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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, 13 Gorffennaf 2023 Dydd Iau, 13 Gorffennaf 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

CYFARFOD CYFFREDINOL Y CYNGOR

A meeting of the Cyfarfod Cyffredinol y Cyngor will be held in Remotely via Microsoft Teams on Dydd Iau, 20fed Gorffennaf, 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

Ystyried unrhyw ddatganiadau buddiant a goddefebau a gafwyd.

4. CYHOEDDIADAU'R CADEIRYDD

Derbyn cyhoeddiadau'r Cadeirydd.

5. CYFARFOD BLYNYDDOL Y CYNGOR

9 - 44

Ystyried ac os credir yn briodol, gymeradwyo penderfyniadau'r cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 25 Mai 2023.

6. CYFARFOD CYFFREDINOL Y CYNGOR

45 - 60

Ystyried ac os credir yn briodol, gymeradwyo penderfyniadau'r cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 30 Mawrth 2023.

7. CYFARFOD ARBENNIG O'R CYNGOR

61 - 64

Ystyried ac os credir yn briodol, gymeradwyo penderfyniadau'r cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 30 Mawrth 2023.

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Cadarnhau penderfyniadau'r Pwyllgor Cynllunio a gynhaliwyd ar 20 Ebrill 2023.

9. PWYLLGOR CRAFFU CYNLLUNIO

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10. PWYLLGOR TRWYDDEDU CYFFREDINOL

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15. **CYFARFOD ARBENNIG O'R CABINET** 97 - 100
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17. **CYFARFOD ARBENNIG O'R CABINET** 107 - 108
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- 29. CWESTIYNAU GAN Y CYHEODD**
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- Ystyried amser cyfarfodydd y dyfodol..
44. **EITEMAU EITHRIEDIG**
- Derbyn ac ystyried yr adroddiadau dilynol sydd ym marn y swyddog priodol yn eitemau eithriedig gan roi ystyriaeth i'r prawf budd cyhoeddus ac y dylai'r wasg a'r cyhoedd gael eu heithrio o'r cyfarfod (mae'r rheswm am y penderfyniad am yr eithriad ar gael ar restr a gedwir gan y swyddog priodol).
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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
Councillor D. Wilkshire

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

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| REPORT TO: | <u>THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u> |
| SUBJECT: | <u>ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – 25TH MAY, 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
 - M. Day
 - S. Edmunds
 - J. Gardner
 - J. Hill
 - W. Hodgins
 - J. Holt
 - G. Humphreys
 - R. Leadbeater
 - E. Jones
 - J. C. Morgan
 - J. P. Morgan
 - L. Parsons
 - D. Rowberry
 - T. Smith
 - J. Thomas
 - S. Thomas
 - H. Trollope
 - J. Wilkins
 - D. Wilkshire
 - L. Winnett
 - D. Woods

AND: Interim Chief Executive
 Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services
 Chief Officer Resources
 Chief Officer Commercial & Customer
 Head of Adult Services
 Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
 Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships
 Head of Organisational Development
 Head of School Improvement & Inclusion
 Service Manager – Performance & Democratic
 Press & Publicity 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 K. Chaplin, G. A. Davies, J. Morgan, J.P., G. Thomas, Corporate Director of Education and Interim Corporate Director of Social Services.</p> | |
| 3. | <p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p> | |

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| <p>4.</p> | <p><u>PRESIDING MEMBER’S ANNOUNCEMENTS</u></p> <p><u>Condolences</u></p> <p>Condolences were expressed to the family of Trevor Jones, MBE fondly known as ‘Trevor the Milk’ a local legend in Tredegar who had sadly passed away.</p> <p>Members and officers paid their respects with a minute’s silence.</p> <p><u>Congratulations</u></p> <p>Congratulations were expressed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All players, staff and supporters of Abertillery Blaenau Gwent RFC on winning the National Division 3 Cup at the Principality Stadium on 8th April, 2023. This meant that Abertillery Blaenau Gwent RFC was the best Division 3 Team in the whole of Wales, such a fantastic achievement. <p>The Club dedicated the game to the memory of former player and previous Chairman, Roger Clark, who passed away suddenly after watching them win the game that took them to the final.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abbi Meyrick who had been selected to play for Wales’s women under 18’s rugby team. | |
| <p>5.</p> | <p><u>PRESIDING MEMBER AND DEPUTY PRESIDING MEMBER</u></p> <p>It was proposed and seconded that Councillor C. Smith be re-elected Presiding Member of the Council and that Councillor D. Wilkshire be appointed Deputy Presiding Member of the Council for the ensuing year.</p> | |

| | | |
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| | <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously, RESOLVED accordingly.</p> | |
| 6. | <p><u>LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</u></p> <p>It was proposed and seconded that Councillor S. Thomas be re-elected Leader of the Council and that Councillor H. Cunningham be elected Deputy Leader for the ensuing year.</p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously, RESOLVED accordingly.</p> | |
| 7. | <p><u>GROUP OFFICERS</u></p> <p>The Labour Group Officers for the ensuing year were reported as follows:</p> <p>Councillor S. Thomas – Leader Councillor H. Cunningham – Deputy Leader Councillor T. Smith – Secretary Councillor C. Smith – Group Chair Councillor D. Wilkshire – Group Vice-Chair Councillor P. Baldwin – Treasurer</p> <p>It was reported that the Independent Group Officers for the ensuing year would be:</p> <p>Councillor J. Wilkins - Leader Councillor W. Hodgins - Deputy Leader Councillor J. Holt – Secretary</p> | |

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|-----------|---|--|
| <p>8.</p> | <p><u>MEMBERSHIP OF THE CABINET</u></p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously RESOLVED that the following be appointed:</p> <p><u>Leader of the Council/Cabinet Member - Corporate Overview & Performance</u> Councillor S. Thomas</p> <p><u>Deputy Leader of the Council/Cabinet Member – Place & Environment</u> Councillor H. Cunningham</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member – Place & Regeneration and Economic Development</u> Councillor J. C. Morgan</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member – People & Social Services</u> Councillor H. Trollope</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member – People & Education</u> Councillor S. Edmunds</p> | |
| <p>9.</p> | <p><u>CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR AND MEMBERSHIP OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES</u></p> <p>It was proposed and seconded that the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair be held by the following and upon a vote being taken this was unanimously RESOLVED:</p> <p><u>People Scrutiny Committee</u> Chair Councillor T. Smith Vice-Chair Councillor J. Morgan, J.P.</p> <p><u>Place Scrutiny Committee</u> Chair Councillor M. Cross Vice-Chair Councillor R. Leadbeater</p> | |

Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

Chair Councillor W. Hodgins

Vice-Chair Councillor D. Bevan

Corporate & Performance Scrutiny Committee

Chair Councillor J. Wilkins

Vice-Chair Councillor J. Thomas

FURTHER RESOLVED that the following be appointed:

People Scrutiny Committee

9 Members – Proportionality 6:3

1. Chair - Councillor T. Smith
2. Vice Chair - Councillor J. Morgan, J.P.
3. Councillors C. Bainton
4. D. Bevan
5. J. Gardner
6. G. Humphreys
7. J. P. Morgan
8. G. Thomas
9. D. Wilkshire

