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Blaenau Gwent

Our Ref./Ein Cyf.
Your Ref./Eich Cyf.
Contact:/Cysylltwch â: Gwasanaethau Democraidd

THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

Dydd Iau, 14 Gorffennaf 2022 Dydd Iau, 14 Gorffennaf 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

CYFARFOD CYFFREDINOL Y CYNGOR

A meeting of the Cyfarfod Cyffredinol y Cyngor will be held in Siambr y Cyngor, Canolfan Ddinesig on Dydd Iau, 21ain Gorffennaf, 2022 at 10.00 am.

Yours faithfully

Damien McCann
Interim Chief Executive

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

Derbyn ymddiheuriadau.

3. DATGANIADAU BUDDIANT A GODDEFEBAU

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn cyfathrebu gyda chi yn eich dewis iaith, dim ond i chi rhoi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.

The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh and English and we will communicate with you in the language of your choice, as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to any delay.

Ystyried unrhyw ddatganiadau buddiant a goddefebau a dderbyniwyd.

4. CYHOEDDIADAU'R CADEIRYDD

Derbyn cyhoeddiadau'r Cadeirydd.

5. CYFARFOD BLYNYDDOL Y CYNGOR – RHAN 1 9 - 20

Cadarnhau, ac os gwelir yn addas, gymeradwyo cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 26 Mai 2022.

6. CYFARFOD BLYNYDDOL Y CYNGOR – RHAN 2 21 - 46

Cadarnhau, ac os gwelir yn addas, gymeradwyo cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 10 Mehefin 2022.

7. CYFARFOD CYFFREDINOL Y CYNGOR 47 - 82

Cadarnhau, ac os gwelir yn addas, gymeradwyo cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 9 Mawrth 2022.

8. CYFARFOD ARBENNIG O'R CYNGOR 83 - 104

Cadarnhau, ac os gwelir yn addas, gymeradwyo cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 17 Chwefror 2022.

9. PWYLLGOR CYNLLUNIO, RHEOLEIDDIO A THRWDDEDU CYFFREDINOL (MATERION CYNLLUNIO) 105 - 118

Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 3 Mawrth 2022.

10. PWYLLGOR CYNLLUNIO, RHEOLEIDDIO A THRWDDEDU CYFFREDINOL (MATERION CYNLLUNIO) 119 - 124

Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 16 Mehefin 2022.

11. PWYLLGOR TRWDDEDU CYFFREDINOL 125 - 126

Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod o'r Pwyllgor Trwyddedu Cyffredinol a gynhaliwyd ar 20 Mehefin 2022.

12. PWYLLGOR GWEITHREDIAETH 127 - 142

Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 2 Mawrth 2022.

13. **CYFARFOD ARBENNIG O'R PWYLLGOR GWEITHREDIAETH** 143 - 154

Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 16 Mawrth 2022.

14. **PWYLLGOR GWASANAETHAU DEMOCRATAIDD** 155 - 158

Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod o'r Pwyllgor Gwasanaethau Democritaidd a gynhaliwyd ar 8 Tachwedd 2021.

15. **PWYLLGOR CRAFFU GWASANAETHAU CYMDEITHASOL** 159 - 166

Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod o'r Pwyllgor Craffu Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol a gynhaliwyd ar 20 Ionawr 2022.

16. **CYDBWYLLGOR CRAFFU ADDYSG & DYSGU A GWASANAETHAU CYMDEITHASOL** 167 - 176

Cadarnhau cofnodion y Cydbwyllgor Craffu Addysg & Dysgu a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol (Diogelu) a gynhaliwyd ar 21 Ionawr 2022.

17. **CYFARFOD ARBENNIG PWYLLGOR CRAFFU ADDYSG A DYSGU** 177 - 186

Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod arbening o'r Pwyllgor Craffu Addysg a Dysgu a gynhaliwyd ar 26 Ionawr 2022.

18. **CYFARFOD ARBENNIG PWYLLGOR CRAFFU GWASANAETHAU CYHOEDDUS** 187 - 192

Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 28 Ionawr 2022.

19. **PWYLLGOR CRAFFU ADDYSG A DYSGU** 193 - 200

Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod o'r Pwyllgor Craffu Addysg a Dysgu a gynhaliwyd ar 1 Chwefror 2022.

20. **PWYLLGOR CRAFFU ADFYWIO** 201 - 210

Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod o'r Pwyllgor Craffu

Adfywio a gynhaliwyd ar 9 Chwefror 2022.

21. PWYLLGOR CRAFFU TROSOLWG CORFFORAETHOL 211 - 218

Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod o'r Pwyllgor Craffu Trosolwg Corfforaethol a gynhaliwyd ar 23 Chwefror 2022.

22. PWYLLGOR CRAFFU GWASANAETHAU CYMUNEDOL 219 - 226

Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod o'r Pwyllgor Craffu Gwasanaethau Cymunedol a gynhaliwyd ar 28 Chwefror 2022.

23. CYD-BWYLLGOR CRAFFU (MONITRO CYLLIDEB) 227 - 234

Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod o'r Cydbwyllgor Craffu (Monitro'r Gyllideb) a gynhaliwyd ar 7 Mawrth 2022.

24. PWYLLGOR CRAFFU ADDYSG A DYSGU 235 - 244

Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod o'r Pwyllgor Craffu Addysg a Dysgu a gynhaliwyd ar 15 Mawrth 2022.

25. PWYLLGOR LLYWODRAETHIANT AC ARCHWILIO 245 - 248

Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod o'r Pwyllgor Llywodraethiant ac Archwilio a gynhaliwyd ar 14 Ebrill 2022.

26. CWESTIYNAU AELODAU

Derbyn cwestiynau, os oes rhai, gan Aelodau.

27. CWESTIYNAU GAN Y CYHOEDD

Derbyn cwestiynau, os oes rhai, gan y cyhoedd.

28. CYNNIG – COSTAU BYW 249 - 252

Ystyried y cynnig a atodir.

29. ADRODDIAD BLYNYDDOL PENNAETH GWASANAETHAU DEMOCRATAIDD 2021/22 253 - 258

Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Democrataidd, Llywodraethiant a Phartneriaethau.

30. **ADRODDIAD CRAFFU BLYNYDDOL 2021/22** 259 - 288
Ystyried adroddiad y Swyddog Craffu a Democrataidd.
31. **TREFNIADAU CYMORTH AR GYFER AELODAU AR GYRFF ALLANOL** 289 - 300
Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Democrataidd, Llywodraethiant a Phartneriaethau.
32. **RHESTR CYDNABYDDIAETH ARIANNOL AELODAU 2022/23** 301 - 316
Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol.
33. **DATGANIAD O DALIADAU A WNAED I AELODAU ETHOLEDIG** 317 - 322
Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol.
34. **CYFRES Y CYNGOR O BOLISIŶAU A GWEITHDREFNAU DISGYBLAETH A GALLU** 323 - 390
Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol.
35. **POLISI GWIRFODDOLI A GEFNOGIR GAN Y CYFLOGWR** 391 - 402
Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol.
36. **ASESIAD ANGHENION POBLOGAETH RHANBARTHOL** 403 - 466
Ystyried adroddiad ar y cyd gan y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Interim Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol a Phennaeth y Tîm Partneriaeth Rhanbarthol.
37. **PWYLLGOR SAFONAU** 467 - 470
Ystyried adroddiad y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 28 Ionawr 2022.
38. **ADRODDIAD AELODAETH** 471 - 472
Ystyried yr adroddiad a atodir.
39. **AMSER CYFARFODYDD CYNGOR Y DYFODOL**

Trafod amser cyfarfodydd y dyfodol.

40. EITEM(AU) EITHRIEDIG

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).

41. LLUNIO RHESTR FER – SWYDDOGION JNC 473 - 474

Ystyried adroddiad y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 17 Mehefin 2022.

42. PWYLLGOR PENODIADAU 475 - 476

Ystyried adroddiad y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 28 Mehefin 2022.

To: Councillor C. Smith (Aelod Llywyddol)
Councillor C. Bainton
P. Baldwin
Councillor S. Behr
D. Bevan
Councillor K. Chaplin
M. Cross
Councillor H. Cunningham
D. Davies
G. A. Davies
M. Day
Councillor S. Edmunds
Councillor J. Gardner
J. Hill
W. Hodgins
J. Holt
Councillor G. Humphreys
Councillor R. Leadbeater
Councillor E. Jones
Councillor J. Morgan, J.P.
J. C. Morgan
J. P. Morgan
L. Parsons
Councillor D. Rowberry
T. Smith
G. Thomas
Councillor J. Thomas

S. Thomas
H. Trollope
J. Wilkins
L. Winnett
Councillor D. Woods

All other Members (for information)
Interim Chief Executive
Chief Officers

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – 26TH MAY, 2022</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>DEMOCRATIC OFFICER</u>

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. HOLT (THE CHAIR, PRESIDING)

- Councillors
- C. Bainton
 - P. Baldwin
 - S. Behr
 - D. Bevan
 - K. Chaplin
 - M. Cross
 - H. Cunningham
 - D. Davies
 - G. A. Davies
 - M. Day
 - S. Edmunds
 - J. Gardner
 - J. Hill
 - W. Hodgins
 - G. Humphreys
 - R. Leadbeater
 - E. Jones
 - J. Morgan, J.P.
 - J. C. Morgan
 - J. P. Morgan
 - L. Parsons
 - D. Rowberry
 - C. Smith
 - T. Smith
 - G. Thomas
 - J. Thomas
 - S. Thomas
 - H. Trollope
 - J. Wilkins
 - D. Wilshire

L. Winnett
D. Woods

AND: Interim Chief Executive
Corporate Director of Education
Interim Corporate Director of Social Services
Chief Officer Resources
Chief Officer Commercial & Customer
Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships
Head of Regeneration
Head of Community Services
Head of Organisational Development
Organisational Development Manager – Payroll, Health & Safety
Communications & Marketing Manager
Press & Publicity Officer
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1.	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
2.	<u>APOLOGIES</u> There were no apologies for absence received.	
3.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u> There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.	

<p>4.</p>	<p><u>DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENTS 2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Democratic and Performance.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein relating to the democratic arrangements moving forward be noted.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p><u>PRESIDING MEMBER AND DEPUTY PRESIDING MEMBER</u></p> <p>It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Chris Smith be elected Presiding Member of the Council and that Councillor David Wilkshire be appointed Deputy Presiding Member of the Council for the ensuing year.</p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p> <p>Councillor Smith, thereupon, took the Chair at this juncture.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</u></p> <p>It was proposed and seconded that Councillor S. Thomas be elected Leader of the Council and that Councillor H. Cunningham be elected Deputy Leader for the ensuing year.</p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p>	

7.

GROUP OFFICERS

The **Labour Group Officers** for the ensuing year were reported as follows:

Councillor S. Thomas – Leader
Councillor H. Cunningham – Deputy Leader
Councillor T. Smith – Secretary
Councillor C. Smith – Group Chair
Councillor D. Wilkshire – Group Vice-Chair
Councillor P. Baldwin – Treasurer

It was reported that the **Independent Group Officers** for the ensuing year would be:

Councillor J. Wilkins - Leader
Councillor W. Hodgins - Deputy Leader
Councillor L. Parsons – Secretary

8.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE

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

Leader of the Council/Executive Member - Corporate Overview & Performance

Councillor S. Thomas

Deputy Leader of the Council/Executive Member – Place & Environment

Councillor H. Cunningham

Executive Member – Place & Regeneration

Councillor J. C. Morgan

Executive Member – People & Social Services

Councillor H. Trollope

Executive Member – People & Education

Councillor S. Edmunds

9.

CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR AND MEMBERSHIP OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

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

People Scrutiny Committee

Chair Councillor T. Smith

Vice-Chair Councillor J. Morgan, J.P.

Place Scrutiny Committee

Chair Councillor M. Cross

Vice-Chair Councillor R. Leadbeater

Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

Chair Councillor W. Hodgins

Vice-Chair Councillor P. Baldwin

Corporate & Performance Scrutiny Committee

Chair Councillor J. Wilkins

Vice-Chair Councillor J. Thomas

FURTHER RESOLVED that the following be appointed:

People Scrutiny Committee

9 Members – Proportionality 6:3

1. Chair - Councillor T. Smith
2. Vice Chair - Councillor J. Morgan, J.P.
3. Councillors C. Bainton
4. D. Bevan
5. K. Chaplin
6. G. A. Davies
7. J. Holt

8. G. Thomas

9. D. Wilkshire

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

1. Mr. T. Baxter Diocesan Education Body
(R.C. Church)

2. Mr. T. Pritchard (Church in Wales)

3. Vacant Youth Forum Representative

Place Scrutiny Committee

9 Members – Proportionality 6:3

1. Chair - Councillor M. Cross

2. Vice Chair - Councillor R. Leadbeater

3. Councillors P. Baldwin

4. S. Behr

5. J. Gardner

6. J. Hill

7. J. Holt

8. J. P. Morgan

9. D. Rowberry

Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

9 Members – Proportionality 6:3

1. Chair - Councillor W. Hodgins

2. Vice Chair - Councillor P. Baldwin

- | | | |
|----|-------------|------------|
| 3. | Councillors | K. Chaplin |
| 4. | | D. Davies |
| 5. | | E. Jones |
| 6. | | L. Parsons |
| 7. | | C. Smith |
| 8. | | L. Winnett |
| 9. | | D. Woods |

**Corporate & Performance Scrutiny Committee –
9 Members – Proportionality 6:3**

- | | | |
|----|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Chair - | Councillor J. Wilkins |
| 2. | Vice Chair - | Councillor J. Thomas |
| 3. | Councillors | C. Bainton |
| 4. | | M. Day |
| 5. | | G. Humphreys |
| 6. | | E. Jones |
| 7. | | R. Leadbeater |
| 8. | | C. Smith |
| 9. | | T. Smith |

<p>10.</p>	<p><u>COUNCIL'S REPRESENTATIVE ON OTHER BODIES</u></p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously, RESOLVED that the following be appointed:-</p> <p><u>Brecon Beacons National Park – National Park Authority & Site Visits</u> Councillor P. Baldwin</p> <p><u>Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Cabinet</u> Leader of the Council</p> <p><u>Gwent Police Crime Panel</u> Councillor G. A. Davies Councillor J. Thomas</p> <p><u>Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd</u> <u>Non Executive</u> Councillor T. Smith Councillor L. Winnett</p> <p><u>South Wales Fire Authority</u> Councillor J. Morgan, J.P.</p> <p><u>Tai Calon Board</u> Councillor S. Behr Councillor E. Jones</p> <p><u>Member Champion – Armed Forces</u> Councillor D. Bevan</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p><u>ANNUAL CYCLE OF MEETINGS 2022/2023</u></p> <p>Members considered the joint officers' report.</p> <p>It was unanimously, RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that:</p>	

	<p>(i) The proposed annual cycle of meetings 2022/2023 attached at Appendix 1 be approved.</p> <p>(ii) The decision making process to deal with any urgent business during the August recess be approved:</p> <p>a. the Leader and Deputy Leader in conjunction with appropriate Executive Members and Officers deal with any urgent items from 1st - 31st August 2022 (i.e. a Special Meeting of the Executive would be convened at short notice recognising that the matter was urgent and the call-in procedure would apply). The Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service in conjunction with the Leadership would determine if a matter was urgent; and</p> <p>b. decisions should be limited to urgent matters and recorded on a decision schedule presented to the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council. No controversial or sensitive matters should be dealt with during this period.</p>	
12.	<u>PART 2 BUSINESS</u>	
13.	<p><u>REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES (IRPW) 2022/2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p>	

	RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the determinations in the final IRPW Annual Report for 2022/2023 be noted.	
14.	<p><u>EXEMPT ITEM</u></p> <p>To receive and consider the following report which in the opinion of the proper officer was an exempt item taking into account consideration of the public interest test and that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting (the reasons for the decisions for the exemption was available on a schedule maintained by the proper officer).</p>	
15.	<p><u>SENIOR STAFFING REPORT</u></p> <p>All officers apart from the Interim Chief Executive, Chief Officer Resources, Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance, Head of Organisational Development and the Democratic and Committee Support Officer left the meeting whilst this item of business was considered.</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 Paragraphs 12 & 13, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Chief Executive.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p>	

RESOLVED that the report which related to staffing matters be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that Council approve the mutual termination of the officer named in the report with effect from the 31 st May 2022.	
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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL (PART 2)</u> <u>10TH JUNE, 2022</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>DEMOCRATIC OFFICER</u>

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR C. SMITH (CHAIR)

- Councillors
- D. Wilkshire
 - C. Bainton
 - P. Baldwin
 - S. Behr
 - D. Bevan
 - K. Chaplin
 - M. Cross
 - H. Cunningham
 - D. Davies
 - G. A. Davies
 - M. Day
 - S. Edmunds
 - J. Gardner
 - J. Hill
 - W. Hodgins
 - G. Humphreys
 - R. Leadbeater
 - E. Jones
 - J. Morgan, J.P.
 - J. C. Morgan
 - J. P. Morgan
 - L. Parsons
 - D. Rowberry
 - T. Smith
 - G. Thomas
 - J. Thomas
 - S. Thomas
 - H. Trollope
 - J. Wilkins

L. Winnett

AND: Corporate Director of Education
Chief Officer Resources
Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships
Head of Community Services
Democratic Officer

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1.	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
2.	<u>APOLOGIES</u> Apologies for absence were reported for Councillor D. Woods, the Interim Chief Executive and the Interim Corporate Director of Social Services.	
3.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u> No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.	
4.	<u>STANDING COMMITTEES AND STANDING SUB-COMMITTEES</u> The Leader of the Council reported that the Planning & General Licensing Committee would be split moving forward, i.e. Planning Committee, General Licensing Committee; and Statutory Licensing Committee. RESOLVED that the following be appointed: <u>Planning Committee</u> <u>11 Members – Proportionality 7:4</u> 1. Chair - Councillor L. Winnett	

- | | | |
|-----|--------------|---------------------|
| 2. | Vice Chair - | Councillor D. Bevan |
| 3. | Councillors | P. Baldwin |
| 4. | | M. Day |
| 5. | | J. Gardner |
| 6. | | J. Hill |
| 7. | | W. Hodgins |
| 8. | | G. Humphreys |
| 9. | | J. Morgan, J.P. |
| 10. | | J. Thomas |
| 11. | | D. Wilkshire |

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

General Licensing Committee
11 Members – Proportionality 7:4

- | | | |
|----|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Chair - | Councillor L. Winnett |
| 2. | Vice Chair - | Councillor D. Bevan |
| 3. | Councillors | S. Behr |
| 4. | | M. Cross |
| 5. | | G. A. Davies |
| 6. | | J. Gardner |
| 7. | | G. Humphreys |
| 8. | | L. Parsons |
| 9. | | D. Rowberry |

10. G. Thomas

11. D. Woods

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

1. Chair Councillor
or
Vice Chair Councillor

Plus 2 other Members of the General Licensing Committee

Statutory Licensing Committee
11 Members – Proportionality 7:4

1. Chair - Councillor L. Winnett

2. Vice Chair - Councillor D. Bevan

3. Councillors S. Behr

4. M. Cross

5. G. A. Davies

6. J. Gardner

7. G. Humphreys

8. L. Parsons

9. D. Rowberry

10. G. Thomas

11. D. Woods

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

1. Chair Councillor

- or*
2. Vice Chair Councillor

Plus 2 other Members of the Statutory Licensing Committee

Democratic Services Committee
9 Members - Proportionality 6:3

1. Chair Councillor J. Holt
2. Vice Chair - Councillor C. Bainton
3. Executive Member - Councillor J. C. Morgan
4. Councillors D. Bevan
5. M. Day
6. E. Jones
7. L. Parsons
8. C. Smith
9. L. Winnett

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

Governance & Audit Committee
9 Members – Proportionality 4:2 plus 3 Lay Members

- | | | |
|----|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Chair | Lay Member – To be confirmed |
| 1. | Vice Chair - | Councillor S. Behr |
| 2. | Councillors | J. Gardner |
| 3. | | W. Hodgins |

-
4. C. Smith
 5. T. Smith
 6. J. Wilkins
 7. Lay Member - Mr. T. Edwards
 8. Lay Member – Mr. M. Veale
 9. Lay Member

Governance & Audit Committee Appointments Panel
3:2

1. Councillor S. Behr
2. Councillor W. Hodgins
3. Councillor C. Smith
4. Councillor T. Smith
5. Councillor J. Wilkins

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

1. Town Councillor – **To be confirmed**
 2. Mr. R. Lynch
 3. Mr. Stephen Williams
 4. Mr R. Alexander
 5. Mrs Sarah Rosser
 6. Miss H. Roberts
-

-
7. Councillor M. Cross
 8. Councillor J. Thomas
 9. Councillor L. Winnett

Longlisting/Shortlisting – JNC Officers
7 Members – Proportionality 5:2

1. Leader or Deputy Leader
2. Executive Member for appropriate Portfolio
3. Chair of appropriate Scrutiny Committee
4. Vice-Chair of appropriate Scrutiny Committee
5. Councillor S. Behr
6. Councillor J. Hill
7. Councillor G. Thomas

Substitutes

1. Councillor P. Baldwin
2. Councillor D. Bevan
3. Councillor J. Thomas
4. Councillor L. Winnett

Appointments Committee – JNC Officers
7 Members – Proportionality 5:2

1. Chair – Leader or Deputy Leader
 2. Executive Member for appropriate Portfolio
 3. Chair of appropriate Scrutiny Committee
 4. Vice- Chair of appropriate Scrutiny Committee
 5. Councillors S. Behr
-

7. J. Hill
8. G. Thomas

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

Substitutes

1. Councillor P. Baldwin
2. Councillor D. Bevan
3. Councillor J. Thomas
4. Councillor L. Winnett

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

1. Leader of the Council
2. Deputy Leader of the Council
3. Leader of the Largest Opposition Group
4. Deputy Leader of the Largest Opposition Group
5. Councillor S. Behr
6. Councillor **To be confirmed**
7. Councillor **To be confirmed**

Officer additions if appropriate

Substitutes

1. Councillor P. Baldwin
2. Councillor D. Bevan
3. Councillor J. Thomas
4. Councillor L. Winnett

**Appointments Committee –
Managing Director/ Chief Executive - 7 Members –
Proportionality 5:2**

1. Chair Leader
2. Vice-Chair Deputy Leader
3. Leader of the Largest Opposition Group
4. Deputy Leader of the Largest Opposition Group
5. Councillors S. Behr
6. **To be confirmed**
7. **To be confirmed**

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

Substitutes

1. Councillor P. Baldwin
2. Councillor D. Bevan
3. Councillor J. Thomas
4. Councillor L. Winnett

Appeals Committee

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

Chair of People Scrutiny Committee
Chair of Place Scrutiny Committee
Chair of Partnerships Scrutiny Committee
Chair of Corporate & Performance Scrutiny Committee

	<p>* 1 Member to be selected from the following Labour Group Members:-</p> <p>Councillors 1. S. Behr 2. J. Thomas 3. L. Winnett</p> <p>* 1 Member to be selected from the following Independent Group Members:-</p> <p>Councillors 1. G. Humphreys 2. J. P. Morgan 3. G. Thomas</p> <p>* On a Rolling Rota</p> <p>Substitute Members</p> <p>Councillors 1. P. Baldwin 2. M. Cross 3. E. Jones 4. T. Smith 5. D. Davies 6. G. A. Davies 7. J. Hill</p> <p><u>Investigating & Disciplinary Committee (JNC & Chief Officers)</u></p> <p>Councillors 1. CHAIR J. Thomas 2. M. Cross 3. C. Smith 4. T. Smith 5. L. Winnett</p>	
5.	<p><u>SPECIAL AND AD HOC COMMITTEES/CONSULTATION MEETINGS</u></p> <p>RESOLVED that the following be appointed:</p> <p><u>Gwent Public Service Board</u></p>	

1. **Leader of the Council / Executive Member – Corporate Overview & Performance**

Councillor S. Thomas

Consultation with Trade Unions

1. Leader/ Executive Member – Corporate Overview & Performance
2. Deputy Leader /Executive Member – Place & Environment
3. Appropriate Portfolio Member(s)

Fostering Panel (Social Services)

1. Councillor D. Bevan

Sub:- Councillor D. Rowberry

Blaenau Gwent & Care and Repair Board

1. Councillor S. Behr
2. Councillor E. Jones

Education Admissions Forum

1. **Executive Member – People & Education**
Councillor S. Edmunds
2. **Chair – People Scrutiny Committee**
Councillor T. Smith

Schools Forum

1. **Executive Member – People & Education**
Councillor S. Edmunds
2. **Chair – People Scrutiny Committee**
Councillor T. Smith

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

1. **Executive Member – People & Education**
Councillor S. Edmunds
2. **Chair – People Scrutiny Committee**
Councillor T. Smith

Getting to Know Our Schools Sub Group (same membership as Scrutiny Committee)

1. **Chair – People Scrutiny Committee**
Councillor T. Smith
2. **Vice Chair – People Scrutiny Committee**
Councillor Jen Morgan, J.P.
3. Councillors D. Bevan
4. C. Bainton
5. K. Chaplin
6. G. Davies
7. J. Holt
8. G. Thomas
9. D. Wilkshire

* **Chair and Vice Chair to endeavour to be at each meeting**

** **All members to be invited to attend sub-group meeting.**

Tomorrow Valley Project

1. **Executive Member – Place & Environment**
Councillor H. Cunningham
2. **Executive Member - Corporate Overview & Performance**
Councillor S. Thomas

Constitution Working Group

1. Leader of the Council
2. Deputy Leader of the Council
3. Leader of the Independent Group
4. Deputy Leader of the Independent Group
5. Presiding Member

Freedom of the Borough – Cross Party Working Group

1. Councillors C. Bainton
2. D. Bevan
3. J. Hill
4. G. Humphreys
5. C. Smith

Leisure and Libraries Strategic Group

1. Leader of the Council (Chair)
2. Executive Member – People & Education

Grants Working Group
14 Members - Proportionality 9:5

1 Member from each Ward on a political proportionality basis.

1. Councillor L. Parsons (Llanhilleth Ward)
2. K. Chaplin (Abertillery & Six Bells Ward)
3. J. Gardner (Brynmawr Ward)
4. M. Day (Cwmtillery Ward)
5. L. Winnett (Blaina Ward)
6. C. Smith (Beaufort Ward)
7. G. Humphreys (Cwm Ward)
8. D. Rowberry (Sirhowy Ward)
9. C. Bainton (Ebbw Vale South Ward)
10. D. Davies (Ebbw Vale North Ward)
11. S. Thomas (Tredegar Ward)
12. J. Thomas (Georgetown Ward)
13. G. A. Davies (Rassau & Garnlydan Ward)
14. P. Baldwin (Nantyglo Ward)

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

1. **Executive Member – People & Education
(Chair)**

Councillor S. Edmunds

2. Councillor D. Bevan

3. Councillor D. Davies

4. Councillor G. A. Davies

5. Councillor – Jen Morgan, J.P.

6. Councillor – T. Smith

Substitutes:

1. Councillor E. Jones

2. Councillor J. Gardner

3. Councillor J. P. Morgan

4. Councillor G. Thomas

5. Councillor D. Woods

6. Councillor D. Wilkshire

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

Community Asset Transfer Steering Group

1. **Executive Member – Place & Environment**
Councillor H. Cunningham

Tredegar Heritage Initiative

1. Councillor E. Jones
2. Councillor D. Rowberry
3. Councillor T. Smith
4. Councillor J. Thomas

Tredegar Town Council Representative

Cost Pressure Sub-Group

1. **Leader of the Council/Executive Member – Corporate Overview & Performance**
Councillor S. Thomas
 2. **Deputy Leader of the Council/ Place & Environment**
Councillor H. Cunningham
 3. **Executive Member – People & Social Services**
Councillor H. Trollope
 4. **Executive Member – People & Education**
Councillor S. Edmunds
 5. **Executive Member – Place & Regeneration**
Councillor J. C. Morgan
 6. **Chair of Corporate & Performance Scrutiny Committee**
Councillor J. Wilkins
 7. **Vice Chair of Corporate & Performance Scrutiny Committee**
Councillor J. Thomas
-

Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Board

1. Leader **or** Deputy Leader
2. Executive Member – Place & Regeneration
3. Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services

Corporate Parenting Board

1. Executive Member – People & Social Services
2. Chair of People Scrutiny Committee
3. Councillor D. Bevan
4. Councillor J. Gardner
5. Councillor J. Morgan, J.P.

Member Champions

Equalities, Welsh Language and Diversity

Councillor C. Smith

Age Friendly

Councillor H. Trollope

Poverty and Inequality

Councillor C. Bainton

Climate Mitigation

Councillor S. Behr

Armed Forces

Councillor D. Bevan (appointed at Annual Council 26th May)

6.

COUNCIL'S REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

RESOLVED that the following be appointed:

Adult Learning Wales (formerly Workers' Educational Association YMCA Wales Community Council)

Scrutiny Chair – People

Age Concern Gwent Executive Committee Membership

Executive Member – People & Social Services

The Alliance

Executive Member – Place & Regeneration
Scrutiny Chair – Place

Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council - Local Committee

1. Councillor H. Trollope
2. Councillor J. Thomas
3. **Vacancy**

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

Scrutiny Chair – People

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board – Stakeholder Reference Group

Executive Member – People & Social Services

Aneurin Leisure Trust – Community Chest Panel

Councillor C. Bainton

Book Council of Wales

Councillor S. Thomas

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal – Regional Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Chair – Place

Councillor M. Cross

Scrutiny Vice-Chair – Place
Councillor R. Leadbeater

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

Executive Member – Place & Regeneration
Executive Member – Place & Environment

CCR Regional Transport Authority

Executive Member – Place & Regeneration

Duke of Beaufort's Breconshire Estate Commoner's Association

Councillor M. Cross

E.A.S. - Education Achievement Service Company Board

Executive Member – Place & Regeneration
Substitute: Executive Member – Place & Environment

Joint Executive Group (JEG)

Executive Member – People & Education

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Councillor L. Winnett
Councillor T. Smith

G.A.V.O. - Executive Committee

Executive Member – People & Social Services
Councillor H. Trollope

- Local Committee

Executive Member – People & Social Services
Councillor H. Trollope

G.A.V.O. - Be Proud of your Community Gwent Awards

(Formerly - Gwent Best Kept Village Committee)
Councillor E. Jones

Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

Scrutiny Chair – Place
Councillor M. Cross

Substitute: Scrutiny Vice-Chair - Place
Councillor R. Leadbeater

Gwent Archives Joint Committee

(Formerly known as Gwent Joint Records Committee)

Executive Member – Place & Regeneration
Vacancy

Gwent Regional Partnership Board

Gwent Regional Partnership Board

Local Government Association

Leader
Deputy Leader

Joint Council for Wales

Employers Side

Executive Member – Corporate Overview & Performance

Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust

Councillor M Cross

National Adoption Service Governance Board

Executive Member – People & Social Services

PATROL Adjudication Joint Committee

Scrutiny Chair – Place
Councillor M. Cross

Substitute: Scrutiny Vice-Chair - Place
Councillor R. Leadbeater

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

Councillor D. Bevan

Rural Development Programme – Local Action Group

Councillor G. Humphreys

SRS Strategic Board

Councillor J. Gardner

Vision in Wales

(formerly Wales Council for the Blind)

Executive Member – People & Social Services

Scrutiny Chair – People

Welsh Local Government Association

Leader of the Council

WLGA Executive Board

Leader of the Council

W.L.G.A. Council and Voting

Leader of the Council

Substitute: Deputy Leader of the Council

W.L.G.A. – All Wales Social Services Policy Group

Executive Member – People & Social Services

W.L.G.A. - Environment Champion

Executive Member – Place & Environment

W.L.G.A. - Finance Working Group

Officer Appointments

Chief Officer Resources

Ms R. Hayden

**WLGA - Corporate Affairs – Public Private Partnership
Ltd – Management Board**

Member Appointment

Executive Member – Corporate Overview & Performance

WLGA - Cultural Affairs & Leisure –
South Wales Regional Committee

Executive Member – Place & Environment

Wales Council for Deaf People

Executive Member – People & Social Services

Welsh Joint Education Committee

Executive Member – People & Education

Youth Offending Service - Local Management Board

Executive Member – People & Social Services

LEA REPRESENTATION ON SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Abertillery Learning Community

Mr. Daryl Tovey
Mr Richard Bevan
Nigel Daniels
Martin Cook
Ms Deborah Mary Field

All Saints R. C. Primary

Mrs Pat Mitchell

All Saints R. C. Primary

Mr. Roy Lynch
Mr Rhion Hollister

Blaen-y-Cwm Primary

Ms Natasha Tepielow
Stephen Connolly

Bryn Bach Primary

Ms. Gemma Badham
Councillor Malcolm Cross
Councillor Diane Rowberry

Brynmawr Foundation

Ms Stephanie Hopkins
Councillor John Hill

Canolfan Yr Afon (The River Centre)

Richard Crook
Lee Powell
Jan English
Additional representatives:
Richard Barrett wef 15/11/21
Ms Lesley Bush wef 15/11/21
Ms Jenna Undery wef 15/11/21

Coed y Garn Primary

Mr. Kenneth Jones
Mr Raffi Abbas

Cwm Primary

Councillor Derrick Bevan
Mrs Kathryn Cross
Ms. Natalie Marshall

Deighton Primary Tredegar

Councillor Haydn Trollope
Councillor Jaqueline Thomas
Delyth Pearsall

Ebbw Fawr Learning Community

Clive Meredith
Councillor Dai Davies
Adam King

Georgetown Primary, Tredegar

Mandy Moore
Councillor John C. Morgan
Ms Donna Hardman

Glanhowy Primary, Tredegar

Miss Joanne Davies
Councillor Tommy Smith
Ms. Tara Lane

Glyncoed Primary

Clive Meredith
Ms. Andrea C. Roberts
Mr. Mostyn I. Smith

Penycwm Special

Hannah Williams
Mrs Jennifer Morgan
Tim Baxter

Rhos y Fedwen Primary

Councillor David Wilkshire
Councillor Gareth A. Davies
Phil Edwards

Sofrydd Primary

Mrs Gill Clark
Debra Fields
Sian Barrett

St. Iltyd's Primary

Mrs Keri Jones
Lucy Allsopp

St. Joseph's R.C. Primary

Councillor Malcolm Cross

St Marys Brynmawr CIW Primary

Claire Gardner

**St. Mary's RC Primary Brynmawr
Vacancy**

Tredegar Comprehensive

Councillor John C. Morgan
Councillor Haydn Trollope
Ms. Melanie Rogers
Mr Peter Harriman

Willowtown Primary

Councillor David C. Davies

Mrs Sian Barrett
Judith Waring

Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, Blaina

Councillor John Hill
Mrs Tracey Dyson

Ystruth Primary

Councillor Lisa Winnett
Garth Collier
Kerys Beese

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – 9TH MARCH, 2022</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>DEMOCRATIC OFFICER</u>

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. HOLT (THE CHAIR,
PRESIDING)

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

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

AND: Managing Director
 Corporate Director of Social Services
 Corporate Director of Education
 Chief Officer Resources
 Chief Officer Commercial & Customer
 Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
 Head of Organisational Development
 Head of Community Services
 Head of Regeneration
 Head of Governance and Partnerships
 Service Manager – Accountancy
 Service Manager – Performance & Democratic
 Organisational Development Manager – Payroll, Health
 & Safety
 Data Protection & Governance Officer
 Press & Publicity Officer

<u>No.</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1.	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
2.	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Councillor M. Holland.</p>	

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

The following declarations of interest were reported:

Item No. 19: Revenue Budget 2022/2023

- Councillors Malcolm Cross, Lyn Elias, John Hill, Wayne Hodgins, Haydn Trollope, Thomas Smith and Bernard Willis

The above-named Members remained in the meeting whilst this item of business was considered.

Item No. 20: Corporate Fees and Charges 2022/2023

- Councillors Stewart Healy and Wayne Hodgins

The above-named Members remained in the meeting whilst this item of business was considered.

Item No. 24: Pay Policy Statement 2022/2023

- Michelle Morris – Managing Director
- Damien McCann – Corporate Director of Social Services
- Lynn Phillips – Corporate Director of Education
- Rhian Hayden – Chief Officer Resources
- Bernadette Elias – Interim Chief Officer Commercial
- Andrea Jones – Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
- Andrea Prosser – Head of Organisational Development
- Clive Rogers – Head of Community Services
- Ellie Fry – Head of Regeneration
- Sarah King – Head of Governance & Partnerships
- Gina Taylor – Service Manager Accountancy
- Gemma Wasley – Service Manager – Performance & Democratic
- Richard Bridge - Organisational Development Manager – Payroll, Health & Safety
- Steve Berry – Data Protection & Governance Officer
- Louise Bishop – Press & Publicity Officer
- Ceri Edwards-Brown – Democratic Officer
- Leeann Turner – Democratic & Committee Support Officer

The Managing Director confirmed that following advice received from the Monitoring Officer, whilst above-named officers had declared an interest in respect of the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23 they would be permitted to remain in the meeting. However, should debate ensue those officers who had declared an interest would leave the meeting at the appropriate juncture with the exception of:

- Ceri Edwards-Brown – Democratic Officer (minute clerk)

Item No. 28: Shortlisting – Interim Chief Executive

- Damien McCann – Corporate Director of Social Services
- Bernadette Elias – Chief Officer Commercial & Customer

Item No. 30: Appointments Committee – Interim Chief Executive

- Damien McCann – Corporate Director of Social Services
- Bernadette Elias – Chief Officer Commercial & Customer

Following advice received from the Monitoring Officer, the above-named officers were able to remain in the meeting whilst Item Nos. 28 and 30 were considered.

4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ukrainian/Russian Conflict:

The Leader of the Council referred to the current horrendous situation in the Ukraine as the unprovoked invasion of country continued to escalate, as did the appalling dire humanitarian crisis, which had resulted in the displacement of almost a million people in the first seven days and now two million refugees had fled Ukraine after two weeks and this exodus was unfortunately, anticipated to continue as long as the war persisted.

He continued by stating that everyone's thoughts were with all those affected by this situation and last week the General Office building had been lit up in the colours of the Ukrainian national flag to show the County Borough's solidarity with its people.

The Leader advised that it was difficult at this stage to predict exactly what may or may not unfold over the coming period and how this may impact on the country and indeed communities. In the days and weeks ahead, people would have concerns about the impact of this war in Ukraine and at home and said that the Council would do all it could to gather and provide information and support to residents.

As part of the public service response, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) had met with Welsh Government to explore options to ensure support could be provided in Wales when Ukrainian citizens began to arrive. Further to this, the Leader of the WLGA had written to the Prime Minister and Home Secretary on behalf of the 22 Welsh local authorities expressing concern that amongst other things the U.K. refugee resettlement process was too complex, narrow and restrictive unlike the U.K.'s European neighbours who had moved at speed and had streamlined processes and relaxed rules. The Leader of the WLGA had, therefore, requested that U.K. Government reconsider the current position and further updates would be provided in due course when more of the details were established.

Councillor John Mason had convened a meeting, as Chair, of the Resettlement Working Group on 14th March to discuss the latest position with regards to the possible resettlement of vulnerable people from Ukraine and local arrangements, at which he was certain that suggestions around further necessary preparations would be discussed at the meeting and he hoped by that time further information would have been received from the WLGA. In addition, the Council would continue to work closely with key agencies at a national, regional, and local level to keep matters under close review to ensure it could respond as best it could to any implications arising for the local communities.

The Leader continued by advising that there had been huge generosity from the Welsh public and indeed people and organisations within its own communities and he offered sincere thanks on behalf of Council to each and every person who had made a contribution thus far. People had been eager to donate and support the people of Ukraine, however, donations of physical goods presented logistical difficulties both here and abroad and, therefore, people were urged who wanted to donate – and were able to – to make a financial donation to the Disaster Emergency Committee's appeal and the Council had issued a statement providing this message and relevant details last week.

The Welsh Government had also confirmed it was providing £4m in humanitarian aid to Ukraine, donated to the Disaster Emergency Committee, which represented 15 major aid charities. Allocating the funding in this way would ensure it reached those who needed it as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

Work was also being undertaken with other public bodies in Wales to identify and take action on any investments held associated with the Russian state. In terms of Blaenau Gwent's exposure, the Council had no direct investments with Russian businesses or financial institutions since they would not currently meet the risk averse strategy of investing in high credit rating counterparties.

With regard to the Greater Gwent Pension Fund exposure, on a fund basis (based on January 2022 valuations) there was exposure of circa 0.19% or £7.14m to the Russian Market. The Wales Pension Partnership had issued a strong statement of intent to divest the Fund of these investments as soon as practically possible.

At this juncture, Members and officers in an act of solidarity with Ukraine and for all those involved in this terrible tragedy on both sides of the conflict paid their respects with a minute's silence.

Congratulations:

Congratulations were expressed to:

- Mr & Mrs Annett of Waunlwyd who had celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on 1st March.

A letter of congratulations had been sent.

- Councillor Clive Meredith who had donated his 100th pint of blood to the Welsh Blood Transfusion Service.

Chair's Appeal – Blaenau Gwent Foodbank:

The Chair expressed her appreciation to Members who have donated to the Blaenau Gwent Foodbank appeal. To date over £770 had been raised to support this organisation which had played a vital borough wide role supporting the vulnerable through the course of the pandemic and continued to do so.

5. – MINUTE BOOK – NOVEMBER 2021 – FEBRUARY 2022

15.

The Minute Book for the period November 2021 – February 2022 was submitted for consideration.

It was unanimously,

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

16. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Question No. 1

The following question was received from Councillor Phil Edwards, Leader of the Minority Independent Group and was responded to by Councillor Nigel Daniels, Leader of the Council:

Question:

Following the revelation in a recent meeting that CCTV cameras would be installed in the Arcade in Abertillery. Would the Leader explain where the funding came from and who decided to site them there?

Response:

The CCTV camera in Abertillery Arcade was a replacement for a long standing now obsolete camera that was installed due to high levels of anti-social behaviour experienced in that area in the Arcade a considerable number of years. Unfortunately, now due to the continuation of anti-social behaviour in this confined area and following a data protection impact assessment, the decision process taken by officers had been based on strong information and intelligence received by the local police, the community and information and complaints received from residents together with local Abertillery Members. This had brought the appropriate Council officers to determine and conclude that in the interests and principle of the CCTV camera arrangements, that a replacement was required and funding for this camera had been met from within the existing CCTV revenue budget.

Supplementary Question:

There were private properties located in the Arcade (which the Council seemed to be supplementing) and the gates on the Arcade were locked each evening and the Member, therefore, asked how anti-social behaviour could be persisting in this area.

Response:

Abertillery Arcade was the Council's responsibility and the Council had a duty to clean and maintain it and there was a small budget available for that purpose. Whilst the Leader was unable to divulge the details of how anti-social behaviour was persisting even though the gates were secured nightly by officers, he gave an assurance that this was fully supported by the police because it would enable them to identify the perpetrators and take appropriate action. This course of action would also protect Council property.

Question No. 2

The following question was received from Councillor Hedley McCarthy, and was responded to by Councillor Dai Davies, Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development:

Question:

Given recent adverse press reports about Trinity Chapel, which still stands idle and empty after six years. Would the Executive Member for Regeneration explain to Council why the project was at an impasse and why we were no nearer completing than we were at the start of this term in 2017?

Response:

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development commenced by stating that he regretted that the completion of Trinity Chapel had not been achieved during his time as Executive Member.

He referred to the first part of the question which stated that 'Trinity Chapel had stood idle and empty for six years' and pointed out that the building had been acquired by the local authority in 2009/2010, so, therefore, it had been idle and empty for many years prior to 2017. During 2015 there had been investment of £1.2m spent on the project

and at that time this had not included an internal refit and reiterated that the building had been left in this condition for a considerable period of time.

In 2017 ways of continually funding the project had been investigated and at that time discussions were entered into with a third party who was prepared to invest a significant amount of funding to complete the building. Part of this agreement was a CAT transfer of the asset to a third party at some point in the future.

In order to allow the project to progress, plans for the use of the building were designed in conjunction with the third party and a tender process undertaken to complete the internal refit. This process had taken much longer than predicated as a significant amount of due diligence had to be undertaken at that time, which was critical due to the amount of previous funding that had already been spent on the building.

Soon after the pandemic struck the community, U.K. and world and priorities had to change to address the emergency response. During this time the Trinity Chapel project and work on the building was held in abeyance for in excess of 18 months due to the lockdown. In addition, during the pandemic building costs had spiralled in these 2 years, therefore, when the lockdown was lifted and discussions resumed with the third party, the project costs had increased significantly. As a result, third party had asked for a retendering exercise which was undertaken and a grant application for funding submitted to Welsh Government to complete the project. This funding application had been successful and funding had been provided which could be used as match funding to complete the project.

The Executive Member continued by stating that he would, therefore, argue against the fact that no work had been done - a considerable amount had been done in the time available, however, the delays which had been faced had been significant. The Executive Member referred to a press article which had made comments about the amount of money that had been spent on Trinity Chapel and that had commented that the project in hindsight should have been dealt with differently and pointed out that press article referred to the time prior to 2017.

The Executive Member concluded by providing an assurance that the Council would be prudent in terms of any further expenditure that would be used on the project and he was still hopeful that Trinity Chapel would be able to be completed at some point in the future.

Supplementary Question:

The Member said that if completed, Trinity Chapel could have been used as a resource during the pandemic and pointed out that Abertillery had no banking facilities. He asked whether the Executive Member and Leader take responsibility for this fiasco?

Response:

The Executive Member said that he would certainly take responsibility that he had wanted the project completed but pointed out that plans for the building dated back to 2013 before he had been involved and these plans included a number of schemes for Abertillery including the Trinity Chapel project, which the then Leader had endorsed at that time.

He pointed out that one such proposal related to the location of the current library which was not fit for purpose and proposed that it be relocated to the town centre to increase footfall. The Executive Member acknowledged the issue regarding the banking arrangements and said that working in conjunction with the third party he hoped that once the work on the building had been completed, banking services would be available within the town.

17. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no questions submitted by members of the public.

18. CENSURE MOTION

The Chair commenced by reminding Council that this was a Censure Motion and not a vote of no confidence as reported in the press and invited the Leader of the Labour Group to present the Censure Motion at this juncture.

The Leader of the Labour Group commenced by stating that this was a technical issue and the Motion needed debating. Given the statement made by the Chair, he asked the Monitoring Officer to confirm whether this was correct because his understanding was that the Motion needed to be signed by at least 7 Members which included Members from at

least two political groups to be valid and, therefore, did not require the support of two-thirds of Council.

The Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance advised that the Council's Constitution did not make reference to a 'vote of no confidence'. There was, however, reference to a Motion to remove the Leader of the Council which may have been construed as a vote of no confidence and in order to achieve the removal of the Leader, the Constitution stipulated that two-thirds of the Members present must support the Motion. This Motion had been defined as a 'Censure Motion' and said that in her opinion as the Monitoring Officer, this was the appropriate label for this Motion.

The Leader of the Labour Group said that motions of no confidence were common place across the country and they could take place and were allowed to be considered. These motions were not required to meet the two-thirds threshold for removal of the Leader, so in essence this was a motion of no confidence and a motion to debate. The Leader of the Labour Group continued by presenting the Censure Motion as follows:

The recent Council meeting of 7th February 2022 dealt with the long-awaited report by Audit Wales into, 'Deficiencies in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's governance and oversight of Silent Valley Waste Services.'

When questioned on 7th February, the Managing Director, Michelle Morris, revealed that Councillor Daniels had been a recipient of the original whistleblowing letter where the officer was named and other parties who had received this letter included the Lead officer, Trade Unions and Deputy Leader.

The officer named in the report was working for the Council and this meant that on 22nd March 2018, Councillor Daniels had known that the recipient of the proposed flexible retirement was amongst those being investigated by both Gwent Police and Audit Wales for seven months before that meeting took place. Councillor Daniels had deliberately withheld this information from his Council colleagues, who were completely ignorant of those involved in the investigation. 34 Members had been present at this meeting, 32 of whom had no idea that this officer was involved in the on-going investigations. The Leader of the Labour Group believed that if Members had been made aware of this

information, he felt that this unsafe report would not have been supported.

For the reasons outlined above the Members who had signed the Censure Motion had no confidence in the Council Leader, Councillor Nigel Daniels.

The Leader of the Council commenced by stating he would respond by way of a statement but said the one question that no-one had ever asked him was did he or had he had sight of the whistle-blower's correspondence complaint and the answer was that no he didn't and no had not been sighted on this letter. The fact that he recently learned that his name was included on a copy circulation list was not proof that he had received a copy of the letter.

He, thereupon, provided the following response to the Censure Motion by outlining the chronological facts:

Council had received the whistle-blower's correspondence in August 2017 which had made a number of unsubstantiated allegations against 13 former and serving officers of the Council. It was only when Audit Wales informed Council that he was aware that 13 officers were originally under investigation. The correspondence had been dealt with properly under the appropriate procedure and referred to Audit Wales for investigation in 2017. Importantly the whistleblowing procedure provided confidentiality and anonymity for any complainant and therefore, any sharing of the letter or information included in that letter would breach that confidentiality and the Whistleblowing Policy. Even if he had had sight of the complaint and clearly if any officer or Member had shared it, they would have breached that confidentiality and the Council's Code of Conduct for both Members and officers. Therefore, to give the benefit of doubt to the officer who had been the primary recipient of the complaint that may have been the reason why the Leader had probably had not been provided with a copy that was intended for him.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that he had been briefed about the complaint by a senior officer without any names or details being shared with him but he had been told to keep it confidential and not discuss or share the fact that any such complaint had been received and when he had asked about the detail, he had been told it was not appropriate for that information to be shared with him due to the very nature of the whistleblowing procedure. Therefore, the accusations contained in the

Motion and in the press release accusing him of hiding details of the police inquiry from Councillors was absolutely wrong. In addition, for accuracy the Managing Director had been quoted in the Motion and press release that as stating he had been the recipient of the whistleblowing complaint, in actual fact the Managing Director had only confirmed that his name was on the copy circulation and being shown as copied into correspondence and this was far from proof of actually receiving that correspondence.

With regard to the Senior Management Review, the outcome of the review had recommended that the officer in question be granted flexible retirement and this had been dealt with correctly under the Flexible Retirement Policy and the officer had moved to a more junior position in the finance service as allowed under the policy. The Leader said that the Managing Director or Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance may wish to confirm at some point, the fact that there would have been no justification for not granting flexible retirement for that officer who at the time was subject to allegations that were unsubstantiated and unfounded and it was not until the draft Audit Wales report was received in November 2021 that the seriousness of the allegations against the officer were confirmed. The Leader stressed at that point in time he still had no knowledge of who was named in that report, who the complaints had been directed at or what the nature of the complaints were. He also stated that only 6 out of the 13 officers named in the original letter were named and criticised in the final Audit Wales report.

With regard to the police investigation, Audit Wales had referred the whistle-blowing complaint to Gwent Police in January 2018 and Gwent Police had only confirmed they would investigate this complaint in July 2018, some 4 months after the Senior Management Review had been agreed by Council and during that time of the review, the officer in question had not been under police investigation. The Leader advised that he was now given to understand that mindful in July 2018 there were 2 current officers were under police investigation, the Managing Director had taken external legal advice to ascertain whether the officers who were part of that police investigation could remain in work or whether suspension should be considered. This legal advice had confirmed that suspension was not appropriate simply because an investigation was underway and no action should be undertaken by the Council which could be seen to pre-empt the outcome of any investigation and for this reason both officers remained in work during the police investigation. The Leader stated that again perhaps the Managing Director may wish to confirm this that the advice was clear

and that consideration of formal action should only be considered once the outcome of the Gwent Police and Audit Wales investigations were known. In September 2019 Gwent Police confirmed they would be closing the investigation and that no action would be taken against any former or serving officers.

Audit Wales published its report on 27th January, 2022 and this was accepted on 7th February, 2022 by Council at which it was also agreed that an internal investigation should take place with further legal advice being sought to confirm the scope of this investigation. The Leader of the Council said he hoped that this explanation provided a factual account of events and more importantly demonstrated that he had not deliberately or otherwise withheld information from Council or Members.

The Leader continued by briefly addressing the accusations made regarding lack of transparency, inclusion, respect and deliberately withholding information. He said that the vast majority of people who knew him be it politically, professionally or a member of the public knew that these were traits that were alien to him and completely opposite to what he was about and he certainly would not have withheld any information that could have willingly been shared with Council if he had been aware of it. Subject to confirmation from the Managing Director and Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance he clarified the following:

- The Leader had never been sighted on the whistleblowing correspondence and even if he had been sighted then the Whistleblowing Policy and the Members Code of Conduct would have prevented him from disclosing any details pertinent to the issue.
- The Managing Director had only stated the Leader had been on the copy circulation and had not said he was a recipient of that correspondence.
- There was no justification not to grant flexible retirement in accordance with Council policy to the officer in question.
- The Gwent Police investigation did commence in July 2018, 4 months after the Senior Management Review had been considered and agreed and legal external advice had been sought which, clearly confirmed that formal action should not be

pursued against the officers until the outcome of the Audit Wales work and police investigation were known.

- Gwent Police closed their investigations in September 2019 with no further action being taken.
- Council agreed the Audit Wales report in February 2022 and also agreed that an internal investigation should take place following further legal advice being sought to scope out the investigation.

The Leader of the Council concluded by stating that he had attempted to keep the response measured as possible to address what he considered an unnecessary and unwarranted motion.

The Leader of the Labour Group pointed out that not only the Leader was on the circulation of the original whistleblowing letter but also had been included on the circulation of the response. He pointed out that the formal police investigation had commenced in July 2018 but a prior investigation had taken place in August 2017 before the police confirmed that a formal investigation would take place. He could not accept that the Leader had not had sight of this correspondence and said that surely in the discussions between the Leader and Chief Executive that the fact that these officers had been involved in serious allegations would have been mentioned. He concluded by stating that this on-going investigation had prevented the Council's accounts being published for a number of years.

At this juncture, the Managing Director confirmed the following points of factual accuracy:

- At Special Council on 7th February, 2022 the Managing Director had confirmed that the Leader and Deputy Leader had been copied in at the bottom of the whistleblowing correspondence. As she had not been in post at that point in time, she was unable to contest either way if they had received a copy of the letter.
- The chronology outlined by the Leader was correct. It was the case that the police investigation was confirmed and commenced in July 2018. External legal advice had been sought in July 2018 which had confirmed that although allegations had been made against the two officers, these were unfounded and unproven so for that reason no action was taken at that point in order not to

pre-empt the outcome of the Audit Wales work or the police investigation.

The Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance clarified the following points of accuracy:

- The Leader of the Labour Group had stated that there were only two officers named in the whistleblowing letter who at that time were currently employed by the Council. In fact, this was not correct and there were a number of officers employed by the Council at that time that had been named in the correspondence.
- Whilst the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance had not provided legal advice to the Lead Director or the Leader when the letter had been received in 2017, her advice would have been that the contents of the letter containing those bare allegations should not be shared with anyone because that would be contrary to the both the Whistleblowing Policy and the Members Code of Conduct.
- The Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance advised Members that in British law a person was 'innocent until proven guilty' and until the process had been followed whether that was a criminal or civil process or an audit undertaken by a regulator, everyone was innocent of charges until properly proven and no-one should be subjected to any detriment by virtue of a mere allegation being made.

In reply to a question, the Managing Director reiterated that the Gwent Police investigation and the statement of individuals that were being called for questioning had not materialised until July 2018 after the Senior Management Review had been approved by Full Council. Council had, therefore, not been advised that Gwent Police had decided to move forward to a formal investigation until July 2018.

The Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance advised the debate that had taken place thus far related to historical matters i.e. the Audit Wales public report, however, Members were requested to try not to anticipate what other matters could emerge as part of the internal investigation that had been agreed by Council. The Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance reiterated her earlier point that even if the Leader had had knowledge of the details of the complaint, he could not have and should not have shared this information.

With regard to the Motion, this had been accepted as valid and if there had been concerns about the validity of the Motion they would have been raised with the proposer at that point in time. It was pointed out that in the current circumstances, it was not always easy to obtain 'wet' signatures on documents, therefore, advice had been provided by the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance that the signatories be copied into the Motion and this in essence signified their endorsement of the Motion. If any named signatory had objected they could have indicated their objection once the agenda had been made public.

In reply to a question, the Managing Director reiterated that the Motion was valid and there was no reason for it not to be considered and with regard to the inaccuracy referred to, the Managing Director pointed out that she had earlier in the debate had the opportunity to correct this. The Managing Director reiterated the point that legal advice was taken regarding the suspension of the named officers and this advice had been clear that there was no reason that this course of action should be taken as the allegations were at the time unproven and unfounded. The Managing Director concluded by stating that Members had a duty of care to employees and asked Members to be mindful of this during the course of the debate.

Following a lengthy discussion when various views and opinions were expressed, a recorded vote was then taken on the Motion as follows:

In Support of the Motion – Councillors P. Baldwin, D. Bevan, M. Cross, P. Edwards, L. Elias, K. Hayden, H. McCarthy, J. Millard, J. C. Morgan, K. Pritchard, T. Sharrem, T. Smith, S. Thomas, H. Trollope, D. Wilkshire, B. Willis and L. Winnett.

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

The Motion was, therefore, not carried.

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the above-named Censure Motion be not supported.

19. REVENUE BUDGET 2022/2023

Councillors Malcolm Cross, Lyn Elias, John Hill, Wayne Hodgins, Haydn Trollope, Thomas Smith and Bernard Willis declared an interest in this item but remained in the meeting whilst it was considered.

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

The Chief Officer Resources explained that this was the final stage of the budget setting process and outlined the salient points contained within the report as follows:

- The Gwent Office of Police and Crime Commissioner had issued precepts to the Council totalling £6,342,390.
- Town/Community Councils precepts amounted to £555,101.
- Including Discretionary rate relief of £208,000, the total net revenue budget for 2022/2023 was £168,267,696.

Section 25, Local Government Act 2003 required that the Chief Officer Resources of this Authority to report on the two following points:

- i. The robustness of the estimates included in the budget
- ii. The adequacy of the Authority's reserves.

In respect of (i) above, the Chief Officer was able to conclude that the estimates had been compiled with the most up to date information available and are suitably robust. Cost pressures have been considered during the budget setting process and for the medium term.

In respect of (ii) above, paragraphs 5.1.9 to 5.1.12 demonstrated that the Authority's financial position is improving and was looking to achieve a sustainable position for the forthcoming year and in the medium term. The reserves protocol would continue to review reserves in order to ensure that Reserves were kept at a sustainable level in the medium term.

In reply to a question raised regarding Town/Community Council precepts, the Chief Officer Resources confirmed that Abertillery &

Llanhilleth Community Council had increased its precept for 2022/23 by 52.39%.

A Member said whilst it was pleasing that a 0% increase in council tax for the 2022/23 financial year was being proposed, however, he expressed his concern that a Band D property in Blaenau Gwent had the highest council tax levels in Wales and this needed to be addressed. The Member continued by stating that it was pleasing to note that three of the Town Councils had reduced their levels of precepts for this year and asked whether the Council scrutinised and audited the town/community council precept levels for each of the areas.

The Chief Officer Resources confirmed that the town/community council had the autonomy to set their own precept levels and the Council had no control over the decisions made.

The Leader of the Labour Group suggested that maybe in future dialogue take place with the town/community councils regarding their precept levels. Another Member said that town/community council's expenditure should be scrutinised going forward.

In reply to question, the Chief Officer Resources advised that she was unaware of any measures that could be imposed to cap the level of town/community council precepts but would undertake to investigate. Each town/community council was subject to external audit which included the precept and the use of it on an annual basis.

The Leader of the Council wished to place on record his congratulations and appreciation to the Town Councils of Brynmawr, Tredegar and Nantyglo and Blaina for taking a very sensible approach in their budget setting process this year. He could not disagree with the comments made and said he would be willing to be involved in in-depth discussions with the town/community councils around the level of their precepts going forward. He, thereupon, proposed that recommendations 3.1 – 3.4 be endorsed.

It was unanimously,

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

3.1 The Council agreed at its meeting on 17th February, 2022 a Council Tax increase of 0% for the 2022/2023 financial year. As a result, the Blaenau Gwent Council element of the full council tax charge would be:-

Valuation Bands (£)								
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1,178.90	1,375.38	1,571.87	1,768.35	2,161.32	2,554.28	2,947.25	3,536.70	4,126.15

3.2 The Council has calculated the following amounts for the year (2022/2023) in accordance with regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Act 1992.

3.3 The Council Tax base was the number of chargeable dwellings in each area adjusted for a number of items e.g. discounts payable, multiplied by the assumed collection rate which for 2022/2023 was 95%.

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

20,876.86

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

4,653.90	Abertillery & Llanhilleth
1,703.87	Brynmawr
2,717.74	Nantyglo & Blaina
4,745.30	Tredegar

c) For the year 2022/2023 the Gwent Office of Police and Crime Commissioner has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council (totalling £6,342,390), in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown:

Gwent Office of Police and Crime Commissioner								
Valuation Bands (£)								
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
202.53	236.29	270.04	303.80	371.31	438.82	506.33	607.60	708.87

3.4 That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2022/2023 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

- a)** 238,686,776 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (d) of the Act.
- b)** 70,627,080 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) and (c) of the Act.
- c)** 168,059,696 Being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.
- d)** 208,000 Being the amount the Authority estimates in relation to Sections 47 and 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 1 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, for discretionary non-domestic rate relief.
- e)** 130,795,000 Being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its Council fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant and additional grant.
- f)** 1,794.94 Being the amount at (c) above plus the amount at (d) above and less the amount at (e) above, all divided by the amount at 3.2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
- g)** 555,101 Being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.

h) 1,768.35 Being the amount at (f) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (g) above by the amount at 3.2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item related.

i. The amounts given by adding to the amount at (h) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 3.2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate were:

j.

1,830.45	Abertillery & Llanhilleth
1,793.59	Brynmawr
1,799.52	Nantyglo & Blaina
1,797.52	Tredegar

The amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (h) and (i) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in section 5(1) of the Act, was applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands were:

k.

The County Borough Tax including Community Precepts									
Valuation Bands									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Abertillery & Llanhilleth	1,220.30	1,423.68	1,627.07	1,830.45	2,237.22	2,643.98	3,050.75	3,660.90	4,271.05
Brynmawr	1,195.73	1,395.01	1,594.31	1,793.59	2,192.17	2,590.74	2,989.32	3,587.18	4,185.04
Nantyglo & Blaina	1,199.68	1,399.62	1,599.58	1,799.52	2,199.42	2,599.30	2,999.20	3,599.04	4,199.88
Tredegar	1,198.35	1,398.07	1,597.80	1,797.52	2,196.97	2,596.41	2,995.87	3,595.04	4,194.21
Ebbw Vale	1,178.90	1,375.38	1,571.87	1,768.35	2,161.32	2,554.28	2,947.25	3,536.70	4,126.15

That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (c) and (j) above, the Council, in accordance with section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2022/23 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

The Full Tax of the County Borough Tax including Police and Community Precepts									
Valuation Bands									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Abertillery & Llanhilleth	1,422.83	1,659.97	1,897.11	2,134.25	2,608.53	3,082.80	3,557.08	4,268.50	4,979.92
Brynmawr	1,398.26	1,631.30	1,864.35	2,097.39	2,563.48	3,029.56	3,495.65	4,194.78	4,893.91
Nantyglo & Blaina	1,402.21	1,635.91	1,869.62	2,103.32	2,570.73	3,038.12	3,505.53	4,206.64	4,907.75
Tredegar	1,400.88	1,634.36	1,867.84	2,101.32	2,568.28	3,035.23	3,502.20	4,202.64	4,903.08
Ebbw Vale	1,381.43	1,611.67	1,841.91	2,072.15	2,532.63	2,993.10	3,453.58	4,144.30	4,835.02

20. **CORPORATE FEES & CHARGES 2022/2023**

Councillors Stewart Healy and Wayne Hodgins declared an interest in this item and remained in the meeting whilst it was considered.

Members considered the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report and advised that:

- The current Fees and Charges register had been reviewed to:
- Ensure all fees & charges included on the register were relevant for 2022/2023.
- Reflect changes in local and national policy and charges.

- Reflect the assumptions included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy, where appropriate.
- The register included charges which had received:
 - An inflationary uplift of 2% per annum as included agreed in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
 - No fee increases
 - Fees and charges that were proposed to be increased by more than 2%.
- The proposed fees for Licensing would be considered by the Licensing Committee and had been included in the Register for completeness. It was proposed to maintain the fees at 2021/2022 level based on the National framework full cost model.
- Social Services (variable) – These fees were currently under negotiation with Providers to reflect the appropriate increase to cover the additional cost of the Real Living Wage, increase in NI Contributions, energy costs etc. However, the delay in receiving the full guidance on the implementation of the real living wage had created difficulty with these negotiations. Therefore, it was proposed that delegated power be granted to the Corporate Director of Social Services to set these fees and charges for 2022/2023.
- The fees and charges for Aneurin Leisure Trust were attached for core services for 2022/23 to be approved by Council in-line with funding and management agreement. The proposed increase to the majority of fees was around 3% however, a number of fees had reduced by up to 30% and a number had increased by up to 36% which was due to standardising the junior and concession rates across the business as a set percentage of the standard fee to improve the consistency moving forward.

The Leader of the Council proposed that the report be endorsed subject to the following amendments:

- An increase of 10% on School Meals would not be applied. The cost would remain at current 2021/2022 prices.
- The price of Meals on Wheels would not increase and the cost would be retained at 2021/2022 prices.

A Member said that at the time when the wellbeing of children was paramount, a number of the uplifts to charges proposed by Aneurin Leisure Trust would cause a barrier for children, young people and the community to participate in sports and activities. He was unable to condone an increase of these magnitudes and felt that the percentage increase was disproportionate when efforts were being made to encourage young people to participate in sports and said that these increases should in line with inflation only. The charges referred to related to:

- Junior Swim – 17.4% increase
- Concessionary Junior Swim – 16.11% increase
- Lifestyle Studio – Concessionary Junior – 30.77% increase

The Leader of the Council said that leisure was traditionally a fragile budget and said he was unsure as to what the potential impact of not agreeing the proposed charges may have on projected revenue streams.

The Member proposed that discussions take place with Aneurin Leisure Trust to explain that the percentage increases were disproportionate and would cause barriers for children and young people to participate in sports and activities and a request made that due consideration be given to a percentage increase in line with inflation.

The Corporate Director of Education clarified that as part of the budget process Aneurin Leisure Trust undertook a benchmarking exercise of their proposed fees and charges with neighbouring authorities for similar activities. Whilst he did not have the information available as to what impact any downward adjustments would have on the Trust's budget in terms of income streams, it would have an impact on income generation but undertook to hold discussions with the Trust regarding the concerns that had been raised.

In reply to request, the Corporate Director of Education confirmed that Aneurin Leisure Trust proposed fees and charges could be considered by the Scrutiny Committee in future to obtain the views of Members prior to the information being reported to Full Council.

A discussion ensued when it proposed that the report be accepted pending a discussion between the Corporate Director of Education and Aneurin Leisure Trust regarding their proposed levels of fees and charges. This proposal was seconded.

RESOLVED accordingly.

It was, thereupon, unanimously

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

- The register of Fees & Charges for 2022/2023 attached at Appendix 1, and the core price increases relating to Aneurin Leisure Trust attached at Appendix 2 be approved.
- Delegated power and responsibility be granted to the Director of Social Services for setting the fees and charges for 2022/2023 relating to the provision of external social care.

21. TREASURY MANAGEMENT – TREASURY STRATEGY STATEMENT, INVESTMENT STRATEGY & MRP POLICY STATEMENT 2021/2022 (INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS)

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

The Chief Officer Resources spoke briefly to the report and highlighted the salient points contained therein. It was pointed out that local authorities were required to prepare, before the start of each financial year, a statement of their policy on making revenue provision to cover debt repayments (known as MRP or Minimum Revenue Provision) in respect of that financial year and submit it to full Council for approval. The MRP statement for 2022/23 was, therefore, also included as part of the Treasury Strategy Statement (Appendix A). The Treasury Management Policy Statement was also attached for information as Appendix B.

These policies would be adhered to at all times with the prime objectives being firstly the security and secondly the liquidity of investments and would also seek to minimise the revenue costs of debt whilst maintaining a prudent level of debt redemption.

There were no significant changes to the proposed policy for 2022/23. The main change included further development of an annual investment strategy to provide additional opportunities for the higher levels of investment currently forecast in the medium term. In addition, the policy

detailed the prudential indicators which would monitor performance, which would be reported to Members throughout the course of the 2022/2023 financial year.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Annual Treasury Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and MRP Policy Statement for 2022/2023 financial year and the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators contained therein be approved.

22. CAPITAL STRATEGY 2022/2023

Members considered the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report and explained that the Capital Strategy was intended to give a high level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributed to the provision of services along with an overview of how associated risk was managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. The development of a Capital Strategy allowed flexibility to engage with Full Council to ensure that the overall strategy, governance procedures and risk appetite were fully understood by all elected Members.

Whilst there were no significant changes required to be made to the 2022/2023 Capital Strategy, recent developments to The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Treasury Management and Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities which had been revised in 2020/2021 would result in changes that would impact on future Capital Strategy reports from 2023/2024 onwards when formal adoption of the revised codes was required.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Capital Strategy 2022/2023 be agreed.

23. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES REPORT 2022/2023

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development.

At the invitation of the Chair, the Organisational Development Manager – Payroll, Health & Safety spoke in detail to the report and highlighted the determinations contained within the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) for 2022/23.

It was noted that as local elections were currently pending, the new arrangements would become effective from 9th May, 2022 and for the period 1st April, 2021 to 8th May, 2022 the current 2021/2022 IRPW determinations would apply.

In reply to a question, the Organisational Development Manager confirmed that it was the choice of individual Members whether to forego or reduce their levels of remuneration.

The Leader of the Council advised that the Council previously responded to the IRPW as part of the consultation period on the draft 2022/2023 determinations expressing objections and concerns to the proposals and stated that the Council was now required to note the final determinations.

The Leader of the Labour Group expressed his concern regarding the proposed increases to remuneration levels at the current time when there were severe financial constraints being experienced by so many. He, thereupon, proposed that the status quo be retained i.e. remuneration be maintained at 2021/2022 levels. Other Members concurred with these comments and expressed their collective concern regarding the current increase in the cost of living and expressed concerns regarding noting the determinations going forward.

The Leader of the Council reiterated that a collective response had been forwarded expressing concerns and objections to the proposals and the determinations were for noting only and pointed out that these determinations would be applicable throughout Wales and it would be the decision of individual Councillors to accept the level of remuneration that they felt appropriate.

The Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance advised that the report was for noting only and not for approval and the determinations would be implemented regardless of concerns expressed. This was a unique situation and there was no option to reject these determinations. Members objections had been noted but it was a matter for individual Members to accept the appropriate level of remuneration.

For clarification, the Chief Officer Resources advised that the Council was legally obliged to implement the determinations of the IRPW report and reiterated that it was for individual Members to decide whether to give up or forego any element of the remuneration. It was noted that should a Member decide to voluntarily forgo part of their remuneration, the national insurance and tax deductions would be based on the net amount. Remuneration was paid as part of the Council budget and any underspends would be retained within this budget.

For clarification, the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance advised that a decision or alternative motion could not be taken (i.e. to retain current remuneration levels) that would bind all Members because the determinations were permitted in law and was a matter for individuals to decide whether to accept the full amount. The Chief Officer Resources added that in terms of compliance the IRPW Panel legally required the relevant authority to comply with the determinations and implement the determinations within each financial year.

The Leader of the Labour Group, therefore, proposed that as the determinations would apply to Members of the new Council, that the report be deferred and considered at that point in time.

The Leader of the Council seconded the proposal as the Council was united in its objection with regard to the determinations to increase remuneration levels and even these objections had been submitted as part of the consultation period to the IRPW, they still remained.

Following a lengthy discussion when it was suggested that the decision be made by the new Council. It was, therefore, unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report be **deferred** and considered by the new Council following the Local Election in May.

24. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/2023

The following officers declared an interest in this item and remained in the meeting whilst the item was considered:

- Michelle Morris – Managing Director
- Damien McCann – Corporate Director of Social Services
- Lynn Phillips – Corporate Director of Education
- Rhian Hayden – Chief Officer Resources
- Bernadette Elias – Interim Chief Officer Commercial
- Andrea Jones – Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
- Andrea Prosser – Head of Organisational Development
- Clive Rogers – Head of Community Services
- Ellie Fry – Head of Regeneration
- Sarah King – Head of Governance & Partnerships
- Gina Taylor – Service Manager Accountancy
- Gemma Wasley – Service Manager – Performance & Democratic
- Richard Bridge - Organisational Development Manager – Payroll, Health & Safety
- Steve Berry – Data Protection & Governance Officer
- Louise Bishop – Press & Publicity Officer
- Ceri Edwards-Brown – Democratic Officer
- Leeann Turner – Democratic & Committee Support Officer

However, should debate ensue those officers who had declared an interest would leave the meeting at the appropriate juncture with the exception of:

- Ceri Edwards-Brown – Democratic Officer (minute clerk)

The report of the Head of Organisational Development was submitted for consideration.

The Head of Organisational Development spoke briefly to the report and it was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed namely, that the Pay Policy Statement 2022/2023 be approved.

25. **MEMBERSHIPS REPORT**

Advisory Panel for Local Authority Governors

The following recommendations were made by the Panel on 8th March, 2022 to appoint in principle:

All Saints Primary School – Laura Newall

Tredegar Comprehensive School – Adrian Tuck

It was, thereupon unanimously,

RESOLVED that the above appointments be endorsed.

--- **APPRECIATION**

The Leader of the Council at this juncture announced that this was the last formal meeting of Council that the Managing Director would be attending prior to leaving to take up her new position and said it would be remiss not to take the opportunity to genuinely express his appreciation to Michelle for all her hard work and dedication to the Council during her time as Managing Director. He had found Michelle to have been a very effective worker, she had worked with all political leadership on all sides of the Council and had been fair, straight and had worked hard to deliver on the priorities that had been important for the Council and its residents.

Michelle had undertaken a massive amount of work in transforming services and bringing efficiency and modernising the organisation and in the past 2 years with Managing Director at the helm, the way Council had navigated through the hugely significant challenges of the Covid pandemic had been phenomenal, working in conjunction with colleagues and Members in Blaenau Gwent and as part of the regional emergency response.

