.e. tiered response model e.g. sheep on Highways = red, Clear process of reporting and 'callout response' required. Further process required for recovery of costs from livestock owners	Neigh. Services / Police	Protocol developed and issued to Farmers / commoners / Police etc ie what we actually do with the sheep? Who do we contact? Reporting lines with BGCBC etc.	Medium Term	Within current resources	In progress

12	Consider extending the current use of covert / overt cameras to deal with hotspot areas	Comm. Safety	Identify any criminal activity and act accordingly	Medium Term	Staff Resource required	
13	Community engagement - promote the revised countryside code (revised April 2021). When restrictions allow	Open Spaces	Including process for reporting roaming sheep	Medium Term	Staff Resource required, possible impact on other service provision	
14	All sheep to be ear tagged and fed into central database to allow immediate identification of who owns the sheep.	Farmers	This will allow early repatriation and to quickly establish the cause of the insecurity which can be repaired and cause further investigations if due to criminal conduct	Medium Term	to be determined following meeting with local farmers	
15	Gwent Police to assist with patrols at known 'pinch points' - also incorporates the off road bike issue	Police	Stakeholder meetings arranged and numerous Police Operations to take enforcement action	Short Term	Within current resources	In progress
16	Consideration of issuing body worn cameras to farmers to capture evidential footage of persons damaging fencing and build the intelligence picture	Police	Evidence capture	Medium Term	tbc	
17	Contact with other LA's to establish how they manage similar issues	P.Health	Establish best practice, share knowledge, collaborative working / resolution	Short Term	Completed by Dave Thompson	Complete
18	Establish a schedule for the cleaning out of cattle grids	Neigh. Services	Prevent sheep ability to cross cattle grids	Short Term	Within current resources	In progress

Straying Animals - Local Authority comparison	
LA	Current Provision
Monmouthshire CBC	<p>There are no formal provisions. It depends on the circumstances and whether it's known where the animals have strayed from.</p> <p>If known then normally a quick call sorts it out.</p> <p>If not known and on private land then we will assist in identifying the owner and contacting.</p> <p>If it's on the public highway then first and foremost it is a public safety and Police issue but we will do our best to assist depending on availability.</p>
Powys CC	<p>Do not have any formal provision/policy for dealing with stray animals.</p> <p>When stray animals are reported (excepted horses which can be dealt with under the Control of Horse Act), and the identification of the animal(s) and or owner is known then we would contact the owner and instruct them to collect the animals.</p> <p>If the owner or animals identity is unknown to the complainant then we would consider an officer visiting to determine the animal(s) identities (if feasible) and then action as above.</p> <p>If neither of the above are feasible then we would use local knowledge of our inspectors to best guess the owners and contact them with a request that they remove the animals or advise us who the legal owner is.</p> <p>One or other of the above normally resolves the matter, and this is the approach that we use in both Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen.</p> <p>If the strays are located on a highway, then due to the safety of our staff and other road users we would report the matter to the police and assist if possible with the identification of the livestock owners.</p>
Caerphilly CBC	<p>We have an arrangement to use a member and small barn of our countryside department on a part time basis. However most of our trespass issues are rectified by trying to contact the farmer who's livestock it is and requiring them to collect their animals. We don't have the capabilities for larger animals such as horses and again try to rely on tracing the owner.</p>

\*\*\* No response from Torfaen CBC but we are aware that they are in the same place as us and those above

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# Agenda Item 13

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 09.07.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**  
Date of meeting: **21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**  
Report Subject: **End of Year 2020/21 Finance and Performance Report**  
Portfolio Holder: **Leader / Executive Member Corporate Services**  
Report Submitted by: **Gemma Wasley, Service Manager Performance and Democratic**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	24/06/21	06.07.21			16/07/21	21/07/21		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
  - 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present to Executive Committee the end of year position of the Finance and Performance Report for the year 2020/21 (attached at Appendix 1).
2. **Scope and Background**
  - 2.1 The Corporate Plan was refreshed and approved by Council in July 2020 following a review of learning so far with implementing the plan, as well as learning from the COVID 19 pandemic.
  - 2.2 The Finance and Performance Report has been written to align to the priorities within the refreshed Corporate Plan.
  - 2.3 The report is presented to the Executive Committee to provide detail of the work that has been undertaken throughout the Council and where further development is required.
  - 2.4 The Finance and Performance Report includes the following information:
    - Key messages against the priorities within the Corporate Plan
    - Expenditure – Revenue and Capital
    - Key improvement actions
    - Key performance indicators
    - Case Studies
    - Performance against external regulation reports
    - Corporate Risk
  - 2.5 The report also includes key actions and activity undertaken in response to the COVID 19 pandemic.
  - 2.6 The Finance and Performance Report is to be used as a key improvement tool for the Authority.
  - 2.7 Information included within the report has been gathered from a number of different sources including updates from business plans and drawing evidence from strategic reports. This has provided a detailed view of the activity and performance of directorates throughout the year.

- 2.8 The report forms part of an on-going process of development within the Council's Performance Management Framework in identifying further areas for improvement and areas of good practice and performance.
- 2.9 The key themes and notable activity across the Council are included in Appendix 1.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
- 3.1 The Finance and Performance Report has been approved by CLT at their meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021.
- 3.2 The Report has been considered by Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021, any comments from this meeting will be fed back verbally to the Executive Committee.
- 3.2.1 **Option 1**  
Provide suggestions to the content of the Finance and Performance Report in order to make it more efficient and effective as a management tool.
- 3.2.2 **Option 2**  
Accept the information as presented.
4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 4.1 The Council has a responsibility to provide performance related information to the public in order to scrutinise the Council's performance and to gauge how well the Council is doing. There is also a requirement for Members to scrutinise the Council's performance. Reporting of such information contributes to the Council's Performance Framework.
5. **Implications Against Each Option**
- 5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***  
Financial information is included within Appendix 1 and is split per directorate.
- 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***  
Risk information is included within Appendix 1 and is split per directorate.
- 5.2.1 The Finance and Performance Report acts as a key monitoring tool for the Council and is considered by external regulators which can have an impact on the reputation of the Council.
- 5.3 ***Legal***  
There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.4 **Human Resources**

Sickness information is included within Appendix 1 and is split per directorate.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Performance information and data is included within Appendix 1 and is split per directorate.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

The information included within the report will provide opportunity for the public to scrutinise the Council's performance and provide accountability across the Council.

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

Services look to involve partners and involve citizens in consultation where possible. This information is included as part of the planning arrangements of the Council.

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

The Finance and Performance Report is reported on regularly and is aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

The Council aims to work using a preventative approach wherever possible so that problems can be tackled before they are escalated. Preventative actions are included in the Council's business plans.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

There are a number of collaborations that the Council is involved with and, where relevant, information on some of these has been included within the Finance and Performance Report.

6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

The Council's business plan includes where an integrated approach to planning and delivery is taking place.

6.8 **EqIA**

The Finance and Performance Report has no negative impact on the protected characteristics.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The report will be monitored quarterly through the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Committee.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- Appendix 1 – Finance and Performance

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# Finance and Performance Report

## End of Year 2020/21

## Foreword

The purpose of the report is to present the performance of the Council as at the end of the year 2020/21, setting out the key activities and measures used to monitor performance against achieving the outcome objectives as identified within the Council's Corporate Plan.

All of these objectives have supporting actions and measures which are monitored as part of the Council's business planning process. The Council has fully aligned all of its planning to the Corporate Plan which includes the Well-being Objectives. These are central to the organisation and future work planning and strategies are aligned to these areas.

## COVID – 19 The Council's Response

In March 2020, a decision was made by the UK Government to put the UK into lockdown in order to try and curb the spread of the global pandemic COVID 19.

In accordance with Emergency Planning arrangements, a GOLD Group was established in Blaenau Gwent which comprised of Corporate Leadership Team, supported by the Civil Contingency Manager and Communications Manager. The strategic aim of GOLD is to delay and mitigate, as far as practicable, the spread and impact of Coronavirus within the community.

GOLD was supported by an Emergency Response Team, made up of Heads of Service and Service Managers working alongside partners including the Aneurin Leisure Trust, GAVO, Tai Calon and the Joint Trade Unions.

As part of its response, the Council had to act quickly and had to consider alternative methods of service delivery, ensuring that the most vulnerable in society were supported. This resulted in delivery of critical services only, with other available resources being redeployed to support the response. Particular focus was on:

- Adult Social Services
- Refuse and recycling collection
- Public protection
- Development of school hubs to support key workers with childcare
- Supporting families eligible for free school meals
- The creation of locality hubs, working to support those vulnerable and shielding
- Supporting local businesses to access financial support

During these unprecedented times the workforce remained resilient and supported the response to the pandemic. Arrangements were put in place for the workforce to engage in virtual meetings with colleagues both internal and external to the Council, maintaining effective links with partners.

Elected Members continued to undertake their roles throughout the pandemic providing a particular focus on community leadership and intelligence. Democratic meetings were suspended however, the Council did hold a virtual AGM in April 2020 and meetings were convened to respond to urgent business. The full committee cycle resumed in September using the fully virtual platform, Microsoft TEAMS.

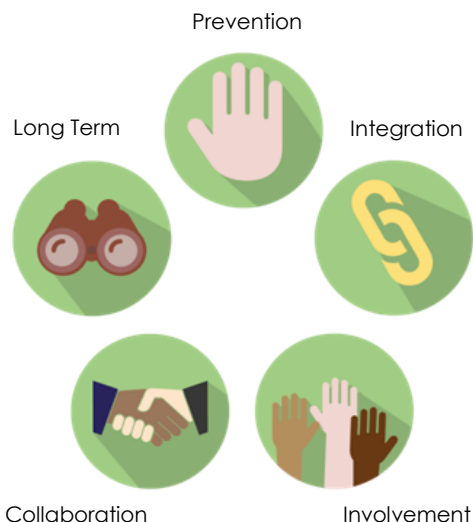
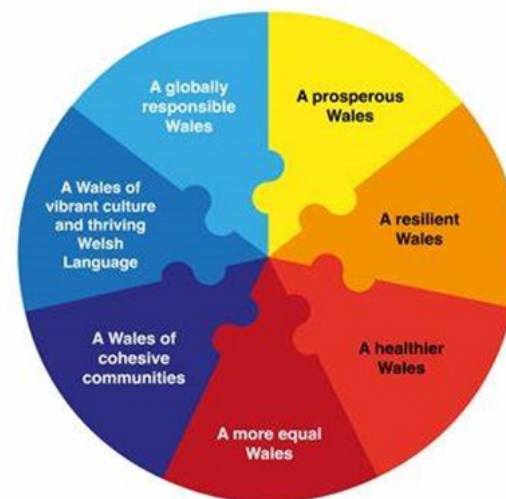
## **Corporate Plan Refresh 2020/22**

As part of the Council's annual Assessment of Performance, written in October 2019, it was identified that the Council's ambitious programme of activity was in the early stages of development and implementation. As part of this, the Council was honest, in that some changes may need to be made to the Corporate Plan moving forward. This has resulted in some amendments being made to the Outcome Statements within the Corporate Plan, in order to better demonstrate the contribution different areas across the Council will contribute to achieving them, enhancing the 'One Council' approach. The overall emphasis of each Outcome Statement (Well-being Objective) has not changed.

## **Corporate Plan 2020/22 Outcome Objectives:**

- ◇ Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities;
- ◇ Support a fairer sustainable economy and community;
- ◇ To enable people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their Communities; and
- ◇ An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities.

**The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** is ground-breaking legislation which aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The vision of this legislation is expressed in the seven national well-being goals.



The Act also puts a duty on public bodies to apply the **Sustainable Development Principles** which states they 'must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. The sustainable development principles are made up of the five ways of working and progress against these areas is evidenced throughout the report.

The Council's performance supports delivery of the core vision of the Council:

## Blaenau Gwent Vision -

Proud Heritage

Strong Communities

Brighter Future



## BRAG Rating

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

Status	Description
Blue	The action/priority has been completed; all performance factors set have been achieved (time, quality, financial aspects).
Green	The action/priority is performing to plan; all performance factors are within the acceptable variance levels set.
Amber	Issues have been identified with the action/priority that will/may negatively impact on performance; the priority owner is able to resolve the problem or make corrective decisions without assistance; action/priority is at risk of failing on one or more of the performance factors set.
Red	Significant issues identified with the action/priority that requires corrective action in order to meet objectives; the priority owner requires assistance to resolve the issue; action/priority is failing on one or more of the performance factors set.

## Why this is important

The Corporate Plan provides the focus for delivering lasting change for the area. It also provides the platform for transforming Blaenau Gwent into a more confident and capable Council. The ambition is to deliver better outcomes for the people of Blaenau Gwent and that ambition is underpinned by solid and sustainable plans, ensuring the Council can be held to account for what it has promised to deliver. Maximising the impact of resources to deliver those outcomes sits at the heart of this priority, including; understanding costs, controlling expenditure, maximising income and aligning resources to the needs of residents, businesses and visitors to build a Blaenau Gwent for the future.



## Progress against actions

A number of high level priorities (shown below) have been identified to support delivery of the corporate objective, '**An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities**'. These are detailed in the following overview pages along with some associated achievements and challenges.

### Priorities:-

- To demonstrate clear and visible leadership to deliver a viable and resilient Council;
- To ensure effective forward financial planning arrangements are in place to support the Council's financial resilience;
- To support and develop a workforce that has the capacity and capability to be productive and responsive to future demands;
- We will deliver online services that are simple and convenient, improving the relationship between residents, business and the council;
- COVID 19 – safe working environment for our staff and service users;
- We will work in an agile way, capturing learning and seeking continuous improvement;
- To develop a more commercial organisation to generate income and deliver cost reductions to make local services sustainable and raise money to re-invest in our priorities; and
- To be a strong and effective partner and collaborate where possible to deliver financial, business and community benefits.

The following section reflects the overall progress position for the delivery of the above corporate objective, along with a breakdown of each individual associated delivery action, highlighting progress, achievements and challenges

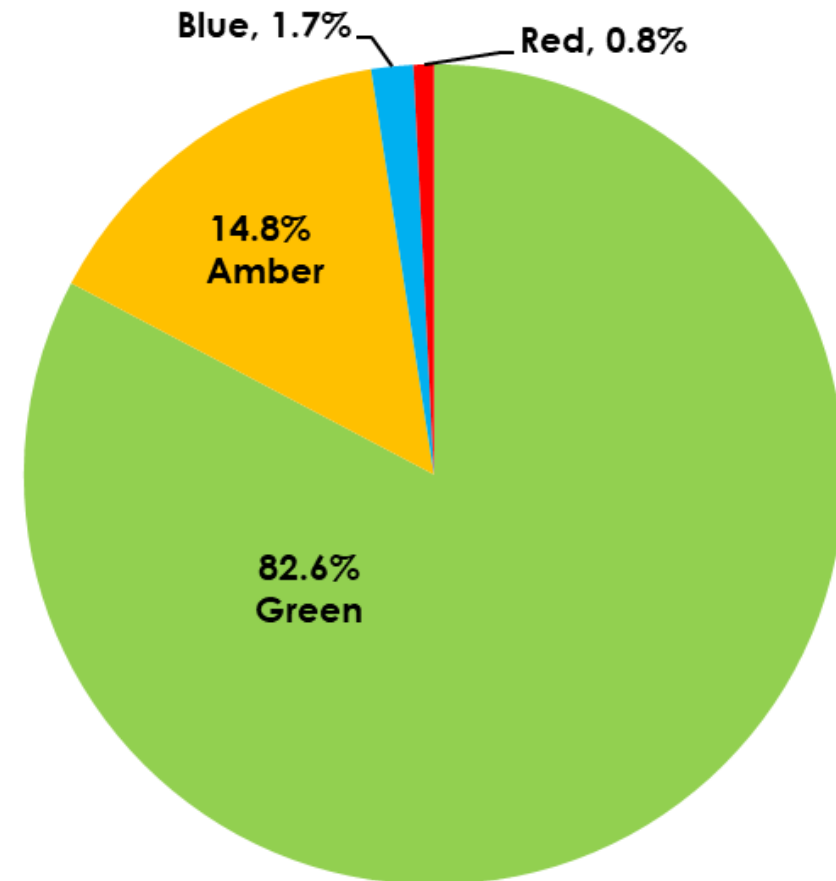
## How we performed

Throughout 2020/21 there has been progress in the implementation of the priorities supporting delivery of the outcome objective, '**An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities**' but it is recognised that there is still further work to do to fully implement the aims and objectives.

As at the 31st March 2021, the performance of this objective was evaluated as being **mainly successful as 82.6% of actions were green (on target), 14.8% were amber (behind target with manageable issues), 0.8% Red (significant issues) and 1.7% was blue (completed).**

Central to delivering this objective is looking at an approach to working in a cost effective and efficient way across the Council supported by strong leadership. The Council has worked hard to achieve 80% of its projected savings targets which has continued to support the financial resilience of the Council and has been identified as an area of good practice by Audit Wales. Clear and visible leadership has been evident throughout the past year with support to addressing the pandemic as well as implementing a new leadership development programme, put in place to support the Council's new working arrangements.

Overall corporate objective delivery position as at 31st March 2021



## Overview

### To demonstrate clear and visible leadership to deliver a viable and resilient Council

- Clear and visible leadership was evident throughout the Covid 19 Pandemic. Arrangements were put in place to establish a GOLD command group (CLT) who's strategic aim is to delay and mitigate as far as practicable the spread and impact within the community. This was supported by a multi-agency emergency response team.
- The Council took the opportunity to pause and reflect on how it had responded to the virus and also identified learning opportunities of how it could deliver services in a different way moving forward, delivering services that will be more in line with modern working practices and reduce costs and impact on the environment. This delivery is at the forefront in how we work and deliver services to improve access to council businesses and services for residents.
- The Corporate Communications Strategy 2020/25 has been aligned to the Commercial Strategy. It is designed to support the delivery of the Council's priorities, vision and values. The overall objective of the strategy is to deliver excellent, innovative and cost effective two-way communications, building a positive reputation and increasing trust and confidence that the Council is delivering services that meet resident, businesses and visitor's needs.
- As recognised by Audit Wales as an area of good practice the Council achieved 80% of its projected savings through delivery of the Bridging The Gap Programme which has continued to support financial resilience.
- The ICT investment road map has been approved to provide the Council with a more modern and sustainable infrastructure. It is a critical organisational investment strategy and is designed to secure the best use of our resources and to create ways of working that are fit for the 21st Century.
- Work has been undertaken to ensure Democratic arrangements have been able to operate remotely throughout COVID 19 and beyond. Work is now progressing on delivering a hybrid meeting option which is now a statutory requirement under the Local Government and Elections Act.
- An intelligence hub, made up of officers from across the council, has been established to share data and use behavioural insight when service planning. Using data in a more insightful way was one of the key learning points from the response to COVID 19.

## How we currently perform



Reduction in the number of working days lost due to sickness compared with the same period last year



Reached over 10 million on our social media channels and regularly posted over 100 items per day.



Average of 31,500 visitors per month to the Council website viewing about 300,000 pages per month.



87% of Audits were completed within the time allocated.



The number of Facebook followers increased to almost 20,000 (from 14,000)

## Overview

### **We will deliver online services that are simple and convenient, improving the relationship between residents, business and the Council**

- Through recent learning from COVID 19 the Council has looked to establish Community Hubs. These will operate from Libraries in order for services to be more accessible to the public including benefits, council tax and community services. Hubs will deliver services in a new and modern way.
- A customer Service delivery review is being undertaken in relation to the contact centre which will support the implementation of a uniformed approach to delivery of customer services, creating good customer experiences for our residents enabling them to resolve issues quickly and seamlessly, working out of the community hubs.
- Unprecedented support has been provided to local businesses enabling them to access Government financial support schemes with the aim of protecting the local economy. The Council paid out £28m in grants to local businesses.
- The Council's Commercial Strategy has been developed within the context of maintaining the Council's core purpose to provide public services delivering social value. A key objective of the strategy is a focus on the experience of residents when using Council services now and in the future.
- The implementation of the Citizens Access Benefits and Citizens Access Landlord Portal continues to be a positive approach to the administration of Housing Benefit and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in an online environment. This fully supported the response to delivery throughout the pandemic.

### **To ensure effective forward financial planning arrangements are in place to support the Council's financial resilience**

- During the year the Medium Term Financial Strategy has been reviewed, and subsequently in March 2021 the Council agreed its budget for 2021/22 which included a planned contribution to reserves of £1.2m
- A capital strategy has been developed and approved for the 2021/22 financial year which gives a high level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services.
- The provisional out-turn financial position of the council for 2020/21 is a net favourable variance of £2.7m against a net revenue budget of £152.1m. In an unprecedented year with service delivery impacted by Covid 19 the positive variance arises for several reasons including a significant amount of Welsh Government funding compensating the Council for additional costs & lost income, additional grants received and underspends across services. The positive out-turn has resulted in an increase in reserves, a move towards strengthening the Council's financial resilience
- New processes are now in place between the Finance and Special Educational Needs Team to ensure improved monitoring of out of county placements as well as inter-county recoupment.
- Good progress has been made with the Industrial Portfolio review. An initial report has been completed with an operational action plan drawn out and agreed. Surveying work is underway and financial preparation completed.
- Close scrutiny of high cost residential and foster placements, plus a reduction in children looked after has led to the provisional outturn for Children's Services for 20/21 showing an underspend. Despite this favourable outturn the legal budget was significantly overspent.

## Overview

### To support and develop a workforce that has the capacity and capability to be productive and responsive to future demands

- Regular updated guidance published for leaders and the workforce on working during the pandemic in line with Welsh Government and NJC guidance
- As part of the response to the Covid 19 pandemic all service areas, partners and schools were given health and safety advice on safe systems of work to include PPE and the development of risk assessments detailing compliance with legislation.
- Full launch of Microsoft Teams to enable where appropriate for the workforce to work from home.
- Weekly newsletter published to the workforce from the Managing Director.
- Weekly position statement on the capacity of the workforce in relation to the impact of Covid to support management of workforce capacity.
- Redeployment arrangements in place to support capacity to deliver front line services.
- In order to provide support to the workforce the council actively promoted well-being sessions and the opportunity to speak with a councillor during these difficult times.
- Virtual arrangements put in place for occupational health, recruitment etc.
- The Council is committed to supporting an inclusive workforce and has recently agreed a Trans Equality Policy, developed in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Gender Recognition Act 2004. This Policy aims to eliminate discrimination based on Gender Identity, whilst creating a culture of respect for human rights and where employees feel valued.
- As part of the Commercial Strategy there has been a focus on the residents' experience of existing and new services. Following feedback, an action plan was developed focussing on areas within the Contact Centre including:
  - A review of the answerphone message to ensure more streamlined and efficient way of contacting the Local Authority;
  - Looking at options in relation to a locally based service provision of the out of hours' service;
  - Working with colleagues within Community Services identifying opportunities to improve the customer experience;
  - Focussed on the training requirements for the staff, undertaking skill set analysis and training needs assessments and developing training plans.

**LONG TERM** - As part of the Council's future operating model works are ongoing for the relocation of the Democratic Hub into the General Offices. A lot of activity has been undertaken to date but key areas include:

- the purchase of a new Delegate System which will support the delivery of hybrid committee meetings. This is now a statutory requirement and will support the Council in the long term supporting remote working.
- A member working group has been established to consider the relocation of the civic memorabilia.



## Overview

To support and develop a workforce that has the capacity and capability to be productive and responsive to future demands

### Sickness Absence

Directorate	Number of Full Time Equivalent Staff (FTE) As at 30.06.20	Quarter 1 Average Days lost per FTE (cumulative)	Number of Full Time Equivalent Staff (FTE) As at 30.09.20	Quarter 2 Average Days lost per FTE (cumulative)	Number of Full Time Equivalent Staff (FTE) As at 31.12.20	Quarter 3 Average Days lost per FTE (cumulative)	Number of Full Time Equivalent Staff (FTE) As at 31.03.21	Quarter 4 Average Days lost per FTE (cumulative)
Corporate Services	279.36	1.41	287.99	2.5	335.12	3.95	338.47	5.67
Regeneration & Community Services	462.76	2.33	467.91	4.05	480.40	7.02	485.65	10.20
Social Services	473.67	4.50	473.01	9.43	465.45	16.78	462.38	22.98
Education	920.84	1.68	915.32	3.21	932.99	6.39	932.19	8.75
<b>Target</b>	-	<b>2.63</b>	-	<b>5.25</b>	-	<b>7.88</b>	-	<b>10.50</b>
<b>Council Total</b>	<b>2136.63</b>	<b>2.41</b>	<b>2144.23</b>	<b>4.67</b>	<b>2213.96</b>	<b>8.42</b>	<b>2218.69</b>	<b>11.67</b>





## Overview

### COVID 19 – safe working environment for our staff and service users

- When lockdown began the council shifted its sole focus to the emergency response. This resulted in delivery of critical services only and with resources being redeployed to support the response. A particular focus was on supporting the most vulnerable in the community.
- Locality response teams were established covering the borough to support the most vulnerable in the community, including those that were shielding as part of government advice. Support included collection of medication, shopping for those that had no other support and signposting to other agencies. Staff were redeployed to the locality teams and activity was monitored enabling provision to meet demand. School Hubs were also established to support key workers and those eligible for free school meals were actively supported.
- The Test, Trace and Protect service is a critical part of the organisational approach to support the monitoring and identification of COVID 19 throughout the borough. It supports the organisation with the main aims and objectives to: enhance health surveillance in the community; undertake effective and extensive contact tracing; and support people to self-isolate when required to do so.
- Work continues to ensure that all schools have access to the necessary PPE and Covid related items.
- Lateral Flow Testing has commenced within all Blaenau Gwent schools, this was initially for all staff and was later rolled out to Year 10 and 11 pupils with the rest of the secondary school pupils being introduced later in the year. Further rollout is planned for the Youth Service, home to school transport operators, supply staff and inclusion staff who are required to access schools in order to work with specific pupils.

### To be a strong and effective partner and collaborate where possible to deliver financial, business and community benefits.

- The Council continues to play an active role across the regional and national collaborative agenda. The National Procurement Network is making good progress in developing a forward sourcing programme with an officer representing the Council at a number of category specific work streams.
- It has been a challenging environment for the hospitality sector despite Welsh Government Covid support programmes. The Destination Management Plan has been approved and will provide an endorsed framework to support Destination Management across the County Borough.
- Work of the Regional Partnership Board has included the continued response to the Coronavirus outbreak across partner agencies and the effect on services; the reallocation of underspend for 2020/21 and the continuation of the Integrated Care Revenue and Capital Funds; the continuation of the Transformational Offer beyond 2021, in response to the Welsh Government's new long term plan for health and social care 'A Healthier Wales'; and the Integrated Winter Plan for 2020/21.
- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal positive performance continues and includes effective progress against key targets. Highlights for Blaenau Gwent include: Metro Plus Programme - Transport or Wales (TfW); CCR Levelling Up Prospectus; Ultra Low Emission Transformation Fund; Housing Catalyst Fund; Challenge Fund Application; CCR Energy Strategy; and Aspire Roll Out .



**INTEGRATION** — *The Test, Trace and Protect strategy takes a whole council approach. It promotes transparency across the organisation, building best practice outside of directorate silos and promotes the maximising and sharing of skills and learning.*



## Overview

### To develop a more commercial organisation to generate income and deliver cost reductions to make local services sustainable and raise money to re-invest in our priorities

- Learning from the pandemic has led to a focus on customer service delivery moving from face to face perspective to online. To support this change, the development of the Community Hubs has included: mapping sessions with staff who work on the front line; the upskilling of staff; and the creation of a performance toolkit with benchmarking against other contact centres.
- In 20/21 a lower level of Discretionary Housing Payments applications were received than in previous years. It is anticipated that this was due to less evictions taking place by Landlords throughout the pandemic. Monitoring will take place to see if there is a change following the national relaxation of the restrictions on evictions. Significant work has been undertaken to support the Council's Bridging the Gap programme, supported by a strategic commercial and commissioning board, has included the review of current 3rd party expenditure to validate legal compliance, maximise commercial benefit and to ensure effective performance and contract management.
- A bespoke baseline financial assessment (profit & loss) to quantify and challenge trading operations is under development by Resources colleagues. This will support the bridging the Gap review by providing a clear financial picture of commercial activity.
- Electronic procurement has been embedded into the activity of the organisation. All competitive tendering in excess of £25k is now facilitated via electronic means (EtenderWales).

### We will work in an agile way, capturing learning and seeking continuous improvement

- The introduction of a new model of working across the Council, incorporating modern working practices, will seek to enhance employees' working experience, maximise performance and productivity and deliver the greatest value to the organisation, in terms of improving service delivery, as well as realising financial gains.
- During the pandemic it was a challenging environment for staff, ensuring that effective delivery of key service areas continued. Any concerns are discussed and support is ongoing with staff to address any concerns and identify measures as part of the change process.
- Development, implementation and compliance with the revised Information Security & Acceptable Usage Policies will provide assurance to the public that their personal and sensitive information, held by the Council, is secure and used appropriately.
- The Agile Working Policy is a key enabler in delivering the future working model for the Council. It also links to the Council's vision for sustainable development including sustainable economic growth, de-carbonisation and the health and well-being of both staff and the community.



**COLLABORATION** - An effective partnership approach was taken to support one another throughout the pandemic, ensuring that the services that were running were appropriately supported and resourced. Partners included the Leisure Trust, Housing and the voluntary sector.

## Case Study - Climate Change

People in Blaenau Gwent were invited to share their views and solutions for tackling the climate crisis in what was Wales' first climate assembly to discuss climate change.

The Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly was held online during two weekends in March bringing residents together from across the borough to address the question: "What should we do in Blaenau Gwent to tackle the climate crisis in a way that is fair and improves living standards for everyone?"

10,000 households in Blaenau Gwent received written invitations to register their interest in participating. From those who applied to be involved, 50 people were then randomly selected to take part and learnt about climate issues facing their community, discussing the themes of housing, nature and transport before proposing and debating potential solutions.



**Michelle Morris, Managing Director, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council said:**



"Climate change is a global issue and it's absolutely vital that we act now to protect our environment for the well-being of future generations and I am sure that the Climate Assembly will help us all focus on this. As a Council we recognise the importance of the challenges and we recently approved a new Decarbonisation Plan. We're already taking a number of actions to reduce our carbon impact such as improving the energy efficiency of our schools; our public buildings and our street-lighting and also reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill. This Plan will see us take a more strategic approach towards achieving carbon neutrality and will help us to prioritise work in a number of key areas of our operations which, with some changes, can make a significant contribution towards our carbon neutral aim."

## Case Study - Council Agrees Budget for 2021-22

Blaenau Gwent's budget for the 2021/22 financial year was approved by Council on 4th March 2021.

Blaenau Gwent received a positive settlement from Welsh Government for the second year running which will see its budget increase by 3.6% for 2021-22 and this has provided the Council with an extra £4.2 million in funding above initial budget estimates.

This and the focus on a series of targeted projects to strengthen the financial future of the Council has allowed a balanced budget for councillors to approve, with no cuts to front line services and a budgeted increase in reserves of £1.2m. The Council understands the value of the services it provides for local residents and this is a welcome position for next year as the priority is to recover from the unprecedented impact of Coronavirus.

### The agreed budget will see the Council:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protect key front line services</li><li>• Provide additional funding of 3.6% for all schools</li><li>• Enable new, community-focused investment including new hubs located in libraries to allow local access to council services for residents</li><li>• Create efficiencies and financial resilience for the future by continuing the 'Bridging the Gap' programme</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fund increasing demand and service pressures in key areas valued by residents and confirmed using the feedback from our recent budget survey including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- increased funding for Social Services of £1,014,490 (+2.2%)</li><li>- extra investment in environment projects of - £683,480 (+4.1%)</li><li>- Council Tax reduction scheme budget of £9.6m</li></ul></li></ul> |
|--|--|



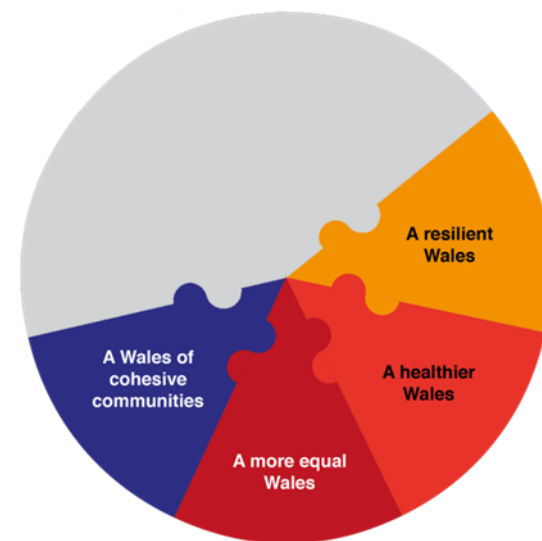
An increase of 3.3% for the Blaenau Gwent element of Council Tax was approved - this equates to an increase of 72p a week increase for a Band A property and an 84p a week increase for Band B households.

Due to the high number of properties in these lower band properties (85%), the level of Council Tax people actually pay is on average one of the lowest in Wales. The increase in the level of Council tax is expected to be the lowest in Gwent and 0.6% lower than the level agreed in 2020-21.

## Why this is important

The Council wants to encourage and support people to make healthy lifestyle choices to enable children, young people and families to thrive. Research has proven people demonstrating positive health behaviours from birth through their life will lead to greater independence, and people being free from complicated health conditions later in life and reducing costs to public services. This in turn could reduce demand on services and ensure the services that are provided are high quality, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

With reduced funding and increasing demand on services the Council can no longer do everything it has done in the past. The focus must be on those actions that will have the greatest impact. Safeguarding the most vulnerable people in the community continues to be a top priority for the Council alongside transforming the aspirations of residents and valuing fairness and equality in everything we do.



## Progress against actions

A number of high level priorities (shown below) have been identified to support delivery of the corporate objective , '**enabling people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities**'. These are detailed in the following overview pages along with some associated achievements and challenges.

### Priorities:-

- To improve accessibility, provision of information and advice to enable people to support their own well-being;
- To work with people and families to make sure they have a say in achieving what matters to them;
- To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater;
- To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering integrated responsive care and support with partners;
- To continue our programme of public engagement and respond in a timely and effective way to feedback;
- To build a collaborative culture between services, partners and communities working together and with people directly to shape and deliver services. i.e. (Community Asset Transfers);
- To put effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect people from harm; and
- To develop a partnership approach to maximising income reducing the impacts of Poverty.



The following section reflects the overall progress position for the delivery of the above corporate objective along with a breakdown of each individual priority, highlighting progress, achievements and challenges

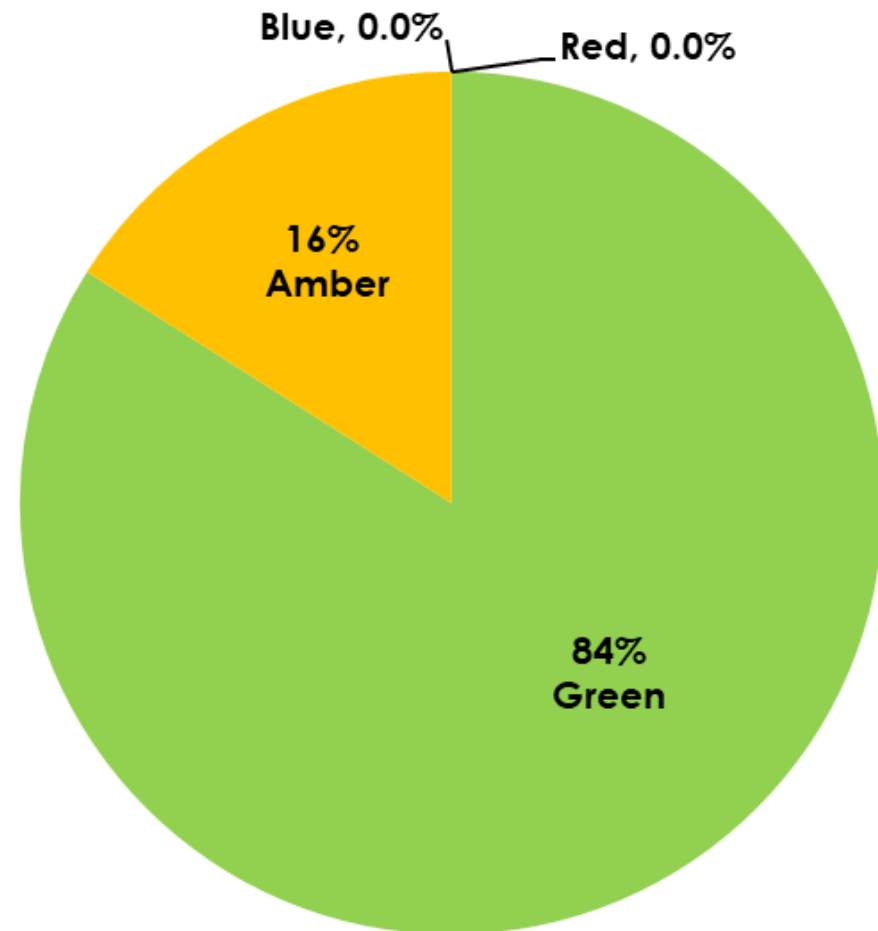
## How we performed

Throughout 2020/21 there has been progress in the implementation of the priorities supporting delivery of the objective 'Enabling people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities' but it is recognised that there is still further work to do to fully implement the aims and objectives.

As at 31st March 2021, the Council evaluated performance and activity against this objective as mainly successful **as 84% of the actions were green (on target) and 16% amber (behind target with manageable issues)**.

This objective remains high on the Council agenda. The Council is looking to address the areas that will have a long term benefit, ensuring that the needs of people of all ages and future generations are at the centre of service design and delivery.

Overall corporate objective delivery position as at 31st March 2021



## Overview

### To improve accessibility, provision of information, advice and assistance (IAA) to enable people to support their own well-being

- IAA team staffing capacity has been temporarily increased and evidence is showing a positive impact in doing so. The numbers of new referrals going into the locality, 14 plus and disability team have been reduced and the number of Initial Assessments undertaken in the IAA team have increased.
- During the pandemic the IAA team continued to work at full capacity and following the schools reopening (April 2021) the IAA service experienced a significant rise in referrals and the evidence suggested the rise came from across the statutory agencies and the voluntary sectors.
- Service developments have continued despite the pandemic. The police restructured their Public Protection Services which allowed the development of local, multi-agency, all age safeguarding, early intervention and prevention hubs. These hubs were piloted in Newport and Blaenau Gwent and led to improving the following :-
  - Early information sharing;
  - Timely decision making;
  - Improved quality of Public Protection Notice referrals;
  - Improved, integrated service responses to children and families;
  - Timeliness of referral pathways to Early Intervention Projects; and
  - Effectiveness of support and interventions offered by the Early Intervention Projects.
- The number of adult clients assessed during the year who are provided with electronic assistive technology as part of a package of care has decreased this year with 245 in receipt in 2019/20 and 169 in receipt in 2020/21.

**COLLABORATION** - Blaenau Gwent has its own local, multi agency, all age safeguarding, early intervention and prevention Hub with elements shared such as health and education jointly with Caerphilly. The hub serves both children and adults and whilst early days the initial feedback is mainly positive.

## How we currently perform



Increase in the number of adults referred to Social Services - 3333 in 2019/20 to 3698 in 2020/21



Child Protection Numbers reduced from 61 in March 2020 to 52 in March 21



Numbers of children looked after reduced 211 in March 2020 to 200 in March 2021



Number of children's cases known to Social Services reduced from 1,105 in March 2020 to 946 in March 2021



Decrease in reports of 'adult suspected of being at risk' 540 in 2019/20 compared with 532 in 2020/21

## Overview

### To work with people and families to make sure they have a say in achieving what matters to them

- There has been a significant cultural change in Blaenau Gwent in relation to adopting a strengths based approach to the work undertaken. This in turn has enabled the children and families to have a stronger voice in saying what really matters to them. Social Care Wales has recognised the progress that has been made and as a result has been asked to speak at an event promoting this approach during 20/21.
- Bespoke training has been delivered to three different teams during this financial year and plans are in place for virtual delivery for all new staff in the Financial Year 2021/2022.
- Outcome focused work remains a priority and the paperwork/forms social workers use have been amended to enable the outcomes approach to be evidenced in these documents.
- A significant change in the service delivery of the Disability Team has resulted from an evaluation by Worcester University. After listening to those that use the service it was decided to change the team to cover 0 – 25 year olds which will include children and young adults with disabilities going through transition. Plans are in place for these changes to be implemented by 1st June 2021, so the new financial year should evidence the impact of these changes on practice and outcomes for service users.
- The active offer of advocacy is embedded into practice and quality assurance meetings take place on a quarterly basis with the National Youth Advocacy Service, our advocacy provider.