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

1. Mr. T. Baxter Diocesan Education Body (R.C. Church)
 2. Mr. T. Pritchard (Church in Wales)
 3. **Vacancy** Youth Forum Representative **(without voting rights)**
-

Place Scrutiny Committee

9 Members – Proportionality 6:3

1. Chair - Councillor M. Cross
2. Vice Chair - Councillor R. Leadbeater
3. Councillors S. Behr
4. K. Chaplin
5. G. Davies
6. J. Gardner
7. W. Hodgins
8. L. Parsons
9. D. Rowberry

Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

9 Members – Proportionality 6:3

1. Chair - Councillor W. Hodgins
 2. Vice Chair - Councillor D. Bevan
 3. Councillors P. Baldwin
 4. D. Davies
 5. M. Day
 6. E. Jones
 7. C. Smith
 8. L. Winnett
 9. D. Woods
-

| | | |
|-----|---|--|
| | <p><u>Corporate & Performance Scrutiny Committee – 9 Members – Proportionality 6:3</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chair - Councillor J. Wilkins 2. Vice Chair - Councillor J. Thomas 3. Councillors C. Bainton 4. J. Hill 5. J. Holt 6. E. Jones 7. R. Leadbeater 8. C. Smith 9. T. Smith | |
| 10. | <p><u>STANDING COMMITTEES AND STANDING SUB-COMMITTEES</u></p> <p>The Leader of the Council notified Members that following consultation with both Groups (& respective Leaderships) an amendment to the composition of the Planning Committee for the 2023/24 cycle was proposed as follows:-</p> <p>Planning Committee would comprise of 14 Members - 1 Member per ward providing greater and fairer representation across all areas of the borough on a proportionality basis of 9 Labour Members and 5 Independent Members.</p> <p>An additional change for the Committee would be that, further to best practice currently in operation in other local authorities and to aid in the mitigation of non-declaration of interests, the Committee would adopt the following principle – <i>‘if a planning application was received in a particular ward and that application was to be decided at Planning Committee, the Member representing that</i></p> | |

ward on the Committee was permitted to speak on the application but not have a vote on it'.

It was proposed that these amendments be trialled for a period of 6 months (and included in other changes to the Constitution later in the year, if agreed).

The above proposal was unanimously RESOLVED ACCORDINGLY.

FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the following be appointed:

Planning Committee

14 Members – Proportionality 9:5

1 Member from each Ward on a political proportionality basis.

1. Chair - Councillor L. Winnett
2. Vice Chair - Councillor P. Baldwin
3. Councillors C. Bainton
4. M. Day
5. W. Hodgins
6. J. Holt
7. G. Humphreys
8. E. Jones
9. J. Morgan, J.P.
10. L. Parsons
11. D. Rowberry
12. C. Smith
13. J. Thomas

14. D. Wilkshire

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

General Licensing Committee
11 Members – Proportionality 7:4

- | | | |
|-----|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Chair - | Councillor L. Winnett |
| 2. | Vice Chair - | Councillor P. Baldwin |
| 3. | Councillors | S. Behr |
| 4. | | M. Cross |
| 5. | | G. Davies |
| 6. | | J. Gardner |
| 7. | | J. Hill |
| 8. | | G. Humphreys |
| 9. | | D. Rowberry |
| 10. | | G. Thomas |
| 11. | | D. Woods |

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

- | | | |
|----|------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Chair | Councillor L. Winnett |
| | or | |
| | Vice Chair | Councillor P. Baldwin |

Plus 2 other Members of the General Licensing Committee

Statutory Licensing Committee
11 Members – Proportionality 7:4

- | | | |
|-----|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Chair - | Councillor L. Winnett |
| 2. | Vice Chair - | Councillor P. Baldwin |
| 3. | Councillors | S. Behr |
| 4. | | M. Cross |
| 5. | | G. Davies |
| 6. | | J. Gardner |
| 7. | | J. Hill |
| 8. | | G. Humphreys |
| 9. | | D. Rowberry |
| 10. | | G. Thomas |
| 11. | | D. Woods |

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

- | | | |
|----|------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Chair | Councillor L. Winnett |
| | <i>or</i> | |
| 2. | Vice Chair | Councillor P. Baldwin |

Plus 2 other Members of the Statutory Licensing Committee

Democratic Services Committee

9 Members - Proportionality 6:3

- | | | |
|----|------------------|------------------------|
| 1. | Chair | Councillor J. Hill |
| 2. | Vice Chair - | Councillor E. Jones |
| 3. | Cabinet Member - | Councillor J.C. Morgan |
| 4. | Councillors | C. Bainton |
| 5. | | D. Bevan |
| 6. | | G. Davies |
| 7. | | L. Parsons |
| 8. | | C. Smith |
| 9. | | L. Winnett |

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

Governance & Audit Committee

9 Members – Proportionality 4:2 plus 3 Lay Members

- | | | |
|----|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Chair | Lay Member – To be confirmed |
| 1. | Vice Chair - | Councillor S. Behr |
| 2. | Councillors | D. Bevan |
| 3. | | K. Chaplin |
| 4. | | W. Hodgins |
| 5. | | C. Smith |
| 6. | | J. Wilkins |
| 7. | Lay Member - | Mrs. J. Absalom |

8. Lay Member – Mr. M. Veale

9. Lay Member - **Vacancy**

Governance & Audit Committee Appointments Panel

3:2

1. Councillor S. Behr

2. Councillor K. Chaplin

3. Councillor C. Smith

4. Councillor W. Hodgins

5. Councillor J. Wilkins

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

1. Town Councillor – **Vacancy**

2. Mr. R. Lynch

3. Mr. Stephen Williams

4. Mr. R. Alexander

5. Mrs Sarah Rosser

6. Miss J. White

7. Councillor M. Cross

8. Councillor J. Thomas

9. Councillor L. Winnett

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

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

Substitutes

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

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

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

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

Substitutes

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

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

1. Leader of the Council
2. Deputy Leader of the Council
3. Leader of the Largest Opposition Group
4. Deputy Leader of the Largest Opposition Group
5. Councillor S. Behr
6. Councillor C. Smith
7. Councillor T. Smith

Officer additions if appropriate

Substitutes

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

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

1. Chair Leader
2. Vice-Chair Deputy Leader
3. Leader of the Largest Opposition Group
4. Deputy Leader of the Largest Opposition Group
5. Councillor S. Behr
6. Councillor C. Smith
7. Councillor T. Smith

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

Substitutes

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

Appeals Committee

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

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

*** 1 Member to be selected from the following Labour Group Members:-**

- Councillors
1. S. Behr
 2. J. Thomas
 3. L. Winnett

*** 1 Member to be selected from the following Independent Group Members:-**

- Councillors
1. G. Humphreys
 2. J. P. Morgan
 3. G. Thomas

*** On a Rolling Rota**

Substitute Members

- Councillors
1. P. Baldwin
 2. M. Cross
 3. E. Jones
 4. T. Smith
 5. D. Davies
 6. G. A. Davies
 7. J. Hill

Investigating & Disciplinary Committee (JNC & Chief Officers)

- Councillors
1. CHAIR J. Thomas
 2. M. Cross
 3. C. Smith
 4. T. Smith
 5. L. Winnett

11.