The Leader said that he was aware of the respect and esteem Michelle had built up in 5 years with colleague chief executive's and officers across Gwent, the region and Wales. He concluded by stating that it had been an absolute pleasure and privilege working with Michelle and

wished her well in her new role as the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

The Leader of the Labour Group concurred with the comments made by the Leader and said that Michelle would be a loss to the Council but wished her well in her new role.

The Chair added her congratulations to Michelle in her new role.

The Managing Director expressed her appreciation to both Leaders for their kind words and expressed her appreciation to Council for the opportunity that she had been provided with to undertake the role for the last four and half years. It had been a privilege and she was proud of what had been achieved over that period. The last two years which the Council had managed to navigate its way through, had been an extraordinary time for everyone.

The Managing Director took the opportunity by expressing her appreciation to the Corporate Leadership Team who had supported her through her time in the role and said she knew these officers would continue to lead the Council from the professional side and to staff who were the Council's biggest asset, who had gone above and beyond in extraordinary circumstances and she expressed her appreciation to them for their continued commitment and support to Council. The Managing Director concluded by wishing the Council, staff and Blaenau Gwent very best wishes for the future.

26. EXEMPT ITEMS

To receive and consider the following reports which in the opinion of the proper officer were exempt items taking into account consideration of the public interest test and that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting (the reasons for the decisions for the exemption were available on a schedule maintained by the proper officer).

The Chief Officer Commercial & Customer left the meeting at this juncture.

Item Nos 27 – 30 were considered simultaneously.

27. SHORTLISTING – JNC OFFICERS

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12 & 13, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to the report of the meeting held on 2nd February, 2022.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report which related to staffing matters be accepted and the decisions contained therein be noted.

28. SHORTLISTING – INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Corporate Director of Social Services and Chief Officer Commercial and Customer declared an interest in this item.

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12 & 13, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to the report of the meeting held on 28th February, 2022.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report which related to staffing matters be accepted and the decisions contained therein be noted.

29. APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE – JNC OFFICERS

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12 & 13, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to the report of the meeting held on 1st March, 2022.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report which related to staffing matters be accepted and the post be offered to Vikki Gledhill on a salary in accordance with JNC 1 (£51,407 - £56,544).

30. APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE – INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Corporate Director of Social Services and Chief Officer Commercial and Customer declared an interest in this item.

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt

information as defined in Paragraphs 12 & 13, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to the report of the meeting held on 7th March, 2022.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report which related to staffing matters be accepted and the post be offered to Damien McCann on a salary in accordance with JNC Chief Executive (£102,976 - £111,055).

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – 17TH FEBRUARY, 2022</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>DEMOCRATIC OFFICER</u>

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. HOLT (THE CHAIR,
PRESIDING)

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

B. Summers
 B. Thomas
 G. Thomas
 S. Thomas
 H. Trollope
 J. Wilkins
 D. Wilkshire
 B. Willis
 L. Winnett

AND: Managing Director
 Corporate Director of Social Services
 Corporate Director of Education
 Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services
 Chief Officer Resources
 Chief Officer Commercial & Customer
 Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
 Head of Governance & Partnerships
 Head of Organisational Development
 Service Manager - Accountancy
 Communications and Marketing Manager

<u>No.</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
---	<p><u>CONDOLENCES</u></p> <p>Condolences were expressed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The family of former Blaenau Gwent County Borough Councillor and Mayor, Paul Hopkins who had sadly passed away. <p>Members and officers paid their respects with a minute's silence</p> <p>The Leader of the Labour Group said that this was extremely sad news regarding the sad loss of his colleague, Paul. He advised that Paul had been a committed socialist and one of the finest advocates for Tredegar and the valleys and would be sorely missed.</p>	

1.	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>
2.	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Councillor T. Sharrem.</p>
3.	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declarations of interest were reported:</p> <p>Item No. 7: Interim Arrangements – Vacant Post</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Michelle Morris – Managing Director - Damien McCann – Corporate Director of Social Services - Richard Crook – Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services - Lynn Phillips – Corporate Director of Education - Rhian Hayden – Chief Officer Resources - Bernadette Elias – Chief Officer Commercial & Customer - Andrea Jones – Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance <p>It was noted that following receipt of advice, the above-named officers would leave the meeting whilst this item of business was conducted.</p>
4.	<p><u>MOTION – REQUEST FOR COUNCIL TO CORRECT AN EQUALITY INJUSTICE SUFFERED BY EMPLOYEES WHO MISSED OUT ON WELSH GOVERNMENT’S FINANCIAL RECOGNITION SCHEME</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the above-named Motion.</p> <p>The Leader of the Labour Group commenced by explaining that the Motion had been submitted to request that Council correct an</p>

equality injustice suffered by employees who had missed out on the Welsh Government's Financial Recognition Scheme and to recognise and recompense the hard work and dedication of employees from Workforce Development, Early Years Childcare and Play, Families First and Flying Start who were all part of the Social Services Directorate.

These diligent and dedicated employees who were some of the lowest paid, had been working at the outset and throughout the course of the pandemic. It was noted that when the Welsh Government's Financial Recognition Scheme had first been announced this cohort of employees had been included to receive this payment but the policy had subsequently been amended to include only health and social care sectors. The Leader of the Labour Group concluded by expressing his concern that this was an injustice, these employees very often worked side by side with their counterparts in health and social care and requested the Council to consider the Motion and recompense these employees of the authority.

The Executive Member for Education said that she had a great deal of sympathy for these staff who had been caught up in this situation and felt that it had been unfortunate that Welsh Government had changed the parameters of eligibility in the way that it did. She expressed her concern that the Motion that had been put forward had the potential to create inconsistencies for the workforce across the Council and was likely to be quite divisive. Within her own portfolio for example, education colleagues had worked tirelessly to either directly provide or support essential frontline services throughout the course of the pandemic and they continued to do so. She also recognised that this hard work and dedication had been replicated across many other service areas of the organisation and was concerned that if the Motion was carried it could have a detrimental impact on staff in those areas.

The Executive Member continued by stating that it was an unfortunate situation of Welsh Government's making and was not sure if it was appropriate for Council to intervene and whilst she was genuinely sympathetic to the staff involved, unfortunately for the reasons outlined above she would be unable to support the Motion.

The Executive Member for Environment advised that her comments were in a similar vein to the Executive Member for Education. Whilst she hugely sympathised with the position these staff that had been put in from her point of view it was the impact and message this would potentially send to other frontline staff that had also been working throughout the pandemic from day one i.e. in her portfolio refuse collectors had continued to provide a service with no interruption, environmental health had been on the front line and housing solutions, just to name a few. For the same reasons she also found it difficult to support the Motion.

A Member said he understood the comments made by the Executive Members and acknowledged that other colleagues had worked on the frontline during the pandemic. However, the Council now had the opportunity to right the wrong that had been done and show its appreciation to the staff (some of the lowest paid) working on the frontline during the pandemic which, had allowed key workers to undertake their roles.

The Executive Member for Social Services commenced by stating that this was very divisive policy that Welsh Government had set out but he referred to the facts:

- 17th March, 2021 – the then Minister for Health and Social Care, Vaughan Gethin had made a statement that all health and social care staff would be paid £735 in recognition of their efforts during the pandemic.
- 24th April, 2021 – Welsh Government issued guidance on the Social Care Financial Recognition Scheme at which point all social services staff including Families First and Flying Start were included and eligible for the payment. This cohort of staff had been recognised twice in that policy.
- June 2021 – Welsh Government updated the guidance stating that Families First and Flying Start Service were no longer eligible for the payment. This was despite evidence that had been provided to Welsh Government that staff had been working with families and children throughout the course of the pandemic.

The Executive Member continued by confirming that he together with his counterparts from across Gwent had raised their concerns with the Minister at meetings and in addition, the Leader and Members of the Executive had written to the Minister requesting that the decision be overturned.

In conclusion, he stated that it was disappointing the Members of the opposition groups at that time had not supported the action taken of the administration against a divisive Welsh Government policy.

The Leader of the Labour Group commenced by stating that this Motion had been brought to Council because it was a particular injustice. He said he differed with the comments made by the Executive Member for Social Services and pointed out that Welsh Government would end up having to pay 200,000 members of staff as part of this scheme and had provided the Council with hardship funding over the last two years.

He continued by stating that his focus was on valuing colleagues in Blaenau Gwent who had worked on the frontline without vaccinations looking after children. These were some of the lowest paid staff who had gone the extra mile looking after children to allow key workers to attend work and they deserved to be treated the same as their colleagues in the health and social care sector. He concluded by proposing that the Motion be supported. This proposal was seconded.

A recorded vote was, thereupon, requested.

In Support of the Motion – Councillors P. Baldwin, D. Bevan, M. Cross, P. Edwards, L. Elias, K. Hayden, H. McCarthy, J. Millard, M. Moore, J. C. Morgan, L. Parsons, K. Pritchard, T. Smith, S. Thomas, H. Trollope, D. Wilkshire, B. Willis and L. Winnett.

Against the Motion – Councillors J. Collins, M. Cook, N. Daniels, D. Davies, G. A. Davies, G. L. Davies, M. Day, D. Hancock, S. Healy, J. Hill, W. Hodgins, J. Holt, J. Mason, C. Meredith, J. P. Morgan, G. Paulsen, K. Rowson, B. Summers, B. Thomas, G. Thomas, J. Wilkins.

The Motion was, therefore, not carried.

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the above-named Motion be not supported.

5. REVENUE BUDGET 2022/2023

Members considered the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Chair commenced by suggesting that because this report had been discussed at both the Joint Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee previously and Members were familiar with its contents, that attention focus on the options for recommendation, in particular paragraphs 3.1.7 and 3.1.8 and in doing so the Chief Officer Resources would, therefore, not need to provide a summary of the report. As was tradition, the Leader of the Council would be invited to speak followed by the Leaders of the Labour Group and Minority Independent Group.

The Leader of the Labour Group strongly suggested that because this was the budget report it should be debated.

The Leader of the Council commenced by stating that there was some merit in the Chair's suggestion and it was not in any way to negate any discussion or debate around the budget because the key issues were encapsulated within the 8 recommendations.

He expressed his appreciation to all officers for their efforts in providing positive budgetary management throughout the year but in particular, special appreciation to Rhian Hayden, Gina Taylor and their teams for their much appreciated efforts in ensuring maintenance of the high levels of financial management that the Council had come to expect.

The Leader continued by advising that the key issues revolved around the 7 options for recommendation contained in paragraph 3 of the report and said that as a combination of the positive aggregate external funding received from Welsh Government for which the Council was extremely grateful, and the results of the Bridging the Gap Strategy meant that the Council did not have to consider or debate any cuts to services. Therefore, at the appropriate time he

would be endorsing options 3.1.1. – 3.1.6 as presented. It was pleasing to note in paragraph 3.1.6, the Council was in a position to provide schools with a £3.91m budget uplift, that equated to 8.4% increase and this was he was sure would be welcomed by head teachers, staff and governing bodies across schools in Blaenau Gwent.

The Leader continued by referring to paragraph 3.1.7 and advised that taking into account the Bridging the Gap achievements table 5 – paragraph 5.1.30, highlighted that there was a budget surplus of £2.44m. A proportion of this funding, he would propose to be utilised to support pay increases over and above the 2% budgeted for in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) with £950,000 being transferred into a contingency budget to help support increases for 2022/23 over and above the 2% assumption. This was prudent financial management and should there be any residue this could be transferred back into reserves.

Whilst paragraph 3.1.7 recommended that the remainder of the £2.44m following the £950,000 budget contingency i.e. £1.5m be transferred into the financial resilience reserves, Members were aware over the past few years the administration had worked hard to address the acknowledged poor level of Council reserves and this was something he felt had been done with some success and in doing so had significantly improved the financial resilience of the Council. It was a fact that since 2017 both the general and earmarked reserves were at the highest level since 2012. Therefore, on this occasion and mindful of the huge progress that had been made in strengthening reserves, the Leader said he would not be recommending that this surplus be transferred into reserves but to address the recommendation contained in paragraph 3.1.8 i.e. that the remaining surplus be utilised in setting the Blaenau Gwent council tax 2022/23. Therefore, at the appropriate time he would formally be recommending that for 2022/23 that there would be a 0% increase in the Blaenau Gwent element of the council tax and that it be frozen for the forthcoming year.

The Leader of the Council pointed out that there were obviously other component elements that made up the council tax bills i.e. Police and Town/Community Council precepts which the Council had no control over. However, he reiterated that he would be recommending that the Blaenau Gwent element of council tax would not increase. This would allow the Council to present a balanced

and legal budget with no draw from reserves and this would still leave a nominal surplus.

The Leader of the Labour Group referred to the comment made that Bridging the Gap was an achievement and pointed out that clearly with the pending rate increases in the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) he did not feel that this was an achievement. Whilst he was delighted with the council tax proposal he took task with the comments made by the Leader. He pointed out that the previous year when the Labour Group had proposed a 0.7% increase in council tax level (because it was felt that this was correct at that time because of the difficulties the public had suffered during the pandemic and other issues), the Leader of the Council had not supported this proposal and said whilst he had sympathy with the comments a budget was not set for one year but was set with the implications for future years and that it was correct to be pragmatic.

The Leader of the Labour Group said that whilst he did not want to cast aspersions or suspicions he asked whether this had been proposed because it was an election year and said he felt it was a complete an utter scam but clearly the Labour Group would be supporting the 0% increase.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that this was not a scam and there was no eye on the election. He advised that the responsibility of any administration was to ensure a strong financial base and he firmly believed the Council had that strong financial base which, had been created over the last number of years and reiterated that both reserves general and earmarked was at the highest level since 2012. It had come to a point as outlined in his earlier remarks mindful particularly this year that from a public perspective it was a difficult year with cost of living increases and the view had been taken the Council was in a position not to add to these pressures from a council tax level and to implement this comfortably. He continued by stating that if he had felt that it was a necessity for any increase in council tax he would not shirk away from doing this because this was about protecting jobs and services and doing what was best in the interests of the public. He offered no apologies and reiterated this was not a scam. A sensible budget had been presented this year and over the last number of years and this would continue. The Leader concluded by stating that he was more than content that what was being done was for the absolute right reasons for the public of Blaenau Gwent and indeed for this Council.

The Leader of the Labour Group said that if the Council was in such a great position it wouldn't have to dip into Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) again and pointed out that the Council this year had received the largest uplift of funding from Welsh Government that he could ever recall. There were four previous sets of council tax increases that had been proposed in previous years ranging in percentage increases but this year his view was that a freeze on council tax levels had been done purely for election purposes.

The Leader of the Council advised that he had been a Councillor for 31 years and had the highest regard for the public in Blaenau Gwent. The budget that had been presented was a sensible budget and which could be afforded as there would be no significant impact on the Council's budgetary position. He reiterated that he made no apologies for doing this, he did not have one eye on the election, this was the right thing to do at the right time.

The Leader of the Minority Independent Group concurred with the comments made by the Leader of the Labour Group and expressed his disappointment that the report was not being debated. The Chair confirmed that this was not stifling debate, the report had been debated on many occasions with a focus on recommendations contained in paragraphs 3.1.7 and 3.1.8 and if Members had any questions, the Chief Officer Resources was in attendance to answer those questions.

Environment Portfolio Budget: The Leader of the Labour Group pointed out that the Environment Portfolio had overspent again by nearly £1m and had been overspending consistently in every quarter of the last five years. He asked the Executive Member for Environment what plans she had to address this issue.

The Executive Member acknowledged the overspend and said that there had been traditional overspends for a variety of reasons. However, ultimately there was a need to redress the budget including examining how the budget was allocated in the first place i.e. was it a true and fair budget and should she be re-elected this would be something she would wish to focus on in-depth going forward.

The Leader of the Labour Group said he would have thought that those measures should have been in place because this department's budget had not been controlled for the last 5 years.

New Vale/Roseheyworth Household Waste Recycling Centres and Town Centre/Street Cleansing: Another Member said despite one of the best financial settlements received from Welsh Government in a considerable number of years there still remained a large adverse cost pressure for this service area. He asked the Executive Member whether she considered operating two household waste recycling centres i.e. New Vale and Roseheyworth had contributed to this cost pressure whether it was unsustainable to retain the two sites going forward. In addition, given the controversial decision that had been made the previous week to bring the operations of Silent Valley back in house whether this was a step towards closing the New Vale site and asked the Executive Member and Leader of the Council to provide an undertaking that the two recycling centres would continue to operate.

The Executive Member confirmed that bringing the Silent Valley services back in house was a decision of Council and this was not a step towards closing New Vale. She agreed that there was a need for two recycling centres as residents had advised how much they valued the choice of two household waste recycling centres being available in the area. The Executive Member said that the two recycling centres would continue to operate. The Leader of the Council concurred with the comments made by the Executive Member.

The Leader of the Labour Group said it was pleasing to receive the reassurance about the New Vale site but what was the plan for how both Household Waste Recycling sites were to be funded going forward.

Another Member also expressed his concern regarding the budgetary position in relation to the Environment Directorate and advised in 2017 a new cleansing team was created to address issues within town centres and this had worked well for a time. However, the cleanliness of town centres had now deteriorated and fly tipping incidences had also increased. He questioned whether the priorities were correct and asked what the plan was to recoup these losses going forward.

The Chief Officer Resources confirmed that a significant proportion of the cost pressure i.e. £400,000 for this portfolio had been included for prudence on the basis of the pending decision to take Silent Valley back in house. However, it was important to note that a cost pressure for that area existed whatever the decision of Council because the cost of operating Silent Valley was greater than the amount previously the Council paid to the company. The vast majority of the remainder of the cost pressure related to the variable nature of the recycle income stream that the service generated. The Council collected and dispose of a significant amount of recycling and this generated a significant amount of income from being sold on. However, the recycle prices could vary quite significantly and in recent years' prices had reduced. It was hoped that next year that there would be an upturn in the market and additional income generated but the cost pressure was a historic deficit in the budget.

A Member pointed out that the recycling centre at Roseheyworth was now recycling and upcycling bicycles and from April to October 6,713 people had visited the site and it was inevitable that there were some cost pressures associated with a brand new facility, which was making a big positive difference in the area.

The Leader of the Labour Group still pointed out that even though £400,000 was attributed to Silent Valley there still remained an overspend of £500,000. He pointed out that at the time the second household waste recycling centre was muted there was no definite data in the report and no evidence to show that there was a need for a second facility and unfortunately, as a result the levels of cleanliness of streets and towns were deteriorating.

In reply to a question in terms of whether this was a realistic budget for the portfolio, the Executive Member stated that there was a need to bring the cost pressure back on an even keel and accepted with the budget enhancement it was realistic. With regard to cleanliness and fly tipping these statistics were reported through the Community Services Scrutiny Committee and both had improved but this was not saying that there wasn't more work to do moving forward.

A Member reported that in 2017 promises were made that the cleanliness of streets would improve but traders were reporting that they had never seen the streets so dirty. These traders were trying to compete against other towns and were losing trade because of

the cleanliness of the streets. The Member referred to the funding that had been set aside to create additional street cleansing crews during the first few years of the administration and asked if the number of crews had now been reduced.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services commenced by advising that the LEAMS rating measure used across all Councils indicated that the cleanliness rating was improving in a positive direction. It was noted that during the pandemic a different working pattern had been adopted in town centres but Members were advised that the number of crews had not reduced but there may have been a reduction in the number of crew members in each team. The Litter Strategy had also recently been adopted and work was being undertaken to implement a broader approach around street cleaning which included education within the community, engaging volunteer litter pickers in addition to the work of the crews.

The Leader of the Minority Independent Group said that whilst the number of vehicles had not reduced they were not fully manned and felt that the statement made was misleading.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services said that he did not believe his statement to be misleading because he had caveated this by advising that whilst it was the same number of vehicles but the crew number may have decreased the same efficient service was being delivered as previously. There had been some changes in certain service areas but reiterated that these were proving to be effective and efficient.

A Member asked whether a programme of work had been established to undertake a deep cleanse of the town centres. People's spirits needed to be lifted during these challenging times.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services advised that the cleansing arrangements had changed during the period of the pandemic and undertook to pursue the matter and report back to the Member.

In reply to a question, the Leader of the Council gave an assurance that at this point in time there were no plans to revert to a 4 weekly refuse collection – however, future administrations may take an alternative view and dictates may be received from Welsh

Government. The Executive Member echoed the comments of the Leader.

A Member requested an undertaking that both the New Vale and Roseheyworth Household Waste Recycling sites were safe and that there would be no job losses as a result of taking Silent Valley back in house – particular reference was made to agency staff that were currently employed at the site.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services confirmed that the business case did assume that the compliment of staff working at Silent Valley at present would transfer across to the frontline service and this assumed that the same level of staff resources that was used to deliver Silent Valley services would be required by the Council in terms of frontline delivery. However, he was unable to comment on the number of agency staff and how Silent Valley was currently resourced.

The Member pointed out that agency staff were not covered by the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) and asked for an undertaking that there would be no job losses.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services reiterated that from a service operational perspective the number of staff required to deliver the service and transfer to the Council frontline service was outlined in the business model and was unable to comment on how Silent Valley currently resourced the services at present.

CCTV: The Leader of the Labour Group said that he had reports of a new CCTV service or service enhancement being implemented for Blaenau Gwent and asked an officer could clarify the current position.

The Chief Officer Commercial and Customer confirmed that a report relating to proposed improvements to the CCTV function had been considered by Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee in December 2021. This exempt report detailed the work which would be undertaken in conjunction with a delivery partner. The proposed improvements (including technical aspects and improving resilience and fault finding) were being taken forward and this work would be brought to fruition during Summer 2022. In the meantime, the

current operating model would continue and the police were being provided with evidence, when requested. In addition, the key issues identified by various stakeholders and uncovered by the review focussed on the digital element whereby digital evidence could be shared and this was work which had already commenced was being progressed by the Head of Service.

The Leader of the Labour Group alluded to a particular area of Tredegar that previously had a CCTV camera and where there were particular issues being experienced and asked as part of this work whether new cameras would be installed.

The Chief Officer Commercial and Customer advised that infrastructure such as the installation of new cameras did not form part of the report. The report focussed on the current infrastructure (not changes to camera locations) and how it needed to be improved based on the evidence that had been collated. However, as part of the CCTV operation and policy arrangements, an annual review would be undertaken in terms of where cameras were required to be sited and as part of that process Members views would be sought.

A Member alluded to previous discussions that had taken place regarding funding in terms of the digital cloud with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and for further details of the CCTV proposals including whether the system would be monitored 24/7. In addition, she asked whether consultation would be taking place with Members because not all Members had not had the opportunity to debate the issue at the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee.

The Chief Officer Commercial and Customer advised that she would circulate the exempt report to Members which contained details of the proposals and pointed out that the proposed improvements and key issues identified had been based on feedback received from Members and partners over time and the digital element formed part of this work going forward. To respond to this feedback work was required to be undertaken with a service delivery partner to secure these improvements and to secure robust and additional capacity.

In reply to a question regarding the adequacy of the monitoring arrangements, the Chief Officer gave an assurance that as part of the development of the service model Members points had been considered and this included appropriate staffing levels and one

thing being considered was the levels of staffing to ensure effective monitoring of the system.

A Member expressed his concern that he felt the progress in terms of CCTV provision had not moved on far enough and there were particular issues with cameras in town centres that were not capturing public order incidences live which meant that the police had to rely on footage a day later. Another Member concurred with the comments made and said the public were not feeling safe within their localities and that additional cameras and monitoring were required. As there was a substantial amount of monies within the reserves, this fund should be used for this purpose and he requested that the matter be investigated and because this issue affected all Members that it be reported back to full Council for consideration and debate.

Another Member advised that he had been informed that CCTV cameras were being installed in Abertillery Arcade due to ongoing anti-social behaviour issues in the area and asked if this could be confirmed.

The Chief Officer Commercial and Customer reiterated that the report which would be circulated to Members detailed the current town centre infrastructure and the location and position of cameras was a separate piece of on-going work which would be informed by Members. However, the Chief Officer confirmed that cameras were being installed in Abertillery Arcade but that this was a separate piece of work (to the work being undertaken in the report) that was being progressed.

General and Earmarked Reserves: In reply to a question, the Chief Officer Resources confirmed as at 31st March, 2021 the current level of general reserves was £10.6m, however, it was anticipated that this would increase by the end of the financial year but she was unable to provide the exact detail of the level that would be at present but the figure was expected to be in excess of £11m. In addition, whilst there would be minor reductions in the earmarked reserves because small levels of funding had been set aside for specific purposes, it was also anticipated that earmarked reserves would also increase by the end of the financial year. It was noted that overall approximately £12m had been transferred into the reserves the previous year.

A Member said that given the level of reserves and the amount that had been transferred into the reserves the previous year there could have been an opportunity at that point to provide a lower than 3.3% increase, however, he endorsed the 0% increase proposed for this forthcoming financial year.

Following a lengthy debate, the Leader of the Council proposed that the following be endorsed:

Paragraph 3.1.1 - The 2022/23 revenue budget as shown in table 2 in paragraph 5.1.13. be agreed subject to following

Paragraph 3.1.2 - The outcomes within the BGCBG provisional Revenue Support Grant (RSG) Settlement and the potential further change in the Final Revenue Support Grant be noted.

Paragraph 3.1.3 - The outcomes within the BGCBG provisional RSG Settlement and its impact upon the Medium Term Financial Strategy be noted.

Paragraph 3.1.4 - The updated cost pressures and growth items (£4m in total) identified in Appendix 2 (paragraphs 5.1.9 – 5.1.12) be agreed for inclusion in the Council's budget.

Paragraph 3.1.5 - The passporting the grants transferring into the Settlement of £265,000 to the relevant services be agreed.

Paragraph 3.1.6 - An uplift of £3.91m which equates to 8.4% increase to the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) be agreed.

Paragraph 3.1.7 - That any achievement of Bridging the Gap proposals which exceeded the in-year budget requirement be transferred into a contingency budget to support pay increases during 2022/23 over and above that provided in the Medium Term Financial Strategy of £0.95m. That the £1.5m **was not** transferred to the Financial Resilience Reserve (paragraph 5.1.32 & 5.1.34) but this figure utilised when setting the Blaenau Gwent element of the 2022/23 council tax.

Paragraph 3.1.8 - A Council tax increase of 4% for 2022/23 (paragraph 5.1.3) as per the Medium Term Financial Strategy assumptions be **not** agreed and by utilising the outstanding balance of the Bridging the Gap achievements proposed a **0% increase on**

Council tax and in doing so would freeze council tax levels for 2022/23.

The above proposals were seconded.

The Leader of the Labour Group on behalf of both opposition groups advised that he supported these measures.

Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously,

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

Paragraph 3.1.1 - The 2022/23 revenue budget as shown in table 2 in paragraph 5.1.13. be agreed.

Paragraph 3.1.2 - The outcomes within the BGCBG provisional Revenue Support Grant (RSG) Settlement and the potential further change in the Final Revenue Support Grant be noted.

Paragraph 3.1.3 - The outcomes within the BGCBG provisional RSG Settlement and its impact upon the Medium Term Financial Strategy be noted.

Paragraph 3.1.4 - The updated cost pressures and growth items (£4m in total) identified in Appendix 2 (paragraphs 5.1.9 – 5.1.12) be agreed for inclusion in the Council's budget.

Paragraph 3.1.5 - The passporting the grants transferring into the Settlement of £265,000 to the relevant services be agreed.

Paragraph 3.1.6 - An uplift of £3.91m which equates to 8.4% increase to the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) be agreed.

Paragraph 3.1.7 - That any achievement of Bridging the Gap proposals which exceeded the in-year budget requirement be transferred into a contingency budget to support pay increases during 2022/23 over and above that provided in the Medium Term Financial Strategy of £0.95m. That the £1.5m **was not** transferred to the Financial Resilience Reserve (paragraph 5.1.32 & 5.1.34) but this figure utilised when setting the Blaenau Gwent element of the 2022/23 council tax.

Paragraph 3.1.8 - A Council tax increase of 4% for 2022/23 (paragraph 5.1.3) as per the Medium Term Financial Strategy assumptions be **not** agreed and by utilising the outstanding balance of the Bridging the Gap achievements a **0% increase on Council tax be agreed and in doing so would freeze council tax levels for 2022/23.**

6. EXEMPT ITEM

To receive and consider the following report which in the opinion of the proper officer was an exempt item taking into account consideration of the public interest test and that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting (the reasons for the decisions for the exemption was available on a schedule maintained by the proper officer).

7. INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS – VACANT POST

Michelle Morris, Managing Director; Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education, Richard Crook, Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services, Damien McCann, Corporate Director of Social Services; Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer Resources; Bernadette Elias, Chief Officer Commercial & Customer and Andrea Jones, Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance declared an interest left the meeting whilst this item of business was considered.

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 14 & 15, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development.

It was agreed that this needed to be actioned as soon as possible in order that an appointment could be made prior to the commencement of the pre-election period.

The Leader of the Labour Group requested that the Council in March be convened as an 'Ordinary' meeting in order that the business for the administrative year could be concluded. The Leader of the Council concurred but said that providing the timelines were achievable, however, the ideal solution was for this to be actioned as soon as possible.

Following a discussion when the Head of Organisational Development clarified points raised it was unanimously,

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report which related to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority) and information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the Authority and employees of or office-holders under the Authority be accepted and the following options be agreed:

Option 1 - Re-designation of Managing Director Role

The role of Managing Director be re-designated to Chief Executive to comply with the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Option 1 – Managing Director Role Interim Arrangement - Internal Arrangement

- Expressions of interest be sought from the Corporate Directors; Education, Social Services and Regeneration and Community Services and the Chief Officers Resources and Commercial that form part of the Council's Senior Leadership Team. These officers were experienced at a senior leadership level in Blaenau Gwent and have had the experience of deputising/covering areas of work/representation for the current Managing Director.
- Formal interview with the Council's Appointments Committee (March 2022) to appoint on an interim basis

- Appointment on the current salary for the Managing Director post.

This option would support a short transition/hand over period working with the current post holder and the potential candidate would already have established relationships within the organisation.

Option 1 – Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer Local Government Elections May 2022

- The Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance who had previous experience to act as the Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer for the Local Government Election in May.
- The Chief Officer Resources to continue in the role of Deputy Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer.

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT PLANNING, REGULATORY &
GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE –
3RD MARCH, 2022**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR D. HANCOCK (CHAIR)

Councillors W. Hodgins (Vice-Chair)

D. Bevan

M. Day

J. Hill

C. Meredith

K. Pritchard

B. Thomas

G. Thomas

T. Smith

L. Winnett

B. Willis

D. Wilkshire

WITH: Team Manager Development Management
Team Leader Development Management
Team Manager - Built Environment
Planning Officer
Solicitor

AND: Public Speakers

Application No. C/2021/0372

154 Gainsborough Road, Cefn Golau, Tredegar

Councillor H. Trollope, Ward Member

C/2021/0386

Land to Southern end of Lime Avenue,

Ebbw Vale NP23 6GL

Mr. J. Hurley, Director, Asbri Planning Ltd.

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.
No. 2	<u>APOLOGIES</u> The following apologies for absence were received from:- Councillor M. Day Councillor G. Thomas
No. 3	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u> The following declaration of interests were raised:- Councillor D. Bevan <u>Item No. 5 - C/2021/0253</u> <u>Premier Club, William Street, Cwm, Ebbw Vale</u> Councillor J. Hill <u>Item No. 5 - C/2021/0253</u> <u>Premier Club, William Street, Cwm, Ebbw Vale</u> D Hancock <u>Item No. 5 - C/2021/0253</u> <u>Premier Club, William Street, Cwm, Ebbw Vale</u> Councillor G. Davies <u>Item No. 5 - C/2021/0253</u> <u>Premier Club, William Street, Cwm, Ebbw Vale</u> The Members confirmed they would not take part in the voting process.

C/2021/0372

154 Gainsborough Road, Cefn Golau, Tredegar NP22 3TL

Proposed Shed

The Planning Officer informed the Committee that the incorrect area had been highlighted in the report. The correct area was thereupon presented to Members via Google Streetmaps.

The Planning Officer advised that the application sought permission for the construction of a shed to the side of 154 Gainsborough Road, Tredegar. The property was one of a pair of semi-detached properties which fronts onto Gainsborough Road. The property was sited at an angle to the road with a garden which wrapped around three sides of the house. The Planning Officer advised that the proposed shed would be located within the side garden, the configuration of the garden was such that it projected towards the front boundary of the garden.

The Planning Officer gave details of the proposed shed with the assistance of diagrams as detailed in the report.

It was further reported that no responses had been received from external consultation or public consultation which had taken place. The Planning Officer noted that following notification to Ward Members of the intention to refuse the application under delegated powers two emails were received requesting the application be presented to Planning Committee. The Ward Members felt that they did not consider the proposal to be prominent as it would be set back from the highway by some significant distance and much lower than its nearest neighbours who had raised no objections.

The Planning Officer further outlined the application and advised of the policies considered in determining the application. The property was within a residential area and it was considered that a shed within the curtilage would be compatible with surrounding uses in the locality as required by policy. The Council Policy stated that garages and outbuildings should not be forward of the front building line unless they are a feature of the streetscape and although it was accepted that the proposal falls behind the front building line of the house, the layout of the site was such that the shed extended towards the front boundary.

The Planning Officer noted that the north eastern corner of the shed would be highly visible from the street and that at this point the proposed shed would measure 3m high. It was acknowledged that the garden wall would partially screen the shed, however it would still project approximately 0.5m above the level of the wall which fronts the site. Therefore, the Planning Officer felt that the proposed shed was contrary to Policy. The Planning Officer also felt that the use of timber cladding and tin roofing sheets would be unacceptable in this location. There had been no amendments sought from the Applicant to these elements given the concerns. The Planning Officer further referenced that the site previously housed a single garage to the front of the house, however, aerial photography suggested that this was removed before 2014 and stated that the proposed shed should be considered on its own merits rather than as a replacement structure.

In conclusion, the Planning Officer referred to the officer's recommendation that the application be refused as the development would cause material harm to the street scene and character of the area contrary to LDP Policy DM1(2) and the key principles set out in the Householder SPG Note 2.

At the invitation of the Chair, the Ward Member, Councillor H. Trollope addressed the Committee.

Councillor Trollope felt that the photographs did not provide a clear position of the site and that in his opinion there was no site impairment. The Applicant had done everything they could to adhere to planning policies and Councillor Trollope concurred that there had been a building in the area previously. There had been no objections raised from neighbours and the Ward Member felt that the reason had been due to the building which had been in situ in previous years.

Councillor Trollope stated that he could not understand why the application had been recommended for refusal and asked the Committee to look at common sense in terms of the 0.5m projection and approve the proposed development.

The Chair invited questions/comments from the Committee at this juncture.

Another Ward Member concurred with the comments raised by his ward colleague and was of the opinion that the development would not impact on neighbours. The Ward Member added that there had been no objections from neighbours and referred to the garage which had been on the site previously. The Ward Member suggested that if Members were minded to refuse the application that a site meeting be arranged in order for the Committee to view the visual impact on the streetscene.

A Member noted the comments raised by Ward Members and the lack of objections from neighbours, however, the Member felt that the development could be adjusted to house a smaller shed. The Member thereupon proposed the officer's recommendation. This proposal was not seconded.

Further discussions ensued in relation to the application and Members concurred with the comments raised by Ward Members.

The Team Manager Development Manager asked if the Committee was minded to approve the application that officers be granted delegated powers to impose a condition regarding the materials to be used. The Team Manager felt that control over the materials to be used would ensure the shed was in keeping with the surrounding area.

A Member proposed that the application be approved with delegated powers given to officers to control the materials and finishes to be used on the proposed shed. This proposal was seconded.

Upon a vote being taken, 11 Members voted in favour of the proposal and 1 Member voted in favour of the officer's recommendation. It was thereupon,

RESOLVED that planning permission be **APPROVED.**

The Chair did not take part in the vote.

C/2021/0386

Land to Southern end of Lime Avenue, Ebbw Vale NP23 6GL
Construction of employment units for B1, B2, and B8 uses, new
access road and junction off Lime Avenue, drainage,
landscaping, car parking, and associated works

The Planning Officer provided a detailed overview of the application and informed that planning permission sought approval for the construction of 5 steel portal frame buildings, a new access road with junction off Lime Avenue, associated car parking areas and ancillary infrastructure on land to the southern end of Lime Avenue, Ebbw Vale. The buildings would be subdivided to provide 10 employment units with a combined floor area of 4,065 square metres that would be used for B1, B2 or B8 use and the Planning Officer noted the overall size and number of units within each building as detailed in the report.

The Planning Officer provided a detailed explanation of the site as outlined in the layout plans noted in the application.

A comprehensive overview of the internal and external consultation responses were provided along with the planning assessment in relation to the following:-

- Principle of the Development
- Layout, Scale and Appearance
- Sustainable Design
- Amenity
- Highways and Parking
- Ecology
- Landscaping
- Flooding
- Drainage
- Ground Stability and Contamination

In conclusion, the Planning Officer advised that whilst the uses classes proposed are not wholly in accordance with the provisions of the LDP, the delivery of a mixture of B1 and B2 employment uses and the provision of a small proportion of B8 storage and distribution use would make a significant contribution to meeting the LDP's regeneration and employment related strategic objectives.

It was considered that the uses proposed would be compatible with neighbouring land uses in the locality providing the B2 and B8 are restricted to the lower, southern development plateau of the application site. Although larger in form and taller in height than the proposal approval, it was considered that the applicant had identified a market for the units and that the scale, design and external materials would also be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and would not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring buildings. In terms of highway and parking matters, the Planning Officer felt that the new access junction at Lime Avenue was acceptable in principle and the amount of parking provision was sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed employment development. It was therefore concluded, on balance, the proposed employment development was broadly in accordance with the Local Development Plans and the conflict within the Local Development Plan's land use allocation was outweighed by the regeneration and economic benefits of the proposal. The Planning Officer, thereupon referred Members to the officer's recommendation for approval.

At the invitation of the Chair, Mr. J. Hurley, the Planning Agent, addressed the Committee.

Mr. Hurley advised that he had been appointed by the Coalfield Regeneration Trust who are the Applicant for the Application. Mr. Hurley advised that the Planning Application had been submitted just before Christmas and wished to thank the Planning Team for how quickly and professionally the application had been dealt with and considered by the Committee.

Mr. Hurley advised that detailed discussions had been undertaken with the Planning Team in relation to the use of the employment units. The application was submitted on the basis that the units would be B1, B2 and B8 as reported by the Planning Officer. Mr. Hurley appreciated the Works Masterplan and LDP policies focussed on B1 units, however, following a request from the Planning Team justification had been submitted to support a more flexible use to attract tenants. It was felt that B1, B2 and B8 uses across the scheme which would provide that flexibility and meet the current demand in the market.

Mr. Hurley referred to the conditions included on the application and was thankful that these had been agreed with the Planning Team.

It was added that the Coalfield Regeneration Trust had a good track record in similar schemes across the UK which secured jobs and attracted investment. Mr. Hurley reiterated that permitting B8 uses on units in Block A-C would be useful to let these units

In conclusion, Mr. Hurley advised that if planning permission was approved there would be a requirement for further discussions with the Planning Team and Estates Department in relation to units A-C and the use classes on those units as it currently stands looking at possibly B8 to ensure the scheme remained viable.

Mr. Hurley thanked the Committee and hoped that the officer's recommendation would be supported for the application.

The Planning Officer noted the concerns of the Applicant in relation to the decision to limit buildings A-C to B1 uses only. The Planning Officer advised that the LDP and SPG Policy's specifically allocated this site for B1 use and any further uses would be a diversion from the Plan. This had been made clear throughout the process and there had been greater flexibility afforded to the southern site. The Planning Officer stated that the conditions would be needed otherwise the site could become wholly B8 which would be wholly contrary to LDP Policy and Masterplan for the Site. It was important to maintain units A-C in an active and economically generating use as well as to protect investment for the Borough. It was also important that the support for start-up and move on businesses was maintained to continue the site as an active site. The Planning Officer felt that without condition 2 the site could be wholly B8 and would be contrary to the LDP.

The Committee supported the application and felt that employment units would be welcomed in Blaenau Gwent.

Another Member welcomed the development, however raised concerns in relation to the B2 uses in terms of the welfare and visual impact on the patients in the hospital. Therefore, the Member felt that it was paramount that the development was monitored to ensure the area was not blighted by unsightly units.

Upon on vote being taken, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that planning permission be **APPROVED.**

No. 5

APPLICATION:
C/2021/0253 PREMIER CLUB, WILLIAM STREET,
CWM, EBBW VALE

Consideration was given to the report of the Planning Officer.

The Team Manager Development Management gave an overview of the report and reminded Members that the application had been considered at the last meeting. It had been the determination of the Committee that contrary to the officer's recommendation the application be approved and the Team Member referred Members to the recommendation and conditions to be issue for the development. It was thereupon

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the inclusion of the following conditions on the planning permission to be issued for the development:-

1. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in full accordance with the following plans and details:-
 - Site location plan (scale 1:1250) received 5th August 2021;
 - Drg ref 21/AP/105 – Proposed elevations received 5th August 2021;
 - Drg ref 21/AP/104 – Proposed floor plan layouts received 5th August 2021;
 - Drg ref 21/AP/103 – Proposed site location plan (scale 1:125) received 5th August 2021;
 - Drg ref 21/AP/106 – Proposed refuse enclosures received 22nd June 2021,

Unless otherwise specified by conditions 2 to 7 below.

REASON: To clearly define the scope of this permission.

-
2. No development shall take place until details of the flood risk measures to be incorporated within the dwellings hereby approved have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such measures as may be approved shall be implemented in full before the dwellings are occupied.

REASON: To ensure the development is carried out in a safe and satisfactory manner and to mitigate the risk of flooding to future occupants.

3. No development shall take place (including demolition, ground works or vegetation clearance) until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (Biodiversity) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP (Biodiversity) shall include details of the following:-

- a risk assessment of any potentially damaging construction activities;
- identification of “biodiversity protection zones”;
- practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction;
- the location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features;
- the times during construction when specialist ecologist need to be present on site to oversee works;
- responsible persons and lines of communication;
- the role and responsibilities on site of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) or similarly competent person; and
- the use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.

The CEMP shall be strictly implemented and adhered to throughout the construction period in full accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To protect biodiversity interests and ensure that suitable measures are taken to mitigate any adverse impacts on biodiversity.

4. Notwithstanding the details outlined in the Tree Survey submitted with the application, no development shall take place until a revised tree survey that accords with BS5857 has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The revised survey must have due regard for all trees located within the vicinity of the site, including those to the north west boundary that are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. It shall include, but is not restricted to the following:-

- full details of excavation methods to be used within the root protection zones of trees;
- details of surfacing materials to be used for the proposed driveway;
- full details of protective measures to retained trees to be in effect for the duration of the development.

REASON: To ensure adequate protection of the landscaped features of the site and the surrounding area, and to ensure no harm occurs to protected trees as a result of the development.

5. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, none of the dwellings hereby approved shall be occupied until the access, driveway and parking areas are constructed, surfaced and drained in accordance with details which must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before works commence on site. The areas provided shall be retained for their designated purposes at all times.

REASON: To ensure the parking needs of the development are adequately met and to safeguard highway interests.

6. None of the dwellings hereby approved shall be occupied until all external finishes shown on the approved plans have been applied in full.

REASON: To safeguard visual amenity interests.

	<p>7. No development shall take place on site outside of the following hours – 8.00hrs to 17.00hrs Monday to Friday; 8.00hrs to 13.00hrs on Saturdays. No development shall take place on Sundays or Bank Holidays.</p> <p><u>REASON:</u> To safeguard the residential amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties.</p> <p>8. Standard time limit (full planning permission).</p>
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>APPEALS, CONSULTATIONS AND DNS UPDATE: MARCH 2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager – Development & Estates.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>PLANNING APPEAL UPDATE AND APPEAL DECISION: LAND ADJOINING COED CAE FARM HOUSE, RASSAU, EBBW VALE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Planning Officer.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information of the appeal decision for Planning Application C/2021/0182 be noted.</p>
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>LIST OF APPLICATIONS DECIDED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS BETWEEN 24TH JANUARY, 2022 AND 16TH FEBRUARY, 2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Senior Business Support Officer.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>

No. 9

**ENFORCEMENT CLOSED CASES BETWEEN
10TH DECEMBER, 2021 AND 10TH FEBRUARY, 2022**

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 12, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

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

RESOLVED that the report which contained information relating to a particular individual be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT PLANNING, REGULATORY &
GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE –
16TH JUNE, 2022**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR LISA WINNETT (Chair)

Councillors D. Bevan (Vice-Chair)

P. Baldwin

M. Day

J. Hill

W. Hodgins

G. Humpreys

J. Thomas

D. Wilkshire

WITH: Team Manager Development Management
Team Leader Development Management
Team Leader Built Environment
Planning Officer (x 3)
Solicitor
Team Manager – Public Protection
Specialist Environmental Health Officers (x2)

AND: Public Speakers

5 Village Lane, Victoria, Ebbw Vale, NP23 8AR
Meirion Morgan (Applicant)

7 Beaufort Terrace, Beaufort, Ebbw Vale, NP23 5NN
Councillor C. Smith (Ward Member)
Councillor G. Thomas (Ward Member)

Vacant Plot North & East of Rassau Industrial Estate,
Mark Langshaw, Tech Valleys (Supporter)
Dan Coles, Coleg Gwent (Supporter)
Councillor G. Davies (Ward Member)
Mrs. Ciner (Applicant)
Mr. T. Watson (Agent)

1 Hawthorn Glade, Tanglewood, Blaina, NP13 3JT
Mr. J. Davies (Applicant)

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>The following apologies for absence were reported:-</p> <p>Councillor J. Morgan Councillor J. Gardner</p>
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declaration of interests were raised:-</p> <p><u>Councillor D. Bevan</u> Item No. 4 – Planning Applications Report Application No. C/2022/0060 5 Village Lane, Victoria, Ebbw Vale, NP23 8AR</p> <p><u>Councillor G. Humpreys</u> Item No. 4 – Planning Applications Report Application No. C/2022/0060 5 Village Lane, Victoria, Ebbw Vale, NP23 8AR</p> <p>It was confirmed that Councillor Bevan and Councillor Humpreys would not take part in the vote process for the aforementioned application.</p>

No. 4

PLANNING APPLICATIONS REPORT

Application No. C/2022/0060

5 Village Lane, Victoria, Ebbw Vale, NP23 8AR

Proposed first floor rear and side extension

Upon a vote being taken, 3 Members voted in favour of the application and 4 Members voted in favour of the officer's recommendation. It was thereupon,

RESOLVED that planning permission be **REFUSED.**

Application No. C/2022/0047

7 Beaufort Terrace, Beaufort, Ebbw Vale, NP23 5NN

Proposed two storey rear extension to provide kitchen, lounge, bedroom, bathroom and ensuite and change of use to bed and breakfast

Upon a vote being taken, 3 Members voted in favour of the application and 6 Members voted in favour of the officer's recommendation. It was thereupon,

RESOLVED that planning permission be **REFUSED.**

Application No. C/2021/0278

Vacant Plot North & East of Rassau Industrial Estate, Rassau, Ebbw Vale

Construction and operation of a purpose-built glass manufacturing facility, and associated development

Upon a vote being taken, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that planning permission be **APPROVED.**

Councillor D. Bevan left the meeting at this juncture.

Application No. C/2021/0378

1 Hawthorn Glade, Tanglewood, Blaina, NP13 3JT

Retention and completion of raised decking area (previous application C/2019/0310)

Upon a vote being taken, 6 Members voted in favour of the application and 1 Member voted in favour of the officer's recommendation. It was thereupon,

The Chair (Councillor L. Winnett) did not take part in the vote.

RESOLVED that planning permission be **GRANTED** with delegated powers for officers to agree an appropriate planting scheme with the applicant.

Application No. C/2022/0014

Glandovey House, Oliver Jones Crescent, Tredegar NP22 3BJ

Change of Use from Class C3 (a) to C2. Existing use is a residential property

Upon a vote being taken, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that planning permission be **GRANTED.**

Councillor D. Bevan re-joined the meeting at this juncture.

Application No. C/2021/0362

Fair Deal Furniture & Garden Centre, Aberbeeg Road,

Aberbeeg, Abertillery, NP13 2EQ

Temporary retention of 'change of use' of the land to extend the garden centre, including alternative car parking, access, servicing arrangements and retention of canopies

Upon a vote being taken, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that planning permission be **GRANTED.**

<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>APPEALS, CONSULTATIONS AND DNS UPDATE: JUNE 2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager – Development & Estates.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>LIST OF APPLICATIONS DECIDED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS BETWEEN 17TH FEBRUARY, 2022 AND 30TH MAY, 2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Senior Business Support Officer.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>ENFORCEMENT CLOSED CASES BETWEEN 11TH FEBRUARY, 2022 AND 31ST MAY, 2022</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 12, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Development Management.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report which contained information relating to a particular individual be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE – 20TH JUNE, 2022

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: Councillor Lisa Winnett (Chair)

Councillors D. Bevan (Vice-Chair)
 S. Behr
 G. Davies
 G. Humphreys
 L. Parsons
 G. Thomas
 D. Rowberry

WITH: Team Manager – Trading Standards and Licensing
 Senior Licensing Officer
 Solicitor

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>No apologies for absence was received.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest and dispensations were received.</p>	

No. 4

TAXI FARE TARIFF INCREASE FROM 1ST JULY, 2022

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Public Protection.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and that the proposed taxi fare tariff should come into force as detailed in the report on 1st July 2022 (Option 1).

Councillor L. Parsons did not take part in the vote.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**
SUBJECT: **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 2ND MARCH, 2022**
REPORT OF: **DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER**

PRESENT: **Leader of the Council/**
Executive Member – Corporate Services
Councillor N. Daniels

Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins

Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins

Executive Member – Social Services
Councillor J. Mason

Executive Member –
Economic Development & Regeneration
Councillor D. Davies

WITH: Managing Director
Corporate Director Education
Corporate Director Social Services
Chief Officer Customer and Commercial
Chief Officer Resources
Head of Regeneration
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
Press Officer

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.</p>
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declarations of interest was reported:-</p> <p>Councillor J. Wilkins (Business Owner) <u>Item No. 9 - Business Rates Relief –</u> <u>Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief – 2022/2023</u></p>
	<p><u>MINUTES</u></p>
No. 4	<p><u>SPECIAL EXECUTIVE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on the 9th February, 2022.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>

	<u>GENERAL MATTERS</u>															
No. 5	<p><u>CONFERENCES/COURSES AND INVITATIONS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Conferences/Courses and Invitation report.</p> <p><u>2022 Royal Garden Parties, London</u></p> <p>RESOLVED that Councillor C. Meredith be approved to attend.</p>															
	<u>DECISION ITEMS – CORPORATE SERVICES</u>															
No. 6	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 2ND MARCH, 2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Leader of the Council.</p> <p>The Leader reported that there would be additional monitoring reports to be added to the agenda which would be accepted in order to conclude any business.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme be accepted and the Forward Work Programme as presented for the Special Executive on 16th March, 2022 be agreed (Option 1).</p>															
No. 7	<p><u>GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The following grants to organisation which had been received since the publication of the report:-</p> <p><u>ABERTILLERY</u></p> <p><u>Llanhilleth Ward - Councillor L. Parsons</u></p> <table> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td>Friends of St. Illtyds</td> <td>£166.75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td>Knit & Natter</td> <td>£100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.</td> <td>Brynithel Activities Group</td> <td>£250</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.</td> <td>Brynithel Bowls Club</td> <td>£100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.</td> <td>Groundwork Wales</td> <td>£100</td> </tr> </table>	1.	Friends of St. Illtyds	£166.75	2.	Knit & Natter	£100	3.	Brynithel Activities Group	£250	4.	Brynithel Bowls Club	£100	5.	Groundwork Wales	£100
1.	Friends of St. Illtyds	£166.75														
2.	Knit & Natter	£100														
3.	Brynithel Activities Group	£250														
4.	Brynithel Bowls Club	£100														
5.	Groundwork Wales	£100														

BRYNMAWR**Brynmawr Ward - Councillor W. Hodgins**

1.	BGfm	£250
2.	Libanus Church	£300
3.	Brynmawr Business Forum	£150
4.	G – Expressions	£144.85

Brynmawr Ward - Councillor L. Elias

1.	Libanus Church	£150
2.	Brynmawr Musical Theatre Company	£54.85

EBBW VALE**Badminton Ward - Councillor C. Meredith**

1.	Tredvale Camera Club	£150
2.	Chair of the Councils Charity Appeal	£100
3.	Raglan Terrace WOAP	£150
4.	Ebbw Vale Childrens Contact Centre	£100
5.	St. Davids Church	£113.07

Rassau Ward - Councillor D. Wilkshire

1.	Ysybty Tri Chwm	£150
2.	Rassau & Beaufort Bowls	£68.34
3.	Rassau OAP	£68.34
4.	Puddleducks	£68.34
5.	Beaufort RFC	£68.34
6.	Rhos y Fedwen	£68.34
7.	Beaufort Male Voice Choir	£68.34
8.	Rock Chapel	£68.34
9.	Ebbw Vale Netball	£68.40

NANTYGLO & BLAINA

Nantyglo Ward – Councillor P. Baldwin

1.	Katie Treharne	£200
2.	Nantyglo RFC	£150
3.	Wesleyan Chapel	£100
4.	Hooks & Pins	£100
5.	St Anne's Church Holy Trinity	£100
6.	Winchestown OAP's	£100
7.	Hermon Cemetary Trust	£600
8.	Nantyglo Community Shop	£250
9.	Nantyglo Football Club	£200
10.	BGfm	£150
11.	Friends of Parc Nant Y Waun	£100
12.	1 st Blaina Scout Group	£100
13.	Nantyglo OAP's	£100
14.	Nantyglo Community House	£184.10

Blaina Ward - Councillor J. P. Morgan

1.	Nantyglo FC	£250
2.	Aberystroth Archaeology	£100
3.	BGfm	£144.10
4.	Ystuth Ladies Hut	£200
5.	Blaina Mens Bowls	£500
6.	Cwmcelyn Methodist Church	£100
7.	Blaina Scouts	£100
8.	Coedcae Interact	£100
9.	Blaina Community Centre	£200
10.	Chair of the Councils Charity Appeal	£50

TREDEGAR

Sirhowy Ward - Councillors T. Smith & M. Cross

1.	Trefil RFC	£200
2.	Tredeggar Orpheus Male Voice Choir	£100
3.	2167 Squadron Air Training Corps	£100
4.	Tredeggar Angling Club	£50
5.	Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum	£100
6.	Tredeggar Ironsides RFC	£200
7.	Gwent Area Ass. Welsh Pony and Cob Society	£50

8.	Sirhowy Valley Woodlands	£50
9.	Nantybawch Community Centre	£350
10.	Sirhowy Community Centre	£350
11.	Ystrad Deri Community Centre	£350
12.	Horeb Chapel	£50
13.	Sardis Chapel	£50
14.	St George's Church	£100
15.	Silurian Amateur Boxing Club	£50
16.	Tredegar Junior Netball Club	£50
17.	Tredegar Operatic Society	£200
18.	Tredegar Twinning Association	£100
19.	Glanhowy Primary (Autism)	£100
20.	Ebenezer Welsh Congregational Church	£100
21.	Immaculate Conception Church	£50
22.	Tredegar Women's Institute	£50
23.	Cymru Creations	£169.70
24.	Valleys Life Afterstroke	£50
25.	Brynbach Running Club	£100
26.	Oak Football Club	£50
27.	Siloam Chapel	£50
28.	Bedwellty Park Men's Bowls	£250
29.	Sirhowy Angling Club	£100
30.	Noh's Ark Appeal	£50
31.	Tredegar RFC	£100
32.	Tredegar Mayors Appeal	£100
33.	Moose International	£50

Sirhowy Ward - Councillor B. Thomas

1.	Kids R Us	£100
2.	Tredegar Operatic Society	£200
3.	Royal British Legion Ebbw Vale Branch	£200
4.	Friends of Ebbw Vale Hospital	£200
5.	St Johns Ambulance Tredegar	£100
6.	Immaculate Conception Church	£217.85

RESOLVED accordingly.

FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.

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

The Managing Director spoke to the report which sought agreement from the Executive on the approach to be adopted to monitor the Recovery from the Covid 19 Pandemic across Council Services and the wider community.

The Managing Director referred to the emergency response situation which had been in place across the Authority over the last 2 years and advised that this work would now come to an end and the Council had identified a recovery phase. The Managing Director advised that the recovery work would be integrated into the Councils governance arrangements using the Business Planning and Performance Management processes. There would also be a set of measures developed which would be used to measure recovery at a strategic level.

The Managing Director added that the Recovery Plan and approach to be undertaken was supported by Scrutiny and it was welcomed that a great deal of the focus would be around the economy on how the Council would support businesses and individuals.

The Leader advised that respective Executive Members had been fully involved in the various strands of the work undertaken and recovery themes. All of which had been reported via the Scrutiny and Executive Committees.

The Executive Member – Economic Development & Regeneration wished to thank the staff across the Council for their work which had been undertaken in response to the pandemic. In terms of the Economic Development and Regeneration Portfolio, the Executive Member noted the monies received from Welsh Government for businesses, however it was felt that it was how it had distributed via the Regeneration and Resources Teams which had allowed the Council to support businesses in the way it had during the pandemic. The Executive Member felt that a fantastic job had been carried out and the Council could now grow from this where it could have been devastation.

	<p>The Executive Member also expressed thanks to the all local governments in their efforts to support businesses across the country.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the approach set out to manage recovery from the Covid 19 Pandemic across Council Services and the wider community be agreed to be taken forward (Option 1).</p>
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>BUSINESS RATES RELIEF – RETAIL, LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY RATES RELIEF – 2022/2023</u></p> <p>Councillor J. Wilkins declared an interest in this item and did not take part in discussions or the vote.</p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources advised that the report had been presented to the Executive to consider and adopt the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief – 2022/23 scheme, as a section 47 discretionary rate relief for 2022/23 on behalf of the Council.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report and highlighted the key points as contained in the report. The Chief Officer added that approximately 300 businesses across Blaenau Gwent would benefit from the scheme, however in order for assistance to be given to ratepayers, the Council must resolve to adopt the Welsh Government prescribed scheme as a discretionary rate relief scheme in line with s47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief – 2022/23 scheme be adopted on behalf of the Council, to supplement the Council’s discretionary rate relief scheme (Option 2).</p>

DECISION ITEMS –
REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

No. 10 **ANEURIN BEVAN DESTINATION STRATEGY**

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

The Head of Regeneration advised that the report sought endorsement of the Aneurin Bevan Destination Strategy and provided a summary of the Strategy's content along with the Themes around which a range of projects for tourism and economic regeneration.

The Head of Regeneration noted the work which had been undertaken collaboratively in relation to tourism and economic development and outlined the projects which had been identified. It was reported that the Strategy tied into and complements the Blaenau Gwent Destination Management Plan and would provide a framework for delivering local projects under the strategic umbrella of the Management Plan. The Head of Regeneration added that once approval had been received it would enable officers to further develop the projects, including feasibility work and establish updated costs.

The Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration advised that Strategy had been worked towards for a while and had now started to fit into the Council's Placemaking Plans with there being more impact in Tredegar at the moment. However, the Executive Member stated that Nye Bevan was a representative of Blaenau Gwent and therefore the Council should look at the Strategy across all towns. The Executive Member continued that the Strategy was not just about Nye Bevan and felt it was important that the Council looked at other aspects, including our industrial heritage and the Chartists which a massive part in our history. The Executive Member also referred to the sporting hero's which could also be considered and felt that there was an opportunity to develop many heritage aspects from our history across the Borough in all our communities in line with the Councils Placemaking Plans.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Aneurin Bevan Strategy be agreed (Option 1).

No. 11 **LEVELLING UP FUNDING (LUF) BID REQUEST**

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

The Head of Regeneration advised that the report sought approval for the Authority to submit Levelling Up Funding (LUF) bids during the second call in line with the UK Govt LUF timetable. The Head of Regeneration gave an overview of the Levelling Up Funding and the bidding process. The Head of Regeneration also highlighted the work undertaken by the Regeneration Team along with the projects identified that met the criteria and hoped that one of the projects could be taken forward.

The Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration stated that one of biggest challenges around the Levelling Up Funding and the Community Renewal funding was timing and although the pandemic had interrupted work, the Department had been put under significant pressure to put projects forward with the funds available. The Executive Member added that this was Phase 1 and it was hoped that as funding become available including European funding the Council could bid for more projects.

The Executive Member concluded that the projects being explored are long standing issues for the Borough which included the Ebbw Vale Car Park and Brynmawr Bus Station. These are big projects that met the criteria for Levelling Up funding and the Executive Member felt that these were projects that would benefit the whole Borough.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and it was agreed that applications be prepared be for the next Levelling Up Fund round of bidding for the schemes as identified in the report (Option 1).

DECISION ITEMS – EDUCATION MATTERS

No. 12 **BLAENAU GWENT DRAFT 10-YEAR WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN CONSULTATION REPORT / DRAFFT**
ADRODDIAD YMGYNGHORI CYNLLUN STRATEGOL CYMRAEG
MEWN ADDYSG 10-MLYNEDD BLAENAU GWENT

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.

The Corporate Director Education outlined the report which provided an overview of the draft Blaenau Gwent 10-year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, providing views, comments and responses in line with the consultation process. The Corporate Director noted the consultation responses and pointed out that a number of respondents referenced the positive progress made to date, whilst also recognising the commitment of the Council to develop both Welsh Education and the Welsh language. All responses would be considered, which included areas whereby consultees had suggested that the draft plan could be strengthened. The Corporate Director advised that the document has been updated accordingly to reflect the consultation.

The Corporate Director advised that the draft plan had been submitted to Welsh Government following the consultation in line with their clear guidelines on 31st January, 2022, however it was informed that the document would be subject to Executive approval and the final version would be submitted in March 2022 once agreed by the Executive. It was noted that this was a course of action taken in a number of authorities.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Draft 10-Year WESP agreed (Option 1).

No. 13 **REVISIONS TO THE SOUTH EAST WALES EDUCATION
ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE COLLABORATION AND MEMBERS
AGREEMENT (CAMA)**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.

The Corporate Director Education advised that the purpose of the report was to provide the Executive with the opportunity to update the South East Wales Education Achievement Service Collaboration and Members Agreement (the CAMA). It was added that the proposal outlined within the report would provide a suitable and necessary level of support to the Education Achievement Service (EAS) should the need to make significant staffing changes, with consequential restricting costs, that impact on their ability to operate as an on-going concern.

The Corporate Director Education highlighted the key points of the report and noted that the EAS working with Directors proposed that the five controlling authorities formalised an agreement, similar to the home authorities Joint Services Protocol, to underwrite certain severance costs (i.e. redundancy payments and any employer capital pension costs) arising through the EAS having to take appropriate action to achieve a balance budget. The Corporate Director noted that this would be achieved through:-

- The home authorities underwriting those severance costs incurred within the EAS, which arise through actions required to meet a balance budget. Home authorities would underwrite those costs, pro rata to their current core contribution percentages, subject to the Company first contributing 50% of its retained balances towards the total cost.

The Corporate Director further referred the Executive to the impact on the budget which detailed a scenario exposure presented for each local authority based on respective contributions to the EAS.

The Executive Member for Education highlighted that the risk to the Authority was low in terms of the financial commitment being requested.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the revised form of wording in the report be agreed. It also be agreed that the EAS be allowed to retain at fifty percent of their balances to protect their liquidity.

	<p><u>MONITORING ITEM – CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS</u></p>
No. 14	<p><u>FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTERS 1 AND 2 (APRIL 2021 TO SEPTEMBER 2021)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Performance and Democratic.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 2)</p>
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEM – REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS</u></p>
No. 15	<p><u>ASPIRE SHARED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>The Head of Regeneration advised that the report outlined the performance of the Aspire programme and associated external business engagement. It also provided performance information on the BGCBC internal apprenticeship programme.</p> <p>The Head of Regeneration advised how well the programme had progressed and added that the Aspire Programme had won a number of awards. It had been recognised alongside other apprenticeships in getting young people into work. The Head of Regeneration further highlight key points from the report and advised that if individuals had not gone into employment they had gone on to study in higher education. It was hoped that the Aspire Programme could be continued and hoped to have discussions with City Capital Region and suggested that there may be opportunities to link with Hive.</p>

	<p>The Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration felt that the Aspire Programme was a fantastic achievement to set up and seeing it grow had been a pleasure. The Executive Member welcomed the interest which had been shown from Merthyr Tydfil Council and Coleg Gwent and felt that the Aspire Programme could go up against any apprenticeships in the Country as it was excellent. It identified opportunities for the Local Authority and local business who had benefited from the apprenticeships which had been undertaken.</p> <p>The Executive Member also wished to pay tribute to Mark Langshaw who had been a champion of the Aspire Programme from the start and it was hoped that Welsh Government would look to continue the funding to ensure the good work could be carried on into the future.</p> <p>The Leader welcomed the report and felt it was something for this Authority to be proud of with political support of the Executive Member for Economic Development & Regeneration.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 2)</p>
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS – EDUCATION MATTERS</u></p>
<p>No. 16</p>	<p><u>21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS BAND B PROGRESS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 1).</p>
<p>No. 17</p>	<p><u>EDUCATION DIRECTORATE – RECOVERY AND RENEWAL PLAN</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted along with the associated documentation and proposed course of action (Option 1).</p>

No. 18	<p><u>CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION SERVICES SPRING AND SUMMER TERMS REPORT 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information detailed within the Corporate Director of Education’s Spring/Summer terms 2021 report and contribute to the continuous self-assessment of effectiveness. (Option 1)</p>
No. 19	<p><u>BLAENAU GWENT EDUCATION SCHOOLS ICT STRATEGY AND PROJECT UPDATE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information therein be noted (Option 1)</p>
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS – SOCIAL SERVICES MATTERS</u></p>
No. 20	<p><u>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES 2021/2022 (QUARTERS 1 AND 2)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Social Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 1).</p>
No. 21	<p><u>SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND EDUCATION – 1ST APRIL TO 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Social Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 1).</p>

DECISION ITEM –
REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

No. 22 **TRANSFORMING TOWNS**
EMPTY PROPERTY MANAGEMENT FUND

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12 and 14, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services and an overview was provided to the Executive by the Head of the Regeneration.

The Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration welcomed the report and felt it was an important change in how the Local Authority dealt with empty properties. The Executive Member felt it presented a real opportunity across our towns to make buildings available and enhance our town centres.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information which contained details relating to an individual and the business/financial affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted (Option 2).

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**
SUBJECT: **SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 16TH MARCH, 2022**
REPORT OF: **DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER**

PRESENT: **Leader of the Council/**
Executive Member – Corporate Services
Councillor N. Daniels

Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins

Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins

Executive Member – Social Services
Councillor J. Mason

Executive Member –
Economic Development & Regeneration
Councillor D. Davies

WITH: Corporate Director Education
Corporate Director Social Services
Chief Officer Customer and Commercial
Chief Officer Resources
Head of Community Services
Service Manager – Public Protection
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
Press Officer

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>The following apologies for absence was reported:-</p> <p>Managing Director Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services</p>
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest and dispensations raised.</p>
	<p><u>MINUTES</u></p>
No. 4	<p><u>EXECUTIVE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd March, 2022.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>

DECISION ITEMS – EDUCATION MATTERS

No. 5 **EAS BUSINESS PLAN 2022-2025**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.

The Corporate Director Education advised that the report was presented to the Executive on an annual basis to review the draft EAS Business Plan 2022-2025 as part of the regional consultation process. The Executive would ensure that the plan enabled appropriate support for schools and settings in Blaenau Gwent. The Corporate Director outlined the changes which had been made to the current plan, which included context in response to Covid-19 and a regional statement of intent that moved away from a vision to a formal statement of intent which was well received by Corporate Directors and Chief Education Officers across the region. The Plan also included Blaenau Gwent strategic priorities and from a self-evaluation perspective there was a summary of progress in the main plan and not in the supporting section as in previous plans. The Corporate Director also noted that the Plan captured measures and outcomes up to 2025, which was useful to measure progress.

The Corporate Director added that Blaenau Gwent statistics and stories are included in the appendices of the Plan which reflected well on Blaenau Gwent. It was further added that the draft EAS Business Plan had been well received and supported by the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that the report and Business Plan be accepted and the information contained therein be noted. (Option 1)

No. 6

BLAENAU GWENT ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR NURSERY AND STATUTORY EDUCATION 2023/24

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.

The Corporate Director Education spoke to the report which outlined the outcome of the annual consultation process, in line with the revised draft of the Blaenau Gwent Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education 2023/24. Executive Committee are asked to provide their views and comments on the document in preparation for the 2023/24 admission round, prior to its determination and publication on the 15th April 2022.

The Corporate Director Education noted that the most significant changes were outlined in the report and summarised the primary changes.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the policy document be agreed. (Option 1).

DECISION ITEM – SOCIAL SERVICES MATTERS

No. 7

CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING POLICY & CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING TRAINING FRAMEWORK

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

The Corporate Director Social Services advised that the report updated the Executive on the developments in respect of the Audit Wales recommendations, regarding the development of a Corporate Safeguarding Policy and a Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework which was detailed in the report and attached appendices. The Corporate Director further provided an overview of the key points as outlined in the report.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted (Option 1) and

- the revised Corporate Safeguarding Policy be agreed; and
- the Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework and its implementation plan be agreed.

	<p align="center"><u>DECISION ITEMS – ENVIRONMENT MATTERS</u></p>
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>DISABLED ADAPTATIONS – POLICY AMENDMENT PROPOSAL TO REMOVE MEANS-TEST</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the joint report.</p> <p>The Service Manager – Public Protection provided a detailed overview of to the report which sought approval from the Executive on a proposed policy amendment that would remove the current means test for grants for disabled adaptations in Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and proposed policy amendment be approved that would remove the current means test for grants for disabled adaptations in Blaenau Gwent from April 1st 2022.</p>
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>ACQUISITION OF HIGHWAYS ASSETS AT SIX BELLS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>The Head of Community Services advised that the report provided the Executive with options for the proposed acquisition of highways assets at Six Bells, Abertillery. The Head of Community Services advised that the Council had been approached by a consortium of residents from High Street, Six Bells, Abertillery who had requested that the Council consider becoming the freehold owner of land currently within their ownership. The land was purchased by the consortium from the National Health Service in December 2019 to protect the interests of local residents and property owners. The group would now like to offer the freehold interest for the highways assets at no charge to the Council. The Head of Community Services noted that there was no apparent reason why these highways assets could not be formally transferred under freehold to Council ownership as maintenance costs are already being funded directly by the council.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the request to make the necessary arrangements to complete and transfer the freehold interest to the Council be approved. (Option 2).</p>

	<p align="center"><u>MONITORING ITEM – CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS</u></p>
<p>No. 10</p>	<p><u>REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING -2021/2022, FORECAST OUTTURN TO 31 MARCH 2022 (AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2021)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources outlined the report which provided an overview of the forecast financial outturn position across all portfolios for the financial year 2021/2022 (as at 31st December, 2021).</p> <p>The Chief Officer advised that the overall favourable variance as at December 2021 was £4.65m, after the application of Welsh Government Hardship Funding and noted that there had been an increase in the favourable variance of £1.835m since the September 2021 forecast position (£2.814m). The Chief Officer further provided an overview of the adverse variance across portfolio which was detailed in the report and informed that these were monitored and reported accordingly with actions plans in place to address cost pressures.</p> <p>The Leader felt that this reported ended the current administration on a positive financial setting. The Leader was of the opinion that this Council had managed the budget really and set a strong platform for the future and an incoming new administration in May. The Leader stated that this Council should be proud of the positive position reported.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive provided the appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes detailed in the report. (Option 1).</p>
<p>No. 11</p>	<p><u>CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, FORECAST FOR 2021/2022 FINANCIAL YEAR (AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources provided the Executive with an overview of each Portfolio's actual and forecast capital expenditure against funding approvals for the 2021/2022 financial year, as at 31st December, 2021</p>

The overall financial position as forecast at 31st December 2021 indicated an adverse variance of £227,852 against a total in year capital budget of £20.1m. The Chief Officer further outlined over spends as detailed in the report and informed that discussions with funding bodies are currently positive, therefore, it was not proposed that funding for these schemes would be built in from the Capital contingency at this stage. However, the Chief Officer was mindful that the Council was approaching the year end and there may be a need to look at funding options.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted (Option 1) and:-

- the appropriate challenge be provided to the financial outcomes in the report;
- support be continued against the appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council; and
- the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding be noted.

No. 12 USE OF GENERAL AND EARMARKED RESERVES 2021/2022

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

The Chief Officer Resources informed the Executive of the forecast reserves position for 2021/2022 as at Quarter 3 and highlighted the key points as contained within the report.

The Leader welcomed the report which demonstrated that the Council had gotten to grips with the financial resilience within the organisation. Although the Council had the highest level of reserves since 2012, the Leader advised that the Council was still only part of the way up in the league table relative to reserve levels across all local authorities. However, the Leader felt that the Council was moving in the right direction and placed the next Council at a good point to inherit or exploit.