### To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater

- A significant proportion of the preventative services delivered in children's and adults services are dependent on grant funding which is allocated on an annual basis. If this funding was removed it would be a significant risk to the department. It is impossible to mitigate against this risk as all core funding is tied up in the delivery of statutory services.
- The 7 preventative programmes that sit under the Children's and Communities Grant have continued to deliver services. The 7 programmes which include Flying Start and Families First, moved to a hybrid approach of face to face and virtual service delivery, maximising virtual platforms and reaching significant numbers of children and families with support and advice during the lock downs.
- Integrated Care Fund money was utilised during 20/21 to deliver Family Group Conferencing, enhance support for special guardians, enhance support to the Supporting Change Team to include psychological support, and enhance the Young Person's Mediation Service.
- Despite the pandemic significant progress has been made in relation to implementing the objectives of the Safe Reduction of Children Looked After Strategy, plus reviewing the strategy to develop a further 5 year strategy from 2020- 25.



**INVOLVEMENT** - Two consultation exercises have been undertaken with foster carers in the last 12 months and this has produced good evidence that foster carers feel supported and have received a good service from the placement and locality teams.

## Overview

### To continue our programme of public engagement and respond in a timely and effective way to feedback

- Internal and external engagement activity continued including the Youth Forum and 50 Plus Network supporting the age friendly community planning.
- The Council continues to develop the way in which it engages with the community. The membership of the Citizens Panel has been refreshed and now integrated with other engagement activity. Engagement activity this year has included:
  - Youth Forum and Older Peoples network supporting Community Impact Assessments aligned to COVID 19;
  - Budget Setting communication exercise for 2021/22; and
  - Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly.
- The Council has also looked at developing a number of digital projects which will continue into 2021. This has included involvement from officers within the Council and also service users and the public. The projects are:
  - Adult Social Care Front Door;
  - Easy Council to Pay;
    - Tech Valleys Digital Squad; and
    - Digital Democracy.

### To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering integrated responsive care and support with partners

- The first phase of the refurbishment of Augusta House is complete with phase 2 capital funding in place to build two new stand alone units in the grounds. Colleagues from Technical Services are currently undertaking ground surveys following planning approval.
- To support the priority of providing and commissioning a flexible and affordable mix of high quality placements, supported lodging providers have been recruited, via Llamau, and the creation of 10 young person flats in (Ty Parc) Tredegar is going well and has had 17 clients to date.
- Discussions are on-going with colleagues in the Housing Strategy Team regarding the need to access and/or development of more 1 bedroom flats for care leavers. This is being fed into the Corporate Housing Strategy so it becomes a strategic consideration when bringing forward new developments.
- A floating support service, specifically for young people (funded via the Housing Support Grant), is being considered to enable access to housing support to support living independently and within their own home in the community. The service is due to commence in Spring 2021.
  - A focus on preparing children for independent living will be possible with extension to Beaufort Road being created specifically for this focus.



**PREVENTION** - *The Living Independently Strategy promotes preventative services including reablement and assistive technology as a model that promotes personal independence and management of a person's own well-being. The strategy delivers a preventative and early intervention approach to minimise the escalation of need and dependency on statutory services.*



## Overview

### To develop a partnership approach to maximising income reducing the impacts of Poverty

- Free School Meals monitoring systems are working well, the application round is opening bi-weekly throughout the school closures, for newly eligible families to apply for the provision. Effective Partnership work between Education and Benefits assists with the process of reviewing applications and determining eligibility. Successful applicants are then set up for payments from the following week. Processes have also been put in place for providing Free School Meal direct payments to families, that have been asked to self isolate as a result of being a contact of a COVID-19 case.
- The number of adults (aged 18+) receiving a service in the community who receive a direct payment has decreased this year, with 120 in receipt in 2019/20 and 113 in receipt in 2020/21.
- The Legacy delivery and associated funding is now part of the Children and Communities Grant. During 20/21 a range of projects were supported including :
  - Community Links;
  - Mental Health worker support;
  - Dads Worker;
  - Childcare grants;
  - Community Engagement Officers;
  - Social Workers in Schools;
  - CAB;
  - Digital Youth Project;
  - Aspire internal mentor;
  - Wild camps;
  - Therapeutic Support;
  - Locality Response;
  - Disabilities Youth Club;
  - Speech and language; and
  - Childcare assisted places.

To ensure Legacy funding is fully utilised moving forward and supports projects most aligned to the objectives a Legacy review has been agreed for early 2021/22.

**LONG TERM / INTEGRATION** - Both the Integrated Care Fund and transformation grant funded projects provide the opportunity to test innovative practices and work collectively to progress integration and partnership working across the Gwent region. All Integrated Care Fund projects focus as much as possible on how Health and Social Services can integrate to provide a seamless service model for recipients of health and social care provision.



## Overview

### To put effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect people from harm

- The Gwent Safeguarding Board continue to support partner agencies and practitioners at this time, as they perform their safeguarding duties to ensure that the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk remains at the forefront of work.
- Numbers of children on the child protection register have remained stable over the last 12 months.
- The Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been updated and a Corporate Safeguarding Training Plan devised.
- COVID 19 continues to have an impact on services and the community with many groups/venues closed and people becoming more socially isolated. However, some groups have started to operate remotely and the Community Connectors are encouraging and supporting people to access the groups via this new way of operating.
- There has been no drop in referrals to safeguarding throughout the pandemic.
- Due to the pandemic there has been a delay in all governors being DBS checked as well as the move to encourage greater uptake and participation by governors in safeguarding training. Virtual sessions are being arranged for the summer term.
- The 360 degree policy has been approved by the Executive Committee for distribution to Governing Bodies for adoption.
- The Wales Safeguarding App is available to all those staff who have a works mobile and communications have gone out to alert those staff without a works mobile of the App which is available to all, via Google search engine.

### To build a collaborative culture between services, partners and communities working together and with people directly to shape and deliver services. i.e. (Community Asset Transfers).

- In order to finalise the transfer of Tredegar Recreation Ground, external assistance has been commissioned to deal with legal standing of selection process.
- Communication is ongoing with Brynithel RFC and Llanhilleth FC to finalise transfer of Brynithel Recreation Ground.
- Charity Commission consent is still being obtained in respect of the transfer of Cwm Recreation Ground and Ebbw Vale Welfare.
- In-house cemetery maintenance works have commenced. Tenders have been sought for essential cemetery road and path infrastructure maintenance works to be completed, which will support and assist communities by providing good access together with providing opportunities for local businesses through contract work, thus supporting the economic prosperity for local and regional communities.
- Consideration is being given to the fact that there is just over two years before burial capacity will become a major issue for the Tredegar Area.
- The review and delivery of the Strategic Asset Management Plan is no longer progressing due to capacity and demands on the service.
- An action plan for Industrial Portfolio Review is now progressing. The Pandemic is affecting businesses but the portfolio is still doing well with income generation being up.
- All regions of the South East Wales Adoption Services continue to work collaboratively, sharing information and good practice to shape and deliver effective services.

## Case Study - Christmas Toy appeal

The annual Christmas Toy Appeal was incredible this year. The Council is extremely grateful for all of the wonderful donations received, which helped to support some of the most vulnerable families within Blaenau Gwent.

This year each child received a Christmas Eve box, a filled stocking and a sack of toys. Each family received a hamper of festive food. The generosity of the individuals from within the community and also from companies and organisations both within and outside of Blaenau Gwent is unprecedented and the appeal went to another level this year.

The appeal supported over 300 children and their families aiming to make a difference to their lives. How Santa manages with the amount of children in the world is baffling – we need some of his magic dust! We would like to extend a huge thank you to all those who coordinated, recorded and posted the Santa messages via our social media platforms. The feedback received from families was amazing! Below are some of the messages received from families who were supported via this appeal.

Page 205

***Mum dropped to her knees when she opened the bag and was crying inconsolably because she was so overwhelmed with the toys she was given. Mum said 'I can't believe how kind people have been, you do not realise how happy I feel'. She later messaged to say, 'Thank you so much for all this stuff, I can't believe it'.***

*'Hi we just want to say a big thank you for all the toys and the hamper. We really appreciated it all and thank you to everyone who helped to put all these together, it's really appreciated'.*



***Mum could not stop smiling, she kept saying 'oh my God, I cannot believe what we have been given, we were only expecting a toy each. I can't thank you all enough, this has taken a weight off my shoulders. Thank you Thank you Thank you'.***

*Mum was given the packages and she said you really don't understand what this means to my family and how grateful I am that we have been helped. I thank you all from the bottom of heart. Thank you so so much for these toys they are amazing I am so grateful - thank you, I hope you all have a lovely Christmas'.*

## Case Study - Compassionate Communities

Mr P was referred through Compassionate Communities – referral stated that Mr P was struggling with 'self-neglect', 'alcoholism' and that he needed to move into a care home.

I contacted Mr P and had a good conversation with him about what matters. Mr P's outcome was to move into a suitable affordable property – his current property had two flights of stairs and due to poor mobility and over confidence when drinking, Mr P had experienced numerous falls resulting in hospital admissions. Mr P had lost all confidence and didn't feel safe in his own environment. This also affected his mental health – he began to develop low self-esteem and he became isolated. This had a real knock-on in terms of how Mr P was able to take care of himself and his home.

Mr P is a very private and proud gentleman and so was very upset with his current situation. He has no family members that live close by and a very limited amount of informal support networks.

With consent I made a referral to Supporting People as a starting point – a POBL support worker was allocated and Mr P was quickly allocated an adapted affordable flat. While in the process of his move however, Mr P experienced another fall and was re-admitted into hospital.

Realising that a return to his property was unsuitable, while Mr P was in hospital myself and POBL arranged for Mr P furniture and belongings to be moved into the new premises for discharge. His internet was installed in his new property to enable Mr P to keep in touch with family members and carry out his shopping. Even the local councillor helped with the practicalities of moving.

Mr P was discharged into the new premises with CRT support around confidence-building and falls management. After a few weeks of intervention, Mr P had reached his optimum and CRT were able to withdraw.

Mr P has settled well into his new accommodation. He receives some minimal support from community meals and a private domestic arrangement. Mr P no longer feels like he needs assistance to manage his alcohol use as he is in such a good place. His mood has much improved and he has seen a real difference in his wellbeing as a whole.

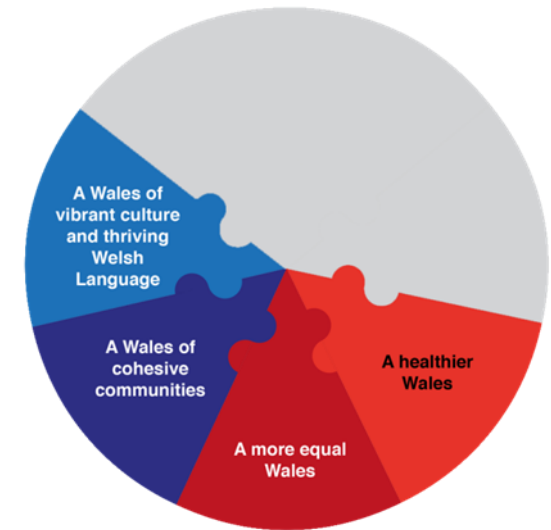


## Why this is important

Improving the quality and provision of teaching and learning is vitally important to ensure the service is achieving ambitious outcomes for all. The Council will continue to invest in services in order to support economic development and regeneration in order to provide opportunities for local people and businesses.

## Progress against actions

A number of high level priorities (shown below) have been identified to support delivery of the corporate objective, '**Support a fairer sustainable economy and community**'. These are detailed in the following overview pages along with some associated achievements and challenges.



### Priorities:-

- Support all learners to achieve improved outcomes;
- To improve pupil outcomes, progress and wellbeing;
- Improve skills and promote digital participation;
- To work with partners to provide effective employment support and access to skills development (Apprenticeships);
- To increase the start-up business rate, retention and growth of local businesses and attract new inward investment;
- To actively participate in partnerships such as Tech Valleys and CCRCDD to attract investment; and
- To work with partners to develop a new vision for our town centres ensuring their long term future.



# Support a fairer sustainable economy and community

This section reflects the overall progress position for the delivery of the above corporate objective, along with a breakdown of each individual priority, highlighting progress, achievements and challenges.

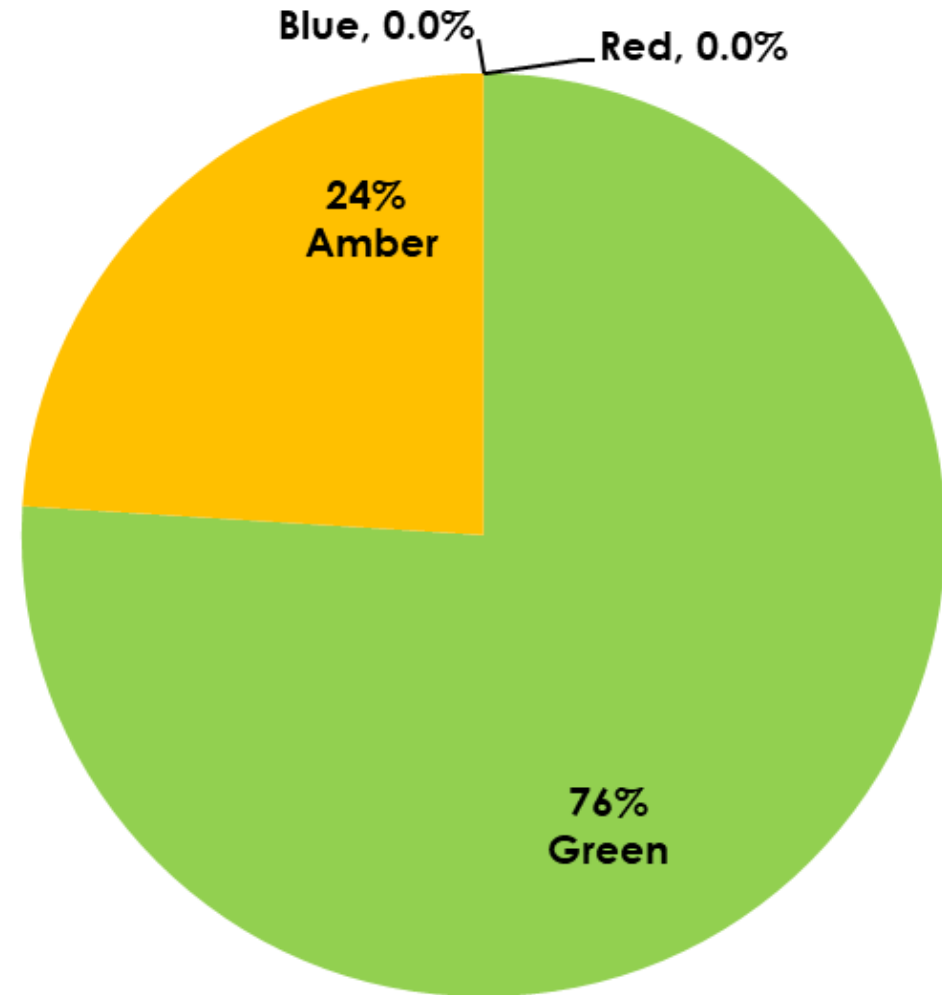
Overall corporate objective delivery position as at 31st March 2021.

## How we performed

Throughout January to March there has been substantial progress in the implementation of the priorities supporting delivery of the objective 'Support a fairer sustainable economy and community' but it is recognised that there is still further work to do to fully implement the aims and objectives.

As at the 31st March 2021, the performance against this objective was **evaluated as mainly successful as 76% of the actions were green (on target) and 24% were amber (behind target with manageable issues )**.

This objective remains high on the Council's agenda. The Council is looking to support the well-being agenda of all citizens as well as support improvements in attainment.



## Overview

### Support all learners to achieve improved outcomes

- A post-16 enhanced transition pilot is underway in Abertillery Learning Campus to look at how best to ensure pupils transitioning from year 11 are able to access appropriate provision and access it successfully.
- Outreach work - A number of referrals were made for young people who wanted further support to transition from school to college, training or employment. A number of discussions took place around fire safety, alcohol, healthy relationships and consequences of actions leading to young people feeling empowered to make informed decisions. A number of young people disclosed that they felt listened to and their opinions were valued.
- The Corporate parenting action plan continues to provide the framework for the development of Children Looked After Friendly schools, which is currently at pilot stage. Good cross directorate working is in place to support this. In addition, robust systems are in place to monitor the appropriateness and effectiveness of EAS Children Looked After grant funding.
- There has been an increase in Elected Home Education (EHE) as a result of COVID. Work is currently progressing via the SEWO to support families who want to see their children return to school and to encourage others in that direction. Whilst also recognising the responsibility placed on the Local Authority by Welsh Government through grant funding to support families who have chosen to Elected Home Education.

**INTEGRATION**- Closer working is taking place between the Inclusion Service, Children's Services and Health regarding Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Transformation and a number of other areas including Out Of County Children Looked After placements, Corporate Parenting priorities, and MYST.

## How we currently perform



BG Effect - \*9 Drop-in sessions held with 20 enquiries;  
\* 17 grant awards given totalling £17,467; and  
\* 28 f/t and 4 p/t jobs created.



Aspire SAP currently has 21 host employers, 38 live apprentices, 7 of which are internal apprentices.



519 on time School Reception applications received with all pupils being offered their first preference school



Reduction in the level of support that schools require for the period 2017 to 2019



Industrial property portfolio :-  
\*12 Business unit transactions completed since April 2020  
\*85% business units occupied

## Overview

### To improve pupil outcomes, progress and wellbeing

- The School Admissions Policy for the 2020-21 admission round was approved and published following a statutory consultation with key stakeholders including: schools, partners, governing bodies, parents etc.
- All school admission rounds for this academic year have been effectively implemented.
- A Leisure Trust review has now concluded with the client function now being aligned within the Education Portfolio. A Leisure and Culture Strategy has also been developed to provide strategic direction for the future of leisure services and identifies key priorities for the next 10 years.
- Regular liaison with Headteachers has taken place regarding the pause of breakfast clubs due to the current Covid restrictions and the decision has been taken to introduce a healthy snack at registration as of May 2021.
- A formal consultation has been carried out in respect of a new 210 place Welsh-medium Primary School. 198 formal responses were received electronically with the proposal receiving a greater level of support than challenge.
- An ESTYN review recognises the positive work of the Council during the pandemic period in four main areas:
  - **Strong Collaboration Work** across the Council and externally to respond appropriately to the needs of learners.
  - Working to support the most **Vulnerable Learners** with a wide range of particular needs.
  - **Youth Service** changed the ways it works to continue to support around 750 children and young people.
  - **Digital Support** -Working with IT partners to provide over 1,600 electronic devices to digitally excluded families to enable them to engage with blended learning opportunities.

### Improve skills and promote digital participation

- The Hwb EdTech project, has continued to be rolled out, providing a range of digital services which will inspire our teachers and learners to confidently embed digital practices, while developing their culture, competencies, skills and knowledge:-
  - 142 devices have been re-built and handed out to pupils to enable them to engage with home learning throughout school closures and any periods of self isolation,
  - MiFi units have been distributed to enable families with connectivity issues to be able to gain access to Wi-Fi hwb edtech project, again, to enable the pupils to engage with home learning.
  - This takes the total of devices distributed to date to 1,359 devices and 161 MiFi units.
- The work of regional and cluster ALNCoS has continued during the COVID period and considerable training has been made available on line.
- School admissions is now a fully online process.
- Digital communication channels were the main means of delivering the enormous volume of information to local residents during the pandemic.



**PREVENTION** - Ensuring that the ALN Act is implemented in an efficient and effective manner, in line with good practice and in partnership with schools and other services/agencies, will ensure an improved system that works for the benefit of pupils, families and the wider community now and in the future.



## Overview

### To work with partners to provide effective employment support and access to skills development (Apprenticeships)

- The Tech Valleys Advisory Group has endorsed the STEM facilitation proposal and Welsh Government funding has been awarded to support a 2 year pilot project (21/22, 22/23). Officers have been appointed and the project will commence in early 21/22.
- A future skills study has been commissioned and concluded to inform the Advanced Engineering Centre proposal. Tech Valleys Advisory Group endorsed the proposal to deliver a centre of excellence that would facilitate future skills requirements, relating specifically to Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering. With Coleg Gwent as a key delivery partner there would be a curriculum and industry training programme to meet demand from local industry. A business case has been submitted to Welsh Government and initial development funding to progress the scheme has been secured.
- Aspire SAP has operated during the pandemic providing ongoing support to both the host employers and the apprentices to ensure the apprenticeship placements have been sustained. Further funding (to Sep 22) has been secured to support the programme delivery.
- There are risks around Cardiff Capital Region not yet signing off the Aspire roll-out.

**LONG TERM** - Close work with Welsh Government is ongoing to shape support programmes whilst continuing to support business on response and recovery in the long term.



**COLLABORATION** - Covid has posed significant challenges for town centres - collaborative working through Town Centre Facilitator, Task & Finish Groups and partners has and will continue to be key for town centre recovery.

### To increase the start-up business rate, retention and growth of local businesses and attract new inward investment

- Interest has been expressed in developing the Employment Park, Lime Avenue. The project has the potential to deliver a key site forming part of the Works Masterplan, working to provide premises for local businesses. The project has the ability to increase the range of premises available to local businesses and a pathway for growth in the area. Fundamentally, the project represents an excellent opportunity to continue the development of the Works Site, delivering a collaborative project which will support local businesses and residents.
- Work is continuing with Ciner and Welsh Government on the next stages which include Planning application approval / Blaenau Gwent land transfer / Welsh Government Grant approval / Preparation to begin on site.
- The Council's Industrial business units remain in high demand and enquiries are coming in daily – stock is now an issue, with demand for units of 300 – 2000 sq. ft. remaining high.
- Work is ongoing for the Box Business Hub, which will include 21 box containers (159 sq. ft. & 220 sq.ft) adapted for business use. The units will accommodate new and existing businesses with 9 active enquiries registered at the end of March 21.
  - BG Effect has continued to provide business support to local people, start-up ventures, existing businesses and social enterprises and has now been awarded £60,000 to extend the scheme for additional 3 years.
  - 13 Kick Start Plus applications awarded in 2020-2021 with total grant award of £10,765.

## Overview

### To actively participate in partnerships such as Tech Valleys and Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) to attract investment


- Additional to the Social Housing Grant Programme a housing viability gap funding application was made to the CCRCD to support further housing development within Blaenau Gwent (circa 70 units inc of 10% social rent). The proposal has been shortlisted at stage 1 and the final cabinet decision is anticipated June 2021.
- A business case has been submitted to the CCRCD outlining a proposal for a regional roll out of the Aspire SAP, this has not progressed in year however will be a priority for 21/22.
- Work on the Local Development Plan will begin in the 10 local planning authorities of South East Wales later in 2021. A review of capacity within Blaenau Gwent delivery team is needed prior to undertaking this key piece of work.
- Work is continuing with partner Local Authorities to support resilience and develop collaborative projects such as the recent application for CRF funding, Transport projects and other CCR initiatives.
- Challenges remain to maximise investment in the Heads of the Valleys area to support businesses and communities. Work continues at a senior level to influence investment programmes to benefit Blaenau Gwent.

### To work with partners to develop a new vision for our town centres ensuring their long term future

- Targeted Regeneration Investment Thematic grant funding has enabled the council to work with property owners across the borough to tackle properties held on the empty properties register as a way of encouraging retail, housing and business opportunities.
- The Brynmawr and Nantyglo Masterplan has been agreed enabling the outcomes of the Masterplan to be taken forward next financial year
- Through TRI and Valleys Taskforce Welsh Government agreed to the establishment of a Town Centre COVID recovery Grant scheme. Premises across Blaenau Gwent were awarded up to £15,000 (80% funding) to support their re-opening as a result of lockdowns and COVID measures. In total we expect £519,012 of grants to be awarded.
- Additional £550,000 of funds were secured for repayable town centre loans.
- Urban Centre Property Enhancement Grants - £920,000 was allocated over two years to support refurbishment and enhancement of commercial properties. In total £1,044,000 will be spent over this period.
- Tredegar Townscape Heritage Initiative has continued with work being concluded to No.10, The Circle in early 2021.

Complimentary initiatives to support the heritage centre at No.10 the circle have also been completed.

- Works to the NCB Town Hall have been severely delayed as a result of COVID-19 and discussions are ongoing with the HLF to manage the funding deadlines.



**INTEGRATION** - The Business & Innovation Team have been working in conjunction with Estates, Finance, Technical Services & Legal to prepare the necessary legal documents & marketing materials for the new Hybrid Units that will be available at The Works site in early 2021. Viewings have already taken place with 5 of the 9 units at lease stage (by one Global business). The remaining 4 are being marketed and will be available during May.

## Case Study - Youth Service Response to COVID-19

Since March 2020, the Youth Service has supported the response to COVID-19. Although school based youth workers and councillors returned to buildings in September, initially, the service refocussed to identify and support the most vulnerable young people known to the Youth Service, Education and schools. Since March 2020, the service supported 600 11-16 year olds and 250



16-25 year olds and from March to July made weekly contact. Initially the focus was supporting young people around the challenges they faced linked to the pandemic, including delivering essentials such as food, toiletries, wellbeing packs, supporting issues around lack of money, losing employment and facing eviction. Youth workers supported young people to find accommodation, and the local authority placed some young people, who would not usually be eligible to access support in bed and breakfast accommodation, to try to ensure that they had a safe place to live. Youth workers also helped young people to apply for financial support.

Over time, the emergency response changed to support young people around their wellbeing. Online activities were developed such as music, cooking and art club, and face to face activities included wellbeing walks, supporting attendance at college and job interviews.

The Counselling Service has continued throughout COVID 19, providing online sessions, meeting young people outside, in school and the youth centre. A full summer programme was provided including a mixture of online and face to face activities. Throughout, youth club staff have been redeployed to provide outreach and the detached team have continued to work in the evenings, responding at times to requests from the Police and community members. This has been an opportunity to keep young people informed about the restrictions, any changes and what that means for them. Between April 2020 and December 2020, 24 referrals (MARFS) were made to Social Services.

Through the Youth Service and Counselling Service, young people are able to access support if and when they need it and are able to access new opportunities. These opportunities help broaden young people's horizons, raise their aspirations and the support ensures that all young people, no matter their experience, are able to participate. This can result in young people becoming active citizens in their communities, making informed choices about their future and reaching their potential.





## Case Study - 21st Century Schools

### Proposed new Glyncoed Primary and Childcare.

Work has commenced on a proposed new 360 place primary school and separate full day childcare building on the former Glyncoed comprehensive site.

The project is funded by Blaenau Gwent and Welsh Government (21<sup>st</sup> Century Band B and Childcare grant). Planning application is now being submitted with an aim for completion being for the Autumn term 2023.



### Proposed Welsh medium primary and childcare within the Tredegar valley.

Work has commenced on a 210 Welsh medium primary school with integrated childcare unit.

The project is in the early design development stage and site investigations. The ambitious programme is to deliver the seedling facility for Autumn term 2023.



## Case Study - Youth Service outreach work.

With an increase in anti-social behaviour, fire setting, waste and theft of recycling bins the Youth Service were asked to support a multi-agency approach to reduce these concerns.

An intense period of 3 weeks Outreach work was carried out consisting of a small team of qualified staff from the Youth Service walking the identified area engaging young people, building trusting relationships and, if necessary, addressing the identified issues and explaining the potential issues and consequences of their actions. The young people were more than happy to chat and engage due to the approach of the staff which involved going on to the territory where these young people hang out and taking the time to get to know them and listen to their opinions.



Over this period the youth service engaged over 100 individual young people aged between 10 and 23 resulting in :-

- A number of referrals being made for young people who wanted further support to transition from school to college, training or employment.
- A number of discussions taking place around fire safety, alcohol, healthy relationships and consequences of actions;
- A number of young people disclosing that they felt listened to and their opinions were valued making them feel empowered to make informed decisions.

The wider impact the outreach work has had on the young people and community has resulted in no wild fires being reported, youth related ASB calls and incidents to the Police reducing and a serious allegation regarding young people inhaling toxic fumes has been completely dispelled.



Staff were able to also highlight to partner organisations the issue of community members providing young people with waste material such as old sofas and wardrobes to take away. This led to the Cleansing Department further educating the community regarding fly tipping and the dangers of this. It has also led to further information being provided to partners such as damage to woodland and specific areas that require cleaning.

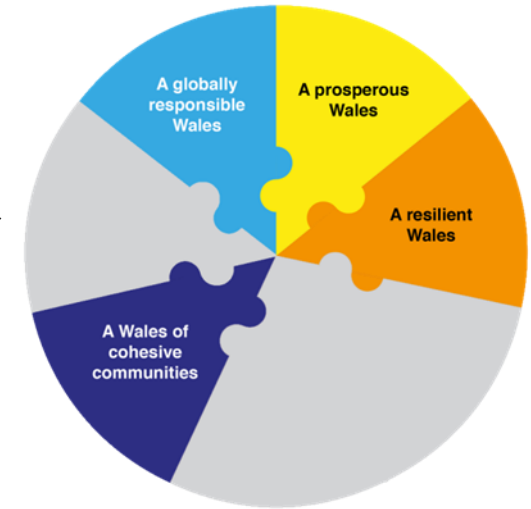
The Detached Youth Work Service will continue to work alongside young people and the community with the plan to develop the ideas that were fed back by young people regarding creating a space for themselves. A litter pick for May half term has also been organised where young people will help to clean the area making it more attractive for all.





## Why this is important

Blaenau Gwent has a rich heritage and its buildings and countryside are part of Blaenau Gwent's attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit. The local environment should be used to help improve the health and well-being of families and communities and be enhanced for future generations to continue to enjoy. There is also a real desire to see the communities where people live kept clean, tidy and useable, creating areas that people can be proud of.



## Progress against actions

A number of high level priorities (shown below) have been identified to support delivery of the corporate objective, '**Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities**'. These are detailed in the following overview pages along with some associated achievements and challenges.

### Priorities:-

- To re-invest in highways maintenance particularly improvements to our residential roads, streets and pavements;
- To increase rates of recycling to enable us to achieve national targets;
- To re-invest in environmental services to address the issues created by fly-tipping, dog fouling, littering, grass cutting, street cleansing and pest control;
- To improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors; and
- To work with partners to provide a variety of homes
- To develop an excellent digital infrastructure including internet and mobile network connectivity that can support the needs of the whole community.
- To develop a portfolio of potential energy opportunities to deliver economic, business and community benefits
- To improve the quality of our school buildings to help learners achieve great outcomes
- To be a carbon neutral Council by 2030

The following section reflects the overall progress position for the above corporate objective, along with a breakdown of each individual priority, highlighting progress, achievements and challenges

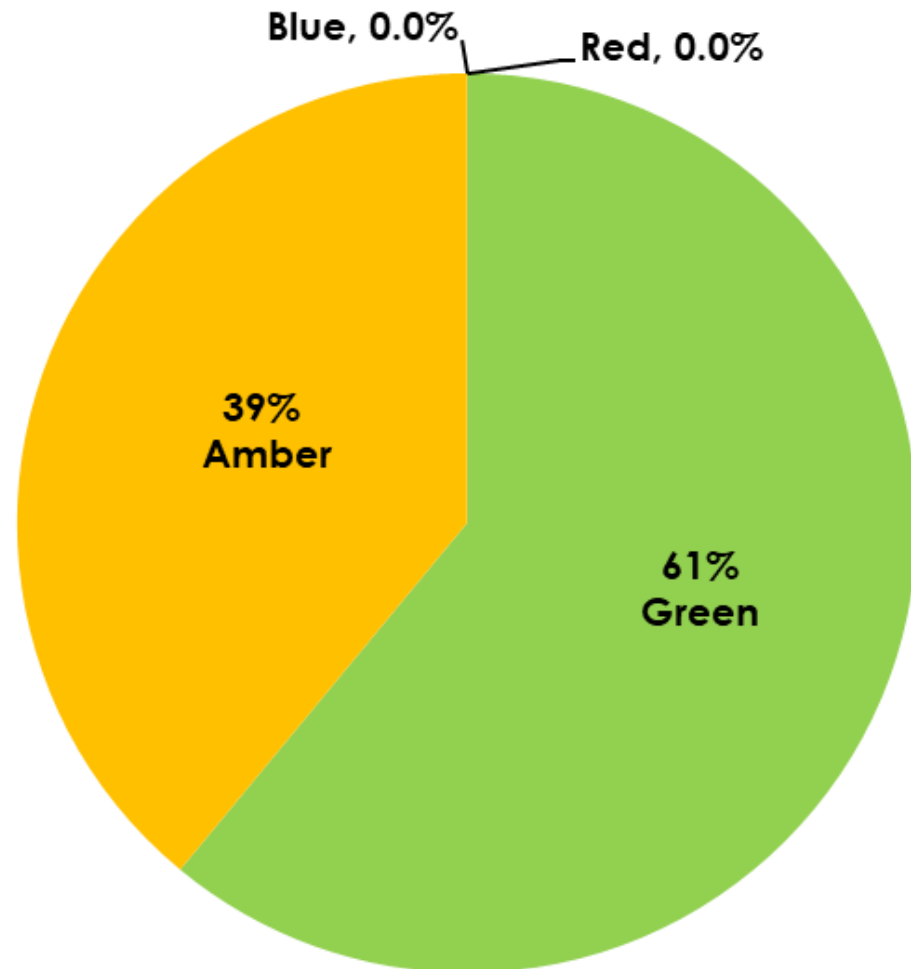
## How we performed

Throughout 2020/21 there has been progress in the implementation of the priorities supporting delivery of the objective, 'Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities' but it is recognised that there is still further work to do to fully implement the aims and objectives over the remainder of the Corporate Plan.

As at the 31st March 2021, the performance was **evaluated as being mainly successful as 61% of the actions were green (on target) and 39% were amber (behind target with manageable issues).**

The environment remains as a high priority for the community. The Council is looking to improve the area so that it is somewhere to be proud to live. Through focusing on delivering against the main priorities set out in the Corporate Plan the Council can begin to transform Blaenau Gwent into a more prosperous and welcoming area that celebrates its heritage and plays its part on the regional and national stage. Investment will continue to be made throughout Blaenau Gwent so that it is an area that people are proud to live in and be a part of.

Overall corporate objective delivery position as at 31st March 2021



## Overview

### To increase rates of recycling to enable us to achieve national targets

- Work is ongoing to build the Education Centre located at the new Roseheyworth HWRC. Following issues with the original planned location, a new location on site has been agreed and updated drawings are in process. The building has been based on a typical classroom for 30 pupils. Further communication is needed with Education regarding the feasibility/usefulness of the building as a classroom.
- Following soft market testing being carried out and responses being considered, Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd. has prepared and submitted a Business Plan which is planned for an independent review in May 2021. A vision/masterplan document for the site has also been prepared which considers the opportunities that exist at the site including the regional wood facility, additional storage areas and energy opportunities. A service specification of services required by the Council has also been developed. If approved, planning application will be developed and submitted for approval, procurements for design and build and equipment prepared.
- The revised pricing structure for the trade waste service is complete and preparation to issue new contracts and duty of cares to customers as they re-open following Lockdown is underway.
- Despite vehicles for the development of a new source segregated trade waste service being ordered, Covid has impacted on delivery timescales due them being delivered from Italy.
- Route optimisation for waste and recycling Services has continued. This will allow us to make waste and recycling rounds more efficient and responsive to community needs.

\* figure not yet verified by NRW

## How we currently perform



**73 Electric Vehicle Charge points have been installed across 35 sites.**



**The Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted has increased to 65.5% \***



**Lighting replacement at Ebbw Vale Sports Centre and installation of Motorised Pool Covers**



**100% of Emergency issues / complaints regarding falling trees were dealt with within 1 day**




**In total 6000 non-LED street lights have been replaced with LED lights.**



## Overview

### To re-invest in environmental services to address the issues created by fly-tipping, dog fouling, littering, grass cutting, street cleansing and pest control

- The Litter and Dog Control Order enforcement initiative has previously tackled the priority of 'improving street cleanliness' and reinforces the Authority's zero-tolerance approach. Unfortunately, as a result of the current COVID 19 pandemic and subsequent redeployment, the service has needed to be suspended.
- Following a consultation process being undertaken with stakeholders, a shared vision and a number of key objectives have been established for a new Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy 2021-2026 that will deliver recognised environmental improvements, supporting delivery of the vision 'To radically reduce litter and fly-tipping so we can improve our natural habitats as well as our wild and urban landscapes, increasing pride and awareness of our local heritage and desire to keep it litter free'.
- The Pest Control Treatment Service has continued with restrictions imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic having no significant impact on the ability to deliver the service as appropriate risk mitigation measures were introduced to ensure that pest control visits could be conducted safely.
- Support to local community groups has continued throughout this period providing litter champions with materials, equipment, staff support and collection of waste following clean up and clearance work where COVID restrictions allowed.



**PREVENTION** - A consultant has undertaken a fundamental review of the Street Cleansing Service. The findings of the review formed the basis of the Litter and Fly Tipping Strategy and identified the key objectives, and actions to improve the local environmental quality for the future.

### To re-invest in highways maintenance particularly improvements to our residential roads, streets and pavements

- Planning of remedial works to the Big Arch has commenced with consultation with Cadw ongoing due to its listed structure status.
- Draft highways maintenance and winter maintenance plan in place. Further officer meetings to be convened to finalise draft plan and then report through Council process for adoption.
- All schemes within the Highways Capital Works Programme 20/21 are complete. A Programme for 2021/22 is being developed and works are subject to Welsh Government Grant Award & Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Capital funding provision.
- The Highways Asset Management Plan is continually being reviewed and updated in order to provide the key data & information to inform decisions on future investments into the highway network. In order to improve the effectiveness of this plan better integration of services is needed.
- An application for works to Tredegar Company Shop (Truck Shop) has been made to Cadw, awaiting response.
- A Stage 2 sketch proposal for Trinity Chapel has been produced and handed over to the Coal Regeneration Trust (CRT) who will procure and deliver the following:
  - Complete building installation;
    - Lower Ground Floor will be space for Abertillery Library;
    - Upper Ground Floor will be space for Adult Community Learning; and
    - First Floor will be Exhibition / Rental Space.

## Overview

### To work with partners to provide a variety of homes

- The allocation of £2.1m was successfully allocated to support the delivery of affordable housing at Ebbw Vale School Site and Glanffrwyd. Further slippage funding of £824k was also secured.
- Affordable (social rent) housing developments completed during the year, were:
  - College Road Phase 2, Ebbw Vale - 33 units
  - Gwaun Helyg Phase 3/4, Ebbw Vale -72 units in total
  - Sirhowy, Tredegar -23 units
- Schemes on site and progressing:
  - Glanffrwyd, Ebbw Vale -23 units, social rent
  - Greenacres, Tredegar -22 units, social rent
  - Golwg Y Bryn, Ebbw Vale -100 units -70 open market, 30 social rent with 56 completed
  - Ebbw Vale School Site -277 units - 222 open market, 55 social rent
- Development work to progress additional housing sites within Blaenau Gwent is ongoing.
- To support the residential development of Abertillery Leisure Centre site further surveys were commissioned to enable a determination of suitable access. Information has now been received and will be used to inform a decision.
- An options appraisal paper has been drafted in respect of Six Bells Plateau and will be discussed with local ward members.
- A development brief for the Civic Centre has been prepared and an options paper will form part of the Ebbw Vale Placemaking Plan. This will inform residential development opportunities at this site, for implementation following the civic centre demolition.

### To improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors

- Blaenau Gwent continues to support the delivery of the South East Wales Resilient Uplands Project with some examples of progress being:-
  - fencing reducing incidents of animals straying onto the public highway;
  - Mynydd Llanhilleth management plan which will have significant benefits for the Communities in the lower Ebbw Fach; and
  - New gates, barriers, boulders and bunds to reduce landscape crime.
- Access improvements to sites have been delivered to the value of £34,000 and Funding for 2021/22 has also been awarded in the value of £54,000.
- Utilisation of the Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being Funding is progressing well and continues to meet the agreed outputs and outcomes .
- Green Recovery funding of £90,000 has been used for biodiversity enhancement and woodland management.
- Project work has been delivered in the value of £240,000 for improvements of the Active Travel network including projects at Parc Bryn Bach , Glyn Coed and Brynmawr to Beaufort.
- Metro Plus Programme - Progress is continuing on the rail investment, alongside Transport for Wales on the project components put forward as part of the Metro Plus scheme in Blaenau Gwent, including both the Ebbw Valley line and the Abertillery spur.