SPECIAL AND AD HOC COMMITTEES/CONSULTATION MEETINGS

RESOLVED that the following be appointed:

Gwent Public Service Board

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

Councillor S. Thomas

Gwent Public Service Board Scrutiny Committee

1. Councillor E. Jones
2. Councillor T. Smith

Consultation with Trade Unions

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

Fostering Panel (Social Services)

1. Councillor D. Bevan

Sub:- Councillor D. Rowberry

Blaenau Gwent & Caerphilly Care and Repair Board

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

Education Admissions Forum

1. **Cabinet Member – People & Education**
Councillor S. Edmunds

-
2. **Chair – People Scrutiny Committee**
Councillor T. Smith

Schools Forum

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

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

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

Getting to know our Schools Sub-Group (Same Membership as Scrutiny Committee)

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

* **Chair and Vice Chair to endeavour to be at each Meeting.**

** **All members to be invited to attend Sub-Group Meeting.**

Safer Schools Partnership Board

1. Councillor T. Smith

Tomorrow Valley Project

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

Constitution Working Group

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

Freedom of the Borough – Cross Party Working Group

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

5. C. Smith

Leisure and Libraries Strategic Group

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

GRANTS WORKING GROUP
14 Members - Proportionality 9:5

1 Member from each Ward on a political proportionality basis.

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

13. G. A. Davies (Rassau & Garnlydan Ward)

14. P. Baldwin (Nantyglo Ward)

Advisory Panel for the Appointment of Local Authority Governors'

1. Cabinet Member – People & Education (Chair)

Councillor S. Edmunds

2. Councillor D. Bevan
3. Councillor D. Davies
4. Councillor G. A. Davies
5. Councillor J. Hill
6. Councillor T. Smith

Substitutes:

1. Councillor E. Jones
2. Councillor J. Gardner
3. Councillor J. P. Morgan
4. Councillor G. Thomas
5. Councillor D. Woods
6. Councillor D. Wilkshire

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

Community Asset Transfer Steering Group

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

Tredegar Heritage Initiative

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

Tredegar Town Council Representative

Cost Pressure Sub-Group

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

7. **Vice Chair of Corporate & Performance Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor J. Thomas

Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Board

1. Leader or Deputy Leader
2. Cabinet Member – Place & Regeneration and Economic Development
3. Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services

Corporate Parenting Board

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

Cost of Living Crisis Cross Party Working Group

1. Cabinet Member – Corporate & Performance
2. Cabinet Member – Place & Environment
3. Cabinet Member – Place & Regeneration and Economic Development
4. Cabinet Member – People & Social Services
5. Cabinet Member – People & Education
6. Chair of Corporate Overview Performance Scrutiny Committee

7. Poverty & Inequality Champion –
Councillor C. Bainton

8. Councillor G. Humphreys

Straying Animals/Animal Trespass Working Group

1. Cabinet Member – Place & Environment
(Chair)

2. Chair of Place Scrutiny Committee

3. Councillor L. Winnett

4. Councillor J. Holt

MEMBER CHAMPIONS

Equalities, Welsh Language and Diversity

Councillor C. Smith

Age Friendly

Councillor H. Trollope

Poverty and Inequality

Councillor C. Bainton

Climate Mitigation

Councillor S. Behr

Armed Forces

Councillor D. Bevan

Wellbeing Champion

Councillor J. Thomas

12.

COUNCIL'S REPRESENTATIVE ON OTHER BODIES

Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the following be appointed:

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

Scrutiny Chair – People

Age Concern Gwent Executive Committee Membership

Cabinet Member – People & Social Services

The Alliance

Cabinet Member – Place & Regeneration

Scrutiny Chair – Place

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

Scrutiny Chair – People

Bannau Brycheiniog (Formerly known as Brecon Beacons National Park)

Councillor P. Baldwin

Book Council of Wales

Councillor S. Edmunds

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Cabinet

Leader of the Council

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal – Regional Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Chair – Place

Councillor M. Cross

Scrutiny Vice-Chair – Place

Councillor R. Leadbeater

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

Cabinet Member – Place & Regeneration and Economic Development

Cabinet Member – Place & Environment

CCR Regional Transport Authority

Cabinet Member – Place & Regeneration and Economic Development

Duke of Beaufort’s Breconshire Estate Commoner’s Association

Councillor M. Cross

Education Achievement Service (E.A.S);

Company Board

Cabinet Member – Place & Regeneration and Economic Development

Substitute: Cabinet Member – Place & Environment

Joint Executive Group (JEG)

Cabinet Member – People & Education

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Councillor L. Winnett

Councillor T. Smith

Gwent Police and Crime Panel

Councillor G. A. Davies

Councillor J. Thomas

G.A.V.O. - Executive Committee

Cabinet Member – People & Social Services

Councillor H. Trollope

G.A.V.O. - Local Committee

Cabinet Member – People & Social Services

Councillor H. Trollope

Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

Scrutiny Chair – Place
Councillor M. Cross

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

Gwent Archives Joint Committee

Cabinet Member – Place & Regeneration and Economic
Development
Councillor J. C. Morgan

Councillor H. Trollope

Gwent Regional Partnership Board

Cabinet Member – People & Social Services

Local Government Association

Leader
Deputy Leader

Joint Council for Wales

Employers Side

Cabinet Member – Corporate Overview & Performance

Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust

Councillor M. Cross

National Adoption Service Governance Board

Cabinet Member – People & Social Services

PATROL Adjudication Joint Committee

Scrutiny Chair – Place
Councillor M. Cross

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

Reserve Forces & Cadets Association for Wales –

Local Government Representation

Councillor D. Bevan

Rural Development Programme – Local Action Group

Councillor G. Humphreys

SRS Strategic Board

Councillor J. Gardner

South Wales Fire Authority

Councillor J. Morgan, J.P.

Tai Calon Board

Councillor S. Behr

Councillor E. Jones

Vision in Wales

(formerly Wales Council for the Blind)