	<p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive considered the forecast use of general and earmarked reserves for 2021/2022 (Option 1) and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the impact of the £4.649m favourable variance for 2021/2022 would have on the budgeted contribution to the General Reserve; • the forecast increase of the General Reserve in 2021/2022 to £12.402m be noted, being 9.39% of net revenue expenditure, above the 4% target level; • the need for ongoing prudent financial management to support the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the financial resilience of the Council be continued; and • continue to challenge budget overspends and implement appropriate service Action Plans, where required.
<p>No. 13</p>	<p><u>BRIDGING THE GAP (BTG) PROGRAMME 2021/2022 – PROGRESS UPDATE OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources advised that the report provided an update on the progress made with the Strategic Business Reviews during the period October to December 2021, the latest assessment of the financial achievement for the current financial year and the latest estimated achievement between 2022/23 and 2026/27.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources outlined the budget gaps for 2022/23 to 2026/26 and reported that the forecast achievement was expected to exceed the estimated achievement of £0.75m by £0.25m for the current year due to the successful outcome of the appeals on rateable values of Council property and assets and rental income on industrial units.</p> <p>In conclusion, the Chief Officer felt that this was another positive report on the Council’s financial position.</p> <p>The Leader concurred that this was a positive report and felt that the Bridging the Gap Programme had been a positive piece of work which had protected services in the Authority where the Council had moved away from the traditional way of balancing budgets where the Council looked to Service Areas for cuts. It was hoped that this would be continued, although it was felt that the Programme would need to be refined going forward.</p>

	<p>The Leader noted the ambition and commitment of officers along with majority of politicians who supported the Programme and the Leader felt it would play a major part in the future of budgets.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive provided the appropriate challenge to the Bridging the Gap Programme. (Option 1).</p>
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS – ENVIRONMENT MATTERS</u></p>
<p>No. 14</p>	<p><u>CONTRACT EXTENSION – PEST CONTROL TREATMENT SERVICE TO 31 DECEMBER 2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager – Public Protection.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the service performance and continuation of the contract with Rentokil until 31st March, 2023 be noted. It would then be reviewed and retendered, as necessary, in accordance with Corporate Procurement rules. (Option 1).</p>
<p>No. 15</p>	<p><u>FLY TIPPING ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY 2021/22</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager Frontline Enforcement Service.</p> <p>The Head of Community Services advised that report provided an update on the Authority’s enforcement activities in relation to fly tipping and other waste regulation offences and the level of fly tipping activity within Blaenau Gwent for the year 2021/22. The Head of Community Services spoke in detail to the report and outlined the key points to the Executive as contained in the report.</p> <p>The Executive Member for Environment welcomed the positive report that had also been well received by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee. There had been a number of favourable comments raised on the work undertaken by the Enforcement Team.</p>

The Executive Member advised that this had been an area which had long been a source of complaints from members of the public who would not been concerned with the operational side as residents wanted to see action. The Enforcement Team had brought about a different way of working instead of the duplication of the various services across the team incidents were dealt with collectively and their actions are outlined in the report. The Executive Member continued that the Enforcement Team had been an initiative she had aspired to develop to move this Council forward. It was a personal priority and an administration priority and feedback from residents were positive.

The Executive Member further referred to the Roseheyworth Recycling Centre and noted the booking system which had been in place due to Covid-19 restrictions, however as of today there would be a hybrid system in place which allowed residents to just turn up at the site. The Roseheyworth Site had been chosen as it was a bigger site which also had a shop on site for residents to visit. The Executive Member also added that work would commence shortly on an Education Centre on the site which would teach children about litter and recycling.

The Executive Member reiterated that this was a pleasing report which needed to be brought forward in order to highlight the good work undertaken by the Enforcement Team across the Borough.

The Leader reiterated that this administration had aspired to this work for many years. There had been delays due to the pandemic, however the work was now being undertaken and the public had recognised the changes in their areas. The Frontline Enforcement Team are doing an excellent job and the difference in the Borough had been massively improved. The Leader added that there was still a fair way to go with the combination of the Enforcement Team, however the Leader stated lets serve these penalty notices and maintain determination to keep Blaenau Gwent tidy. The progress made and the work undertaken was a huge credit to the Department with the support of the Executive Member for Environment.

In conclusion, the Executive Member added that this report demonstrated the strong start, however there was a great way to go with this initiative and the Executive Member was confident that the Enforcement Team would continue to achieve the best results.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive continued to support the waste regulation work and development of the Frontline Enforcement Service as detailed in the report. (Option 1).

ABERTILLERY LEARNING COMMUNITY

At the invitation of the Leader, the Executive Member for Education apologised for the lateness of reporting this information, however, it had only just been received and it was positive news to share in relation to the Abertillery Learning Community and thereupon asked the Corporate Director Education to provide the appropriate update.

The Corporate Director Education advised that Abertillery Learning Committee had been subject to an Estyn Monitoring Visit in February 2022. The findings had been published today by Estyn and the Corporate Director was pleased to report that the Learning Community had made sufficient progress against the 7 recommendations and had been removed from the Estyn Improvement Category. This was great news for the Learning Community and the Council as well as the children of Abertillery Learning Committee.

The Corporate Director added that a press statement had been developed in conjunction with the Learning Committee and wished to thank them for their prompt action. The Corporate Director felt that this was further good news to conclude the current cycle of meetings.

The Executive Member for Education stated that this was fantastic news predominately for the children, it had been such a journey for the Learning Community and the Executive Member was delighted that it was now in position of such a positive place and would now go from strength to strength. The Executive Member expressed thanks to everyone involved in making the progress needed and the collective support of the Executive in relation decisions to be taken, along with the Education Team and the school staff in getting the School to this position.

The Leader thanked everyone for attending the final meeting closed.

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE –
8TH NOVEMBER, 2021**

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

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J.C. MORGAN (CHAIR)

Councillors B. Summers
M. Cook
M. Day
K. Hayden
S. Healy
J. Hill (substituting for Cllr J. Collins)
H. McCarthy, B.A. (Hons)
L. Parsons
K. Pritchard

ALSO: Scrutiny Chairs & Vice-Chairs

Chair and Vice-Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
Councillors H. Trollope & J. Holt

Chair and Vice-Chair of Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Councillor S. Thomas & K. Rowson

Vice-Chair of Community Services
Councillor C. Meredith

AND: Head of Organisational Development
Service Manager, Performance & Democratic
Organisational Development Manager –
Payroll, Health & Safety

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u>	

	It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Collins, M. Cross and G.A. Davies.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>DEMOCRATIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th September, 2021.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be received as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>DRAFT REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES 2022/23</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development which was presented to inform Members of the proposals contained within the draft report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales for 2022/23.</p> <p>The Organisational Development Manager – Payroll, Health & Safety introduced the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member commented that although he supported the work of the Remuneration Panel he believed that Members should not be setting their own levels of remuneration. He felt strongly that he could not support the proposed increases due to the position with regard to COVID-19, the Government’s low pay offer to Council staff of 1.75% and to NHS workers who had put themselves at risk throughout the pandemic and felt that the UK workforce in general had been treated poorly. He reiterated that on behalf of his group he could not support these increases and hoped</p>	

those comments would be sent back to the remuneration panel for their deliberations.

Another Member agreed with his colleague's comments and said he could not support the increases, and felt that the situation with COVID and the austerity measures could put pressure on annual budgets. He enquired regarding the budget with the reduction in Councillor numbers from 42 to 33 next May. The Organisational Development Manager said that based on 33 elected members from May 2022 and adding on the proposed pay increases it was within the current budget, however, if the proposed increases were not agreed there would be a saving to the Authority. The exact figures would not be known until after the May 2022 elections.

In response to a Member's question regarding the report being presented to full Council for approval, the Service Manager Performance & Democratic confirmed that all reports from the Democratic Services Committee were presented to full Council for a decision and the draft IRP Report would be presented to the next full Council meeting.

A Member commented that the Democratic Services Committee could make recommendations around the different points contained within the report and those recommendations would go back to the Remuneration Panel for deliberation along with other recommendations from all 22 Local Authorities across Wales. The final proposal would be presented to full Council in early 2022.

Another Member commented that the report had not taken on board Blaenau Gwent constituents and the impact of COVID, he could not support these increases while some Home Care workers were on the minimum wage and nurses had been offered pay increases under 2%.

Another Member felt that with the reduction of Councillors in the next election it was wrong to increase salaries. He also agreed with his colleague's comments and said that with some people earning the minimum wage and others such as bus drivers on low wages he could not support the increases. Other Members also endorsed these comments.

A Member asked for clarification on senior salaries, the Organisational Development Manager clarified that Members in receipt of a Band 1 or Band 2 senior salary cannot receive a salary from any NPA or FRA to which they have been appointed, they remain eligible to claim travel and subsistence expenses only. Band 3 would be able to receive a salary from the NPA or FRA to which they are appointed.

In relation to ICT training, the Service Manager advised Members that they were currently in the process of preparing the Induction Programme for the new Council in May and ICT was a key part of that programme.

In response to a Member's question, the Organisational Development Manager advised that other than the proposed pay increases to elected Members and also the co-optees every other detail contained within the report remained the same from the previous year.

At the invitation of the Chair a Member proposed to recommend that the Democratic Services Committee did not support the increases in remuneration as set out in the draft IRPW proposals for 2022/23, however, the report be presented to Council for consideration of all other aspects of the report.

This proposal was seconded.

Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously

AGREED to recommend to Council that the report be accepted and Option 2 be endorsed, namely that the Democratic Services Committee did not support the increases in remuneration as set out in the draft IRPW proposals for 2022/23, however, the report be presented to Council for consideration of all other aspects of the report.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 20TH JANUARY, 2022**

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

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S.C. THOMAS (CHAIR)

Councillors: D. Bevan
G.A. Davies
G.L. Davies
P. Edwards
K. Hayden
W. Hodgins
J. Holt
M. Moore
G. Paulsen
T. Sharrem
T. Smith
B. Summers

AND: Corporate Director of Social Services
Head of Children’s Services
Head of Adult Services
Service Manager, Children’s Services
Communications & Policy Officer
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G. Collier and K. Rowson.</p>	

<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>Councillor Wayne Hodgins declared an interest in the meeting as some of his clients may also be service users of the Social Services Directorate.</p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 18th November, 2021 were submitted.</p> <p>It was noted that the Members briefing session with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board was scheduled for 1st March, 2022.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>ACTION SHEET - 18TH NOVEMBER, 2021</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 18th November, 2021 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><u>Item 7 - National Adoption Service Annual Report</u></p> <p>In response to a Member's question regarding advertising comparisons with other areas, the Head of Children's Services said she was unaware of any comparison data but would look into this matter and inform Members in due course.</p> <p>A Member felt that the Authority should return to more traditional forms of advertising such as newspapers, roundabout ads and billboards to reach audiences who may not be aware of adoption services and may not use social media. The Head of Children's Services said analysis had been undertaken regarding the demographic of people interested in adoption and the data helped to focus adverts to those people most likely to adopt. Social media platforms were targeted as they were used by the majority of people potentially interested in adoption. She added that now that Covid restrictions were easing this would enable them to be</p>	

	<p>more present in communities and would provide a mix of both social media and community based advertising.</p> <p>The Chair felt that, along with social media advertising, there should also be a return to awareness raising in the community that had taken place pre-pandemic and local community hubs could be used for displaying advertising posters, etc.</p> <p>A Member enquired regarding information on children in foster care going on to become adopted by their foster carers. The Head of Children’s Services said there was a small number of children who went on to become adopted by their foster carers. They were looking to develop this area and were piloting new guidance to recruit adopters who would also be assessed as foster carers so the child could be placed with them immediately, stay with them and be adopted by them.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>CORPORATE PARENTING PROGRESS REPORT 2021-22</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager, Children’s Services which was presented to inform Members of the progress made by Blaenau Gwent Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) throughout 2021 to improve outcomes and services for our Children Looked After (CLA).</p> <p>The Service Manager, Children’s Services spoke to the report and highlighted the main points in each key priority contained therein.</p> <p>A Member requested an update in relation to the recruitment of a psychologist. The Head of Children’s Services said there was a need for psychology input to support practitioners in relation to some very complex needs of children looked after. Through the ICF grant money they had been able to recruit a part time psychologist who offered consultations to foster carers in order to manage complex behaviours and prevent placement breakdown.</p>	

A Member enquired if the team engaged with the Education Directorate to improve the number of children looked after that had a statement of special educational needs. The Service Manager, Children's Services said they work in partnership with the Education Directorate, the Children Looked After Educational Officer sits on the Corporate Parenting Board and children had mentors and advisors attached to them around the educational agenda so their individual needs were looked at, monitored and individual actions plans were put in place to look at how they could be supported around their educational progress.

Councillor Hodgins left the meeting at this juncture.

A Member enquired regarding how many looked after children were still with their parents. The Head of Children's Services said of the 194 children looked after, 42 were looked after by the Authority and placed with parents. She explained that these cases were reviewed regularly, and if the local Authority no longer needed to be the legal parents alongside the birth parents, cases were taken back to court to revoke care orders.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Members acknowledged progress made throughout 2021 and feel confident that the Local Authority and its partners are doing well to improve outcomes for our looked after children as part of our corporate parenting responsibilities.

No. 7

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES 2021/2022 (QUARTERS 1 AND 2)

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Social Services which was presented to highlight key points from quarters 1 and 2 of the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2021/2022 (Appendix 1).

The Corporate Director of Social Services introduced the report and the Head of Children's Services highlighted the main points in relation to Children's Services and the Head of Adult Services highlighted the main points in relation to Adult Services.

Adult Services

A Member referred to the shortage of carers and enquired if there had been any improvement in recruitment. The Head of Adult Services said there were lots of initiatives and currently they were working very closely with external and internal providers to look at recruitment and retention. It was extremely challenging but services were still being maintained and operating as normal as possible within the pandemic.

With regard to qualifications for the posts, if an individual did not have the relevant qualifications the Directorate would work with them to obtain that qualification. This approach enabled people without the relevant qualifications to apply for the posts and be supported in achieving the required qualifications.

The Corporate Director of Social Services commented that prior to Christmas they had been able to use some funding for winter pressures to support some domiciliary care and residential care providers and this had helped with retention, but recruitment across Gwent was still minimal. He felt that the real living wage was a move in the right direction but estimated that a higher hourly payment would make it a more attractive proposition for people to work in that sector.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the report be accepted as provided.

No. 8

SOCIAL WORKER VACANCY RATES IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES, PAY AND INCENTIVES

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Children's Services which was presented to provide information on the following:-

- The social work staffing pressures being experienced in children's social services;
- What is being done to manage these pressures;
- Comparisons of social work pay scales across Wales in particular Gwent;

- Additional incentives offered to Blaenau Gwent social workers.

The Head of Children’s Services spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.

In response to a Member’s question regarding promoting health and social care as an area of work in schools and colleges, the Head of Children’s Services informed Members that pre-pandemic they had visited schools and attended open days at universities to promote the benefits of working for Blaenau Gwent Social Care and would be doing this again when Covid restrictions allow. The Corporate Director of Social Services said they had been working with colleges across Gwent including University of South Wales to develop opportunities for placements within social care to try and attract students into the sector. They had been concentrating on domiciliary care and residential care as that was often a precursor to people developing an interest in working in social care.

With regard to the comparison of wages, the Head of Children’s Services said this was kept under review but there was a concern that if one Authority raised their wage offer then other authorities may follow which could inadvertently lead to social workers moving from one Authority to another disrupting their relationship with the children and families they support. The Corporate Director of Social Services said this was a national issue and felt that a national solution was needed, and as the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) there was support for a national pay scale and they had also been pushing the Welsh Government for the introduction of bursaries for social workers, similar to that of nurses, to create parity between health and social care and to give some incentive to social workers to undertake the role.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Members scrutinised the report on social worker vacancy rates in children’s services, pay and incentives and contributed to the continuous assessment of the effectiveness of the directorate.

No. 9

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 3RD MARCH, 2022

	<p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chair of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee which presented the Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on the 3rd March, 2022.</p> <p>The Chair advised Members that due to a Special Council meeting being held on the 3rd March, 2022, it was proposed that the Social Services Scrutiny Committee scheduled for the 3rd March, 2022 be cancelled and the agenda items be considered in the next Committee cycle.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that the Social Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on 3rd March 2022 be cancelled and the agenda items be considered in the next Committee cycle.</p>	
<p>No. 10</p>	<p><u>DEVELOPMENT OF A CAERPHILLY/BLAENAU GWENT COLLABORATION IN PROVIDING LEGAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SERVICES</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Children's Services which was presented to provide information in support of a collaborative arrangement with Caerphilly County Borough Council providing legal services for Blaenau Gwent Children's Social Services Department.</p> <p>The Head of Children's Services spoke to the report, highlighted the main points contained therein and responded to Members questions. She informed Members that a review of annual costs would be included as part of the SLA, but it was important to note that Blaenau Gwent</p>	

would be responsible for costs incurred when commissioning counsel for more complex cases and other associated court costs.

With regard to capacity, the Head of Children's Services explained that the continuation of the strategy to reduce the numbers of children looked after should result in a reduction of the number of court applications required in the future. Caerphilly had been successful in recruiting and retaining their legal team and she felt confident that there would be sufficient capacity to support Blaenau Gwent Children's Services. She advised that if agreement for the collaboration was given Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council would enter into a minimum 5 year SLA with Caerphilly County Borough Council.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report which contained information relation to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that the Social Services Scrutiny Committee support the collaboration between Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly, for Caerphilly County Borough Council to provide legal services for Children's social services.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: JOINT EDUCATION & LEARNING AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SAFEGUARDING) – 21ST JANUARY, 2022

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR H. TROLLOPE (CHAIR)

Councillors D. Bevan
M. Cook
G.A. Davies
M. Day
L. Elias
P. Edwards
J. Hill
J. Holt
K. Hayden
S. Healy
W. Hodgins
J.C. Morgan
G. Paulsen
K. Rowson
T. Smith
S. Thomas

WITH: Corporate Director of Social Services
Corporate Director of Education
Strategic Education Improvement Manager
Service Manager
Adults Service Manager
Safeguarding in Education Manager
Press and Publicity Officer
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer

AND: Education Co-opted Member
Mr. T. Baxter

ITEM	SUBJECT
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from</p> <p>Councillor T. Sharrem Councillor D. Wilkshire Councillor G.L. Davies Councillor C. Meredith Councillor B. Summers Head of School Improvement & Inclusion Head of Children’s Services</p>
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>
No. 4	<p><u>JOINT EDUCATION & LEARNING AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SAFEGUARDING)</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Joint Education & Learning and Social Services Scrutiny Committee (Safeguarding) Meeting held on 14th July, 2021 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 14TH JULY, 2021</u></p>

The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Joint Education & Learning and Social Services Scrutiny Committee (Safeguarding) held on 14th July, 2021 was submitted and the following points were raised:-

Anti-Bullying Quality Mark

A Member was disappointed that only one school had the Anti-Bullying Quality Mark and asked the reason why only one school had received the Anti-Bullying Quality Mark.

The Corporate Director Education referred to the explanation provided and noted that only one school had received the Anti-Bullying Mark, however, there was a number of schools who addressed bullying via the Rights Respecting Schools agenda. It was added that this initiative encompassed a number of matters which included the wellbeing of pupils, counselling support services as well as bullying.

The Member requested that a briefing note be provided on schools which were taking part in the Rights Respecting Schools agenda and wider programmes in relation to wellbeing and counselling work.

The Committee AGREED that the Corporate Director Education provide a briefing note on the wider work being taken forward across all schools in relation to Rights Respecting Schools Assessments.

Operation Encompass

A Member welcomed that the relevant information had been made available to schools in relation to incidents of domestic abuse. However, the Member stated that it was also important that other incidents which occurred in and around the schools were also reported. There was a great deal of information shared on social media in terms of anti-social behaviour and gatherings and if these affected young people in schools the respective schools should be informed in order to support learners. The Member was concerned that there was very little information being given to schools by the Police on incidents other than domestic abuse.

The Corporate Director Education noted the concerns raised and advised that information was provided to schools by 8.00 a.m. to support affected learners.

	<p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing that the action sheet be noted.</p>
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Social Services.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Social Services advised that the report outlined the concept of Contextual Safeguarding and the approach being taken across Gwent and Wales. The Corporate Director added that the report had been requested at a previous meeting and thereupon gave a detailed overview of the key points as detailed in the report.</p> <p><i>A Member referred to point 2.6 in the report – “as an example, overcrowding at home means the young person spends a lot of time out in public spaces. When in those places, the young person is experiencing robbery and violence. These violent incidents impact the behaviour of this young person, and many others in school. The inability of the school to respond effectively further normalises violence amongst peer groups at the school. These peer groups have more influence over the young person’s behaviour than their parents – and impacts the capacity of the parents to safeguard their child from the harm they experience in (and the pull of) public and peer spaces. We must not forget to consider online environments too. These might be related, for example gangs using social media to track or groom young people, but they will have an influence on children and young people. Every situation and context is different but whatever the issues and problems, contextual safeguarding aims to help provide an approach to help keep children and young people safe”. The Member felt that this paragraph had been poorly worded as schools were a safe haven for some children and young people as teachers are trained to identify problems and therefore felt that this paragraph did not reflect the good work of schools in these instances.</i></p> <p>The Corporate Director Social Services advised that the wording was not a criticism of schools. The report was written based on the processes used in London Boroughs and larger cities. There are no examples in Wales and concurred that teachers are trained to look</p>

out for vulnerable learners. The Corporate Director stated that Wales would operate differently to schools in London who had tested this concept.

The Corporate Director Social Services agreed to look at the wording of the paragraph.

In response to a question raised in relation to the success of contextual safeguarding, it was advised that Bedfordshire University had tested the methods in London Boroughs which had proved to be very positive. However, the Corporate Director added that the issues in and around London would be more challenging than those in Blaenau Gwent, however the concept had supported children in these challenging environments positively and made them safe.

An Officer gave an example of how contextual safeguarding was embedded in processes in Blaenau Gwent and the positive work undertaken with Community Safety.

Further discussions ensued around the concept of contextual safeguarding and training to be undertaken. The Corporate Director Education added that if these methods were fully utilised in schools it would mean a great deal of additional training for teaching and Social Services. The Corporate Director felt that the work with colleagues in Community Safety placed Blaenau Gwent in a good position and the model could be adopted to fit Blaenau Gwent. It was felt that with it being a smaller Borough it would be less complex, although it would have a significant impact in terms of training across social services and education.

A Member welcomed the groups and clubs available for young people, however it was noted that there was nothing available for children who did not want to participate in youth groups or sporting clubs, therefore the Member felt that these children were being overlooked.

The Corporate Director Social Services advised that the Youth Service provision supported children and young people that did not engage in youth groups or sports clubs. The Corporate Director Education added that the Youth Service had a presence on streets in and around town centres where the children and young people were

gathering. The detached youth team was partly funded by Police to address the aforementioned issues and at present work was being undertaken to recruit additional resource and a restructure of working hours. The hours the team worked was largely evenings and weekends to improve their reach and support young people in the community.

In terms of the next steps for Blaenau Gwent, the Corporate Director Social Services advised that work would continue with Welsh Government and the Safeguarding Board and it was hoped that the Authority could recruit the much needed social workers.

The Chair welcomed this approach and suggested that dialogue be undertaken with the Assembly Member for Blaenau Gwent to gain his support.

The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 1).

No. 7 **SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND EDUCATION – 1ST APRIL TO 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2021**

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Service Manager, Children's Services and Strategic Education Improvement Manager.

It was informed that the report provided safeguarding performance information and analysis from Children's Social Services and Education from 1st April, 2021 to the 30th September, 2021. The information enabled members to identify safeguarding trends and areas within the Authority that required further development to improve safeguarding practices in order to meet the safeguarding needs of children and young people within Blaenau Gwent.

The Service Manager outlined the referrals into Social Services and noted that there was an increase, however these were being monitored on a monthly basis and advised that similar issues had been observed in neighbouring authorities. The Officer further outlined the key points in relation to child protection.

At this juncture the Chair invited questions from Members.

A Member asked if there were a high number of referrals received from the Police that had to be re-referred back to the Police as not a matter for Social Services.

It was reported that no referrals were returned back to the Police, if a referral did not meet the threshold for statutory social services support, there were a number of initiatives in BG around preventative services, mainly Families First, and a package of support would be offered to families from the lower tier support services, with parental consent. The Officer stated that there was work ongoing with Education and Families First support workers, looking at a model that had been put in place with social workers in schools, to evaluate if the model was working, which prevents unnecessary referrals coming into the IAA Service.

Corporate Director Education left the meeting at this juncture.

Councillor J. Holt left the meeting at this juncture.

A discussion ensued around social workers and it was advised that the turnover of Social Care staff in Blaenau Gwent was no different to that nationally or in neighbouring authorities. There was a large turnover of staff and in these instances it could be difficult for the family to build longstanding relationships. It was added that the Authority attempted to ensure that there was little disruption when social workers left the Authority and cases needed to be reallocated.

The Safeguarding in Education Manager gave an overview of the education information related to April 2021 to July 2021. It was stated that the findings reported were during the pandemic, therefore it was not possible to make comparisons as there had been disruption to schools. The Officer further outlined Numbers of restrictive physical interventions Numbers of bullying incidents reported which have led to exclusions Quality Assurance Meetings, Estyn Judgements, Operation Encompass, Compliance Reporting, elected home education. In relation to elected home learning, the Officer pointed out 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 had increased this was similar to the rest of Wales and it was felt that this was due to the pandemic. In conclusion, a further overview was provided in relation to DBS Escalations and VAWDASV.

The Chair invited questions from Members at this point.

A Member asked that a briefing note be provided on the timeliness of information being provided for school's transfers inside Blaenau Gwent and for pupils coming from outside Blaenau Gwent.

The Committee AGREED that the Strategic Education Improvement Manager provide a briefing note in relation to the timeliness of information provided when pupils transfer between schools inside and outside Blaenau Gwent.

The Strategic Education Improvement Manager also agreed to speak to colleagues to ascertain how to facilitate the information from Police in relation to any anti-social behaviour incidents in school areas. The Committee AGREED that a briefing note be provided on processes which could be put in place.

A Member raised concerns around home education and felt that there should be more checks in place. The Member stated that due to the pandemic examination results had been based on teacher assessments and if young people are being taught at home they are not being assessed by teachers which would affect their results.

The Strategic Education Improvement Manager noted that elected home education was a national challenge. exacerbated by the pandemic, and noted the various arrangements that are in place to manage this and suggested that further feedback be received from the relevant officer around the wider concerns as an action point for the next meeting.

The Committee AGREED this course of action.

The Corporate Director Social Services advised that from a safeguarding perspective the Authority had raised these concerns with Welsh Government for a number of years. In some instances, the child was unknown to the Authority as there was not a need to inform the local school. Therefore, in terms of safeguarding no one was monitoring the child. It was felt that there was a need for a formal register and more calls during the year to monitor children's welfare and the Board had recommended this to Welsh Government but there had been no progress on the request. The Corporate Director felt that there was a clear reluctance politically to make those children safe in their environment.

A Member noted that both the Corporate Director Social Services and the former Corporate Director Education had pushed this issue with Welsh Government and asked if a reason was known as to why parents chose to home education their children. The Strategic Education Improvement Manager added that there had been an increase in home learning since the pandemic. The Member

	<p>appreciated the concerns and felt that discussions should be undertaken with these families to address their concerns.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 1).</p>
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>ADULT SAFEGUARDING REPORT</u> <u>1ST APRIL TO 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Social Services.</p> <p>The Adults Services Manager advised that the report provided Safeguarding Performance information related to Adult Services from 1st April, 2021 to the 30th September, 2021. The reported also identified Safeguarding areas within the Authority which required further development to improve safeguarding practice and procedures for Adult Services. The Officer referred Members to the performance data and provided an overview of the current position as detailed in the report.</p> <p>A discussion ensued in relation to data presented for care homes and it was informed that care homes had been severely affected by the pandemic as the residents were most vulnerable. The visiting regime was managed by the individual care home and different ways were introduced allow loved ones to speak to relatives. There had been a great deal of work undertaken around care homes and reported all around the Country how they had been affected by the pandemic.</p> <p>A Member referred to the alleged abuse data reported and asked if cameras could be placed in care homes to monitor these issues. The Officer advised that there was a great deal of legislation and governance around the installation of cameras. A number of homes had installed CCTV at the entrance, although there were reports of cameras being placed in rooms it was a complex issue to take forward. All matters of abuse or theft were fully investigated.</p> <p>Another Member asked if the safeguarding processes were in place in sheltered accommodation. The Corporate Director Social Services advised that not all sheltered accommodation was managed on a full time basis, therefore there was less protection on these complexes. If anyone was aware of issues within housing complexes it was important they are reported in order for the matter to be investigated</p>

	<p>as there were processes in place to be pursued by social workers who would visit the individual.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 1).</p>
No. 9	<p><u>SAFEGUARDING - VULNERABLE LEARNERS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Safeguarding in Education Manager and the Strategic Education Improvement Manager.</p> <p>The Strategic Education Improvement Manager spoke to the report which detailed strategies being used to safeguard vulnerable learners with Education colleagues and relevant officers in the Social Services Department. The Strategic Education Improvement Manager referred Members to the relevant performance data and highlighted key points as outlined in report.</p> <p>A discussion ensued around free school meal direct payments and it was asked if a briefing note could be presented on the uptake of free school meals across all schools to ascertain where parents who were entitled had not taken up the support. It was paramount that all parents are encouraged to access the support available.</p> <p>The Strategic Education Improvement Manager added that there was promotional work undertaken around free school meals and grants to help with school uniforms.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that a briefing note be prepared for consideration on Free School Meals take up.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 1).</p>

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: SPECIAL EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26TH JANUARY, 2022

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR H. TROLLOPE (CHAIR)

Councillors: J. Holt
 D. Bevan
 M. Cook
 M. Day
 L. Elias
 S. Healy
 J. Hill
 J.C. Morgan
 J.P. Morgan
 B. Summers
 D. Wilkshire

Co-opted Member

T. Baxter

AND: Corporate Director of Education
 Strategic Education Improvement Manager
 Service Manager Inclusion
 Service Manager Education Transformation &
 Business Change
 Press & Publicity Officer
 Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p>	

	<p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G. Collier, C. Meredith and T. Smith.</p> <p>Head of School Improvement & Inclusion Service Manager Young People & Partnerships</p>	
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>COVID UPDATE POSITION IN EDUCATION AND ACROSS THE SCHOOL ESTATE</u></p> <p>At the invitation of the Chair the Corporate Director of Education gave a verbal Covid update position in education and across the school estate.</p> <p>The Corporate Director of Education informed Members that currently there were 584 positive cases per 100,000 population, placing Blaenau Gwent fifth across Wales in relation to Covid cases. The level remains high but was down significantly compared to the end of the new year. The Gwent Incident Management team agreed that the schools alert level remains in the very high risk category. The number of cases among school children had increased up to 186 positive cases and 81 staff had been affected by Covid, that was 6.5% of the overall workforce within schools.</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent's position with the Welsh Government categorisation on a RAG status was currently Green as most schools had retained face to face learning. However, recently four schools had introduced elements of blended learning.</p> <p>The Welsh Government Education Minister had issued a letter to all schools outlining that from 28th January, 2022 there would be a national move to alert level 0. There would be a cautious phased and planned approach across schools moving forward. He advised that the Welsh Government had reduced the self-isolation period for positive cases to five days.</p>	

	<p>Schools were expected to continue to use the Schools Infection Control Framework in relation to local school implementation around positive cases.</p> <p>Qualification Wales had confirmed plans to hold examinations for both Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 learners in the summer term. There was an intention to adjust the examination grade boundaries to reflect that many learners had been subject to disrupted teaching and learning over the last two years and this had been broadly welcomed across the Education sector in Wales.</p> <p>In response to a Member’s question, the Corporate Director of Education reassured the Member that with regard to the Welsh Government School Infection Control Framework a localised implementation was expected. The Local Authority was supporting schools where they had to take decisions around blended learning in relation to communication with parents and health and safety requirements.</p> <p>With regard to licenses and digitally disadvantaged learners, the Corporate Director said the transition of equipment from those learners that had left education and those learners entering statutory education was being managed and running relatively smoothly. The Service Manager Education Transformation & Business Change confirmed the process was operating smoothly and they were undertaking regular reviews. Usage and demand for both the mi-fi units and devices had decreased considerably over the course of the autumn term as schools had sought to provide continuity of learning on site, but they were regularly monitoring the situation and working very closely with schools around implementation.</p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 30th November, 2021 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 30TH NOVEMBER, 2021</u></p>	

The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 30th November, 2021 was submitted, whereupon:-

Item 10 - Management of Pupil Places and the School Estate 2020/21

The Service Manager, Education Transformation & Business Change explained they were working with schools annually to review any capacity issues they had and adapt accordingly, looking at self-help schemes, developing action plans to reduce surplus places and also ensure that there were sufficient places for growth going forward.

The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.

No. 7

CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT OF EDUCATION SERVICES

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education which presented the Corporate Director of Education's Spring and Summer Terms Report (2021).

The Corporate Director of Education spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.

A Member felt that progress around the seven recommendations on the last Estyn report should have been included in this report. He raised concerns regarding performance data, the Welsh Government had suspended the publication of Key Stage 4 performance measures in 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years stating that qualification awards data would not be used to report on attainment, but that data was included in this report. The Corporate Director of Education explained that progress against the seven recommendations highlighted by Estyn had previously been shared with Members as part of the self-evaluation report. This could also be included within future Corporate Director's Report of Education Services. In relation to performance data the information presented in the report was not attributable to any school and would only be used for self-evaluation purposes and not for wider

accountability issues. The Director explained that this information was via centre determined grades and was not comparable but did an assessment to move forward and provides a baseline of current performance.

In response to a Member's question regarding the Governing Body at the River Centre, the Director said that Members would be aware from the Improving Schools report that over the last 12 months the River Centre had formally become a school causing concern. As part of the Local Authority powers of intervention they had appointed additional LA Governors, including an LA Chair of Governors which had strengthened the Governing Body significantly. The Director felt assured that the current Governing Body were starting to take steps around admissions, placement of learners and consideration around school development planning to improve the setting for children and young people.

With regard to reporting progress on the new curriculum, the Director said that from September 2022 elements of the initial changes around the curriculum for Wales would be introduced and confirmed that updates around ALN reform, curriculum reform and qualifications reform would become a formal part of the reporting mechanisms moving forward into the new academic year.

The Chair commented that close working with the Social Services Directorate in relation to the new ALN bill should be expanded upon, such as social workers being accessible at schools. The Director said that between the Director of Social Services Annual report and this report they would be able to demonstrate cross directorate working that would be strengthened across both education and social care, particularly as they were dealing with the same children and young people in both community and school settings.

A Member welcomed closer working with the Social Services Directorate particularly around health and well-being as some children with issues such as behavioural problems, eating disorders and mental health issues had been waiting over 18 months for appointments with consultants. The Corporate Director of Education said the situation around collaboration with health services had been particularly difficult due to the pandemic. Many services had

	<p>been under pressure and one of those service areas was CAMHSs, the Director gave assurances that they would continue to work closely with health colleagues to support children and young people. The work of the Youth Services counselling service also ensured that emotional well-being considerations were at the forefront of the work undertaken with children and young people, taking preventative approaches.</p> <p>A Member referred to page 54 – Risk Description EDDRR1 ‘Failure of schools in Blaenau Gwent to adapt and change accordingly to the requirements of the new curriculum and national agenda of the Welsh Government as laid out in the National reform agenda document "Education for Wales: Our national Mission” – and felt this paragraph should be reworded as many schools were working continuously on the new curriculum. The Director explained that this was the risk associated with schools failing to adapt but agreed to revise the wording of this paragraph to avoid and misunderstanding of terminology.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Members scrutinised the information detailed within the Corporate Director of Education’s Spring/Summer terms 2021 report and contributed to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.</p>	Director of Education
No. 8	<p><u>EDUCATION DIRECTORATE – RECOVERY AND RENEWAL PLAN</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education, the Head of School Improvement and Inclusion and the Service Manager – Education Transformation and Business Change, which was presented to provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the updated Recovery and Renewal Action Plan (Appendix 3), and the updated One Page Overview (Appendix 4), which address the Education Directorate’s identified priorities for recovery and renewal, as part of the corporate response to the COVID-19 situation.</p>	

	<p>The Service Manager – Education Transformation and Business Change spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>The Director of Education responded to questions raised:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The latest position regarding Estyn regulatory activity was that local authority inspections would continue but school based inspection activity would not start until after February half term. • With regard to local authority comparisons, due to the relaxation of performance measures they were unable to benchmark at this point in time and were not looking to currently provide performance information that would consider either family of schools or family of local authorities as that data was not readily available. • Currently absenteeism was approaching 6.5% of the workforce within schools but only a few Headteachers had been affected by Covid. • With regard to car parking at school sites, the Service Manager said there was a traffic management working group in place to look at key issues at individual school sites and schools were prioritised on the basis of risk and safety and were on a rota for the traffic enforcement process. They worked closely with individual schools and Highways to look at traffic management plans and mitigation measures for each of those schools. <p>A Member referred to page 74 - School Accountability Services and commented that EAS Challenge Advisors in schools had now been replaced with School Improvement Partners. The Service Manager would ensure this was updated on future reports.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that the report, associated documentation and proposed course of action be accepted.</p>	<p>Service Manager Education Transformation and Business Change</p>
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>YOUTH SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020 – 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager, Young People and Partnerships which was</p>	

presented to provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the work of the Youth Service.

The Corporate Director of Education spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.

A Member referred to paragraph 2.3 and enquired regarding progress on youth club developments in Brynmawr. The Director said restructuring was being undertaken with the Detached Youth Work team to ensure the right people were appointed with the right skill sets. The intention was to take the services to community settings that young people were more comfortable with and work with them on street corners etc., this would increase the reach of the service and would impact areas without youth clubs such as Brynmawr.

A Member commented that Youth Services provided a fantastic service that worked well and was needed in all towns throughout the borough. She felt that young people only wanted a safe place with shelter to gather and outreach workers did an excellent job interacting with young people on their level.

A Member raised concerns regarding the risk to future funding for the Youth Services. The Director of Education said work was currently being undertaken on securing future Shared Prosperity Funding. The Member commented that the Youth Services team were doing an excellent job and needed to be supported to secure future funding for the service, as it was important to do more for young people throughout the borough.

A Member referred to paragraph 6.1.1 youth homelessness. The Director of Education said the number of cases of young people dependent upon friends and family to facilitate accommodation had increased due to the pandemic, but was not identified as actual homelessness. It had become an increasing problem across the borough and they were monitoring the situation closely as it did impact upon life chances for young people. With regard to priority housing for them, the Director said that the Service Manager Young People & Partnerships did often refer young people to Housing colleagues.

<p>The Chair commented on the excellent work that had been undertaken by the Service Manager, Young People and Partnerships and her team regarding period poverty. The Director also acknowledged the work of the Service Manager, Education Transformation and Business Change who was leading on this strand of work outside of community settings and the work that was taking place directly within schools.</p> <p>With regard to school holiday activities, the Service Manager, Education Transformation and Business Change reminded Members of the School Holiday Enrichment programme (SHEP) initiative and said they worked closely with the Community Services Directorate and schools to identify settings that meet the criteria and have suitable staff resources and facilities to accommodate the provision for school holiday activities.</p> <p>A Member requested a breakdown of partners that the Authority worked with regarding Summer holiday activities. The Director of Education agreed to provide the information and informed Members that the Detached Youth Work team was partially funded by Gwent Police.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee considered and accepted the report.</p>	<p>Director of Education</p>
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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: SPECIAL PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28TH JANUARY, 2022

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S. HEALY (CHAIR)

Councillors M. Cook
 P. Baldwin
 G. Davies
 J. Holt
 J. Millard
 M. Moore
 J.C. Morgan
 J.P. Morgan
 G. Paulsen
 S. Thomas

WITH: Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships
 Service Manager, Policy and Partnerships
 Policy Officer (PSB)
 Scrutiny and Democratic Officer/Adviser

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was reported that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>
No. 2	<u>APOLOGIES</u>

	<p>The following apologies for absence were received:-</p> <p>Councillor M. Cross Councillor H. Trollope Councillor C. Meredith</p>
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest reported.</p>
No. 4	<p><u>PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Meeting held on December, 2021.</p> <p>In response to a request for an update on the Early Years Pilot and supporting evidence from the Pilot undertaken in Cwm it was reported that the relevant officer would be contacted to provide an update on the action sheet for the next meeting.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED this course of action.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject the foregoing that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>
No. 5	<p><u>GWENT REGIONAL WELL-BEING ASSESSMENT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Policy and Partnerships.</p> <p>The Service Manager, Policy and Partnerships advised that the report outlined the consultation draft of the regional Gwent Well-Being Assessment in line with statutory timelines and informed Members of the consultation process and next steps for the draft Assessment of Local Well-Being for Gwent. The Service Manager explained that an overview of the report would be provided along with the assessment detailed in the appendix to the report.</p> <p>At this juncture, the Policy Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the scope and background as detailed in the report.</p>

The Service Manager added that the document presented was a draft version, therefore there would be gaps to be completed prior to the assessment being finalised.

The Service Manager, Policy and Partnerships gave a detailed overview of the Draft Gwent Well-Being Assessment and outlined the work which had been undertaken across the PSB partnerships and highlighted the key areas of impact, as follows:-

- Social Well Being – Deprivation
- Social Well Being – Housing
- Social Well Being – Health
- Social Well Being – Community Safety
- Social Well Being – Education
- Social Well Being - Transport

At this juncture, the Chair invited questions from Members.

A Member raised concerns in relation to public transport and felt that access to public transport should be paramount in this assessment. The Service Manager noted that the information presented was a selection of issues from across the region and if the Committee felt that this needed to be considered as a response to the Regional Public Service Board (PSB) as part of the final assessments.

The Member stated that transport played a massive part in our communities and concurred that the locality and issues faced by people with transport was a great challenge. The Regional PSB needed to ensure that works were being taken forward with other transport boards to collaborate in order to solve these local issues and explore opportunities. The Service Manager added that joined up thinking in relation to transport was crucial and agreed the comments be noted as part of the conversation from the Committee.

The Policy Officer added that the slides being shared was a high level overview and advised that transport featured over the social well-being, economic and environmental chapters of the assessment, therefore concurred that there needed to be a joined up approach to tackle the issues.

The Service Manager continued with the overview of the draft assessment, as follows:-

Economic Well Being – Income
Economic Well Being – Employment

No questions were raised at this juncture, therefore the Service Manager proceeded to the next section as follows:-

Environmental Well Being – Habitats
Environmental Well Being – Climate Change and Risk
Environmental Well Being – Net Zero and One Planet Living

No questions were raised at this juncture, therefore the Service Manager proceeded to the next section as follows:-

Cultural Well-Being

The Service Manager concluded the overview of the draft assessment and noted the forming challenges. The timescales were further outlined in terms of the consultation process and it was advised that the Regional PSB would give consideration to the results of the consultation in February prior to being agreed and published by the 5th May, 2022.

A Member welcomed the Draft Assessment and concurred with the concerns in relation to transport and asked that these concerns were reflected in the response to the PSB.

A discussion ensued around the public transport challenges in Blaenau Gwent. It was hoped that Blaenau Gwent would not miss out due to the larger areas within the Region being considered by the Draft Assessment. A Member noted that the main areas of economic development would be along the Heads of the Valleys which encompassed Blaenau Gwent and would be easier for greater transport links to build the economy, however the main areas of concern were within the locality between towns and villages.

Another Member felt that this Borough missed out in some instances, therefore it was important there was joined up planning for buses and trains in even the smaller areas. There was an ambition to move people away from travelling by car, however the trains and buses could take a couple of hours with a number of buses just to travel to another town. If these issues were not addressed people would continue to travel by car as it was less time consuming.

The Service Manager – Partnerships and Policy noted the challenges in Blaenau Gwent and advised that although there had been a regional move by the Public Service Board this had been replaced by the Local Well Being Partnership. The Partnership would strive to address the specific areas at a Blaenau Gwent level.

Councillor G. Paulsen left the meeting at this juncture

Another Member concurred with the concerns raised in relation to transport and noted the comments raised by Members at Full Council which echoed the concerns being raised.

The Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships noted the comments and in terms of Blaenau Gwent missing out it was advised that Blaenau Gwent was at the top of a number of tables.

A further discussion ensued around the creation of the of Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) which would commence from June and this CJC would cover the South East Wales area and be looking at links to Gwent. The Head of Governance and Partnerships concurred that all bodies needed to work together to ensure that there was a robust integrated public transport service around Gwent and within small areas. It was paramount that children and young people were able to access transport and it would allow older generations that were isolated to conveniently visit nearby towns. A reference was made to the discussions raised in Full Council and it was hoped that some of the strategic aspects raised would be brought forward.

Councillor J.C. Morgan left the meeting at this juncture.

A Member noted the joint working approach to be undertaken across Gwent and looked forward to see how it developed. The Member concurred that unfortunately the elderly suffered greatly in terms of isolation due to lack of public transport. The Member referred to the Fflecsi bus service in operation within the Borough which was difficult to access by the elderly and noted a number of issues which had been reported to him as elected Member. The Member was of the opinion that if this service could be more flexible it would be more effective.

Councillor M. Moore left the meeting at this juncture.

The Committee AGREED that the Assessment be shared with all elected Members once it had been finalised.

The Head of Governance and Partnerships wished to express her thanks to the Service Manager and Policy Officer for the amount of work undertaken on the Draft Assessment. The Chair and Members of the Committee also reiterated their thanks to the officers.

The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing that the report be accepted and the Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee provided specific comment on the draft Gwent Well-being Assessment for consideration by the Gwent Public Services Board before approval (Option 2).

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 1ST FEBRUARY, 2022**

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

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. HOLT (IN THE CHAIR)

Councillors: D. Bevan
M. Cook
M. Day
L. Elias
S. Healy
J. Hill
C. Meredith
J.C. Morgan
J.P. Morgan
T. Smith
B. Summers

AND: Strategic Education Improvement Manager
Service Manager Education Transformation &
Business Change
Service Manager Young People & Partnerships
Press & Publicity Officer
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H. Trollope (Chair), G. Collier and D. Wilkshire.</p>	

	<p><u>Co-opted Member</u> T. Baxter</p> <p>Corporate Director of Education</p>	
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
	<p><u>COVID UPDATE POSITION IN EDUCATION AND ACROSS THE SCHOOL ESTATE</u></p> <p>At the invitation of the Chair the Service Manager Education Transformation & Business Change gave a brief verbal Covid update position in relation to Education and the school estate.</p> <p>The Service Manager advised Members that the number of cases across the school estate within the last five days was 183, the total within the last 28 days was 697 cases.</p> <p>There was still a high proportion of cases throughout the school estate, and over the last two weeks 3 nurseries and 1 special needs class had been affected, however, there were no class closures at present. There were 54 staff cases across schools, of the 45 confirmed cases 7 were working from home and 1 self-isolating due to TTP advice. The overall absence across schools was 103 which included long and short term sickness absence and Covid absence, broken down this was 64 school based staff (excluding teachers) and 39 teachers. Currently there were no classes or schools that had moved to blended learning, however, that was a temperamental and changing situation.</p> <p>In response to a Member’s question regarding staff returning to work after isolation, the Service Manager confirmed that staff were returning as soon as they were clear and the reduction in the self-isolating timeframe had assisted with that. Supply cover had also been affected and they had worked with the Welsh Government and the EAS to look at supporting schools on a national level as well as localised support to gain supply cover as and when required.</p>	

	<p>A Member commented that pupils were preparing for examinations this year and enquired out of the number of staff that were on sick leave how many were not involved with revision classes. The Service Manager said she did not have that information to hand as currently they were collecting information on a local authority basis and working with individual schools where there was pressure. Currently all of the classes were able to be delivered as programmed but she would gather a more detailed breakdown on a school by school basis particularly with regards to secondary provisions and feedback to Members.</p> <p>A Member commented that the last two years had been challenging for schools and requested that the Service Manager forward a letter of appreciation to all Headteachers and staff, on behalf of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee, thanking them for doing an excellent job and working tirelessly during the pandemic to deliver education in Blaenau Gwent. The Service Manager said it had been a huge undertaking by staff and would draft correspondence on behalf of the scrutiny committee reinforcing the positive messages that had already been made around retaining provision during extremely challenging times throughout the last two academic sessions.</p> <p>All Members endorsed these comments and added that over the last two years the Education Directorate had done an excellent job in supporting schools through this challenging period.</p>	<p>Service Manager Education Transformation and Business Change</p> <p>Service Manager Education Transformation and Business Change</p>
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS BAND B PROGRESS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education and Service Manager – Education Transformation and Business Change which was presented to provide Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the 21st Century Schools Programme, along with the opportunity to scrutinise progress in line with the delivery of the Band B Programme.</p> <p>The Service Manager – Education Transformation and Business Change spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p>	

In relation to the development of the new 360 primary school to replace Glyncoed primary, a Member thanked all Departments on the creation of a pick-up and drop-off area off Allotment Road which would alleviate traffic congestion and improve access to the site.

A Member enquired regarding the car park extension at Six Bells school site. The Service Manager – Education Transformation and Business Change explained that a sustainable drainage application had been submitted retrospectively as legislation came into force after construction of the school had been initiated. An Ecology Management Plan was required and they were working with the Ecology team towards construction on site in line with the extension in the summer period.

A Member commented that £10m for remodelling and improving secondary schools would not go far and enquired regarding the rationale for the timescales moving forward with this work. The Service Manager explained they were looking at long term investment in secondary school remodelling, future bandings in the 21st century schools programme would look to incorporate remodelling. It was a long term vision for the Local Authority who would look to allocate funds on the basis of the needs of each school. The timeline had been constructed as some schools needed more in depth consideration of the options around remodelling projects. An outline budget had been allocated to each secondary school on the basis of condition, suitability and need, they then work with the school to produce a project brief which feeds into the business case development and the associated timelines.

The Service Manager added that they take a holistic approach with regard to minor works maintenance and planned works programme and the Welsh Government capital maintenance funding which had been allocated to support schools. They look to address the condition and suitability issues to the greatest degree possible by looking at some of the fundamental works associated with maintenance of school buildings which would then impact upon the transformational changes brought about by the 21st century schools programme.

The Member reiterated that £10m for remodelling secondary schools would not go far especially with the amount of work that was needed to improve schools built in the 1970's. Glanhwy school would be the oldest school in Blaenau Gwent after completion of the Band B programme and the Member enquired what Band Glanhwy would fall into. The Service Manager stated that the banding for Glanhwy school was not yet known but she would look to bring this forward via the prioritisation programme that was being discussed for Band C going forward.

Councillor R. Summers left the meeting at this juncture.

A Member referred to Rhos-y-Fedwen primary school and enquired regarding work being undertaken aimed at foundation phase. The Service Manager clarified the work was aligned to a larger scheme being undertaken to the external play area and was particularly relevant to foundation phase and had now been completed. She confirmed this work did fall outside of the programme as the programmed works focused on internal remodelling to improve the suitability of the teaching and learning environment and condition of the school.

With regard to the new Welsh medium school, a Member raised concerns regarding pupil numbers for the school. The Service Manager said that after a detailed consultation exercise had been undertaken and which was then followed by the Welsh Government school organisation code and associated statutory processes the school had been approved. She advised that pupil numbers at Bro Helyg primary were increasing and over the next few years could exceed capacity. There was a requirement upon the Local Authority to increase Welsh medium education provision with a commitment to achieving the vision of one million welsh speakers. The school was being developed as a seedling growth model to allow a period of time for the school to grow and they would look at modelling the pupil population accordingly. The impact upon schools had been captured throughout the consultation and post consultation period and was also covered within the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

Councillor M. Day left the meeting at this juncture.

	<p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that the report be accepted.</p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>BLAENAU GWENT EDUCATION/SCHOOLS ICT STRATEGY AND PROJECT UPDATE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education and Service Manager – Education Transformation and Business Change which was presented to provide Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to scrutinise progress in relation to Blaenau Gwent Education/Schools ICT Strategy, along with associated projects.</p> <p>The Service Manager Education Transformation & Business Change spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>In response to a Member’s question regarding the Authority’s responsible officer for ICT, the Service Manager advised that the Chief Officer Commercial & Customer had overall responsibility for the Transformation team who dealt with corporate ICT. Education colleagues worked closely with SRS around education ICT ensuring alignment between corporate and education aspects.</p> <p>A Member commented that this was a digital age and ICT was at the centre of learning and enquired regarding Welsh Government initiatives to ensure that every child was equipped for the future. The Service Manager said that the Hwb Ed Tech programme focused on provision of devices for schools during the pandemic and extensive funding had been available to support digitally disadvantage learners to ensure that if there was a move to blended learning, no learners would be disadvantaged. Welsh Government were keen for local authorities and schools to take over that project moving forward. They were currently building in the monitoring and management of digitally disadvantaged learners, in line with the Welsh Government digital learner journey into the ICT Strategy.</p> <p>The Service Manager Young People & Partnerships joined the meeting at this juncture.</p>	

	<p>A Member enquired if the IT equipment that had been distributed during the pandemic for blended learning was going to be recalled. The Service Manager said that they were working with schools to revisit devices to look at whether or not they were suitable for continued use and look to undertake any necessary adaptations. Devices would only be brought back in to school for technical monitoring or in order to replenish licenses. If it was identified that a family still needed their device, then the school and the Local Authority would continue to support that.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that the report be accepted.</p>	
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 15TH MARCH 2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chair of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee which presented the Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on the 15th March 2022.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on 15th March 2022 be approved.</p>	

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
9TH FEBRUARY, 2022**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. HILL (CHAIR)

Councillors G.A. Davies
M. Cross
P. Edwards
K. Hayden
S. Healy
W. Hodgins
J.C. Morgan
H. McCarthy
L. Parsons
G. Paulsen
K. Rowson
M. Cook
B. Willis

AND: Head of Regeneration
Service Manager Business & Regeneration
Team Manager, Regeneration Opportunities
Skills Development Manager - Aspire Blaenau Gwent
Marketing & Communications Officer
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer/Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p>	

	No apologies for absence were reported.	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>Councillors G. Paulsen and W. Hodgins declared an interest in the following item:</p> <p>Item No. 8 Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 8th December, 2021 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 8TH DECEMBER, 2021</u></p> <p>The Action Sheet arising from the meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 8th December, 2021 was submitted.</p> <p><i><u>Trinity Chapel</u></i></p> <p>The Service Manager Regeneration Opportunities provided a verbal update, and undertook to circulate a briefing note for Members to include costs.</p> <p>Following discussions at the last meeting and Members' request for information on the costs of the project, the Officer reported that the acquisition costs for the building in 2009 was £95k, and was undertaken because the building was in disrepair and was becoming an issue within the Town Centre. The building was originally acquired with a view to accommodate an indoor market on the ground floor and business incubation units on the upper two levels.</p> <p>The project was developed and the tender price was £740k. Funding was secured via the Convergence Programme along with match funding from other sources. However, the Officer reported that two significant issues had impacted on the timescale and costs of the project, i.e. the requirement</p>	

for a build-over agreement with Welsh Water which delayed work for 5 months, and discovery of a further water main on site which delayed the project for a further 6 weeks. These unforeseen issues resulted in the original tender price increasing to £1.2m total cost. The deficit was grant funded through the Vibrant and Viable Places Programme.

In response to a question raised by a Member the Officer confirmed that the costs for the next phase and the library building was £900k.

A Member expressed concern regarding the escalating costs of the project and felt that the drainage issues should have been identified sooner if more research of the building had been undertaken.

Members said the costs were significant and felt that the original plans for the building would have been more appropriate for the Town Centre. A Member also asked whether the initial cost of £740k included internal works.

In response the Officer confirmed that the £740k was intended to cover internal and external works, but did not include the costs for the fit-out of the building.

A Member said this was the second occasion where the Council had incurred additional costs for trunk sewerage or water mains issues on major developments and questioned Welsh Water's responsibility in terms of keeping records.

Another Member asked when completion of the project could be expected.

The Officer confirmed that discussions were ongoing with Coalfields Regeneration Trust and the Council were pushing for the programme to commence as soon as possible. She said in terms of Welsh Government's budget profile the majority of spend was expected in the next financial year, so completion of the project was expected in 2022.

The Chair referred to the briefing note to be circulated to Members and asked that a timeline of the project to date be included.

	<p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the Action Sheet be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>LEVELLING UP FUNDING BID REQUEST</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Service Manager Business & Regeneration.</p> <p>The Service Manager Business & Regeneration presented the report which sought authority to submit Levelling Up Funding (LUF) bids during the second call in line with the UK Government LUF timetable.</p> <p>The Officer spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member said he understood that in the first round of bids only a few projects in Wales had been accepted, and stressed the importance of the Council having a breadth of projects available to move on.</p> <p>The Officer agreed, he said the challenge was identifying projects that were deliverable and supported by Central Government, and this required a significant amount of work in terms of consultation and also the application itself.</p> <p>Another Member said he was disappointed that this would fall outside the political process due to the pre-election period and asked whether there was a longer list of projects that could be considered.</p> <p>The Officer said the purpose of the report was to highlight the opportunity and the challenges of identifying projects that fit the specific criteria. Officers were unable to do anything about the timeframe, but he assured that any projects submitted for bids would add value in terms of the regeneration of Blaenau Gwent, but also projects that were likely to succeed.</p> <p>In response to a question raised by a Member regarding the Car Park in Ebbw Vale the Officer explained that the Car Park had been identified as a key project within the Placemaking Plan for the Town Centre, albeit there was work to be done to develop delivery models and negotiating</p>	

	<p>with current owners. However, since the additional guidance on LUF had been issued there may be other projects that would be more appropriate in terms of deliverability within the timeframes and specific criteria in the next round of funding. He said the Car Park had been provided as an example but pointed out that timeframes could preclude that type of funding.</p> <p>A discussion ensued when the Officer explained that the Team were developing Placemaking Plans for Town Centres and these were very much focussed on Welsh Government funding. However, work had already commenced in terms of policy documents and providing evidence for the rationale and framework for projects, and this would provide the evidence and information required to feed into whatever opportunities come forward.</p> <p>The Service Manager Regeneration Opportunities pointed out that this was not the only funding opportunity, and the reason for developing Placemaking Plans for each Town Centre was to have a series of projects and delivery plans in place to take forward should funding become available.</p> <p>A Member said the report would allow Officers to continue their work, but provided flexibility around schemes and funds that could be accessed.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and applications be prepared for the next LUF round of bidding for the schemes identified in the report in paragraph 2.7. (Option 1)</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>ANEURIN BEVAN DESTINATION STRATEGY</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Service Manager Business & Regeneration.</p> <p>The Service Manager Business & Regeneration presented the report which sought endorsement of the Aneurin Bevan Destination Strategy, and provided a summary of the content of the Strategy and the Themes around which a range of projects are based.</p>	

The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein.

A Member said he felt there was not enough diversification within the report in recognising the achievements of other prominent figures from across Blaenau Gwent compared to Aneurin Bevan.

Another Member said the people of Tredegar were very proud of the achievements of Aneurin Bevan and the creation of the NHS from an idea founded in Tredegar. He said when considering development of Tredegar Town Centre it was recognised that there was no building that people could visit and learn the historical background of the town. He said 10 The Circle was an integral part of the development of the Town Centre and would not only provide a place for people to visit and learn the history of the NHS, but also increase footfall in the Town Centre. However, he agreed there were other key areas in Blaenau Gwent that needed focus and he believed that tourism could be a strategic way forward for the Borough in the future. He welcomed the report and said the new concept in Tredegar was already proving its worth.

Another Member said he welcomed the Study, however, he felt some elements were out of date as a number of schemes had now been developed. He said since the report was prepared a series of Town Centre Partnership Boards had been established which included a number of partners, and he suggested that destination management form part of the work of those Partnership Boards which could then feed into the overarching Destination Management Board.

The Officer agreed with the suggested approach. He said things had progressed in terms of project delivery, and the framework for overseeing regeneration had also been updated.

The Chair of the Destination Management Group confirmed that the Group was already considering how Blaenau Gwent could celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the birth of the NHS next year, and was looking at partners to be involved in that work. However, he also agreed with previous comments

	<p>and confirmed that the Group was mindful of the fact that Blaenau Gwent had an extensive heritage of famous people that should also be celebrated.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the Aneurin Bevan Strategy be supported with the amendments requested, prior to approval by the Executive Committee. (Option 2)</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>ASPIRE SHARED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.</p> <p>The Skills Development Manager presented the report which provided performance information on the Aspire Programme and associated external business engagement; and also performance information on the BGCBC internal apprenticeship programme.</p> <p>The Officer spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member asked whether Registered Social Landlords in Blaenau Gwent were involved in the Programme.</p> <p>The Officer confirmed that they had not recruited any apprentices to date. However, they did provide excellent work placements for looked after children on the Traineeship Programme in the construction sector.</p> <p>The Member also asked whether apprenticeships could be offered within the Council's Business Support Section.</p> <p>In response the Officer explained that this had not been pursued due to limited capacity within the Team, as current efforts were focussed on supporting and filling apprenticeship vacancies within the Social Care Team.</p> <p>Another Member commended the Aspire Team on the success of the programme. He then referred to the shortage of staff within the Social Care Team and asked how it was intended to fill those vacant posts.</p>	

The Officer confirmed that the Team worked closely with Organisational Development to identify current vacancies that would be suitable for an apprenticeship. There were currently five Level 2 vacancies within the Social Care Team, and work was ongoing with the training provider secure training and NVQ support for those posts. However, in terms of identifying vacancies for apprenticeships, it was crucial that training providers have the funding capacity to provide training. The Officer said Social Care was a priority area with the vast majority of Officer time dedicated to filling vacancies within the sector.

A Member commended the work of the Aspire Team and said there was a need for the Programme to be expanded moving forward, particularly in the automotive sector.

The Officer confirmed that discussions were ongoing with Cardiff City Region and Welsh Government to look at opportunities to develop the Programme and widen the scope across other LA's. The Officer said the automotive industry was a key sector to consider, particularly with the maintenance of electric vehicles etc., and the Team could work with training providers to develop pathways into that sector. However, she pointed out that Aspire was a Programme Management Team and without sufficient capacity within learning providers then the Team would be unable to facilitate those opportunities, and she urged Members to lobby Welsh Government to ensure a sustainable future in the growth of apprenticeships and funding for learning providers.

In response to a question raised by a Member regarding funding, the Officer confirmed that discussions were ongoing with Welsh Government and Cardiff City Region to develop a proposal post 2022 and she hoped to provide an update on this in the near future.

A Member said College Gwent had a significant amount of money to develop the Monwel site and asked whether the Aspire Programme was involved in that work.

The Officer confirmed that Aspire was very much part of that work and had been working closely with College Gwent and Tech Valleys on this for a number of years. In terms of the

	<p>proposal itself, she confirmed that College Gwent had received funding to purchase equipment to develop programmes of learning in preparation for the opening of the Hive in September 2023. She said apprenticeships were at the forefront of industry within Blaenau Gwent many years ago, and it was intended to bring back a more modernised apprenticeship that would fill future skills gaps, looking at technology within the manufacturing industry. Hopefully a report would be presented in due course and Members would see significant development of that work.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted. (Option 2)</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>TRANSFORMING TOWNS EMPTY PROPERTY MANAGEMENT FUND</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities.</p> <p>The Service Manager Regeneration Opportunities presented the report which provided an overview of the Transforming Towns Empty Property Management Fund and sought support of the list of properties to include within the action plan submitted to Welsh Government. The Officer spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein.</p> <p>A discussion ensued when the Officer replied to questions and clarified points raised by Members.</p>	

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report which contained information relation to the business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted and that the Council endorse and fully support the Enforcement Action Plan. Once the action plan has been approved by Welsh Government, the Council would then be invited to prepare and submit business plans for each of the properties that they need funds for. (Option 2)

The Chair reported that this was the last meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee prior to the local elections in May, and took the opportunity to thank Officers and Members for their support during the year.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 23RD FEBRUARY, 2022**

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

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S. HEALY (CHAIR)

Councillors: M. Cook
 P. Baldwin
 G.A. Davies
 L. Elias
 J. Hill
 W. Hodgins (substitute Cllr J.P. Morgan)
 J. Holt
 H. McCarthy
 C. Meredith
 G. Paulsen
 T. Smith
 S. Thomas

AND: Managing Director
 Corporate Director of Social Services
 Corporate Director of Education
 Head of Organisational Development
 Service Manager Performance & Democratic
 Service Manager Accountancy
 Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p>	

	<p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G. Collier and J.P. Morgan.</p> <p>Chief Officer Commercial & Customer Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 10th December, 2021 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 10TH DECEMBER, 2021</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee held on 10th December, 2021 was submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>BLAENAU GWENT COVID 19 RECOVERY PLAN</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services which was presented to set out and seek the views of the Scrutiny committee on the approach to be adopted to monitor the Recovery from the Covid 19 Pandemic across Council Services and the wider community.</p> <p>In the absence of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services, the Service Manager Performance and Democratic presented the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member referred to the 2018 town centre footfall numbers for Brynmawr and enquired if the data was accurate. He felt that if the intention was to increase footfall numbers to pre-pandemic levels the data needed to be accurate. The</p>	

	<p>Service Manager explained they had taken the data from the football counters in each of the town centres but would undertake to check the accuracy of the figures with Environment colleagues.</p> <p>As the Government’s furlough scheme was ending in March a Member enquired regarding the Authority’s consultation and engagement with local businesses. As Regeneration Officers had been unable to attend the meeting, the Service Manager Performance and Democratic responded that the economy had been identified as a key area of focus and an action plan led by economy colleagues was in place to support businesses across Blaenau Gwent. With regard to actual dialogue with businesses she would need to consult with the theme leads. She advised Members that this was a starting point and moving forward future reports presented to scrutiny committees could include more detail in relation to specific areas.</p> <p>A Member suggested that a progress report be presented to the relevant scrutiny committee to consider what support packages may be needed as a result of the furlough scheme ending. The Service Manager agreed that a progress report on identified themes could be put forward as a potential agenda item for the new committee cycle.</p> <p>The Managing Director suggested that as Regeneration Officers were not in attendance at the meeting the Member could raise his concerns with the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services after the conclusion of the meeting to gain a better understanding of the work being undertaken with local businesses.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely to recommend to Executive Committee that the approach set out to manage recovery from the Covid 19 Pandemic across Council Services and the wider community is taken forward.</p>	<p>Service Manager Performanc & Democratic</p>
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTERS 1 AND 2 (APRIL 2021 TO SEPTEMBER 2021)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Performance and Democratic which presented the Finance and Performance Report for Quarters 1 and 2 (April</p>	

2021 to September 2021).

The Service Manager Performance and Democratic presented the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.

A Member commented that it was disappointing that not all senior officers were in attendance to represent their service to address Members comments and felt that the report was overly positive. He felt that to give a true picture the report should include a synopsis at the start of each section compiled by the individual Corporate Directors. With regard to financial pressures, he felt that even with the improved funding received from the Welsh Government over the last five years, the Authority was still struggling financially and had to resort to the MRP to balance the budget. He referred to the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and the Abertillery rail link and felt that the Authority should use City Deal funding to pursue other opportunities to develop projects.

The Chair also raised concerns regarding senior officers' attendance and felt that advanced notice should be given to the Chair if senior officers were unable to attend scrutiny meetings.

The Managing Director took this point on board and referred to the Members comments regarding the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and advised that there were other projects being developed such as the housing viability project in Tredegar. There were also other City Deal projects coming forward across the region that were in the early stages of consideration with the Heads of the Valleys regions and Welsh Government City Deal colleagues.

A Member referred to the bus service and felt this could form an integrated transport system with the rail link.

Another Member felt that the report needed to be more balanced covering issues the Authority did well and issues that needed further work. He raised concerns regarding several issues i.e. communication with the public when systems were unavailable, IT connectivity, iTrent system, hospital discharges and CCTV. The Managing Director responded that the Authority had invested significantly in IT systems and had a strong partnership with SRS, other local

authorities and Gwent police. The switch to homeworking had been almost seamless and a credit to the organisation. Last year Members had agreed an IT investment plan in order to keep IT systems continually upgraded, however, there would be challenges with systems failing from time to time but importantly there was a robust partnership with SRS to respond quickly to those issues. She felt that the organisation had moved incredibly effectively to working on IT platforms and overall the Authority's IT systems stood up extremely well.

With regard to IT connectivity in schools the Director of Education said there had been some challenges around school connectivity but this had been an all Wales issue relating to the All Wales Public Services Broadband Aggregate which sits outside of direct control of the SRS but had created varying levels of connectivity across a number of schools. The Director advised that the situation had stabilised and there were plans in place to secure connectivity for schools over the summer period and provided assurances that schools would be in a far more stable position moving forward.

With regard to delayed transfers of care the Director of Social Services said Blaenau Gwent was the best performing Authority in Gwent around delayed transfers of care and they were working hard to maintain those standards, unfortunately there was a UK wide issue in relation to recruitment to the care sector. Welsh Government was introducing the real living wage from April 2022 which would help to retain and recruit staff and he felt this was the start of a journey to try and improve wages and professionalism to recruit the right people into the sector. The Director confirmed there had been a waiting list for Domiciliary care packages recently and priority had been given to hospital discharges over the community, currently there were only a few people awaiting domiciliary care packages.

With regard to the iTrent system the Head of Organisational Development reported that the system was currently operating fully and no issues had been reported where managers were unable to record sickness absence.

	<p>The Chair commended officers on their outstanding work to keep front line services operational throughout a very difficult period.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the information as presented be accepted.</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>TREASURY MANAGEMENT – TREASURY STRATEGY STATEMENT, INVESTMENT STRATEGY & MRP POLICY STATEMENT 2022/2023 (INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources which was presented to give Members the opportunity to scrutinise the Treasury Strategy, Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy (including prudential indicators) to be adopted for the 2022/2023 financial year, prior to formal recommendation to Council.</p> <p>The Service Manager Accountancy presented the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that Members considered the Annual Treasury Strategy Statement & Annual Investment Strategy & MRP Policy Statement for 2022/2023 financial year and the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators contained therein (APPENDIX A) and did not consider any amendments, prior to submission to Council for formal approval.</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>CAPITAL STRATEGY 2022/2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources which was presented to give Members the opportunity to consider the Capital Strategy (attached at Appendix 1) following the annual review, to be adopted for the financial year 2022/2023.</p> <p>The Service Manager Accountancy presented the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Members</p>	

<p>considered the Capital Strategy for the 2022/23 financial year (attached as appendix 1) and did not consider any amendments, prior to submission to Council for formal approval.</p>	
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<p>As this was the last meeting of the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee in the Committee cycle, the Chair thanked Members and Officers for their contribution and support over the last 5 years.</p>	
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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
28TH FEBRUARY, 2022**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M. MOORE (CHAIR)

- Councillors C. Meredith
- P. Baldwin
- M. Cook
- M. Day
- S. Healy
- W. Hodgins
- P. Edwards
- J. Holt
- J.C. Morgan
- L. Parsons
- B. Summers
- L. Winnett

WITH: Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services
 Head of Community Services
 Service Manager Neighbourhood Services
 Service Manager Public Protection
 Team Manager Frontline Enforcement Service.
 Team Manager Housing Solutions & Compliance
 Scrutiny & Democratic Officer/Advisor

AND: Councillor J. Wilkins, Executive Member Environment

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p>	

	No apologies for absence were reported.	
No. 3	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS</u> No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.	
No. 4	<u>COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u> The minutes of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on 15 th November, 2021 were submitted. The Committee AGREED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.	
No. 5	<u>ACTION SHEET</u> The action sheet arising from the meeting held on 15 th November, 2021 was submitted, whereupon:- <i><u>Civil Parking Enforcement</u></i> A Member requested an update to the end of February 2022 for Nantyglo, and the Chair confirmed that the Officer would provide all Members with an update for their ward. Another Member asked whether the number of CPE Enforcement Officers in the Borough was sufficient. In response the Head of Community Services reported that the fully staffed number of enforcement officers was two. However, one Enforcement Officer had recently left and the recruitment process was underway to fill the vacant post. In terms of whether the number was sufficient, the Officer confirmed that the annual report was brought to Committee and provided Members an opportunity review the service. The last report was submitted in November 2021 and the current arrangements were agreed. <i><u>Action Sheet – 4th October (Update on Catch 22)</u></i> A Member said it was reported at the last meeting that Catch 22 was considering a CAT of either Rassau Resource Centre or Newtown Community Centre. The	

	<p>note attached to the Action Sheet stated that the organisation was considering a CAT for the provision of an SEPD Centre, however, the Member said in a recent press report the Chief Executive of Catch 22 said it was for the purposes of an ALN Centre. The Member sought clarification on the issue. He also expressed concern regarding the proposals and said a public consultation exercise should be undertaken.</p> <p>The Chair said the relevant Officer was not in attendance. However, she pointed out that the proposed use of the building would come under the remit of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The Member pointed out that the CAT had been discussed at the last meeting and information brought back to Committee. However, he agreed that the issue should have been referred to the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee, and he asked that this be actioned and an updated provided to Members.</p> <p><u><i>Active Travel and Safe Routes to Communities (Cableway)</i></u></p> <p>A Member raised concerns regarding the ongoing closure of the cableway due to the Covid restrictions. In response the Head of Community Services confirmed that a risk assessment would be undertaken, however, he pointed out that any decision to reopen the cableway would need to align with the broader Council workplace policy which was still under the remit of essential activities only.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Special Meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on 24th January, 2022 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>FLY TIPPING ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY 2021/22</u></p>	

Consideration was given to report of the Team Manager Frontline Enforcement Service.

The Team Manager Frontline Enforcement Service presented the report which provided an update on the Authority's enforcement activities in relation to fly tipping and other waste regulation offences and the level of fly tipping activity within Blaenau Gwent for the year 2021/22.

The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein.

A Member asked whether the booking system in place for the HWRC's was having a detrimental impact on fly tipping.

In response the Service Manager Neighbourhood Services explained that the booking system, introduced in response to the Covid pandemic, was being reviewed and options were being explored. However, he said the report demonstrated that fly tipping had reduced in the last 12 months.

A Member asked whether CCTV could be deployed in problem areas.

The Team Manager Frontline Enforcement Service confirmed that a number of locations were being considered and prioritised, but he would be happy for Members' input.

Another Member expressed concern regarding the low level of fixed penalty notices issued for fly tipping.

The Officer explained that 424 complaints of fly tipping were investigated by Enforcement Wardens, however, the majority of the materials dumped do not contain any evidence for the Enforcement Wardens to pursue. However, moving forward FPN's will be issued on a lower level of evidence so it was anticipated that the figures would increase significantly in the next financial year.