## Overview

### To develop an excellent digital infrastructure including internet and mobile network connectivity that can support the needs of the whole community.

- Digital infrastructure is being developed in areas of Blaenau Gwent including within town centres and other innovative projects through the GovTech Catalyst.
- Delays to the delivery of the Local Full Fibre Network - awaiting update following discussions with UK Gov.
- The Council has been part of a number of pilot digital projects with a focus on the user experience and customer journey. The projects have included a number of service areas including Social Services and Community Services supporting internal awareness and capacity building in the service re-design approach. Additional training has been accessed via the WLGA with more planned. Directorate digital roadmaps are being developed, highlighting areas of opportunity for service redesign and better use of technology and systems. A prioritisation and planning exercise is underway and activity being scoped to support services included in the new operating model.

### To develop a portfolio of potential energy opportunities to deliver economic, business and community benefits

- Annual review of the Energy Prospectus completed - projects will span 21/22/23
- Delivery and final claims have been submitted for the PENTAGON and DRIVE Projects.
- Horizon2020 Proposals submitted for the last two rounds of funding under the Horizon2020 programme, awaiting decision. This will be replaced by the Horizon Europe programme in 2021/22.
- Partners developed a simulated project that would install Solar PV to the Coldmill School (11 to 16) and provide renewable energy to the building. Although it was originally only intended to be a simulation, the predicted results were extremely positive so this is a potential project that can be explored as a future investment.
- Funding was secured in 2020/21 to carry out small scale hydro generation investigations within the wards of Cwm and Llanhilleth through the Rural Development Programme. Identification of sites for further investigation and up to two sites for feasibility analysis will now follow. If suitable opportunities exist this work could provide us with a small portfolio of hydro generation projects that can be considered further for investment and delivery.
- Discussions are ongoing with Western Power Distribution to ensure infrastructure readiness for future business investment.
- The Council continues to work with Tech Valleys to develop and deliver projects, including completion of the Business Park- on the Works Site, development work around a Future Skills Academy and a range of other projects in development.



**COLLABORATION / PARTNERSHIP WORKING** - *The Welsh-medium Regional Planning of School Places and Demand Group have identified that a regional solution to the anticipated shortfall in Welsh-medium secondary school places is the highest priority.*

## Overview

### To improve the quality of our school buildings to help learners achieve great outcomes

- The delivery of the 21st Century Schools Band B programme/timeline has and continues to be subject to regular review throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic. The financial profile has also undergone review in discussion with Welsh Government, with the latest profile submitted in December 2020. To date the following outcomes have been achieved:-
  - Learning from the Band A Programme has been used to inform Band B development and implementation.
  - Welsh Government has approved all Business Case submissions to date in line with delivery of the Band B Programme.
  - Band B projects are currently on profile and programme.
- 62% of school maintenance and repair requests have been addressed and works completed. Technical services is in the process of providing a timeframe for completion of all outstanding actions.
- Emergency works that were postponed due to Covid restrictions will be undertaken during the Whitsun half term holidays.
- The Penycwm consultation document is complete and out for consultation. Work will be scheduled to be carried out over the Summer but it is recognised that space will remain a focus at the school going forward due to the increase in pupils with profound and complex needs.

### To be a carbon neutral Council by 2030

- As part of the Carbon Reduction Strategy, the South East Wales Resilient Uplands (SEWRU) project includes enhancement of our Upland Heath and Bog habitats which are an excellent Carbon Sink. Enhancing these habitats will improve their performance in terms of carbon sequestration, making a positive contribution to the carbon reduction strategy.
- All Electric Vehicle Charging Points have been installed across Gwent. In total 73 charge points across 35 sites.
- The Decarbonisation Plan has been adopted and an outline approach to implementation approved with a focus on establishing an officer focused Board to take forward the approach to transition. A Terms of Reference for the Board has also been established using best practice from elsewhere and the Climate Change Committee Sixth Carbon Budget.
- To mitigate the challenge of developing a 'carbon focused' culture where people understand their role in becoming a carbon neutral public service by 2030, officers across the organisations are being involved in the PCAN focused Readiness Assessments for each of the 9 transition areas identified in the plan.



**LONG TERM** -The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme is a long-term investment programme that, at present, spans the period 2014 to 2034. The Band B element covers the period 2019 to 2025. Its emphasis is on delivering a school estate that is fit for purpose and contributes to raising educational standards,



## Case Study - Advanced Engineering Centre

Work has commenced on an Advanced Engineering Centre in the Former Monwell Building for Coleg Gwent. Establishment of this leading engineering centre would support hundreds of learners in Ebbw Vale and include refurbishment of the former Monwell factory in Letchworth Road, Ebbw Vale. £200K has been awarded for the design element and design works are well under way with a planning application expected in the next month. This is an exciting project with a steep learning curve – very unique use.

The state-of-the-art facility would be a pioneering Centre of Excellence, which would be capable of delivering a new curriculum fit for the engineering industry of the future. Around 600 learners are expected to attend the centre by 2026/27 on a range of full-time, part-time, higher education and apprenticeship courses.



Regeneration Director, Richard Crook Says:

“This project brings together Tech Valleys, Coleg Gwent and a number of partners to develop its vision of a global centre for the development of new technologies. It will create an environment that will attract hi-tech inward investors within the advanced manufacturing sector.

“The Advanced Engineering Centre will be constantly adapting to produce highly trained students who have a real passion for engineering

and upskill the current engineering workforce, ready for the next industrial revolution. The partnership with the Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme will ensure local industry are provided with skilled young people for the jobs of the future.”

The initiative is supported by The Tech Valleys board. If the funding bid is approved, the facility is expected to open in September 2022. The centre will support Tech Valleys vision for South Wales Valley and Blaenau Gwent to be recognised as a global centre for the development of new technologies by 2027.

## Case Study - New Council Centre of Operations

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is committed to delivering front line services in an effective and efficient manner.

To support this delivery, proposals to develop a new Council Centre of Operations is underway. This would act as a direct replacement of the existing Central Depot currently located in Brynmawr.

The New Council Centre of Operations, is currently out for a 1 month Pre-application Consultation prior to the Full Planning Application.



EXISTING CENTRAL DEPOT



PROPOSED NEW COUNCIL CENTRE OF OPERATIONS

# Financial Management

2020/21 Forecast (as at 31st March 2021)

Revenue Budget				
Portfolio	£,000 Budget 20/21	£,000 Draft Provisional Outturn 20/21	£,000 Variance Favourable/ (Adverse)	Favourable/ (Adverse) Variance %
Corporate Services & Financial Management & Strategy	16,730	15,366	1,364	8.2
Economy	1,215	1,185	30	2.5
Education & Leisure	62,128	61,751	377	0.6
Environment	25,532	25,643	(111)	(0.4)
Licensing	70	93	(23)	(32.9)
Planning	1,118	1,169	(51)	(4.6)
Social Services	45,352	44,231	1,121	2.4
<b>Council Total</b>	<b>152,145</b>	<b>149,438</b>	<b>2,707</b>	<b>1.7</b>

Capital Budget			
Portfolio	£,000 Budget 20/21	£,000 Variance	Favourable/ (Adverse) Variance %
Corporate Services & Strategy	122	0	0
Environment, Economy & Infrastructure	14,446	(91)	(0.6)
Social Services - Adult & Children	873	0	0
Education, Active Living and Learning	1,777	0	0
All Portfolios	628	0	0
<b>Council Total</b>	<b>17,846</b>	<b>(91)</b>	<b>(0.6)</b>

**Current Budget Position:** The Draft provisional out-turn position across all portfolios to 31 March 2021, is a significant favourable variance of £2.7m against a net revenue budget of £152.1m. This is an improved forecast when compared to Q3 (£0.5m forecast favourable). In an unprecedented year with service delivery impacted by Covid 19 the positive variance arises for several reasons including a significant number of Welsh Government funding compensating the Council for additional costs & lost income, additional grants received in the final quarter of the financial year and underspends across services. The provisional out-turn position is subject to external audit and could therefore change by the completion of the audit.

**Current Budget Position:** Despite the Covid-19 Pandemic Capital Expenditure has been largely unaffected by the Lockdown restrictions.

The provisional outturn position indicates a favourable variance of £0.16m against an in year budget of £17.78m. Previous reports identified significant in year overspends on the Household Waste Recycling Centre and Lime Avenue Business Park projects of £0.2m & £0.23 respectively. Expenditure on these schemes for 2020/21 are within agreed budget levels however overspends against overall funding levels are expected during the next financial year.

The final account on the Roseheyworth Household Waste Recycling construction will be settled in the first quarter of 2021/22. The Authority will continue to liaise with the contractor to mitigate the final costs and to secure additional funding.

Discussions have been ongoing with Welsh Government with regards to funding the forecast overspend on the Lime Avenue Hybrid Units.

# Regulatory Proposals

The Council is subject to numerous internal and external audits and regulatory reviews each year which ensures local authorities provide value for money when delivering services, services are being run efficiently and effectively, and identifies local authorities approach in planning and delivering improved services in the future. This section aims to capture the progress being made against these proposals.

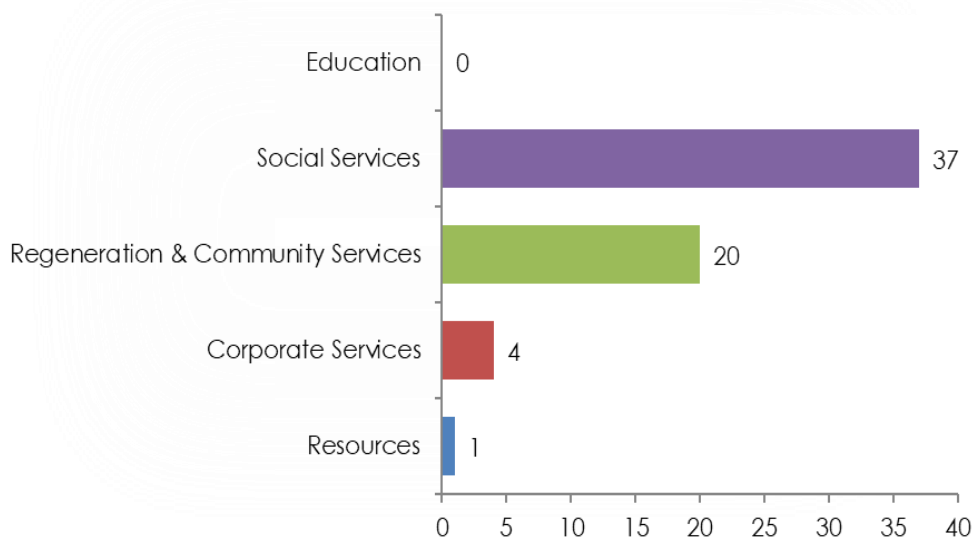
## Reports and Proposals

At 31st March 2021 there were 19 'live' audit reports. Of those:-

- 7 reports were still at the initial stages, either being newly received or due to be taken through the Democratic process; and
- 12 reports are being monitored via business plans, totalling 62 proposals for improvement being implemented.

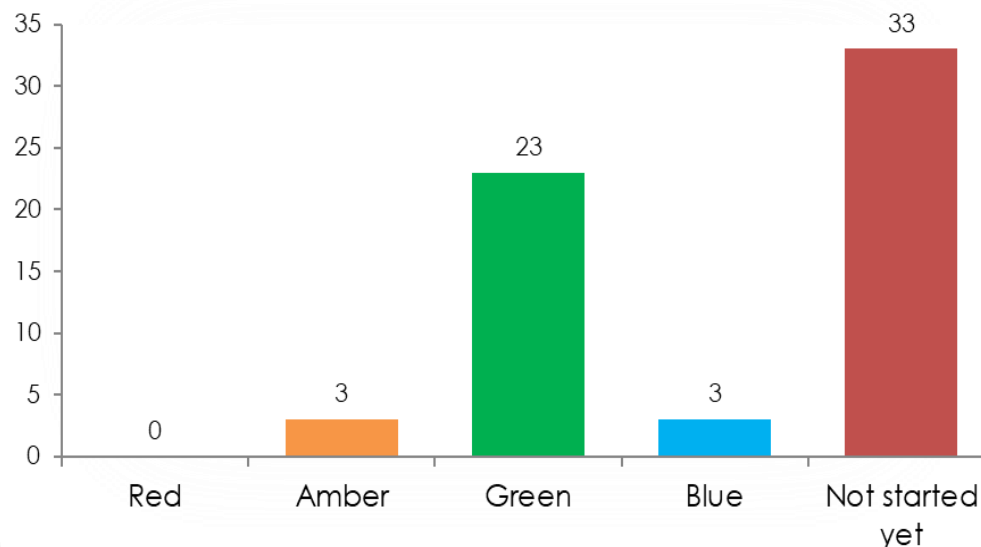
### Open proposals for improvement

#### Open Proposals for Improvement



### Current proposals status

#### Current Proposal Status





# Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	End of Year 2020/21	Status
<p>CRR20 -</p> <p><b>There is a risk that increasingly complex needs and demand for services provided by Social Services and Education, in particular for Looked After Children, will put further significant pressure on the Council's budget.</b></p> <p>Director of Social Services and Councillor John Mason</p>	<p><b><u>End of Year Review 2020 2021</u></b></p> <p>Although we have had to change and adapt processes and procedures during the pandemic to fulfil our statutory responsibilities and maintain the wellbeing of our communities and staff, this has created increased financial pressures but the Welsh Government's hardship fund has mitigated these costs. Additional funding being used through ICF and Transformation funding has been confirmed for a further 12 months covering 2021 to 2022. There has continued to be a slow reduction in the number of children looked after during the year and good evidence that the Supporting Change Team and the Myst team are having an impact on both numbers and budget.</p> <p>A review by Worcester University and a subsequent refresh of the children looked after reduction strategy 2017-2020 took place during the year with a New Strategy and Action plan agreed covering 2020 to 2025 this is currently beginning to be implemented. In addition a review was also undertaken of our disability team and a new model of operation proposed for this team, which will begin implementation in the first quarter of 2021-22.</p>	High
<p>CRR21</p> <p><b>The Financial resilience of the Council could be at risk if the Council does not ensure that financial planning and management decisions support long term stability and sustainability.</b></p> <p>Chief Officer – Resources and Councillor Nigel Daniels</p>	<p><b><u>End of Year Review 2020 2021—During the year the status of this risk reduced from critical to high</u></b></p> <p>In the early part of 2020/21 there were significant concerns around the potential financial impact the Covid 19 pandemic would have on the local / national economy and consequently the Council.</p> <p>WG announced that funding would be provided for additional costs and loss of income incurred as a consequence of delivering services in response to the pandemic. This funding will continue until at least September 2021.</p> <p>A review of the Medium Term Financial Strategy was undertaken and budget gaps for the 5 years to 2025/25 are currently predicted. To address these budget gaps work has continued on the development and implementation of the Bridging the Gap proposals.</p> <p>A positive WG local government settlement for 2021/22 has resulted in Blaenau Gwent receiving a funding increase of £4.3m and in March 2021 the Council agreed a budget which included a planned increase to both the General Reserve (£200k) &amp; the Financial Resilience Earmarked Reserve (£1m), a further step in improving the Council's financial resilience.</p>	High

# Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	End of Year 2020/21	Status
<p>CRR22 -</p> <p><b>Failure to deliver the Council's priorities within the agreed annual budget resulting in the increased use of emergency finance measures and the drawdown of reserves.</b></p>	<p><b><u>End of Year Review 2020 2021</u></b></p> <p>For 2020/21, the Council set a budget which required Bridging the Gap efficiencies of £1.5m whilst also addressing £2.05m of cost pressures and growth items and a plan to increase reserves by £1.7m.</p> <p>The global Covid-19 pandemic and the response had a significant impact on the Council both financially and on the delivery of services throughout the year. The changing circumstances during the year saw a number of services being suspended or being delivered in an alternative way.</p> <p>Financial forecasts improved during the year and the provisional outturn indicates a favourable variance of £2.639m (1.7%), against a total revenue budget of £152m .</p> <p>The favourable variance has arisen for a number of reasons, including Welsh Government Hardship funding which has compensated the Council for the additional costs incurred supporting enhanced service delivery in response to the Covid 19 pandemic and lost income (from Covid restrictions) ; reduced costs due to closure of buildings, staff mileage, delays in filling vacant post, general administration and service provision due to changes in working practices; underspends on cross cutting budgets (Commercial &amp; Contract management - and Transformation Fund) not utilised fully and unbudgeted grants that have offset core budget funding</p> <p>The favourable variance results in a significant increase in both general &amp; specific reserves.</p>	High
<p>CRR 25</p> <p><b>The 2 schools currently in receipt of Council Intervention fail to make appropriate progress against the Statutory Warning Notice to Improve and their Post Inspection Action Plans.</b></p>	<p><b><u>End of Year Review 2020 2021</u></b></p> <p>Over 2020-21 there has been satisfactory progress made by both schools that are in an Estyn category and this is triangulated through the Schools Causing Concern review meetings. The risk remains the same, however, due to Estyn being unable to undertake monitoring visits to verify the progress made at this stage. The schools will be reviewed during the Autumn term monitoring visits and it is acknowledged that both schools are improving.</p>	High

# Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	End of Year 2020/21	Status
<p>CRR14</p> <p><b>Failure to improve staff attendance rates within the Council will lead to an unacceptable impact on the ability of the Council to deliver services effectively and financially support the cost of sickness absence.</b></p> <p>Head of Organisational Development and Councillor Nigel Daniels</p>	<p><b><u>End of Year Review 2020 2021</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall outturn figure is 11.67 days per full time equivalent employee (FTE) which has exceeded the corporate target (10.50 Days) by 1.17 days</li> <li>• When comparing the overall outturn with the previous year, there has been a decrease of 2.24 days from 13.91 days</li> <li>• Covid-19 impact – when excluding sickness absence related to Covid-19 the outturn figure reduces to 9.98 days a reduction of 1.69 days which comes in below the corporate target</li> <li>• Annual report reviewing sickness absence to be developed and presented to CLT and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee</li> <li>• Directorate and service targets for 2021/22 to be set by directorates</li> <li>• More detailed analysis of the hotspots to be undertaken with directorates</li> <li>• Ongoing management of sickness absence by managers supported by OD – including any long Covid and top 20 long term cases</li> </ul>	High
<p>CRR19</p> <p><b>If the Council does not manage its information assets in accordance with requirements set down within legislation, then it may be faced with financial penalties and possible sanctions that hinder service delivery.</b></p> <p>Head of Legal &amp; Corporate Compliance and Councillor Nigel Daniels</p>	<p><b><u>End of Year Review 2020/21</u></b></p> <p>Due to the pandemic progress on a number of areas stalled initially whilst directorates focussed on the obvious priorities of the Covid response and/or staff were redeployed. Despite this there has been significant progress with a number of policies being approved, or developed to draft stage, which will further protect the organisation and better communicate the messages to staff and raise awareness. Further policies are planned in 2021/22 Q1 to add to this progress along with providing guidance documents on how to safely use the new technologies being provided to staff whilst the organisation moves to new ways of working.</p> <p>Overall throughout 2020/21 there was a total of 47 data breaches of which 2 required reporting to the ICO (who chose to take no action), this is a slight increase on the total of 45 from the previous year. However, it is difficult to make direct comparisons due to the pandemic. Work continues on training and different methods to conduct this effectively and safely to the most amount of people are being explored. As refresher training is required for all staff on a rolling 2-year basis this is a constant area of work.</p>	High

# Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	End of Year 2020/21	Status
<p>CRR26</p> <p><b>Business Continuity. The on-going COVID-19 pandemic presents a continued risk to service delivery.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Year End Review (2020/21)</u></b></p> <p>The response to the Coronavirus Pandemic has been the focus for the business during this year with the first lock-down commencing at the end of March 2020 and further waves in the pandemic resulting in another extended lock-down from December 2020 with relaxation in restrictions only commencing in April 2021.</p> <p>There has been significant and sustained impact on business continuity through the year with many services, particularly those classed as non-critical, being suspended or significantly reduced either as a result of the restrictions or due to staff being redeployed into critical service areas or high levels of staff absence due to self-isolation and/or shielding. As at April 2021 the majority of services have returned to more normal operations, enabled by the return of schools, end of shielding and the return of staff from redeployment. Some services have altered arrangements in place to enable social distancing e.g. refuse collection, and some personal services such as Day Care and Respite have not yet been able to return to normal operations, but will do so as soon as safe and practical to do so.</p> <p>Those staff who are able to work from home continue to do so and formal council meetings are still taking place remotely, these arrangements will change over the summer in line with the expected relaxation in restrictions. The new Democratic Hub will be able to pilot some agile meetings (both remote and in person attendees) in June with the intention of all meetings moving to an agile basis from September onwards. Similarly, when staff are able to return to office working they will do so under the new Agile Working Policy with home working being a significant aspect of work on an on-going basis and with agile office space available at the General Offices, Anvil Court, Tredegar and the Depot. The Civic Centre will not re-open and work to decommission the building has commenced.</p> <p>The risk of further disruption to service delivery exists particularly in the Autumn/Winter period given the uncertainty as to the impact of reducing restrictions and the presence of variants of concern. The modelling does show the likelihood of a third wave from the late summer but it is hoped that the successful vaccination programme will mitigate the worse impact of this on our community and workforce.</p>	<p><b>Critical</b></p>

# Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	End of Year 2020/21	Status
<p>CRR24</p> <p><b>There is a risk that exiting the EU will have an adverse impact at a national and local level which could impact on the community and on the Council and its ability to deliver public services.</b></p> <p>Managing Director / Head of Governance and Partnerships and Councillor Nigel Daniels</p>	<p><b><u>End of Year Review 2020 / 2021</u></b></p> <p>In many cases businesses have been substantially disrupted or closed during this year due to the Coronavirus Pandemic; with the first lock-down commencing at the end of March 2020 and further waves in the pandemic resulting in another extended lock-down from December 2020 with relaxation in restrictions only commencing in May 2021. There has been significant and sustained impact on businesses in BG resulting in some businesses closing, less start-ups and businesses holding back on investment. Issues surrounding leaving the EU have been clouded by COVID19 restrictions therefore we believe that the full effects of leaving have not yet been experienced.</p> <p>EU Transition group refreshed its terms of reference to monitor the impact of EU transition on council services, our communities and the local economy using the existing risk assessment and action plan, highlighting any emerging risks not previously identified or downgrading existing risks if impact is found to be low. The risk assessment was updated based on known impact of EU transition since 1st Jan, plus a new opportunities register has been developed to plan for opportunities arising from replacement EU funding, new trade &amp; travel rules, and other new UK legislation. Many of the implications for the local economy remain unknown until travel and trade starts to increase when Covid restrictions begin to ease during 2021/22.</p> <p>Refreshed situation reporting process has been put in place for service areas to report any EU transition issues (by exception) for escalation to Welsh Government &amp; WLGA where necessary (this has not been required yet). Welsh and UK Government EU Transition planning information shared with local businesses and EUSS material shared via council's social media.</p> <p>Welsh Government agreed to continue the EU Transition Fund Brexit Coordinator funding for local authorities in 2021/22. As in previous years, the EUTF funding was awarded to the WLGA who have redistributed £45,000 to each local authority to enable EU Transition coordinators “to remain at the heart of activity as the nature of the focus of required work now changes from planning to implementation.</p> <p>The risk of further disruption to business exists particularly in the Autumn/Winter period given the uncertainty as to the impact of reducing restrictions and the presence of variants of concern. The modelling does show the likelihood of a third wave from the late summer but it is hoped that the successful vaccination programme will mitigate the worse impact of this on our community and businesses.</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Critical</p>

# Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	End of Year 2020/21	Status
<p>CRR 4</p> <p><b>Safeguarding - Failure to ensure adequate safeguarding arrangements are in place for vulnerable people in Blaenau Gwent</b></p>	<p><b><u>End of Year Review 2020 2021</u></b></p> <p>Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the directorate has continued to provide a consistent and timely response to safeguarding including face to face visits. Initially there was a reduction of referrals when we first went into lockdown but quickly this returned to more 'normal levels'. We have continued to report safeguarding performance to Welsh Government throughout the pandemic and to the Regional Safeguarding Board. Now that schools have returned full time to face to face contact we will continue to monitor the impact on referrals during quarter 1 of 2021-22.</p> <p>In Adult Services due to the number and complexity of referrals we have created an additional social worker post within the safeguarding team, however the post is unlikely to be filled until quarter 1 of 2021-22. Also our lead service manager for Corporate Safeguarding has led on the update of the Corporate Safeguarding policy as well as the proposed corporate safeguarding training programme which will be implemented in quarter 1 of 2021-22.</p> <p>The risks around pupils not receiving "face to face" learning in the school setting as a result of the pandemic were recognised , WG guidance "Stay safe, Stay Learning: supporting the education system" encouraged practitioners to make virtual contact with learners based on routines developed by head teachers while following WG guidance on live streaming and video conferencing.</p> <p>In relation to vulnerable learner provision, there was a strong provision in place to support learners that are Children Look After and those learners that are on the Child Protection Register whose families may have needed support. There were also arrangements in place with the education welfare service. The lack of meaningful safeguarding data available primarily due to most learners receiving their learning remotely resulted in the postponement of the Joint Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p><i>The Joint Safeguarding Committee will now be held on 26<sup>th</sup> April and a report will highlight a need following the emergency response to the pandemic to re-establish the collection of data from schools through the safeguarding and inclusion protocol. This action is in hand and will be presented to CLT/Members accordingly. The Safeguarding in Education Manager has been tasked to provide a Focus area of Analysis Development Way Forward (FADE) evaluation of the safeguarding matrix as at the end of the Spring term. The information on the matrix includes policy adoption, training, DBS escalations and volunteer information. The Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) policy is being finalised and will be presented to the Joint Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee in the near future. The implementation of the data management system, namely MyConcern across the school estate continues. The Summer term Estyn Local Authority Link Inspector (LALI) meeting will cover an update to the inspectorate on safeguarding aspects of work.</i></p>	<p>High</p>

# Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	End of Year 2020/21	Status
<p>CRR 1</p> <p><b>Failure to deliver and sustain the changes required to ensure that vital services are prioritised within the financial constraints faced by the Council</b></p>	<p><b><u>End of Year Review 2020 2021</u></b></p> <p>The financial out-turn for the Council will be a positive one with a surplus projected, allowing monies to be transferred into general reserves which will support financial resilience. The focus on the emergency response to the pandemic during the year has been supported by additional funding from Welsh Government and this has enabled the Council to manage financial pressures effectively and sustain service delivery, where that has been possible within the Covid restrictions.</p> <p>Priority services have continued to be funded and supported through the year with additional funds channelled into Education, Social Services and Community Services. Some work was inevitably delayed due to the pandemic but no funding has been diverted to the detriment of the council's priorities and this work is now re-commencing.</p>	<p>High</p>

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# Agenda Item 14

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 09.07.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**  
Date of meeting: **21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**  
Report Subject: **Development of Business Energy Model to enable Business Parks to achieve Net Zero Outcomes**  
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**  
Report Submitted by: **Amy Taylor, Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities**

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	06.07.21			30.06.21	21.07.21		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1. To provide the Executive Committee with:

- Details of the background to the Project;
- Progress made as a demonstrator of the Welsh Government Smart Living Programme;
- An overview of the newly established Whole System Business Research Innovation for Decarbonisation (WBRID) Project; and
- An overview of the Blaenau Gwent WBRID Competition.

## 2. Scope and Background

### Smart Living, Welsh Government

- 2.1. The Welsh Government (WG) Smart Living Programme commenced in 2015. Blaenau Gwent was one of the first wave of demonstrator projects across the Smart Living Demonstration Programme. The Blaenau Gwent Energy Prospectus approved by Executive Committee in 2020 identifies the Blaenau Gwent Energy Catalyst Model as a key project opportunity within the Borough.
- 2.2. The Blaenau Gwent Energy Catalyst Project seeks to consider how we can generate local energy, distribute it locally and how we can use it to benefit Blaenau Gwent businesses and residents.
- 2.3. The Project has gone through a number of Phases to reach the current stage of development. During Phase 1, BRE Wales highlighted some of the problems faced by Blaenau Gwent around energy. Fuel poverty is high in Blaenau Gwent which is illustrated by demographic trend across the Borough. The majority of residents rely upon prepayment meters which have the highest tariffs. For residents who have standard meters, they are typically on expensive 'standard' tariffs with many not having investigated switching to lower rate tariffs.

2.4. The breadth of the local energy system in Blaenau Gwent is very wide, so we sought to break down the energy system into groups or categories. We identified four initial categories of buildings across Blaenau Gwent that would be required to form part of a local energy services model. Figure 1 shows details of the four platforms identified.



**Figure 1: Blaenau Gwent Energy Catalyst Model – Proposed Energy Platforms**

- 2.5. Subsequent phases of the project have considered each of the energy platforms along with consideration of how this can all be brought back together as the Local Services Model.
- 2.6. Across Blaenau Gwent, the Industrial and Commercial sector was found to use the highest proportion of supplied electricity. As a result, the Industrial and Commercial sector platform was selected as the first of the energy platforms to be considered in greater detail.
- 2.7. Another reason for focusing on this platform is the change to Landlord regulations for non-domestic properties. Since April 2018, landlords of non-domestic private rented sector (PRS) properties are not been permitted to grant, extend or renew an existing tenancy if their property has an EPC rating of F or G. Landlords have to ensure their properties achieve a minimum energy efficiency standard Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band B by 2030.
- 2.8. Blaenau Gwent is home to 25 Business Sites (**Appendix One**) which includes Business Parks, Town Centres and Out of Town Retail. Our primary focus shall be on what are likely to be larger energy users in Business Parks. The parks across Blaenau Gwent were all developed at different points and as a result vary greatly in age. For example, the oldest of the Council owned business parks are over 60 years old and in some cases this will cause challenges over technologies that can be deployed to support building energy requirements.
- 2.9. This was split into two areas of work, the first being business consumer research and the second platform development:
- Consumer Research focused upon making contact and establishing relationships with various sectoral representative companies across Blaenau Gwent that would help us understand the current energy picture across businesses in Blaenau Gwent.
  - Business Platform Development initially started with building up a picture of the Industrial and Commercial assets across Blaenau Gwent and in later stages looked at the modelling of potential technology solutions.

### *Business Consumer Research*

- 2.10. Miller Research were engaged by WG to undertake the Business Consumer Research Study. The objectives of the study were to develop business knowledge and understanding of opportunities, benefits and risks for businesses within Blaenau Gwent in the area of energy. In addition, we sought to understand the assets of the businesses or landlords to inform development of the business energy platform to align with the Council Smart Living objectives.
- 2.11. The engagement was carried out using 1 to 1 interviews, phone interviews and online surveys. Stakeholder interviews and the online survey noted energy as not the primary concern for businesses, however, it was seen as a top five priority within the next five years, by 53 per cent of businesses surveyed. Interestingly, cost of utilities was seen as the biggest risk for businesses through the online survey and 86 per cent of respondents noted the cost of energy as the highest perceived risk related to energy.

### *Business Platform Development*

- 2.12. Recognising that we have many business parks across Blaenau Gwent, some with similar characteristics and others with different characteristics we recognised that it would not be possible to adopt a 'one-size fits all' approach. Taking this into account we set about developing a virtual 'typical business park' that could be used to test and model the impact of different energy efficiency / generation technologies. AECOM Limited were commissioned by WG to undertake this element of Phase 2.
- 2.13. The purpose of creating the 'Typical Business Park' was to inform decision making about key items such as scalability of solutions and technologies. It also provides a good indication as to what the market opportunities are in relation to technologies in the business sector and the supply model most suited to delivery.
- 2.14. As part of Phase 2A a range of renewable energy technologies and services were considered and whilst some were discounted due to technical compatibility, relevance in their application and economic viability were able to identify a number of opportunities to be explored further. These were:
- Brokerage service operated by the Local Authority which provides:
    - Solar PV (ground and roof mounted)
    - LED replacement lighting
    - Energy procurement
- 2.15. Further engagement work with stakeholders in Phase 2B enabled more robust and finer grain data to be gathered to underpin proposed options as part of Phase 2B. Engagement along with desk-top and drive-around surveys enabled identification of the levels of energy demand and suitability of PV and lighting installations. From this, four business parks were identified to showcase the opportunities identified. The four parks were selected because they held common characteristics with a number of other business parks that would enable us to simulate potential opportunities across sites in Blaenau Gwent.

### Whole System Business Research Innovation for Decarbonisation (WBRID)

- 2.16. In late 2020, the Welsh Government made funding available for four Local Authorities to issue challenges to businesses with innovative products, processes and services to help communities and the public sector adapt to the challenge of net zero developments and integration of multi energy vector and sectors on a whole system basis.
- 2.17. The Whole System Business Research Innovation for Decarbonisation (WBRID) scheme, is a pilot using the tested principles of Small Business Research Initiative schemes, and is offering four challenges up to £100,000 for each challenge for phase one and up to a further £500,000 for each challenge for phase two, subject to budget provision.
- 2.18. Individual challenges will support work with up to four suppliers in phase one up to £25,000 per project. Those suppliers successful in phase one will be able to apply and if successful, progress to phase two in 2021-22.
- 2.19. The four Local Authorities invited to be challenge owners are Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Bridgend County Borough Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and North Wales Economic Ambition Board. Each of the challenges are different but all have to consider potential for replication and scalability.

### Overview of the Blaenau Gwent WBRID Competition

- 2.20. The invitation for BGCBC to become a challenge owner in the WBRID pilot has enabled the Business Platform Development to move into its third phase. Our competition shall seek to identify innovative solutions which will support energy supply, demand and storage for commercial end users (and in the future domestic end users) across Blaenau Gwent and to work towards creating zero energy parks as a Unique Selling Point (USP) for Blaenau Gwent.
- 2.21. We will work with suppliers to consider to create a local energy system that would meet industrial and commercial energy requirements and work alongside domestic energy user requirements to help alleviate fuel poverty.
- 2.22. Suppliers were selected using the pre-commercial procurement process. A contract notice was released in December and the deadline for supplier applications was 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021.
- 2.23. In total 11 submissions were received from suppliers wishing to work with Blaenau Gwent in Stage 1. These have been evaluated and four companies selected to proceed to Stage 1. Between February and April 2021 they worked with the Council and WG on the development of solutions that will support delivery of our challenge.
- 2.24. Results of Stage 1 are currently being considered in conjunction with WG, Smart Living Team with a view towards securing funding for Phase Two and selecting the preferred suppliers.

### **3. Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Regeneration Scrutiny Committee noted the progress within the report at its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.
- 3.2 This report provides an update on progress therefore there are no options for recommendation. The Executive Committee are asked to note progress of the Project.

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

- 4.1. Generation of renewable energy in Wales is supported and encouraged through legislation as follows:

Welsh Government Energy Policy Statement ‘A Low Carbon Revolution’ (2010) - Notes the potential involvement of WG in encouraging renewable energy industries in order to both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote sustainable economic growth.

#### Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- 4.2. Welsh Government ‘Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act’ 2015 – Large scale renewable energy is directly aligned with:

‘A prosperous Wales’ goal, striving towards creating an innovative, productive and low carbon society, which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

- 4.3. There is also a direct link to the well-being goal for ‘A globally responsible Wales’ in tackling climate change. The Act encourages long term generational thinking by public bodies to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

#### Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Corporate Plan Refresh 2020-2022

- 4.4. This topic supports the achievement of the Council’s Corporate Plan Refresh 2020-2022 in the following areas:

- To create strong and environmentally smart communities we are taking a strategic approach to the management of our land in different ways;
- To be a carbon neutral Council by 2030;
- To develop a portfolio of potential energy opportunities to deliver economic, business and community benefits; and
- To develop a more commercial organisation to generate income and deliver cost reductions to make local services sustainable and raise money to re-invest in our priorities.

#### Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan

- 4.5. In Blaenau Gwent generation of renewable energy development is supported within the LDP under LDP Strategic Policy 7 – Climate Change, which seeks to address the cause of climate change through ‘encouraging more of the County Borough’s electricity and heat requirements to be generated by renewable and low/zero carbon technologies’.
- 4.6. Development Management Policy 4 – Low and Zero Carbon Energy, also encourages major development proposals to incorporate schemes which generate energy from renewable sources.

#### Blaenau Gwent Energy Prospectus 2019

- 4.7. The project is one of a number identified within the Energy Prospectus endorsed by the Council’s Regeneration Scrutiny and Executive Committees.

#### Blaenau Gwent Decarbonisation Plan, 2020-2030

- 4.8. This project will also work towards addressing some of the key challenges identified within the Council’s decarbonisation plan 2020-2030. For the Council to become carbon neutral by 2030 we will have to exploit local opportunities for renewable generation and using energy differently.

### **5. Implications Against Each Option**

#### *Cost*

- 5.1. There have been no direct financial implications as a result of our involvement in the Smart Living Demonstration Programme. All work completed to date has been fully funded and commissioned via the Smart Living Team at Welsh Government. Existing staff resources have been utilised to support the project to date and this will continue to be the case over the next 12 months.
- 5.2. There are no direct financial implications for Stage 1 or the potential Stage 2 of WBRID as Welsh Government have committed research and development funding as noted above to fund the whole of the project prior to commercial purchase of any model developed during the research and development phase of the project.
- 5.3. Funding of £100,000 has been awarded to the Council from Welsh Government for the purposes of running the WBRID Challenge. If we successfully complete Phase 1 and receive approval to proceed to Phase 2 funding of up to £500,000 would be made available by Welsh Government.

#### *Risk including Mitigating Actions*

- 5.4. Throughout the Project a risk register will be maintained, with any high risks being reported within Regeneration Services Business Plan. A table containing initial risks for the project is included below.

Theme	Description	Likelihood (1 to 3)	Impact (1 to 5)	Status	Mitigation
Engagement	Blaenau Gwent businesses do not take advantage of bulk material, energy purchase	2	2	Medium	Miller research tested different methods of engagement to increase stakeholders part of phase 2 studies face to face engagement identified as a successful form of engagement increased communications with businesses to keep them updated on the project and progress Standalone energy event to bring businesses together - possibly create a network of businesses
Technology	Solutions do not provide as much improvement in energy performance as anticipated	2	3	Medium	AECOM collected further data around energy usage and performance in Phase 2B Further energy information to be collected to validate and model against original assumptions Pilot project carried out to test performance and consider how modelling / forecasting should be adapted
Procurement	Lack of interest from companies wishing to participate in this research project	2	1	Low	Promote using same methods as SBRI (Innovate UK) Work with KTN to promote the project Communications campaign developed to promote the project with potential suppliers

#### *Legal*

- 5.5. Across the industrial and commercial portfolio, we see mixed ownership (public, private, owner occupier) which adds complexity to project delivery. In some cases, where tenancies are in place there will be different forms of tenancy agreement which adds further layers of complexity around carrying out works.

### *Personnel*

- 5.6. The challenge will be project managed within Regeneration Services and will involve working with a number of teams including Economic Development, Estates, Legal and Community Services.

## **6. Supporting Evidence**

### *Performance Information and Data*

- 6.1. Once the project is established a performance framework will be developed and reported accordingly.

### *Expected outcome for the public*

- 6.2. Some of the many benefits of low cost, low carbon financial, technical and digital investment for the public will include benefit from economic development for the region. Businesses that invest in and deliver low carbon infrastructure would further sustain businesses through local energy supply and offer the potential to own and manage local energy generation assets as part of a partnership arrangement with the Council.
- 6.3. Local businesses would also have the opportunity to shape and support the development of any commercial offering and to support the facilitation role of the Council in attracting further inward investment into the region. The project can also enhance the reputation of Blaenau Gwent and move towards low carbon sustainable business parks as a unique selling point.
- 6.4. There is also an opportunity in the future for the Council to generate lower cost, locally sourced renewable energy for the benefit of residents to tackle fuel poverty, improve local energy generation and resale of surplus energy generation on Blaenau Gwent business parks to the local community.

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

- 6.5. Blaenau Gwent Council will continue to work with local business parks and carry out further engagement with building owners and tenants. The project will seek to bring together a range of partners to work collaboratively to assist Blaenau Gwent to meet its aspirations of Net Zero Business Parks.

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

- 6.6. The project will assist the Council with balancing its short term needs to identify areas for potential financial efficiency (reduced energy costs, digital efficiencies) both for its own business and property rental portfolio, alongside its long term support for businesses and community needs for a sustainable, low carbon future through local the development of energy generation.
- 6.7. Should this test also prove that the solution is replicable we would then look to consider scalability and replicability with some of our neighbouring Local Authority Partners. Blaenau Gwent has successfully led on joint Local Authority projects



and we could consider a similar approach towards deployment of the challenge solution.

