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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, 23 Mawrth 2023 Dydd Iau, 23 Mawrth 2023

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, 30ain Mawrth, 2023 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 rybudd os dymunwch wneud hynny. Darperir gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd os gwneir cais am hynny

2. YMDDIHEURIADAU

Derbyn ymddiheuriadau.

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.

3. **DATGANIADAU BUDDIANT A GODDEFEBAU**
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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

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – 26TH JANUARY, 2023</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>DEMOCRATIC OFFICER</u>

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR C. SMITH (PRESIDING MEMBER, CHAIRING)

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

AND: Interim Chief Executive
 Corporate Director of Education
 Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services
 Interim Corporate Director of Social Services
 Chief Officer Resources
 Chief Officer Commercial & Customer
 Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
 Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships
 Development Plans Team Manager
 Policy Officer (Engagement & Equality)
 Communications & Marketing Manager

WITH: Chloe Lines - Outgoing Youth Mayor
 Chloe Simmonds, Deputy Youth Mayor

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1.	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
2.	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from:</p> <p>Councillors M. Cross, D. Davies, J. Holt, J. Wilkins and Mara Moruz, Youth Mayor.</p>	
3.	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	

4. **OUTGOING YOUTH MAYOR – CHLOE LINES**

The Presiding Member welcomed Chloe Lines, the outgoing Youth Mayor to the meeting.

Chloe, thereupon, provided an overview of her democracy journey to date. Chloe's main priority during her time in office was raising awareness of bullying and her campaign film was shown to Council. It was noted that the film was available to view on the Council's website and had been shared with all schools.

Members commended Chloe on her truly inspirational journey and on producing such an amazing and powerful film and expressed their best wishes to her for the future.

The incoming Youth Mayor, Mara Moruz and Deputy Youth Mayor, Chloe Simmonds were also welcomed and congratulated on their successful election and best wishes were expressed to both for their forthcoming year in office.

5. **PRESIDING MEMBER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Congratulations

Congratulations were expressed to:

- Riley Powell aged 14, a Year 10 pupil of Tredegar Comprehensive School who would be playing against world number 8 seed, Kyren Wilson in the Shoot Out Snooker match which was being televised that day.

RESOLVED that a letter of congratulations be sent to Riley.

Condolences

- Condolences were expressed to Steve Smith, Service Manager Development & Estates on the sad passing of his father.

	<p>➤ International Holocaust Memorial Day would be held on 27th January, 2023 which would remember those who had lost and gave their lives during the Holocaust.</p> <p>Members and officers paid their respects with a minute's silence.</p>	
<p>6. – <u>DECISION BOOK OCTOBER 2022 – JANUARY 2023</u> 18.</p>	<p>The Decision Book for the period October 2022 – January 2023 was submitted for consideration.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the decisions be approved and confirmed as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>19.</p>	<p><u>COUNCIL – ACTION SHEET – 24TH NOVEMBER, 2022</u></p> <p>The Action Sheet arising from the meeting held on 24th November, 2022 was submitted.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the information contained therein be noted.</p>	
<p>20.</p>	<p><u>MEMBERS QUESTIONS</u></p> <p>There were no questions submitted by Members.</p>	

<p>21.</p>	<p><u>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</u></p> <p>There were no questions submitted by members of the public.</p> <p>In reply to a question, the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance stated that the procedure for the submission of public questions was detailed in the Constitution, which was available on the Council’s website. However, for the purposes of openness and transparency, ways to highlight this information in a clearer website format would be investigated in conjunction with the Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships.</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p>	
<p>22.</p>	<p><u>REVISED LDP DELIVERY AGREEMENT TIMETABLE</u></p> <p>Members considered the report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Revised Delivery Agreement and timetable for the preparation of the Replacement LDP be approved.</p>	
<p>23.</p>	<p><u>STANDARDS COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance (Monitoring Officer)</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p>	

	<p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely the appointment of Miss Jennifer White to the Standards Committee be approved and in addition, Ms Sarah Manuel be approved as the reserve candidate to provide cover should a vacancy became available.</p>	
<p>24.</p>	<p><u>FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH</u></p> <p>The Leader of the Council commenced by stating that it had previously been mentioned and noted that the 27th January was International Holocaust Memorial Day which marked the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau one of the largest death camps.</p> <p>Unfortunately, racial hate crimes were on the increase and Home Office statistics had indicated that there had been a marked increase in these crimes by 19% between March 2021 and March 2022 and therefore, there was a need to take action to counteract this.</p> <p>Eva Clarke, a holocaust survivor had dedicated and devoted much of her life to spreading a message of hope in the darkness and outlining the harrowing story of the holocaust to young and old. Eva had visited Blaenau Gwent on numerous occasions, delivering this message to Members, the public and children. To recognise this great work and honouring Eva's commitment and dedication, the Leader proposed that Eva be awarded the Freedom of the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>In doing so, the Leader stated that this would send a message from the Council, that racism and racial discrimination had no place now in community and it would be fought wherever it raised its ugly head.</p> <p>To conclude, the Leader of the Council placed on record his appreciation to Dave Rees and Unison for the help they had provided in consistently bringing this subject to the fore and for their continued support at events.</p>	

	<p>Other Members commended and seconded the proposal to award Eva Clarke, Freedom of the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>It was, therefore, unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Freedom of the Borough be bestowed on Eva Clarke.</p>	
<p>25.</p>	<p><u>MEMBERSHIP REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to:</p> <p><u>ADVISORY PANEL FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNORS</u></p> <p>The following recommendations were made by the Panel on 19th January, 2023 to appoint in principle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blaen-y-Cwm Primary School – Helen Langley - Coed-y-Garn Primary School – Councillor Sonia Behr - Ebbw Fawr 3-16 Learning Community – Councillor George Humphreys - St. Illtyds Primary School – Keri Jones - Sofrydd Primary School – Keri Jones <p>It was, thereupon, unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the above appointments be endorsed.</p> <p><u>COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCILS</u></p> <p>It was noted that under the Health and Social Care (Quality & Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020 (“the 2020 Act”) Community Health Councils would be replaced by the Citizen Voice Body (CVB) which was due to launch on 1st April, 2023. Therefore, Members’ appointments would cease when the CHCs were abolished, which was anticipated to be on the 1st of April 2023 and Members would be offered the opportunity to become a volunteer for the</p>	

CVB (although they would not form part of the composition of the CVB Board).

WLGA RURAL FORUM

- appointing a Member on the above Forum.

RESOLVED that Councillor Chris Smith be appointed to represent the Council on the WLGA's Rural Forum.

WELLBEING CHAMPION

- appointing a Wellbeing Champion.

RESOLVED that Councillor Jacqueline Thomas be appointed as the Council's Wellbeing Champion.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – 23RD FEBRUARY, 2023</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>DEMOCRATIC OFFICER</u>

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR C. SMITH (PRESIDING MEMBER, CHAIRING)

- Councillors
- P. Baldwin
 - S. Behr
 - D. Bevan
 - K. Chaplin
 - M. Cross
 - H. Cunningham
 - D. Davies
 - G. A. Davies
 - M. Day
 - J. Gardner
 - J. Hill
 - W. Hodgins
 - J. Holt
 - G. Humphreys
 - E. Jones
 - R. Leadbeater
 - 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
 - D. Wilkshire
 - L. Winnett

D. Woods

AND:

- Interim Chief Executive
- Corporate Director of Education
- Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services
- 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 Organisational Development
- Service Manager - Accountancy
- Service Manager – Performance & Democratic
- Service Manager – Policy & Partnerships
- Service Manager – Customer Experience & Transformation
- Communications & Marketing Manager
- Press & Publicity Officer
- Contact Centre Supervisor
- Scrutiny & Democratic Officer

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1.	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
2.	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from:</p> <p>Councillors C. Bainton and S. Edmunds.</p>	

PRESIDING MEMBER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations

Congratulations were expressed to:

- Megan Cottrell from Llanhilleth who had been selected as the co-captain for Wales in the under 17 Netball Team which would be playing in the Europe Netball Championships.

A letter of congratulations had been sent to Megan.

Condolences

Condolences were expressed to the families of:

- Former Police & Crime Commissioner, Ian Johnston on his sad death.
- Clare Drakeford, wife of the First Minister for Wales, Mark Drakeford on her sad passing.
- The thousands of earthquake victims who had lost their lives in Turkey and Syria.

Members and officers paid their respects with a minute's silence.

3.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

4.

REVENUE BUDGET 2023/2024

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

The Leader of the Council proposed the following:

Appendix 2 - Cost Pressures

- Corporate Services: Engagement & Participation Equalities & Welsh Language – Additional Staffing Requirement in the sum of £81,110 – this cost pressure **be removed**, consideration be given to identifying funding from elsewhere within the budget.

Bridging the Gap Business Cases

The following proposals **be agreed**:

- RES01 – Growth Strategy – Housing - £150,000.
- RES02 - Review of Fees & Charges for income generating services across the Council - £100,000.
- RES03 - Reduction in the Transformation Fund - £270,995.
- RES04 - Removal of Commercial and Contract Management Budget - £271,000.
- RES05 - Removal of Additional Pension Costs Budget - Aneurin Leisure Trust - £152,000.

- CS01 - Third Party Spend (Establish a Professional Buying Team) - £396,550.
- CS04 – Review of Telephony - £48,000.
- CS05 - Review of Electronic Document Management & Retention System (EDRM) - £104,000.
- CS09 – Members Remuneration – £50,000.
- CS10 - General Offices Income Generation - £60,000.
- CS11 – Members Grants (Special Levy) £8,910.

- SS - Prevention & Early Intervention - Establishment of MYST Team - Invest to Save Scheme - £416,000.
- SS01 - Reduction in Legal Fees Budget (Children’s Social Services) - £175,000.
- SS02 - Utilisation of the Children & Communities Grant - £21,025.

- SS06 - Review of Provider Manager Capacity (Supported Living and Augusta / Community Options) - £25,000.
- SS07a - Reduction in Community Options (day services bases) - £143,170.
- SS07b - Reduction in Transport at Community Options - £58,200.

- ENV12 – Closure of Mechanical Link - £41,000.
- ENV18 – Regeneration Income – £30,000.
- ENV23 - Removal of Dog Waste Bag Provision - £14,596.
- ENV24 - Move to Fortnightly Collection for Green Waste - £75,000.
- ENV25 – Industrial Units - £100,000.

- ED06 – Review of SLA Contracts - £20,000.

- CC02 – Review of Operational Buildings - £250,000.

- Commercial Activity & Investment - £50,000.

The above proposals totalled **£3.03m**.

The following proposals **be not agreed**:

- ED07 – Home to School Transport Service Review.
- ED08 – Aneurin Leisure Trust Management Fee – Review of Service Provision.

- ENV - Move to 4 Weekly Refuse Collection.
- ENV02 - Closure of all Play Areas.
- ENV03 - Reduction in Street Cleansing Provision.
- ENV04 - Reduction in Street Lighting Provision.
- ENV05 - Public Toilet Provision - Withdraw Funding.
- ENV06 - Waste - Closure / Part Closure of HWRC's.
- ENV07 - Waste - Reduction in Recycling Rounds.
- ENV08 - Removal of School Crossing Patrollers.
- ENV09 - Removal of Match Funding re: Subsidised Bus Service.

- ENV11 - Discontinuation of Pest Control Treatment Service.
- ENV14 - Cease Support for Armistice Parades.
- ENV15 - Reduction in Enforcement Wardens.

- SS04 - Income Generation - Cwrt Mytton.
- SS09 - Capping of Community Domiciliary Care High-Cost Packages.
- SS10 - Closure of Supported Living Bungalow – Reducing from 4 to 3.
- SS11 – Income Generation - Hydrotherapy Pool (Bert Denning).
- SS13 - Outsource / Closure of Cwrt Mytton.
- SS14 - Review of In-House Domiciliary Care Service and Potential Externalising of Extra Care.

The Leader of the Council further proposed:

- A 4.2% increase in the Individual Schools Budget (ISB).
- A Council Tax increase of 3.45%.

It was noted that the total use of reserves would amount to **£4.3m**. The Leader proposed that the Chief Officer Resources consider which specific reserves to utilise in finalising the budget and said officer to provide an update at the Special Meeting of the Council on 6th March, 2023 in terms of the use and management of reserves going forward.

In reply to a request, the Chief Officer Resources undertook to pursue options for consideration in respect of the current credits within the council tax accounts due to overpayments. However, the officer stressed that this would be on the understanding that if individuals submitted valid claims, the Council would be duty bound to repay the monies.

The Leader of the Independent Group, thereupon, confirmed that the Group supported the majority of the proposals outlined above by the Leader of the Council with

the **exception of the following and proposed that the following amendments:**

- CS11 – Members Grants (Special Levy) - £8,910 – **this proposal was not supported.**
- ED01 – Reduction in ISB Schools Funding - £252,000 – **this proposal was not supported.**
- ENV22 – Trade Waste - £64,000 – **this proposal was supported.**

The total amount of proposals **agreed amounted to £3.002m** whilst the total proposals **not agreed amounted to £1.18m.**

The Leader of the Independent Group further proposed:-

- A Council Tax increase of 2.5%.

This would increase the draw on reserves by £553,764 with the total draw on reserves totalling **£4.72m.**

A recorded vote was, thereupon, requested.

In Favour of the amended proposals – Councillors D. Davies, G. A. Davies, M. Day, J. Hill, W. Hodgins, J. Holt, G. Humphreys, J. P. Morgan, L. Parsons, G. Thomas, J. Wilkins.

Against the amended proposals – Councillors P. Baldwin, S. Behr, D. Bevan, K. Chaplin, M. Cross, H. Cunningham, J. Gardner, R. Leadbeater, E. Jones, J. Morgan, J.P., J. C. Morgan, D. Rowberry, C. Smith, T. Smith, J. Thomas, S. Thomas, H. Trollope, D. Wilkshire, L. Winnett, D. Woods.

The vote on the amendment was not carried.

As none of the Members that had voted against the amendment were opposing the preferred option (1) a further vote was not required.

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

- The 2023/24 revenue budget as shown in table in paragraph 5.1.15 of the report be agreed.
- The outcomes within the overall provisional Revenue Support Grant (RSG) Settlement and the potential for further change in the Final RSG Settlement (paragraphs 2.6 – 2.17 of the report) be noted.
- The outcomes within the BGCBC provisional RSG Settlement and its impact upon the Medium Term Financial Strategy (paragraphs 2.18 – 2.26 of the report) be noted.
- The updated cost pressures and growth items identified in Appendix 2 (paragraphs 5.1.10 – 5.1.16 of the report) for inclusion in the Council's budget be agreed **with the exception of** Engagement & Participation Equalities & Welsh Language – Additional Staffing Requirement in the sum of £81,110.
- A 4.2% increase in the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) be agreed.
- The Bridging the Gap proposals delivering financial efficiencies and budget cuts towards the budget gap (paragraphs 5.1.25 to 5.1.32 of the report) be approved **with the exception of:**
 - ED07 – Home to School Transport Service Review.
 - ED08 – Aneurin Leisure Trust Management Fee – Review of Service Provision.
- ENV - Move to 4 Weekly Refuse Collection.
- ENV02 - Closure of all Play Areas.
- ENV03 - Reduction in Street Cleansing Provision.
- ENV04 - Reduction in Street Lighting Provision.
- ENV05 - Public Toilet Provision - Withdraw Funding.
- ENV06 - Waste - Closure / Part Closure of HWRC's.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ENV07 - Waste - Reduction in Recycling Rounds. ➤ ENV08 - Removal of School Crossing Patrollers. ➤ ENV09 - Removal of Match Funding re: Subsidised Bus Service. ➤ ENV11 - Discontinuation of Pest Control Treatment Service. ➤ ENV14 - Cease Support for Armistice Parades. ➤ ENV15 – Reduction in Enforcement Wardens. ➤ SS04 - Income Generation - Cwrt Mytton. ➤ SS09 - Capping of Community Domiciliary Care High-Cost Packages. ➤ SS10 - Closure of Supported Living Bungalow – Reducing from 4 to 3. ➤ SS11 – Income Generation - Hydrotherapy Pool (Bert Denning). ➤ SS13 - Outsource / Closure of Cwrt Mytton. ➤ SS14 - Review of In-House Domiciliary Care Service and Potential Externalising of Extra Care. ➤ The use of reserves in the sum of £4.3m to balance the budget for 2023/2024 be approved. ➤ A Council tax increase of 3.45% for 2023/24 be agreed. 	
<p>5.</p>	<p><u>MEMBERSHIPS REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to:</p> <p><u>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To appoint a Chair of the Democratic Services Committee. <p>RESOLVED that Councillor Joanna Wilkins be appointed Chair of the Democratic Services Committee.</p>	

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – 6TH MARCH, 2023</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>DEMOCRATIC OFFICER</u>

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR C. SMITH (PRESIDING MEMBER, CHAIRING)

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

AND: Interim Chief Executive
 Corporate Director of Education
 Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services
 Interim Corporate Director of Social Services
 Chief Officer Resources
 Chief Officer Commercial & Customer
 Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
 Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships
 Service Manager – Accountancy
 Service Manager – Performance & Democratic
 Communications & Marketing Manager

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
1.	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>
2.	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from:</p> <p>Councillors K. Chaplin, J. Morgan, J.P., G. Thomas, D. Wilkshire and L. Winnett.</p>
3.	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declarations of interest were reported:</p> <p>Item No. 4: Revenue Budget 2023/2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Councillors J. Gardner, W. Hodgins, E. Jones, D. Rowberry, J. Thomas and H. Trollope.

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

4. REVENUE BUDGET 2023/2024

Councillors J. Gardner, W. Hodgins, E. Jones, D. Rowberry, J. Thomas and H. Trollope 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 Leader of the Council referred to paragraph 2.2 of the report and advised that the final settlement now included a transfer of funding into the local government settlement, which related to Fire & Rescue Authority Pensions. The value of this grant amounted to £5.8m nationally across Wales and had increased Blaenau Gwent's final settlement to £139,730,490. Members were advised that the Council had previously agreed to passport the increase of £130,000 to the Fire & Rescue Authority, therefore, the Council's budget requirement had now increased from £178,034,276 to £178,164,692.

Consequently, changes would be required to some of the figures contained in the report, however, it was emphasised that this amendment would not change the Council's position in respect of the use of reserves or the increase in the council tax level.

Therefore, to reflect the increase in the final settlement the following amounts contained within the report would be amended as follows:

Paragraph 3.1.2 – this figure would now be amended to £178,164,692.

Paragraph 5.1.7 (a) – this figure would now read £178,164,692.

Paragraph 5.1.7 (c) – this figure would now read £139,730,490.

Paragraph 5.1.13 – the figure in the first sentence would be amended to read £178,164,692.

Paragraph 5.1.14 – the Revenue Support Grant figure would now be amended to read £117,692,418, increasing the total net revenue budget to £182,432,694.

It was, thereupon unanimously,

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

- Council Tax Resolution detailed below, be approved.
- Statutory budget requirement of £178,164,692 detailed below, be approved.
- Use of the specific reserves identified totalling £4.26m (paragraph 5.1.16 of the report) be approved.

5.1.2 The Council agreed at its meeting on 23rd February 2023, a Council Tax increase of 3.45% for the 2023/2024 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
1,219.57	1,422.84	1,626.10	1,829.36	2,235.88	2,642.41	3,048.93	3,658.72	4,268.51

5.1.3 At its meeting in December 2022 the Council agreed the Council Tax base for tax setting purposes be 20,806.70 for 2023/24, this being the total number of chargeable dwellings in each area adjusted for a number of items e.g., discounts payable, multiplied by the assumed collection rate of 95%.

5.1.4 In addition, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, 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:

4,617.75	Abertillery & Llanhilleth
1,692.74	Brynmawr
2,698.63	Nantyglo & Blaina
4,737.20	Tredegar

5.1.5 The above representing the number of chargeable dwellings to which the Town & Community Council's precept would apply.

5.1.7 That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2023/2024 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and sections 47 and 49 of the Local Government Act 1988 (as amended):

a	£178,164,692	Being the aggregate of the amounts the Council estimates for the items set out in section 32(2) (a) to (d) of the Act less the aggregate of the amounts the Council estimates for the items set out in section 32 (3) (a) and (c) of the Act calculates by the Council, in accordance with section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year
b	£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.
c	£139,730,490	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.
d	£1,857.35	Being the amount at (a) above plus the amount at (b) above and less the amount at (c) above, all divided by the amount at 5.1.3 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.
e	£582,331	Being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (Town and Community Precepts)
f	£1,829.36	Being the amount at (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (e) above by the amount at 5.1.3 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 relates.

5.1.8 The amounts given by adding to the amount at (f) 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 5.1.3 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:

g	1,891.94	Abertillery & Llanhilleth
	1,854.76	Brynmawr
	1,863.14	Nantyglo & Blaina
	1,862.96	Tredegar

5.1.9 The amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (f) and (g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in section 5(1) of the Act, is 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:

The County Borough Tax including Community Precepts									
Valuation Bands									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Abertillery & Llanhilleth	1,261.29	1,471.51	1,681.73	1,891.94	2,312.37	2,732.80	3,153.23	3,783.88	4,414.53
Brynmawr	1,236.50	1,442.60	1,648.68	1,854.76	2,266.92	2,679.10	3,091.26	3,709.52	4,327.78
Nantyglo & Blaina	1,242.09	1,449.11	1,656.13	1,863.14	2,277.17	2,691.20	3,105.23	3,726.28	4,347.33
Tredegar	1,241.97	1,448.97	1,655.97	1,862.96	2,276.95	2,690.94	3,104.93	3,725.92	4,346.91
Ebbw Vale	1,219.57	1,422.84	1,626.10	1,829.36	2,235.88	2,642.41	3,048.93	3,658.72	4,268.51

5.1.10 That it be noted that for the year 2023/2024 the Gwent Office of Police and Crime Commissioner had stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council (totalling £6,752,190), 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
216.35	252.40	288.46	324.52	396.64	468.75	540.87	649.04	757.21

5.1.11 That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (g) and 5.1.9 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 2023/24 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	1,477.64	1,723.91	1,970.19	2,216.46	2,709.01	3,201.55	3,694.10	4,432.92	5,171.74
Brynmawr	1,452.85	1,695.00	1,937.14	2,179.28	2,663.56	3,147.85	3,632.13	4,358.56	5,084.99
Nantyglo & Blaina	1,458.44	1,701.51	1,944.59	2,187.66	2,673.81	3,159.95	3,646.10	4,375.32	5,104.54
Tredeggar	1,458.32	1,701.37	1,944.43	2,187.48	2,673.59	3,159.69	3,645.80	4,374.96	5,104.12
Ebbw Vale	1,435.92	1,675.24	1,914.56	2,153.88	2,632.52	3,111.16	3,589.80	4,307.76	5,025.72

5. CORPORATE FEES & CHARGES 2023/2024

Members considered the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

It was noted that whilst an 8% inflationary increase to some fees and charges were being proposed as a consequence of the increased costs that the Council was experiencing, the Leader of the Council proposed that the following amendments to the fees and charges listed below be endorsed:

Social Services:

- Non-Residential Services – Home Care – **4% increase.**
- Non-Residential Services – Day Care – **4% increase.**
- Non-Residential Services – Direct Payments – **4% increase.**
- Non-Residential Services - Part III Accommodation Charge (own provision) – **4% increase.**
- Non-Residential Services – August House (own provision) – **2% increase.**
- Bert Denning Day Centre – Standard Baseline Fee – **4% increase.**
- Bert Denning Hydrotherapy Pool - Fee for OLA and private customers weekdays – **4% increase.**
- Bert Denning Hydrotherapy Pool – Fee for Weekend Use – **4% increase.**
- Flying Start Childcare - Non-Flying Start children childcare fees – **4% increase.**

Communications – C2BG Community Alarm & Telecare Service Charges:

- Monitoring fees- analogue lifeline with pendant- monthly – **5% increase.**
- Monitoring fees- Digital lifeline with sim card and pendant- monthly – **5% increase.**
- Monitoring fees- analogue lifeline with pendant with 5 additional sensors- monthly – **5% increase.**
- Monitoring fees- digital lifeline with pendant with 5 additional sensors- monthly – **5% increase.**
- Safety Package- (analogue) recommended by Social Worker- monthly – **5% increase.**
- Safety Package- (digital) recommended by Social Worker- monthly – **5% increase.**
- Initial Installation fees – **5% increase.**
- Further installation of additional sensors – **5% increase.**
- Installation of non-monitored equipment – **5% increase.**
- Replacement pendant – **5% increase.**

Community Meals:

- Meals on Wheels – Meal and dessert – **2% increase.**

Community Services – Waste:

- Bulky Waste Collection – **4% increase.**

Community Services – Cemeteries:

- Interment - New grave - Double Depth – **2% increase.**
- Interment - Re-open of grave – **2% increase.**
- Interment - Exclusive right of burial (EROB) – **2% increase.**
- Cremated remains - New Grave (minimum depth) Ashes – **2% increase.**
- Cremated remains - Re-open of grave Ashes – **2% increase.**
- Cremated remains - Scattering of Ashes – **2% increase.**
- Cremated remains - Exclusive right of burial (EROB) – **2% increase.**
- Garden of rest plots - Cremated remains (new grave) Ashes – **2% increase.**
- Garden of rest plots - Cremated remains (re-open) Ashes – **2% increase.**

- Garden of rest plots - Exclusive right of burial (EROB) – **2% increase.**
- Memorials - Erect memorial – **2% increase.**
- Memorials - Additional inscription, replacement memorial – **2% increase.**
- Memorials - Memorial still born baby (exclusive right of burial (EROB) – **2% increase.**
- Memorials - Renovation, clean and re-anchor memorial – **2% increase.**
- Memorials - Small plaque – **2% increase.**
- Memorials - Additional application for surround/memorial – **2% increase.**

Grounds – Grounds & Playing Fields - Matches:

- Grounds & playing fields training – **4% increase.**
- Fairs – **4% increase.**
- Carnivals/ Fetes – **4% increase.**
- Unauthorised use – **4% increase.**

Highways:

- Kerb drop initial inspection – **4% increase.**
- Temporary Road Closures for Events (non-charitable) – **4% increase.**

Technical Services – Education - School Meals:

- Adults (Staff & Student) Per Meal. Fee effective from September – **2% increase.**
- Children (Secondary & Primary) Secondary Age Child (Years 7 to 11). Fee effective from September. Fee per meal. And Primary Age Child (Nursery to Year 6). Fee effective from September. Fee per meal. – **2% increase.**

Economic Development:

- Commercial Bookings in Town Centres - Ebbw Vale, Tredegar, Blaina, Abertillery & Brynmawr Town Centres – **2% increase.**

Licensing:

- Licensing - Skin Piercing - Practitioner Registration – **4% increase.**

Public Health:

- Public Health - Food Safety Export Certificate – **4% increase.**

To reflect the above changes to the report, the Leader further proposed that an amended Option (3) be endorsed, namely:

Option 3

1. Members of the Council consider and approve the amended register of Fees & Charges for 2023/2024, and the core price increases relating to Aneurin Leisure Trust attached at Appendix 2.

2. Members approve delegated power and responsibility to the Interim Director of Social Services for setting the fees and charges for 2023/2024 relating to the provision of external social care.

This proposal was seconded.

RESOLVED accordingly.

It was, thereupon, unanimously,

FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 3 be endorsed, namely:

- The amended register of Fees & Charges for 2023/2024 and the core price increases relating to Aneurin Leisure Trust attached at Appendix 2 be approved.
- Delegated power and responsibility be approved for the Interim Corporate Director of Social Services for the setting of fees and charges for 2023/2024 relating to the provision of external social care.

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT PLANNING COMMITTEE – 9TH FEBRUARY, 2023

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. Humphreys
 D. Wilkshire

WITH: Service Manager Development & Estates
 Team Manager Development Management
 Team Leader Development Management (x 2)
 Team Leader Built Environment
 Planning Officer (x 3)
 Solicitor
 Communications, Marketing and
 Customer Access Manager

AND: **Public Speakers**
 Paul Parsons (Agent) Application No. C/2022/0347
 Diane Brooks (Objector) Application No. C/2022/0250
 Matthew Gray (Agent) Application No. C/2022/0250

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	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Gardner and J. Thomas.</p>
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest and dispensations reported.</p>
No. 4	<p><u>AREAS FOR MEMBER BRIEFINGS AND TRAINING</u></p> <p>Members training on Section 106 Agreements to be arranged in the near future.</p>
No. 5	<p><u>PLANNING APPLICATIONS REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager Development Management.</p> <p><u>Application No. C/2022/0281</u> <u>44 Commercial Street, Tredegar, NP22 3DJ</u> <u>Change of use of ground floor to Takeaway (A3) and new windows to front elevation</u></p> <p>Upon a vote being taken, it was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED that planning permission be <u>GRANTED</u>, subject to the conditions detailed in the report.</p> <p><u>Application No. C/2022/0347</u> <u>16 Market Street, Ebbw Vale</u> <u>Replacement shop front and roller shutter, 4 storey rear extension, creation of 5 flats and provision of sun tanning salon at lower ground floor in conjunction with the existing barber shop at ground floor (street level)</u></p> <p>Upon a vote being taken, it was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED that planning permission be <u>GRANTED</u>, subject to the conditions detailed in the report.</p> <p><u>Application No. C/2022/0250</u> <u>Land adjacent to KFC, Waun-Y-Pound Road, Ebbw Vale, NP23 6LE</u></p>

	<p><u>Erection of a drive thru bakery (Class A1/A3 use) and associated development</u></p> <p>Following a lengthy discussion and upon a vote being taken, it was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED that planning permission be <u>GRANTED</u>, subject to the conditions detailed in the report.</p> <p><u>Application No. C/2022/0332</u> <u>Brookfield Hawthorn Road Beaufort Ebbw Vale NP23 5HS</u> <u>Retention of change of use of land to incorporate it as residential curtilage including boundary treatments</u></p> <p>Upon a vote being taken, it was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED that planning permission be <u>GRANTED</u>, subject to the conditions detailed in the report.</p>
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>LOCAL IMPACT REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Local Impact Report.</p> <p>Following a lengthy discussion and upon a vote being taken, it was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED that delegated powers be <u>GRANTED</u> to Planning Officers to update and emphasise certain parts of the report in light of Members concerns and comments. The LIR can then be sent to PEDW highlighting the anticipated impacts of the proposed development on the area.</p>
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>APPEALS, CONSULTATIONS AND DNS UPDATE: FEBRUARY 2023</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. 8</p>	<p><u>LIST OF APPLICATIONS DECIDED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS BETWEEN 19TH DECEMBER 2022 AND 27TH JANUARY 2023</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>

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

SUBJECT **PLANNING COMMITTEE – 9TH MARCH, 2023**

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

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR LISA WINNETT (Chair)

Councillors D. Bevan (Vice-Chair)
 P. Baldwin
 J. Hill
 J. Gardener
 W. Hodgins
 G. Humphreys
 D. Wilkshire

WITH: Team Manager Development Management
 Team Manager - Built Environment
 Solicitor
 Planning Officer x 3
 Communications, Marketing and Customer Access Manager
 Children Services Manager

AND: **Public Speaker**
 Mr. G. Evans, Objector (Madison House & Mon Calpe,
 Picton Road, Dukestown, Tredegar NP22 4DX)

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>

<p>No. 2</p>	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence was received from Councillors M. Day and J. Thomas.</p>
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declarations of interest and dispensations were raised:-</p> <p><u>No. 4, Planning Report</u> <u>C/2023/0001, Madison House & Mon Calpe, Picton Road, Dukestown, Tredegar, NP22 4DX</u></p> <p>Councillor D. Bevan Councillor W. Hodgins Councillor D. Wilkshire</p>
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>PLANNING APPLICATIONS REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager Development Management.</p> <p><u>C/2023/0001</u> <u>Madison House & Mon Calpe, Picton Road, Dukestown, Tredegar, NP22 4DX</u> <u>Change of use of existing residential properties (C3) into children's care homes (C2)</u></p> <p>Councillors D. Bevan, W. Hodgins and D. Wilkshire abstained from voting due to their declaration of interest raised.</p> <p>RESOLVED that planning permission be <u>GRANTED.</u></p>
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>APPEALS, CONSULTATIONS AND DNS UPDATE: MARCH 2023</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 28TH JANUARY, 2023 TO 24TH FEBRUARY, 2023</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>AREAS FOR MEMBER BRIEFINGS AND TRAINING</u></p> <p>It was reported that the following Members Briefings would be arranged in the next few weeks:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 106; and • Role of a Planning Committee Member
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>ENFORCEMENT CLOSED CASES BETWEEN 15TH DECEMBER, 2022 AND 22ND FEBRUARY 2023</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.</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 PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE – 13TH MARCH, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR LISA WINNETT (CHAIR)

Councillors D. Bevan (Vice-Chair)
 M. Cross
 G.A. Davies
 G. Humphreys
 D. Rowberry
 G. Thomas
 D. Woods

**WITH: Team Manager – Trading Standards and Licensing
 Senior Licensing Officer
 Solicitor
 Data Protection & Governance Officer**

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. Behr and L. Parsons.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p>	

	<p>There were no declarations of interest and dispensations reported.</p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>REVIEW OF POLICY RELATING TO HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENCES FOLLOWING WELSH GOVERNMENT GUIDE AND DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT STATUTORY TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE STANDARDS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager – Trading Standards and Licensing.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and that Members approved the adoption of the revised ‘Policy Relating to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licences as shown in Appendix 1, incorporating the WG and DfT revisions and the proposed amendment to allow Wheelchair Access Vehicles to be licenced when first registered up to 10 years old. (Option 1).</p>	

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: CABINET – 18th JANUARY, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

**PRESENT: Leader/
Cabinet Member - Corporate Overview & Performance
Councillor S. Thomas**

**Deputy Leader/
Cabinet Member – Place & Environment
Councillor H. Cunningham**

**Cabinet Member – Place & Regeneration
Councillor J.C. Morgan**

**Cabinet Member – People & Social Services
Councillor H. Trollope**

WITH: Interim Corporate Director Social Services
Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services
Chief Officer Resources
Chief Officer Customer & Commercial
Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships
Head of School Improvement & Inclusion
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
Service Manager Performance & Democratic
Press & Publicity 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>Apologies for absence were received for Councillor S. Edmunds, Cabinet Member for People & Education; the Interim Chief Executive; the Corporate Director of Education; and the Head of Organisational Development.</p>
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>
	<p><u>DECISION SHEET</u></p>
No. 4	<p><u>CABINET</u></p> <p>To receive the decisions of Cabinet held on the 7th December, 2022.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>
	<p><u>GENERAL MATTERS</u></p>
No. 5	<p><u>CONFERENCES, COURSES, EVENTS AND INVITATIONS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the following:</p> <p><u>His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Gwent's Awards Ceremony 2023</u> <u>9th February, 2023</u></p> <p>RESOLVED that Councillor D. Bevan, Armed Forces Champion be approved to attend.</p>

	<u>CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO</u>
No. 6	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 1st MARCH, 2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Democratic & Scrutiny Officer.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 1st March, 2023 be approved as presented. (Option 1)</p>
No. 7	<p><u>REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - 2022/2023, FORECAST OUTTURN TO 31ST MARCH 2023 (AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2022)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Option 1 be approved, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members consider and provide appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report; and • Note the forecast application of reserves.
No. 8	<p><u>CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, FORECAST FOR 2022/2023 FINANCIAL YEAR (AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2022)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Option 1 be approved, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report. • Continue to support appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council. • To note the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding.

<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>REVIEW OF THE FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Service Manager Performance & Democratic.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and, Option 1 be approved, with the proposal that future Finance and Performance reports be presented on a quarterly basis for a trial period.</p>
<p>No. 10</p>	<p><u>WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2021-2026</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Head of Organisational Development.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Cabinet note the progress against the 2021/22 delivery plan and endorse the 2022/23 delivery plan. (Option 1)</p>
	<p><u>PLACE AND ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO</u></p>
<p>No. 11</p>	<p><u>WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING STRATEGY REVIEW</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Service Manager Neighbourhood Services.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Place and Environment proposed an alternative Option 3, namely:</p> <p>That Members of the Cabinet note progress made to date, and approve the updated Waste Management and Recycling Strategy, incorporating the suggestions made by the Place Scrutiny Committee, namely</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review the receptacles provided to residents to ensure they are fit for purpose; and where appropriate and practical, for litter pickers to separate the waste they collect for recycling; and • That a programme of targeted engagement activity be undertaken to reach the 70% recycling target.

	<p>The alternative Option 3 was approved, and it was RESOLVED accordingly.</p>
	<p><u>PEOPLE AND SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO</u></p>
No. 12	<p><u>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES 2022/2023 (QUARTERS 1 AND 2)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Corporate Director of Social Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted as provided. (Option 2)</p>
	<p><u>PEOPLE AND EDUCATION PORTFOLIO</u></p>
No. 13	<p><u>CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION SERVICES - QUARTER 1 & 2 2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted as provided. (Option 2)</p>
No. 14	<p><u>IMPROVING SCHOOLS PROGRAMME</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the joint report of the Head of School Improvement and Inclusion, and the Strategic Education Improvement Manager.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted as provided. (Option 2)</p>

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: SPECIAL CABINET – 22ND FEBRUARY, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

**PRESENT: Leader/
Cabinet Member - Corporate Overview & Performance
Councillor S. Thomas**

**Deputy Leader/
Cabinet Member – Place & Environment
Councillor H. Cunningham**

**Cabinet Member – Place & Regeneration
Councillor J.C. Morgan**

**Cabinet Member – People & Social Services
Councillor H. Trollope**

WITH: Interim Chief Executive
Interim Corporate Director Social Services
Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services
Corporate Director Education
Chief Officer Resources
Head of Partnerships and Governance
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
Communications, Marketing & Customer Access Manager
Head of Organisational Development
Service Manager – Policy & Partnerships
Corporate Procurement Manager
Service Manager – Customer Experience & Benefits

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 S. Edmunds Chief Officer Customer and Commercial
No. 3	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u> No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.
	<u>CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO</u>
No. 4	<u>REVENUE BUDGET 2023/2024</u> Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources. A Leader proposed that sections 3.1.1 to 3.1.3 of Option 1 be accepted and sections 3.1.4 to 3.1.8 of Option 1 be deferred pending further consideration at the Special Meeting of the Council scheduled to be held on Thursday, 23 rd February, 2023. This proposal was seconded. RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing that the report be accepted and <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members recommended to Council the 2023/24 revenue budget as detailed in the table in paragraph 5.1.15 of the report;• provided comment on the outcomes within the overall provisional RSG Settlement and noted the potential for further change in the Final RSG Settlement (paragraphs 2.6 – 2.17);

- provided comment on the outcomes within the BGCBC provisional RSG Settlement and its impact upon the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (paragraphs 2.18 – 2.26);
- decisions related to the updated cost pressures and growth items (£3.22m in total) identified in Appendix 2 (paragraphs 5.1.10 – 5.1.16) be deferred for consideration at the Special Meeting of Council on 23rd February, 2023;
- decisions related to an uplift of £1.5m which equates to 3% increase to the ISB (paragraphs 5.1.17 to 5.1.24) be deferred for consideration at the Special Meeting of Council on 23rd February, 2023;
- decisions related to the Bridging the Gap proposals delivering £4.18m of financial efficiencies and budget cuts to towards the budget gap (paragraphs 5.1.25 to 5.1.32) be deferred for consideration at the Special Meeting of Council on 23rd February, 2023;
- decisions related to the use of reserves of £2.5m to balance the budget for 2023/2024 (paragraphs 5.1.33 to 5.1.35) be deferred for consideration at the Special Meeting of Council on 23rd February, 2023; and
- decisions related to a Council Tax increase of 4% for 2023/24 (paragraph 5.1.7) as per the MTFS assumptions be deferred for consideration at the Special Meeting of Council on 23rd February, 2023.

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

SUBJECT: **CABINET – 1ST MARCH, 2023**

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

PRESENT: **Leader/**
Cabinet Member - Corporate Overview & Performance
Councillor S. Thomas

Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member – Place & Environment
Councillor H. Cunningham

Cabinet Member – Place & Regeneration
Councillor J.C. Morgan

Cabinet Member – People & Social Services
Councillor H. Trollope

WITH: Interim Chief Executive
Chief Officer Resources
Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
Corporate Director Education
Chief Officer Customer and Commercial
Children’s Services Manager
Head of Partnerships and Governance
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance

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.

<p>No. 2</p>	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>The following apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <p>Councillor S. Edmunds; and Interim Corporate Director Social Services</p>
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>
	<p><u>DECISION SHEET</u></p>
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>CABINET</u></p> <p>To receive the decisions of Cabinet held on the 18th January, 2023.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>
	<p><u>GENERAL MATTERS</u></p>
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>CONFERENCES, COURSES, EVENTS AND INVITATIONS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the following:-</p> <p><u>Meeting & Service Requirements - Education Cabinet Members 'Spring Meeting' with MfE&WL - Residential 2023</u> <u>1st March – 3rd March, 2023</u></p> <p>RESOLVED that approval be given for Councillor S. Edmunds, Cabinet Member – People and Education to attend.</p> <p><u>2023 Royal Garden Party</u></p> <p>RESOLVED that a representative be approved to attend one of the Royal Garden Parties to be held in London on the 3rd or 9th May, 2023.</p>

	<u>CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO</u>																		
No. 6	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 1st MARCH, 2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Democratic & Scrutiny Officer.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 19th April, 2023 be approved as presented (Option 1).</p>																		
No. 7	<p><u>DRAFT COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2023/28</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial and Customer.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the draft Commissioning and Procurement Strategy 2023/2028 be approved (Option 1).</p>																		
No. 8	<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 were received further to the publication of the report:-</p> <p><u>ABERTILLERY</u></p> <p><u>Abertillery & Six Bells Ward - Councillor J. Holt</u></p> <table> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td>Abertillery Workmens Institute</td> <td>£57</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>Abertillery & Six Bells Ward - Councillor R. Leadbeater</u></p> <table> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td>Abertillery Orpheus Male Voice Choir</td> <td>£100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td>Abertillery Amateur Dramatic Musical Society</td> <td>£100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.</td> <td>Fion Jones</td> <td>£100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.</td> <td>Abertillery Bluebirds</td> <td>£100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.</td> <td>Ebenezer Food Cupboard</td> <td>£32</td> </tr> </table>	1.	Abertillery Workmens Institute	£57	1.	Abertillery Orpheus Male Voice Choir	£100	2.	Abertillery Amateur Dramatic Musical Society	£100	3.	Fion Jones	£100	4.	Abertillery Bluebirds	£100	5.	Ebenezer Food Cupboard	£32
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3.	Fion Jones	£100																	
4.	Abertillery Bluebirds	£100																	
5.	Ebenezer Food Cupboard	£32																	

BRYNMAWR

Brynmawr Ward - Councillor J. Gardner

1.	Brynmawr Museum	£300
2.	Blaina Cricket Club	£150
3.	Falcon Martial Arts	£200
4.	Brynmawr Historical Society	£300

Brynmawr Ward - Councillor J. Hill

1.	Friends of Parc Nant Y Waun	£158
2.	BGFM	£100
3.	Ebbw Vale Works Museum	£100
4.	Brynmawr FC	£150
5.	Community Hope Project	£150
6.	Ebbw Valley Brass	£150

EBBW VALE

Beaufort Ward - Councillor C. Smith

1.	Ebbw Vale Works Museum	£200
2.	Beaufort Male Voice Choir	£280

Beaufort Ward - Councillor G. Thomas

1.	Beaufort Hearts	£130
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Cwm Ward – Councillors D. Bevan & G. Humphries

1.	Waunlwyd & Victoria Events Committee	£200
2.	Ebbw Valley Brass	£200
3.	Royal British Legion Cwm Branch	£200

Ebbw Vale North Ward - Councillor D. Davies

1.	Willowtown Primary PTA	£150
2.	EVI Pantry	£100

Ebbw Vale North Ward - Councillor J. Morgan

1.	One Life Autism	£500
2.	Tredegar Operatic Society	£200
3.	Ebbw Vale Operatic Society	£200
4.	Toppers School of Dance and Drama	£180

Ebbw Vale South Ward - Councillor C. Bainton

1.	EVI Pantry	£200
2.	Ebbw Valley Brass	£100
3.	Willowtown Primary PTA	£300
4.	A B Boxing	£200
5.	Blaenau Gwent Young Stars	£200
6.	RTB RFC	£130
7.	Glanyrafon Pensioners Hall	£100

Ebbw Vale South Ward - Councillor S. Edmunds

1.	EVI Pantry	£100
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Rassau & Garnlydan Ward - Councillor G. Davies

1.	Rhos y Fedwen Primary School	£200
2.	Acorns Nursery	£100
3.	The Owl Sanctuary	£100

Rassau & Garnlydan Ward - Councillor D. Wiltshire

1.	Garnlydan Community Spirit	£100
2.	Ebbw Vale Works Museum	£80
3.	Beaufort Male Voice Choir	£80
4.	Rassau & Beaufort Bowls	£75
5.	Rassau OAP's	£100
6.	Blaenau Gwent Young Stars	£80
7.	Puddleducks	£200
8.	Ebbw Vale Christmas Lights	£80
9.	Hospice of the Valleys	£80
10.	Rock Chapel	£80
11.	Beaufort RFC	£80
12.	Ebbw Vale Male Voice Choir	£80
13.	Rhos y Fedwen Primary School	£100

14.	Ebbw Vale Cricket Club	£80
15.	Ebbw Vale Netball	£80
16.	Blaenau Gwent Indoor Bowls	£80
17.	Garnlydan AFC	£100

NANTYGLO & BLAINA

Blaina Ward - Councillor L. Winnett

1.	Blaina Cricket Club	£100
2.	Cwmcelyn Angling Club	£100

Blaina Ward - Councillor J. Morgan

1.	Blaina Mens Bowls	£250
2.	Cwmcelyn Methodist Church	£100
3.	Cwmcelyn Angling Club	£100
4.	Aberystroth History and Archaeological Society	£80

TREDEGAR

Sirhowy Ward – Councillors M. Cross & T. Smith & D. Rowberry

1.	Tredeggar Orpheus Male Voice Choir	£100
2.	2167 Squadron Ait Training Corps	£100
3.	Tredeggar Angling Club	£100
4.	Trefil RFC	£200
5.	Trefil Junior RFC	£100
6.	Gwent Area Association Welsh Cob & Pony	£100
7.	Tredeggar Ironsides RFC	£200
8.	Sirhowy Valley Woodlands	£100
9.	Sirhowy Community Centre	£250
10.	Ystrad Deri Community Centre	£250
11.	Horeb Chapel	£50
12.	Sardis Chapel	£50
13.	Ebenezer Welsh Congregational Church	£100
14.	St George's Church	£100
15.	Immaculate Conception Church	£100
16.	Valleys Life After Stroke	£100
17.	Silurian Boxing Club	£100
18.	Tredeggar Junior Netball Club	£100
19.	Tredeggar Women's Institute	£100

	<p>20. Oak Football Club £100</p> <p>21. Tredegar Operatic Society £100</p> <p>22. Tredegar Twinning Association £100</p> <p>23. Brynbach Running Club £100</p> <p>24. Bedwellty Park Bowls £100</p> <p>25. Siloam Chapel £100</p> <p>26. Tredegar Mayors Appeal £100</p> <p>27. Moose International Hall £100</p> <p>28. Blaenau Gwent Otters £100</p> <p>29. Tredegar AFC £100</p> <p>30. Tredegar Business Forum £100</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>
	<p><u>PEOPLE AND EDUCATION PORTFOLIO</u></p>
No. 9	<p><u>BLAENAU GWENT ESTYN LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES (LGES) INSPECTION OUTCOME</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 2).</p>
No. 10	<p><u>BLAENAU GWENT ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR NURSERY AND STATUTORY EDUCATION 2024/25</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the joint report of the Corporate Director Education, Service Manager Education Transformation and Business Change.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the policy document be approved (Option 1).</p>

	<u>PEOPLE AND SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO</u>
No. 11	<p><u>REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP UPDATE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Corporate Director Social Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the programme of work by the Regional Partnership Board be supported (Option 1).</p>
	<u>JOINT PLACE AND REGENERATION & PLACE AND ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIOS</u>
No. 12	<p><u>REGENERATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>The Leader noted that the Place Scrutiny Committee recommended Option 1, and that tourism in Blaenau Gwent be further developed. The Leader asked if an explanation on the specific aspect on developing tourism had been provided.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member – Place and Regeneration noted the substantive report and felt that a great deal of work was already being undertaken around tourism within the Borough and therefore proposed Option 2. The Cabinet Member – Place and Environment concurred that the report contained a great deal of information and felt that an explanation was needed on the reason why focus should be placed on tourism. The Cabinet Member – Place and Environment thereupon seconded Option 2.</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p> <p>The Leader suggested that in future Scrutiny Committees be asked to provide a more explanatory paragraph on recommendations put forward to Cabinet for Cabinet Members to be fully informed on specifics being recommended.</p>

	<p>RESOLVED accordingly. It was therefore</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 2).</p> <p>Councillor H. Trollope left the meeting at this juncture.</p>
	<p><u>PLACE AND ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO</u></p>
<p>No. 13</p>	<p><u>UPDATE CEMETERY BURIAL CAPACITY FEBRUARY 2023</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 Team Manager Streetscene.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information which contained details relating to the business/financial affairs of persons other than the Authority be agreed. (Option 1)</p>

	<p><u>PEOPLE AND SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO</u></p>
<p>No. 14</p>	<p><u>BUSINESS CASE TO PURCHASE 2 PROPERTIES FOR USE AS RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOMES</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 Interim Corporate Director Social Services.</p> <p>It was proposed that Part 1 Option 1 and Part 2 Option 1 be agreed in principle subject to further discussions in connection with future valuation potential. This proposal was seconded.</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing that the report be accepted and the information which contained details relating to the business/financial affairs of persons other than the Authority be agreed (It was proposed that Part 1 Option 1 and Part 2 Option 1 be agreed in principle subject to further discussions in connection with future valuation potential).</p>

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE
16TH NOVEMBER, 2022**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: MS JOANNE ABSALOM (CHAIR)

Councillors S. Behr (Vice-Chair)
J. Gardner
W. Hodgins
C. Smith
T. Smith
J. Wilkins
Mr M. Veale

WITH: Chief Officer Resources
Audit & Risk Manager
Senior Finance Business Partner
Professional Lead – Internal Audit
Principal Accountant
Assistant Accounting Technician
Service Manager Policy & Partnerships
Service Manager Registration, Elections and
Corporate Complaints
Team Leader - Housing Solutions
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	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <p>Mr T. Edwards Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships Alice Rushby, Audit Wales</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interests and dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The decisions of the Governance & Audit Committee held on 21st September, 2022 were submitted.</p> <p>On a point of accuracy, the Chair reported a typing error on item 7 Action Sheet – 27th July, 2022. The date of the Governance & Audit Committee should read 27th July, 2022 and not the 17th July, 2022.</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 21ST SEPTEMBER, 2022</u></p> <p>The Action Sheet arising from the meeting held on 21st September, 2022 was submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Action sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>SPECIAL GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The decisions of the Special Governance & Audit Committee held on 20th October, 2022 were submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	

No. 7	<p><u>GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Scrutiny & Democratic Officer.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Forward Work Programme for the Governance and Audit Committee be accepted. (Option 1)</p>	
No. 8	<p><u>INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Professional Lead Internal Audit.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee note the findings within the attached Appendices and notes progress on activities for the period 1st July 2022 to 30th September 2022.</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED that Exempt Appendix B2 and B4 be deferred until the next meeting and the relevant Officers be invited to attend the meeting.</p>	
No. 9	<p><u>ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT – USE OF POWERS UNDER THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (RIPA) 2000</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Governance and Audit Committee considered the information contained in the report and provided specific comment. (Option 2)</p>	
No. 10	<p><u>COMPLAINTS INFORMATION FOR QUARTER 1 AND QUARTER 2 – 2022/2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance.</p>	

	<p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee sought further clarification on areas within the report and highlighted areas of interest or concern that needed to be considered in future monitoring and reporting of complaints. (Option 2)</p>	
<p>No. 11</p>	<p><u>DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2021/2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Governance & Audit Committee received the Draft 2021/2022 Statement of Accounts for information, prior to the consideration for approval on completion of the financial audit, and considered the financial position of the Council as at 31 March 2022.</p>	

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
- 17TH JANUARY, 2023**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: Councillor T. Smith (Chair)

Councillors J. Morgan, J.P.
C. Bainton
D. Bevan
K. Chaplin
G.A. Davies

Co-Opted Youth Member

Ms. R. Lewis

WITH: Corporate Director of Education
Interim Corporate Director of Social Services
Head of Children's Services
Head of Adult Services
Head of Governance & Partnerships
Head of School Improvement & Inclusion
Service Manger Education Transformation & Business Change
Strategic Education Improvement Manager
Policy Officer Engagement & Equality
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were reported for Mr. Tim Baxter.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The decisions of the People Scrutiny Committee held on 18th October, 2022 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18th OCTOBER, 2022</u></p> <p>The Action sheet arising from the meeting held on 18th October, 2022, was submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES 2022/2023 (QUARTERS 1 AND 2)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Corporate Director of Social Services.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted as provided (Option 2).</p>	

<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION SERVICES - QUARTER 1 AND 2 2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Education.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted as provided (Option 2).</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>IMPROVING SCHOOLS PROGRAMME</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the joint report of the Head of School Improvement Inclusion and the Strategic Education Improvement Manager.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted as provided (Option 2).</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 28TH FEBRUARY, 2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Scrutiny & Democratic Officer.</p> <p>The following amendments were reported:</p> <p>The Estyn Feedback report to be added, and the Safeguarding Performance Report to be removed and replaced by an end of year performance report (June 2023).</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the Forward Programme for the meeting 28th February, 2023 be accepted (Option 1)</p>	

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STANDARDS COMMITTEE

24TH JANUARY, 2023

PRESENT: MR R. ALEXANDER (CHAIR)

Mr R. Lynch
Mr S. Williams
Councillor M. Cross
Councillor L. Winnett

WITH: Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
(Monitoring Officer)
Data Protection & Governance Officer

1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

No requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.

2. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillor S. Thomas (Leader of the Council)
Councillor J. Wilkins (Leader of the Independent Group)
Councillor J. Thomas
Ms S. Rosser

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.

4. STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 18TH OCTOBER, 2022

The decisions of the Standards Committee held on the 18th October, 2022 were submitted.

The Committee AGREED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.

5. ACTION SHEET

The Action Sheet arising from the meeting held on 18th October, 2022 was submitted.

The Committee AGREED that Group Leaders only be invited to meetings of the Standards Committee if relevant items on the agenda; and the work of the Democratic Services Team and the Monitoring Officer be noted in the Annual Report.

6. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consideration was given to the draft Terms of Reference.

The Committee AGREED that

- the draft Terms of Reference be amended to include the word 'ethics' to reflect the Nolan Principles, the word standards precluded by the word ethics;
- the Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance to look at the involvement of the Committee in Town/Community Council work;
- the Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance to pursue attendance of the Town Council representative on the Committee.

7. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT DRAFT TEMPLATE

Consideration was given to the Annual Report draft template.

The Committee AGREED that the Annual Report

- should report on items in the public domain;
- should include a Chair's conclusion summing up the work of the Committee for the year and the conclusion to note the work of the Democratic Services Team and the Monitoring Officer;
- a Special Standards Committee be convened on 2nd March, 2023 to approve final version of the Annual Report before being considered at Council on 30th March, 2023;

- the report to cover a calendar year i.e. January 2022 – January 2023.

8. STANDARDS COMMITTEE LAY MEMBER VACANCY APPOINTMENT UPDATE

Consideration was given to the verbal report of the Data Protection & Governance Officer.

The Committee AGREED that the verbal report be noted.

9. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS AMENDMENT TO PROCESS

Consideration was given to the verbal report of the Monitoring Officer.

The Committee AGREED that if the new process was causing issues to advise the Ombudsman going forward.

10. FUTURE TRAINING OF MEMBERS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Committee AGREED that a virtual half day training session be arranged with an external provider for existing and new Members. Torfaen and Monmouthshire Council's to be invited to attend. An internal discussion on the training session to be held once completed.

11. AOB/DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance to look to establish a specific webpage promoting the work of the Standards Committee.

The next meeting to be held on 2nd March, 2023.

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE
30TH JANUARY, 2023**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: MS JOANNE ABSALOM (CHAIR)

Councillors S. Behr (Vice-Chair)

W. Hodgins

C. Smith

Mr M. Veale

WITH:

Chief Officer Resources

Audit & Risk Manager

Interim Corporate Director of Social Services

Corporate Director of Environment & Regeneration

Service Manager Development & Estates

Interim Head of Children’s Services

Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships

Professional Lead – Internal Audit

Finance Business Partner

Senior Auditor

Information Security Officer

Data Protection & Governance Officer

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

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

	<p>Apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <p>Councillor T. Smith Councillor J. Wilkins Charlotte Owen - Audit Wales</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no Declarations of interests and dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The decisions of the Governance & Audit Committee held on 16th November, 2022 were submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 16TH NOVEMBER, 2022</u></p> <p>The Action Sheet arising from the meeting held on 16th November, 2022 was submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Action sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE</u> <u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources informed Members that the Statement of Accounts 2021/22 would not be available for the next Committee meeting scheduled for 8th March, 2023. A briefing note outlining the current position would be forwarded to Members.</p> <p>A Special Governance & Audit Committee meeting be convened if the Statement of Accounts 2021/22 becomes available before the scheduled meeting on 26th April, 2023.</p>	

	<p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the Forward Work Programme for the Governance and Audit Committee be approved.</p>	
No. 7	<p><u>INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Professional Lead Internal Audit.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee noted the findings within the attached Appendices and noted progress on activities for the period 1st October to 31st December 2022.</p>	
No. 8	<p><u>EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF BLAENAU GWENT INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Audit & Risk Manager.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee agreed that the report reflected their understanding of the Internal Audit Service, and that the proposed action plan be agreed and forwarded to Carmarthenshire to finalise the report.</p>	
No. 9	<p><u>BLAENAU GWENT COUNCIL'S POSITION IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONS IN AUDIT WALES' REPORT 'LEARNING FROM CYBER ATTACKS'</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 Paragraphs 14 and 18, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</p>	

	<p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources & SIRO and the Chief Information Security Officer.</p> <p>A Member requested that further IT training be arranged for Members.</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the Committee considered the information provided in the report and gained assurance that the Council had (or intended to put in place) appropriate measures to minimise the risk of cyber attacks.</p>	
	<p><u>APPENDIX B2 AND B4 – INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT</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 Paragraphs 13 and 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>A verbal update was received from the Service Manager Development & Estates regarding Appendix B2 and B4 deferred from the previous Governance & Audit Committee held on 16th November, 2022.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the verbal report be accepted and the Service Manager Development & Estates refer Appendix B4 to the relevant Scrutiny Committee for consideration.</p>	

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 31ST JANUARY, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R. Leadbeater (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors P. Baldwin
 S. Behr
 J. Gardener
 J. Holt
 J.P. Morgan

WITH: Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
 Head of Community Services
 Team Manager - Streetscene
 Team Manager – Regeneration Opportunities
 Team Manager – Commercial Services
 Team Leader – Built Environment
 Senior Homelessness Officer
 Team Leader – Housing Solutions Infrastructure Manager
 Team Manager – Trading Standards
 Service Manager – Community Services
 Service Manager – Development and Estates
 Team Leader – Environmental Protection
 Communications Officer
 Scrutiny and Democratic Officer

<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>

<p>No. 2</p>	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>The Vice-Chair reported that Councillor M. Cross, Chair who was currently in hospital following a heart attack. It was informed that Councillor Cross had undergone an operation and was doing well. The Committee wished Councillor Cross a speedy recovery.</p> <p>Another apology was received from Councillor J. Hill.</p>
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the decisions of the meeting held on 13th December, 2022.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>ACTION SHEET</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the action sheet.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and the action sheet be noted.</p>
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>REGENERATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair proposed that a positive step would be that tourism in Blaenau Gwent be further developed in the area.</p> <p>This proposal was seconded and AGREED by the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee thereupon AGREED that the report and information provided within the appendix be accepted and the aforementioned recommendation for improvement be considered by Cabinet (Option 1).</p>

No. 7	<u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 14TH MARCH, 2023</u> Consideration was given to the report of the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer. The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and the Forward Programme for the meeting scheduled
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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 2nd FEBRUARY, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. WILKINS (CHAIR)

Councillors J. Thomas (Vice-Chair)

- C. Bainton
- M. Day
- G. Humphreys
- E. Jones
- R. Leadbeater
- C. Smith

WITH: Interim Chief Executive
 Interim Corporate Director Social Services
 Corporate Director Education
 Chief Officer Resources
 Service Manager Accountancy
 Head of Governance and Partnerships
 Corporate Procurement Manager
 Chief Officer Commercial and Customer
 Business Partner - Finance
 Service Manager Performance and Democratic
 Scrutiny and Democratic Officer

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	<u>APOLOGIES</u>

	An apology for absence was reported from Councillor T. Smith.
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>
No. 4	<p><u>CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the decisions of the meeting held on 15th December, 2022.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Action Sheet.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>
No. 6	<p><u>TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REVIEW – 1st APRIL 2022 TO 31st SEPTEMBER 2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and Members scrutinised the treasury management activity undertaken during the first 6 months of 2022/2023 and did not provide comment prior to its submission to full Council (Option 2).</p>
No. 7	<p><u>DRAFT COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2023/28</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial and Customer.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and provided comments on the draft Commissioning and Procurement Strategy 2023/2028 prior to approval by Cabinet (Option 1).</p>
No. 8	<u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 16TH MARCH, 2023</u>

<p>Consideration was given to the report of the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer.</p>
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<p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and the Scrutiny Committee agreed the Forward Programme for the meeting 16th March, 2023, as presented (Option 2).</p>

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 7TH FEBRUARY, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: Councillor W. Hodgins (CHAIR)

Councillors P. Baldwin
 K. Chaplin
 D. Davies
 E Jones
 L. Parsons
 C. Smith
 L. Winnett

Cabinet Member People and Social Services
 Councillor H. Trollope

WITH: Interim Corporate Director Social Services
 Head of Partnerships and Governance
 Corporate Director Education
 Scrutiny and Democratic Officer

<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> No apologies for absence were received.