Executive Member – People & Social Services

Scrutiny Chair – People

Welsh Local Government Association

Leader of the Council

WLGA Executive Board

Leader of the Council

W.L.G.A. Council and Voting

Leader of the Council

Substitute: Deputy Leader of the Council

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

Cabinet Member – People & Social Services

W.L.G.A. - Environment Champion

Cabinet Member – Place & Environment

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

Officer Appointments

Chief Officer Resources

Ms R. Hayden

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

Member Appointment

Cabinet Member – Corporate Overview & Performance

WLGA - Cultural Affairs & Leisure – South Wales Regional Committee

Cabinet Member – Place & Environment

WLGA Rural Forum

Councillor C. Smith

Wales Council for Deaf People

Cabinet Member – People & Social Services

Welsh Joint Education Committee

Cabinet Member – People & Education

Youth Offending Service - Local Management Board

Cabinet Member – People & Social Services

LEA REPRESENTATION ON SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

| School | Current LEA Representative |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Abertillery Learning Community | Mr. Daryl Tovey Mr Richard Bevan Ms Deborah Mary Field Mr Matthew Fowler Vacancy |
| All Saints R. C. Primary | Mrs Pat Mitchell Laura Newall |
| Beaufort Hill Primary | Mr. Roy Lynch Mr Rhion Hollister Vacancy |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Blaen-y-Cwm Primary | Ms Natasha Tepielow Stephen Connolly Mrs Keri Langley Vacancy |
| Bryn Bach Primary | Ms. Gemma Badham Councillor Malcolm Cross Vacancy |
| Brynmawr Foundation | Ms Stephanie Hopkins Councillor John Hill |
| Canolfan Yr Afon (The River Centre) | Lee Powell Jan English Jacqueline Gwynne Additional representatives: Richard Barrett Ms Lesley Bush |
| Coed y Garn Primary | Mr. Kenneth Jones Councillor Sonia Behr Vacancy |
| Cwm Primary | Councillor Derrick Bevan Mrs Kathryn Cross Ms. Natalie Marshall |
| Deighton Primary Tredegar | Councillor Haydn Trollope Councillor Jaqueline Thomas Delyth Pearsall Councillor Ellen Jones |
| Ebbw Fawr Learning Community | Clive Meredith Adam King |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| | Mr Jon Mower Councillor George Humphreys Vacancy |
| Georgetown Primary Tredegar | Councillor John C. Morgan Ms Donna Hardman Vacancy |
| Glanhowy Primary, Tredegar | Miss Joanne Davies Councillor Tommy Smith Ms. Tara Robinson |
| Glyncoed Primary | Clive Meredith Mr. Mostyn I. Smith Councillor Chris Smith |
| Penycwm Special | Hannah Williams Tim Baxter Councillor Jen Morgan, J.P. |
| Rhos y Fedwen Primary | Councillor David Wilkshire Councillor Gareth A. Davies Councillor S. Edmunds |
| Sofrydd Primary | Debra Fields Sian Barrett Mrs Keri Jones |
| St. Illtyd's Primary | Mrs Keri Jones Lucy Allsopp Sara Long |

| | | | |
|------------|--|--|--|
| | St. Joseph's R.C. Primary | Councillor Malcolm Cross | |
| | St Marys Brynmawr CIW Primary | Claire Gardner | |
| | St. Mary's RC Primary Brynmawr | Angela Davies | |
| | Tredegar Comprehensive | Councillor John C. Morgan Councillor Haydn Trollope Ms. Melanie Rogers Mr Peter Harriman Adrian Tuck | |
| | Willowtown Primary | Mrs Sian Barrett Mr Jordan Colcombe Vacancy | |
| | Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw | Councillor Sue Edmunds | |
| | Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, Blaina | Mrs Tracey Dyson Councillor Peter Baldwin Rebecca Legge | |
| | Ystruth Primary | Councillor Lisa Winnett Garth Collier Kerys Beese | |
| 13. | <u>MEMBERSHIP REPORT</u> | | |
| | Consideration was given to the following:- | | |
| | <u>Advisory Panel for Local Authority Governors</u> | | |

| | | |
|------------|---|--|
| | <p>The following recommendations were made by the Panel on 15th May, 2023 to appoint in principle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rhos-y-Fedwen Primary School – Councillor Sue Edmunds - Tredegar Comprehensive School – Melanie Rogers <p>It was, thereupon, unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the above appointments be endorsed.</p> | |
| <p>14.</p> | <p><u>ANNUAL CYCLE OF MEETINGS 2023/2024</u></p> <p>Members considered the joint officers’ report.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The proposed annual cycle of meetings 2023/2024 attached at Appendix 1 be approved. (ii) The decision-making process to deal with any urgent business during the August recess be approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the Leader and Deputy Leader in conjunction with appropriate Cabinet Members and Officers deal with any urgent items from 1st - 31st August, 2023 (i.e., a Special Meeting of the Cabinet would be convened at short notice recognising that the matter was urgent and the call-in procedure would apply). The Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service in conjunction with the Leadership would determine if a matter was urgent; and | |

| | | |
|------------|--|--|
| | <p>b. decisions should be limited to urgent matters and recorded on a decision schedule presented to the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council. No controversial or sensitive matters should be dealt with during this period.</p> | |
| <p>15.</p> | <p><u>GWENT WELLBEING PLAN 2023-2028</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the joint Officers' report.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be approved, namely that the Gwent Wellbeing Plan 2023-2028 be endorsed.</p> | |

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| REPORT TO: | <u>THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u> |
| SUBJECT: | <u>ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – 30TH MARCH, 2023</u> |
| REPORT OF: | <u>DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER</u> |

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

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

AND: Interim Chief Executive
 Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
 Interim Corporate Director of Social Services
 Head of Organisation Development
 Chief Officer Resources
 Chief Officer Commercial & Customer
 Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
 Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships
 O.D. Manager Payroll, Health & Safety
 Service Manager, Performance & Democratic
 Communications & Marketing Manager

WITH: R. Alexander, Chair of the Standards Committee

| <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>The following apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <p>Councillor J. P. Morgan Councillor H. Trollope Councillor J. Morgan, J.P.</p> | |
| 3. | <p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were raised.</p> | |

4.

PRESIDING MEMBER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Condolences

- Condolences was expressed to Councillor John P Morgan on the sad passing of his father.
- Condolences was expressed to the former County Borough Councillor Gill Clark and her family following the sad passing of her husband Roger Clark.

The Presiding Member asked Members and Officers of the Council to hold a one minute's silence as a mark of respect.

Congratulations

- Families First Young Carers project has been successful in being selected through to the final of the judging process of the Social Care Wales Accolades awards under the supporting unpaid carers category. The awards ceremony is taking place on 27th April, and the team are very proud to be finalists and are looking forward to celebrating their achievement during the ceremony.
- Mrs. June Charles of Cwm, who at 87 years young won the Community Award Inspirational Women of Year Award at in Bedwellty House. It was a very emotional event and Mrs Charles was very pleased to receive that award.
- Blaenau Gwent over 60 Indoor Bowls Team has reached the final and play Swansea next week.
- Tredegar Town Band won the Welsh Champions.
- Ebbw Valley Brass Band has won the section championship.

| | | |
|---------------------|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abertillery and Blaenau Gwent RFC have reached Division 3 Cup Final and play at Principality Stadium on 8th April, 2023. - Nantyglo Rugby Club are in the final of the National Cup at Principality Stadium. - Ebbw Fawr Year 9 pupils took part in a mock trial at Swansea Crown Court. The Presiding Member attended the event and although the pupils were not very confident they got through to the next round. It was an excellent competition and the pupils were outstanding. <p>The Presiding Members expressed congratulations to everyone on behalf of the Council.</p> | |
| <p>5. – 21.</p> | <p><u>DECISION BOOK – NOVEMBER 2022 – MARCH 2023</u></p> <p>The Decision Book for the period November 2022 – March 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>22.</p> | <p><u>COUNCIL – ACTION SHEET – 26TH JANUARY, 2023</u></p> <p>The Action Sheet arising from the meeting held on 26th January, 2023 was submitted.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the information contained therein be noted.</p> | |

23.

MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Question 1

The following question was received from Councillor Lee Parsons, and was responded to by Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader of the Council.

Question:

“The current contract with the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board ends in September 2023. Can the Leader inform Council when face to face full Council meetings will commence at the General Offices?”