In response to a question raised by a Member, the Officer confirmed that the Council worked closely with the Duke of Beaufort Estate regarding fly tipping, and also with other

	<p>Partners and private landowners to get waste removed as soon as possible.</p> <p>A discussion ensued when Officer clarified points raised by Members.</p> <p>A Member sought an update on rear lane collections.</p> <p>The Service Manager Neighbourhood Services confirmed that some rear lane collections have been reinstated but there was still work to be done.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and supported the continuing waste regulation work and development of the Frontline Enforcement Service. (Option 1)</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>DISABLED ADAPTATIONS – POLICY AMENDMENT PROPOSAL TO REMOVE MEANS-TEST</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Public Protection and the Team Manager Housing Solutions & Compliance.</p> <p>The Service Manager Public Protection presented the report which sought Members’ views relating to a proposed policy amendment that would remove the current means test for grants for disabled adaptations in Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>The Officer spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein.</p> <p>A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the means-test for large adaptations.</p> <p>A Member proposed Option 1 with the following amendment, namely ‘that the means-test for large adaptations be retained on a sliding scale’.</p> <p>The proposal was seconded.</p> <p>Another Member proposed Option 2, and this was seconded.</p>	

	<p>Upon a vote being taken</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and Members support the proposed policy amendment that would remove the current means test for grants for disabled adaptations in Blaenau Gwent from April 1st 2022; and that the means-test for large adaptations be retained on a sliding scale. (Option1)</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>CONTRACT EXTENSION – PEST CONTROL TREATMENT SERVICE TO 31 DECEMBER 2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Service Manager Public Protection.</p> <p>The Service Manager Public Protection presented the report which provided an update on the pest control treatment service currently provided by Rentokil. The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member asked whether local companies had been considered for the contract.</p> <p>In response the Officer confirmed that the Council’s procurement framework was applied. He said a national company also had resilience within the workforce that a smaller local company may not have.</p> <p>A discussion ensued when the Officer clarified points raised by Member.</p> <p>A Member proposed Option 2 with the recommendation to the Executive that at the end of the contract (31st March, 2023) a local procurement exercise be undertaken for the service.</p> <p>The proposal was seconded.</p> <p>Another Member proposed Option 1 and this was seconded.</p> <p>Upon a vote being taken</p>	

<p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and Members note the service performance and continuation of the contract with Rentokil until 31st March 2023 when it would be reviewed and retendered, as necessary, in accordance with Corporate Procurement rules. (Option 1)</p>	
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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (BUDGET MONITORING) – 7TH MARCH, 2022

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S. HEALY (CHAIR)

Councillors M. Cook
D. Bevan
G.A. Davies
G.L. Davies
P. Edwards
K. Hayden
J. Hill
J. Holt
H. McCarthy
C. Meredith
J. Millard
M. Moore
J.C. Morgan
G. Paulsen
K. Rowson
T. Smith
B. Summers
S. Thomas
B. Willis
L. Winnett

WITH: Managing Director
Chief Officer Resources
Corporate Director Education
Corporate Director Social Services
Chief Officer Commercial & Customer
Head of Governance & Partnerships
Head of Regeneration
Service Manager Neighbourhood Services
Team Manager Leisure & Streetscene
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer/Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were reported for Councillors M. Day, M. Cross, H. Trollope, L. Elias and Mr. T. Baxter (co-opted Member).</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>Councillor B. Summers declared an interest in Silent Valley Waste Services Limited where referred to on the agenda.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (BUDGET MONITORING)</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 15th November, 2021 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 15TH NOVEMBER, 2021</u></p> <p>The Action Sheeting arising from the meeting held on 15th November, 2021 was submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Action Sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (BUDGET MONITORING)</u></p> <p>The minutes of the special meeting held on 8th February, 2022 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	

<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING -2021/2022, FORECAST OUTTURN TO 31 MARCH 2022 (AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2021)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources presented the report which provided the forecast financial outturn position across all portfolios for the financial year 2021/2022 (as forecast at 31st December 2022); the forecast financial position to the end of March 2022 across all portfolios; and the forecast outturn for Fees & Charges.</p> <p>The overall forecast outturn as at December 2021 was a favourable variance of £4.65m, after the application of Welsh Government Hardship Funding. There had been an increase in the favourable variance of £1.835m since the September 2021 forecast position (£2.814m).</p> <p>The forecast included actual and estimated funding from the Hardship Fund for April to December 2021 of £5.036m. The Officer confirmed that claims had been submitted, in line with the set of principles issues by Welsh Government, for Quarters 1 to 3 loss of income and £130,000 was included in the forecast for Social Services. It had been confirmed that Welsh Government Hardship Funding would continue to March 2022.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and Members note the financial outcomes in the report. (Option 1)</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, FORECAST FOR 2021/2022 FINANCIAL YEAR (AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources presented the report which provided an overview of each Portfolio's actual and forecast capital expenditure against funding approvals for the 2021/2022 financial year, as at 31st December 2021;</p>	

the forecast financial position to 31st March 2021 across all portfolios; and details of significant adverse/favourable variances.

The overall financial position as forecast at 31st December, 2021 indicated an adverse variance of £227,852 against a total in year capital budget of £20.1m. The report identified significant overspends on the following projects:

Household Waste recycling Centre - £42,752

The overspend related to increased costs due to the Covid-19 pandemic and future proofing of the site. Discussions were ongoing with WRAP Cymru and Welsh Government regarding funding the additional expenditure.

Lime Avenue Business Park –£185,096

The latest anticipated final account advises a loss and expenses claim for items in relation to unforeseen issues caused by Covid-19 pandemic of £185,096, a reduction of £49,614 when compared to the Quarter 2 forecast of £234,710. Officers were in dialogue with Welsh Government and WEFO project officials to pursue additional funding to mitigate the overspend.

The Officer confirmed that discussions with funding bodies was currently positive, therefore, it was not proposed that funding for these schemes be built in from the Capital contingency at this stage.

In response to a question raised by a Member, the Officer confirmed that the figures provided was for the existing buildings on Lime Avenue Business Park.

The Member then referred to the planning application for the delivery of 10 units to the south of the site and enquired regarding funding for the development.

The Officer confirmed that planning approval had been granted last week, however, the Council was not involved in delivery of the project. The project was being funded by the applicant with part funding from Welsh Government.

Another Member said he understood that Tech Valleys had pulled out of the project.

In response the Officer explained that Tech Valleys was providing funding for start-up units, however, the applicant had submitted a renewed application with a change to the units being provided at the site. In terms of Tech Valleys funding, the level of funding Welsh Government would be allocating to Tech Valleys for the next few years was awaited, but Welsh Government have indicated that funding would be difficult next year. The Officer said there was funding available for developments, and it was likely that the applicant would enter into discussions with Welsh Government.

A Member asked for the costs incurred for the survey undertaken on the Civic Centre, and the Chief Officer Resources undertook to report back on this matter.

Another Member referred to the discussions on the proposed new development at Lime Avenue, and expressed concern that the potential loss of Tech Valley funding could impact other projects. He said the Executive Member and Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services both sat on the Tech Valley Board and the Chair undertook to discuss this matter with the Executive Member.

A Member then referred to the Land Release Fund - Pithead Baths and expressed concern regarding the response received from the Executive Member to correspondence on this matter, and pointed out that Officers had still not provided a response to his questions regarding the funding. He thereupon took the opportunity to ask what conditions were attached to the funding of £224,878k and whether there was any contribution from Blaenau Gwent.

In response the Head of Regeneration undertook to report back on the terms and conditions of the funding.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and Members:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council; and • Note the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding. (Option 1) 	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>USE OF GENERAL AND EARMARKED RESERVES 2021/2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources presented the report which provided the forecast reserves position for 2021/2022 as at Quarter 3 (31 December 2021). Section 6 of the report provided an overall summary of the forecast financial position in relation to the balances in general and earmarked reserves at 31 March, 2022.</p> <p>The general reserve opening balance of £7.553m represents 5.72% of net revenue expenditure, which was above the 4% target level of £5.284m. Table 1 at Section 6.1.3 showed the forecast position for the general reserve at year end 2021/2022 to be an increase of £4.849m, to £12.402m. This balance represented 9.39% of net revenue expenditure, £7.118m above the 4% target level of £5.284m, indicating further progress towards strengthening the financial resilience of the Council and providing a buffer to deal with unexpected future issues.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the impact of the £4.649m favourable variance for 2021/2022 would have on the budgeted contribution to the General Reserve; • Note the forecast increase of the General Reserve in 2021/2022 to £12.402m, being 9.39% of net revenue expenditure, above the 4% target level; • Consider the need for ongoing prudent financial management to support the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the financial resilience of the Council; and 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to challenge budget overspends and implement appropriate service Action Plans, where required. <p>Maintenance of general reserves at an adequate level is crucial to the Council being able to meet future liabilities arising from risks for which specific provision has not been made.</p>	
<p>No. 10</p>	<p><u>BRIDGING THE GAP (BTG) PROGRAMME 2021/2022 – PROGRESS UPDATE OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources presented the report which provided an update on the progress made with the Strategic Business Reviews during the period October to December 2021, the latest assessment of the financial achievement for the current financial year and the latest estimated achievement between 2022/23 and 2026/27.</p> <p>In recognising the challenges that the Council faces in the short, medium and long term, a programme of Strategic Business Reviews have been developed to deal with the potential funding gaps identified in the MTFS (Table 1) and to improve the financial resilience of the Council. In agreeing the budget for 2021/2022 the estimated achievement of Bridging the Gap (BtG) was £755,000 contributing to a surplus budget of £1.3m.</p> <p>The latest assessment of the potential achievement of the BtG programme (as per the MTFS) was estimated to be £6.7m between 2022/2023 and 2026/2027, and Table 2 provided the annual assessment of achievement.</p> <p>The Officer confirmed that the Council’s Corporate Leadership Team, supported by officers from all services continued to identify / develop additional BtG proposals to close the future years’ budget gaps.</p> <p>The budget gaps identified within the report were based upon the Medium Term Financial Strategy assumptions included within the 2022/2023 Budget Report. These assumptions included:</p>	

- An increase in funding from Welsh Government of 3% for 2022/2023, 2% for 2023/2024 and cash flat thereafter.
- Pay awards and price inflation of 2% per annum.
- Annual cost pressures £2m per annum (from 2023/24).

The Officer pointed out that variations to/from these assumptions would impact the budget gaps.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and Members note progress of the Bridging the Gap programme. (Option 1)

As this was the last meeting in the cycle prior to the elections, the Chair took the opportunity to thank the Vice-Chair, Members and Officers for their support during the year.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 15TH MARCH, 2022**

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

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. HOLT (IN THE CHAIR)

Councillors: D. Bevan
M. Cook
P. Edwards (substitute for L. Elias)
S. Healy
J. Hill
C. Meredith
J.C. Morgan
J.P. Morgan
T. Smith
B. Summers
D. Wilkshire
L. Winnett (substitute for H. Trollope)

AND: Corporate Director of Education
Strategic Education Improvement Manager
Service Manager Inclusion
Service Manager Education Transformation &
Business Change
Service Manager Young People & Partnerships
Pupil & Student Officer
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

ALSO: **Representatives of EAS**
Ed Pryce, Assistant Director
Hayley Davies-Edwards, Principal Challenge Advisor

Representative of Aneurin Leisure Trust
Ceri Waters, Partnership, Funding & Contracts Manager

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
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<p>No. 1</p>	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
<p>No. 2</p>	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H. Trollope (Chair), G. Collier and L. Elias.</p> <p><u>Co-opted Member</u> T. Baxter</p>	
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>SPECIAL EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Special Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 26th January, 2022 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 26TH JANUARY, 2022</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the special meeting of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 26th January, 2022 was submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 1st February, 2022 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 1ST FEBRUARY, 2022</u></p>	

	<p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 1st February, 2022 was submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>EDUCATION DIRECTORATE RESPONSE TO COVID-19</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education, which was presented to provide Members with an opportunity to review the Education Directorate’s response to the COVID-19 situation, particularly supporting the schools during the emergency response period.</p> <p>The Corporate Director of Education presented the report and gave an overview of the current position with regard to the Education Directorate’s response to Covid-19.</p> <p>A Member enquired if there were any proposals to reduce the school summer holiday period to catch up on pupil learning as this was being considered in England. He also raised concerns regarding the increased charges for Leisure services and the affect this would have on some children’s health and well-being. The Corporate Director of Education responded that there were no proposals to change the duration of the school summer holiday period. With regard to the proposed increase in charges for Leisure services, in particular swim prices, he confirmed that following negotiation with the Aneurin Leisure Trust the proposed increase in swim charges had been reduced and would be implemented from 1st April, 2022.</p> <p>A Member referred to page 78 of the report and commented that EAS Challenge Advisors had now been replaced with School Improvement Partners. He felt that the report needed information in relation to youngsters with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and in relation to academic progress enquired if level 1 qualifications had been withdrawn from the River Centre. The Corporate Director of Education responded that he would ensure that future reports would be updated with regard to the title of School Improvement Partners. With regard to youngsters with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties he</p>	

confirmed that learners at the River Centre in year 11 would have the opportunity to access appropriate qualifications from level 1 up to GCSE's and would also be offered other alternative curriculum qualifications.

A Member referred to the recent temporary closure of the River Centre for health & safety reasons. The Corporate Director of Education confirmed the River Centre had been partially closed to years 9, 10 & 11 for a short period of time and explained that a major incident had occurred and support from both Gwent Police and the South Wales Fire Service had been requested. As a result, a safer schools package of support had been put in place which included a number of key partners and corporate support services to ensure that arrangements within the setting facilitated improved practices in the future.

The Member had been unaware of this issue and enquired regarding the process to keep Members informed of such incidents. The Service Manager Education Transformation & Business Change explained that all Local Authority support services were notified when there was a school closure, and a communication was distributed to Ward Members on behalf of the school and the Education Directorate notifying them of the latest position. The Service Manager confirmed that a communication was issued but would ensure that the Corporate Communications team were aware of any issues regarding Member distribution.

A Member commented that a comprehensive report on the River Centre and schools causing concern should be presented to a future meeting of this Committee. The Director of Education agreed that as part of the Improving Schools report, a comprehensive update in relation to the River Centre could be provided.

In response to a Member's question regarding 'build back better', the Director of Education said that an example of this work related to ICT developments around connectivity work with the schools and also the devices that had been issued to vulnerable learners. He gave an example of 'build back better', in adverse weather conditions learners would still be able to continue to receive meaningful education.

	<p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that the report be accepted as presented.</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT SERVICES (EAS)</u> <u>BUSINESS PLAN 2022/25</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education and the Managing Director EAS which was presented for Members to consider the full contents of the draft EAS Business Plan 2022-2025, as part of the regional consultation process. Through this activity Members will ensure that the plan enables appropriate support for schools and settings in Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>The Assistant Director EAS gave a presentation on the Business Plan covering a wide range of school improvement services to all schools. The plan supports the role the Local Authority have in delivering their statutory function, addressing their individual improvement priorities and promoting improved pupil outcomes.</p> <p>A Member enquired if all schools now participated in school to school working, professional learning and self-improvement. The Assistant Director EAS said there was strong school engagement data, which was shared with the Local Authority and concerns were raised if there was insufficient engagement by schools. A brief two slide PowerPoint presentation called 'Stats and Stories' specifically focusing on Blaenau Gwent levels of school engagement would be circulated to scrutiny Members to give a snapshot of school engagement as of Spring 2022.</p> <p>A Member referred to paragraph 5.1.5 and the uncertainty around regional grant funding, the Assistant Director EAS said there had been a commitment from the Welsh Government to move to a three year grant profile which showed positive intent from the Welsh Government and confirmed that for the first year they were unaware of any significant reductions.</p> <p>In response to a Member's question regarding how the EAS was going to measure pupil progress moving forward, the Assistant Director EAS gave a detailed response and said that dialogue was still being undertaken with schools</p>	

regarding progression and assessment and would continue with local authorities and Headteachers to evolve that dialogue.

A Member enquired regarding what barriers and weaknesses the EAS may encounter to achieving the vision moving forward. The Assistant Director EAS said that a broad range of risks were highlighted in paragraph 5.2.1 and felt it was around recognising that they were part of a wider system, partnerships with schools, local authorities, Estyn and the Welsh Government was key and collectively, working with partners, to know when to intervene and not leaving that intervention too late.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Members received the report for information and accepted the Business Plan.

No. 10 **INSPIRE 2 ACHIEVE AND WORK PERFORMANCE REPORT JANUARY – DECEMBER 2021**

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Young People & Partnerships, which was presented to provide Members with an opportunity to scrutinise the local Inspire 2 Achieve and Inspire 2 Work projects funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). These projects are part of the Youth Service's approach to reducing the numbers of young people becoming Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET).

The Service Manager, Young People & Partnerships presented the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.

A Member commented that it was an outstanding achievement that year on year the figures for NEET's were low and felt it was important to secure long term funding to ensure that these projects continue in the future.

With regard to funding, the Service Manager, Young People & Partnerships advised Members that the regional programme would end in May 2023 and local delivery would end in April 2023. She felt it was important to ensure that

they were involved in discussions for any UK Government funding coming through the system, however, there were concerns that UK Government programmes were not looking at supporting employability programmes for young people below the age of 18. There was also a risk that the NEET's figures could increase if staff left the service as their contracts would not continue beyond May next year.

A Member commented that future prosperity of the County Borough was through education and jobs for young people and felt it should be a priority for the Council to seek long term funding to ensure these projects were carried forward.

The Corporate Director of Education commented that if the funding gap remained relating to Inspire 2 Achieve and Inspire 2 Work projects then, as part of the Council's budget setting process, consideration could be given to secure elements or provision for the projects moving forward.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Members scrutinised the information detailed within the report and the report be accepted.

No. 11 **WELSH PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS (WPLS)**
ANNUAL RETURN 2020/21

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education and the Service Manager Young People & Partnerships which was presented to consider the report submitted to the Museums, Archives and Libraries Division (MALD) of Welsh Government with respect to the fourth year of the Sixth Assessment Framework for the Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) return 2020/21.

The Service Manager Young People & Partnership presented the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.

A Member referred to paragraph 5.1 of the report and welcomed the increased spend on books but felt further increases were needed. The Service Manager Young People & Partnerships explained that a new five-year agreement had been put in place in 2020, which did not

measure library services specifically around spend on books. Currently, the Council and Leisure Trust were looking at and scrutinising the whole standards in library services to ensure that the whole library service was developing well and operating at a good level. This involves the potential for further increases in resources for books and other reading material.

With regard to book donations from the public, the Partnership, Funding & Contracts Manager ALT said they received substantial donations from the public, however, there was no measure within the standards regarding public donations and as such they were not included in the figures for the number of items required.

A Member enquired if libraries were adequately staffed moving forward as they were now also community hubs. The Partnership, Funding & Contracts Manager ALT said libraries were currently adequately staffed as visitor numbers had not yet returned to pre pandemic levels. As the community hubs expand and libraries take on more services then a review of staffing structures may be needed.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely Members scrutinised the information detailed within the report and the report be accepted.

No. 12

BLAENAU GWENT ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR NURSERY AND STATUTORY EDUCATION 2023/24

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Education Transformation & Business Change which was presented to outline the outcome of the annual consultation process, in line with the revised draft of the Blaenau Gwent Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education 2023/24.

The Service Manager Education Transformation & Business Change presented the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.

A Member referred to Appendix 1 paragraph 20 Home to School and Post 16 Transport – and raised concerns

regarding a ward issue relating to an overflow of children for the forthcoming Year 7 intake to Abertillery Learning Community. The Service Manager Education Transformation & Business Change said this issue specifically related to the Home to School and Post 16 Transport policy. The Service Manager advised that the admission number for Abertillery Learning Community was 150 and they had allocated 'in time' applications up to the admission number. There had been four 'late' applications and they were working with the Abertillery Learning Community to look to extend their capacity in order to accommodate those additional learners.

Following further discussion, the Service Manager reiterated that this issue specifically related to the Council's Home to School and Post 16 Transport policy, and although the Admissions policy for Nursery and Statutory Education 2023/24 referenced the Home to School and Post 16 Transport policy it was for the Council, as an admissions authority, to implement the Admission Policy in line with Welsh Government's School Admissions and Admission Appeal codes.

Councillor Bob Summers left the meeting at this juncture.

A lengthy and detailed discussion ensued whereby Members expressed concern regarding the Home to School and Post 16 Transport policy, the Service Manager thereupon clarified points of concern raised by Members.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee considered and accepted the policy document.

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE –
14TH APRIL, 2022**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: Mr. Terry Edwards (Chair)

Councillors S. Healy
D. Davies
J. Hill
J. Holt
J. Millard
K. Rowson
B. Summers
S. Thomas

Mr. Martin Veale

WITH: Chief Officer Resources
Senior Business Partner Finance
Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
Head of Internal Audit
Data Protection & Governance Officer

AND: Mike Jones – Audit Wales

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
No. 2	<u>APOLOGIES</u>	

	Apologies for absence were reported for Councillor D. Hancock.	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>Councillor B. Summers & J. Hill declared an interest in the following items:</p> <p>Item No. 5 Statement of Accounts 2016/17 to 2020/21 (Silent Valley Waste Services Limited)</p> <p>Item No. 6 Audit Wales – Audit of Accounts Reports 2016/17 to 2020/21</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>AUDIT COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Audit Committee held on 25th January, 2022 were submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p>STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2016/2017 TO 2020/2021</p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources reported that Item Nos. 5 and 6 covered the same issue, i.e. Blaenau Gwent’s Statement of Accounts, and Audit Wales’ opinion on the Accounts, and suggested that the items be considered together.</p> <p>The Senior Business Partner Finance presented the report which re-presented the Statement of Accounts from 2016/2017 to 2020/2021.</p> <p>He confirmed that the Statements of Accounts had previously been submitted to Committee and the Auditor General issued an opinion on the Accounts for each financial year. However, in each case he was unable to certify that the audit of the accounts was complete due to ongoing work in relation to</p>	

concerns raised in correspondence in respect of Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd.

However, having issued his report in respect of the matters raised (*Deficiencies in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's governance and oversight arrangements in respect of a Council-owned company, Silent Valley Waste Services Limited - considered at the Special Meeting of the Council on 7th February, 2022*) the Auditor General had now indicated that he was able to issue new opinions on each Statement of Accounts from 2016/2017 and certify the audit for each year as complete.

The statutory framework for approval of Local Authority accounts required that, prior to the Auditor General issuing an updated opinion, the Accounts for each year have to be re-certified by the Chief Officer Resources and reapproved by the Governance & Audit Committee.

The Officer therefore conformed that the Statement of Accounts submitted for approval had been amended to include the revised opinion provided by the Auditor General. In addition, the relevant disclosure in the 'Narrative Report' section of each set of Accounts (2016/2017 to 2019/2020) had been updated to reflect the current position. No other amendments have been required.

The Audit Wales representative confirmed that the reports, apart from some narrative changes confirming that Audit Wales can now certify and explain the situation in terms of its findings and reporting to Members etc. were identical and have been considered by Members. However, a revised letter of representation would be required.

He also pointed out that the Accounts were in the 2021 format as the revised audit opinion was being issued at this date, nothing in the context and content had changed.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Accounts for each financial year 2016/2017 to 2020/2021 be **re-approved** by the Governance & Audit Committee under the delegated authority of the Council. (Option 1)

<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>AUDIT WALES - AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS REPORTS 2016/2017 TO 2020/2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>RESPONSE TO AUDIT WALES ENQUIRY TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Head of Internal Audit presented the report which informed Members of the management response to the Audit Wales enquiries (Appendix A) and for the Committee to consider its own response to the enquiries as those charged with governance.</p> <p>The Officer clarified points raised by a Member.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee endorse the Management Response to the Audit Wales query and considered that the draft response of the Committee accurately reflects their views. (Option 1)</p> <p>The Chair thanked Officers and Members for their support and work during the year, and wished Members well in the forthcoming Elections.</p>	

Notice of Motion to Council Re: Cost of Living

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council notes:

Local government has endured central government funding cuts of more than 50% since 2010. Between 2010 and 2020, councils lost 60p out of every £1 they have received from central government. UNISON research found that councils in England had to fill a combined funding gap of £3 billion when setting budgets for 2022/23.

Over the last two years, councils have led the way in efforts against the Covid-19 pandemic, providing a huge range of services and support for our communities. Local government has shown more than ever how indispensable it is. But Covid has led to a massive increase in expenditure and loss of income, and as we emerge from the pandemic, local authorities and schools need far more support from Westminster.

Council and school workers kept our communities safe through the pandemic, often putting themselves at considerable risk as they work to protect public health, provide quality housing, ensure our children continue to be educated, and look after older and vulnerable people.

Since 2010, the local government workforce has endured years of pay restraint with the majority of pay points losing 27.5 per cent of their value since 2009/10. Staff are now facing the worst cost of living crisis in a generation, with RPI forecast by the Office for Budgetary Responsibility (OBR) to average at 9.8% across 2022 and currently running at 11.1%. Many staff are having to make impossible choices between food, heating and paying for other essentials. This is a terrible situation for anyone to find themselves in.

At the same time, workers have experienced ever-increasing workloads and persistent job insecurity. Across the UK, 900,000 jobs have been lost in local government since June 2010 – a reduction of more than 30 per

cent. Local government has arguably been hit by more severe job losses than any other part of the public sector.

There has been a disproportionate impact on women, with women making up more than three-quarters of the local government workforce.

Recent research shows that if the Government were to fully fund the unions' 2022 pay claim, around half of the money would be recouped thanks to increased tax revenue, reduced expenditure on benefits and tax credits, and increased consumer spending in the local economy.

This Council believes:

Our workers are public service super-heroes. They keep our communities clean and safe, look after those in need and keep our towns and cities running.

Without the professionalism and dedication of our staff, the council services our residents rely on would not be deliverable.

Local government workers deserve a proper real-terms pay increase. The Government needs to take responsibility and fully fund this increase; it should not put the burden on local authorities whose funding has been cut

to the bone and who were not offered adequate support through the Covid-19 pandemic.

This Council resolves to:

Support the pay claim submitted by UNISON, GMB and Unite on behalf of council and school workers, for an increase of £2,000 or RPI (whichever is greater).

Call on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to central government to fund the NJC pay claim.

Write to the Chancellor and Secretary of State to call for a pay increase for local government workers to be funded with new money from central government.

Meet with local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim and consider practical ways in which the council can support the campaign.

Encourage all local government workers to join a union.

Signed by:

Councillor T. Smith
Councillor L. Winnett
Councillor P. Baldwin
Councillor M. Cross
Councillor D. Wilkshire

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Agenda Item 29

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 06.07.2022

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 05.07.2022

Committee: **Council**
Date of Meeting: **21st July, 2022**
Report Subject: **Annual Report of Head of Democratic Services 2021/22**
Portfolio Holder: **Councillor S. Thomas – Leader of the Council/Executive Member Corporate Overview and Performance**
Report Submitted by: **Sarah King, Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	30/06/22						21/07/22	

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To present the 2021/22 annual report of the Head of Democratic Services.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The annual report of the Head of Democratic Services (HDS) outlines the comprehensive range of arrangements in place to support Elected Members to enable them to fulfil their roles.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option One

The Council approves the report on the basis that it is satisfied there is a sufficient level of support for Elected Members.

3.2 Option Two

The Council provides comment and amendments to the report of the HDS 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 The role of HDS is set out in the Council's Constitution and Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

5. Implications Against Each Option

Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

5.1 The Council must provide the HDS with resources that, in its opinion, are sufficient to allow the functions of the role set out in the Measure to be discharged.

5.1.2 Various budgets are allocated to support Elected Members, including support from a dedicated Democratic Services Team, with support from the Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships and the Service Manager Performance and Democratic.

Each Member is allocated an allowance to support them to undertake their role effectively.

The amount allocated to support Member Development is £5,880.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

5.2.1 There are potential risks associated with option two if the levels of support arrangements for Members are deemed by Council not to be sufficient. The Democratic Services Committee is able to recommend to Council a review of resources and/ or support if felt necessary.

5.3 ***Legal***

5.3.1 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Council to designate an officer to the post of Head of Democratic Services (HDS). The role is set out in the Council's Constitution as a statutory function.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

5.4.1 The role of the HDS is to:

- carry out the Local Authority's function of designated Head of Democratic Services;
- keep under review the adequacy of provision of staff, accommodation and other resources made available to discharge the democratic services functions of the Authority; and
- make reports, at least annually, to the full Council in relation to these matters.

5.4.2 The HDS is able to make recommendations including with regard to the appointment, organisation and management of staff discharging democratic functions. The HDS may arrange for the discharge of democratic functions by staff and can delegate functions to staff as they feel appropriate.

5.4.3 Throughout the majority of 2021/22 the Chief Officer Commercial (formally the Head of Democratic Services) maintained the Head of Democratic Services role until a new Head of Service came into post in January 2022.

6. ***Supporting Evidence***

6.1 A summary of current service and support for Elected Members is provided below.

6.2 A Democratic Hub has been established at the General Offices in Ebbw Vale.

6.3 Linked to the requirements of the **Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021** the Council has implemented hybrid meeting arrangements. Each meeting is recorded and included on the Council website. Arrangements are being made for live recordings to be broadcast in the 2022 cycle. This approach promotes openness and transparency as well as engagement with the Council's democratic processes.

6.4 The table below shows a comparison of the number of meetings held and member attendance throughout the year.

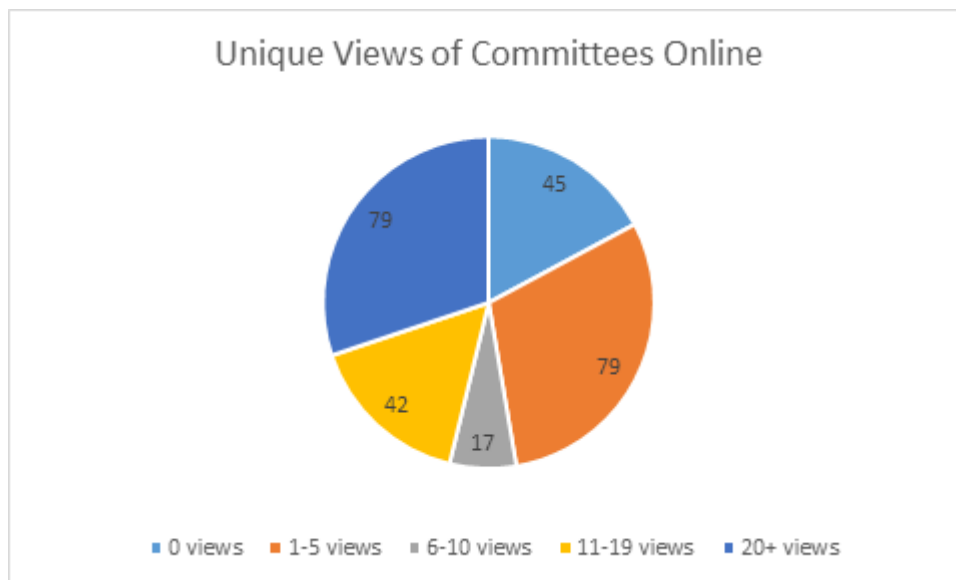
Member Attendance at Scrutiny Committees							
	Agreed Committee Membership	Total Members Due to Attend June 21 to Mar 22	Actual Members in Attendance June 21 to Mar 22	% of Members in attendance June 21– Mar 22	% of Members in attendance Sept 20- Apr 21	Number of Meetings Held June 21 to Mar 22	Number of Meetings Held Sep 20 to Apr 21**
Community Services	15	90	80	89	79	6	7
Corporate Overview	15	105	85	81	75	7	5
Education and Learning	15	105	99	94	83	7	7
Regeneration	15	105	95	90	80	7	8
Social Services	15	60	49	82	79	4	6
Total	75	465	408	87	79	31	33
Joint Safeguarding	23	69	48	70	67	2	2
Joint Budget	32	160	123	77	75	5	4
PSB	15	45	32	71	77	3	2
Total	70	250	203	81	75	10	8
Overall	145	715	611	85	78	41	41

* 8 meetings were scheduled to be held during late March / April 2022, however, these meetings were cancelled owing to the Pre-Election period.

**Committees were stopped at the beginning of 2020 owing to the COVID 19 Pandemic therefore meetings were only held between September 2020 to April 2021.

6.5 The graph below provides the number of unique views* for the committee meetings held throughout the 2021/22 democratic cycle.

**Unique views - the number of the unique users that click on a video. If a single user views 5 times on a link, the server will 1 unique view.*



6.6 The top most viewed committees to date are:

BGCBC Committee Name and Meeting Date	Unique Viewers
Special Meeting of the Council - 07 February 2022	79
Special Meeting of the Council - 17 February 2022	14
Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee - 1 February 2022	15
Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 09 February 2022	13
Ordinary Meeting of the Council - 27 January 2022	10

6.7 Council agreed to pause the **Personal Development Review (PDR)/ Competency Framework** until the new Head of Service was in post and for the newly Elected Members in May 2022. As part of this, the Head of Democratic Services will undertake a review of the current process and will work with the Leader to get the process operational by the end of 2022.

6.8 An extensive **Member Induction and Refresher Programme** has been prepared to support both new and returning members following the local election in May 2022. The programme has been split by induction sessions and then development sessions. All will be recorded and uploaded into the Member electronic library, including any supporting documentation.

6.9 **Councillor Skills: E-Learning for Members in Wales** work has been ongoing with the Welsh Local Government Association and all local authorities across Wales to upgrade the All Wales Academy e-learning platform in order that it continues to be fit for purpose with particular

emphasis on improving accessibility and content. These modules have been included in the Member Induction and Development Programme.

- 6.10 **An electronic Member library** has been established. This dedicated resource is available on the intranet for Members. This research function includes key documentation and information including resources from the Member Induction and Development Programme.
- 6.11 **A Member training and development programme** was in place throughout the year. The programme reflected the key areas for support, including those identified by Members topics identified from the forward work programmes of the Scrutiny committees and support related to training required for specific roles on committee e.g. Planning.
- 6.12 **A Mentoring Scheme for Members** is established. Members self-select and participate in the scheme, and a number of Members have taken the opportunity to be involved. On-going advice and guidance from the HDS has been provided to support the Mentoring scheme. The new HDS will undertake a review of the mentoring scheme moving forward.
- 6.13 **Support arrangements for Members appointed who sit on outside bodies** have been established and implemented. This area of support had been identified by Members. Reports from Members who sit on outside bodies now form part of the Council agenda on a periodic basis. Feedback from Members who have participated in the arrangement suggests that they feel there is value in giving Members the opportunity to report back to the Council. The support arrangements also include the identification of a link officer for Members aligned to their role on outside bodies.
- 6.14 The arrangements to support **the agenda management of committees** is in place. In accordance with requirements under the Local Government Measure, each committee has considered the **timings of meetings** to establish Members preference, and this has informed the timings of the current cycle of meetings.
- 6.15 The Council is actively involved in the **Joint Scrutiny Committee of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)**. Each of the 10 local authorities is represented on the Committee. Activity has continued during 2021/22 and Blaenau Gwent Council was represented by the Chair of Regeneration Scrutiny Committee being the Primary member and the Vice-Chair of Regeneration Scrutiny Committee the deputy member.
- 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***
 - 6.2.1 By providing a democratic function that has been identified as having sufficient support and resources means that Elected Members are provided with the support that they need to operate effectively, which in turn should support them in their role with the community.
- 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
 - 6.3.1 Opportunities to maximise engagement in the range of training and support arrangements by Members will assist them in meeting future demands of their roles.
- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
 - 6.4.1 The Member support arrangements look to the longer term and in recognition of the increasing complexity of the roles Members undertake.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

- 6.5.1 The content of the member development programme is aimed to give Members a solid grounding and prepare them to meet their roles and responsibilities for the future.
- 6.5.2 The role of HDS is to undertake a review of the support provided to members and identify if further support is required in order to prevent ineffective delivery of the democratic function.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

- 6.6.1 The training and development programme for Members includes elements of both internal and external support. Training is offered on a regional basis in some instances e.g. Education Achievement Service, Joint Scrutiny Committee of the CCRC.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

- 6.7.1 All Council services are involved with the democratic functions of the Council. Forward Work Programmes and agendas are developed jointly with Members and Officers.

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

- 6.8.1 The Member development programme has been subject to an Equality impact assessment screening with no adverse impact on the protected characteristics identified.
- 6.8.2 Language preference for Members has been established.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 The HDS presents an annual report to Democratic services and Council. Regular monitoring reports on the democratic arrangements are also presented as part of the committee forward work programme.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- None

Agenda Item 30

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 21.06.2022

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 21.06.2022

Committee: **Council**
Date of Meeting: **21st July, 2022**
Report Subject: **Annual Scrutiny Report 2021/22**
Portfolio Holder: **Councillor S. Thomas, Leader / Executive Member
Corporate Overview & Performance**
Report Submitted by: **Elizabeth Thomas, Scrutiny and Democratic Officer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	23.06.22						21.07.22	

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present to Members of Council the Annual Scrutiny report 2021/22 in accordance with the Council's Constitution (attached at Appendix 1).

2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Annual Scrutiny Report has been produced in accordance with Section 7.4.3 of the Council's Constitution which states that 'The Overview and Scrutiny Committee must report annually to the Full Council on their workings with recommendations for their future working programme and amended working methods if appropriate'.

The Annual Scrutiny Report 2021/22 sets out the key areas of work that have been undertaken by each Scrutiny Committee during 2021/22.

Actions in relation to the delivery of scrutiny in Blaenau Gwent are set out within the Business Plan of the Performance and Democratic Section and monitored throughout the year.

3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 **Option 1:** That Council approve the 'scrutiny activity' that has been undertaken by each Scrutiny Committee during 2021/22, and agree that the report is published on the Blaenau Gwent website.

Option 2: That Council suggest amendment to the Annual Scrutiny Report 2021/22 prior to publication on the Council's website.

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

The submission of an Annual Scrutiny Report is a statutory responsibility under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

5. Implications Against Each Option

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

There are no direct financial implications linked to this report.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

Scrutiny has a pivotal role in promoting improvement, efficiency and collaboration across public services and in holding those responsible for delivering services to account.

Scrutiny is an important element of the governance and democratic arrangements of the Council and is often reviewed externally by Audit, Inspection and Review Bodies. If Scrutiny is considered to not be working well this will then have a negative impact on the reputation of the Council as well as on the governance arrangements of the Council.

5.3 **Legal**

There are no legal implications linked to this report.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There is one officer supporting the implementation of Scrutiny throughout the Council.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

The service monitors and collects performance data, examples of which are included in the Annual Scrutiny report (Appendix 1).

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

Pre decision scrutiny aims to improve the needs and requirements of local people via the policy work and service area developments that the scrutiny committees undertake; on behalf of the local community, members consider, challenge and make recommendations for consideration by the Executive Committee or Council prior to decisions being made.

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

As part of ongoing Scrutiny development consideration is provided to encourage within the scrutiny process.

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

The Annual Scrutiny report includes development areas looking forward to ensure that the Council's Scrutiny arrangements continue to be developed, monitored and reviewed so that it continues to be part of the Council's robust governance arrangements.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

Scrutiny Committees consider policies and procedures in order to recommend improvements for the future, taking a preventative approach to planning.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Peer learning and support from other local authorities is used to continue to develop the approach to Scrutiny.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

The internal evaluation arrangements that involve both Members and Officers are ongoing throughout the meeting cycle. Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny meetings are held regularly throughout the cycle to support the implementation of the scrutiny arrangements.

6.8 ***EqIA***

It is anticipated that there would not be any negative impact on the protected characteristics in relation to this report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 When necessary scrutiny support arrangements are monitored by the Democratic Services Committee who recommend to Council via the Democratic Arrangements Report.

Actions in relation to the delivery of scrutiny in Blaenau Gwent are set out within the Business Plan of the Performance and Democratic Section and monitored throughout the year.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21

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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Annual Scrutiny Report 2021-22

Scrutiny Committee Chairpersons



Cllr Mandy Moore
Community Services
Scrutiny Committee



Cllr Stewart Healy *
Corporate Overview Scrutiny
Committee



Cllr Haydn Trollope* *
Education and Learning
Scrutiny Committee



Cllr John Hill
Regeneration Scrutiny
Committee



Cllr Steve Thomas **
Social Services Scrutiny
Committee

***Councillor Stewart Healy** is also Chair of the Joint (Budget) Scrutiny Committee and the Public Service Board Scrutiny Committee.

****Councillors Haydn Trollope** and **Stephen Thomas** jointly chair (on a rotational basis) the Joint Education and Learning and Social Services (Safeguarding) Scrutiny Committee.

Contents

Introduction	Page 4
Forward Work Programmes	Page 5
Reporting on the COVID-19 Pandemic to Scrutiny Committees	Page 6
Scrutiny in Figures 2021/22	Page 7
Community Services Scrutiny Committee	Page 8-10
Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee	Page 11-13
Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee	Page 14-16
Regeneration Scrutiny Committee	Page 17-19
Social Services Scrutiny Committee	Page 20-22
Monitoring Member Attendance at Scrutiny Committee Meetings	Page 23
How the Public can get involved in the Scrutiny Process	Page 24
Future Planned Developments for Scrutiny and wider Democratic functions	Page 25
Contact Information	Page 26

Introduction

Welcome to Blaenau Gwent's Annual Scrutiny Report 2021/22 which gives an overview of the work undertaken by each Scrutiny Committee in what has been a year of continuing changes and challenges for scrutiny.

Democratic meetings continued to be held virtually via Microsoft Teams until September 2021. Reflecting the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act for the broadcasting of meetings, Blaenau Gwent moved to holding Hybrid Democratic meetings at the General Offices in Ebbw Vale.

Despite the challenges faced by Members, being required to gain new skills in order to participate via Hybrid committee meetings, they have continued to effectively challenge and influence the Council's decision-making process and add value to a wide range of activity, in order to deliver effective outcomes for the people of Blaenau Gwent.

Scrutiny in Blaenau Gwent is made up of five scrutiny committees that collectively support the work of the Executive Committee and Council, this allows non-Executive members to influence how local and strategic policy can work more effectively for the people they serve and effectively challenge the Executive on the decisions it makes. The five scrutiny committees are:

- ◆ Community Services
- ◆ Corporate Overview
- ◆ Education and Learning
- ◆ Regeneration
- ◆ Social Services

There are also two Joint Scrutiny Committees for Budget Monitoring and Safeguarding for children, young people and adults; and a Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee, that scrutinises the work of the Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board.

Forward Work Programmes

Work to develop the **Forward Work Programmes (FWPs) for 2021/22** began in March 2021, work included:

- Meeting with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs via Microsoft Teams to consider the previous years FWPs and suggest new items for consideration.
- Meeting with officers to consider the Draft FWPs.
- Following the Annual General Council meeting, met with new Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs to discuss the Draft FWPs.
- The FWPs were formally signed off by each of the Scrutiny Committees during June 2021, then translated and made available for public view on the BG website.
- The Forward Work Programmes being fluid documents, were regularly reviewed by Chairs and Vice-Chairs and officers at Agenda Management meetings and by all committee members at each scrutiny committee meeting.

Reporting on the COVID-19 Pandemic to Scrutiny Committees

When responding to an emergency the Council is required to adopt a 2 stage process:

- First Stage is Response
- Second Stage is Recovery

In order to respond to COVID-19 the Council had to operate both Response and Recovery at the same time. At the outset of the pandemic the Council undertook a Community Assessment to assess the impact the pandemic has had on:

- The Economy
- Learners
- Social Services
- The Council Workforce

These areas were then used to consider the Council's recovery themes which were reported to the relevant scrutiny committees as outlined below:

- On 23rd February 2022, the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee received a report to seek Members views on the approach to be adopted by the Council to monitor the recovery from the pandemic across all Council services and the wider community. Members welcomed this report and suggested that a first quarter data report be included on the Forward Work Programme for 2022/23.
- The Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee continued to receive updates during 2021/22 on the Directorate's response to COVID-19 both verbally and in report format, in order to keep the committee informed of the changes being made regarding Blaenau Gwent schools and its pupils.
- The Regeneration Scrutiny Committee received a report on 30th June 2021, to provide Members with a summary of the work undertaken and the proposals set out to support economic recovery within Blaenau Gwent.

All these reports can be found via this link: [Councillors and Committees | Blaenau Gwent CBC](#) and then by selecting the appropriate Committee and relevant date (detailed above).

Scrutiny in Figures for 2021/22

22 Pre Decision Scrutiny
Agenda Items

41 Formal Scrutiny
Committee Meetings
held

63 Unique Views of
Committee Meetings
Online

Education and Learning
Scrutiny Committee Most
Viewed Scrutiny Committee
Meeting on 1st February 2022.

14 Member Briefings
Sessions held

81% of Members
Attended Scrutiny
Committee Meetings

6 Task and Finish
Group Meetings

Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Overview from Chair



Following on from the successes of last year, the Community Services Scrutiny Committee continued to focus on all matters relating to the Environment.

It has been a challenging year, despite the pandemic, the committee and officers have stepped up to resolve a number of issues and reviews in a fully comprehensive and productive way.

Undoubtedly, next year will also be challenging and I am sure that the Scrutiny Committee will continue to work collaboratively for positive outcomes for our communities.

To see the items that have been scrutinised during the year, the Forward Work Programmes can be accessed on the following link https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/media/gyyajr1d/community_services_fwp_21-22.docx

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee members and officers for their participation and input. I would also like to thank the support staff for their help and guidance throughout the year.

Cllr Mandy Moore

Chair, Community Services Scrutiny Committee.

Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Chair: Councillor Mandy Moore

Vice-Chair: Councillor Clive Meredith

Membership of the Committee:

Councillors: Peter Baldwin, Martin Cook, Malcolm Cross, Malcolm Day, Phill Edwards, Stewart Healy, Wayne Hodgins, Julie Holt, John C Morgan, Greg Paulsen, Tim Sharrem, Bob Summers, Lisa Winnett

Scrutiny Forward Work Programme - Key Highlights

The main areas of responsibility of the **Community Services Scrutiny Committee** is to develop and review strategies, plans and policies and monitor performance of Environmental Health, Waste and Recycling, Biodiversity, Environment, Civil Parking, Housing, Highways and Transportation. The key highlights this year included:

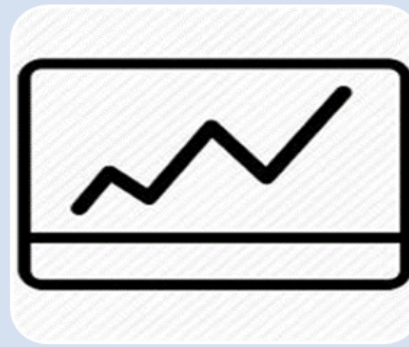
- Continued to receive regular, in-depth progress around implementation of the **Centre of Operations**, the committee recommended that the Executive agree to progress to the final business case stage; and the **Section 19 Flood Investigation Report—Llanhilleth** and recommended that the Executive Committee agree to publish the report in accordance with relevant legislation.
- Received the annual review of **Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Plan** to ensure that the Council was meeting its statutory duties under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and to continue monitoring of the activity plan for 2021/22; and the **Civil Parking Annual review** which ensured that the current business model was fit for purpose
- Continued to monitor the performance of the **Flood Risk Management Plan** and **Waste and Recycling Performance**.



Policies, Plans and Strategies

Below are examples of topics where the committee has considered and made recommendations where appropriate:

- Disabled Adaptations Policy
- New Centre of Operations - Outline Business Case
- Highways Capital Works Programme



Monitoring and Progress Updates

Below are examples of reports received by the committee as part of its monitoring role:

- Highways Capital Work Programme
- Update on Flood Risk Management Plan
- Community Services Directorate Performance
- Fly Tipping Enforcement Activity
- Pest Control Treatment Service



Member Learning and Development

The following member briefing sessions, identified as part of the Committee's Forward Work Programme, were arranged, to which all members were invited to attend:

- Public Engagement Principles Litter and Fly Tipping Strategy
- Active Travel Network
- Highways - Potholes, Overbanding & Residential Highways Assessments

Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee

Overview from Chair



The Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee has had a productive year, retaining a consistent membership.

Committee members have continued to develop and demonstrate their understanding of the role of the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee and have collectively provided constructive and relevant input into agenda items. There has been appropriate challenge and questioning of officers with detailed responses and appropriate actions taking place. The Forward Work Programme has been structured and its content has been led by the committee.

To see the items that have been scrutinised during the year, the Forward Work Programmes can be accessed on the following link https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/media/u50hrnlj/corporate_overview_fwp_21-22.docx

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to committee members and officers for their valuable input and support this year.

Cllr Stewart Healy

Chair, Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee.

Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee

Chair: Councillor Stewart Healy

Vice-Chair: Councillor Martin Cook

Membership of the Committee:

Councillors: Peter Baldwin, Garth Collier, Malcolm Cross, Gareth A Davies, Lyn Elias, John Hill, Julie Holt, Hedley McCarthy, Clive Meredith, John P Morgan, Greg Paulsen, Tommy Smith, Steve Thomas.

Scrutiny Forward Work Programme - Key Highlights

The main areas of responsibility of the **Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee** is to develop and review strategies, plans and policies and monitor performance of the Council as a whole; and Organisational Development, Communication and Marketing, Equalities, Customers and Citizens, Welsh Language, Medium Term Financial Strategy. The key highlights this year have included:

- Continued to receive regular, in-depth on progress around implementation of the **Medium Term Financial Strategy** which provided the latest assessment of the Council's financial position over the next five years.
- Carried out the annual review of **Staff Attendance 2020/21** which ensured that the action plan continued to support improvement in attendance; and the **Capital Strategy Annual review** which provided Members with assurance that the Council's Corporate Plan priorities continue to be delivered.
- Continued to monitor the performance of the Council via the **Joint Finance and Performance report** as well as the **Commercial Strategy** and **Annual Health and Safety reports**.



Policies, Plans and Strategies

Below are examples of topics where the committee has considered and made recommendations where appropriate:

- Workforce Strategy
- Welsh Language Promotion Strategy
- CCTV Delivery Model Proposals



Monitoring and Progress Updates

Below are examples of reports received by the committee as part of its monitoring role:

- Joint Finance and Performance
- Communications Strategy
- Review of Staff Attendance
- Treasury Management
- Contracts Over £500,000



Member Learning and Development

The following member briefing sessions, identified as part of the Committee's Forward Work Programme, were arranged, to which all members were invited to attend:

- Socio Economic Duty
- Hate Crime Training
- Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly
- Resettlement Programme

Overview from Chair



This year has been a challenging year working remotely. I feel the committee has grown in so many ways, especially using the IT equipment. Also understanding about blended learning within the schools and that, as per a decision by Welsh Government, the usual comparative performance data of schools is no longer allowed in the public domain.

Once again we are seeing the standards raised in our schools and it is pleasing to note how many schools have been categorised as 'Green' across the borough, but there is still a lot of work to do, so that we can have confidence that we are giving every pupil in the Borough the best education they can possibly have.

Going forward, this will be a challenging time for scrutiny as we all have to get to grips with the new education framework from Welsh Government, as we are not only here to scrutinise but to be a critical friend and support education in every way that we can. It is a time of change with a new Director of Education and a new position of Head of School Improvement and Inclusion, I feel that we are in a good position but we must not sit on our laurels we must continue to support all learners in Blaenau Gwent.

To see the items that have been scrutinised during the year, the Forward Work Programmes can be accessed on the following link https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/media/xf5lotrr/education_and_learning_fwp_21-22.docx

Councillor Haydn Trollope
Chair, Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee

Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee

Chair: Councillor Haydn Trollope

Vice-Chair: Councillor Julie Holt

Membership of the Committee:

Councillors: Derrick Bevan, Garth Collier, Martin Cook, Malcolm Day, Lyn Elias, Stewart Healy, John Hill, Clive Meredith, John C Morgan, John P Morgan, Tommy Smith, Bob Summers, David Wilkshire.

Scrutiny Forward Work Programme - Key Highlights

The main areas of responsibility of the **Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee** is to develop and review strategies, plans and policies and monitor performance of School Improvement, Youth Service, Education Transformation, 21st Century Schools, School Admissions, Leisure and Libraries. The key highlights this year have included:

- Continued to receive regular, in-depth progress around implementation of the **Education Services Self Evaluation report** which provided the findings of the ongoing self evaluation processes undertaken within the Education Directorate; and the **Education Accessibility Strategy and Action Plan Review** which ensured that appropriate education provision and support services are available to meet the diverse needs of children, young people, parents and carers.
- Carried out the annual review of the **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan** which sets out the Council's Strategic approach and direction in the development and delivery of Welsh-medium provision and Welsh education.
- Continued to monitor the performance of the **Improving Schools Programme; Pupil Exclusions and School Attendance.**



Policies, Plans and Strategies

Below are examples of topics where the committee has considered and made recommendations where appropriate:

- Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy
- Inclusion Strategy
- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan



Monitoring and Progress Updates

Below are examples of reports received by the committee as part of its monitoring role:

- Aneurin Leisure Trust Performance
- Director's Report for Education Services
- Youth Service Performance
- Education and Schools ICT Strategy Project update
- Contracts Over £500,000



Member Learning and Development

The following member briefing sessions, identified as part of the Committee's Forward Work Programme, were arranged, to which all members were invited to attend:

- Annual Performance Coleg Gwent
- Estyn Preparedness
- Education Achievement Service

Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

Chair's Overview



Early in the Pandemic a great effort was made to be able to hold meetings virtually with the first virtual meeting held in September 2020, thanks to all concerned this worked extremely well and enabled council business to continue. As restrictions were eased meetings moved to the current hybrid system where members can choose to meet face to face if preferred.

The committee's work programme for the last year was varied and interesting with many subjects causing much debate and deliberation. Committee members representing all political parties and across wards showed commitment to the principles of scrutiny by robustly challenging reports and officers responding to these challenges in a professional way.

To see the items that have been scrutinised during the year, the Forward Work Programmes can be accessed on the following link https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/media/cu3ahgki/regeneration_fwp_21-22.docx

I would like to extend my thanks to members of the committee for participating in the scrutiny of the Regeneration portfolio and to officers for their comprehensive reports and the competent answers to members' questions. I would also like to thank the Executive Member and officers for the fortnightly review meetings which are of great benefit. My particular thanks goes to my Vice Chair, Councillor Gareth A Davies for his invaluable assistance.

***Cllr John Hill,
Chair Regeneration Scrutiny Committee***

Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

Chair: Councillor John Hill

Vice-Chair: Councillor Gareth A. Davies

Membership of the Committee:

Councillors: Martin Cook, Malcolm Cross, Gareth L Davies, Phill Edwards, Keith Hayden, Stewart Healy, Wayne Hodgins, Hedley McCarthy, John C Morgan, John P Morgan, Lee Parsons, Keri Rowson, Bernard Willis.

Scrutiny Forward Work Programme - Key Highlights

The main areas of responsibility of the **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee** is to develop and review strategies, plans and policies and monitor performance of Economic Development, Town Centre, Industrial Units, Destination Management, Energy, Local Development Plan. The key highlights this year have included:

- Continued to receive regular, in-depth progress around implementation of the **Decarbonisation Plan** which provided detail of how the Council would deliver its commitment to the ambition of the Welsh Public Sector to achieve net Zero by 2030; and the **Aneurin Bevan Destination Strategy** that complements the Blaenau Gwent Destination Management Plan (DMP) and will provide a framework for delivering local projects under the strategic umbrella of the DMP.
- Carried out reviews of the **Energy Prospectus** Members reviewed the activity undertaken during 2020/21 to address future energy challenges; and the **Investment in Micro-Hydro Development** Members received the latest position of the Micro-Hydro feasibility study and supported the next steps for this project.
- Continued to monitor the performance of the **Hybrid Units and Hwb Bocs** and **Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme**.



Policies, Plans and Strategies

Below are examples of topics where the committee has considered and made recommendations where appropriate:

- Renewable Energy Generation Project
- Ebbw Vale Placemaking Plan
- Levelling Up Funding Bid Request
- Transforming Towns Empty Property Fund



Monitoring and Progress Updates

Below are examples of reports received by the committee as part of its monitoring role:

- Decarbonisation Plan
- Regeneration Directorate Performance
- Energy Prospectus Annual Review
- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Quarterly Performance



Member Learning and Development

The following member briefing sessions, identified as part of the Committee's Forward Work Programme, were arranged, to which all members were invited to attend:

- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal
- STEM Facilitation Pilot Project
- Replacement LDP - Renewable Energy Assessment

Social Services Scrutiny Committee

Chair's Overview



The Social Services Scrutiny Committee has continued its work to scrutinise and challenge a diverse and wide-ranging work programme utilising the skills and experience developed by members over the past five years, notable examples include *Annual and Quarterly Director reports, National Adoption Service Annual report, Regional Partnership Board and the Children and Community Grant.*

Through thorough questioning and deliberation, the Committee made a number of key recommendations that were subsequently agreed by the Executive Committee, the committee also received a number of performance monitoring reports.

To see the items that have been scrutinised during the year, the Forward Work Programmes can be accessed on the following link https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/media/scpfxpzzq/social_services_fwp_21-22.docx

I would like to thank all Members of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee and Officers from the Department for their hard work and commitment in what has been another very challenging year.

Cllr Steve Thomas

Chair, Social Services Scrutiny Committee

Social Services Scrutiny Committee

Chair: Councillor Steve Thomas

Vice-Chair: Councillor Keri Rowson

Membership of the Committee:

Councillors: Derrick Bevan, Garth Collier, Gareth A Davies, Gareth L Davies, Phill Edwards, Keith Hayden, Wayne Hodgins, Julie Holt, Mandy Moore, Greg Paulsen, Tim Sharrem, Tommy Smith, Bob Summers.

Scrutiny Forward Work Programme - Key Highlights

The main areas of responsibility of the **Social Services Scrutiny Committee** is to develop and review strategies, plans and policies and monitor performance of Children's Services, Adult Services, Information Advice and Assistance, Integrated Children's Centre. The key highlights this year have included:

- Continued to receive regular, in-depth progress around implementation of the **Safe Reduction of Children Looked After Strategy** Members discussed the progress made in relation to the implementation of the Strategy for 2020-2025.
- Carried out annual reviews of the **Corporate Parenting Board** which informed Members of the progress made by the Board throughout 2021 to improve outcomes and services for Children Looked After.
- Continued to monitor the performance of the **National Adoption Service** and **Regional Partnership Board**.



Policies, Plans and Strategies

Below are examples of topics where the committee has considered and made recommendations where appropriate:

- Proposals to develop a Blaenau Gwent My Support Team
- Development of a Caerphilly / Blaenau Gwent collaboration in providing Legal Services for Children's Services



Monitoring and Progress Updates

Below are examples of reports received by the committee as part of its monitoring role:

- Annual Report of the Director of Social Services
- Children and Communities Grant
- Regional Partnership Board



Member Learning and Development

The following member briefing sessions, identified as part of the Committee's Forward Work Programme, were arranged, to which all members were invited to attend:

- Welsh Government White Paper on Rebalancing of Care Consultation
- Work of the Placement Team supporting Foster Carers

Monitoring Member Attendance at Scrutiny Committee Meetings

The table below shows a comparison of the number of meetings held and member attendance from **1st June 2021 to 17th March 2022** compared to a similar period in the year 2020/21.

Member Attendance at Scrutiny Committees							
	Agreed Committee Membership	Total Members Due to Attend June 21 to Mar 22	Actual Members in Attendance June 21 to Mar 22	% of Members in attendance June 21–Mar 22	% of Members in attendance Sept 20-Apr 21	Number of Meetings Held June 21 to Mar 22	Number of Meetings Held Sep 20 to Apr 21
Community Services	15	90	80	89	79	6	7
Corporate Overview	15	105	85	81	75	7	5
Education and Learning	15	105	99	94	83	7	7
Regeneration	15	105	95	90	80	7	8
Social Services	15	60	49	82	79	4	6
Total	75	465	408	87	79	31	33
Joint Safeguarding	23	69	48	70	67	2	2
Joint Budget	32	160	123	77	75	5	4
PSB	15	45	32	71	77	3	2
Total	70	250	203	81	75	10	8
Overall	145	715	611	85	78	41	41

* 8 meetings were scheduled to be held during late March / April 2022, however, these meetings were cancelled owing to the pre-election period

How the public can get involved in the Scrutiny Process

Members of the public are welcome to attend any Committee meeting to observe proceedings (unless there is an exempt item), agenda are published one week in advance of the meeting, on the Council's website. However, during 2021/22 owing to COVID-19 social distancing requirements, meetings have been held virtually via Microsoft Teams and recorded and uploaded to the council website, normally by the following day, to enable members of the public to view the meetings online.

From the March 2022 cycle, Members of the public will be able to continue to observe meetings virtually or physically at the General Offices adhering to any COVID restrictions the council deems necessary at any particular time.

In the new Municipal Year 2022/23, the public will be able to watch the Committees live using a live stream service on the Council's website, or to view recordings of the meetings after the event.

The Council is currently preparing a Participation Strategy to include ways in which members of the public can engage in the democratic process.

Agendas, reports and minutes of meetings can be found on the Council's Website: [Councillors and Committees | Blaenau Gwent CBC](#)

Members of the public can suggest items for the Scrutiny Committees either by writing, emailing or phoning the Democratic Team. Information can also be found on the Council's Website: [Blaenau Gwent CBC: Get Involved with Democracy \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](#)

All contact information can be found at the end of this document.

Future Planned Developments for Scrutiny and the wider democratic process

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act

The Local Government and Elections Act 2021 contains a number of provisions to promote diversity, involvement and participation in council democratic arrangements. Some of these provisions include:

- Encouraging local people to participate in decision making
- Development of a Participation Strategy
- The electronic broadcasting of meetings and multi location meetings
- A review of the council's petition scheme
- Job sharing for members of the Executive

The Council is looking to implement the required areas from the Act and has included this within an implementation plan which in future can be monitored by the Democratic Services Committee as appropriate.

Democratic arrangements 2022 onwards

As the current political cycle will end in March 2022, and in readiness for the Election in May 2022, the Council is looking to review its democratic processes.

The Council will see a reduction in Elected Members from 42 to 33 prompting the consideration of a number of areas such as, committee size, committee remits, committee cycle and support to the committee process.

These new areas will be presented to the new Members for their consideration and consultation prior to implementation in the 2022/23 year.

Public Service Board

As part of the Council's partnership responsibilities under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act there is a requirement to scrutinise the Public Service Board. The Board is made up of a number of statutory and non-statutory partner organisations with responsibility for the development and implementation of the Wellbeing Plan.

In early 2022, a decision was made to establish a Regional Public Service Board covering the areas of Gwent (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen) as well as a Regional Public Service Board Scrutiny Committee. Arrangements for this committee are still in development but will be implemented within the 2022/23 year. It has been agreed up to 2023 for Local Partnership Scrutiny Committees to also remain in place with a review to be undertaken at that time.

Contact Information

If you would like to find out more about the work we have undertaken or how to become involved in future Scrutiny activity please contact:

Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships	Service Manager Performance and Democratic (Deputy Head of Democratic Services)	Scrutiny and Democratic Officer / Advisor
Sarah King	Gemma Wasley	Elizabeth Thomas
Tel: 07870 402616	Tel: 07977158983	Tel: (01495) 354795
Email: Sarah.king@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk	Email: Gemma.wasley@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk	Email: Liz.thomas@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

<p>You can contact your local Councillor and talk to them about Scrutiny.</p> <p>Contact details for Councillors can be found on our website at Blaenau Gwent CBC: Councillor Directory (blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)</p> <p>Address: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council General Offices Steelworks Road Tyllwyn Ebbw Vale NP23 6AA</p> <p>Web: Blaenau Gwent CBC: Blaenau Gwent (blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)</p>	<p>Additional documents which may be of interest to you can be found on our website.</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan 2018-23 Well-beingPlan(Layout)-D8.pdf (blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)</p> <p>Corporate Plan 2020 - 2022 Final Corporate Plan July 2020.pdf (blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)</p> <p>Council Minutes, Agendas and Reports Blaenau Gwent CBC: Council Minutes, Agendas & Reports (blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)</p>
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Agenda Item 31

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 11.07.2022

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 11.07.2022

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **21st July, 2022**

Report Subject: **Support Arrangements for Members on Outside Bodies**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, - Leader of the Council/
Executive Member Corporate Overview and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Sarah King, Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	07/07/22						21/07/22	

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present proposals for enhanced reporting arrangements for Members sitting on all Outside Bodies.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The reporting arrangements are being proposed in order support the governance arrangements of the Council, by offering a transfer of knowledge of the work being undertaken with Outside Bodies and providing this information back to both Officers and Members.
 - 2.2 Providing appropriate support for Members sitting on Outside Bodies will ensure Members can provide an effective and valuable contribution in these roles. Many of the Outside Bodies have a direct role in terms of providing services and/or activities for the communities.
 - 2.3 In 2017, Council approved for arrangements to be put in place for Members sitting on Outside Bodies. This work was undertaken by considering national guidance and arrangements in other local authorities. At the time, these arrangements were only put in place for Members sitting on Outside Bodies that represented either Strategic Partners or bodies whose services had a direct impact on Blaenau Gwent, including:
 - Brecon Beacons National Park
 - Gwent Police and Crime Panel
 - Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd
 - South Wales Fire Authority
 - 2.4 This report proposes that arrangements are put in place for all Outside Bodies, with enhanced arrangements put in place for the bodies identified as having a strategic significance to the Council. Further to the list above it is suggested that this is broadened to include:
 - Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

- Gwent Archives Joint Committee
- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal – Regional Scrutiny Committee
- E.A.S. - Education Achievement Service Company Board
- SRS
- Gwent Regional Partnership Board

2.6 **Proposed Arrangements**

2.6.1 **Strategic Bodies**

For the Outside Bodies identified above, it is suggested that the representing member completes a template which is then reported to Council on a quarterly basis in order to provide communication/feedback to all Members. The template is found at appendix 1.

For the Strategic Bodies, it is suggested that the following support arrangements are put in place:

- A short pre-meeting is held between the Member(s) and relevant lead officer to discuss the agenda and any particular points of interest (Member(s) attend the meeting);
- A short post-meeting is held between the Member(s) and lead officer to de-brief, if required.

2.6.2 **All Other Outside Bodies**

The representing member to complete a brief template in order to provide information on the work being undertaken by the outside body. This template will be reported to Council on a 6 monthly basis. The template is found at appendix 2.

2.7 *Tai Calon (please note, owing to the nature of the information provided by this Outside Body it is not appropriate for formal feedback arrangements to be put in place).*

2.8 Prior to the AGM Part 2, an initial review of the list of Outside Bodies was undertaken to ascertain if member representation is still required. The reporting arrangements suggested within this report will provide additional evidence as to whether this list can be further reviewed.

2.9 Member Training on the requirements for Members sitting on Outside Bodies is included as part of the member induction and refresher programme to inform Members of the role and responsibilities of Members on Outside Bodies as well as the support and feedback arrangements.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Recommendation**

For Council to approve the enhanced arrangements for Outside Bodies, as outlined within the report.

3.2 **Option One – Strategic Outside Bodies**

- Agree the set of Strategic Outside Bodies in paragraph 2.4; or
- Make amendment to the suggested Strategic Body list.

3.3 **Option 2 – Reporting Arrangements for Strategic Outside Bodies**

- Agree for the enhanced template to be completed by Members represented on the Strategic Outside Bodies, found at appendix 1;
- Make amendments to this template; or
- Not approve the template.

Option 3 – Reporting Arrangements for All Other Outside Bodies

- Agree for the brief template to be completed by Members represented on the other Outside Bodies, found at appendix 1;
- Make amendments to this template; or
- Not approve the template.

Option 4 – Reporting Timelines

- Agree for the Members represented on the Strategic Outside Bodies to report to Council twice per year;
- Agree for the Members represented the other Outside Bodies to report to Council once per year; or
- Suggest a new reporting framework.

Option 5 – Review of the Outside Bodies

Agree for there to be a further review of the current outside bodies following feedback from Members as outlined above.

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

Providing appropriate support for Members sitting on Outside Bodies will ensure they can provide an effective and valuable contribution in these roles. Many of the Outside Bodies have a direct role in terms of providing services and/or activities for the communities.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

There are no new financial implications arising from these proposals.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Members are fully liable for the decisions they take whilst sitting as Members on Outside Bodies. However, it would be prudent for the Council to ensure that its appointees are fully briefed on their new roles and responsibilities and are well supported in them. This could help avoid any reputational damage to individuals or the Council. Support to Members sitting on the Strategic Outside Bodies is identified above under paragraph 2.6.1.

5.2.1

Putting in place these new support arrangements also provides the full Council (and lead officers) with an opportunity to receive feedback on the progress being made in these partner organisations through a formal route.

5.3 ***Legal***

There are no legal implications for implementing these reporting arrangements however, Members will need to be mindful to not provide any commercially sensitive information into the public domain.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

The proposals suggest that lead officers meet with Members for short pre and post meetings, so this will have an impact on capacity but it should be kept to a minimum. It should also help the officers as they will have a better understanding of how their partner organisations are operating and progressing.

6. ***Supporting Evidence***

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Following the development of arrangements in 2017 further amendments have been made to the process to support the Council's governance framework.

6.1.1 A review of the number of Outside Bodies has been undertaken and it is proposed that a further review in undertaken later in the year.

6.1.2 Many Outside Bodies provide relevant training for Members.

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

Members will become more knowledgeable of the work being undertaken by Outside Bodies and the potential impacts on Blaenau Gwent.

6.2.1 By putting arrangements in place for reporting in to Council, all activity will be detailed and available within the public domain.

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

The arrangements will enable for information sharing with Members and officers involving them in any future discussions as necessary.

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

Following the introduction of these new arrangements Members should feel better able to fulfil their roles on the Outside Bodies and have an increased confidence in making well informed judgements and decisions in the future. It will also help to ensure a consistent approach to these different roles by all Council Members.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The new arrangements and training will also help to minimise the risks around Members liabilities on Outside Bodies and any adverse reputational

damage to individuals and the Council by making sure Members fully understand their roles and responsibilities and where they can go to for further information and/or support.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The nature of having Members represented on Outside Bodies support collaborative working.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

Officers have consulted guidance from the Welsh Local Government Association and other local authorities who have previously briefed Members in this area.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

Members will need to be mindful of how they attend meetings of the Outside Bodies and if there are opportunities to meet virtually and to receive documentation via email.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment***

There is no anticipated negative impact on the protected characteristics.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 *State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements*

As identified within the report.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 – Enhanced Template for Members Sitting on Strategic Outside Bodies*
- *Appendix 2 – Brief Template for Members Sitting on Other Outside Bodies*

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Committee:

Date of meeting:

Report Subject: **Member Feedback from Outside Bodies**

Portfolio Holder:

Report Submitted by:

1. **Purpose of the Report**

To provide feedback from the last meeting of the *(relevant Outside Body)* giving an update on key issues and information of relevance to the Council.

2. **Background**

Arrangements have been put in place for Members to provide feedback in relation to any Outside Bodies in which they are represented.

These arrangements have been put in place in order to support the governance arrangements of the Council, by offering a transfer of knowledge of the work being undertaken with Outside Bodies and providing this information back to both Officers and Members.

Providing appropriate support for Members sitting on Outside Bodies will ensure Members can provide an effective and valuable contribution in these roles. Many of the Outside Bodies have a direct role in terms of providing services and/or activities for the communities.

It has been agreed that the majority of Outside Bodies will provide information on the work being undertaken by the Outside Body on a 6 monthly basis using an established template.

There will be a number of Outside Bodies however that will operate more formal reporting arrangements. These Outside Bodies represent the more Strategic Partners who have a direct impact on Blaenau Gwent. These are:
Brecon Beacons National Park
Gwent Police and Crime Panel
Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd
South Wales Fire Authority
Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee
Gwent Archives Joint Committee
Cardiff Capital Region City Deal – Regional Scrutiny Committee
E.A.S. - Education Achievement Service Company Board
SRS

3. **Feedback Information**

Role of Member on the Outside Body:

Date of Meeting:

Key Issues to feedback:

(this will not include any exempt items or those that are confidential)

- *Communications/Messages*
- *Key Decisions taken by the Board*
- *Items for consideration by the Council*
- *Future items for discussion*

Member Feedback from Outside Bodies

Outside Body	Representing Member	Date/s of Meetings	Key Messages / Discussions / Decisions from the Meetings
Adult Learning Wales	Scrutiny Chair – People		
Age Concern Gwent Executive Committee Membership	Executive Member – People & Social Services		
The Alliance	Executive Member – Place & Regeneration Scrutiny Chair – Place		
Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council - Local Committee	1. Councillor H. Trollope 2. Councillor J. Thomas 3. Vacancy		
Aneurin Bevan Health Board - Independent Review Panel to meet Continuing Health Care Needs	Scrutiny Chair – People		
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board – Stakeholder Reference Group	Executive Member – People & Social Services		
Aneurin Leisure Trust – Community Chest Panel	Councillor C. Bainton		
Book Council of Wales	Councillor S. Thomas		
Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Cabinet	Leader of the Council		
CSC (Compound Semi Conductor Board(Part of IQE Investment through City Deal))	Executive Member – Place & Regeneration Executive Member – Place & Environment		
CCR Regional Transport Authority	Executive Member – Place & Regeneration		

Member Feedback from Outside Bodies

Duke of Beaufort's Breconshire Estate Commoner's Association	Councillor M. Cross		
Joint Executive Group (JEG)	Executive Member – People & Education		
Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	Councillor L. Winnett Councillor T. Smith		
G.A.V.O. - Executive Committee	Executive Member – People & Social Services Councillor H. Trollope		
G.A.V.O Local Committee	Executive Member – People & Social Services Councillor H. Trollope		
G.A.V.O. - Be Proud of your Community Gwent Awards Formerly - Gwent Best Kept Village Committee	Councillor E. Jones		
Gwent Regional Partnership Board	Executive Member – People & Social Services		
Local Government Association	Leader Deputy Leader		
Joint Council for Wales Employers Side	Executive Member – Corporate Overview & Performance		
Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust	Councillor M Cross		
National Adoption Service Governance Board	Executive Member – People & Social Services		

Member Feedback from Outside Bodies

Patrol Adjudication Joint Committee	Scrutiny Chair – Place Councillor M. Cross Substitute: Scrutiny Vice-Chair - Place Councillor R. Leadbeater		
Reserve Forces & Cadets Association for Wales – Local Government Representation	Councillor D. Bevan		
Rural Development Programme – Local Action Group	Councillor G. Humphreys		
SRS Strategic Board	Councillor J. Gardner		
Vision in Wales (formerly Wales Council for the Blind)	Executive Member – People & Social Services Scrutiny Chair – People		
Welsh Local Government Association	Leader of the Council		
WLGA Executive Board	Leader of the Council		
W.L.G.A. Council and Voting	Leader of the Council Substitute: Deputy Leader of the Council		
W.L.G.A. – All Wales Social Services Policy Group	Executive Member – People & Social Services		
W.L.G.A. - Environment Champion	Executive Member – Place & Environment		
W.L.G.A. - - Finance Working Group	Officer Appointments Chief Officer Resources Ms R. Hayden		

Member Feedback from Outside Bodies

WLGA - Corporate Affairs – Public Private Partnership Ltd – Management Board	Member Appointment Executive Member – Corporate Overview & Performance		
WLGA - Cultural Affairs & Leisure – South Wales Regional Committee	Executive Member – Place & Environment		
Wales Council for Deaf People	Executive Member – People & Social Services		
Welsh Joint Education Committee	Executive Member – People & Education		
Youth Offending Service - Local Management Board	Executive Member – People & Social Services		

Agenda Item 32

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 07.07.2022

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 06.07.2022

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **21st July, 2022**

Report Subject: **Schedule of Members Remuneration 2022-23**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas
Leader of the Council/Executive Member –
Corporate Overview & Performance**

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)
	✓						21/07/22	

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To consider and agree the Schedule of Members Remuneration for 2022-23.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 To comply with Part 8 (sections 141 to 160) and schedules 2 and 3 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) regulations the Council is required to produce annually a schedule of payments it intends to make to its members and co-opted members.
 - 2.2 The proposed schedule for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is provided at Appendix 1.
 - 2.3 This report outlines the information that the Schedule should contain including the arrangements for the payment of salaries, allowances and fees to all members and co-opted members.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 Option 1 (**preferred option**) – to agree and publish the Schedule of Members Remuneration for 2022/23.
 - 3.2. Option 2 – to make suggestions to amend the Schedule although the process is prescriptive in line with the legislation quoted above.
4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 In agreeing and publishing the Schedule of Members Remuneration, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is complying with its statutory responsibilities under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the requirements of the IRPW aligning to the priority of being an efficient Council.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 *Impact Upon Budget*

5.1.1 Option 1 - It is estimated that the publication costs will be approximately £200.

There are no other direct financial implications as a result of this report - the remuneration levels of Members of the Council for 2022/23 are identified in the attached Appendix 1.