<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declaration of interest was raised:-</p> <p>Item No. 6 – Regional Partnership Update Councillor W. Hodgins – some of his clients may be service users of the Social Services Directorate.</p>
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The decisions of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on, 22nd November, 2022 were submitted.</p> <p>It was reported that Councillor L. Parsons’ apologies had been omitted from decisions.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing that the decisions be accepted as a true recording of proceedings.</p>
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>ACTION SHEET</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Action Sheet.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the action sheet be noted.</p>
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP UPDATE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Corporate Director Social Services.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and scrutinised the report and supported the programme of work by the Regional Partnership Board (Option 1).</p>

No. 7

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 7TH FEBRUARY, 2023

Consideration was given to report of the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer.

It was proposed that the Regional Partnership Update be presented to Committee on an annual basis. This proposal was seconded.

The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing that the Forward Work Programme for 7th February be accepted (Option 1).

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: SPECIAL CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 21ST FEBRUARY, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: Councillor J. Wilkins (CHAIR)

Councillors J. Thomas (Vice-Chair)

M. Day
G. Humphreys
E. Jones
R. Leadbeater
C. Smith
T. Smith

Cabinet Member – Corporate and Performance

Councillor S. Thomas

Members without Voting Rights

Councillors P. Baldwin
S. Behr
D. Bevan
C. Cross
H. Cunningham
D. Davies
G.A. Davies
J. Gardener
J. Holt
J. Hill
W. Hodgins
J.C. Morgan
L. Parsons
G. Thomas
H. Trollope
D. Rowberry
L. Winnett

WITH: Interim Chief Executive
 Corporate Director Education
 Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
 Interim Corporate Director Social Services
 Head of Community Services
 Chief Officer Resources
 Service Manager - Accountancy
 Head of Organisational Development
 Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
 Service Manager – Customer Experience & Transformation
 Chief Officer Customer and Commercial
 Head of Partnership and Governance
 Service Manager – Policy and Partnerships
 Communications, Marketing & Customer Access Manager
 Press Officer
 Scrutiny Officer

<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 received from:-</p> <p>Councillor Carl Bainton; Councillor S. Edmunds; and Councillor D. Woods</p>
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>

<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>REVENUE BUDGET 2023/2024</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>A Member proposed that sections 3.1.1 to 3.1.3 of Option 1 be accepted and recommended to Cabinet and Council and sections 3.1.4 to 3.1.8 of Option 1 be deferred pending further consideration at the Special Meeting of the Council scheduled to be held on Thursday, 23rd February, 2023. This proposal was Seconded.</p> <p>The Committee thereupon AGREED, subject to the foregoing that the report be accepted and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members recommended to Council the 2023/24 revenue budget as detailed in the table in paragraph 5.1.15 of the report; • provided comment on the outcomes within the overall provisional RSG Settlement and noted the potential for further change in the Final RSG Settlement (paragraphs 2.6 – 2.17); • provided comment on the outcomes within the BGCBC provisional RSG Settlement and its impact upon the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (paragraphs 2.18 – 2.26); • decisions related to the updated cost pressures and growth items (£3.22m in total) identified in Appendix 2 (paragraphs 5.1.10 – 5.1.16) be deferred for consideration at the Special Meeting of Council on 23rd February, 2023; • decisions related to an uplift of £1.5m which equates to 3% increase to the ISB (paragraphs 5.1.17 to 5.1.24) be deferred for consideration at the Special Meeting of Council on 23rd February, 2023; • decisions related to the Bridging the Gap proposals delivering £4.18m of financial efficiencies and budget cuts to towards the budget gap (paragraphs 5.1.25 to 5.1.32) be deferred for consideration at the Special Meeting of Council on 23rd February, 2023; • decisions related to the use of reserves of £2.5m to balance the budget for 2023/2024 (paragraphs 5.1.33 to 5.1.35) be deferred for
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consideration at the Special Meeting of Council on 23rd February, 2023; and

- decisions related to a Council Tax increase of 4% for 2023/24 (paragraph 5.1.7) as per the MTFS assumptions be deferred for consideration at the Special Meeting of Council on 23rd February, 2023.
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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Action Sheet

Ordinary Meeting of the Council

Meeting Date	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
26.01.23	Public Questions For the purposes of openness and transparency, ways to highlight the procedure in a clear website format for members of the public to submit questions to Council, be investigated.	Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance/ Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships/Service Manager Performance & Democratic	Work is underway with the Corporate Communications Team to promote and publicise how members of the public can get involved in local democracy (including submitting questions to Council) through our website pages and social media platforms. We will also build this into the work on further developing the Diverse Council action plan and drafting the new Engagement and Participation Strategy.

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Agenda Item 25

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 20.03.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 21.03.2023

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **30th March, 2023**

Report Subject: **Treasury Management Mid-Year Review Report - 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader/Cabinet Member - Corporate Overview & Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer Resources**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
	19/01/2023				02/02/2023		30/03/2023	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to give Members the opportunity to consider the Treasury Management activities carried out by the Authority during the first half of the 2022/23 financial year.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report provides a summary of the Treasury Management activities carried out under delegated powers by the Chief Officer Resources in the period 1st April to 30th September 2022 in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice.

- 2.2 Treasury Management can be defined as:

“The management of the local authority’s cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”

- 2.3 The primary requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice are currently as follows:

- a. Creation and maintenance of a Treasury Management Policy Statement which sets out the policies and objectives of the Council’s treasury management activities.
- b. Creation and maintenance of Treasury Management Practices which set out the manner in which the Council will seek to achieve those policies and objectives.

- c. Receipt by the Council of an annual Treasury Management Strategy report (including the annual investment strategy report and minimum revenue policy) for the year ahead, a mid-year review and an annual review report of the previous year.
 - d. Delegation by the Council of responsibilities for implementing and monitoring Treasury Management policies and practices and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions, which in this Council is the Chief Officer Resources.
 - e. Delegation by the Council of the role of scrutiny of Treasury Management strategy and policies to a specific named body which in this Council is the Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.4 This report is therefore presented to Council to provide a mid-year review report (attached as Appendix 1) of the Treasury Management activities for the 2022/2023 financial year, in accordance with (c) above.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 Option 1 (preferred option)

Members note the treasury management activity undertaken during the first 6 months of 2022/23 and accept the record of performance and compliance achieved during the first half of the 2022/23 financial year.

3.2 Option 2

Members note the treasury management activity undertaken during the first 6 months of 2022/2023 and do not accept the record of performance and compliance achieved during the first half of the 2022/23 financial year.

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

4.1 The report is written under legislation (the Local Government Act 2003), Welsh Government guidance and CIPFA codes of practice.

4.2 This topic also supports the Corporate Plan Priority of being an ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

- 5.1.1 The Authority has complied with the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2017 and in doing so has strived for effective risk management and control, whilst at the same time pursuing best value as far as possible.
- 5.1.2 The Authority has effectively managed credit risk throughout the period, so ensuring that it has not been subjected to any financial loss as a result of the pandemic.
- 5.1.3 The Authority has maximised investment returns as far as is possible whilst managing the associated risk and minimised borrowing costs throughout the period.
- 5.1.4 Investment returns of £541,000 have been achieved with an average interest rate of 0.82%. This is lower than the benchmark rate of 1.39% but reflects that the Authority no longer invest in counterparties that pay a higher rate, due to credit rating reductions. Of this return, £311,000 relates to investments made from the receipt of the £70million Rail Infrastructure Loan. There is a condition of the funding approval that states any interest earned from holding the loan must be added to the works programme. Therefore, this income will be placed in a reserve until such time it is used to fund works or can be transferred to the Authority. The remaining return of £230,000 relates to interest from the investment of the Authority's own funds. The annual budgeted investment interest for the full year is £6,000, which reflects the interest rates forecast at that time and the extraordinary increases in bank base rate during 2022/23.
- 5.1.5 An average interest rate of 0.51% has been paid on temporary borrowings against a benchmark of 1.70%, amounting to £73,000 for the six-month period. The budget for interest paid on short term borrowing is £425,000 for a full year - the full year interest payable is forecast to be within this budget.
- 5.1.6 A summary of the Treasury Management activities for the period are shown in the table below:

	Value	Interest	Average Interest Rate
	£m	£	%
Short Term Loans raised	98	73,000	0.51%
Short Term Investments made	381	541,000	0.82%
Long Term debt outstanding 30/9/22	169.45		3.53%
Short Term debt outstanding 30/9/22	59.4		0.51%

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

- 5.2.1 The main risk in relation to Treasury Management is that of credit risk and protecting the Authority's cash. This is effectively managed through the Authority's risk averse Treasury Management policy that seeks to protect the capital sum rather than maximise investment returns.
- 5.2.2 The £70 million received from the Welsh Government in relation to the Rail Infrastructure scheme has posed challenges for the Treasury Management function in terms of exploring new investment opportunities, such as Notice Accounts and banks, whilst adhering to the Authority's Investment Strategy and approved counterparty limits. In order to mitigate the risk of breaching these limits, the Authority has utilised the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility in the first instance (unlimited deposits) as well as its Money Market Fund and other Investments with Local Authorities (£10 million limit). Furthermore, the Authority will continue to monitor other investment opportunities in the second part of the year.
- 5.2.3 Following the increases in the Bank of England base rate beginning in December 2021, the base rate has risen from 0.75% to 2.25% in the first half of the year. The Bank of England has further increased this rate to 3.5% in December 2022 and the market now expects that the base rate will increase further to 4.50% by the second quarter of next year. The Authority has benefitted from entering into short-term borrowing and taking advantage of low interest rates in the first half of the year. However, the increase in market rates will have a significant impact on borrowing costs in 2023/24 and poses a cost pressure to the Authority's budgets.

5.3 Legal

- 5.3.1 The report is written under legislation (the Local Government Act 2003), Welsh Government guidance and CIPFA codes of practice.

5.4 Human Resources

- 5.4.1 There are no direct staffing implications to report. Staff directly involved with Treasury Management activities will continue to monitor the credit situation on a daily basis and will notify the Chief Officer Resources accordingly. Any consequential changes required to be made to the borrowings or investment strategy as a result will be reported to the Council.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 Performance Information and Data

Despite the financial climate in relation to the pandemic, the Authority has performed well in terms of its Treasury Management activities during the first half of the year, as detailed in the report and summarised below:

- a. Investment returns of £541,000 have been achieved in the period with an average interest rate of 0.82%. This is lower than the benchmark rate of 1.39% but reflects that the Authority no longer invest in counterparties that pay a higher rate, due to credit rating reductions. The annual budgeted investment interest is £6,000, which has been exceeded as a consequence of the investments in relation to the £70m Rail Infrastructure money together with the impact of increases in the Bank of England base rate throughout 2022.
- b. An average interest rate of 0.51% has been paid on temporary borrowings against a benchmark of 1.70%, amounting to £73,000 for the six-month period. The budget for interest paid on short term borrowing is £425,000 for a full year - the full year interest payable is likely to be within this budget. The interest payable by the Authority has therefore been minimised as far as possible and is evidence of good performance.
- c. All of the Treasury limits and Treasury Management prudential indicators set for the financial year have been complied with during the year.
- d. No institutions in which investments were made during the period had any difficulty in repaying investments and interest in full, so the Authority has not been exposed to any financial loss as a result of the difficult economic climate. The Authority will continue to monitor other investment opportunities throughout the rest of the financial year.

6.2 Expected outcome for the public

- 6.2.1 The Council's Treasury Management activities support delivery of services to the public.

6.3 Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)

- 6.3.1 Members of the Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee and full Council are involved in developing and monitoring compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

6.4 Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)

N/A

6.5 Preventative focus

- 6.5.1 The Authority's Treasury Management policy prioritises protecting the capital sum rather than achieving higher interest returns.

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

N/A

6.7 Integration (across service areas)

N/A

6.8 **Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions**

N/A

6.9 **Integrated Impact Assessment**

N/A

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 As the nominated Committee, Corporate Overview & Council will receive three reports in every annual cycle: -

- A Treasury Management Policy report prior to the start of every financial year
- A mid-year progress report on Treasury Management activity
- An end of year out turn report on Treasury Management activity.

8. **Background Documents / Electronic Links**

- Appendix 1
- Appendix A
- Appendix B

APPENDIX 1

TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID YEAR REVIEW REPORT 2022/23

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2009 was adopted by this Council in February 2010 and this Council fully complies with its requirements. The Code was revised in 2011 and further revised in 2017.

The primary requirements of the Code are as follows:

1. Creation and maintenance of a Treasury Management Policy Statement which sets out the policies and objectives of the Council's treasury management activities.
2. Creation and maintenance of Treasury Management Practices which set out the manner in which the Council will seek to achieve those policies and objectives.
3. Receipt by the Council of an annual treasury management strategy report (including the annual investment strategy and minimum revenue provision report) for the year ahead, a mid year review and an annual review report of the previous year.
4. Delegation by the Council of responsibilities for implementing and monitoring treasury management policies and practices and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions, which in this Council is the Chief Officer Resources.
5. Delegation by the Council of the role of scrutiny of treasury management strategy and policies to a specified named body which in this Council is the Corporate Overview & Performance Scrutiny Committee.

Treasury management in this context is defined as:

"The management of the local authority's cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

The purpose of this report is to meet one of the above requirements of the CIPFA Code, namely the mid-year review of treasury management activities, for the financial year 2022/23.

2. THIS TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID YEAR REVIEW REPORT COVERS

- ❖ Economic Background during the period
- ❖ Interest Rate Forecast
- ❖ Treasury Advisors
- ❖ The Council's treasury position as at 30 September 2022;
- ❖ Borrowing and investment rates for the first half of 2022/23;
- ❖ Mid-year review of the borrowing strategy 2022/23;
- ❖ Borrowing outturn for the first half of 2022/23;
- ❖ Debt rescheduling for the first half of 2022/23;

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- ❖ Compliance with treasury limits and Prudential Indicators for the first half of 2022/23;
- ❖ Mid-year review of the investment strategy for 2022/23;
- ❖ Investment outturn for the first half of 2022/23;
- ❖ Other treasury management issues.

3. ECONOMIC BACKGROUND DURING PERIOD

The second quarter of 2022/23 saw:

- GDP revised upwards in Q1 2022/23 to +0.2% q/q from -0.1%, which means the UK economy has avoided recession for the time being;
- Signs of economic activity losing momentum as production fell due to rising energy prices;
- CPI inflation eased from 10.1% in July to 9.9% in August, though inflation has not peaked yet. The easing in August was mainly due to a decline in fuel prices reducing fuel inflation from 43.7% to 32.1%. And with the oil price now just below \$90pb, we would expect to see fuel prices fall further in the coming months.- The unemployment rate fall to a 48-year low of 3.6% due to a large shortfall in labour supply;
- Bank Rate rise by 100bps over the quarter, taking Bank Rate to 2.25% with further rises to come;
- Gilt yields surge and sterling fall following the “fiscal event” of the new Prime Minister and Chancellor on 23rd September.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has now increased interest rates seven times in as many meetings in 2022 and has raised rates to their highest level since the Global Financial Crisis. Even so, coming after the Fed and ECB raised rates by 75 basis points (bps) in their most recent meetings, the Bank of England’s latest 50 basis points hike looks relatively conservative. However, the UK’s status as a large importer of commodities, which have jumped in price, means that households in the UK are now facing a much larger squeeze on their real incomes.

we now expect the MPC to increase interest rates further and faster, from 2.25% to a peak of 4.50% in February 2023. The combination of the government’s fiscal loosening, the tight labour market and sticky inflation expectations means that the MPC raised interest rates by 75bps at the policy meetings in November (to 3.00%) and 50 basis points in December (to 3.50%). It is expected that further 50 basis point hikes in February and March will increase the rate to 4.50%. Market expectations for what the MPC will do are volatile. If Bank Rate climbs to these levels the housing market looks very vulnerable, which is one reason why the peak in our forecast is lower than the peak of 5.50% - 5.75% priced into the financial markets at present.

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4. INTEREST RATE FORECASTS

The Council's treasury advisor, Link Group, has provided the following forecast:

Link Group Interest Rate View	19.12.22												
	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25
BANK RATE	3.50	4.25	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.00	2.75	2.50	2.50
3 month ave earnings	3.60	4.30	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.00	3.80	3.30	3.00	3.00	2.80	2.50	2.50
6 month ave earnings	4.20	4.50	4.60	4.50	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.40	3.10	3.00	2.90	2.60	2.60
12 month ave earnings	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.50	4.30	4.20	4.00	3.50	3.20	3.10	3.00	2.70	2.70
5 yr PWLB	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.10
10 yr PWLB	4.30	4.40	4.40	4.30	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.30
25 yr PWLB	4.60	4.60	4.60	4.50	4.40	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.50
50 yr PWLB	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.30	3.20	3.20

The latest forecast on 19th December sets out a view that both short and long-dated interest rates will be elevated for some little while, as the Bank of England seeks to squeeze inflation out of the economy, whilst the government is providing a package of fiscal loosening to try and protect households and businesses from the ravages of ultra-high wholesale gas and electricity prices.

As shown in the forecast table above, further increases in Bank Rate are now expected during 2023/24, from 3.5% as at the date of this report to 4.5% in quarter 1 of 2023/24, with subsequent decreases during 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Forecasts for PWLB rates and gilt and treasury yields

As the interest forecast table for PWLB certainty rates above shows, there is likely to be a rise over the forecast period, with some degree of uplift due to rising treasury yields in the US.

The Council has appointed Link Group as its treasury advisors and part of their service is to assist the Council to formulate a view on interest rates. The PWLB rate forecasts above are based on the Certainty Rate (the standard rate minus 20 bps) which has been accessible to most authorities since 1st November 2012.

The latest forecast on 27th September sets out a view that both short and long-dated interest rates will be elevated for some little while, as the Bank of England seeks to squeeze inflation out of the economy, whilst the government is providing a package of fiscal loosening to try and protect households and businesses from the ravages of ultra-high wholesale gas and electricity prices.

The increase in PWLB rates reflects a broad sell-off in sovereign bonds internationally but more so the disaffection investors have with the position of the UK public finances after September's "fiscal event". To that end, the MPC has tightened short-term interest rates with a view to trying to slow the economy sufficiently to keep the secondary effects of inflation – as measured by wage rises – under control, but its job is that much harder now.

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Gilt and treasury yields

Throughout 2022/23, gilt yields have been on an upward trend. They were initially caught up in the global surge in bond yields triggered by the surprisingly strong rise in CPI inflation in the US in May. The rises in two-year gilt yields (to a peak of 2.37% on 21st June) and 10-year yields (to a peak of 2.62%) took them to their highest level since 2008 and 2014 respectively.

However, the upward trend was exceptionally sharp at the end of September as investors demanded a higher risk premium and expected faster and higher interest rate rises to offset the government's extraordinary fiscal stimulus plans. The 30-year gilt yield rose from 3.60% to 5.10% following the "fiscal event", which threatened financial stability by forcing pension funds to sell assets into a falling market to meet cash collateral requirements.

In response, the Bank did two things. First, it postponed its plans to start selling some of its quantitative easing (QE) gilt holdings until 31st October. Second, it committed to buy up to £65bn of long-term gilts to "restore orderly market conditions" until 14th October. In other words, the Bank is restarting QE, although for financial stability reasons rather than monetary policy reasons.

Since the Bank's announcement on 28th September, the 30-year gilt yield has fallen back from 5.10% to 3.83%. The 2-year gilt yield dropped from 4.70% to 4.30% and the 10-year yield fell back from 4.55% to 4.09%.

5. TREASURY ADVISORS

The Council uses external treasury management advisors. The Council recognises that responsibility for Treasury Management decisions remains with the Authority at all times and will ensure that undue reliance is not placed upon our external service providers.

It also recognises that there is value in employing external providers of treasury management services in order to acquire access to specialist skills and resources. The Council will ensure that the terms of their appointment and the methods by which their value will be assessed are properly agreed and documented and subjected to regular review.

The Council retendered for the provision of Treasury Management advisory services during 2022. This resulted in the appointment of Link Asset Services for a period of two years from 1st May 2022 until 30th April 2024, with an option to extend for a further two years at 12-month intervals.

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6. TREASURY POSITION AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

The Council's debt and investment position at the beginning of the year and the end of the half year was as follows:

The table illustrates that the total debt outstanding as at 30 September 2022 was £228.8 million, comprising of long term debt of £169.45 million and short term debt of £59.4 million.

	31March 2022 Principal	Average Rate/ Return	30Sept 2022 Principal	Average Rate/ Return	Increase/ (Decrease) in Borrowing
	<u>£000</u>		<u>£000</u>		<u>£000</u>
Fixed Rate Funding:					
- PWLB	74,067	4.06%	74,056	4.02%	(10)
- Market Loans	14,000	1.40%	18,000	1.26%	4,000
Variable Rate Funding:					
- Market (LOBO *)	4,000	4.5%	4,000	4.50%	0
Interest Free Loans:					
Welsh Government	73,395	0.00%	73,395	0.00%	0
Total Long Term Debt	165,462	3.70%	169,451	3.53%	3,990
Short Term Loans(<365 days)	62,365	0.32%	59,365	0.51%	(3,000)
Total Debt	227,827	2.35%	228,816	2.43%	990
Investments:					
- Short Term	100,000	0.04%	96,300	0.82%	(3,700)
Total Investments	100,000		96,300		(3,700)

* LOBO – Lenders Option Borrowers Option. This loan has a fixed rate for the first two years of 3.85%. The remaining period of the loan (which we are now in) has a rate of 4.5%, but the lender can increase this rate at six month intervals.

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7. BORROWING AND INVESTMENT RATES IN 2022/23

The following table displays a selection of interest rates prevailing as at 1st April 2022 and 30th September 2022.

	01/04/2022	30/09/2022
Bank Base Rate	0.75%	2.25%
1 Month SONIA Rate	0.69%	2.26%
PWLB 10 year Maturity	2.66%	5.15%
PWLB 15 year maturity	2.83%	5.14%
PWLB 25 year maturity	2.85%	4.98%

8. MID YEAR REVIEW OF THE BORROWING STRATEGY FOR 2022/23

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2022/23 was approved by Council in March 2022. The Borrowing Strategy adopted as part of this was as follows:

To utilise the Authority's overdraft facility:

To fund unexpected daily cash deficits;
To fund temporary cash shortfalls where there are no other sources of funding available within the marketplace.

To borrow over the short term:

To fund temporary cash shortfalls;
To maintain a suitably balanced maturity profile; to make short term savings required in order to meet budgetary constraints;
In anticipation of securing longer term loans at more attractive rates.

To borrow over the long term:

To reduce the Authority's average cost of borrowing;
To maintain a stable, longer term portfolio;
To maximise the potential for future debt rescheduling.

If appropriate to avoid all new external borrowing:

To maximise savings in the short term;
To run down temporary investment levels;
To minimise exposure to interest rate and credit risk.

Borrowings undertaken during the period (see section 7 below) have been done so in accordance with this strategy and has focused on short term borrowings in order to minimise borrowing costs. Current short-term borrowing rates continue to be very low, however are likely to increase following the forecast increases to the Bank of England Base Rate. The Authority is therefore taking advantage of such rates and is predominantly borrowing short term where necessary to fund the remainder of its capital expenditure and maturing debt until such time the market indicates that long term rates would be more advantageous. In March 2021 the Welsh Government awarded the Authority an interest free specific loan in relation to the Rail Track project, whilst this has resulted in an increase to the level of the Council's longer-term debt this

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resource has reduced the need to borrow externally in the first half of the 2022/23 financial year.

In the current economic climate, it is considered that the approved strategy is still fit for purpose and therefore no revisions are proposed.

9. BORROWING OUTTURN FOR THE FIRST HALF OF 2022/23

Long Term Borrowing

Definition

Long term borrowing relates to debt taken out for a period of greater than one year. It is taken out for periods of 1 year up to 50 years. This borrowing is required to finance capital expenditure undertaken in the year that is funded through:

- Borrowing approvals from Welsh Government, known as un-hypothecated supported borrowing (USB), for which revenue support for the borrowing costs is provided through the revenue support grant;
- Prudential borrowing, for which borrowing costs are funded through revenue savings.

Total outstanding as at 30th September 2022

The total long term debt outstanding as at 30th September 2022 was £169.45 million. This is made up of debt taken from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), from other local authorities (through the market place), Specific Welsh Government Loans and from the market (LOBO). This debt is due to be repaid within the following years:

Maturing Within	£000s
1YR	2,909
1-2YRS	8,764
2-3YRS	15,451
3-4YRS	15,277
4-5YRS	12,609
5-6YRS	6,037
6-10YRS	19,980
10-15YRS	9,570
15+ YRS	78,854
Total	169,451

New borrowings for the First Half of 2022/23

Long-Term borrowings of £8m (Market Loans) have been repaid during the financial year. New Market Loans of £12m have been received to 30 September 2022.

Short Term Borrowing

Definition

Short term borrowing relates to debt taken out for a period of less than one year i.e. it will all be fully repaid within a year. These short term loans are taken out to manage the Authority's short term cash flow i.e. to fund deficits in cash flow on a daily basis

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TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID YEAR REVIEW REPORT 2022/23

pending receipt of income from grants or other sources, or pending the taking out of longer term debt to fund capital expenditure whilst we wait for advantageous longer term borrowing opportunities. Current short term borrowing rates are very low and are forecast to stay at these levels for the short term. The Authority is therefore taking advantage of such rates and is borrowing short term to fund its capital expenditure and maturing debt until such time the market indicates that long term rates are more advantageous.

Total outstanding as at 30th September 2022

The total short term debt outstanding as at 30th September 2022 was £59.4 million. This is made up of debt taken from other local authorities through the market place.

New borrowings for the First Half Year of 2022/23

Appendix A lists the short term loan activity during for the first half year and shows that over the period a total of £62.4 million loans were brought forward from the previous year and £36million of new short term loans were raised. A total of £39 million of these loans were repaid during the first half year, leaving a balance outstanding as at 30th September 2022 of £59.4 million.

The following table gives a summary which shows that the average rate of interest paid was in line with the benchmark.

	Total Value of Loans during the period	Average Loan	Interest paid during the period	Average Interest Rate	Average Loan Days during 2022/23	Benchmark Interest Rate *
Short Term borrowing	£98.4M	£3.8M	£73K	0.51%	206.7	1.70%

* Benchmark = 1.70% Budgeted interest rate for short term borrowings

7. DEBT RESCHEDULING

No debt rescheduling was undertaken during the period.

8. COMPLIANCE WITH TREASURY LIMITS

During the financial year the Council operates within the treasury limits and Prudential Indicators set out in the Treasury Strategy Statement 2022/23, approved by Council in March 2022.

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Operational Boundary for external debt

The Council resolved that this limit be set at £237 million for 2022/23. The average level of borrowings to the 30th September 2022 was £220.3 million, this is well below the limit.

The operational boundary can be exceeded on an occasional basis, and this is to be expected due to cash flow fluctuations. Sustained breaches however, would indicate that either the limit has been set too low, or that the Authority is breaching its prudential boundaries and that corrective action needs to be taken.

Monitoring of the operational boundary is undertaken on a daily basis and any such continual breaches would be investigated and a recommended course of action reported to Council.

Authorised Limit for external Debt

The Council resolved that this limit be set at £260.7 million for 2022/23. The Authorised Limit is set having regard to the operational boundary above.

The average level of borrowings for the first half year to the 30th September 2022 was £220.3 million, so well within the limit set.

The Authorised Limit must not be breached.

Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing

The Council resolved the following limits for the maturity structure of fixed rate borrowings for 2022/23;

	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Actual as at 30/09/2022
under 12 months	20%	0%	1.72%
12 months and within 24 months	20%	0%	5.17%
24 months and within 5 years	50%	0%	25.57%
5 years and within 10 years	75%	0%	15.35%
10 years and above	95%	25%	52.18%

The actual debt maturity profile at 30th September 2022 is well within the limits set.

Upper Limit on Variable Interest Exposure

Council resolved the upper limit on variable rate exposures for 2022/23 should be set at 30% of outstanding long term debt. This strategy limits the proportion of interest which is subject to variable rate terms and hence protects the Council against increased costs in times of rising interest rates.

The actual level of variable borrowings is £4 million (LOBO) which equates to 2.4% of the outstanding long term debt as at 30th September 2022, so is well within the limit set.

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TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID YEAR REVIEW REPORT 2022/23

9. MID YEAR REVIEW OF INVESTMENT STRATEGY FOR 2022/23

The Annual Investment Strategy for 2022/23 adopted by Council in March 2022 was to maintain only temporary, short term investments and to make those investments in accordance with anticipated cash flow requirements (including the investing of sums borrowed at prevailing low interest rates in anticipation of capital spending). The Council's investment priorities are:

- a. the security of capital;
- b. The liquidity of its investments.

The Council also aims to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity. The risk appetite of this Council is low in order to give priority to the security of its investments.

In order to ensure that the Authority's investments are secure and that risk is minimised an investment matrix is used to determine investment counterparties, which factors in Fitch and Moody's credit ratings, credit default swap (CDS) spread data, and credit rating agency comments.

Currently, the approved investment counterparties available to the Authority are Barclays (the Authority's bank), Lloyds Bank, the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF), other Local Authorities and the Public Sector Deposit Fund. In order to diversify its investment portfolio, the Authority has undertaken fixed term deposits with other banks in line with the counterparty list. Whilst interest rates receivable on these counterparties is low the security of the capital sum is high and there is no cost associated with placing cash there.

This strategy has been adhered to in determining the investments for the first half of 2022/23 outlined in section 10 below.

10. INVESTMENT OUTTURN FOR THE FIRST HALF OF 2022/23

Appendix B gives details of the investments made during the first half of the year, and the following table gives a summary, which shows the Authority's average rate of return was below the benchmark.

	Total Value of Investments during period	Average Investment	Investment Returns	Average Rate of Return	Average Investment Days during 2022/23	Benchmark Return *
Internally Managed	£381.3M	£4.2M	£541k	0.82%	70.3	1.39%

* Benchmark = 1 Month SONIA

1.39%

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No institutions in which investments were made had any difficulty in repaying investments and interest in full during the year.

It has been publicly noted that some Local Authorities have entered into arrangements to restructure their debt portfolios. Where the Council has outstanding investments with those Authorities, confirmation that the amounts due will be repaid in full on the maturity date has been received by Officers.

11. OTHER TREASURY MANAGEMENT ISSUES

None to report

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List of Temporary Lenders 2022/2023

APPENDIX A

DATE	LENDER	NEW LOAN VALUE	RATE	REPAY DATE	DURATION OF LOAN	INTEREST DUE TO 30/09/22	PRINCIPAL REPAID 2022/23	PRINCIPAL OUTSTANDING AS AT 30/09/2022
			%		DAYS IN 2022/23			
B/F	01/04/2022							
03/11/2021	BG & CAERPHILLYCARE AND REPAIR	365,000	-	CALL	365	2,347.50		365,000
27/08/2021	CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL	5,000,000	0.06	26/08/22	147	1,208.22	5,000,000	-
27/08/2021	FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL	2,000,000	0.06	26/08/22	147	483.29	2,000,000	-
28/06/2021	TAMESIDE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COU	3,000,000	0.08	27/06/22	87	572.05	3,000,000	-
28/06/2021	WEST YORKSHIRE COMB. AUTH.-WEST YOF	3,000,000	0.07	27/06/22	87	500.55	3,000,000	-
20/07/2021	LONDON BOROUGH OF NEWHAM	5,000,000	0.07	19/07/22	109	1,045.21	5,000,000	-
26/07/2021	WEST YORKSHIRE COMB. AUTH.-WEST YOF	5,000,000	0.06	26/04/22	25	205.48	5,000,000	-
28/10/2021	WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY	5,000,000	0.06	19/07/22	109	895.89	5,000,000	-
21/09/2021	WEALDON DISTRICT COUNCIL	5,000,000	0.04	08/04/22	7	38.36	5,000,000	-
30/11/2021	WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY	5,000,000	0.04	27/05/22	56	306.85	5,000,000	-
30/11/2021	SOUTH LAKELAND DISTRICT COUNCIL	1,000,000	0.04	27/05/22	56	61.37	1,000,000	-
26/11/2021	HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL	4,000,000	0.12	25/11/22	238	2,406.58		4,000,000
04/01/2022	SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	4,000,000	0.20	03/01/23	277	4,010.96		4,000,000
14/01/2022	WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL	6,000,000	0.20	16/11/22	229	6,016.44		6,000,000
28/01/2022	WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL	4,000,000	0.20	28/11/22	241	4,010.96		4,000,000
17/12/2021	SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	3,000,000	0.18	16/12/22	259	2,707.40		3,000,000
14/02/2022	HYNDBURN BOROUGH COUNCIL	2,000,000	0.50	13/02/23	318	5,013.70		2,000,000
	B/F Raised in previous years still outstanding	62,365,000				31,830.81	39,000,000	23,365,000
	NEW LOANS 2022/23							
27/05/2022	WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY	6,000,000	0.10	26/05/2023	309	2,087.67		6,000,000
27/05/2022	CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL	3,000,000	0.28	26/05/2023	309	2,922.74		3,000,000
27/05/2022	BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL	2,000,000	0.28	26/05/2023	309	1,948.49		2,000,000
08/04/2022	SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	3,000,000	0.28	06/04/2023	358	4,050.41		3,000,000
08/04/2022	CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL	2,000,000	0.28	06/04/2023	358	2,700.27		2,000,000
27/06/2022	SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	5,000,000	0.50	26/06/2023	278	6,575.34		5,000,000
13/07/2022	POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER OF WE	5,000,000	0.80	12/07/2023	262	8,767.12		5,000,000
26/08/2022	CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL	5,000,000	1.30	26/05/2023	218	6,410.96		5,000,000
26/08/2022	WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY	5,000,000	1.20	30/03/2023	216	5,917.81		5,000,000
	Total Raised During the Period	36,000,000				41,380.81	0	36,000,000
	Total Value of Loans	98,365,000				73,211.62	39,000,000	59,365,000
	Average Loan	3,783,269						
	Interest Paid	73,212						
	Average Interest Rate	0.51%						

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INVESTMENTS 2022/2023

APPENDIX B

DATE	BORROWER	VALUE	RATE		REPAYMENT DATE	DURATION OF INVESTMENT	INTEREST DUE TO	INVESTMENTS REPAID	PRINCIPAL O/S
B/F	01/04/22		%			DAYS IN 2022/23	30/09/22		AS AT 30/09/2022
03/11/21	LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON	6,000,000	0.250		02/11/2022	215	7,520.55		6,000,000
06/01/22	NATIONWIDE BUILDING SOCIETY	4,000,000	0.130		06/04/2022	5	71.23	4,000,000	0
04/02/22	LANDESBANK HESSEN THURINGEN GIROZENT	4,000,000	0.470		04/04/2022	3	154.52	4,000,000	0
14/02/22	NATIONAL BANK OF KUWAIT	4,000,000	0.600		14/04/2022	13	854.79	4,000,000	0
21/03/22	DERBY CITY COUNCIL	3,000,000	0.650		21/04/2022	20	1,068.49	3,000,000	0
29/03/22	PCC CUMBRIA	3,000,000	0.620		14/04/2022	13	662.47	3,000,000	0
31/03/22	SOUTH SOMERSET DISTRICT COUNCIL	4,000,000	0.580		08/04/2022	7	444.93	4,000,000	0
30/11/21	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	250,000	0.045		29/04/2022	28	8.63	250,000	0
30/11/21	THURROCK COUNCIL	6,000,000	0.200		30/11/2022	243	6,016.44		6,000,000
17/12/21	ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENH	1,000,000	0.250		16/12/2022	259	1,253.42		1,000,000
21/12/21	MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUN	5,000,000	0.110		21/04/2022	20	301.37	5,000,000	0
24/01/22	ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL	5,000,000	0.100		25/04/2022	24	328.77	5,000,000	0
31/01/22	SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL	6,000,000	0.050		31/05/2022	60	493.15	6,000,000	0
10/02/22	LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL	5,000,000	0.250		10/06/2022	70	2,397.26	5,000,000	0
21/02/22	CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL	5,000,000	0.160		23/05/2022	52	1,139.73	5,000,000	0
25/02/22	SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL	6,000,000	0.300		25/08/2022	146	7,200.00	6,000,000	0
28/02/22	LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY	2,500,000	0.750		30/05/2022	59	3,030.82	2,500,000	0
03/03/22	WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL	2,000,000	0.700		03/08/2022	124	4,756.16	2,000,000	0
08/03/22	GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL	2,500,000	0.500		08/04/2022	7	239.73	2,500,000	0
14/03/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	5,000,000	0.560		14/04/2022	13	997.26	5,000,000	0
15/03/22	ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL	6,000,000	0.450		15/06/2022	75	5,547.95	6,000,000	0
22/03/22	STIRLING COUNCIL	2,000,000	0.550		05/04/2022	4	120.55	2,000,000	0
23/03/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	4,000,000	0.595		27/05/2022	56	3,651.51	4,000,000	0
28/03/22	NATIONAL BANK OF CANADA - LONDON	4,000,000	0.650		28/04/2022	27	1,923.29	4,000,000	0
31/03/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	2,750,000	0.620		31/05/2022	60	2,802.74	2,750,000	0
	PUBLIC SECTOR DEPOSIT FUND	2,000,000	VAR.		CALL	183	11,481.18	0	2,000,000
	Investments Raised in Previous Year	100,000,000					64,466.93	85,000,000	15,000,000
	Current Year								
01/04/22	PCC DEVON AND CORNWALL	3,000,000	0.600		07/04/2022	6	295.89	3,000,000	0
04/04/22	LANDESBANK HESSEN THURINGEN GIROZENT	4,000,000	0.730		04/05/2022	30	2,400.00	4,000,000	0
06/04/22	NATIONAL BANK OF KUWAIT	2,000,000	1.600		06/10/2022	183	15,605.48		2,000,000
07/04/22	LANDESBANK HESSEN THURINGEN GIROZENT	2,000,000	1.030		08/08/2022	123	6,941.92	2,000,000	0
11/04/22	CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL	5,000,000	0.700		11/07/2022	91	8,726.03	5,000,000	0
08/04/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	5,000,000	0.550		11/04/2022	3	226.03	5,000,000	0
13/04/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	5,000,000	0.550		22/04/2022	9	678.08	5,000,000	0
21/04/22	NATIONAL BANK OF CANADA, LONDON	2,000,000	1.040		21/07/2022	91	5,185.75	2,000,000	0
21/04/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	6,000,000	0.550		29/04/2022	8	723.29	6,000,000	0
25/04/22	ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL	5,000,000	0.700		25/05/2022	30	2,876.71	5,000,000	0
28/04/22	PCC DEVON AND CORNWALL	2,000,000	0.650		09/05/2022	11	391.78	2,000,000	0
03/05/22	PCC DEVON AND CORNWALL	2,500,000	0.650		13/05/2022	10	445.21	2,500,000	0
04/05/22	LANDESBANK HESSEN THURINGEN GIROZENT	4,000,000	1.100		04/08/2022	92	11,090.41	4,000,000	0
05/05/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	2,000,000	0.815		09/05/2022	4	178.63	2,000,000	0
09/05/22	CORNWALL COUNCIL	5,000,000	0.840		09/06/2022	31	3,567.12	5,000,000	0
16/05/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	7,000,000	0.800		20/05/2022	4	613.70	7,000,000	0
27/05/22	BOURNEMTH, CHRISTCH. & POOLE COUNCIL	5,000,000	0.870		15/06/2022	19	2,264.38	5,000,000	0
01/06/22	OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND COMMISSIONER	1,000,000	0.830		09/06/2022	8	181.92	1,000,000	0
09/06/22	CORNWALL COUNCIL	5,000,000	1.050		11/07/2022	32	4,602.74	5,000,000	0
10/06/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	2,000,000	1.020		01/07/2022	21	1,173.70	2,000,000	0
10/06/22	AL RAYAN BANK PLC	1,000,000	1.970		10/03/2023	273	6,098.90		1,000,000
14/06/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	7,000,000	1.050		28/06/2022	14	2,819.18	7,000,000	0
15/06/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	2,000,000	1.030		29/06/2022	14	790.14	2,000,000	0
30/06/22	CORNWALL COUNCIL	5,000,000	1.070		29/07/2022	29	4,250.68	5,000,000	0
11/07/22	CORNWALL COUNCIL	5,000,000	1.080		11/08/2022	31	4,586.30	5,000,000	0
13/07/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	8,000,000	1.050		19/07/2022	6	1,380.82	8,000,000	0
21/07/22	NATIONAL BANK OF CANADA, LONDON	2,000,000	2.100		21/12/2022	153	8,284.93		2,000,000
29/07/22	CORNWALL COUNCIL	5,000,000	1.390		31/08/2022	33	6,283.56	5,000,000	0
10/08/22	LANDESBANK HESSEN THURINGEN GIROZENT	6,000,000	2.345		10/01/2023	153	20,044.93		6,000,000
10/08/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	4,000,000	1.550		19/08/2022	9	1,528.77	4,000,000	0
11/08/22	CORNWALL COUNCIL	5,000,000	1.580		12/09/2022	32	6,926.03	5,000,000	0
18/08/22	UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL, ESSEX	5,000,000	1.570		08/09/2022	21	4,516.44	5,000,000	0
23/08/22	CALDERDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COU	1,300,000	1.800		10/10/2022	48	2,500.27		1,300,000
25/08/22	LEEDS CITY COUNCIL	5,000,000	1.600		08/09/2022	14	3,068.49	5,000,000	0
05/09/22	CORNWALL COUNCIL	5,000,000	2.120		05/12/2022	91	7,550.68		5,000,000
08/09/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	6,000,000	1.640		20/09/2022	12	3,235.07	6,000,000	0
12/09/22	CORNWALL COUNCIL	5,000,000	2.230		12/12/2022	91	5,804.11		5,000,000
20/09/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	5,000,000	1.870		28/09/2022	8	2,049.32	5,000,000	0
22/09/22	SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL	5,000,000	3.000		22/12/2022	91	3,698.63		5,000,000
01/04/22	THURROCK BOROUGH COUNCIL	4,000,000	0.750		01/07/2022	91	7,479.45	4,000,000	0
05/04/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	4,000,000	0.550		26/04/2022	21	1,265.75	4,000,000	0
06/04/22	NATIONWIDE BUILDING SOCIETY	4,000,000	0.690		06/07/2022	91	6,881.10	4,000,000	0
13/04/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	4,000,000	0.630		13/05/2022	30	2,071.23	4,000,000	0
14/04/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	4,000,000	0.660		16/05/2022	32	2,314.52	4,000,000	0
14/04/22	NATIONAL BANK OF KUWAIT (INTERNATIONAL	4,000,000	2.030		13/04/2023	352	37,819.18		4,000,000
22/04/22	THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR	7,000,000	0.700		06/07/2022	75	10,068.49	7,000,000	0
28/04/22	NATIONAL BANK OF CANADA - LONDON	4,000,000	1.520		28/10/2022	183	25,985.75		4,000,000
23/05/22	CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL	5,000,000	0.860		23/08/2022	92	10,838.36	5,000,000	0
23/05/22	LEEDS CITY COUNCIL	5,000,000	0.890		23/06/2022	31	3,779.45	5,000,000	0
30/05/22	LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY	2,500,000	1.050		30/08/2022	92	6,616.44	2,500,000	0
31/05/22	AL RAYAN BANK PLC - LONDON	5,000,000	1.560		01/12/2022	184	26,284.93		5,000,000
06/06/22	SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL	5,000,000	1.090		06/09/2022	92	13,736.99	5,000,000	0
15/06/22	ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL	6,000,000	1.050		15/09/2022	92	15,879.45	6,000,000	0
01/07/22	THURROCK BOROUGH COUNCIL	4,000,000	1.800		03/04/2023	274	18,147.95		4,000,000
05/07/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	5,000,000	1.055		28/07/2022	23	3,323.97	5,000,000	0
05/07/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	6,000,000	1.290		05/09/2022	62	13,147.40	6,000,000	0
06/07/22	NATIONWIDE BUILDING SOCIETY	4,000,000	1.420		06/10/2022	92	13,538.63		4,000,000
06/07/22	PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL	5,000,000	1.370		06/10/2022	92	16,327.40		5,000,000
31/08/22	CITY OF BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT	5,000,000	1.850		14/10/2022	44	7,856.16		5,000,000
05/09/22	RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL	5,000,000	2.130		05/12/2022	91	7,586.30		5,000,000
06/09/22	SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL	5,000,000	1.850		06/12/2022	91	6,335.62		5,000,000
08/09/22	UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL	5,000,000	3.000		07/09/2023	205	9,452.05		5,000,000
15/09/22	DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE	4,000,000	1.650		26/09/2022	11	1,989.04	4,000,000	0
12/04/22	CCLA PUBLIC SECTOR DEPOSIT FUND	8,000,000	VAR.		CALL	172	44,469.52		8,000,000
	Investments Raised in Current Year	281,300,000					476,781.16	200,000,000	81,300,000

		381,300,000					541,248.10	285,000,000	96,300,000
	Average Investments	4,236,667							
	Interest Received	541,248							
	Average Interest Rate %	0.82%							

Agenda Item 26

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 15.03.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 14.03.2023

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **30th March, 2023**

Report Subject: **Treasury Management – Treasury Strategy Statement, Investment Strategy & MRP Policy Statement 2023/2024 (including Prudential Indicators)**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader/Cabinet Member - Corporate Overview & Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer Resources**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
	09/03/2023				16/03/2023		30/03/2023	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report for Members to consider and agree the proposed Treasury Strategy, Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy (including prudential indicators) to be adopted for the 2023/2024 financial year.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report is prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management that requires an annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) to be approved in advance of the relevant financial year. Prior to recommendation for formal approval by Council the TMSS has been scrutinised by the Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee at its March meeting.
- 2.2 In accordance with the Code, the Treasury Strategy Statement includes the Annual Investment Strategy. It is important to note that although it is called the Annual Investment Strategy, it is kept under review throughout the year and any changes required are reported to Council at that time.
- 2.3 The Code also recommends that Council creates and maintains a Treasury Management Policy Statement (TMPS), stating the policies and objectives of its treasury management activities. Although the Code does not require authorities to seek approval of the TMPS, it is attached as Appendix B for information.
- 2.4 Local Authorities are required to prepare, before the start of each financial year, a statement of their policy on making revenue provision to cover debt repayments (known as MRP or Minimum Revenue Provision) in respect of that financial year and submit it to full Council for approval. The MRP

statement for 2023/24 is therefore also included as part of the Treasury Strategy Statement (last page of Appendix A).

2.5 From 2019/20 onwards the revised codes of practice introduced a requirement for all local authorities to prepare a Capital Strategy report, which is intended to provide: -

- a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services
- an overview of how the associated risk is managed
- the implications for future financial sustainability

The Capital Strategy for Blaenau Gwent CBC is updated annually and is subject to a separate report on today's agenda.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

To include Recommendation(s) / Endorsement by other groups, e.g. CMT/Committees/Other groups)

3.1 Option 1

Members consider the Annual Treasury Strategy Statement & Annual Investment Strategy & MRP Policy Statement for the 2023/2024 financial year and the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators contained therein (Appendix A) and propose amendments prior to approval.

Option 2 (preferred option)

3.2 Members consider and agree the Annual Treasury Strategy Statement & Annual Investment Strategy & MRP Policy Statement for 2023/2024 financial year and the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators contained therein (Appendix A).

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

4.1 The report is written under legislation (the Local Government Act 2003), Welsh Government guidance and CIPFA codes of practice.

4.2 This report also supports the Corporate Plan Priority of being 'An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services at the right time and the right place', by ensuring effective forward financial planning arrangements are in place to support the Council's financial resilience.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

5.1.1 The Authority will comply with the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 and in doing so will strive for effective risk management and control, whilst at the same time pursuing best value.

5.1.2 The Treasury Strategy Statement & Annual Investment Strategy and MRP Policy Statement for 2023/2024 financial year will be adhered to at all times with the prime objectives being firstly the security and secondly the liquidity of investments. It will seek to minimise the revenue costs of debt whilst maintaining a prudent level of debt redemption. The annual investment strategy has been developed to provide additional opportunities for the higher levels of investment currently forecast into the medium term.

5.1.3 The revenue cost of debt arises through the Minimum Revenue Provision (or MRP) set aside for debt repayment. The revised MRP Policy was agreed by Council in December 2021 and will be applied from 2021/22 and beyond. Budget forecasts for MRP from 2023/2024 have been factored into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

5.2.1 The main risk in relation to Treasury Management is that of credit risk and protecting the Authority's cash. This is effectively managed through the Authority's risk averse Treasury Management policy that seeks to protect the capital sum rather than maximise investment returns.

5.3 ***Legal***

N/A

5.4 ***Human Resources***

5.4.1 There are no direct staffing implications to report. Staff directly involved with Treasury Management activities will continue to receive consultancy advice, training and professional/technical updates during the year.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

6.1.1 This report sets out the Authority's prudential indicators for the 2023/2024 financial year, against which performance can be monitored throughout the year. It also sets out the borrowing and investment strategy and MRP policy that will be adhered to for the year.

- 6.1.2 The Prudential Code was developed by CIPFA, as a professional Code of Practice to support local authorities in taking their decisions on capital investment.
- 6.1.3 The key objectives of the Prudential Code are to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital investment plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent, and sustainable. A further key objective is to ensure that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice and in a manner that supports prudence, affordability, and sustainability.
- 6.1.4 To demonstrate that local authorities have fulfilled these objectives, the Prudential Code sets out the indicators that must be used, and the factors that must be taken into account. The Code does not include suggested indicative limits or ratios.
- 6.1.5 The Treasury Strategy Statement attached as Appendix A includes the prudential indicators that are required to be established & monitored for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and that are recommended for approval by Council.
- 6.1.6 The Treasury Management Code requires that the Council nominate a Committee to be responsible for the effective scrutiny of Treasury Management Strategy and policies. For Blaenau Gwent CBC this role is undertaken by the Corporate and Performance Scrutiny Committee.
- 6.1.7 The documents contained within this report are required to be adequately scrutinised before being recommended to Council.
- 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***
The Council's Treasury Management activities support delivery of services to the public.
- 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
Members of the Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee and Council are involved in the development and monitoring compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.
- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
The revised MRP Policy was agreed by Council in December 2021 and will be applied from 2021/22. Budget forecasts for MRP from 2023/2024 have been factored into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and longer-term financial planning.

- 6.5 ***Preventative focus***
The Authority's Treasury Management policy prioritises protecting the capital sum rather than achieving higher rates of interest.
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
N/A
- 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
N/A
- 6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***
The Authority will consider Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) factors when setting up any investment arrangements. For example, we would avoid investing in companies linked with fossil fuels.
- 6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment***
See above
7. **Monitoring Arrangements**
- 7.1 As the nominated Scrutiny Committee, Corporate Overview and Performance will receive three reports in every annual cycle: -
- A Treasury Management Policy report prior to the start of every financial year
 - A mid-year progress report on Treasury Management activity
 - An end of year outturn report on Treasury Management activity
- 7.2 In addition, this Scrutiny Committee will receive quarterly monitoring reports on the Authority's performance against its Treasury Management Prudential Indicators.
8. **Background Documents / Electronic Links**
- Appendix A
 - Appendix B

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BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Treasury Management Strategy Statement

Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement

2023/24

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Council is required to operate a balanced budget, which broadly means that cash raised during the year will meet cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operation is to ensure that this cash flow is adequately planned, with cash being available when it is needed. Surplus monies are invested in low-risk counterparties or instruments commensurate with the Council's low risk appetite, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering investment return.

The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, essentially the longer-term cash flow planning, to ensure that the Council can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer-term cash may involve arranging long or short-term loans or using longer-term cash flow surpluses. On occasion, when it is prudent and economic, any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.

The contribution the treasury management function makes to the authority is critical, as the balance of debt and investment operations ensure liquidity and / or the ability to meet spending commitments as they fall due, either on day-to-day revenue or for larger capital projects. The treasury operations will see a balance of the interest costs of debt and the investment income arising from cash deposits affecting the available budget. Since cash balances generally result from reserves and balances, it is paramount to ensure adequate security of the sums invested, as a loss of principal will in effect result in a loss to the Council's General Fund Balance.

CIPFA defines Treasury Management as:

"The management of the local authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

Whilst any commercial initiatives or loans to third parties will impact on the treasury function, these activities are generally classed as non-treasury activities, (arising usually from capital expenditure), and are separate from the day-to-day treasury management activities.

To date the Authority has not engaged in any commercial investments and has no non treasury investments.

1.2 Statutory requirements

The Local Government Act 2003 (the Act) and supporting regulations requires the Council to 'have regard to' the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice to set Prudential and Treasury Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

The Act therefore requires the Council to set out its Treasury Strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy. The Treasury Strategy details the expected activities of the Treasury function in the forthcoming financial year (2023/24). The Investment Strategy sets out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.

Statutory Instrument WSI 2008 no. 588 section 3 lays down that:

"A local authority must calculate for the current financial year an amount of minimum revenue provision which it considers to be prudent."

Along with the above duty, the Welsh Government issued guidance in March 2008 (and further updated in November 2018) which requires that a Statement on the Authority's policy for its annual MRP should be submitted to the full Council for approval before the start of the financial year to which the provision will relate. A revised MRP policy was agreed by Council in 2021, the updated Annual MRP Policy Statement is therefore included at section 5.

1.3 CIPFA requirements

The CIPFA 2021 Prudential and Treasury Management Codes require all local authorities to prepare a Capital Strategy, which will provide the following:

- a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services
- an overview of how the associated risk is managed
- the implications for future financial sustainability

The aim of this capital strategy is to ensure that all elected members of the full council fully understand the overall long-term policy objectives and resulting capital strategy requirements, governance procedures and risk appetite.

The Capital Strategy will include capital expenditure, investments and liabilities and treasury management in sufficient detail to allow all members to understand how stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability will be secured.

The primary requirements of the Treasury Management Code are:

1. Creation and maintenance of a Treasury Management Policy Statement which sets out the policies and objectives of the Council's treasury management activities.
2. Creation and maintenance of Treasury Management Practices which set out the manner in which the Council will seek to achieve those policies and objectives.
3. Receipt by the full council of an annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement - including the Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy - for the year ahead, a Mid-Year Review Report and an Annual Report covering activities during the previous year.
4. Delegation by the Council of responsibilities for implementing and monitoring treasury management policies and practices and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions, which in this Council is the Chief Officer Resources.
5. Delegation by the Council of the role of scrutiny of treasury management strategy and policies to a specific named body. For this Council the delegated body is the Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee.

1.4 Reporting Arrangements

The Full Council is currently required to receive and approve, as a minimum, three main reports each year, which incorporate a variety of policies, estimates and actuals.

- a. **The Treasury Strategy Statement** (this report) - The first, and most important report covers:
 - The capital plans (including prudential indicators)
 - a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy (how residual capital expenditure is charged to revenue over time);
 - the Treasury Management Strategy (how the investments and borrowings are to be organised), including treasury indicators; and
 - an Annual Investment Strategy (the parameters on how investments are to be managed).
- b. **A mid year treasury management report** – This will update members with the progress of the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and an assessment of whether the treasury strategy is being met or whether any policies require revision.

- c. **An annual treasury report** – This is a backward-looking review document and provides details of a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations compared to the estimates within the strategy.

Scrutiny

The above highlighted reports are required to be adequately scrutinised before being recommended to and accepted by the Full Council. This role is undertaken by the Corporate and Performance Scrutiny Committee.

In addition to the three major reports detailed above, from 2023/24 quarterly reporting (end of June/end of December) is also required. These additional reports do not have to be reported to Full Council but must be adequately scrutinised. The table below sets out the frequency of the reporting requirements:

Area of Responsibility	Frequency
Treasury Management Strategy / Investment Strategy / MRP policy	Annually before the start of the financial year
Treasury Management Strategy / Investment Strategy / MRP policy – midyear outturn report	Mid-year
Treasury Management Strategy/Performance against approved Prudential Indicators	Quarterly
Treasury Management Strategy / Investment Strategy / MRP policy – updates or revisions at other times	Ad hoc
Annual Treasury Outturn Report	Annually by 30 September after the year end.

1.5 Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24

The strategy for 2023/24 covers two main areas:

Capital issues

- the capital expenditure plans and the associated prudential indicators
- the minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy

Treasury management issues

- the current treasury position

- treasury indicators which limit the treasury risk and activities of the Council
- prospects for interest rates
- the borrowing strategy
- policy on borrowing in advance of need
- debt rescheduling
- the investment strategy
- creditworthiness policy; and
- the policy on use of external service providers.

These elements incorporate the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, Welsh Government Investment Guidance and MRP Guidance, the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code.

1.6 Training

The CIPFA Treasury Management Code requires the responsible officer to ensure that members with responsibility for treasury management receive adequate training in treasury management. This especially applies to members responsible for scrutiny.

Furthermore, the Code states that they expect “all organisations to have a formal and comprehensive knowledge and skills or training policy for the effective acquisition and retention of treasury management knowledge and skills for those responsible for management, delivery, governance, and decision making.

The scale and nature of this will depend on the size and complexity of the organisation’s treasury management needs. Organisations should consider how to assess whether treasury management staff and board/ council members have the required knowledge and skills to undertake their roles and whether they have been able to maintain those skills and keep them up to date.

As a minimum, authorities should carry out the following to monitor and review knowledge and skills:

- Record attendance at training and ensure action is taken where poor attendance is identified.
- Prepare tailored learning plans for treasury management officers and council members.
- Require treasury management officers and council members to undertake self-assessment against the required competencies

- Have regular communication with officers and council members, encouraging them to highlight training needs on an ongoing basis.”

Members were invited to attend a training session in January 2023, provided by the Authority’s Treasury Management Advisors Link Treasury Services. Further training will be arranged as required.

A formal record of the training received by officers central to the Treasury function will be maintained by the Capital and Corporate Accounting Team. Similarly, a formal record of the treasury management/capital finance training received by members will also be maintained by the Democratic Services Team.

1.7 Treasury Consultants

The Council uses external treasury management advisors to support its Treasury Management function however the Council recognises that responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the organisation at all times and will ensure that undue reliance is not placed upon the services of our external service providers. All decisions will be undertaken with regards to all available information, including, but not solely, our treasury advisers.

It also recognises that there is value in employing external providers of treasury management services in order to acquire access to specialist skills and resources. The Council will ensure that the terms of their appointment and the methods by which their value will be assessed are properly agreed and documented and subjected to regular review.

The Council’s current advisors are Link Group and have been appointed from May 2022.

1.8 The role of the S151 Officer

The role of the S151 Officer in relation to Treasury management has been embodied in the CIPFA Code of Practice for many years. The 2017 revised Code, further enhanced this role in relation to the following areas:

- preparation of a capital strategy to include capital expenditure, capital financing, non-financial investments and treasury management, with a long-term timeframe ensuring that the capital strategy is prudent, sustainable and affordable in the long term and provides value for money
- ensuring that due diligence has been carried out on all treasury and non-financial investments and is in accordance with the risk appetite of the authority

- ensure that the authority has appropriate legal powers to undertake expenditure on non-financial assets and their financing
- ensuring the proportionality of all investments so that the authority does not undertake a level of investing which exposes the authority to an excessive level of risk compared to its financial resources
- ensuring that an adequate governance process is in place for the approval, monitoring and ongoing risk management of all non-financial investments and long-term liabilities
- provision to members of a schedule of all non-treasury investments including material investments in subsidiaries, joint ventures, loans and financial guarantees
- ensuring that members are adequately informed and understand the risk exposures taken on by the authority
- ensuring that the authority has adequate expertise, either in house or externally provided, to carry out the above
- creation of Treasury Management Practices which specifically deal with how non treasury investments will be carried out and managed.

2. The Capital Prudential Indicators 2023/2024 – 2025/2026

The Council’s capital expenditure plans are the key driver of treasury management activity. The output of the capital expenditure plans is reflected in prudential indicators, which are designed to assist members overview and confirm capital expenditure plans.

2.1 Capital Expenditure and Financing

This prudential indicator is a summary of the Council’s capital expenditure plans, both those agreed previously, and those forming part of this budget cycle. The actual capital expenditure that was incurred in 2021/2022 and the estimates of capital expenditure to be incurred for the current and future years that are recommended for approval are:

Capital Expenditure £000's					
	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Estimate	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate
Total	15,261	50,809	74,300	26,931	17,835

Note

Actual figures for 2021/22 & estimated figures for 2022/2023 represent total gross capital expenditure (I.e. include all expenditure including that financed from grant).

Estimated figures for 2023/24, 2024/25 & 2025/26 are based on the Authority's approved capital programme plus external funding approvals received at this stage and estimated spend
The increases for 2022/23 onwards relate mainly to the railway works and the 0% loan from WG

The table below summarises the above capital expenditure plans and how these plans are being financed by capital or revenue resources. Any shortfall of resources results in a funding borrowing need.

Capital Expenditure £000's	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Estimate	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate
Total	15,261	50,809	74,300	26,931	17,835
Financed by:					
Grants, Capital Receipts, revenue and other sources	14,264	45,055	38,070	17,026	13,955
Net financing need for the year from USB** and PB***, & Other Borrowing	997	5,754	36,230	9,905	1,905

** USB – Unhypotheated Supported Borrowing – borrowing that is supported through the Revenue Support Grant.

***PB – Prudential Borrowing – borrowing that is not supported through the Revenue Support Grant.

2.2 The Council’s borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement)

The second prudential indicator is the Council’s Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR is simply the total historic outstanding capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for from either revenue or capital resources. It is essentially a measure of the Council’s indebtedness and so its underlying borrowing need. Any capital expenditure, which has not immediately been paid for (i.e. is borrowed for), will increase the CFR.

The CFR does not increase indefinitely, as the minimum revenue provision (MRP) is a statutory annual revenue charge which broadly reduces the indebtedness in line with each asset’s life, and so charges the economic consumption of capital assets as they are used.

The CFR includes any other long term liabilities (e.g. finance leases). Whilst these increase the CFR, and therefore the Council’s borrowing requirement, these types of scheme include a borrowing facility and so the Council is not required to separately borrow for these schemes. The Council currently has £0.139m of such schemes within the CFR.