Response:

“Thanks for the question, Cllr Parsons. Unfortunately, I cannot at this stage, even though I have the same request from members of the Labour Group. Some barriers would have to be overcome before we could resume face-to-face meetings.

Firstly, as you say, the current contract with ABUHB for the mass vaccination centre ends on 31st September 2023. But there is an option to extend for a further six months at that point if agreed by both the Council and ABUHB, dependant upon whether there will be another Winter vaccination programme

Secondly, in the recent Budget proposals for 23/24, both political groups agreed with the business case that referred to a £60,000 saving by renting rooms at the General Offices. A significant part of that saving is the approximate £4,000 a month we receive from ABUHB. If the contract ends, we will have to find the deficit elsewhere.

Thirdly, we have a current Council policy that was agreed upon at the September 29th meeting, namely, the Multi-Location Meetings Policy, which unanimously decided that all Council & Cabinet meetings would be held remotely, and all formal scrutiny meetings could be held on a hybrid basis.

Obviously, if we resume face to face meetings it would not be as it was before March 2020 as legislation has changed post pandemic.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 provides that Councils are required to:

Electronically broadcast meetings (with effect from May 2022), and make and publish arrangements to ensure that all Council, Cabinet, Committee, Sub-Committee and Joint Committee meetings may be attended remotely (i.e. enabling persons not in the same place to attend the meeting) – also referred to as ‘multi-location meetings’.

The Local Government Act stipulates that Councils cannot mandate physical meeting attendance.”

Supplementary Question:

“Can the Leader of the Council confirm there was no plans to build a political arena in Blaenau Gwent in the future”.

Response:

“The Leader of the Council confirmed that this would be a decision to be taken by full Council and at this point in time there had been no Council decision to create a political arena”.

Question 2

The following question was received from Councillor Gareth A. Davies, and was responded to by Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader of the Council:-

Question:

“Could the Leader confirm or refute the rumours that Bus Services including the Fflecsi Service in Blaenau Gwent are to end soon.”

Response:

“For clarity, there are three types of services being run at the moment – Commercial routes run by private providers; services which we pay private providers a subsidy to run and the Fflecsi pilot, which has been running since June 2021.

Covid 19 devastated bus usage so WG provided funding during the pandemic and continued post-pandemic, through the Bus Emergency Scheme (BES), as of this moment this is due to end after June this year.

This funding enabled private providers to remain viable whilst it was hoped passenger numbers would return to pre-pandemic numbers.

As you can imagine, alongside the other 21 local authority Leaders, I have been lobbying Welsh Government on the impact this funding reduction may have on local bus services.

To be honest, at this point, we do not know fully the impact this will have on private providers; providers are expected to notify their local authority 21st April what their post-BES operations will be, at which point we will have greater clarity.

Regarding the Fflecsi services, this will continue until the end of June 2023; we are currently in discussions with WG and TfW about hopefully continuing this service but perhaps using a different model; we hope to be able to report back on this in the coming months.”

24.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The following question was received from Mr. Phillip Edwards and was responded to by Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader of the Council:

Question:

“At a Special Meeting of the Council on 7th February, 2022 the Council looked at the findings of the Welsh Audit Office report into its relationship with Silent Valley Waste Services Limited.

After discussion, Councillor Stephen Thomas made a proposal which was seconded by myself (as Leader of the Minority Independent Group) and unanimously accepted by full Council that an internal investigation should take place to ensure that the significant concerns highlighted by an Audit Wales report into the relationship between Blaenau Gwent Council and a waste services provider “will never ever happen again.”

Has this investigation taken place and who was on the investigating panel?”

Response:

“The investigation has been carried out in two phases:

Firstly, following the Council meeting and with the agreement of the then political group Leaders, the former Managing Director sought independent legal and employment law advice to carry out "*A preliminary investigation to determine whether, in respect of the current Council employees named in the Audit Wales Public Interest Report (published 27th January 2022), it is appropriate to take action under any of the Council's employment policies and procedures.*"

Considering the legal advice, the then Managing Director progressed the matter with the Monitoring Officer and Organisational Development Department (Human Resources).

An agreed mutual outcome was then shared with Audit Wales, who proffered no objection to the course of action utilised.

Secondly, the other Auditor General's recommendation was to review the Council's governance and oversight arrangements with other companies in which we have an ownership interest.

As a consequence of this recommendation, a review has been completed of the governance and oversight arrangements of Aneurin Leisure Trust, the Gwent Educational Achievement Service, Gwent Archives, and the final one on the Gwent Crematorium should be completed by the end of March 2023. When completed, a report will be coming through the democratic processes in the next couple of months to provide detailed assurances to Members and the public on the existing governance and oversight of these organisations.

Supplementary Question:

“Arising from the Silent Valley Report presented on the 7th February, 2022 and issue was raised in relation to an officers flexible retirement which was agreed at a previous Council meeting in 2018. I believe this is critical information to the report and Members should have been informed. The former Managing Director never revealed if this information had been discussed with the Leadership and Executive Members before the Council meeting. Therefore I ask if the Council could write to the former Managing Director to confirm if this information was shared with the Leadership and Executive at that time.

Response:

“The Leader of the Council advised that he was not in the Leadership or on the Executive at this time and would not be aware of any discussions undertaken”.

| | | |
|-----|---|--|
| | <p>The Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance added that this request would need to be considered and therefore a response would be provided in due course.</p> | |
| 25. | <p><u>TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REVIEW REPORT - 1ST APRIL 2022 TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>It was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the treasury management activity undertaken during the first 6 months of 2022/2023 be noted and the record of performance and compliance achieved during the first half of the 2022/2023 financial year be accepted.</p> | |
| 26. | <p><u>TREASURY MANAGEMENT – TREASURY STRATEGY STATEMENT, INVESTMENT STRATEGY & MRP POLICY STATEMENT 2023/2024 (INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS)</u></p> <p>Members considered the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>It was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1; namely considered 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 proposed amendments prior to approval.</p> | |

| | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 27. | <p><u>CAPITAL STRATEGY 2023/2024</u></p> <p>The report of the Chief Officer Resources was submitted for consideration.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Capital Strategy for the 2023/24 financial year be agreed.</p> | |
| 28. | <p><u>CORPORATE FEES AND CHARGES 2023/2024</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 be approved; and - the 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) be approved together with the restated fees relating to Bulky Waste collection included on Appendix 1. | |

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| 29. | <p><u>DISCRETIONARY COST OF LIVING SCHEME – SUPPLEMENTARY PROPOSALS</u></p> <p>Members considered the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>It was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the proposed amendments to Blaenau Gwent Discretionary Cost of Living Scheme be agreed.</p> | |
| 30. | <p><u>PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023/2024</u></p> <p>The report of the Head of Organisational Development was submitted for consideration.</p> <p>It was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed namely, that the Pay Policy Statement 2023/2024 be approved.</p> | |
| 31. | <p><u>INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES ANNUAL REPORT 2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development.</p> <p>It was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the determinations in the final IRPW Annual Report for 2023/2024 be noted.</p> | |