5.1.2 Option 2 - No publication costs will be incurred under this option.

5.2 *Risk*

5.2.1 Option 1 – There are no significant risks for the Council with this option.

5.2.2 Option 2 (**preferred option**)– Non-compliance with the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) could result in reputational damage for the Council.

To mitigate this risk, agreeing and publishing the Schedule of Members Remuneration is proposed (option 1).

5.3 *Legal*

5.3.1 **Option 1** – This option ensures the Council complies with statutory responsibilities.

5.3.2 **Option 2** – This would result in non-compliance within the statutory requirements.

5.4 *Human Resources*

5.4.1 There are no Human Resources implications that impact upon the report other than the time required to produce and maintain the Schedule of Members Remuneration throughout the year.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

6.1.2 The Schedule should confirm that the Council's maximum limit of Senior Salaries has not been exceeded and include a declaration of whether:

- A statement of the basic responsibility of a councillor is in place.
- Role descriptions of senior salary office holders is in place.
- Records are kept of councillor attendance.

- 6.1.3 It is also statutory to set out arrangements for the payment of salaries, allowances and fees to all members and co-opted members and must include a statement of allowable expenses together with details of the duties for which they may be claimed.
- 6.1.4 The Council must as soon as practicable after determining its Schedule for the year and no later than 31st July of the year to which the Schedule relates, make arrangements for its publication within the Council's area and in addition forward the Schedule to the IRPW.
- 6.2 *Expected Outcome for the public*
- 6.2.1 Publication provides taxpayers and citizens with information about the remuneration of their elected members.
- 6.3 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*
- 6.3.1 The IRPW consulted with Councils and elected members prior to determining remuneration levels to be paid, this included visiting all 22 Welsh councils
- 6.3.2 The Schedule of Members Remuneration will be published on the Councils website.
- 6.4 *Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)*
- 6.4.1 It is a requirement that similar information is published on an annual basis.
- 6.5 *Preventative focus*
- 6.5.1 Not relevant to this report.
- 6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working*
- 6.6.1 Not relevant to this report.
- 6.7 *Integration (across service areas)*
- 6.7.1 Not relevant to this report.
- 6.8 *EqIA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)*
- 6.8.1 Not relevant to this report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 *State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements*

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 – Schedule of Members Remuneration 2022/23*



Appendix 1 2022
2023 English.pdf

- *IRPW Annual Report 2022/23*
<https://gov.wales/independent-remuneration-panel-wales-annual-report-2022-2023>

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

MEMBERS' SCHEDULE OF REMUNERATION

This Scheme is made under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 with regard to Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Regulations which apply to payments made to members and co-opted members of local authorities.

1. Basic Salary

- 1.1 A Basic Salary shall be paid to each elected Member of the Authority.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Regulations, the rate of the Basic Salary shall be reviewed annually as determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
- 1.3 Where the term of office of a Member begins or ends other than at the beginning or end of a year, their entitlement to the Basic Salary will be pro-rata.
- 1.4 No more than one Basic Salary is payable to a Member of the Authority.

2. Senior Salaries & Civic Salaries

- 2.1 Members occupying specific posts shall be paid a Senior Salary as set out in **Schedule 1**.
- 2.2 In accordance with the Regulations, the rates of Senior Salaries and Civic Salaries shall be reviewed annually as determined by the Annual or Supplementary Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
- 2.3 Only one Senior Salary or Civic Salary is payable to a Member of the Authority.
- 2.4 A Member of the Authority cannot be paid a Senior Salary and a Civic Salary.
- 2.5 All Senior and Civic Salaries are paid inclusive of Basic Salary.
- 2.6 A Senior Salary may not be paid to more than the number of members specified by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in its Annual Report and cannot exceed fifty percent of the total membership of the authority, except to include a temporary Senior Salary office holder providing temporary cover for the family absence of the appointed office holder.
- 2.7 A Member of the Authority in receipt of a Band 1 or Band 2 Senior Salary **cannot** receive a salary from any National Park Authority (NPA) or Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) for which they have been nominated.
- 2.8 Where the term of Senior Salary or Civic Salary of a Member begins or ends other than at the beginning or end of a year, their entitlement to the Salary will be pro-rata.

3. Election to Forgo Entitlement to Allowance

- 3.1 A Member may, by notice in writing delivered to the Proper Officer of the authority, personally elect to forgo any part of their entitlement to any salary, allowance or fee payable under this Scheme from the date set out in the notice.

4. Suspension of a Member

- 4.1 Where a Member of the Authority is suspended or partially suspended from their responsibilities or duties as a Member of the Authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 (Conduct of Members), or regulations made under the Act, the part of the Basic Salary payable to them in respect of that period for which they are suspended will be withheld by the Authority (Section 155 (1) of the Measure).
- 4.2 Where a Member in receipt of a Senior Salary is suspended or partially suspended from being a Member of the Authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 (Conduct of Members), or regulations made under the Act, the Authority must not make payments of the Member's Senior Salary for the duration of the suspension (Section 155 (1) of the Measure). If the partial suspension relates only to the specific responsibility element of the payment, the Member may retain the Basic Salary.

5. Repayment of salaries, allowances or fees

- 5.1 Where payment of any salary, allowance or fee has been made to a Member of the Authority or Co-opted Member in respect of any period during which the Member concerned:
- (a) is suspended or partially suspended from that Member's or Co-opted Member's duties or responsibilities in accordance with Part 3 of the 2000 Act or regulations made under that Act;
 - (b) ceases to be a Member of the Authority or Co-opted Member; or
 - (c) is in any other way not entitled to receive a salary, allowance or fee in respect of that period,

The Authority will require that such part of the allowance as relates to any such period be repaid.

6. Payments

- 6.1 Payments of all allowances will be made by the Chief Officer Resources by direct bank credit in instalments of one-twelfth of the Member's annual entitlement on the 28th day of each month.
- 6.2 Where payment has resulted in a Member receiving more than their entitlement to salaries, allowances or fees the Authority will require that such part that is overpayment be repaid.
- 6.3 All payments are subject to the appropriate tax and National Insurance deductions.

7. Contribution towards Costs of Care and Personal Assistance

- 7.1 Contribution towards Costs of Care and Personal Assistance shall be paid to a Member or Co-opted Member, who has caring responsibility for dependent children or

adults, or a personal care requirement, provided the Member incurs expenses in the provision of such care whilst undertaking 'approved' council duties.

- 7.2 Contribution towards Costs of Care and Personal Assistance applies in respect of a dependant under 16 years of age, or a minor or adult who normally lives with the member as part of their family and who cannot be left unsupervised for whom the Member or Co-opted Member can show that care is required. If a Member or Co-opted Member has more than one dependant the Member may claim more than one allowance, provided the Member can demonstrate a need to make separate arrangements for care.
- 7.3 Eligible Members may claim contribution towards costs of care and personal assistance for actual and receipted costs as set out in **Schedule 1**. All claims for the contribution towards costs of care and personal assistance should be made in writing to Democratic Services detailing times, dates and reasons for claim. Receipts are required for both informal and formal care arrangements.

8. Family Absence

- 8.1 Members are entitled under the provisions of the Family Absence for Members of Local Authorities (Wales) Regulations 2013 to a period of family absence, during which if they satisfy the prescribed conditions they are entitled to be absent from authority meetings.
- 8.2 When taking family absence Members are entitled to retain a basic salary irrespective of their attendance record immediately preceding the commencement of the family absence.
- 8.3 Should a senior salary holder be eligible for family absence they will be able to continue to receive their senior salary for the duration of the absence.
- 8.4 If the authority agrees that it is necessary to make a substitute appointment to cover the family absence of a senior salary holder the Member substituting will be eligible if the authority so decides to be paid a senior salary.
- 8.5 If the paid substitution results in the authority exceeding its maximum number of senior salaries, an addition to the maximum will be allowed for the duration of the substitution.

9. Co-optees' payments

- 9.1 A daily fee (with a provision for half day payments) shall be paid to Co-optees, provided they are statutory Co-optees with voting rights.
- 9.2 Co-optees' payments will be capped at a maximum of the equivalent of 10 full days a year for each committee to which an individual may be co-opted.
- 9.3 Payments will take into consideration travelling time to and from the place of the meeting, reasonable time for pre meeting preparation and length of meeting (up to the maximum of the daily rate).

- 9.4 The Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance (Monitoring Officer) is designated as the “appropriate officer” and will determine preparation time, travelling time and length of meeting, the fee will be paid on the basis of this determination.
- 9.5 The Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance (Monitoring Officer) can determine in advance whether a meeting is programmed for a full day and the fee will be paid on the basis of this determination even if the meeting finishes before four hours has elapsed.
- 9.6 A half day meeting is defined as up to 4 hours.
- 9.7 A full day meeting is defined as over 4 hours.
- 9.8 The daily and half day fee for the Chairpersons of the Standards Committee and Audit Committee, as determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, is set out in **Schedule 1**.
- 9.9 The daily and half day fee for other statutory Co-optees with voting rights, as determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, is set out in **Schedule 1**.

10. Travel and Subsistence Allowances

10.1 General Principles

- 10.2 Members and Co-opted Members are entitled to claim travelling expenses when travelling on the Authority’s business for ‘approved duties’ as set out in **Schedule 2**. Where Members travel on the Authority’s business they are expected to travel by the most cost effective means. In assessing cost effectiveness regard will be given to journey time. A Member who does not travel by the most cost effective means may have their claim abated by an appropriate amount.
- 10.3 Where possible Members should share transport.
- 10.4 The distance claimed for mileage should be the shortest reasonable journey by road from the point of departure to the point at which the duty is performed, and similarly from the duty point to the place of return.
- 10.5 The rates of Members’ Travel and Subsistence Allowances are set out in **Schedule 3** and are subject to annual review by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
- 10.6 Where a Member is suspended or partially suspended from their responsibilities or duties as a Member of the Authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 (Conduct of Members), or regulations made under the Act, any travel and subsistence allowances payable to them in respect of that period for which they are suspended or partially suspended must be withheld by the Authority.

11. Travel by Private Vehicle

- 11.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales has determined that the maximum travel rates payable should be the rates set out by Her Majesty’s Revenue & Customs

for the use of private cars, motor cycles and pedal cycles plus any passenger supplement.

11.2 The mileage rates for private vehicles as determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales are set out in **Schedule 3**.

11.3 Where a Member makes use of their private vehicle for approved duty purposes, the vehicle must be insured for business use. Proof of appropriate insurance must be provided to the Authority on request.

12. Travel by Public Transport

12.1 Rail or Coach Travel

Unless otherwise authorised rail tickets will be second-class.

12.2 Taxi Fares

Taxi fares will only be reimbursed where their use has been authorised for cases of urgency, where no public transport is reasonably available, or a Member has a particular personal need. Re-imburement will be upon receipt only.

12.3 Air Fare

Travel by air is permissible if it is the most cost effective means of transport. Authorisation of the Head of Democratic Services is required and tickets will be purchased directly by the Council.

12.4 Travel Abroad

Travel abroad on the Authority's business will only be permitted where authorised by Head of Democratic Services. Democratic Services will arrange travel and accommodation.

12.5 Other Travel Expenses

Members are entitled to reimbursement of toll fees, parking fees, overnight garaging and other necessary travel associated expenses. Re-imburement will be upon receipt only.

13. Overnight Accommodation

13.1 Overnight stays will only be permitted where the Authority's business extends to two days or more, or the venue is at such a distance that early morning or late night travel would be unreasonable. All overnight stays must receive prior authorisation from the Head of Democratic Services.

13.2 Overnight accommodation will be booked by the Council. Wherever possible the overnight accommodation will be pre-paid or invoiced.

13.3 Direct booking of overnight accommodation by a Member will only be permitted in the event of an emergency. Reimbursement will only be made upon the production of a

receipt and will be at a level deemed reasonable and not in excess of the rates set out in **Schedule 3**.

14 Subsistence Allowance

- 14.1 The day subsistence rate to meet the costs of meals and refreshments in connection with approved duties (including breakfast when not provided as part of overnight accommodation) is set out in **Schedule 3**. The maximum daily rate covers a 24 hour period and can be claimed for any meal that is relevant, providing such a claim is supported by receipt(s)
- 14.2 No provision is made for subsistence claims within the Authority.

15. Claims and Payments

- 15.1 A claim for travel and subsistence allowances must be made in writing within two months of the end of the calendar month in which entitlement to allowances arises and must be accompanied by the relevant receipts.
- 15.2 Allowances will be paid by the Chief Officer Resources by direct bank credit.

16. Pensions

- 16.1 The Authority shall enable its Members who are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

17 Supporting the work of Authority Members

- 17.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales expects Members to be provided with adequate support to carry out their duties and that the support provided should take account of the specific needs of individual Members. The Authority's Democratic Services Committee is required to review the level of support provided to Members and should take proposals for reasonable support to the full council.
- 17.2 All elected Members and Co-opted Members should be provided with adequate telephone, email and internet facilities to give electronic access to appropriate information.
- 17.3 Such support should be without cost to any Member. Deductions must not be made from Members' salaries as a contribution towards the cost of support which the Authority has decided is necessary for the effectiveness and or efficiency of Members.

18 Compliance

- 18.1 In accordance with the Regulations, the Authority must comply with the requirements of Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in respect of the monitoring and publication of payments made to Members and Co-opted Members as set out in **Schedule 4**.

Members and Co-opted Members are reminded that expense claims are subject to both internal and external audit.

SCHEDULE 1

SCHEDULE OF REMUNERATION 2022-23

MEMBERS ENTITLED TO BASIC SALARY	ANNUAL AMOUNT OF BASIC SALARY
<p>The following named elected members of the authority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Keith Chaplin2. Julie Holt3. Ross Leadbeater4. Godfrey Thomas5. Dean Woods6. John P Morgan7. Jules Gardner8. John Hill9. Derrick Bevan10. George Humphreys11. Malcolm Day12. Dai Davies *13. Jen Morgan14. Carl Bainton15. Jacqueline Thomas16. Lee Parsons17. Peter Baldwin18. Sonia Behr19. Gareth A Davies20. David Wilkshire21. Dianne Rowberry22. Ellen Jones <p><i>* Denotes relinquished amount of £3,133.08 per annum</i></p>	£16,800

	SENIOR SALARIES ENTITLEMENTS (includes basic salary)		ANNUAL AMOUNT OF SENIOR SALARY
	ROLE	MEMBER	
1.	Leader / Executive Member – Corporate Overview & Performance	Stephen Thomas	£53,550 (Relinquished £180 per annum)
2.	Deputy Leader / Executive Member – Place & Environment	Helen Cunningham	£37,485
3.	Executive Member – Place & Regeneration	John C Morgan	£32,130 (Relinquished £125.04 per annum)
4.	Executive Member – People & Education	Sue Edmunds	£32,130
5.	Executive Member – People & Social Services	Hayden Trollope	£32,130
6.	Chairperson of People Scrutiny Committee	Tommy Smith	£25,593
7.	Chairperson of Place Scrutiny Committee	Malcolm Cross	£25,593 (Relinquished £125.04 per annum)
8.	Chairperson of Partnerships Scrutiny Committee	Wayne Hodgins	£25,593
9.	Chairperson of Planning Committee/General Licensing/Statutory Licensing Committees	Lisa Winnett	£25,593 (Relinquished £90 per annum)
10.	Leader of the Opposition / Chairperson of Corporate & Performance Scrutiny Committee	Joanna Wilkins	£25,593
11.	Presiding Member	Chris Smith	£25,593
12.	Not Used		
13.	Not Used		
14.	Not Used		
15.	Not Used		
16.	Not Used		

SENIOR SALARIES ENTITLEMENTS (includes basic salary)		ANNUAL AMOUNT OF SENIOR SALARY
ROLE	MEMBER	
A maximum of 16 senior salaries for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council may be paid and this has not been exceeded.		

ENTITLEMENT TO CIVIC SALARIES		ANNUAL AMOUNT OF CIVIC SALARY
ROLE	MEMBER	
Civic Head (Mayor or Chair)	Not Used	N/A
Deputy Civic Head (Deputy Mayor or Chair)	Not Used	N/A

ENTITLEMENT AS STATUTORY CO-OPTees		AMOUNT OF CO-OPTees ALLOWANCES
ROLE	MEMBER	
Chairperson Of Standards Committee	R. Alexander	£268 Daily Fee £134 ½ Day Fee
Chairperson of Governance & Audit Committee	To be determined	£268 Daily Fee £134 ½ Day Fee
Statutory Co-optees - Standards Committee, Education OVSC Committee, Governance & Audit Committee, Crime and Disorder OVSC	<u>Standards:</u> R. Lynch S. Williams S. Rosser H. Roberts <u>Audit</u> M. Veale T. Edwards Vacant	£210 Daily Fee £105 ½ Day Fee
Statutory Co-optees -ordinary members of Standards Committee who also chair Standards Committees for Community Councils	Not Used	£238 Daily Fee £119 ½ Day Fee

Contribution towards costs of care and personal assistance	
All Members	

- Formal (registered with Care Inspectorate Wales) care costs to be paid as evidenced.
- Informal (unregistered) care costs to be paid up to a maximum rate equivalent to the Real UK Living Wage at the time the costs are incurred.

Members Support – what is provided in terms of telephone, internet or email (see Determination 6)	
Telephone Support for Executive Members	
Telephone Support for Chairs of Committees	
Telephone Support for all other Members	
Access to Email for Executive Members	
Access to Email for Chairs of Committees	
Access to Email for all other Members	
Internet Support for Executive Members	
Internet Support for Chairs of Committees	
Internet Support for all other Members	

SCHEDULE 2

Approved duties: -

- attendance at a meeting of the Authority or of any committee of the Authority or of any body to which the Authority makes appointments or nominations or of any committee of such a body;
- attendance at a meeting of any association of authorities of which the Authority is a member;
- attendance at any other meeting the holding of which is authorised by the Authority or by a committee of the Authority or by a joint committee of the Authority and one or more other Authorities;
- a duty undertaken for the purpose of or in connection with the discharge of the functions of Cabinet;
- a duty undertaken in pursuance of a standing order which requires a Member or Members to be present when tender documents are opened;
- a duty undertaken in connection with the discharge of any function of the Authority which empowers or requires the Authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises;
- attendance at any training or developmental event approved by the Authority or its Cabinet;
- Any other duty approved by the authority, or any other duty of a class so approved, undertaken for the purpose, of or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the authority or any of its committees.

SCHEDULE 3

Mileage Rates

All sizes of private motor vehicle Up to 10,000 miles Over 10,000 miles	45 pence per mile 25 pence per mile
Private Motor Cycles Pedal Cycles	24 pence per mile 20 pence per mile
Passenger supplement	05 pence per mile

Subsistence Allowance

The day subsistence rate is up to a maximum of £28 and covers a 24 hour period and can be claimed for any meal if relevant provided such a claim is supported by receipts.

Re-imbusement of alcoholic drinks is not permitted.

Overnight Stay

The maximum allowances for an overnight stay are £200 for London and £95 for elsewhere. A maximum of £30 is available for an overnight stay with friends or relatives whilst on approved duty.

SCHEDULE 4

Compliance

- The Authority will arrange for the publication on the council's website the total sum paid by it to each Member and Co-opted Member in respect of salary, allowances, fees and reimbursements not later than 30 September following the close of the year to which it relates. In the interests of transparency this will include remuneration from all public service appointments held by elected Members.
- The Authority will publish on the council's website a statement of the basic responsibility of a councillor and role descriptors for senior salary office holders, which clearly identify the duties expected.
- The Authority will publish on the council's website the annual schedule of Member Remuneration not later than 31 July of the year to which the schedule refers.
- The authority will send a copy of the schedule to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales not later than 31 July of the year to which the schedule refers.
- The Authority will maintain records of Member or Co-opted Members attendance at meetings of council, cabinet and committees and other approved duties for which a Member or Co-opted Member submits a claim for reimbursement.
- The Authority will arrange for the publication on the council's website of annual reports prepared by Members.
- When the Authority agrees a paid substitution for family absence it will notify the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales within 14 days of the date of the decision of the details including the particular post and the duration of the substitution.

Agenda Item 33

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 07.07.2022

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 08.07.2022

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **21st July, 2022**

Report Subject: **Statement of Payments Made to Members in 2021/2022**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas - Leader of the Council/Executive Member – Corporate Overview & Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Andrea J Prosser
Head of Organisational Development**

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

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.2 To consider and agree the publication of the Statement of Payments made to Members for 2021/2022.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The report identifies the reporting requirements for the publication of the annual schedule of payments made to members for 2021/22 to comply with part 8 (sections 141 to 160) and schedules 2 and 3 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) regulations.
 - 2.2 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, in compliance with Part 8 (sections 141 to 160) and schedules 2 and 3 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) regulations, is required to produce annually a schedule of payments it has made to its members and co-opted members (Appendix 1).
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 Option 1 (**preferred option**) – to publish Statement of Payments Made to Members during 2021/22 in compliance with relevant legislation.
 - 3.2 Option 2 – not to publish Statement of Payments Made to Members for 2021/22.

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

4.1 In publishing the Statement of Payments to Members annually, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is complying with its statutory responsibilities under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the requirements of the IRPW.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 *Impact Upon Budget*

5.1.1 **Option 1 – Publication of Statement of Payments to Members**

The estimated cost of publication is £200 this includes the Welsh language translation. There are no other financial implications resulting directly from this report.

The payments made by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to Members during 2021/22 totalled £747,706.72 and in addition, pension contributions for those members of the local government pension scheme were £72,555.60

5.1.2 **Option 2 – Not to publish the Statement of Payments to Members**

There would be no costs associated with this option.

5.2 *Risk*

5.2.1 **Option 1 - Publication of Statement of Payments to Members**

No significant risks identified for the Council with this option.

5.2.2 **Option 2 – Not to publish the Statement of Payments to Members**

Not publishing the statement would leave the Council non-compliant with Part 8 (sections 141 to 160) and schedules 2 and 3 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the IRPW and would result in reputational damage for the Council.

To mitigate this risk Option 1 is recommended.

5.3 *Legal*

5.3.1 **Option 1 - Publication of Statement of Payments to Members**

This option ensures the Council complies with statutory responsibilities.

5.3.2 **Option 2 – Not to publish the Statement of Payments to Members**

This would result in non-compliance with statutory requirements.

5.4 *Human Resources*

5.4.1 There are no Human Resources implications that impact upon the report other than the time required to produce the Statement of Payments to Members.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

6.1.1 The Schedule must be in accord with the determinations of the IRPW and should contain the following information:

- Basic Salary
- Senior Salary
- Co-opted Member Fee
- Reimbursement of Cost of Care
- Travel Allowance
- Subsistence Allowance
- Pension Contributions
- Payments received from other Public Bodies

The above are reported on a gross basis but are subject to relevant tax, national insurance regulations and pension contributions.

6.1.2 For 2021/22 the format of the Statement has been prescribed by the IRPW to ensure consistency of reporting across organisations.

6.1.3 This schedule should be published in the local authority area and on the Council's website by 30th September 2022 and submitted to IRPW.

6.1.4 The payments made by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to Members during 2021/22 totalled £747,706.72 and in addition, pension contributions were made equalling £72,555.60

6.2 *Expected Outcome for the public*

Publication provides taxpayers and citizens with information about the remuneration of their elected members.

6.3 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

6.3.1 The IRPW consulted with Councils and elected members prior to determining remuneration levels to be paid, this included visiting all 22 Welsh councils.

6.3.2 The Statement of Payments will be published in a local newspaper and on the Councils website.

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

It is a requirement that similar information is published on an annual basis.

6.5 *Preventative focus*

Not relevant to this report.

6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working*

Not relevant to this report.

6.7 *Integration (across service areas)*

Not relevant to this report.

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

Not relevant to this report.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 *State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements*

Compliance with requirements are monitored by the IRPW.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 – Statement of Payments made to Members for 2021/22*



CO2207D8

Statement of Paymei

- *Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales 2021/22*

[Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales: annual report 2021 to 2022 | GOV.WALES](#)

Councillor Name Enw'r Cynghorydd	Role or Title Swyddogaeth neu Deitl	Basic Salary Cyflog Sylfaenol	Senior Salary - Executive Members ¹ Cyflog Uwch - Aelodau'r Gweithrediaeth ¹	Civic Salary Cyflog Dinesig ¹	% Opted to forgo %Wedi dewis iildio	Travel allowance Costau Teithio	Subsistence allowance Costau Cynhallaeth	Reimbursement of care costs ² Ad-daliadau costau gofal ²	Total Cyfanswm	Pension Contributions Cyfraniadau Pensiwn	Payments from other public bodies Taliadau oddi wrth cyrff cyhoeddus eraill		
											Name of Public body	Enw'r corff	Amount Paid Swm a Delir
Amanda Moore	Scrutiny Chair		23,160.96						23,160.96				
Bernard Willis	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96				
Brian Thomas	Elected Member	14,367.96				52.20			14,420.16				
Clive Meredith	Elected Member	14,367.96			-0.87%				14,367.96	3,347.04	Gwent Police and Crime Panel		To be confirmed
David Davies	Deputy Leader		31,782.96		-9.86%				31,782.96	6,732.72			
David Elias	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96				
David Wilshire	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96				
Denzil Hancock	Scrutiny Chair		23,160.96						23,160.96				
Derrick Bevan	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96				
Gareth Davies	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96				
Gareth Davies	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96	3,376.44			
Garth Collier	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96	3,376.44			
Godfrey Rhys Thomas	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96				
Gregory Paulsen	Elected Member	14,367.96			-2.44%				14,367.96	3,294.24			
Haydn Trollope	Scrutiny Chair		23,160.96						23,160.96	5,442.84			
Hedley Mccarthy	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96	3,376.44			
Joanna Wilkins	Cabinet Member		27,741.00						27,741.00				
Joanne Collins	Cabinet Member		27,741.00						27,741.00	6,519.12			
John Hill	Elected Member								0.00		Brecon Beacons National Park		To be confirmed
John Mason	Cabinet Member		27,741.00						27,741.00				
John Morgan	Elected Member	14,367.96			-0.87%				14,367.96				
John Morgan	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96				
Jonathan Millard	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96	3,376.44			
Julie Holt	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96	3,376.44			
Keith Hayden	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96	3,376.44			
Keith Pritchard	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96	3,376.44			
Keri Rowson	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96				
Lisa Winnett	Elected Member	14,367.96			-0.63%				14,367.96	3,355.32	Gwent Police and Crime Panel		To be confirmed
Malcolm Cross	Scrutiny Chair (UP)	14,367.96			-0.87%				14,367.96				
Malcolm Day	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96				
Mark Holland	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96	3,376.44			
Martin Cook	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96		Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd		8,793.00
Nigel Daniels	Leader		44,921.04						44,921.04				
Norman Parsons	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96	3,376.44			
Peter Baldwin	Elected Member	14,367.96			-0.07%				14,367.96				
Phillip Edwards	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96	3,376.44			
Richard Hill	Scrutiny Chair		23,160.96						23,160.96				
Robert Summers	Elected Member	14,367.96			-1.87%				14,367.96		Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd		8,793.00
Stephen Thomas	Leader of the Opposition		23,160.96		-0.78%				23,160.96				
Stewart Healy	Scrutiny Chair		23,160.96						23,160.96				
Thomas Smith	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96	3,376.44			
Therese Sharrem	Elected Member	14,367.96			-0.87%				14,367.96	3,347.04			
Wendy Hodgins	Elected Member	14,367.96							14,367.96	3,376.44	South Wales Fire and Rescue		2,021.21
Total / Cyfanswm		445,406.76	298,892.76	-		52.20	-	-	744,351.72	72,555.60			
Co-opted Member Name Enw Aelog Cyfetholedig	Committee Pwyllgor	Total Allowance Paid Cyfanswm Lwfans a delir				Travel allowance Costau Teithio	Subsistence allowance Costau Cynhallaeth	Reimbursement of care costs Ad-daliadau costau gofal	Total Cyfanswm				
Martin Veale	Co-Opted Member	525.00							525.00				
Sarah Rosser	Co-Opted Member	204.00							204.00				
Stephen Williams	Co-Opted Member	198.00							198.00				
Terence Edwards	Co-Opted Chair of Audit Committee	2,224.00							2,224.00				
Francis Lynch	Co-Opted Member	204.00							204.00				

¹ Inclusive of the Basic Salary / Gan gynnwys y cyflog sylfaenol

² If publishing care reimbursements anonymously, include a total.
 Os yn cyhoeddi ad-daliadau gofal yn ddi-enw, rhwng gyfanswm

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Agenda Item 34

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 06.07.2022

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 08.07.2022

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **21st July 2022**

Report Subject: **Council's Suite of Disciplinary and Capability Policies & Procedures**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader / Executive Member Corporate Overview and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Andrea J Prosser, Head of Organisational Development.**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	23/06/2022						21/07/2022	

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for the following proposed policies and procedures:
- Disciplinary Policy & Procedure
 - Capability Policy
 - Disciplinary Procedure for the Chief Executive
 - Disciplinary Procedure for Specific Statutory Officers
 - Disciplinary Procedure for Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers

2 Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Organisational Development (OD) Service has reviewed the Council's suite of Disciplinary and Capability Policies & Procedures for all staff, with the exception of school based employees, who under the delegated powers of the Governing Body are subject to separate procedures and have not been included in this review.
- 2.2 The above policies and procedures have been reviewed and/or developed and are attached to this report. For ease of reference, the following table illustrates each policy / procedure, its scope and which officers they apply to:

Policy / Procedure	Covers	Who it applies to
Disciplinary Policy & Procedure	Conduct	Corporate employees*
Capability Policy	Performance	Corporate Employees*
Disciplinary Procedure for the Chief Executive	Conduct and performance	Chief Executive
Disciplinary Procedure for Specific Statutory Officers	Conduct and performance	Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer & Head of Democratic Services
Disciplinary Procedure for Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers	Conduct and performance	A Chief Officer reports directly to the Chief Executive. A Deputy Chief Officer reports directly to one or more of the statutory or non-statutory chief officers.

** With the exception of those covered by other procedures (as illustrated in the table) and those under delegated powers of a Governing Body.*

- 2.3 OD are responsible for the development and review of all of the Council's HR related policies. In line with OD's Policy Schedule, the Disciplinary and Capability Policies (Corporate Staff) were due for review. In addition, following a number of complex disciplinary cases, the Council procured an external consultant, to review a particular disciplinary case and associated processes. The review set out a number of recommendations for the Council in relation to the management of disciplinary processes. These recommendations have been taken on board in the review and development of the policies.
- 2.4 The Disciplinary and Capability Policies for Corporate Staff have undergone a fundamental review, however, there are no significant procedural changes and the policies remain in compliance with the ACAS Codes of Practice, which are relied upon in Employment Tribunals. There is a stronger emphasis on the roles and responsibilities of officers involved in the process and the expectations laid upon them. In addition, a recommendation from the external consultant was to strengthen suspension processes which has been taken on board with the development of a Suspension Protocol which will feature as part of management guidance.
- 2.5 The Disciplinary Policy & Procedure for Corporate Staff is now inclusive of the Appeals Procedure which previously sat separately. Combining the documents allows for ease of reference for employees and reduces the number of policies requiring review.
- 2.6 A Managers Guide to Handling Disciplinary Matters will be finalised upon approval of this report and will be made available to all Managers. The Guide aims to provide further advice and guidance for Managers when dealing with disciplinary matters.
- 2.7 As part of the review, OD is also proposing the introduction of a new suite of procedures for Senior Officers to replace the Disciplinary Procedure for Chief Officers. The procedures developed for the Chief Executive, Specific Statutory Officers and Chief Officers & Deputy Chief Officers have been developed to manage disciplinary and capability matters in line with statutory regulations and the relevant terms and conditions of employment.
- 2.8 In line with the introduction of the new suite of policies and procedures and the recommendations of the external consultant, a pool of Managers will be trained on handling disciplinary matters to ensure appropriate levels of expertise. The training will cover key stages such as:
- Deciding whether to suspend,
 - Investigation,
 - Conducting a fair disciplinary hearing.
 - Conducting a fair disciplinary appeal.

3 Options for recommendation

- 3.1 **Option 1** (preferred option) - That Council approve the suite of Disciplinary and Capability Policies and Procedures for implementation. This will ensure that the policies reflect best practice, statutory requirements and strengthens current practice.

3.2 **Option 2** - That Council does not approve the suite of Disciplinary and Capability Policies and Procedures for implementation.

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

4.1 The suite of policies and procedures ensure that we meet our obligations as underpinned by employment law and statutory regulations.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

There are no direct financial implications of approving the new policies.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The risk of not implementing the proposed policies would mean that the policies are not reflective of current best practice and the recommendations from the external review. There are no risks associated with implementing the new suite of policies.

5.3 ***Legal***

All policies & procedures have been drafted in conjunction with legal support. The policies and procedures are fully compliant with employment law, statutory regulation and terms and conditions of employment.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

The review and development of the policies and procedures has been led by OD and it is therefore recommended by OD that the new suite of policies and procedures are approved by Council and implemented accordingly alongside the appropriate training to upskill Managers.

6 **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

No supporting performance information but the review and development of the policies and procedures has been supported by an external review of practice and employment law advice.

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

N/A

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

The recognised Trade Unions; Unison, GMB and Unite, were fully engaged and consulted. At the outset of the process the Unions were invited to provide initial comments on current policy and practice to be taken into account during the review; Unison and GMB provided comments.

Following the development of the Policies, the unions were then invited to engage in a consultation period. Unison and GMB engaged in this process and provided detailed written feedback and participated in several meetings

during which the feedback was reviewed and where appropriate amendments made to the policies.

Other stakeholders who have been engaged in the development of the documents, include legal, audit and safeguarding experts.

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

The implementation of the new suite of policies and procedures would ensure that they become well established and are in line with current best practice. They will be reviewed in line with the OD policy review timetable or if there are any legal or best practice changes that may arise in the meantime.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

N/A

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

N/A

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

N/A

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

N/A

6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment (complete an impact assessment to consider how the decision might help to reduce the inequalities of outcome associated with socio-economic disadvantage).***

N/A

6.9b ***Equality Impact Assessment (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***

Integrated Impact Assessment completed – no adverse impact.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 All policies and procedures are monitored by OD in line with the Policy Schedule. The proposed policies and procedures will be reviewed in line with the OD policy review timetable or if there are any legal or best practice changes that may arise in the meantime.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1

- *Disciplinary Policy & Procedure*
- *Capability Policy*
- *Disciplinary Procedure for Chief Executive*
- *Disciplinary Procedure for Specific Statutory Officers*
- *Disciplinary Procedure for Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers*

Disciplinary Procedure

**For Specific Statutory Officers
(Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Head of Democratic Services)**



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: xx Review: xx

Version Control

This document is intended for:

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

Version	Key Changes	Approved By

This document may be reviewed and amended at any time and without consultation in response to legal requirements or in response to an organisational requirement and where the changes do not reflect a fundamental change or affect the spirit or intent of the document.

Contents

1. Scope of Procedure.....	3
2. Responsibilities	3
3. Issues requiring Investigation	4
4. Timescale.....	4
5. Suspension	4
6. Right to be Accompanied	5
7. Considering the Allegations or Other Issues under Investigation	5
8. Appointment of a DIP	6
9. DIP’s Investigation.....	6
10. Receipt and Consideration of the DIP’s Report by the IDC	7
11. Action Short of Dismissal	7
12. Where the IDC proposes Dismissal.....	8
13. Appeals	8

1. Scope of Procedure

- 1.1 This Disciplinary Procedure (**Procedure**) applies to the Monitoring Officer (Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance), Section 151 Officer (Chief Officer – Resources) and Head of Democratic Services (Head of Governance & Partnerships; referred to in this Procedure as the **Statutory Officer** or **Statutory Officers** and incorporates the requirements of The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (Wales) Regulations 2006 (**Regulations**).
- 1.2 This Procedure has been adopted by the Council for the purpose of dealing with alleged misconduct (**conduct**) and/or under-performance (**capability**), or where there is some other substantial issue that requires investigation and which, in each case, if upheld, would be recorded on the Statutory Officer's personnel file. It does not apply where there is any proposal for dismissal of the Statutory Officer by reason of redundancy, expiry of a fixed term contract or retirement or termination on ill health grounds.
- 1.3 Save where alternative arrangements have been agreed between the Council and the Statutory Officer, the steps set out in this Procedure should be followed. The parties recognise it may be necessary to depart from the Procedure, from time to time, according to particular circumstances of a case. In such circumstances, both parties agree to give their consideration to reasonable proposals to modify the Procedure accordingly.
- 1.4 Where appropriate an informal resolution will be sought where there are allegations relating to the conduct or capability of or similar issues in relation to the Statutory Officer. Where this is not appropriate or where informal resolution is not possible, this Procedure will apply.
- 1.5 This Procedure does not form part of the Statutory Officer's contract of employment and it may be amended from time to time.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 All those involved in the disciplinary process have the following responsibilities in line with this Procedure:
 - Ensuring they familiarise themselves with this Procedure.
 - Ensuring the Procedure is applied fairly and consistently.
 - Ensuring all individuals involved in this process are treated with dignity and respect.
 - Maintaining confidentiality at all times in relation to this Procedure.
 - Cooperating fully in investigations and all meetings relating to this Procedure.
 - Making every effort to attend scheduled meetings in line with the Procedure.

3. Issues requiring Investigation

- 3.1 Where an allegation is made relating to the conduct or capability of the Statutory Officer or there is some other substantial issue that requires investigation, the matter will be considered by the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee (**IDC**). Matters to be referred to the IDC will usually be overseen by the Chief Executive.
- 3.2 The IDC will be a standing committee appointed by the Council which shall be politically balanced. It shall include no fewer than three elected members and should not include any member who has a conflict of interest or who has had a prior involvement in the matter.

4. Timescale

- 4.1 It is in the interests of all parties that proceedings be conducted expeditiously. It is recognised that it would be inappropriate to impose timescales that could in practical terms be difficult to achieve but recommend that proceedings be subject to regular review.

5. Suspension

- 5.1 The Chief Executive will consider whether it is appropriate to suspend the Statutory Officer. Suspension is not regarded as disciplinary action under this Procedure but as a neutral act which may be implemented where, in the opinion of the Chief Executive:
- 5.1.1 the Statutory Officer's continuing presence at work might compromise the investigation; or
 - 5.1.2 The Statutory Officer's continuing presence at work might impair the efficient exercise of the Council's functions; or
 - 5.1.3 an allegation is such that, if substantiated, it would amount to gross misconduct.
- 5.2 The Statutory Officer shall be informed of the reason for the proposed suspension and shall have the right to present information to the Chief Executive before such a decision is taken. While suspended the Statutory Officer must not visit the Council's premises or contact any service users, members, suppliers, contractors or staff unless authorised to do so by the Chief Executive.
- 5.3 The necessity for the Statutory Officer to remain suspended shall be reviewed at regular intervals and reasonable efforts shall be made to conclude the investigation within a reasonable time. Consideration will be given as to whether alternative working arrangements might be implemented which could avoid the need for the Statutory Officer's suspension, whilst avoiding any compromise to the investigation or the efficient exercise of the Council's functions.

- 5.4 Unless otherwise agreed, any suspension should last for no longer than two months but may be extended following discussion with the Designated Independent Person (**DIP**). Suspensions should not be unduly extended however, there may be extenuating circumstances whereby a suspension exceeds two months.
- 5.5 Absence from duty during any period of suspension shall be on full pay. In the event that the Statutory Officer reports sick during a period of suspension, the Council's occupational sick pay scheme will be applied and upon production of the appropriate medical certificates, the Statutory Officer will be paid in line with their sick pay entitlements as set out in the Statutory Officer's terms and conditions of employment.

6. Right to be Accompanied

- 6.1 The Statutory Officer will be entitled to be accompanied at all meetings/hearings under this Procedure by a Trade Union Representative or Workplace Companion (hereafter referred to as a '**Companion**').
- 6.2 If the Companion is unable to attend any meeting/hearing the Statutory Officer may propose an alternative date provided it is no more than five working days after the original date proposed for the meeting. If the Companion is unable to attend such meeting/hearing within that period the meeting/hearing may proceed and a decision may be taken if the Statutory Officer fails to attend. The Statutory Officer may not request the postponement of any meeting where their suspension is being considered under paragraph 4.2.

7. Considering the Allegations or Other Issues under Investigation

- 7.1 The IDC will, as soon as is practicable, inform the Statutory Officer in writing of the allegations or other issues under investigation.
- 7.2 The IDC may:
- 7.2.1 make such enquiries of the Statutory Officer or any other person as it considers appropriate;
 - 7.2.2 request the Statutory Officer or any other person it considers appropriate to provide it with such information, explanation or documents as it considers necessary; and
 - 7.2.3 hear oral evidence.
- 7.3 The IDC will provide the Statutory Officer with any evidence that the IDC is to consider and they will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider such evidence. The Statutory Officer shall be invited to put forward written representations and any evidence including evidence from witnesses that they wish the IDC to consider.

- 7.4 The IDC will provide the opportunity for the Statutory Officer to make oral representations at a meeting with the IDC before a decision is made pursuant to paragraph 7.5 below.
- 7.5 The IDC will give careful consideration to the allegations or other issues, supporting evidence and the case put forward by the Statutory Officer before taking further action.
- 7.6 The IDC shall decide whether:
- 7.6.1 the issue requires no further formal action under this Procedure; or
- 7.6.2 the issue should be referred to a DIP.
- 7.7 The IDC shall inform the Statutory Officer of its decision.

Where the allegations relate to a criminal investigation, the Council will not usually wait for the outcome of any prosecution before deciding what action, if any, to take.

8. Appointment of a DIP

- 8.1 Where the IDC decides that the issue should be referred to a DIP, the DIP shall be agreed between the IDC and the Statutory Officer, wherever possible within one month of the IDC's decision. If the parties are unable to reach agreement, the Council will appoint the person nominated by Welsh Ministers.
- 8.2 The IDC will be responsible for making the appointment of the DIP, providing the necessary facilities, agreeing remuneration and providing information about the allegations.

9. DIP's Investigation

- 9.1 It will be the responsibility of the DIP to investigate the issue/allegation. The amount of investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations or other issues and may involve interviewing and taking statements from the Statutory Officer and any witnesses and/or reviewing relevant documents. The Statutory Officer must co-operate fully and promptly with any investigation.
- 9.2 On conclusion of the investigation the DIP will prepare a report (**Investigation Report**):
- 9.2.1 stating in their opinion whether (and if so the extent to which) the evidence they have obtained supports any allegation of misconduct, or incapability or supports the need for action under this Procedure for some other substantial reason; and

- 9.2.2 recommending what, if any, disciplinary action or range of actions appears to be appropriate for the Council to take against the Statutory Officer having regard to all the circumstances of the case.

10. Receipt and Consideration of the DIP's Report by the IDC

- 10.1 The IDC will consider the Investigation Report and will provide a copy to the Statutory Officer, together with any supporting documentation including witness statements where relevant and accompanied by written notice of the specific allegations to be considered by the IDC at a disciplinary hearing.
- 10.2 The Statutory Officer will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider the information referred to in paragraph 10.1 and shall be invited to put forward written representations and any evidence including evidence from witnesses that they wish the IDC to consider.
- 10.3 The Statutory Officer must make every effort to attend the disciplinary hearing.
- 10.4 The IDC shall give the Statutory Officer the opportunity to state their case at the disciplinary hearing before making a decision. The Statutory Officer may be accompanied to the hearing by a Companion.
- 10.5 Having considered the evidence and any other associated factors the IDC may:
- 10.5.1 take no further action;
 - 10.5.2 recommend informal resolution or other appropriate procedures;
 - 10.5.3 refer back to the DIP for further investigation and report;
 - 10.5.4 take disciplinary action against the Statutory Officer short of dismissal; or
 - 10.5.5 recommend the dismissal of the Statutory Officer to the Council.
- 10.6 Where practicable, the decision of the IDC will be delivered orally after an adjournment. The IDC will in any event confirm its decision to the Statutory Officer in writing, normally within five working days of the disciplinary hearing (**Decision Letter**).

11. Action Short of Dismissal

- 11.1 Where the decision of the IDC is to take action short of dismissal the IDC will impose the necessary penalty/action up to the maximum recommended by the DIP and which may include (but is not limited to) the following:
- 11.1.1 a first written warning;

11.1.2 a final written warning;

11.1.3 demotion and/or redeployment.

- 11.2 Where the Statutory Officer is issued with a written warning, it will set out the nature of the misconduct, the change in behaviour required, the period the warning will remain active and the likely consequences of further misconduct in that active period. A first written warning will normally remain active for nine months; a final written warning will normally remain active for 12 months. Records of all proceedings in line with this Procedure will be kept on the employee's personal file. All records will be kept confidential and will be retained in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure, the Council's Retention Guidelines and statutory requirements.

12. Where the IDC proposes Dismissal

- 12.1 Where the decision of the IDC is to propose that the Statutory Officer is dismissed, the IDC will inform the Statutory Officer of its decision and put that proposal to the Council along with any necessary documentation.
- 12.2 The Council will consider the proposal from the IDC that the Statutory Officer should be dismissed. This shall be by way of a review of the case and the recommendation to dismiss. The Statutory Officer will have the opportunity to put their case at a hearing before the Council before a decision is taken and they may be accompanied to that hearing by a Companion.
- 12.3 Those Council members that form part of the IDC, will not vote in respect of any recommendation to a Full Council meeting regarding dismissal.
- 12.4 The Council may decide to uphold or dismiss the decision of the IDC or to impose a different sanction.
- 12.5 The dismissal of the Statutory Officer may, in appropriate circumstances, be without notice or payment in lieu of notice.

13. Appeals

Appeals against Action Short of Dismissal

- 13.1 Where the IDC takes action short of dismissal, the Statutory Officer may appeal to the Appeals Committee within five working days of the date of the Decision Letter, setting out the grounds of appeal. The Appeals Committee will be a standing committee appointed by the Council. It shall include no fewer than three elected members and should not include any member who is a member of the IDC or who has had a prior involvement in the matter. All reasonable effort should be made for the appeal to be heard at the earliest opportunity and as far as possible should be no longer than 6 weeks from the date of the written appeal being received.

- 13.2 The Appeals Committee will consider the report of the DIP and any other relevant information considered by the IDC. The Statutory Officer will have the opportunity to put their case at a hearing before the Appeals Committee, which will take the form of a review of the decision taken by the IDC, before a decision is taken and they may be accompanied to that hearing by a Companion.
- 13.3 The Appeals Committee will give careful consideration to the report of the DIP and any other relevant information and may conduct any further investigation it considers necessary to reach a decision.
- 13.4 The Appeals Committee may decide to uphold or dismiss the decision of the IDC or to impose a different sanction.
- 13.5 Where practicable, the decision of the Appeals Committee will be delivered orally after an adjournment. The Appeals Committee will in any event confirm its decision to the Statutory Officer in writing, normally within five working days of the hearing.
- 13.6 The decision of the Appeals Committee will be final.

Appeals against Dismissal

- 13.7 Where the IDC has made a proposal to dismiss, the hearing by the Council referred to in paragraph 12.2 above will also fulfil the statutory appeal function. There shall be no further right of appeal.

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Disciplinary Procedure

For Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: xx Review: xx

Version Control

This document is intended for:

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

Version	Key Changes	Approved By

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Contents

1. Scope of Procedure.....	3
2. Responsibilities	4
3. Issues requiring Investigation	4
4. Timescale.....	4
5. Suspension	5
6. Right to be Accompanied	5
7. Considering the Allegations or Other Issues under Investigation	6
8. Receipt and Consideration of the Investigation Report by the IDC	6
9. Appeals	8

1. Scope of Procedure

1.1 This Disciplinary Procedure (**Procedure**) applies to the following officers who are the Council's Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers, with the exception of the Chief Executive and Specific Statutory Officers for whom separate procedures apply:

- *Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services*
- *Corporate Director Social Services*
- *Corporate Director of Education*
- *Chief Officer – Commercial & Customer*
- *Head of Children's Services*
- *Head of Adults Services*
- *Head of School Improvement & Inclusion*
- *Head of Community Services*
- *Head of Regeneration & Development*
- *Head of Organisational Development*
- *Service Manager Public Protection*
- *Service Manager Performance & Democratic Services*
- *Service Manager Policy & Partnerships*
- *Service Manager Commercial & Procurement*
- *Service Manager Accountancy*
- *Service Manager Customer Experience & Transformation*
- *Service Manager Revenues & Charging Assessments*
- *Service Manager Education Transformation & Business Change*
- *Service Manager Young People Partnerships*

This is an indicative list and is accurate at the time of the policy development and/or review however, this does not preclude other roles which may fall within the definition of a Chief Officer or Deputy Chief Officer.

These officers are referred to in this Procedure as the **Chief Officer** or **Deputy Chief Officers**. Where reference is made to Chief Officer below, unless otherwise stated, this will be deemed to also be a reference to a Deputy Chief Officer.

1.2 Separate disciplinary procedures apply to the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer, the Section 151 Officer and the Head of Democratic Services.

1.3 This Procedure has been adopted by the Council for the purpose of dealing with alleged misconduct (**conduct**) and/or under-performance (**capability**), or where there is some other substantial issue that requires investigation and which, in each case, if upheld, would be recorded on the Chief Officer's personnel file. It does not apply where there is any proposal for dismissal of the Chief Officer by reason of redundancy, expiry of a fixed term contract or retirement or termination on ill health grounds.

1.4 Save where alternative arrangements have been agreed between the Chief Executive (or their nominee) and the Chief Officer, the steps set out in this Procedure should be followed. The parties recognise it may be necessary to depart from the Procedure, from time to time, according to particular circumstances of a case. In

such circumstances, both parties agree to give their consideration to reasonable proposals to modify the Procedure accordingly.

- 1.5 Where appropriate an informal resolution will be sought where there are allegations relating to the conduct or capability of or similar issues in relation to the Chief Officer. Where this is not appropriate or where informal resolution is not possible, this Procedure will apply.
- 1.6 This Procedure does not form part of the Chief Officer's contract of employment and it may be amended from time to time.

2.Responsibilities

- 2.1 All those involved in the disciplinary process have the following responsibilities in line with this Procedure:
 - Ensuring they familiarise themselves with this Procedure.
 - Ensuring the Procedure is applied fairly and consistently.
 - Ensuring all individuals involved in this process are treated with dignity and respect.
 - Maintaining confidentiality at all times in relation to this Procedure.
 - Cooperating fully in investigations and all meetings relating to this Procedure.
 - Making every effort to attend scheduled meetings in line with the Procedure.

3.Issues requiring Investigation

- 3.1 Where an allegation is made relating to the conduct or capability of the Chief Officer or there is some other substantial issue that requires investigation, the matter will be considered by the Chief Executive.

4.Timescale

- 4.1 It is in the interests of all parties that proceedings be conducted expeditiously. It is recognised that it would be inappropriate to impose timescales that could in practical terms be difficult to achieve but recommend that proceedings be subject to regular review.

5. Suspension

- 5.1 The Chief Executive will consider whether it is appropriate to suspend the Chief Officer. Suspension is not regarded as disciplinary action under this Procedure but as a neutral act which may be implemented where, in the opinion of the Chief Executive:
- 5.1.1 the Chief Officer's continuing presence at work might compromise the investigation; or
 - 5.1.2 the Chief Officer's continuing presence at work might impair the efficient exercise of the Council's functions; or
 - 5.1.3 an allegation is such that, if substantiated, it would amount to gross misconduct.
- 5.2 The Chief Officer shall be informed of the reason for the proposed suspension and shall have the right to present information to the Chief Executive before such a decision is taken. While suspended the Chief Officer must not visit the Council's premises or contact any service users, members, suppliers, contractors or staff unless authorised to do so by the Chief Executive.
- 5.3 The necessity for the Chief Officer to remain suspended shall be reviewed at regular intervals and reasonable efforts shall be made to conclude the investigation within a reasonable time. Consideration will be given as to whether alternative working arrangements might be implemented which could avoid the need for the Chief Officer's suspension, whilst avoiding any compromise to the investigation or the efficient exercise of the Council's functions.
- 5.4 Absence from duty during any period of suspension shall be on full pay. In the event that the Chief Officer reports sick during a period of suspension, the Council's occupational sick pay scheme will be applied and upon production of the appropriate medical certificates, the Chief Officer will be paid in line with their sick pay entitlements as set out in the Chief Officer's terms and conditions of employment.

6. Right to be Accompanied

- 6.1 The Chief Officer will be entitled to be accompanied at all formal meetings/hearings under this Procedure by a Trade Union Representative or Workplace Companion (hereafter referred to as a '**Companion**').
- 6.2 If the Companion is unable to attend any formal meeting/hearing the Chief Officer may propose an alternative date provided it is no more than five working days after the original date proposed for the meeting. If the Companion is unable to attend such meeting/hearing within that period the meeting/hearing may proceed and a decision may be taken if the Chief Officer fails to attend. The Chief Officer may not request the postponement of any meeting where their suspension is being considered under paragraph 5.2.

7. Considering the Allegations or Other Issues under Investigation

- 7.1 The Chief Executive will, as soon as is practicable, inform the Chief Officer in writing of the allegations or other issues under investigation.
- 7.2 The purpose of an investigation is for the Council to establish a fair and balanced view of the facts relating to any disciplinary allegation, before deciding whether to proceed to a disciplinary hearing. The amount of investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. Where the allegations relate to a criminal investigation, the Council will not usually wait for the outcome of any prosecution before deciding what action, if any, to take. An Investigating Officer will be appointed who will look into the issue(s) in question, interview and take statements from relevant individuals and/or review relevant documents. Witnesses may be requested to attend relevant meetings in relation to the process. The Chief Officer must co-operate fully with any investigation. In appropriate circumstances the Chief Executive may act as Investigating Officer in which case paragraph 7.4 will apply after the Chief Executive has completed their investigation and prepared a report as specified in paragraph 7.3.
- 7.3 At the conclusion of the investigation the Investigating Officer will prepare a report (**Investigation Report**) and provide this to the Chief Executive.
- 7.4 The Chief Executive will decide whether:
- 7.4.1 the issue requires no further formal action under the Procedure (in which case they will consider what other steps, if any, should be taken); or
 - 7.4.2 the issue should be referred to the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee (**IDC**).

8. Receipt and Consideration of the Investigation Report by the IDC

- 8.1 The IDC will be a standing committee appointed by the Council which shall be politically balanced. It shall include no fewer than three elected members and should not include any member who has a conflict of interest or who has had a prior involvement in the matter.
- 8.2 The IDC will consider the Investigation Report and will provide a copy to the Chief Officer, together with any supporting documentation including witness statements where relevant and accompanied by written notice of the specific allegations to be considered by the IDC at a disciplinary hearing.
- 8.3 The Chief Officer will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider the information referred to in paragraph 8.2 and shall be invited to put forward written representations

and any evidence including evidence from witnesses that they wish the IDC to consider.

- 8.4 The Chief Officer must make every effort to attend the disciplinary hearing.
- 8.5 The IDC shall give the Chief Officer the opportunity to state their case at the disciplinary hearing before making a decision. The Chief Officer may be accompanied to the hearing by a Companion.
- 8.6 Having considered the evidence and any other associated factors the IDC may:
 - 8.6.1 take no further action;
 - 8.6.2 recommend informal resolution or other appropriate procedures;
 - 8.6.3 refer back to the Investigating Officer for further investigation and report;
 - 8.6.4 take disciplinary action.
- 8.7 In the case of disciplinary action, this may include (but is not limited to) the following:
 - 8.7.1 a first written warning;
 - 8.7.2 a final written warning;
 - 8.7.3 dismissal;
 - 8.7.4 demotion and/or redeployment.
- 8.8 Where the Chief Officer is issued with a written warning, it will set out the nature of the misconduct, the change in behaviour required, the period the warning will remain active and the likely consequences of further misconduct in that active period. A first written warning will normally remain active for nine months; a final written warning will normally remain active for 12 months. Records of all proceedings in line with this Procedure will be kept on the employee's personal file. All records will be kept confidential and will be retained in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure, the Council's Retention Guidelines and statutory requirements.
- 8.9 The dismissal of the Chief Officer may, in appropriate circumstances, be without notice or payment in lieu of notice.
- 8.10 Where practicable, the decision of the IDC will be delivered orally after an adjournment. The IDC will in any event confirm its decision to the Chief Officer in writing, normally within five working days of the disciplinary hearing (**Decision Letter**).

9. Appeals

- 9.1 The Chief Officer may appeal to the Appeals Committee within five working days of the date of the Decision Letter, setting out the grounds of appeal. The Appeals Committee will be a standing committee appointed by the Council. It shall include no fewer than three elected members and should not include any member who is a member of the IDC or who has had a prior involvement in the matter. All reasonable effort should be made for the appeal to be heard at the earliest opportunity and as far as possible should be no longer than 6 weeks from the date of the written appeal being received.
- 9.2 The Appeals Committee will consider the Investigation Report and any other relevant information considered by the IDC. The Chief Officer will have the opportunity to put their case at a hearing before the Appeals Committee, which will take the form of a review of the decision taken by the IDC, before a decision is taken and they may be accompanied to that hearing by a Companion.
- 9.3 The Appeals Committee will give careful consideration to the Investigation Report and any other relevant information and may conduct any further investigation it considers necessary to reach a decision.
- 9.4 The Appeals Committee may decide to uphold or dismiss the decision of the IDC or to impose a different sanction.
- 9.5 Where practicable, the decision of the Appeals Committee will be delivered orally after an adjournment. The Appeals Committee will in any event confirm its decision to the Chief Officer in writing, normally within five working days of the hearing.
- 9.6 The decision of the Appeals Committee will be final.

Disciplinary Procedure

For the Chief Executive



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: xx Review: xx

Version Control

This document is intended for:

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

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Contents

1. Scope of Procedure.....	3
2. Responsibilities	3
3. Issues requiring Investigation	4
4. Timescale.....	4
5. Suspension	4
6. Right to be Accompanied	5
7. Considering the Allegations or Other Issues under Investigation	5
8. Appointment of a DIP	6
9. DIP's Investigation.....	6
10. Receipt and Consideration of the DIP's Report by the IDC	7
11. Action Short of Dismissal	8
12. Where the IDC proposes Dismissal.....	8
13. Appeals	9

1. Scope of Procedure

- 1.1 This Disciplinary Procedure (**Procedure**) applies to the Chief Executive of the Council (referred to in this Procedure as the **Chief Executive**) and incorporates the requirements of The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (Wales) Regulations 2006 (**Regulations**).
- 1.2 This Procedure has been adopted by the Council for the purpose of dealing with alleged misconduct (**conduct**) and/or under-performance (**capability**), or where there is some other substantial issue that requires investigation and which, in each case, if upheld, would be recorded on the Chief Executive's personnel file. It does not apply where there is any proposal for dismissal of the Chief Executive by reason of redundancy, expiry of a fixed term contract or retirement or termination on ill health grounds.
- 1.3 Save where alternative arrangements have been agreed between the Council and the Chief Executive, the steps set out in this Procedure should be followed. The parties recognise it may be necessary to depart from the Procedure, from time to time, according to particular circumstances of a case. In such circumstances, both parties agree to give their consideration to reasonable proposals to modify the Procedure accordingly.
- 1.4 Where appropriate an informal resolution will be sought where there are allegations relating to the conduct or capability of or similar issues in relation to the Chief Executive. Where this is not appropriate or where informal resolution is not possible, this Procedure will apply.
- 1.5 This Procedure does not form part of the Chief Executive's contract of employment and it may be amended from time to time.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 All those involved in the disciplinary process have the following responsibilities in line with this Procedure:
 - Ensuring they familiarise themselves with this Procedure.
 - Ensuring the Procedure is applied fairly and consistently.
 - Ensuring all individuals involved in this process are treated with dignity and respect.
 - Maintaining confidentiality at all times in relation to this Procedure.
 - Co-operating fully in investigations and all meetings relating to this Procedure.
 - Making every effort to attend scheduled meetings in line with the Procedure.

3. Issues requiring Investigation

- 3.1 Where an allegation is made relating to the conduct or capability of the Chief Executive or there is some other substantial issue that requires investigation, the matter will be considered by the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee (**IDC**). Matters to be referred to the IDC will usually be overseen by the Monitoring Officer and the Chair of the IDC.
- 3.2 The IDC will be a standing committee appointed by the Council which shall be politically balanced. It shall include no fewer than three elected members and should not include any member who has a conflict of interest or who has had a prior involvement in the matter.

4. Timescale

- 4.1 It is in the interests of all parties that proceedings be conducted expeditiously. It is recognised that it would be inappropriate to impose timescales that could in practical terms be difficult to achieve but recommend that proceedings be subject to regular review.

5. Suspension

- 5.1 The IDC will consider whether it is appropriate to suspend the Chief Executive. Suspension is not regarded as disciplinary action under this Procedure but as a neutral act which may be implemented where, in the opinion of the IDC:
 - 5.1.1 The Chief Executive's continuing presence at work might compromise the investigation; or
 - 5.1.2 The Chief Executive's continuing presence at work might impair the efficient exercise of the Council's functions; or
 - 5.1.3 An allegation is such that, if substantiated, it would amount to gross misconduct.
- 5.2 The Chief Executive shall be informed of the reason for the proposed suspension and shall have the right to present information to the IDC before such a decision is taken. While suspended the Chief Executive must not visit the Council's premises or contact any service users, members, suppliers, contractors or staff unless authorised to do so by the Chair of the IDC.
- 5.3 The Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair of the IDC shall hold the delegated power to suspend the Chief Executive immediately in an emergency if an exceptional situation arises whereby allegations of misconduct by the Chief Executive are such that their remaining presence at work poses a serious risk to the health and safety of others or the resources, information or reputation of the Council. In extenuating circumstances only, whereby the Monitoring Officer is unable to suspend

the Chief Executive, the delegated power to suspend will transfer to the Head of Organisational Development (in consultation with the Chair of the IDC).

- 5.4 The necessity for the Chief Executive to remain suspended shall be reviewed at regular intervals and reasonable efforts shall be made to conclude the investigation within a reasonable time. Consideration will be given as to whether alternative working arrangements might be implemented which could avoid the need for the Chief Executive's suspension, whilst avoiding any compromise to the investigation or the efficient exercise of the Council's functions.
- 5.5 Unless otherwise agreed, any suspension should last for no longer than two months but may be extended following discussion with the Designated Independent Person (**DIP**). Suspensions should not be unduly extended however, there may be extenuating circumstances whereby a suspension exceeds two months.
- 5.6 Absence from duty during any period of suspension shall be on full pay. In the event that the Chief Executive reports sick during a period of suspension, the Council's occupational sick pay scheme will be applied and upon production of the appropriate medical certificates, the Chief Executive will be paid in line with their sick pay entitlements as set out in the Chief Executive's terms and conditions of employment.

6. Right to be Accompanied

- 6.1 Other than in circumstances where there is an urgent requirement to suspend the Chief Executive, they will be entitled to be accompanied at all meetings/hearings under this Procedure by a Trade Union Representative or Workplace Companion (hereafter referred to as a '**Companion**').
- 6.2 If the Companion is unable to attend any meeting/hearing the Chief Executive may propose an alternative date provided it is no more than five working days after the original date proposed for the meeting. If the Companion is unable to attend such meeting/hearing within that period the meeting/hearing may proceed and a decision may be taken if the Chief Executive fails to attend. The Chief Executive may not request the postponement of any meeting where their suspension is being considered under paragraph 5.2.

7. Considering the Allegations or Other Issues under Investigation

- 7.1 The IDC will, as soon as is practicable, inform the Chief Executive in writing of the allegations or other issues under investigation.
- 7.2 The IDC may:
 - 7.2.1 make such enquiries of the Chief Executive or any other person as it considers appropriate;

7.2.2 request the Chief Executive or any other person it considers appropriate to provide it with such information, explanation or documents as it considers necessary; and

7.2.3 hear oral evidence.

7.3 The IDC will provide the Chief Executive with any evidence that the IDC is to consider and they will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider such evidence. The Chief Executive shall be invited to put forward written representations and any evidence including evidence from witnesses that they wish the IDC to consider.

7.4 The IDC will provide the opportunity for the Chief Executive to make oral representations at a meeting with the IDC before a decision is made pursuant to paragraph 7.5 below.

7.5 The IDC will give careful consideration to the allegations or other issues, supporting evidence and the case put forward by the Chief Executive before taking further action.

7.6 The IDC shall decide whether:

7.6.1 the issue requires no further formal action under this Procedure; or

7.6.2 the issue should be referred to a DIP.

7.7 The IDC shall inform the Chief Executive of its decision.

Where the allegations relate to a criminal investigation, the Council will not usually wait for the outcome of any prosecution before deciding what action, if any, to take.

8. Appointment of a DIP

8.1 Where the IDC decides that the issue should be referred to a DIP, the DIP shall be agreed between the IDC and the Chief Executive, wherever possible within one month of the IDC's decision. If the parties are unable to reach agreement, the Council will appoint the person nominated by Welsh Ministers.

8.2 The IDC will be responsible for making the appointment of the DIP, providing the necessary facilities, agreeing remuneration and providing information about the allegations.

9. DIP's Investigation

9.1 It will be the responsibility of the DIP to investigate the issue/allegation. The amount of investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations or other issues and may involve interviewing and taking statements from the Chief Executive and any witnesses and/or reviewing relevant documents. The Chief Executive must co-operate fully and promptly with any investigation.

- 9.2 On conclusion of the investigation the DIP will prepare a report (**Investigation Report**):
- 9.2.1 stating in their opinion whether (and if so the extent to which) the evidence they have obtained supports any allegation of misconduct, or incapability or supports the need for action under this Procedure for some other substantial reason; and
 - 9.2.2 recommending what, if any, disciplinary action or range of actions appears to be appropriate for the Council to take against the Chief Executive having regard to all the circumstances of the case.

10. Receipt and Consideration of the DIP's Report by the IDC

- 10.1 The IDC will consider the Investigation Report and will provide a copy to the Chief Executive, together with any supporting documentation including witness statements where relevant and accompanied by written notice of the specific allegations to be considered by the IDC at a disciplinary hearing.
- 10.2 The Chief Executive will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider the information referred to in paragraph 10.1 and shall be invited to put forward written representations and any evidence including evidence from witnesses that they wish the IDC to consider.
- 10.3 The Chief Executive must make every effort to attend the disciplinary hearing.
- 10.4 The IDC shall give the Chief Executive the opportunity to state their case at the disciplinary hearing before making a decision. The Chief Executive may be accompanied to the hearing by a Companion.
- 10.5 Having considered the evidence and any other associated factors the IDC may:
- 10.5.1 take no further action;
 - 10.5.2 recommend informal resolution or other appropriate procedures;
 - 10.5.3 refer back to the DIP for further investigation and report;
 - 10.5.4 take disciplinary action against the Chief Executive short of dismissal; or
 - 10.5.5 recommend the dismissal of the Chief Executive to the Council.
- 10.6 Where practicable, the decision of the IDC will be delivered orally after an adjournment. The IDC will in any event confirm its decision to the Chief Executive in writing, normally within five working days of the disciplinary hearing (**Decision Letter**).

11. Action Short of Dismissal

- 11.1 Where the decision of the IDC is to take action short of dismissal the IDC will impose the necessary penalty/action up to the maximum recommended by the DIP and which may include (but is not limited to) the following:
- 11.1.1 a first written warning;
 - 11.1.2 a final written warning;
 - 11.1.3 demotion and/or redeployment.
- 11.2 Where the Chief Executive is issued with a written warning, it will set out the nature of the misconduct, the change in behaviour required, the period the warning will remain active and the likely consequences of further misconduct in that active period. A first written warning will normally remain active for nine months; a final written warning will normally remain active for 12 months. Records of all proceedings in line with this Procedure will be kept on the employee's personal file. All records will be kept confidential and will be retained in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure, the Council's Retention Guidelines and statutory requirements.

12. Where the IDC proposes Dismissal

- 12.1 Where the decision of the IDC is to propose that the Chief Executive is dismissed, the IDC will inform the Chief Executive of its decision and put that proposal to the Council along with any necessary documentation.
- 12.2 Those Council members that form part of the IDC, will not vote in respect of any recommendation to a Full Council meeting regarding dismissal.
- 12.2 The Council will consider the proposal from the IDC that the Chief Executive should be dismissed. This shall be by way of a review of the case and the recommendation to dismiss. The Chief Executive will have the opportunity to put their case at a hearing before the Council before a decision is taken and they may be accompanied to that hearing by a Companion.
- 12.3 The Council may decide to uphold or dismiss the decision of the IDC or to impose a different sanction.
- 12.4 The dismissal of the Chief Executive may, in appropriate circumstances, be without notice or payment in lieu of notice.

13. Appeals

Appeals against Action Short of Dismissal

- 13.1 Where the IDC takes action short of dismissal, the Chief Executive may appeal to the Appeals Committee within five working days of the date of the Decision Letter, setting out the grounds of appeal. The Appeals Committee will be a standing committee appointed by the Council. It shall include no fewer than three elected members and should not include any member who is a member of the IDC or who has had a prior involvement in the matter. All reasonable effort should be made for the appeal to be heard at the earliest opportunity and as far as possible should be no longer than 6 weeks from the date of the written appeal being received.
- 13.2 The Appeals Committee will consider the report of the DIP and any other relevant information considered by the IDC. The Chief Executive will have the opportunity to put their case at a hearing before the Appeals Committee, which will take the form of a review of the decision taken by the IDC, before a decision is taken and they may be accompanied to that hearing by a Companion.
- 13.3 The Appeals Committee will give careful consideration to the report of the DIP and any other relevant information and may conduct any further investigation it considers necessary to reach a decision.
- 13.4 The Appeals Committee may decide to uphold or dismiss the decision of the IDC or to impose a different sanction.
- 13.5 Where practicable, the decision of the Appeals Committee will be delivered orally after an adjournment. The Appeals Committee will in any event confirm its decision to the Chief Executive in writing, normally within five working days of the hearing.
- 13.6 The decision of the Appeals Committee will be final.

Appeals against Dismissal

- 13.7 Where the IDC has made a proposal to dismiss, the hearing by the Council referred to in paragraph 12.2 above will also fulfil the statutory appeal function. There shall be no further right of appeal.

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Disciplinary Policy & Procedure



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: xx Review: xx

Version Control

This document is intended for:

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

Version	Key Changes	Approved By

This document may be reviewed and amended at any time and without consultation in response to legal requirements or in response to an organisational requirement and where the changes do not reflect a fundamental change or affect the spirit or intent of the document.

Contents

1. Policy Statement	3
2. Scope	3
3. General Principles	3
4. Expectations & Responsibilities	5
5. Disciplinary Procedure	6
6. Undertaking an Investigation	8
7. The Disciplinary Hearing	9
8. Levels of Warnings – Misconduct and Gross Misconduct	10
9. Appeals against Disciplinary Action.....	11
10. General Information.....	11
Appendix 1: Examples of Standards and Conduct.....	12
Appendix 2: Disciplinary Process Flowchart	14
Appendix 3: Appeals Procedure	15
Appendix 4: Appeals Procedure Flowchart.....	19

1. Policy Statement

The conduct, attitudes and behaviours expected of staff are detailed in the Council's Competency Framework and the Code of Conduct, which aims to shape and define the culture of the Council to provide excellent services to the public. Employees are also expected to conduct themselves within the law, within any code of practice or ethics associated with their profession or trade as well as within generally accepted standards of behaviour. Examples of acts of misconduct and gross misconduct are attached in [appendix 1](#).

The Council is committed to supporting staff to achieve acceptable standards of conduct. Where an employee fails to display acceptable standards of conduct (in or outside of the workplace), attitude or behaviour, the manager in compliance with this policy will take appropriate action.

No formal action under this procedure will be taken against an employee until an investigation has taken place.

This policy and procedure has been developed in line with the ACAS Code of Practice.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the Council with the following exceptions:

- Those covered under separate procedures, namely the Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer, the s.151 Officer, Head of Democratic Services and those who are defined by Regulations (which may be amended from time to time) as a Chief Officer or Deputy Chief Officer, as referenced in the applicable procedures.
- School based employees under the delegated powers of the Governing Body are subject to a separate procedure.

3. General Principles

Limits of Authority

It is the responsibility of all supervisors, line managers and senior managers to uphold acceptable standards of conduct and behaviour in the workplace and to tackle misconduct appropriately.

It is however, recognised that there are certain limits of authority when dealing with the formal stages of disciplinary matters. Further information on the limits of authority is available in the Manager's Guide.

Definition

This policy deals with misconduct and does not apply to cases involving sickness absence, proposed redundancies, poor performance or probationary periods for which there are dedicated policies.

This Policy & Procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment.

Right to be Accompanied

At every stage of the procedure, the employee will have the right to seek advice from a Trade Union Representative or workplace colleague (hereafter referred to as a 'companion'). The employee may be accompanied at all formal meetings held in line with this policy. The employee must tell the Organisational Development Division (OD) who their chosen companion is, in good time before any formal meeting.

A companion is allowed reasonable time off their duties without loss of pay but employees are not obliged to act as a companion if they do not wish to do so.

If the employee's companion is unavailable at the time a meeting is scheduled and will not be available for more than five working days afterwards, the Council may ask the employee to arrange alternative representation.