*Collaboration / partnership working*

- 6.8. Business developments across Blaenau Gwent are in mixed ownership (Public, Private and Owner/Occupier) and this will require us to collaboratively work with each of the ownership groups if we are to fully achieve the aspiration of Net Zero Business Parks.

*Integration(across service areas)*

- 6.9. As outlined above work for this project will need to take place across multiple service areas. Service areas including Economic Development, Estates, Legal and Community Services will be included in discussions and invited to provide feedback on potential solutions.

## **7. Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1. As a result of receiving grant funding from Welsh Government to carry out the challenge we are required to report back on progress and seek approval for future stages of funding. A Stage One completion report is required at the end of Stage One.
- 7.2. Weekly meetings are held with the Lead Officer from Smart Living at Welsh Government and the other four challenge owners. These meetings are used to provide updates on progress, discuss risks and/or issues and discuss common themes that support Welsh Government in evaluating the success of the WBRID programme.

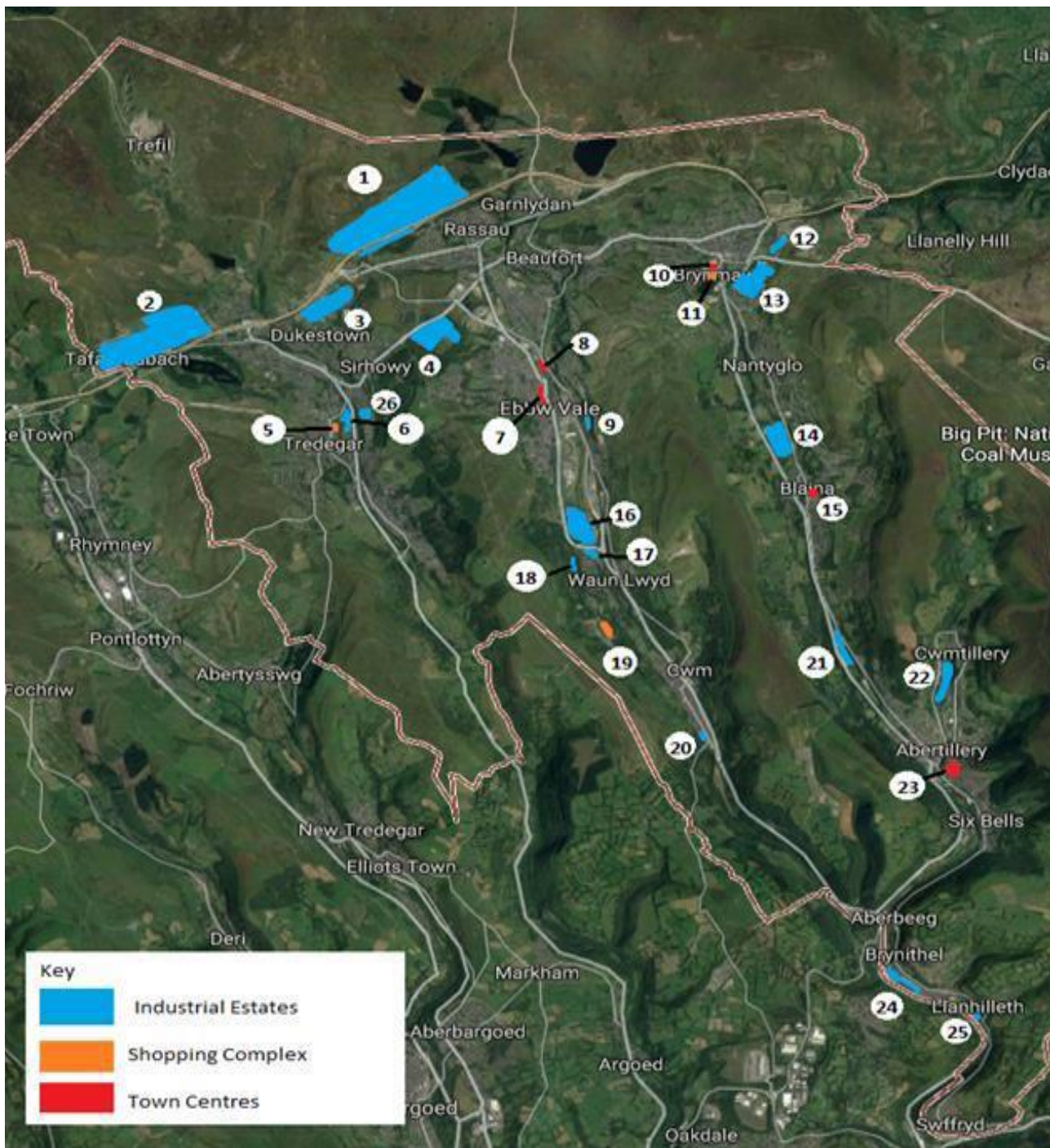
### **Background Documents /Electronic Links**

Appendix One – Business and Industrial Estates Across Blaenau Gwent

*Executive Committee Report, Energy Prospectus, 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019*

*Executive Committee Report, Energy Prospectus Annual Review, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021*

## Appendix One – Business and Industrial Estates across Blaenau Gwent



# Agenda Item 15

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 09.07.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

Report Subject: **Covid-19 Recovery - Economy**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**

Report Submitted by: **Owen Ashton, Service Manager Business & Regeneration**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
13.06.21	15.06.21	06.07.21			30.06.21	21.07.21		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a summary of work undertaken and proposals to support economic 'recovery' within Blaenau Gwent.

## 2. Scope and Background

### Background

- 2.1 Covid-19 has had an unprecedented impact on the global economy. Its effects will be felt for a number of years as the UK, Wales and Blaenau Gwent takes tentative steps towards 'recovery' from the global pandemic.
- 2.2 Studies have shown that the pandemic has had an uneven impact across the UK with some communities and sectors being disproportionately affected. The UK and Welsh Governments through 'furlough' and other schemes have attempted to reduce the impact of the pandemic, providing much needed support which has enabled some businesses to survive.
- 2.3 Despite this support, many communities and businesses face a challenging future, requiring fundamental shifts in where and the way in which they work. The successful roll-out of the vaccination programme provides hope for a return to some level of normality, however there is an emerging consensus that we may need to live with and adapt to Covid-19, its variants and future pandemics.

### The Challenge

- 2.4 The challenge for government, both national and local, and for communities and businesses is to understand and adapt to new ways of working, embrace and integrate some of the changes which have been enforced during the pandemic. A key part of this is to understand the impact that Covid-19 has had on local businesses and to work with businesses to collaboratively

identify support measures to create a more resilient and sustainable economy within Blaenau Gwent.

2.5 Fundamentally, this may need to start with agreeing on what we mean by 'recovery' – does it mean a return to a pre-Covid-19 economy or something different? We will also need to be driven by data and evidence which could be obtained from various sources, most importantly from businesses and our communities. Business feedback and engagement will be key to any attempts at 'recovery'.

2.6 We will also need to agree on key areas to focus on – these could be 'Town Centres' and 'Business Parks' within the county borough and supporting businesses within these areas to address a number of challenges:

- Digital maturity will be more important for business delivery across all sectors, and digital skills will become key.
- Plans for manufacturing moves to robotics, AI will be brought forward.
- On-shoring means more local supply chains will be sought from UK and EU by bigger businesses
- More resilient businesses may mean more storage required for finished products and raw materials
- Town centres will need a total rethink, as almost everything retail moves to on-line capability and hospitality venues will be the last to reopen with fewer staff
- As homeworking grows more quickly businesses change their working model and COVID proof spaces are the new office space

2.7 Alongside this, some of the responses to the challenges include actions across a range of partners and sectors including:

- Manufacturing tech advice, investment and skills
- Digital skills program across all sectors
- Supply chain support, sites and premises (on-shoring facilitation)
- Specific support for growth companies and R&D in BG
- Identify initiatives for 18-24 post-ed work related training (e.g. FJF)
- Build the Foundational Economy
- Widen accessibility through innovative/sustainable transport solutions
- Enable more start-ups especially town centre and on-line
- Progress with Test Facility as future facing anchor investment to BG
- Influence other economic recovery work in Wales and UK

2.8 There may be other actions that communities and businesses may see as more or equally as important – we want to understand what these are and how we can support businesses and communities.

#### The Next Steps

2.9 Members will recall a previous report to Council detailing proposals as part of the Blaenau Gwent Recovery Plan outlining the Council's approach. Tying in to the Recovery Plan, an Impact Assessment is currently being undertaken to establish a baseline and metrics, working closely with partners utilising

existing networks. The networks have already provided input into the actions identified in 2.7 which forms the basis of the emerging Impact Assessment and will continue to provide valuable data and insights to help shape and inform support programmes, metrics to be used, as well as providing sounding boards to test proposals and delivery agents.

2.10 We propose to continue engagement with these networks over the next few weeks to finalise the Impact Assessment which will feed into the Recovery Plan. However, a key challenge is that some businesses and the Council are in many ways still in a 'response' mode. Although many lessons have been learned, the opening up of the economy has only recently started and so it may take some time to fully reflect on and understand in detail the real impact of the pandemic and the steps needed.

2.11 The Council has already started this process and has been working with UK and Welsh Government to support businesses in a number of ways, for example the Regeneration department has worked closely with colleagues in Finance on administering Covid-19 relief funding on providing direct support as detailed below:

Grant scheme	No of Grants Awarded	Total Value of Grants
Self-Employment Bursary	30	£75,000.00
Freelancer & Cultural	74	£185,000.00
Freelancer & Cultural 'Top Up'	56	£140,000.00
Lockdown Discretionary	213	£420,500.00
Restrictions Discretionary (Round 1)	226	£452,000.00
Restrictions Discretionary (Round 2)	222	£444,000.00
	<b>821</b>	<b>£1,716,500.00</b>

2.12 This complemented by over £500,000 of funding via WG through its Valleys Taskforce and TRI programmes supporting Town Centre businesses to undertake improvements to Covid-proof their premises. In combination with other support programmes managed and administered with the Council's Finance team, local businesses have been provided with around £30m of Covid-19 support.

2.13 We are also in the process of submitting an application to the UK Government for the Community Renewal fund and will potentially be submitting an application for the Levelling Up fund. Collaboratively developing the Recovery

Plan will support these and other applications to UK and Welsh Government to facilitate economic recovery in Blaenau Gwent.

### 3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 This report was presented and supported by the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

3.2 Option 1 – Endorse the report and recommend any additional avenues of engagement and/or actions.

3.3 Option 2 – To not endorse the report.

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

4.1 The report supports the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-22 Outcome Statements:

- Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities
- Support a fairer sustainable economy and community

4.2 The Council's Well-being Plan for 2018-23 includes 5 Objectives. This project directly supports the objectives of creating 'safe and friendly communities' and 'forge new pathways to prosperity'.

### 5. **Implications Against Each Option**

#### ***Impact on Budget***

5.1 Should Option 1 be taken forward there should be no direct impact on Council budgets at this time in terms of work to be undertaken.

5.2 However, with the pandemic continuing, and its longer term impacts as yet not fully understood, there is likely to be an impact on the Council's budgets in terms of loss of income from service charges and rents as businesses and residents struggle with payments. For 2020/2021, the Economy Portfolio received funding from the Emergency Hardship fund totalling £164,000 for loss of income.

5.3 Whilst not fully quantifiable at this time, it needs to be acknowledged as a potential ongoing impact on the Council's budgets, however, the recovery work should assist in reducing wherever possible the impacts by working with and supporting businesses and the community.

#### 5.4 ***Risk***

Option 1 – The risks associated with Option 1 are that the Council may raise expectations on the extent of recovery that it can influence and may face

challenges in effectively engaging with businesses and communities, many of whom are still actively engaged in responding to the pandemic.

Option 2 – The risk with option 2 is reputational in that the Council may be seen to not attempting to work with businesses and communities and provide a framework for ‘recovery’.

#### 5.5 **Legal**

There are no legal implications anticipated at this stage and it is proposed that the engagement with businesses is undertaken on an informal basis.

#### 5.6 **Human Resources**

Staff within the Regeneration and other departments will work collaboratively on data collection, analysis and engagement with businesses and communities.

### 6. **Supporting Evidence**

#### 6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

The Recovery Plan and proposals will be evidence-led and data-driven.

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

The Recovery Plan will provide a framework and reference point for the public to see the collaborative work undertaken with businesses and communities.

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

Consultation, engagement and participation will form the central pillar of the Recovery Plan.

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

The Recovery Plan will provide a long-term framework to support business and communities

#### 6.5 **Preventative focus**

The Recovery Plan will hopefully establish measures and interventions to prevent similar pandemics having such an impact on the economy

#### 6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

Collaboration and Partnership working will be a central pillar of the Recovery Plan.

#### 6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

The nature of the work required to co-produce the Recovery Plan will involve input and expertise from across the Council.

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

An Equalities Impact Assessment screening is currently being undertaken.

### 7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 To be confirmed.



# Agenda Item 16

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 09.07.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**  
Date of meeting: **21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**  
Report Subject: **Flood Risk Management Plan (2016- 2022)**  
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. J. Wilkins, Executive Member Environment**  
Report Submitted by: **Head of Community Services, Clive Rogers  
Team Leader Natural Environment, W Jervis**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
22/06/21	24/06/21	06.07.21			19.07.21	21.07.21		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on progress made in delivery of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's Flood Management Plan of 2016 up to April 2021.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report provides the background to the Plan and summarises progress made on objectives and measures since its adoption, and approval by Welsh Government in 2016.
- 2.2 The Plan highlights the hazards and risk of flooding and sets out how the Authority will work with other parties and local communities to manage the risks.
- 2.3 The Plan sets out how over the six-year period, we will manage flooding so that the communities most at risk and the environment benefit the most.
- 2.4 The objectives outlined in the Borough's Flood Management Plan come under the headings: Social & Cultural, Economic, and Environmental
- 2.5 The above objectives have been further classed into 3 categories:
- Prevention (11 Measures)
  - Protection (15 Measures)
  - Preparedness (8 Measures)

To achieve the objectives under the headings and categories, the Plan identifies measures designed to reduce flooding.

- 2.6 Including the use of non-structural measures such as avoiding inappropriate development, and covering all aspects of flood risk management, including raising awareness of flooding and providing a better understanding of local flooding issues.

2.7 **Section 19 Flood Investigation Report for Storm Water Flooding at Meadow Street and Railway Street, Llanhilleth:**

The Section 19 Flood Investigation Report for Storm Water Flooding at Meadow Street and Railway Street, Llanhilleth on 15th to 17th February 2020 is currently being finalised and will be presented to scrutiny in due course.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Options Appraisal**

- **Option 1:** Preferred option; That Members accept the Report and progress made over the previous 12 months.
- **Option 2:** That Members do not accept the Report and recommend alternative actions going forward.

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

- The attached Appendix 2 is a table of the measures identified in the Plan. The table identifies the progress made since the Plan was adopted in December 2015, and also progress made since the last annual review in 2020.
- The measures evidenced in Appendix 2 demonstrates how the desired objectives of the Blaenau Gwent Well Being Goals, as well as the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act have been achieved

The findings of Appendix 2 can be summarised as follows:

4.1 **Prevention (BG01-04)**

- Undertook a number of CCTV and Man Entry surveys of our culvert inlets to inspect their condition and to understand the flood risk and associated issues that could occur so that appropriate action can be taken at numerous locations including.
  - i. Abertillery Old Ash Tip
  - ii. Abertillery Bowls Club
  - iii. HOV Culvert near Garnlydan.
  - iv. Melbourne Rd, Abertillery

4.2. **Undertook significant schemes to alleviate flooding at the following locations.**

- Ladies Row and King Street Tredegar.
- Culvert repairs at Victoria, Ebbw Vale.
- Remedial works at Cwmtillery Culvert.
- Remedial works to the embankment at Railway Terrace Aberbeeg.

4.3 **Smaller but no less urgent works were undertaken at the following locations:**

- New trash screens to culvert inlets at various locations.
- Land drainage for to stabilise landslip at Briery Hill. Ebbw Vale.

- Temporary flood relief works at Market Street, Tredegar.
- Holland Street, (School House) flood relief investigation and maintenance works.
- Melbourne Rd, Abertillery. Repairs to Drainage.
- Church Street additional drainage to relieve flooding.

4.4 Technical Services were successful in applying for 100% funded Welsh Government Revenue Grants to undertake the following works and objectives.

4.5	Ad Hoc, Small scale asset maintenance, inspection and recording	£80,453.10
	Man entry and CCTV drainage Surveys	£12,101.25
	Annual AMX Software License and training for new staff	£3,924.00
	Culvert Inlet Grid repairs and replacements and secondary grids	£8057.10
	Total value of works	£104,535.45

4.6 The following work was 85% Welsh Government funded. The remaining 15% was funded by other Welsh Government grants which were provided to enable councils to progress with our Flood risk management plan.

4.7	Scheme	Total expenditure	Value of Grant
	Ladies Row, King Street, Tredegar Flood Alleviation	£82,754	£70,341
	Remedial works to the embankment at Railway Terrace Aberbeeg	£33,035.	£28,080
	Remedial works at Cwmtillery Culvert	£86,205	£73,274
	Scour Remedial works at Victoria Culvert Ebbw Vale	£43,205	£36,724
	Total value of works	£245,199	£208,419

4.8 BGCBC also undertook the following actions as part of our statutory duties.

- 2,500+ culvert inspections for year 2020-21.
- 307 Con 29 Land Search requests relating to drainage.
- 108 Planning applications relating to drainage
- 210 Service requests for assistance relating to drainage.

#### 4.9 **Protection (BG 05-08)**

Further Schemes have taken place in various locations across the borough to help store water and slow down surface run-off, including Tree planting, Woodland Management, Green Infrastructure and footpath repairs. This was funded by Welsh Government Access improvement grants of approximately £68,000.

4.10 Since January 2019 BGCBC became the SAB (SuDS Approving Body) for the Blaenau Gwent area.

To enable us to undertake these duties we are presently working in partnership with Caerphilly CBC to deliver an effective service which is responsible for ultimately limiting the amount of runoff from developments directly into watercourses, and to ensure they are constructed in a responsible and sustainable manner, which will help towards the objectives of the plan.

- 4.11 The agreement with Caerphilly CBC for them to undertake the Technical Approvals on our behalf has been in place since the use of SuDS and their approval by the SAB become mandatory in January 2019. This is currently subject to review.

#### **Preparedness (BG09-13)**

The Authority continues to develop a response to flooding incidents and Multi-agency Tactical Emergency Management and Strategic Emergency Management training is undertaken on an annual basis.

There is also a Gwent Local Resilience Forum Recovery Plan in place.

### **5 Implications Against Each Option**

- 5.1 **Option 1:** That Members accept the Report and progress made over the previous 12 months.

5.2 **Implications:**

- i. Actions are not evenly distributed across the borough, as they are prioritised by risk.
- ii. Funding may not always be available to continue the delivery of the plan. therefore, actions identified in the plan may not be delivered.

- 5.3 **Option 2.** That Members do not accept the Report and recommend alternative actions going forward.

5.4 **Implications:**

- i. Additional funding may be required to undertake alternative actions.
- ii. Grant funding may not be available for alternative actions.

### **6. Supporting Evidence**

- 6.1 **Adoption of the 2016 Flood Risk Management Plan primarily contributes to meeting the following priorities:**

Corporate Plan Priority:

- Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities
- To improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors.

- 6.2 Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan:

Adoption of the Flood Risk Management Plan 2016 – 2021 will help provide the following objectives:

- The best start in life for everyone
- Safe and friendly communities
- To look after and protect the environment
- To forge new pathways to prosperity

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

By continuing to work towards the objectives set out in our Flood Risk Management Plan BGCBC will maximise its contributions to the Well-being goals.

### 6.3 **The Future Generations Act**

The Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Flood plan achieves the goals of The Future Generations Act by improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.

” It sets out five ways of working needed for Public Bodies to achieve the seven well-being goals.

### 6.4 **Long-term**

The importance of balancing short-term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs

### 6.5 **Integration**

Considering how the public body’s well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

### 6.6 **Involvement**

The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves

### 6.7 **Collaboration**

Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.

### 6.8 **Prevention**

How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objective.

## 7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The identified objectives and achievements towards the plan are continually assessed by officers responsible for its delivery.

7.2 The achievements towards the plan will continue to be reported annually through scrutiny as it has done for the previous 2 years since its inception.

### **Background Documents /Electronic Links**

Appendix 1 – Wellbeing Goals

Appendix 2 – Annual Review

- Flood and Water Management Act 2010

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

BGCBC Flood Risk Management Plan

[https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Resident/Planning/Floods\\_FRMP\\_complete.pdf](https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Resident/Planning/Floods_FRMP_complete.pdf)

•Flood Risk Management Strategy

[https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Resident/Planning/Flood\\_Risk\\_Strategy.pdf](https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Resident/Planning/Flood_Risk_Strategy.pdf)

Assess how well your project / activity will result in multiple benefits for our communities and contribute to the national well-being goals.		
Description of the Well-being goals	How will your project / activity deliver benefits to our communities under the national well-being goals?	Is there anyway to maximise the benefits or minimise any negative impacts to our communities (and the contribution to the national well-being goals)?
<p><b>A prosperous Wales</b> An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.</p>	<p>The plan recognises the role of Green Infrastructure in helping to reduce the level of flood risk and the severity. Considering the issue of climate change and flood risk within or schools NRM programme will engender our Future Generations with a clear understanding of climate change issues and Flood Risk</p>	<p>The delivery of Green Infrastructure are a relatively low cost, sustainable option, but they are limited by the resource availability. Our NRM programme optimises progress</p>
<p><b>A resilient Wales</b> A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).</p>	<p>The Flood Risk Management Plan's measures will reduce the risk of flooding and by utilising Green Infrastructure to good effect will add value in terms of enhancing our biodiverse natural environment, and increase resilience to change.</p>	<p>Engaging with our communities and encouraging active participation in the understanding and management of our Natural GreenSpaces will maximise benefits.</p>
<p><b>A healthier Wales</b> A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.</p>	<p>By reducing flood risk we are reducing stress and worry for people in these areas and thus maximising their mental well-being. Encouraging active participation in the management and use of our Green spaces has proven health and wellbeing benefits.</p>	<p>Our communities can be encouraged through initiatives such as Go Green 4 Health , Patient Referrals by GP's and general volunteering opportunities in order to maximise health benefits.</p>

Description of the Well-being goals	How will your project / activity deliver benefits to our communities under the national well-being goals?	Is there anyway to maximise the benefits or minimise any negative impacts to our communities (and the contribution to the national well-being goals)?
<p><b>A more equal Wales</b> A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).</p>	<p>Active community engagement in Green Infrastructure initiatives will provide opportunities for all citizens to participate regardless of background. Project delivery through Probation Services, Go Green 4 Health etc focus on engaging with hard to reach groups of people.</p>	<p>Promotion and engagement of events to increase levels of engagement. Networking to encourage participation levels.</p>
<p><b>A Wales of cohesive communities</b> Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.</p>	<p>Through working with communities to enable them to respond to flood risk and encouraging events and activities that focus on local green spaces help to help to develop develop cohesive communities.</p>	<p>Supporting local Groups to take an active role in the local environment will maximise the benefits</p>
<p><b>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</b> A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.</p>	<p>Establishing local groups to take an active role in their local environmental quality will help to underpin local pride and cultural appreciation</p>	<p>Supporting local Groups to take an active role in the local environment will maximise the benefits</p>
<p><b>A globally responsible Wales</b> A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.</p>	<p>By raising awareness and building resilience to flood risk we are making a positive contribution to global well-being.</p>	<p>Supporting local Groups to take an active role in the local environment will maximise the benefits</p>



Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
<b>MEASURE BG01: We will avoid inappropriate development in flood risk areas</b>							
BG01.1	Adopt the Local Development Plan and implement Policy SP7 which directs new development away from high flood risk areas	Prevention M21	S1, S2, S3	Work with others to avoid inappropriate development	2016-2021	The Local Development Plan has been adopted and Strategic Policy SP7 is used to direct development away from flood risk areas. Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 was implemented in January 2019 and BGCBC are a SuDS Approval Body (SAB). This means that planning consents have now become completely separate from consents relating to Drainage.	SP7 continues to direct new development away from high flood risk areas.
BG01.2	Raise awareness in Planning Committees when developments potentially impact on flood risk areas.	Prevention M21	S1, S2, S3, Ec2	Work with others to avoid inappropriate development	2016-2021	Development which potentially impact on flood risk areas are identified within planning committee reports	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has been set up as a SuDS Approval Body (SAB). This means that planning consents have now become completely separate from consents relating to Drainage.  The Planning Committee continues to be made aware

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
							when applications have implications on flood risk areas.
BG02.1	Adopt the Local Development Plan and implement Policy SP7 which includes a requirement to incorporate measures in design and construction to reduce the effects of flooding. This will ensure buildings are designed to reduce the effects of flooding	Prevention M23	S2, Ec1, Ec1, Ec2	Promote flood resilience and flood proofing	2016-2021	<p>The Local Development Plan has been adopted and Strategic Policy SP7 is used to ensure buildings are designed to reduce the effects of flooding</p> <p>Due to the implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 planning consents have now become completely separate from consents relating to Drainage.</p>	Where less vulnerable development is permitted in flood risk areas, where necessary, buildings continue to be designed to reduce the effects of flooding.
BG02.2	Promote appropriately designed developments in relation to site levels, creation of high ground and setting floor levels	Prevention M23	S1, S2, Ec2	Promote flood resilience and flood proofing	2016-2021	Advice from NRW on appropriate ground levels and floor level is taken into account in the planning application process. Blaenau Gwent County Borough is now a SuDS Approval Body (SAB). This means that planning consents has become completely separate from consents relating to	Advice from NRW on appropriate ground levels and floor level continues to be taken into account in the planning application process.

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
						Drainage	
BG02.3	Increase approaches in road schemes to utilise materials which provide more resilience to flooding incidents where they are likely to occur.	Prevention M23	S4, Ec2, En2	Promote flood resilience and flood proofing	2016-2021	<p>The Drainage Officer previously provided advice on appropriate design for Highway schemes, building in green infrastructure solutions as appropriate.</p> <p>This measure has been largely overtaken by Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Therefore planning consents have now become completely separate from consents relating to Drainage.</p>	This measure is ongoing
BG03.1	Develop reporting system to register details of events at the time of flooding incidents.	Prevention M24	Ec2	Learn from flood events	2016-2021	<p>funding acquired from Welsh Government allowed us to purchase flood management software which will improve the accuracy of recording flooding incidents Software and training was provided in March 2017 enabling details of flood events to be recorded on the software. The loss of a staff member in 2018</p>	The register and software remain in place. The software licence continues to be funded by Welsh Government Flood Grants.

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
						reduced input into the database to a minimum.	
BG03.2	Develop and maintain a register of flood assets.	Prevention M24	Ec2	Learn from flood events	2016-2021	funding acquired from Welsh Government allowed us to purchase flood management software which improved the accuracy of recording our Assets. Software and training was provided in March 2017 and details of flood events were recorded on the software The loss of a staff member in 2018 reduced inputting into the database to a minimum.	A new apprentice Drainage Engineer was appointed in 2020 and software training has taken place.  Work to update the database has recommenced and will be continuously updated. Whist resources permit.
BG03.3	Develop a maintenance recording system and ensure these are informed by the register of flooding incidents.	Prevention M24	Ec2	Flood Forecasting warning & incident management	2016-2021	Welsh Government funding enabled the purchase of funding acquired from Welsh Government allowed us to purchase flood management software designed to improve the efficiency of maintenance schedule Software and training was provided in	A new trainee officer has now been appointed and given further training. this has enabled the database to be updated

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
						March 2017 and details of flood events were recorded on the software. Inputting of data ceased due to lack of capacity during 2019-20.	
BG03.4	Carry out a risk assessment of all critical culverts and flood assets, as identified through the register of flooding incidents, maintenance records or flood assets, and prepare an action plan to address any unacceptable risks as a result of the review.	Prevention M24	Ec2	Modelling & Hydrology	2016-2021	<p>Progress has been made with T98 condition assessments of all critical and significant culvert resulting in repairs and replacements of a number of inlets.</p> <p>Funding has also enabled us to undertake CCTV surveys on a number of culverts, resulting in work to address unacceptable risk</p>	<p>We have undertaken a number of CCTV and man entry inspections throughout the borough.</p> <p>In 2020 a number of catchment studies were undertaken to inform us if the existing culverts are able to cope with the extra demand of new developments and the resulting additional impermeable surfaces which increase flow at culvert inlets.</p>
BG04.1	Ensuring flood events are recorded in line with the form identified in PRFA	Prevention M24	Ec2	Flood Forecasting warning & incident management	2016-2021	<p>A system originally put in place for the recording of flood incidents onto spreadsheets. Software and training has since been provided and details of flood events were recorded on the software. This measure is</p>	<p>Since the loss of the officer progress on this aspect has been reverted to the spreadsheet until it can be input into the software database.</p> <p>A new trainee officer has now</p>

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
						ongoing.	been appointed and training has been undertaken paid for by 100% Welsh Government funding.  Work to update the database is ongoing.
BG04.2	Implementing a geographical database of flood events to inform future mapping of flood risk areas	Prevention M24	Ec2	Flood Forecasting warning & incident management	2016-2021	<p>Flood risk management software has enabled us to commence input of flooding locations and improve the efficiency and accuracy of mapping flood risk areas.</p> <p>Lack of resources has limited progress with data input, and as a result has reverted to the spreadsheet until it can be input into the software database.</p> <p>A new trainee officer was appointed and training is to be arranged so that he and other members of staff are able to input the data on to our new software</p>	<p>Officers have now received training paid for by 100% Welsh Government funding.</p> <p>Providing we have the resources, work to update the database will be ongoing. It is anticipated that this will be continuous as new flood events occur.</p>

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
BG05.1	Delivery of the Blaenau Gwent Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), specifically HAP1, Wet woodlands, HAP4, Wetlands and HAP 5 Rivers and Streams.	Protection M31	S1, Ec1, En2	Ensure appropriate floodplain compensation	2016-2021	<p>Working with community groups, schools and external charities including pond restoration and creation.</p> <p>Volunteers participated in the vegetation clearance</p> <p>In 2018 invertebrate monitoring and training has been given to new volunteers.</p> <p>Several areas covering all three rivers in Blaenau Gwent are now monitored on a monthly basis.</p> <p>Trigger levels are set so any concerns with water quality are raised immediately.</p> <p>Monthly visits to the rivers also ensure that issues noted while on site are reported.</p> <p>An invasive weed treatment programme was continued that identified and treated Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Restricted due to Covid Restrictions</p> <p>Restricted due to Covid Restrictions</p> <p>Restricted due to Covid Restrictions</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Treatment ongoing where invasive species are reported.</p>

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
						<p>found on the Rivers Sirhowy, Ebbw Fawr and Ebbw Fach that flow from Blaenau Gwent into Caerphilly.</p> <p>Himalayan Balsam was also treated in a number of locations</p>	
BG05.2	Consider/Review the designation and management of Local Nature Reserves (LNR) where they assist in flood prevention.	Protection M31	S1, Ec1, En2	Ensure appropriate floodplain compensation	2016-2021	<p>Biodiversity Action Plans have been updated to accommodate Action in the Flood risk management strategy, incorporating planting schemes and habitat management which help to alleviate flooding. BGCBC are contributing to the water management on local nature reserves in line with the ecological management plan in collaboration with internal teams and community groups.</p>	Ongoing



Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
BG05.3	Consider planning requirements for wetland habitat creation as part of the Development Management Process.	Protection M31	En2	Ensure appropriate floodplain compensation	2016-2021	Opportunities for wetland habitat creation are being considered within the development management process. The options are always discussed with developers when appropriate.	The implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 has ensured that the requirements for wetland habitat creation as part of the Development Management Process are considered separately as a matter of course.
BG05.4	Consider the designation and management of existing wetland areas where they assist in flood prevention.	Protection M31	Ec2, En2	Ensure appropriate floodplain compensation	2016-2021	A number of pond restorations schemes have been identified to build resilience to climate change and help combat the risk of flooding including; Peacehaven, Tredegar Business Park, Beaufort ponds Six Bells and Trevor Rowson.  River clearance involving the removal of large quantities of debris was undertaken at sites throughout Blaenau Gwent.	Similar works are ongoing but greatly reduced due to restrictions imposed by Covid.

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
BG05.5	BGCBC will encourage developers to incorporate wetland and other natural attenuation schemes in new development through guidance, Policies and pre-application discussions with Planning Control case officers.	Protection M31	S2, Ec2, En2	Ensure appropriate floodplain compensation	2016-2021	<p>2016-17 We have developed draft supplementary planning guidance for biodiversity which considers how to incorporate wetland and other natural attenuation schemes in new developments.</p> <p>2017-18 The above is still relevant but we have seen a fall in enquiries for major housing and other schemes which is when these requirements would become relevant.</p>	Following the implementation of schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 the issues are automatically considered as part of the SAB application process.
<b>MEASURE BG06: We will increase approaches that utilise the natural environment, like adopting soft engineering in place of traditional solutions, managing of the land to reduce storm runoff, creating more wetlands to store water</b>							
BG06.1	Identify contributions to delivery of the Woodlands for Wales Strategy (Welsh Gov) e.g. Shelter belt planting opportunities.	Protection M31	Ec2, En2	Sustainable woodland and forestry management	2016-2021	<p>A number of woodland planting schemes delivered on school sites</p> <p>1500 trees planted as part of the Sirhowy Valley planting scheme around Peacehaven.</p> <p>Further tree planting took place</p>	<p>Schemes delivered on the following sites:</p> <p>Woodland management at Cwmtillery. £8,500</p> <p>Tree Planting Blaenau Gwent,</p>

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
						<p>during Dec 2019 at Bryn Bach Park</p> <p>Sirhowy Community Woodland Group new woodland Planting – 500 native trees planted.</p> <p>2 Ha of infected Larch clear-felled at Bryn Bach Park and replaced with 5000 native this will build in resilience to climate change, and involved the use of volunteers from 4 local schools and the local community.</p> <p>155meters of hedgerow planting took place</p>	Blaenau Gwent Green Infrastructure repairs undertaken with a total value of
BG06.2	Review the existing management of ordinary water courses in regard to controlling invasive weeds.	Protection M31	Ec2, En2	RBMP: Manage invasive non-native species	2016-2021	26 Km of water courses monitored for the presence of Japanese Knotweed with 65 individual sites being treated (Autumn 2016). The sites have been revised and treated where required in September 2017.	Similar works are ongoing but more reliant on individual reports of sightings due to restrictions imposed by Covid

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
						In 2018-19 an ongoing invasive weed treatment programme was continued which treated Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, and Himalayan Balsam	
BG06.3	Review the existing management plans for Local Nature Reserves which assist in storing and filtering water.	Protection M31	Ec2, En2	RBMP: Improve flows and water levels	2016-2021	Working with our community groups the LNR management plans form the basis of actions on site. Water courses, ponds and lakes are considered to maximise their potential for storing and filtering water	This measure is ongoing in collaboration with the borough ecologist, but greatly reduced due to restrictions imposed by Covid and resulting lack of human resource.
BG06.4	When designing streetscape works consideration will be given to incorporating a greater area of tree planting and permeable areas.	Protection M31	S4, Ec2, En2	RBMP: Reduce impacts of other physical modifications	2016-2021	Consideration is given to the inclusion of tree planting and permeable areas in all development applications.  during 2017- 18, 131 planning applications responded to and opportunities to include additional tree planting included where possible.	Following the implementation of schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 the incorporation of a greater area of tree planting and permeable areas are automatically considered as part of the SAB application process.

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
BG06.5	Identify opportunities for planting to stabilise river banks.	Protection M31	Ec2, En2	RBMP: Reduce impacts of other physical modifications	2016-2021	<p>We worked with NRW, Groundwork Wales and volunteers at Marine Colliery on bank stabilisation project, using native woodland species (500 native trees planted).</p> <p>Aberbeeg cycle bridge has included bank stabilisation via green engineering and native woodland planting on the embankment. (500 native trees)</p> <p>No further projects delivered in 2019 -20</p>	Due to restrictions imposed by Covid and the resulting reduction of resources No further projects delivered in 2020 -21
<b>MEASURE BG07: deploying the sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) approach for surface water management for both new and existing developments</b>							
BG07.1	Adopt the Local Development Plan and implement Policy DM1 which requires	Protection M34	Ec1, Ec2	Support implementation of SUDs	2016-2021	The LDP is a key Council Policy in terms of Development Control. Policy DM1 is considered in all development applications (378	Following the implementation of schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 the reduction of surface water

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
	proposals to reduce surface water run off through minimising an increase in impermeable surfaces and using Sustainable Drainage systems, where appropriate.					applications considered for 2016)	run of by the introduction of more permeable areas are automatically considered as part of the SAB application process.
BG07.2	Encourage developers through pre-application discussions to use sustainable drainage systems pending the introduction of the new SuDS regime	Protection M34	En2	Support implementation of SUDs	2016-2021	The use of SUDs is being considered through the development control process. However we are finding developers are not buying in 100% to the principle until it becomes a mandatory requirement.	Following the implementation of schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 the incorporation SuDS are automatically considered as part of the SAB application process.

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
BG07.3	Specify greater use of SuDS systems for new developments as conditions of planning consent.	Protection M34	S1, S2, En2	Support implementation of SUDs	2016-2021	Developers are encouraged to adopt the SuDS management train. However, as it is not yet a statutory requirement we have not attached conditions requiring SUDs but we do attach informative notes to permissions advocating its use	Following the implementation of schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 the incorporation SuDS are automatically specified as part of the SAB conditions.
<b>MEASUREBG08: Identifying and protecting areas suitable for inundation and water storage to prevent flooding elsewhere</b>							
BG08.1	Identify areas suitable for inundation and water storage.	Protection M31	Ec1, En2	Identify opportunities for floodplain restoration	2016-2021	No progress has been made in this area at present due to lack of capacity.	Due to the topography of Blaenau Gwent there are limited inundation areas for consideration

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
<b>MEASUREBG09: Enable those at risk of flooding to play a proactive role in shaping the flood risk management service they receive</b>							
BG09.1	Develop community resilience schemes for areas at risk of flooding	Preparedness M43	S1, S2, S3	Provide service to local resilience forums	2016-2021	No further work undertaken at present. National guidance on community resilience has recently been issued by the Cabinet Office. This is currently being considered on a Multi-Agency basis as to what community resilience work is currently undertaken, and what additional work can be done with current capacity (not necessarily solely flood related).	No further progress made in 2020 – 2021.



Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
BG09.2	Ensuring wider awareness of individual risk to increase levels of preparedness and planning for flooding events	Preparedness M43	S1, S3, Ec1	Raise awareness of flood risk issues	2016-2021	<p>Information on flood risk is now available on various websites (BGCBC, Gwent Local Resilience Forum, Natural Resources Wales). Updates to BGCBC web site are applied as necessary</p> <p>In 2020 Progress was limited due to the lockdown and social distancing regulations related to the Covid 19 Virus</p> <p>Progress is also limited due to the Civil Contingencies Team only having capacity to work on COVID-19.</p>	No further progress made in 2020 – 2021.
<b>MEASURE BG10: Improve the response to flooding incidents by the emergency response organisations, as well as individuals and businesses</b>							
BG10.1	Ensure lessons from flooding incidents in this and other areas are captured	Preparedness M42	Ec1, Ec2	Learn from flood events	2016-2021	As a result of the flood report forms we are investigating each event of flooding to identify the source and take measures to prevent future occurrences.	<p>This measure is ongoing.</p> <p>Whereas all flooding issues are routinely investigated to an appropriate level. A section 19 Report is a more in depth investigation into serious</p>

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
							flooding events. BGCBC is presently finalising its Section 19 investigation of the flood event at Llanhilleth in February 2020 and will be published on the authority website.
BG10.2	Appropriate trained staff to ensure awareness of roles, responsibilities and an effective response for those involved in flood response.	Preparedness M42	Ec1, Ec2	Work closely with NRW	2016-2021	Multi agency Tactical Emergency Management (Head of Service) and Strategic Emergency Management (Corporate Management Team) training is undertaken on an annual basis.  Relevant training has been undertaken every year, and all staff with a strategic or tactical role have been trained. Training for 2020 is postponed due to COVID-19	No further progress made in 2020 – 2021.