The CFR projections recommended for approval are shown in the table below:

Capital Financing Requirement					
	<u>2021/22</u> Actual £000	<u>2022/23</u> Estimate £000	<u>2023/24</u> Estimate £000	<u>2024/25</u> Estimate £000	<u>2025/26</u> Estimate £000
CFR at start of financial year	169,050	169,422	173,932	208,824	217,295
CFR at end of financial year	169,422	173,932	208,824	217,295	219,642
Movement in CFR	372	4,510	34,892	8,471	2,347
<i>Movement in CFR represented by:</i>					
Net Financing need for the year (above)	996	5,754	36,230	9,905	3,880
New Finance Leases	501	500	500	500	500
less MRP	-1,125	-1,744	-1,838	-1,934	-2,033
	372	4,510	34,892	8,471	2,347

2.3 Liability Benchmark

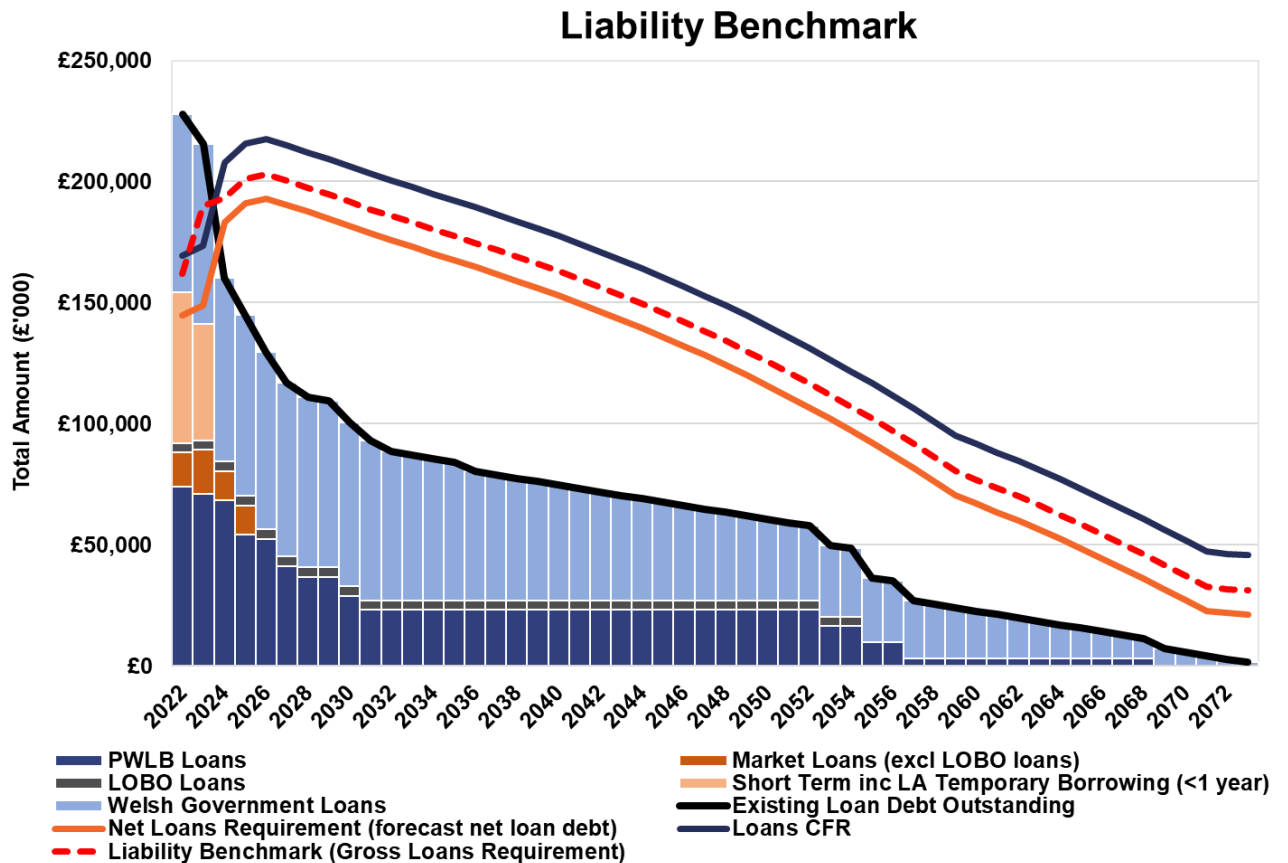
A third and new prudential indicator for 2023/24 is the Liability Benchmark (LB). The Authority is required to estimate and measure the LB for the forthcoming financial year and the following two financial years, as a minimum.

There are four components to the LB: -

1. Existing loan debt outstanding: the Authority’s existing loans that are still outstanding in future years.

2. Loans CFR: this is calculated in accordance with the loans CFR definition in the Prudential Code and projected into the future based on approved prudential borrowing and planned MRP.
3. Net loans requirement: this will show the Authority’s gross loan debt less treasury management investments at the last financial year-end, projected into the future and based on its approved prudential borrowing, planned MRP and any other major cash flows forecast.
4. Liability benchmark (or gross loans requirement): this equals net loans requirement plus short-term liquidity allowance.

The chart below shows the Authority’s Liability Benchmark (dotted line) for the maturity profile of the outstanding debt.



Liability Benchmark					
	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2023/24</u>	<u>2024/25</u>	<u>2025/26</u>

APPENDIX A

Treasury Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy & MRP Statement 2023/24

	<u>Actual</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>Estimate</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>Estimate</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>Estimate</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>Estimate</u> <u>£000</u>
Liability Benchmark	161,827	189,836	193,229	201,200	203,047
Existing Loan Debt Outstanding	227,827	215,542	160,353	144,901	129,624
(Over)/Under Liability Benchmark	(66,000)	(25,706)	32,876	56,299	73,423

The liability benchmark, or the Gross Loans requirement, is the forecast of the level of debt the Council requires in accordance with its budget plans.

Where the liability benchmark is greater than the existing loan debt, it suggests that there is a borrowing requirement, and the Authority is in an under-borrowed position. Where the existing loans debt is greater than the liability benchmark, it suggests that the Authority is over-borrowed and has surplus cash requiring to be invested.

The above chart above shows that the Authority was in an over-borrowed position as at 31st March 2022, which is due to the receipt of the £70m rail loan from the Welsh Government in March 2021. As expenditure is incurred in relation to the rail scheme, this over-borrowed position will reduce as the Capital Financing Requirement begins to increase. Excess cash balances from the receipt of the loan were invested in line with the Council's Investment Strategy.

The chart also shows that as the existing loan debt outstanding decreases due to maturing debt being repaid, the Authority will have a borrowing requirement. This borrowing requirement is built into the annual Treasury Management estimates included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy and will be met via the Borrowing Strategy outlined in section 3.4 below.

2.4 Affordability prudential indicators

The previous sections cover the overall capital and control of borrowing prudential indicators, but within this framework prudential indicators are required to assess the affordability of the capital investment plans. These provide an indication of the impact of the capital investment plans on the Council's overall finances. The Council is asked to approve the following indicators:

2.5 Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream.

This indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income) against the net revenue stream.

Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream					
	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Estimate	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate
	%	%	%	%	%
General Fund	2.62%	3.44%	4.06%	3.89%	3.70%

Note:

The estimates of financing costs for 2023/2024 include current commitments and the proposals in the budget report to be presented to Council in February/March

The net revenue stream for 2024/2025 & 2025/2026 are based on the following assumptions, which have been used as the basis for the Authority’s medium term financial strategy (MTFS).

- *RSG & NNDR – per MTFS assumption to increase by 2% for 2024/25 and remain static for 2025/26*
- *Council Tax -assumes 4% increase for 2024/25 and 4% for 2025/26.*
- *Council Tax Base – remains at 2022/2023 level*

3.0 Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/2024

The capital expenditure plans set out in Section 2 provide details of the capital activity of the Council. The treasury management function ensures that the Council's cash is organised in accordance with the relevant professional codes, so that sufficient cash is available to meet this capital activity and the Council's Capital Strategy. This will involve both the organisation of the cash flow and, where capital plans require, the organisation of appropriate borrowing facilities. The strategy covers the relevant treasury / prudential indicators, the current and projected debt positions and the annual investment strategy.

The suggested strategy for 2023/2024 in respect of the following aspects of the treasury management function is based upon the treasury officers' views on interest rates, supplemented with leading market forecasts provided by the Council's treasury advisor, Link Treasury Services.

The Strategy covers:

- 3.1 *the current treasury portfolio position*
- 3.2 *Treasury management prudential Indicators for 2023/2024 to 2025/2026*
- 3.3 *prospects for interest rates*
- 3.4 *the borrowing strategy*
- 3.5 *policy on borrowing in advance of need*
- 3.6 *debt rescheduling*
- 3.7 *strategy on the use of usable capital receipts*

3.1 Current Treasury Portfolio Position

The Council's treasury portfolio position at 31 March 2022, with forward projections are summarised below. The table shows the actual external debt (the treasury management operations), against the underlying capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement - CFR), highlighting any over or under borrowing.

Treasury Portfolio Position					
	2021/22 actual £000	2022/23 estimate £000	2023/24 estimate £000	2024/25 estimate £000	2025/26 estimate £000
<i>External Debt:</i>					
Debt	227,827	215,542	217,884	218,348	220,814
Other Long-Term Liabilities	421	730	994	1,241	1,138
Gross Debt as at 31 March	228,248	216,272	218,878	219,589	221,952
The Capital Financing Requirement	169,422	173,932	208,824	217,295	219,642
Under / (Over) Borrowing	(59,198)	(42,340)	(10,054)	(2,294)	(2,310)

0

The Council is currently in an over borrowed position. This means its actual debt is higher than its capital financing requirement in the current year, this is as a result of Welsh Government providing the Authority with a specific loan in relation to the Rail Track in March 2021. However, the table indicates that as expenditure is incurred in relation to this capital scheme, the Authority will revert to its under borrowed position over time.

Within the range of prudential indicators there are a number of key indicators to ensure that the Council operates its activities within well-defined limits. One of these is that the Council needs to ensure that its gross debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2023/24 and the following two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years but ensures that borrowing is not undertaken for revenue or speculative purposes.

The Chief Officer Resources reports that the Council complied with this prudential indicator in the current year and does not envisage difficulties for the future. This view takes account of current commitments, existing plans, and the proposals in the budget report.

3.2 Treasury Management Prudential Indicators for 2023/24 – 2025/26

The following section sets out the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators that are recommended for approval.

3.2.1 Adoption of CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management

In December 2021, CIPFA issued a revised CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services, the Council will continue to comply with this.

3.2.2 Treasury management limits on activity

There are four debt related treasury activity limits. The purpose of these are to restrain the activity of the treasury function within certain limits, thereby managing risk and reducing the impact of any adverse movement in interest rates. However, if these are set to be too restrictive they will impair the opportunities to reduce costs / improve performance. The indicators are:

- **Upper Limit on Fixed Interest exposure**

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has always adopted a risk averse strategy in relation to variable rate debt and should interest rates rise the Authority would wish to continue with its strategy of maintaining a stable long-term portfolio by drawing longer term fixed rate funding. In order to be consistent with this strategy, the upper limit on fixed rate exposures for 2023/2024, 2024/2025 & 2025/2026 should be set at 100% of its net outstanding sums.

- **Upper Limit on Variable Interest Exposure**

In order to give the flexibility to enable debt rescheduling opportunities to be undertaken, the upper limit on variable rate exposures for 2023/2024, 2024/2025 & 2025/2026 should be set at 30% of its net outstanding sums.

- **Range of Exposures**

This means that the Chief Officer Resources will manage fixed interest exposures within the range 70% to 100% and variable rate exposures within the range 0% to 30%. This is a continuation of current practice.

- **Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing**

It is recommended that the Council sets upper and lower limits for the maturity structure of its borrowings as follows:

The amount of projected borrowing that is fixed rate and maturing in each period, as a percentage of total projected borrowing that is fixed rate, is illustrated in the table below. This is a continuation of the current practice.

	Upper Limit	Lower Limit
Under 12 months	20%	0%
12 months & within 24 months	20%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	50%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	75%	0%
10 years and above	95%	5%

3.2.3 Authorised Limit for External Debt

This is a key Prudential Indicator that represents a control on the maximum level of borrowing. This represents a legal limit beyond which external debt is prohibited, and this limit needs to be set or revised by the full Council. It reflects the level of external debt which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term.

This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003. The Government retains an option to control either the total of all councils' plans, or those of a specific council, although this power has not yet been exercised.

It is recommended that the Council approves the following Authorised Limits for its Total External Debt Gross of Investments for the next three financial years.

Authorised limit for external debt				
	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Borrowing	260,052	247,580	255,640	255,300
Other long-term liabilities	701	803	1,093	1,365
Total	260,753	248,383	256,733	256,665

3.2.4 Operational Boundary

This is the limit beyond which external debt is not normally expected to exceed. In most cases, this would be a similar figure to the CFR, but may be lower or higher depending on the levels of actual debt and the ability to fund under-borrowing by other cash resources.

The proposed Operational Boundary for external debt is based on the same estimates as the Authorised Limit but directly reflects the Chief Officer Resources' prudent estimate of the most likely but not worst-case scenario. It excludes the contingency included within the Authorised Limit (to allow for example for unusual cash movements) and equates to the maximum of external debt projected by this estimate. The Operational Boundary represents a key management tool for in year monitoring by the Chief Officer Resources.

It is recommended that the Council approves the following Operational Boundary Limits for the next three financial years.

Operational Boundary for external debt				
	202/223 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Borrowing	236,411	225,073	232,400	232,091
Other long term liabilities	637	730	994	1,241
Total	237,048	225,803	233,394	233,332

3.2.5 Actual External Debt

The Council's actual external debt as at 31 March 2022 was £228.2 million (including temporary borrowing), comprising 99.9% borrowing and 0.1% other long term liabilities. It should be noted that actual external debt is not directly comparable to the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary since the actual debt reflects the position at one point in time.

3.3 Prospects for Interest Rates

As part of their service, the Council's treasury advisor Link Group assist the Council to formulate a view on interest rates. The following table reflects current views:

Link Group Interest Rate View	19.12.22												
	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25
BANK RATE	3.50	4.25	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.00	2.75	2.50	2.50
3 month ave earnings	3.60	4.30	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.00	3.80	3.30	3.00	3.00	2.80	2.50	2.50
6 month ave earnings	4.20	4.50	4.60	4.50	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.40	3.10	3.00	2.90	2.60	2.60
12 month ave earnings	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.50	4.30	4.20	4.00	3.50	3.20	3.10	3.00	2.70	2.70
5 yr PWLB	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.10
10 yr PWLB	4.30	4.40	4.40	4.30	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.30
25 yr PWLB	4.60	4.60	4.60	4.50	4.40	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.50
50 yr PWLB	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.30	3.20	3.20

Additional notes by Link on this forecast table: -

- *Our central forecast for interest rates was updated on 19 December and reflected a view that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) would be keen to further demonstrate its anti-inflation credentials by delivering a succession of rate increases. Bank Rate stands at 4% currently, but is expected to reach a peak of 4.5% in H1 2023.*
- *Further down the road, we anticipate the Bank of England will be keen to loosen monetary policy when the worst of the inflationary pressures are behind us – but that timing will be one of fine judgment: cut too soon, and inflationary pressures may well build up further; cut too late and any downturn or recession may be prolonged.*
- *In the upcoming months, our forecasts will be guided not only by economic data releases and clarifications from the MPC over its monetary policies and the Government over its fiscal policies, but the on-going conflict between Russia and Ukraine. (More recently, the heightened tensions between China/Taiwan/US also have the potential to have a wider and negative economic impact.)*

Forecasts for Bank Rate

- As shown in the forecast table above, the forecast for Bank Rate now indicates a peak of 4.5% by the first quarter of the 2023/24 financial year. It is expected that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will deliver another 0.25% increase in March followed by a further increase of 0.25% in May to arrive at the peak of 4.5% (4.0% currently).

However, the following could have an impact on these forecasts:

- The CPI measure of inflation looks to have peaked at 11.1% in Q4 2022 (currently 10.7%). Despite the cost-of-living squeeze that is still taking shape, the Bank will want to see evidence that wages are not spiralling

upwards in what is evidently a very tight labour market.

- The plan to sell £10bn of gilts back into the market each quarter (Quantitative Tightening), has started and will focus on the short, medium, and longer end of the curve in equal measure, now that the short-lived effects of the Truss/Kwarteng unfunded dash for growth policy are firmly in the rear-view mirror.
- On the positive side, consumers are still estimated to be sitting on over £160bn of excess savings left over from the pandemic so that will cushion some of the impact of the above challenges. However, most of those are held by more affluent people whereas lower income families already spend nearly all their income on essentials such as food, energy and rent/mortgage payments.

Gilt yields / PWLB rates

The yield curve movements have become less volatile of late and PWLB 5 to 50 years Certainty Rates are, generally, in the range of 4.10% to 4.80%. The view is that markets have built in, already, nearly all the effects on gilt yields of the likely increases in Bank Rate and the elevated inflation outlook.

Investment and borrowing rates

Investment returns are expected to improve slightly in 2023/24 in line with the markets expectations of further rate rises. However, while markets are pricing in response to the series of Bank Rate hikes, actual economic circumstances may see the MPC fall short of these elevated expectations.

Borrowing interest rates fell to historically very low rates as a result of the COVID crisis and the quantitative easing operations of the Bank of England. The Bank of England has since increased the base rate at each of its last 10 meetings, now to its current rate of 4.0%. The policy of avoiding new borrowing by running down spare cash balances has served local authorities well over the last few years.

The current margins over gilt yields are as follows: -.

- **PWLB Standard Rate** is gilt plus 100 basis points (G+100bps)
- **PWLB Certainty Rate** is gilt plus 80 basis points (G+80bps)
- **PWLB HRA Standard Rate** is gilt plus 100 basis points (G+100bps)
- **PWLB HRA Certainty Rate** is gilt plus 80bps (G+80bps)
- **Local Infrastructure Rate** is gilt plus 60bps (G+60bps)

Borrowing for capital expenditure. The long-term (beyond 10 years), forecast for Bank Rate is 2.50%. As all PWLB certainty rates are currently above this level, borrowing strategies will need to be reviewed in that context. Better value can

generally be obtained at the shorter end of the curve and short-dated fixed LA to LA monies should be considered. Temporary borrowing rates are likely, however, to remain near Bank Rate and may also prove attractive whilst the market waits for inflation, and therein gilt yields, to drop back later in 2023.

While this authority will not be able to avoid borrowing to finance new capital expenditure and to replace maturing debt the cost of carry will be minimised, (the difference between higher borrowing costs and lower investment returns).

3.4 The Borrowing Strategy

The Council is currently in an over borrowed position. This means its actual debt is higher than its capital financing requirement in the current year, this is as a result of Welsh Government providing the Authority with a specific interest free loan in relation to the Rail Track project. However, as expenditure is incurred in relation to the scheme, the Authority will revert to its under borrowed position

The Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. With short term interest rates currently lower than long term rates, it is likely to be more cost effective in the short term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short term loans instead.

By doing so, the Authority is able to reduce borrowing costs and reduce overall treasury risk. This results in the Council having a low liquidity ratio, however the risk associated with this is minimal and is continually monitored. The benefits of short-term borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long-term borrowing rates are forecast to decrease. The Council's Treasury Advisors will assist the Authority with this cost of carry and breakeven analysis.

In addition, the Authority will borrow short term loans to cover cash flow shortages.

The borrowing strategy to be adopted will therefore be:

(Each strand of the strategy will be considered together, and decisions made based on the most advantageous position for the Authority at that time).

To utilise the Authority's overdraft facility:

to fund unexpected daily cash deficits;
to fund temporary cash shortfalls where there are no other sources of funding available within the marketplace.

To borrow over the short term:

to fund temporary cash shortfalls;
to maintain a suitably balanced maturity profile;
to make short term savings required in order to meet budgetary constraints;

in anticipation of securing longer term loans at more attractive rates.

To borrow over the long term:

to reduce the Authority's average cost of borrowing;
to maintain a stable, longer term portfolio;
to maximise the potential for future debt rescheduling.

If appropriate to avoid all new external borrowing:

to maximise savings in the short term;
to run down temporary investment levels;
to minimise exposure to interest rate and credit risk.

Sensitivity of the forecast – In normal circumstances the main sensitivities of the forecast are likely to be the two scenarios noted below. Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution will be adopted with the 2023/24 treasury operations. The Chief Officer Resources will monitor interest rates in financial markets and adopt a pragmatic approach to changing circumstances:

- *if it was felt that there was a significant risk of a sharp FALL in borrowing rates, then borrowing will be postponed.*
- *if it was felt that there was a significant risk of a much sharper RISE in borrowing rates than that currently forecast, fixed rate funding will be drawn whilst interest rates are lower than they are projected to be in the next few years.*

3.5 Policy on borrowing in advance of need

The Council will not borrow more than or in advance of its needs purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. Any decision to borrow in advance will be within forward approved Capital Financing Requirement estimates and will be carefully considered to ensure value for money can be demonstrated and that the Council can ensure the security of such funds.

In determining whether borrowing will be undertaken in advance of need the Council will;

- ensure that there is a clear link between the capital programme and maturity profile of the existing debt portfolio which supports the need to take funding in advance of need
- ensure the ongoing revenue liabilities created, and the implications for the future plans and budgets have been considered
- evaluate the economic and market factors that might influence the manner and timing of any decision to borrow
- consider the merits and demerits of alternative forms of funding

- consider the alternative interest rate bases available, the most appropriate periods to fund and repayment profiles to use.
- consider the impact of borrowing in advance on temporarily (until required to finance capital expenditure) increasing investment cash balances and the consequent increase in exposure to counterparty risk, and other risks, and the level of such risks given the controls in place to minimise them.

3.6 Debt Rescheduling

As short term borrowing rates will be still be cheaper than longer term rates, there may be potential for some residual opportunities to generate savings by switching from long term debt to short term debt. However, these savings will need to be considered in the light of the size of premiums incurred, their short term nature, and the likely cost of refinancing those short term loans, once they mature, compared to the current rates of longer term debt in the existing debt portfolio.

The reasons for any rescheduling to take place will include: -

- the generation of cash savings and / or discounted cash flow savings
- helping to fulfil the strategy outlined in paragraph 3.4 above
- enhance the balance of the portfolio (amend the maturity profile and/or the balance of volatility).

Variations in risk will be considered when evaluating such opportunities, in order to ensure that the Authority's risk averse strategy is maintained.

All rescheduling will be reported to Council as part of the mid-year and Annual Treasury Outturn reports.

3.7 Strategy on the use of Usable Capital Receipts

The long standing policy on usable capital receipts is that they are immediately invested internally, thereby helping to improve the Authority's cash flow position and reducing the level of external loans that need to be raised. This in turn reduces external interest charges from the money market. This approach is consistent with what is regarded as good practice in terms of strategic level treasury management and overall produces savings in debt servicing costs for the Authority. However, as approved sums of usable capital receipts are subsequently used to finance part of the annual capital programme each year, appropriate allowance then needs to be made for the use of these receipts in determining the estimated level of external borrowing required for that year. Hence usable capital receipts are released on a controlled basis and the annual estimates for external interest charges are adjusted accordingly.

4.0 Annual Investment Strategy

4.1 Background

The Welsh Government and CIPFA have extended the meaning of ‘investments’ to include both financial and non-financial investments. This report deals solely with treasury (financial) investments, (as managed by the treasury management team). Non-financial investments, essentially the purchase of income yielding assets, are covered in the Capital Strategy, (a separate report).

In setting its investment strategy the Council has regard to the following: -

- Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003
- The Welsh Government’s Guidance on Local Government Investments (“the Guidance”)
- CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes 2021 (“the Code”)
- CIPFA Treasury Management Guidance Notes 2018

The Council’s investment priorities are:

1. The **Security** of the capital sum –ensuring that our investments are safe and not at risk of being lost;
2. The **Liquidity** of its investments – ensuring that our investments are easily accessible i.e. not tied up for long periods of time;
3. Return on investment (**Yield**) – once security and liquidity have been satisfied in line with the Council’s risk appetite, then and only then will the Council seek the maximum return on its investment.

The Borrowing of monies purely to invest or on-lend and make a return is unlawful and this Council will not engage in such activity.

Investments will be made with reference to the core balance and cash flow requirements and the outlook for short-term interest rates (i.e. rates for investments up to 12 months). Greater returns are usually obtainable by investing for longer periods. The Council mainly maintains temporary, short-term investments (i.e. for periods of less than a year) and investments will accordingly only normally be made with reference to the cash flow requirements, including the investing of sums borrowed at prevailing low interest rates in anticipation of capital spending. More recently, due to the receipt of cash in relation to specific capital schemes (Rail Track project) where spend is likely to be incurred over a 5-year period, this has identified cash that could be invested for longer periods, this annual investment strategy has been amended to reflect this

Investment returns expectations

The current forecast shown in paragraph 3.3, includes a forecast for the next increase in Bank Rate in March 2023.

The suggested budgeted investment earnings rates for returns on investments placed for periods up to about three months during each financial year, (based on a 0.25% increase in March 2023) are as follows:

Average earnings in each year	
2023/24	4.40%
2024/25	3.30%
2025/26	2.60%
2026/27	2.50%
Long term later years	2.80%

For its cash flow generated balances, the Council will seek to utilise the Local Authority lending market, notice accounts, money market funds and short-dated deposits, in order to benefit from the compounding of interest.

4.2 Definition of Investments – Specified and non-specified

The Local Government Act 2003 refers to specified and non-specified investments. The Welsh Assembly Government’s Guidance on Local Government Investments, effective from 1st April 2010, defines the following:-

Specified Investments:

An investment is a **specified** one if **all** of the following apply:-

- (a) it is denominated in sterling and any payments or repayments in respect of it are payable only in sterling
- (b) the investment is not a long-term one i.e. one which is due to be repaid within 12 months of the date on which the investment was made or one which may require to be repaid within that period
- (c) the making of the investment is not defined as capital expenditure by virtue of regulation 20(1)(d) of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Wales) Regulations 2003 [SI 3239 as amended]
- (d) the investment is made with a body or in an investment scheme of * high credit quality or with one of the following public sector bodies:
 - i. the UK Government
 - ii. a local authority in England or Wales (as defined in section 23 of the 2003 Act) or a similar body in Scotland or Northern Ireland
 - iii. a parish or community council.

* High credit quality is defined in the creditworthiness policy in 4.3

Non-specified Investments:

- (i) An investment is non-specified if it does not meet the above definition.

As a result of the change in accounting standards under IFRS 9, this authority will consider the implications of investment instruments which could result in an adverse movement in the value of the amount invested and resultant charges at the end of the year to the General Fund. The Welsh Government has passed a statutory override to allow Welsh local authorities time to adjust their portfolio of all pooled investments by delaying implementation of IFRS 9 for five years until 31 March 2023. At the current juncture it has not been determined whether a further extension to the over-ride will be agreed by Government.

4.3 Creditworthiness policy

In accordance with the guidance from the Welsh Government and CIPFA, and in order to minimise the risk to investments, the Council applies the creditworthiness service provided by its Treasury Advisors. This service employs a sophisticated modelling approach utilising credit ratings from the three main credit rating agencies - Fitch, Moody’s and Standard & Poor’s. The credit ratings of counterparties are supplemented with the following overlays:

- “watches” and “outlooks” from credit rating agencies;
- CDS spreads that may give early warning of changes in credit ratings;
- sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries

Counterparties for investment purposes are selected using specific criteria, as follows:

Banks - high credit quality – the Council will only use banks which:

- are UK banks; and/or
- are non-UK and domiciled in a country which has a minimum sovereign Long Term rating of AAA (any non UK transactions would be undertaken in Sterling).
- and have, as a **minimum**, the following Fitch, Moody’s and Standard and Poor’s credit ratings (where rated):

Table 1:

	Fitch	Moody’s	S&P
Long Term	A-	A3	A-
Short Term	F1	P-1	A-1

Long term rating – covers maturities of up to five years. It provides an assessment of the ongoing stability of the institutions prospective financial condition. A indicates high credit quality and low expectation of credit risk. The + or – suffixes are appended to a rating to denote the relative status within the long term rating category. The Moody’s and S&P definitions are similar to Fitch. The Moody’s numerical suffix indicates a rating at the higher end of the scale (1) to the lower end of the scale (3), with 1 having higher credit quality than 3.

Short term rating – covers obligations which have a maturity of less than one year. This rating places greater emphasis on the liquidity necessary to meet financial commitments. Rating **F1 (Fitch)** is the highest short term credit quality rating. It indicates the strongest capacity for timely payment of financial commitments. The Moody’s and S&P definitions are similar to Fitch.

- **Part nationalised UK bank** – Royal Bank of Scotland Group (NatWest, Royal Bank of Scotland, Ulster Bank). This bank can be included provided it continues to be part nationalised or it meets the ratings in Banks above.
- **The Council’s own banker (Barclays)** – Since under existing arrangements excess surplus funds can be held overnight with the Council’s Bank, unexpected credit rating downgrades to the Bank could result in these short-term investments technically being placed with a counterparty that does not meet the minimum approved credit criteria specified above. The S&P short term rating for Barclays is A-1. A-1 means that S&P consider Barclays capacity to meet its financial commitment on its obligations as strong. Fitch and Moody’s both consider this to be strong. The minimum credit rating for Barclays will therefore be A-1 (S&P) with F1 for Fitch and P-1 for Moody’s. Whilst this will mean that Barclay’s S&P credit ratings could be lower than those required for other institutions (as detailed above), investments with Barclays will be restricted to the overnight (or over weekend) sweep facility (where surplus balances are “swept” into an interest bearing account) up to a maximum of £10 million.

Should Barclays’ credit ratings continue to meet the credit criteria required for other institutions (above), then the investment periods for meeting the minimum criteria will continue to be applied. See below for contingency arrangements in relation to the Authority’s bank.

Table 2:

	Fitch	Moody’s	S&P
Long Term	A+	A1	A

Short Term	F1	P-1	A-1
------------	----	-----	-----

- **Building societies** - The Council will *use only* the Nationwide Building Society, unless their short term credit ratings fall below the minimum specified in table 1 above for banks.
- **AAA rated Money market funds (MMFs)** – Triple A rated MMFs are considered to be highly credit rated.
- **UK Government** - The Debt Management Account Deposit Facility DMADF of the Debt Management Office (DMO). The DMO is legally and constitutionally part of HM Treasury and as an Executive Agency of His Majesty’s Treasury it operates at arm’s length from Ministers. The DMO is considered to be highly credit rated.
- **UK Local authorities**, Police Authorities, parish councils etc.
- **Corporate Bonds, Ultra short and short duration bonds** - The council will invest in corporate bonds in line with the criteria below

Use of additional information other than credit ratings

Additional requirements under the Code require the Council to supplement credit rating information. Whilst the above criteria relies primarily on the application of credit ratings to provide a pool of appropriate counterparties for officers to use, additional operational market information must be applied before making any specific investment decision from the agreed pool of counterparties. Ratings will therefore not be the sole determinant of the quality of an institution and the assessment will therefore also take account of information that reflects the opinion of the markets, as follows:

Credit default swaps (CDS)

The Council will engage with its Treasury advisors to maintain a monitor on market pricing such as “credit default swaps (CDS)” and overlay that information on top of the credit ratings.

CDS spreads offer a timely market perception of the risk attached to the relevant institution. These can, on occasion, pre-empt actions by the credit rating agencies whose ratings can lag behind market reaction to changes in the credit institutions situation. Since they are traded instruments, they carry in them market perception related to that entity’s credit quality. In order to “measure” the CDS data, the Authority uses a benchmark system which allows the CDS spread of an institution to be compared against a predetermined benchmark rate. This data is then used to assess whether the market is indicating that an institution’s credit quality is a cause for concern. Where there is a cause for concern then the counterparty will

either be downgraded in terms of investment period or removed from the approved list.

Credit Rating Agency Comments

➤ **Rating Watch negative (or on review for possible downgrade)**

Where the credit rating agencies have placed counterparties on “rating watch negative” or “on review for possible downgrade”, then this indicates that there is a reasonable probability of a rating change in a relatively short period (a few weeks). If the counterparty is on negative rating watch, then it will be downgraded in terms of the investment period or removed from the list.

➤ **Negative Outlook**

This indicates the direction a rating is likely to move over a one to two year period.

Time and monetary limits applying to investments.

The table below shows the time and monetary limits per institution on the Council's counterparty list:

	Long term Rating (Fitch, Moody's, S&P)	Short term rating (Fitch, Moody's, S&P)	Money Limit	Time Limit
Banks - higher quality	AAA, Aa2, AA	F1+, P-1, A-1+	£15m	3 years
Banks - medium quality (including Nationwide BS)	A-, A3, A-	F1, P-1, A-1	£6m	2 years
Banks – part nationalised	N/A	N/A	£4m	2 years
Council's banker (not meeting Banks - medium)	A+, A1, A	F1, P-1, A-1	£10m	overnight
DMADF	AAA	N/A	unlimited	6 months
Corporate bonds, ultra-short and short duration bonds	AA, A	A-1	£10m	4 years
Local authorities – per Authority	N/A	N/A	£10m	3 years
	Fund rating		Money Limit	Time Limit
Money market funds – per MMF	AAA		£10m	liquid

Country and Group Limits

The Council has determined that it will only use approved counterparties from non UK countries with a minimum sovereign rating of AAA from Fitch (Aa2 Moody's, AAA S&P).

In addition, no more than £6m will be placed with any non-UK Bank/Financial Institution at any time.

For financial institutions included within the same banking group, the counterparty limit will apply to the group.

Lloyds Banking Group

- Halifax Lloyds Bank Bank of Scotland

RBS Group

- National Westminster Royal Bank of Scotland Ulster Bank

4.4 Contingency Arrangements for the Authority's Corporate Bank

If credit agency ratings change and the Authority's Corporate Bank fails to comply with the approved Investment Policy criteria specified above, then delegated authority, to agree appropriate and reasonable interim contingency arrangements prior to approval by Full Council, is granted to the Members and Officers listed below:

- Nominated Members: Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council, Chair of Corporate and Performance Scrutiny Committee.
- Nominated Officer: Statutory Section 151 Officer (Chief Officer Resources)

The Statutory Section 151 Officer and at least two of the three nominated Members, must approve unanimously the appropriate and reasonable interim contingency arrangements.

4.5 Monitoring of credit ratings

Guidance states that the Annual Investment Strategy must state how credit ratings are to be monitored and what action is to be taken when ratings change.

The responsibility for constructing and amending the Council's approved counterparty investment list is delegated to the Chief Officer Resources and is contained within the Treasury Management Practice Schedules. All investments will be made in accordance with this list and the limits therein.

Credit ratings for individual counterparties can change at any time. The Chief Officer Resources is responsible for applying the stated credit rating criteria above, and will add or delete counterparties as appropriate to / from the approved

counterparty list when there is a change in the credit ratings of individual counterparties or in banking structures. The Authority is alerted to changes in credit ratings through its Treasury Advisors.

- If a downgrade results in the counterparty/investment scheme no longer meeting the Authority's minimum criteria, its further use as a new investment will be withdrawn immediately.
- If a body is placed on negative rating watch (i.e. there is a reasonable probability of a rating change and the likelihood of that change being negative) and it is currently near at the minimum acceptable rating for placing investments with that body, then no further investments will be made with that body.

The only exception permitted to these criteria will be the contingency arrangement for the Authority's bank described in section 4.4

4.6 Liquidity of Investments

The maximum period for which funds may be committed will depend upon future cash flow requirements and will comply with the maximum period permitted (as specified in the table above).

Specified investments may comprise up to 100% of the Council's total investments

The Authority will consider investing in long-term investments in order to manage the cash profile associated with the specific rail project. Excluding the UK Government, it is suggested that no more than £15m be placed with any one institution with duration as set out in the table above. The Authority will not have more than £50m deposited in long-term investments (the Upper Limit).

4.7 Ethical investing

Investment guidance, both statutory and from CIPFA, makes clear that the SLY principles i.e. security, liquidity and yield must remain fundamental to Local Authority investing: however ethical issues may play a subordinate role to this. It should be noted that local authority investing incorporates Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) metrics into credit rating agency assessments and a growing number of financial institutions and fund managers/money market funds promote ESG products. Therefore, where appropriate the Authority will consider ESG factors when setting up any investment arrangements. For example, we would avoid investing in companies linked with fossil fuels.

The Council has begun developing a policy on ESG within its Treasury Management Practices (TMP 1). This Council is supportive of the Principles of Responsible Investment and will seek to bring ESG factors into the decision-making process for investments. Within this, the Council is also appreciative of the Statement on ESG in Credit Risk and Ratings which commits signatories to incorporating ESG into credit ratings and analysis in a systemic and transparent way. The Council uses ratings supplied by Link from Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's to support its assessment of suitable counterparties. Each of these rating agencies is a signatory to the ESG in credit risk and ratings statement.

4.8 Investment monitoring reports

The Council will report on its investment activity as part of its mid-year and Annual Treasury Outturn Report.

5. Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement

The Secretary of State recommends that before the start of each financial year a local authority prepares a statement of its policy on making MRP in respect of that financial year and submits it to full Council.

Under regulation 22 of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Wales) Regulations 2003, local authorities are required to charge to their revenue account for each financial year MRP to account for the principal cost of their debt in that financial year.

For 2007/8 and subsequent financial years, the detailed calculation has been replaced with a requirement that local authorities calculate an amount of MRP which they consider to be prudent. Local Authorities are legally obliged to "have regard" to such guidance (i.e. set a prudent MRP) – which is exactly the same duty as applies to other statutory guidance including the Prudential Code and CIPFA Treasury Management Code.

The broad aim of prudent provision is to ensure that debt is repaid over a period reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits, or, in the case of borrowing supported by Revenue Support Grant (RSG), reasonably commensurate with the period implicit in the determination of that grant.

The legislation does not define what constitutes a "prudent provision". However, the MRP guidance issued by the Secretary of State (WG) interprets the term and provides some ready-made examples of acceptable methods for calculating a prudent level of MRP.

In November 2021, Council approved an amended MRP policy to be applied from 2021/22 and beyond, as follows:

MRP on Supported Borrowing – this element of the CFR will be calculated on an annuity basis over 50 years.

MRP on Unsupported Borrowing – this will be based on Option 3 of the statutory guidance that allows for MRP provision using the asset life methodology on an annuity basis. The calculation looks at the average asset life for all unsupported borrowing in each year and applies the annuity calculation to the total unsupported borrowing capital expenditure for that year. The annuity method can be argued as providing a fairer charge than equal instalments as it takes into account the time value of money. The interest rate to be used in the annuity calculation is the weighted average PWLB annuity rate. Estimated life periods will be determined under delegated powers. To the extent that expenditure is not on the creation of an asset and is of a type that is subject to estimated life periods that are referred to in the guidance, these periods will generally be adopted by the Council. However, the Council reserves the right to determine useful life periods and prudent MRP in exceptional circumstances where the recommendations of the guidance would not be appropriate.

In addition, the guidance allows for MRP to be deferred for assets under construction and this part of the guidance is adopted because the asset is not used by the authority until it is operational and therefore the MRP will match the life of the asset.

MRP on Finance Leases - Option 3 will apply in a modified form, to ensure that the MRP for Finance Leases is equal to the rental payable each year, with the following exception for capital receipts.

Capital Receipts – In circumstances where it is prudent to do so and to protect Council Tax payers from unnecessary MRP charges, capital receipts received will be used to reduce the Council's overall borrowing requirement, rather than making a conventional MRP charge to revenue.

Loans to third parties – where loans are made to other bodies for their capital expenditure, then the capital receipts generated by the annual repayments on those loans will be put aside to repay debt instead of charging MRP. However, if there is a risk during the term of the loan that collateral held as security is not sufficient to meet its obligations or there is a likelihood of default, a prudent MRP will commence as a charge to the Authority's revenue account.

Voluntary repayment of debt - the Authority may make additional voluntary debt repayment provision from revenue or capital resources. If it does so, this will be disclosed in the Authority's Statement of Accounts. The Section 151 officer can then choose to offset previous years disclosed overpayments against the current year's prudent provision providing the amount charged is not less than zero.

Application of retrospective sum – The remaining £3.2m retrospective adjustment balance from the previous MRP Policy review in 2017/18, has been re-profiled over the period 2021/22 to 2025/26. However, it is important to note that all figures have been calculated prospectively and do not amend any previous years calculations, in line with the Welsh Government Guidance which applied from April 2019.

CP 15/02/2023

APPENDIX B Treasury Management Policy Statement

1. This organisation defines its treasury management activities as: “The management of the authority’s investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks”.
2. This organisation regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the organisation.
3. This organisation acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management, and to employing suitable comprehensive performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.”

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Agenda Item 27

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 15.03.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 14.03.2023

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **30th March, 2023**

Report Subject: **Capital Strategy 2023/2024**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader/Cabinet Member - Corporate Overview & Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer Resources**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
	09/03/2023				16/03/2023		30/03/2023	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give members the opportunity to consider and agree the Capital Strategy (attached at Appendix 1) following the annual review, to be adopted for the financial year 2023/2024.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, revised in 2017, introduced the concept of a Capital Strategy with effect from April 2019. Appendix 1 to this report is the proposed Capital Strategy for this Council.
- 2.2 The capital strategy is intended to give a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. The development of a capital strategy allows flexibility to engage with full council to ensure that the overall strategy, governance procedures and risk appetite are fully understood by all elected members.
- 2.3 The Capital Strategy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that the Council's Corporate Plan priorities continue to be delivered.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1 (Preferred Option)**

Members consider and agree the Capital Strategy for the 2023/24 financial year (attached as appendix 1) .

Option 2

3.2 Members consider the Capital Strategy for the 2023/24 financial year (attached as appendix 1) and propose amendments, prior to formal approval.

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

4.1 The Capital Strategy is aligned to the Corporate Plan and Well-being Plan and will inform the way in which long term service objectives are delivered.

4.2 The Capital Strategy is intended to take a long-term view which reflects the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

5.1.1 The detailed financial implications of the Capital Strategy are contained within the Capital Programme, Treasury Management Strategy and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

5.2.1 The identification and mitigation of risk is contained within the Capital Strategy document.

5.3 **Legal**

5.3.1 There are a number of statutory requirements relating to capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity that the Council must adhere to.

5.4 **Human Resources**

N/A

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

6.1.1 The Performance information is contained within Appendix 1 – Capital Strategy

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

6.2.1 The Capital Strategy will detail the financial implications for the Council in providing capital investment for the communities of Blaenau Gwent.

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

6.3.1 The Corporate Leadership Team will consider the long-term implications of capital investment and how the governance arrangements in place through full Council, enable decisions to be made by elected members.

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

6.4.1 The Capital Strategy summarises the capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management arrangements of the Authority, for the long term.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

6.5.1 The Capital Strategy will assist in the prevention of projects outside of the Council's service objectives and priorities proceeding.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

6.6.1 The future development of the Capital Strategy, particularly in relation to commercial investments, will require a collaborative / partnership approach.

6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

6.7.1 The future development of the Capital Strategy will require an integrated approach across all services.

6.8 **Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions**

6.8.1 The Council is committed to the Decarbonisation Plan to achieve a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. The Capital Programme currently contains schemes which promote the reduction of carbon emissions such as ReFIT, Electric Vehicle Charge Points and Carbon reduction schemes. New Council buildings should be designed to the latest energy efficiency standards.

6.8.2 The Authority also considers Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) factors when setting up any investment arrangements. For example, we would avoid investing in companies linked with fossil fuels.

6.9 **Integrated Impact Assessment**

See above

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The Capital Strategy will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis and be reported to full Council.

However, monitoring reports are submitted to Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee during the financial year as follows:

- Capital Programme – Quarterly
- Treasury Management Report – 6 monthly
- Update on performance against prudential indicators - quarterly

8. **Background Documents / Electronic Links**

- Corporate Plan
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Treasury Management Strategy Statement
- Capital Programme
- Statement of Accounts
- Strategic Asset Management Plan
- Constitution
- Local Wellbeing Plan 2018-2023

BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CAPITAL STRATEGY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The concept of a Capital Strategy was first highlighted by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities in 2017 with a requirement that they be introduced from April 2019.
- 1.2 The Strategy defines at the highest level how the capital programme decision making identifies the issues and options that influence capital spending, and sets out how the resources and capital programme will be managed. In addition, the Capital Strategy should comply with the Prudential Code for local authority capital investment introduced through the Local Government Act 2003. The key objectives of the Code are to ensure that capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable.
- 1.3 Part 1, Section 3 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003 (the Act) requires that the Authority shall determine and keep under review how much it can afford to borrow. The Act is supported by the Prudential Framework for local authority capital investment and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Code).

2. DETERMINING A CAPITAL STRATEGY

- 2.1 Authorities should have in place a capital strategy that sets out the *long-term context* in which capital expenditure and investment decisions are made, primarily to deliver the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan.

This demonstrates that authorities take capital expenditure and investment decisions in line with service objectives and properly takes account of: -

- Stewardship
- Value for money
- Prudence and
- Sustainability and affordability

It will also enable due consideration *to both risk and reward* and *impact* on the achievement of priority outcomes. The capital strategy should form a part of the authority's integrated revenue, capital, and balance sheet planning.

- 2.2 As local authorities become increasingly complex and diverse it is vital that those charged with governance understand the long-term context in which investment decisions are made and all the financial risks to which the authority is exposed. For example, when local authorities have increasingly wide powers around commercialisation, more authorities being subject to group arrangements and the increase in combined authority arrangements, it is no longer sufficient to consider only the individual local authority but also the residual risks and liabilities to which it is subject.
- 2.3 The capital strategy is intended to give a high level overview of how: -
- capital expenditure
 - capital financing
 - treasury management activity
- contribute to the provision of services, along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. The development of a capital strategy allows flexibility to engage with full Council to ensure that the overall strategy, governance procedures and risk appetite are fully understood by all elected members.
- 2.4 The capital strategy should be tailored to the authority's individual circumstances but should include capital expenditure, investments and liabilities and treasury management. The capital strategy should include sufficient detail to allow all members to understand how stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability will be secured and to meet legislative requirements on reporting.
- 2.5 In considering how stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability can be demonstrated, local authorities should have regard to the following key areas where material.

3. LINKS TO THE CAPITAL STRATEGY

- 3.1 The report has links to the strategic themes of the Authority, taking into account cross-cutting issues where relevant. It has specific links to the following plans / strategies:

a) The Council's Corporate Plan 2022/2027

The Corporate Plan is the prime document which outlines what the Council aims to achieve. The current plan covers the period 2022 - 2027. The core vision, core values and priorities in the Council Plan are: -

Blaenau Gwent – a place that is fair, open and welcoming to all by working with and for our communities

The Council's Core Values:



Our Vision and Values reflect who we are as a Council, how we do things and how we are shaping the future by ensuring that these apply to everything we do.

Corporate Plan 2022/27 Outcome Priorities:

- Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent
- Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities
- An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place
- Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient

The key objective of this Capital Strategy is to ensure that the capital funding available to the Council is spent on projects that assist the Council to deliver the outcomes in the Corporate plan, including maintaining, replacing or / and upgrading existing assets. This is why the Corporate Plan features strongly in the allocation of resources in the capital programme.

There are several other key strategies / documents which align with the Council's Corporate Plan. These guide how the Council works on specific aspects affecting the Council.

b) Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Capital Strategy is closely linked to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), primarily with respect to the affordability of the capital programme. The MTFS is agreed by Council on an annual basis and forms part of the annual budget setting report.

c) Treasury Management Strategy

The Treasury Management Strategy links to the Capital Strategy in determining the Council's approach to borrowing and investments, including borrowing to fund capital expenditure. The Treasury Management Strategy incorporates the requirements of the Prudential Code and includes the Prudential Indicators. The Council has an integrated Treasury Management Strategy and has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public Services. The Treasury Management Strategy deals with borrowing and investment arising as a consequence of all the financial transactions of the Council, not exclusively those arising from capital spending.

d) Statement of Accounts

Capital expenditure incurred during the year is reflected in the Balance Sheet within the Statement of Accounts, ensuring that stewardship of assets is demonstrated. The accurate monitoring and recording of capital expenditure ensures that this document is free from material error. The Statement of Accounts is externally audited each financial year to certify that it presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council.

e) Strategic Asset Management Plan 2017/2022

The Strategic Asset Management Plan sets out how the Council manages and treats its property and land, ensuring that it is well placed to manage expectations, budgets and services going forward.

f) Regulatory Framework of Capital Spend

The Procurement Strategy, along with the Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations (part of the Council's Constitution), looks at who can supply goods and services to the Council and how these goods and services should best be obtained to secure value for money.

More generally, prudent financial management contributes to the following Well-being Goals within the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015:

- A prosperous Wales.
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales.
- A Wales of cohesive communities.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.
- A globally responsible Wales.

4 **CAPITAL STRATEGY**

The Capital Strategy outlines the principles and framework at the very high level that shape the Authority's capital investment proposals. The principal aim is to deliver an affordable programme of capital consistent with the medium term financial strategy that contributes to the achievement of the Council's priorities and objectives as set out in the Authority's Corporate Plan, considers associated risks particularly with commercial opportunities, recognises financial constraints over the longer term and represents value for money.

4.1 **CAPITAL EXPENDITURE**

4.1.1 Capital expenditure is defined as costs incurred by the Council in acquiring new property, plant and equipment (PPE); or costs incurred by enhancing the existing PPE asset base. Capital expenditure can also be incurred in instances where the asset is owned by a third party but the Council has provided the third party with a grant. In such instances the expenditure is recorded as if incurred directly by the Council.

4.1.2 In accordance with accounting definitions, expenditure can be capitalised when it relates to:

- *The acquisition or creation of a new fixed asset* - capitalisation will depend on the creation of rights to future economic benefits controlled by the Authority.
- *The enhancement of an existing fixed asset* - capitalisation will depend on the works substantially increasing the value of the asset, extending its useful life, or increasing its use in service provision.

4.1.3 The Council's current asset base can be classed into two distinct areas: -

- *operational assets* i.e., those assets relating to day-to-day activities that will ensure the Council meets (primarily) its statutory requirements and
- *development assets* i.e., those assets which will help the Council achieve strategic aims and generate income

4.1.4 The Authority has a de-minimus limit for capital expenditure of £50,000. The Policy will be reviewed during 2023/24.

Capital expenditure that is below this de-minimus limit, is charged to a revenue budget. There are however, some exceptions including Highways capital expenditure, and Health & Safety capital expenditure. In these cases, items that individually fall below this de-minimus level are allowable as capital expenditure because they are aggregated together and treated as one single item of expenditure within the year.

4.1.5 The Authority's core capital programme is considered by Council and is funded from a variety of sources including capital receipts, Prudential Borrowing, General Capital Grant and Supported Borrowing Approvals. Both of the two

latter funding streams are confirmed annually by Welsh Government as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement.

4.1.6 Changes to the programme from one year to the next include: -

- New policy directives
- New proposed schemes
- Revised scheme profiling
- Slippage and
- Changes in expenditure projections

4.1.7 The Authority's forecast of capital expenditure for the next three financial years, in line with the prudential indicators and as laid out in the 2023/2024 Treasury Management Strategy is as follows: -

Capital Expenditure £000's						
	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Estimate	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate
Total	15,261	50,809	74,300	26,931	17,835	5,740

The capital programme usually covers a three-year period. However, the current capital programme covers the financial years 2019/20 to 2025/2026, primarily to incorporate Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme

4.1.8 Governance arrangements are as follows: -

The capital programme is considered annually by full Council

The capital programme is monitored in-year through: -

- Regular forecast expenditure reports to budget holders
- Quarterly forecast expenditure reports to the Corporate Overview & Performance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet .
- Actual outturn expenditure is incorporated into the Council's annual Statement of Accounts, which is reported to the Governance & Audit Committee and subject to external audit.

4.1.9 If additional resources are identified, a revised capital programme will be presented to full Council for consideration. If the value of competing bids exceeds the amount of available resources, a prioritisation methodology is followed, in order to match bids to available resources. Currently that methodology incorporates the following key elements: -

- Links to the Council's Corporate Plan
- Links to national priorities
- Statutory scheme or non-statutory scheme
- An existing legal or contractual commitment

- The availability of external grant funding
- The likelihood of revenue saving generation / cost avoidance
- National Wellbeing Goals/ Sustainability Principles

4.2 **CAPITAL EXPENDITURE FINANCING**

4.2.1 All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions); the Council's own resources (revenue contributions, reserves and capital receipts); or debt (borrowing supported and unsupported; leasing).

4.2.2 A detailed explanation of each of the main sources of funding is provided below:

- **General Capital Grant** – This is a sum of money which is provided by the Welsh Government as part of the annual settlement. The Council is free to use the capital grant on any capital project it wishes.
- **Supported Borrowing** – The Council will borrow internally / externally to fund expenditure. The revenue costs arising from the borrowing (Interest Costs and Minimum Revenue Provision) are funded by the Welsh Government through the annual revenue settlement, hence the term “Supported Borrowing”.
- **Unsupported Borrowing** – the Council borrows internally / externally but is required to finance the revenue costs from its own resources. Projects funded by means of unsupported borrowing tend to be projects which deliver revenue savings or generate additional income and these savings are used to meet the additional revenue costs arising from the borrowing.
- **Specific Capital Grants** – The Council will be awarded capital grants which partly or fully fund the cost of a project. Capital grants usually come with restrictions surrounding the expenditure which can be funded and by when the expenditure must be incurred.
- **Revenue Contribution** – Services can make a contribution from their revenue budgets to fund projects and should deliver revenue savings/avoid future costs or generate additional income. These contributions tend to be as a match funding to a project which is mainly funded from a specific capital grant.
- **Capital Receipts** – The funds generated from the sale of assets can be used to contribute to the funding of the capital programme. These are usually generated from the sale of surplus assets (normally land or buildings).
The Council's long-standing policy on usable capital receipts is that they are immediately invested internally. This helps to improve the Council's cash flow position and reduces the level of external loans that need to be raised,

which in turn reduces external interest charges from the money market. This approach is consistent with what is regarded as good practice in terms of strategic level treasury management and overall, produces savings in debt servicing costs for the Council.

However, as approved sums of usable capital receipts are subsequently used to finance part of the annual capital programme each year, appropriate allowance then needs to be made for the use of these receipts in determining the estimated level of external borrowing required for that year. Hence usable capital receipts are released on a controlled basis and the annual estimates for external interest charges are adjusted accordingly. Any request to earmark a capital receipt for a different purpose will require a report to full Council.

- **Reserves** – Funding held in reserve, e.g. unapplied capital receipts, can be used to support the capital programme.

4.2.3 The financing of the forecast capital expenditure shown in paragraph 4.1.7 above, is detailed below:

Capital Expenditure £000's	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Estimate	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate
Total	15,261	50,809	74,300	26,931	17,835	5,740
Financed by:						
Grants, Capital Receipts, revenue and other sources	14,264	45,055	38,070	17,026	13,955	3,835
Net financing need for the year from USB and PB	997	5,754	36,230	9,905	3,880	1,905

4.2.4 Debt (including leases) is a source of finance that is used to fund a capital scheme and is repayable over time. The Council sets aside a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) every year for the repayment of existing debt. MRP forms part of the debt management budget and is monitored by Corporate Finance. The annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement, (which is approved by full Council before the start of the new financial year), includes (at section 32) a MRP statement which sets out the MRP Policy that is to be adopted by the Council at the start of the next financial year.

4.2.5 The Authority's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and capital receipts used to replace debt. The Council's estimated CFR is set out in the Treasury Management Strategy and is illustrated below.

Capital Financing Requirement					
	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2023/24</u>	<u>2024/25</u>	<u>2025/26</u>
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Estimate</u>
	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£001</u>
CFR at start of financial year	169,050	169,422	173,932	208,824	217,295
CFR at end of financial year	169,422	173,932	208,824	217,295	219,642
Movement in CFR	372	4,510	34,892	8,471	2,347
<i>Movement in CFR represented by:</i>					
Net Financing need for the year (above)	996	5,754	36,230	9,905	3,880
New Finance Leases	501	500	500	500	500
less MRP	-1,125	-1,744	-1,838	-1,934	-2,033
	372	4,510	34,892	8,471	2,347

4.3 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy defines treasury management as “The management of the organisation’s borrowing; investments and cash flows; its banking; money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks”.
- 4.3.2 Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account. Investment balances tend to be high at the start of the financial year as revenue income is received before it is spent but reduce in the long-term as capital expenditure is incurred before being financed.
- 4.3.3 Due to decisions taken in the past, the Council currently has £227.8m debt outstanding as at 31 March 2022, at an average interest rate of 2.35%. In addition, £77,418 was earned on investments during 2021/22 at an average rate of 0.04%.
- 4.3.4 The Council has to have regard to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors when it considers its investment opportunities. For example, this Council would avoid investing in organisations linked with fossil fuels. This Council is supportive of the Principles of Responsible Investment and will seek to bring ESG factors into the decision-making process for investments. This is a developing area and will be explored further as more opportunities become available to Local Authorities and if cash balances allow.
- 4.3.5 The Annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement is approved by Full Council prior to the start of the new financial year and sets out the Council’s Borrowing Strategy; Investment Strategy and respective prudential indicators.

- 4.3.6 In addition to the Capital Strategy, the full Council is required to receive and approve, as a minimum, three main reports each year, which incorporate a variety of polices, estimates and actuals.

The Treasury Strategy - the first, and most important report covers:

- The capital plans (including prudential indicators)
- the treasury management strategy (how the investments and borrowings are to be organised) including treasury indicators; and
- an investment strategy (the parameters on how investments are to be managed).
- a minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy (how residual capital expenditure is charged to revenue over time);

A mid year treasury management report – This will update members with the progress of the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and an assessment of whether the treasury strategy is being met or whether any policies require revision.

An annual treasury report – This provides details of a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations compared to the estimates within the strategy.

Quarterly reports – In addition to the three major reports detailed above, from 2023/24 quarterly reporting (end of June/end of December) is also required. These additional reports do not have to be reported to Full Council but do require to be adequately scrutinised. This role is undertaken by the Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee.

Scrutiny and monitoring of the Strategy throughout the year is carried out by the Corporate Overview & Performance Scrutiny Committee.

4.4 COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

- 4.4.1 A number of local authorities are investing in non-treasury management investment, for example commercial property, either via a fund manager or direct purchase of property in order to generate enhanced treasury returns above the rate of inflation. The returns generated from this type of investments can support revenue budgets in an environment when Welsh Government revenue support funding has declined year on year.
- 4.4.2 At present the Council has no investments in commercial property either directly (through property acquisitions) or indirectly (through a fund manager). However, the Council is continually developing an investment strategy in line with a more commercial approach and so this type of investment will be considered in the future.
- 4.4.3 With a financial rate of return being the main objective, the Council would need to fully identify the Local Authority powers underpinning any investments i.e.

economic regeneration activity. In addition, the Council would need to understand that there is a degree of higher risk on commercial investment than with treasury investments. The principal risk exposures include a decline in the property market and capital being tied up in the medium/ long-term. In order to balance the three basic principles of security, liquidity and yield, consideration would need to be given to the proportion of commercial investments made.

- 4.4.4 Any potential commercial investment would need due diligence and expert independent external advice. Legal advice would also be required from within the Council and where necessary, externally.
- 4.4.5 As per the revised Treasury Management and Prudential codes of practice, an authority must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return.

4.5 POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS ARISING FROM THE CAPITAL STRATEGY

- 4.5.1. The Capital Strategy will enable the Council to focus its energy and resources to the priorities in the Corporate Plan. In addition, transparent governance arrangements will enable improved decision making processes and financial planning into the longer term.
- 4.5.2. By adopting a more commercial approach, the Council will be able to secure additional revenue streams to mitigate future enforced budget reductions.
- 4.5.3 The level of annual savings required over the period of the medium term financial strategy will continue to be challenging with the potential to impact on the capital programme. If the funding gap is difficult to achieve, this risk could be mitigated by a further review of the capital programme to assess the feasibility of reducing capital financing costs affecting revenue. This would involve reducing capital expenditure and the associated borrowing requirement, therefore reducing interest and loan repayment costs.
- 4.5.4. The Council's Capital Strategy is based on an assumed level of funding from Welsh Government and from external grants and capital receipts. Given the continued uncertainty over budgets and the changes to grant funding, there is a risk that this assumed level of grant funding may not be received or further funding given to local authorities during the financial year. This risk can be mitigated through regular reviews of the current capital programme.
- 4.5.5. If interest rates increase sharply in the medium term, there is a risk that long term capital financing costs will impact on the affordability of new capital schemes and the revenue budget. This risk can be mitigated by regular reviews of interest rate forecasts and engagement with the Council's external treasury management advisor.
- 4.5.6. The strategy acknowledges the importance of maintaining existing Council assets. There is a risk that a replacement programme is not sufficient and that

the standard of the assets falls to such a point that a greater level of investment is required in order to maintain services. This risk can be mitigated by ensuring that the capital programme delivers a balanced programme of enhancing current assets and developing new assets.

- 4.5.7. External borrowing results in a significant interest cost each year. Any sharp rise in interest rates may impact on the affordability of future projects which are funded from new borrowing. This risk is mitigated to some extent through the Treasury Management Strategy which illustrates a mix of short term, medium term and long term loans.

4.6. **KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

- 4.6.1 The Council employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions.
- 4.6.2 Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council tests the market through regular competitive tendering. This ensures that performance management arrangements are in place, as laid out in the contract specification.
- 4.6.3 To ensure knowledge & skills are maintained and appropriate Key relevant staff will undertake training as and when opportunities arise or whenever there are changes in regulations. Treasury management training for members has and will continue to be provided by officers and treasury management advisors on an annual basis.

Agenda Item 28

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 15.03.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 14.03.2023

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **30th March, 2023**

Report Subject: **Corporate Fees & Charges 2023/2024**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader of the Council/
Executive Member Corporate Overview & Performance**

Report Submitted by: **R Hayden – Chief Officer Resources**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
	9/3/23						30/3/23	

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Members to approve additional fees & charges to be applied for the 2023/2024 financial year.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 At the Council Meeting on 6 March 2023, Members approved the Fees & Charges to be applied for 2023/2024. However a number of fees in relation to Estates and Strategic Asset management had been omitted from the register new fees for room hire at the General Offices are proposed and amendments to Trade Waste fees previously agreed is highlighted.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 *To include Recommendation(s) / Endorsement by other groups, e.g. CLT/Committees/Other groups)*
 - 3.2 **Option 1 (Preferred Option)**
 - 3.2.1 Members of the Council consider and approve the fees and charges for 2023/2024 for Estates and Strategic Asset management attached at Appendix 1 and room hire charges for the General Offices at Appendix 2.
 - 3.2.2 Members approve an amendment to a fee relating to Waste Services from £574,93 per quarter to £543.66 per quarter for 2023/2024 (paragraph 5.1.4) and approve the restated fees relating to Bulky Waste collection included on Appendix 1.
 - 3.3 **Option 2**
 - 3.3.1 Members of the Council consider and do not approve the Fees and Charges attached at Appendix 1.