Criminal Offences and Misconduct outside the Workplace

Where an employee's conduct outside of work is the subject of a criminal investigation, charge or conviction, or where actions may bring the Council into disrepute, in line with the Council's Code of Conduct, consideration will be given as to whether the matter is relevant to the employee's employment. In such cases, the allegations will be investigated in line with this procedure.

The Council will not usually wait for the outcome of any prosecution before deciding what action, if any, to take. Where an employee is unable or has been advised not to attend a disciplinary hearing or say anything about a pending criminal matter, the Council may have to take a decision based on the available evidence.

Failure to Attend a Meeting

The Council's aim is to proceed with all disciplinary matters without undue delay. The employee must make every effort to attend a meeting in line with this procedure. There may be certain circumstances where it would be reasonable to re-arrange a meeting at the earliest possible opportunity. In cases where a companion cannot attend on a proposed date, the employee can suggest an alternative time and date within five working days after the original date. In some cases and in line with appropriate advice the disciplinary process, including any hearing, may proceed in the absence of the employee.

Sickness Absence

Managers should refer to the Attendance Management Policy when managing sickness absence. In cases where an employee is absent from work due to sickness during any part of a disciplinary process, it will not be assumed that the employee is precluded from attending meetings or that the disciplinary process should be put on hold. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis having regard to the need to conclude the process in a timely manner. The employee may be referred to Occupational Health for a determination on whether they are fit to attend meetings in

line with this procedure. Reasonable adjustments will be considered and accommodated where possible, as recommended by Occupational Health.

In cases where an employee reports sick on the day of a formal meeting only, the meeting will usually be rescheduled however, failure to attend a further meeting may result in the meeting being held in the absence of the employee.

Children and Vulnerable People

The Council has guidelines and protocols for dealing with issues that relate to children and vulnerable people and reference must be made to the relevant procedures when considering disciplinary action in such cases.

Organised Events and Social Gatherings

The Disciplinary Policy & Procedure extends to social gatherings of employees after work or for an organised event. As such, improper conduct or other unacceptable behaviour will be considered in line with this policy.

Grievances Raised During a Disciplinary Process

Where an employee raises a grievance during a disciplinary process, where appropriate, both the grievance and disciplinary issues will be dealt with concurrently dependent upon the circumstances of the case.

Record Keeping

Records of all proceedings in line with this Policy will be kept on the employee's personal file. All records will be kept confidential and will be retained in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure, the Council's Retention Guidelines and statutory requirements.

4. Expectations & Responsibilities

Employee	<i>Employee's will:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure they are fully aware of the conduct and behaviour expected of them during the course of their duties and outside of the workplace.• Familiarise themselves with the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.• Maintain confidentiality when involved in Disciplinary matters.• Ensure that their companion is available to attend any appropriate meetings.• Cooperate in investigations and meetings as necessary whether they are the subject of allegations of misconduct or called as a witness; and should treat all individuals involved in the process with dignity and respect.
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<p>Organisational Development</p>	<p><i>Organisational Development will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conjunction with Investigating and Disciplining Officers, ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently throughout any formal process. • Be present at each formal meeting as set out in this procedure. • Provide advice and guidance on the application of the policy and procedure throughout the Investigation and any subsequent Disciplining Hearing; any employment law issues; and matters of consistency. • Provide advice on the way an investigation report is presented to ensure it addresses all necessary issues and provide any advice on any decision making in relation to investigation or disciplinary hearing. • Ask questions during any formal meeting to assist proceedings. • Treat all individuals involved in the process with dignity and respect. • Maintain confidentiality when involved in Disciplinary matters.
<p>Trade Union/ Workplace Companions</p>	<p><i>Trade Unions and Workplace Companions will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote appropriate conduct in the workplace. • Advise and support their members who are involved in disciplinary proceedings. • Co-operate with investigations and attendance at meetings as appropriate. • Treat all individuals involved in the process with dignity and respect. • Maintain confidentiality when involved in Disciplinary matters. • Make every effort to attend scheduled meetings in line with the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure when they have agreed to accompany an employee involved in investigations and disciplinary hearings. • The role of the Trade Union is outlined in the ACAS Code of Practice (add link)

5. Disciplinary Procedure

A member of the Organisational Development Division will always be available for advice and guidance and in all cases will be present throughout the formal process.

In conjunction with OD advice, managers must determine whether supportive action or formal action is the most appropriate course of action when dealing with issues of misconduct.

Supportive Action

Supervisors and managers should have regular discussions with employees about any areas of concern in relation to attitude, behaviour and conduct at work. An

employee may expect to receive informal advice and guidance on areas of improvement as part of the normal working relationship. Similarly, in cases other than gross or serious misconduct, any concerns relating to conduct should usually be discussed with the employee to explore options other than invoking formal proceedings. Where appropriate, a note of any such informal discussions may be held on the employee's file until the matter has sufficiently improved but it will not form part of the employee's disciplinary record.

Formal Action

Formal action will be taken where there is a clear breach of the Council's policy and procedures and/or accepted standards of conduct or behaviour.

Suspension from Duty

Suspension from duty may take two forms; temporary removal from the workplace or formal suspension.

Temporary Removal from the Workplace

Temporary removal from the workplace can occur where a line manager requests that an employee refrains from working where there has been an initial allegation, workplace conflict or their continued presence may be disruptive or detrimental to the working environment. This must be authorised by a senior manager (Team Manager or above) and should not exceed two working days. Temporary redeployment to an alternative role on a short-term basis may be used as an alternative.

Formal Suspension

In some cases an employee may need to be formally suspended from work and the Council's Suspension Protocol will apply. Formal suspension may be considered in the following circumstances:

- The matter is potentially gross misconduct;
- The presence of the individual at work may prejudice the investigation;
- The alleged conduct represents a potential risk to other staff and/or service users.

In all cases, reasonable alternatives to suspension will be considered such as redeploying the employee to a suitable post on a temporary basis or restricting certain activities pending an investigation in order to avoid both the financial impact and the effect on service provision during a period of sustained suspension. Suspensions will be subject to regular review throughout the period and managers will determine at each review whether it remains an appropriate course of action.

Suspension is not a disciplinary sanction and does not imply that a decision has already been made about the allegations. Suspension arrangements will be confirmed in writing. While suspended, employees should not visit the Council's premises or contact any service users, suppliers, contractors or colleagues, unless the employee has been authorised to do so by their manager. A dedicated Support Officer appointed by the Manager will offer support for the employee throughout the suspension.

The decision to suspend will normally be communicated to the employee face to face. Employees are not entitled to be accompanied by a Trade Union Representative or workplace companion at the suspension meeting. Consideration will be given to the

attendance of a trade union or workplace representative but they will not be routinely invited unless the Council requests the employee to provide some initial response to the allegations.

Suspensions will be with full pay except in the cases where an employee has reported sick. In cases where an employee reports sick during a suspension, the occupational sick pay scheme will be applied and upon production of the appropriate medical certificates, the employee will be paid in line with sickness entitlements in accordance with their Terms and Conditions of employment.

6. Undertaking an Investigation

The purpose of an investigation is for the Council to establish a fair and balanced view of the facts relating to any disciplinary allegation, before deciding whether to proceed to a disciplinary hearing. The amount of investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. An Investigating Officer will be appointed who will usually be a line manager or, depending on the circumstances, a senior nominated officer from within the same Department who will look into the issue(s) in question, interview and take statements from relevant individuals and/or review relevant documents. Witnesses may be requested to attend relevant meetings in relation to the process and their statements will usually be passed to the employee in question and their representative.

The Investigating Officer will invite the employee who is the subject of the disciplinary investigation to attend an Investigatory Meeting in writing, detailing the nature of the allegations. Although not a legal requirement, they will also be given the opportunity to be accompanied by a companion.

It is important to note that the investigation and any investigatory interviews are not in themselves disciplinary action. They are solely for the purposes of fact-finding.

At the conclusion of the investigation a decision will be made by the Investigating Officer whether the matter will proceed to a Disciplinary Hearing, taking into consideration all of the available facts and evidence. The employee will be notified as promptly as possible of this decision in writing.

Circumstances may arise in the workplace, which could lead to the Internal Audit Section carrying out an investigation. This situation may arise because of concerns or allegations about an employee that, for example, there has been a breach of the Contract Procedure Rules or the Financial Procedure Rules or financial irregularities. If Internal Audit undertake an investigation, their findings which will be submitted in writing to the employee's Manager to determine whether any further action is required in line with the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.

Whistleblowing

Concerns raised of a whistleblowing nature will be investigated initially in line with the Whistleblowing Policy.

7. The Disciplinary Hearing

Following any investigation, if the Council considers there are grounds for disciplinary action, the employee will be required to attend a Disciplinary Hearing. The employee must make every effort to attend the hearing. Failure to attend without good reason may lead to a decision being taken in the employee's absence.

The employee has the right to be accompanied by a companion at the Disciplinary Hearing.

The employee will be notified in writing a minimum of 5 working days in advance of the date, time and location of the Disciplinary Hearing and they will be given details of the nature of the complaint or issue, including whether the allegations may amount to gross misconduct, which could result in dismissal. All relevant information including the investigation report, witness statements, documentation and information related to the case will be issued prior to the Disciplinary Hearing. Specific arrangements will be made, where appropriate, to view sensitive or complex information that forms part of the evidence bundle (that cannot be copied or removed from the Council), at an identified location. In cases where an employee's trade union representative or workplace companion cannot attend on a proposed date, the employee can suggest an alternative time and date within five working days after the original date.

A Senior Officer from the same Department as the employee who is subject to the disciplinary process or where appropriate, another nominated Senior Officer **who has not been involved in the investigation** will usually conduct the Disciplinary Hearing (the "Disciplining Officer"). A member of the Organisational Development Division (who can be the same OD Representative who advised at the investigation stage) will also be present.

If an employee wishes to call relevant witnesses, they should notify the Disciplining Officer on receipt of the letter inviting them to the Disciplinary Hearing advising them of the names of the witnesses they intend to call. It is the responsibility of whoever is calling the witnesses to invite the witness to attend the disciplinary hearing however, the scheduling of attendance will be considered by the Disciplining Officer prior to the Hearing.

The Investigating Officer, who may call witnesses to attend the Hearing, will present the findings of the investigation at the Disciplinary Hearing. The employee and their representative will have the opportunity to present their case at the Disciplinary Hearing and respond to the allegations. At the conclusion of the Hearing both parties will be given the opportunity to sum up their case.

The Disciplinary Hearing may be adjourned if the Disciplining Officer considers that further investigation is required. The employee will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider any new information obtained before the disciplinary hearing is reconvened.

The Disciplining Officer will make their decision and the employee will be advised of the outcome. The decision may not always be made immediately after the

Disciplinary Hearing but it will be communicated in writing to the employee as soon as possible thereafter (and normally no later than 5 working days).

The Disciplinary procedure is detailed in the attached flowchart ([appendix 3](#)).

8. Levels of Warnings – Misconduct and Gross Misconduct

Where an employee's misconduct is such as to warrant a disciplinary sanction, the Disciplining Officer will issue a warning to the employee. The sanction, which is issued, may be at any level of warning and will be dependent upon the circumstances, the seriousness of the offence and whether the matter is a first offence. Consideration will also be given to the reasonableness of the outcome and consistency with other recorded cases.

Detailed below are the outcomes that can be expected as a result of misconduct or gross misconduct.

1. (First) Written Warning

If the matter falls into the remit of misconduct as defined in this policy, or if the misconduct has escalated from prior supportive action, the employee will be issued with a first written warning. The written warning will remain live on the employee's file for a period of **9 months**. Whilst the warning will expire, a record of what has occurred will remain on the personal file in line with the Council's retention guidelines.

Repetition of this, or any other misconduct during the specified period will be subject to full consideration of the circumstances and, if appropriate, the next stage of the procedure will be implemented, which could result in a final written warning.

2. Final Written Warning

If the employee already has an active written warning or the employee's conduct is sufficiently serious then a final written warning will be issued. This final written warning will remain on the employee's file for a period of **12 months**. Whilst the warning will expire, a record of what has occurred will remain on the personal file in line with the Council's retention guidelines.

It should be noted that:

- repetition of the same, or any other misconduct during the specified period of the warning; and/or
- where a final written warning fails to bring about the required improvement, further disciplinary action may be taken which could result in dismissal.

3. **Dismissal or other Sanction**

An employee may be dismissed for further misconduct where there is an active final written warning on record or for gross misconduct irrespective of whether there are active warnings on the employee's record. In the case of gross misconduct, the employee will normally be summarily dismissed without notice or pay in lieu of notice.

Where dismissal is decided as an appropriate form of action, any mitigating circumstances will be taken into account by the Disciplining Officer. In certain cases, action short of dismissal may be considered, such as a transfer to another post or place of work. This action should only be taken following consultation with the Organisational Development Division.

All cases of disciplinary action must be formally recorded and the outcome, with the right of appeal (detailed below), confirmed in writing to the employee.

A list of examples of acts that constitute serious or gross misconduct is attached ([Appendix 1](#)).

9. Appeals against Disciplinary Action

Employees are entitled to appeal against any formal disciplinary action in line with the Council's Appeals Procedure ([Appendix 3](#)) within five working days of receipt of the written confirmation of the disciplinary outcome decision. Appeals short of dismissal will be made to a senior manager who has not been involved in the case. Appeals against a dismissal will be heard by the Council's Appeals Committee, which usually consists of three appointed Council Members. In all cases, the employee will be expected to clearly state the grounds for appeal and provide a statement of case for consideration by the Appeals Panel in accordance with the Appeals Procedure. There will be no further right of internal appeal following the conclusion of the Appeals Procedure.

There are three possible outcomes as a result of an appeal:

- The decision of the Disciplinary Hearing is upheld.
- The decision of the Disciplinary Hearing is overturned and substituted with some other sanction (excluding a more severe sanction).
- The decision of the Disciplinary Hearing is overturned.

For further information, please refer to the Appeals Procedures in [Appendix 3](#) of this policy.

10. General Information

As a result of an investigation process, the Council may be required to make a referral to a regulatory body such as the Disclosure and Barring Service, Social Care Wales or other professional bodies. If a referral is required, the employee concerned will be notified of this in writing.

Appendix 1: Examples of Standards and Conduct

Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct is a serious breach of contract, which, in the opinion of the Council, is likely to prejudice its business or reputation or irreparably damage the working relationship and trust between the Council and the employee. In such cases, the employee will be dismissed without notice (summary dismissal). The following list of offences is not to be regarded as exhaustive and is intended as a guide only.

Examples of matters that are normally regarded as gross misconduct include:

- Serious breach of the Council's Code of Conduct.
- Acts of theft or other offences of dishonesty including acceptance of improper hospitality, fees or rewards.
- Gross negligence or dereliction of duty including improper treatment of clients/customers or serious breach of a professional code of practice.
- Serious breach of health and safety rules.
- Bullying and harassment of staff.
- Physical violence, fighting or physical assault.
- Discrimination against colleagues, contractors, members of the public or service users.
- Falsification of qualifications, records or personal information which are a stated requirement of employment or which results in financial or personal gain.
- Falsification of the Council's recording, data or information systems.
- Deliberate damage to or misuse of, the Council's information, property or equipment; or a breach of the Information Security Policy including unauthorised entry into the Council's computer system(s). This includes unauthorised copying of software or downloading copyright, threatening, obscene or libellous material and misuse of the Council's internet provision.
- Failure to disclose suspected malpractice or knowledge of abuse/neglect/harm of a child or vulnerable person.
- Contravention of the Council's Alcohol and Drugs Policy.
- Committing an act outside work, or being convicted of a criminal offence, which in the opinion of the Council may affect its reputation or its relationships with staff, service users or members of the public, or otherwise affects the employee's suitability for continued employment.
- Inappropriate use of social networking sites, which may bring the Council into disrepute. This includes misuse of such sites outside of working time.
- Engaging in employment whilst medically declared unfit to do so which is in direct conflict with your employment with the Council or undertaking unauthorised paid or unpaid employment.
- Any act which may result in an action against the Council for negligence or breach of the duty of care.
- Unauthorised use, processing or disclosure of personal data contrary to the Council's Data Protection Policy.
- Unauthorised use or disclosure of confidential information or failure to ensure that confidential information is kept secure.
- Repeated or serious failure to obey instructions, or any other serious act of insubordination.

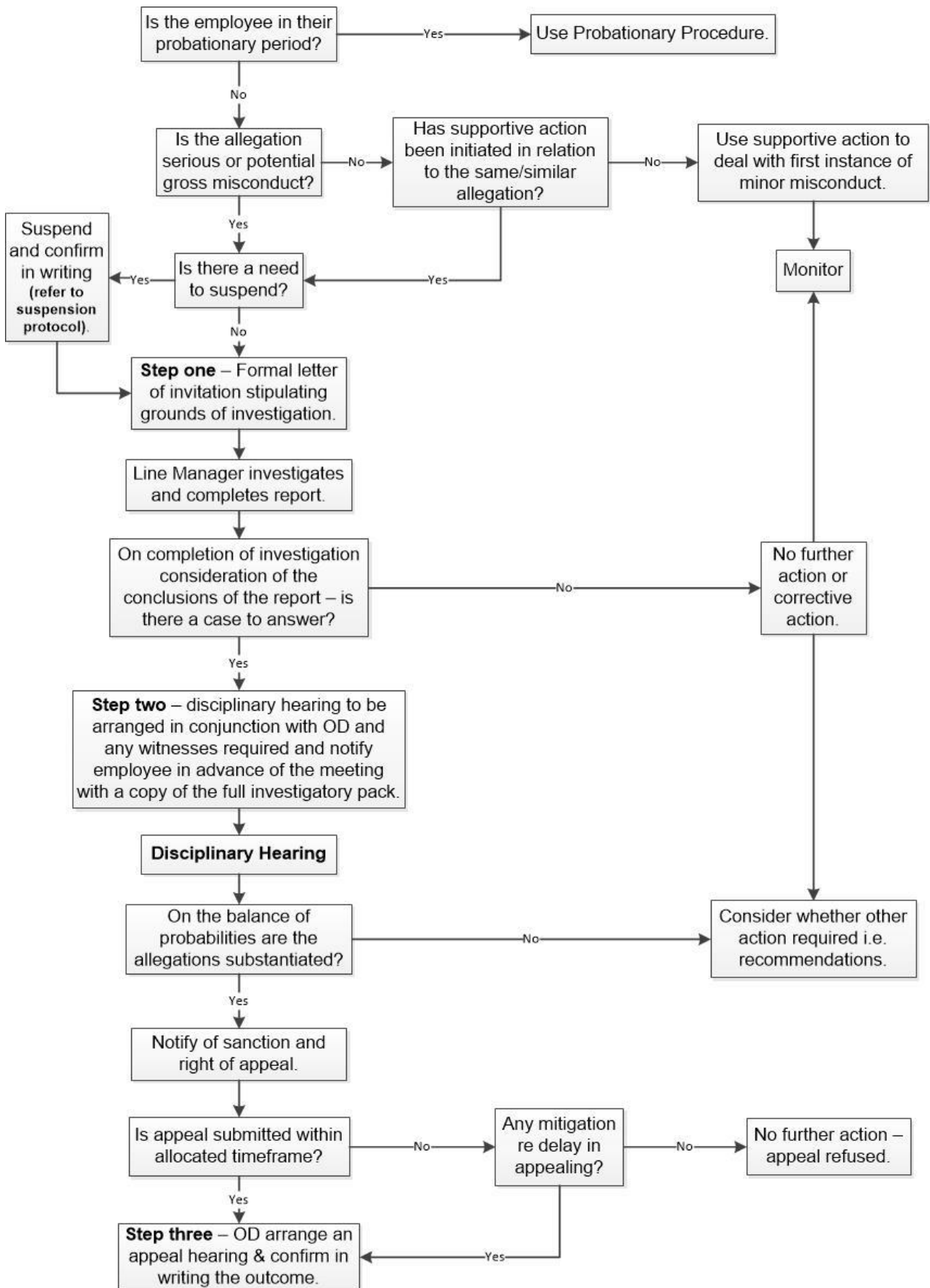
Misconduct

The following are examples of matters that will normally be regarded as misconduct and will be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Policy & Procedure:

- Failure to comply with a work rule, reasonable order, instruction or contractual requirement.
- Failure to comply with a health or safety requirement.
- Persistent late attendance and/or inadequate timekeeping, abuse of the Council's Flexible Working Hours Scheme such as regular clocking omissions, persistent failure to achieve contract hours, continued loss of key fob, or similar.
- Matters relating to unacceptable levels of attendance and failure to comply with the requirements of the Attendance Management Policy.
- Undertaking activities, whilst purporting to be absent due to sickness, which are likely to be incompatible with the reason for absence and/or which are unlikely to be conducive to recovery.
- Misuse of equipment, supplies and facilities provided by the Council.
- Providing false information orally or by the falsification of records or documents.
- Contravention of the Council's Equalities Policies.
- Failure to report or record any matter which it is the employee's duties to report or record, e.g. failure to disclose a pecuniary interest.
- Breach of the Council's Smoking Policy.
- Failure to comply with the legal requirements of the Driver's Handbook.

This list is intended as a guide and is not exhaustive.

Appendix 2: Disciplinary Process Flowchart



Appendix 3: Appeals Procedure

Preliminary Matters

- 1.1 All appeals in relation to disciplinary will be heard in line with this Procedure.
- 1.2 The Appeal will be heard as follows:
 - 1.2.1 Where the appeal is in relation to disciplinary action short of dismissal, a Senior Officer (chairperson) from an alternative service area, who will review the disciplinary decision will hear it. In all cases, the Senior Officer will not have been involved with the detail of the case, the original meeting or decision and where possible will be senior in authority to the person who took the disciplinary decision. In addition, an Organisational Development Representative from another operational team who has not previously advised or been involved in the case will attend the hearing to advise the Senior Officer (hereafter referred to as the 'Appeals Panel') and an officer will also be present to take minutes of the hearing.
 - 1.2.2 Where the appeal is in relation to dismissal, an Appeals Panel consisting of three elected members, will review the decision taken to dismiss.
 - 1.2.3 The Appeals Panel will be chaired by a Chair of a Scrutiny Committee and in all cases Committee Members will not have been involved with the detail of the case, the original meeting or decision. In addition, the Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance or their nominated representative will attend the hearing and act as Advisor to the Appeals Committee. An officer will also be present to take minutes of the hearing.
- 1.3 An Appellant (employee), or their representative, wishing to lodge an appeal must notify the **Head of Organisational Development, in writing**, of their intention to do so within **5 working days of receipt of the written confirmation** of the disciplinary outcome. This correspondence should state the grounds on which the Appellant is appealing.
- 1.4 The Appeal will be heard without unreasonable delay and every effort will be made to ensure that it will be held within **20 working days** from receipt of the appellant's written notification.
- 1.5 **Written acknowledgement** of the appeal as submitted will be provided and the Appellant and Respondent (management) will be advised of the following:
 - Timeframe in which to submit their **'written statement of case'** in line with this Procedure.
 - Notice of the time, date and venue of the Hearing at least 5 working days in advance.

- 1.6 The parties involved in the Hearing will submit their '**written statement of case**' to the Council's Organisational Development Division by no later than **10 working days** from the date of the original **written confirmation** that the appellant intends to appeal. The statements of case should include the following:
- The Appellant's statement should outline the reasons for the appeal, any evidence on which they intend to rely, witness statements and details of relevant witnesses to be called at the Hearing.
 - The Respondent's statement will outline the original facts and details presented at the Disciplinary Hearing with supporting documentation and the reasons for the original decision, together with the details of relevant witnesses to be called at the Hearing.
- 1.7 The Appellant has the right to be represented by a Trade Union Representative or workplace companion and will be able to call witnesses to provide evidence **relevant to the case**. It is the Appellant's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements for their representative and/or relevant witnesses to attend the Hearing. Character witnesses will not be heard unless they are able to provide salient facts in relation to the case.
- 1.8 If the Appellant and/or their representative cannot attend on the proposed date with just cause, an alternative date and time can be suggested which is mutually acceptable and which should normally be within **5 working days** of the original date.
- 1.9 In the event of either party not complying with the pre-conditions relating to the Appeals Procedure prior to the Hearing, then save for acceptable or excusing circumstances, the Appeals Panel may consider the appeal based on the evidence available.

The Hearing

- 2.1 At the outset of the Hearing, those present will be introduced and the purpose of the hearing and how it will be conducted will be outlined. The Chairperson will also clarify the grounds for appeal and refer to the submitted statements of case.

As the Hearing will undertake a review of the decision, it is important to note that no new facts should normally be presented at the Hearing. In the case where new evidence has emerged since the original disciplinary decision was taken, this should be brought to the attention of the Appeals Panel at the start of the Hearing. It will be for the Appeals Panel to determine if the appeal should proceed or if it should be adjourned in order for further investigation.

During the proceedings, the Appeals Panel can determine to adjourn the case, as they consider appropriate in the circumstances.

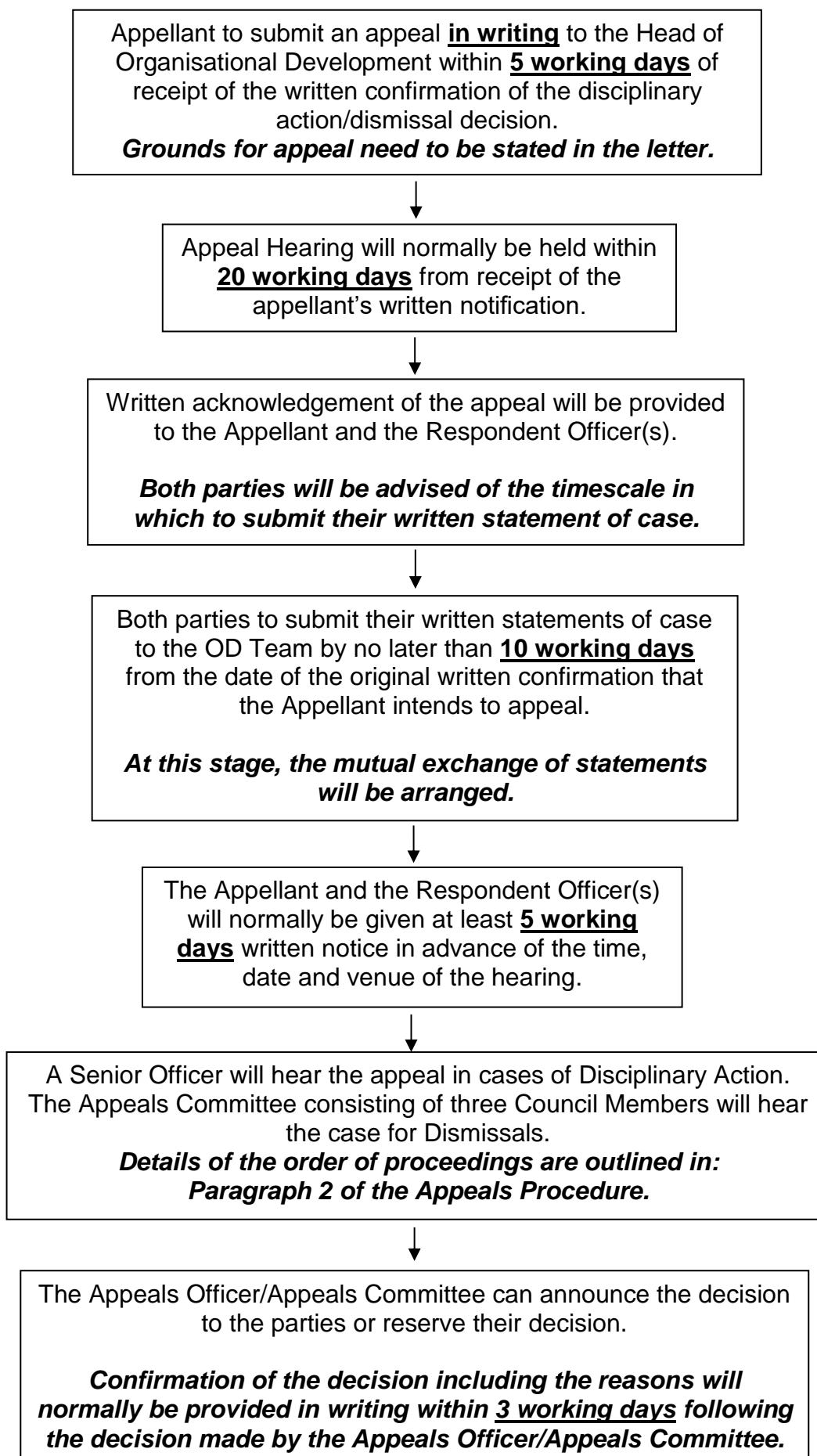
- 2.2 The order of presentation would normally be the following:
- a) The Respondent Officer(s) will put the management case forward in the presence of the Appellant and their representative relying only on the documents that form part of the written statement of case and calling witnesses to provide **relevant evidence**.

- b) The Appellant and/or representative will have the opportunity to ask questions in relation to evidence submitted by the Respondent Officer(s) or any witnesses called. Witnesses will be brought into the Appeal Hearing at the time their evidence is to be heard and should withdraw on completion of the questioning unless specifically requested to remain.
- c) The Appeals Panel will have the opportunity to ask questions of the Respondent Officer(s) and any witnesses at the time they give their evidence.
- d) The Respondent Officer(s) will have the opportunity to re-examine witnesses on any matter referred to in the examination by the Appellant or their representative or members of the Appeals Panel.
- e) The Appellant and/or their representative will put the case in the presence of the Respondent Officer(s), relying only on the documents that form part of the written statement of case and calling witnesses to provide **relevant evidence**. The representative may put the employee's case, sum up and respond on the employee's behalf to any view expressed at the Hearing. The Appellant should respond personally to direct questions during the Hearing in order to be able to clarify the facts of the matter.
- f) The Respondent Officer(s) will have the opportunity to ask questions in relation to evidence submitted by the Appellant, their representative, and any witnesses called. Witnesses will be brought into the Appeal Hearing at the time their evidence is to be heard and should withdraw on completion of the questioning unless specifically requested to remain.
- g) The Appeals Panel will have the opportunity to ask questions of the Appellant, their representative and any witnesses at the time they give their evidence.
- h) The Appellant or representative will have the opportunity to re-examine witnesses on any matter referred to in the examination by the Respondent Officer(s) or members of the Appeals Panel.
- i) The Respondent Officer(s) will then have the opportunity to sum up their case if they so wish.
- j) The Appellant or their representative will have the opportunity to sum up their case if they so wish.
- k) The Appellant, their representative, and the Respondent Officer(s) and any remaining witnesses to withdraw.

Deliberation and Conclusion

- 3.1 The Appeals Panel, together with any Advising Officer(s), will deliberate in private, only recalling the parties to clear any points of uncertainty upon evidence already given. If recall is necessary, both parties are to return, even if only one is concerned with the point given rise to doubt.
- 3.2 The Appeals Panel, in certain cases, could take the decision to adjourn the hearing in order that lines of enquiry are further investigated or matters clarified.
- 3.3 The Appeals Panel can announce the decision to the parties personally or reserve their decision. Confirmation of the decision, including the reason(s) for the decision, will normally be provided, **in writing**, within **3 working days** following the decision made by the Appeals Panel.
- 3.4 The Appeals Panel decision will be final and this procedure provides the final level of appeal available internally within Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. There is no further level of internal appeal.

Appendix 4: Appeals Procedure Flowchart



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Capability Policy (Performance Improvement)



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: xx Review: xx

Version Control

This document is intended for:

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

Version	Key Changes	Approved By

This document may be reviewed and amended at any time and without consultation in response to legal requirements or in response to an organisational requirement and where the changes do not reflect a fundamental change or affect the spirit or intent of the document.

Contents

1. Policy Statement	3
2. Definition of Capability.....	3
3. Scope	4
4. Expectations and Responsibilities	4
5. Day to Day Management.....	5
6. Supportive Action	6
7. Capability Stages	7
8. Sustained Performance Period (SPP).....	10
9. Appeals	10
10. Sickness Absence and Capability	14
11. Probationary Period.....	14
12. The Equality Act 2010	14
Appendix 1: Performance Improvement Plan	15
Appendix 2: Flowchart	16

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Council will provide employees with as much support and assistance possible to enable them to carry out their duties in an appropriate manner. In order to continue to develop as an organisation it is imperative that employees not only provide a service but constantly look for ways to improve and add value to the organisation.
- 1.2 The behaviour and attitude the Council expects of all employees, is described in the competency frameworks, which should be used in conjunction with day-to-day management and the Performance Coaching Scheme to encourage personal and professional development at every opportunity.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to provide support for employees and managers to achieve satisfactory standards of performance. The Authority is committed to providing appropriate and reasonable support to employees who are unable to reach the standard of performance required.
- 1.4 This policy's purpose is to provide Line Managers with the necessary information in order to:
 - Ensure employees are performing their roles effectively and to deal with those employees not performing, in a fair and consistent manner.
 - Encourage sensitive, realistic and constructive approaches from all concerned when dealing with capability matters.
 - Make every effort to support and retain an employee in line with this policy.
 - Clarify and confirm that the managerial responsibility for resolving capability matters rests with Line Managers, with advice and support from Organisational Development as required.
 - Ensure that capability matters are dealt with efficiently within agreed time-periods (*according to circumstances*) and with clear outcomes at all stages.

2. Definition of Capability

- 2.1 Section 98(3) of the Employment Rights Act 1996 defines 'capability' as the ability of an employee to perform required work to an acceptable standard by reference to skill, aptitude, health or any other physical or mental quality.
- 2.2 The fundamental distinction between capability and misconduct may be expressed simply as 'can't do' as opposed to 'won't do'. The latter implies that the employee has some degree of control, intention and/or choice in the matter; the employee could do better but will not or fails to perform due to their own carelessness, negligence or unwillingness. Cases of misconduct will be dealt with in line the [Disciplinary Policy and Procedure](#).
- 2.3 Issues of health capability are not included in this policy and are covered by the [Attendance Management Policy](#).

2.4 Below are some examples of which procedure would be appropriate in certain circumstances:

Issue	Procedure
Poor attendance (including sickness)	Attendance Management Policy
Poor performance due to a poor attitude	Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
Persistent short term ill-health, where the Line Manager suspects that the absence is not genuine	Disciplinary Policy and Procedure & Attendance Management Policy
The reason(s) for incapability are related to misconduct e.g. secondary employment	Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
Consistent failure to perform duties to an acceptable standard	Capability Procedure

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all employees of the Council with the exception of the Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer, the Section 151 Officer, the Head of Democratic Services and those who are defined by Regulations (which may be amended from time to time) as a Chief Officer or Deputy Chief Officer.
- 3.2 School based employees under the delegated powers of the Governing Body are subject to a separate procedure.

4. Expectations and Responsibilities

4.1 Manager

- Have regular performance coaching meetings with employees about any areas of concern in relation to skills, attitude and aptitude at work. An employee should expect to receive informal advice and guidance on areas of improvement as part of the normal working relationship. Such information should be recorded as part of regular supervision meetings.
- Ensure that effective recruitment, induction, performance coaching, training and development arrangements exist so that employees are properly supported in meeting the requirements of their job.
- Managers need to be prepared and ready to have difficult conversations with their team members.
- Clearly communicate to their employees, verbally and in writing, any fundamental change in the requirements of the job and provide any additional support and guidance required.
- Ensure that employees' workloads are **reasonable** and take steps to address any related issues.
- Ensure that if new standards are set, they are reasonably attainable for employees.
- Ensure that all employees are aware of the Council's Corporate Competency Framework, and the responsibilities/level that apply to their role.

- Maintain confidentiality and not divulge any details of unsatisfactory performance to any unauthorised person.
- Be open to the concerns of their employees.

4.1.1 Heads of Service and Corporate Directors are responsible for ensuring the consistent application of this policy/procedure and have overall responsibility for ensuring that managers are appropriately trained to deal with performance matters and for managing and/or overseeing all stages of the policy. Managers will be failing in their responsibilities if they do not address issues of capability amongst their employees.

4.1.2 **No formal action will be taken against an accredited Trade Union representative under this Policy until the Regional Trade Union officer has been informed.**

4.2 Employee

- Undertake the duties of their post to the very best of their abilities and to meet the requirements of the job.
- Look for ways to improve their contribution to the ambitions of their service and the Council as a whole.
- Actively engage in training, development, support and guidance.
- Participate fully in activities such as the Performance Coaching Scheme to establish the needs of the post and monitor performance in line with the Council's Corporate Competency Frameworks.
- Inform managers of any concerns with regard to tasks set or workload issues as early as possible.

4.3 Organisational Development (OD)

- Provide advice and guidance to managers to support with the management of each stage of the process.
- Attend all formal meetings.
- Provide template letters for each stage of the process.

5. Day to Day Management

5.1 **Before embarking on this procedure, you should be satisfied that your employee has:**

- Completed their probationary period.
- Received an appropriate induction to their job (whether they are new to the Authority or new to the job).
- Appropriate qualifications/training and skills to enable the employee to undertake the role.
- The appropriate level of resources (e.g. IT equipment) to enable them to do the job.
- Had regular performance coaching meetings and that any agreed support has been put in place.

- 5.2 Remember that there are many ways in which poor performance can be identified. Examples include, but are not limited to:
- Targets not being met.
 - Complaints from colleagues or customers.
 - Poor attitude, behaviour and lack of commitment.
 - Line-managers and colleagues covering the responsibilities of the employee.
- 5.3 Once it has been established that there is a specific concern with the workplace performance of an employee, consideration must be given at the earliest opportunity to what support can be given to assist the individual to overcome the matter.
- 5.4 Discussions should take place at normal regular performance coaching meetings. If, however, the issue is identified at a time when a regular meeting is not planned, a specific meeting may need to be arranged. This initial support should be regarded as the informal day-to-day process of maintaining an acceptable standard of work and may take the form of one or more of the following; performance coaching, supervision, training and general encouragement and motivation of the employee.
- 5.5 If the initial support does not resolve the matter and an unacceptable standard of work is occurring on a persistent and regular basis, the manager should inform the employee that they intend to initiate the stages of the capability policy, and provide a copy of the capability policy to the employee.

6. Supportive Action

- 6.1 If the day to day management has not addressed the performance matters and the manager believes that there is a more persistent or more serious capability matter, they should arrange a meeting with the employee.
- 6.2 During the meeting the manager will discuss the performance matters to determine a way forward to improve performance. The line manager and the employee will attend the meeting.
- 6.3 **Performance Improvement Plan**
The meeting will provide the opportunity to agree a Performance Improvement Plan to support the employee to achieve the required standard for performance. This would involve setting agreed improvement goals and developing targets, which must be achieved within a specified time period. The performance improvement plan will also detail any support, coaching, mentoring or training required to provide support to the employee. A template for the performance improvement plan can be found at [Appendix 1](#). This plan will set the review period within which an improvement in performance is required.

6.4 **Review Periods**

Must be **reasonable** in length, depending on the nature of the job. In a job where there are few and simple tasks, a period of a few days may be reasonable, particularly where the performance matter relates to a task which is fundamental to the job and emerges in the early stages of appointment. Where the job is complex, and improvements cannot be assessed over a short period, a review period of several weeks, or longer, may be necessary.

6.5 **Notes**

The manager should make a note of the meeting. The performance improvement plan should be agreed at the meeting and should be signed by the employee to evidence that they agree to the content of the plan. Unreasonable refusal to sign the plan will not prevent the plan remaining a live document and the individual continuing to be supported towards and assessed against its requirements.

6.6 **Supportive Action Review Meeting**

At the end of the agreed review period a meeting will be arranged to review the progress made by the employee. The manager and the employee will attend the meeting.

6.7 The manager will review progress against the performance improvement plan during the review and the employee will also have the opportunity to provide feedback.

6.8 If the manager takes the decision that performance has improved to the required standard, no further action will be necessary. The manager must inform the employee of the satisfactory outcome of the review in writing. It should be noted at this stage, however, that it is expected that the individual will sustain this level of performance and the manager should continue to hold regular performance management meetings with the individual to discuss their ongoing performance.

6.9 Where performance does not improve, or where there is some improvement but the required standard is still not reached, the manager may consider a further review period or consider action that is more formal.

6.10 Where there has been no sustained and significant improvement, the manager will take the decision to progress to the first stage of the formal procedure of the policy and a meeting will be arranged.

7. Capability Stages

7.1 If performance matters do not improve to the required standards during these stages, the following sanctions will be issued:

- **First Stage – Written Warning (live for a period of 9 months)**
- **Second Stage – Final Written Warning (live for a period of 12 months)**
- **Third Stage – Consideration of options including dismissal**

7.2 **First and Second Stage Meeting**

A meeting will be arranged and attended by the manager, employee and Organisational Development (OD). The employee will have the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a Trade Union representative/work colleague. The meeting will follow the same process as the supportive action meeting and the manager will:

- Discuss the performance matters in detail with the employee and confirm the standard of work performance expected from the employee in the area(s) under consideration.
- Review all informal measures taken to date.
- Provide the employee with an opportunity to feedback.
- Discuss the way forward and ensure suitable targets and performance improvement plans are drawn up that specify the review period, additional training or supervision required, changes in working arrangements or practices, provision of equipment or facilities, referral to the relevant agencies or any other measures being taken to support the employee to achieve the required standard of performance.
- Set a review date (normally monthly and no longer than every three months) which allows for regularly updating the employee on progress being made and gives the employee a reasonable period of time during which the required improvements must be made.
- Inform the employee that if they fail to reach the required standard during the course of the review period, further formal action may be taken, which will include further escalation through the capability policy.

7.3 The manager should make a note of the meeting. The performance improvement plan should be signed by the employee at the end of the meeting to evidence that they agree to the content of the plan. Unreasonable refusal to sign the plan will not prevent the plan remaining a live document and the individual continuing to be supported towards and assessed against its requirements. Copies of this documentation will be sent to them immediately following the meeting.

7.4 **First and Second Stage Review Meeting**

At the end of the agreed review period a meeting will be arranged to review the progress made by the employee. The manager and the employee will attend the meeting. The employee has the right to representation by a work colleague or Trade Union representative. A representative of the OD Division will also attend.

7.5 The manager will formally review progress against the performance improvement plan during the review period in discussion with those present and the employee will also have the opportunity to provide feedback.

7.6 If the manager takes the decision that performance has improved to the required standard, no further action will be necessary. The manager must inform the employee of the satisfactory outcome of the review in writing. It should be noted at this stage, however, that it is expected that the individual will sustain this level of performance and managers should continue to hold regular performance management meetings with the individual to discuss their ongoing performance. The individual will be notified that a 12 month Sustained Performance Period will commence. (Please refer to section 8 of the policy).

- 7.7 Where performance does not improve, or where there is some improvement but the required standard is still not reached, the manager may consider a further review period.
- 7.8 Where there has been no sustained and significant improvement, the manager will confirm that the appropriate disciplinary sanction (written/final written warning) will be issued and a meeting will be arranged to commence the next stage of the policy.
- 7.9 Following the meeting, the decision of the manager will be confirmed in writing to the employee, normally within 5 working days. This will include details of:
- The sanction to be imposed.
 - The area(s) where improvement is required.
 - The level of improvement required and/or required standard to be achieved.
 - The measures that will be made available to ensure that the employee can reach this level, (e.g. training, or supervision).
 - Any other action that will be taken by the manager or employee to help resolve the situation.
 - The consequences if performance does not reach a satisfactory level within the stated review period.
 - The right of appeal.
- 7.10 **Third Stage Meeting**
The process and format of this meeting will be identical to that of the first and second stages of the Capability Policy (above). Managers chairing third stage meetings must ensure that the employee has been informed that their case is under consideration of various options, including dismissal.
- 7.11 **Third Stage Review Meeting**
During the third stage review meeting the manager will need to consider the appropriate action. This may involve a further monitoring period, termination of employment or in exceptional circumstances the manager may consider an alternative option. Managers should seek advice from their OD representative when considering the appropriate course of action.
- 7.12 **A further monitoring period**
An extension of the assistance offered will only be taken if it is considered, in the light of the previous review period, that there is a likelihood that the employee's performance will achieve an acceptable level in the further time period given. It will be made clear that if performance does not reach an acceptable level within the agreed period the employee may be dismissed with appropriate notice. A specified time limit based on the particular circumstances must be issued.
- 7.13 **Termination of employment**
Where the employee has not met and sustained the required level of improvement in performance, the employee will be dismissed on the grounds of capability due to poor performance.
- 7.14 Unless there are exceptional circumstances put forward by the employee that are considered acceptable, the employee's contract of employment will be terminated.

- 7.15 The decision to terminate employment must be confirmed in writing, informing the employee of the following:
- The fact that they have been given notice of dismissal.
 - **The reason for dismissal.**
 - Confirmation of the date of termination and details of pay in lieu of notice where circumstances dictate (e.g. if the working of the notice risks affecting the service to an unacceptable degree).
 - The employee's right of appeal against dismissal.

8. Sustained Performance Period (SPP)

- 8.1 This will be a 12 month period, effective from the date of the review meeting where the employee is notified that they will not escalate further through the formal stages of the process. This is to ensure that processes undertaken in this policy result in sustained performance improvements for the employee. The manager will inform the employee of this in writing when implementing this period.
- 8.2 During this time the manager must review performance formally as part of regular performance coaching meetings with the employee.
- 8.3 The manager should address any performance matters promptly during the SPP. **If the performance is of a level that justifies returning to the formal stages of the Capability Policy the employee will move directly to the next stage rather than commencing at the beginning.**
- 8.4 If performance is assessed as satisfactory at the end of the review period, the manager should confirm this in writing to the employee. A copy of this letter will be placed on the employee's personal file. It should be noted here that it is the responsibility of the employee to maintain this level of performance without the need for close supervision or personal action plans beyond this process.

9. Appeals

- 9.1 **An employee has the right to appeal against any formal sanction imposed through the Capability Policy.**
- 9.1.1 Appeals can be made against procedural errors and/or the outcome. The grievance procedure will not apply in circumstances relating to this procedure. The appeal process should continue in parallel with, and not delay, any ongoing action under this procedure, including the start of any notice period.
- 9.1.2 An employee, or their representative, wishing to lodge an appeal must notify the **Head of Organisational Development, in writing**, of their intention to do so within **5 working days of receipt of the written confirmation** of the sanction issued/ outcome. This correspondence should state the grounds on which the Appellant is appealing.

9.2 Appeals Against Warnings

Where the appeal is in relation to sanctions issued in the first and second stages of the formal process, a Senior Officer (chairperson) from an alternative service area will review the decision will hear the appeal.

The decision of the Senior Officer (chairperson) shall be final. There shall be no further internal right of appeal.

9.3 Appeals Against Dismissal

Where the appeal is in relation to dismissal, an Appeals Panel consisting of three elected members, will review the decision taken to dismiss.

The decision of the Members Committee shall be final. There shall be no further internal right of appeal.

9.4 APPEALS PROCEDURE - PRELIMINARY MATTERS

All appeals in relation to the Capability Policy will be heard in line with this Procedure.

9.4.1 The Appeal will be heard as follows:

- Where the appeal is in relation to sanctions issued in first and second stages of the formal process, a Senior Officer (chairperson) from an alternative service area wherever possible, who will review the decision will hear it. In all cases, the Senior Officer will not have been involved with the detail of the case, the original meeting or decision and where possible will be senior in authority to the person who took the decision to issue the sanction. In addition, an Organisational Development Representative from another operational team who has not previously advised or been involved in the case will attend the hearing to advise the Senior Officer (hereafter referred to as the 'Appeals Panel') and an officer will also be present to take minutes of the hearing.
- Where the appeal is in relation to dismissal, an Appeals Panel consisting of three elected members, will review the decision taken to dismiss.
- The Appeals Panel will be chaired by a Chair of a Scrutiny Committee and in all cases Committee Members will not have been involved with the detail of the case, the original meeting or decision. In addition, the Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance or their nominated representative will attend the hearing and act as Advisor to the Appeals Committee. An officer will also be present to take minutes of the hearing.

9.4.2 An Appellant (employee), or their representative, wishing to lodge an appeal must notify the **Head of Organisational Development, in writing**, of their intention to do so within **5 working days of receipt of the written confirmation** of the sanction issued under the Capability Policy. This correspondence should state the grounds on which the Appellant is appealing.

9.4.3 The Appeal will be heard without unreasonable delay and every effort will be made to ensure that it will be held within **20 working days** from receipt of the appellant's written notification.

9.4.4 **Written acknowledgement** of the appeal as submitted will be provided and the Appellant and Respondent (management) will be advised of the following:

- Timeframe in which to submit their '**written statement of case**' in line with this Procedure.
- Notice of the time, date and venue of the Hearing at least 5 working days in advance.
- The parties involved in the Hearing will submit their '**written statement of case**' to the Council's Organisational Development Team by no later than **10 working days** from the date of the original **written confirmation** that the appellant intends to appeal. The statements of case should outline the reasons for the appeal and any evidence on which they intend to rely.
- The Respondent's statement will outline the original facts and details in relation to the capability process undertaken, along with supporting documentation and the reasons for the decision.

9.4.5 The Appellant has the right to be represented by a Trade Union Representative or workplace companion. It is the Appellant's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements for their representative to attend the Hearing.

9.4.6 If the Appellant and/or their representative cannot attend on the proposed date with just cause, an alternative date and time can be suggested which is mutually acceptable and which should normally be within **5 working days** of the original date.

9.4.7 In the event of either party not complying with the pre-conditions relating to the Appeals Procedure prior to the Hearing, then save for acceptable or excusing circumstances, the Appeals Panel may consider the appeal based on the evidence available.

9.5 **APPEALS PROCEDURE - THE HEARING**

9.5.1 At the outset of the Hearing, those present will be introduced and the purpose of the hearing and how it will be conducted will be outlined. The Chairperson will also clarify the grounds for appeal and refer to the submitted statements of case.

9.5.2 During the proceedings, the Appeals Panel can determine to adjourn the case, as they consider appropriate in the circumstances.

9.5.3 The order of presentation would normally be the following:

- a) The Respondent Officer(s) will put the management case forward in the presence of the Appellant and their representative relying only on the documents that form part of the written statement of case.

- b) The Appellant and/or representative will have the opportunity to ask questions in relation to evidence submitted by the Respondent Officer(s).
- c) The Appeals Panel will have the opportunity to ask questions of the Respondent Officer(s) at the time they give their evidence.
- d) The Appellant and/or their representative will put the case in the presence of the Respondent Officer(s), relying only on the documents that form part of the written statement of case. The representative may put the employee's case, sum up and respond on the employee's behalf to any view expressed at the Hearing. The Appellant should respond personally to direct questions during the Hearing in order to be able to clarify the facts of the matter.
- e) The Respondent Officer(s) will have the opportunity to ask questions in relation to evidence submitted by the Appellant and/or their representative.
- f) The Appeals Panel will have the opportunity to ask questions of the Appellant at the time they give their evidence.
- g) The Respondent Officer(s) will then have the opportunity to sum up their case if they so wish.
- h) The Appellant or their representative will have the opportunity to sum up their case if they so wish.
- i) The Appellant, their representative, and the Respondent Officer(s) to withdraw.

9.6 APPEALS PROCEDURE - DELIBERATION AND CONCLUSION

- 9.6.1 The Appeals Panel, together with any Advising Officer(s), will deliberate in private, only recalling the parties to clear any points of uncertainty upon evidence already given. If recall is necessary, both parties are to return, even if only one is concerned with the point given rise to doubt.
- 9.6.2 The Appeals Panel, in certain cases, could take the decision to adjourn the hearing in order that matters are clarified.
- 9.6.3 The Appeals Panel can announce the decision to the parties personally or reserve their decision. Confirmation of the decision, including the reason(s) for the decision, will normally be provided, **in writing**, within **3 working days** following the decision made by the Appeals Panel.
- 9.6.4 The Appeals Panel decision will be final and this procedure provides the final level of appeal available internally within Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. There is no further level of internal appeal.

10. Sickness Absence and Capability

- 10.1 If an employee is absent due to illness there may be a requirement for a referral to the Council's Occupational Health provider, ([Occupational Health Management Referral Form](#)) for an assessment and to obtain the relevant information and advice.

11. Probationary Period

- 11.1 This Capability Policy does not apply to employees who are undertaking their probationary period. The probationary period is designed to offer both the employee and employer the opportunity to assess the employee's suitability for the post on a monthly basis and any development needs should be discussed with the individual and any other appropriate officer(s) during this time.

12. The Equality Act 2010

- 12.1 During the application of this policy should a manager become aware that the employee has, is perceived to have or is associated with someone who has, what the Equality Act 2010 defines as a Protected Characteristic, and this is potentially impacting on the employee's performance, further advice should be sought as to any reasonable adjustments that may need to be considered. Advice should be sought from Organisational Development.

Appendix 1: Performance Improvement Plan

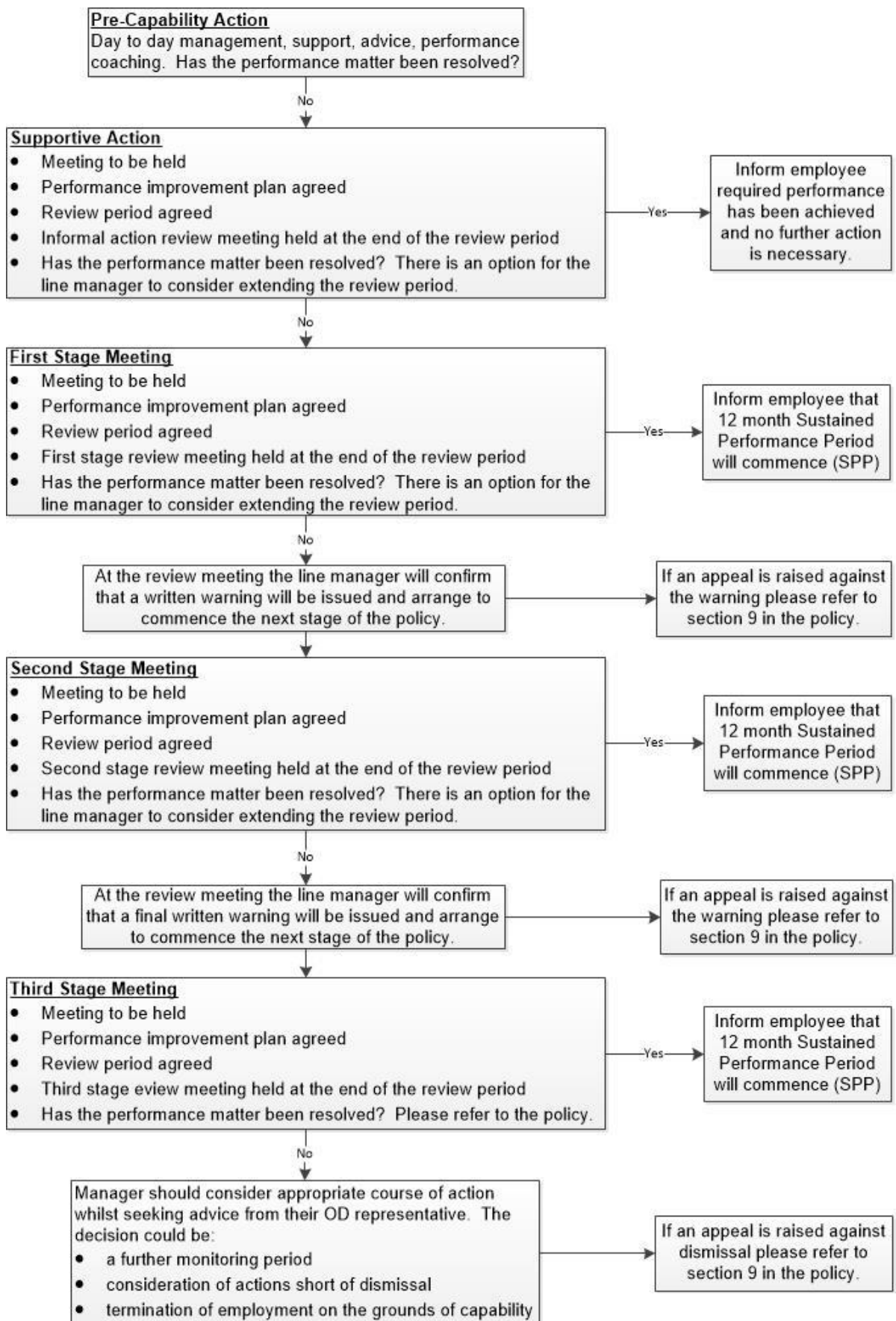
Identified Areas	Assessment Level (select key colour)	Success Criteria	Action: Support/Training required	Timescale for tasks to be achieved	Progress against Targets

Has identified capability gaps, is already making improvements in capability for current and future delivery and is well placed to do so. Is expected to improve further in the short term through practical actions that are planned or already underway and has clear metrics to support progress.

Has weaknesses in capability for current and future delivery and/or has not identified all weaknesses and has no clear mechanism for doing so. More action is required to close current capability gaps and deliver improvement over the medium term.

Significant weaknesses in capability for current and future delivery that require urgent action. Not well placed to address weaknesses in the short or medium term and needs additional action and support to secure effective delivery.

Appendix 2: Flowchart



N.B. Managers should inform employees in writing of the decision at the end of each stage

Agenda Item 35

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 08.07.2022

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **21st July, 2022**

Report Subject: **Employer Supported Volunteering Policy**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader / Executive Member Corporate Overview & Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Andrea J Prosser, Head of Organisational Development**

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

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the implementation of the proposed Volunteering Policy (appendix 1).

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 According to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, employer supported volunteering is where organisations provide opportunities for employees to volunteer in work time, for example by allowing volunteering leave and such programmes can help form a bridge between organisations, their employees and the wider community.
- 2.2 Employer supported volunteering is important because of the potential benefits it can bring. Some of the recognisable benefits for employers include the link between volunteering and employee development and the opportunity to engage with employees, whilst improving communication and understanding of the local community. In addition, employers can also build stronger teams and improve staff morale whilst improving overall brand reputation and demonstrating a commitment to make a difference to local communities.
- 2.3 Volunteering gives employees the chance to build connections with their local communities and give back to society while working on issues they feel passionate about. They also gain the opportunity to develop key soft skills in areas such as coaching, leadership, organisational abilities, confidence and gaining an overall sense of fulfilment.
- 2.4 Community and voluntary sector organisations often have low budgets and value enthusiastic volunteers with specialist skills, expertise and knowledge. Corporate volunteering programmes work well when employers and volunteers have an open, mutually beneficial and respectful relationship with the organisation they wish to support.

- 2.5 The proposed attached Volunteering Policy will entitle an employee to **one day paid leave per year** to undertake volunteering opportunities in the local community. In line with the Policy, the Council would encourage its employees to volunteer by allowing time off during work hours which they will use to volunteer at an establishment of their choice i.e. charities, community groups, schools, care homes, hospitals, etc. The Policy clearly sets out the parameters of the leave entitlement.
- 2.6 The Policy will apply to all Council staff irrespective of length of service, excluding those employed on a relief basis. The policy will not apply to school based staff who are under the delegated powers of a Governing Body.
- 2.7 The Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) have also been consulted in conjunction with the development of this policy and they have provided a direct link into themselves to support and guide employees in finding an appropriate volunteering opportunity.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
- 3.1 **Option 1**
Support volunteering leave by approving the proposed Volunteering Policy for implementation.
- 3.2 **Option 2**
Do not approve the Volunteering Policy for implementation.
4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 4.1 The proposed Volunteering Policy has direct links with the Councils Corporate Plan, Wellbeing Plan and Workforce Strategy.
- 4.2 The Corporate Plan's core values include "proud & ambitious", "working together" and "raising aspirations", all of which can be supported by the implementation of the Volunteering Policy.
- 4.3 The Wellbeing Plan clearly sets out 5 objectives for the Council and its communities, all of which are supported by the introduction of a Volunteering Policy i.e. "Blaenau Gwent wants safe and friendly communities...". Allowing our staff to contribute in a meaningful way in our communities, promotes this objective and increases partnership working with local organisations/groups.
- 4.4 Priority outcomes for the Council's Workforce Strategy includes "A highly motivated and engaged workforce" and a "Modern Employer of Choice"; the introduction of a Volunteering Policy directly contributes to both of these priorities. Volunteering can have a significant impact on a person's health and well-being. It can reduce stress levels, improve mood, help people stay active and give them a sense of purpose.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**
- 5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***
 There are no direct budgetary implications as a result of implementing the policy however, cover costs for employees in front line positions for one day per year, should they utilise the entitlement, will be applicable.
- 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***
 N/A
- 5.3 ***Legal***
 There are no legal implications.
- 5.4 ***Human Resources***
 Allowing staff to volunteer in a meaningful way is known to improve employee wellbeing. This directly links to the Council's Workforce Strategy which will support our aim of having a highly supported and engaged workforce and being a modern employer of choice.
- 6.1 ***Supporting Evidence***
Performance Information and Data
 N/A
- 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***
 Greater services from local charities etc. that benefit from volunteers.
- 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
 The Trade Union (Unison, GMB & Unite) have had sight of the policy and raised no objections.
- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
 Directly links the Council's Plans and Strategies as detailed above.
- 6.5 ***Preventative focus***
 N/A
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
 The implementation of a Volunteering Policy will improve collaboration and partnership working with local communities.
- 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
 Policy applies to all Council staff only. The policy will not apply to school based staff who are under the delegated powers of a Governing Body.
- 6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***
 N/A
- 6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***
 N/A

6.9b. ***Equality Impact Assessment***

Integrated Impact Assessment completed – no adverse impact.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The Policy will be reviewed and updated by Organisational Development on a regular basis.

8 **Background Documents /Electronic Links**

8.1 Appendix 1 – Volunteering Policy

Volunteering Policy



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: XXX Review: XXX

Version Control

This document is intended for:

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

Version	Key Changes	Approved By

This document may be reviewed and amended at any time and without consultation in response to legal requirements or in response to an organisational requirement and where the changes do not reflect a fundamental change or affect the spirit or intent of the document.

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Definition of Corporate Volunteering	3
3. Scope of the Policy.....	3
4. Policy Statement	3
5. Policy Entitlement.....	4
6. Employee Responsibilities	5
7. Manager’s Responsibilities.....	5
8. Requesting Paid Volunteering Leave	5
9. Further Considerations	6
Request Form For Volunteering Leave	7

1. Introduction

The Council recognises that some employees wish for an opportunity to develop professional and personal skills whilst helping local people, the community or improving the environment. By encouraging voluntary activities, the Council demonstrates that it values its employees, local groups and seeks to play a leading role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the communities that it serves as part of its commitment to community engagement. This policy is also intended to support, encourage and develop employees by facilitating their involvement in a wide range of community organisations.

This Policy sets out the requirements for implementing the Council's commitment to supporting employee volunteering.

2. Definition of Corporate Volunteering

Corporate volunteering is a workplace-based initiative whereby the Council provides support and encouragement for its employees to volunteer in the local community and for good causes. Volunteering is defined as a commitment of time and energy for the benefit of the community, environment, individuals or groups which can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and not for financial gain. The Council encourages its employees to volunteer by allowing time off during work hours which they use to volunteer at an establishment of their choice i.e. charities, community groups, schools, care homes, hospitals.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to Council staff only, regardless of length of service or type of contract with the exception of those employed on a relief basis.

4. Policy Statement

The Council is committed to playing its part as active corporate citizens by sharing our expertise, skills and resources and creating partnerships which have a positive impact on our wider communities. Accordingly, the Council encourages its employees to engage as volunteers in a broad range of social, environmental and economic initiatives in the communities of Blaenau Gwent as a means of enhancing the Council's community leadership role.

By actively supporting the community and continuing to be a socially responsible organisation, the Council believes that this scheme will bring real benefits to our customers, our communities and our employees.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Positively impact and contribute to the local community of Blaenau Gwent, continuing to be a socially responsible organisation by sharing our expertise, resources and creating partnerships.
- Support and encourage employees to volunteer to improve skills, personal development, health and wellbeing.
- Contribute to the recruitment and retention of staff providing access to further opportunities, staff motivation and the delivery of quality services.

Volunteering can provide a refreshing and inspiring break and have a great motivational effect on the individual, thus leading to improved business performance. Volunteering leave can also have a positive effect on the Council's ability to recruit and retain employees.

Volunteering can benefit the individual, community and the Council by providing opportunities for:

- Personal growth, where an individual can acquire new skills and knowledge that will have a positive effect on the Authority.
- Sense of pride and achievement which will impact employee satisfaction, morale and wellbeing.
- Employee engagement contributing to brand reputation, recruitment and retention.
- Access to skilled support and increased productivity and reputation in the community.
- Increased awareness and engagement with community issues.

5. Policy Entitlement

To support our commitment to being an "Employer of Choice" and to achieve the aims in the section above, it is the responsibility of the Council to give employees the opportunity to broaden their experience and acquire new skills by carrying out voluntary work. This will be achieved by granting a paid volunteering period of **one day per year per employee** which can be split into half days. Accrual of volunteering leave cannot be carried forward into the next year if not utilised by the employee.

If you would like to volunteer but unsure of an organisation to volunteer with, please contact Caragh Porter at Caragh.Porter@gavo.org.uk or 07483 128080 who is the Council's direct link to the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO). GAVO can support and guide you individually in finding an appropriate volunteering opportunity.

Where an employee wishes to apply for a period of unpaid, extended leave to undertake volunteering, please refer to our Sabbatical Policy.

Where possible, the Council will try to accommodate requests for volunteering leave but the needs of the service will always be paramount.

6. Employee Responsibilities

The employee responsibilities when requesting volunteering leave are:

- Volunteering to the best of their ability and representing the Council in a professional and positive way.
- Respecting the privacy, property and confidentiality of others.
- Ensuring they are aware of any safeguarding obligations and report any concerns.
- Notifying the organisation they are volunteering for and their manager with as much notice as possible if they are unable to attend the volunteering commitment.

7. Manager's Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the manager in relation to the Volunteering Policy are:

- Ensuring staff members, including new starters are aware of the opportunity to volunteer.
- To be as supportive as possible when considering employee's requests, however, need to ensure that volunteering will not disrupt or adversely affect service delivery.
- Ensuring there is no conflict of interest with the individual's role and does not promote extreme views.
- Ensuring the volunteering activity is of legitimate cause.
- Ensuring sufficient cover is in place while the employee volunteers.
- Submitting the request for volunteering form to the OD department in a timely manner.

8. Requesting Paid Volunteering Leave

To request a period of volunteering leave, the employee should speak with their manager to ensure they can be released from their work duties. The employee must complete a "[Request Form for Volunteering Leave](#)" and submit this form to their manager in advance of the leave.

The manager will consider the application with regards to the business needs of the Service and only on receipt of an approved form should the employee commit themselves to volunteering.

Abuse of the Provisions

Any abuse of the provisions of the volunteering policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Authority's [Disciplinary Code](#).

9. Further Considerations

- Issues such as insurance, health & safety and safeguarding will be the liability of the volunteering organisation while the employee is on volunteering leave.
- Any expenses occurred such as travel will not be covered by the Council.
- Any activities which cannot be shown to be of benefit to the local community, such as organisations who look to make profit, volunteering to support a friend or family member will not qualify under this scheme.

Request Form For Volunteering Leave



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

SECTION 1 – TO BE COMPLETED BY EMPLOYEE

Name:

Staff Number:

Directorate:

Designation:

Date requested to volunteer:

Volunteering organisation and contact details:

Details of volunteering:

I have read and understood the Volunteering Leave Policy.

Employee's Signature:

Date:

SECTION 2 – TO BE COMPLETED BY LINE MANAGER/HEADTEACHER

The above request has been accepted.

Manager's Signature:

Date:

Print Name:

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN TO HRpayroll@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

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Agenda Item 36

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 06.07.2022

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 04.07.2022

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **21st July, 2022**

Report Subject: **Regional Population Needs Assessment (PNA)**

Portfolio Holder: **Haydn Trollope, Executive Member Social Services**

Report Submitted by: **Tanya Evans, Interim Director Social Services
Phil Diamond, Head of Regional Partnership Team**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
							21/07/2022	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek approval of the Population Needs Assessment (PNA) from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.
- 1.2 To receive comments from members on the highlighted needs in the PNA and if these needs reflects the local authority area.
- 1.3 To demonstrate how the PNA aligns to the regional Well-being Assessment required under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 PNA Summary

- The Population Needs Assessment is a statutory document required by Welsh Government once per electoral cycle.
- Local authorities are required under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 to work in partnership with health boards to produce a regional PNA.
- The PNA will set out the extent to which there are people in the area of assessment who need care and support.

- 2.2 As set out in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWB Act) local authorities and local health boards must enter into a partnership to produce one PNA report per local government electoral cycle. The Act also stipulates:

- the Regional Partnership Board is required to produce the Population Needs Assessment (PNA); and
- local authorities and local health boards are required formally to approve the PNA report and make available on their websites.

- 2.3 A copy of the PNA report must be completed by April 2022 and be sent to Welsh Ministers at the time of publication. The first regional PNA was overseen by the Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB) in April 2016. The PNA is aligned to Well-being Assessment completed by Public Service Boards as required under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.
- 2.4 The 2022 PNA report will also align, integrate and cross reference the Gwent Well-being Assessment, completed by the newly formed Regional Public Service Board, to avoid duplication and create a joint population well-being assessment for the region (this section can be read alongside the regional Well-being Assessment or as an individual document).
- 2.5 The first PNA was approved and signed off across the region on 1st April 2017 (follow link to RPB website Population Needs Assessment <http://www.gwentrpb.wales/>)
- 2.6 The identified need was used to develop the regional Area Plan. Following the publication of the regional report each local authority and health board is required to prepare and publish a plan setting out the range and level of services they proposed to provide, or arrange to be provided, in response to the PNA. The plans are formally referred to as Area plans and a statutory requirement under the SSWB Act. The first regional Area Plan was published 1st April 2018 and set out the partnership working and delivery of services in response to each core theme identified in the population assessment.
- 2.7 In March 2021, Welsh Government released supplementary advice for RPBs to support development of the PNA. There were no changes to the guidance, however, some additional information and definition of core themes were included, but the statutory PNA themes have not changed and are set out below:
- children and young people
 - older people
 - health / physical disabilities
 - learning disability/autism
 - mental health
 - sensory impairment
 - carers who need support; and
 - violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
- 2.8 The RPB adopted an approach to produce a separate Area Plan section for autism, and Welsh Government (WG) have advised that separate PNA sections should be produced within the new PNA. An additional section in relation to Housing is also appropriate and can provide a clear link to the national strategies and partnership working with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).
- 2.9 It will be unrealistic for the PNA to include all the identified needs across health and social care but the regional report will highlight the joint priorities

to be progressed across public services, the health board and voluntary sector.

2.10 Engagement with citizens is a key requirement under the SSWB Act and the PNA has been developed with the inclusion of qualitative data from a range of citizen groups.

2.11 As required with the first PNA, the RPB will have to develop a regional Area Plan – publication 1st April 2023 – and will set out how the identified need will be met through partnership working and collaboration. The RPB will once again work alongside the Regional Public Service Board and partners to ensure alignment with Well-being Plans required under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, as well as linking to local authority Corporate Plans and the ABUHB Integrated Medium Term Plan.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 BGCBC to consider if needs identified in the regional Population Needs Assessment are an accurate reflection of local and regional needs; and agree to endorsing the PNA.

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

4.1 As outlined in the report, the PNA is a statutory requirement of the SSWB Act and is also strategically aligned to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

No direct implication to budget but will involve new ways of working long term and need to review how budgets are uses across local authorities

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Risk that BGCBC will not be fulfilling statutory duty if sign off not agreed.

5.3 ***Legal***

See above

5.4 ***Human Resources***

No direct implication to HR but will involve new ways of working long term and may need to review staffing roles.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 Performance Information and Data, expected outcome for the public, Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation), Thinking for the Long term (forward planning), Preventative focus, Collaboration / partnership

working and Integration (across service areas) are key areas set out across the Population Needs Assessment report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 The PNA will be monitored, reviewed and refreshed by the RPB. The RPB will also monitor delivery of outcomes following the PNA through the statutory Area Plan.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Copy of PNA and Summary

[Population Needs Assessment - Gwentrpb](#)



Gwent Regional Partnership Board Population Needs Assessment

Introduction

As set out in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 local authorities and local Health Boards must produce one population assessment report per local government electoral cycle. The first regional Population Needs Assessment (PNA) was completed by the Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB) in April 2016 and aligned to Wellbeing Assessment completed by Public Service Boards as required under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. This PNA report will also align, integrate and cross reference the Gwent Wellbeing Assessment to avoid duplication and create a joint population wellbeing assessment for the region (this section can be read alongside the regional Wellbeing Assessment or as an individual document).

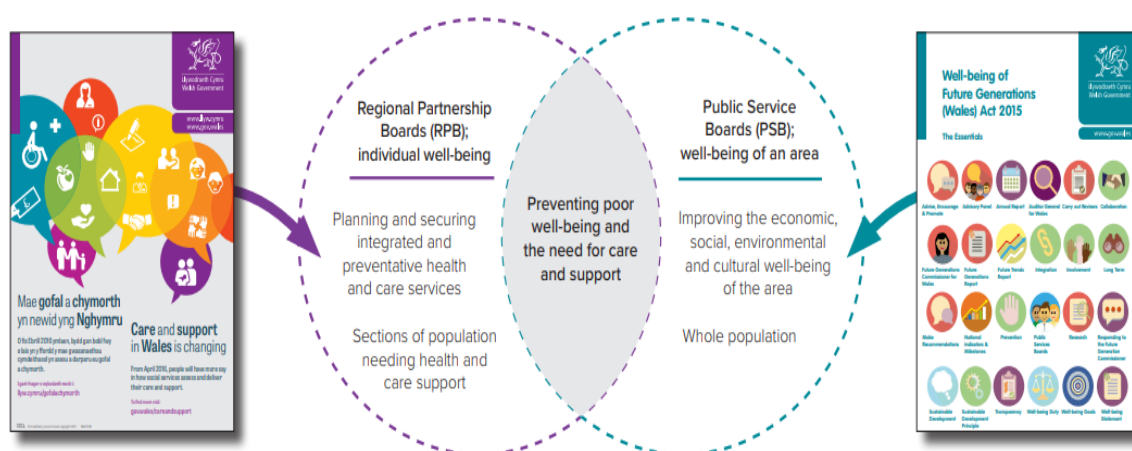


Fig 1: Relationship between RPBs and Public Service Boards.