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
<b>MEASURE BG11: Ensure effective recovery arrangements are in place and supported by all relevant parties</b>							
BG11.1	Involvement in multi-agency recovery planning, ensuring plans are tested for suitability	Preparedness M42	Ec1, Ec2	Provide flood incident response service	2016-2021	A Gwent Local Resilience Forum Recovery plan is in place. This is updated on a 3 yearly basis, and Civil Contingencies are involved in both the development of these arrangements and plan validation.  The Recovery Plan will be tested through recovery of COVID-10	No further progress made in 2020 – 2021.
<b>MEASURE BG12: Develop better flood forecasting and warning system</b>							
BG12.1	Developing a consistent approach to recording of flood events and flood assets.	Preparedness M41	Ec2	Flood Forecasting warning & incident management	2016-2021	In 2016 we were mostly recording data with a pen and paper and simple excel databases of flood events and of our culvert inlet inspection regime.  As of Jan 2017 a new software package, in line with NRW requirements for recording data.  2017 -18 software installed for the	In 2020 Software training was provided for a number of staff and the inputting of data has commenced. Primarily to record flood assets on to the software.  Flood events have been collated from a number of different formats and input onto an excel database. These will ultimately

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
						recording of floods and we have commenced the inputting of data However this was limited due to the lack of trained staff. recourses were limited due to training	be transferred to our AMX software.
BG12.2	Develop a communication strategy for at-risk communities where risks that cannot be immediately reduced are communicated to the Emergency Planning Team and affected businesses or residents.	Preparedness M43	S1, S2, Ec2	Flood Forecasting warning & incident management	2016-2021	No progress has been made in this area at present due to lack of capacity.  However, There is a resilience group in Cwm set up by NRW.	No further progress made in 2020 – 2021.
<b>MEASURE BG13: Improve communication and support to residents, businesses and communities</b>							
BG13.1	Set up a "Flood Risk Community Engagement Group" to help communicate flooding and flood risk to residents, businesses,	Preparedness M44	S1, S2	Raise awareness of flood risk issues	2016-2021	No progress has been made in this area at present due to lack of capacity.	No further progress made in 2020 – 2021.

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2020	Progress 2020-2021
	community etc.						

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# Agenda Item 17

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 09.07.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**  
Date of meeting: **21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

Report Subject: **Local Air Quality Progress Report**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J. Wilkins – Executive Member Environment**

Report Submitted by: **David Thompson – Service Manager, Public Protection**

Report Written by: **Tim Griffin – Specialist Environmental Health Officer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
25/5/21		06.07.21			June 21	July 21		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform members of the findings of the Local Air Quality Progress Report produced in fulfilment of the statutory requirements of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 for the calendar year of 2019.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Environmental Health Section carries out air quality monitoring at 27 locations within the borough for Nitrogen Dioxide. The results indicated that the Nitrogen Dioxide levels at each of the monitoring locations were considerably below the national air quality objective for Nitrogen Dioxide in 2019.
- 2.2 The 2019 Air Quality Progress Report for Blaenau Gwent CBC was submitted to Welsh Government in December 2020. The submission date for the annual air quality progress report is normally September each year but an extension for submission of the report was agreed with Welsh Government due to the increased work volumes as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic. The report contains the latest air quality data for the calendar year of 2019 applicable to the County Borough and provides current information relating to any new local developments or issues that may have an impact on air quality.
- 2.3 Air Quality in Blaenau Gwent continues to be generally good. As in previous years, the report concludes that it is unlikely that any of the air quality objectives that the Council are required to have regard to, are being exceeded or will be exceeded within the Borough and therefore there is no need for any further Detailed Assessment for any pollutant nor a need to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).
- 2.4 The report was accepted by Welsh Government in February 2021.

### 3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 That Executive Committee notes the content of the 2019 Air Quality Progress Report for Blaenau Gwent CBC in relation to the continued monitoring and ongoing review of air quality within Blaenau Gwent by the Environmental Health Section in fulfilment of the Authority's statutory duties in compliance with Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.

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

- 4.1 This is a statutory duty in accordance with Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.
- 4.2 This topic supports the achievement of the Blaenau Gwent Well-being plan to look after and protect the environment by ensuring the air quality in our area remains at a good standard.

### 5. **Implications Against Each Option**

#### 5.1 *Impact on Budget*

All costs relating to undertaking this work and producing the report are met from existing Environmental Health budgets.

#### 5.2 *Risk*

This is a statutory duty in accordance with Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. Local authorities are required to review and assess air quality within their areas. Failure to do so will result in both significant legal and reputational risks.

#### 5.3 *Legal*

This air quality work is carried out to ensure the Authority complies with its statutory duties.

#### 5.4 *Human Resources*

All work relating to the fulfilment of the Authority's statutory obligations with regards to Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 will continue to be undertaken by existing Officers within the Environmental Health Section.

### 6. **Supporting Evidence**

#### 6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

The 2020 Air Quality Progress Report is the latest in the series of reports produced in fulfilment of the Authority's statutory duty with respects to Local Air Quality Management. The full report is available on the Authority's website by way of the link at the end of this report.



- 6.1.1 The current National Air Quality Standards to which the Authority must have regard to relate to the following pollutants: Benzene, 1,3 Butadiene, Carbon Monoxide, Particulate Matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) & (PM 2.5), Lead, Sulphur Dioxide and Nitrogen Dioxide. Each pollutant has an evidenced adverse health impact above certain levels, the standards reflect levels at which the risk of such adverse health impacts are minimised.
- 6.1.2 The current 2020 report contains the latest air quality monitoring data for the calendar year of 2019 applicable to the County Borough, and provides current information relating to any new local developments or issues that may have an impact upon air quality.
- 6.1.3 Examples of new local developments which were considered as part of the review and assessment process and which are highlighted in the 2020 report include the ongoing works at the A465 (Heads of the Valleys Road) duelling scheme and new commercial developments which have required an environmental permit within the Borough.
- 6.1.4 The main potential air quality impacts, based on the information available at the time of the 2020 report, which were arising from developments such as the A465 duelling scheme, were associated with increased road traffic emissions. Nitrogen dioxide is one of the main pollutants associated with vehicle movements and is also a good surrogate indicator for levels of other pollutants, such as Sulphur Dioxide, which is also associated with road traffic emissions. As a result of the review and assessment of the new local developments, additional Nitrogen Dioxide monitoring sites were put in place at sites of relevant public exposure. To-date monitoring results from these locations indicate that the pollution levels at all sites are well below the prescribed Air Quality Standard for Nitrogen Dioxide. Information relating to the location of all the active Nitrogen Dioxide monitoring sites within the Borough together with the monitoring results for the calendar year of 2019 and previous years can be found, in detail, in the 2020 Air Quality Progress Report.
- 6.1.5 The revised guidance issued by Welsh Government in 2017 identified schools as having a unique role to play in local air quality management for two particular reasons. The first is the contribution made by the “school run” to the levels of air pollution and traffic congestion on roads within school catchment areas during term time rush hours. The second is the potential for schools to help educate children and parents on the issues around air quality.
- 6.1.6 In January 2020, Environmental Health began air quality monitoring at a further 2 schools within the borough which are-
- Deighton Primary School, Tredegar.
  - Abertillery Learning Community, Six Bells Campus, (Primary School), Abertillery.

The other schools that air quality monitoring is currently being carried out at are-

- Bryn Bach Primary School, Tredegar.
- Georgetown Primary School, Tredegar.
- Ebbw Fawr Learning Community, Primary Phase, Ebbw Vale.
- St Mary's RC Primary School, Brynmawr.
- Abertillery Learning Community, Tillery Street Campus, (Primary School), Abertillery.

The results of the monitoring at all of the schools have so far been all below the air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide.

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

This report will reassure the public that the air quality within our borough is of a good standard.

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

The air quality monitoring is carried out at a variety of locations including domestic properties, schools and community buildings and all of the monitoring results and air quality reports are available on the council's website.

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

By ensuring we maintain good air quality within the borough we are protecting the public health of future generations.

#### 6.5 *Preventative focus*

The Environmental Health Section take proactive steps to prevent the deterioration of our air quality by working closely with the Authority's planning section to identify developments and industrial processes prior to their introduction.

#### 6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working*

The Planning section and the Environmental Health section work closely together to monitor developments in the area that may have an impact on air quality.

#### 6.7 *Integration (across service areas)*

This report does not impact on other service areas.

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

No negative effects for protected characteristics.

## 7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 This work will continue to be monitored by the environmental health section and routinely reported to scrutiny and executive committee.

### **Background Documents / Electronic Links**

The full report, and all previous air quality reports, are available on the Authority's website by way of the following link:

<http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/resident/environmental-health/pollution/air-quality/>

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# Agenda Item 18

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 09.07.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

Report Subject: **Education Directorate – Recovery and Renewal Plan**

Portfolio Holder: **Executive Member of Education, Cllr. Joanne Collins**

Report Submitted by: **Head of School Improvement and Inclusion, Luisa Munro-Morris and Service Manager - Education Transformation and Business Change, Claire Gardner**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
27.5.21	3.6.21	06.07.21			22.6.21	21.07.21		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Executive Committee with an update on the Education Directorate's identified priorities for recovery and renewal, as part of the response to the COVID-19 situation.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the Corporate Director of Education provides a verbal update to Scrutiny Committee regarding the response to the COVID-19 emergency. In addition, Education has reported on key outcomes, challenges and implications at each stage of the response, including the repurposing and subsequent reopening of schools.

- 2.2 This report provides an overview of progress made during the planning phase of Education recovery, along with information on identified priorities for recovery and renewal. The draft recovery and renewal plan is in development and will be a working document, which outlines how the Council will continue to support schools, both during and beyond the pandemic. It is, however, highly likely that we will continue to move between alert levels and thus response and recovery throughout the remainder of this and the next academic year. Therefore, an effective approach to business continuity at each level is required. This is dealt with via the development and review of local COVID-19 Education Guidance document, operational plans and risk assessments. It is also a key feature of the aforementioned plan. An alert level information paper has been produced, which details the operational implications and changes at each stage (please refer to **Appendix 1** for more information).

## 2.3 Impact Assessment

Until the latter part of Spring-term, the Education Directorate was firmly focused on working with and supporting schools to continue to effectively adapt and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. A significant shift in practice, delivery and learning has occurred throughout the course of the pandemic, affecting every aspect of education and all associated provision. Therefore,

in order to inform the development of a recovery and renewal plan, the Education Directorate undertook a detailed Impact Assessment to identify key impacts on education from the COVID-19 emergency. Each impact has been RAG rated to measure its seriousness. The following impacts have been identified (please refer to **Appendix 2** for more information):

- 2.4
- **Learners** - Education, social, emotional, physical and mental health implications (short and long-term).
  - **Vulnerable learners** - For those with disabilities and additional needs, provision and processes have been restricted.
  - **School staff** - Professional development, social, emotional, physical/mental health and general wellbeing in line with the need to adapt to blended learning. Staff childcare implications relating to school closure. LA's and schools have been required to establish and implement control and safety measures to support clinically vulnerable staff. This has impacted upon both staff and school operations.
  - **Childcare** - After school and pre-school provision which has been reduced and/or is not available due to COVID restrictions
  - **Education staff training** - Staff training needs aligned to operations are not all currently adapted to be delivered online e.g. first aid
  - **Education assets and site management** - Statutory functions, testing and inspection (Health and Safety, Fire Risk Assessment, maintenance and site management, ventilation), operations are regularly reviewed in line with the latest guidance and governed by risk assessments
  - **School operations** – Catering, cleaning and access to school sites, movement in and around the school, trips and visits, visitors, refuse, PPE and resources are all under continual review. These areas are subject to risk assessment and reduced operation in line with the COVID alert level implementation. Changes to the school day have been implemented throughout the school estate to support staggered start and finish times. Changes to statutory functions and regulations which affect school operation e.g. school admissions. ICT infrastructure, devices, access to resources, systems and software for both pupils and staff in line with digital exclusion and blended learning are continually reviewed to support inclusion. Home to school and post 16 transport operations, have been restricted, reconfigured and subject to detailed risk assessment.
  - **School support services** - School support service operation i.e. Educational Psychology, ALN, Social Services etc. has been prohibited on site due to lack of access, which has affected pupil and family engagement and progress. Transition at all phases has been affected by key support services having restricted/no access to schools. Human Resource management processes and engagement via OD are now online focused, but will require review to support effective school operations that were paused due to COVID. Wellbeing support services require monitoring in terms of access and uptake. Additional insurance and financial implications for schools as a result of the pandemic. EAS support for schools has transitioned to online with a deficit to levels of engagement and to the brokerage of relevant

support at all levels e.g. Learning Network Schools (LNS) arrangements.

- **School accountability services** - EAS Challenge Advisors have not been able to hold schools to account and school's data monitoring has been suspended. ESYTN has suspended inspection resulting in risks to school – particularly those in a category, who are in for longer than planned.
- **School leadership** - School governance has been adapted online, therefore, the evidence base is largely restricted to Headteacher report and narrative. Support for current and new school leaders has been limited to online, and school to school working opportunities have mainly focused on wellbeing and operational issues.
- **Poverty** - Family entitlement to benefits has increased across Blaenau Gwent and the region, including free school meals. Additional funding has been allocated to support these families, however, many schemes are not sustainable and so the ongoing impact will need to be assessed.
- **School community** - Limited face to face contact and the shift to online engagement has challenged communication and relationships.
- **School development** - School development plans have had to be largely adapted in order to react to COVID-19.
- **Safeguarding** - School closure has meant that children and young people have had limited access to on-site school support e.g. adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Service support intelligence and capability has been restricted. Vulnerable adults are more exposed to risk factors with limited access to support services.
- **Voluntary/Third Sector/ Charities work and engagement** - Opportunities to engage partners have been restricted significantly due to operational implications associated with COVID-19.
- **Preventative health measures** - School-based preventative strategies to support healthcare needs of pupils have either been stopped or largely disrupted by COVID-19 i.e. vaccinations, growth and development checks, dental health, period equity etc.
- **COVID-19 control measures** - LA's and schools have implemented a series of control measures in order to manage community health i.e. vaccinations, Lateral flow tests, use of PPE, positive case management and risk assessment.

2.5 The impact assessment process provided the opportunity for reflection and review, learning from which has been taken forward to inform recovery and renewal priorities and planning.

2.6 The relationship between the Council and its schools is stronger than ever before. Our aim is to create a shared vision and associated plan to address key priorities for the future of Education within Blaenau Gwent.

## 2.7 **Recovery – Priorities**

It needs to be acknowledged that the impact of the last 15 months on all aspects of our school communities, and in particular the disruption to teaching and learning, is far reaching. Recovery will need to be planned in the short,

medium and long term for learner development and progression. The Education Directorate's top priority in the EAS business plan is to;

2.8 *Minimise the impact of COVID-19 on learner development and progress, including improving the digital competency of all learners and staff in the wider Blaenau Gwent school community.*

### 2.9 **Renewal – Priorities**

Through schools having to adapt to new ways of working, a number of positive outcomes have been evidenced. The Education Directorate will work with relevant stakeholders, including schools and the EAS, to use these outcomes to shape new ways of working across the Education Directorate and throughout the school estate. The core purpose of all schools in Blaenau Gwent will be to provide excellent learning and teaching for all our learners, but this will not mean a return to doing things as they were pre-pandemic, but to using the experience of the pandemic to shape education provision as we move forward.

### 2.10 **Next Steps**

The Education Directorate continues to work on the development of both the impact assessment and draft recovery and renewal action plan, both of which will be further developed and delivered in consultation with schools, support services and partners. Structures have been established through which consultation, engagement, participation and monitoring can take place. For example, a Stakeholder Recovery and Renewal Group has been established with representation from all school sectors and clusters. The draft Recovery and Renewal Plan is attached as **Appendix 3** and there will be regular update reporting via CLT and the Scrutiny/Executive governance processes, in line with corporate arrangements, particularly against the 4 recovery priorities across the Council and the work led by the Corporate Director of the Environment and Regeneration.

2.11 Education aim to finalise the impact assessment inclusive performance indicators, along the recovery and renewal action plan by the end of June 2021 – post consultation with all relevant stakeholders. In the interim, progress will continue to be made along with further development of the priorities identified within the working documents.

## 3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 This report has been discussed by Education DMT, CLT and Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee prior to submission to the Executive Committee.

- **Option 1** – The Executive Committee accepts the report, associated documentation and proposed course of action.
- **Option 2** – The Executive Committee provide comments in relation to improvements that can be made in relation to the associated documentation and proposed course of action.



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

4.1 Education is a strategic priority and key to facilitating effective delivery of the Corporate Plan.

4.2 One of the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan is for every child to have the best start in life. The Council seeks to ensure that provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people, so that their progress is in line with ambitious expectations. This is particularly pertinent in an emergency crisis situation.

4.3 There are both statutory and regulatory functions and responsibilities associated with Education. The recovery and renewal plan is an essential component in securing effective and compliant delivery.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget**

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report, however, it should be noted that the impact of the COVID-19 emergency response on both Council and school revenue budgets is being closely monitored. It should be acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased financial costs within the Education Portfolio across the board. The vast majority of these revenue costs have been funded through the WG's Hardship funding. It pleasing to report that the provisional Education portfolio out-turn will have a favourable position at year-end for financial year 2020-21 as well as an improving situation for school balances.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

There are two strategic risks associated with this report:

1. The impact of COVID-19 on learner progression and pupil regression. This is being mitigated through the Council, EAS and Schools working in collaboration to support learners across the board; and,
2. The risks associated with the provision of safe learning environments to minimise the potential transmission of COVID. There are comprehensive risk assessments in place to mitigate the risks, but the situation is constantly under review and appropriate remedial action is taken e.g. self-isolation protocols are implemented.

5.3 **Legal**

This report provides information relating to the emergency response requirements as well as the specific Education obligations set out in the School Standards and Organisation Act Wales (2013) to support strategic and operational activity to improve pupil outcomes and wellbeing.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Education are in the process of mapping existing and required datasets (both qualitative and quantitative), analysis of which will inform planning and

performance. The two lead officers are working closely with the Policy and Performance team and the Corporate Recovery Group, to develop performance indicators which will be used to monitor and report on progress.

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

There is a commitment from the Council and its schools to provide quality education for our children and young people to improve their life chances, despite the challenges faced during the emergency crisis.

#### **6.3 Involvement**

There has been extensive involvement of key stakeholder both corporately and across the school estate. The planning groups for secondary, primary and special schools that are established, including Headteacher representation has secured a collaborative and corporate response. This collaborative approach will continue throughout the recovery and renewal period.

#### **6.4 Thinking for the Long term**

This report largely reflects on the emergency response to date, however, there are robust governance arrangements in place to support the next stages of the emergency for the foreseeable future.

#### **6.5 Preventative focus**

The Council's emergency response has facilitated a preventative approach to minimising the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

#### **6.6 Collaboration / partnership working**

The report outlines the significant amount of partnership working at a strategic and operational level. This has resulted in a strengthening of the working relationships between the Council, schools and other key partners.

#### **6.7 Integration**

The emergency response has been a 'One Council' approach.

#### **6.8 EqIA**

The application of EqIA's to each priority has been considered as part of the Education impact assessment process. EqIA's will be undertaken in line with development and implementation of the recovery and renewal plan.

### **7. Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The report will be presented to the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee and then subsequently through to the Executive Committee for monitoring purposes.

#### **Background Documents / Electronic Links**

Appendix 1 – Alert Level Implications

Appendix 2 – Education Directorate Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 – Draft Recovery and Renewal Action Plan

## **Welsh Government Alert Level Response and Associated Implications for School**

### **Alert Level One – Low Risk**

- Schools will be fully operational in line with their COVID Secure Risk Assessment with limited impact upon overall business continuity
- Sports Centres will be open for use under an agreement with schools
- Individual risk assessments will be in place for vulnerable staff and pupils, to support them to continue to access school-sites
- Monitoring of school-based incidence rates will take place on a daily basis
- Sufficient staff will be in place to facilitate the delivery of education, along with all statutory and wider education functions
- School support functions including transport, will be fully operational under a COVID Secure Risk Assessment
- Local Authority multi-departmental support and engagement will be carried out on a regular basis
- Local Authority Guidance documents will be in place in respect of both operations and human resources

### **Alert Level Two – Medium Risk**

- Schools will be fully operational in line with their COVID Secure Risk Assessment, with the exception of breakfast and afterschool clubs which will cease operation, along with other associated recreational activity
- Overall business continuity is likely to be impacted, with a reduction in non-essential business
- Sports Centres will be open for use under an agreement with schools
- School operations including the management and use of resources throughout the school will be reviewed
- School site access restrictions will be in place
- Individual risk assessments will be in place for vulnerable staff and pupils
- Additional monitoring measures will be in place to establish and address COVID-19 incidence rates in both pupil and staff populations
- Staff and pupil numbers are likely to fluctuate aligned to self-isolation and increased incidence of COVID-19, with decreasing staff and pupil populations
- Classes and year groups (including associated school staff, support staff and visitor contacts) are likely to be required to self-isolate
- School support staff self-isolation is also more likely i.e. caretaking, catering, cleaning, transport, school crossing patrol staff etc. affecting the delivery of key support services
- Supply staff may be required to cover the delivery of education
- The delivery of education may be impacted, with the need to introduce partial remote learning measures within affected class and/or year groups
- School-based operations will require review on a school-by-school basis based in line with the findings of contact tracing, e.g. the schools COVID Secure Risk Assessment and associated mitigation measures are likely to require review
- Increased Local Authority multi-departmental support and engagement may be required
- There is a potential for increased demand for both the Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programmes

- Local Authority guidance documents will be in place for both operations and staff, requiring review at regular intervals

### **Alert Level Three – High Risk**

- School-based operation is likely to decrease in line with COVID Secure Risk Assessment. Breakfast and afterschool clubs, along other associated recreational activity will cease to operate
- Overall business continuity will be impacted with further reductions in services, provision and site-based work
- Sports Centres will be open for use under an agreement with schools, with restricted use likely to affect the delivery of physical education to varying degrees (on a school by school basis)
- School operations including the management and use of resources throughout the school will be reviewed and reduced accordingly
- School site access restrictions will be in place ensuring that only essential visitors are able to access school buildings
- Individual risk assessments for vulnerable staff and pupils are likely to require review
- Increased monitoring measures will be in place to identify and manage increased COVID-19 incidence rates in both pupil and staff populations
- Staff and pupil numbers are likely to decrease aligned to self-isolation and increased incidence of COVID-19
- There will be an increased need to address pupil/family support requirements outside of standard operating procedures, i.e. increased Social and other related service support, digital exclusion, entitlement to free school meals etc.
- Possible increase in staff absence linked to health and welfare
- Classes and Year Groups (including staff) are likely to be required to self-isolate, along with partial and/or full temporary school closures, where it is no longer viable to operate safely
- The school closure protocol will come into effect (i.e. consideration of the ability to fulfil first aid, emergency planning, supervision, support for ALN etc. and to carry out statutory functions)
- In the event of a school closure, consideration will be given to furloughing staff in line with the established criteria
- School support staff self-isolation is highly likely i.e. catering, cleaning, transport, school crossing patrol staff etc. affecting the delivery of key support services
- Higher numbers of supply staff are likely to be required to cover the delivery of education
- Delivery of education is highly likely to be impacted, with the need to move to partial and/or full remote learning
- School-based operations will require review on a school-by-school basis in line with the findings of contact tracing e.g. the schools COVID Secure Risk Assessment and mitigation measures will require review. The introduction of additional control measures is likely to be required, such as the habitual wearing of PPE in classrooms by staff (this falls outside of the WG School Operational Guidance)
- Increased Local Authority multi-departmental support and engagement will be required more frequently
- There will be a higher level of demand and impact upon Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programmes

- Local Authority Guidance documents for both operations and staff will require frequent review

#### **Alert Level Four – Very High Risk**

- School-based operation is likely to decrease significantly in line with COVID Secure Risk Assessment and review processes. Breakfast and afterschool clubs, along other associated recreational activity, will cease operation
- Overall business continuity will be significantly impacted with services, provision and site-based work being focused on essential and statutory activity/requirements
- Sports Centres will be closed which will impact upon the availability of use by schools and ultimately the delivery of physical education to varying degrees
- School operations including the management and use of resources throughout the school will be reviewed and reduced
- School site access restrictions will be in place ensuring that only essential visitors are able to access school buildings
- Individual risk assessments for vulnerable staff and pupils will require review
- Significantly increased monitoring measures will be in place associated with pupil and staff numbers, including out of hours and duty arrangements
- Staff and pupil numbers will frequently fluctuate aligned to self-isolation and increased incidence of COVID-19, with significant impact expected upon both staff and pupil populations
- There will be an increased need to address pupil/family support requirements outside of standard operating procedure i.e. increased Social and other related service support, digital exclusion, entitlement to free school meals etc.
- There is likely to be an increase in staff absence linked to both health and welfare
- Classes and Year Groups (including staff) will be required to self-isolate, along with partial and/or full temporary school closures associated with a health and safety assessment and where it is no longer viable to operate safely
- School closure protocol comes into effect more frequently (i.e. first aid, emergency planning, supervision, support for ALN etc. along with the ability to carry out statutory functions)
- In the event of a school closure, consideration can be given to furloughing staff where applicable, in line with the established criteria
- School support staff self-isolation will be required i.e. caretaking, catering, cleaning, transport, school crossing patrol etc. affecting the delivery of key support services
- Higher numbers of supply staff will be required to cover the delivery of education (if available and if the school remains open)
- Delivery of education will be impacted, with the need to move to partially and/or fully remote learning
- School-based operations will require review on a school-by-school basis based on the findings of contact tracing e.g. the schools COVID Secure Risk Assessment and mitigation measures will require review with the introduction of additional control measures such as the habitual wearing of PPE in classrooms by staff (this falls outside of the WG School Operational Guidance).
- Increased Local Authority multi-departmental support and engagement will be required more frequently
- Full school closure may be required over a prolonged period, with the requirement to establish provision for vulnerable and key worker children

- Increased impact and demand upon Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programmes
- Local Authority Guidance documents in place for both operations and staff – reviewed more frequently

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# Education Impact Assessment

Impact Area	*RAG	Key Impacts	Identified Needs / Actions	Responsible
Learners	Amber	Impact of missed time in school – education, social, emotional, physical and mental health implications (short and long-term).	<p>Develop a recovery and renewal plan with a focus on education and wellbeing.</p> <p>Link with national and regional priorities.</p> <p>Undertake stakeholder engagement to facilitate learning from experience, and renewal of practice.</p> <p>Partnership work with the EAS to broker support in line with the EAS Business Plan.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
Vulnerable learners	Red	<p>Impact of missed time in school – education, social, emotional, physical and mental health.</p> <p>For those with disabilities and additional needs, provision and processes have been restricted.</p>	<p>Develop recovery and renewal plan with a focus on provision for vulnerable learners.</p> <p>Link with national and regional priorities.</p> <p>Undertake stakeholder engagement to facilitate learning from experience, and renewal of practice.</p> <p>Partnership work with Social Services, Health and Safety and the EAS to broker support.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion

\*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

School staff	Amber	<p>Impact of missed time in school – professional development, social, emotional, physical/mental health and general wellbeing in line with the need to adapt to blended learning.</p> <p>Staff childcare implications relating to school closure.</p> <p>LA's and schools have been required to establish and implement control and safety measures to support clinically vulnerable staff. This has impacted upon both staff and school operations.</p> <p>For those with disabilities and additional needs, provision and processes have been restricted.</p>	<p>Develop recovery and renewal plan</p> <p>Link with national and regional priorities.</p> <p>Undertake stakeholder engagement to facilitate learning from experience, and renewal of practice.</p> <p>Partnership work with OD, Health &amp; Safety and the EAS to broker support.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
Childcare	Red	After school and pre-school provision which has been reduced and/or is not available due to COVID restrictions	Childcare operational plans and risk assessments to be reviewed and monitored by the Childcare Sub-group.	Service Manager - ET and BC
Staff training	Red	Staff training needs aligned to operations are not all currently adapted to be delivered online i.e. first aid and RPI	Training plan review in partnership with Health and Safety and OD colleagues.	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager -ET and BC
Education assets and site management	Amber	Statutory functions, testing and inspection (Health and Safety, Fire Risk Assessment, maintenance and site management, ventilation), operations are regularly reviewed in line with the latest guidance and governed by risk assessments	<p>Review school operational plans and WG guidance to inform priorities and changes to local guidance and operations.</p> <p>Review guidance and associated policy, risk assessment and operational plan bi-monthly, in partnership</p>	Service Manager - ET and BC

\*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact



			with Health and Safety and the Technical Working Group.	
School operations	Red/Amber	<p>Catering, cleaning, access to school sites, movement in and around the school, trips and visits, visitors, refuse, PPE and resources are all under continual review. These areas are subject to risk assessment and reduced operation in line with the COVID alert level implementation. Changes to the school day have been implemented throughout the school estate to support staggered start and finish times.</p> <p>Changes to statutory functions and regulations which affect school operation e.g. school admissions.</p> <p>ICT infrastructure, devices, access to resources, systems and software for both pupils and staff in line with digital exclusion and blended learning are continually reviewed to support inclusion.</p> <p>Home to school and post 16 transport operations, have been restricted, reconfigured and subject to detailed risk assessment.</p>	<p>Operational plan to be monitored, provision, guidance and policy to be adapted accordingly.</p> <p>Regular monitoring required as above</p> <p>ICT Plan and associated strategy to be developed in partnership with SRS and the ICT Strategy Group.</p> <p>Monthly review in line with the latest regulations. Procurement and operations review</p>	Service Manager ET and BC
School support services	Red	<p>School support service operation i.e. Educational Psychology, ALN, Social Services etc. has been prohibited due to lack of access, which has affected pupil and family engagement and progress.</p> <p>Transition at all phases has been affected by key support services having restricted/no access to schools.</p> <p>Human Resource management processes and engagement via OD are now online focused, but will require review to support effective school operations that were paused due to COVID.</p>	<p>Inclusion Service review to be undertaken.</p> <p>Transition to be developed.</p> <p>Work with OD to undertake an impact associated and establish an operational plan around schools.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager ET and BC

\*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

		<p>Wellbeing support services require monitoring in terms of access and uptake.</p> <p>Additional insurance and financial implications for schools as a result of the pandemic.</p> <p>EAS support for schools has transitioned to online with a deficit to levels of engagement and to the brokerage of relevant support at all levels e.g. LNS Schools.</p>	<p>Working with Finance and Insurance colleagues to undertake an impact assessment, in order to inform future planning.</p>	
School accountability services	Red	<p>EAS Challenge Advisors have not been able to hold schools to account and school's data monitoring has been suspended.</p> <p>Esytyn has suspended inspection resulting in risks to school – particularly those in a category, who are in for longer than planned.</p>	<p>Review EAS Business Plan in line with WG regulations and guidance.</p> <p>Multi-agency partnership working with Estyn in order to support schools causing concern.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
School leadership	Amber	<p>School governance has been adapted online, therefore, the evidence base is largely restricted to Headteacher report and narrative.</p> <p>Support for current and new school leaders has been limited to online, and school to school working opportunities have mainly focused on wellbeing and operational issues.</p>	<p>Work with the EAS to review current practice for governance and school leadership.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
Poverty	Red	<p>Family entitlement to benefits has increased across Blaenau Gwent and the region, including free school meals. Additional funding has been allocated to support these families, however, many schemes are not sustainable and so the ongoing impact will need to be assessed.</p>	<p>Working with Finance and Benefits colleagues to undertake an impact assessment, in order to inform future planning.</p>	Service Manager ET and BC/ Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
School community	Red	<p>Limited face to face contact and the shift to online engagement has challenged communication and relationships.</p>	<p>Provide support for individual schools to address barriers to parent engagement in partnership with the EAS.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion

\*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

School development	Amber	School development plans have had to be largely adapted in order to react to COVID-19.	Provide support for individual schools to address barriers to parent engagement in partnership with the EAS.	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
Safeguarding - children	Red	School closure has meant that children and young people are at greater risk of harm e.g. adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Service support intelligence and capability has been restricted.	Supporting Schools to ensure that they are able to effectively identify and manage risks, via structure an effective multi-agency approach.	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager ET and BC
Safeguarding - adults	Red	Vulnerable adults are more exposed to risk factors with limited access to support services.	Supporting Schools to ensure that they are able to effectively identify and manage risks, via structure an effective multi-agency approach.	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager ET and BC
Voluntary/Third Sector/ Charities work and engagement	Red	Opportunities to engage partners have been restricted significantly due to operational implications associated with COVID-19.	Establish a stakeholder re-engagement and support plan for Education and schools.	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager ET and BC
Preventative health measures	Red	School-based preventative strategies to support healthcare needs of pupils have either been stopped or largely disrupted by COVID-19 i.e. vaccinations, growth and development checks, dental health, period equity etc.	Work closely with ABUHB, Public Health Wales and associated partners to review and develop a school health plan .	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/Service Manager ET and BC
COVID control measures	Amber	LA's and schools have implemented a series of control measures in order to manage community health i.e. vaccinations, Lateral flow tests, use of PPE, positive case management and risk assessment.	Review and evaluate existing control measures in line with the latest guidance, regulations and associated operational plans, in order to inform business continuity planning.	Service Manager ET and BC/Health and Safety

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Review of Implementation - Areas that have worked well				
Relationships and Engagement with headteachers	Green	Throughout the course of the pandemic relationships, communication and engagement with school leaders has improved significantly. School leaders have had the opportunity to work together with the Council, shaping provision and informing key developments throughout the response period. In addition, they have been empowered to share and seek solutions to issues which have emerged, whilst working closely with the Council to achieve consistency in delivery methods etc.	Continue with the current engagement format to aid recover and ensure effective engagement and participation opportunities are in place for/with school leaders	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager ET and BC
Digital inclusion	Amber	Throughout the course of the pandemic both Welsh Government and the Council have worked to secure and invest in devices and connectivity to address digital disadvantage. As a result, there is now an improved understanding of the level of digital disadvantage throughout the school estate. In addition, there are established methods and solutions by which the impact of digital disadvantage can be addressed.	Ensure a full review of provision and requirements takes place, to aid device/provision sustainability plans in line with the Education ICT Strategy and blended learning developments.	Service Manager ET and BC/ Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
Business continuity – service design and delivery	Amber	Both schools and associated Council services have established effective service design and delivery models, along with business continuity arrangements, ensuring effective response to the pandemic.	Continue to review operational and business continuity plans, to ensure that alert level response and associated delivery can be managed effectively.	Service Manager ET and BC
Learners	Amber	Many pupils have developed skills through engaging with distance learning e.g. resilience and time management.	Continue to build on these skills in a face-to-face setting, ensure schools provide catch up support for pupils who have not developed such skills/not engaged well with distance learning	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
Teaching staff	Amber	Many teachers and teaching assistants have developed their use of ICT to deliver learning, many schools have used ICT in creative and engaging ways to encourage, motivate and support learning.	Continue to build on these skills in a face-to-face setting. Work with the EAS to ensure blended learning continues to	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion

\*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

			be a key priority in school development planning	
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\*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

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**RECOVERY AND RENEWAL**  
**BLAENAU GWENT ACTION PLAN Summer 2021 – Summer 2022**

**Theme 1: Learners/school staff/school development**

Responsibility	Action	Resources (Specific no. of days/costs)	Timescale (Start/End)	Success Criteria	Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for actions (date)	Monthly Updates
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<p>Head of School Improvement and Inclusion</p>	<p>Undertake stakeholder engagement to facilitate learning from experience, and renewal of practice.</p> <p><u>Philosophy for Children sessions with primary stakeholders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary school pupils</li> <li>• Secondary school pupils</li> <li>• Special school representative – River Centre and/or Pen Y Cwm</li> <li>• Primary teachers and TAs</li> <li>• Secondary teachers and TAs</li> </ul>	<p>5 days to undertake P4C enquiries</p>	<p>June – July 2021</p> <p>September 2021</p>	<p>Written report on the P4C enquiries re impact of pandemic</p> <p>Paper submitted to academic journal based on P4C enquiries</p>	<p>Report to DMT and Scrutiny/Executive as part of FWP.</p> <p>Report to DMT and Scrutiny/Executive. Share good practice across EAS.</p>	
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Head of School Improvement and Inclusion and Service Manager - ET and BC	<u>Stakeholder Recovery and Renewal Group</u>  Fortnightly engagement with primary and secondary headteachers to shape support for recovery and renewal  Group to provide peer support on school development	1 hour meeting primary, fortnightly  1 hour meeting secondary, fortnightly	April 21 - onwards	Sharing of good practice, learning from recovery to aid renewal - agreed strategies and systems are put in place across BG schools to support recovery and renewal	Report to DMT and Scrutiny/Executive. Share good practice across EAS.	April 21 – Initial meeting with HTs to discuss the remit of this group.
Head of School Improvement and Inclusion	<u>Curriculum Reform Group</u>  Fortnightly engagement with primary and secondary headteachers to shape implementation of CfW	1 hour meeting primary, fortnightly  1 hour meeting secondary, fortnightly	June 21 – onwards	Sharing of good practice, agreed strategies and systems are put in place to enable effective implementation of CfW	Report to DMT and Scrutiny/Executive. Share good practice across EAS.	
Head of School Improvement and Inclusion and Principle Challenge Advisor	<u>Partnership work with the EAS to broker support in line with the EAS Business Plan.</u>  Co-construction of MER cycle to hold EAS to account for services provided to BG schools	2 days	June 21	EAS are providing the support schools in BG need to continue to improve	Report to DMT and Scrutiny/Executive.	