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

- 4.1 This report supports the Corporate Plan outcome “an ambitious and innovative Council delivering the quality services at the right time and in the right place”.
- 4.2 Income from Fees & Charges contributes funding (approx.5%) towards delivering Council priorities and supports the Councils’ financial resilience.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

- 5.1.1 The assumption in the Medium term Financial Strategy and the 2023/2024 draft estimates assumes that income budgets will remain at 2022/2023 levels and this is to mitigate any potential cost pressure arising during 2023/2024 should income levels reduce due to the cost of living crisis.
- 5.1.2 As a consequence of the increased costs that the Council is experiencing and is expecting to continue during 2023/2024 (8% inflationary increase), Council is asked to consider an 8% uplift to the Fees & Charges for Estates and Strategic Asset Management attached at Appendix 1 and the introduction of charges for the Hire of additional rooms at the General Offices is attached at Appendix 2.
- 5.1.3 An amendment is required to the quarterly charge for Trade Waste collection for 1100 litre bin, which was stated incorrectly on the Fees & Charges Register presented to Council on 6 March 2023. This figure should be:

Table 1 – Trade Waste Fee – Quarterly Charge for 1,100 litre bin

	Fee 2022/2023 £	Fee 2023/2024 £	% Increase
As approved on 6 March	563.65	574.93	2%
Restated Fee	533.00	543.66	2%

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

- 5.2.1 Fee increases may impact on demand from residents as they continue to be impacted by the cost of living crisis. This could result in a reduction in income that the Council receives, particularly in the short term.

Demand and the impact on the budget will be monitored and reported as part of the Financial Reporting Framework.

5.2.2 Not increasing fees & charges may put pressure on income budgets not currently achieving targets. The Council will not recover the full costs of delivering services with the Council subsidising costs to individuals.

5.3 ***Legal***

5.3.1 There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report. However, charging and trading for local authorities must comply with the Local Government Act 2003 and The Localism Act 2011.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

N/A

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

6.1.1 The proposed register of Fees & Charges is attached at Appendix 1 and 2.

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

6.2.1 The setting of fees and charges on an annual basis is essential to maintaining economic resilience, however, these should be set at a cost that considers full cost recovery and what local people can afford, taking into account the protected characteristics.

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

6.3.1 The review of the Fees & Charges Register has been prepared in consultation with relevant officers.

6.3.2 Services look to involve partners and citizens in consultation where possible. The impact of these charges will be reviewed throughout the year by officers, along with any issues raised by users of the services affected.

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

6.4.1 Full cost recovery will support the long term financial resilience and the ability to maintain facilities and services for the people of Blaenau Gwent.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

6.5.1 Income generation contributes funding towards delivering Council Services and investing into early intervention and prevention activities.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

6.6.1 Fees & Charges are reviewed and updated in partnership with officers across the Council.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

6.7.1 N/A

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

N/A

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IAA)*** *(All decisions, policy reviews or policy implementation will now require a completed Integrated Impact Assessment)*

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 *State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements*

7.1.1 The regular review of the corporate fees and charges register is a vital component of the Council's budget setting proposal and should be monitored and refreshed to ensure it is in line with the Council's agreed income policy and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

7.1.2 Actual Income achieved from Fees & Charges during the financial year will be monitored and reported to Corporate Leadership Team and Members as part of the Financial Reporting Framework.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

-

Service Area	Generic description	Detailed description	Regulated /Fixed Charge	Fee Categories (if applicable)	Fee 2022/2023 £	Fee 2023/24 £
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Transfer of tenancy		Per application	£75.00	£81.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Transfer of licence		Per application	£75.00	£81.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Lease for garage		Per application	£75.00	£81.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Land applications		Per application	£100.00	£108.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Fees on sales, per application.		£0 - £50,000	£500.00	£540.00
				£50,000 - £100,000	£700.00	£756.00
				£100,000 - £200,000	£850.00	£918.00
				£210,000 - £500,000	£1,100.00	£1,188.00
				Above £500,000	£1,700.00	£1,836.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Garden Land - Rental Per plot and whatever size.		Minimum Fee	£70.00	£75.60
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Grazing Land - Rental Per plot and whatever size.		Minimum Fee	£120.00	£129.60
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Eastern Valley Slops - Rental Per plot and whatever size.		Minimum Fee	£120.00	£129.60

Service Area	Generic description	Detailed description	Regulated /Fixed Charge	Fee Categories (if applicable)	Fee 2022/2023 £	Fee 2023/24 £
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Other Low Level Income Per plot and whatever size.		Minimum Fee	£120.00	£129.60
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Garage Agreements, per plot. Minimum Fee.		Single Garage Large Garage Double Garage	£120.00 £160.00 £210.00	£129.60 £172.80 £226.80
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	S38 Agreements			£1,100.00	£1,750.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	S278 Agreements			£1,100.00	£1,750.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	S106 Agreements			£1,100.00	£2,250.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Photocopying - Document			£34.00	£36.72
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Letters of Postponement			£70.00	£75.60

Service Area	Generic description	Detailed description	Regulated /Fixed Charge	Fee Categories (if applicable)	Fee 2022/2023 £	Fee 2023/24 £
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Mortgage Redemption			£70.00	£150.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Licence to Assign			£350.00	£750.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Deed of Variation			£350.00	£750.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Freehold Reversions			£420.00	£750.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Easements			£500.00	£750.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Consent to dispose (Overage)			£70.00	£150.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Leases			£350.00	£350.00

Service Area	Generic description	Detailed description	Regulated /Fixed Charge	Fee Categories (if applicable)	Fee 2022/2023 £	Fee 2023/24 £
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Landlords consent for e.g alterations			£110.00	£350.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Auction sales subject to Valuer's discretion based on markability and value			£300 (minimum charge) to £1,100 (maximum charge)	£500.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Tenancy at Will				£350.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Disposals (drawing up conveyance)				£500.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Legal charges				£750.00
Economic Development	Estates & Strategic Asset Management	Deed of release of overage				£750.00
Community Services	Waste - Bulky Waste Collection			1 Item 2 Items 3 Items 4 Items 5 Items	£6.10 £12.20 £18.40 £24.50 £30.60	£6.34 £12.68 £19.02 £25.36 £31.70

Y Swyddfeydd Cyffredinol
 Heol Gwaith Dur
 Glynebwy
 Blaenau Gwent
 NP23 6AA
 Ffôn: - 01495 356056
 E-bost: Generaloffices@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

The General Offices
 Steelworks Road
 Ebbw Vale
 Blaenau Gwent
 NP23 6AA
 Telephone: - 01495 356056
 Email: - Generaloffices@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

FFIOEDD LLOGI Y SWYDDFEYDD CYFFREDINOL

GENERAL OFFICES HIRE FEES.

Enw'r Ystafell Room Name	Nifer uchaf o seddi Max Room Capacities	Diwrnod Llawn Full Day	Hanner Diwrnod Half Day	Fesul Awr Hourly
Neuadd Jack Williams VC Jack Williams VC Hall	170	£294.00	£196.00	£98.00
Ystafell Abraham Darby Abraham Darby Room	70	£228.00	£150.00	£75.00
Sinema Sweet Escott Sweet Escott Cinema	30	£180.00	£120.00	£60.00
Ystafell Syr William Firth Sir William Firth Room	40	£117.00	£78.00	£39.00
Ystafell Frederick Mills Frederick Mills Room	16	£79.00	£52.00	£26.00
Ystafell Gyfrifiaduron Melin Boeth Hot Mill Room	8	£72.00	£46.00	£23.00
Yr Aelwyd Agored The Open Hearth	12	£65.00	£46.00	£23.00

Dylid nodi bod yr holl brisiau yn eithrio TAW / *Please note all prices exclude VAT*

Mae'r gost yn cynnwys - 1 siart troi / *Included in cost - 1 flip chart*

Fe'ch hysbysir fod yr adeilad yn agor am 9am / Please be advised that the building opens at 9am

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Agenda Item 30

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 06.03.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 07.03.2023

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **30th March, 2023**

Report Subject: **Pay Policy Statement 2023/2024**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader of the Council/Cabinet Member Corporate Overview & Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Andrea Prosser, Head of Organisational Development**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
22/2/23	2/3/23						30/3/23	Emailed to Trade Unions on 22/2/23

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 (appendix 1) to progress to Council for endorsement in order to comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The Localism Act 2011, Chapter 8 (Sections 38 to 43), requires Local Authorities to prepare a Pay Policy Statement which must articulate the Authority's policies in respect of a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce, particularly its senior staff (Chief Officers) and its lowest paid employees.

2.2 The Statement must comply with the following:

- Be prepared for each financial year, the first of which was approved for the financial year 2012/13.
 - Be approved by Full Council before 31 March each year.
 - Be published on the Council's website.
- Come into force and be complied with [S41 (2)] from the date of its approval and be subject to a review on a minimum of an annual basis in accordance with the relevant legislation prevailing at that time.

- 2.3 In “performing its functions” under S38 of the Act the Authority must also have due regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State and must as a minimum statutory requirement include the following:
- Set out the policies relating to the remuneration of its Chief Officers and its lowest paid employees.
 - Set out the relationship between its Chief Officers and employees who are not Chief Officers.
 - State its definition of “lowest paid employees” and the reasons for adopting it.
 - Set out its policies on remuneration for the highest paid employees alongside their policies and remuneration towards its lowest paid employees.
- 2.4 The Act does not require Authorities to use their Pay Policy Statement to publish specific numerical data on pay and rewards. However, the Council considers how information set out within the Pay Policy Statement fits with data on pay and rewards required to be published under the Code of Recommended Practice on Data Transparency and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.5 The Council uses the nationally negotiated pay spine referred to as the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) as the basis for its local grading structure. This determines the salaries of the large majority of the workforce. The NJC pay award for 2023/24 is currently pending.
- 2.6 Other local authorities have recently been engaged on their position with regards to the re-employment/re-engagement of staff who have left the Council via redundancy or any type of severance package that included a financial package. To ensure the Council is clear on its advice regarding re-engagement and to align with other local authorities, it is proposed to include the following text in the Pay Policy Statement:

Staff who have left the employment of the Council by means of a voluntary redundancy or a voluntary severance which included a financial package, will not usually be re-employed or re-engaged in any way (i.e. by way of agency or consultancy). In exceptional cases only and where there has been a break of more than two years, re-engagement will be subject to CLT approval on the basis of a report outlining a critical business case. In cases that concern the Chief Executive, Directors or Chief Officers, Full Council approval will be required.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 *To include Recommendation(s) / Endorsement by other groups, e.g. CLT/Committees/Other groups)*

The Pay Policy Statement has/will be circulated to the following:

- OD DMT on 22 February 2023
- Trade Unions on 22 February 2023
- CLT on 2 March 2023
- Council on 30 March 2023

3.2 **Option 1:** To consider and approve the Pay Policy Statement (preferred option).

3.3 **Option 2:** To make suggestions/comments to add to the Pay Policy Statement.

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

The Pay Policy Statement will assist the Council to secure and maintain a suitable workforce which is required to deliver and develop its statutory responsibilities and also services covered in the Corporate Plan and Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

The Pay Policy Statement sets out the pay appropriate to various staff groups within the Council and any financial implications linked to pay awards are negotiated nationally.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The risk of not adopting the Pay Policy Statement is that the Council will not comply with its statutory obligations in line with the Localism Act 2011 and be in breach of the National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service as set out by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.

5.3 ***Legal***

Approving the Pay Policy Statement ensures the Council complies with the requirements set out under the Localism Act 2011. This report supports the responsibility for the Council to produce an annual Pay Policy Statement under the Localism Act 2011.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

The Pay Policy Statement provides transparency in relation to the Council's approach to setting the pay of the workforce, particularly senior staff and lowest paid employees and meets the statutory duty of implementing national agreements on pay.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

N/A

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

Producing an annual Pay Policy Statement provides the public with information to ensure the Council is open and transparent with regards to pay.

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

The involvement/roles and responsibilities of employees are detailed in the Pay Policy Statement and appendices.

The Trade Unions were consulted on the attached draft policy and a honoraria payment for a senior manager has been queried with the Corporate Leadership Team.

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

The Council is committed to providing quality services which offer value for money. The Pay Policy Statement seeks to ensure the Council attracts, retains and motivates the best employees with the right skills.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

N/A

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The Pay Policy Statement has been updated in collaboration with key staff in Organisational Development.

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)***

No adverse impact has been identified.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 *State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements*

The Pay Policy Statement will be reviewed and updated by the Organisational Development Division on an annual basis.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Pay Policy Statement 2023/2024

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Pay Policy Statement

2023/2024



Version Control

This document is intended for:

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

Version	Key Changes	Approved By
2020/21	New policy for 2020/2021	Council – 23/7/20
2021/22	New policy for 2021/2022	Council – 25/3/21
2022/23	New policy for 2022/2023	Council – 9/3/22
2023/24	New policy for 2023/2024	Council – 30/3/22

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.

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- Appendix 1: Local Government Services Employee Pay Scales
- Appendix 2: Chief Officer Pay Scales
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- Appendix 4: Annual Leave and Holiday Pay Guidance
- Appendix 5: Retirement Options Policy
- Appendix 6: Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 Statement Of Policy - Exercise Of Discretionary Functions
- Appendix 7: Redundancy Policy
- Appendix 8: In the Interests of the Efficiency of the Service Policy

1. Introduction

Welcome to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's annual Pay Policy Statement. This statement sets out the Council's approach to setting pay for employees including senior officers and covers the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

The Council recognises the public interest in public sector pay and we are committed to being open, transparent and accountable ensuring that our council tax payers have access to information about how we pay employees.

As a public sector organisation, we recognise the importance people place on the delivery of high quality council services, whilst ensuring value for money.

As one of the largest employers in the area it is important that we offer attractive employment opportunities on fair rates of pay and reasonable terms and conditions. This will ensure we can attract, retain and motivate employees, with the right level of skills, who are committed and share our vision. This has a beneficial impact on the quality of life and prosperity within the local community as well as on the local economy.



Councillor Stephen Thomas
Leader of the Council



Damien McCann
Interim Chief Executive

2. Purpose

- 2.1 Under Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council has the power “to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as the Council thinks fit”. This Pay Policy Statement sets out the Council’s approach to Pay in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 - 43 of the Localism Act 2011 and with regard to the latest Welsh Government guidance. The purpose of this Pay Policy Statement is to provide transparency in relation to the Council’s approach to setting the pay of its workforce, particularly its senior staff (or ‘chief officers’) and its lowest paid employees. Local Authorities are required to produce and publish a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year detailing:
- The Council’s policies in relation to all aspects and elements of the remuneration of Chief Officers;
 - The approach to the publication of and access to information relating to all aspects of the remuneration of Chief Officers;
 - The Council’s policies in relation to the remuneration of its lowest paid employees (including the definition adopted and reasons for it);
 - The relationship between the remuneration of Chief Officers and other employees.
- 2.2 The Council is a large complex organisation with a multi-million pound budget providing and/or commissioning a wide range of essential services. The general approach to remuneration levels may, therefore, differ from one group of employees to another to reflect specific circumstances at a local, regional or national level. It will also need to be flexible, when required, to address a variety of changing circumstances, whether foreseeable or not.
- 2.3 The Council will develop an annual Pay Policy Statement and will seek to align reward systems with business objectives. As required by legislation, following approval by Full Council this Pay Policy Statement will come into immediate effect and will be subject to review on a minimum of an annual basis in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance prevailing at the time.

3. Legislative Framework

- 3.1 In determining the pay and remuneration of its employees, the Council will comply with all relevant employment legislation.
- 3.2 With regard to the Equal Pay requirements contained within the Equality Act 2010, the Council, through the use of an equality proofed Job Evaluation scheme for staff under the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) terms and conditions which directly relates salaries to the requirements, demands and responsibilities of the role, will aim to ensure that there is no pay discrimination within its pay structures and that all pay differentials can be objectively justified.

4. Scope of the Policy

- 4.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires authorities to develop and make public their Pay Policy Statement on all aspects of Chief Officer remuneration and that pertaining to the 'lowest paid' in the Council, explaining the relationship between the remuneration for Chief Officers and other groups.
- 4.2 The provisions in the Localism Act 2011 do not apply to the staff of local authority schools and as such they are not included within the scope of this Pay Policy Statement. In addition this policy does not apply to Members of the Council as they are not employees and are governed by separate legislation via the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
- 4.3 The provisions of the Localism Act 2011 do not detract from the Council's autonomy in making decisions on pay that are appropriate to local circumstances and which deliver value for money for local taxpayers.

5. Key Principles

5.1 Transparency, accountability and value for money

- 5.1.1 The Council is committed to an open and transparent approach to its Pay Policy Statement which will enable the taxpayer to access, understand and assess information on remuneration levels across all groups of Council employees. The following are attached as appendices:

- Appendix 1: Local Government Services Employee Pay Scales
- Appendix 2: Chief Officer Pay Scales
- Appendix 3: Soulbury Pay Scales
- Appendix 4: Annual Leave and Holiday Pay Guidance
- Appendix 5: Retirement Options Policy
- Appendix 6: Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 Statement Of Policy - Exercise Of Discretionary Functions
- Appendix 7: Redundancy Policy
- Appendix 8: In the Interests of the Efficiency of the Service Policy

5.2 Pay and Reward Strategy

- 5.2.1 The primary aim of a reward strategy is to attract and retain suitably skilled employees so that the Council can perform at its best. The biggest challenge for the Council in the current circumstances is to maximise productivity and efficiency within current resources. The Pay Policy Statement is therefore a matter of striking an often difficult balance between setting appropriate remuneration levels which will facilitate a sufficient supply of appropriately skilled individuals to fill the Council's wide range of roles, and ensuring that the burden on the taxpayer and a financially challenged organisation does not become greater than can be fully and objectively justified.

5.2.2 In this context, it does need to be recognised that, in particular, remuneration levels at the more senior grades need to enable the Council to attract a suitably wide pool of talent from which to recruit, often when in competition with other public and private sector employers from outside, as well as within, Wales. Remuneration levels are also important in retaining suitably skilled and qualified individuals once in post. The Council recognises that pay is not the only means of rewarding and supporting employees and offers a wider range of benefits, including flexible working arrangements, access to learning and development, an annual leave purchase scheme, a staff benefits scheme and an Employee Assistance Programme, etc.

The Council's Workforce Strategy 2021-2026 will consider pay and reward under the broader themes of this Strategy.

5.2.3 In addition, the Council is a major employer in the area and as such it must have regard to its role in the economic well-being of the people of Blaenau Gwent. The Council also has a role in setting standards on pay and conditions to other employers in the area for similar reasons.

5.2.4 In designing, developing and reviewing its Pay Policy Statement, the Council will seek to balance the above factors appropriately to maximise outcomes for the organisation and the community it serves, while managing pay costs and maintaining sufficient flexibility to meet future needs.

6. Pay Structure

6.1 The Council uses the nationally negotiated pay spine referred to as the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) as the basis for its local grading structure. This determines the salaries of the large majority of the workforce.

The local pay and grading structure for employees employed under the National Joint Council for Local Government Services consists of:

- 11 bands - Grades 1-11
- The opportunity for incremental progression.
- Overlapping spinal column points on certain grades

The national pay deal for 2022/23 included the deletion of the bottom point from the NJC pay spine with effect from 1 April 2023. The impact of the removal of the bottom point together with the progression of the living wage, will require a local review of the graded structure in consultation with the trade unions.

A copy of the pay scales effective from 1 April 2022 is attached at appendix 1. The national pay negotiations for 2023/24 are currently ongoing at the time of writing this Policy.

- 6.2 In addition to the NJC arrangements referred to above, the Council recognises other nationally negotiated arrangements including the JNC for Chief Executives, Chief Officers and the Soulbury Agreement. The details of which are outlined in appendices 2 and 3. The national pay negotiations for staff under the Soulbury Agreement for 2022/23 and the JNC for Chief Executives and Chief Officers for 2023/24 are current ongoing at the time of writing this Policy.
- 6.3 In line with TUPE regulations some staff from merged organisations may retain their former employer's terms and conditions of service. Such arrangements would be outside of the Council's Collective Bargaining arrangements.
- 6.4 All other additional pay related allowances such as overtime, statutory holiday payments and standby are the subject of either nationally or locally negotiated rates, having been determined from time to time in accordance with collective bargaining and/or as determined by Council Policy.
- 6.5 All Council employees (with the exception of teachers) are entitled to join the local government pension scheme (LGPS). If employees are eligible they will automatically become a member of the scheme, however they can decide to opt out of the scheme. The benefits and contributions payable under the fund are set out in the LGPS regulations.
- 6.6 New appointments will normally be made at the minimum point of the relevant grade, although this can be varied where necessary due to business or market conditions to secure the best candidate.

7. Job Evaluation

- 7.1 Job evaluation is a systematic way of determining the value/worth of a job in relation to other jobs within an organisation. The remuneration for staff on NJC for Local Government Services terms and conditions is determined by an ongoing analytical job evaluation scheme. The scheme used is the Greater London Provincial Council scheme (GLPC).
- 7.2 The concept of equality was central to the Pay and Grading Structure and the changes to terms and conditions were subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) by Northgate as part of the Council's pay modelling and negotiations with the Trade Unions.
- 7.3 The Council has commissioned an equal pay audit which will be reported in 2023.

8. Honoraria and Secondment

- 8.1 There may be occasions when an employee is asked to act up into a post at a higher grade or undertake additional duties over and above that of their substantive post for a period of time. In such circumstances an additional payment may be granted in line with Council Policy. This Scheme is applicable for all employees.

9. Market Supplements

- 9.1 Job evaluation enables the Council to set appropriate remuneration levels based on internal job size relativities within the Council. However, from time to time it may be necessary to take account of the external pay market in order to attract and retain employees with particular experience, skills and capacity. In these circumstances the Council's Market Supplement Policy will apply. In exceptional circumstances outside the policy it will be a matter for Council's consideration.

10. Accountability and Decision Making

- 10.1 In accordance with the statutory requirements and the Constitution of the Council, policies relating to the recruitment, pay, terms and conditions of employees of the Council, except teachers, are the responsibility of the Council.

11. Chief Officer Remuneration

11.1 Definition of Chief Officer and Pay Levels

- 11.1.1 For the purposes of this statement, 'Chief Officers' are as defined within Section 43 of the Localism Act. The posts falling within the statutory definition are set out below. The pay and grading structure for these posts is attached at appendix 2.

Post	Range	Salary 2022/23	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Executive 	JNC CE	£104,901 £107,483 £110,058 £112,629 £112,980	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Director of Social Services Corporate Director of Education Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services 	JNC CO	£85,406 £87,497 £89,583 £91,664 £93,751	Statutory and Non Statutory Chief Officers directly reporting to the Chief Executive.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Officer – Commercial and Customer Chief Officer – Resources (Statutory 151 Officer) 	JNC 5	£76,159 £78,021 £79,876 £81,724 £83,582	Statutory and Non Statutory Chief Officers directly reporting to the Chief Executive.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Children's Services Head of Adult Services 	JNC 5	£76,159 £78,021 £79,876 £81,724 £83,582	Directly reporting to Corporate Director of Social Services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance (Monitoring Officer) Head of School Improvement and Inclusion Head of Community Services Head of Regeneration & Development Head of Governance & Partnerships (Head of Democratic Services) Head of Organisational Development 	JNC 3	£66,623 £68,242 £69,863 £71,477 £73,092	Directly reporting to Statutory and Non Statutory Chief Officers.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Manager Accountancy 	JNC 2	£60,362 £61,827 £63,285 £64,743 £66,205	Directly reporting to Statutory and Non Statutory Chief Officers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Manager Public Protection* • Service Manager Performance & Democratic • Service Manager Policy & Partnerships • Service Manager Commercial & Business Development • Service Manager Customer Experience & Transformation • Service Manager Revenues & Charging Assessments • Service Manager Inclusion • Service Manager – Education Transformation and Business Change • Service Manager – Young People and Partnerships 	JNC 1	£54,103 £55,408 £56,715 £58,013 £59,317	*The Service Manager Public Protection is in receipt of annual honoraria payment of £6,890.10 in addition to normal salary.

11.1.2 The Council employs Chief Officers under JNC terms and conditions which are incorporated within their contracts. The JNC for Chief Executives and Chief Officers negotiates on national (UK) annual cost of living pay increases for this group and any award of the same is determined on this basis. Chief Officers employed under JNC terms and conditions are contractually entitled to any national JNC determined pay rises and this Council will therefore pay these as and when determined, in accordance with current contractual requirements. Any other proposal to determine or vary the remuneration of Chief Officers (or those to be appointed as Chief Officers) must be approved by Full Council.

11.1.3 The Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 provides an Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRP) with powers to make recommendations in relation to any policy in an authority's Pay Policy Statement which relates to the salary of the Head of the Paid Service (Chief Executive), or any proposed change of salary of the Head of the Paid Service. The Council must therefore consult the IRP about any proposed changes to the salary of the Chief Executive (except one which is commensurate to a change affecting the authority's other staff more generally) and have regard to their recommendations. If the authority chooses not to follow the advice of the Panel it may become subject to a Ministerial direction to reconsider the position. The Act also allows authorities to reduce (but not increase) the salary payable to the Chief Executive in advance of a recommendation from the IRP, so long as the contract under which the salary is payable does not prevent the authority from changing the salary after receiving a recommendation.

The Welsh Local Government Association will notify the Independent Remuneration Panel of national pay awards on behalf of the Council.

11.1.4 No referrals have been made to the IRP during 2022/23.

11.1.5 In addition to agreeing the parameters for setting the pay of Chief Officers, Full Council will be given the opportunity to approve salary packages for any new posts that come within the scope of this Pay Policy Statement and as defined within the Act as being £100,000, or greater, per annum. For this purpose, salary packages will include salary, bonuses, fees, allowances routinely payable, any expenses/

allowances chargeable to UK income tax, any other benefits in kind to which the officer is entitled as a result of their employment and any increase in or enhancement of the Chief Officer's pension entitlement where the increase or enhancement is as a result of a resolution of the Council.

11.1.6 No bonus or performance related pay mechanism is applicable to the Chief Executive or Chief Officers' pay; although an increment is awarded annually up to the maximum of the scale for the post.

11.2 Recruitment of Chief Officers

11.2.1 The Council's policy and procedure in relation to the recruitment of Chief Officers is set out in the Council's Constitution. When recruiting to these posts the Council will take full and proper account of its commitment to equal opportunities. The determination of the remuneration to be offered to any newly appointed Chief Officer will be in accordance with the pay structure and relevant policies in place at the time of recruitment.

11.2.2 Where the proposed remuneration of a Chief Officer's post is £100,000 or greater, per annum it will be publicly advertised externally, as set out in the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (Wales)(Amendment) Regulations 2014. There is however a facility within the regulations to make temporary appointments of up to 12 months, without the need to advertise externally.

11.3. Additions to Salary for Chief Officers

11.3.1 The Council does not apply any bonuses or performance related pay to its Chief Officers.

11.3.2 The Council does pay all reasonable travel and subsistence expenses on production of receipts and in accordance with national and local conditions. The Council pays the HMRC recommended mileage rate of 45p per mile.

11.3.3 Annual leave and bank holiday entitlements can be found in appendix 4.

11.3.4 The Council has a statutory duty to appoint a Returning Officer for specified Elections and Referenda. The Head of Legal & Compliance (Monitoring Officer) undertakes this role and is paid for discharging these functions in accordance with prescribed fees.

11.4 Payments on Termination for Chief Officers

11.4.1 The Council's approach to statutory and discretionary payments on termination of employment of Chief Officers (and all other employees), prior to reaching normal retirement age is set out within the following policies:

- Retirement Policy (appendix 5)
- Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 Statement Of Policy - Exercise Of Discretionary Functions (appendix 6)
- Redundancy Policy (appendix 7)
- In the Interests of the Efficiency of the Service Policy (appendix 8)

In line with Council's agreed Redundancy Policy, redundancy payments are based on actual weekly earnings (up to the maximum spinal column point 46 £1,010.17 per week as at 1 April 2022). Staff who do not have access to their Pension will receive a redundancy payment based on the statutory calculator multiplied by 2 up to a maximum of 60 weeks. Those who are able to access their pension will receive a redundancy payment based on the statutory calculator up to a maximum of 30 weeks and will have immediate access to unreduced payment of their LGPS benefits.

The Council does not increase the total membership of active members of the pension scheme or award additional pension.

11.4.2 Where Chief Officers (definition in section 11.1.1) are terminated and are recommended to receive severance payments, of £100,000 or greater, the business case for this must go to Full Council for approval. Council Members must be made aware of any statutory or contractual entitlements due to the employee and the consequences of a non-approval by Council. The following components of a severance package will be included when determining whether the package exceeds £100,000:

- Salary paid in lieu
- Lump sum redundancy/severance payment and
- Cost to the authority of the strain on the pension fund arising from providing early access to an unreduced pension.

11.4.3 Decisions relating to any other payments falling outside the provisions or the relevant periods of contractual notice will be taken by those officers and Members authorised to do so by the Council's Constitution.

11.4.4 Staff who have left the employment of the Council by means of a voluntary redundancy or a voluntary severance which included a financial package, will not usually be re-employed or re-engaged in any way (i.e. by way of agency or consultancy). In exceptional cases only and where there has been a break of more than two years, re-engagement will be subject to CLT approval on the basis of a report outlining a critical business case. In cases that concern the Chief Executive, Directors or Chief Officers, Full Council approval will be required.

12. Remuneration at the Lowest Level

12.1 The lowest paid persons employed under a contract of employment with the Council are employed on full time (37 hours) equivalent salaries in accordance with the minimum spinal column point currently in use within Grade 1 of the Council's grading structure. As at 1 April 2023, with the deletion of the bottom point of the pay spine, spinal column point 2 is now the minimum point with an hourly rate of £10.60 per hour (pending the pay award for 2023/24).

12.2 The Council runs an apprenticeship scheme and payments are made in line with the shared apprenticeship scheme.

- 12.3 The relationship between the rate of pay for the lowest paid and Chief Officers is determined by the processes used for determining pay and grading structures as set out earlier in this Pay Policy Statement.

13. The Real Living Wage

- 13.1 The Council agreed to implement the Real Living Wage with effect from 1 April 2018 and guaranteed that no member of staff in the Council will earn less than the Real Living Wage. The Real Living Wage is independently calculated each year by the Resolution Foundation and overseen by the Living Wage Commission. By paying the Real Living Wage employers are voluntarily ensuring that their employees can earn a wage which is enough to live on as determined by the Living Wage Foundation.
- 13.2 The Real Living Wage rate of £10.90 per hour will be implemented in line with the 2023/24 pay award and will be effective from 1 April 2023. This will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that no member of staff in the Council will earn less than the Real Living Wage.

14. Off Payroll Working in the Public Sector - IR35 Intermediaries Legislation

- 14.1 The Intermediaries Legislation ensures that individuals who work through their own or even another personal service company (PSC) pay employment taxes in a similar way to an organisation's own employees. This is relevant to those individuals providing services to the Council who if they were not engaged through a personal service company (PSC) or other intermediary would be employed by the Council directly.
- 14.2 This new measure, "Off-payroll working in the public sector" moves responsibility to the Council for deciding if the off-payroll rules for engagements in the public sector apply. This measure makes the Authority responsible for deducting and paying associated employment taxes and National Insurance Contributions (NICs) to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

15. Pay Relativities within the Council

- 15.1 The statutory guidance under the Localism Act recommends the use of pay multiples as a means of measuring the relationship between pay rates across the workforce and that of senior managers, as included within the Hutton Report 'Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector' (2011). The Hutton Report explored the case for a fixed limit on dispersion of pay through a requirement that no public sector manager can earn more than 20 times the lowest paid person in the organisation. The report concluded that the relationship to median earnings was a more relevant measure and the Government's Code of Recommended Practice on Data Transparency recommends the publication of the ratio between the highest paid salary and the median average salary of the whole of the Council's workforce.

15.2 The multiples of pay for Blaenau Gwent which will be published annually are set out below:

	2022/23	2023/24
The multiple between the lowest paid full time equivalent employee and the Chief Executive	1:6.13	1:5.31
The multiple between the lowest paid full time equivalent employee and average Chief Officer	1:3.89	1:3.52
The multiple between the median full time equivalent earnings (excluding teachers) and the Chief Executive	1:4.93	1:4.23
The multiple between the median full time equivalent earnings (excluding teachers) and average Chief Officer	1:3.89	1:2.81

16. Gender Pay Gap

- 16.1 We are an employer required by law to carry out Gender Pay Reporting under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.
- 16.2 The gender pay gap is an equality measure that shows the difference in average earnings between women and men.
- 16.3 The UK gender pay gap is just over 15% (2021).
- 16.4 At the Council we are confident that men and women are paid equally for doing equivalent jobs across the business. The gender pay gap shows that the workforce is predominantly female with women occupying a high percentage of jobs across all four pay quartiles. The pay gap in Blaenau Gwent continues to be significantly lower than the national average.

Gender Pay Gap Report – 31 March 2022

Hourly Rate – Gender Pay Gap

Women's Hourly Rate is:	-0.69% Lower (mean)	-4.93% Lower (median)
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Pay Quartiles – Gender Pay Gap

How many men and women are in each of the quartiles:

	Men	Women
Upper Quartile:	29%	71%
Upper Middle Quartile:	32%	68%
Lower Middle Quartile:	36%	64%
Lower Quartile:	30%	70%

17. Publication

- 17.1 Upon approval by Full Council, this statement will be published on the Council's Website.
- 17.2 The Council's Annual Statement of Accounts contributes to the transparency on Council spend as it includes information on posts where the full time equivalent salary is at least £60,000.

18. Review of the Policy

- 18.1 This Policy outlines the current position in respect of pay and reward within the Council and it will be reviewed to ensure that it meets the principles of fairness, equality, accountability and value for money for the citizens of Blaenau Gwent. The Policy will be reviewed at least annually and reported to Full Council for approval in line with statutory requirements.



Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Pay and Grading

NJC Local Government Services - 1st April 2022

Grade	SCP	Salary	Weekly	Monthly	Hrly rate
1	1	£20,258	£388.51	£1,688.17	£10.50
	2	£20,441	£392.02	£1,703.42	£10.60
2	2	£20,441	£392.02	£1,703.42	£10.60
	3	£20,812	£399.13	£1,734.33	£10.79
	4	£21,189	£406.36	£1,765.75	£10.98
3	4	£21,189	£406.36	£1,765.75	£10.98
	5	£21,575	£413.77	£1,797.92	£11.18
	6	£21,968	£421.30	£1,830.67	£11.39
4	7	£22,369	£428.99	£1,864.08	£11.59
	8	£22,777	£436.82	£1,898.08	£11.81
	9	£23,194	£444.82	£1,932.83	£12.02
	10	£23,620	£452.99	£1,968.33	£12.24
	11	£24,054	£461.31	£2,004.50	£12.47
	12	£24,496	£469.79	£2,041.33	£12.70
5	14	£25,409	£487.30	£2,117.42	£13.17
	15	£25,878	£496.29	£2,156.50	£13.41
	17	£26,845	£514.84	£2,237.08	£13.91
	18	£27,344	£524.41	£2,278.67	£14.17
	19	£27,852	£534.15	£2,321.00	£14.44
	20	£28,371	£544.10	£2,364.25	£14.71
6	21	£28,900	£554.25	£2,408.33	£14.98
	22	£29,439	£564.58	£2,453.25	£15.26
	23	£30,151	£578.24	£2,512.58	£15.63
	24	£31,099	£596.42	£2,591.58	£16.12
	25	£32,020	£614.08	£2,668.33	£16.60
	26	£32,909	£631.13	£2,742.42	£17.06
7	26	£32,909	£631.13	£2,742.42	£17.06
	27	£33,820	£648.60	£2,818.33	£17.53
	28	£34,723	£665.92	£2,893.58	£18.00
	29	£35,411	£679.12	£2,950.92	£18.35
	30	£36,298	£696.13	£3,024.83	£18.81
8	30	£36,298	£696.13	£3,024.83	£18.81
	31	£37,261	£714.59	£3,105.08	£19.31
	32	£38,296	£734.44	£3,191.33	£19.85
	33	£39,493	£757.40	£3,291.08	£20.47
	34	£40,478	£776.29	£3,373.17	£20.98
9	34	£40,478	£776.29	£3,373.17	£20.98
	35	£41,496	£795.81	£3,458.00	£21.51
	36	£42,503	£815.13	£3,541.92	£22.03
	37	£43,516	£834.55	£3,626.33	£22.56
	38	£44,539	£854.17	£3,711.58	£23.09
10	39	£45,495	£872.51	£3,791.25	£23.58
	40	£46,549	£892.72	£3,879.08	£24.13
	41	£47,573	£912.36	£3,964.42	£24.66
	42	£48,587	£931.81	£4,048.92	£25.18
11	43	£49,590	£951.04	£4,132.50	£25.70
	44	£50,615	£970.70	£4,217.92	£26.24
	45	£51,650	£990.55	£4,304.17	£26.77
	46	£52,673	£1,010.17	£4,389.42	£27.30



Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Pay and Grading

JNC Chief Executive & Chief Officers - 1st April 2022

Grade	SCP	Salary	Weekly	Monthly	Hrly rate
Chief Executive	Min	£104,901	£2,011.80	£8,741.75	£54.37
	2nd	£107,483	£2,061.32	£8,956.92	£55.71
	3rd	£110,058	£2,110.70	£9,171.50	£57.05
	4th	£112,629	£2,160.01	£9,385.75	£58.38
	Max	£112,980	£2,166.74	£9,415.00	£58.56

Grade	SCP	Salary	Weekly	Monthly	Hrly rate
Chief Officer	Min	£85,406	£1,637.92	£7,117.17	£44.27
	2nd	£87,497	£1,678.02	£7,291.42	£45.35
	3rd	£89,583	£1,718.03	£7,465.25	£46.43
	4th	£91,664	£1,757.94	£7,638.67	£47.51
	Max	£93,751	£1,797.96	£7,812.58	£48.59

Grade	SCP	Salary	Weekly	Monthly	Hrly rate
JNC 1	Min	£54,103	£1,037.59	£4,508.58	£28.04
	2nd	£55,408	£1,062.62	£4,617.33	£28.72
	3rd	£56,715	£1,087.68	£4,726.25	£29.40
	4th	£58,013	£1,112.58	£4,834.42	£30.07
	Max	£59,317	£1,137.59	£4,943.08	£30.75
JNC 2	Min	£60,362	£1,157.63	£5,030.17	£31.29
	2nd	£61,827	£1,185.72	£5,152.25	£32.05
	3rd	£63,285	£1,213.68	£5,273.75	£32.80
	4th	£64,743	£1,241.65	£5,395.25	£33.56
	Max	£66,205	£1,269.68	£5,517.08	£34.32
JNC 3	Min	£66,623	£1,277.70	£5,551.92	£34.53
	2nd	£68,242	£1,308.75	£5,686.83	£35.37
	3rd	£69,863	£1,339.84	£5,821.92	£36.21
	4th	£71,477	£1,370.79	£5,956.42	£37.05
	Max	£73,092	£1,401.76	£6,091.00	£37.89
JNC 4	Min	£68,707	£1,317.67	£5,725.58	£35.61
	2nd	£70,382	£1,349.79	£5,865.17	£36.48
	3rd	£72,049	£1,381.76	£6,004.08	£37.34
	4th	£73,718	£1,413.77	£6,143.17	£38.21
	Max	£75,385	£1,445.74	£6,282.08	£39.07
JNC 5	Min	£76,159	£1,460.58	£6,346.58	£39.48
	2nd	£78,021	£1,496.29	£6,501.75	£40.44
	3rd	£79,876	£1,531.87	£6,656.33	£41.40
	4th	£81,724	£1,567.31	£6,810.33	£42.36
	Max	£83,582	£1,602.94	£6,965.17	£43.32

Soulbury Pay Agreement

Educational Improvement Professionals

SCP	01.09.2021	
1	37,056	
2	38,383	
3	39,637	
4	40,907	
5	42,168	
6	43,431	
7	44,758	
8	46,035	*
9	47,522	
10	48,849	
11	50,158	
12	51,425	
13	52,860	**
14	54,140	
15	55,553	
16	56,831	
17	58,113	
18	59,371	
19	60,668	
20	61,338	***
21	62,626	
22	63,749	
23	64,985	
24	66,093	
25	67,278	
26	68,434	
27	69,616	
28	70,815	
29	72,016	
30	73,215	
31	74,404	
32	75,611	
33	76,819	
34	78,056	
35	79,291	
36	80,560	
37	81,809	
38	83,071	
39	84,316	
40	85,561	
41	86,811	
42	88,061	
43	89,309	
44	90,564	
45	91,815	
46	93,069	
47	94,327	
48	95,574	****
49	96,825	****
50	98,079	****

Notes to Educational Improvement Professionals above: Salary scales to consist of not more than four consecutive points based on the duties and responsibilities attaching to posts and the need to recruit and motivate staff.

- * Normal minimum point for EIP undertaking the full range of duties at this level.
- ** Normal minimum point for senior EIP undertaking the full range of duties at this level.
- *** Normal minimum point for leading EIP undertaking the full range of duties at this level.
- **** Extension to range to accommodate structured professional assessments.

Young People's / Community Service Manager

SCP	01.09.2021	
1	38,433	
2	39,691	
3	40,947	
4	42,231	*
5	43,535	
6	44,807	
7	46,107	**
8	47,585	
9	48,400	
10	49,660	
11	50,912	
12	52,166	
13	53,412	
14	54,669	
15	55,928	
16	57,191	
17	58,460	
18	59,722	
19	60,976	
20	62,257	***
21	63,562	***
22	64,898	***
23	66,260	***
24	67,650	***

Notes to Young People's / Community Service Manager above:

The minimum Youth and Community Service Officers' scale is 4 points.

Other salary scales to consist of not more than four consecutive points based on duties and responsibilities attaching to posts and the need to recruit retain and motivate staff.

- * normal minimum point for senior youth and community service officers undertaking the full range of duties at this level (see paragraph 5.6 of the Soulbury Report).
- ** normal minimum point for principal youth and community service officer undertaking the full range of duties at this level (see paragraph 5.8 of the Soulbury Report).
- *** extension to range to accommodate discretionary scale points and structured professional assessments.

Trainee Educational Psychologists

SCP	01.09.2021
1	24,970
2	26,798
3	28,623
4	30,453
5	32,279
6	34,107

Assistant Educational Psychologists

SCP	01.09.2021
1	30,694
2	31,948
3	33,201
4	34,448

Educational Psychologists - Scale A

SCP	01.09.2021	
1	38,865	
2	40,838	
3	42,811	
4	44,782	
5	46,755	
6	48,727	
7	50,584	
8	52,440	
9	54,179	*
10	55,921	*
11	57,544	*

Notes to Educational Psychologists - Scale A above:

Salary scales to consist of six consecutive points based on the duties and responsibilities attaching to posts and the need to recruit retain and motivate staff.

*Extension to scale to accommodate structured professional assessment points.

Senior and Principal Educational Psychologists

SCP	01.09.2021	
1	48,727	
2	50,584	
3	52,440	*
4	54,179	
5	55,921	
6	57,544	
7	58,210	
8	59,456	
9	60,690	
10	61,945	
11	63,177	
12	64,431	
13	65,707	
14	66,941	**
15	68,235	**
16	69,514	**
17	70,803	**
18	72,090	**

Notes to Senior and Principal Educational Psychologists above

Salary scales to consist of not more than four consecutive points based on the duties and responsibilities attaching to posts and the need to recruit retain and motivate staff.

* Normal minimum point for the principal educational psychologist undertaking the full range of duties at this level.

**Extension to range to accommodate discretionary scale points and structured professional assessments.



Annual Leave & Holiday Pay A Manager's Guide



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: January 2023 Review: January 2028

Version Control

This document is intended for:

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

Version	Key Changes	Approved By
Mar 2020	Updated to reflect changes being introduced by the Government on 6 April 2020 which extend the reference period for calculating a worker's average weekly pay from 12 to 52 weeks.	DMT
Jan 2023	Updated to reflect additional annual leave day following 2022 pay negotiations	DMT

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.

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1. Purpose & Scope

This document aims to provide guidance on a consistent approach to the way in which annual leave and sickness pay is calculated across the Authority.

It is important that such entitlements are paid in accordance with legislation and ensures that the Authority is delivering the most efficient service possible.

In terms of the legal context the Working Time Regulations (WTR) (1998) sets out parameters regarding working hours, statutory entitlement to paid leave for most workers and a number of other related matters. It is against this background that the guidance has been developed.

SECTION 1 – TYPES OF WORKERS

2. Definition of Workers

Permanent Employees

A permanent employee is a full time or part time individual who is employed by the Authority on a permanent contract. The employee will have full employment rights in line with current legislation, as outlined in their statement of particulars. There is no expected end date of their employment and they will accrue continuous service.

Permanent employees will accrue all relevant entitlements and benefits in line with the Council's terms and conditions i.e. sick pay and annual leave.

Fixed Term Employees

A fixed-term contract is one that ends on a specified date or on the occurrence of a particular event such as the loss of funding or the completion of a task. A fixed term employee can be a temporary replacement for an absent employee whose contract will terminate upon the return of the regular employee. After four years' continuous service in a fixed term position the manager should refer to the Fixed Term Regulations for further guidance, as the employee will be entitled to permanent status.

Employees recruited on such a contract should be done so on the basis that there is a fixed period for which the work is expected to last and that the weekly hours are definitive e.g. to cover maternity leave or an externally funded project.

Fixed term employees will be entitled to the same benefits as a permanent worker, i.e. annual leave and sick pay.

Term-Time Employees

A term-time contract is defined by an employee working only during periods that coincide with the school terms and is not required to work during school holidays. Term-time employees will be employed based on the number of weeks they work per year and remuneration will be calculated on a pro rata basis which will be inclusive of their annual leave entitlement.

Term-time employees will not be permitted to take leave during school time but will be entitled to the same other benefits of the Authority such as sick pay.

Temporary Employees

Temporary contracts will have no expectation of permanence as the termination date or the event on which the employment will terminate is not known. An employee on a temporary contract will accrue continuous service from the start date of that contract.

Temporary employees will be entitled to sick pay, annual leave and the range of other benefits the Authority offers, where applicable.

An employee should be recruited on a temporary contract if the work is expected to be of a temporary nature but the end date is not known e.g. to cover a period of sickness of a permanent employee. Contractual hours should be stipulated for the purposes of a temporary contract.

Relief Employees

Relief employees should be recruited as a way of dealing with a variable need for work i.e. short term absences. Employees of this nature should only be used on an ad hoc basis and will not work regularly and consistently.

Relief employees should only be paid at the bottom of the grade and will not move through any grade increments. They will not be entitled to annual leave, sick pay or bank holiday entitlements. A relief employee will not benefit from the range of entitlements to which other employees of the Council are entitled.

If relief employees are allowed to build up regular and consistent hours then this will become a risk to the Authority i.e. annual leave, sickness pay and redundancy liability.

Relief employees should be regularly monitored by managers and termination paperwork completed routinely when the employee is no longer required, to ensure there is an accurate record of all current employees.

Part Time Employees

A part time employee will be defined as such if they work fewer hours than the Council's normal full time hours (37 hours per week). Part time employees will not be treated less favourably than comparable full time workers, nor will they be entitled to any benefits which exceed a full time equivalent.

Agency Workers

The Council has a contract to source all agency workers. All administration relating to annual leave and sick pay will be administered by the contractor directly. It should be understood that Agency Workers are not employees of the Council.

3. General Principles

When recruiting, a manager should carefully consider the type of contract that would best suit the required need to ensure efficiency of the service. Due consideration should be given throughout the duration of any contract that is not permanent to ensure that it is still fit for purpose and meets the need of the service. Managers should change the nature of the contract if the situation changes e.g. a relief employee who has started to pick up regular shifts as a result of long term sickness should be terminated as a relief employee and given a temporary contract.

SECTION 2 - ABSENCE

4. **Sickness Leave Entitlement**

Permanent, Fixed Term, Term-Time and Temporary employees of the Authority are entitled to the following sick pay benefits, dependent on their length of service:

1st year – 1 month full pay and (after 4 months service) 2 months half pay

2nd year – 2 months full pay and 2 months half pay

3rd year – 4 months full pay and 4 months half pay

4th and 5th year – 5 months full pay and 5 months half pay

After 5 years – 6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

Sickness entitlement is calculated on a rolling 12 month basis, which starts on the first day of sickness absence looking back a calendar year.

Periods of absence in respect of industrial injury arising out of, or in the course of, employment with the Authority will not be counted for the purpose of calculating entitlement to sick pay.

All sickness and absence periods must be inputted on iTrent.

The [Attendance Management Policy](#) can be found on the intranet for guidance on how to manage short term and long term employee absence. This policy applies to all types of employees.

5. **Annual Leave Entitlement**

Annual leave is required to be taken by arrangement within the leave year, which should commence on the 1st of the month in which the employee's birthday falls.

Annual leave entitlement for a full time employee is 26 days for those with less than 5 years' continuous service and 31 days for those with more than 5 years' continuous service.

JNC Officers are entitled to 31 days (FTE) annual leave irrespective of length of service.

Soulbury, Aspire and staff on other terms of conditions, will have a different entitlement to annual leave and Managers should refer to the relevant terms and conditions for further guidance.

Annual leave and bank holiday entitlements will be calculated on a pro-rata basis for part time staff. All part time staff should be given their entitlement in hours and minutes.

One day of annual leave entitlement is required to be taken at the Christmas closure by all staff who would ordinarily be expected to work on the designated day; this will be prorated for part time employees.

All annual leave should be taken during the year in which it is accrued. A maximum of five days may be carried over from one entitlement year to the next (prorated for part time staff).

Each calendar year employees are entitled to 8 statutory bank holidays and 2 extra statutory bank holidays. For a full list of statutory and extra statutory bank holidays please refer to the Council's [intranet site](#).

Part time staff should be given a pro rata entitlement for bank holidays in hours and minutes as per the guidance contained within this document, which will be added to their annual leave entitlement. Part time workers whose normal rota day falls on a bank holiday will be expected to deduct their normal working hours for that day from their entitlement. The Authority has developed a simple to use online annual leave calculator that will enable the user to identify the appropriate leave entitlements for both full and part time employees. The [calculator](#) can be accessed on the intranet site.

Term-time only staff will not be permitted to take any leave during term time; they are instead paid a pro rata amount of annual leave included in their monthly salary, in order to take leave outside term time.

6. Payment for Annual Leave on Termination of Employment

If an employee leaves the Authority's employment part way through their entitlement year their annual leave entitlement will be calculated on a pro rata basis up until their termination date (based on completed calendar months only). Staff will be encouraged to take the annual leave to which they are entitled before terminating with the Authority. Only in exceptional circumstances will staff be entitled to be paid for any accrued annual leave that they are unable to take, or if the line manager cannot accommodate the taking of the leave, before the date of termination. There must be a sound business case in such situations. Any accrued but untaken flexi time or TOIL will not be paid upon termination; managers will be expected to manage all leave in the notice period.

If, on the date of termination an employee has taken annual leave in excess of their pro rata entitlement, then they will be required to reimburse the Authority by means of deduction from their salary in respect of any excess annual leave taken.

It is important that all annual leave is managed appropriately so that the risk of outstanding annual leave or taking more than accrued is limited.

7. Sickness whilst on Annual Leave

Where an employee falls sick or is injured whilst on annual leave, the employee can report sick and take replacement annual leave at a later time as long as the following conditions are adhered to:

- The total period of incapacity must be fully certified by a qualified medical practitioner. The Authority reserves the right to request further evidence of incapacity in certain instances.
- The employee must contact the manager by telephone on the first day of any known period of incapacity during the annual leave period.
- The employee must submit a written request no later than 10 days after returning to work, setting out how much of the annual leave period was affected by sickness and the amount of leave that the employee wishes to be credited back to their entitlement.
- Where an employee is abroad when taken ill, evidence must still be produced by the employee by way of medical certificate or proof of a claim on an insurance policy for medical treatment.
- All costs of medical certification are to be incurred by the employee.

If an employee satisfies all of the above conditions then the Authority will credit the number of days lost to illness back to their current entitlement year. The leave must then be re-taken within their current entitlement year wherever practical. Where carryover of leave is necessary, only the statutory element of any untaken leave may be carried over (see next section “Annual Leave Entitlement and Sick Leave” for full details). Where it is found that an employee has deliberately requested the replacement of annual leave under false circumstances they will be dealt with via the Council’s [Disciplinary Policy & Procedure](#).

If an employee is ill or injured before the start of planned annual leave, the Authority will agree to the employee postponing the leave to another mutually agreed time (in that leave year wherever possible). The employee must submit this request in writing to their line manager alongside medical certification confirming that the employee is unfit for work.

The Authority may require an employee to take all or part of their replacement annual leave on particular days, in line with the Working Time Regulations (1998).

All periods of sickness absence resulting from these circumstances will be treated in accordance with the Authority’s Attendance Management Policy.

8. Annual Leave and Sick Leave Entitlement

An employee who is absent due to sickness will continue to accrue their contractual annual leave entitlement. However, only annual leave up to the statutory entitlement (28 days in total which includes bank holidays), as provided by the Working Time Regulations (1998) can be carried over from one leave year to the next. This will be prorated for part time employees. Any leave carried over must be taken in the following year and the Council may require an individual to take the leave on particular days.

Example 1 - Full Time Equivalent

Employee A is entitled to 41 days leave (31 days annual leave + 10 bank holidays).

Employee A has taken 5 days annual leave and shortly after returning to work is then sick for nine months, returning 2 weeks before the end of their leave year.

Although the employee has 36 days in total left only 28 days can be carried over to the following leave year.

Employees who are sick must only be allowed to carry over 5 days annual leave if they have previously taken their statutory allowance of 28 days, inclusive of bank holidays, and do not return before their next entitlement year.

Example 2 - Full Time Equivalent

Employee B is entitled to 41 days leave (31 days annual leave + 10 bank holidays).

Employee B has taken 31 days annual leave and is then sick until the next leave year.

Although the employee has 10 days left in total, only 5 days can be carried over to the following leave year.

Where an employee returns to work following long term sick leave, any annual leave accrued should be taken in the same leave year where practicable. The Authority may require an individual to take all or part of the accrued leave on particular days in the interest of service delivery.

Travelling/Trips whilst on Sick Leave

Employees are not encouraged to go on holiday whilst on sick leave where this may be **detrimental** to their recovery. Employees who wish to go on holiday or who have pre-booked holidays must seek the written permission, or otherwise, of their Line Manager before embarking on the holiday. For this reason the employee must ensure that they give their Line Manager sufficient notice of their intention to travel. Under normal circumstances the Line Manager will not withhold permission provided that, where requested, the employee submits a letter from their doctor in support of the holiday. The Council reserves the right to refer the employee to the Occupational Health Advisor/Physician for confirmation.

If an employee is on sick leave and goes on holiday without seeking the appropriate approval this will be dealt with in line with the Authority's Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.

Employees on sick leave should be aware that if they participate in activities that are inconsistent with their stated reasons for being sick or activities that worsen or prolong their absence, which could include travel and holidays, the Authority reserves the right to stop statutory sick pay and/or occupational sick pay, and in some cases this could result in disciplinary action.

Annual Leave whilst on Sick Leave

The Council encourages employees to utilise annual leave during sickness periods wherever possible, and where their absence permits, which may **assist** recovery and wellbeing. Therefore, an employee on sick leave may request to take their accrued annual leave entitlement while on sick leave. This must be approved by the employee's GP (to confirm that the trip will not hinder the employee's recovery) and evidence of this submitted to the line manager who will then approve any dates and deduct the annual leave from the employee's entitlement. This will not impact on the employee's entitlement to paid or unpaid sick leave. However, it will be deducted from the annual leave allowance and will not be classed as sick leave.

It is the responsibility of the line manager to inform Payroll that an employee is on annual leave instead of sick leave (via the sick returns) during this time to ensure the employee is paid the correct rate of pay.

A process flowchart is attached as [appendix 2](#).

9. Annual Leave for Phased Return to Work after Sickness Absence

Phased returns are used for a variety of reasons when someone has been absent due to sickness. Where agreed (normally in line with Occupational Health), a phased return to work will be managed according to the particular worker and their particular circumstances. The Authority does not expect staff to use their annual leave entitlement during this time. However, the employee and their line manager may agree that accrued annual leave can be used to arrange a period of part time working at the end of the phased return. For advice on specific cases please contact the OD Division.

Managers must inform Payroll of the agreed pattern of work during the period of phased return.

SECTION 3 – REMUNERATION FOR ANNUAL LEAVE & SICKNESS LEAVE (PERMANENT & FIXED TERM STAFF)

10. Definitions

Overtime - generally means any work over the basic contractual 37 working hours per week.

Additional hours - any work over the contracted basic working hours of part-time workers i.e. those whose contract is less than 37 hours per week. Overtime only becomes applicable to part time workers once these additional hours, added to the contracted hours, exceed the normal working hours of full-time staff i.e. more than 37 hours per week.

11. Additional Payments/Enhancements

Case Law and Employment Appeal Tribunals in 2014 along with new regulations have necessitated a revision of how certain additional payments are treated. The basic principle is that if an employee works varied hours as part of their role then **the total amount of varied hours worked should be included in a 52 week calculation** when calculating holiday pay/sick pay because individuals should not be at a financial detriment while on leave or sick.

Any additional contractual payments must also be included in the calculation of holiday/sick pay, providing the employee receives payment for these hours. If time is taken in rather than pay then this would not be included.

Example – where employees are contractually required to be on standby or sleep in these payments must be included in holiday/sick pay calculations.

However, if an employee receives a payment for standby and they are called out to attend and then given the next day off because they have been called out, only the standby payment should be included in the calculation, as the call out payments have been covered by taking the next day off.

12. Absence due to sickness

Employees will be paid their contractual hours whilst absent due to sickness, in line with the entitlements detailed above.

No employee should exceed 37 hours of work per week except in exceptional circumstances. These instances should be discussed at Departmental Management Team meetings and in conjunction with advice from the Organisational Development Division.

If an employee has committed to working additional hours and then subsequently reports sick when the hours were due to be worked, they will not be paid for the additional hours.

However, additional hours actually worked should be calculated for holiday pay/sickness purposes where an individual works varied hours. In these instances holiday pay/sick pay should be calculated using a 52 week average, **excluding** any weeks the employee did not earn any pay.

Staff should not accrue annual leave entitlement for additional hours worked. They will instead just be paid for the additional hours they worked. If they work varied hours then their pay should be inclusive of any average hours worked by undertaking the 52 week calculation.

13. Use of temporary staff

Temporary staff should be recruited in line with the guidance set out at the beginning of this document. Temporary workers should be recruited to fill a gap, usually for a short term period, with a set number of hours to work per week.

Sickness pay should be based on contractual hours unless working varied hours. Sick pay should be calculated using a 52 week average, excluding any weeks the employee did not earn any pay. Managers must regularly monitor and review working hours and if they are no longer fit for purpose the contract should be amended accordingly.

Annual leave entitlements in these cases should be calculated at the outset of the employment and based on a pro rata calculation for the expected duration of the contract. The calculations should also be inclusive of a bank holiday pro rata entitlement.

14. Use of relief staff

Relief workers should be recruited in line with the guidance set out at the beginning of this document. Such workers should only be used on an ad hoc basis and should not be relied upon to fill an ongoing gap in capacity. A pool of relief workers for any given service area can be common practice although they should not be offered regular hours, as this would constitute a temporary contract.

Relief workers will not be entitled to any sick pay and will not be paid for any shift that they are unavailable to work due to sickness.

Relief workers will not be entitled to accrue any annual leave or bank holiday entitlement.

Relief workers should be paid in accordance with the Authority's usual terms and conditions dependent on the shift they are scheduled to work i.e. a bank holiday or sleep in shift. They will not be paid more than a permanent member of staff for such shifts.

15. More than one job

If members of staff work in different roles across the authority, it is a managerial responsibility to ensure that individuals do not breach the Working Time Regulations as we are one employer and staff are entitled to the appropriate rest periods.

Individuals should report sick in line with the reporting procedures for each role they are unfit to attend.

Staff are not permitted to take annual leave in one role in order to pick up additional shifts in another.

16. Calculating Annual Leave

The Authority has developed a simple to use online annual leave calculator that will enable the user to identify the appropriate leave entitlements for both full and part time employees.

The calculator can be accessed on the intranet [here](#).

Guidance and ready reckoners for the manual calculation of annual leave can be found in [appendix 1](#).

Appendix 1 - Guidance for Calculating Annual Leave

To assist the calculation of annual leave a number of ready reckoners have been devised. They are attached below, with guidance notes and can also be accessed on the Council's [Intranet site](#).

This guidance is only to be used for staff working 52 weeks per year.

Please use this guidance in conjunction with the annual leave and bank holiday calculation tables.

Useful Information

- If a member of staff works the same number of hours each day, for five days (Mon-Fri), there is no need to calculate the pro rata entitlement, as it will always equate to 26 days (less than 5 years service) and 31 days (more than 5 years service), and the leave entitlement can be taken in days (e.g. 25hrs per week, 5hrs per day, Mon-Fri).
- A pro rata monthly annual leave entitlement for full time staff (37 hrs) working a normal 5 day week (7hrs 24mins per day) is:
 - 2 days for an employee with less than 5 years service.
 - 2.5 days for an employee with more than 5 years service.

Calculating a Pro Rata Entitlement for Part Time Staff

In order to calculate an employee's entitlement to annual leave you need to ensure that you have:

- the weekly contracted hours for the employee
- the number of days/pattern worked each week
- the number of hours the employee is required to work each day
- the employee's birth month
- whether the employee has more or less than 5 years service
- the table for annual leave and bank holidays calculations

Annual leave entitlements run from an employee's birth month, therefore, if your birthday falls in June your leave entitlement would run from 1 June to 31 May each year.

To calculate leave entitlement, you need to:

- Use the annual leave and bank holiday calculations table to locate the number of hours worked per week and identify the entitlement/pro rata entitlement.
- Add the annual leave and bank holiday entitlement together for the full entitlement.
- Calculate the bank holidays that will fall on the employee's working days and the hours the employee is due to work on these days and total these hours.
- Deduct the number of hours that need to be used for bank holidays and deduct from the full entitlement.
- The number of hours remaining is the employee's entitlement to annual leave.