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| 32. | <p><u>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships.</p> <p>It was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted on the basis that there was sufficient level of support provided for Elected Members.</p> | |
| 33. | <p><u>COUNCIL'S SUITE OF MEMBER DEVELOPMENT POLICIES</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships.</p> <p>It was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 endorsed, namely the suite of Policies as set out in the appendices be approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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). | |

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| <p>34.</p> | <p><u>MEETING SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE EQUALITY ACT 2010: ANNUAL REPORTING AND IMPACT ASSESSING</u></p> <p>The report of the Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships was submitted for consideration.</p> <p>It was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Reporting – the progress made against the Council’s Equality Objectives be noted. • Impact Assessing – the new IIA process be noted and a Member Briefing Session be convened 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. | |
| <p>35.</p> | <p><u>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Members considered 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 that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was confirmed that the statutory duty imposed by the Act had been met. • The change of name for the Standards Committee to “Ethics and Standards Committee” be approved. | |

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| <p>36.</p> | <p><u>PRESIDING MEMBER’S ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT: JUNE 2022 – MARCH 2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Presiding Member’s Annual Activities Report.</p> <p>It was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the activities and events attended by the Presiding Member for the period June 2022 – March 2023 be noted.</p> | |
| <p>37.</p> | <p><u>MEMBERSHIPS REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the following:-</p> <p><u>Advisory Panel for Local Authority Governors</u></p> <p>The following recommendations were made by the Panel on 17th March, 2023 to appoint in principle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 <p>It was, thereupon, unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the above appointments be endorsed.</p> <p><u>ABUHB Stakeholders Reference Group (SRG)</u></p> <p>It was noted that a decision had been taken to disband the SRG in its current form whilst the Chair of the Health Board reviewed and redesigns the role and constitution of the Group ensuring it was fit for purpose and fully effective.</p> | |

A proposal for re-establishment of the SRG would be considered by the Health Board and the Board would then be able to confirm the SRG's membership requirements going forward.

Aneurin Leisure Trust – Community Chest Panel

GAVO – Be Proud of your Community Gwent Awards

It was noted that the above groups had been disbanded.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

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| REPORT TO: | <u>THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</u> |
| SUBJECT: | <u>EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – 30TH MARCH, 2023</u> |
| REPORT OF: | <u>DEMOCRATIC OFFICER</u> |

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

Councillors C. Bainton
S. Behr
K. Chaplin
M. Cross
H. Cunningham
D. Davies
G. A. Davies
M. Day
S. Edmunds
J. Gardner
J. Hill
J. Holt
W. Hodgins
G. Humphreys
E. Jones
R. Leadbeter
J.C. Morgan
L. Parsons
D. Rowberry
T. Smith
J. Wilkins
D. Wilkshire
L. Winnett
G. Thomas
S. Thomas

AND: Interim Chief Executive
 Chief Officer Commercial & Customer
 Head of Democratic Services Governance &
 Partnerships
 Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
 Service Manager Performance & Democratic
 Professional Lead for Engagement, Equalities &
 Welsh Language

ALSO: Eva Clarke

| <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>The following apologies for absence were received from:</p> <p>Councillors H. Trollope, J.P. Morgan.</p> | |
| 3. | <p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p> | |
| 4. | <p><u>HONORARY 'FREEDOM OF THE COUNTY BOROUGH' - EVA CLARKE</u></p> <p>The Chair commenced by explaining that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council had been convened for the sole object, notice of which was now given, of considering and if thought fit passing a resolution in the following terms, which resolution, pursuant to Section 249 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, must be passed by not less than two-thirds of the Members voting thereon.</p> <p>At the invitation of the Chair, the Leader of the Council thereupon continued by proposing the following Motion:</p> | |

That in pursuance of Section 249 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council of the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent do hereby confer the Honorary Freedom of the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent upon

EVA CLARKE

To mark Eva's commitment, dedication and devotion to spreading a message of hope in darkness by outlining the harrowing story of the Holocaust to young and old alike to combat racism, prejudice and anti-semitism. In recognition of the work and ties that Eva has forged within the Blaenau Gwent area.

That the Council do embrace the privilege of admitting the said Eva Clarke as Freeperson of the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent.

This Motion was seconded.

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT PLANNING COMMITTEE – 20TH APRIL, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR LISA WINNETT (Chair)

Councillors D. Bevan (Vice-Chair)
 P. Baldwin
 M. Day
 J. Gardner
 J. Hill
 W. Hodgins
 G. Humphreys
 J. Thomas
 D. Wilkshire

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

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

| <u>ITEM</u> | <u>SUBJECT</u> |
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| 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> |

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| | There were no apologies for absence reported. |
| No. 3 | <p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declarations of interests were raised:-</p> <p><u>Councillor W. Hodgins</u> Item No. 5 – Planning Applications Report – Application No. C/2023/0012 - Units 2 & 3A (Home Bargains & Peacocks) Lakeside Retail Park Nantyglo Brynmawr NP23 4SL - Installation of a mezzanine floor within Units 2 and 3A.</p> <p>It was reported that Councillor Hodgins would not take part in the discussion or vote.</p> <p><u>Councillor W. Hodgins</u> Exempt Item No. 8 – Enforcement Prosecution Update Report</p> <p>It was reported that Councillor Hodgins would not take part in the discussion for one of the sites mentioned in the Report.</p> |
| No. 4 | <p><u>AREAS FOR MEMBER BRIEFINGS AND TRAINING</u></p> <p>No areas for Members Training/Briefings were raised.</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/2023/0004</u> <u>The Kings Arms, Newchurch Road, Ebbw Vale NP23 5BD</u> <u>Change of use of public house with letting bedrooms (A3) to Hotel (C1)</u></p> <p>A Member proposed that a Register of Attendance Book for visits no longer than a 28 day period be added to the Planning conditions. This proposal was seconded.</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 with the inclusion of the additional condition of a Register of Attendance book for visits no longer than a 28 day period.</p> |

Application No. C/2023/0012

**Units 2 & 3A (Home Bargains & Peacocks) Lakeside Retail Park
Nantyglo Brynmawr NP23 4SL**

Installation of a mezzanine floor within Units 2 and 3A

The Planning Officer informed Members of two amendments within the report. Firstly paragraph 1.8 should read 'for retail purposes' at the end of the paragraph and secondly paragraph 1.19 for Unit 3A should read 'with mezzanine floor for storage only'.

RESOLVED accordingly.

Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously

FURTHER RESOLVED that planning permission be **GRANTED**, subject to the conditions detailed in the report.

Councillor Hodgins did not take part in the discussion or vote.

Application No. C/2022/0309

**Land to the south of Fair View, Ashvale, Tredegar
Residential development and associated works**

Team Manager Development Management joined the meeting at this juncture.

Following discussion it was unanimously

RESOLVED that planning permission be **GRANTED** and delegated powers be granted to Planning Officers to make amendments to the conditions detailed in the report.

Application No. C/2022/0117

**The Willows Club, Church Street, Tredegar, NP22 3DS
Demolish existing social club and erect (2 x pairs) of semi-
detached, 3 bed dwellings with off road parking**

Upon a vote being taken, 6 Members voted in favour of the officer's recommendation, 3 Members voted against the officer's recommendation and 1 Member abstained from voting. It was thereupon,

RESOLVED that planning permission be **GRANTED**, subject to the conditions detailed in the report.