Head of School Improvement and Inclusion	<p>Fortnightly meetings with PCA to monitor MER cycle and share information about schools</p> <p><u>Engagement with STEM</u></p> <p>Increase opportunities for STEM links across BG schools</p> <p>Work with Regeneration on the STEM activity</p> <p>Promote 5G classroom across BG schools</p>	<p>1 hour meetings fortnightly</p> <p>Meetings and site visits to local companies/STEM links</p> <p>STEM Co-ordinator in place</p>	<p>April 21 – ongoing</p> <p>May 21 ongoing</p>	<p>teaching and learning and leadership</p> <p>All schools in BG can access STEM support to enrich teaching and learning</p>	<p>Report to DMT and Scrutiny/Executive.</p> <p>Report to DMT and Scrutiny/Executive</p> <p>Report to DMT and Scrutiny/Executive</p>	<p>April 21 – initial meeting with PCA. Sharing of documents to inform discussion around role of EAS.</p> <p>May 21 – Meeting with STEM contacts</p>
Head of School Improvement and Inclusion	<p><u>Whole school wellbeing and mental health support</u></p> <p>Evaluate current provision within inclusion team to support school’s wellbeing and mental health. Exploration of different support strategies to provide a BG model e.g. Trauma Informed Schools</p>	<p>Gathering of data on current support, exploration of different models e.g. TIS</p>	<p>May 21 – August 21</p>	<p>All schools in BG have access to relevant wellbeing and mental health support</p>	<p>Report to DMT and Scrutiny/Executive</p>	<p>Meeting with TIS 19/05/21</p>

<p>Head of School Improvement and Inclusion</p>	<p><u>Further develop partnership working</u> with e.g. healthy schools, Post-16 partnership, youth service, education transformation, social services</p>	<p>Join relevant groups to ensure school improvement and inclusion representation</p>	<p>May 21 – onwards</p>	<p>A joint up approach to school improvement and inclusion across services in BG</p>	<p>Report to DMT and Scrutiny/Executive</p>	
<p>Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/Principle Challenge Advisor</p>	<p><u>Develop better use of blended learning tailored more closely to individual needs</u></p>	<p>Work with EAS to ensure schools have relevant support to enable all learners to engage effectively with blended learning</p>	<p>June 21 - ongoing</p>	<p>All schools in BG have access to the relevant support to enable all their learners to effectively engage with blended learning</p>	<p>Report to DMT and Scrutiny/Executive</p>	

**Theme 2: Vulnerable learners**

Responsibility	Action	Resources (Specific no. of days/costs)	Timescale (Start/End)	Success Criteria	Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for actions (date)	Monthly Updates
Head of School Improvement and Inclusion and Service Manager - ET and BC	<u>Digitally disadvantaged learners continue to access devices/MIFI</u>	Replacement costs of devices (WG funded?)	Until summer 21, to be reviewed.	All digitally disadvantaged learners in BG have access to devices/MIFI	Weekly reports from schools/SRS/ Report to DMT and Scrutiny/Executive	
Head of School Improvement and Inclusion	<u>Realignment of ALN SLA and EP Service</u>  Revised support offer to schools based on school-improving system. Schools to be provided with one offer to access whole school training to support vulnerable learners	Time for meetings	March 21 – Summer 21	All schools in BG have access to relevant training to support the needs of vulnerable learners.	Report to DMT and Scrutiny/Executive	March 21 – meeting with ALN service manager April 21 – meeting with head of EP service May 21 – ALN package of support for schools – draft started
Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/Principle Challenge Advisor	<u>Analysis of additional funding to support vulnerable learners</u>	Time for analysis	September 21	Analysis used to inform support for vulnerable learners in recovery and renewal plan	Report to DMT and Scrutiny/Executive	

**Theme 3: Leadership/parent engagement**

Responsibility	Action	Resources (Specific no. of days/costs)	Timescale (Start/End)	Success Criteria	Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for actions (date)	Monthly Updates
Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/Principle Challenge Advisor	Work with the EAS to review current practice for governance and school leadership in current context, to inform future ways of supporting leadership	Time for meetings	September 21 – December 21	School governors/leader are supported to implement school improvement and held to account	SCC meetings/action plans/ Report to DMT and Scrutiny/Executive EAS monthly CA reports	
Head of School Improvement and Inclusion	Meet with all school leaders	Time for meetings	April 21 – September 21	HoS/la has clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development of all school settings in BG	Visit notes – not for accountability purposes	
Head of School Improvement and Inclusion	Work with the Recovery and Renewal group to explore key barriers/enablers to carers/parents engaging with distance learning. Create a BG offer for training parents/carers	Time for meetings	September 21 – December 21	Development of BG offer to support parents, initial pilot stage by December 21, roll out to all schools January 22	Report to DMT and Scrutiny/Executive/sh are good practice across EAS	

Theme 4: Staff training						
Responsibility	Action	Resources (Specific no. of days/costs)	Timescale (Start/End)	Success Criteria	Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for actions (date)	Monthly Updates
Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager -ET and BC/Health and Safety Manager	<p><u>Survey of schools to identify where training is not up to date e.g. Safeguarding, first aid and Health and Safety</u></p> <p>Use information to support schools to access relevant training</p>	Time to create a survey, data collection and feedback to schools.	June 21 – ongoing	All schools in BG have received relevant training	Termly review of data	
Theme 5: Early Years						
Responsibility	Action	Resources (Specific no. of days/costs)	Timescale (Start/End)	Success Criteria	Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for actions (date)	Monthly Updates
Head of School Improvement and Inclusion	<u>Develop links with early years provision and early years intervention</u>	Time for meetings	September 21 - ongoing	Schools work well with early years' provision to close the early year's attainment gap, and identify and deal effectively with early warning signs.	Report to DMT and Scrutiny/Executive	

# Agenda Item 19

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 09.07.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

Report Subject: **Aneurin Leisure Trust Performance and Monitoring Report (April 2020 – March 2021)**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Joanne Collins, Executive Member for Education**

Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education  
Joanne Sims, Service Manager – Young People and Partnerships**

Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
√	√	06.07.21			22.06.21	21.07.21		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Executive Committee with an update on the performance of the Aneurin Leisure Trust and to clarify the future performance monitoring arrangements.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 In April 2018, the Council commenced a review of the provision of Leisure and Culture services. This review was in line with the finance and management agreement between the Council and the Aneurin Leisure Trust (ALT). The review included two phases and the second phase of the review concluded early 2020.
- 2.2 In parallel to the review, the Council developed the Leisure and Culture Strategy 2019-29 to provide strategic direction for the future of leisure services and identified key priorities for the next 10 years.
- 2.3 Due to the emergence of COVID-19 and subsequent national lockdown, the outcome of the review was not presented to Full Council until September 2020. However, at that meeting, Option 2 was agreed which stated:
- 2.4 'Provide a time limited contract extension period of five years with a break/review point at year 3. Using the proposed new governance structure to formally review the performance of ALT's delivery of the business plan against the new specification and revised financial and management arrangement. Use clear checkpoints to identify risks and take action to mitigate those in a timely manner. If ALT fully deliver to their business plan the Council will consider a further extension to the contract subject to a further review'.
- 2.5 In addition, along with the appointment of the then Interim Corporate Director of Education, it was agreed in April 2020 to move the lead responsibility for Leisure and Culture from the Regeneration and Community Services Directorate to the Education Directorate, undertaking the role of client for these services, and appointing an interim lead officer for this function. Following the permanent appointment to the post of Corporate Director of Education, a new Education senior management structure was created which included a new post of Service Manager

– Young People and Partnerships. This post includes the function of lead officer with Aneurin Leisure Trust.

2.6 Since April, the following areas have been prioritised:

- Establishing regular meetings and protocols between the Education link officer and senior managers in the ALT;
- Supporting the ALT Trust through lockdown, phased reopening and understanding any financial impact;
- Identifying areas for development following the review, including the service specification, governance structure, SLAs, reporting framework; and,
- Facilitated the transfer of the Metropole Theatre from ALT to Awen Cultural Trust and Head 4 Arts back into the Council.

2.7 **Response to COVID-19**

2.8 Throughout lockdown, many of the Trust's employees were initially redeployed to support the Council's response to the pandemic and later providing summer activities for vulnerable children. However, the Trust also placed the majority of the workforce onto the Job Retention Scheme (furlough) in order to safeguard the business. A robust phased reopening plan was developed and gradually many of the Trust's services have moved to partial or full re-opening, working closely with Health and Safety colleagues to put the appropriate risk assessments in place. ALT also worked closely with the Local Health Board to provide Bedwellty House as a vaccination centre free of charge.

2.9 The review recognised that key to the successful delivery of a sustainable Leisure and Culture offer is improved governance and contract management arrangements. Therefore, since April, developments have focussed on finalising the draft service specification which outlines exactly what services are being requested. This has been finalised and forms part of a wider suite of legal documents which will be completed by the end of June.

2.10 Fortnightly meetings have taken place between the link officer and ALT throughout the year. This improved partnership with the Council has resulted in ALT successfully accessing the Welsh Government Hardship Fund, which alongside careful management of furlough arrangements, has ensured that the Trust is financially and operationally stable, despite a year of extreme interruption to usual business.

ALT has also used this year to proactively pursue all possible funding/grant schemes created due to Covid and information about these are set out in Appendix 1.

2.1.1 **Monitoring and Scrutinising Performance**

In order to monitor and scrutinise the progress and impact of the Trust, a full progress report will be presented to Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee twice a year, reporting against the agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) within the specification. The KPI balance scorecard is set out in section 6.1 and is the proposed way ALT will present their performance. Other reports may be presented throughout



the year by exception. These reports will also be presented to the Executive Committee and the Joint Strategic Partnership Group for comment.

- 2.1.2 The working relationship between the Council and Aneurin Leisure Trust greatly improved during phase 2 of the review. This positive working relationship has continued to improve throughout lockdown and into the re-opening phase. This has been enhanced through the weekly structured meetings between the link officer and senior managers in the Trust during the first six months of lockdown.

### 3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 This report has been discussed and agreed by Education DMT, CLT and Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee prior to submission to the Executive Committee. Members are asked to consider the following options:

- 3.2 **Option 1:** The Executive accept the annual performance and the proposals for future reporting arrangements.

- 3.3 **Option 2:** The Executive do not accept the information detailed within the report.

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

#### 4.1 **Corporate Plan Priorities**

This report supports the Council's Performance Management Framework and the work of the Aneurin Leisure Trust contributes to the Council priority, Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities, the delivery of statutory responsibilities for providing library services and the core elements of the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing plan.

### 5. **Implications Against Each Option**

#### 5.1 **Impact on Budget**

- 5.1.1 This proposal in this report will ensure that the Council is getting the most out of the investment through the commissioned service. The proposed new reporting process will ensure that the investment is delivering the outcomes as articulated in the Leisure and Culture Strategy. The full impact of COVID-19 on the Trust's Business Plan is not yet fully realised, as the furlough scheme has provided much needed financial support. However, the Trust has a clear delivery plan and financial forecast which takes account of this uncertainty, and is being closely monitored.

- 5.1.2 ALT income and expenditure is set out below. This is regularly discussed and shared with the Council, with a BGCBC Finance Officer also attending all ALT Finance meetings. Due to the ALT's success in accessing Covid related grants, the hardship fund and careful management of staff on furlough, the Trust is in a positive financial position, which is providing some support for the future. This is important as the Trust has forecast that a return to full operation will take time.

Income and Expenditure	Original Estimate YTD	Mar 2021 Actual YTD	Variance Fav/(Adv)
	£	£	£
Income YTD	2,511,228	3,243,085	731,857
Expenditure YTD	6,013,825	5,754,678	259,147
<b>Operating Deficit YTD</b>	<b>(3,502,597)</b>	<b>(2,511,593)</b>	<b>991,004</b>
Management Fee YTD	3,232,692	3,232,688	(4)
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) YTD</b>	<b>(269,905)</b>	<b>721,095</b>	<b>991,000</b>

## 5.2 Risk

The risk of not monitoring progress against the agreed performance indicators could lead to the outcomes in the Leisure and Culture Strategy not being met, and the Trust not meeting the requirements set out in the service specification.

## 5.3 Legal

Monitoring performance in line with the agreed performance indicators is a requirement within the Service Specification, which is part of the Finance and Management Agreement. The Finance and Management Agreement represents all the legal and financial arrangements for the relationship between the Council and ALT.

## 5.4 Human Resources



There are no direct Human Resources implications associated with this report other than the allocation of time from the link officer.









## 6. Supporting Evidence

### 6.1 Performance Information and Data

6.1.2 The bi-annual reports will include progress against the following key performance indicators. Targets and measures have been agreed against each of these areas to provide clarity on what is expected for the Trust and also to ensure Members can make judgements on what is going well and what needs to improve. ALT has developed a visual dashboard which highlights progress against the KPIs and the current status is set out below:

6.1.3

Area	Target	Outcome	Key Drivers
Governance, Leadership & Advocacy	Green >90% Amber <90% >80% Red <80%		All meetings attended
Financial Sustainability	Green 1% of Target Amber <1% of Target Red >5% of Target		During a challenging year of lockdown closures the Trust has utilised; The Hardship Fund and the JRS through Furlough
Use of the Services	Green Target met Amber 10% of target Red >10% of Target		Data has not been achieved due to sites being closed for 8 months of the financial year
Operational Performance	Green 80%-100% Amber 70%-79% Red 0%-79%		Not achieved due to lockdown closures throughout the year
Customer & Staff Satisfaction	Green >55% Amber <55% >45% Red <45%		When open the customer satisfaction has been positive but lockdown has not provided a full year of data. Staff satisfaction is good due to furloughed staff receiving 100% of salary
Library Services Standards	Green >80% Amber 70% - 79% Red <79%		A year on year improvement on the WPLS report. Other positives include working in partnership with BGCBC to create the Community Hubs
Environmental Sustainability	Green 3% Amber 10% Red >10%		Phase 2 implemented to install replacement pool covers which will greatly reduce water heating costs
Asset Management	Green >90% Amber <90% >80% Red <80%		All key maintenance tasks actioned

6.1.4 This table clearly highlights ALT is performing well in all areas it has control over. However, importantly, the three areas which are red or amber are directly related to the services not being able to be open to the public, and so we would not expect these to be green at this point.

6.1.5 Measures underpinning these KPIs are also listed in Appendix 1.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

The expected outcome for the public will be to achieve the aspirations in the Leisure and Culture Strategy

6.3 ***Involvement***

The updating of the service specification and performance indicators has been developed in collaboration between the Council and the Trust.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term***

Blaenau Gwent's decision to commission the provision of Leisure and Culture Services from ALT is intended to secure the long term provision of Leisure and Culture provision in the County Borough. The monitoring and reporting process, in line with the finance and management agreement, seeks to strengthen the long term provision by ensuring that provision is in line with what is required.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

The impact of leisure and cultural provision on wellbeing has been recognised for a long time and is preventative in its approach.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

The new governance model within the service specification ensures that collaboration is at the heart of all decisions. The Joint Strategic Partnership Group will strengthen this approach and encourage greater partnership working.

6.7 **Integration**

The move of the client function to Education will only further enhance opportunities for integration between the Trust and across areas within the Council.

6.8 **EqIA**

There is no requirement for an EQIA assessment as all partners will have their own equality planning arrangements in place.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The current reporting arrangements, along with the new governance structure will ensure that the performance of the Trust is transparent and accountable. Reports will be presented to CLT, Scrutiny Committee, Executive and the new Joint Strategic Partnership Group on a six monthly basis.

**Background Documents / Electronic Links**

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

## Appendix 1

### Grants applied for during the Covid Pandemic by ALT

\*not including any funds received through the Hardship fund or the JRS

C Waters	Digital 2030	Welsh Govt	Digital Transformation Fund	Aug-20		<b>£25,000</b>	<b>Caerphilly Led</b>
C Waters	Learning and Work Institute	Learning and Work Institute	Adult Learners Wkk	Sep-20	1 mth	<b>£750</b>	<b>Approved</b>
C Waters	Welsh Govt	Digital Exclusion Fund	Laptops, Mi Fi	Aug-20	6mths	<b>£13,480</b>	<b>Approved</b>
P Sykes	Welsh Govt	Sports Resilience Fund	Recovery fund	Aug-20	12 mths	<b>£55,000</b>	<b>Approved</b>
C Waters	Welsh Govt	Arts Council Wales	Support for Arts	Sep-20	5 mths	<b>£70,000</b>	<b>Approved</b>
C Waters	BGCBC	Town Centre Grants	Gazebos EVLAC	Sep-20	5 mths	<b>£2,000</b>	<b>Approved</b>
C Hares	BGCBC	Town Centre Grants	BHaP	Sep-20	3mths	<b>£12,000</b>	<b>Approved</b>
C Hares	BGCBC	Town Centre Grants	PBB	Oct-20		<b>£12,000</b>	<b>Declined</b>
T Jones	Welsh Govt	Cultural Services Fund	Staff salaries	Sep-20	4 mths	<b>£4,720</b>	<b>WG funded a central post for marketing across service</b>
C Waters	WCVA	Cultural Resilience	staff salaries			<b>£75,000</b>	<b>Declined (re; management fee)</b>
C Waters/G Parnham	National Lottery Heritage	Local Place for Nature	Sensory garden	Nov-20	3 mths	<b>£11,000</b>	<b>Approved</b>
C Hares	National Lottery Heritage	15 minute Heritage	BHaP - Digital tour		6 mths	<b>£10,000</b>	<b>In process</b>
C Waters	Welsh Government	Adult Learning Support Fund	Remote/Blended Learning training for tutors	Nov-20	5 mths	<b>£6,000</b>	<b>Approved Coleg Gwent lead</b>
C Waters G Parnham	WCVA	Landfill (conservation)	Fencing PBB			<b>£50,000</b>	<b>In process</b>
C Waters	Welsh Government	Digital Exclusion Fund	Tablets/laptops	Nov-20	5 mths	<b>£5,777</b>	<b>Approved</b>
C Waters	Good Things Foundation	Census On line	Deliver digital census	Sep-20	9weeks	<b>£4,434</b>	<b>Approved</b>
T Jones	Welsh Government	Estyn Allan	Libraries improve social media	Jan-21	3mths	<b>3,000</b>	<b>Approved</b>
P Sykes	Sport Wales	Sports Recovery Fund	Providing activities for the most vulnerable families	Apr-21	12 mths	<b>£55,000</b>	<b>Approved</b>
					Total Applied	<b>£393,161</b>	
					Grants Rec'd	<b>£237,161</b>	
					Not lead	<b>£31,000</b>	
					Declined	<b>£79,720</b>	
					In process	<b>£60,000</b>	
						<b>£347,881</b>	

## Measures underpinning the KPIs

The below will be used for monitoring all performance information and data from April 2021 but has not been tracked through 2020 due to being closed for 8 months of the financial year.

Leisurecard holders																
	April	May	June	Q1	July	Aug	Sept	Q2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q4
Total New holders (in reporting period)																
Total Card Holders																
Gym Statistics																
	April	May	June	Q1	July	Aug	Sept	Q2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q4
Total Bookings in Month																
Age Group with Highest Bookings																
Average Income Per Day £																
Swimming Statistics																
	April	May	June	Q1	July	Aug	Sept	Q2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q4
Total Bookings in Month																
Racquet Sport Statistics																
	April	May	June	Q1	July	Aug	Sept	Q2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q4
Total Bookings For Month - Badminton																
Total Bookings For Month - Squash																
Fitness Class Statistics																
	April	May	June	Q1	July	Aug	Sept	Q2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q4
Fitness Class Age Group Highest Usage																
Total Bookings in Month																
Average Income Per Day £																
App Statistics																
	April	May	June	Q1	July	Aug	Sept	Q2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q4
Total App Users																
Percentage % Increase Since Mar 20																
Booking Comparison																
	April	May	June	Q1	July	Aug	Sept	Q2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q4
App Bookings %																
Online Bookings %																
Reception Bookings %																
Footfall Per Site																
	April	May	June	Q1	July	Aug	Sept	Q2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q4
ASC																
EVSC																
TSC																
BHAP (park)																
BHAP (house)																
PBB (park)																
PBB (visitor centre)																
EV Lib																
Tred Lib																
Bryn Lib																
Blai Lib																
Aber Lib																
Cwm Lib																
Unique Users																
	April	May	June	Q1	July	Aug	Sept	Q2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q4
Sports Centres																
Libraries																

**Appendix 2 Investments made in 2020-21**

# Investments

Investment	Venue	Cost
New flooring throughout visitor centre	Parc Bryn Bach	£18,000
New furniture in the café	Parc Bryn Bach	£8,000
Refurbished showers	Parc Bryn Bach	£50,000
Upgraded Mini Golf	Parc Bryn Bach	£48,000
Lake view patio	Parc Bryn Bach	£10,000
Pedal Go-Karts (to be hired)	Parc Bryn Bach	£5,600
Bi-Fold windows	Parc Bryn Bach	£9,000
Kiosk (outside catering)	Parc Bryn Bach	£6,000
Online booking systems	Parc Bryn Bach	£4,500
Tiled flooring	Bedwellty House	£4,750
Large Awning Shelter	Bedwellty House	£5,000
Additional outside seating	Bedwellty House	£3,500
Dining Bubbles	Bedwellty House	£2,000
Patio Heaters	Bedwellty House	£2,500
Gym upgrades (all 3 centres)	Sports Centres	£600,000
	Total	£776,850



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# Agenda Item 20

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 09.07.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**  
Date of meeting: **21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**  
Report Subject: **Improving Schools Programme 2021**  
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J Collins, Executive Member for Education**  
Report Submitted by: **Lynn Philips, 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)
27.05.21	03.06.21	06.07.21			22.06.21	21.07.21		

## 1. **Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of the report is to provide Executive Committee with an overview of those schools that have been inspected in the period, including those schools that have presented as a cause for concern, their progress and the work delivered or currently underway to continue to support them to improve.

## 2. **Scope and Background**

The report covers the inspection outcomes reported on during the period and all schools and settings within the County Borough identified by the Education Directorate, supported by the, EAS and/or Estyn as needing to improve.

The Blaenau Gwent Improving Schools Programme operates within the regional arrangements for supporting schools across South East Wales and is aligned with regional policies and processes for school monitoring, evaluation, support and intervention. The regional arrangements build on the national frameworks and guidance and in particular the National Framework for Categorising Schools and the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The significant improvement in performance of Blaenau Gwent's schools during recent years and the latest position is explained further in Appendix 1.

The Blaenau Gwent Improving Schools Programme focuses particularly on those schools which need to secure improvement in schools categorised as Amber and Red.

## 3. **Options for Recommendation**

### 3.1 **Option 1**

The Executive is asked to accept the information detailed within the report and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness.

### **Option 2**

Accept the report as provided.

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

##### 4.1 **Corporate Plan**

One of the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan is for every child to have the best start in life. The Council seeks to ensure that provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people, so that their progress is in line with ambitious expectations.

##### 4.2 **Statutory Responsibility**

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 consolidates, clarifies and reforms the law in relation to intervention in schools causing concern. The Welsh Government's statutory guidance for schools causing concern (February 2014) details the local authority powers of intervention in schools causing concern, the grounds on which those powers can be invoked and the procedures governing the intervention process.

#### 5. **Implications Against Each Option**

##### 5.1 **Impact on Budget**

There are no direct financial implications for this report. However, the Council allocates approximately £42.8 million to schools via the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) to provide high quality education and to improve pupil outcomes.

Blaenau Gwent continues to make a financial contribution to the regional EAS arrangements of approximately £350,000 from the core Education Directorate Budget. The EAS is the Council's commissioned school improvement service commissioned to work directly with schools to provide professional challenge and support to improve. The Education Directorate holds the EAS to account for the impact and effectiveness of their work in schools in Blaenau Gwent. The EAS value for money report has previously been shared with Members that indicates an improving position i.e. educational standards are increasing with less financial resources.

##### 5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

5.2.1 The Estyn Inspection Framework focuses primarily on standards, the quality of education provision and the quality of leadership in educational establishments and schools. Improving pupil performance is fundamental to the development of a highly-skilled workforce which is essential to Blaenau Gwent's longer term economic development. Failure to identify schools and provide support appropriately places at risk the quality of education and standards in individual schools. The Estyn Inspection approach provides an external viewpoint through which potential school risks are identified and resolved. Failure to ensure that there is robust monitoring of settings and of Council services carries with it a number of significant risks:

- Undetected and unaddressed decline in school performance and the quality of provision.

- Learners do not achieve to acceptable levels
- Lack of overall improvement in schools' performance
- Children do not receive the best start in life
- Negative impact on the reputation of the Council.

5.2.2 Similarly, ineffective monitoring of Council Services also poses a range of risks including:

- Reducing standards and quality of provision in settings
- Poor value for money
- Ineffective support for settings which hinders improvement
- Negative impact on the reputation of the Council.

5.2.3 However, there are clear Education Directorate led risk mitigation considerations in place that are facilitating strong school improvement. Mitigating actions include the routine monitoring of quantitative and qualitative information, regular quality assurance meetings between the Council and the EAS, regular quality assurance meetings within the Education Directorate and across teams, school inspection findings and school categorisation results. The progress schools make in their School Development Plans is also monitored on a half-termly basis. School attendance and exclusion figures are monitored on a fortnightly basis. School's safeguarding processes are also closely monitored. Although notably during the pandemic many of these routine business processes have been suspended, in line with national requirements. However, holistic support packages are devised for schools via regular intra Council services meetings between OD, finance, health and safety, education and school governor support services. Moreover, through ongoing robust self-evaluation processes school level performance data is regularly analysed and evaluated to identify emerging trends or possible underperformance.

5.2.4 The quality of provision i.e. the quality teaching and learning in classrooms is monitored and supported via the EAS. The quality of school leadership is also supported extensively by the EAS via a range of programmes and school-to-school networks. Through the monitoring of performance by means of Estyn reports, the Scrutiny/Executive Committees are provided with assurances that educational settings and supporting services are able to deliver provision of a high quality.

### 5.3 **Legal**

Estyn is an inspection body, established under the Education Act 1992. Whilst, the improving schools programme operates within the legal framework of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

### 5.4 **Human Resources**

There is no direct staffing or workforce implications arising from this report.

## 6. **Supporting Evidence**

### 6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

### 6.1.1 **School Categorisation**

Under normal circumstances, all schools are categorised on an annual basis in accordance with the National Model for Categorisation. The process has taken place at a regional level and historic national moderation has confirmed that the regional process is robust. However, there has been no school categorisation process undertaken since 2020. Importantly, Appendix 1 shows the significant progress made and the reduction in the level of support that Blaenau Gwent Schools require during recent times.

### 6.1.2 **Schools in the Red and Amber Categories, that have made positive progress (2019 to 2021)**

Appendix 1 details the progress of the following schools: -

- Brynbach Primary School; and,
- Glyncoed Primary School.

It is pleasing to note that both schools have made further positive progress and are now not in receipt of additional support with Brynbach Primary School being categorised as yellow in 2019/20 and Glyncoed Primary School was removed in the autumn term 2020 from the Schools Causing Concern process.

### 6.1.3 **Schools Causing Concern (SCC)**

#### 6.1.3.1 **Schools who are in receipt of additional support 2019 to 2020**

Appendix 1 details the additional support that is now provided to Sofrydd Primary School (Yellow to Amber).

#### 6.1.3.2 **Schools in Receipt of a Statutory Warning Notice (Red)**

Appendix 1 details the arrangement and progress for the two schools, ALC and Brynmawr Foundation School that are in receipt of a Statutory Warning Notice and the River Centre, which is in receipt of a Pre-Warning Notice letter.

#### 6.1.3.3 **Educational Inspections**

Since the last inspection report to this Committee in the Autumn of 2020 there have been no further Estyn inspections undertaken.

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

### 6.2.1 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

The regional policy for monitoring, evaluation and intervention in schools through the categorisation process is derived from the National Categorisation Framework, but has been evolved through the engagement of a variety of stakeholders including schools and members of governing bodies. A range of Council services and external partners are involved in delivering programmes to support schools requiring improvement. Monitoring progress towards targets enables effective targeting of support.

6.2.2 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**  
Analysis of aggregate school performance data is a key element in ensuring that schools are known well by the Council so that appropriate support and intervention can be directed towards areas of greatest need.  
Monitoring of school performance facilitates support for schools to ensure that schools maintain high quality outcomes in the longer term.

6.2.3 **Preventative focus**  
Through effective monitoring and evaluation of school performance, early identification of emerging areas for improvement can be achieved with consequent early intervention to secure improvement.

The effectiveness of the Council's monitoring, evaluation and intervention programmes ensure that preventative action is taken early in order to minimise the escalation of concerns.

6.2.4 **Collaboration / partnership working**  
The Council collaborates with neighbouring local authorities through the South East Wales Consortium for the provision of School Improvement services through the Education Achievement Service (EAS). The Council also secures a range of pupil support services such as Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired, Speech and Language, and Ethnic Minority support services through regional collaboration.

Within the Council, the school improvement and inclusion leadership teams ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to supporting schools in the Education Directorate and across the Council as a whole.

6.2.5 **Integration (across service areas)**  
The Council commissions its school improvement function on regional basis.

6.3 **EqIA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)**  
There is no requirement for EQIA assessment since this is not a change of policy or practice. However, implementation of the council's monitoring, evaluation and intervention practice in schools has a positive impact on children and young people and on staff within a particular school. By improving the quality of education, standards are improved for all children and young people. Through the Council's school improvement strategy, particular focus is given to vulnerable learners and those who are at risk of underachievement.

## 7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Monitoring of Estyn reports and improvement pathways is an important mechanism for ensuring that Members of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee and the Executive are sufficiently informed to enable them to hold the authority to account effectively for the quality of education provision, and importantly, pupil outcomes.

## **Background Documents /Electronic Links**

*Appendix 1 – Improving Schools Programme*

*Appendix 2 – Estyn Inspection Framework*

*Appendix 3 - Operational appendix for meetings of Schools Causing Concern*

## Improving Schools Programme

### 1.0 School Categorisation

The national framework for the categorisation of schools is based on a staged process. For the 2020-21 academic year this process has been suspended. In the interim the regional identification support level is now classified as high, medium, low and self-improving. However, in terms of the judgements shown in this report on the overall category of support are based on a four-colour model, green, yellow, amber, and red, with 'green' denoting the category where least support is needed.

Blaenau Gwent has a strong position overall on school categorisation and a relatively small number of Schools Causing Concern, with progress being identified in all of these SCC schools. In the case of schools categorised as Red, the school's Challenge Adviser works with the school to create a Single Plan i.e. the school development plan, which defines the support available through the Local Authority and the Education Achievement Service (EAS). In the schools requiring such improvement regular half-termly Schools Causing Concern meetings (SCC) are held, which in the case of Blaenau Gwent Schools are chaired by the Executive Member for Education and are attended by the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, Corporate Director of Education, Strategic Education Improvement Manager, Principal Challenge Adviser and EAS representatives. Following each meeting, the Schools Causing Concern Panel evaluates the progress which the school has made and determines the next steps which should be taken in relation to supporting the school. This can include the invocation of formal powers of intervention should that be considered appropriate.

### 2.0 Statutory Responsibility

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 consolidates, clarifies and reforms the law in relation to intervention in schools causing concern. The statutory guidance defines a 'school causing concern' as one which is:

- Subject to a Warning Notice issued under the 2013 Act.
- Not subject to Warning Notice but meets one or more of the six grounds for intervention and there is a related risk to the health and safety on any person that calls for urgent intervention
- Deemed by Estyn to require significant improvement.
- Deemed by Estyn to require special measures.

Under the terms of the Act, a school will be 'eligible for Intervention' where one of the following six grounds for intervention exist:

- Ground 1: The standards of performance of pupils at the school are unacceptably low.

- Ground 2: There has been a breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed.
- Ground 3: The behaviour of pupils at the school or any action taken by those pupils or their parents is severely prejudicing, or is likely to severely prejudice, the education of any pupils at the school.
- Ground 4: The safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise).
- Ground 5: The governing body or headteacher has failed, or is likely to fail, to comply with a duty under the Education Acts.
- Ground 6: The governing body or head teacher has acted, or is proposing to act unreasonably in the exercise of any of its or his or her functions under the Education Acts.

### **Local Authority powers of intervention**

Under Section 5 of the Act, the LA is able to intervene in schools causing concern in the following ways:

1. Direct the governing body to secure advice or collaborate with another school
2. Appoint additional governors and nominating a new Chair
3. Appoint an Interim Executive Board
4. Suspend the delegated authority for the governing body to manage the school's budget
5. Direct the governing body to take certain action or to desist from taking certain action.

A school remains eligible for intervention by the LA until one of the following events takes place;

- the authority gives notice that it is satisfied that the grounds for interventions that have been dealt with or that using its powers of intervention would not be appropriate for any other reason.
- the Welsh Ministers determine that the power to intervene is no longer in effect and give notice in writing to the local authority and the governing body of their determination.

### **3.0 Performance Information and Data**

All schools are usually categorised on an annual basis in accordance with the National Model for Categorisation. The process takes place at a regional level and historically when in operation the national moderation has confirmed that the regional process is robust. This process has been suspended though since 2020, in line with national requirements.



### 3.1 School Categorisation January 2019

Overall, National School Categorisation in January 2019 indicated further continued improvement when compared with the previous year in terms of the number of green and yellow schools:

- The number of Red schools remains the same **(2)**. Two schools remain categorised as Red (Abertillery Learning Community and Brynmawr Foundation School).
- **2** schools were categorised as Amber (one school Rhos-y-Fedwen Primary remained as Amber with Brynbach Primary School being categorised from yellow to amber due to the need to provide additional support. Overall this represented a reduction of 2 schools compared to the previous year.)
- **10** schools were categorised as yellow (Coed-y-Garn Primary, Glyncoed Primary, St Joseph's Primary, St Mary's RC Primary, Sofrydd Primary Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, Ystruth Primary with a further 3 schools moving from Amber to Yellow, including River Centre, EFLC and St Illtyd's Primary)
- **11** schools were categorised as Green (All Saints RC Primary, Beaufort Hill Primary, Deighton Primary, Georgetown Primary, Glanhowy Primary, Pen-y-Cwm Special, St Mary's CiW Primary and Tredegar Comprehensive School with a further 3 schools moving from Yellow to Green Blaen-y-Cwm Primary, Cwm Primary and Willowtown Primary). This is again an improvement on the previous year and over a three-year period represents a significant improvement in the percentage of schools categorised as either Yellow or Green and demonstrates the improved capacity and leadership within our schools.

### 3.2 School Categorisation January 2020

Overall, National School Categorisation in January 2020 indicated further sustained improvement over the period.

- The number of Red schools remains the same **(2)**. Two schools remain categorised as Red (Abertillery Learning Community and Brynmawr Foundation School), as both schools are in an Estyn category.
- **2** schools were categorised as Amber (Glyncoed Primary School and Sofrydd Primary School.)
- **10** schools were categorised as Yellow (Coed-y-Garn Primary, Ebbw Fawr Learning Community, St Illtyd's Primary, St Joseph's Primary, St Mary's RC Primary, Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, River Centre with a further 2 schools moving from Amber to Yellow (Brynbach Primary

and Rhos-y-Fedwen Primary) and one Deighton Primary School moving from Green to yellow)

- **11** schools were categorised as Green (All Saints RC Primary, Blaen-y-Cwm Primary, Beaufort Hill Primary, Cwm Primary, Georgetown Primary, Glanhowy Primary, Pen-y-Cwm Special, St Mary's CiW Primary, Willowtown Primary, Ystruth Primary and Tredegar Comprehensive School. This is again an improvement and represents a significant improvement in the percentage of schools categorised as either Yellow or Green and further demonstrates the improved capacity and leadership within our schools.

### **3.3 School Categorisation 2020/2021**

As previously explained the school categorisation process has been suspended and as such no comparative data is available, however, there has been progress made in made in a number of schools.

### **3.4 Brynbach Primary School (Yellow to Amber to Yellow)**

In January 2019, the school was categorised as Amber in 2019 in recognition of the additional support required by the then recently appointed Headteacher. Throughout that academic year, the then EIB processes reported that progress against the school development plan priorities are Good with the school being removed from category at the end of the year and the categorisation process for 2019/20 confirming that the school was now categorised as Yellow.

### **3.5 Glyncoed Primary School (Yellow to Amber)**

Glyncoed Primary School was classified as Amber in January 2020 as a result of concerns in relation to leadership capacity at the school as a result of a number of leadership changes over a period of time. Progress was evaluated and assessed as strong and during the autumn term 2020 the school was removed from the SCC process noting the evident progress that had taken place at pace.

### **4.0 Schools Causing Concern Update**

The regional approach to School Causing Concern was amended in preparation for the 2019/20 academic year and the protocol is embedded at the end of this document. As such, these meetings form part of a wider drive by SEWC Councils and EAS to improve educational outcomes for all children and young people. The Council and EAS roles will be principally:

- To review and evaluate pace and progress in relation to identified School Development Plan priorities.
- To challenge the Headteacher and Governing Body on the rates of progress in their school.

- To recommend and monitor actions aimed at accelerating improvement.
- To consider the extent to which the school has been successful in achieving required improvement. This will determine future actions by the LA and EAS. This may encompass:

#### 4.1 **Schools Causing Concern (SCC) Progress:**

During the period from March 2020, schools have been operating under very different and challenging circumstances. In March, the focus of the Council/EAS support for schools shifted to the delivery of the National Continuity of Learning Plan and subsequently the regional distance and blended learning PL offer. During this time, national programmes for leadership and regional network meetings have continued and schools have engaged with these activities to varying degrees. In addition, SDP review meetings, Team Around the School meetings, Schools Causing Concern meetings and bespoke meetings with individual schools have given schools opportunities to identify and access appropriate support. During this period schools have been presented with a wide range of professional learning opportunities and support to deliver distance and blended learning.

Since March 2020, restrictions have meant that school visits have been very limited, and evaluations of the quality and effectiveness of leadership and the quality of teaching and learning have been undertaken largely through virtual meetings and review of documentation. Opportunities to examine first-hand evidence have, therefore, been very limited as is the case in all schools across Wales. At the commencement of the 2021/22 academic year there were only 3 schools identified as a cause for concern and one school was added to during the spring term. Below is summary of their progress made to date:

##### 4.1.1 **Sofrydd Primary School (Yellow to Amber)**

Sofrydd Primary School was categorised as Amber in January 2020 as the school development plan was identified as unsatisfactory and became part of the regional schools causing concern arrangements. During early 2020, a Leadership and Management review was commissioned which reported to the governing body of the school just prior to the initial wave of the pandemic.

The purpose of the review was to evaluate and review the current leadership standards in the school, the quality of provision and standards achieved by pupils to provide an evidence base, to support the school to identify its key priorities for improvement and enable the local authority and the EAS to provide the appropriate level of support.

The review identified 12 key recommendations for securing improvement and now informs the work programme that is being progressed. Key to this improvement agenda has been the need to improve governance arrangements, which have continued to be strengthened through the

successful recruitment of a new Chair of Governors and Vice Chair of Governors who has continued to work alongside the Acting Executive Headteacher, this relationship has continued to deliver satisfactory progress against the recommendations, however, there is a need for the school improvement service to verify judgements. At the start of the Summer term 2021 a new Acting Headteacher commenced in post. This position will be kept under review in the summer term of 2021.

#### **4.1.2 Schools in Receipt of a Statutory Warning Notice**

##### **4.1.2.1 Abertillery Learning Community (Red)**

The school is currently subject to a LA warning notice to improve and a programme of intervention. However, it is important to note that for 2020 as a result of the pandemic there are no comparative performance measurements that can be relied upon.

A school leadership review was undertaken in the Autumn term of 2017, which resulted in LA intervention and when the school was inspected in February 2018 it was then placed in the statutory category of requiring significant improvement. A follow-up visit was held in July 2019 and Inspectors noted the progress that had been made in respect of many of the recommendations for action from the inspection, although noted that many of the improvements are at an early stage of development and as such confirmed that the school will remain within an Estyn category. Following a successful period of leadership continuity by two established Headteachers, the Governing Body successfully recruited a suitably experienced Headteacher to the permanent position of Headteacher and also appointed a new Chair of Governors. Both have been in place now for in excess of 2 years. Additional LA governors remain in place to provide additional capacity to the governing body for progressing key personnel matters.

The Learning Community has had several changes in senior leadership since the core inspection:

- A new substantive Headteacher was appointed in January 2020.
- A new Director of Learning took up post in the Summer 2020.
- A Deputy Phase Lead at primary was appointed in Spring 2021.
- A new substantive Secondary Phase Lead started at Easter 2021.
- A new Secondary Assistant Headteacher started at Easter 2021

The Learning Community has engaged well with support on offer from the Council and the EAS. The model for supporting the school is via Challenge Adviser, with additional Learning Network School support (via Tonyrefail Community School). The Learning Community has engaged with this arrangement, though delays to planned support were caused in the Autumn and Spring due to COVID affecting capacity in both secondary and primary settings. EAS support visits commenced at the end of the Spring term 2021. The focus of support from the Challenge Adviser, and also from the Learning

Network School, is specifically to enable leaders to make strong progress against the school's recommendations

SCC meetings scheduled half-termly during 2020-2021 were disrupted by the pandemic, however, catch-up sessions between the Council and the Learning Community continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. There were two formal SCC meetings that were held in the autumn; in October and December. In November 2020, the EAS had completed a review of progress against the Estyn recommendations using a limited evidence base gathered as part of an on-site visit. The outcome of this was shared in the December SCC meeting. The formal SCC meetings continued into the Spring term on a half-termly basis. Moreover, the Abertillery Learning Community Corporate Group was reinstated in the Spring term. The group is chaired by the Managing Director of the Council and the emphasis of the meetings is to gain corporate assurance against the Learning Community's capacity to improve standards and consider sustainability issues, particularly the revenue budget and dealing with the projected financial deficit. The ALC revenue budget provisional out-turn is a significantly improved position with a deficit circa £324,000 against the projected deficit of over £1m+.

There is also consideration of the following high-level strategic overview strands of work to capture the statement of actions moving forward. Updates are reported against areas set out below and progress is cross-referenced to the LA statement of action plan:

- OD strategy
- Financial strategy (5 Year Plan)
- Provision strategy (ICT, Inclusion, Youth service)
- Engagement strategy

The Headteacher presented reports in each of the SCC meetings. In the October 2020, December 2020, February 2021 and March 2021 SCC meetings, the Headteacher reported on actions taken against each of the recommendations in the current term, with limitations on making school judgements due to the circumstances of the pandemic. It was acknowledged, however, by the SCC Panel that satisfactory progress is being made, based on the evidence seen and presented and that the Learning Community is in a more stable position, especially from a governance perspective. A broad range of actions were taken in all priority areas and each were reported on in detail in the meetings, including outlining the provision developed in distance and blended learning across the community, with a focus on both learning and wellbeing of pupils, staff and the wider school community. It is expected that Estyn will return to the school in the near future to undertake a monitoring visit.

#### 4.1.2.2 **Brynmawr Foundation (Amber to Yellow and to Red)**

In December 2013 Brynmawr Foundation School was inspected by Estyn and placed in Estyn monitoring; with an adequate judgement for its current performance and prospects for improvement. Recommendations included

improving the school's performance and improving quality in teaching and learning. The school was categorised as Amber in 2014 and 2015. The school was issued with a statutory Warning Notice in 2015 to improve standards, particularly in Maths. Support was put in place and Key Stage 4 outcomes improved significantly in 2016. The Warning Notice was subsequently lifted.

Due to the improvement secured, in 2016 the school was classified as Yellow, having made strong progress against Estyn's recommendations and with improved performance at the end of KS4.

However, following an unexpected decline in KS4 performance in 2017, particularly in Maths and the outcome of an EAS review of the effectiveness of leadership and management at the school, the school was categorised as Red in the 2017-18 in the national school's categorisation process and invoked the LA powers of intervention. The school continues to be subject to a LA statutory warning notice to improve and after a period of support, intervention is now in place.

In the autumn term 2019, the school was inspected by Estyn and was placed in a category of Significant Measures and Members will already be aware from a previous report to this committee that the inspectors awarded a judgement against all four inspection areas of 'unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement' and against the inspection area of care support and guidance a judgement of 'adequate and needs improvement' was recorded.