Scenario: Employee with more than 5 years service working 30hrs per week, 7hrs 30mins per day Tuesday-Friday, birth month June

- Using the annual leave (31 days) and bank holiday calculations table locate the number of hours worked per week (30) and identify the pro rata entitlement (Annual leave = 180hrs Bank holiday = 60 hrs).
- Add this figure together which gives you a total of 240 hrs, this is a full year's entitlement.
- Next you need to deduct all bank holidays that fall on the working day and deduct them depending on the number of hours due to work on that day. In this case the employee works Tues-Fri, (7hrs 30mins per day) so only the Bank Holidays at Christmas and Good Friday (4 days) would need to be deducted at 7hrs 30mins each, therefore 30 hrs needs to be deducted for bank holidays.
- There is a total of 210hrs remaining for annual leave.

As the employee works the same number of hours each day (7hrs 30mins) this leave entitlement can be divided equally by 7.5 and would equate to 28 days.

How to determine if an annual leave entitlement is in days or hrs/mins

- If the part time employee works the same number of hours each day then the leave can be calculated in days **assuming** the remaining total can be divided equally. (e.g. If 120hrs remaining for annual leave and the employee works five hrs per day then divide 120 by 5 which converts to 24 days leave).
- Annual leave will have to be calculated in hrs and mins if the employee does not work the same number of hours each day.

When to recalculate a leave entitlement

It is important to note that an employee's leave entitlement will need to be recalculated as a result of:

- An increase / reduction in weekly working hours
- Change to working pattern (working day, daily hours, etc) as this may affect the deduction of hrs for bank holiday entitlement
- The employee reaching 5 years continuous service
- Termination of employment part way through a leave year

Calculating the additional entitlement for a full time employee who reaches 5 years service part way through their leave year

Please note this calculation is for staff that are full time.

If an employee reaches 5 years service part way through their leave year, they will be entitled to a pro rata amount of the additional 5 days. To calculate a pro rata additional entitlement, you need to:

- Divide the full additional entitlement of 5 by 12 to get a monthly entitlement (0.4).
- Identify the number of complete months that remain in the leave entitlement after the date of 5 years service.

- Multiple the number of complete months remaining by 0.4.
- This figure will be the additional entitlement that the employee will receive when they reach 5 years service.
- The following full leave year their leave will be increased to 31 days.

Scenario: Full time employee with a leave year that runs from February - January reaches 5 years service on 10 March

- Identify the number of completed months that remain in the leave entitlement after the date of 5 years service = 10 (months) April – January.
- Multiply the number of full months remaining by 0.4.
- On 10 March this employee will receive an additional 4 days leave.
- The following full leave year their leave will be increased to 31 days.

Calculating the additional entitlement for a part time employee who reaches 5 years service part way through their leave year

If an employee reaches 5 years service part way through their leave year, they will be entitled to a pro rata amount of the additional leave (this will vary depending on their weekly hours). To calculate a pro rata additional entitlement, you need to:

- Use the annual leave calculation table (26 days/less than 5 years service) to locate the number of hours worked per week and identify the entitlement in hours.
- Use the annual leave calculation table (31 days/more than 5 years service) to locate the number of hours worked per week and identify the entitlement in hours.
- Calculate the difference in entitlement (this is the pro rata amount for a full year's additional entitlement).
- Divide the full additional entitlement by 12 to get a monthly entitlement.
- Identify the number of completed months that remain in the leave entitlement after the date of 5 years service.
- Multiple the number of full months remaining by the monthly entitlement.
- This figure will be the additional entitlement that the employee will receive when they reach 5 years service.
- The following full leave year their leave will be increased to the full entitlement identified on the annual leave calculation (31 days/more than 5 years service).

Scenario: Part time employee (20hrs) with a leave year that runs from February - January reaches 5 years service on 10 March

- Use the annual leave calculation table (26 days/less than 5 years service) to locate the number of hours worked per week and identify the entitlement in hours = **100hrs.**
- Use the annual leave calculation table (31 days/more than 5 years service) to locate the number of hours worked per week and identify the entitlement in hours = **120hrs.**
- Calculate the difference in entitlement (this is the pro rata amount for a full year's additional entitlement) = **20hrs.**
- Divide the full additional entitlement by 12 to get a monthly entitlement = **1.5hrs.**
- Identify the number of completed months that remain in the leave entitlement after the date of 5 years service = **10 months.**
- Multiply the number of full months remaining by the monthly entitlement = **15hrs.**
- This figure will be the additional entitlement (**15hrs**) that the employee will receive when they reach 5 years service.

- The following full leave year their leave will be increased to the full entitlement identified on the annual leave calculation (31 days/more than 5 years service).

Calculating a leave entitlement for a portion of a year

To calculate a leave entitlement for a portion of the year (e.g. new starter starting part way through leave year or employee terminating):

- Calculate the full annual leave entitlement.
- Calculate the number of completed months the employee works in the leave year.
- Divide the full entitlement by 12 and multiply by the number of completed months the employee has/will work.

Scenario: Employee with more than 5 years service working full time normal hours (37 hrs / 7hrs 24mins per day), birth month June, terminating 15 November

- Full annual leave entitlement would be 31 days.
- Completed months worked 1 June – 31 October = 5 months.
- Divide the full entitlement by 12 and multiply by the number of completed months (5) the employee has worked.
- Pro rata entitlement would be 12.5 days.
- As this individual is terminating you would need to deduct any leave already taken. (If there is a shortfall then the amount would need to be reclaimed in the final salary, alternatively if there is leave remaining this can be paid or taken prior to termination).

BANK HOLIDAY CALCULATIONS - 10 DAYS

Hours Worked Per Week	Bank Holiday Hours (Decimal)	Bank Holiday Hours (Hrs & Mins)
1	2	2
2	4	4
3	6	6
4	8	8
5	10	10
6	12	12
7	14	14
8	16	16
9	18	18
10	20	20
11	22	22
12	24	24
13	26	26
14	28	28
15	30	30
16	32	32
17	34	34
18	36	36
18.5	37	37
19	38	38
20	40	40
21	42	42
22	44	44
23	46	46
24	48	48
25	50	50
26	52	52
27	54	54
28	56	56
29	58	58
30	60	60
31	62	62
32	64	64
33	66	66
34	68	68
35	70	70
36	72	72
37	74	74

ANNUAL LEAVE CALCULATIONS - 26 DAYS

Hours Worked Per Week	Annual Leave Hours (Decimal)	Annual Leave Hours (Hrs & Mins)
1	5.2	5.12
2	10.4	10.24
3	15.6	15.36
4	20.8	20.48
5	26	26
6	31.20	31.12
7	36.40	36.24
7.4	38.48	38.29
8	41.60	41.36
9	46.80	46.48
10	52	52
11	57.20	57.12
12	62.40	62.24
13	67.60	67.36
14	72.80	72.48
15	78	78
16	83.20	83.12
17	88.40	88.24
18	93.60	93.36
18.5	96.20	96.12
19	98.80	98.48
20	104	104
21	109.20	109.12
22	114.40	114.24
23	119.60	119.36
24	124.80	124.48
25	130	130
26	135.20	135.12
27	140.40	140.24
28	145.60	145.36
29	150.80	150.48
30	156	156
31	161.20	161.12
32	166.40	166.24
33	171.60	171.36
34	176.80	176.48
35	182	182
36	187.20	187.12
37	192.40	192.24

ANNUAL LEAVE CALCULATIONS - 31 DAYS

Hours Worked Per Week	Annual Leave Hours (Decimal)	Annual Leave Hours (Hrs & Mins)
1	6.2	6.12
2	12.4	12.24
3	18.6	18.36
4	24.8	24.48
5	31	31
6	37.20	37.12
7	43.40	43.24
7.4	45.88	45.53
8	49.60	49.36
9	55.80	55.48
10	62	62
11	68.20	68.12
12	74.40	74.24
13	80.60	80.36
14	86.80	86.48
15	93	93
16	99.20	99.12
17	105.40	105.24
18	111.60	111.36
18.5	114.70	114.42
19	117.80	117.48
20	124	124
21	130.20	130.12
22	136.40	136.24
23	142.60	142.36
24	148.80	148.48
25	155	155
26	161.20	161.12
27	167.40	167.24
28	173.60	173.36
29	174.80	174.48
30	186	186
31	192.20	192.12
32	198.40	198.24
33	204.60	204.36
34	210.80	210.48
35	217	217
36	223.20	223.12
37	229.40	229.24

MINUTES - DECIMAL CONVERSION

Minutes	Decimal		Minutes	Decimal
1	0.017		31	0.517
2	0.033		32	0.533
3	0.050		33	0.550
4	0.067		34	0.567
5	0.083		35	0.583
6	0.100		36	0.600
7	0.117		37	0.617
8	0.133		38	0.633
9	0.150		39	0.650
10	0.167		40	0.667
11	0.183		41	0.683
12	0.200		42	0.700
13	0.217		43	0.717
14	0.233		44	0.733
15	0.250		45	0.750
16	0.267		46	0.767
17	0.283		47	0.783
18	0.300		48	0.800
19	0.317		49	0.817
20	0.333		50	0.833
21	0.350		51	0.850
22	0.367		52	0.867
23	0.383		53	0.883
24	0.400		54	0.900
25	0.417		55	0.917
26	0.433		56	0.933
27	0.450		57	0.950
28	0.467		58	0.967
29	0.483		59	0.983
30	0.500		60	1.000

Appendix 2 - Holidays whilst on Sick Leave





Retirement Options Policy

(Local Government Pension Scheme only)



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: November 2017 Review: August 2022

Version Control

This document is intended for:

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

Version	Key Changes	Approved By
Mar 2020	Reformatted Only	DMT

This document may be reviewed and amended at any time and without consultation in response to legal requirements, in line with best practice or in response to an organisational requirement and where the changes do not affect the spirit or intent of the document.

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1. Policy Statement

Retirement is an important step in a person's life; Blaenau Gwent is committed to ensuring that the transition from work to retirement is as smooth as possible for its employees.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to lay down the principles and practices that will govern Blaenau Gwent's approach to employee retirements.

Blaenau Gwent recognises the contributions of a diverse workforce, including the skills and experience of older employees. It believes that employees should, wherever possible, be permitted to continue working for as long as they wish to do so.

The intention of the policy is to promote equality and fairness and to give managers and employees, where possible, the flexibility to plan retirements.

3. Scope

This policy has been developed in line with the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006, which came into force on 1 October 2006, and the Local Government Pension Scheme Changes 2014. It also reflects the changes following the abolition of the default retirement age with effect from 1 October 2011.

These provisions apply to all Blaenau Gwent employees with the exception of teaching staff. Any reference to pension entitlements will only apply to individuals who participate in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

4. Advice to Employees considering their Retirement Options

A. Retirement (From National Pension Age (NPA))

With effect from 1 October 2011, the Default Retirement Age has been removed and employees will no longer have a contractual retirement date of age 65.

An employee can now choose to retire from at any time between age 55 and 75 and receive their pension benefits immediately, although there may be a reduction in the benefits if payment is taken before your NPA, as it's being paid earlier. If you take it later than your NPA it's increased because it's being paid later.

Your Normal Pension Age (NPA) is simply the age when you can retire and take the pension you have built up in full – for the pension built up from 1 April 2014 your NPA is the same as your State Pension Age (but with minimum of age 65).

Employees who have contributed to the pension scheme will be entitled to a lump sum and an annual pension upon retirement, and they can take up the option to convert an element of their annual pension into a tax-free lump sum. At state retirement age employees will receive the basic flat-rate state pension if sufficient National Insurance contributions have been paid.

If an employee wishes to work after NPA they will continue paying into the LGPS, building up further benefits. They can receive their pension when they retire or reach the eve of their 75th birthday, whichever comes first. If the employee retires at or after NPA they can, if they wish, defer drawing their pension but must draw it before age 75. An employee will continue to accrue pension benefits if they continue working beyond NPA and the pension will be uplifted in line with regulations.

B. Current Transitional Protection Arrangements

The 85 year rule, which allowed members to retire before the age of 65 with unreduced benefits provided their age and membership added up to 85 was removed with effect from 1 October 2006.

However there are currently transitional protection arrangements in place for employees who were members of the LGPS prior to this date. The following table will help you work out your general position in relation to the 85 year rule, however, you should be aware that the rules governing how the 85 year rule protection applies, and the level of that protection, are quite complex.

If you would not satisfy the 85 year rule by the time you are 65	All your benefits are reduced if you choose to draw your pension before your Normal Pension Age. The reduction will be based on how many years before your Normal Retirement Age (protected Normal Pension Age for pension built up before 1 April 2014) and new Normal Pension Age (linked to State Pension Age) for pension built up from 1 April 2014) you draw your benefits.
If you will be age 60 or over by 31 March 2016 and choose to draw your pension before your Normal Pension Age	Provided you satisfy the 85 year rule when you start to draw your pension, the benefits you build up to 31 March 2016 will not be reduced.
If you will be under age 60 by 31 March 2016 and choose to draw your pension before your protected Normal Pension Age	Provided you satisfy the 85 year rule when you start to draw your pension, the benefits you've built up to 31 March 2008 will not be reduced.
If you will be aged 60 between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2020 and meet the 85 year rule by 31 March 2020	Some or all of the benefits you build up between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2020 will not have a full reduction.

C. Workforce Planning

With the removal of the default retirement age (Age 65), it is important that the Authority is in a position to plan its workforce requirements to meet future business needs.

The Authority encourages its managers to hold regular workplace discussions with all employees to discuss performance, development and training needs. The discussions also need to include both the Authority's and the employee's future plans and expectations. This will be an opportunity for employees to discuss any future plans or proposals for retirement and in turn allow the manager to plan for such an event.

Organisational Development are able to provide advice and support to managers to assist in workforce planning for their service area as a whole. Further information and advice can be provided by our Organisational Development Advisor.

5. Flexible Retirement - Regulation 35

The Authority relies upon the knowledge and skills of its employees. A flexible approach to retirement may mean that those employees who would otherwise retire completely can choose to explore other options which can benefit both the employee and the Authority. The Authority is actively promoting Work Life Balance options and managers will take this into consideration when considering any application for flexible retirement.

A. Eligibility

Employees can apply for flexible retirement from age 55 years onwards, (providing you have met the 2 year vesting period in the scheme).

B. Options

There are a number of flexible retirement options available as follows:

- working flexible hours leading up to retirement;
- retiring and returning to work part time in current post; or
- full-time/part time in a lower graded post with reduced responsibilities (assuming a suitable position is available).

C. Pension Implications

An employee reducing their hours or moving to a less senior position at or after age 55 can, provided there is a business case to support this, draw some or all of the benefits accrued, to help ease him/her into retirement, although the benefits may be reduced for early payment. The employer however has the discretion to waive the reduction in whole or in part.

Employees can continue paying into the LGPS on their reduced hours or in the new role, building up further benefits in the scheme up to the eve of their 75th birthday.

D. Conditions of Service

An employee's terms and conditions of service will remain unchanged as there is continuity of employment i.e. holidays, occupational sick pay, etc.

- Where an employee receives pension and returns to the Authority in a lower graded post the appointment will be made on the first point of the new scale.
- Where an employee returns to the Authority in the same role on reduced hours the salary point will remain unchanged, however the salary, holidays, etc will be pro-rata to the number of hours agreed in the application.

E. Application

Applications must be made using the Flexible Retirement Request Form, identifying the preferred flexible retirement option. This must be made to the appropriate officer who is their respective line manager/service manager and copied to the Organisational Development Division.

F. Procedure

- On receipt of the Flexible Retirement Request Form the financial implications in relation to the early release of the pension will be considered along with any service delivery issues by the directorate to ensure that:
 - there is no detrimental effect on service delivery
 - any flexible working arrangements are fair and equitable to all employees in the team
 - any flexible working arrangement is reviewed to ensure its effectiveness on both sides
 - there is a viable business case to present to the Early Retirement Panel for approval
- The Early Retirement Panel will review the business case and make a decision whether the flexible retirement is a viable option for the Authority. Once considered at the Early Retirement Panel, the employee and their line manager/service manager will be notified of the outcome.
- If the application is successful, agreement will be reached with the employee and their line manager/service manager regarding the start date and review date for the new arrangements.
- If the application is unsuccessful, the employee will be provided with an explanation why the request has been denied. The decision of the Panel is final and there is no right of appeal.

If an employee is interested in pursuing flexible retirement, they can contact the Organisational Development Division for more details.

6. Other Policies/Guidelines

These provisions should be applied in accordance with other Blaenau Gwent Policies with particular reference to the following:

- Worklife Balance Policies
- Recruitment and Selection Charter
- In the Interest in Efficiency of the Service Policy
- Redundancy Policy
- Attendance Management Policy

7. Further Information

Further information, copies of appropriate forms and guidance can be obtained from:

Organisational Development Division

Municipal Offices, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale, NP23 6XB

Tel: (01495) 355008

Fax: (01495) 355787

E-mail: hr.division@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Resources Division

Municipal Offices, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale, NP23 6XB

Contact: **Loren Cosh– Pensions and Technical Officer**

Tel: (01495) 355170

Fax: (01495) 356133

E-mail: loren.cosh@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Torfaen Pension Scheme Administrators

Torfaen County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Pontypool, NP4 6YB

Tel: (01495) 766266

Fax: (01495) 766275

E-mail: pensions@torfaen.gov.uk

Retirement Options

Frequently Asked Questions



Q How much notice will I have to give if I want to retire?

You will need to give sufficient notice of your intention to retire to assist the Authority in planning its workforce requirements. In cases where employer consent is required, the retirement will need to be approved by an early retirement panel, so appropriate notice would be required to ensure that up to date retirement figures can be requested, a report created and approved within this timescale.

The Authority encourages its managers to hold regular workplace discussions with staff, and this will also be an opportunity to discuss any proposals for retirement and to allow your manager to plan for such an event.

Q I am 56 years of age, can I retire?

It is possible to retire from the age of 55 and receive benefits immediately although these benefits will be reduced due to them being paid for a longer period of time. The earliest age that you could access your pension in full, would be your NPA, before this you may suffer a reduction in your benefits for early payment, depending on your service.

Q I have been unwell recently; can I finish on Ill Health?

In line with the Attendance Management policy, the Authority will make a decision in relation to the grounds for termination of your employment. Following this you will need to be assessed by an Independent Registered Medical Practitioner and satisfy the criteria to qualify for the release of your pension, i.e. "you must be incapable of undertaking your current role until the age of 65".

For further information in relation to termination of employment on the grounds of ill health please contact the Organisational Development Division.

Q I am 52 and would like to retire, what do I need to do?

In line with the pension regulations, employees would not receive release of their pension benefits before the age of 55. If you wanted to finish work you would have to voluntarily resign and your pension contributions would be frozen until such time that you are eligible to draw upon them. The earliest age you can draw your pension if you no longer work for the authority is age 55 providing you have paid pension contributions from 1 April 2014 onwards. If you left the pension scheme prior to 1 April 2014 your earliest retirement date will be your NPA, although there may be a reduction in your pension for early payment.

If you were made redundant, then you would receive the relevant redundancy payment, and any pension contributions would be frozen until you reach pensionable age.

Q Can I just retire when I want to? Will my age impact on my benefits?

An employee's pension can be released from the age of 55. Any retirements before the age of 60 are known as Regulation 31. As part of the request for retirement the Authority will need to consider the financial implications (if any) in relation to the early release of your pension. It is necessary for the retirement to be considered at a Retirement Panel, the panel will review the business case and make a decision on the retirement.

You can also choose to retire from age 55 and receive pension benefits immediately, although there may be a reduction in the pension for early payment if full service hasn't been achieved.

If you continue to work after NPA, you will continue to pay into the LGPS, building up further benefits. You will receive your pension when you retire or reach the eve of your 75th birthday, whichever come first.

Q I'm not ready to retire completely, what are my options?

If you are over the age of 55 there are a number of flexible retirement options available, such as working flexible hours, reduced hours or undertaking a lower graded post with reduced responsibilities, assuming there is a suitable position available.

Provided there is a viable business case to support your request, you can draw some or all of the benefits you have built up, although the benefits may be reduced for early payment. Again, a report would need to be considered by the Early Retirement Panel to ensure there is a viable business case before the request is approved, so sufficient notice would be required.

Q I'm approaching age 65, but don't want to retire.

The default retirement age was abolished from 1 October 2011, and there is no longer a contractual retirement age, therefore you will not need to submit a request to work beyond age 65. It is anticipated that you would have communicated your intentions to continue working to your manager during ongoing workplace discussions.

If you work beyond age 65 you will continue to pay into the Local Government Pension Scheme and build up further benefits. Your pension will be released when you retire or reach the eve of your 75th birthday, whichever comes first.

Flexible Retirement Request Form



PLEASE COMPLETE FORM AND RETURN TO YOUR LINE MANAGER

Name:

Address:

Staff Number:

Directorate:

Division/Section:

Post Title:

National Insurance Number:

Date Of Birth:

Current Pattern Of Work:

Proposed Flexible Working Option:

Employee's Signature:

Date:



Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013

Statement Of Policy - Exercise Of Discretionary Functions



The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) 2014 effective from 1 April 2014 introduces or amends a number of discretionary elements over which the Council as the employing body can exercise its discretion.

These policy discretions are, where appropriate, as close to the discretions previously applied by the Council and have been the subject of consultation with the trades unions.

In accordance with Regulation 60 of the above regulations the Council must formulate, approve, publish and keep under review changes to the Council's Policy in relation to the exercise of its employer discretions under regulations:

- 16(2)(e) and 16(4)(d) (funding of additional pension);
- 30(6) (flexible retirement);
- 30(8) (waiving of actuarial reduction); and
- 31 (award of additional pension).

In addition and in accordance with Paragraphs 2(2) of Schedule 2 to the Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions, Savings & Amendment) Regulations 2014 the Council must also prepare a written statement on whether, in respect of benefits relating to pre 1 April 2014 membership, to 'switch on' the 85 year rule for a member who voluntarily retires (leaves employment) and elects to draw their benefits on or after the age of 55 and before the age of 60 thereby agreeing to waive in full or part any actuarial reduction applied to the member's benefits.

The Council is required to send a copy of this Statement to the Pensions Administering Authority by no later than 30 June 2014 and publish it in a place that is easily accessible to all of its eligible scheme employees. There is also the requirement to keep this Policy Statement under review and make such revisions as are appropriate following a change of policy.

Where a revision is made a copy of the revised statement must be supplied to the Pension Administering Authority before the expiry of one month beginning with the date that any such revision is made. The Council must also publish its revised statement ensuring that it is equally accessible.

In preparing, or reviewing and making revisions to its statement, the Council must have regard to the extent to which the exercise of its discretionary powers, unless properly limited, could lead to a serious loss of confidence in the public service.

This document outlines Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's policy on the employer discretions specified in LGPS 2014, effective from 1 April 2014.

PART A – Formulation of COMPULSORY policy in accordance with Regulation 60 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013

Regulation 16 – Additional Pension Contributions

Where an active Scheme member wishes to purchase extra annual pension of up to £6,500* (figure at 1 April 2014) by making Additional Pension Contributions (APCs), the employer can choose to (voluntarily) contribute towards the cost of purchasing that extra pension via a Shared Cost Additional Pension Contribution (SCAPC).

The Scheme employer may resolve to fund in whole or in part any arrangement entered into by an active scheme member to pay additional pension contributions by way of regular contributions in accordance with *Regulation 16(2)(e)*, or by way of a lump sum in accordance with *Regulation 16(4)(d)*.

The Scheme employer may enter into an APC contract with a Scheme member who is contributing to the MAIN section of the Scheme in order to purchase additional pension of not more than the additional pension limit (£6,500 from 1 April 2014 subject to annual increase in line with the Pensions (Increase) Act 1971). The amount of additional contribution to be paid is determined by reference to actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's policy concerning the whole or part funding of an active member's additional pension contributions - Regulation 16(2)(e) and 16(4)(d)

The Council's policy is not to establish a Shared Cost Additional Pension Contribution Scheme for its employees either on the basis of regular ongoing contribution or by a one off lump sum. This would be a cost pressure and as such the Council will not exercise this discretion on the basis of affordability.

Regulation 30(6) – Flexible Retirement

An active member who has attained the age of 55 or over and who with the agreement of their employer reduces their working hours or grade of employment may, with the further consent of their employer, elect to receive immediate payment of all or part of the retirement pension to which they would be entitled in respect of that employment as if that member were no longer an employee in local government service on the date of the reduction in hours or grade (*adjusted by the amount shown as appropriate in actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State – separate policy required under Regulation 30(8)*).

As part of the policy making decision the Scheme employer must consider whether, in addition to the benefits the member may have accrued prior to 1 April 2008 (which the member must draw), to permit the member to choose to draw all, part or none of the pension benefits they built up after 31 March 2008 and before 1 April 2014 and all, part or none of the pension benefits they built up after 1 April 2014.

Due consideration must be given to the financial implications of allowing an employee to draw all or part of their pension benefits earlier than their normal retirement age.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's policy concerning flexible retirement

The Council currently has a policy in place to consider applications for Flexible Retirement which is linked to the Council's policies on retirement and flexible working. The Authority relies upon the knowledge and skills of its employees and as such this policy provides the opportunity for retaining skills and experience as part of a transition towards retirement.

Flexible Retirement allows scheme members age 55 and over to apply to transfer to a lower graded post or to reduce hours of employment and at the same time access their retirement benefits. Both the transfer to a lower graded post or reduction in hours of work and the early release of retirement benefits is an employer discretion.

The Council currently operates a Flexible Retirement Scheme and as such this arrangement will continue. The business case in respect of a flexible retirement request will be considered at the Council's Early Leavers Panel.

Regulation 30(8) – Waiving of Actuarial Reduction

Where a Scheme employer's policy is to consent to the immediate release of benefits in respect of an active member who is aged 55 or over, those benefits must be adjusted by an amount shown as appropriate in actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State (commonly referred to as actuarial reduction or early payment reduction).

A scheme employer (or former employer as the case may be) may agree to waive in whole or in part and at their own cost, any actuarial reduction that may be required by the Scheme Regulations.

Due consideration must be given to the financial implications of agreeing to waive in whole or in part any actuarial reduction.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's policy concerning the waiving of actuarial reduction

The business case in respect of Early Retirements will be considered in line with the terms of reference of the Council's Early Leavers Panel. Waiving of actuarial reduction protections in such cases will not normally be considered. Only in exceptional circumstances where there is a clear financial or operational advantage for the Authority in so doing or on compassionate grounds would this be considered. This would require authorisation by the Chief Finance Officer and the Head of Organisational Development or their nominated representative.

Regulation 31 – Award of Additional Pension

A Scheme employer may resolve to award

(a) an active member, or

(b) a member who was an active member but dismissed by reason of redundancy, or business efficiency, or whose employment was terminated by mutual consent on grounds of business efficiency,

additional annual pension of, in total (including any additional pension purchased by the Scheme employer under Regulation 16), not more than the additional pension limit (£6,500 from 1 April 2014 subject to annual increase in line with the Pensions (Increase) Act 1971).

Any additional pension awarded is payable from the same date as any pension payable under other provisions of the Scheme Regulations from the account to which the additional pension is attached.

In the case of a member falling within sub-paragraph (b) above, the resolution to award additional pension must be made within 6 months of the date that the member's employment ended.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's policy concerning the award of additional pension

The Council's policy is not to fund additional pension at whole cost to the employer given the substantial costs associated with introducing an equitable scheme. This would be a cost pressure and as such the Council **will not exercise** this discretion on the basis of affordability.

Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions and Savings) Regulations 2014 Schedule 2 – paragraphs 2 and 3

Where a scheme member retires or leaves employment and elects to draw their benefits at or after the age of 55 and before the age of 60 those benefits will be actuarially reduced unless their Scheme employer agrees to meet the full or part cost of those reductions as a result of the member otherwise being protected under the 85 year rule as set out in previous regulations.

So as to avoid the member suffering the full reduction to their benefits the Scheme employer can 'switch on' the 85 year rule protections thereby allowing the member to receive fully or partly unreduced benefits but subject to the Scheme employer paying a strain (capital) cost to the Pension Fund.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's policy concerning the 'switching on' of the 85 year rule

The business case in respect of early retirements will be considered in line with the terms of reference of the Council's Early Leavers Panel. 'Switching on' of the 85 year rule protections in such cases **will not normally be considered**. Only in **exceptional** circumstances where there is a clear financial or operational advantage for the Authority in so doing or on compassionate grounds would this be considered. This would require authorisation by the Chief Finance Officer and the Head of Organisational Development or their nominated representative.

The discretions contained within this Policy Statement are applicable to all eligible members of the Scheme. The Scheme rules allow for a revised statement to be issued at least one month in advance of the date that any new policy takes effect.

The revised statement must be sent to the Pensions Administering Authority and published in a place that is accessible to all of its eligible scheme members.

The policies made above have regard to the extent to which the exercise of the discretions could lead to a serious loss of confidence in the public service and will be exercised reasonably and only used when there is a real and substantial future benefit to the Council for incurring the extra costs that may arise.

The Council retains the right to change this Policy Statement at any time and only the version which is current at the time a relevant event occurs to an employee will be the one applied to that employee.



Redundancy Policy



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: July 2019 Review: July 2024

Version Control

This document is intended for:

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

Version	Key Changes	Approved By
July 2020	Reformatted and EAP details added	DMT

This document may be reviewed and amended at any time and without consultation in response to legal requirements, in line with best practice or in response to an organisational requirement and where the changes do not affect the spirit or intent of the document.

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1. Policy Statement

Blaenau Gwent Council is focused on continuous improvement in times of financial challenge and continues to be committed to providing job security for all employees however, the challenging financial situation that Local Government faces may impact on the staffing establishment of the Council.

In order to minimise the impact of reductions in staffing levels the following procedure will be adopted for all employees of the Council. In all circumstances the instigation of this policy will involve consultation and engagement with the trade unions.

In any redundancy situation the Council will ensure that the process is fair and equitable for all concerned and will ensure that all parties are consulted and communicated with at all stages of the process.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy will apply to all members of staff employed at Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council including all school based employees, Teachers and Headteachers **regardless of length of service or contract type**. The policy complies with all relevant legislation and works within the guidelines set out within the ACAS code of practise.

Governing bodies are not obliged to adopt this policy. In such cases where Governing Bodies choose to develop their own policy, legislation must be adhered to and full consultation must take place with all relevant Unions and Professional Associations. Should Governing bodies chose not to adopt this Policy any calculations over and above the agreed payments laid out in this document are to be funded from within the School budget.

It is important that School Governors understand their legal responsibilities for declaring a post(s) redundant and the protocols to be followed in relation to the Council's Corporate Redundancy Panel as the compensating body.

3. Definition of Redundancy

Redundancy is defined in law as a dismissal for one of the following reasons:

- cessation of business;
- cessation of business at the employee's place of work;
- a reduction or cessation of work; and
- anticipation of a reduction or cessation of work.

In cases where the business or part of the business transfers to another provider, employees are not necessarily redundant and would normally transfer to another employer on their terms and conditions, commonly referred to as "TUPE" regulations (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment).

In the case of schools, redundancy will usually occur because pupils numbers have fallen, resulting in budgetary reductions, which make support for the current level of staffing impossible. There may be other reasons from time to time, for example, a school closure.

Statutory Framework: the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the Staffing of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2006 refer to education legislation which reinforces the provision for School Governing Bodies to appoint and dismiss staff. The contract of employment however is between the Council and the employee for Community Schools. For Voluntary Aided Schools the contract of employment is between the Governing Body and the employee.

4. Measures to Avoid Redundancy

Blaenau Gwent Council will consult with the Trade Unions with a view to establishing whether the proposed job losses can be achieved by means other than compulsory redundancies. Similarly Governors should always seek resolutions, which avoid the need for compulsory identification of a member of staff as being surplus to requirement at the school. Consideration will be given to the following alternative options, subject to the Council's immediate urgent operational considerations:

- natural wastage;
- restricting further recruitment of new staff other than where this is essential i.e. front line service;
- restricting the use of sub-contract temporary and casual staff, including termination where practical, of temporary or contract staff;
- reducing the amount of overtime working in the particular service;
- inviting applications for consideration for early retirement, flexible retirement and/or voluntary redundancy (crossmatching);
- requests to job share or part time working;
- redeploying individuals to alternative posts.

5. Notification to the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform

It is a legal requirement to notify the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (DBERR) in writing of a proposal to make 20 or more employees redundant within a 90 day period. The OD Division will coordinate this return.

Consultation will start at the earliest opportunity and within the statutory requirements. These are:

- 45 days if 100 or more employees are to be made redundant;
- 30 days for 20-99 employees; and
- for less than 20 employees no notification is required.

6. Consultation

Employees and relevant recognised Trade Unions should be made aware of the proposals for organisational change, and the reasons, at the earliest opportunity. Failure to consult could result in a finding of unfair dismissal by an Employment Tribunal. Before starting any redundancy process, advice should be sought from Organisational Development. A flowchart detailing the consultation process is attached at [Appendix 3a](#).

In the case of Schools, as soon as a budgetary problem is identified, that could lead to a potential redundancy situation, the Headteacher should liaise with Schools Finance and the Organisational Development Teams. If after discussions there is an agreement that there is a redundancy situation, the Trade Unions must be informed and the consultation process commenced. Such action will ensure that the correct support, advice and guidance is provided throughout the process.

Employees have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or their trade union representative at all stages of the process.

Timescales for Statutory Consultation

There are minimum statutory timescales that indicate when formal consultation should begin. Where possible consultation should allow for further consideration of any counter-proposals and alternatives to redundancy:

- at least 45 days if 100 or more employees are to be made redundant; and
- at least 30 days for 20-99 employees.

The Council will consult with the Trade Unions even if it is proposed that only one employee who: a) belongs to a trade union or b) is affected by collective bargaining, will be made redundant. Consultation must include discussions on ways to:

- avoid or reduce redundancies;
- mitigate its consequences; and
- consider redeployment.

Staff will also receive information through the organisational and directorates staff communication/engagement framework.

Disclosure of Information

The Council has a statutory duty to disclose in writing to the appropriate representatives the following information:

- the reasons for the proposed redundancies;
- the number and descriptions of employees whom it is proposed to dismiss; including agency staff who are contracted for more than 3 months work;
- total number of employees employed in the same place of work;
- the proposed method of selection;
- the proposed method of carrying out the dismissal taking into account any agreed procedure including timescales; and
- method of calculating redundancy payment.

School specific information regarding disclosure is detailed in the Schools Consultation Process ([Appendix 5](#)).

7. Selection

Where the redundancy applies to a job held by one individual, the post would be redundant without the need for selection.

Where there are multiple redundancies or a reduction in posts within a group of employees the “pool” of employees from which the redundancies will be drawn must be defined. This might be one team within a Department, a group of employees doing the same job, usually working to the same or similar job description, or those performing a particular function across a number of departments, managers should seek advice from Organisational Development if the selection pool is not clear. [Appendix 2](#) details the grounds that will not be used as criteria when selecting staff for redundancy.

Consultation for employees on Maternity leave will also take place and further guidance on this should be sought from the OD Division.

Selection Criteria

The criteria used for redundancy selection must be fair, clear, objective and non-discriminatory, precisely defined and capable of being applied in an independent way. The criteria must be applied fairly and consistently to all employees at Blaenau Gwent who have been identified as at risk.

If the Council is faced with making compulsory redundancies the selection criteria will be agreed with the trade unions. The criteria applied, will as far as possible, be measurable and supported by documentary evidence. The following list gives examples of the criteria that the organisation may apply.

- Attendance records; including Number of Occasions and Number of days
- Disciplinary records; (Agreed period of time)
- Capability
- Job Knowledge and Skills
- Flexibility
- Timekeeping (Discretionary)

Standard mandatory criteria will be used in all cases and additional discretionary criteria will be used where appropriate dependent on roles identified. The selection criteria will, in all cases, be agreed with the Departmental Manager and Trade Union representatives prior to any consultation meetings taking place. [Appendix 4a](#) details the compulsory and discretionary criteria.

School Based Staff

The criteria outlined in the Redundancy Selection Matrix can be applied to school support staff. For teaching staff the relevant matrix appears in [appendix 5](#). Should the Governors chose to use criteria other than those recommended in this Policy, they must consult with the Trade Union with a view to reaching agreement on the revised criteria.

The Complete Closure of the Relevant Service

As far in advance of the proposed termination date as possible, the appropriate officer, in consultation with the OD Division, will notify all employees as a result of a service or establishment closure where there will be compulsory redundancies proposed.

Management in consultation with the OD Division will then enter into immediate consultation on an individual basis with those employees affected.

In the course of the consultation employees will be informed of the basis of their selection and invited to make representations on their proposed dismissal. Management will give full consideration to any such representations before a confirmed selection for redundancy is made by the appropriate officer in consultation with the OD Division.

Where selection has been confirmed, those selected for redundancy will be given notice of termination in accordance with contractual and/or statutory requirements.

School closures will be subject to the relevant statutory consultation requirements. At the appropriate time all post holders in the school to be closed will be identified as “at risk” of redundancy and be dealt with in accordance with necessary stages of this policy. Representation and appeals procedures will rest with the Governing Body of the closing school.

8. Suitable Alternative Employment

The Council will make every effort to establish whether there is suitable alternative employment available and offer such employment to the individual(s) concerned. In the case of school based staff this will be in conjunction with the Headteacher and Governing Body. Records of such actions should be maintained. If “suitable alternative employment” is not available redundancy will apply.

The following factors must be considered in determining whether a particular post offers “suitable alternative employment”:

- relevance of an employee’s skills, qualifications, abilities and experience to the requirements of the post;
- the practicality and cost of re-training;
- provide similar earnings including hours of work;
- have similar status; and
- not involve unreasonable additional inconvenience.

The Council will give prior consideration for suitable alternative employment to employees at risk of redundancy provided the employee’s skills and abilities match the essential criteria of the post or will do so with reasonable training. Please see the redeployment policy for guidance. For school based staff historically there has been a high success rate of identifying suitable alternative employment between schools, and Governing Bodies will be requested to maintain their co-operation in

facilitating suitable alternative arrangements to mitigate redundancy situations. Crossmatch opportunities will be explored in any redundancy situation.

Trial Period

All posts offered for re-deployment will be subject to a trial period. The length of the trial period will be agreed with the employee prior to a post being taken up, and will generally relate to the complexity and any change of duties undertaken. Detail of trial periods can be found in the [Redeployment Policy](#).

If an employee refuses an offer of alternative employment which the Council deems suitable and the refusal is considered to be unreasonable, the individual will lose their entitlement to a redundancy payment, and potential early access to their pension benefits.

Trial period arrangement should also apply to school based staff where appropriate for a trial to take place.

Ring Fencing

Ring fencing would only normally occur in the following situations:

- Restructuring: in a restructuring situation the Authority may, in certain cases where there is a reduction to the overall number of posts consider ring fencing as part of this process.
- Recruitment: an employee including school based staff on the “at risk” list who expresses an interest, and meets the essential person specification criteria, will be interviewed. In the event of more than one employee applying for a vacant post, all who meets the essential person specification criteria will be interviewed.

No appointments to ring fenced posts will be made unless:

- A candidate demonstrates sufficiently that they fully possess the requirements of the posts, as laid down in the person specification and as determined by the selection procedure (s).
- A candidate can reasonably be expected to fully meet the requirements of the posts within a reasonable period, with the provision of appropriate training and support. In such cases a “trial period” will apply.
- Where no suitable candidate is found from the “at risk” list, the post may be advertised externally.

Cross matching within Schools

The Organisational Development Division will in liaison with Headteachers maintain a list of school based staff who have expressed an interest in potential redundancy to facilitate crossmatch for staff identified as “at risk”. The list will be referred to in all compulsory redundancy situations.

9. Formal Notification of Redundancy

In accordance with this policy, and following a period of consultation notification of redundancy will be given, providing employees with appropriate notice of their employment being terminated.

The notice period will be an individual's contractual or statutory notice period, whichever is **greater**. Wherever possible notice should be worked and not paid in lieu. In those exceptional circumstances where full notice is not worked the balance will be paid in lieu except when a termination date is mutually agreed prior to the contractual date. Then any balance in lieu is not applicable.

	Continuous Service	Statutory Notice
All staff	1 month but less than 2 years	1 week
	2 years but less than 12 years	1 week of each year of continuous employment
	12 years or more	Not less than 12 weeks (unless the contract provides for a greater period)
Teachers	Subject to contract under continuous service	2 months Notice in Autumn and Spring Terms 3 months during the Summer Term Notice to be given no later than 31 st October, 28 th February and 31 st May to take effect at the end of the specified period.
Headteachers	Subject to contract under continuous service	3 months notice in Autumn and Spring Terms* 4 months during the Summer Term* Notice to be given no later than 30 th September, 31 st January and 30 th April to take effect at the end of the specified period.

In cases where notice is not formally provided to the employee by the deadline the Governing Body will be obliged to employ them for an extra period or make payment in lieu of notice, to ensure that the necessary notice periods are complied with. Headteachers are only considered surplus to requirements in the event of a school closure.

10. Right of Appeal

The employee has the right of appeal if they believe the redundancy is unjustified or that the selection for redundancy is unfair.

Stage 1 Appeal

Should an employee wish to appeal against their scoring and/or selection then this should be heard in the first instance by a Senior Officer within the department and a member of the OD Division.

Stage 2 Appeal

If an employee wishes to appeal against the decision to dismiss on the grounds of redundancy following their notice being issued the appeal letter should be sent to the OD Division in line with the timeframes set out in the appeals procedure for dismissals.

School based staff

[Appendix 5](#) outlines the appeals process for school based staff, which stipulates specific rights for representation and appeal at Governing Body Panels.

11. Compensation

Clearly, where there is a redundancy, there will be entitlement to redundancy pay and other benefits. Compensation for loss of employment due to redundancy will not be calculated on less favourable terms than in accordance with statutory entitlement laid down in existing legislation. All employees who receive redundancy payments will be given a written notification of their redundancy pay. [Appendix 1](#) details the calculation of redundancy pay.

12. Withholding Redundancy Payments

If an employee under notice of redundancy receives an **offer** of work in local government, or a related employer, to commence before the fifth Monday following the date of termination, there will be no entitlement to a redundancy payment. Related employers are those covered by the Redundancy Modification Order.

13. Continuity of Service

Continuity of service for all employees including school based staff **will not** be broken if the employee receives and accepts an offer of employment with an organisation covered by the **Redundancy Modification Order** before their employment ends with Blaenau Gwent and they start their new job before the 5th Monday following the date of termination of employment. In this situation they will not be entitled to a redundancy payment.

Where a redundancy payment is made, continuity of service will be broken for the purposes of calculating future redundancy payments. However, there is an entitlement to count previous service for notice periods, annual leave, sickness payments and maternity leave, provided that the break has not exceeded 2 years.

In the case of an employee who has more than one job with the Authority, continuity of service will be based on the redundant post. However, if at the time of redundancy the employee is employed under only one contract but in the past has had one or more overlapping contracts the length of service can be counted back to the start of the first contract if the service has been continuous.

14. Business Case/Approval Mechanism

Any termination on the grounds of redundancy or a crossmatch redundancy whereby the Council exercises its discretion must be supported by a business case.

This business case will include consideration of service delivery changes and the financial consequences of any redundancy payment and pension recovery payback over a period no greater than 5 years.

In the case of schools there will be a full consultation process in liaison with the Headteacher, Organisational Development Division and Trade Unions which will result in the school's redundancy protocols being instigated and relevant panels being held as detailed in [Appendix 5](#). An important consideration will be that the redundancy will not be formally declared until the business case for release of compensation has been approved by the Corporate Redundancy Panel, as the compensating body. It is therefore important that there is an early justification for a robust business case and the Headteacher may be required to attend the Corporate Redundancy Panel in support of their business case.

15. Employee Support and Advice

Organisational Development can support redundancy situations and where appropriate signpost to relevant bodies, details of additional support are outlined below:

Time off for attending interviews

Subject to the Council's operational needs and with approval of the relevant line manager, employees will be granted reasonable time off with pay during their notice period to look for work or to seek retraining opportunities in accordance with current legislation.

Employee Assistance Programme

The Authority has an Employee Assistance Programme in place with an independent provider called "Care first" for all employees and managers. Employees can access support on any personal or work-related issues that may be causing concern or distress such as stress awareness, debt management, well-being and relationship

issues. Contact details are below and additional information is available on the [intranet](#).

- “**Care first**” is free to use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and there is no need for employees to ask a manager to use the service. Employees can call **0800 174319** to speak to a professional counsellor or information specialist **in confidence** about a range of issues.
- The “**Care first Lifestyle**” website offers extensive resources including articles on health, issues at home, issues at work, management support tools, stress questionnaires and online counselling in real-time. Employees should visit the website at www.care-first.co.uk and login using the following details - username: **blaenau** and password: **employee**
- The “**Care first Zest**” website is an online personal and interactive well-being portal which helps employees identify which areas of their well-being may need some focus and gives tools, information and support needed to make positive changes. This unique health management resource helps employees enhance their well-being and lead to a healthier lifestyle. Employees should visit www.welshframework-zest.co.uk, click ‘Register’, enter **WF1** as the organisation code and complete the onscreen registration to create an account.

React Funding

Any member of staff facing redundancy will be able to access government funding for re-training. In addition to this there is an employer subsidy available to potential new employers (subject to eligibility).

Support under the ReAct II scheme is available for individuals who:

- have become unemployed in the last six months as a result of redundancy, are currently unemployed, and who have not been in continuous employment for 6 weeks or more since being made redundant;
- are currently under notice of redundancy;
- have not undertaken any publicly funded training since being made redundant, including the work-based learning suite of programmes.

In any redundancy situation all members of staff will have full access to information regarding REACT funding. In addition to this staff will be granted reasonable time off to attend any appointments with their react advisors. React advisors can also support CV creation and interview technique training depending on requirements.

Business Set Up Support

Staff under notice of redundancy who are thinking of setting up their own business will also have access to specialist advisors for advice and support. Any member of staff facing a redundancy and wishing to receive this advice can request this directly with their Manager who will make the necessary arrangements with the OD Division.

Job Centre Plus/Careers Wales

Job Centre Plus and Careers Wales are able to offer individuals advice on job search, CV compilation, interview techniques. Depending on the scale of redundancies the Council will seek to provide this service in-house. This will be determined in line with Department Managers the OD Division and individuals facing redundancy.

Appendix 1: Statutory Redundancy Payments

Currently, statutory redundancy payments depend on:

- length of continuous service by the employing authority/ies;
- how continuous service relates to a particular age band; and
- weekly pay.

Discretionary Payments

The Council exercises its discretion in line with the relevant Pension regulations and guidance. The following discretions will apply:

Redundancy payments will be based on actual earnings as opposed to “statutory” limits however an upper limit of SCP 46 will apply to all redundancies. For staff employed under teacher conditions the cap will be an equivalent amount on the teachers pay scales according to the Teacher’s Pay and Conditions Document.

Payments

Staff who do not have access to their Pension

- A redundancy payment based on the statutory calculator multiplied by 2 up to a maximum of 60 weeks.

Staff who are able to access their Pension

- A redundancy payment based on the statutory calculator up to a maximum of 30 weeks.
- Will have immediate access to unreduced payments of their LGPS/TPS benefits.

Taxation

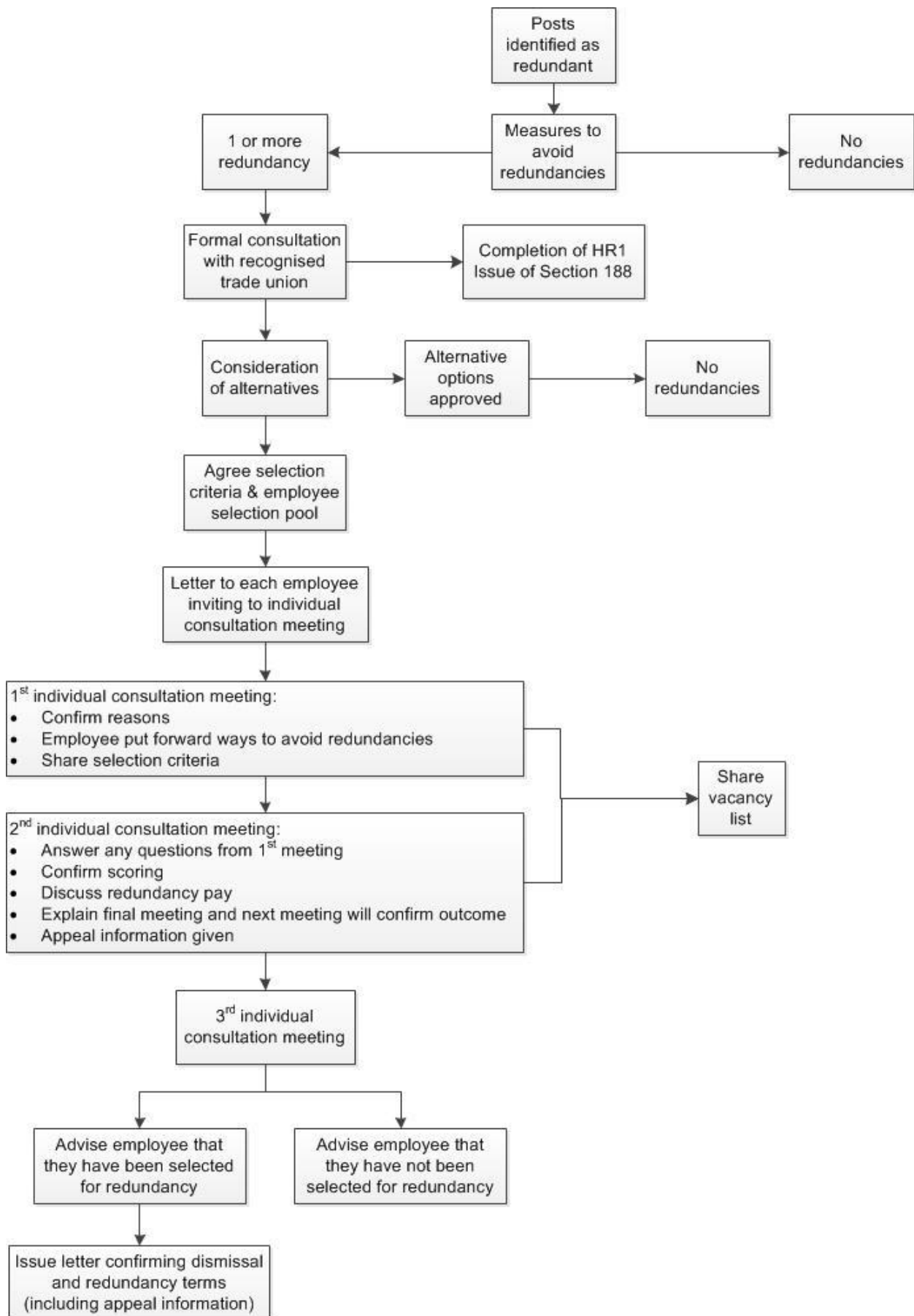
Where a discretionary award exceeds £30,000 the excess is subject to a tax deduction at the individual’s marginal rate. The component subject to assessment is the award of redundancy.

Appendix 2: Inappropriate Redundancy Selection Criteria

The following grounds shall **not** be used as criteria when selecting staff for compulsory redundancy:

- participation in trade union activities, or membership or non-membership of a trade union
- having requested flexible working arrangements
- having taken lawfully organised industrial action lasting eight weeks or less (or more than eight weeks in certain circumstances)
- having asserted a statutory employment right
- maternity-related reasons, or in relation to other rights for working parents (for example adoption leave and paternity leave)
- having exercised, or sought to exercise, the right to be accompanied at a disciplinary or grievance hearing
- a reason relating to the member of staff's rights under the Working Time Regulations 1998
- a reason relating to the member of staff's rights under the National Minimum Wage Act 1998
- a reason relating to member of staff's rights under the Maternity and Parental Leave etc Regulations 1999
- a reason specified in the Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- a reason specified in the Fixed-term Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002
- having made a protected disclosure within the meaning of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- having taken action on health and safety grounds as a designated or recognised health and safety representative, or as an member of staff in particular circumstances
- having taken part (or proposed to take part) in consultation on specified health and safety matters, or taken part in elections for representatives of member of staff safety

Appendix 3a: Consultation Process



Appendix 3b: Redundancy Procedure – Flowchart for School Based Staff

In the Annual General Meeting, the Governing Body elects a Redundancy Panel and a Redundancy Appeals Panel.



Governing Body/Head Teacher identify a potential staff reduction, after identifying the needs of the school. The OD Division can be contacted for advice. Consultation begins with trade unions and staff.



Skills & Experience Matrix distributed to all relevant teaching staff for completion. Summary Matrix to be completed by Headteacher. Redundancy Selection Matrix completed for support staff tailored to relevant selection pool and summary matrix completed by Headteacher.



Redundancy Panel uses criteria to identify staff as surplus to requirements, using the summary matrix.



Headteacher notifies staff that they have been identified as surplus to requirements and that they have the right of representation to the Redundancy Panel. LEA confirms the decision of the panel.



If required, the Redundancy Panel considers representations. The member of staff has a right to be present at a formal hearing where the right to natural justice will apply.



If the representations are rejected, the employee should be notified in writing and informed of their right of appeal.



If there is an appeal, the Redundancy Appeals panel will conduct a complete re-hearing of the case.



The decision of the Redundancy Appeals Panel is final subject to authorisation by the Corporate Redundancy Panel.



The Corporate Director of Education must be officially notified of the decision at the Corporate Redundancy Panel.

Appendix 3c: Redundancy Procedure – Flowchart for Non School Based Staff

Following 1st consultation meeting with staff in line with the Council's Redundancy Policy, agree job description for post to ensure appropriate detail and information is transferred to matrix.



Agree a timeframe to complete the matrix; the date the scoring will be based on; the date the matrix will be finalised and a timetable of all meetings, in order to give all interested parties clear information.



Ascertain which system the information is to be checked against, i.e. iTrent and establish OD contact to ensure continuity throughout the process. The same manager is to be involved throughout the process.



Arrange pre-meeting with OD and an independent officer to quality assure the scoring.



Arrange 2nd consultation meeting to explain the matrix scores with staff, give the right to appeal the decision as set out in the Policy.



Following the expiry of the appeal period, arrange 3rd consultation meeting to confirm the staff not selected for redundancy and discuss the options with the staff that have been selected for redundancy that are now at risk.



Following the decision by the corporate redundancy panel; issue final notice letter to the unsuccessful staff giving right of appeal against dismissal.

Redundancy Selection Matrix

Proposal:

Officer Lead:

Effective date of scoring:

Number of Redundancies:

Number of staff in Selection Pool:

Selection Pool Description:

Employee Name:

Designation:

Grade:

Length of Service (Mandatory) Score:

The Council uses length of service as part of the selection criteria and recognises that this cannot be used as the only qualifying factor in selection for redundancy. The Council's aim is to apply this as part of the selection criteria for redundancy. In addition to this the council will also apply length of service as a factor in a tie-break situation. Where there is a tiebreaker in respect of the scoring, final selection will be made by reference to length of Service, where the person with the longest continuous (unbroken) local government service will be retained.

1 Day – 1 years service	5
1 year – 3 years service	10
3 years – 5 years service	15
5 years – 10 years service	20
10 – 15 years service	25
15 years or more	30

Attendance Record (Mandatory)

For the purpose of attendance records the Council will score the Attendance Record criteria over a 4 year period with effect from the date of marking. All individuals within the selection pool including those not selected for redundancy will be subject to further scoring for selection. The Council reserves the right to revisit the scoring at any point during the notice period.

Please note that consideration is required upon absences that could fall within the remit of the Equality Act 2010. Further advice and guidance is available from Organisational Development, and is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>

In cases whereby absences maybe linked to a work related accident, these should be considered separately.

Occasions of Absence (Mandatory)

Score:

7 or more periods of absence	0
5 - 6 periods of absence	10
3 - 4 periods of Absence	20
1 – 2 periods of Absence	30
No Absences	40

Occasions of Absence are the number of times a person has been off sick over the previous 4 years i.e. 1 period of 4 weeks absence and 1 period of 2 days absence would be 2 occasions. This must be formally recorded and available for review by the employee.

Days of Absence (Mandatory)

Score:

41 or more days	0
31 – 40	5
21 – 30	10
11 – 20	15
1 – 10	20
Nil	25

Days of absence are the total amount of days lost to absence.

Disciplinary Record (Mandatory)Score:

Only disciplinary warnings that are current and do not expire prior to the date of termination will be used when scoring this section.

Final Written Warning	0
First Written Warning	10
Nothing on Record	20

Capability (Mandatory)Score:

Has entered into stage 3 of the capability process and is being considered for re-deployment, further monitoring or dismissal.	0
Has entered into stage 2 of the capability process and is currently working to a development plan to improve performance.	5
Has entered into stage 1 of the capability process and is currently working to a development plan to improve performance.	10
(Evidenced) Issues of performance being addressed through, supervision, performance management and training. As defined in the Capability Policy.	15
Nothing on Record	20

Job Knowledge Skills (Mandatory)Score:

Tailored to each Selection Pool (maximum of 20 points).

Essential Qualifications & Experience:

- This would be Essential Criteria from the agreed JD.
- Maximum of 10 points if staff are also being scored in undertaking duties across the council.
- If the individuals going through the matrix are static members of staff (i.e. office based) the maximum point scored for this section should be 20 points.

Flexibility (Mandatory)Score:

- Tailored to each Selection Pool (maximum of 10 points).
- Transferable skills across the Directorate/Council e.g. managing staff, budgets, IT skills (maximum of 10 points).

Timekeeping (Discretionary) Score:

Timekeeping criteria will only be applied when the selection pool are required to work varying shift patterns.

8 or more	0
5 – 7	5
2 – 5	10
No lateness	15

Maximum Points Achievable: Actual Points Achieved:

Scoring Manager Signature:

Print Name: Date:

Quality Assured Signature:

Print Name: Date:

Employee Signature:

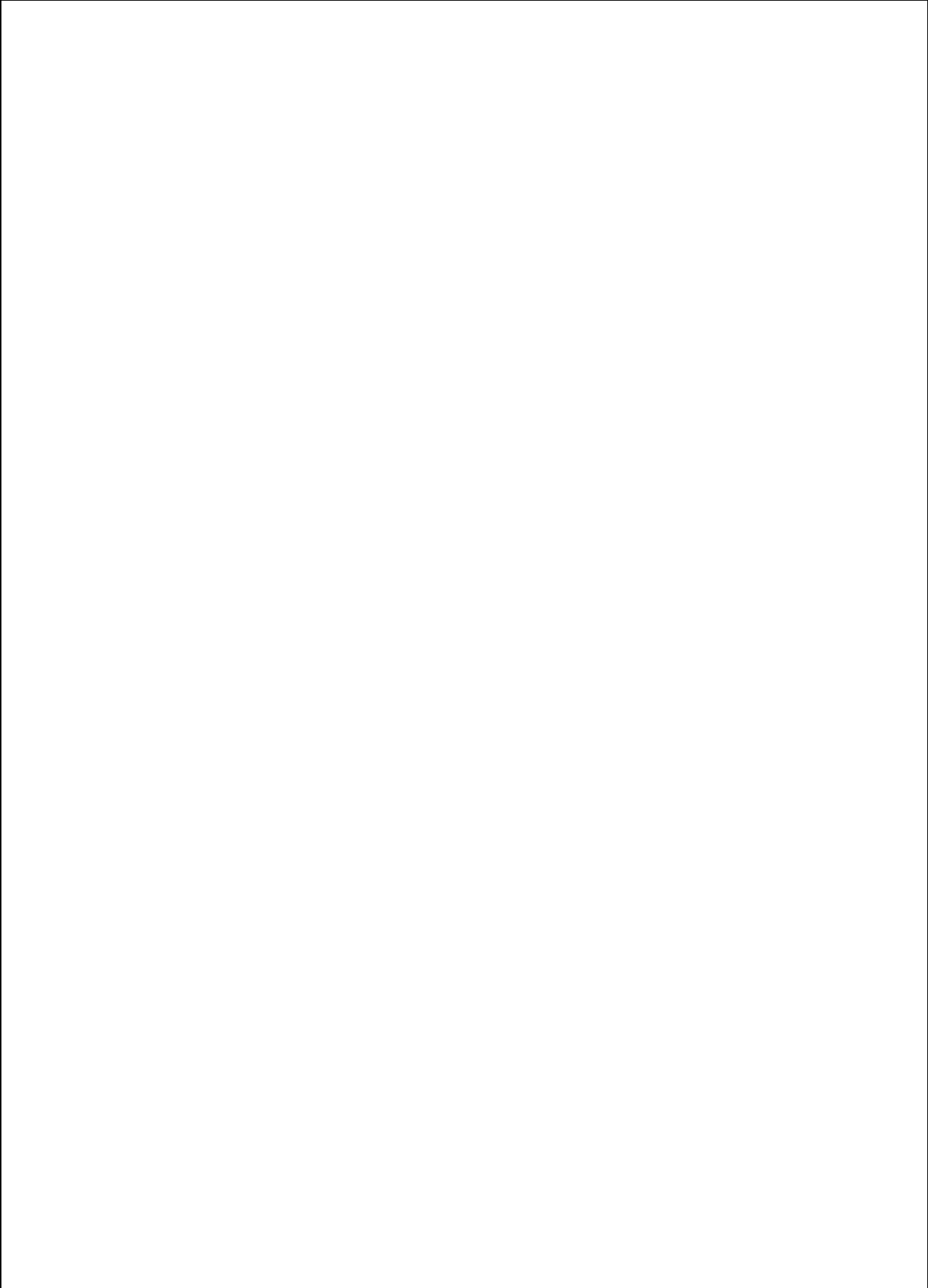
Print Name: Date:

I can confirm that I :

Agree Disagree with the scoring of the matrix

If disagree, please stipulate the grounds in which you are disagreeing.
NB: by completing this section, an appeal against the scoring of your matrix will be raised.

Supporting Evidence



Appendix 4b: Redundancy Selection Matrix (Manager's Guide)

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Redundancy Selection Matrix

Please note that the date of scoring will need to be agreed with the Manager and Trade Union/Representative prior to the exercise taking place. All employees in the selection pool should be marked at the same effective date.

Proposal:

Officer Lead:

Effective date of scoring:

Number of Redundancies: Number of staff in Selection Pool:

Selection Pool Description:

Employee Name:

Designation: Grade:

Length of Service (Mandatory) Score:

The Council uses length of service as part of the selection criteria and recognises that this cannot be used as the only qualifying factor in selection for redundancy. The Council's aim is to apply this as part of the selection criteria for redundancy. In addition to this the council will also apply length of service as a factor in a tie-break situation. Where there is a tiebreaker in respect of the scoring, final selection will be made by reference to length of Service, where the person with the longest continuous (unbroken) local government service will be retained.