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| | <p><u>Application No. C/2023/0055</u> <u>74A & Caleb Cottage, King Street, Brynmawr, NP23 4RG</u> <u>Application for variation of conditions 2 and 4 to amend parking provision of planning permission C/2022/0186 (Change of use of ground floor offices and first and second floor living accommodation to create two dwellings plus conversion and change of use of Calebs cottage to one dwelling together with associated external, creation of garden and provision of parking)</u></p> <p>Following discussion it was unanimously</p> <p>RESOLVED that planning permission be <u>GRANTED</u> and delegated powers be granted to Planning Officers to make amendments to condition 4 detailed in the report.</p> |
| <p>No. 6</p> | <p><u>APPEALS, CONSULTATIONS AND DNS UPDATE: APRIL 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. 7</p> | <p><u>LIST OF APPLICATIONS DECIDED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS BETWEEN 25TH FEBRUARY 2023 AND 3RD APRIL 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. 8</p> | <p><u>ENFORCEMENT PROSECUTION UPDATE 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</p> |

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

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

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

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

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

SUBJECT **PLANNING COMMITTEE – 15TH JUNE, 2023**

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

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR LISA WINNETT (Chair)

Councillors P. Baldwin (Vice-Chair)

C. Bainton

M. Day

W. Hodgins

J. Holt

G. Humphreys

E. Jones

L. Parsons

D. Rowberry

C. Smith

J. Thomas

D. Wilkshire

WITH: Team Manager Development Management
Planning Officer (x2)
Communications Officer
Solicitor

AND: **Public Speaker**
Mr. T. Griffin, Application No. C/2023/0060
Unit 21, Rising Sun Industrial Estate

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. |

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| <p>No. 2</p> | <p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Councillor Jen Morgan.</p> <p>The Chair asked that correspondence be sent to Councillor Morgan wishing her a speedy recovery from Members of the Planning Committee.</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p> |
| <p>No. 3</p> | <p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were raised.</p> |
| <p>No. 4</p> | <p><u>AREAS FOR MEMBER BRIEFINGS AND TRAINING</u></p> <p>The Chair reported that the following Members Briefings was planned:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement Training • Section 106 <p>It was added that the sessions would be beneficial for all Planning Committee Members but would be offered to all Members of the Council for their information.</p> |
| <p>No. 5</p> | <p><u>TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS</u></p> <p>It was proposed that future meetings be held at 10.00 a.m.</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p> |

No. 6

PLANNING APPLICATIONS REPORT

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

Application No. c/2022/0265

1 Cross Brook Cottages, Trefil, Tredegar

To retain the development of the new house as built, renovation of existing outbuilding into garage with room above and replacement parking

Upon a vote being taken, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that planning permission be **GRANTED**, subject to the conditions detailed in the report.

The Ward Member, Councillor D. Rowberry did not take part in the voting process.

Application No. C/2023/0060

Unit 21, Rising Sun Industrial Estate, Blaina. NP23 3JW

The erection of a manufacturing building which extends at the rear of the existing main building and wraps around the building to increase manufacturing footprint, upper-level storage facility with goods in/out yard space and subsequent perimeter landscaping with additional car parking

Upon a vote being taken, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that planning permission be **GRANTED**, subject to the conditions detailed in the report and the officers be delegated power to make future decisions.

The Ward Member, Councillor L. Winnett did not take part in the voting process.

No. 7

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager – Development and Estates.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.

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| <p>No. 8</p> | <p><u>SCHEME OF DELEGATION – PLANNING COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager – Development and Estates.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the changes set out in this report be approved (Option 2).</p> <p>Councillor D. Wilkshire left the meeting at this juncture.</p> |
| <p>No. 9</p> | <p><u>UNDERSTANDING THE WELL-BEING OF PLANNERS IN WALES AND BUILDING CONTROL DEPARTMENTS IN THE UK</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager – Development and Estates.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the measures set out to protect wellbeing of staff, staff retention and building resilient teams be endorsed.</p> |
| <p>No. 10</p> | <p><u>PLANNING APPEAL UPDATE: 2 MARKET STREET, ABERTILLERY, NP13 1AH.</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Officer.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the appeal decision for planning application C/2022/0199 as attached at Appendix B be noted.</p> |
| <p>No. 11</p> | <p><u>PLANNING APPEAL UPDATE: 7 BEAUFORT TERRACE, BEAUFORT, EBBW VALE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Planning Officer.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the appeal decision for planning application C/2022/0047 as attached at Appendix A be noted.</p> |

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| No. 12 | <p><u>APPEALS, CONSULTATIONS AND DNS UPDATE: JUNE 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> |
| No. 13 | <p><u>LIST OF APPLICATIONS DECIDED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS BETWEEN 4th APRIL, 2023 TO 29th MAY, 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> |
| No. 14 | <p><u>ENFORCEMENT CLOSED CASES BETWEEN 23rd FEBRUARY, 2023 AND 25th MAY, 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 – 26th JUNE, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR LISA WINNETT (CHAIR)

Councillors P. Baldwin (Vice-Chair)
 S. Behr
 G. Davies
 J. Hill
 G. Humphreys
 J. Gardener
 G. Thomas
 D. Woods

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

**AND: Mr. A. Arpa, Applicant
 Applicant’s Representative
 PC J. Taylor**

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

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

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| <p>No. 3</p> | <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>TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS</u></p> <p>RESOLVED that future meetings be held at 10.00 a.m.</p> |
| <p>No. 5</p> | <p><u>SCHEDULE OF APPLICATIONS FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENCES</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 Team Manager Trading Standards and Licensing.</p> <p><u>Application No. 1.1(a)</u></p> <p>This application was <u>DEFERRED.</u></p> <p><u>Application No. 1.2(b)</u></p> <p>RESOLVED that the report which contained information relating to a particular individual be accepted and the application for a review of Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle drivers licence be <u>REVOKED.</u></p> |

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT SPECIAL GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE – 3RD JULY, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR LISA WINNETT (CHAIR)

Councillors P. Baldwin (Item No. 4 only)

S. Behr

G. Davies

J. Hill

G. Humphreys

D. Rowberry (Item Nos 1 – 3 only)

D. Woods

**WITH: Team Manager – Trading Standards and Licensing
Licensing Enforcement Officer
Solicitor**

AND: P.C. J. Taylor – Gwent Police

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> |

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| <p>No. 2</p> | <p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Cross and G. Thomas.</p> |
| <p>No. 3</p> | <p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest and dispensations reported.</p> <p>Councillor D. Rowberry left the meeting at this juncture.</p> |
| <p>No. 4</p> | <p><u>SCHEDULE OF APPLICATIONS FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENCES</u></p> <p>Councillor P. Baldwin joined the meeting at this juncture.</p> <p>In the absence of the applicant, the Committee unanimously agreed to proceed with the hearing.</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 Team Manager Trading Standards and Licensing to review an application for a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle driver's licence.</p> |

Application No. 1.1(a)

RESOLVED that the report which contained information relating to a particular individual be accepted and the applicant's Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle drivers' licence be **REVOKED**.