Governance has significantly improved, the additional Governors that had been appointed have been removed evidencing the cultural growth that is now demonstrable within the Governing Body. However, it is important to note that for 2020 as a result of the pandemic there are no comparative performance measurements that can be relied upon. The school's engagement in regional Professional Learning Opportunities and professional networks has been strong.

The school has had several changes in senior leadership since the core inspection:

- A new Assistant Headteacher was appointed at Easter 2020.
- Two new Associate Assistant Headteachers joined the leadership team this current academic year.
- The Assistant Headteacher who leads on inclusion and wellbeing will step down at the end of this academic year and a recruitment process is planned for May 2021 to appoint a replacement.
- A new subject leader for mathematics was appointed in April 2021 and will take up post on June 6th, 2021.

The school has engaged well with support on offer from the Council and the EAS, for example, LNS school to school support and Challenge Adviser support. The focus of support from LNS is specifically to enable leaders to make strong progress against the school's recommendations.

SCC meetings scheduled half-termly during 2020-2021 were disrupted by the pandemic, however, catch-up sessions between the Council and the BFS continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. There were two formal SCC meetings that were held in the autumn; in October and December. In November 2020, the EAS had completed a review of progress against the Estyn recommendations using a limited evidence base gathered as part of an on-site visit. The outcome of this was shared in the December SCC meeting.

Additionally, the school also shared their own review of progress against the recommendations from the same period:

- In the December 2020 SCC meeting, the Headteacher reported satisfactory progress against all inspection recommendations.
- In the February 2021 meeting, due to school closure the Headteacher reported on the school's home learning strengths and shared results from its recent survey with parents/carers, pupils and staff.
- In March 2021 the headteacher reported that broadly 65% of pupils overall had engaged with online learning during the time of school closure.
- In the March SCC meeting the Headteacher outlined 'improvements' and 'continue focus' areas for each of the inspection recommendations, with no formal judgements presented due to the challenge of gathering first-hand evidence. The Headteacher also reported that governance was now effective in the school with the Chair of Governors solely focussing on BFS and that Governors had implemented new 'recommendation monitoring sub-groups'.
- The Headteacher outlined that the financial position for BFS has improved significantly with a projected surplus at year-end 2020-21 and this is evidenced in the provisional accounts.
- The Headteacher and Brynmawr Foundation School have wholeheartedly embraced the WG Multi-Agency Support for Schools in Special Measures initiative and the initial improvement conference was convened in April 2021.

#### 4.1.2.3 **River Centre (Amber to Yellow)**

In the Spring term of 2021, the Council acted promptly and issued a pre-warning letter to the Chair of Governors of the River Centre. The pre-warning notice clearly set out the Council's areas of concern, which were predicated around the school's pupil capacity and admission arrangements for learners. In essence, the pre-warning notice concludes that the school has not operated or functioned in accordance with the terms on which it was established, particularly relating to placement of learners back into mainstream settings. The governing body has responded to the pre-warning notice and the Council are seeking confirmation of full compliancy against expectations. There are also other concerns that have emerged, such as the quality of the School Development Plan that will be covered through the SCC protocols.

Following the issuing of the pre-warning notice a number of governors resigned from the governing body, which included both the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors. These vacancies have now been filled and a new Chair of Governors appointed as well as three strong LA Governors being appointed. Consequently, as the school has been identified as a cause for concern, in line with the regional protocol moving forwards the school will participate in SCC meetings with the LA and the EAS. The initial meeting at which an overview of the SCC process took place in March 2021 and the next meeting is scheduled for late May 2021.

**5.0 Educational Inspections**

5.1 Appendix 2 details the framework that Estyn uses when inspecting educational establishments and the levels of follow up activity.

5.2 Since the last inspection report to this Committee there have been no further Estyn inspections.



<b>Overview of Current Inspection Framework</b>	
<b>Inspection Area</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Standards</b>
	1.1 Standards and progress overall 1.2 Standards and progress of specific groups 1.3 Standards and progress in skills
<b>2.</b>	<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>
	2.1 Wellbeing 2.2 Attitudes to learning
<b>3</b>	<b>Teaching and Learning Experience</b>
	3.1 Quality of teaching 3.2 The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum 3.3 Provision for skills
<b>4</b>	<b>Care, support and guidance</b>
	4.1 Tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support 4.2 Personal development 4.3 Safeguarding
<b>5</b>	<b>Leadership and Management</b>
	5.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers 5.2 Self-evaluation processes and improvement planning 5.3 Professional learning 5.4 Use of resources

### **Inspection Arrangements for Early Years Settings**

Members will be aware that the inspection framework under which early years settings were inspected differs from the school framework which is presently reported with the provision being assessed against the three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management

As a result of the inspection, the setting's current performance and prospects for improvement are assessed against a four-point judgement scale which is shown below:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement

### **Post Inspection Follow up Arrangements**

- **Estyn review** (formerly Estyn monitoring) - Normally, schools will require this level of activity when the judgement for inspection area 5, leadership and management, is adequate and needs improvement. It would be possible that a few inspection areas have been judged as good. However, the school would have some important areas for improvement that require monitoring.
- **Significant improvement** - The inspection report will state that in accordance with the Education Act 2005 HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. Schools in need of **significant improvement** are likely to have fewer important areas for improvement than schools in need of special measures. If inspectors have seriously considered, but rejected, the judgement that the school is in need of special measures, it is highly likely that it will come into the category of schools requiring significant improvement.
- **Special measures** - The inspection report will state that In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. Schools identified as in need of **special measures** during a core inspection are likely to have many important areas for improvement in their work. Some schools may have a few important areas for improvement to a very marked degree or many areas for improvement to a lesser degree. In most instances, it will be the cumulative weight and effect of a combination of these areas for improvement which, when taken together, will prompt the judgement that a school is not providing an acceptable standard of education. While one feature alone is unlikely to result in a judgement that a school requires special measures, where inspectors find low standards and poor teaching and learning, significant risks to pupils or the likelihood of a breakdown of discipline, the school will normally require special measures.

For some educational establishments / schools there will be no follow-up activity.



# EAS

Education Achievement Service  
for South East Wales  
Gwasanaeth Cyflawni Addysg  
i Dde Ddwyrain Cymru

## Schools Causing Concern

Operational appendix for meetings of  
Schools Causing Concern

September 2019

## Schools Causing Concern Meetings:

A Schools Causing Concern meeting can be requested by the local authority when a school is considered to be a 'school which causes concern' or is at risk of 'becoming a school which causes concern'. A School Causing Concern meeting will be arranged when a school:

- Is placed in a red or amber category;
- Has received a local authority warning notice;
- Is placed in an Estyn statutory category of requiring Significant Improvement or Special Measures;
- Evidences that enhanced support and challenge is required linked to grounds 1-6 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 for Schools Causing Concern.

Meetings may be arranged when a school;

- Is placed in a yellow or green category but its capacity to improve is not secure and / or the pace of improvement is too slow.
- Is in an Estyn review category.
- Is identified as a risk in relation to a review or audit, which has been conducted by the LA or EAS. This may include for example; Finance, Health & Safety and Safeguarding Audits or Leadership and ALN Reviews.
- Demonstrates evidences that enhanced support and challenge is required linked to grounds 1-6 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

Within the Welsh Government guidance on Schools Causing Concern, the six grounds for intervention are:

<b>Ground 1</b>	The standards of performance of pupils at the school are unacceptably low.
<b>Ground 2</b>	There has been a breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed.
<b>Ground 3</b>	The behaviour of pupils at the school or any action taken by those pupils or their parents is severely prejudicing, or is likely to severely prejudice, the education of any pupils at the school.
<b>Ground 4</b>	The safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise).
<b>Ground 5</b>	The governing body or head teacher has failed, or is likely to fail, to comply with a duty under the Education Acts.
<b>Ground 6</b>	The governing body or head teacher has acted or is proposing to act unreasonably in the exercise of any of its, his, or her functions under the Education Acts.

## Terms of Reference

### Membership of a Schools Causing Concern Meeting

A Schools Causing Concern meeting is a collaborative meeting between a school, the local authority and the EAS. Key individuals are essential to the meeting. Essential members are listed below:

Director of Education / Chief Education Officer (or representative of)  
Head of School Standards (LA)  
Head Teacher  
Chair of Governing Body or Vice Chair (in exceptional circumstances)  
EAS Representative

*The following members will attend at the request of the Executive Member / Cabinet Member for Education, Chief Education Officer or Managing Director of the EAS:*

Executive / Cabinet Member for Education  
Managing Director / Director / Assistant Director EAS

*On occasions, additional school, LA or EAS staff will be required to attend. Additional members may include:*

Additional Senior Leaders or Heads of Department from schools  
Additional EAS Representatives  
Additional Senior Leaders, HR, Finance or Health and Safety Offices from the local authority.

### Aims of a Schools Causing Concern Meeting

School Causing Concern meetings form part of a wider drive by SEWC LAs and EAS to improve educational outcomes for all children and young people. The local authority and EAS roles will be principally:

- To review and evaluate pace and progress in relation to identified School Development Plan priorities.
- To challenge the Headteacher and Governing Body on the rates of progress in their school.
- To recommend and monitor actions aimed at accelerating improvement.
- To consider the extent to which the school has been successful in achieving required improvement. This will determine future actions by the LA and EAS. This may encompass:

### Schools Causing Concern Progress Judgements:

1. The school has made strong progress / very good progress and will not be required to attend Schools Causing Concern meetings. The support level of the school will be reduced.
2. The school has made satisfactory/ strong progress but will need to continue to attend Schools Causing Concern meetings for a further period of time to enable the improvements to become consistent and embedded.
3. The school has made satisfactory / strong progress but still requires additional support and the SDP / PIAP requires revision and updating.
4. The school demonstrates limited progress which lacks pace. It is advised that the local authority determine appropriate next steps of action agreed with the agreed Schools Causing Concern policy.



## Process

- The local authority will determine the venue for meetings. Generally, meetings will be held in local authority offices unless there is a specific reason for holding the meeting at the school.
- The Director of Education or Cabinet Member / Executive Member for Education will chair the meeting.
- The local authority will facilitate the meetings. The local authority or EAS will take minutes of the meeting.
- The agenda will be agreed at least 2 weeks in advance of the meeting. The local authority should ensure that further notice is given whenever possible, enabling the school to fully prepare for the meeting. Ideally, the next agenda should be discussed at the end of a Schools Causing Concern meeting. This discussion will include details of specific areas the local authority and EAS wish to focus upon and those persons required to attend.
- Schools will be requested to present evidence to demonstrate progress linked to their School Development Plan / PIAP. Therefore, all reports presented at Schools Causing Concern meetings must practically align to the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. Local authorities reserve the right to request first hand evidence linked to specific reports. This may include pupil data, pupil books, minutes of departmental meetings, SLT meetings and reports to Governing Bodies. (This list is not intended to be exhaustive).
- Schools will prepare and submit progress reports or updates of their School Development Plan to the local authority 5 working days prior to the meetings. All documents to be distributed to all attendees at least 3 working days in advance of the meeting.
- School may use the meetings to discuss brokered support, their on-going challenges / barriers to improvement and any additional support requirements.
- The school will be expected to discuss its progress, obstacles to improvement, and any further planned actions.
- The LA and EAS will provide a view on a range of aspects relating to the school's key successes and barriers. These aspects may include the school's level of engagement, its pace and progress, its capacity to improve and required future support from the LA and EAS.
- Where a school is requested to attend a Schools Causing Concern meeting, the local authority may choose to discuss and focus on a range of issues, which can contribute to successful school performance and pupil outcomes. This should include a focus on pupil exclusions, attendance, wellbeing, vulnerable group data, performance management arrangement, parent engagement etc. (This list is not intended to be exhaustive).
- Confidential items will not be recorded within minutes. The nature of confidential discussion will be agreed between the school, local authority and the EAS. The local authority reserves the right to see either the Headteacher or Chair of Governors individually by request.
- The LA will provide a view of the schools' improvement and its need for further support using Schools Causing Progress Judgements 1-4 (indicated on page 3).
- Local authority and EAS staff will participate in a pre-briefing and debriefing session before and after a Schools Causing Concern meeting.

## Schedule /Timings of Meetings

For schools requiring the highest levels of support, monthly meetings will be established. All Schools Causing Concern will be requested to attend a meeting every half term.

It is expected that a School Causing Concern meeting will last no longer than 1.5 hours.

The local authority will aim to agree and issue meeting dates at least 6 weeks in advance. The local authority will invite EAS representatives, the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors. The Head Teacher will invite any additional staff or Senior Leaders whose attendance has been requested.

The local authority and EAS will establish which organisation will record and circulate minutes of meetings. All minutes should be circulated to the school, LA and EAS within 10 working days.

## **Agenda**

The standing agenda for all Schools Causing Concern meetings is:

1. Welcome and apologies.
2. Specific actions or matters arising from the previous meeting.
3. Head teacher led discussion based around the school's progress against the School Development Plan priorities (agreed prior to the meeting), including any reports verifying evidence of progress. Other Senior Leaders or Heads of Department may lead specific / appropriate reports by request.
4. School led discussion linked to the progress of all learners, including vulnerable groups.
5. EAS overview of support provided and commentary of progress made by the school.
6. Conclusions / next steps.
7. A.O.B / Future agenda items.
8. Confidential matters to be discussed in the presence of the local authority, EAS, the Head and/ or the Chair of Governors.
9. Meeting close.

A 15-minute LA and EAS pre-brief / debrief will take place before and after each meeting. The school will not be invited to participate.

## **Improvement Conferences:**

It is recognised that a Schools Causing Concern meeting is time limited which can restrict the length of the agenda. On occasions an extended meeting will be required to consider:

- The pace of progress linked to School Development Plan priorities and the identified support required.
- Why a school is not improving and has become 'stuck'.
- The level and range of support a school has received and its impact.
- The use of local authority statutory powers.

An improvement Conference will act as an extended and focussed meeting. This could be considered as an escalation of concern. The meeting will be scheduled over at least half a day and will be chaired and by either:

- The Executive/ Cabinet Member for Education
- The Chief Education Officer
- A Chief Education Officer from within the region but not from within the LA
- The Managing Director / Director of the EAS

At this stage the local authority will determine the agenda in conjunction with the school with at least 3 weeks' notice. Minutes will be kept as a record of the meeting and shared with all in attendance.

Persons Present:  
 Apologies:  
 Date of meeting:

**Actions completed since last Schools Causing Concern Meeting (School / LA / EAS)**

- 

**Main issues arising from Meeting**

- 
- Schools Causing Progress Judgements 1-4:

**Actions for the school (to include timescales);**

Actions		Timescales
1.		
2.		

**Actions for the LA (to include timescales);**

Actions		Timescales
1.		
2.		

**Actions for the EAS (to include timescales);**

Actions		Timescales
1.		
2.		

**Next Meeting: (Date)**

**Next Agenda Items: (Draft)**



# Agenda Item 21

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 09.07.21

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

Report Subject: **Safeguarding Performance Information for Social Services and Education – 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr John Mason, Executive Member Social Services  
Cllr Joanne Collins, Executive Member Education**

Report Submitted by: **Alison Ramshaw, Service Manager, Children’s Services  
Michelle Jones, Strategic Education Improvement Manager**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
24.06.21	01.07.21	06.07.21			14.07.21	21.07.21		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Executive Committee with safeguarding performance information and analysis from Children’s Social Services and Education from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. Monitoring and reporting systems are well developed to ensure the department is able to track information and evidences that the safeguarding agenda remains a priority for the Local Authority.

The information provided will enable members to identify safeguarding trends and areas within the Authority that require further development to improve safeguarding practice in order to meet the safeguarding needs of children and young people within Blaenau Gwent.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report contains safeguarding information from Social Services from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2021 and Education information from 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2021.
- 2.2 This report is written in order to provide a greater focus on the safeguarding agenda. The Corporate Leadership Team and Elected Members agreed for safeguarding information to be reported to a Joint Social Services /Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee after each school term and then to the Executive Committee.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 Having scrutinised the information members can

Option 1

Accept the approach and information detailed in the report provided

Option 2

Consider the information provided and provide comments on where improvement can be made to the current monitoring processes.

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

The Safeguarding agenda is considered as part of the Council's Corporate Strategies that includes:

- Corporate Plan
- Single Integrated Plan
- Corporate Risk Register
- Safe Reduction of CLA Strategy
- Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy

Social Services work to a number of regional and national safeguarding procedures which can be located on the South East Wales Safeguarding Children's Board website: <http://sewsc.org.uk>

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

There is no impact on the budget both in the short and long

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The Directorate Risk register identifies the highest risks for the Social Services Department. These are monitored as part of the quarterly report of the Director of Social Services.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data (see Appendix 1)**

## 6.2 **Social Services**

### 6.2.1 **Referrals to Social Services**

**Figure 1:1** Shows the number of referrals made to social services. The chart demonstrates a slight increase in referrals during Q1 (1,113) and further increases in Q2 (1,292), Q3 (1,363) and Q4 (1,368). The data indicates a levelling off of referral rates for Q4 although the rise in referrals from the start of the year through to the end of the year is currently being monitored and similar pictures have been observed across neighbouring authorities. The COVID pandemic is likely to have had an impact on families and may be a reason for the rise.

**Figure 1.2:** Shows the source of the referrals. As in previous quarters, police remain the highest referring agency (40% in Q1, 39% in Q2, 35% in Q3) and 36% in Q4), followed by Health (17%) and followed by Individuals (12%).

**Figure 1.3:** shows the numbers of referrals received into the department on open cases. During Q1 the number increased to 824 from 817 in Q2 this number increased to 981 in Q3, and 1,055 in Q4. Again the COVID pandemic is the likely cause for rise in referrals on open cases. The LA rag rated open cases during the first lockdown and when services resumed in line with WG guidance the LA did experience more families requiring intervention and support as services became more available to them

### 6.2.2 **Youth Services**

**Figure 1.4:** Shows the numbers of youth service referrals during Q's 1, 2 and 3. The figure shows that a reduction in referrals 15 in Q1 to 8 in Q4.

The youth service is an active partner on the Space Wellbeing Panel, they sit on the Steering Group as part of the Families First model and they actively participate in the South East Wales Safeguarding Local Network meetings. Multi-agency working and close partnership arrangements with the youth service ensure that safeguarding is prioritised.

### 6.2.3 **Child Protection**

**Figure 2.2:** Gives a summary of the number of children on the child protection register the numbers of registrations and deregistration is also included. There were a total of 62 children on the child protection register in Q1 to 33 families. This accounted for an additional 1 child being registered in this quarter. The numbers of children on the child protection register increased by 14 to 76 in Q2 involving 39 families.

Q3 saw 68 children on the child protection register to 33 families, which was a decrease of 8 from the previous quarter. The number of children reduced to 52 in Q4 to 24 families.  
62 in Q1 (2020)

76 in Q2 (2020)  
68 in Q3 (2020)  
52 in Q4 (2021)

The reduction in child protection registration during Q4 has been closely monitored. Children's services have been using a strengths based model of assessment and intervention and this has proved very successful in how social workers intervene with families. The strengths based model requires assessments to consider what is working well within the family and what matters to families in respect of change. Risk management is a contributing factor in the assessments and is having a very positive outcome when engaging with all family members.

**Figure 2.5:** shows the average time a child is on the CPR. The social services senior management team review all those children on the CPR for 12 months or longer to ensure there is no unnecessary drift. The data provided does not give rise to concern and is as expected.

**Figure 2.6:** gives the breakdown on both initial and review conferences. They show the numbers of conferences held the number of families involved and the outcomes in terms of registered or not.

The numbers of initial conferences increased in Q1 to 33 children to 19 families. Of the 33 children subject to child protection case conference 32 were registered.

51 review conferences were held in Q1, 23 children continued registration with 28 children who ceased to be registered.

The numbers of initial conferences held in Q2 decreased to 30 children to 16 families. Of the 30 children subject to child protection case conference 29 were registered.

45 review conferences were held in Q3 and 27 children continued registration with 18 who ceased to be registered.

The numbers of initial conferences held in Q3 decreased to 28 children to 12 families. Of the 28 children subject to child protection case conference 27 were registered.

53 review conferences were held in Q3. 26 children continued registration with 27 who ceased to be registered.

The numbers of initial conferences held in Q4 decreased to 13 children to 8 families. Of the 13 children subject to child protection case conference 12 were registered.

29 review conferences were held in Q4. 29 children continued registration with 26 who ceased to be registered.

**Figure 2.7:** shows the number of initial conferences held within timescales. There has been consistent practice in this area throughout Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4, with 100% of conferences held within timescales.

**Figure 2.8:** relates to review conferences and the percentage held within timescale shows 100% for Q1 and Q4, 84.4% for Q2 and 96.2 for Q3. The data provided does not give rise to concern.

### 6.3 **Education Information**

#### 6.3.1 **Overview**

Blaenau Gwent Council and Education Directorate is committed to ensuring that Safeguarding in Education processes are robust, fit for purpose and are being consistently applied. Through this report Members are provided with greater clarity on the extensive work that is undertaken in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements give no cause for concern and fulfil the requirements as set out in the Estyn framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES). Moving forwards the Directorate intends to review the data presented to this committee and as such it is likely that further reports will encapsulate a much broader data set.

Turning to the reporting period for this report i.e. January 2021 to March 2021, Members will be aware that schools did not commence their gradual return to face to face learning until after the February half term and as such this report is limited in the data that can be shared. However, all schools were written to at the start of the Summer term advising them that the routine data collection would be reinstated from 1<sup>st</sup> April and thus it is anticipated that moving forwards further reports will capture all data sets.

#### **Bullying Incidents and Restrictive Physical Interventions (RPI)**

##### 6.3.2

#### **Numbers of restrictive physical interventions**

##### 6.3.3

Systems are in place within the Local Authority to gather incidents when Restrictive Physical Interventions (Figure 4.1) are used in school to manage pupils' behaviour. Following each incident, the school is required to record the incident in a Bound and Numbered book and complete an incident form. The incident form is sent to the Local Authority Education Directorate where it is recorded on a central recording system.

Figure 4.1: number of RPIs used in school during the Spring Term 2021.

The number of RPIs in the Spring term was 3. This is a significant decrease from data previously reported but this reduction is to be expected during this time, as schools were closed to the majority of learners due to COVID restrictions, only partially reopening prior to the end of the Spring term.

Regular monitoring of incident forms is undertaken by the Safeguarding in Education Manager to ensure the use of physical intervention is appropriate.  
**Numbers of bullying incidents reported which have led to exclusions:**

#### 6.3.4

Bullying has been identified by children and young people as a significant issue they face. An anti-bullying strategy has been developed by the Education Department.

**Figure 4.2** shows that between January and March there were no exclusions from school where bullying was recorded as the primary reason for the exclusion. In fact, there have been no exclusions from school for bullying since the summer term 2019.

Whilst this is an improving picture it should be noted that schools have had periods of closure since March 2020.

#### **Quality Assurance Visits**

#### 6.3.5

The Education Directorate has developed a quality assurance process across Local Government Education settings (LGES) which has been in place since September 2017.

Members will be aware through a report to this Committee that this protocol was recently reviewed and learning from visits and broader safeguarding issues has continued to inform the focus of the Safeguarding in Education Managers work.

As such, quality assurance visits to Local Government Education Settings (LGSES) include pupil and staff voice through pupil and staff discussions, scrutiny of training, policy, safe recruitment practice, and record-keeping of concerns. A “dip test of activity” Activity is undertaken by the Safeguarding in Education Manager to test the robustness of the safeguarding systems and to ascertain a level of assurance.

During the Spring Term 2021, 1 out of a projected 4 QA visits took place. This was held virtually during the school closure period, which directly impacted on the remaining visits. No significant safeguarding issues were identified during this visit, providing reassurance that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place. Whilst formal QA visits were impacted during this period, schools engaged well with the termly meeting for designated safeguarding persons and with training provided for Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, demonstrating an ongoing commitment to development of knowledge and understanding of safeguarding matters.

#### **Estyn Judgements**

#### 6.3.6

Members will be aware of the Estyn framework for schools which changed in 2017 and that Inspection area 4 covers the safeguarding element. In arriving at a judgement for this Inspection area within 4.3 Inspectors will consider whether the schools safeguarding arrangements are effective and give no cause for concerns. In coming to a judgment Inspectors will consider a multitude of evidence such as;

- whether the schools safeguarding arrangements protect all children
- the arrangements for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers
- how well the school promotes safe practices and a culture of safety
- whether the school complies with statutory guidance in discharging its safeguarding functions
- the arrangements of the management of bullying, harassment and discrimination reporting of physical interventions
- how well the school keeps pupil safe from radicalisation
- arrangements for the provision of pupils educated off site and;
- The health and safety of the school buildings and site.

**Figure 4.4:** - provides an overview of the Estyn judgements for schools inspected under the new arrangements from September 2017 up until March 2021. Estyn inspections have been suspended during the pandemic and therefore there is no change in the data in this report. However, moving forwards it is anticipated that Estyn visits will commence in the near future.

The table evidences that care support and guidance arrangements in nearly the majority of schools (5/9) are good or better, with 4 schools receiving adequate judgements. All schools inspected during the period were assessed as having suitable arrangements for safeguarding in place that meet requirements and give no cause for concern

### **Operation Encompass**

6.3.7 **Figure 4.5:** shows the number of domestic abuse incidents reported during the period. During the period there were 141 occurrences involving 185 children. From the data received this time it is not possible to break this down further to understand the age profile of the children affected.

Of these (185) children, a few (13.5% 25) experienced repeat incidents during the period.

However, of the children affected during the period:

- Very few (3.4% 4) cases were high risk
- A few cases (17.9% 21) were medium risk
- Many cases (81.1% 95) were a low risk

Risk is assessed on a case by case basis by a professional against a risk tool known as the Dash checklist. The purpose of the Dash risk checklist provides a consistent and simple tool for practitioners who work with adult victims of domestic abuse in order to help them identify those who are at high risk of harm and whose cases should be referred to a Marac meeting in order to manage their risk.

### **Compliance Reporting**

The Police compliance target for recording the school name on the PPN is 90%. However, at the end of the current period the compliance rating has improved with a school compliance rate of 75.8%.

### **Elected Home Educated (EHE):**

- 6.3.8 Elective home education (EHE) is when parents decide to provide home based education for their child rather than sending them to school. Home educated children are therefore not registered at mainstream or special schools.

Figure 4.6: The total number of children electively home educated as of 31st March 2021 was 94. At the same point in 2020 the number was 77.

Figure 4.7: sets out the number of secondary age pupils who have become EHE or who have returned to school from being EHE during the Summer, Autumn and Spring term. There is a decrease of 7 pupils coming out of school when compared to the data for the previous two terms.

Figure 4.8: sets out the number of additional pupils who have become EHE or who have returned to school from being EHE during the Spring Summer and Autumn term. There is an increase of 29 pupils coming out of school when compared to the data for the previous two terms.

Figure 4.9: provides a breakdown by year group of EHE pupils. The numbers of pupils in KS4 is the highest which is similar to the pattern across Wales where KS4 is the highest.

Members should note that there are appropriate processes in place to monitor elective home education with formal visits held to check on the suitability of education. However, whilst the number of EHE pupils overall has seen an increase this is similar to the rest of Wales.

### **School Attendance**

- 6.3.9 Figure 4.10 shows the primary and secondary attendance for the Spring term. Due to 'Covid' it would not be appropriate to compare the data to the same period last year as schools have only been open for hub provision for the majority of the Spring term. A comparison to other regions in the South East Wales has therefore been provided for members.

It should be noted that it is difficult to have any accurate comparative data for the Spring term as both hub provision and schools reopening plans varied across the region.

### **School Exclusions**



- 6.3.10 Figure 4.11 shows the primary exclusion data for the Spring term. Whilst the number of exclusions are relatively low, the rate of exclusions is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in the consortia.

Figure 4.12 shows the secondary exclusion data for the Spring term. Whilst the number of exclusions are low, the rate of exclusions is the 4th highest in the consortia.

Due to 'Covid' it would not be appropriate to compare the data to the same period last year. A comparison to other regions in the South East Wales has therefore been provided for members.

### **Corporate – Education**

#### **6.4 DBS Escalations**

- 6.4.1 Figure 5.1.1 provides the DBS escalations for the period. Within the education Directorate there are well established escalation process that are in place to manage any noncompliance issues of DBS or registration with EWC. This information along with other data such as training uptake, policy adoption etc is held on the Directorate safeguarding matrix that is monitored by the Safeguarding in Education Manager who produces a Fade report for consideration by Education DMT on a termly basis providing an overview of the position across the education directorate and schools.

With reference to the 1 non-compliance issue regarding DBS this relates to an exam invigilator who is not working as the usual arrangements for exams were suspended this time last year.

#### **VAWDA SV**

- 6.4.2 Figure 532 provides the training uptake for Group 1 training by schools. This confirms that the current level of take up is 77%

#### **Expected outcome for the public**

- 7.1 Those children who are assessed to be at risk of harm are protected and safeguarded, and that the Local Authority adheres to legislation regarding statutory intervention.

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

- 7.2 The development of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and the Departmental Safeguarding Leads meetings which are due to be reconvened help ensure all departments within the Authority are aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and are kept updated with any emerging issues or trends within safeguarding.

Termly meetings also take place with the Safeguarding Leads from all the schools and monthly meetings take place between the safeguarding team and lead education staff.

The SEWSCB local Safeguarding Network group also reviews the safeguarding information to ensure all partner agencies are as fully aware as possible.

### **7.3 Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

The Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF) enables Social Services to plan for the future as spend, risk and performance is continuously reported on and provides a baseline of where the department is currently and where it needs to be in the future.

### **7.4 Preventative focus**

The work undertaken by the Social Services Directorate looks to promote a preventative approach to practice through early identification and intervention. Having a proactive rather than reactive approach to service planning can also help with planning resources.

Providing this report and the level of detailed safeguarding information to Scrutiny Committee enables members to ensure risks are identified and acted on.

### **7.5 Collaboration / partnership working**

The South East Wales Safeguarding Children's Board and its sub groups ensure a multi-agency collaborative approach to safeguarding. Blaenau Gwent fully participates in the Children's and Adults Safeguarding Boards.

Additionally, the Corporate Safeguarding Policy ensures each department has safeguarding leads and these meet together on a quarterly basis looking at safeguarding across the whole Authority. The Leisure Trust lead also participates in this meeting.

Throughout Q's 2 and 3 partnership working with the police continues to progress through the Early Action Together programme and the Operation Encompass initiative. The Detective Sergeant (DS) in post continues to make positive contributions to the safeguarding process. Strategy Discussions are now being held in a timely manner (within 24hours) and information relevant to safeguarding decision making happens in a much more efficient manner.

Regarding the quality assurance element to the DS role, it has been reported through the Early Action Together steering group meetings that the police are feeling better supported in the completion of the PPN's and this has been evidenced with the Information Advice and Assistance service as the quality of information in the PPN's is much improved

7.6 **Integration (across service areas)**

All local authorities and partner agencies work together on safeguarding through the South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board and Gwent wide Adult Safeguarding Board.

8 **EqlA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)**  
N/A

8.1 **Monitoring Arrangements**

The Local Safeguarding Network Group is a sub group of the South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board and Gwent wide Adult Safeguarding Board. This group is made up of multi-agency representation from within Blaenau Gwent who monitors and reviews the safeguarding information and performance. This group has direct links with the Youth Forum to ensure the voice of the child is fully considered and heard on safeguarding issues.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

*Append 1 – BG Safeguarding Reporting Template 2020-2021*

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# Safeguarding Performance Report

## **Social Services**

1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to  
31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

## **Education**

Spring Term 2021

## **Corporate Services**

1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to  
31<sup>st</sup> March 2021



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

# **Blaenau Gwent**

County Borough Council

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## **Purpose of the report**

The council is committed to creating an environment which enables people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities whilst feeling safe and protected.

We believe that all children, adults and young people have the right to be safe from harm and it is a corporate objective to put effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect people from harm.

We recognise our responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, and this includes the contribution we make to working together with other agencies so that all children and young people reach their full potential and we continue to look after the most vulnerable people in our communities.

The purpose of this report is to provide safeguarding information that is recorded and monitored to ensure that we are indeed delivering this objective.

Monitoring and reporting systems are well-developed to ensure the department is able to track information and evidences that the safeguarding agenda remains a priority for the local authority.

Performance information is collated from Social Services, Organisational Development and Education information systems which identifies activity, demands and trends of data. This includes a number of items that are statutory requirements as part of the Welsh Government Performance Framework.

The report includes information on the following:

- Referrals received and their outcomes
- Children who are being safeguarded and analysis
- Quality assurance arrangements with education settings
- Broader issues within education that impact upon safeguarding
- Corporate progress on recommended proposals for improvement
- DBS Compliance
- Safeguarding Corporate Risk Register

This report will be shared with Senior Management Teams and presented to the Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee for Social Services, Education and Active Living.

# 00 | Community Profile - Demographics

## Community Profile



– key benefit claimants August 2014 - 23.2% in Blaenau Gwent compared to all Wales level of 16.4%)

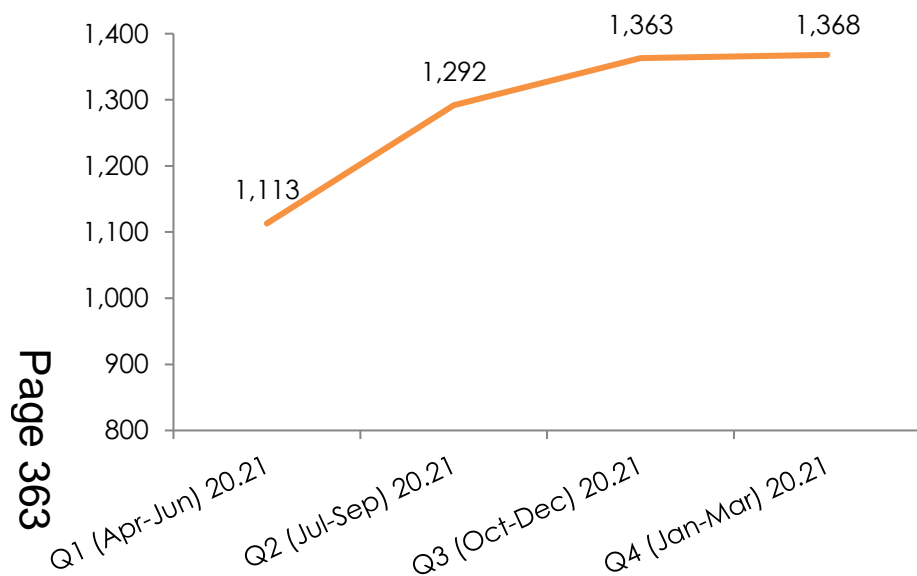
- The total rate of Blaenau Gwent's recorded offence levels was higher than comparative areas. For the year ending December 2014 Police recorded crimes - 76.89 crimes per thousand population in Blaenau Gwent compared to its most similar group of areas average (as defined by the Home Office) of 69.03 per thousand population.
- Total Population: 69,713 Number of 0 – 17 year olds: **13,607** (2018 Population Estimates)
- Number of Open cases to Children's Social Services as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 20: **930**
- Number of pupils attending primary schools: **5,961**
- Number of pupils attending secondary schools: **3,115**

- 45% of Blaenau Gwent's local areas are amongst the top 20% deprived areas in Wales. (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019)
- The proportion of benefit claimants amongst people of working age was higher in Blaenau Gwent than the proportion across the comparable authorities (working-age client group



# 01 | Referrals to Social Services

**Fig: 1.1 Number of referrals received by Social Services**



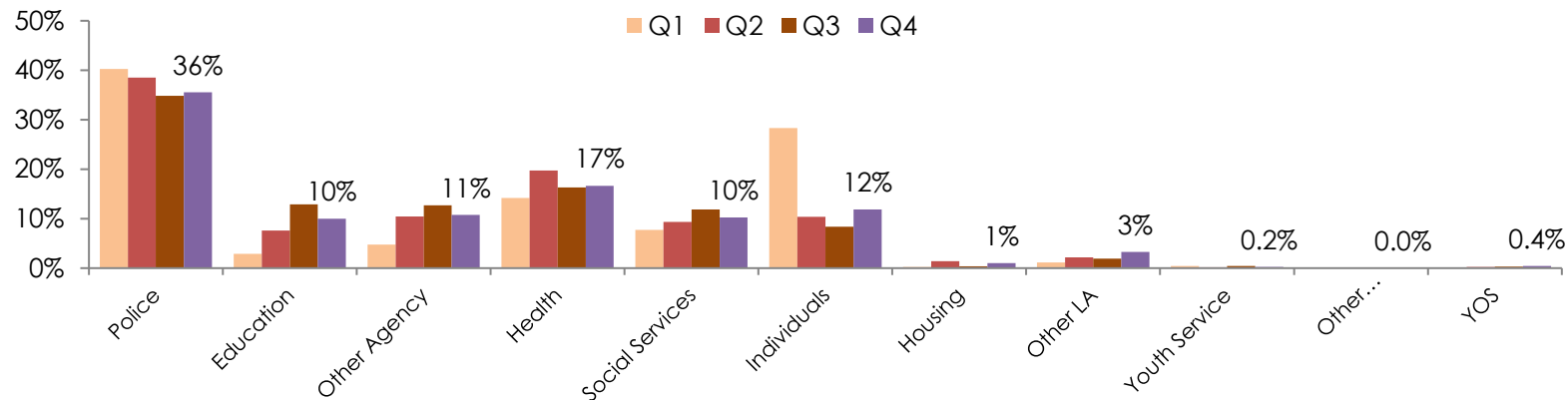
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**Fig: 1.2 Number and Percentage of Referrals by Source (Q1, Q2, Q3 & Q4)**

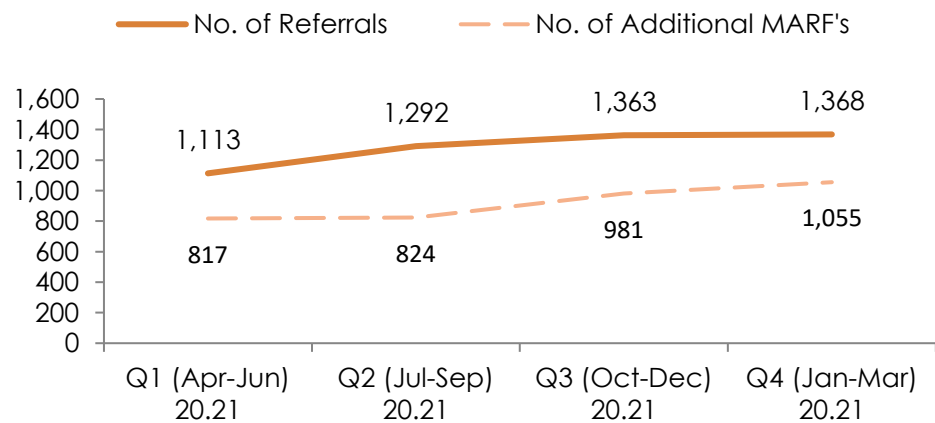
	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 3	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Police	448	40%	498	39%	475	35%	486	36%
Education	32	3%	93	7%	158	12%	135	10%
Other Agency	53	5%	135	10%	173	13%	147	11%
Health	158	14%	255	20%	222	16%	228	17%
Social Services	86	8%	121	9%	162	12%	140	10%
Individuals	315	28%	134	10%	114	8%	162	12%
Education - Post 16		0%	0	0%	3	0%	2	0%
Education - OOC		0%	5	0%	15	1%	0	0%
Housing	3	0%	18	1%	5	0%	14	1%
Other LA	13	1%	28	2%	26	2%	45	3%
Youth Service	5	0%	2	0%	6	0%	3	0.2%
Other Departments	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
YOS	0	0%	3	0%	4	0%	6	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,113</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,292</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,363</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,368</b>	<b>100%</b>

# 01 | Referrals to Social Services

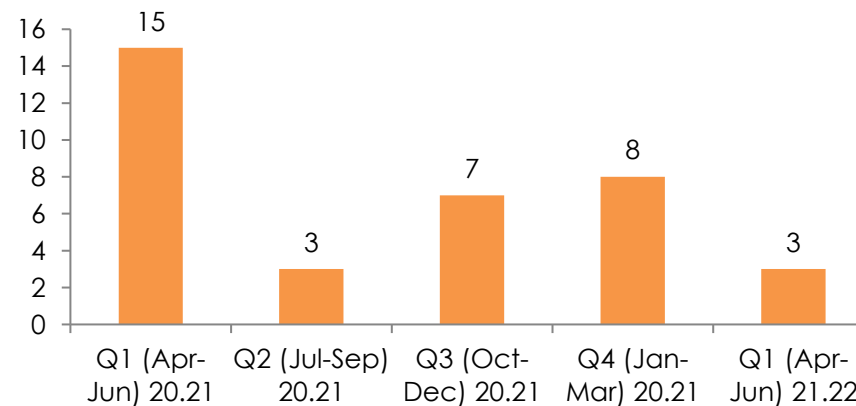
Graph showing the source of referrals and the percentage