When calculating Service points, the Local Government continuous service date is required to be used. Please note the reference to Service being used in a tie-break situation. This would only apply to staff being assessed in the same selection pool.

1 Day – 1 years service	5
1 year – 3 years service	10
3 years – 5 years service	15
5 years – 10 years service	20
10 – 15 years service	25
15 years or more	30

Attendance Record (Mandatory)

For the purpose of attendance records the Council will score the Attendance Record criteria over a 4 year period with effect from the date of marking. All individuals within the selection pool including those not selected for redundancy will be subject to further scoring for selection. The Council reserves the right to revisit the scoring at any point during the notice period.

In this circumstance explanation and agreement with Trade Union/Representative/Manager/ Individual that any absence taken within the notice period may alter the scoring further, and this will be discussed on a case by case basis.

Please note that consideration is required upon absences that could fall within the remit of the Equality Act 2010. Further advice and guidance is available from Organisational Development, and is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>

In cases whereby absences may be linked to a work related accident, these should be considered separately.

Occasions of Absence (Mandatory)

Score:

7 or more periods of absence	0
5 - 6 periods of absence	10
3 - 4 periods of Absence	20
1 – 2 periods of Absence	30
No Absences	40

Occasions of Absence are the number of times a person has been off sick over the previous 4 years i.e. 1 period of 4 weeks absence and 1 period of 2 days absence would be 2 occasions. This must be formally recorded and available for review by the employee.

Days of Absence (Mandatory)

Score:

41 or more days	0
31 – 40	5
21 – 30	10
11 – 20	15
1 – 10	20
Nil	25

Days of absence are the total amount of days lost to absence.

Disciplinary Record (Mandatory) Score:

Only disciplinary warnings that are current and do not expire prior to the date of termination will be used when scoring this section.

Final Written Warning	0
First Written Warning	10
Nothing on Record	20

The above is self explanatory and any current warnings on file will determine the score.

Capability (Mandatory) Score:

Has entered into stage 3 of the capability process and is being considered for re-deployment, further monitoring or dismissal.	0
Has entered into stage 2 of the capability process and is currently working to a development plan to improve performance.	5
Has entered into stage 1 of the capability process and is currently working to a development plan to improve performance.	10
(Evidenced) Issues of performance being addressed through, supervision, performance management and training. As defined in the Capability Policy.	15
Nothing on Record	20

The above is in line with the Capability Policy and should the employee have commenced this process, the scores must reflect this.

Job Knowledge Skills (Mandatory) Score:

Tailored to each Selection Pool (maximum of 20 points).
Essential Qualifications & Experience:

- This would be Essential Criteria from the agreed JD.
- Maximum of 10 points if staff are also being scored in undertaking duties across the council.
- If the individuals going through the matrix are static members of staff (i.e. office based) the maximum point scored for this section should be 20 points.

Examples are the flexibility to cover other roles within the department i.e. Recreational Assistant covering a Duty Manager, a Home Carer covering Duty Planner. Consideration can also include covering different areas of work within the department or being able to work across functions.

Where possible this should be objective and would relate to specific skills required for the role. This could include qualifications, skills, and specialist skills. This may also relate to particular tasks in the department that all employees within the selection pool should have had equal opportunity to train/carry out.

The criteria for this section must be mutually agreed with the Manager and the Union/representatives.

Flexibility (Mandatory) Score:

- Tailored to each Selection Pool (maximum of 10 points).
- Transferable skills across the Directorate/Council e.g. managing staff, budgets, IT skills (maximum of 10 points).

The criteria for this section must be mutually agreed with the Manager and the Union/representatives.

Timekeeping (Discretionary) Score:

Timekeeping criteria will only be applied when the selection pool are required to work varying shift patterns.

8 or more	0
5 – 7	5
2 – 5	10
No lateness	15

This should only be applied if the individuals affected work set shift patterns/times and also if the criteria is applied across the selection group.

Maximum Points Achievable: Actual Points Achieved:

Scoring Manager Signature:

Print Name: Date:

Quality Assured Signature:

Print Name: Date:

Employee Signature:

Print Name: Date:

I can confirm that I :

Agree Disagree with the scoring of the matrix

If disagree, please stipulate the grounds in which you are disagreeing.
 NB: by completing this section, an appeal against the scoring of your matrix will be raised.

Supporting Evidence

Manager to provide supporting evidence as to the rationale behind the points awarded e.g. sickness absence records, rationale for scoring in the job knowledge and skills and flexibility.

[Empty box for supporting evidence]

Appendix 5: Additional Guidance for Schools

Consultation Process

The Governing Body, usually through the Headteacher, has a duty to consult with the staff and trade unions. Any proposals on alternative options at consultation stage will also be considered by the Headteacher and Governing Body. The Headteacher should call a meeting at the earliest opportunity and invite the relevant Trade Unions. The purpose of the meeting is to inform all staff of the possibility of one or more redundancies and to explore the way in which this may be prevented, such as the methods of natural wastage, staff reducing hours, voluntary retirement etc. If these possibilities do not resolve the need for redundancies, then a compulsory process should be implemented. It is vital that any staff members who are absent are kept informed of the situation and consulted.

Establishment of Committees

At the Annual General Meeting, the Governing Body should elect or appoint two committees: the Redundancy Committee and the Redundancy Appeals Committee. It is recommended that each committee consists of at least three people, with five as a maximum, an odd number being recommended to produce a clear result in the event of a vote being taken on any issue.

It is strongly recommended that the Chair of Governors does not sit on either of the committees, as it is normal practice for him/her to be involved in the redundancy process with the Headteacher throughout. It is also important that staff members do not sit on either of these committees, as impartiality could not be ensured.

Establishment of Criteria

The Governing Body should have clearly defined criteria for selection of posts to be declared surplus to requirement at the school. These should be agreed by the Governing Body and publicised within school, with a statement giving a commitment to a fair, consistent, objective and non-discriminatory selection process.

Should the governors choose to use criteria other than those recommended by the Council, they must consult the trade unions, with a view to reaching agreement on the revised criteria.

The Council, however, recommends that Governors adopt the procedures within this document, which have been agreed with the recognised trades unions.

Selection Process

Background Information

In selecting criteria for identification of a post to be declared 'surplus to requirement' at a school, governors must take care to avoid use of criteria which would discriminate under the terms of the Equality Act 2010.

Clearly the process should identify a post - which is filled by an individual - but should not be aimed at justifying the selection of an individual per se.

Assessment of Needs

In order to identify the specific areas of surplus capacity, an assessment of needs should be carried out across the whole school. The Headteacher will be required to:

- Identify current and projected pupil number trends;
- Identify current and future curriculum needs;
- Identify any organisational and management requirements of the school.

In Secondary Schools a curriculum audit should be completed, which will identify the needs of the school within each subject area. Clearly this cannot be achieved until the options process has been completed and projected pupil numbers are known.

It is imperative that this information is documented accurately, as it will form the basis of any potential redundancies and could be challenged at a later date. Please be aware that this process has to be carried out in a timely manner, in order to ensure that notice periods will be adhered to.

Having identified the needs of your school, it is advisable that you contact your Council representatives in Resources and Organisational Development for advice.

Selection Criteria

In the event that all options have been unsuccessful in avoiding a compulsory redundancy situation, the adopted selection criteria must be used to identify the appropriate 'surplus' post(s).

The relevant forms (Skills and Experience Matrix) to be issued to all teaching staff within the Primary and Secondary sector respectively are attached. These forms identify the relevant agreed set of criteria for teaching posts within each sector, which will enable the Headteacher and governors to match the needs of the school with the skills and experience of the teaching staff.

Due to the number and diverse nature of support staff posts within schools, a set of criteria has not been agreed in its entirety for such staff. However, it has been agreed with the trade unions that the template in this Policy at [Appendix 4a](#) is used in all cases and is added to, according to the needs of the post. It should be pointed out that such criteria must be drawn up and agreed with the trade unions prior to any redundancy negotiations beginning.

A copy of the relevant form must be issued to all relevant staff for completion, with an explanation of its purpose. In order to ensure that all staff are fully aware of the process, a copy of this policy must be issued with the appropriate form.

It is imperative that any staff who are absent are also made aware and participate in the process. Please contact the Organisational Development Service Partner, who will advise you on the most appropriate course of action.

It is imperative that all staff are afforded sufficient time to complete the form and are provided with any necessary advice and guidance on its completion. All staff members should be made aware of the support that is available through the line management and Trade Union, in the completion of the form. On completion of the form, staff should meet with their line manager to discuss and agree its content.

Skills and Experience Matrix – Completion of the Form

The purpose of the Redundancy Selection Matrices is to enable relevant teaching and support staff to demonstrate the skills, knowledge, experience, etc that they have, which meet the current and future needs of the school. Staff should be aware that the data will be collected and used as part of an exercise to match their skills and experience to the current and future needs of the school. It is, therefore, important that all staff invest sufficient time and effort into its completion, as it forms the basis of the decision-making regarding the redundancy.

On completion of the form, the individual will meet with his or her line manager, in order to discuss the content, so that any discrepancies can be highlighted. At this meeting, documents such as job descriptions, person specifications, training records etc. should be available for supporting information. On agreement of the content of the form, the member of staff and line manager sign the bottom. All completed and signed forms should be returned to the Headteacher.

In the event of a member of staff being unable to complete the form, it will fall to a line manager to undertake this task, with the appropriate consultation. In such cases, the completed form will be sent to the individual for their information. They will then be given the opportunity to make any amendments and additions, within a given timescale. Support from the line manager will be available to assist in this process.

Failure to return the form will result in the original version being used in the process. The member of staff will be informed that this is the case.

Completion of the Summary Matrix

On receipt of the completed forms, the Headteacher or School Management Team member(s) must transfer the information onto the appropriate Summary Matrix sheet (see appendices). It is important that the information is anonymised when transferred onto the Summary Matrix, in order to ensure a fair process throughout. The Teacher No or Staff No should be completed at the top of each Criteria Matrix form and then transferred onto the Summary Matrix sheet.

In Secondary Schools, the completed forms will form the basis of any 'bumping' that can be achieved within the various subject areas. Headteachers should use the information provided on the Criteria Matrix too see whether internal staff movement within subject areas can be achieved, in order to remove surplus capacity. When this process has been exhausted, a clear picture will have emerged of where the surplus capacity remains. It must be stressed that consultation with staff is imperative during this process.

On completion of the 'bumping' process, the Summary Matrix will be completed for the subjects in which there is surplus capacity only.

Support and guidance throughout the process will be available from the Organisational Development Service Partner.

The Role of the Panel

A member of the OD Division and/or the Governor's Support Division will attend all relevant meetings to guide governors through the process and deal with the administration and consultation with the Trade Unions.

In the event that a sufficient number of staff members volunteer to accept redundancy, the panel members will be required to approve the redundancy on these grounds. However, in the event of more staff volunteering for redundancy than the number of surplus posts, the process below should be carried out, but for the volunteers only.

At the Redundancy Panel hearing, the Headteacher will explain the process adopted to date and what has been identified as the current and future needs of the school. The appropriate documentation is then issued for discussion. The Headteacher will then circulate and explain the anonymised Criteria Matrix and Summary Matrix sheets, which provide all necessary information on the relevant staff members. The panel members will then be required to match the skills and experience of the individual staff members to the needs of the school.

It should be noted that, in Secondary schools, information should be provided only for the areas of surplus capacity.

Only Part 1 of the form should be considered at this stage. If the information does not identify the required 'surplus' posts, the length of service should be considered as the deciding factor. In this case, the person with the shortest length of service with the Authority will be selected for redundancy.

Following the Hearing

Following the Redundancy Hearing, the Headteacher and Chair of the Panel should arrange to meet with the selected individual to communicate the outcome and the right to appeal, as per this policy. The meeting should also be an opportunity for the individual to ask any questions about the process and to discuss any other relevant issues.

The decision of the Redundancy panel will be communicated in writing by the Council, within seven calendar days.

As outlined the employee has the right to appeal against the decision of the Redundancy panel, in the form of a Representation Hearing. Following the outcome of the Representation Hearing, the employee has one final right to appeal to the Redundancy Appeal Panel. This is a complete rehearing of the case, with a fresh panel of Governors who have no prior knowledge of the case.

Council Panel Meeting

On completion of the process, the final authorisation is granted by the Council via a panel of Officers, comprising of representatives from Resources and Organisational Development. The decision is based on the presentation of a sound business case. Please refer to the section on Business Case/Approval Mechanism.

Representation Hearings

The purpose of this meeting is to receive representations from the member(s) of staff identified as 'surplus to requirement'. These should be on the basis of incorrect identification e.g. "I am a geographer not an historian", "I have skills in the area of x" etc.

The teacher should be encouraged to bring a colleague or trade union representative to the meeting.

Procedurally the meeting should follow this course:

- All panel members are asked to confirm that they are able to act impartially. A Chair should be elected for the duration of the Hearing.
- The Headteacher will outline the reason for the proposed redundancy (ies) and the criteria used in identifying the post in question.
- The staff member (colleague or trade union representative) may ask questions of the Head Teacher.
- Members of the Panel may seek clarification of points from the Head Teacher.
- The staff member (colleague or trade union representative) makes their representation.
- The Headteacher may ask questions of the staff member.
- The Panel may ask questions of the staff member (colleague or trade union representative).
- Both parties may sum up their case, the Head Teacher summing up first.
- The Headteacher and staff member (colleague or trade union representative) shall leave the room whilst the Panel consider the representations made to them.

- At this point advice to the panel may be offered by the relevant Support Officer in attendance.
- The parties shall return and the decision of the panel given verbally including notification of the right of appeal to the Redundancy Appeals Committee, if the representation has been rejected.

The decision of the panel will be communicated in writing to the staff member within seven calendar days and arrangements to exercise the right of appeal will be outlined in that letter.

Appeal Hearing

The Appeal Hearing should follow the pattern of the Representation hearing, but it is a complete rehearing of the case with a fresh panel of governors, who have no knowledge of the arguments and cases put previously.

The remit of this meeting is wider than that of the representation meeting. Not only might the committee hear argument on wrong identification but also on whether a genuine redundancy situation exists.

Once more the staff member is encouraged to have a colleague or trade union representative with them.

The procedure for the meeting follows that of the Representation Hearing:

- All committee members are asked to confirm that they are able to act impartially. A Chair should be elected for the duration of the Hearing.
- The Headteacher will outline the reason for the declaration and the criteria used in identifying the post in question.
- The teacher (colleague or trade union representative) may ask questions of the Headteacher.
- Members of the Committee may seek clarification of points from the Head Teacher.
- The staff member (colleague or trade union representative) will make their representation.
- The Headteacher may ask questions of the staff member.
- The Committee may ask questions of the staff member (colleague or trade union representative).
- Both parties may sum up their case, the Headteacher summing up first.
- The Headteacher and staff member (colleague or trade union representative) shall leave the room whilst the Committee consider the representations made to them.
- At this point advice to the Committee may be offered the relevant officer.

- The parties shall return and the decision of the Committee given verbally.

The decision of the Committee will be communicated in writing to the staff member within seven calendar days.

The decision of the appeals committee is final.

Redundancy/Appeal Committee

In the event of a compulsory redundancy being identified, the member of staff has the right to make representations to the Schools Redundancy Committee and then appeal against the decision to the Schools Appeal Committee. In circumstances where the employee wishes to exercise this right of representation, initially to the redundancy Committee, they have a period of 7 calendar days to inform the Chief Education Officer, in writing of their intentions and why. The 7 days takes effect from the date on which the employee is informed of the decision in writing.

The outcome of the representation hearing will be communicated to the individual within 7 calendar days. In the event that the employee is not satisfied with the outcome of representation hearing they have a right to appeal to the Redundancy Appeal Committee. In this case the employee will have 7 calendar days to notify the Chief Education Officer, in writing, if they wish to appeal against the representation decision to this Committee.

At the Annual General Meeting the governing body should elect or appoint two panels: the Redundancy Committee and the Redundancy Appeals Committee. It is recommended that each committee consist of at least 3 people, with 5 as a maximum.

It is strongly recommended that the Chair of Governors does not sit on either of the Committees, as it is normal practice for them to be involved in the redundancy process with the Head teacher throughout. It is also important that staff members do not sit on either of these Committees, as impartiality could not be ensured.

Teachers Redundancy Selection Matrix

Name of School:

Proposal:

Headteacher:

Effective date of scoring:

Number Of staff in Selection Pool:

Selection Pool Description:

Employee Name:

Designation:

Grade:

Schools should determine criteria that are relevant to their own school and the circumstances of the reduction in staffing in the School, Faculty or Department. Any changes to the template should be made in consultation with relevant Trade Unions.

Specific Skills and Experience (Mandatory)

Please provide information to support your matrix in the supporting evidence column. **Please complete the matrix electronically as the rows will then expand with the information included.**

Relevant Teaching Skills	Supporting Evidence (For completion by employee and agreed by a nominated manager)	Score Guide (Scoring to be completed by nominated manager – not for completion by employee)	Score (for completion by Manager)
Foundation/ Nursery		Experience of having taught in last 3 years = 3 Experience of having taught in last 5 years = 2 Experience but not in last 5 years=1 No Experience = 0	
KS2		Experience of having taught in last 3 years = 3 Experience of having taught in last 5 years = 2 Experience but not in last 5 years=1 No Experience = 0	
KS3		Experience of having taught in last 3 years = 3 Experience of having taught in last 5 years = 2 Experience but not in last 5 years=1 No Experience = 0	
KS4		Experience of having taught in last 3 years = 3 Experience of having taught in last 5 years = 2 Experience but not in last 5 years=1 No Experience = 0	
Subjects Taught (please list):		Not scored	

Specialist Relevant Skills – Examples	Supporting Evidence (For completion by employee and agreed by a nominated manager)	Score Guide (Scoring to be completed by nominated manager – not for completion by employee)	Score
Degree in relevant subject taught		3	
Crosscutting skills/Added Value (relating to the curriculum)		3	
Subject Leadership/ Key Stage Leadership/ Year management role/ Leadership Role/ TLR Post Holder		Experience in any of these areas in the last 3 years = 3 Experience in last 5 years = 2	
Literacy, numeracy and digital competency		Expert/Uses in practice and has taught others = 3 Confident/Intermediate user = 2 Basic use = 1	
Science/Technology		Expert/Uses in practice and has taught others = 3 Confident/Intermediate user = 2 Basic use = 1	
Wider curriculum contribution		Up to 3 points (Criteria to be school specific and agreed with Trade Unions)	

Training and Development	Supporting Evidence (For completion by employee and agreed by a nominated manager)	Score Guide (Scoring to be completed by nominated manager – not for completion by employee)	Score
Post-graduate qualification		Working towards - 1 Achieved - 3	
Other relevant qualifications		Working towards - 1 Achieved - 3	
Contribution towards a self improving schools		Up to 3	

Maximum Points Achievable:

Actual Points Achieved:

Scoring Manager Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

Quality Assured Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

Employee Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

I can confirm that I :

Agree Disagree with the scoring of the matrix

If disagree, please stipulate the grounds in which you are disagreeing.

NB: by completing this section, an appeal against the scoring of your matrix will be raised.

TIEBREAKER SITUATION

In the event of more than one teacher achieving the same score in the application of the above criteria; the decision may be concluded by using the attendance record.

Attendance Record (Mandatory)

For the purpose of attendance records the School will score the Attendance Record criteria over a 4 year period with effect from the date of marking. All individuals in the tiebreak situation will be subject to further scoring for selection. In the event that not all employees have been employed for a period of 4 years, a period of the last rolling 12 months will be applied. The School reserves the right to revisit the scoring at any point during the notice period.

Please note that consideration is required upon absences that could fall within the remit of the Equality Act 2010. Further advice and guidance is available from Organisational Development, and is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>

In cases whereby absences maybe linked to a work related accident, these should be considered separately.

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Occasions of Absence (Mandatory)

Score:

7 or more periods of absence	0
5 - 6 periods of absence	10
3 - 4 periods of Absence	20
1 – 2 periods of Absence	30
No Absences	40

Occasions of Absence are the number of times a person has been off sick over the previous 4 years i.e. 1 period of 4 weeks absence and 1 period of 2 days absence would be 2 occasions. This must be formally recorded and available for review by the employee.

Days of Absence (Mandatory)

Score:

41 or more days	0
31 – 40	5
21 – 30	10
11 – 20	15
1 – 10	20
Nil	25

Days of absence are the total amount of days lost to absence.

In the event that the Attendance Record does not resolve the tie-break situation then length of service will be included.

Length of Service

Where there is still a tiebreaker in respect of the scoring, final selection will be made by reference to length of Service, where the person with the longest continuous (unbroken) local government service will be retained.

Maximum Points Achievable:

Actual Points Achieved:

Scoring Manager Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

Quality Assured Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

Employee Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

I can confirm that I :

Agree Disagree with the scoring of the matrix

If disagree, please stipulate the grounds in which you are disagreeing.

NB: by completing this section, an appeal against the scoring of your matrix will be raised.



In the Interests of the Efficiency of the Service Policy



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: November 2017 Review: November 2022

Version Control

This document is intended for:

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

Version	Key Changes	Approved By
Apr 2020	Reformatted and EAP details added	DMT

This document may be reviewed and amended at any time and without consultation in response to legal requirements, in line with best practice or in response to an organisational requirement and where the changes do not affect the spirit or intent of the document.

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4. Discretionary Payments	4
5. Business Case/Approval Mechanism	4
6. Employee Assistance Programme	4

1. Introduction

Blaenau Gwent Council recognises that the people we employ are our most valuable asset and critical in developing modern, high quality, efficient and responsive customer focused public services.

Whilst it is the Council's intention to develop and provide a stable work environment and security of employment for all its employees, it must ensure that it provides a viable, high quality, value for money service to the Community. In this respect circumstances may arise where changes in the market, technology, organisational and/or statutory requirements necessitate the need for changes in staffing requirements for a service which may lead to termination of contracts "in the interests of the efficiency of the service".

2. Definition of Efficiency

Termination on the grounds of efficiency unlike redundancy is not a dismissal, it is a mutual agreement of termination of a contract of employment by both parties i.e. employee and the Council. This is also considered to be in the best interests of both parties.

Compensation on terminating employees on these grounds is entirely at the Authority's discretion. The discretion will not be exercised as an alternative to dealing with the matter of inadequate performance through properly presented procedures.

3. Compensation

Clearly where there is a termination on the grounds of efficiency, there will be entitlement to compensation for the loss of the employment.

4. Discretionary Payments

The Council exercises its discretion in line with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997 (as amended) and the Local Government (Early Retirement of Employment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2000, 2006 and 2008 (as amended) – generally called the Discretionary Compensation Regulations. Individuals who terminate on the grounds of efficiency:

a) **Aged over 55 years**

Individuals will have immediate access to an unreduced payment of their LGPS benefits.

b) **Aged under 55 years**

Individuals may receive a compensation payment equivalent to that calculated for redundancy as outlined in the Council's Redundancy Policy for those staff who do not have access to their pension.

5. Business Case/Approval Mechanism

Any termination on the grounds of Efficiency whereby the Council exercises its discretion must be supported by a business case.

This business case will include consideration of service delivery changes and the financial consequences of any efficiency compensation and pension recovery payback over a period no greater than 5 years.

6. Employee Assistance Programme

The Authority has an Employee Assistance Programme in place with an independent provider called "Care first" for all employees and managers. Employees can access support on any personal or work-related issues that may be causing concern or distress such as stress awareness, debt management, well-being and relationship issues. Contact details are below and additional information is available on the [intranet](#).

- **"Care first"** is free to use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and there is no need for employees to ask a manager to use the service. Employees can call **0800 174319** to speak to a professional counsellor or information specialist **in confidence** about a range of issues.

- The “**Care first Lifestyle**” website offers extensive resources including articles on health, issues at home, issues at work, management support tools, stress questionnaires and online counselling in real-time. Employees should visit the website at www.care-first.co.uk and login using the following details - username: **blaenau** and password: **employee**
- The “**Care first Zest**” website is an online personal and interactive well-being portal which helps employees identify which areas of their well-being may need some focus and gives tools, information and support needed to make positive changes. This unique health management resource helps employees enhance their well-being and lead to a healthier lifestyle. Employees should visit www.welshframework-zest.co.uk, click ‘Register’, enter **WF1** as the organisation code and complete the onscreen registration to create an account.

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Agenda Item 31

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 15.03.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 14.03.2023

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **30th March, 2023**

Report Subject: **Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report 2023**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor S. Thomas - Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member Corporate and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Andrea Prosser, Head of Organisational Development**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
	09/03/23			24/03/23			30/03/23	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform Members of the determinations within the annual report 2023/2024 (attached at appendix 1) of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW).
- 1.2 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the IRPW's Annual Report to take effect from 1 April each year.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The IRPW is responsible for setting the levels and arrangements for the remuneration of members of the following organisations.
 - Principal Councils – county and county borough councils
 - Community and Town Councils
 - National Park Authorities
 - Fire and Rescue Authorities
 - Corporate Joint Committees
- 2.2 The IRPW is an independent body and is able to make decisions about:
 - The salary structure within which members are remunerated
 - The type and nature of allowances to be paid to members
 - Whether payments are mandatory or allow a level of local flexibility
 - Arrangements in respect of family absence
 - Arrangements for monitoring compliance with the Panel's decisions
- 2.3 The Panel is an independent organisation and the organisations listed above are required, by law, to implement the decisions it makes.
- 2.4 The Annual Report of the IRPW, sets out the Decisions and Determinations on pay, expenses and benefits for elected members of principal councils, community and town councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities for implementation from April 2023.

- 2.5 The IRPW has a duty to set payments that are fair and that encourage and enable democratic participation. It must also take account of affordability and acceptability.
- 2.6 In making its determinations for this Annual Report, the IRPW considered a range of benchmarks, including past, current, and projected indices and actual figures and the known and forecast extent and impact of multiple economic and social factors. These included post Brexit and COVID work environments and the cost of living, energy, and climate crises.
- 2.7 The IRPWs proposals are consulted on and, following consideration of the views received in response to its consultation, the IRPW makes its final determinations which are published each year in its Annual Report.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

To include Recommendation(s) / Endorsement by other groups, e.g. CMT/Committees/Other groups)

- 3.1 The report was considered by CLT at their meeting on 9th March 2023 and by Democratic Services Committee on 24th March 2023.
- 3.1.1 Council to note the determinations in the final IRPW Annual Report for 2023/2024

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

- 4.1 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the IRPW's Annual Report to take effect from 1 April each year.
- 4.2 The Panel is an independent organisation and the organisations listed in paragraph 2.1 are required, by law, to implement the decisions it makes.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

The determinations set out in the annual report of the IRPW will be paid from the Members allowances. The determinations are within current budget.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Failure to comply with the Panel's determinations will result in reputational damage for the Council. This is mitigated by Democratic Services Committee and Council considering and agreeing the determinations.

5.3 ***Legal***

The report outlines the plans of the IRPW in terms of elected member remuneration which will become regulation.

It is also the responsibility of the Council to establish our position on how to respond to any Freedom of Information requests we receive in relation to reimbursement of costs of care. The IRPW states that it is not the intention to disclose details of individual's claims.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no direct staffing implications from this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

The report details the main determinations within the 2023/24 annual report of the IRPW as they relate to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

Summary of the Independent Remuneration Panel's Determinations for 2023 to 2024

6.1.1 **Determination 1 - Basic salary for elected members of principal councils:**

The basic level of salary for elected members of principal councils will set at £17,600.

The basic salary, paid to all elected members, is remuneration for the responsibility of community representation and participation in the scrutiny, regulatory and related functions of local governance. It is based on a full time equivalent of three days a week. The Panel regularly reviews this time commitment and no changes are proposed for 2023 to 2024.

Last year the Panel reset the basic salary to align with the 2020 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) published by the Office of National Statistics. This reduced the imbalance that had arisen between the basic salary of members of principal councils and the average salaries of their constituents. The change took effect from the May 2022 local elections.

Building on this decision the Panel has determined that for the financial year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 it is right to retain a link between the basic salary of councillors and the average salaries of their constituents. **The basic salary will be aligned with three fifths of the all Wales 2021 ASHE, the latest figure available at drafting. This will be £17,600. This will represent a 4.76% increase in the basic salary.**

6.1.2 **Determination 2 – Salaries paid to Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils:**

The limit on the number of senior salaries payable (“the cap”) will remain in place.

All senior salaries include the basic salary payment. The different levels of additional responsibility of and between each role is recognised in a banded framework. No changes to banding are proposed this year.

Early next year the Panel will gather evidence from principal councils to explore whether and how the workload of elected members has changed.

The ASHE 2021 increase applies to the role element of Band 1 and Band 2 salaries – leader, deputy leader and executive members.

Band 3 and Band 4 salary holders will receive a small increase to the role element of their pay and the role element of Band 5 pay will remain frozen. The increase in basic salary will apply.

Determinations for 2023 to 2024 include

- An increase of 4.76% in the basic allowance for all councillors of principal councils, taking the basic salary from £16,800 to £17,600.
- Senior salary payments as follows:

Band	Role	Group A	Group B	Group C*
Band 1	Leader	£66,000	£59,400	£56,100
	Deputy Leader	£46,200	£41,580	£39,270
Band 2	Executive	£39,600	£35,640	£33,660
Band 3	Committee Chair (if paid)	£26,400		
	Civic Head			
	Presiding Officer			
Band 4	Leader of largest opposition group	£26,400		
Band 5	Leader of Other Political Groups	£21,340		
	Deputy Civic Head			
	Deputy Presiding Officer – no role payment	£17,600		

**Group C: Blaenau Gwent, Ceredigion, Denbighshire, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Isle of Anglesey*

There are no further changes to the payments and benefits paid to elected members and therefore all other Determinations from 2022 to 2023 still stand and should be applied in 2023 to 2024, including those covering:

- Travel and subsistence;
- Care and Personal Assistance;
- Sickness Absence;
- Corporate Joint Committees,
- Assistants to the Executive,
- Additional salaries and Job sharing arrangements and

- Co-opted Members

6.1.3 **Determination 3 - Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees:**

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be £8,800.

The salary of vice-chair will be £4,400.

6.1.4 **Determination 4 - Payments towards costs and expenses of members of Community and Town Councils:**

Members of Community and Town Councils will be paid £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a week) towards the extra household expenses (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of working from home. And Councils must either pay their members £52 a year for the cost of office consumables required to carry out their role, or alternatively councils must enable members to claim full reimbursement for the cost of their office consumables.

There are no further changes to the payments and benefits paid to elected members and therefore all other Determinations from 2022 to 2023 still stand and should be applied in 2023 to 2024, including those covering:

- Payments for undertaking senior roles;
- Contributions towards costs of care and personal assistance;
- Reimbursement of Travel and subsistence costs;
- Compensation for financial loss;
- Attendance allowance and
- Co-opted Members

6.1.5 **Determination 5 – Payments to National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities:**

The basic pay of members of National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities has been increased by 4.76%. Full details of the levels of remuneration for members of National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities, is set out in the report.

All other Determinations for 2022 to 2023 will still stand and should be applied in 2023 to 2024, including those covering;

- Contributions towards costs of care and personal assistance;
- Reimbursement of Travel and subsistence costs;
- Compensation for financial loss;
- Co-opted Members and
- Restrictions on receiving double remuneration where a member holds more than one post.

6.1.6 **Determination 6:**

All other Determinations set out in the 2022 to 2023 [Annual Report](#) of the Panel remain valid and should be applied.

6.2 *Expected outcome for the public*

Members of Council represent their ward and the borough in order to provide a voice to the constituents, support decision making and provide community leadership.

6.3 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

The IRPW engaged with members, officers and interested parties in the consultation on their annual report 2023/2024.

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

The IRPW considers evidence and research in order to establish the reasoning for its determinations and aims to support the role of elected member now and in the future.

6.5 *Preventative focus*

6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working*

The IRPW works collaboratively with key stakeholders engaged in promoting participation in local democracy.

6.7 *Integration (across service areas)*

Elected Members work across all directorates of the Council in order to understand activity and to inform effective decision making.

6.8 *Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions*

There is no direct link to reducing carbon emissions from this report however, the Council and its members have moved to an online approach to working greatly reducing the negative impact on the environment through the stopping of printing committee papers.

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).*

The decision for remuneration is for the IRPW to make and the Council is a consultee in this, there is no direct decision from the Council.

6.9b. *Equality Impact Assessment (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)*

The IRPW aims to support members with regards to:

- Travel and subsistence
- Care and Personal Assistance
- Sickness Absence

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 *State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements*

Arrangements are in place to consider the reports of the IRPW as required through the democratic process.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *IRPW Annual Report 2023/2024*



Independent
Remuneration Panel fi

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Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

Annual Report

February 2023

Annual Report 2023 to 2024

Section	Page number
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2. Role and Responsibilities of the Panel	4
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4. Consultation and Summary of Determinations	15

Section 1: Introduction

This is the Final Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, setting the Decisions and Determinations on pay, expenses and benefits for elected members of principal councils, community and town councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities for implementation from April 2023.

This is my first Report as Chair of the Panel, having been appointed in June 2022. I would like to take this opportunity to thank John Bader, the outgoing Chair, for his service over many years and who led the Panel through two significant pieces of work last year – the [Independent 10 Year Review of the Panel](#) and restoring the link between elected members salaries and average earnings in Wales. I also thank Joe Stockley for his service and I am pleased to announce the appointment of Bev Smith in June this year. Saz Willey, Vice Chair, and Ruth Glazzard continued to lead the work of the Panel during this period of change and I thank them for the support they have given both Bev and I, as new members. Ruth Glazzard stood down from the Panel at the end of 2022, when she took up a new Public Appointment. The Public Bodies Unit is currently recruiting for a new Panel member.

This year the Panel has continued to focus on and take forward the recommendations from the [Ten-Year Review](#). There are four key strands to this work – review the way we work, set out a three year strategy for the Panel, improve how we communicate and engage with stakeholders and build a robust evidence base to inform decisions.

We have embarked on the recommended Effectiveness Review of the way we work and have started developing our longer-term strategy with Panel Development Days in August and February. We have agreed that our mission is to deliver a fair and accountable reward framework for Wales, to support communities to have their voices heard within our local democratic bodies. We will use our expertise and professionalism to build trusting, sustainable partnerships to inform our work and deliver the changes Wales needs.

We aim to improve the way we communicate and engage both with our immediate stakeholders and the general public. As a first step we now publish a summary of our monthly meetings on our [website](#), but recognise there is much more to do. We aim to improve the accessibility and ease of use of our website and develop it into a more useful resource tool for people. We intend it to be an easy-to-use store of information on our Determinations, and, building on our current [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page, develop our Guidance on how all decisions should be applied.

Whilst we are an independent body, we will continue to work collaboratively with key stakeholders engaged in promoting participation in local democracy. The Welsh Government published research exploring the barriers to standing for elected office and the changing role of the councillor and held a series of events across Wales to highlight and discuss the findings.

We took an active part in these events, hosting seminars on remuneration and the changing role of local councillors. We welcomed the opportunity to share knowledge, experience, and best practice across a range of subjects and particularly the focus

on developing a shared understanding of how we can take collective action to increase diversity in local democracy.

The Panel has decided that this year will be a year of consolidation. Major changes were put in place last year, and a significant uplift in salary levels was agreed. We wish to allow time for last year's Determinations to bed in and to allow the Panel to continue its development of a research and evidence base to inform future decisions and move to a longer term planning cycle. This report reflects that decision.

During the past few years, we have been considering the structure of our reports and how we can make them more accessible to all. We have concluded that much of the information published replicates previous years, often without significant change. For this report we decided to focus on the changes made as a result of the proposals. We have therefore decided that the majority of the content set out in previous reports will be removed from the report and placed on the Panel's website. We will make arrangements for those who are unable to access the website.

This change has significantly reduced the size of the report and made it more manageable to navigate. This approach is also in line with our efforts to respect the challenges facing us in protecting our planet.

We included an online survey in this year's Draft Annual Report for the first time and would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete this, or send in written responses to our consultation questions and comments on the Draft report.

Panel Membership

Frances Duffy, Chair
Saz Willey, Vice Chair
Bev Smith

Detailed information about the members can be found on the website: [Panel website](#)

Section 2: Role and responsibilities of the Panel

Role of the Panel

The Panel is responsible for setting the levels and arrangements for the remuneration of members of the following organisations.

- Principal councils – county and county borough councils
- Community and town councils
- National Park Authorities
- Fire and Rescue Authorities
- Corporate Joint Committees

The Panel is an independent body and is able to make decisions about:

- The salary structure within which members are remunerated
- The type and nature of allowances to be paid to members
- Whether payments are mandatory or allow a level of local flexibility
- Arrangements in respect of family absence
- Arrangements for monitoring compliance with the Panel's decisions

The Panel is an independent organisation and the organisations listed above are required, by law, to implement the decisions it makes. There is no requirement set by the Panel for principal councils to vote on the Determinations. The Panel also sets out Guidance on how its Determinations should be applied, and all councils must have due regard to this Guidance. The current guidance is set out in the [2022 to 2023 Annual Report, Annex 2 "The Regulations"](#). This guidance is still applicable.

The Panel is also consultee for proposed changes to the pay of principal council Chief Executives.

Principles

The work of the Panel is underpinned by a set of principles which guides its approach, methodology and decision making. They are:

- **Upholding trust and confidence** – Citizens rightly expect that all those who choose to serve in local authorities uphold the public trust by embracing the values and ethics implicit in such public service.
- **Simplicity** – The Framework is clear and understandable.
- **Remuneration** – The Framework provides for payment to members of authorities who carry a responsibility for serving their communities. The level of payment should not act as a barrier to taking up or continuing in the post.
- **Diversity** – Democracy is strengthened when the membership of authorities adequately reflects the demographic and cultural make-up of the communities such authorities serve.

- **Accountability** - Taxpayers and citizens have the right to receive value for money from public funds committed to the remuneration of those who are elected, appointed or co-opted to serve in the public interest.
- **Fairness** - The Framework will be capable of being applied consistently to members of all authorities within the Panel's remit as a means of ensuring that levels of remuneration are fair, affordable and generally acceptable.
- **Quality** - The Panel recognises that the complex mix of governance, scrutiny and regulatory duties incumbent upon members requires them to engage with a process of continuous quality improvement.
- **Transparency** - Transparency of members' remuneration is in the public interest.

Section 3: Summary of Deliberations and Determinations

Methodology

Each year the Panel engages with members of the bodies for which it sets remuneration levels, officers within those organisations and clerks. The Panel also engages with relevant membership bodies including Welsh Local Government Association, One Voice Wales and the Society for Local Council Clerks. It does this through a range of meetings which, at the moment, remain mostly online. The Panel has continued with these discussions. They provide an opportunity for the Panel to explore views about existing arrangements, the impact decisions are having on individuals, how the arrangements are operating in practice and any issues or concerns individuals wish to raise. They have also provided an opportunity for discussion about emerging situations which the Panel has considered in its decision making.

The draft report was published widely and members of the public encouraged to and have provided valuable feedback and we welcome this. This year, the Panel had the opportunity to engage with a wider group of stakeholders at the three Welsh Government “Diversity in Democracy” events and workshops.

The Panel also considers feedback from the publishing of the Annual Report in the previous year. The changes made in last year’s Report, in particular the uplift in the basic salary, seem to have been well received by stakeholders. The issues raised with the Panel have all been centred around the detail of the Determinations, asking for guidance on how they should be applied or asking for points of clarification where the text of the Report was unclear.

The Panel has therefore agreed to review the format and structure of the main Report and make better use of the Panel website to provide information and guidance.

The Panel has a duty to set payments that are fair and that encourage and enable democratic participation. It must also take account of affordability and acceptability.

In making its determinations the Panel considered a range of benchmarks, including past, current and projected indices and actual figures and the known and forecast extent and impact of multiple economic and social factors. These included post Brexit and COVID work environments and the cost of living, energy and climate crises.

Consultation on the draft Annual Report

The Panel produced and issued a draft report on 6 October 2022 for an eight-week consultation, which closed on 1 December 2022.

In addition, as part of the consultation process, stakeholders were invited to answer five questions using an online survey or by return email. A total of 89 responses were received online, whilst 44 were submitted by email to the IRP Mailbox. The

Panel would like to thank everyone who contributed to the consultation. A summary of the responses is included in section 4.

Overall, the responses supported the Panel's determinations and so no changes have been made in the final Determinations. In some areas the wording of the Determinations has been strengthened to clarify areas of uncertainty raised through the consultation, primarily a restatement of the ability for members, on an individual basis, to opt out of part or all of their remuneration.

In addition, the consultation responses, highlighted a few areas that the Panel will consider in their forward work programme for this year. The forward work programme will be published on the Panel's website at the end of March.

Following consideration of the views received in response to its consultation the Panel now makes its final determinations.

Panel's Determinations for 2023 to 2024

Basic salary for elected members of principal councils: Determination 1

The basic salary, paid to all elected members, is remuneration for the responsibility of community representation and participation in the scrutiny, regulatory and related functions of local governance. It is based on a full time equivalent of three days a week. The Panel regularly reviews this time commitment and no changes are proposed for 2023 to 2024.

Last year the Panel reset the basic salary to align with the [2020 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings \(ASHE\)](#) published by the Office of National Statistics. This reduced the imbalance that had arisen between the basic salary of members of principal councils and the average salaries of their constituents. The change took effect from the May 2022 local elections. The rationale for this significant step can be found in last year's Annual Report and a detailed explanatory paper setting out the historical context and analysis is available on the Panel's website.

Building on this decision the Panel has determined that for the financial year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 it is right to retain a link between the basic salary of councillors and the average salaries of their constituents. **The basic salary will be aligned with three fifths of the all Wales 2021 ASHE, the latest figure available at drafting. This will be £17,600. This will represent a 4.76% increase in the basic salary.**

Salaries paid to Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils: Determination 2

The limit on the number of senior salaries payable ("the cap") will remain in place. At the 2022 local elections boundary reviews changed the number of members for some councils. The Panel adjusted the senior salary cap for these councils in its 2022 to 2023 Annual Report. As there are no further changes for 2023 to 2024, the

maximum number of senior salaries payable within each council remains as set out in the 2022 to 2023 [Report](#).

All senior salaries include the basic salary payment. The different levels of additional responsibility of and between each role is recognised in a banded framework. The framework was revised last year after a review of differentials and market comparators. No changes to banding are proposed this year. Early next year the Panel will gather evidence from principal councils to explore whether and how the workload of elected members has changed.

The [ASHE 2021](#) increase applies to the role element of Band 1 and Band 2 salaries – leader, deputy leader and executive members.

To complete the last year’s realignment of the framework, Band 3 and Band 4 salary holders will receive a small increase to the role element of their pay and the role element of Band 5 pay will remain frozen. The increase in basic salary will apply.

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will therefore be £66,000. All other payments have been decided in reference to this and are set out in Table 1.

Table 1 – Salaries payable to Basic, Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils

Description	Remuneration		
Elected members of principal councils			
Basic salary (payable to all elected members)	£17,600		
Senior salaries (inclusive of basic salary)	Group A	Group B	Group C
Band 1:			
Leader	£66,000	£59,400	£56,100
Deputy Leader	£46,200	£41,580	£39,270
Band 2:			
Executive members	£39,600	£35,640	£33,660
Band 3:			
Committee Chairs (if remunerated): Civic Head Presiding Officer	£26,400		
Band 4:			
Leader of largest Opposition Group	£26,400		
Band 5:			
Leader of Other Political Groups Deputy Civic Head	£21,340		
Deputy Presiding Member – no role payment	£17,600		

Group A: Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Swansea

Group B: Bridgend, Caerphilly, Carmarthenshire, Conwy, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Newport, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Vale of Glamorgan, Wrexham

Group C: Blaenau Gwent, Ceredigion, Denbighshire, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Isle of Anglesey

There are no further changes to the payments and benefits paid to elected members and therefore all other Determinations from 2022 to 2023 still stand and should be applied in 2023 to 2024, including those covering:

- Travel and subsistence;
- Care and personal assistance;
- Sickness absence;
- Corporate Joint Committees,
- Assistants to the Executive,
- Additional salaries and Job sharing arrangements and
- Co-opted members

Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees: Determination 3

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be £8,800.

The salary of vice-chair will be £4,400.

There are no other changes.

Contribution to costs and expenses of members of Community and Town Councils: Determination 4

Last year the Panel carried out a major review of the remuneration framework for community and town councils and undertook a comprehensive consultation exercise with the sector. The Framework was updated then and this year the Panel has decided to make limited but important changes.

The Panel recognise that all members of community and town councils necessarily spend time working from home on council business. This was the case before and during COVID and is continuing. As a result, members have extra domestic costs and also need office consumables.

The Panel considers members should not be out of pocket for carrying out their duties. However, an individual may decline to receive part, or all, of the payments if they so wish. This must be done in writing and is an individual matter. A community or town council member wishing to decline payments must themselves write to their proper officer to do so. Each community and town council must ensure that it does not create a climate which prevents persons accessing any monies to which they are entitled that may support them to participate in local democracy. Payments should be made efficiently and promptly.

Reimbursement for extra costs of working from home

All councils must pay their members £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a week) towards the extra household expenses (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of working from home.

Reimbursement for consumables

Councils must either pay their members £52 a year for the cost of office consumables required to carry out their role, or alternatively councils must enable members to claim full reimbursement for the cost of their office consumables.

It is a matter for each council to make and record a policy decision in respect of when and how the payments are made and whether they are paid monthly, yearly or otherwise. The policy should also state whether and how to recover any payments made to a member who leaves or changes their role during the financial year.

Guidance on taxation

It is not within the remit or authority of the Panel to provide specific advice on matters of taxation. Advice can be provided by One Voice Wales and guidance is available on the HMRC website.

The £156 should fall under the statutory provisions of section 316A ITEPA: [Income Tax \(Earnings and Pensions\) Act 2003 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) and the current amount that can be paid without attracting a tax liability is £6 per week: [Expenses and benefits: homeworking: Homeworking expenses and benefits that are exempt from tax - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

The level of payments is set out in Table 2.

Table 2 – Payments to Community and Town Councils

Type of payment	Requirement
Group 1	Electorate over 14,000
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all Members
Senior Role	Mandatory £500 for 1 member; optional for up to 7
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Costs of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory
Group 2	Electorate 10,000 to 13,999
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	Mandatory for 1 member; optional up to 5
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory
Group 3	Electorate 5,000 to 9,999
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory
Group 4	Electorate 1,000 to 4,999
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory

Type of payment	Requirement
Group 5	Electorate less than 1,000
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory

Group number	Size of Electorate
Group 1	Electorate over 14,000
Group 2	10,000 to 13,999
Group 3	5,000 to 9,999
Group 4	1,000 to 4,999
Group 5	Under 1,000

There are no further changes to the payments and benefits paid to elected members and therefore all other Determinations from 2022 to 2023 still stand and should be applied in 2023 to 2024, including those covering:

- Payments for undertaking senior roles;
- Contributions towards costs of care and personal assistance;
- Reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs;
- Compensation for financial loss:
- Attendance allowance and
- Co-opted members

Payments to National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities: Determination 5

The three national parks in Wales - Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia were formed to protect spectacular landscapes and provide recreation opportunities for the public. The Environment Act 1995 led to the creation of a National Park Authority (NPA) for each park.

National Park authorities comprise members who are either elected members nominated by the principal councils within the national park area or are members appointed by the Welsh Government through the Public Appointments process. Welsh Government appointed and council nominated members are treated equally in relation to remuneration.

The three fire and rescue services (FRAs) in Wales: Mid and West Wales, North Wales and South Wales were formed as part of Local Government re-organisation in 1996. FRAs comprise elected members who are nominated by the Principal Councils within each fire and rescue service area.

Payments will increase as a result of the uplift proposed for elected members of principal councils. Therefore, there will also be an uplift of 4.76% in the basic salary element.

The remuneration for Chairs will remain linked to a Band 3 senior salary of principal councils. Therefore there will be a small increase to the role element of their pay. Deputy Chairs, Committee Chairs and other senior roles will remain linked to Band 5. Therefore their role element of pay will remain frozen. The increase in basic salary will apply. Full details of the levels of remuneration for members of National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities, is set out in Table 3.

Table 3 – Payments to National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities

National Parks Authorities	
Basic salary for ordinary member	£4,964
Chair	£13,764
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£8,704
Committee Chair or other senior post	£8,704
Fire and Rescue Authorities	
Basic salary for ordinary member	£2,482
Chair	£11,282
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£6,222
Committee Chair or other senior post	£6,222

All other Determinations for 2022 to 2023 will still stand and should be applied in 2023 to 2024, including those covering;

- Contributions towards costs of care and personal assistance;
- Reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs;

- Compensation for financial loss;
- Co-opted members and
- Restrictions on receiving double remuneration where a member holds more than one post.

Section 4: Consultation: Summary of Responses

The Panel produced and issued a draft report on 6 October 2022 for an eight-week consultation, which closed on 1 December 2022.

The website link and pdf version of the draft report was sent to:

- One Voice Wales
- Welsh Local Government Association
- Society for Local Council Clerks
- Principal councils
- Fire and Rescue Authorities
- National Park Authorities and
- Community and Town Councils.

Determination 1: Basic Salary increase

Not all councils commented. Three highlighted whether it was correct that members be given an increase during the current cost of living crisis. However, these accepted that personal circumstances of members need to be considered and therefore it should be a personal matter for members to determine themselves whether or not they accept the pay rise or make the choice to opt-out. The Panel considered this feedback, and, whilst mindful of the overall impact on council budgets, agreed that the increase in basic salary was an important factor in encouraging and supporting a diverse group of people to stand for election.

Determination 2: Senior Salaries

There were two key issues raised by stakeholders; firstly whether the level of remuneration adequately recognises the increasing responsibilities of principal council members and secondly whether the current maximum number of senior salaries ought to be reviewed. The Panel noted these points and will consider whether this area should be a focus of the future workplan.

Determination 3: Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees

No representations were received in relation to the salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Determination 4: Payments towards costs and expenses of members of Community and Town Councils

Over half of the responses highlighted a concern that the payments were mandatory and that their council did not wish to increase their precept to meet these costs. The fact that the Report did not restate that members can choose to decline their entitlement to payments was not helpful. However, other responses supported the payments.

Ten per cent of the responses received raised concerns about the costs of administration and fifteen responses raised questions about the correct treatment for tax purposes. One clerk also asked if the payments that members receive could be

published globally, similar to how the contribution to costs of care and personal assistance is publicised.

Other comments mentioned the need to encourage “green” travel and one queried the need for payments to be made for senior positions.

The Panel considered these responses and agreed to reiterate the policy on individual opt outs in the Final Report and to provide a link to helpful HMRC websites.

The Panel will continue to work with stakeholders to improve support and advice to Community and Town Councils.

Determination 5: Payments to National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities

No representations were made in relation to payments to members of National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities.

In addition, as part of the consultation process, stakeholders were invited to answer five questions via an online survey or by return email. A total of 89 responses were received online, whilst 48 were submitted by email to the IRP Mailbox.

Question 1

The Panel has continued to use the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) published by the Office for National Statistics as the benchmark for setting the basic salary of elected members of principal councils. There is a corresponding proportionate increase proposed for the members of National Park and Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Panel has continued to refer to the last published ASHE which was 2021. Do you agree that the basic salary element should be referenced to the [ASHE 2021](#) data.

Responses

90% of those who answered this question agreed that the Panel should reference the basic salary element to the ASHE 2021 data. 3% did not agree whilst 7% had no opinion on this question

Question 2

The Panel has made changes to the payment of costs and expenses of members of community and town councils. Do you agree with the addition of the “consumables” element?

Responses

72% agreed to the addition of the ‘consumables’ element, whilst 25% did not agree to this additional payment.

The most common theme in the answers given to question two was whether this payment was now mandatory or if the payment was optional and that Councillors had the choice to forgo. The same question was asked of the £156 payment.

Question 3

The Panel will gather evidence from principal councils to explore whether and how the workload of elected members has changed to inform future Determinations. Are you content that the Panel should build this review into its future work plan and build the evidence base to support decisions?

Responses

97% of those who responded to this question agreed.

The majority of the answers highlighted the additional work that elected members now undertook in their role.

Community and town councils welcomed this as it would recognise the amount of work that the sector does.

Question 4

We have significantly reduced the size of the report this year to concentrate on key decisions made and intend to make more use of the website to provide easy to use guidance to users. This approach is also in line with our efforts to respect the challenges facing us in protecting our planet.

How would you like to access information and guidance from the Panel? (choose all that apply)

Responses

Summary report with links to detailed guidance	84
Easy to use guidance notes	71
Frequently asked questions	49
Website	54
Social media	16
Information events	25
Other	14

If other, please specify:

The proposed summary report, detailed guidance notes and frequently asked questions were welcomed. Other answers included seminars, online meetings and an information event.

Have you experienced any challenges accessing or understanding our guidance and information through our website? Please let us know how we can make it easier for you?

A simplified report and separate guidance document will help stakeholders find the information they require.

No stakeholders experienced any challenges accessing or understanding the guidance and information through the website

Question 5

The Panel intend to undertake a series of engagements with all relevant stakeholders over the next year as part of the development of its forward planning and building of its evidence and research strategy.

Have you any comments that would help the Panel shape this engagement?

For example, a preference for online polls, the holding of engagement events, virtual or face to face, which groups should be involved, how do we engage with prospective candidates etc.

Responses

The most popular answers given to this question were:

- online polls
- Virtual meetings
- Face to face meetings

There was a mixture of support for both online and in-person events. Some responses proposed that the Panel held regional engagement events so that several Councils could attend at the same time. Other comments received suggested these events would help to discuss any issues with the Panel in depth and for the Panel to receive a broader viewpoint and more comprehensive feedback on any proposals.

One Voice Wales offered support to the Panel in arranging any events in the Community and Town Council sector.

Summary of Determinations:

Determination 1:

The basic level of salary for elected members of principal councils will set at £17,600.

Determination 2:

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will be £66,000. All other payments have been decided in reference to this and are set out in Table 1.

Determination 3:

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be £8,800.

The salary of vice-chair will be £4,400.

Determination 4:

Members of Community and Town Councils will be paid £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a week) towards the extra household expenses (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of working from home. And councils must either pay their members £52 a year for the cost of office consumables required to carry out their role, or alternatively councils must enable members to claim full reimbursement for the cost of their office consumables.

Determination 5:

The basic pay of members of National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities has been increased by 4.76%. All payments are set out in Table 3.

Determination 6:

All other Determinations set out in the 2022 to 2023 [Annual Report](#) of the Panel remain valid and should be applied.

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The Report and other information about the Panel and its work are available on our website at:

[Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales](#)

Agenda Item 32

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 21.03.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 21.03.2023

Committee: **Council**
Date of Meeting: **30th March, 2023**
Report Subject: **Annual Report of the Head of Democratic Services**
Portfolio Holder: **Councillor S. Thomas Leader/Cabinet Member
Corporate Overview & Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Sarah King (Statutory Head of Democratic Services)**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
	16/03/23			27/03/23			30/03/23	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present the annual report of the Head of Democratic Services for 2022-23 and to confirm the level of support being provided to Elected Members is appropriate.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The annual report outlines the comprehensive range of arrangements in place to support Elected Members to enable them to fulfil their roles in an effective and compliant manner.

3. Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Democratic Services Committee will consider the report at its meeting on 27th March, 2022 and any recommendations will be provided verbally to Council.

Option One

That Council approves the report on the basis that it is satisfied there is a sufficient level of support for Elected Members.

Option Two

That Council provides comment and amendments to the report of the HDS prior to approval.

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

The role of the Head of Democratic Services is set out in the Council's Constitution.

5. Implications Against Each Option

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

The Council must provide the Head of Democratic Services with resources that, in its opinion, are sufficient to allow the function of the role set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 to be discharged.

The Member Development Budget for 2022-23 was £6260.00.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

There are potential risks if the levels of support arrangements for Elected Members are deemed by Council to be not sufficient. The Democratic Services Committee can recommend to Council a review of resources and/or support, if appropriate.

5.3 ***Legal***

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Council to designate an officer to the post of Head of Democratic Services. The role is set out in the Council's Constitution as a statutory function.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

The Head of Governance & Partnerships is the appointed Head of Democratic Services.

The role of the Head of Democratic Services 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.
- make reports, at least annually, to the full Council in relation to these matters.

The Head of Democratic Services is able to make recommendations including with regard to the appointment, organisation and management of staff discharging democratic functions. They may arrange for the discharge of democratic functions by staff and can delegate functions to staff as they feel appropriate.

6. ***Supporting Evidence***

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

A summary of the key areas and main changes to existing support arrangements for Elected Members which have been implemented in 2022-23 is below.

a) May 2022 Elections

Information provided for all newly elected Councillors at the Election Count – including details and times for the Orientation Day at the General Offices where Members collected ICT equipment and mobile phones; copies of the new Members Handbook and the Members Induction Programme.

An ICT Drop-In session was put in place to provide support and guidance for Members on the set up, access and usage of their Council ICT equipment.

b) Member Induction/Development Programme

A comprehensive Induction Programme was implemented for all new and returning Members covering all the essential information and knowledge needed to fulfil the

role of Councillor in an effective and compliant way. Sessions were delivered by a mix of Council Officers and/or external providers, where appropriate. Positive feedback has received from Members and external organisations on the Programme.

We have collated statistics on attendance against the Induction Programme and formal Committee meetings and in future, to be consistent with other authorities across Wales and to improve transparency, we will look to publish that data. Overall, engagement from Members has been good with the Induction Programme and this continues with the ongoing Development Programme. The Member Development Programme seeks to build up additional knowledge and skills for Members in key areas of Council business.

c) New Democratic & Governance Structure

As a result of the reduction in Elected Members from 42 to 33, we carried out a comprehensive desk top research exercise to consider where the democratic function of the Council could be strengthened and modernised.

From the research a number of findings and proposals were put forward and a new approach agreed by Council in May 2023 for implementation for the 2022 cycle, which included:-

- the establishment of a **Presiding Member** position (based on the role set out in the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013.
- a change to the **number of and remit of Scrutiny Committees** – People, Place, Partnerships and Corporate & Performance.
- a reduction in the **number of Members sitting on committees.**
- a change to **Scrutiny agendas** with a maximum of two items for either Pre-decision or Performance.
- a change in the **production of minutes** to record only decisions and/or recommendations due to the statutory requirement to record meetings.
- a **timings of meetings** survey was undertaken to determine the Council diary, in line with the requirement for this to be once a term.
- re-established the meetings of the **Chairs & Vice Chairs** of Scrutiny Committees.

Formal evaluation is undertaken after each Scrutiny Committee meeting and any issues raised at the Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting. A wider evaluation is also underway of the changes made to the democratic and governance structure as was previously agreed, to see if any further changes and/or improvements could be made.

d) Member Briefings

Due to the more succinct and focused agendas for Scrutiny Committees, we have seen an increase in the amount of Member Briefings. However, all of them are appropriate and we have had positive feedback in terms of the level of information and questioning being provided to Members through these sessions. Each directorate also has quarterly all Member briefing sessions diarised which they are using for updates on key portfolio information.

e) Members Library

All sessions as part of the Member Induction and Member Development programmes and all Member Briefing sessions have been recorded. The recordings have been uploaded onto the Members Library for ease of reference and for those who may have been absent. In addition, all of the online training from WLGA has also been deposited in the Library.

f) Informal Wellbeing Sessions

As a result of Members' wellbeing being raised as part of the Health and Safety induction session, a decision was taken to implement informal Wellbeing meetings for Members on a quarterly basis, for those who wish to attend. The initial meeting was well attended and Members wanted to see a Wellbeing Champion role added as part of the Committee Report – this was agreed by Council.

g) Member Development Programme

A suite of Member Development policies have been reviewed and updated including the following:-

- Member Development Strategy
- Members Mentoring Framework
- Members Personal Development Review and Competency Framework

We will be working with Members from 2023-24 to fully implement these policies to further improve their skills, knowledge and competencies.

h) Cabinet/CLT Improvement and Development

External resources were commissioned and funded through the WLGA to work collectively with the new Cabinet and the Corporate Leadership Team on the development of the Corporate Plan 2022-27. Further external resources have been commissioned and funded through the WLGA to start work on a longer-term programme of improvement and development.

6.2 *Expected outcome for the public*

By providing a democratic function with sufficient support and resources means Elected Members are provided with the support, guidance and training needed to operate effectively and compliantly. In addition, this will support them in their role within the community and representing their ward.

6.3 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

Opportunities to maximise engagement by Elected Members in the range of training and support available to them will assist in meeting current and future demands of their roles.

- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
Any changes or improvements made to Elected Member support arrangements are done with a view to them being sustainable in the longer term and in recognition of the increasing complexity of the roles Members undertake.
- 6.5 ***Preventative focus***
The content of the Member Induction programme is aimed to give them a solid grounding in preparing them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities in an effective and compliant way. The ongoing Member Development programme then builds additional skills and knowledge across the Council.
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
The Member Development Programme and individual Member Briefings should encompass all of the local, regional and national collaborations and partnerships in place, in which the Council has an interest. Blaenau Gwent Members sit on many outside bodies with other Councillors from across Wales to service these partnerships/bodies.
- 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
All Council services are involved with the democratic functions of the Council. Forward Work Programmes and agendas are developed jointly with Elected Members and Officers. The change in the remit of the Scrutiny Committees to be more cross-cutting has also helped to facilitate this.
- 6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***
The modernisation of the democratic arrangements enables Members and officers to attend meetings without the need for travelling.
- 6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IAA)***
No assessment is required for this report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

The Head of Democratic Services presents an annual report to Democratic Services Committee and Council.

Evaluation is undertaken after each formal Scrutiny Committee meetings and any can be raised formally at the Chairs and Vice Chairs meetings.

Regular meetings also take place between the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer and the Head of Democratic Services to assess and consider the existing arrangements for Elected Members and any issues of improvement and/or compliance.

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Agenda Item 33

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 15.03.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 14.03.2023

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **30th March, 2023**

Report Subject: **Council's Suite of Member Development Policies**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader / Cabinet Member
Corporate Overview and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Sarah King, Head of Democratic Services, Governance
& Partnerships**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
	09/03/23			24/03/23			30/03/2023	

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for the following Member strategy and frameworks:

- Member Development Strategy 2022 – 2027 (Appendix 1)
- Members' Mentoring Framework 2022 – 2027 (Appendix 2)
- Elected Members Personal Development Review and Competency Framework 2022 (Appendix 3)

2 Scope and Background

2.1 Elected members today face increasing challenges and are required to undertake a diverse range of roles ranging from that of community leader to specific responsibilities within the Council.