As set out in Welsh Government's SSWB Act Part 2 Code of Practice, this population assessment comprises of (1) an assessment of need the (2) range and level of services required. It will also jointly assess:

- the extent to which there are people in the area of assessment who need care and support
- the extent to which there are carers in the area of assessment who need support
- the extent to which there are people whose needs for care and support (or, in the case of carers, support) are not being met.

Policy Areas included and within this Population Needs Assessment (PNA).

- National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006 and children and young people's plans as required by the Children Act 2004.
- Integrated Medium Term Plans produced by Local Health Boards as required by the NHS Finance (Wales) Act 2014,
- Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 including local homelessness strategies
- United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the United Nation Principles for Older Persons

- Equality Act 2010 Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Beliefs, Sex and Sexual Orientation.
- National Outcomes Framework
- Welsh language strategic framework More than just words
- Socio -Economic Duty

Engagement - a culture not a process

The voice of citizens, third sector partners and service providers are key to developing this PNA and the guidance on effective citizen engagement, set out in *'National participation Standards, Participation Cymru's National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales'* and the Older People's Commissioner's Best Practice Guidance for *'Engagement and Consultation with Older People on Changes to Community Services in Wales'*, have been considered. Citizen voices have been included in each PNA section and coordinated through the regional Citizen Panel and Chair who sits on the RPB. This also includes populations from the secure estate in order to fulfil the requirements of section 11 of the Act.

There has been extensive engagement across the region using various methodologies such as Snap surveys, social media and established forums (Carers forum, Youth Council, Dementia Friendly cafes etc). An online survey was distributed across the region and the Public Service Board have analysed comments to identify themes; and there were over 1500 individual comments in relation to health and social care.

Social Care – “Affordable social care and good support for carers”

The need for increased social care provision was a regular theme that emerged through the survey, especially in regard to providing adequate social care for older people. Other comments include:

‘More funding for those with learning difficulties will help provide more support and better quality respite for children and adults with learning difficulties’

A need for improved services for older people within the community and just want somebody to talk to

Elderly people are feeling isolated- More day centres need to be available as many services have closed during the pandemic

Local Authorities - “The Council is doing more to help residents than ever”

There is a mixed view on the local authorities across Gwent from residents. Many commented that their local council has provided more support than ever during the pandemic whereas other residents have expressed concern regarding a lack of involvement from their local council, finding difficulties in knowing what is available within their community as a result of this. When asked what we could do to help improve on this, one resident noted how we

could introduce well-being ambassadors to help improve cohesion between local communities and their council.

Health – “Fair and equal access to support when needed”

Health and wellbeing are important to residents across Gwent and many individuals commented on the importance of mental health services and improving access to them for both adults and children. Residents commented on the importance of exercise and the ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle, access to sports centres and green spaces were felt to be key to this.

‘Need for a more efficient Mental Health and well-being service- Concerns around waiting times and responses from health and well-being advisors’

There were multiple positive comments on health services in the region however a number of residents noted the importance of having access to face to face appointments with their local GP. Difficulties in being able to access appointments for dentists and GPs were raised. Residents also highlighted the importance of given local communities the skills to be able to manage their own health and wellbeing so that there isn’t as much need for services.

‘Waiting list to access all services are high, housing, GPs, social services’

Schools – “There is a sense of community- good schools and facilities”

Throughout the feedback on what we can do to improve wellbeing in Gwent in the future, schools are highlighted as a tool that can be utilised by local communities for groups to meet and more community classes to be held. Schools are very much seen as a positive way to engage with our local residents too.

More Youth activities – Help improve mental well-being of teenagers

Focussed work with minority groups

We have engaged the views of those who would otherwise be hard to reach and marginalised including minority groups such as homeless people and travellers. We have used existing mechanisms to engage with vulnerable groups such as those set out below.

- *Military veterans*
- *Gypsy travellers*
- *Black And Minority Ethnic groups*
- *Asylum seekers and refugees*
- *Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) community*
- *People in secure estates and their families*
- *Children and young people in contact with the Youth Justice System*
- *Looked After Children and young carers*
- *Homeless people*

Veterans

A veteran is defined as: ‘anyone who has served for at least one day in the Armed Forces (Regular or Reserve), as well as Merchant Navy seafarers and fishermen who have served in a vessel that was operated to facilitate military operations by the Armed Forces.

In 2017 the Ministry of defence estimated 2.4 million UK Armed Forces Veterans in the UK, making up an estimated 5% of household residents aged 16 and over. There are approximately 140,000 veterans living in Wales and Veterans aged above working age (65+) are estimated at 82,000. The majority of Service Leavers transition from the Armed Forces well and integrate back to community life with the right support at the right time. Studies identify that most veterans in general view their time in the Services as a positive experience and do not suffer adverse health effects as a result of the time they have served. However, for a minority, adverse physical and mental health outcomes can be substantial and can be compounded by other factors – such as financial and welfare problems. Key health issues facing the veteran population relate to common mental health problems (but also include Post traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)) and substance misuse – including excess alcohol consumption and to a much lesser extent - use of illegal drugs. In addition, time in the Services has been identified to be associated with musculoskeletal disorders for some veterans.

Research suggests that most people ‘do not suffer with mental health difficulties even after serving in highly challenging environments. However, some veterans face serious mental health issues. The most common problems experienced by veterans (and by the general population) are:

- depression
- anxiety
- alcohol abuse (13%)

Probable PTSD affects about 4% of veterans. Each year, about 0.1% of all regular service leavers are discharged for mental health reasons. Each Health Board in Wales has appointed an experienced clinician as a Veteran Therapist (VT) with an interest or experience of military (mental) health problems. The VT will accept referrals from health care staff, GPs, veteran charities, and self-referrals from ex-service personnel. The service in ABUHB is based in Pontypool. The primary aim of Veterans’ NHS Wales is to improve the mental health and well-being of veterans with a service-related mental health problem. The secondary aim is to achieve this through the development of sustainable, accessible, and effective services that meet the needs of veterans with mental health and well-being difficulties who live in Wales.

A Welsh Government report from 2014 ‘Improving Access to Substance Misuse Treatment for Veterans’ identified that Substance Misuse Area Planning Boards lead on local collaborative planning, commissioning, and delivery for services to ensure that the needs of veterans are met. A 2011 report from Public Health Wales on ‘Veterans’ health care needs assessment of specialist rehabilitation services in Wales’ identified a range of recommendations to support veterans with respect to their physical health and disability with regards to specialist rehabilitation service provision.

The Strategy for Our Veterans (MOD, 2018) has a 10-year scope to 2028. The strategy addresses the immediate needs of older Veterans as well as setting the right conditions for society to empower and support the newer generation.

The key themes that emerged as affecting Veterans lives were:

- Community, relationships and integrating into their community.
- Employment, education, and skills to continue to enhance their careers through their working lives.
- Finance and debt. Veterans have sufficient financial education, awareness, and skills to be financially self-supporting and resilient.
- Health and Wellbeing. All veterans enjoy a state of positive physical and mental health and wellbeing, enabling them to wider aspects of society.
- Making a home in civilian society. Veteran have a secure place to live either through buying, renting or social housing.
- Veterans and the law. They leave the Armed Forces with the resilience and awareness to remain law abiding civilians.

During the pandemic there were challenges of loneliness and isolation in Veterans with Welsh Government funding provided to address this issue.

There are a range of services across Gwent to support Veterans and The Armed Forces Covenant has been recognised in Law from December 2021, meaning that Housing, Education and Health services will have to pay 'due regard' when implementing policies.

Gypsy Travellers

- Blaenau Gwent 72 (0.10%)
- Caerphilly 31 (0.02%)
- Monmouthshire 6 (0.01%)
- Newport 84 (0.06%)
- Torfaen 155 (0.17%)
- Wales 2785 (0.09%)

The 2011 Census showed the following people identified as Gypsy/Traveller or Irish Traveller (this excludes Roma). However, it is likely that many households would not have completed the census – both because they were living on 'unauthorised sites' or encampments and as such did not appear on official records or because of a mistrust of the purpose of the census. Where people did receive forms, potential lower than average literacy levels may have meant that some households would not have completed them, and where they were completed some households would have chosen not to identify as Gypsies/Travellers or Irish Travellers. The largest Gypsy & Traveller (G&T) population is in Torfaen, however Nantyglo in Blaenau-Gwent also has a large population, many now living in 'bricks and mortar' in close proximity to a long established site. Newport also has a significant G&T population in unofficial sites around the periphery of the city centre and Newport is very often the unofficial unauthorised site for travellers in transit heading east/west from Ireland to England.

The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people have the worst outcomes of any ethnic group across a huge range of areas including education, health, employment, criminal justice and hate crime (House of Commons 2019). It has been found that:

- Infant mortality rates are up to five times higher among this minority group when compared to the national rate.
- The immunisation rates among Travellers children are low compared with the rest of the population. Some suggest that GPs are reluctant to register Travellers as they are of no fixed abode, meaning they cannot be counted towards targets and therefore remuneration.
- There is a high accident rate among the Traveller and Gypsy population, which is directly related to the hazardous conditions on many Traveller sites – particularly as sites are often close to motorways or major roads, refuse tips, sewage work, railways or industrialized areas. Health and safety standards are often poor.
- Travellers have lower levels of breastfeeding.
- There is also a higher prevalence of many medical conditions when compared to the general population, including miscarriage rate, respiratory problems, arthritis, cardiovascular disease, depression and maternal death rates.
- Alcohol consumption is often used as a coping strategy, and drug use among Traveller young people is widely reported and feared by Traveller elders.
- Cultural beliefs include considering that health problems (particularly those perceived as shameful, such as poor mental health or substance misuse) should be dealt with by household members or kept within the extended family unit
- Travellers also face challenges in accessing services either due to the location of the sites (or due to transient nature of being in an area). Not having access to transport (particularly related to women who often cannot drive) to reach services is another reason for low use of services as well as low levels of health literacy of what services they are entitled to use or how to access them.

Generally the communities have low expectations in regard to their health and life expectancy. Studies have repeatedly shown that Travellers often live in extremely unhealthy conditions, while at the same time using health services much less often than the rest of the population.

Black And Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups

The 2011 Census shows the following percentages classed as BAME populations in each local authority compared to Wales

- Blaenau Gwent 1.5%
- Caerphilly 1.6%
- Monmouthshire 1.9%
- Newport 10.1%
- Torfaen 2.0%
- Wales 4.4%

Public Health Wales have found that ethnicity is an important issue because, as well as having specific needs relating to language and culture, persons from ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely to come from low income families, suffer poorer living conditions and gain

lower levels of educational qualifications. In addition, certain ethnic groups have higher rates of some health conditions. For example, South Asian and Caribbean-descended populations have a substantially higher risk of diabetes; Bangladeshi-descended populations are more likely to avoid alcohol but to smoke and sickle cell anaemia is an inherited blood disorder, which mainly affects people of African or Caribbean origin. Raising the Standard: Race Equality Action Plan for Adult Mental Health Services aims to promote race equality in the design and delivery of mental health services in order to reduce the health inequalities experienced by some ethnic groups. People don't always access support that is available as they are often unaware the support exists or it doesn't meet their needs. Language barriers can also cause difficulties for engagement and supporting people. Raising awareness of services and support within BAME communities is crucial to improve uptake of support. It has also been highlighted that although costly, the information needs to be accessible within areas of the community and also accessible in different formats and languages.

It is clear is that coronavirus has had an adverse and disproportionate impact on people from BME communities. A Government enquiry took place to identify why people from BME backgrounds appear to be disproportionately affected and further work is needed to ensure we can improve health outcomes.

Asylum Seekers, Refugees & Migrants

Until 2001, relatively low numbers of asylum seekers and refugees decided to settle in Wales compared to some parts of the UK. The numbers of asylum seekers and refugees increased when Wales became a dispersal area. The number of asylum applications in 2016 has seen an increase of 8% compared to the year before. Service provision to refugees and people seeking asylum by non-government organisations (NGOs) has decreased significantly in recent years. This has an adverse impact on people's health and Well-being. No recourse to public funds and safeguarding issues such as honour based violence and trafficking are key emerging themes for service providers. For service users the lack of, or limited access to information and tenancy support appear to be the key emerging themes. Various reports acknowledge that data collection systems for the number of migrants have weaknesses, which puts limitations on their reliability. There is no agreed definition for 'migrants' which further exacerbates reliable data collection.

The 2011 census found that the top ten countries of origin of people born outside the UK, in order of highest numbers first were: Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Poland, Philippines, Germany, South Africa, Nigeria, Italy and Zimbabwe. Feedback from Education and Social Services indicate that people from Roma background have very specific needs in addition to those of the general new-migrant population. Good communication with migrants is essential. Determining the language and suitability of format (e.g. written, audio, face to face, telephone) and support available, such as advocacy and interpretation are critical elements to ensure effective communication. This will in turn benefit budgets and customer care as it contributes to determining the appropriate service. In addition, other issues highlighted for both migrants and asylum seekers include the need for more advocacy and floating support for migrants, lack of a strategic approach to information and service provision for new migrants and lack of coordination between services for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT +) community

The public health white paper 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People' identified poor mental health, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), problematic drug and alcohol use and smoking as the top public health issues facing the UK. All of these disproportionately affect LGBT populations:

- Illicit drug use amongst LGB people is at least 8 times higher than in the general population
- Around 25% of LGB people indicate a level of alcohol dependency
- Nearly half of LGBT individuals smoke, compared with a quarter of their heterosexual peers
- Lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are at higher risk of mental disorder, suicidal ideation, substance misuse and deliberate self-harm
- 41% of trans people reported attempting suicide compared to 1.6% of the general population

People in secure estates and their families

HMP Usk/Prescoed is situated in Monmouthshire and social care staff support inmates in line with the Act. The prisons have a combined population of 527. (MoJ, 2108) ABUHB also provide primary healthcare services to offenders in HMP Usk/Prescoed, in partnership with the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). In addition to the prison population it is likely that ex-offenders will require additional care and support to prevent needs arising, particularly those who misuse drugs and/or alcohol or have mental health problems. A recent 'Prison Health Needs Assessment in Wales' report was published by Public Health Wales and highlighted a number of key areas to address:

- Access to healthcare facilities
- Mental health and healthcare
- Substance Misuse including smoking
- Oral health
- Infections disease
- Support following release

During the pandemic we know that there were serious concerns to everyone living and working in prisons, resulting in restrictions put in place to limit the spread of the virus (HM Inspectorate of Prisons 2021) Prisoners have identified a decline in emotional, psychological and physical wellbeing at this time, due to chronic boredom and exhaustion of spending hours locked in their cells. They lacked enough day to day interaction and support from other prisoners, staff and family and friends.

Children and young people in contact with the Youth Justice System

Children and young people in contact with the youth justice system may have more health and well-being needs than other children of their age. They have often missed out on early attention to these needs. They frequently face a range of other, often entrenched, difficulties, including school exclusion, fragmented family relationships, bereavement, unstable living conditions, and poor or harmful parenting that might be linked to parental poverty, substance misuse and mental health problems. Many of the children and young people in contact with

the youth justice system in Gwent may also be known to children's social care and be among those children and young people who are not in education, employment, or training. For vulnerable children and young people, including those in contact with the youth justice system, well-being is about strengthening the protective factors in their life and improving their resilience to the risk factors and setbacks that feature so largely and are likely to have a continuing adverse impact on their long-term development. Well-being is also about children feeling secure about their personal identity and culture. Due attention to their health and well-being needs should help reduce health inequalities and reduce the risk of re-offending by young people. Across the region the Youth Offending Service (YOS) & partners are:

- Developing a health pathway in partnership with ABUHB for young people involved/in contact with the youth justice system.
- Testing the Youth Justice Board (YJB) Enhanced Case Management - a therapeutic approach towards addressing a child's offending behaviour
- Identifying, screening, and responding to Speech, Language & Communication Needs (SLCN) via the provision of a dedicated Gwent YOS Speech & Language Therapist.
- Commissioning a Substance Misuse Service for Children and Young People within Gwent.

(1) CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

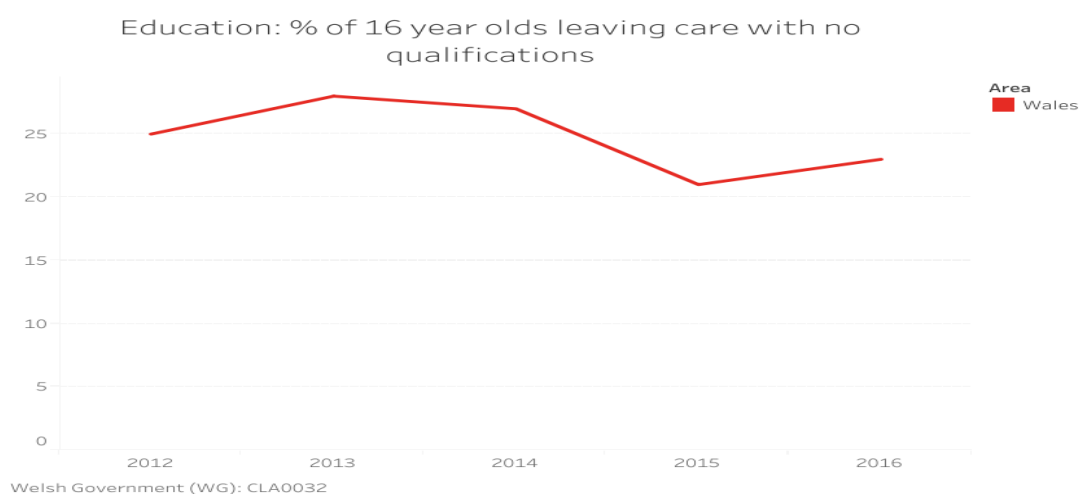
Key themes

- Children with Complex Needs, including seamless transition of care and support needs, for example between Childrens Continuing Care and Continuing NHS Healthcare.
- Safe accommodation for children with complex, high end emotional and behavioural needs. This is a new Welsh Government priority for 2021-22 and aims to both prevent individuals being unnecessarily escalated to, and facilitate de-escalation from, secure or inpatient care.
- Looked After Children and the increasing numbers going into care/adoption (Local Authorities have a specific duty under Section 75 of the Act to ensure they have sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of looked after children).

Policy Areas

- Amendments to Part 9 of the SSWB Act including revisions to the definition of Children and Young People (CYP) with complex needs to include children and young people: with disabilities and/or illness, care experienced, in need of care and support, at risk of becoming looked after, and those with emotional and behavioural needs.
- Children’s Commissioner for Wales ‘No Wrong Door’ recommendations and annual reports.
- Together for Children and Younger People
- National Commissioning Board guidance for Integrated Commissioning of Services for Families, Children and Young People with Complex Needs.
- The NEST (Nurturing, Empowering, Safe, Trusted) Early Help and Enhanced Support National Framework
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

(1.1) Percentage of 16-year-olds leaving care with no qualifications

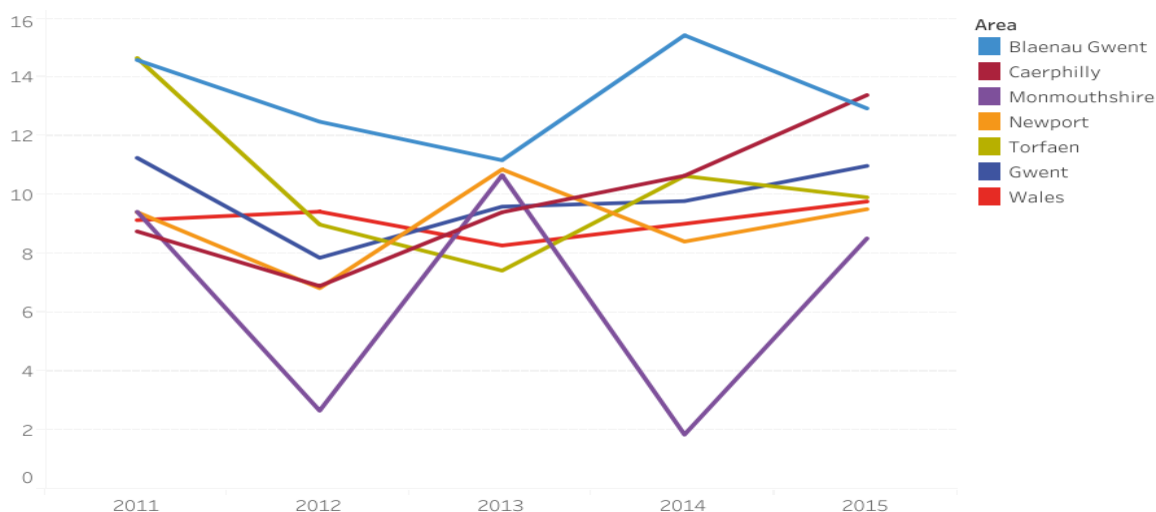


Care leavers will face a large number of personal and emotional challenges when family relationships breakdown and understandably education and aspirations will be affected. Attitudes to school, authority and adults will be indifferent and if a young person feels that

they have been ‘given up on’ it will be very easy said young person to give up on their selves. Schools will closely monitor the number of CLA and treat as vulnerable learners to ensure additional support and understanding are afforded to CLA. The availability of data is not consistent across the region, but the national data is stark with between 1 in 4 to 5 CLA leaving with no qualification which should not be accepted for any group of young people. The RPB includes statutory membership from education colleagues to ensure issues can be discussed and raised as well as planning actions across multi-agency partners and accessing preventative and transformation funding opportunities. Covid-19 has affected schooling for all young people and education achievements and accessing further education with additional emotional support and housing solutions will remain a priority.

(1.2) Looked after Children with 3 or more placements

Looked after children: SCC/004 - Looked after children with 3 or more placements (%)

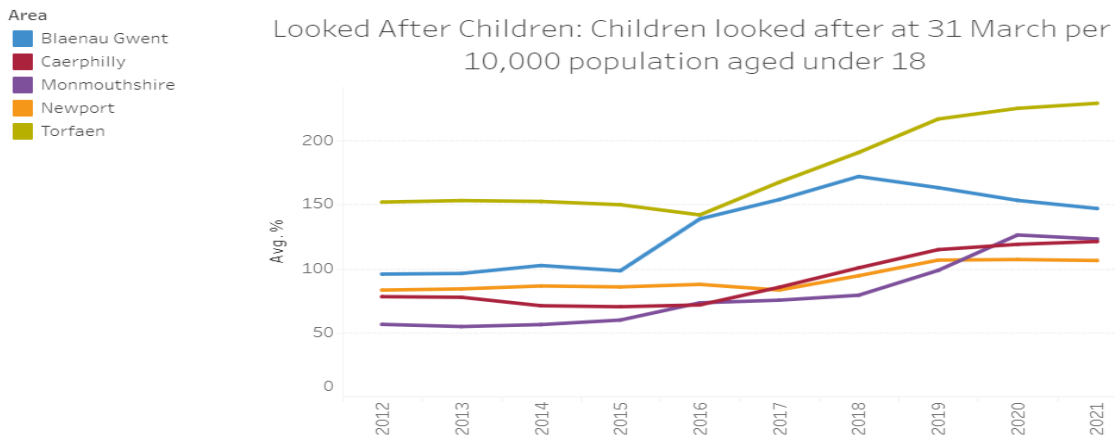


Welsh Government (WG): SCC004

Stability for CLA is key to supporting young people to develop positive relationships, trust, emotional wellbeing and access to education. A change of circumstances can often be unsettling and lead to lack of trust in support organisations as well disengagement, with comments from young people that ‘people have given up on them’. A safe, stable home environment is a priority for any young person but especially CLA and even though the numbers seem relatively low, we know outcomes will be affected with increased number of placements. Partner and third sector organisations prioritise the need for remedial actions to avoid placement breakdown, with respite for carers and children a solution to help secure long-term placements. National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) offer an independent advocacy service for CLA to ensure the voice and views of young people are heard and greater support and working with third sector partners is key to partnership working through RPB. Covid-19 has affected the face-to-face opportunities for advocacy, but online sessions have been facilitated.

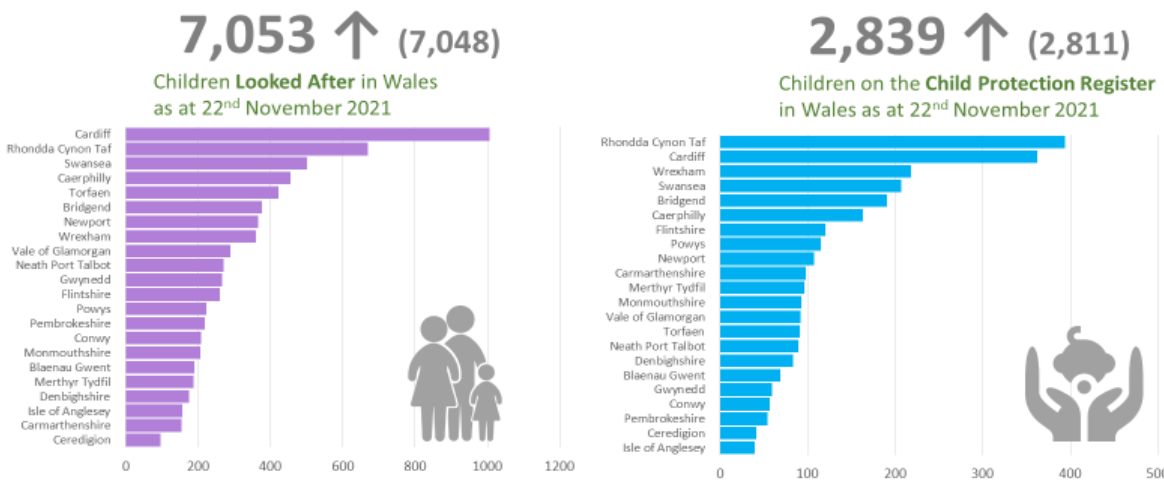
Gwent Population Needs Assessment

(1.3) Rate of Children Looked After per 10,000 population



The number of Children Looked After (CLA) and percentage 10,000 still remains high across all local authority areas. We know that CLA face some of the most complex and challenging of circumstances amongst their peers and Welsh Government has prioritised support at a local and regional level through Integrated Care Funding guidance and legislation. Multi-agency partnership approaches under the RPB have been established such as MYST project and SPACE Wellbeing Panels. However, there have been large costs for emergency and out of county placements incurred across the region which has led to the development of capital projects in Gwent such as Windmill Farm, through ICF capital funding, where savings can be redistributed into preventative programmes. The impact of covid-19 pandemic will have exacerbated circumstances for CLA, and support and prevention will still remain a priority going forward especially the need to develop services and provision that mean young peoples' care and support needs can be met close to home

Children's Social Care - Safeguarding



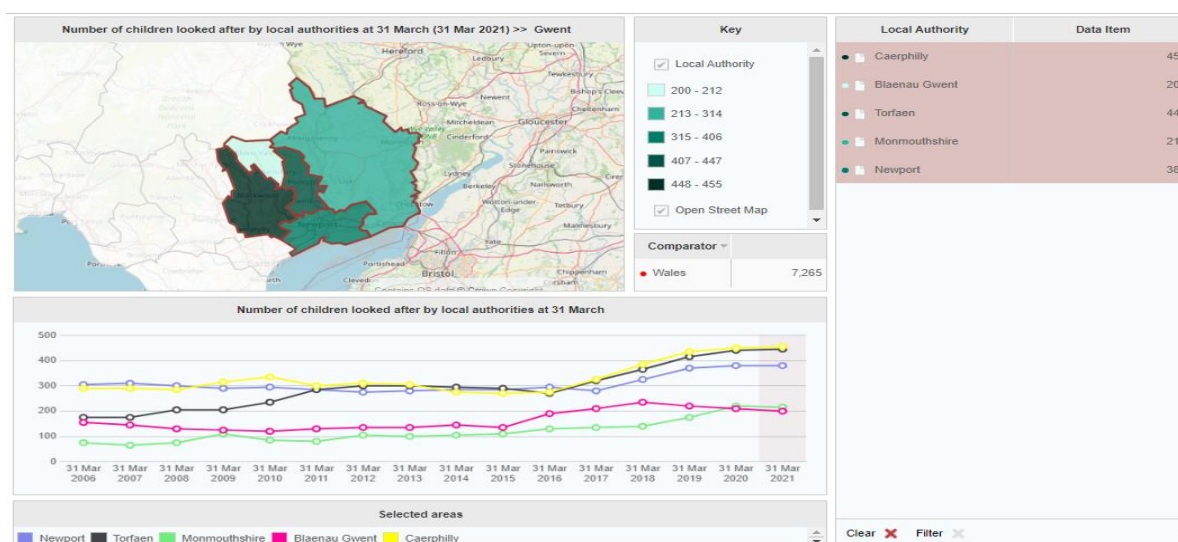
↑↓↔ denotes change from previous week (previous week's figures) Source: Local Authority Covid-19 Data Collections – 24 November 2021

Gwent Population Needs Assessment

There are additional data graphs relating to young people in the Social Wellbeing section (Baby and children's health and development) of the Wellbeing Assessment including

1. % of low birthweight live single births
2. Teenage conceptions
3. Breastfeeding
4. Flying Start children reaching or exceeding developmental milestones
5. Healthy weight and obesity
6. Immunisations
7. Oral health
8. Adverse Childhood Experiences

In addition to the data included in the Wellbeing Assessment there are a number of national data portals outlining need across the region including Social Care Wales Data Portal [Home - Social Care Wales Data Observatory \(socialcaredata.wales\)](#) and below is the data relating to Children Looked After. This PNA will not duplicate the information but reference where necessary.



Emerging Themes, Future trends, and challenges

The most recent Welsh Government data (as of 31 March 2020) shows that there are 16,580 children who receive care and support from children's services across 22 local authorities. Of those children being supported, 7,180 are looked after. Of those children, 17% live with their families or with other family members through kinship care arrangements, 70% live with foster carers, 8% live in residential care, 3% of children are placed for adoption and 2% of older children live independently with support. Welsh Government have prioritized the need for safe accommodation for children with complex, high end emotional and behavioural needs. This is a new Welsh Government priority for 2021-22 and aims to both prevent individuals being unnecessarily escalated to, and facilitate de-escalation from, secure or inpatient care.

Emerging Priorities

- 1. To improve outcomes for children and young people with complex needs through earlier intervention, community based support and placements closer to home.**
- 2. To ensure good mental health and emotional well-being for children young people through effective partnership working especially mitigating long term impact of Covid-19 pandemic.**

(2) OLDER PEOPLE INCLUDING DEMENTIA

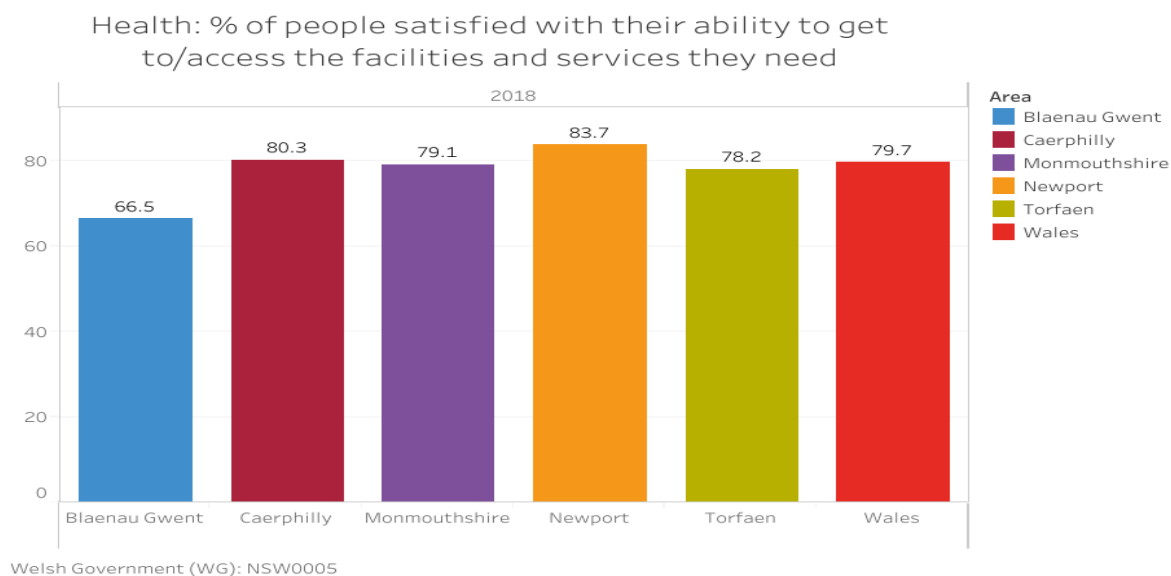
Key Themes

- Improve emotional wellbeing for older people to reduce loneliness and isolation with early intervention
- Improve life outcomes for people living with dementia and their carers.
- Protect the rights for older people as enshrined in the United Nation’s Principles for Older Persons, and the SSWB 2014 Act.

Policy Areas

- United Nation’s Principles for Older Persons, and the SSWB 2014 Act
- Dementia Action Plan 2018-2022
- Older People’s Commissioner ‘Making Wales the best place in the world to grow older: Strategy 2019-22
- Strategy for Older People in Wales: Living Longer, Ageing Well. (2013 -2023)

(2.1) Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/access the facilities and services they need

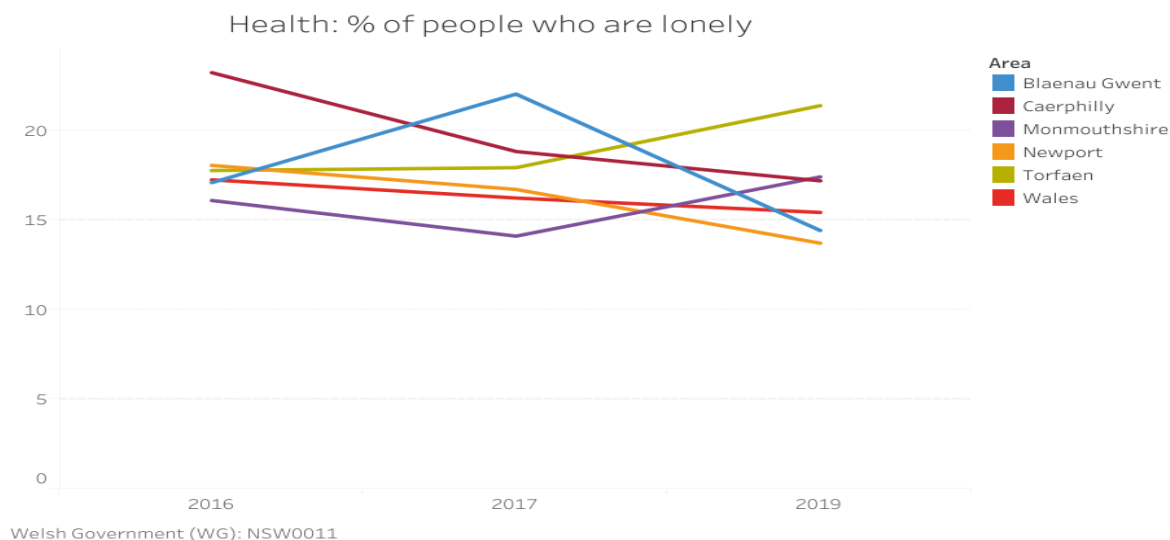


A large percentage of people are generally satisfied with access to facilities across the region. This percentage is within the Wales average for Monmouthshire despite the rurality and access to bus services. This data is from 2018 and Blaenau Gwent figure is quite low in comparison to other local authorities, however since 2018 ABUHB have committed to building a new Health & Wellbeing Centre in Tredegar which was built on the former site of Tredegar General Hospital and Brynmawr Medical Practice has been built to improve access to services. There has been a big shift to digital technologies through the recent Covid-19 pandemic and recognition that a number of people would not have accessed services during lockdown and

Gwent Population Needs Assessment

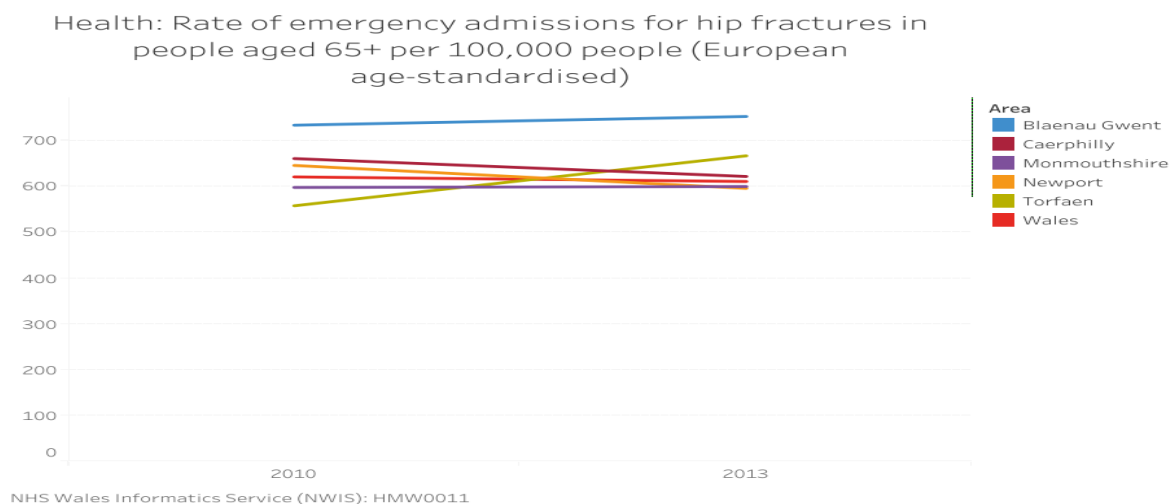
therefore the RPB will still need to ensure an equitable access to services across the region, especially for older people who may not be confident with the use of technologies.

(2.2) Percentage of people who are lonely



We recognise that loneliness is an issue across all local authority areas and highlighted in the previous PNA; and this will have been exacerbated recently through the Covid-19 pandemic where a number of vulnerable people will have been shielding. The data varies across the region but is generally high and between 15-20% (1 in 5 people) which is a considerable number of people susceptible to poor emotional and mental health and deterioration in physical help. Loneliness may be perceived as an older person's issue – recognised by Older People's Commissioner for Wales – but given that the percentage is approximately 20% it is likely that younger people will be affected too, especially given virtual working arrangements. Solutions are generally low cost/no cost and important for RPB to promote networks, access to information and local groups, particularly through Dewis portal.

(2.3) Rate of emergency admissions for hip fractures in people aged 65 plus per 100,000 people



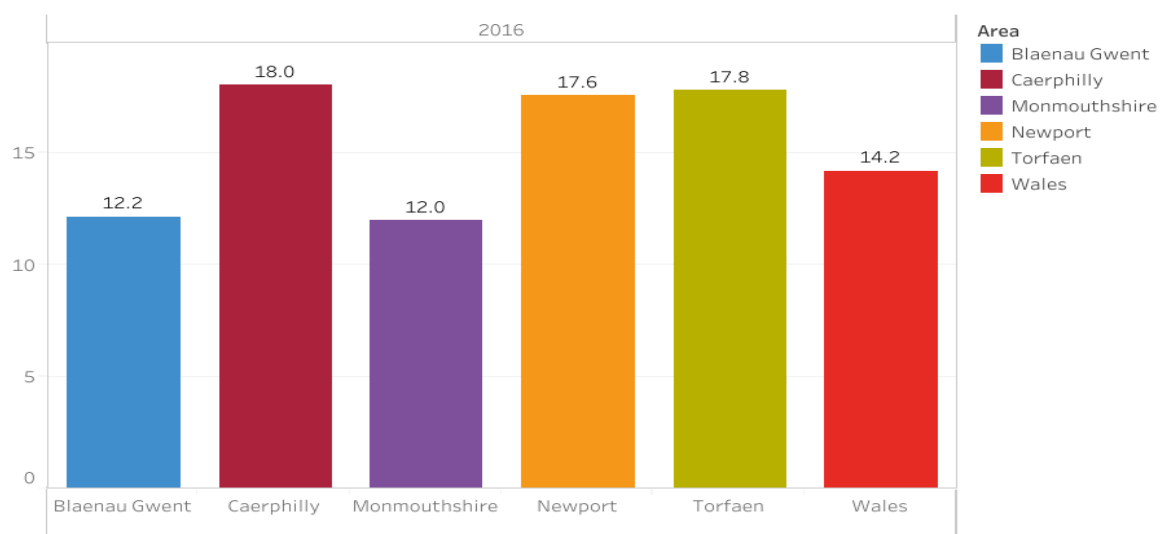
It is widely accepted that falls amongst older people are one of the biggest factors in hospital admissions and calls for ambulance assistance. Hip fractures data can be inferred and indicate level of falls amongst older people and subsequently hospital admissions.

1 in 3 people aged 65+ (over 3 million) fall in the UK every year and 1.2 million people are treated in Accident and Emergency Departments (A&E) after a fall, costing the NHS £1.6 billion each year (CSP, 2015; Tinetti, 1988). The Economic Model for Falls Prevention (CSP, 2016) suggests that mild falls (those that don't require any additional treatment on discharge from A&E) represent 47.2% of the total number of falls. Falls account for approximately 10% of 999 emergency calls received via the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust (WAST) across Wales (WAST, 2016). There has been an emphasis on preventing falls and dedicated studies, roles and services within the ABUHB as well as wider public information and awareness. Gwent Frailty is a multi-disciplinary service within the Primary Care and Community Services Division in Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, centred on providing patients with care and/or treatment closer to home and promoting patient independence; and falls prevention is a core function of the service.

We have seen recently during the pandemic and during the winter periods the impact on WAST and hospitals, falls can have and along with progressed dementia, the predominant factor in 999 calls for ambulances. The data included is a conservative indication of falls given that not all older people will require surgery after an accident. However, the data when totalled is approximately 3000 people during 2013 and will not simply reflect hospital admissions but also the large number of rehabilitation services required and subsequent impact on independent living. Given the impact on health and social care, falls prevention will still remain a priority for RPB consideration.

(2.4) Percentage of people who called for an ambulance in the last 12 months

Health: % of people who called for an ambulance in the last 12 months

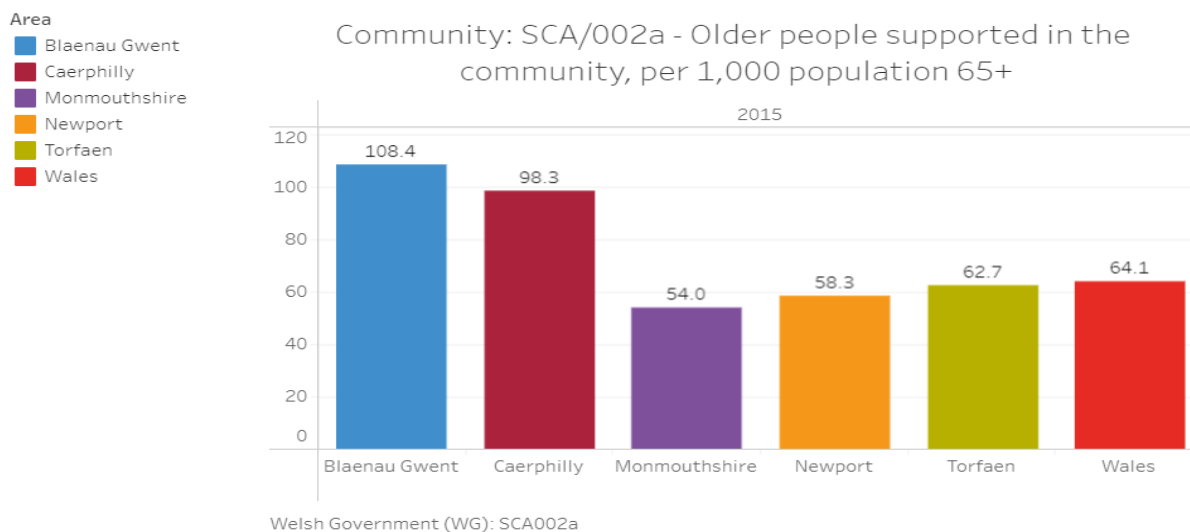


Welsh Government (WG): NSW0037

Gwent Population Needs Assessment

The data can highlight the acute needs of some local authority areas when compared to the rest of Wales. The 3 areas higher than Wales average are valley communities and could point to wider health detriments in those areas.

(2.5) Older people supported in the community, per 1,000 population 65+

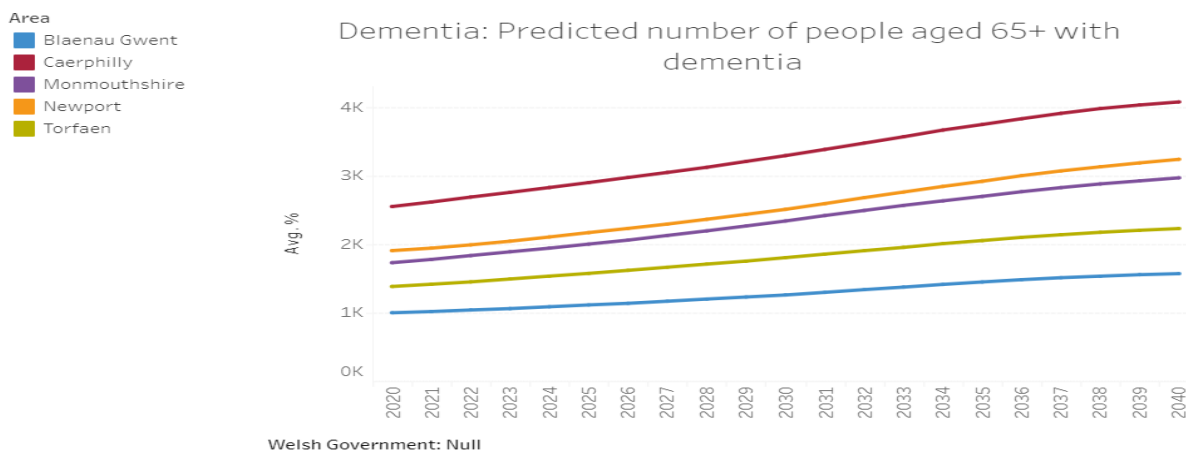


Remaining at home is at the heart of many peoples view of being independent. People have told us they would like help and support to move around and maintain their own home, go out as they please and not have to depend too much on others. We also know that many older people with long term health conditions are caring for a family member, friend or neighbour and need to be supported to continue to do so. These unpaid carers contribute significantly to the Gwent economy and potential health and social care costs.

Older people need good, timely and accurate information to be able to understand what support is available to them and this can be important to maintaining independence. This also needs to be provided in a range of ways so people can access it. Small things can be quite significant – such as size and type of fonts in leaflets or background colours to aid readability. Information is now often provided digitally and so access to online information for older people is dependent on skills and resources. Greater consideration should be given to supporting older people to develop the necessary skills and confidence to access information online. Public access areas such as GP Surgeries, public transport and community libraries can act as access points for information but in some areas of Wales these are underutilised and overlooked. We have valuable community library resources across Gwent which provide information, advice, and guidance for both older people and those living with dementia.

Gwent Population Needs Assessment

(2.6) Predicted number of people with dementia 65 plus



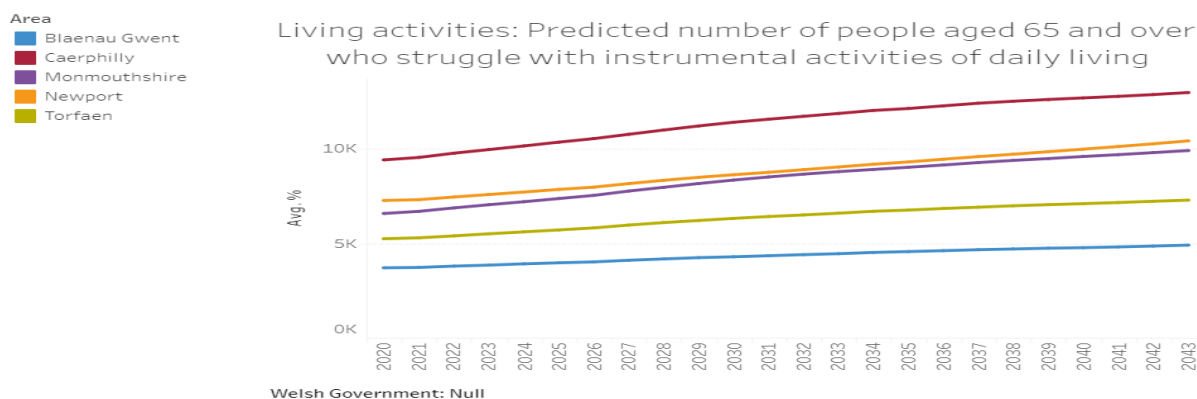
Approximately 42,000 people are living with dementia in Wales, and it is most common in older people, affecting 1 in 20 people over the age of 65 and 1 in 5 over the age of 80. It is predicted that 1 million people in the UK will have dementia by 2025 and this could increase to 2 million by 2050 (Alzheimer's Research UK). Above figures are from '*Dementia UK: A report into the prevalence and cost of dementia*' prepared by the Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU) at the London School of Economics and the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College London, for the Alzheimer's Society, 2007. The prevalence rates have been applied to population projections of the 65 or older population to give estimated numbers of people predicted to have dementia, to 2035.

Across all local authority areas in the Gwent region, an increase in the number of people living with dementia is predicted. The increases range from 62.1% in Blaenau Gwent to 97.1% in Monmouthshire over the period 2013 to 2035. The RPB are working to support more timely diagnosis and are developing a consistent clearly understood diagnosis, care and support pathway which incorporates standards of care and outcome measures. Living with dementia can have a big emotional, social, and psychological impact on a person, their families, and carers. This can affect the relationships a person has with their environment and the support that they receive. It is important to people living with dementia that people develop awareness and understanding of the condition so they can be supported to maintain quality of life. As an RPB we provide development and learning opportunities jointly with our key partners to the workforce and communities to raise awareness, understanding and highlight risk factors and preventative measures. We also work with partners and continue to develop and build on the strengths of our Dementia Friendly Communities, working in collaboration of Age Friendly Community groups.

We are aware of the impact of the pandemic on people living with dementia and professionals within health and social care have been working hard to support people through assistive technology, online support and telephone calls where face to face visits could not be provided. We have also been supporting people living with dementia their family and carers through the Get There Together National project, working with partners to create a series of films aimed to reduce concerns and reassure anyone who is anxious about getting beyond the front door as well as dealing with the stresses of Covid-19.

Gwent Population Needs Assessment

(2.7) Predicted number of people unable 1 task 65 plus



Healthy life expectancy is increasing over time, which is positive, however when the time comes where the oldest population develop care and support needs, those needs are more intensive and expensive as people live longer. People over the age of 65 are more likely to need extra support to remain independent in their own homes and across all local authorities in Gwent it is predicted there will be an increase in people unable to manage at least one domestic task on their own.

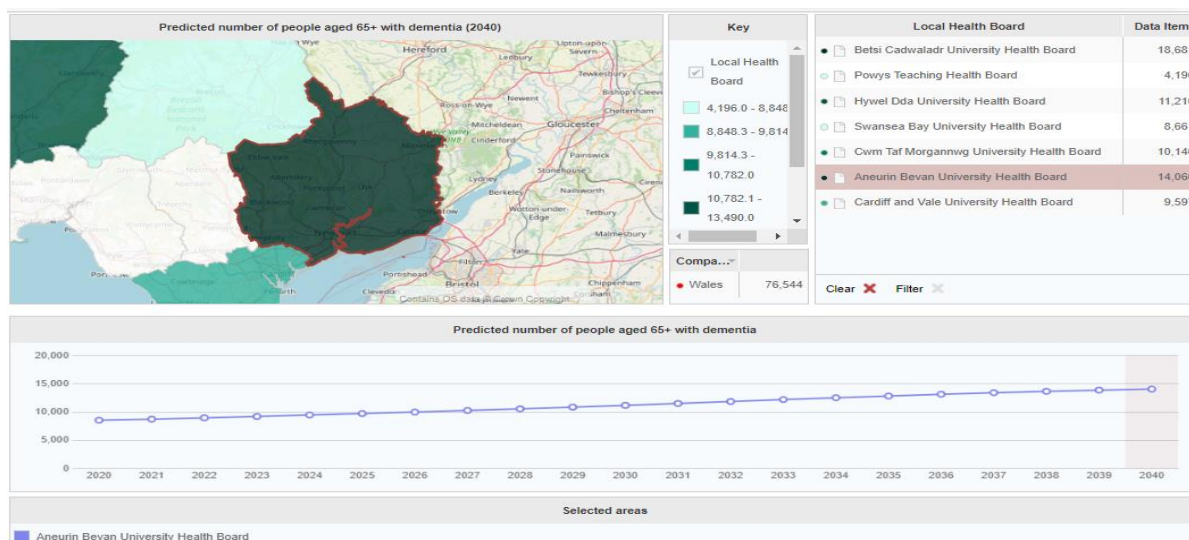
Predicted number of people aged 65 or over that will be unable to manage at least one domestic task on their own (household shopping, wash and dry dishes, clean windows inside, jobs involving climbing, use a vacuum cleaner, wash clothing by hand, open screw tops, deal with personal affairs, do practical activities). Figures are taken from *Living in Britain; Results from the 2001 General Household Survey, Supplementary report: People aged 65 and over, table 37, ONS*. The predicted increases range is from 44.9% in Blaenau Gwent to 71.6% in Monmouthshire. As an RPB we have a range multi-disciplinary reablement and care services in place to provide long and short-term support to help people live independently in their own homes. We also have been using grant funding from the Integrated Care Fund to promote digital and mobile assistive technology solutions to support the prevention of falls.

There are additional data graphs relating to adults in the Social Wellbeing section of the Wellbeing Assessment including

1. Life expectancy and health inequalities
 2. Cancer registrations
 3. Deaths due to cancer
 4. Deaths due to cardiovascular disease
 5. Delayed transfers of care
- Healthy lifestyles including
6. Physical activity
 7. Healthy diet
 8. Alcohol
 9. Smoking
 10. Individuals who are overweight or obese
 11. Overweight/obesity
 12. Diabetes

Gwent Population Needs Assessment

In addition to the data included in the Wellbeing Assessment there are a number of national data portals outlining need across the region including Social Care Wales Data Portal [Home - Social Care Wales Data Observatory \(socialcaredata.wales\)](#) below is information relating to number of people predicted to be living with dementia. This PNA will not duplicate the information but reference where necessary.



Emerging Themes, Future trends, and challenges

Wales has an ageing population and many people stay healthy, independent, and well into old age, however as people age, they are more likely to live with complex co-morbidities, frailty, and disability. By 2030 it is projected that there will be over 1,008,000 older people in Wales (33% of the population) (ONS 2017/2018). Older people have lots of skills, knowledge, and experience to contribute to society and are a valuable resource to us in Gwent, with many volunteering and sharing their skills in communities. A whole system approach is needed between health and social care and other partners to help people remain independent and as healthy as possible so they can continue to live at home.

What people have told us

Remaining at home is at the heart of many peoples view of being independent. People have told us they would like help and support to move around and maintain their own home, go out as they please and not have to depend too much on others. We also know that many older people with long term health conditions are caring for a family member, friend or neighbour and need to be supported to continue to do so. These unpaid carers contribute significantly to the Gwent economy and potential health and social care costs.

“I want to remain in my own home for as long as I can. It’s where all my memories are”.

“I am scared of being in contact with people as don’t want to get covid, but I am also isolated so feel really down. It’s confusing!”.

What are the gaps in understanding of well-being?

The number of older people with unmet care and support needs is increasing substantially due to challenges in the health and care system. Effective solutions are needed to address these needs including addressing delayed discharges in hospitals that can lead to worsening health outcomes and complications around care and support needs. It is clear that most people desire to cope with their illnesses and remain independent at home and care models need to reflect the needs of the person as part of their care and support.

The public health restrictions put in place to keep people safe during the pandemic, meant that older people saw big changes to their normal activities and routines. It also meant spending time apart from family, friends, volunteering roles, jobs and communities and creating loneliness and isolation. These changes have meant some people are nervous and anxious to return to normality and are unsure of what the future holds.

Connecting through digital platforms became a valuable resource to many people in Gwent so they could stay in touch with family and friends, access health services, shopping, advice, guidance, and entertainment. However digital exclusion still remains across Wales where some older people have a number of barriers to getting connected such as lack of confidence in using digital technology, financial barriers, costs of broadband services or lack of broadband due to rurality of area. Some people also said that healthcare appointment had been cancelled and they were now struggling as had to wait for health procedures and were unsure of how long they would have to wait. This will impact future waiting lists for procedures and appointments and currently the total Outpatient waitlist position is 111,239, reduced from 116,336 as at October 2021. The Inpatient waitlist is currently 17,703 and as of December 2021, the Referral to Treatment Time position is: 4818 open pathways are over 104 weeks, 22,984 over 52 weeks and 34,254 over 36 weeks.

The pandemic has also brought to light positives about life in Gwent, with communities coming together to support each other, people volunteering and responding to calls for help. There has been a wave of solidarity during this time and the commitment and dedication of our health and social care workforce during this time and continues to be incredible. Also:

- We have key assets in Gwent such as our network of unpaid carers and volunteers and a passionate multi-agency workforce. We also have a very good relationship with our independent/third sector partners and Dementia Supportive Communities.
- There are roughly four million unpaid carers (for all service user groups), of whom one quarter provide more than 50 hours a week of care, giving practical help, companionship, and general supervision. Nearly 90% of older people with dependency problems receive some informal care (some alongside formal care). There is likely to be a fall in the future supply of such carers, arising from changes in the population age structure, rising divorce rates, decline in family size, rising childlessness, growing employment among married women, changing household composition of older people, and changing preferences of older people. (SCIE)

- Volunteers also play a major part in providing social care. It has been estimated that their contribution represents the equivalent of 221,000 full-time employees, or roughly one in every five hours of formal caring. Many such volunteers are older people themselves.
- There are pressures on social care services arising from the needs and preferences of older people increasing.
- Recruitment and retention of employees is challenging for services for older people. High levels of stress and dissatisfaction are reported by staff, and although low pay is an issue, the introduction of the national minimum 4 wage should have eased recruitment. This has been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Emerging Priorities

- 1. To improve emotional well-being for older people by reducing loneliness and social isolation with earlier intervention and community resilience.**
- 2. To improve outcomes for people living with dementia and their carers**
- 3. To support older people to live, or return following a period of hospitalisation, to their own homes and communities through early intervention and integrated care models.**

(3) HEALTH / PHYSICAL DISABILITIES & SENSORY IMPAIRMENT

A person with a ‘health or physical disability including sensory impairment’, may have difficulty carrying out everyday activities, as their movement and senses may be limited. Sensory impairment is reduced or loss of sight, hearing, or both. Those included are the blind, partially sighted, deaf, and hard of hearing. A disability may be present from birth or occur during a person's lifetime. Health disabilities can include chronic conditions such as obesity or an individual might have had a stroke and have long term effects with movement, speech, hearing, and sight. Equipment and adaptations can help a person to live more independently and confidently at home. Prevention, early identification and providing practical and emotional support and easier accessibility to services can have a real positive impact on life outcomes.

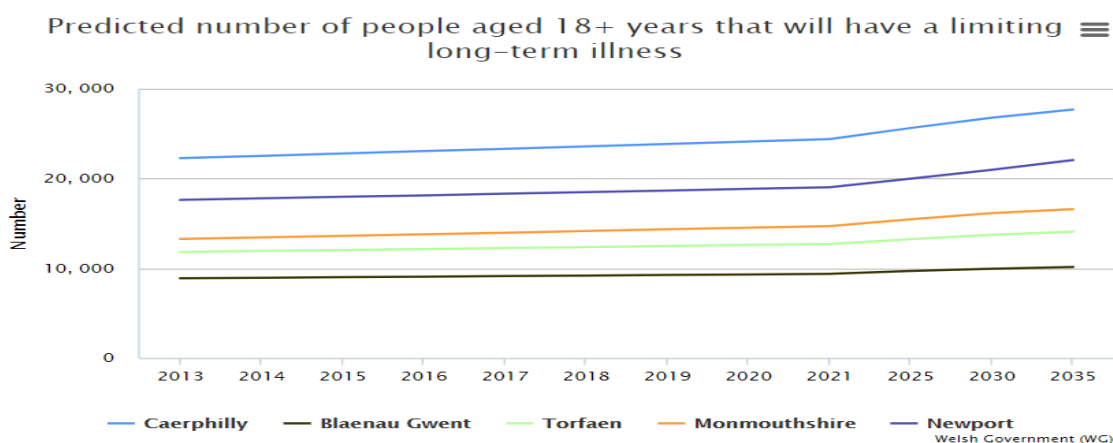
Key Themes

- Supporting disabled people through an all-age approach to live independently in appropriate accommodation
- Support access to community-based services, including transport.
- Help people reduce the risk of poor health and well-being through earlier intervention and community support.
- Ensure people are supported through access to accurate, timely information and assistance and ‘rehabilitation’ where required.
- Improve emotional well-being particularly through peer-to-peer support.

Policy Areas

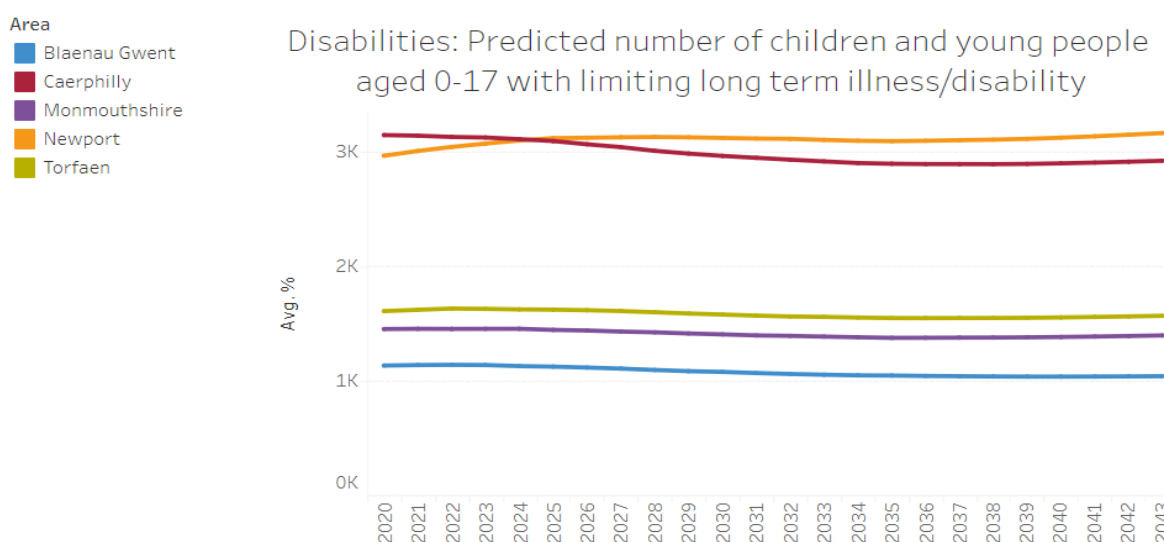
- Welsh Government’s Disability Equality Forum Impact of Covid-19 on disabled people in Wales and ‘Action on Disability’ framework
- Wales Council of the Blind. Rehabilitation Officers for Visual Impairment, Addressing a workforce crisis in Wales
- All Wales Deaf Mental Health and Wellbeing Group. Deaf People Wales: Hidden Inequality.

(3.1) Predicted number of people aged 18+ years with a limiting long-term illness



The impact of chronic conditions on peoples lives and services in Wales is of growing concern. Wales has the highest rates of long-term limiting illness in the UK, accounting for a large proportion of unnecessary emergency hospital admissions (NHS Wales). Figures are taken from the *Welsh Health Survey 2012, table 3.11 Adults who reported having illnesses, or being limited by a health problem/disability, by age and sex*. Adults who reported having a limiting long-term illness were asked to specify the illness which was the main cause of their limitation. All local authority areas across the Gwent region are predicted to see an increase in the number. The predicted increases range from 14.1% in Blaenau Gwent to 25.1% in Newport

(3.2) Predicted number of people aged 0 - 17 that will have a disability according to Disability Discrimination Act definitions 2035

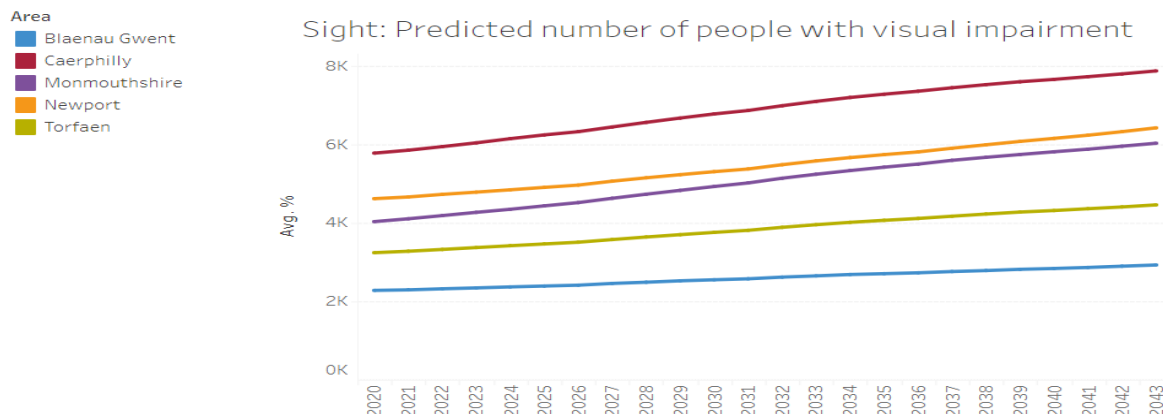


This figure is taken from the study *Prevalence of childhood disability and the characteristics and circumstances of disabled children in the UK, Blackburn et al, BMC Paediatrics 2010*. Children were defined as disabled if they met the Disability Discrimination Act criteria for a disabled person. Disability Discrimination Act definitions mean that the child has significant difficulties with any of the following areas: mobility, lifting/carrying, manual dexterity, continence, communication (speech, hearing, eyesight), memory/ability to concentrate or understand, recognise if in physical danger, physical coordination, or other problem or disability.

The number of young people living with a disability is predicted to be relatively stable over the next 10 years but will still remain significant in terms of multi-agency partnership support required to ensure outcomes. Transition arrangements between primary and secondary education is key to ensuring outcomes as well as effective planning between partners. Parents often highlight the number of different partners requesting information and the RPB has invested in an Integrated Service for Children with Additional Needs (ISCAN) to coordinate services for children and families in one place. ISCAN has been key to reducing multiple ‘hand

offs' to partners and supported parents with caring of children with disabilities especially during Covid-19 pandemic.

(3.3) Number of sight impaired people 65 plus



The above data has been taken from the registers of people with physical or sensory disabilities, data includes all persons registered under Section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948. However, registration is voluntary, and figures may therefore be an underestimate of the numbers of people with physical or sensory disabilities. Registration of severe sight impairment is, however, a pre-condition for the receipt of certain financial benefits and the number of people in this category may therefore be more reliable than those for partial sight impairment or other disabilities. These factors alongside the uncertainties about the regularity with which local authorities review and update their records, mean that the reliability of this information is difficult to determine and so it cannot be thought of as a definitive number of people with disabilities. People with sight impairment are registered by local authorities following certification of their sight impairment by a consultant ophthalmologist. The Certificate of Vision Impairment (Wales) formally certifies someone as partially sighted or as blind (now using the preferred terminology 'sight impaired' or 'severely sight impaired', respectively) so that the local authority can register him/her. Registration is voluntary and access to various, or to some, benefits and social services is not dependent on registration. If the person is not known to social services as someone with needs arising from their visual impairment, registration also acts as a referral for a social care assessment.

The majority of local authority areas in the Gwent region have experienced a decrease however this data will need to be explored further to ascertain if this is a registration issue and if people are aware of services.

Rehabilitation Officers for Visual Impairment (ROVI) provide early intervention support, helping people to remain independent and contribute to their community. There is a concern that in some areas some people are being signposted away from this support however we don't have the full data on this. The role has been identified across Wales as needing a clear pathway for referral to address unmet need and further promotion of the role which has been taken forward in Torfaen. The RPB work closely with third sector partners and will continue to support people with sight impairment through multi-agency partnership approaches and access to new technologies.

It is estimated that there are around 2000 children and young people aged 0-19 with a visual impairment in Wales. At least 20 per cent of these will have additional disabilities and/or additional learning needs; a further 30 per cent have very complex needs (Vision2020UK: Shared statistics and key messages about sight loss 2013). Wales Council for the Blind have highlighted that *'Partnership working is the only way to provide services that will ensure that Welsh CYPVI achieve their full potential and have the skills to be ready for adult life. This can only be achieved with early intervention by the right people at the right time.'* The report can be downloaded here http://www.wcb-ccd.org.uk/wales_vision_forum.php.

Emerging Themes, Future trends, and challenges

More than **600,000** people in Wales have hearing or sight loss (NHSWales2015) with the number increasing due to demographic trends and increases in chronic health conditions, amongst other causes. The effects of living with multiple health conditions can be profound, affecting quality of life, daily activities, poor physical and mental wellbeing and finding and maintaining employment, leading to financial hardship. This can then exacerbate inequalities, with loss of income and worklessness contributing to further declines in health. There is a danger that, without action, worsening socioeconomic inequalities will further concentrate this trend among the most disadvantaged.

Disability is extremely diverse and although some people might have extensive health care needs others might not, however all people with a disability need to access mainstream healthcare services. Almost everyone is likely to experience some form of disability during their lifetime, which could be temporary or permanent, having a dramatic impact on quality of life. There have been many improvements through the years, however the UK Disability Survey (2021) identified that public perception of disabled people is still a significant barrier to participation in areas, including employment and education and unhelpful perceptions and stigma.

People living with disabilities have been disproportionately impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic. They have had potentially higher risk of catching the virus due to underlying health conditions and had difficulty in engaging in preventative measures and experienced disruptions to health services they usually rely on. People with sensory loss have found it extremely challenging as their communication needs have not been met leaving them increasingly isolated. Although health and social care have worked hard across Gwent to reach out and support people during this time, we need more specific actions going forward, to recognise the impact there has been for people with health, physical and sensory disabilities.

There is an urgent need to improve the data we collect on disability, to further improve equality for disabled people and increase emotional wellbeing within health and social care.

What are the gaps in understanding of well-being?

Adults and children with disabilities have struggled both physically and mentally throughout the pandemic with the loss of services and support during this time. Some people previously found comfort in their daily routines which were removed with cancelled appointments and lockdown of education and activities.

Some people who are blind and visually impaired felt lonely prior to the pandemic but during this challenging time they have had to face more physical and psychological barriers. Social

distancing rules have been difficult, as this cannot be observed along with directional arrows, screens etc. In community settings and trying to follow the rules has caused anxiety, stress, and exhaustion. Rehabilitation in sight loss is key in preventative approaches to support new ways to accomplish essential tasks and to introduce a range of equipment and techniques to avoid injuries and falls and mitigate or defer the need for longer term care. There is a scarcity of ROVIs which needs to be anticipated and addressed in the Gwent area to support eye conditions, orientation and mobility, independent living and communication skills. During the pandemic the ROVI in Torfaen has provided training to social care colleagues on the ROVI role and referral pathways and the benefits they bring. This has resulted in more referrals.

Visual impairment is strongly associated with falls and hip fractures. The rate of falls in older people with visual impairment is 1.7 times higher than other older people of the same age, with hip fractures 1.3 - 1.9 times higher

The new normal is for people to wear facemasks to prevent transmission of disease. As a result of this deaf and hearing-impaired people feel excluded from the world. Deaf people who rely on sign language still need facial expressions for full communication, so this has been difficult.

What people have told us

Some people feel isolated and excluded and have been struggling with mental and physical health. Some people feel there is lack of multi-agency support and they don't always know who to contact. Some people also struggle with accessibility of certain buildings, pavements and using public transport.

“I have just applied for a guide dog and am on the ‘awaiting training list’ I can’t wait to get my confidence back and be able to go out and have my independence back”.

Some people have hidden disabilities which are not visible but are just as challenging. They have faced discrimination as their disability can't be seen. There needs to be more positive attitudes towards disabled people. It is important for us to have a more inclusive future that focuses on our strengths.

- People are living longer; however future trends indicate that on average a quarter of people after age 65 will live with some form of health disability. This needs to be considered when developing service models with a particular focus on effective prevention interventions. There are estimated to be about 9 million deaf and hard of hearing adults in the UK, that is about 18% of the total population. About 640,000 of these are profoundly or severely deaf. As people grow older the changes of becoming deaf increase: 7 out of 10 people over 70 will have developed a significant hearing loss. This could have a significant impact on health and social care services.
- Sensory impairment can be a significant life limiting condition and its incidence increases with age. This means the challenges associated with the condition are likely to grow over

coming decades. People with sensory impairment have a range of care and support needs. There is a scarcity of ROVI workers who can provide the necessary assessment and delivery of interventions including a lack of adequate supervision to support the workforce which also needs addressing.

- Early identification is vital, as is prevention, support to reduce loneliness, isolation and promote mental health and well-being. Offering effective care and support is likely to reduce other risks associated with age and frailty, such as falls. A focus is needed on further development of generic and specialist services and improving the access to other services for people with a sensory impairment. This will require a multi-agency approach.
- The prevalence of physical disability is much wider than those who need or want help from social care however this could change in the future if needs increase.
- Sight loss in the UK is estimated to double over the next 40 years, which will have a significant impact on the UK's health and social care system and damage the quality of life for millions of people. (RNIB 2009)
- Hearing loss is a common health issue in the armed forces. Many veterans will have had prolonged exposure to loud noise from small arms fire, artillery, engines, and other machinery during service, causing permanent hearing damage. The Veterans Gateway website provides information, advice and support for Veterans and their families on support and services currently available.

It is important that people with sight loss are signposted to support services within their communities and the sight loss sector in Wales recognises *Perspectif* as the tool to identify these services and it is available at <http://www.wcb-ccd.org.uk/perspectif/index.php>. Sight Cymru also provide a range of services across Gwent. Another critical service is Low Vision Service Wales – provided by Optometrists or Dispensing Optometrists accredited as Low Vision Practitioners in a Primary Care setting. People accessing the Service are able to receive low vision aids to support with day-to-day activities and are also offered advice and guidance. Practitioners will also be able to signpost service users to third sector providers for further support. There are currently 41 practices that provide the Low Vision Service to patients in Gwent.