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**Fig: 1.3 Multi-agency referral forms (MARF's) received on open cases**

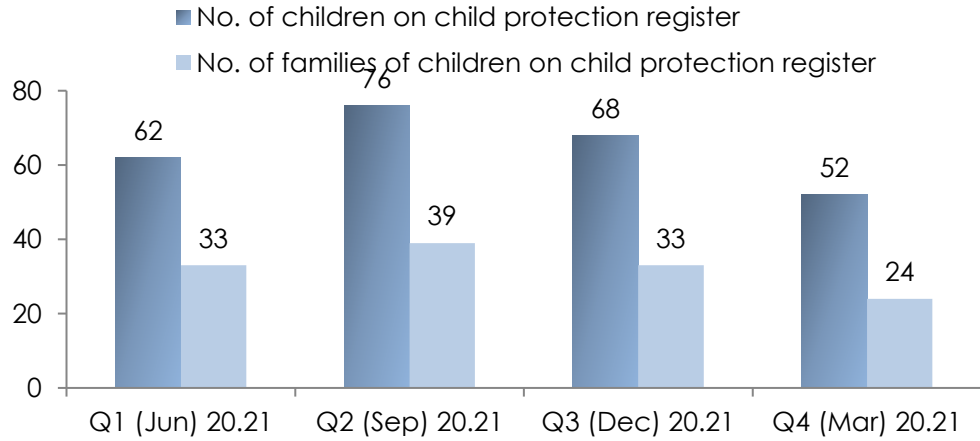


**Fig: 1.4 Referrals received from Youth Services**

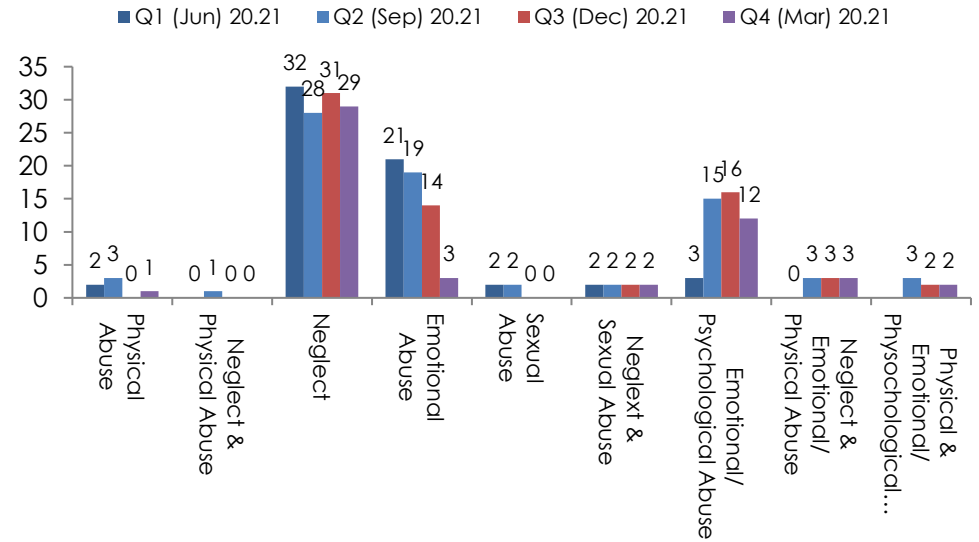


# 02 | Child Protection Register

**Fig 2.1 Children on the Child Protection Register**

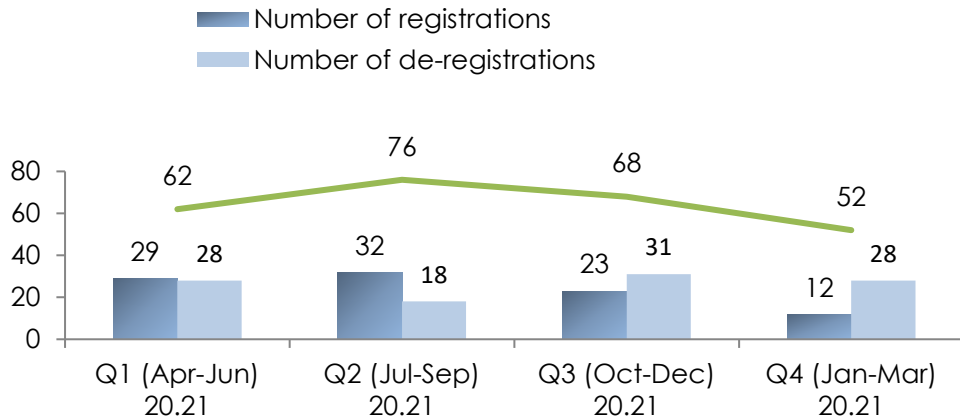


**Fig 2.3 Categories of abuse**



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**Fig 2.2 Child Protection Register Summary**



**Fig 2.4 Age Breakdown of children on child protection register**

# 02 | Child Protection Register

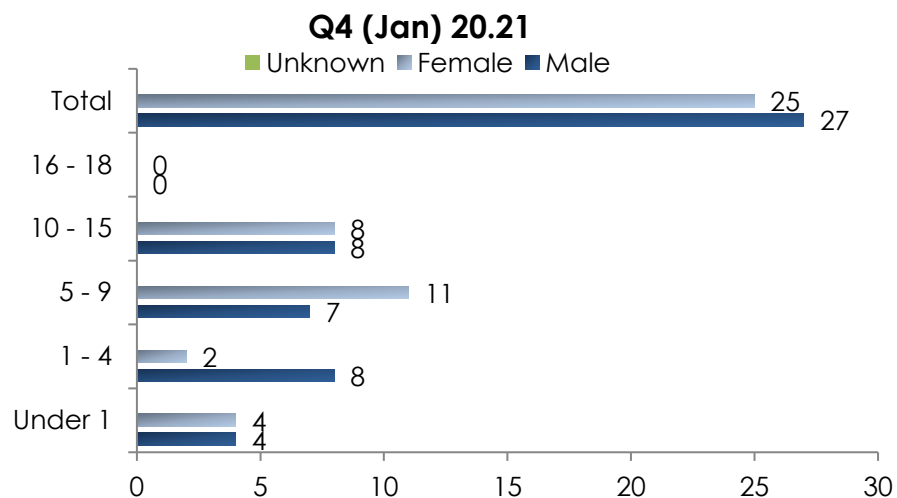
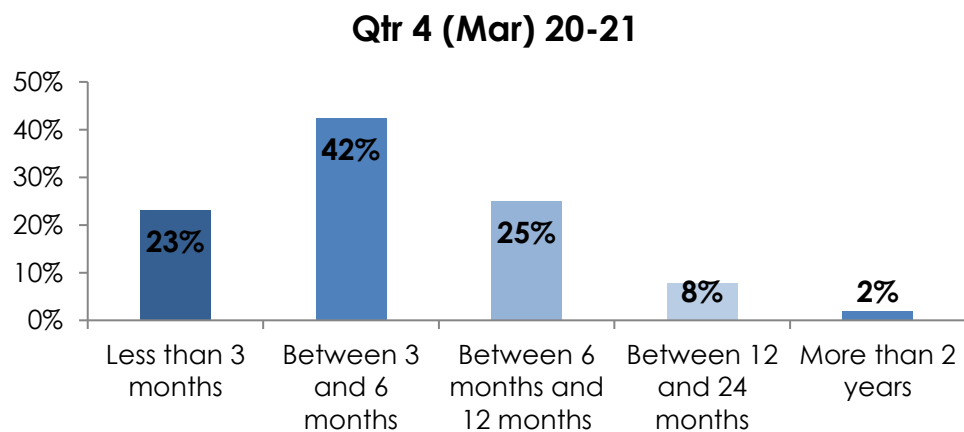


Table showing the breakdown of children on the child protection register over the last 12 months

	Q1 (Jun) 20.21	Q2 (Sep) 20.21	Q3 (Dec) 20.21	Q4 (Mar) 20.21
Less than 3 months	25	31	23	12
Between 3 and 6 months	14	15	20	22
Between 6 months and 12 months	19	26	15	13
Between 12 and 24 months	4	4	9	4
More than 2 years	0	0	1	1
	<b>62</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>52</b>

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Fig 2.5 Average length of time on register



# 02 | Child Protection Register

**Fig 2.6: Child Protection Conferences**

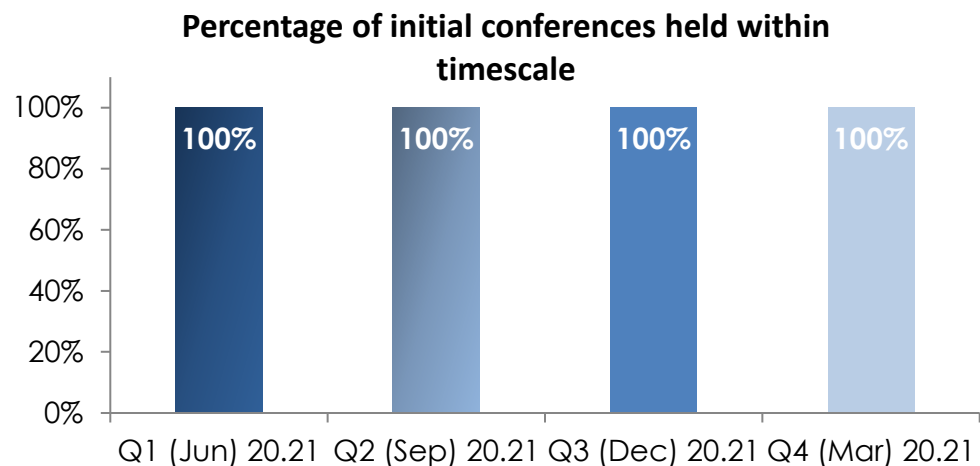
	Q1 (Jun) 20.21		Q2 (Sep) 20.21		Q3 (Dec) 20.21		Q4 (Mar) 20.21	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Conferences Held</b>	<b>84</b>		<b>75</b>		<b>81</b>		<b>68</b>	
Initial Conferences	33	39%	30	40%	28	35%	13	19%
No. of Families	19		16		12		8	
Review Conferences	51	61%	45	60%	53	65%	55	81%
No. of Families	27		22		29		25	

<b>Initial Child Protection Conferences</b>	<b>33</b>		<b>30</b>		<b>28</b>		<b>13</b>	
<i>Outcome:</i>								
Registered	24	73%	26	87%	22	79%	8	62%
Registered at birth	8	24%	3	10%	5	18%	4	31%
Not registered	1	3%	1	3%	1	4%	1	8%

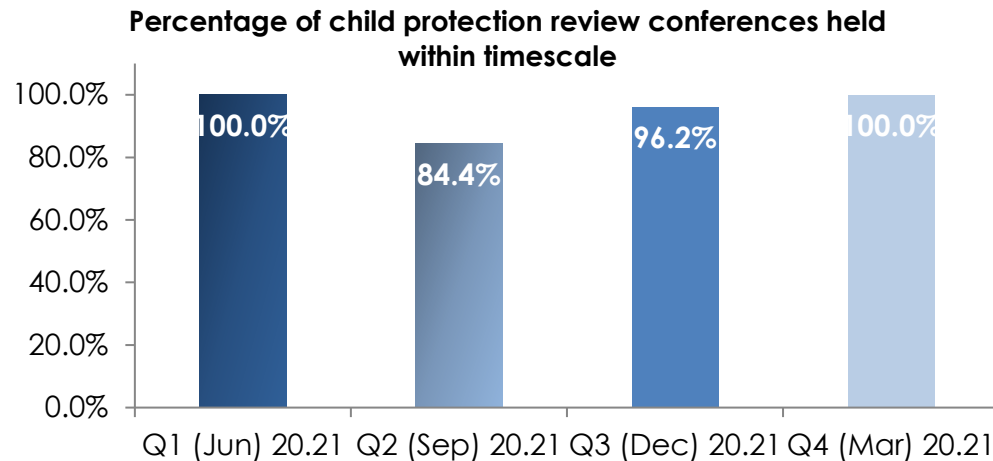
<b>Review Child Protection Conferences</b>	<b>51</b>		<b>45</b>		<b>53</b>		<b>55</b>	
<i>Outcome:</i>								
Continue with registration	23	45%	27	60%	26	49%	29	53%
Cease registration	28	55%	18	40%	27	51%	26	47%

# 03 Referrals to Education

**Fig 2.7 Initial Child Protection Conferences**



**Fig: 2.8 Child Protection Review Conferences**



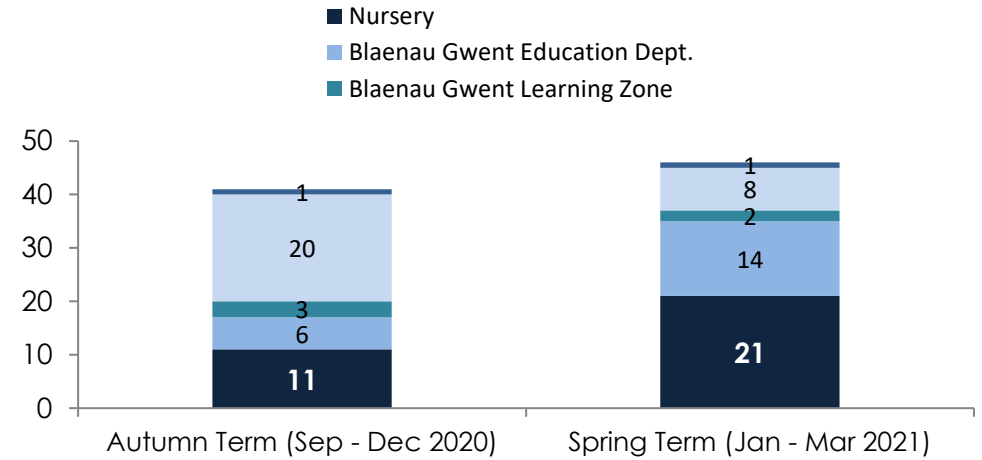
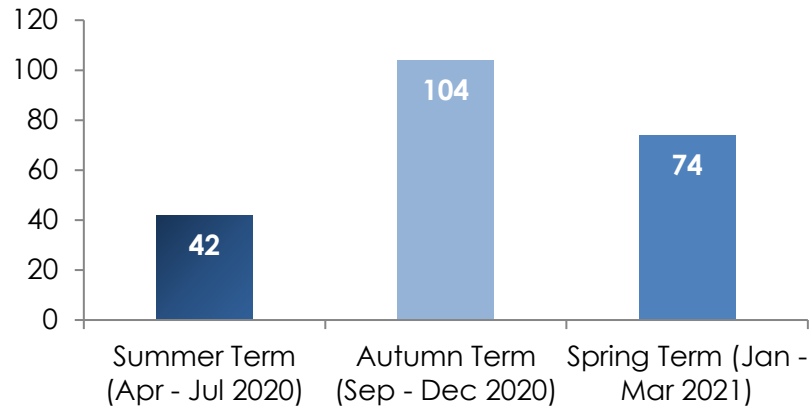
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	Q4 (Mar) 19.20	Q1 (Jun) 20.21	Q2 (Sep) 20.21	Q3 (Dec) 20.21
Number of initial conferences held	33	30	28	13
Number of initial conferences held within 15 working days of the strategy discussion	33	30	28	13
Percentage of initial conferences held within timescale	100%	100%	100%	100%

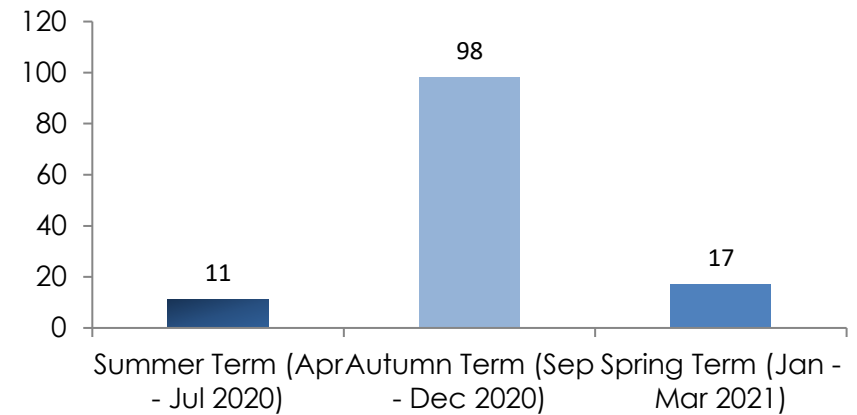
	Q4 (Mar) 19.20	Q1 (Jun) 20.21	Q2 (Sep) 20.21	Q3 (Dec) 20.21
Number of Review Child Protection Conferences held	51	45	53	55
Number of Review Child Protection Conferences held within timescale	51	38	51	55
Percentage of Review Child Protection Conferences held within timescale	100.0%	84.4%	96.2%	100.0%

# 03 | Referrals to Education

**Fig 3.1 Contacts by Source – Primary School**



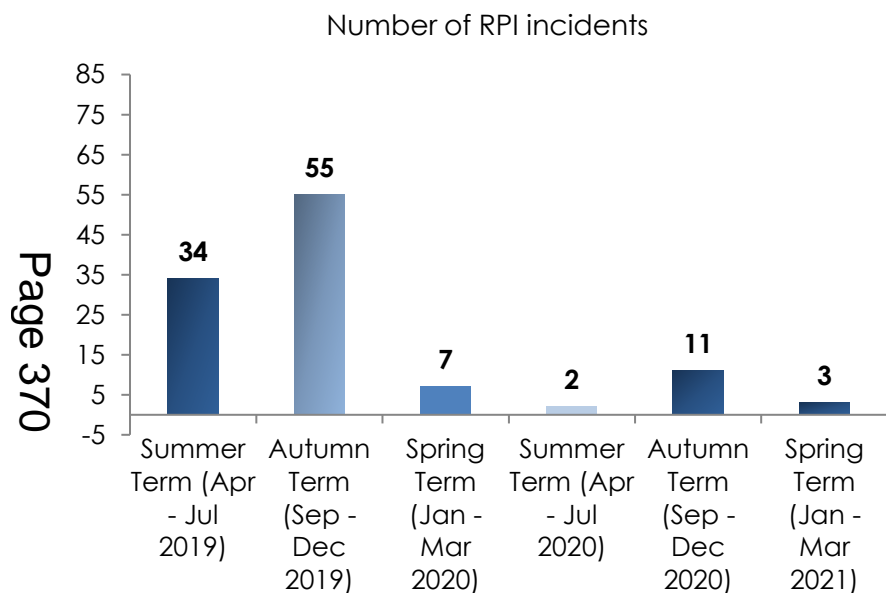
**Fig 3.2 Contacts by Source – Secondary School**



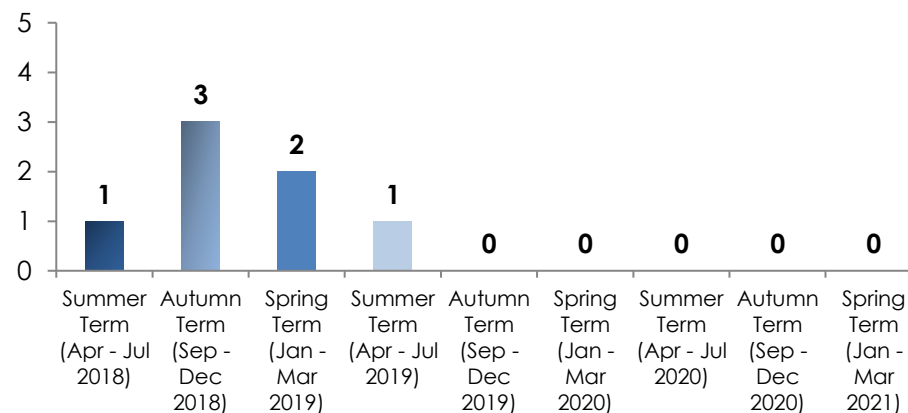
**Fig 3.3 Contacts by Source - Other**

Attendance at schools has been severely disrupted due to the Covid pandemic. Schools have been closed for extended periods of time, repurposed, and partially opened, re-opening after February half-term. For these reasons, it is not advisable to make comparisons with performance in previous quarters, and years.

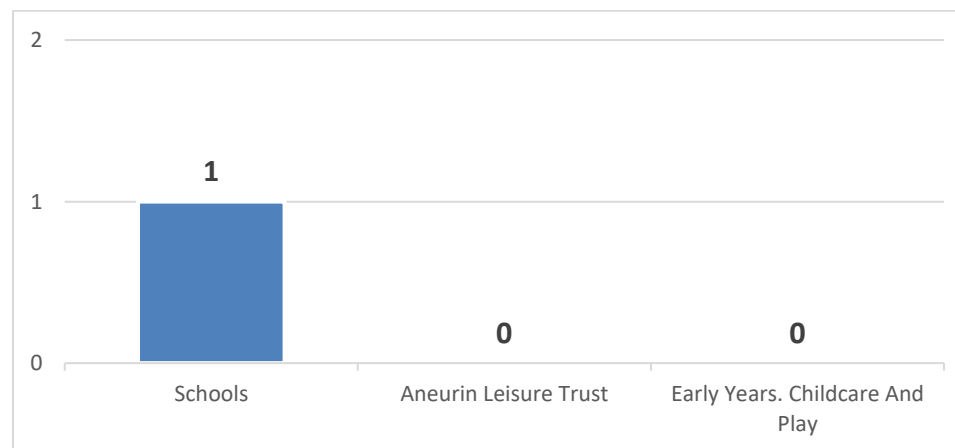
**Fig: 4.1 RPI Incidents**



**Fig: 4.2 Bullying incidents leading to exclusion**



**Fig 4.3 Quality Assurance Visits**





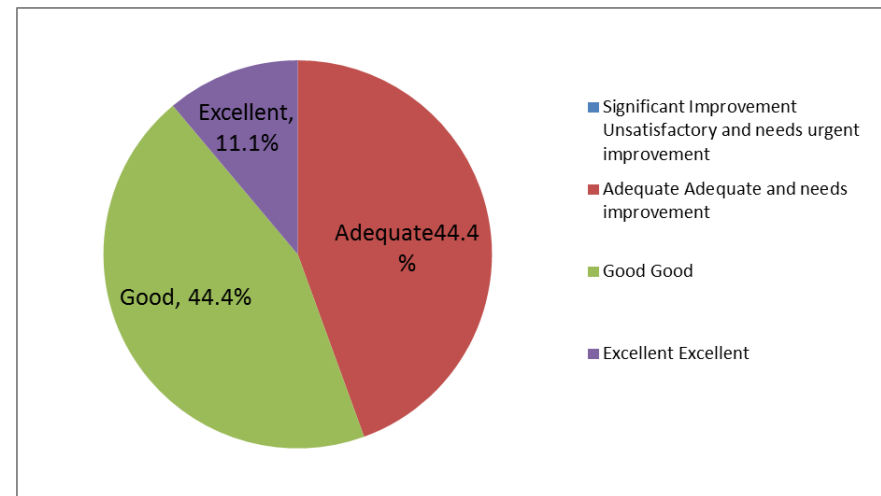
## 4 Estyn Judgements

The table below provides an overview of the Estyn judgements for schools inspected under the new arrangements from September 2017 up until December 2020.

Estyn Inspection Framework September 2017							Inspection Areas					
LA	Phase	School #	School	Date report Published	Follow-up Activity	Monitoring Visit 1	Standards	Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Teaching and learning experiences	Care, Support and guidance	Leadership and management	Out of Follow-up activity
BG	Secondary	6775401	Brynmawr Foundation School	Dec-19	SM		Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Adequate	Unsatisfactory	
BG	Primary	6773309	St Marys CIW Primary School	Mar-19	-		Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	
BG	Primary	6772310	Rhos y Fedwen Primary **	Feb-17	Estyn Review		Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Jul-18
BG	Primary	6772310	Blaenycwm Primary	May-18	-		Good	Good	Good	Excellent	Good	
BG	Secondary	6772306	Abertillery Learning Community	01/02/2018 (revist June 19)	SI	SI	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Unsatisfactory	
BG	Primary	6774074	St. Joseph's R.C. Primary	Jan-18	-		Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	
BG	Primary	6773316	St. Illtyd's Primary	01/10/2017 (revisit Mar 19)	Estyn Review	-	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Mar-19
BG	Primary	6772312	Glyncoed Primary*	Nov-17	-		Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	
BG	Primary	6772309	Glanhowy Primary*	Feb-18	-		Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	

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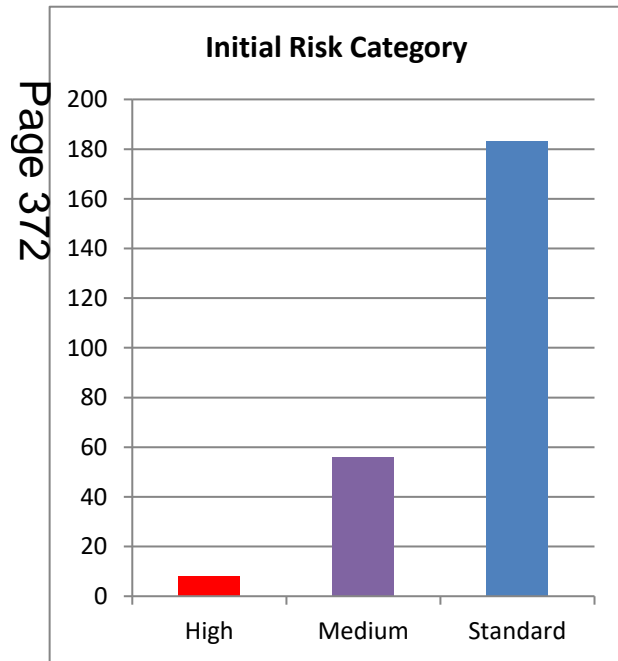
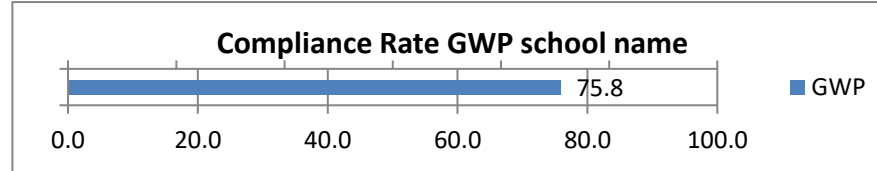
Care and Support Guidance Inspection Ratings



## 4.5 Operation Encompass

For the period Quarter 4 – January to March

Occurences	CYP
141	185



## 4.6 Elected Home Education (EHE)

	March 2021	March 2020
Total number of children electively home educated	94	77

4.7 The table below sets out the number of secondary age pupils who have become EHE or who have returned to school from being EHE during the summer, autumn and spring term.

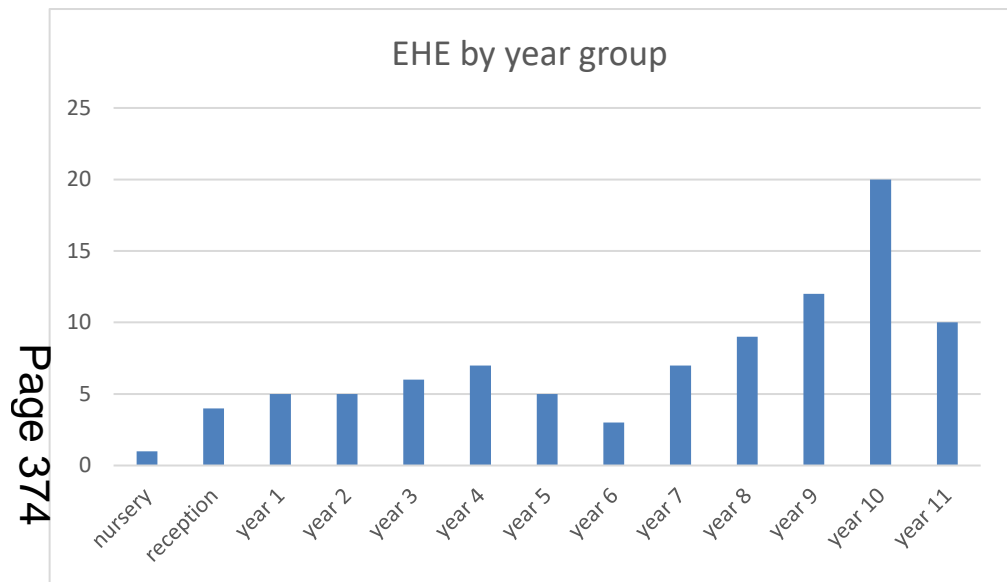
Month	School 1		School 2		School 3		School 4	
	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In
Apl – Jul 2020	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sept – Dec 2020	2	0	3	0	4	2	1	0
Jan – Mar 2021	1						2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>

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4.8 The table below sets out the number of additional pupils who have become EHE or who have returned to school from being EHE during the summer, autumn and spring term.

Month	Primary		College		Did not transition		Moved into/out of Borough (including BG pupils that were in OOC schools)		School place unavailable	
	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In
Apl – Jul 2020	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Sept – Dec 2020	18	2	0	2	8	0	4	5	2	0
Jan – Mar 2021	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

## 4.9 Breakdown per year group EHE



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## 5.1 DBS Compliance

Managers are required to identify the requirement of a DBS check utilising the eligibility criteria, all DBS checks are renewed on a 3 yearly basis. Organisational Development co-ordinates this DBS process for new starters and 3 yearly rolling programme along with monitoring the compliance of these checks and we have formal escalation processes in place. The updates on the compliance with DBS are provided bi-annually to Corporate Leadership Team.

***This reporting has been relaxed during the pandemic, however the monitoring and escalation processes have continued.***

The information shown below is as of 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2021.

### 5.1.1 Position Statement: New Starter / Rolling Programme DBS Checks Schools

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Effective Date: 22nd April 2021

Criteria	Total
Staff requiring a DBS	1263
Staff with a valid DBS	1262

Out of Compliance	Less than 4 weeks	1 - 3 months	More than 3 months	Total
New Starters currently out of compliance	0	0	0	0
Rolling Programme currently out of compliance	0	0	1	1
<b>Totals</b>	0	0	1	1

Only those schools with DBS out of compliance will be detailed below.

Rolling Programme							
Department / School	Awaiting Appointment	Appt Comments	Awaiting Certificate	Cert Comments	Total	Escalation	
						Chased with Employee	Escalation to Operational Team
School 1	1	Awaiting ID documents	0		1	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

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## Escalation Process

Employees and Managers receive automated e-mails from the DBS system reminding that the process has not been completed

Operational Teams receive fortnightly reports of all DBS applications currently in progress to enable Safeguarding escalation where required

5.1.2 Position Statement: New Starter / Rolling Programme DBS Checks Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (Excluding Schools).

Effective Date: 22nd April 2021

Criteria	Total
Staff requiring a DBS	1079
Staff with a valid DBS	1079

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Out of Compliance	Less than 4 weeks	1 - 3 months	More than 3 months	Total
New Starters currently out of compliance	0	0	0	0
Rolling Programme currently out of compliance	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	0	0	0	0

### Escalation Process

Employees and Managers receive automated e-mails from the DBS system reminding that the process has not been completed

Operational Teams receive fortnightly reports of all DBS applications currently in progress to enable Safeguarding escalation where required

## 5.3 VAWDASV Corporate Training Online

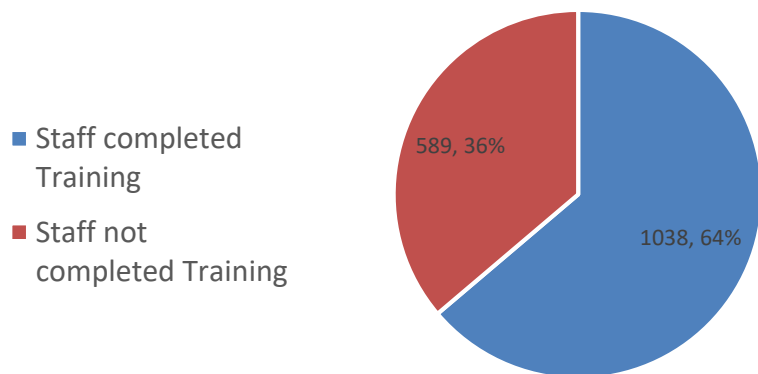
### Corporate Training

#### Domestic abuse Training

Corporate training has been provided to staff in respect of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence with **69%** of staff having **completed** the **VAWDAS online training**.

#### 5.3.1 VAWDASV Corporate

VAWDASV Corporate Online Training



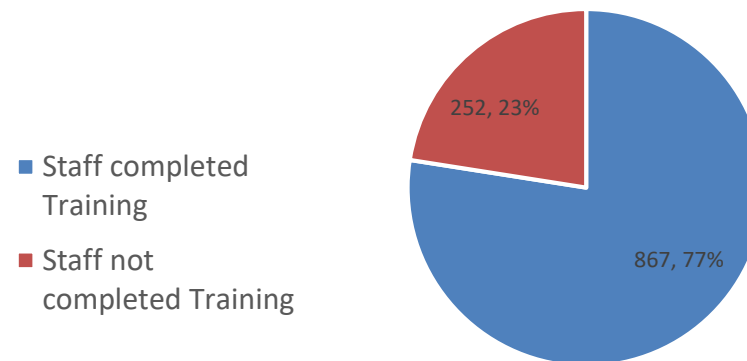
### All Wales Safeguarding Training on line for staff

Online Safeguarding training was included in the online corporate induction module in 2019.

In terms of the wider workforce a suitable module is currently being evaluated by the corporate Safeguarding group which has been delayed due to the impact of the pandemic.

#### 5.3.2 VAWDASV Schools

VAWDASV School Online Training





## 5.4 Risk Register

Ref No.	Description of Risk	Triggers	Consequences	Likelihood	Impact	Status	Current Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Status	Proposed further controls to mitigate / reduce risk	Risk Owner
CRR4	Safeguarding - Failure to ensure adequate safeguarding arrangements are in place for vulnerable people in Blaenau Gwent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is inadequate assessments and monitoring</li> <li>• If there is a lack of documentation</li> <li>• If there are increasing referrals for services</li> <li>• If there is a lack of appropriate guidance and training</li> <li>• If there is poor communication between all parties (internal / external)</li> <li>• If there is a high turnover of staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential significant harm / loss of life</li> <li>• Long term reputational damage and confidence in the Council undermined</li> <li>• Increase in complaints / Potential litigation / prosecution</li> <li>• External intervention</li> <li>• Increased pressure on budgets</li> <li>• Low staff morale</li> </ul>	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gwent Adult Safeguarding Board</li> <li>• SE Wales Safeguarding Children's Board</li> <li>• Standing item on CLT agenda</li> <li>• Safeguarding Network</li> <li>• Director of Social Services has a corporate responsibility for safeguarding</li> <li>• Lead Executive Member identified for safeguarding</li> <li>• Adult protection co-ordinator and process in place in line with All Wales process.</li> <li>• Manager's report consistently on safeguarding to elected Members and the Corporate Leadership Team</li> <li>• Joint Education and Social Services Safeguarding Team</li> <li>• Joint Social Services and Education Safeguarding scrutiny meeting held 3 times a year</li> <li>• Joint Business unit and subgroups for adults and children</li> </ul>	2	4	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Plans will further embed risk assessment tools</li> <li>• Embedding of quality assurance processes in adult safeguarding</li> <li>• Training for all staff on Domestic Abuse Corporately</li> </ul>	<p>Director of Social Services</p> <p>Councillor John Mason</p>

## Quarter 4 Progress (January – March 2021)

In Adult Services – the recent analysis of our adult safeguarding performance data and complexity of cases has resulted in an additional safeguarding post being created within the Safeguarding Team. This will add additional capacity to undertake safeguarding assessments and timely investigations and enable the service to enhance our preventative work through engagement and training. It has also enabled the safeguarding lead to further embed our quality assurance processes.

In Children’s services –Children in Blaenau Gwent have now started to return to school. Although we have seen an increase in referrals each Quarter during 2020/21 the rise has not been concerning to date. We await to see the impact on referrals when children have been in education with face-to-face contact for a longer period. The Children’s Services Service Manager has now completed the work on the Corporate Safeguarding policy update and a corporate safeguarding training programme which will be brought before CLT in quarter 1 of 2021/22.

The lack of meaningful safeguarding data available primarily due to most learners receiving their learning remotely resulted in the postponement of the Joint Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee

*The Joint Safeguarding Committee will now be held on 26<sup>th</sup> April and a report will highlight a need following the emergency response to the pandemic to re-establish the collection of data from schools through the safeguarding and inclusion protocol. This action is in hand and will be presented to CLT/Members accordingly. The Safeguarding in Education Manager has been tasked to provide a FADE evaluation of the safeguarding matrix as at the end of the Spring term. The information on the matrix includes policy adoption, training, DBS escalations and volunteer information. The Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) policy is being finalised and will be presented to the Joint Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee in the near future. The implementation of the data management system, namely MyConcern across the school estate continues. The Summer term Estyn Local Authority Link Inspector (LALI) meeting will cover an update to the inspectorate on safeguarding aspects of work.*

## **End of Year Review 2020 2021**

Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the directorate has continued to provide a consistent and timely response to safeguarding including face to face visits. Initially there was a reduction of referrals when we first went into lockdown but quickly this returned to more ‘normal levels’. We have continued to report safeguarding performance to Welsh Government throughout the pandemic and to the Regional Safeguarding Board. Now that schools have returned full time to face to face contact we will continue to monitor the impact on referrals during quarter 1 of 2021-22.

In Adult Services due to the number and complexity of referrals we have created an additional social worker post within the safeguarding team, however the post is unlikely to be filled until quarter 1 of 2021-22. Also our lead service manager for Corporate Safeguarding has led

on the update of the Corporate Safeguarding policy as well as the proposed corporate safeguarding training programme which will be implemented in quarter 1 of 2021-22.

The risks around pupils not receiving “face to face” learning in the school setting as a result of the pandemic were recognised , WG guidance “Stay safe, Stay Learning: supporting the education system” encouraged practitioners to make virtual contact with learners based on routines developed by head teachers while following WG guidance on live streaming and video conferencing.

In relation to vulnerable learner provision, there was a strong provision in place to support learners that are Children Look After and those learners that are on the Child Protection Register whose families may have needed support. There were also arrangements in place with the education welfare service. The lack of meaningful safeguarding data available primarily due to most learners receiving their learning remotely resulted in the postponement of the Joint Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee.

*The Joint Safeguarding Committee will now be held on 26<sup>th</sup> April and a report will highlight a need following the emergency response to the pandemic to re-establish the collection of data from schools through the safeguarding and inclusion protocol. This action is in hand and will be presented to CLT/Members accordingly. The Safeguarding in Education Manager has been tasked to provide a Focus area of Analysis Development Way Forward (FADE) evaluation of the safeguarding matrix as at the end of the Spring term. The information on the matrix includes policy adoption, training, DBS escalations and volunteer information. The Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) policy is being finalised and will be presented to the Joint Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee in the near future. The implementation of the data management system, namely MyConcern across the school estate continues. The Summer term Estyn Local Authority Link Inspector (LALI) meeting will cover an update to the inspectorate on safeguarding aspects of work.*

## Regulatory Proposals

88	WAO	Follow-up review of Corporate Arrangements for the Safeguarding of Children Document Reference: 1521A2019-20	01/10/2019	<p>1. Corporate Safeguarding Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the Policy</li> <li>• Update the structure</li> <li>• Include updated information from the All Wales Policy</li> <li>• When adopted in April 2020, include information from the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures</li> </ul> <p><b>Completion Date April 2020</b></p>	Alison Ramshaw (Corporate Safeguarding Group) T1 Families First, IAA 14+ and Safeguarding	Social Services	<p>The Corporate Safeguarding Leads mtg were on hold during the first stage of the pandemic but reconvened during the latter part of the year. The chair of the CSL group wrote a report to CLT and the Audit Committee seeking approval to extend the completion dates of the WAO Safeguarding Review recommendations as the pandemic meant that no progress could be made. Extended dates were agreed and a further 12 months was approved. Work was completed on the updating of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and a Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework has been developed. Both pieces of work are currently awaiting CLT approval prior to implementation. The Wales Safeguarding App is available to all those staff who have a works mobile and communications have gone out to alert those staff without a works mobile of the App which is available to all via Google search engine. Lead officers with responsibility for safeguarding are still to be identified</p>
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