2.2 In order to aid these roles, the Council is looking to provide the best possible support to members to enable them to meet these challenges. This takes the form of skill and knowledge development, support facilities, and support services.

2.3 To coincide with the new Council term, the Performance & Democratic Team have reviewed the Council's suite of Member Development Policies for all Members to ensure they are fit for purpose going forward.

- 2.4 The above named documents have been reviewed and are attached to this report. For ease of reference, the following table illustrates each strategy and framework, its scope and to whom they apply to:

Policy / Procedure	Covers	Who it applies to
Member Development Strategy 2022 - 2027	Training and Development	All Members
Members' Mentoring Framework 2022 - 2027	Mentoring for Elected Members	Member mentors and mentees (member mentors can be identified from other Local Authorities)
Elected Members Personal Development Review and Competency Framework 2022	Personal Development and Performance	Personal Development Reviews are held on an annual basis and are mandatory for all Senior Salary Holders. All other members will be offered to undertake a Personal Development Review

- 2.5 The Performance & Democratic Team are responsible for the development and review of all the Council's Member Development related policies. In line with the Policy Schedule, these documents were due for review.

3. Options for recommendation

- 3.1 CLT considered the Suite of Member Policies at their meeting on 9th March 2023. Democratic Services Committee reviewed the policies at their meeting on 24th March.

Option 1

To consider and approve the suite of Policies as set out in the appendices:

- *Member Development Strategy 2022 – 2027 (appendix 1)*
- *Members' Mentoring Framework 2022 – 2027 (appendix 2)*
- *Elected Members Personal Development Review and Competency Framework 2022 (appendix 3)*

Option 2

Consider the suite of Policies as set out in the appendices and make recommendations for amendment before approval.

Option 3

Do not support the adoption and implementation of one or more of the member support policies (noting the risk implications outlined in sections 5.2 and 5.3).

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 ensure that the Council meets its obligations to support Elected Members as underpinned by statutory regulations.

- 4.2 The development of Members supports the Corporate Plan priorities:
- An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place; and
 - Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

A budget to support member development is available and will be utilised to support implementation of the policies.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The risk of not implementing the proposed policies would mean that the policies are not reflective of legislative requirements to support the development of Elected Members.

5.3 ***Legal***

The policy and frameworks have been developed to take into account the legislative requirements as outlined in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and 2011, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

The review and development of the policy and frameworks has been led by the Performance & Democratic Team who will also lead the implementation alongside Elected Members.

6 **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Each policy has been developed using internal evaluations and considering best practice from across Wales.

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

The policies aim to support the development of Elected Members to ensure that they are able to operate effectively and succeed in their roles as community leaders.

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

In order to develop and review the member support policies, discussions and research has been undertaken with other Local Authorities, the WLGA and WG.

CLT have approved the suite of policies and member engagement is sought through the democratic cycle.

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

The implementation of the new suite of policies would ensure that they become well established and are in line with current best practice. They will be reviewed in line with the policy review timetable or if there are any legal or best practice changes that may arise in the meantime.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

The Council aims to work using a preventative approach wherever possible so that problems can be tackled before they are escalated. Providing support to elected members aims to provide a proactive approach to training and development to support them in their roles.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

Where most appropriate, the Council will look to partners to provide training to elected members.

6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

Where most appropriate, services across the Council will provide training to elected members.

6.8 **Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions**

The report does not directly link to decarbonisation but every effort will be made to support the reduction of carbon emissions by undertaking training, where appropriate, remotely or on a hybrid basis.

6.9 **Integrated Impact Assessment (IAA)** *(All decisions, policy reviews or policy implementation will now require a completed Integrated Impact Assessment)*

An integrated impact assessment is not required for the suite of policies.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The strategy and frameworks have been developed to support Members with their development and learning. All documents will have a lifespan of a political cycle, currently 5 years, at which point they will be reviewed at the beginning of the new electoral term.

Each policy will have a monitoring and evaluation process in place to ensure they are delivering fully for the needs to elected members.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Member Development Strategy 2022 – 2027 (appendix 1)*
- *Members' Mentoring Framework 2022 – 2027 (appendix 2)*
- *Elected Members Personal Development Review and Competency Framework 2022 (appendix 3)*

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Member Development Strategy 2022 - 2027



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working with and for our communities*

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Blaenau Gwent – a place that is fair, open and welcoming to all by working with and for our communities

Introduction

The work of an Elected Member is complex and challenging and the political, legislative and local landscape in which they work is changing constantly. Members need to balance the expectations of local constituents against the challenges of effectively running a local authority in maintaining and delivering services effectively, and within budget.

Nationally, there is a drive for local authorities to raise the standard of support and development opportunities provided to Members, in order to assist them in meeting the challenges of their roles. The Welsh Government's Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, emphasises the need to secure the provision of reasonable training and development opportunities for Members.

Both new and experienced Members need appropriate support, information and professional development to undertake their complex and evolving roles. This Member Development Strategy has been developed to support all Members and aims to provide effective training and development opportunities to support Members to effectively deliver their challenging and demanding roles and to meet future challenges.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has a duty to and is committed to supporting the development of its Members. Members play a pivotal role in decision making and delivering better outcomes for citizens and the Council recognises that the provision of effective training and development is critical to this and its success.

Purpose

Member development refers to any development activities or training programmes specifically designed to improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of Members in their varied roles.

The Council will provide Members with flexible and responsive training and development that is based on individual and organisational needs. All elected Members regardless of length of service, party membership or post held within the political framework will have equal access to training and development opportunities.

To assist Members to identify areas for development and understand their roles within the political framework, a number of supporting mechanisms have been established in order that Members have an understanding of the expectations placed upon them and an understanding of what the Council can do to support Members in these areas. As a result, Members will be encouraged to identify their own development needs via the Personal Development Review and Competency Framework process.

To ensure Members achieve the most from the development opportunities, Blaenau Gwent Council will provide effective, planned, appropriately resourced and evaluated training.

The objectives of the Strategy are:

- To equip Members with the necessary training and development opportunities to enable them to effectively undertake their different roles, and to enable the Council to deliver its priorities.
- To support the integrity of Members when working with the public by providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge.
- An enhanced understanding and ownership of the Council's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan 2022/27.
- To provide an opportunity for Members to reflect on how they have demonstrated the relevant skills, knowledge and behaviours to support their personal development.
- To provide effective, planned, appropriately resourced, monitored and evaluated training.
- To establish an environment where Member development is seen as vital to the success of the authority.
- To make training and development available and encourage its take-up by all Councillors, irrespective of seniority, length of service or political affiliation.
- For Political Groups and Political Leaders to show commitment to the delivery and promotion of the Member Development Programme and encourage their Group Members to participate in these opportunities.
- Keeping Members up to date with new legislation and changing policies
- For Members to work to the values of the Council as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2022/27 by being: **Respectful; Inclusive; Collaborative; Accountable; and Supportive**

Legislative Framework for the Strategy

The **Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011** requires Local Authorities to secure the provision of reasonable training and development opportunities for its Members. The Measure does not define what constitutes reasonable training and development. However, Welsh Government guidance recommends that Local Authorities provide opportunities for what is essential for a Member to perform their role effectively.

The **Wales Programme for Improvement** places a responsibility on the Council to maintain continuous improvement in service delivery, emphasising the need to develop new and innovative ways of working to improve service outcomes. All Members have a key role in the process of challenging established patterns of service delivery.

The **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** places a duty on public bodies, including the Council, to think more about the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. Public bodies need to make sure that when making their decisions they take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future. Within this all Elected Members have a key role in providing leadership and representation within the local community.

The **Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021** requires that a leader of a political group must take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Group Members. The duty does not make leaders of a political group accountable for the behaviour of their Members' as conduct must be a matter of individual responsibility. However, they do have a role in taking reasonable steps in maintaining standards, setting an example, using their influence to promote a positive culture, being proactive in promoting high standards of conduct in their group and addressing issues as soon as they arise.

Corporate Plan 2022/27

The Corporate Plan is the Council's roadmap setting out our vision, values and priorities. Through focusing on delivering against the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan we can begin to transform Blaenau Gwent into a more prosperous and welcoming area and this in turn plays a part on a regional and national stage. It is also a key part of building a more confident and capable Council. It is about achieving real outcomes for the people of Blaenau Gwent and is underpinned by solid and sustainable plans, ensuring the Council can be held to account for what it has promised to deliver. The Corporate Plan identifies four priorities, known as Well-being Objectives, which set out the direction for action and agenda for change over the next five years. The ambitions set out in this Plan require for the Council, communities and partners to work in new and innovative ways to drive change and transform the area in order to have a positive impact on the lives and well-being of current and future generations.

The Corporate Plan has not been developed in isolation and alignment has been made to the Marmot Principles (to reduce health inequalities across Gwent and to work in partnership with the Institute of Health Equity (IHE) to address the social determinants of health), and the priorities from the Gwent Public Service Board Plan (PSB) Well-being Plan.

The table below highlights the links between the Corporate Plan 2022/27, the Marmot Principles and the Gwent PSB's Well-being Plan.

Corporate Plan 2022/27	Marmot Principle	Gwent Well-being Plan
Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give every child the best start in life. • Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives. • Create fair employment and good work for all. • Ensure a healthy standard of living for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to create a fair and equitable Gwent for all
Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities. • Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention. • 'Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to create a Gwent where the natural environment is protected and enhanced
An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create fair employment and good work for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to create a fair and equitable Gwent for all
Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to create a Gwent that has friendly, safe and confident communities

How the Strategy is Delivered

The training and development of Elected Members will be provided using a variety of different methods, including:

- A comprehensive **Induction and Refresher Training Programme** for all Elected Members, whether newly elected or returning this is provided at the start of each political cycle.
- The **Member Development Programme** is an ongoing and comprehensive learning and development programme to improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of Elected Members in their varied roles. The programme will include topical and legislative information as well as being amended to cover identified need over the year.
- Members are provided with **Information Handbooks** to inform them of the various arrangements in place throughout the democratic processes.
- The **Personal Development Review and Competency Framework** enables a Member and the Council to mutually assess personal development needs. It is set within the context of the role of the Member, the priorities and expectations of the Council, the needs of the community and the personal aspirations the individual wishes to achieve. These will be offered to all Elected Members, however, they are only mandatory for Senior Salary Holders.
- The Council will encourage experienced Members of the Council to share their expertise and will encourage members to take advantage of any **Mentoring** arrangements offered. Arrangements can also be made to support mentees from other local authority areas or for mentors/peers in other local authorities to provide support.
- Support arrangements are in place for Elected Members who represent the Council on an **Outside Body or Organisation**. Elected Members should provide feedback on the work they have undertaken on the outside body as well as share any learning experiences.
- The establishment of **Role Descriptions and Core Competencies** as set out in the Constitution provide Members with clarity on expectations and accountability within their diverse roles.
- The **Forward Work Programmes** of Scrutiny, Governance & Audit, Cabinet and Council will be used to identify any learning and training opportunities that will support Elected Members to understand the work of the Council and its services.

- **Annual Reports for Members** - The Councillor's Annual Report is a voluntary process intended to be used as a mechanism for improving communication between Councillors and the local electorate and it helps to improve local people's knowledge and understanding of what their local councillor does, and the important role they undertake.
- **Modernising Local Government** – the Council has made a commitment to support Members to become more digitally inclusive.
- **Cost Effective** Member training and development will be sourced through the use of in-house training, cost-sharing with neighbouring authorities and outside providers.
- The Online **Member Support Library** is a dedicated area on the Council intranet which has been developed as a single point of contact for Elected Members to access in order to gain information on a wide range of areas and topics. Recordings from Member Development Sessions are also available on this portal.
- A range of **E-Learning Modules** are available to help develop Members' knowledge and understanding of local government and the broad issues that face them in their role. The modules will enable Members to undertake learning at a time that suits them, and, for some topics, will supplement the learning received through workshops and workbooks.
- The Council will **Record** all committee meetings which are open to the public. These recordings are available on the Council's website.
- The Council has available **Hybrid Meeting Options** to enable Elected Members to remote attend and participate in a meetings.
- The Council operate a number of **Mandatory Training** sessions which Elected Members are expected to attend:

For all Elected Members -

- Members Code of Conduct
- Corporate Parenting/Safeguarding Responsibilities

For Specific Elected Members -

- Licensing and Planning – for Elected Members appointed to these regulatory committees
- Appeal Committee Training - for Elected Members dealing with Dismissals

Roles and Responsibilities

In order to facilitate the effective delivery of training and development arrangements for Elected Members, support will include:

Head of Democratic Services

The Head of Democratic Services is to produce and monitor the Member Development Programme, to collate the learning and development needs of Elected Members and use these needs to inform the annual training programme and ongoing member development.

Support Arrangements under the Head of Democratic Services

The Corporate Performance Team, which includes both the Democratic Arrangements and Scrutiny functions, will support the Head of Democratic Services in the delivery of training and development for Members. Democratic Services will record attendance of Members at all training, committees and member development sessions. This ensures Elected Members can review their training and development activities.

Democratic Services Committee

The Democratic Services Committee has the responsibility for ensuring the democratic element of the Council is operating correctly including ensuring sufficient staff, accommodation and resources are available to support Members in their role. The Committee oversees the Council's Member Development arrangements and monitors the delivery of the programme and periodically assesses its effectiveness.

Political Group Leaders

Group Leaders have a particular responsibility to ensure that their Members engage fully in the Member Development process; recognising and proactively seeking out training opportunities.

Political Groups

Groups should promote member development opportunities and also encourage and support Members' participation.

Elected Members

Elected Members are responsible for:

- Identifying their own development needs.
- Seeking opportunities to improve their effectiveness and increase their potential.
- Attending arranged learning and development opportunities.
- Participating in the Personal Development Review / Competency Framework.
- Sharing their knowledge and skills with their peers.
- Reviewing their learning and development activities.

Directorates and Departments

All departments within the Council are responsible for identifying and delivering service specific training to Elected Members.

Welsh Local Government Association

Guidance, support and expertise will be used throughout the development of the Members' Programme, including use of the e-learning modules.

Monitoring of the Strategy

Ensuring that the Strategy remains fit for purpose and continues to meet the needs of Elected Members is essential. To ensure continued development and delivery of an effective training and development programme the following arrangements are in place:

Formal Monitoring

Progress of the Strategy will be monitored by the Democratic Services Committee.

There will be a formal review of the Strategy every five years.

Informal Monitoring

A record will be kept of the attendance of Elected Members at all training and development sessions. Members will be requested to complete an evaluation of each committee, training and development session which they attend. Feedback will be provided to facilitators following each session. This will be used to inform and adapt future events to ensure their ongoing effectiveness and strengthen the Member Development Programme.

Resourcing the Strategy

The majority of training is likely to be provided in-house but there is a specific budget available to support the training and development opportunities for Members. This sum also covers the costs of Members attending conferences which are deemed to be opportunities for development.

Conclusion

This Strategy has been developed in order to support Members with their development and learning. The Strategy will have a life-span of a political cycle, currently 5 years, at which point it will be reviewed at the beginning of the new electoral term.



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Members' Mentoring Framework 2022 - 2027



*Blaenau Gwent – a place that is fair, open and welcoming to all by working
with and for our communities*

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Blaenau Gwent – a place that is fair, open and welcoming to all by working with and for our communities

Introduction

The work of an Elected Member is complex and challenging and the political, legislative and local landscape in which they work is changing constantly. Members need to balance the expectations of local constituents against the challenges of effectively running a local authority in maintaining and delivering services effectively, and within budget.

Both new and experienced Members need appropriate support, information and professional development to undertake their complex and evolving roles.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has a duty to and is committed to supporting the development of its members. The Council recognises that the provision of effective training and development is critical to its success. Members play a pivotal role in decision making and delivering better outcomes for citizens.

The role of an elected member is a complex and challenging. All members, whether newly elected or returning, can benefit from support and development in reacting to new or personally challenging situations. All Members are provided with a range of essential support and development activities, but these cannot always cater for some of the individual and immediate needs of Member. Mentoring is an approach to support the development needs of Members.

What is Mentoring?

‘Mentoring is a confidential relationship where a mentee works with a mentor to explore issues or situations where they feel they need support or development’

Mentoring is a voluntary, confidential, one to one relationship in which an individual uses a more experienced or more senior person as a sounding board for guidance. It enables the mentee to “grow” in their role in skills, knowledge, understanding and behaviour. It can be a medium, long term or ongoing relationship. It is not a prescriptive or directive relationship but rather one which allows the mentee to find their own way, assisted by the mentor and allows the mentee to apply skills, knowledge and experience to new situations to unlock future capability.

How does Mentoring work?

Although mentoring and coaching are not completely discrete from each other the approach differs in some ways. Some specific characteristics of mentoring include:

- The mentoring relationship is recognised as being self-selecting, with the mentee identifying their mentor.
- The mentees set the agenda in the main and takes responsibility for their learning within the relationship.
- Mentoring usually takes place over a longer time period, the agenda is more open, and evolves over time.
- The mentor helps the mentee learn through asking questions and sharing their experience without being too directive.
- The mentor supports the mentee's learning and helps them discover their own solutions to situations they may be finding challenging.

What does a mentor do and when can mentoring be used?

As a mentor you will form a voluntary, confidential, one to one relationship with someone who is less experienced than yourself. This person will seek to use you, your skills, knowledge and experience as a guide and support for their personal and professional development and a sounding board for their ideas and approaches.

The agenda for your discussions will be primarily set by your mentee although you may need to guide them in clarifying their goals for what they hope to achieve from the relationship. Typically, you might discuss:

- Working within the organisation: I'm new to the authority how does it all work here?
- A new role: I'm a new Scrutiny Chair, can you help me understand the role?
- Career development: Where do I go from here? How do I get there?
- Political challenges: How do I get my voice heard in the Group?

The role of mentor brings with it significant responsibilities. You have a responsibility to:

- Work within a code of practice. Before undertaking work with a mentee, the mentor will agree to act within a code of practice (attached).
- Use a mentoring contract (attached). The issues outlined in the mentoring contract should be discussed at the beginning of the relationship and both parties should agree to abide by the resulting decisions.
- Develop your mentoring skills through training.

What can a mentee expect?

As a mentee, you will form a voluntary, confidential, one to one relationship with a person who is more senior/experienced than yourself. You can use this person, their skills, knowledge and experience as a guide and support for your own personal and professional development and as a sounding board for your own ideas and approaches.

You will set the agenda for your discussions. The relationship can last for as long as both parties agree that it is helpful. Either party has the ability to dissolve the relationship when it has run its natural course or if the pairs are not compatible or productive. We encourage you to arrange to review the usefulness of the relationship with your mentor regularly.

Training and guidance

All Members acting as mentors will be provided with some basic training in the techniques and personal style required to be a mentor. This basic training will be facilitated by the Welsh Local Government Association [WLGA]. The guidance includes:

- Responsibilities of mentors.
- Techniques for mentoring.
- Protocols for the mentoring relationship.
- Tips on how to get the most out of being a mentee.

The Authority will use the WLGA's "Guidance for Member Mentors"

The Authority's Approach to Mentoring

The Authority will provide support for any member wishing to act as a mentor or be mentored by colleagues by:

- arranging for training to be provided to potential mentors.
- providing basic written guidance on mentoring techniques to mentors.
- providing information on how to make the most of mentoring opportunities to mentees.
- finding suitable mentors from within or if necessary outside the authority for members as available.
- providing mentors with ongoing support and training as required.

The Mentoring Contract

The following issues should be discussed at the beginning of the relationship and both parties should agree to abide by the resulting decisions.

Time & Place

- Both parties agree how much time they are able to give including work between meetings if necessary.
- Frequency of meetings.
- Duration of relationship (how long before a review).
- Mode of meeting – physical or virtual.
- Venues - away from the usual working environment, private, out of reach of phones and colleagues.

Scope & Context

- What will be covered?
- What might some of the learning goals, short and long term be?
- The mentee sets the agenda.

Relationships and Responsibilities

- The Mentor has a responsibility to act within a code of practice.
- The meetings are a priority - once set they should not be altered if avoidable.
- The mentee is responsible for their learning and actions.
- There is a responsibility on both sides for honesty and trust.
- Both parties need to take responsibility for suggesting the ending of the relationship when appropriate.

Confidentiality

- Agreement on confidentiality or where any information goes.
- Should notes be made? What happens to any notes during and after the arrangement?
- Will there be any discussions with the mentors' mentor/sponsors/peers.

Mentoring Contract

I (Mentee) and I(Mentor)

Agree to follow the guidance of this document in developing our mentoring partnership.

- All areas of discussion will be totally confidential and will not be discussed outside the partnership.
- The process will operate within a framework of equal opportunities and unacceptable behaviour on the part of either party should be challenged and dealt with.
- A minimum of one meeting per month will be agreed over the first six-month period.
- The Mentee will take responsibility for arranging mutually convenient meeting times.
- It is recognised that the Mentee takes responsibility for setting the agenda for the meeting, although this is likely to be informal.
- Expectations of the partnership will be agreed at the first meeting.
- Both parties will operate within the role set in this contract.
- All unwanted contact will be agreed, and any unwanted intrusion will be discussed.
- Any difficulties initially will be discussed between the partnerships, then with the scheme co-ordinator as appropriate.
- If the contract and partnership breaks down both parties will follow an agreed process of "letting go". No fault or blame will be applied to either party.

Signature (Mentee).....

Signature (Mentor).....

Code of Practice for Member Mentors

Before undertaking work with a mentee, the mentor will agree to act within this code of practice.

Throughout the relationship and after it has been concluded, the Mentor will:

Competence

- Undertake training in mentoring.
- Agree to work only within their level of competence.
- Understand and agree to work within this code.
- Seek personal support when necessary, from an appropriate mentor's mentor.

Context

- Agree to understand and operate within the political/organisational context where the relationship is taking place.
- Seek to meet the learning and development needs of the mentee.

Boundaries

- Agree to work within the boundaries of the mentoring relationship i.e. work/professional development/performance not straying into areas where they are not qualified/experienced such as counselling or psychotherapy or into an inappropriate personal relationship.
- Be prepared to refer the mentee to other sources of information/expertise or professional assistance as appropriate.

Confidentiality

- Maintain a level of confidentiality agreed with the mentee both during and after the relationship has ended.
- Disclose information only when agreed with the mentee unless the mentor believes that there is convincing evidence of serious danger to the mentee or others if the information is withheld.

Integrity and professionalism

- Act within appropriate law/policy/values of the authority e.g. equalities and HR policies.
- Consider the learning and development needs of the mentee as brought to the relationship as paramount.
- Seek to understand the needs and point of view of the mentee maintaining respect for the mentee throughout the relationship.
- Not exploit the mentee in any way or put their own interests before that of the mentee.

I the undersigned agree to work with my mentee in accordance with the above Code of Practice

Mentor's

Signature: _____

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Elected Members Personal Development Review and Competency Framework 2022

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council



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Context and Overview

The **Blaenau Gwent Elected Member Personal Development Programme and Competency Framework** provides an opportunity for Members to self-reflect and consider how well things are progressing and where support is needed if things aren't going as intended.

The **Personal Development Review (PDR)** is a way for a Member and his/her Authority to mutually assess a Member's personal development needs. The review should be set within the context of the role of the Member, his/her aspirations for what s/he hopes to achieve, the purpose and aspirations of the Authority and the needs of the community.

The **Member Competency Framework** has been developed to support Elected Members in their role, both inside and outside of the Council. The Framework is a method of describing the underpinning values that shape and define the culture of Blaenau Gwent Council and is aligned to the Officer Competency Framework. It broadly outlines the skills and knowledge required by Members to perform their different roles and provides an indication of how they might carry them out effectively. It is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive but to provide a prompt for new and existing councillors to identify areas where support may be required. This support could be in the form of information, training, facilitated workshops, coaching and mentoring, or opportunities to learn from observation. The framework is designed to be flexible, so that councillors can work with officers and colleagues to decide the most useful method.

The Framework should:

- Outline the skills, knowledge and behaviours required by Elected Members.
- Support Elected Member personal development.
- Provide an opportunity to assess progress, understand where further support would be helpful and setting future personal objectives.
- Build confidence, develop skills and knowledge and improve personal performance to contribute to the council and the community.

The Elected Member Personal Development Programme and Competency Framework can provide:

- Clarity for Members about the expectations and accountabilities placed upon them.
- Understanding of and support for the individual and collective development needs of Members.
- Support for Members in preparing for new roles (succession planning).
- An understanding and ownership of organisational goals.
- Support for improved Member performance.

The **Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011** places a requirement on councils to provide all Members with an opportunity to have a personal development review to assess their development needs. The Measure states:

- A local authority must secure the provision of reasonable training and development opportunities for its Members.
- A local authority must make available to each Member of the authority an annual review of the Member's training and development needs.
- The review must include an opportunity for an interview with a person who is, in the opinion of the authority, suitably qualified to provide advice about the training and development needs of a Member of a local authority.

Process for undertaking the Elected Member Personal Development Programme and Competency Framework

- Each Senior Salary Holder is required to undertake an assessment of their performance on an annual basis. This is mandatory.
- Each non senior salary holder will be offered to undertake an assessment of their performance. This is voluntary.
- Members undertaking a review will be required to complete a template detailing the activities they have undertaken over the past year.
- A meeting will then take place to discuss the areas of success and areas for improvement.
- Note: Group Leaders will lead the discussions with their Members' and will also be supported by the Head of Democratic Services. Group Leaders will require for their reviews to be led by an external party as identified by the Council.

The purpose of the review will be to provide the Member with an opportunity to review their role generally, identify any specific tasks for the year ahead, consider the areas where they feel confident and identify areas where they will be more challenged and may need support and development. The Head of Democratic Services will detail the outcome of the review in an agreed plan which sets out any identified training and development needs.

Whilst completing this you may want to consider the following:

- The Council's Corporate Plan including its priorities, strategic vision and core values.
- The skills you require to work effectively within the Council and with constituents.
- The knowledge that is needed to work effectively within the Council and with constituents.
- What role/s do you undertake in the Council e.g., Committee Member, Member Champion, sit on an Outside Body etc.
- Being accountable and delivering results.
- Your personal responsibilities and attributes.
- Relevant legislation that impacts how you work.

Personal Development Review - Looking Back over the Past 12 Months

Please complete this pro forma and bring it to the review meeting, this form is confidential to you and the person who is conducting your review, except for the final sheet, which will be used by Democratic Services for your personal development plan and to prioritise activities for the council member development programme.

Considerations	Comments
What are my current roles and responsibilities? <i>(e.g. council, cabinet, scrutiny member, chair, member of a statutory committee, member of an outside body, a member champion and in the community, ward member/community leader)</i>	
What successes have you had this year?	
What challenges have you had to face the year?	
What aspects of the role am I confident in?	
What aspects of the role am I less confident in?	
What learning and development have I undertaken this year and what have I learnt as a result of this?	
Overall, what learning and development would be helpful for me moving forward?	

Competency Framework - Looking Back over the Past 12 Months

Competencies	Comments
<p>Delivering the Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands where the organisation is going and why. • Communicates a compelling view of the future. • Understands how they can contribute to delivery of the vision. 	
<p>Working with Officers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to assertive relationships that promote constructive challenge. • Listens to the advice provided to assist the political decision making process. • Ensures the best interests of the Council are furthered when interacting with Officers. • Establishes and continually improves positive and appropriate interaction with all Officers. 	
<p>Improvement and Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a positive attitude to change and contributes to new ideas and improved ways of working. • Looks to continually improve service delivery. 	
<p>Communicating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates appropriately, openly and effectively. 	

Competencies	Comments
<p>Making Informed Decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures decisions are based on sound evidence and linked to improving services. • Considers implications of proposed decisions. • Ensures decisions link to continually improving performance. • Seeks clarification or challenges appropriately. • Explains decisions appropriately. 	
<p>Putting the Citizen First</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognises the importance of contributions from the community to setting and achieving continually improving services. • Seeks feedback from the citizen. • Engages with the community appropriately and respectfully. • Is an ambassador for the organisation and the community it serves. 	
<p>Leading People <u>(for SRA Holders Only)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads and motivates others to continually improve performance. • Is approachable, supportive, and demonstrates integrity, fairness, and high personal and professional standards. 	
<p>Communicating the Vision <u>(for SRA Holders Only)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sees the "big picture". • Proactively promotes the vision to others. • Ensures others understand how their role contributes to achieving the vision. 	

Personal Action Plan

(to be completed following the facilitated review session. A one to one session with the Head of Democratic Services will be arranged for you to agree your personal action plan)

What Action is required to support you to further develop?	Method of Achievement	How will I know I have achieved this?

Contact Details

If you require any support to complete the Member Competency Framework please contact:

Sarah King
Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships
Email: sarah.king@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Gemma Wasley
Service Manager Performance and Democratic
Deputy Head of Democratic Services
Email: gemma.wasley@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Additional Support Documents

This Elected Member Personal Development Review and Competency Framework is not exhaustive and there are a number of other documents that support Elected Members and identify the skills and intended outcomes needed from Elected Members. These should all be available in the members online library or by asking a member of Democratic Services. Support may include but is not limited to:

- The Council's Constitution including Role descriptions for Elected Members and Code of Conduct
- Member Representation on Outside Bodies
- Data Protection
- Freedom of Information legislation
- Cabinet Committee Support booklet
- Scrutiny Committee Support booklet
- Corporate Plan 2022/27

Guidance is also provided by the WLGA:

- Guidance for councils planning to implement personal development reviews for members [Personal Development Review Schemes for Members - WLGA](#)
- A Development Framework for Councillors in Wales [Councillor Development \(competency\) Framework - WLGA](#)

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Agenda Item 34

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 23.03.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 23.03.2023

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **30th March, 2023**

Report Subject: **Meeting Specific Requirements of the Equality Act 2010: Annual Reporting and Impact Assessing**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader of the Council / Executive Member Corporate Overview & Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Sarah King, Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
	02/03/23				16/03/23		30/03/23	

1. **Purpose of the Report**

To present the Council's Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) Annual Report 22/23, and the new Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process being used for impact assessing.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Council, as a public body in Wales, has a requirement under the Equality Act 2010 (statutory duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 to meet a set of general and specific duties ('the Act' from here on in).
 - 2.2 **Annual Reporting Duty**
 - 2.2.1 The Council has to produce an annual monitoring report by 31 March each year on the progress made towards meeting the commitments set out in the Council's [Strategic Equality Plan 2020 to 2024](#) (SEP).
 - 2.2.2 The 2022/23 report for the Council is provided at Appendix 1. It provides key progress made towards achieving each of the six Equality Objectives set out in the Council's SEP. The report also includes the Council's employment and workforce information (for 2021/22). Key requirements to report on Gender Pay is covered in the Council's [Pay Policy Statement](#).
 - 2.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment Process**
 - 2.3.1 As a defined public body in Wales, the Council must fulfil a specific duty for the assessment of impact. This relates to the likely impact of any new or existing (when reviewed) policies or practices. There is a key focus when assessing impact on the ability to meet the Council's three general duties

under the Act, including assessing any positive or negative impact on groups covered by the nine protected characteristics.

- 2.3.2 Where there has been deemed to be a substantial (or likely) negative impact the Council must report this accordingly, outlining any decisions taken with any mitigations considered/actioned.
- 2.3.3 A review of the way the Council's carries out impact assessments was included as part of the SEP's 2021/22 defined work programme. This fell in-line with new legal expectations from the Act, the Socio-Economic Duty.
- 2.3.4 As part of the review, a decision was taken to streamline the process by removing the initial screening process, based on feedback that it created confusion. The process was also strengthened to ensure all equality and socio-economic factors were fully considered when making decisions, reviewing existing or developing new policies. The requirement to carry out and report on impact assessing continued to be expected in corporate reporting templates for decision making.
- 2.3.5 In 2022/23 further consideration was given to the impact assessing process following on-going monitoring, consideration of good practice and regional/national network discussions.
- 2.3.6 This has led to a new Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process being developed which incorporates wider policy considerations beyond equality and socio-economics:
 - i. Well-being of Future Generation Act Goals
 - ii. New Corporate Objectives
 - iii. Armed forces (new national duties)
 - iv. Community Safety considerations
- 2.3.7 The new process was agreed by CLT in November 2022 (Appendix 2), with agreement for relevant officers to attend management team meetings to update on the content and expectations of the new processes. The Policy Team continues to provide on-going support, advice and guidance to those completing the IIA process.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

To include Recommendation(s) / Endorsement by other groups, e.g. CLT/Committees/Other groups)

CLT considered the Annual Report and new IIA process and recommended a member briefing session for all elected members on the new IIA process.

Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee considered the Annual Report and new IIA process and recommended for a member briefing session for all elected members on the new IIA process.

Annual Reporting

- a. To consider the Annual Report being presented for 22/23 and note progress made against the Council's Equality Objectives; and

Impact Assessing

- b. To note the new IIA process, and support a member briefing sessions for all elected members to cover the specific duty for assessing impact to include, the process, examples of its use, and its role in decision-making.

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

The Corporate Plan recognises that our Strategic Equality Plan is one of the key policies and strategies that help to deliver our ambition.

As outlined both Annual Reporting and Assessing of impact are defined as specified duties Equality Act 2010 (statutory duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

There are no direct financial implications as a consequence of this report. The publication and translation of the Annual Report, on behalf of the Council, is met within existing budget of the Governance and Partnerships. There are no direct costs associated to the IIA process, however there could be potential mitigation/adaptation costs associated to individual processes carried out against new and existing policies.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

5.3 ***Legal***

In producing and publishing the Annual Report the Council is meeting its legal requirements.

The IIA process is put in place to support the Council in meeting its specific duties for assessing impact. There are risks if impact assessing is not carried out effectively where it is deemed it should be. These risks would include reputational, regulatory intervention (Audit Wales/Equality & Human Rights Commission) and financial (subject to legal channel per case).

5.4 **Human Resources**

There is a duty across the organisation to comply with the Act and proactively support the implementation of the SEP and meet specific duties.

The Policy and Partnerships Team oversee responsibility via the Professional Lead for Engagement, Equalities & Welsh Language to submit the Annual Report within the defined timeframes.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

In 2020, the Council agreed it's SEP to cover the period 2020-2024. This plan has six equality objectives, which are:

1. We will be an organisation who ensures fairness and equality is in everything that we do
2. We will be an equal opportunity employer with a workforce that values equality and diversity
3. We will support children and young people, particularly those with protected characteristics, to achieve their learning ambitions
4. We will promote and support safe, friendly and cohesive communities.
5. We will ensure there is meaningful involvement with people who have protected characteristics and key stakeholders that represent their interests.
6. We will strive to tackle inequality caused by poverty for people who have protected characteristics.

The attached Annual Report (Appendix 1), has been developed to meet the reporting requirements, and covers the reporting year 2022/23 providing key updates on action taken against each of the outlined objectives. Key equality data is also presented covering staff that work for the period April 2021 to March 2022.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

The annual report clearly shows contributions and outcomes for the public, and is aligned to the national well-being goals for a more equal Wales, a

Wales of cohesive communities, and a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

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

The Annual Report (and progress against actions outlined in the plan) has been developed with the input from staff members and key representatives from across the Council who are actively involved in delivery actions against the SEPs outlined objectives.

Furthermore, the IIA process has been development with active participation from stakeholders across the Council.

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

The current SEP 2020-24 outlines the Council's intention for a four-year period, in-line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and the annual report reflects a specific year within it (22/23). The information presented in this annual report will be used to help shape the policy development of the next SEP from 2024, with planning beginning in 2023/24 (including democratic processes).

The report highlights the new Integrated Impact Assessment process which will support more informed decision making for service development, service change, policy development or policy review.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The SEP looks to ensure that no person is discriminated against now or in the future. The annual report provides progress towards meeting the requirements set out.

The IIA ensures that those assessing impact have considered those with the protected characteristics, the impacts towards national well-being goals, our corporate objectives, and socio-economic impacts. Additionally, impacts on further specific groups such as armed forces community, and children and young people to ensure informed decisions are made.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The annual report has been developed with the involvement of key stakeholders from across the Council.

The IIA review involved working with services to understand the process, and check it was fit for purpose. Also, it incorporated good practice shared via Regional Equality Officer networks. As a result of this the previous Impact Assessment was updated and the screening template was removed.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

The SEP and IIA provides a corporate approach across the organisation to deliver general and specific equality duties.

6.8 **Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions**

The IIA has the current Corporate Objectives built into the process which will strengthen services to ensure that they have considered the carbon impact on any service change, service development, policy review or policy implementation.

6.9 **Integrated Impact Assessment (IAA)** *(All decisions, policy reviews or policy implementation will now require a completed Integrated Impact Assessment)*

The report considers Equalities throughout and identifies key Action Points to strengthen our approach to embed Equalities across the Council.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The annual reporting process is part of our statutory monitoring responsibilities. We have a duty to publish the report on the Council web site where it is made available to the public and other organisations (e.g. EHRC). Furthermore, the Annual Report is considered each year (whether as a specific report or information item) as part of the Council's cabinet and scrutiny forward work programmes.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- [Blaenau Gwent Strategic Equality Plan](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1 – BGCBC Annual Strategic Equality Monitoring Report 22/23

Appendix 2 – BGCBC Integrated Impact Assessment Template 22/23

Blaenau Gwent

Strategic Equality Plan

Annual Report 2022 – 2023



Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Annual Strategic Equality Monitoring Report

April 2022 – March 2023

“Blaenau Gwent – a place that is fair, open, and welcoming to all by working with and for our communities”

If you do require this document in a different format, e.g., large print, Braille, audio version, etc. please contact:

Email: pps@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

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Foreword

We are pleased to provide our progress towards Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2020/24. The annual report covers the period of April 2022 to March 2023 (including workforce data 2021-22) and sets out how we are meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. It highlights progress we have made against our six strategic equality objectives.

Putting fairness and equalities at the heart of everything we do is central to the delivery of our equalities plan and our services. We recognise our key role, as a public body, in advancing and strengthening equalities across Blaenau Gwent and are committed to being a 'place that is fair, open and welcoming to all by working with and for our communities' as outlined in our [Corporate Plan 2022/27](#)

To achieve this, we continue to deliver a range of programmes and activities, in partnership with other public bodies, to realise better equality outcomes for Blaenau Gwent. Including making progress towards contributing to the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act](#) and the seven National Well-being Goals.

We acknowledge the growing importance of the equality agenda and the need for the Council's continued commitment and support to address ongoing and new equality matters. We continue to focus on key priorities which seeks to support local recovery following the impact of the global COVID 19 pandemic as well as looking to address new impacts such as the cost-of-living crisis, and, have proactively supported families fleeing the Ukraine conflict by setting up a Welcome Centre.

Over the next year, in-line with Welsh Government, we will continue to develop local plans in support of the Anti-Racist Wales and LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer +) Action Plans and the National Commemoration Audit as we begin work to develop our new Strategic Equality Plan for 2024/28.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank our staff, local communities, and stakeholders for their on-going support in helping us to deliver our commitments.



Councillor Stephen Thomas

Leader, Portfolio for Equality & Diversity



Damien McCann

Interim Chief Executive

*Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg
This document is available in Welsh*

Introduction

Our annual report highlights how we are meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty (the “general duty”) or PSED by ensuring we are supporting a fairer society through advancing equality and fostering good relationships.

We do this this by valuing diversity through activities on a day-to day basis as well as how we deliver our services and our policies to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Our annual report is divided into six main sections—one for each of our strategic equality objectives. Each main section has been divided into the following sub-sections:

- Overview
- Key Examples of Actions from 2022/23
- Next Steps for Equality Objective in 2023/24

Our annual report concludes with the presentation of the Council’s Workforce data for 2021/22.

Progress against Equality Objectives

Equality Objective One *“We will be an organisation who ensures fairness and equalities is in everything that we do”*

Overview

We want to be an organisation that embeds fairness and equality throughout everything that we do. The Council is committed to being a ‘place that is fair, open, and welcoming to all by working with and for our communities’.

We recognise the value of this work in enabling us to achieve meaningful outcomes for our staff, citizens, local communities, and stakeholders. We want to ensure and continue to develop a workforce that is supportive and want to ensure the services we deliver are accessible for all.

Our aim is to advance equality across Blaenau Gwent by developing a strong framework, which is supported by the whole organisation lead through strong political and effective leadership.

We continue to strengthen our equality programme through our Corporate Leadership Team and School Management Team. We work collectively, using a “One Council” approach, to meet our six equality objectives set out within our plan. Our Corporate Leadership Team regularly considers its PSED duties and provides effective leadership to ensure its equality outcomes are delivered through organisation-wide collaborative delivery.

We feel it is very important that we continue to ensure that equality is championed throughout the organisation and have done this both politically and professionally. For example, we recognise international campaigns such as White Ribbon Day, World Aids Day, Holocaust Memorial Day, LGBTQ+ history month as well as many more.

Key Examples of Actions from 2022/23



New Corporate Plan for 2022/27 – Our new Corporate Plan was agreed by Council in October 2022 and reflects our new vision and core values of being respectful, inclusive, collaborative, accountable and supportive. Furthermore, we have set four priorities that we feel will allow us to achieve the best outcomes for our communities which are:

- Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent
- Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities
- An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place
- Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent, and resilient

Furthermore, the Council, along with our partners across Gwent through our Public Services Board, are working towards becoming a region that aims to tackle and reduce inequalities, via the Marmot principles to:

- Give every child the best start in life
- Enable all children, young people, and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
- Create fair employment and good work for all
- Ensure a healthy standard of living for all
- Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities
- Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention
- Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together
- Create fair employment and good work for all
- Tackle racism, discrimination, and their outcomes

The Corporate Plan recognises that our Strategic Equality Plan is one of the key policies and strategies that help to deliver our ambition.

Partnership Work and Collaboration - Our Equality Champion represents the organisation on the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Members Equality Network, and the Council is also represented at various National and Regional Equality Network meetings to collaborate and share good practice and learning. As an organisation we continue to pledge our support towards national equality campaigns and emerging policies, such as Zero Racism Wales; Welsh Government's vision of an [Anti-Racist Wales](#) by 2030 and [LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales](#).

We continue to be part of the Proud Council's network which has currently expanded over the last year to include a further two local authorities in Wales. Being part of the network allows us to work collaboratively to attend Pride events and work together on LGBTQ+ history month. By uniting and working together we can achieve a greater impact.

New Integrated Impact Assessment process from 2022/23 - In our previous report we highlighted our intention to develop a new Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process to coincide with the implementation of the Socio-Economic Duty. Over the past year, we have considered the effectiveness of our previous process; feedback from those completing impact assessments; and the findings of the Audit Wales Report [Equality Impact Assessments: more than a tick box exercise?](#)

This has resulted in the removal of the screening element to ensure that all our decisions, and service and policy reviews require are assessed. We further strengthened the process by including impact assessments against the Well-Being of Future Generation Act goals, our new Corporate Plan objectives, the new Armed Forces duty and also Community Safety Considerations.

The new IIA process was agreed in November 2022 following a briefing session with Senior Managers and Corporate Leadership Teams.

Further sessions have also been held with specific teams as part of an ongoing process.

As part of the IIA review work we are developing a research library to provide accessible data and intelligence to support anyone carrying out an IIA and the delivery of actions associated to our Strategic Equality Plan. The research library includes case studies, census data, other local data, regional & national evidence and reports relating to equality and diversity, as well as examples of lived experiences from peoples covered by protected characteristics.

Key Strategy Development - Our Annual Workforce Equality data for 2021/22 is available via Open Source on Blaenau Gwent Council's website under the "[Equality in Blaenau Gwent](#)" page. This data is used to gain an effective picture of the diversity of our organisation and informed the development of our Workforce Development Strategy, review of existing policies, and the development policies and guidance documentation for managers, with a key example this year being Accessibility Guidance for supporting those with neurodiversity conditions.

Simple SEPs for Schools – The Council has supported our schools over the last year to develop a two-page template to be used as their School Equality Plan. This approach clearly aligns to the organisation's Strategic Objectives for 2020 to 2024, as well as allowing them to deliver on outcomes specific to their school. It also will allow case studies and good practice to be identified as we go forward.

Policy Development – A good example of equality-focused policy development is the writing of a Toileting Policy to ensure that the Equalities Act 2010 is followed in all our schools. The policy supports toileting plans for our pupils who need further support due to key issues associated to protected characteristics such as disability and gender. Parental support groups across the area are in operation to address any parental concerns and develop pathways to support parents who raise

concerns regarding their children's disabilities. We have brought together agencies to support and provide up-to-date guidance and advice every month across different venues across the area.

Elected Member Training – This reporting year coincides with a new Council following local election held in May 2022. To support all elected members, both new and returning, an organisational member development programme was put in place. One of the core courses identified to happen within the first quarter for our elected members was Equality and Diversity, being delivered in August 2022. The training was co-delivered by an equality and diversity specialist company, [Red Shiny Apple](#), and a representative from Victim Support.

The training focused on giving elected members an understanding of the legal responsibilities in relation to Equality and Welsh Language. It provided an overview of the Council's equality and diversity policies which promote our PSED commitments (for example, the Integrated Impact Assessment). The session also focused specifically on hate crime and equality issues for people with protected characteristics.

We also encourage our elected members to consider e-modules available online developed by the WLGA which further support them to understand their duties.

Championing Key Equality Campaigns – As in previous years, the organisation continues to champion national and international equality campaigns from both professional and political leadership. As an example, in 2022/23 we have delivered organisational campaigns and events for International Women's Day 2023, International Holocaust Memorial Day 2023 and LGBTQ+ History Month. Each of the above examples have had active participation of the Council's newly appointed elected member for Equality and our Cabinet Members and senior management.



A particularly good example of this was the recent recognition given to International Holocaust Memorial Day via an event held on Friday 27th January 2023. It was a chance to honour the survivors of regimes of hatred and take the opportunity to reflect on the ways in which we live our lives today and bring our communities together to create a safer, better future.

With the theme being “Ordinary People” for 2023, our Equality Champion hosted the event to commemorate the day, with local councillors, council staff and partner representatives invited to attend “The Little Theatre” in Tredegar. The event was hosted by Tredegar-based not for profit company Cymru Creations and involved a documentary film that brought together five different stories to highlight the atrocities that occurred. Also, later in the evening, the organisation lit up Tredegar Town Clock and the General Offices in Ebbw Vale purple to commemorate the day.

Furthermore, at the Council meeting held on 26th January 2023, the Council’s Leader, supported by the Cabinet members, made a proposal - which was unanimously agreed - to award [Eva Clarke](#) the Freedom of the Borough, the highest accolade the can the Council can bestow.

Eva Clarke was born in a concentration camp and was one of only three babies that survived. Eva has worked so hard over the years to ensure the stories of those survivors have been told, ensuring their memories live on and what they endured is never forgotten. Eva has strong links with South Wales, and Blaenau Gwent particularly. The award ceremony took place in March 2023.



Next Steps for Equality Objective One in 2023/24

- Continue to raise the profile of the equality agenda across the organisation and embed it as “business as usual”, supported through regular meetings and monitoring work carried out by the organisation.
- The development of the new Strategic Equality Plan for 2024-28.
- Ensure that the organisation is appropriately considering all the related duties from the Welsh Government’s Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and LGBTQ+ Action Plans.
- Ensure the organisation receives up-to-date guidance and support, including the sharing of good practice, to achieve its Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Continued engagement of political and professional leadership teams and ongoing support of National and Regional equality campaigns.
- Review the effectiveness of the new Integrated Impact Assessment process, provide guidance and support
- Provided management teams with guidance on the new Integrated Impact Assessment process to ensure staff are familiar with the process
- Build on our research library to include guidance on the Integrated Impact Assessment Process and examples, data sets, national and local reports, and case studies and lived experience stories.
- Continue to lead on key agendas affecting our communities such as Cost of Living and supporting national issues such as resettlement.
- Develop an organisational Equality and Welsh Network

Equality Objective Two - “We will be an equal opportunity employer with a workforce that values equalities and diversity”

Overview

We as an employer value our workforce, we recognise that being an equality opportunity employer and being identified as an employer of choice is of utmost importance to encourage take up of roles and encourage more diversity within the workforce.

We continue to take steps to maintain and create a diverse workforce as we recognise this brings about benefits both internally and within the community of Blaenau Gwent as it allows for different perspectives and alignment with the communities that we serve.

In 2021 we developed an organisational Workforce Strategy which is in place until 2026. The strategy sets out the key priorities to create an effective workforce:

- Health, culture, and effective leadership
- Excellence in management across the council
- Highly motivate engaged workforce
- Evidence based decision making, planning and delivery; and
- Modern employer of choice

To support us becoming a ‘modern employer of choice’ we have continued to monitor the diversity of the workforce using workforce data and information.

Key Examples of Actions from 2022/23



Key Workforce Data - This year work has taken place to improve the quality of our workforce data via a review by of our Organisation Development Division on our equality monitoring processes. This has been done to reflect current guidelines across all the protected characteristics.

Following the review, the equality questions asked in our staff information management system, iTrent, has been updated and all staff are regularly reminded via our internal communication channels to consider their personal information. It is anticipated this will further allow for greater understanding of the workforce.

Gender Pay Gap – We annually consider the issue of gender pay and publish relevant statistics each year as part of our statutory equality measure which helps us to understand the difference in average earnings between women and men.

Our assessment, published as part of our [Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23](#), shows women and men are paid equally for doing equivalent jobs across the Council, with a predominantly female workforce (77.3% female, 22.7% male), occupying a high percentage of jobs across all four pay quartiles. Furthermore, our gender pay gap is significantly lower than the national UK average.

Agile Working - In 2021 the new Agile Working Policy was implemented which ensured staff were able to work at home, or from the community safely and effectively, following risk assessments. This process ensured that staff were provided with the necessary adjustments or equipment to carry out their duties effectively as well as demonstrating the ongoing commitment towards equality.

An online survey and face to face workshops were undertaken at the end of 2022 to consider the impact of the Agile Working Policy to understand the positives or negatives of the policy in regard to staff working practices. The policy will be reviewed further in 2023 and updated where necessary.

Our Organisational Development Policies – In 2022/23 our Organisational Development Division reviewed and updated a series of workforce policies which supports equality and diversity within the workplace. A few examples are highlighted below:

Pay Policy	Mar-22
Adverse Weather Guidance	Jun-22
Adoption/Surrogacy Leave	Oct-22
Maternity Leave	Oct-22
Paternity/Maternity Support Leave	Oct-22
Parental Leave	Oct-22

We believe regularly monitoring, reviewing, and implementing these policies allows us to maintain policy effectiveness and strengthens equality of opportunity.

A good example of where policy development for our staff has made a difference is when the Council agreed to sign up to the Trade Union Congress (TUC) policy “Dying to Work Charter” in December 2022. Therefore, our Critical Illness and Working Guidelines and the Attendance Management Policy have been updated. Interim Chief Executive, Blaenau Gwent County Borough, Damien McCann, commented:

“We support the TUC’s Dying to Work Campaign and in signing the Dying to Work Charter we show our commitment to support colleagues should they receive a terminal ill health diagnosis. A terminal diagnosis is devastating and is a time of huge emotional stress, fear, and uncertainty. The health and well-being of our staff is a priority and when employees are faced with a serious or terminal illness, it is important that they can choose the path that is right for them and their families, without having the additional worry of financial uncertainty.”

Training for council staff and school-based staff – As part of our equality and diversity training offer for teachers and pupils we delivered a Race Awareness Training Programme facilitated by [No Boundaries](#) in one of our learning community schools over three separate sessions.

Furthermore, two of our Primary Schools in the area have taken part in training on anti-discrimination offered by our regional West Gwent Community Cohesion Team. This saw over 60 pupils (Year Five and Year Six) exploring themes of: Similarities and Differences; Identity; Exploring diversity; Communities Culture and Cohesion; Belonging and Inclusion; and Prejudice.

We also have a corporate partnership training programme agreement with neighbouring Caerphilly County Borough Council to deliver bespoke training specifically for those working within Health & Social Care. Although the courses are not solely equality focused, equality is embedded throughout the delivery.

During 2022/23 around 3,000 training opportunities (online and face to face), were taken up by approximately 2,000 Council and school staff.

Further support around Training and Development - Children in Wales have also provided free training, including webinar sessions, on LGBTQ+ support for Children & Young People; Child Poverty; Violence Against Women and Girls and NSPCC report. These training opportunities, alongside additional resources have been shared with services across the Council, including educational settings.

In 2022/23 we worked with the West Gwent Community Cohesion Team to develop an e-module on equality for all staff, which we anticipate will be rolled out early 2023/24.



Communicating on Equality and Diversity

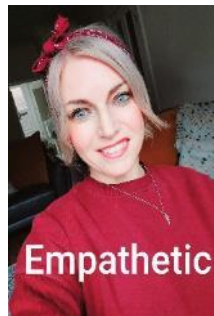
Issues – We have continued to deliver a weekly ‘Well-being Wednesday’ staff bulletin which provides up-to-date access to well-being services such as our Care First service, as well as information on training and development opportunities.

In 2022/23 the bulletin has been used to promote training opportunities for staff on topics such as armed forces, hate crime and Welsh, as well as promote relevant equality and diversity information (for example, online animated video about mental health support).

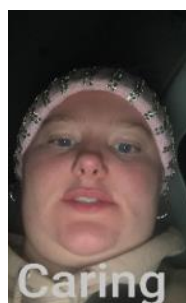
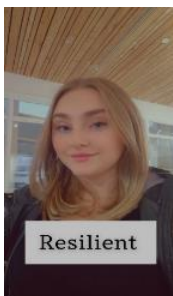
Two other good examples include encouraging all staff to learn sign language through [Sign4life](#), and also providing updates on the release of key statistics from the Census 2021, providing new up-to-date insight into the people living in Blaenau Gwent and their protected characteristics.

Communicating with Schools on Equality and Diversity – Regular educational bulletins are prepared to provide schools with key equality and diversity information, resources, policy information, training and support relevant to educational settings.

Supporting White Ribbon Day – In November 2022 staff across the council were encouraged to participate in [White Ribbon Day](#) . This day looks to engage people to prevent violence against women and girls by addressing its root causes. In 2022, the day fell during the FIFA World Cup, and people participating were asked to highlight one of 11 traits that men and boys can nurture to help create a world of equality and safety for women. Examples of staff participation are shown below:



Also, the Blaenau Gwent Youth Forum were keen to participate, with examples shown below:



UK Youth Parliament Member for Blaenau Gwent (left); Blaenau Gwent Youth Mayor (Centre); and Welsh Youth Parliament Member for Blaenau Gwent.

Social Care Recruitment Drive - A positive career campaign was developed to raise the profile of working in social care. The campaign aimed to encourage people to take up staffing roles which help individuals with protected characteristics. Please click the links below to watch the films:

[Grace - Adult Social Care](#)

[Interested in a career in Social Care?](#)

*Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg
This document is available in Welsh*

Next Steps for Equality Objective Two in 2023/24

- We will test if our workforce values equalities and diversity through continued staff engagement and involvement and identify any key areas for improvement.
- We will review the diversity of our workforce using our workforce data and where appropriate implement the delivery of positive recruitment drives
- We will continue to use our workforce data to understand health conditions of our employees and where appropriate hold specific awareness days to raise awareness
- Implement and review the Equality Training & Resources Toolkit for wider services.
- To continue to build on the Welsh & Equality staff network to support with plan development and deliver on the objectives within the plan.
- We are currently developing Neurodiversity Guidance for managers in consultation with key partners and trade unions.
- Other policies under development for Council approval include the Recruitment Policy, IVF Policy, and Attendance Management Policy.

Equality Objective Three - *“We will support children and young people, particularly those with protected characteristics, to achieve their learning ambitions”.*

Overview

Education is identified as a key priority within our Corporate Plan 2022/27- *“Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent”.* We as a local authority continue our commitment to ‘improving pupil outcomes, progress, and well-being, particularly for our most able and vulnerable pupils’. Providing access to support for children and young people to reach their learning outcomes is essential both for themselves now and the future.

We believe all children and young people should have access to learning opportunities and we aim to work with pupils who are covered by one or more of the protected characteristics to ensure that their learning outcomes are maximised, giving them every opportunity to reach their goals.

Key Examples of Actions from 2022/23

School Support & Guidance - We continue to build strong relationships with our schools and provide support to ensure the latest equality advice and guidance is provided and understood. This includes raising awareness of our strategic equality objectives to ensure schools understand how they contribute and can support equality outcomes.

Working together with schools a simplified, two-page, school equality plan template has been implemented which provides a mechanism for capturing how school are delivering on their equality objectives. The template is fully aligned to the Council’s Strategic Equality Plan and enables schools and the Education Directorate to set out how strategic equality goals are to be achieved.

To complement the new template, we have also developed a new monitoring process for schools to be able to showcase the positive work they are delivering to support the equality agenda. We will review these new arrangements for schools in 2023/24.

“Equality, Diversity & Inclusion” guidance, which includes training, information and toolkit resources are regularly provided from supporting organisations via the Schools Bulletin. For example, National Equality Campaigns and specific reports focusing on equality matters relevant to children and young people are provided.

We continue to develop a framework for reporting incidents via the “My Concerns” system. The system, when fully adopted, looks to provide intelligence on school-based issues and will allow for bespoke training and interventions to be provided, if required, to support outcomes for schools, staff, and pupils.

Gypsy Traveller Play Scheme Project – A positive play scheme project continues to deliver positive outcomes for Gypsy Traveller families and children since the appointment of a dedicated Housing Support Officer for Cwmcrachen. The project delivered onsite and in partnership with Head4Arts has provided children of all ages the opportunity to gain skills in wreath making, t-shirt design, jewellery making and much more.

The Arts Award project for children aged 11-21 years provides opportunities to gain new skills as well as an academic qualification. The projects benefit all children who attend school or are home educated.

A Flying Start project and a ‘Ti a Fi’ group has also been established which will promote the **Welsh Language** to mother and babies. The purpose of the project is to provide younger generations an opportunity to play and learn a new language before attending school whilst raising the importance of early years’ education and the **Welsh Language**.

In February 2023, Gwent Police delivered “The Young Police Cadets” project to target anti-social behaviour and raise awareness about the consequences of poor decisions and actions.



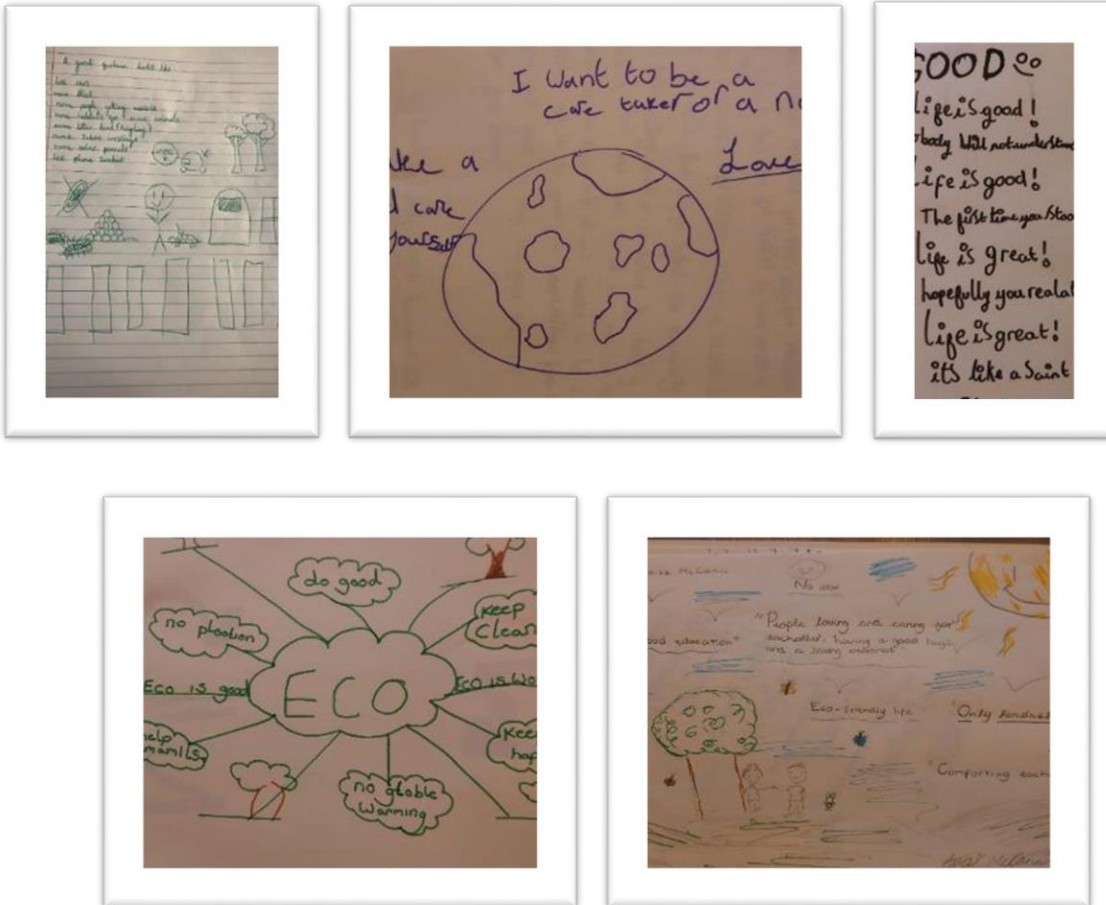
The Gypsy Traveller service along with the Housing Officer worked together to feed into the WG review of local authority Gypsy Traveller sites which can be found here [Gypsy and Traveller caravan count: quality report | GOV.WALES.](#)

Children’s Grand Council - The Policy and Partnerships team worked together with Education, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, and other Council service areas to successfully deliver three Children’s Grand Council sessions to a cohort of 59+ pupils within Blaenau Gwent.

In 2022, two online sessions were delivered due to Covid-19. The first in-person session was held in October 2022 and focussed on the following topics:

- Children’s Rights
- Why we have a Children’s Grand Council
- How children and young people can get involved
- Healthy food relationships
- Gwent Well-being Plan consultation

What does a good future look like?



Further online sessions are arranged for children who could not attend the in-person session to ensure all children and young people had an opportunity to take part.

LGBTQ+ Support Groups - LGBTQ+ support groups for children and young people are still in operation across Blaenau Gwent. The support groups provide appropriate information and with the opportunity to speak about feelings and empower them to ensure their voice is heard within a safe space.

Young Carers - Families First continue to support young carers to ensure that they are supported, and their voices are heard. Currently, there are 124 Young Carers. A weekly Young Carers group is held and on average 22 members regularly attend. On average, 32 Young Carers attend residential events or planned activities.