Emerging Priorities

- 1. To support disabled people through an all age approach to live independently in appropriate accommodation and access community based services, including transport.**
- 2. Ensure people are supported through access to accurate information, assistance and 'rehabilitation' where required.**
- 3. Improve transition across all age groups and support services**

(4) LEARNING DISABILITIES

There are approximately 54,000 people in Wales living with a learning disability (ONS, 2019). A learning disability affects the way a person learns new skills throughout their lifetime. This can affect communication, understanding new or complex information and coping independently. A learning disability can be mild, moderate, or severe. Some people with a mild learning disability might be able to communicate well and look after themselves independently but might need a bit longer to embrace new skills. Other people might not be able to communicate and have more complex needs, needing further support. It very much depends on the persons abilities and the level of care and support they receive.

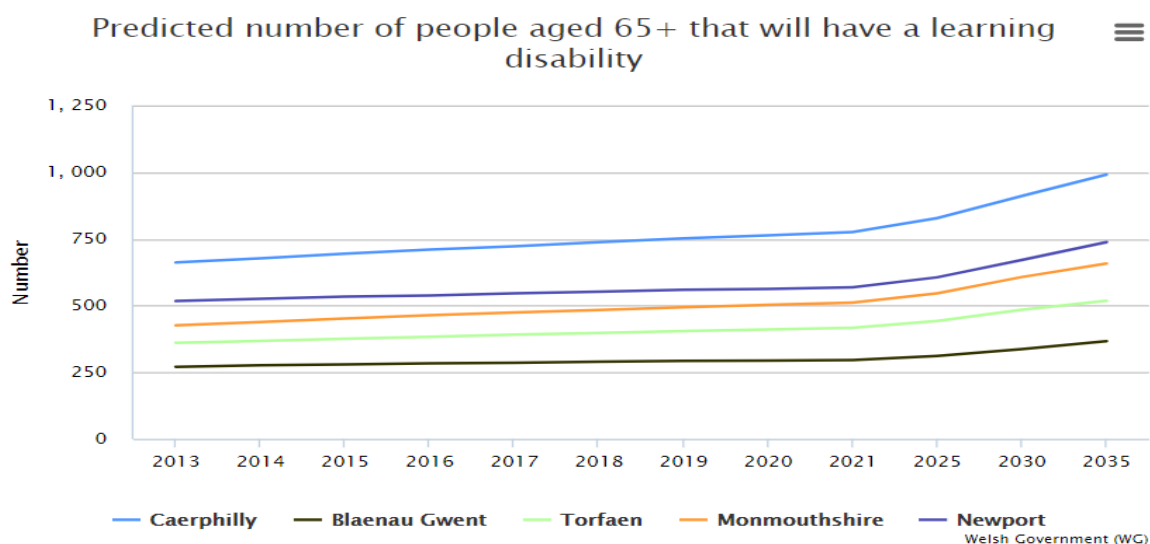
Key Themes

- Support people with learning disabilities to live independently with access to early intervention services in the community.
- Provide greater public awareness and understanding of people with learning disabilities needs.

Policy Areas

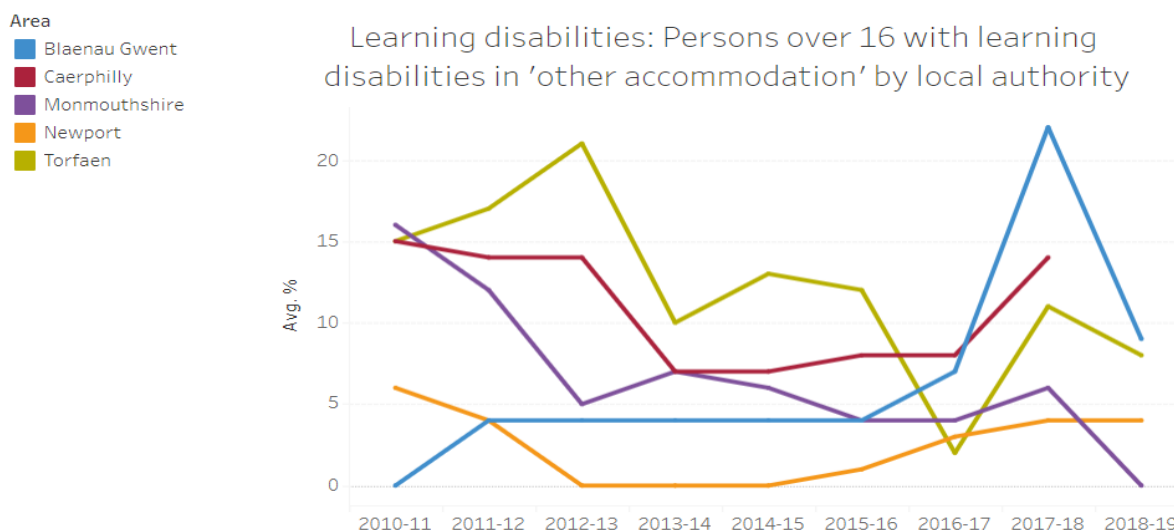
- Learning Disability Improving Lives Programme
- Children’s Commissioner Report ‘No Wrong Door’ in relation to adult services for children with learning disabilities.

(4.1) Predicted number of people 65 plus with Learning Disabilities



The data is taken from the Register of persons with learning disabilities (SSDA901). The data may be an underestimate of the total number of people with learning disabilities as registration is voluntary. Local authorities submit numbers of those identified as having a learning disability currently known to the authority and included in a register for the purpose of planning or providing services. All local authority areas across the region are predicted to see an increase in the number. The predicted increases range from 35.4% in Blaenau Gwent to 54.5% in Monmouthshire.

(4.2) Number of placements for persons aged 16 years or older with learning disabilities



Emerging Themes, Future trends, and challenges

Blaenau Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen
106	205	80	153	129

There are a total of 673 people with learning disabilities known to ABUHB with average life expectancy increasing over the last few decades. However, the impact of the pandemic has had a negative impact on people with a learning disability, where they have felt isolated at being separated from family and friends and daily routines disrupted. People have said that stress, anxiety, feeling isolated and changes to their normal routine has had a negative impact on mental health. Also, some people felt their health had deteriorated as they weren't as active and had put on weight due to not going out and about.

Communication and information was felt to be confusing surrounding Covid-19 which saw lots of organisations adapting the way they worked and providing more innovative ways to support people. Social media, websites and online platforms were used so people could connect and also telephone support calls as well as easy read resources so people could feel informed.

A reduction in community-based support due to restrictions has left some people feeling unsupported which has had a detrimental impact on mental health and physical wellbeing. There was also confusion over Government guidelines with people needing further advice and reassurance, which saw lots of people not wanting to visit a health professional even if this was needed. Organisations across Gwent adapted the way they worked and provided more innovative ways to support people. This was done through providing activities and services through social media, websites, and online platforms, so people could connect. Telephone check in calls were also provided by some organisations to help people stay connected, as well as easy read resources so people could keep informed.

Emerging Priorities

- 1. To support people with learning disabilities to live independently with access to early intervention services in the community; and greater public awareness and understanding of people with learning disabilities needs.**

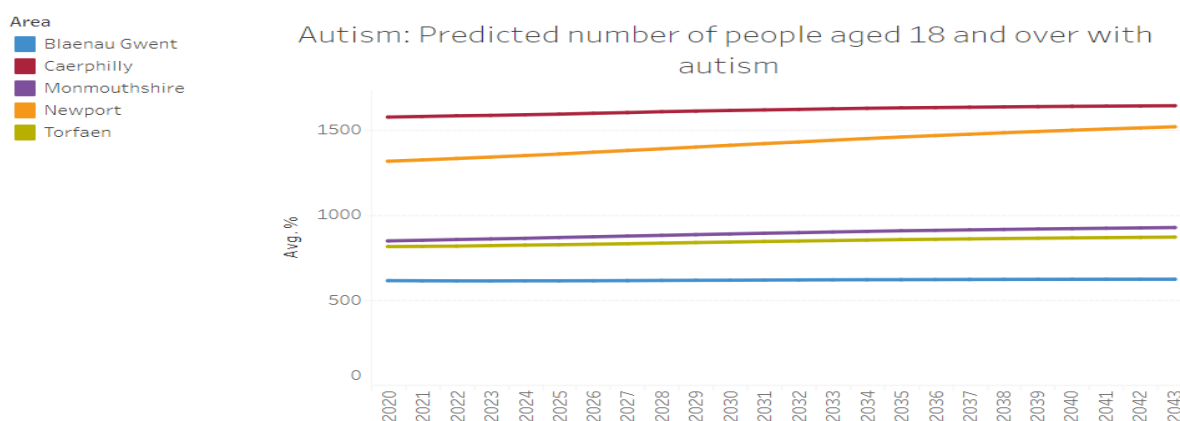
(5) AUTISM

Autism or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a lifelong neurodevelopmental condition which affects how people communicate and interact with the world. One in 100 people are on the autistic spectrum and there are around 700,000 autistic adults and children in the UK (NAS). Each person living with autism has a distinct set of strengths and challenges and the way in which people learn with autism can range from highly skilled to severely challenged. Autism means that the way a person thinks about and experiences the world is different to most people. Autism is different for everyone and some autistic people need little or no support. Others may need help from a parent or carer on a daily basis. These figures are taken from the study Prevalence of disorders of the autism spectrum in a population cohort of children in South Thames: The Special Needs and Autism Project (SNAP), Baird et al, the Lancet, 2006.

Policy Areas

- Part 2 of the Code of Practice within the SSWB Act
- Autism Delivery Plan 2021-2022

(5.1) Predicted number of people aged 0-17 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).



Across local authorities in the Gwent region, with the exception of Blaenau Gwent, all local authority areas are predicted to see an increase in the number. Across the remaining local authority areas in the Gwent region predicted increases range from 2.1% in Monmouthshire to 17.7% in Newport. Autistic people often have difficulty in accessing community activities, leisure facilities and other services. The RPB has supported the embedding of the Integrated Autism Service and raising awareness of autism in schools through a children’s story book – ‘Moli the Cow who Moo she was Different’.

Emerging Themes, Future trends, and challenges

What people have told us

People want help to plan their life the way they want with the right support and services to help. Person centred planning can help people to make their own choices and achieve life goals so people can reach their potential.

There is also a need for more meaningful activities that are fun but also help people to grow and learn. Although volunteering is considered important to learn new skills, more opportunities are needed for paid employment, training, and education. Organisations adapted through the pandemic with some activities being held on Zoom. This created barriers for some organisations to join, due to data protection laws. Many people appreciated the online support and to have options to connect on zoom but have now said they have 'zoom fatigue'.

Independent living is important and the opportunity to live in suitable housing, in a suitable location with the right individual support. One size does not fit all. Some people with autism said they felt that some professionals did not know enough about autism and had a very 'stereotypical view' and felt more training was needed for not just awareness but acceptance of difference.

"My autism is unique to me. I want people to have not just a greater awareness of autism, but also an acceptance of it. My brain works differently to other people, but I have my own unique skills to offer so don't see my diagnosis, see me".

- People have felt isolated and feel nervous so could need emotional and practical support to return to normality.
- Children and young people with a disability need an improved transition support programme to improve outcomes.
- There have been difficulties with some people accessing suitable health provision so this need addressing for effective future support.
- Improved post diagnostic support is needed for adults as some feel since having their diagnosis they are left "to get on with it".
- People with autism have struggled through the pandemic with loneliness and want more meaningful activities that inspire and support learning.
- Increased Autism Awareness training for the workforce and communities and how each person is unique with their own strengths and abilities.

Emerging Priorities

- 1. To provide more timely diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder and access to support services and information and advice.**

(6) MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health affects everyone as it includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make life choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through to adulthood. A quarter of people will experience mental health issues or illness at some point during their lifetime, often facing discrimination and stigma and affecting the people around them.

- 1 in 10 children between the ages of 5 and 16 have a mental health problem and many more have behavioural issues. There is evidence this is increasing.
- Approximately 50% of people with enduring mental health problems will have symptoms by the time they are 14 and many at a much younger age, demonstrating that mental illness can affect people across the course of their lives.
- Between 1 in 10 and 1 in 15 new mothers experience post-natal depression.
- 1 in 16 people over 65, and 1 in 6 over the age of 80, will be affected by dementia. Current estimates are that approximately 43,000 people in Wales are experiencing dementia and this is predicted to increase by over 30% in the next 10 years.
- 9 in 10 prisoners have a diagnosable mental health and/or substance misuse problem
- 295 people took their own life in Wales in 2020 (Samaritans)

Key Themes

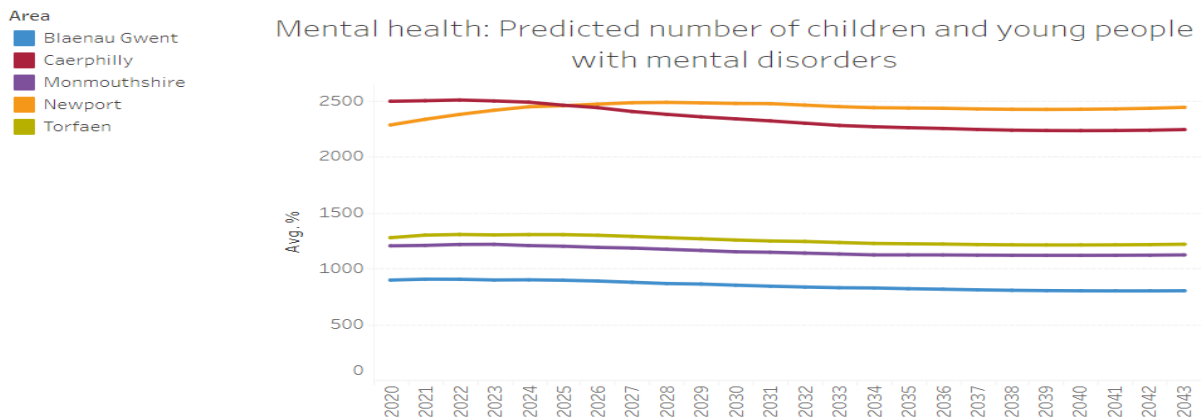
- Increased understanding and awareness of mental health amongst the public to reduce stigma.
- Improved interventions to help people to seek support earlier.
- To improve emotional well-being and mental health for adults and children through early intervention and community support.

Policy Areas

- Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan 2019-2022
- Together for Children and Young People Plan Together for Children and Young People, NHS Wales Health Collaborative
- Covid-19 in Wales: 'the mental health and wellbeing impact' by Cardiff University
- Talk to Me 2, Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy for Wales 2015-2020 [talk-to-me-2-suicide-and-self-harm-prevention-strategy-for-wales-2015-2020](#)
- National Mental Health Covid survey

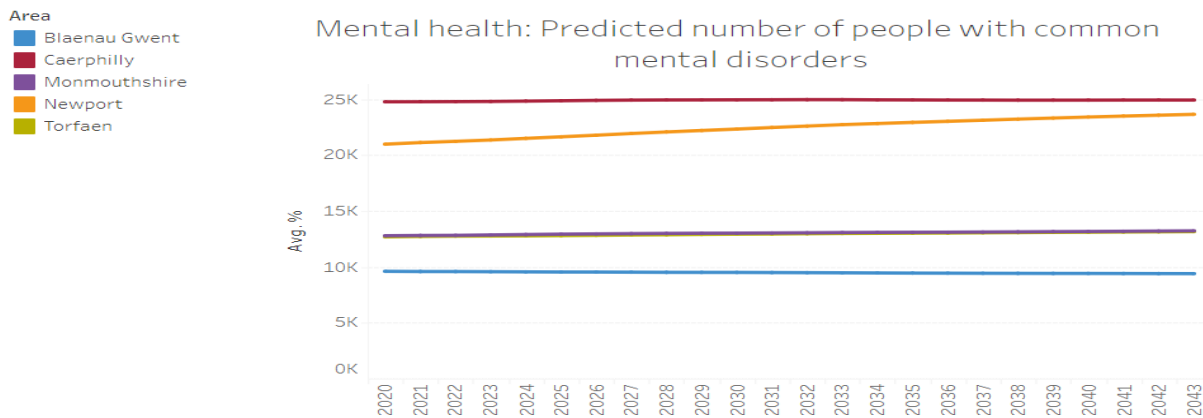
Gwent Population Needs Assessment

(6.1) Predicted number of people aged 5-15 that will have a mental disorders



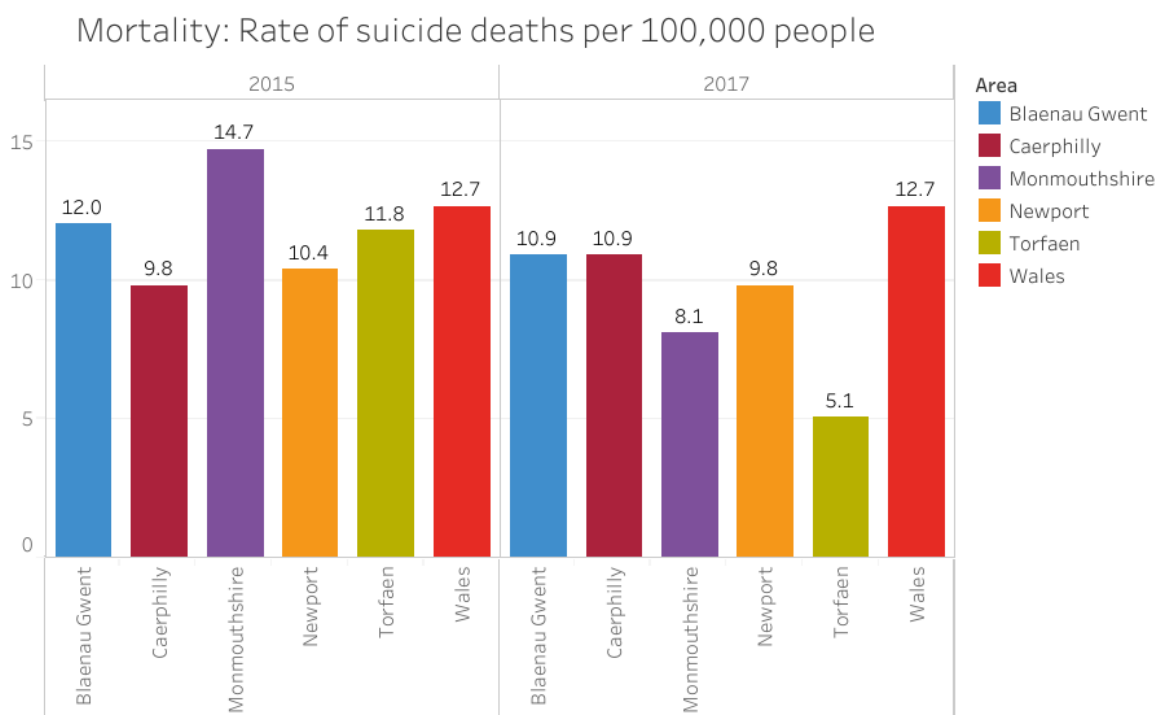
The percentage ranged from 66% in Blaenau Gwent to 78% in Monmouthshire. This compares with 72% of people aged 16 years or older free from a common mental disorder for Gwent and 74% for Wales.

(6.2) Number of people aged 16 plus free from a common mental disorder



Across the local authority areas in the Gwent region both Torfaen and Newport are predicted to see increases of 0.4% and 16.6% in the number of people aged 5 - 15 with a mental health problem. The other local authority areas are all predicted to see decreases over the same period

(6.3) Rate of suicide deaths per 100,000 people.



Office for National Statistics (ONS): SUI0003

Suicide is a major cause of death amongst the 15 to 44 age group. In Wales over the period 2010 – 2012 it accounted for almost one in five deaths in males aged 15 to 24 years and just over one in ten deaths amongst women of that age. Suicide (intentional self-harm and events of undetermined intent) accounted for 27% of external causes of death (transport accident, suicide, other accidental injury, other external causes) in all ages (15 and over) between 2010 and 2012. This exceeded deaths from road traffic accidents which account for 9.1% (an average of 107 per year) in the same age group and time period.

Research was completed in 2020/2021 by a range of partners from ABUHB, Swansea and Cardiff University, *‘The influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental wellbeing and psychological distress: A comparison across time’*. This research highlighted the impact the pandemic has likely had on psychological wellbeing and the mental health of many people. It was found that there was an increase in clinically significant levels of psychological distress in Wales, particularly in younger adults, women, and those from areas of greater deprivation. These findings can be used to prepare and plan for the wave of psychological distress that has been predicted to hit mental health support services due to the pandemic. ‘There is a need to balance the efforts to stop the spread of the virus against the mental health problems being caused by the virus’.

In Gwent we have established the multi-agency Gwent Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Steering group to develop our local plan to be responsive to the needs of the population. We hold biannual workshops to ensure we engage and take account of evidence and local data. Suicide and self-harm prevention are everyone’s business and requires a collaborative

approach and we have a passionate proactive partnership to take this work forward. The Gwent Suicide and Self-Harm prevention plan reflects the national Talk to Me 2 strategy, setting our aims and objectives to prevent and reduce suicide and self-harm in Gwent and the workshops are used to discuss priorities for the year ahead.

There are additional data graphs relating to adults in the Social Wellbeing section of the Wellbeing Assessment including

1. Mental health
2. Loneliness
3. Suicide and self-harm

NHS Wales in conjunction with Cardiff and Swansea Universities developed a national survey to assess levels of mental health during the recent pandemic. This research examined the psychological wellbeing and mental distress of the population of Wales during the first and second national lockdown periods – June to July 2020 and Jan to March 2021 respectively.

- Survey 1 (June – July 2020): 12,989 completed the survey and of those, 2,470 (20%) indicated they lived in ABUHB region.
- Survey 2 (Jan – March 2021): 10,428 completed the survey and of those 3,486 (33%) indicated they lived in ABUHB region

(6.4) Research Findings: Variations across Wales – Percentage of respondents reporting moderate to severe psychological distress

Local Authority	Survey 1	Survey 2	Change from 2020 to 2021
Blaenau Gwent	43%	49.1%	+ 6.1
Caerphilly	37.8%	48.2%	+ 10.4
Monmouthshire	23.4%	34.9%	+ 11.5
Newport	38.6%	44.8%	+ 6.2
Torfaen	32.0%	46.8%	+ 14.8

More respondents were experiencing severe psychological distress in survey 2, compared to survey 1, and the RPB will need to keep the mental health and wellbeing of our population central to our medium/long whole system Covid-19 recovery policy and planning. The RPB will consider further actions at both a local and national level to mitigate the risk factors, and enhance the protective factors, associated with poor mental wellbeing and psychological distress; as well as exploring what further actions need to be taken to meet an increased need for mental health support across all tiers of service provision.

Emerging Themes, Future trends, and challenges

- Poor mental health and mental illness have a significant impact on individuals, society, and the economy overall. To respond to the mental health emergency, we need to work collaboratively to support more preventative and early interventions and encourage inclusivity.
- We need to promote the mental wellbeing of people in Gwent and ensure that the workforce is supported to be able to provide people with the support they need at the right time.
- Although progress has been made through previous strategies there is still work to do to improve life outcomes for people and address stigma.
- We need to improve information available to the public, to create more understanding of mental health and encourage people to talk to gain early support. It is also crucial we meet the needs of Welsh language, other languages, Easy Read and Braille; and other accessible formats so mental health information is accessible to all.
- There is a need for more meaningful activities to promote wellbeing and improve life outcomes.
- There is a need to tackle loneliness and isolation.
- In Gwent we need to look at ways of improving job opportunities for people with mental health issues to get people into work and out of poverty.
- The need to adopt the principles of consent, choice and inclusiveness, and respect for delivering care, within the least restrictive measure under the umbrella of **mental capacity Act 2005 and the amended 2019 act**. This will mean commitment to implementing the newly amended MCA 2019 act when it finally becomes law

What are the gaps in understanding of wellbeing?

Blaenau Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen
316	758	324	567	378

There are a total of 2,343 people supported with mental health services through ABUHB but there are also signs that the pandemic is driving a worrying rise in mental health in Wales. Two thirds of people in Wales have said the pandemic has had a negative impact on their wellbeing. People have gone through adverse experiences such as losing their jobs, falling into debt, worrying about their health, and been isolated from friends and families. For most people, the symptoms of Covid-19 pass within a few days or weeks, but for some people the effects can last for weeks or months. This condition is called long Covid and can impact mental health causing depression and anxiety as well as sleep issues, extreme tiredness and a range of other debilitating symptoms.

Research was completed in 2020/2021 by a range of partners from ABUHB, Swansea and Cardiff University, ‘The influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental wellbeing and psychological distress: A comparison across time’. This research highlighted the impact the pandemic has likely had on psychological wellbeing and the mental health of many people. It was found that there was an increase in clinically significant levels of psychological distress in

Wales, particularly in younger adults, women, and those from areas of greater deprivation. These findings can be used to prepare and plan for the wave of psychological distress that has been predicted to hit mental health support services due to the pandemic. 'There is a need to balance the efforts to stop the spread of the virus against the mental health problems being caused by the virus'.

What people have told us

People have said they are struggling with poor mental health due to their early life experiences, financial issues, housing, long term illness, family worries, employment issues, bereavement or feeling burnt out from workloads and caring roles. Many people feel worse emotionally since the pandemic however it is worth noting that some people in Gwent also said they feel more relaxed in some ways; as life has slowed down for them and they don't have to go out of the house to access some services.

Some people felt they had to fight for support and had been pushed into financial difficulty as they had to give up work as unable to cope. Also, people from BAME communities said their mental health had been affected by racism, inequalities, and mental health stigma with added stress of the challenges of accessing services. There can also be language barriers and not knowing where to turn for help.

Waiting lists for mental health services can be lengthy due to the level of need and during this time an individual's emotional wellbeing can decline further. Some people also felt that there was not enough crisis support.

"I wish people viewed mental health differently I used to work but had to give up as I was not emotionally well enough and started having physical problems. That could happen to anyone at any time, People still judge and there is still a stigma to mental health".

Emerging Priorities

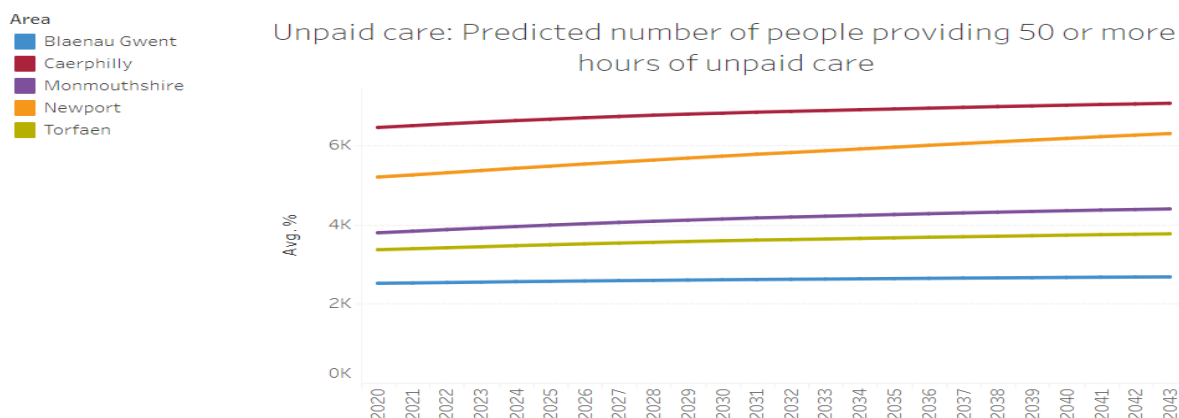
- 1. Increased understanding and awareness of mental health amongst the public to reduce stigma and help people to seek support earlier.**
- 2. To improve emotional well-being and mental health for adults and children through early intervention and community support.**

(7) CARERS WHO NEED SUPPORT

Policy Area

- Welsh Government’s Strategy for Unpaid Carers

(7.1) Predicted number of people providing 50+ hours of unpaid care



Figures are taken from the Census 2011 reference CT0224 - Sex by age by provision of unpaid care by general health. This dataset provides estimates that classify usual residents of England and Wales by provision of unpaid care and by age and by general health. All local authority areas across the Gwent region are predicted to see an increase in the number. The predicted increases range from 35.6% in Blaenau Gwent to 58.9% in Monmouthshire over the period.

A survey by Carers UK of over 8,000 people currently caring unpaid for family or friends, the majority of whom provide well over 50 hours of care every week, reveals the huge personal and financial cost of caring for a loved one. Nearly one in four carers (23%) do not have enough money to cover their monthly expenses. Many carers are worrying about how they will cope this winter face rising energy prices and increases in the cost of living. As well as providing significant levels of care themselves, almost two thirds (63%) of carers are also using their own income or savings to cover the cost of care, equipment or products for the person they care for. On average carers spend an estimated £1,370 a year on services or equipment for the person they care for.

The situation has got worse during the pandemic with over one in three carers (36%) saying that their financial situation has worsened since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and a quarter (25%) are spending more on equipment or products for the person they care for. As a result many are struggling financially and unable to save for their own retirement. Almost two-thirds of carers (65%) say they are worried about their ability to save and plan for the future. The financial strain is also damaging carers’ mental health with over half (52%) reporting they feel anxious or stressed about their finances, and over one in three carers (35%) providing more than 35 hours of care a week said they have been or are in debt.

Gwent Population Needs Assessment

Carers are still having to take on more hours of care for the person they care for, with 55% of carers having reduced or no access to day services and a third of carers reporting reduced or no access to paid care workers.

(7.2) Number of young carers known to Social Services during the year 2016

Blaenau Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen
17	45	38	51	49

A young carer is someone aged under 18 who takes responsibility for someone who is ill, disabled, elderly, experiencing mental distress or affected by substance misuse, or has substantial responsibility for caring for a sibling. A young carer may be from any family. They may be the person providing all of the care but may also help someone else to provide the care.

(7.3) Number of schools engaging in Young Carers in School Programme

	Number of Primary Schools	Engaging Primary schools	Number of Secondary Schools	Engaging secondary schools	Engaging PRS 1/5
Blaenau Gwent	23	3	4	3	
Caerphilly	78	8	12	7	
Monmouthshire	30	1	4	4	1
Newport	46	3	9	8	
Torfaen	26	6	6	5	
Total	203	21 (10%)	35	27 (77%)	1 (20%)

The RPBs commitment to supporting young/young adult carers in education remains high especially identifying hidden carers. We have seen a changing climate for young carers balancing their caring roles, alongside coping with firstly school closures and managing online learning and then reopening of schools further exacerbated by outbreak quarantines. It has become ever more important that systems are in place to understand, inform, identify, support and listen to young carers. We have been raising awareness with school staff and students about young carers and the challenges they may face and encouraging parents and young people to identify themselves to receive tailored support with their education. This has been done in a range of ways to take account of Covid restrictions which has made it difficult to offer face to face visits including: staff training is offered every 6-8 weeks virtually to schools in Gwent; assembly videos can be shared with students and staff of all ages; letters sent to families with information on how to access young carer services and carers assessments locally.


The Young Carers in schools programme delivered by CTSEW has seen an increase in demand. In Gwent, a total of 49 primary/ secondary schools are engaging with the programme. Originally this programme funded one Schools Development Worker with support from the Young Carers Manager. This year it has become necessary to review this, to take account of support and engagement needed with primary schools with an additional Young Carers in Schools Programme Officer to focus on primary schools in Gwent.

(7.4) Predicted number of people aged 16 - 24 that will provide 1 - 19 hours of unpaid care in 2035

Blaenau Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen
266	904	236	740	464

Figures are taken from the Welsh Health Survey 2008: Health of Carers. The prevalence rates have been applied to population projections to give estimated numbers predicted to provide unpaid care, to 2035.

(7.5) Number of carers accessing regional Carers Hub

	Number of Carers Accessing Gwent Carers Hub	Number of Referrals Received	Number of Referrals from Professionals
April 2020 – March 2021	1105	530	187
April 2021	283	42	3
May	239	85	8
June	323	70	3
July	310	58	12
August	303	48	3
Sept	191	50	6
Total	1649	353	35

The Gwent Carers Hub is available to all carers in the Gwent region. During 2020/21, 1105 carers accessed the Gwent carers hub. We have already seen a significant increase this year; in the period April 2021- September 2021 up to 24th September 2021, 1649 carers accessed the service. The Carers Hub provide accesses to information as well as wellbeing activities, first aid training for carers, legal clinics, coffee morning, complimentary therapies and drop in services.

Emerging Themes, Future trends, and challenges

Carers UK report that:

- There are 370,230 carers in Wales according to the 2011 census
- The Office of National Statistics indicated that there are 487,000 carers in Wales in a 2019 survey
- Every year in Wales 123,000 people become carers
- Carers save the Wales economy £8.1 billion per year
- Nearly 3 million people in the UK juggle caring with holding down a job
- The main carers' benefit is worth just £64.60 for a minimum of 35 hours - £1.85 per hour
- 103,594 people in Wales provide over 50 hours of care per week

- People providing high levels of care are twice as likely to be permanently sick or disabled
- Over 1 million people in the UK care for more than one person
- 58% of carers across the UK are women; 42% are men
- By 2037 the number of carers in the UK will have increased to 9 million

On 1st October 2021, the **Older Persons Commissioner reported on her findings in their 'State of the nation' report**. This highlighted that unpaid care had increased significantly with 80% providing more care than before the pandemic, 72% had not had a break from their caring roles since the pandemic and reported loneliness of older people had increased from 49% to 75%.

In **2021/22 Welsh Government reaffirmed its commitment to carers with the announcement of £1 million nationally for Local Health Boards** to work collaboratively with partners to address four national priorities to improve support for carers by:

- identifying and valuing carers;
- providing information, advice and assistance
- supporting life alongside caring and
- supporting unpaid carers in education and the workplace.

In January 2022 the commitment was confirmed further but with a single focus of supporting hospital discharge.

Public Health Wales research *'Unpaid carers in Wales: The creation of an e-cohort to understand long-term health conditions amongst unpaid carers in Wales'* was the first study in Wales providing a comprehensive assessment of the prevalence of physical and mental long-term health conditions and multimorbidity as managed in primary care amongst unpaid carers, and compared to a matched comparison group of non-carers in Wales. The study highlights the health needs of unpaid carers are often overlooked due to the focus on the health of those being cared for. Understanding the health and wellbeing needs of unpaid carers themselves is of key importance, to ensure support is in place to maintain their own good health whilst they also care for others. The research also found:

- Routinely collected primary care data and National Survey for Wales data were used to identify 62,942 unpaid carers in Wales since 2011; this electronic-cohort **of unpaid carers were more likely to be female, of older age and live in deprived areas**, compared to the general population in Wales.
- Thirty-six out of thirty-seven physical and mental long-term health conditions recorded in primary care were more prevalent among unpaid carers than non-carers. The most **prevalent condition for both unpaid carers and non-carers was anxiety and/or depression, with standardised rates of 248 and 137 per 1,000 population respectively**.
- For some conditions, there was evidence to suggest onset at a younger age amongst unpaid carers such as anxiety and/or depression, irritable bowel syndrome and musculoskeletal disorders.
- **Unpaid carers were more likely to be living with multiple long-term health conditions (308 per 1,000 population amongst unpaid carers compared to 187 per 1,000 population**

amongst non-carers), and the difference in prevalence was greater at a younger age (e.g. for those aged 25-34yrs, 205 per 1,000 population amongst unpaid carers compared to 79 per 1,000 population amongst non-carers). In older age, the proportion of unpaid carers managing multiple long-term conditions exceeded 550 per 1,000 by the age of 65 years and above, whereas amongst non-carers this proportion was only exceeded at 75 years and above.

What Carers have told us?

During Cares week 2021, over 700 carers were involved in activities and information awareness including over 100 young carers. Carers week is an opportunity to raise greater awareness of the caring role and provide information to the public. One local authority used this an opportunity to all gather feedback on services.

There were 466 webpage views during Carers Week, an average of 1,684 people saw each daily Facebook carers posts between 3 and 13 June 2021 which resulted in 102 clicks for further information. The highest numbers of people who saw individual posts was on 8 June with a reach of 2,093 people. There was an average of 1,669 Twitter impressions across the week. The most popular post was on 3 June which detailed the lighting of the Civic Centre clock tower in blue to mark Carers Week 2021.

State of Caring 2021 in Wales: each year, Carers UK carries out a survey of carers to understand the current state of caring in the UK. This report contains a snapshot of what caring in Wales is like in 2021, capturing the impact that caring has on carers' lives and evidencing the policy recommendations that would improve this.

Finances: caring often brings with it additional costs, from equipment and care costs to increased expenditure on fuel and transportation. When asked to describe their current financial situation, 36% of carers in Wales said they were struggling to make ends meet. A further 23% are or have been in debt as a result of caring and 8% cannot afford utility bills such as electricity, gas, water or telephone bills. When asked about how their financial situation had changed since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, 36% of carers said that their financial situation had got worse since the start of the pandemic. Caring can be expensive and 65% of carers are spending their own money on care, support services or products for the person they care for. The average monthly spend for carers in Wales is £109.75 and with high rates of inflation and a rising cost of living, this extra spend is likely to further disadvantage carers financially.

Support and Services: carers often need practical and emotional support to enable them to care safely for people with complex needs, and too often they struggle to get the support they need. When asked about barriers to accessing support, the largest issue for Welsh carers was that they did not know what services were available in their area with 40% of carers reporting this as a barrier. In addition, 30% of carers were concerned about the risk of catching COVID-19 and 32% say that the care and support services did not meet their needs. Considering the future of services, 51% of carers were uncertain about what practical support

they may be able to access in the next twelve months and 66% were worried that services will be reduced.

Health: Caring can have a detrimental impact on someone's physical and mental health. 26% of carers described their physical health as bad or very bad. 34% of carers rated their mental health as bad or very bad. Looking at wider indicators of wellbeing, 36% of carers reported that they are often or always lonely, otherwise known as being 'chronically lonely'. Carers also rated their overall satisfaction with life at an average of 4 out of 10 and their level of anxiety at 6 out of 10. Carer's assessments The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 gives Welsh carers the right to a carer's needs assessment. Despite carers' rights to assessments only 21% of Welsh carers reported having an assessment in the last 12 months. Of those, 28% waited more than six months for their assessment. Of those who hadn't requested a carer's assessment, 37% stated that this was because they didn't know what it was and 20% stated it was because they didn't think it would be beneficial. 10% of carers said their assessment had been postponed or they were still waiting.

Technology: When asked about their current use of digital technology, remote healthcare such as online GP appointments was the most popular technology listed with 37% of carers stating that this made their caring role easier. Looking to the future, 31% of Welsh carers would like to continue accessing support services digitally in the future and 44% stating they would like to continue accessing health and social care services digitally.

Work: Working carers represent a significant proportion of the working population and 196 respondents were in paid work. The pandemic is continuing to have an impact on working experiences, with 51% of working carers are working from home part or full time. The limited return of services continues to have an impact. 30% of working carers in Wales stated that if care services did not return, they would either need to reduce their working hours or give up work entirely.

Respite is continually highlighted as the highest support need for carers across Gwent.

Emerging Priorities

1. Support carers to care through flexible respite, access to accurate information, peer to peer support, effective care planning and through an increased public understanding.
2. Improve well-being of young carers & young adult carers and mitigating against the long term impact of Covid-19 pandemic

(8) HOUSING

Housing needs include specialist housing and accommodation needs of the core priority groups, including supported accommodation, such as extra care housing, supported living for adults with a disability, and small unit residential care for children with higher needs. Also included are additional investment in adaptations to support people in the priority groups to continue to live independently and safely in their own home.

Policy Areas

- The Housing (Wales) Act 2014
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016
- Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015
- Substance Misuse Delivery Plan 2019 – 2022
- Together for Mental Health: A Strategy for Mental Health and Wellbeing in Wales
- Equality Act 2010
- Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness 2016
- Housing Support Grant Guidance March 2021
- Programme Plans and Objectives (PPO) being undertaken for the ICF Capital Funding programme.
- Local Housing Market Assessments (LHMAs)
- Welsh Government Strategy for Preventing and Ending Homelessness
- Ending Homelessness in Wales: A high level action plan 2021-2026

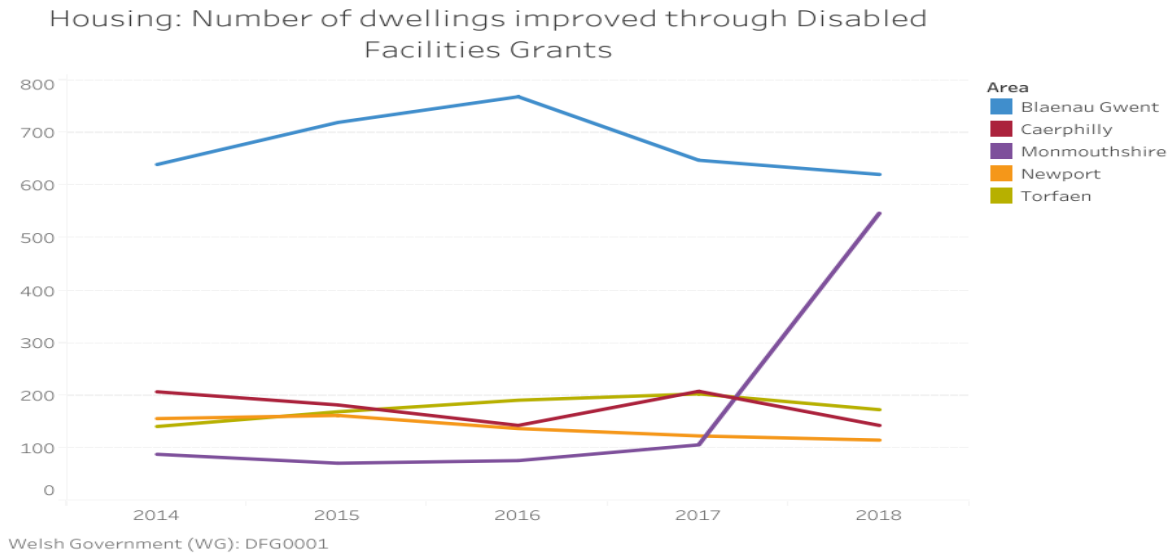
(8.1) Rate of all other accommodation for persons aged 16+ with a learning disability per 10,000 population

Blaenau Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen
3.8	6.6	9.4	7.6	5.1

The data is taken from the Register of persons with learning disabilities (SSDA901). The data may be an underestimate of the total number of people with learning disabilities as registration is voluntary. Local authorities submit numbers of those identified as having a learning disability currently known to the authority and included in a register for the purpose of planning or providing services.

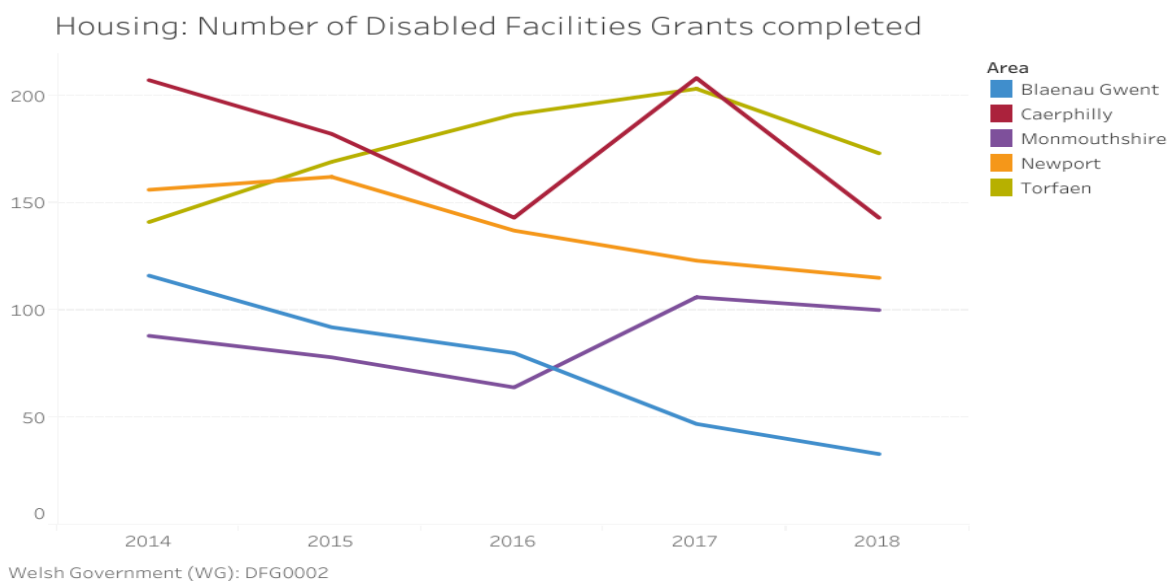
Gwent Population Needs Assessment

(8.2) Number of dwellings improved through Disabled Facilities Grant



The DFG is a mandatory council grant that helps to meet the costs of adapting a disabled person's home so that they can continue to live there as independently as possible. Tenants, owner occupiers and landlords who have a disabled tenant can apply for a DFG. The DFG is a means tested grant to disabled adults (means testing does not apply to parents of dependent disabled children or young people under 19). This means depending on your income, savings and outgoings, you might have to make a contribution towards the cost of the works. In Wales, the maximum DFG award is currently £36,000. There is growing concern amongst LAs given budget pressures and introduction of financial assessments, that a number of people are pulling out of the process and exacerbating original issues.

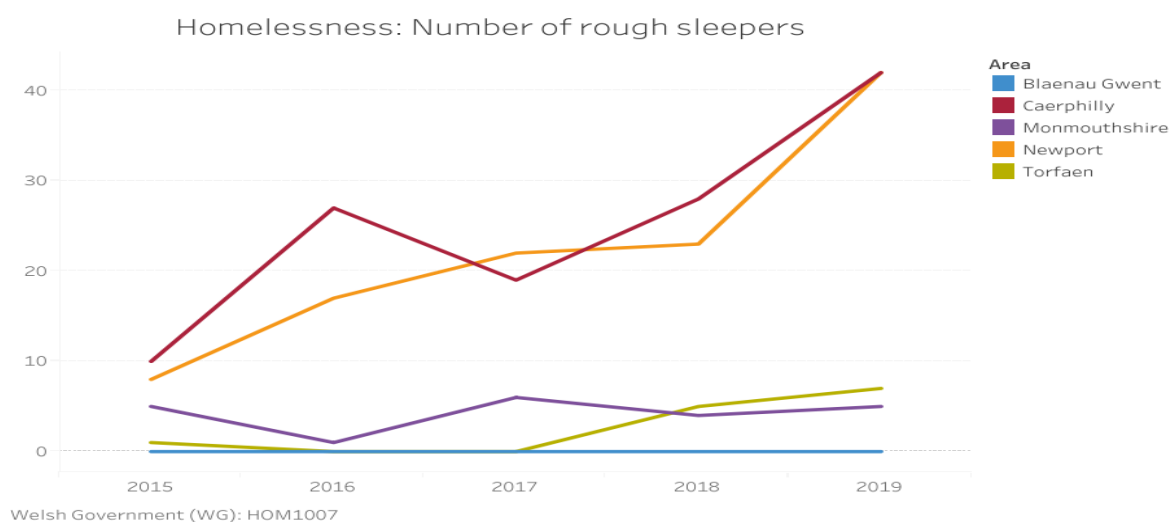
(8.3) Number of Disabled Facilities Grants completed



Gwent Population Needs Assessment

Examples of the sorts of adaptations the DFG covers include: Widening doors and installing ramps or stairlifts, Kitchen and bathroom adaptations for eg. walk in showers, Extensions (possibly for a downstairs bathroom and/or bedroom), Installing a suitable heating system that meets the disabled person's needs, Adapting the controls on the heating system or lighting so they are easier to use. Before a formal DFG application is considered, a social services department's occupational therapist (OT) will usually need to assess the disabled person's needs, including whether the works are "necessary and appropriate". The OT's recommendations are normally put to the Housing Department who administers the DFG. The council will then have to decide whether it is "reasonable and practicable" to do the works. Given the challenges and lack of recruitment into OT posts, there is a real concern that the number of DFG completed will decrease. The RPB are currently assessing the potential impact across the 5 LAs.

(8.4) Number of rough sleepers



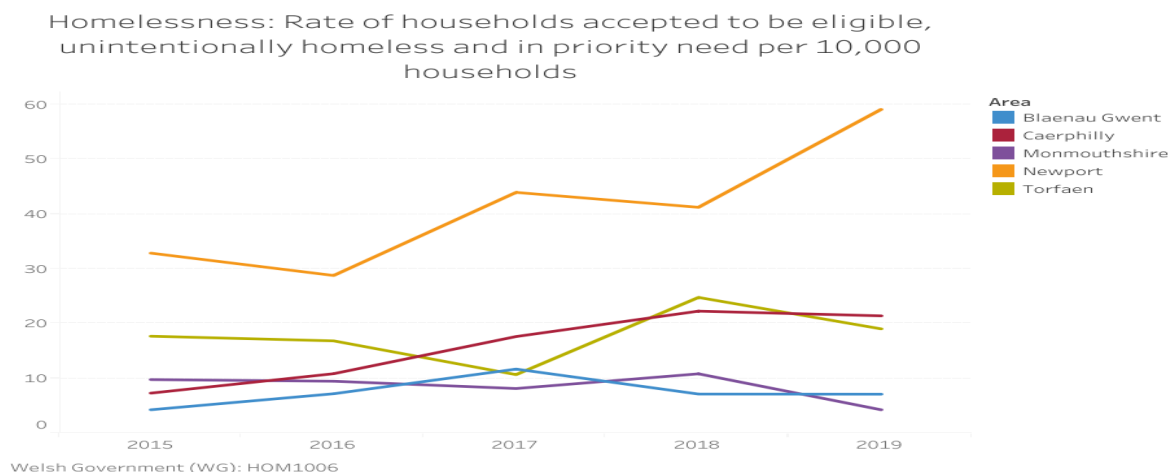
Homelessness is where a person lacks accommodation or where their tenure is not secure. Rough sleeping is the most visible and acute end of the homelessness spectrum, but homelessness includes anyone who has no accommodation, cannot gain access to their accommodation or where it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy accommodation. This would include overcrowding, 'sofa surfing', victims of abuse and many more scenarios. A person is also homeless if their accommodation is a moveable structure and there is no place where it can be placed. Homelessness, or the risk of it, can have a devastating effect on individuals and families. It affects people's physical and mental health and well-being, and childrens' development and education, and risks individuals falling into a downward spiral toward the more acute forms of homelessness. The impacts can be particularly devastating if a stable, affordable, housing solution isn't achieved and people end up having to move frequently. The average age of death for people experiencing homelessness is 45 for men and 43 for women. People sleeping rough are 17 times more likely to have been the victims of violence. Homeless people are 9 times more likely to take their own life than the general population Ref: [About Homelessness | Crisis UK](#)

Gwent Population Needs Assessment

Implementation of Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 by local authorities across Wales has done much to prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless – over 23,673 households since 2015. However, whilst prevention rates remain high at 68% in 2018-19, there are still far too many whose homelessness is not prevented and who are falling through the net. The demand on local authority services under the 2014 Act duties is increasing. In 2018-19 over 10,000 households presented to local authorities as at risk and a further 11,500+ presented as homeless and owed a duty.

Rough sleeper numbers in Wales are estimated to be 128 in September 2021, with numbers increasing slightly over the summer period. The data available is more accurate and current than it has ever been and provides a clearer understanding of all forms of homelessness in Wales, which would otherwise be masked through sofa surfing, living in overcrowded homes or unconventional types of dwellings.

(8.5) Rate of households accepted to be eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need per 10,000 households.



At the start of the first lockdown in March 2020, an emergency homelessness response was put in place. This involved additional funding, together with both statutory and non-statutory guidance to ensure that no-one was left without accommodation, together with the support they need, to stay safe during the pandemic. The inclusive 'no-one left out' approach has been in place continuously since then and to date has resulted in local authorities and their partners supporting over 15,300 people into temporary accommodation since March 2020. Latest data shows there were 6,935 people in temporary accommodation at the end of September 2021, of which 1,742 were dependent children.

Whilst the pressure on homelessness services remains high, with around 1,000 people presenting a month, understanding the true scale of homelessness presents us with a unique opportunity to make the radical change required to address it. It increases the urgency and importance of preventative work to stop people ever experiencing the destabilising impact of homelessness. It increases the urgency and understanding of the housing capacity required, both in the social and private sector, to make the transformational shift required to end homelessness. Latest figures for 2021

Blaenau Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen	Wales
8	24	4	58	33	28

(8.6) Temporary Accommodation

The table below shows the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation in Gwent at 31st March 2021 and to allow for comparison the table following shows the number of households in temporary accommodation in Gwent as at 31st March 2020 and number of households in temporary accommodation in Gwent as at 31st March 2020 is also provided. Ref: [Households in Temporary Accommodation \(gov.wales\)](#)

Authority	No of households in temporary accommodation at 31 March 2021	Mid-year 2020 household estimates	Rate per 10,000 households	No of households in temporary accommodation at 31 March 2020
Blaenau Gwent	38	31,371	12.1	27
Caerphilly	224	77,242	29.0	123
Monmouthshire	131	40,712	32.2	21
Newport	346	66,543	52.0	153
Torfaen	88	40,813	21.6	60
Gwent	827	N/A	N/A	384
Wales	3,730	1,378,226	27.1	2,325

Newport reported the second highest number of households in temporary accommodation as at 31st March 2021 in Wales and saw the biggest increase during this collection period (April 2020 – March 2021). Following a Gwent regional snapshot collection that was collated during September 2021 through the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group, we can see that the trajectory of people accommodated in temporary accommodation has since increased again to 936 households. Additionally, waiting list figures were also collected as part of this snapshot exercise and as of 10th Sept 2021 there were 452 households on the waiting list for temporary accommodation.

(8.7) Provision of accommodation for 16 and 17-year-old young people who may be homeless

Supporting children and young people to remain with their families is in the best interest of most children. This fundamental principle also applies to 16 or 17 year olds, unless it is not safe or appropriate to do so or where there are other responsible adults in their wider family and friends network that can care for the young person. Gwent Local Authorities explicitly recognise this principle, with services commissioned to work pro-actively with young people and their families to identify and resolve the issues which have led to the homelessness crisis. This could involve family support such as family mediation or family group conferences.

Where a young person approaches for housing assistance, their needs for accommodation are clearly assessed taking into consideration their welfare and ability to continue to live in their current accommodation or family home. If a young person is eligible for assistance the accommodation must be suitable. B&B accommodation is not normally considered to be a suitable option and therefore is only used by Gwent Local Authorities as an emergency short term provision.

The following information is collected by Welsh Government in order to establish the number of placements made by Local Authorities into Bed and Breakfast accommodation to meet the

Gwent Population Needs Assessment

immediate housing needs of all young people aged 16/17, and also 18-20 year olds (up to 21st birthday) who have previously been in care.

Total placements in bed and breakfasts during the quarter, by length of stay and whether the provision is through Homelessness or Social Services legislation - Period (2020-21 January –March)

	Total		Total of which are single person household: Aged 16 to 17	Of which are care leavers only, aged 18 to 21, accommodated by the current Homelessness legislation
	Of which are single person household: Aged 16 to 17, accommodated by the current Homelessness legislation	Of which are single person household: Aged 16 to 17, Accommodated by Children's Social Services		
Wales	75	42	120	69
Gwent	30	21	54	18

Emerging Themes, Future trends, and challenges

Each year local authority Housing Support Grant teams will distribute a Gwent Housing Support annual service user survey and the survey has become an important and established element of the needs mapping process. It is the responsibility of the local authorities in the region to ensure that engagement is undertaken with those who have used services. Those who have needed to use services funded through the Housing Support Grant come from a wide range of backgrounds and receive support on a range of different issues; the support they receive is person centred and aims to help people to secure and maintain sustainable housing and to develop the skills needed to help them thrive. Consultation with stakeholders happens with face to face meetings and forums taking place at a local level and regionally through an annual survey and quarterly regional provider forum meetings.

During 2020/21, a total of 262 responses were received to the questionnaire with engagement in the consultation exercise across all Gwent Local Authorities. There are approximately 7000 people receiving support across Gwent at any one time from services funded through the Housing Support Grant; finding ways to encourage people to engage in the survey continues to be an important consideration going forward. A number of key messages were highlighted through the survey and included

- access to technology as part of the support planning process
- closer links need to be made with digital inclusion projects delivered across the region
- access to digital inclusion services and projects to improve their skills and develop their learning in this area and this should be clearly identified in their support plan.

A stakeholder survey is also shared with the service user questionnaire and 31 partners provided feedback and includes

- Scope out exactly what is available
- Long term planning, partnership working and communication is key
- Develop assessments of need

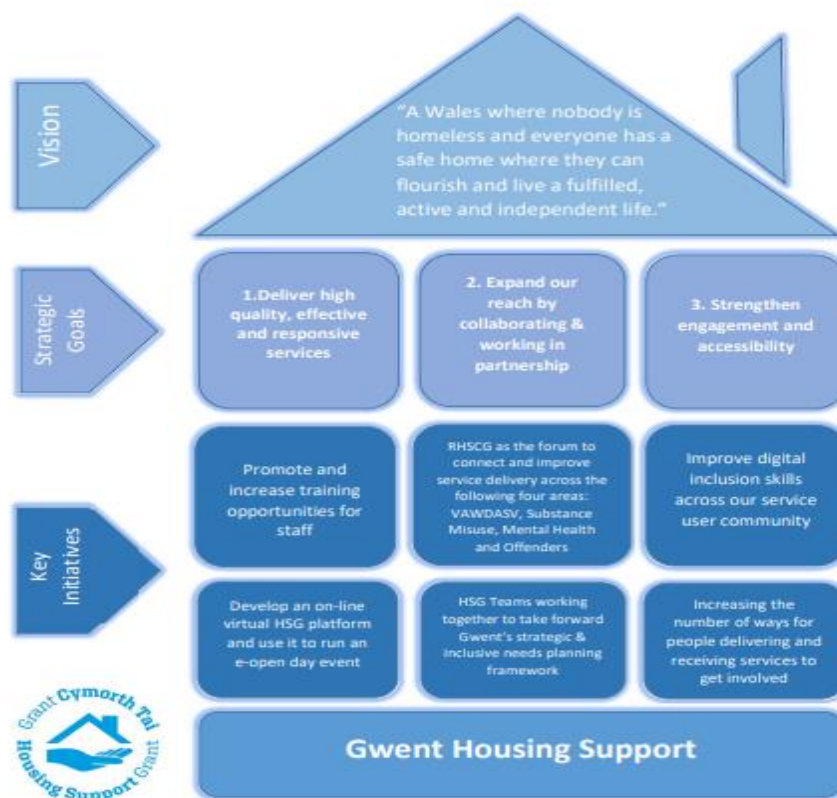
Gwent Population Needs Assessment

- Lack of suitable affordable accommodation and not enough single units as there are not the properties available and we need to develop and bring online more accommodation
- Young people being placed in accommodation that does not meet their needs
- Great vision but stock needs to be there in order for it to be successful.

Following the Housing Support needs planning and consultation processes completed during 2021; the following regional strategic objectives have been developed and agreed with partners and the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group:

- Deliver high quality, effective and responsive services
- Expand our reach by collaborating and working in partnership
- Strengthen engagement and accessibility

Key initiatives are being developed to deliver against these strategic goals and these will be reviewed on an annual basis (*– the attached pic captures the above responses – workforce development –training, promotion, collaboration and partnership working, digital inclusion and engagement*).



Homelessness

A change in circumstances or a significant life event such as a relationship breakdown or losing employment, has the potential to unexpectedly push any one of us towards the experience of homelessness; a devastating, dangerous, isolating and potentially life changing and

threatening experience. Some people are more at risk of homelessness and these include those who are leaving home for the first time or leaving care, being pregnant and having nowhere to stay, living on a low income, leaving prison, or from being an asylum seeker or refugee.

The Welsh Government definition of homelessness:

'Homelessness is where a person lacks accommodation or where their tenure is not secure. Rough sleeping is the most visible and acute end of the homelessness spectrum, but homelessness includes anyone who has no accommodation, cannot gain access to their accommodation or where it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy accommodation. This would include overcrowding, 'sofa surfing', victims of abuse and many more scenarios. A person is also homeless if their accommodation is a moveable structure and there is no place where it can be placed.'

Homelessness, or the risk of it, can have a devastating effect on individuals and families. It affects people's physical and mental health and well-being, and children's development and education, and risks individuals falling into a downward spiral toward the more acute forms of homelessness. The impacts can be particularly devastating if a stable, affordable, housing solution isn't achieved, and people end up having to move frequently.

Impact and response during pandemic

The vision in Gwent is for everyone to have a home to live in and the right support if they need it to lead a fulfilling life. Since the onset of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, an emergency homelessness response has been in place and the approach to homelessness has been transformed with the introduction of a 'no-one left out' approach, this involved additional funding, together with both statutory and non-statutory guidance to ensure that no-one was left without accommodation, together with the support they need, to stay safe during the pandemic. Many households were supported into emergency temporary accommodation and as at 31 March 2021, there were 3,729 households placed in temporary accommodation across Wales. This is an increase of 60% on 31 March 2020, and is the highest figure recorded since the introduction of the current legislation in April 2015.

This inclusive "no-one" left out approach has been in place continuously since then and resulted in over 15,000 people being supported into temporary accommodation across Wales between March 2020 and the end of September 2021. The scale of what may once have been considered hidden homelessness and inequality within Wales has become evident. Latest data shows there were 6,935 people in temporary accommodation across Wales at the end of September 2021, of which 1,742 were dependent children.

Whilst the pressure on homelessness services remains high, with around 1,000 people presenting a month, understanding the true scale of homelessness presents us with a unique opportunity to make the radical change required to address it. It increases the urgency and importance of preventative work to stop people ever experiencing the destabilising impact of homelessness. It increases the urgency and understanding of the housing capacity required,

both in the social and private sector, to make the transformational shift required to end homelessness.

The publishing of the “Ending Homelessness in Wales: A high level action plan 2021-2026 sets out that Welsh Government sees being homeless as simply intolerable and their vision to make homelessness

- **“Rare”** - Ensuring homelessness is rare means preventing people from becoming homeless in the first place
- **“Brief”** – How a national focus on rapid rehousing will lead to a Wales where homelessness is brief
- **and “Unrepeated”** – Ensuring we have a system which places the right people in the right homes in the right communities with the right support, in order for people to succeed and thrive

The above sets the direction of travel for the work of Welsh Government and its partners to end homelessness in the next five years and the responsibility for ending homelessness to extend beyond dedicated homelessness and housing teams and demanding an “all public services” response.

There were a number of principles set out in the Welsh Governments Strategy for Ending Homelessness 2019 that underpin the approach to homelessness prevention and going forward are expected to underpin the work of delivery partners and are to be reflected across public services.

- The earliest preventions are most effective and most cost effective and should always be the interventions of first choice.
- Tackling and preventing homelessness is a public services matter – rather than a ‘housing matter’.
- All services should place the individual at the centre and work together in a trauma informed way.
- The duties in Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 should be the last line of defence – not the first - and all services should work to the spirit not simply the letter of the law.
- Policy, service delivery and practice should be informed and shaped in a co-productive manner and by those with lived experience.

Ref: Homelessness in Wales 2020-2021 Statistical First Release, Ending Homelessness in Wales; A High Level Action Plan 2021-2026

Emerging Priorities

1. A multi agency partnership approach to ensure appropriate housing and accommodation for older people and vulnerable citizens
2. Homelessness requiring a collaborative response from public services
3. Non use of B&B accommodation for young people

(9) Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV)

Domestic violence and abuse is a serious health and social care issue and has escalated through the pandemic, with access to services curtailed due to the covid 19 outbreak. It impacts on all services including adult and children's social service, health services, housing, criminal justice, education, police, and voluntary and community organisations; so, needs a collaborative approach. Anyone can be affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence including women, men, children, and young people. This can happen regarding of sex, age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, religion or belief, income, geography, or lifestyle. A significant number of people who experience VAWDASV will have one or more 'protected characteristic' under the Equality Act 2010 and will face additional vulnerabilities and have increased barriers to support.

Gwent has been working in partnership as the first region in Wales for strategic coordination of VAWDASV services, where we pioneer new ways of working. We have a range of early intervention and prevention services through Supporting People, Flying Start, Families First and also specialist sector services, recognising that survivors are the experts. There are a number of data sources available to the regional VAWDASV Board including

- Rate of sexual offences per 1,000 people
- Number of sexual offences
- Number of domestic violence offences
- Number of sexual and domestic violence offences
- Number of MARAC (domestic abuse) cases
- Number of recorded incidents of domestic abuse (DACC)

The RPB works alongside the VAWDASV Board and does not replicate the information monitored.

Emerging Themes, Future trends, and challenges

The pandemic has highlighted the dangers faced by victims and survivors. In Wales during the lockdown period calls to the Wales national helpline Live Fear Free, rose by 49% and call times trebled with those contacting the helpline often reporting more frequent abuse with shorter escalation periods. (Social Care Wales 2021) There has also been a surge in calls and website visits to specialist domestic violence services and emergency services have experienced an overstretched workforce tackling the pandemic.

As lockdown restrictions ease it is expected there will be a demand in services as individuals and

"I have spent most of the pandemic living with daily anxiety for fear something will kick off and have been trying to avoid conflict at all costs with my partner. It has been a scary depressing time for me, and I have felt like I can't breathe".

families look for support. We need to build back better, investing in prevention and early intervention so people can access the right support at the right time. We also need to deliver a whole system approach to tackling abuse and ensuring the safety of both young people and adults through access to safe, effective, trauma informed support.

Gwent Population Needs Assessment

Emerging Priorities

- 1. TBC by VAWDASV Board**

(10) GWENT WORKFORCE AND DEVELOPMENT

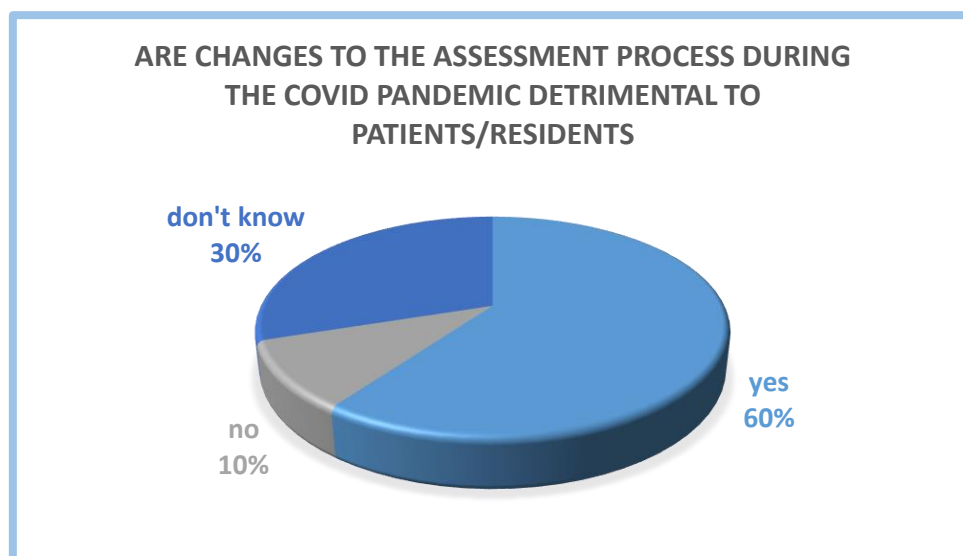
The RPB have established a regional Workforce and Development Board with a delivery plan which is monitored by the Board. Workforce Development managers and the regional Partnership Team meet regularly, prior to the board to ensure consistent developments across the workforce, joint training and continuous development of the regional training plan.

The health and social care workforce has come under an increased focus during the pandemic and with huge recognition amongst the public given the commitment of staff to support vulnerable citizens across the region. Recruitment and levels of pay have proven to be challenging issues across the UK, Wales and in the region. This will require national solutions and an area for RPB focus going forward given that workforce will be the foundations for all health and social care support going forward.

Local Workforce Development Managers and the regional Transformation team form part of a National Social Services and Well-being Act Workforce Development Group. The group ensures coordinated development across Welsh Government, Care Council for Wales and regional and Workforce Development teams and ensures there is a focus on raising the profile of the care sector as a career path and raising standards through commissioning.

(10.1) A survey of the experiences and views of Mental Health assessors and Deprivations of Liberties process during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLs) provides a legal framework to protect vulnerable adults, who may become, or are currently being deprived of their liberty in a care home or hospital setting and who lack mental capacity to consent to their care arrangements. Measures introduced to manage the spread of COVID-19 by the UK and Welsh Government have impacted upon the assessment process for Deprivation of Liberty safeguards and Best Interest Assessors, Mental health Assessors and DoLs Signatories working in Gwent were asked to complete a survey in relation to their views and experiences during the COVID pandemic.



Gwent Population Needs Assessment

It is clear from practitioners that the virtual and online form of assessment, although necessary at the time, has not been as seamless as other assessments. Barriers to completing DoLs assessments due to the COVID pandemic need further examination and an area of focus for Welsh Government as well as the RPB.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

28th January, 2022

PRESENT: MR. S. WILLIAMS (CHAIR)

Councillors K. Hayden, M. Moore & G. Thomas

Ms. S. Rosser

Mr. F.R Lynch

Town Councillor J. Thomas

WITH: Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance (Monitoring
Officer)

Data Protection & Governance Officer

CHAIR

In the absence of the Chair and the Vice-Chair, it was agreed that Mr. S. Williams chair the meeting.

1. **SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION**

No requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.

2. **WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

The Acting Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and the following apologies for absence were reported:

Mr. R. Alexander, Chair of the Standards Committee

Miss H. Roberts, Vice-Chair

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.

4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the Standards Committee held on the 14th July, 2020 were submitted.

Matters Arising

Raising awareness of the availability of dispensations

The Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance referred to previous discussions and concerns raised by the Chair that the Council did not utilise the dispensations scheme as much as other LA's. The Officer said this was due to the political circumstances of the Council, and the fact that there was a clear majority group. However, in terms of raising awareness of the availability of dispensations the Officer said this could be included as part of the training for elected Members following the local elections in May. The training session would be held on 11th May, 2022 by an independent provider and the Officer undertook to ensure that invitation be extended to Members of the Standards Committee.

Webcasting of meetings

The Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance reported that prior to the Covid pandemic webcasting of meetings was being considered. However, in response to the pandemic the Council put in place a new operating system to hold meetings which included a facility to record meetings which were then published on the Council's website for the public to view.

The Officer reported that a new Head of Democratic Services had been recently appointed and would be working on options for live broadcasting of Council meetings.

The Standards Committee agreed, subject to the foregoing, that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.

5. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN (CONDUCT ELEMENT)

The Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance presented the Annual Report of the Public Services Ombudsman for information. The report did not raise any conduct issues for Blaenau Gwent, however, the Officer confirmed that a report was submitted to Council annually on the Council's performance in relation to conduct issues.

A small element of the report highlighted each LA's performance on code of conduct issues and the Officer said she was pleased to reported that Blaenau Gwent had an excellent record with the minimum number of complaints referred to the Ombudsman. She said Members would be aware that the Council operated a Local Resolution Policy which had proved successful in early resolution and preventing issues being referred to the Ombudsman.

The Officer also reported that the Council's Managing Director would be leaving the Council shortly to take up her new role as the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

The Officer concluded that the Ombudsman Report on the conduct element reflected the very low number of complaints referred to the Public Services Ombudsman in Blaenau Gwent, and since July 2021 there was only 1 complaint taken forward and investigated, and that was in relation to a Town & Community Council matter. The outcome of the complaint was awaited.

6. PENN REPORT

The Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance presented the report on the independent review undertaken of the Ethical Standards Framework in Wales. The report had been considered and was supported by the Monitoring Officers' Group.

The Officer then went through the report in detail and highlighted the main points contained therein.

Councillor M. Moore left the meeting at this juncture.

7. FUTURE WORK PLAN - TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS

A Member asked whether a review of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy could form part of the future work plan, and also whether the recent case before the Adjudication Panel could also be considered.

In response the Head of Legal Corporate Compliance explained that the Whistleblowing Policy generally related to staff rather than elected Members, and the Policy was considered by Council.

In relation to the case before the Adjudication Panel the Officer confirmed that Clerks of the Town & Community Councils had been contacted and regular updates were provided, and their legal support was provided by One Voice Wales. She pointed out that the Council did not offer the Local Resolution Policy to Town & Community Councils as they had their own processes in place via One Voice Wales. However, they were invited to the Council's Code of Conduct training sessions.

The Member also asked whether an overview of Members' declarations of interest could be brought to the Committee.

The Officer raised no objection to the request as Members' declarations of interests were in the public domain. However, the Officer explained that

there were two elements, i.e. a declaration of interest when an elected Member takes office; and declarations of interest reported at meetings when a Member may have a particular interest in the matter being considered, and this was recorded in the minutes and a record of the declaration of interest was kept within Democratic Services.

The Member asked if an electronic version was available and the Officer confirmed that this was being considered.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

In response to comments made by a Member regarding the frequency of meetings etc. the Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance confirmed that this had been impacted by the Covid pandemic, however, it was anticipated that a schedule of meetings for the year would be developed following the Annual Meeting of the Council.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed.

Agenda Item 38

Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **21st July, 2022**

Report Subject: **Membership Report**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor S. Thomas – Leader/
Executive Member – Corporate Overview
& Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Democratic Services**

Report Written by: **Democratic Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
							21/07/22	

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present a list of Memberships for consideration and determination by Members of the Council.
2. **Scope**
 - 2.1 **ANEURIN BEVAN COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL**

To appoint one representative to the Community Health Council.
 - 2.2 **GWENT ARCHIVE JOINT COMMITTEE**

To appoint one additional representative to the above Joint Committee.
 - 2.3 **ADVISORY PANEL FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNORS**

To ratify the following appointments made at the panel meeting held on 30th June, 2022:

Willowtown Primary School – Mr Jordan Colcombe

Ebbw Fawr Learning Centre – Mr Jon Mower

St Illtyds Primary School – Sarah Long

Deighton Primary School – Councillor Ellen Jones

The River Centre – Jacqueline Gwynne

2.3.1 **Membership - Advisory Panel for the Appointment of Local Authority Governors**

Pursuant to the revised terms of reference agreed at the Panel meeting on 30th June, the membership of the Advisory Panel for Local Authority Governors needs to be reviewed as follows:

The Panel for the Appointment of LA Governors will need to comprise of:

- 3 Majority Group Members (including the Executive Member for People & Education who will Chair the Panel); and
- 3 Members from the Minority Group

2.4 **Cost of Living Crisis Working Group**

To establish and appoint Members to the above-named Working Group.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 To consider the above.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 12, 13 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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