The Young Carers steering group brings representatives from a range of partner organisations together to ensure the best support available is offered at the right time to those who need it.

As a Council we support Young Carers to ensure their voices are heard by encouraging them to participate and get involved in Blaenau Gwent's Youth Forum by sharing their priorities or issues. We will continue to work with Young Carers to understand how they would like to participate and ask them to help shape any future sessions with services they want to talk with.



Children & Young People Staff and Partnership Network -

The Children & Young People Staff and Partnership Network has been established to support better communication and joined-up working; to help develop and facilitate projects (for example, excursions). The network helps maximise outcomes for all the children and young people we work with.

Key Educational Work and Development - Schools have developed strategic pathways to ensure the correct agencies are supporting learners and their families. A robust referral process has been established via the Early Years and Additional Learning Needs Support Panel. The panel provides early intervention to support learners and their families to achieve specific targets and achieve better learning outcomes.

Enhanced transition, Person Centred practice (PCP), is embedded to ensure transition of early years' learners are managed with the full support of schools. In partnership with the Inclusive Practice Service work has been underway to design support packages to help school nurseries to develop autism spectrum disorder friendly classrooms.

Our early year's settings supported World Down Syndrome Day – Odd Socks; World Autism Awareness Day; World health day – Healthy Eating; and National Inclusion Week – Celebrating diversity and inclusion.

The Traveller Education Service – We continue to provide one to one, and small group academic support for children and young people within schools and alternative settings. Through the literacy intervention, nearly all Gypsy Roma Traveller pupils made improvements in both reading and spelling in both primary and secondary education. Despite Covid-19 having an initial impact on learning most pupils' have reached pre-pandemic attainment levels due to the additional support provided.

All pupils at secondary schools now have literacy levels within the normal range for age i.e., Standard Scores of 90 or above. The onsite Literacy Project provides support to those with low literacy levels. Also, literacy booklets have been created and distributed to parents to encourage reading at home.

During Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller History Month in June 2022 we encouraged all schools to participate to raise awareness and to celebrate the culture.

Transition work continues to support pupils moving from primary school into secondary schools' settings (Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3). Gypsy, Roma, Traveller pupils and their families are fully supported throughout this phase to ensure any barriers and fears are overcome which typically stem from parents' own negative personal experiences from school. Leaflets for professionals, pupils and parents were distributed to help guide and encourage transition.

Next Steps for Equality Objective Three in 2023/24

- Continue to embed and develop the current equality performance monitoring arrangements for schools
- Development of corporate schools' equality network as a channel for providing up to date guidance and support, as appropriate
- Continue to develop the framework for reporting issues within schools via the "My Concerns" system
- Consideration of [Children in Wales' Child Poverty Report's](#) findings and what work required to support Blaenau Gwent.
- Expanding the Children's and Young People Network to ensure maximised opportunities for children and young people to get involved
- To support Families First to establish a working group for Young Carers to improve their voices being heard

Equality Objective Four- “We will promote and support safe, friendly and cohesive communities”

Overview

Our commitment towards the Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act National Goals of supporting ‘a more Equal Wales’ and a ‘Wales of Cohesive Communities’ continues. Working in partnership with the West Gwent Community Cohesion Team alongside our Community Safety Team we deliver programmes and initiatives that increase awareness & understanding, celebrate diversity, and bring communities together.

Key Examples of Actions from 2022/23

National & International Campaigns - We continue to work in partnership with a wide range of organisations to support key national equality and cohesion campaigns through public and organisational events and via social media.

Examples, includes:

- Holocaust Memorial Day
- Show Racism the Red Card
- LGBTQ+ History Month, Pride
- White Ribbon Day (campaign to end domestic violence)
- Black History Month
- International Children’s Day

Asylum Dispersal and Ukrainian Support - Since 2016, Blaenau Gwent Council has supported the UK's Resettlement Scheme Programme, working in partnership with a wide range of public, third sector and private organisations, to deliver a holistic package of support.

In June 2021, the Council agreed to support Afghan nationals via Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and later Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) building on existing commitment to support the UK Resettlement Scheme. The Council pledged to resettle up to 4 families from Afghanistan. 2 families have successfully resettled in Blaenau Gwent (9 individuals), alongside a spontaneous Afghan family arrival (3 individuals).

In early 2022, Russia's invasion of Ukraine saw those living in Ukraine fleeing their country due to the conflict. This led to the UK Government launching "**The Homes for Ukraine Scheme**" in March 2022. The scheme allows individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to bring Ukrainians to safety, including those with no family ties to the UK.

The Homes for Ukraine Scheme allows (individual) sponsors in the UK to nominate a named Ukrainian or a named Ukrainian family to stay with them in their home or in a separate property.

In Blaenau Gwent, several expressions of interest were received in support of The Homes for Ukraine Scheme – including residents offering accommodation (spare rooms or second homes). We now have 33 Ukrainian refugees hosted within the borough.

Furthermore, in 2022 the Council worked with Welsh Government to set up a Welcome Centre in the area to support Ukrainian people seeking refuge and sanctuary via the Wales Super Sponsor Scheme. Arrivals at the centre began from July 2022, and to date, almost 100 Ukrainians have been supported with initial accommodation.

Several residents have secured employment locally. All school aged children are now enrolled into local schools. A number of residents are exploring private rental options, particularly the larger families where there are no hosting options available. Positive communications campaigns have resulted in two expressions of interest to host Ukrainian families.

Partnership & Community Work - In November 22, we supported the Gwent Public Services Board in delivering its second participatory budgeting programme, Community Voice, Community Choice. 16 community groups were successfully voted by the public to receive monies to deliver local well-being projects (a total of £127,527) at a community event held at The Beaufort Theatre, Ebbw Vale.

Since October 2022, 11 community groups received monies from the Household Support Fund / Cost of Living Food Distribution Support Grant to provide direct help to local communities in need, and 21 community groups received monies from the Loneliness and Isolation Grant.

Next Steps for Equality Objective Four in 2023/24

- Continue to support National equality campaign (e.g., Black History Month, Holocaust Memorial etc.), including positive social media campaigns.
- Continue to provide representation and National, Regional and Local Equality and Community Cohesion Networks supporting the sharing of intelligence, learning and good practice.
- Deliver Community Cohesion training (e.g., Hate Crime Awareness) for Corporate Leadership Team, Members, and staff and schools
- Support the delivery of the Afghan Resettlement Programme and Wider Asylum Seeker Dispersal Scheme pilot.
- Continue to work as a partner with Welsh Government, local communities, and education to support those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the Community Voice & Community Choice programme to understand the impact of the programme and to continue to work with partners should additional funding arise for 23/24.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the Warm Grant Scheme within BG and how it has supported the community. If further funding arises for 23/24, continue to use this funding to support the community
- Continue to work with our partners, post-Covid-19, and within the current cost of living crisis, to maintain community provisions which support community cohesion.

Equality Objective Five- “We will ensure there is meaningful involvement with people who have protected characteristics and key stakeholders that represent their interests”

Overview

As a local authority we take the voices of our community very seriously. We understand the importance of meaningful involvement and providing opportunities for everyone to be able to share their views and influence decision-making processes within the Council and our wider partners.

We demonstrate this through our commitment to the National Principles for Public engagement and the National Principles for Children and Young People’s Participation.

Key Examples of Actions from 2022/23

Engagement Highlights – Post Covid-19 we continue to engage our community groups via online platforms. However, during the past year - when it has been safe to do so - we have run in-person engagement activities. Engaging people in a variety of ways has allowed us to reach as many people as possible so they are able to get involved and share their views.

We continue to support the Citizen Panel which gives local people as well as stakeholders the opportunity to get involved and have their say on local matters, through surveys, user research interviews, and focus groups etc. Examples of consultations promoted includes:

- Council Budget 2023/24
- Active Travel Consultation
- Development of Participatory Budgeting Process.

Gwent Public Services Board, Gwent Well-being Plan - As a member of the Gwent Public Services Board we are committed to supporting the Well-being of Future Generation’s Act’s five ways of working, which includes “involvement”, both locally and regionally.

In 2021, we consulted on the findings of the Gwent Well-being Assessment's findings. 402 (23%) participated in Blaenau Gwent out of a total of 1,713 responses across Gwent.

In 2022, we consulted on the draft Gwent Well-being Plan. 97 (37.2%) participated in Blaenau Gwent out of a total of 261 responses across Gwent.

Our reach and participation rates reflect the strong partnership working and community links we have in Blaenau Gwent which is supported by the local partnership engagement group.

Special sessions were delivered for children and young people via the Children's Grand Council and Youth Forum (65 participants). The sessions were made accessible and enabled views and ideas to be shared through drawings, stories, and poems.

Our Blaenau Gwent Youth Forum -The Youth Forum gives young people the chance to have their say and get involved in the development and improvement of services. The group continue to represent the voices of young people across Blaenau Gwent and have delivered on several local and regional priorities and actively participated in a range of public activities:

- National / Local Campaign Work (for example, encouraging young people to register to vote)
- Film development around tackling bullying
- Attendance at House of Commons Debate
- Consultations to support policy development
- Knife Angel launch
- Police Crime Commissioner Question Time Event
- Young person Adopted-Member role on scrutiny committees

The Youth Forum received recognition for the valuable contributions made to the local community at the GAVO Volunteering Awards in 2022.

Next year, a positive campaign to recruit more young people will be launched with the aim to redress the gender equality balance of the group as currently all forum members are female.



Gwent Association for Voluntary Action (GAVO)- Awards



Video: [Knife Angel Launch - Newport](#)



House of Commons Debate



Video: [Let's Go Zero](#)

Youth Mayor Priority on Tacking bullying - Outgoing Youth Mayor, Chloe Lines and Youth Forum members worked with Cymru Creations to create a film as part of their Anti-Bullying Campaign. To view the film, click on the image below:



Next steps

- Continue to support the Gwent PSB and Local Delivery Partnership in meeting its involvement and engagement requirements under the WBFG Act as well as supporting delivery of the Gwent Well-being Plan.
- Continue to support the development our forums, understanding the levels of engagement that each person accessing those form wants, i.e., information only, consultations, meetings etc.
- Development of a participation & engagement strategy along with the development of a communication strategy which will consider the requirements of the Equality Act.
- Undertake a review of Blaenau Gwent citizens' panel.
- Continue to strengthen children & young people's participation and engagement by launching a campaign to recruit new Youth Forum members and to explore opportunities to expand the Children & Young People's Network.

Equality Objective Six *“We will strive to tackle inequality caused by poverty for people who have protected characteristics”*

Overview

We are committed to meeting our requirements under the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 which includes tackle inequality caused by poverty. We look to ensure those who experience poverty, or those who live in less favourable living standards, are considered during all decision-making processes relating to the services we deliver.

We continue to work with Welsh Government, the Equality & Human Rights Commission as well as our partners to undertake work, research, and analysis to understand the socio-economic situation of our communities within Blaenau Gwent. This work informs our decision-making processes.

The cost of living crisis that has swept across the United Kingdom in 2022 has meant that many people are struggling with escalating costs such as bills for energy and food as inflation soars, and wages have not increased at the same or similar levels.

As a Council in 2022/23, we have been determined to do what we could to help those within our community that needed support, help, advice or guidance, particularly for those that need it the most.

Key Examples of Actions from 2022/23

Revised Integrated Impact Assessment – The Council undertook a review of the way it carries out its impact assessment process. This fell in-line with new legal expectations from the Act, the Socio-Economic Duty.

As part of the review a decision was taken to streamline and simplify the process by removing the initial screening process. The process was also strengthened to ensure all equality and socio-economic factors were fully considered as well as wider policy considerations when making decisions, reviewing existing or developing new policies:

- Well-being of Future Generation Act Goals
- New Corporate Objectives
- Armed forces (new national duties)
- Community Safety considerations

The requirement to carry out and report on impact assessing continues to be expected as part of the corporate reporting and decision-making process. The Policy Team continues to provide on-going support, advice, and guidance to the organisation on the Integrated Impact Assessment Process.

Cost of Living Crisis – We continue to work collaboratively with partners to help tackle the cost of living crisis. Recognising joined-up working and holistic interventions are required to ensure those who are socio-economically disadvantaged are provided the right support at the right time now, and in the future.

As a Council during 2022/23 we have set up internal networks to ensure available schemes are put in place to support people with a strong focus on our Community Hubs, which operate across seven accessible locations across the borough through our network of libraries. Furthermore, we are working with Citizen Advice to offer weekly support through our community hubs.



The community hubs offer people the opportunity to benefit from a range of advice and support including discretionary payments for cost of living and housing payments with specific support available for pensioners and those with disability. Also, council tax discounts and reduction may be appropriate which particularly help those with mental or physical disabilities, carers or those on low income. Support for families with children is also offered with a specific focus on free school meals and uniform grants.

Furthermore, advice and support for utility bills continues to be offered as people suffer as a consequence of the energy crisis, with opportunities for support and schemes provided for fuel support, winter fuel payments for older people and warm home discounts.



Blaenau Gwent Food Partnership – The Council plays a crucial role with its partners in supporting this important [new partnership](#) which is aiming to build a local food system that is healthy, affordable, resilient and fair.

The partnership is focusing on supporting communities around the borough with community growing projects, food organisations and a shop local network.

In supporting people through the cost of living crisis there is currently is a focus on providing opportunities for people who are struggling to get access to food through a number of food bank or food support providers across the borough. In 2022/23 the Council provided support through overseeing the Food Distribution Support Grant with over £70,000 being available to groups.

Next Steps

- Continue working with Welsh Government and the Equality and Human Rights Commission to ensure we are maximising equality outcomes for those who are socio-economically disadvantaged, using up to date data and reports as well as local intelligence to inform local decisions.
- Monitor and review of the new Integrated Impact Assessment process, including guidance and supporting materials for staff.
- Continue to work in partnership with public and third sector organisations to reduce inequality of outcomes for those who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

Next steps and action planning 2023-2024

Our annual report has highlighted the continued progression towards meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty as well as highlighting key examples to demonstrate our progress towards our Strategic Equality Plan Objectives 2020-2024, which continues to raise the profile of equality throughout the organisation.

We do however recognise that there is more work to do in order to improve inequality of outcomes for our local communities, staff, and stakeholders, which has become increasingly important over recent years in light of the global COVID 19 pandemic, which has been followed by the unjust war on Ukraine as well as the current cost of living crisis which has exacerbated existing inequalities.

We are committed to continually building on the progress made, share good practice across the organisation, strive towards continued contribution to the WBFG Act goals 2015 and the national goals of ‘**a More Equal Wales**’ and ‘**a Wales of Cohesive Communities**’.

Over 2023-2024 we intend to build on our highlighted work using it to form a plan for the up-and-coming year, as well as using this to form the development of new Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028. Part of this work will also involve further work around Welsh Government’s Race Equality and LGBTQ+ Action Plans, and the National Commemoration Audit for Wales.

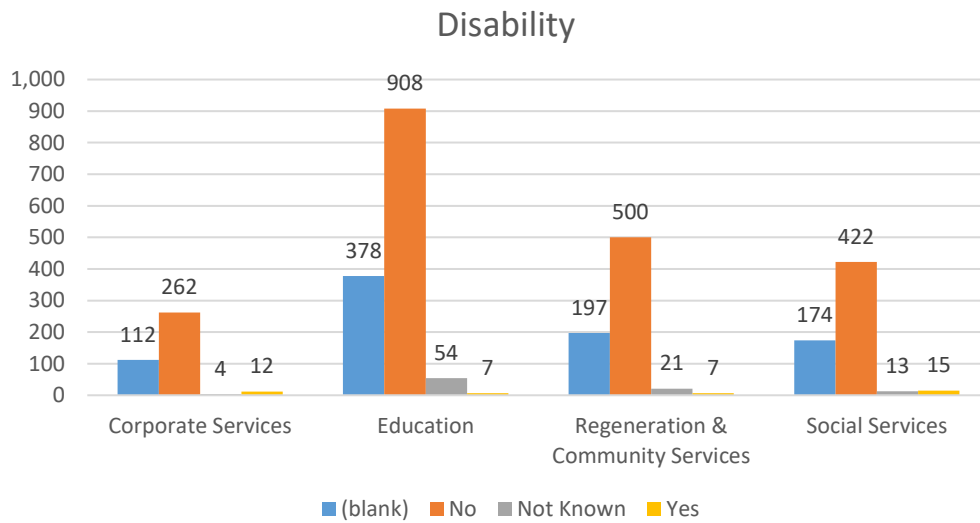
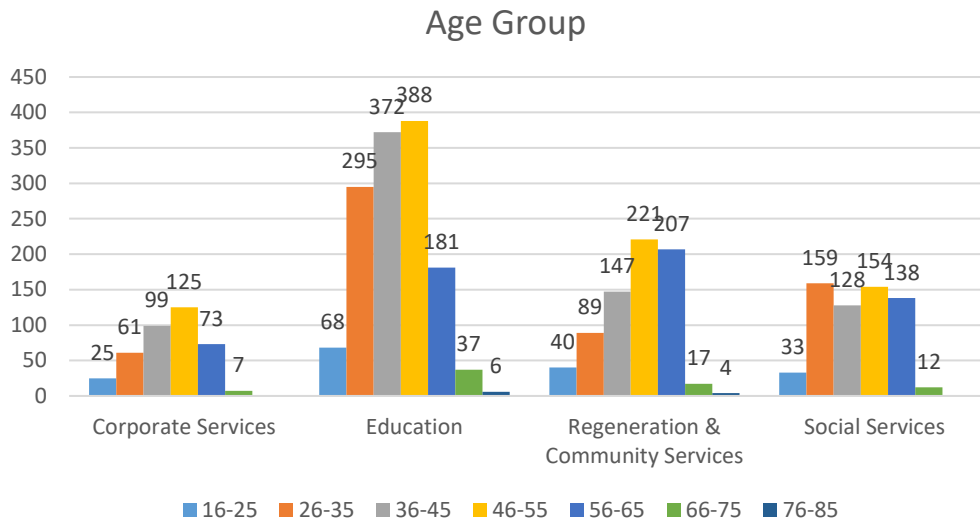
As you will have seen within the report each section has next steps that will form the work plan for 2023-2024. Some of the key actions for 2023-2024 are highlighted below:

- Continue to embed the new Integrated Impact Assessment Process, ensuring that this is part of core business, allowing for effective decision-making processes to maximise equality outcomes across the organisation.
- Continue to work with education to understand the equality landscape within our schools, to gain a baseline of equality work, implement a

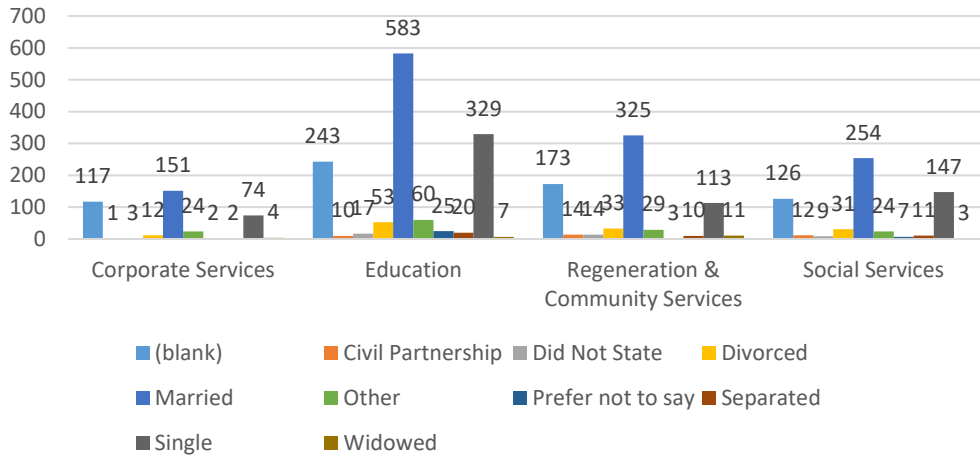
robust reporting mechanism for schools and understand training/support needs to continue to build on the equality work.

- Develop and implement an Equality Training Programme & Resources package accessible to the whole organisation (including basic awareness training and bespoke)
- Continue to support the Gwent Public Services Board to develop the New Gwent Well-being Plan
- Re-establish and strengthen existing engagement networks as well as establish new opportunities for people to get involved (e.g., Voices of our Valleys, Corporate Equality Network, Young People Network etc.)
- Raise awareness of the ARWAP, LGBTQ+ Action Plan and the commemoration audit, what this means and key actions to take forward to develop an action plan in order to progress this work
- Engage effectively across the organisation, with partners and key groups to develop the new Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028

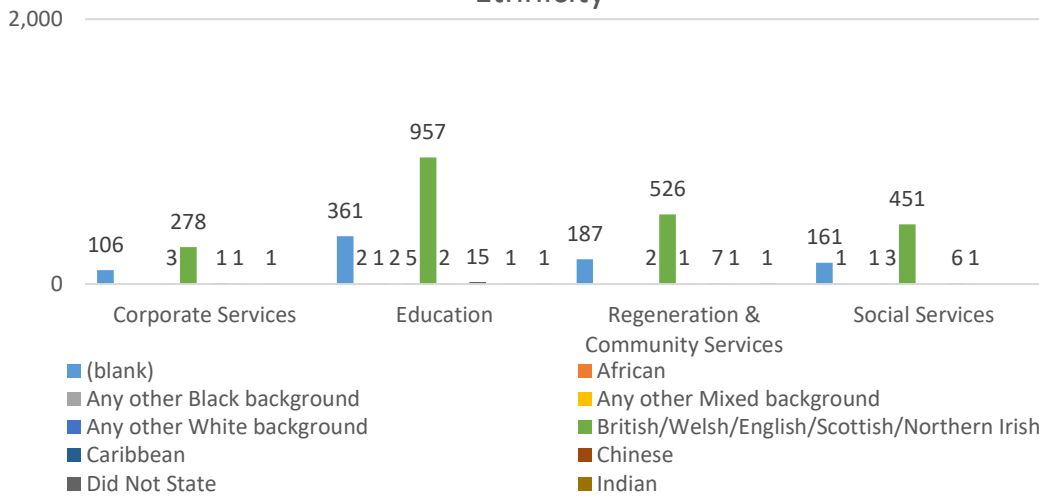
Workforce Summary Data April 2021-March 2022

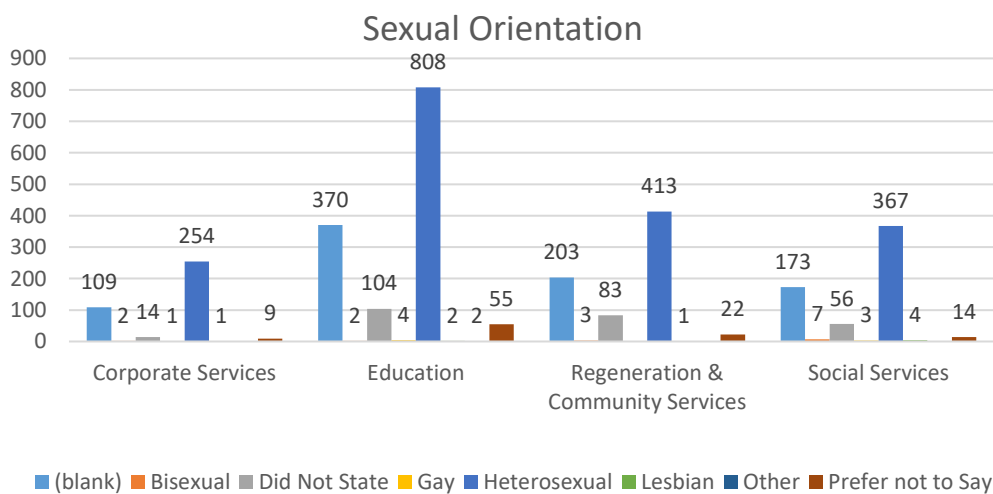
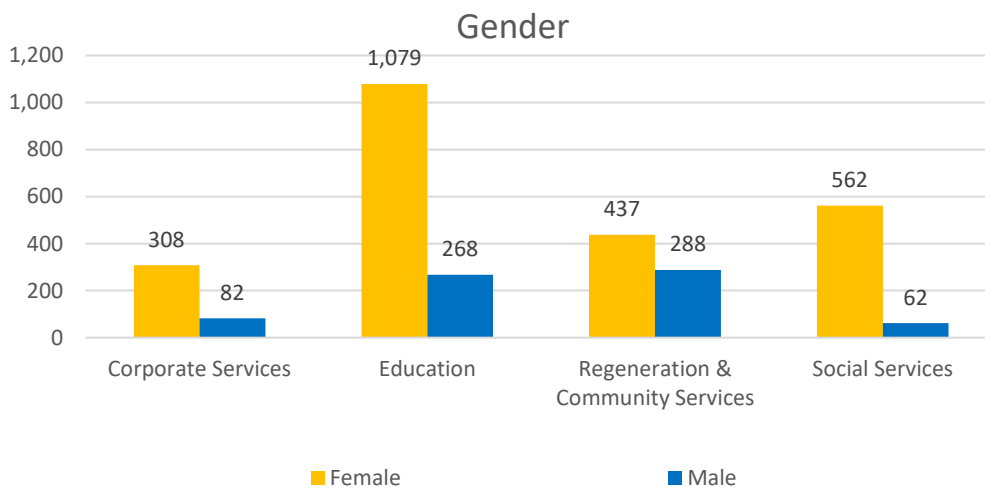
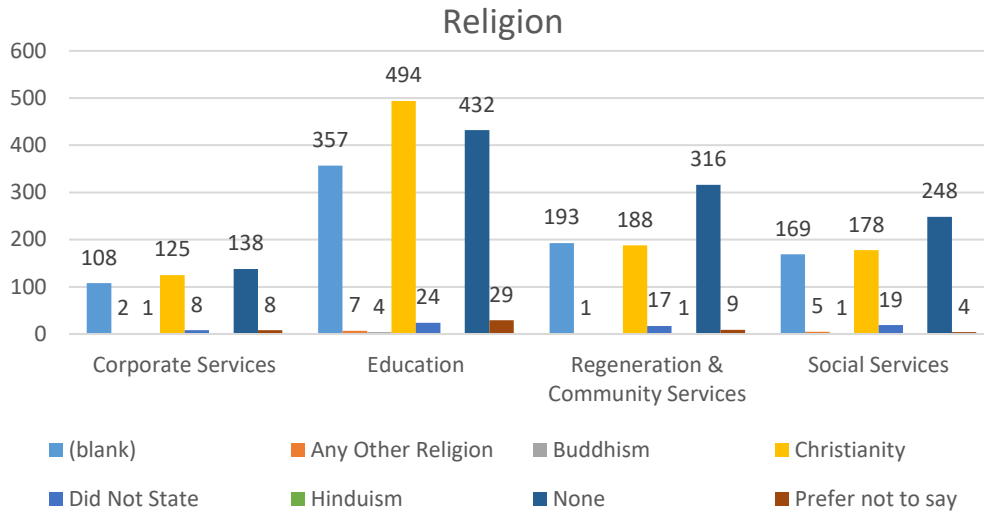


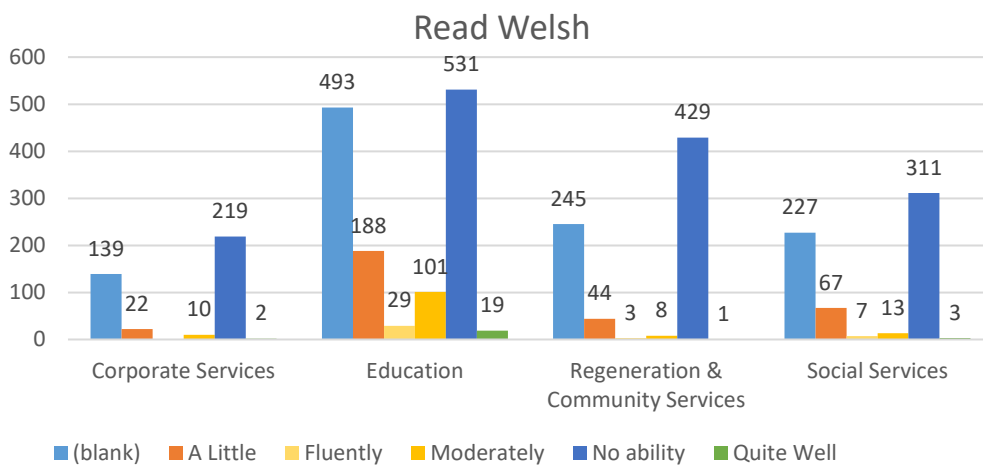
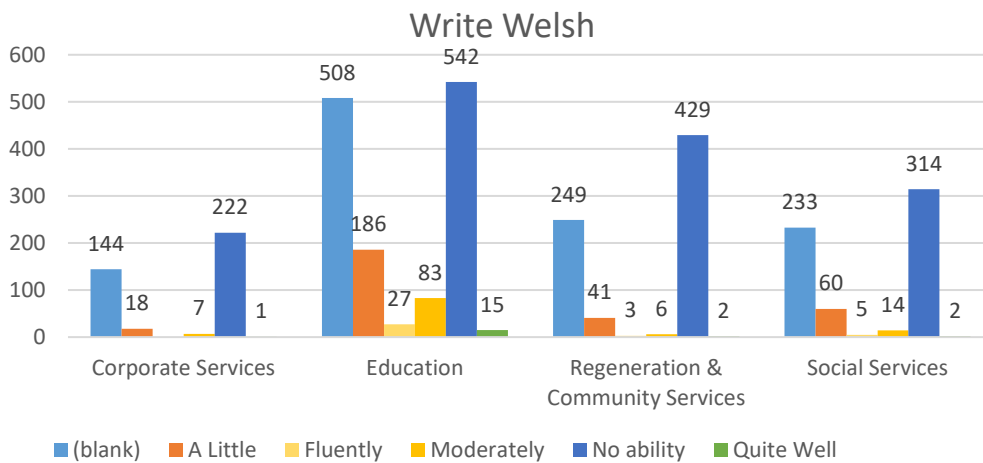
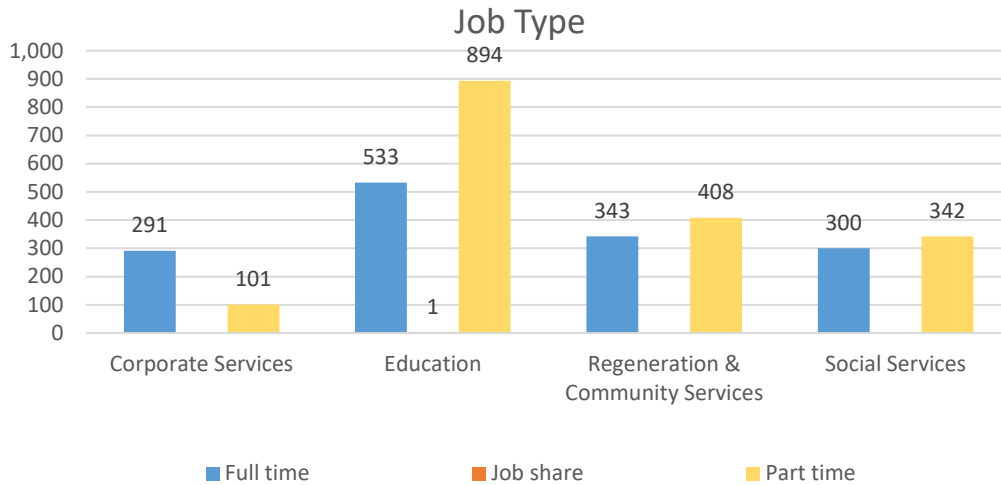
Marital Status

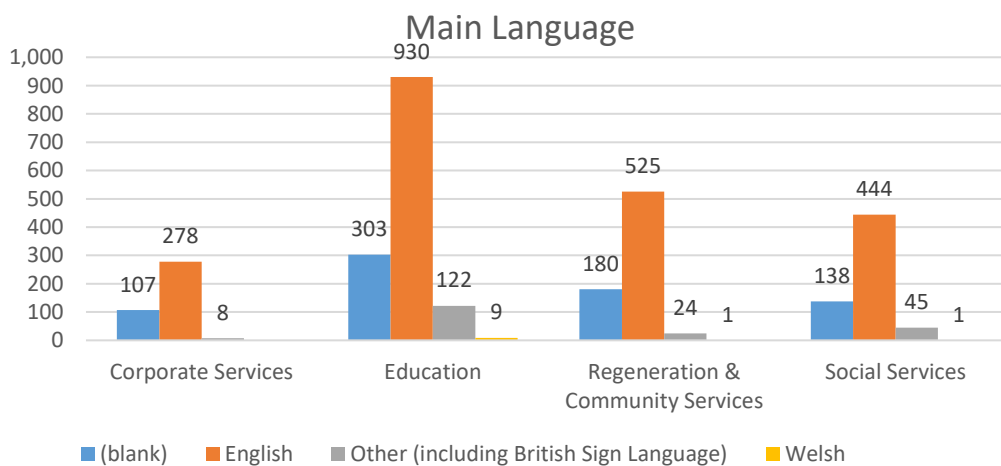
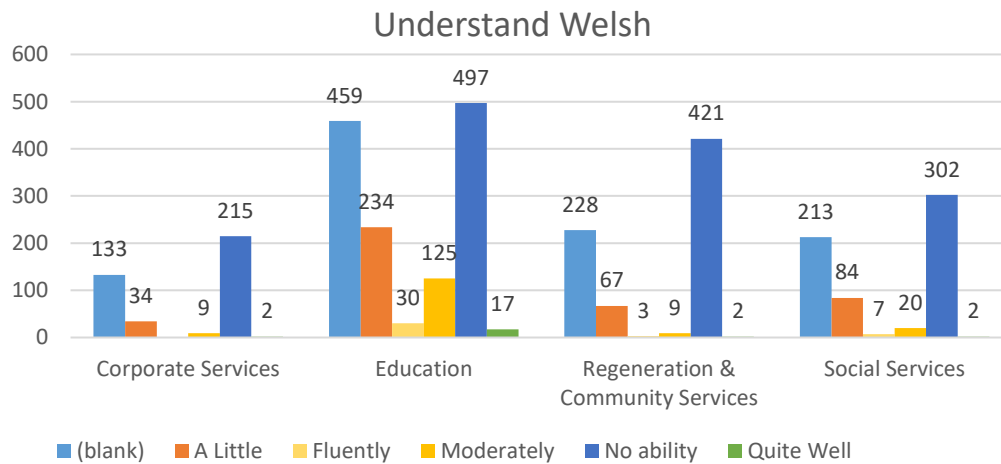
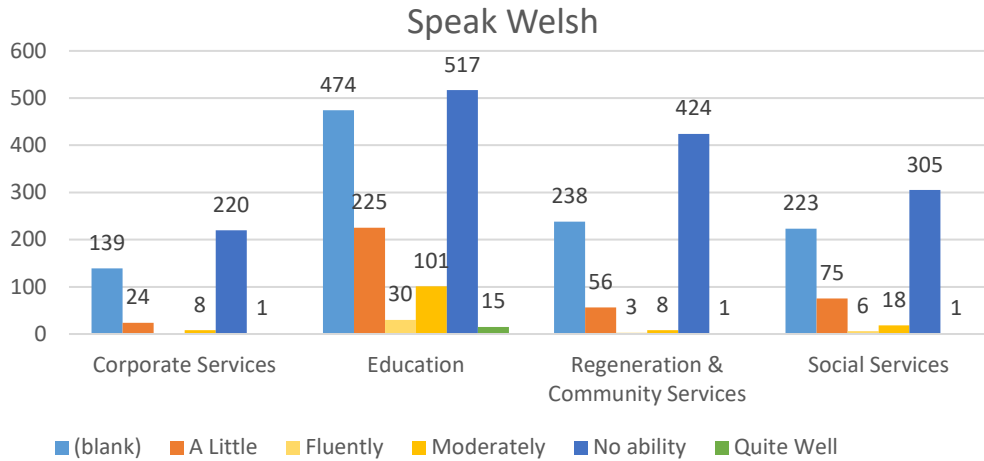


Ethnicity









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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council - Integrated Impact Assessment

All decisions, policy reviews or policy implementation will now require a completed Integrated Impact Assessment.

- Section 1-Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Section 2-Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010
- Section 3-Corporate Plan
- Section 4-Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Section 5-Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Section 6-Children’s Right “The Right Way”
- Section 7-Community Safety
- Section 8 Armed Forces
- Section 9-Data
- Section 10-Consultations Statutory Consultation Doctrine of Legitimate Expectation and Gunning Principles
- Section 11-Monitoring
- Section 12-Decision of proposal

Lead Officer	Head of Service	Service Area & Department	Date

Briefly outline the proposal indicating what change or decision is to be made, also provide any documentation that may be used to support this.
What is the proposal that needs to be assessed?

Section 1 Outline how the proposal will impact on any people or groups of people with protected characteristics, please refer to the Equalities Act 2010 (Wales) for further information Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and the EHRC guidance The Essential Guide to the Public Sector Equality Duty: EHRC Briefly outline below if there will be any positive or negative impacts as a result of the proposal being considered.			
Protected characteristics	Will the proposal have any positive impacts on those with a protected characteristics?	Will the proposal have any negative impacts on those with a protected characteristics?	Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.
Age (<i>people of all ages</i>)			
Disability (<i>people with disabilities/ long term conditions</i>)			
Gender Reassignment (<i>anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth</i>)			

Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i>			
Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave)</i>			
Race <i>(people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds)</i>			
Religion or Belief <i>(people with different religions and beliefs including people with no beliefs)</i>			
Sex <i>(women and men, girls and boys and those who self-identify their gender)</i>			
Sexual Orientation <i>(lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, other)</i>			




NOTE: Section 2 only needs to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. See page 6 of the Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty Welsh Government Guidance.



Section 2			
Socio-economic Duty (Strategic Decisions Only)			
The Welsh Governments Socio-economic Duty provides a framework in order to ensure tackling inequality is at the forefront of decision making.			
.Please consider the below vulnerable groups and consider how the proposal could affect them:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Single parents and vulnerable families ➢ People with low literacy/numeracy ➢ Pensioners ➢ Looked after children ➢ Homeless people ➢ Carers ➢ Armed Forces Community ➢ Students ➢ Single adult households ➢ People misusing substances ➢ People who have experienced the asylum system ➢ People of all ages leaving a care setting ➢ People living in the most deprived areas in Wales (WIMD) ➢ People involved in the criminal justice system 			
Socio Economic disadvantage definitions.	Will the proposal have a positive, negative or neutral impacts on the below?	How could you mitigate the negative impacts outlined?	Please highlight any evidence that has been considered.
Low Income / Income Poverty <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i>			
Low and/or No Wealth <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i>			

<p>Material Deprivation (<i>unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.</i>)</p>			
<p>Area Deprivation (<i>where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport) Impact on the environment?</i>)</p>			
<p>Socio-economic Background (<i>social class i.e. parents education, employment and income</i>)</p>			
<p>Socio-economic Disadvantage (<i>What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged</i>)</p>			

Section 3-Corporate Plan	
<i>Please outline any Corporate Plan linkages of the proposal -BG Corporate Plan 22-27</i>	
Priority 1 - Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent	
Priority 2 - Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities	
Priority 3 - An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place	
Priority 4 - Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient	

Section 4-Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – The Five Ways of Working (ICLIP)
Sustainable development principles. The WCFG Act requires the Council to consider how any proposal improves the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales using the five ways of working as a baseline)

Five Ways of Working	How have you used the Sustainable Development Principles in forming the proposal?
<p>Long Tern</p> 	<p>Consider the long-term impact of the proposal on the ability of communities to secure their well-being.</p>
<p>Prevention</p> 	<p>Consider how the proposal is preventing problems from occurring or getting worse</p>
<p>Integration</p> 	<p>Consider how your proposal will impact on other services provided in our communities (these might be Council services or services delivered by other organisations or groups)</p>

<p>Collaboration</p> 	<p>Consider how you are working with Council services or services delivered by other organisations or groups in our communities.</p>
<p>Involvement</p> 	<p>Consider how you involve people who have an interest in this proposal and ensure that they represent the diversity of our communities.</p>

How does your proposal link to the Welsh Governments Priorities for Wales? Please indicate below.

1. **A PROSPEROUS WALES** ... an innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

2. **A RESILIENT WALES** ... a nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change). Think about how your activity will have regard to protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

3. **A HEALTHIER WALES** ... a society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

4. **A MORE EQUAL WALES ...** A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

5. **A WALES OF COHESIVE COMMUNITIES ...** attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

6. **A WALES OF VIBRANT CULTURE AND THRIVING ...** a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

7. **A GLOBALLY RESPONSIBLE WALES ...** a nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.



Section 5-Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards <i>(The Welsh Language Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards require the Council to have 'due regard' for the positive or negative impact that any proposal may have on opportunities to use the Welsh language. Welsh Language Standards)</i>			
Requirement	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts in regards to the below?	What can be done to mitigate any negative impacts?	Please demonstrate any evidence used to form this opinion.
Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. <i>Specifically Standards 88 - 93</i>			
What opportunities are there to promote the Welsh Language? <i>e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work / community</i>			
What opportunities are there for a person or person to use the Welsh Language? <i>e.g. staff, residents and visitors</i>			
Has the Welsh Language been considered in order to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?			

Section 6 – Children’s Rights Approach - [The Right Way](#)

The Children’s Rights Approach – The Right Way is a framework for working with children, grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It places the UNCRC at the core of planning and service delivery and integrates children’s rights into every aspect of decision-making, policy and practice. The Right Way focuses on three main them Participation, Provision and Protection.

Protected characteristics	Will the proposal have any positive impacts on the Children’s Rights Approach?	Will the proposal have any negative impacts on the Children’s Rights Approach?	Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.
Participation (child or young person as someone who actively contributes to society as a citizen)			
Provision (the basic rights of children and young people to survive and develop)			
Protection (children and young people are protected against exploitation, abuse or discrimination)			

Section 7– Community Safety

Duty to Consider Crime and Disorder Implications

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on the local authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder, anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment, the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances, re-offending and serious violence.

Impacts	Will the proposal have any positive impacts on crime and disorder?	Will the proposal have any negative impacts on crime and disorder?	Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.
Crime (consider impact on each: victims, offenders and neighbourhoods)			
Anti-Social Behaviour and behaviour adversely affecting the local environment (consider impact on each: victims, offenders, neighbourhoods and green spaces)			
Misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances			

(Think vulnerable children, adults, families and communities)			
Re-offending (Think young people and adults, victims, families, communities)			
Serious Violence (Think vulnerable young people, vulnerable adults, victims, families, communities)			
Counter Terrorism (People and places that are vulnerable to terrorism or violent extremism)			
Community Cohesion (Asylum seekers, Migrants, Victims or Hate Crime, Community tensions)			

Section 8- Armed Forces Covenant Duty [AFC Draft Statutory Guidance - Final.pdf](#)

Impacts	Will the proposal have any positive impacts on the armed forces community?	Will the proposal have any negative impacts on the armed forces community?	Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.
<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of services • Planning and funding • Co-operation between bodies and professionals <p>These healthcare functions are within scope of the Duty in the following settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Primary Care services, including general practice, community pharmacies, NHS dental, NHS optometry services and public health screening services. • NHS Secondary Care services, including urgent 			

<p>and emergency care, hospital and community services, specialist care, mental health services, and additional needs services (as applicable).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authority-delivered healthcare services, including sexual health services and drug and alcohol misuse services 			
<p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Educational attainment and curriculum • Child wellbeing • Transport • Attendance • Additional needs support • Use of Service Pupil Premium funding (England only) <p>These education functions are within scope of the Duty in compulsory education settings, that is, primary, secondary, and, for England only, compulsory further</p>			

education. The Duty does not cover nursery (early years education), higher education, or other voluntary adult education settings			
Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocations policy for social housing • Tenancy strategies (England only) • Homelessness • Disabled Facilities Grants 			

Section 9-Data-Please outline any data or evidence that has been used to develop the proposal, this can be previous consultations, local/national data, pilot projects, reports, feedback from clients etc.		
Data/evidence –What data/evidence was used? - provide any links.	What were the key findings?	How has the data/evidence informed this proposal?

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Are there any data or information gaps and if so what are they and how do you intend to address them?

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Section 10-Consultation. Please provide details of consultation undertaken to support the proposal. Please consider the Gunning Principles: -

Principle 1: Consultation must take place when the proposals are still at a formative stage. You must not have already made up your mind.

Principle 2: Sufficient reasons must be put forward to allow for intelligent consideration and response. Have people been given the information and opportunity to influence?

Principle 3: Adequate time must be given for consideration and response. Is the consultation long enough bearing in mind the circumstances?

Principle 4: The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when finalising the decision

Briefly describe any planned consultations or consultations that have been carried out to date. Please consider the above principles.

Please consider the following questions; -

- 1. Who did you consult?**
- 2. When did the consultation take place and was adequate time given for a response?**
- 3. Was there enough information provided to respond effectively?**
- 4. What were the findings?**
- 5. Have the findings been considered in regards to the decision?**

Section 11-Monitoring and Review	
How will the implementation of the proposal be monitored, including the impacts or changes made?	
What monitoring tools will be used?	
How will the results be used for future development?	
How and when will it be reviewed?	
Who is responsible for ensuring this happens?	

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Section 12 - Decision		
<i>Using the information you have gathered from sections 1-9 please state in the table below whether you are able to proceed with the proposal.</i>		
Continue with the proposal in its current form	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Continue with proposal but take into account reasonable steps to mitigate any negative impacts of the proposal	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Name of person completing the IIA	
Name:	
Job Title:	
Date:	

Head of Service Approval			
Name:			
Job Title:			
Signature:		Date:	

Please contact Policy & Partnerships should you require any further advice or guidance on completing your assessment via lissa.friel@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk or emma.scherptong@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk.

Agenda Item 35

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 09.03.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 09.03.2023

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **30th March, 2023**

Report Subject: **Annual Report of the Standards Committee**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader of the Council/
Executive Member Corporate Overview & Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Andrea Jones, Head of Legal & Corporate
Compliance/Monitoring Officer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance and Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
	X						30.3.23	X Standards Committee

1. **Purpose of the Report**

To provide Council with the Annual Report of the Standards Committee for the year 31st December 2021 to 31st December 2022.

To consider a change in the Committee's title.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Local Government Act 2000 requires the Council to establish a Standards Committee to promote and maintain high standards of conduct and probity in the conduct of Councillors. The Standards Committee has been in operation since November 2000.
The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 has introduced a mandatory requirement for Standards Committees to present an Annual Report to full Council. This statutory report must describe how the Committee has discharged its functions during the previous year and must include a summary of any reports, actions or recommendations made or referred to the Committee. In addition, it should be noted next year's Annual Report must include an assessment of the extent to which leaders of political groups on the Council have complied with their new duties to promote and maintain high standards of conduct within their groups.
 - 2.2 In addition, the Committee now proposes that the Committee be renamed to the "Ethics and Standards Committee" to better reflect and clarify the work undertaken by the Committee.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 Option 1: Council considers the report and confirms that the statutory duty imposed by the Act (outlined above) has been met.

Council also considers approving the change of name for the Standards Committee to “Ethics and Standards Committee”.

3.2 Option 2: Council considers the report and provides specific comments and/or suggestions prior to confirming that the statutory duty has been met. Council also considers approving the change of name for the Standards Committee to “Ethics and Standards Committee”.

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

4.1 As outlined above, there is a statutory duty for the Standards Committee to report annually to Council on its work during the previous twelve months.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

There is no impact upon budget arising out of this report.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

N/A

5.3 ***Legal***

The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 imposes a duty upon Standards Committees to produce an annual report and for the report to be presented to full Council within three months.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no human resource implications associated with the report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Data is contained within the report which is pertinent to the work of the Standards Committee.

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

The report provides valuable information to the Council and the Public on the functions of the Standards Committee, and how this is closely connected to the promotion of good standards in public life.

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

N/A

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

This information will be presented annually to Council.

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

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment***

N/A

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

The Monitoring Officer will monitor compliance of the reporting statutory duty.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – The Annual Report of the Blaenau Gwent Standards Committee 2021/2022 and terms of reference for the Committee.

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BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Standards Committee Annual Report 2021 – 2022

FOREWORD BY THE CHAIR

I am pleased to present this Annual Report of the Standards Committee for 2021/22. The Annual Report provides information to the Council about the work carried out by the Committee in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by elected Members and co-opted Members during the past 12 months and identifies specific issues that have arisen. Standards Committees are required by virtue of Section 63 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act and Part 3 of the Local Government Act 2000 to make an annual report after the end of each financial year and for full Council to consider that report within 3 months. This statutory report must describe how the Committee's functions have been discharged during the previous year and must include specific reference to any reports, actions or recommendations made or assigned to the Committee. In addition, the Annual Report for next year must include an objective assessment of the extent to which leaders of political groups on the Council have complied with their duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct within their groups. Copies of this Annual Report must also be sent to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and to all local community councils.

The Standards Committee is committed to promoting high standards of ethical conduct among elected Members, co-opted Members and officers in order to maintain public confidence in local government. The Committee has, and will continue, to proactively review all ethical standards policies and procedures as part of their important forward work programme. In this reporting period, we are pleased to report that, no serious complaints of misconduct were referred to the Standards Committee by the Ombudsman during the past 12 months and no complaints were referred for determination by the Committee under Stage 3 of the Local Resolution Protocol. It is essential that the current good standards are maintained in the future and the Standards Committee needs to guard against any possible drift towards complacency. This is particularly important against the background of the numbers of newly elected Councillors, following the May 2022 local elections and the fact that we are still in the early stages of a new administration.

The training requirements for County Borough Councillors will continue to be monitored as part of the Committee's forward work programme. We will also be undertaking a review to ensure that all mandatory training has been completed and that all declarations of acceptance of office and registers of members' interests have been completed where appropriate.

Mr Stephen Williams kindly agreed to stand Vice-Chair in this reporting period to align our structure with that of most other Standards Committees in Wales. One co-opted Member of the Standards Committee stood down during 2022 and interviews took place for recruitment of a successor in December 2022. The appointment of the successful candidate, Miss Jenny White, was recently ratified by full Council. We extend a warm greeting to Jenny and are also very pleased to welcome Councillor Lisa Winnett, Councillor Jacqueline Thomas and Councillor Malcolm Cross as our new elected member representatives. In addition, we acknowledge the previous helpful contribution made to the Standards Committee by Councillor Jacqueline Thomas in a former Community Councillor role

Finally, I would like to thank all Members of the Committee and Council officers for their invaluable advice and support throughout the last 12 months.

Ronnie Alexander

1. Introduction

The Local Government Act 2000 requires Councils to establish a Standards Committee to promote and maintain high standards of conduct and probity in the conduct of Councillors. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council established a Standards Committee in October 2000.

The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 introduced a mandatory requirement for Standards Committees to present an annual report to full Council. This statutory report must describe how the Committee has discharged its functions during the previous year and must include a summary of any reports, actions or recommendations made or referred to the Committee. In addition, it should be noted next year's Annual Report must include an assessment of the extent to which leaders of political groups on the Council have complied with their new duties to promote and maintain high standards of conduct within their groups.

The current terms of reference for the Standards Committee is appended to this report.

This Standards Committee Annual Report covers the period from 31st December 2021 to 31st December 2022.

2. Membership of the Standards Committee (9 Members)

The Standards Committees (Wales) Regulations 2001 sets out the statutory framework which determines the size and composition of Standards Committee Membership. It should be noted that Regulation 12 of those Regulations specifies that the rules of political proportionality do not apply to those elected representatives/members who are nominated by the County Borough Council to sit on the Standards Committee. At least half of the Committee members shall be independent (lay) members with no affiliation (within the specified rules) to the Council for whom they are appointed. Five of the nine members of Blaenau Gwent's Standards Committee are independent (lay) thus satisfying the composition requirements.

The Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Standards Committee is comprised of the following members:

- Mr R Alexander (Chair)
- Miss H Roberts (Vice Chair until July 2022 – resigned from post at this time)
- Mr S Williams (Vice Chair from July 2022 to present)
- Mr FR Lynch
- Mrs S Rosser
- Councillor L Winnett
- Councillor M Cross
- Councillor J Thomas

- Town Councillor R Clark

Following the resignation of Miss Roberts in July 2022 a vacancy was created which following a period of advertising a recommendation of appointment was made in December 2022 and ratified by Council in January 2023 (Jenny White).

3. Term of Office - Independent Members of the Standards Committee

Regulations 18 – 21 of the Standards Committees (Wales) Regulations 2001 sets out the detailed rules in relation to the permitted terms of office of members of a Standards Committee. The term of office for an independent member of the Standards Committee is for an initial term of between 4 and 6 years. The independent member can be reappointed for a second term of no more than 4 years.

Below is a table which sets out the current position in connection with individual terms of office.

Note: County Borough Councillors may serve a maximum of five years, concurrent with the Local Government Election timetable. However, it should be noted that the Council may nominate different Standards Committee representatives at the Annual General Meeting which takes place in May of each year.

	Appointment Date	Term Time (Yrs)	End Date
1. Cllr Jacqueline Thomas	01/06/2022	5	01/06/2027
2. Mr Francis ROY Lynch	23/07/2020	6	22/07/2026
3. Mr. Stephen Williams	28/02/2019	6	27/02/2025
4. Miss Jenny White	26/01/2023	6	25/01/2029
5. Sarah Rosser	26/11/2020	6	26/11/2026
6. Mr Ronnie Alexander	01/05/2016	10	30/04/2026
7. Cllr M Cross	01/06/2022	5	01/06/2027
8. Cllr L Winnett	01/06/2022	5	01/06/2027
9. Town/Community Cllr Roger Clark	01/07/2022	4	01/07/2026

4. Term of Office - Community / Town Council Member of the Standards Committee

The term of office for a Community/Town Council Member of the Standards Committee shall be no more than 4 years or the period until ordinary elections for the community council on which the member sits, whichever is the shorter.

A member may be reappointed for a further consecutive term upon consultation with other community councils within the area.

A Community/Town Council Member shall cease to be a member of the Standards Committee if that member ceases to be a member of the Community/Town Council.

5. Meetings of the Standards Committee

In the period between 31st December 2021 and 31st December 2022 the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Standards Committee met a total of 3 times on the following dates:

- 28th January 2022
- 19th July 2022
- 18th October 2022

6. Detail of the Work undertaken by the Standards Committee

The following paragraphs set out the work carried out by the Standards Committee during the reporting period:

- a) No applications for dispensations were made to the Standards Committee. In certain circumstances Councillors may be granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee which enables them to take part in Council business where this would otherwise be prohibited because they have a personal interest as defined by the Members' Code of Conduct. Provided Councillors act within the terms of their dispensation there is deemed to be no breach of the Code of Conduct or the law.
- b) During the period the Committee considered the Annual Report of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW). This report did not raise any conduct issues for Blaenau Gwent but did report on each Local Authority's performance on code of conduct issues and it was noted that the number of complaints received had increased approximately 40% for the whole of Wales. However, Blaenau Gwent were shown to have an excellent record with only a single complaint referred to PSOW. This low figure was largely attributed to the Council's successful early resolution and prevention process using its Local Resolution Policy.
- c) No referrals were made to the Standard's Committee under the Council's Local Resolution Protocol (LRP). The LRP is set out in the Council's Constitution and is a mechanism for encouraging early resolution of internal Member Conduct complaints without the need to engage the PSOW's office.
- d) Complaints of Breach of the Code of Conduct: No conduct complaints in relation to Blaenau Gwent were taken forward for investigation by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales during the relevant period and the PSOW made no referrals to the Standards Committee.
- e) The Committee also considered the Penn Report during this period regarding the review of the Ethical Standards Framework in Wales which was supported by the Monitoring Officers' Group. This report and the main points contained were all given appropriate consideration towards how they link with the work undertaken by the Committee and how this will fit within future work. Regional work is ongoing in connection with the Penn recommendations.

- f) Other work relating to training considerations, composition of the Committee and recruitment have also been reported and/or considered during this period.

No Adjudication Panel hearings were concluded during this period.

7. Annual Meeting with Political Group Leaders

Section 62 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act imposes new duties on Leaders of political groups and they must take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of their group. In addition, the changes to the legislation also provide the Standards Committee with additional functions to ensure that group leaders have access to advice and training to support these new duties and to monitor their compliance with them.

The Standards Committee met with the Group Leaders of Blaenau Gwent in October 2022 to discuss the changes in legislation where it was agreed to work together on matters of standards, ethics and the code of conduct. It was agreed that Group Leaders would continue to meet with the Standards Committee at least on an annual basis and also extend an invite to all Committee meetings with a view to promoting a good working relationship.

Standards Committee Terms of Reference

The terms of reference of the Standards Committee are as follows:

1. Promoting and maintaining ethics and high standards of conduct by Councillors and Co-opted Members.
2. Assisting Councillors and Co-opted Members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct.
3. Advising the Authority on the adoption or revision of the Members Code of Conduct.
4. Monitoring the operation of the Members Code of Conduct.
5. Monitoring appropriate training for Councillors and Co-opted Members on Ethics & Standards.
6. Considering applications for dispensations to Councillors relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct.
7. Considering complaints which have arisen under the Council's internal procedure on member conduct and cases which have been referred by the Ombudsman.
8. Monitoring compliance by leaders of political groups on the Council with their duties under section 52A (1) of the 2000 Act (as amended) to take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of their groups, and to co-operate with Standards Committee in the exercise of these functions.

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Agenda Item 36

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 06.03.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 07.03.2023

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **30th March, 2023**

Report Subject: **Presiding Member's Annual Activities Report: June 2022 – March 2023**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor C. Smith – Presiding Member**

Report Submitted by: **Councillor C. Smith – Presiding Member**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
							30.03.23	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present to Members of Council details of the events and engagement activities undertaken by the Presiding Member for the period June 2022 – March 2023.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Pursuant to the Special Meeting of the Council held on 26th October, 2022 Members requested that a report be prepared detailing the engagements and events attended by the Presiding Member.
- 2.2 The Role of the Presiding Member is to chair the Ordinary, Annual, Extraordinary and Special Meetings of the Council and to represent the Council at official and public events where representation has been requested and to promote the Council and its work as and when opportunities arise.

3. Summary of Activities

- 3.1 This report provides a summary of activities undertaken for the period June 2022 – March 2023, details below:

August:

- Gwent Police Passing Out Parade and Awards Ceremony at Llanhilleth Institute.

September:

Due to the sad passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II during September several regional and local proclamation ceremonies were attended to pay tribute to Her Majesty and mark the Accession of King Charles III to the throne. These events included:

- The Reading of the Regional Proclamation at Newport.
- The Local Proclamation Event at the General Offices, Ebbw Vale. The Presiding Member took the lead role at this event by reading the official Proclamation to those present.
- Attendance at the Commemorative Service for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at Tredegar Town Council.
- Attendance at the Fire Service Awards at Llantrisant.
- Hosted a small informal reception to congratulate Commonwealth Games Medallists, Charlotte Carey and Owain Dando at the General Offices, Ebbw Vale. Charlotte had won a bronze medal in the table tennis doubles and Owain had won a bronze medal in the men's triple bowls event.

October:

- Attendance at a meeting of the Youth Forum.
- Attendance at the Participatory Budget Event Community Fund in Tredegar.
- Chaired the GAVO Awards Ceremony at Llanhilleth Institute.

- Facilitated visits by Glanhowy and Sofrydd Primary School to the General Offices, Ebbw Vale.
- Attendance at the celebration to mark 130 years of the Metropole Theatre, Abertillery.

November:

- Facilitated visits by All Saints Primary School, Tredegar Comprehensive and Brynmawr Foundation School to the General Offices, Ebbw Vale.
- Official handover of HM Queen Elizabeth II Condolence Book to Gwent Archives
- Attendance at the Work Charter Event at the General Offices.
- Attendance at the Gwent Music Showcase Concert at the ICC, Newport.

December:

- Attendance at Salvation Army Christmas Concert, Cwm.
- Attendance at Youth Mayor Inauguration at Bedwellty House, Tredegar.
- Visited Coed-y-Garn Primary School, Nantyglo.

January:

- Attendance at the Big Bocs Bwyd event at Willowtown Primary School, Ebbw Vale.
- Attended and participated in the International Holocaust Memorial Event at The Little Theatre, Tredegar.

February:

- Facilitated visits by Cwm and Ystruth Primary Schools to the General Offices, Ebbw Vale.

- Hosted 5 Blaenau Gwent Litter Champion Events throughout the County Borough to recognise and express the Council's appreciation to these individuals for their tireless hard work and dedication.
- Attendance at the official opening and unveiling of the Youth Shelter at Brynmawr Welfare Park.

March:

- Attendance at the Gwent High Sheriffs' Community Fund 'Your Voice, Your Choice' Grant-Giving Event in Newport.
- Official handover of the Freedom of the Borough Scroll to the Royal British Legion.
- Judging and Trophy Presentation at The Great Welshcake Off Fairtrade Fortnight 2023 at Bedwellty House, Tredegar.
- Facilitated a visit by Abertillery 3-16 Learning Community to the General Offices, Ebbw Vale.
- Attendance at the Magistrates Court Mock Trial Competition in Swansea to support Ebbw Fawr Learning Community whose students were participating in the competition.
- Attendance at the International Women's Day Event at Bedwellty House, Tredegar.
- Attendance at the Wellbeing Workhub Launch at Parc Bryn Bach.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 That Council notes the activities and events attended by the Presiding Member for the period June 2022 – March 2023.

Agenda Item 37

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:	30th March, 2023
Report Subject:	Memberships Report
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor S. Thomas – Leader/ Cabinet 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	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
							30/03/23	

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 ADVISORY PANEL FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNORS

To ratify the following appointments made at the panel meeting held on 17th March, 2023:

Glyncoed Primary School – Councillor Chris Smith

Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw – Councillor Sue Edmunds

Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg – Ms. Tracy Dyson

Abertillery 3-16 Learning Community – Mr. Matthew Fowler

2.2 ABUHB STAKEHOLDERS REFERENCE GROUP (SRG)

To note that a decision has been taken to disband the SRG in its current form whilst the Chair of the Health Board reviews and redesigns the role and constitution of the Group ensuring it is fit for purpose and fully effective.

A proposal for re-establishment of the SRG will be considered by the Health Board at which point the Board will then be able to confirm the SRG's membership requirements going forward.

2.3 **ANURIN LEISURE TRUST – COMMUNITY CHEST PANEL**

GAVO – BE PROUD OF YOUR COMMUNITY GWENT AWARDS

To note that the above groups have been disbanded.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

To consider the above.