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT PLANNING COMMITTEE – 6TH JULY, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR LISA WINNETT (Chair)

Councillors P. Baldwin (Vice-Chair)

W. Hodgins

J. Holt

G. Humphreys

E. Jones

L. Parsons

D. Rowberry

C. Smith

J. Thomas

D. Wilkshire

WITH: Service Manager Development & Estates
 Team Manager Development Management
 Planning Officer (x2)
 Communications, Marketing & Customer
 Access Manager
 Solicitor

AND: Charlotte Owen – Audit Wales

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> |

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| | An apology for absence was received from Councillors M. Day and Jen Morgan, J.P. |
| No. 3 | <p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were raised.</p> |
| No. 4 | <p><u>REVIEW OF THE PLANNING SERVICE – BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL</u></p> <p>Consideration was given report Audit Wales Report.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the recommendations contained within be noted.</p> |
| No. 5 | <p><u>DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE INFORMATION QUARTER 4 – JANUARY TO MARCH 2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Service Manger Development & Estates.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p> |
| No. 6 | <p><u>BUILDING CONTROL - OUT OF HOURS DANGEROUS STRUCTURES CALL OUTS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Service Manager Development & Estates.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and upon a vote being taken Option 1 was approved, namely:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue as per the existing arrangement where a BCO is not guaranteed to attend an incident. The advantage of this option is that it entails least cost. • However, this is predicated on the Council acknowledging and accepting the risk that in the event that emergency services require professional advice on the safety of a structure e.g. to enter, then there will be no BCO in attendance. • RCSLT are asked to consider the potential risk and reputational damage |

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| | <p>associated with what may be a major incident and Building Control do not attend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It may also prove impossible to instigate any cost recovery against property owners. |
| No. 7 | <p><u>APPEALS, CONSULTATIONS AND DNS UPDATE JULY 2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Service Manager Development & Estates.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p> |
| No. 8 | <p><u>LIST OF APPLICATIONS DECIDED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS BETWEEN 30TH MAY 2023 AND 22ND JUNE 2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Business Support Officer.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p> |
| No. 9 | <p><u>AREAS FOR MEMBER BRIEFINGS AND TRAINING</u></p> <p>The Chair reported that the following Members Briefing Sessions would be arranged in due course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement Training • Section 106 • Material Planning Considerations <p>It was noted that the training sessions would be offered to all Members of the Council.</p> |

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: CABINET – 19TH APRIL, 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**

**Cabinet Member – People & Education
Councillor S. Edmunds**

WITH: Interim Chief Executive
Chief Officer Resources
Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
Head of School Improvement & Inclusion
Chief Officer Customer and Commercial
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
Communications, Marketing & Customer Access Manager
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>No apologies for absence were reported.</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 the Special Cabinet held on the 22nd February, 2023.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p> |
| No. 5 | <p><u>CABINET</u></p> <p>To receive the decisions of the Cabinet held on the 1st March, 2023.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p> |
| | <p><u>CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO</u></p> |
| No. 6 | <p><u>REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - 2022/2023, FORECAST OUTTURN TO 31ST MARCH 2023 (AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2022)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> |

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| | RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Members note the forecast application of reserves. (Option 1) |
| No. 7 | <p><u>CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, FORECAST FOR 2022/2023 FINANCIAL YEAR (AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council; and • Note the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding. (Option 1) |
| No. 8 | <p><u>BUSINESS RATES RELIEF – RETAIL, LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY RATES RELIEF – 2023/24</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Cabinet adopt the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief – 2023/24 scheme on behalf of the Council, to supplement the Council’s Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme. (Option 2)</p> |
| | <u>PLACE AND ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO</u> |
| No. 9 | <p><u>PROGRESS REPORT CONTRACTS OVER £500K</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the information included within the report be accepted (Option 1).</p> |
| No. 10 | <p><u>LOCAL AIR QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT – 2022 (FOR 2021)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Members note the content of the 2022 Air Quality Progress Report for Blaenau Gwent CBC in</p> |

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| | <p>relation to the continued monitoring and ongoing review of air quality within Blaenau Gwent by the Environmental Health Section in fulfilment of the Authority's statutory duties in compliance with Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.</p> |
| No. 11 | <p><u>ECO4 FLEXIBLE ELIGIBILITY - MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND JOINT 'STATEMENT OF INTENT'</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Members note the content of the report in relation to the implementation of ECO4 Flex in the borough.</p> |
| | <p><u>PLACE AND REGENERATION PORTFOLIO</u></p> |
| No. 12 | <p><u>BRYNMAWR PLACEMAKING PLAN</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.</p> <p>The Leader emphasised that progression of any projects contained within the Placemaking Plan would be subject to funding being identified.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Cabinet endorse the Brynmawr Placemaking Plan, its vision and core ambitions for the future. This will enable us to finalise the draft of the delivery plan and steps towards implementation of the projects that will be contained within it. (Option 2)</p> |
| No. 13 | <p><u>SHARED PROSPERITY FUND</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Members to endorse the SLA between BGCBC and RCTCBC, subject to clarification received from RCTCBC and for the Director of Regeneration and Community Services alongside the S151 Officer to be given delegated authority to</p> |

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| | accept revisions to the SLA to facilitate the implementation of the SPF within Blaenau Gwent. (Option 2) |
| | <u>PEOPLE & EDUCATION PORTFOLIO</u> |
| No. 14 | <p><u>EAS BUSINESS PLAN 2023-2025 (CONSULTATION VERSION – ACCESSIBLE)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report and business plan be accepted. (Option 1)</p> |
| No. 15 | <p><u>PROPOSAL TO CONSULT ON ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS RESOURCE BASE CAPACITY</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Cabinet support the associated consultation document and course of action. (Option 1)</p> |
| | <u>JOINT PORTFOLIO - PLACE AND ENVIRONMENT / PLACE AND REGENERATION</u> |
| No. 16 | <p><u>ADVANCED ENGINEERING CENTRE (HIVE) EBBW VALE</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 report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.</p> |

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| RESOLVED that the report which contained exempt information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted, and Option 1 be approved. |
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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

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

SUBJECT: **SPECIAL CABINET – 28TH APRIL, 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 – People & Social Services
Councillor H. Trollope

Cabinet Member – People & Education
Councillor S. Edmunds

WITH: Interim Chief Executive
Chief Officer Resources
Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services
Interim Corporate Director Social Services
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
Head of School Improvement & Inclusion
Chief Officer Customer and Commercial
Solicitor Commercial
Communications Officer

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

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

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| <p>No. 2</p> | <p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Councillor J.C. Morgan.</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>PLACE AND ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO</u></p> |
| <p>No. 4</p> | <p><u>FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE WASTE TRANSFER STATION AND HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE</u></p> <p>Due to the need to consider the following item as a matter of urgency, the Leader of the Council and the Presiding Member confirmed that the following matter can be considered under the Provisions of Paragraph 4(b), Section 100(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972.</p> <p>Consideration was given to the joint report of the Chief Officer Commercial and Customer, Chief Officer Resources and Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report and update be accepted on the proposed transfer of services from SVWS to the Council on 1st May, 2023 (including the transfer of assets and liabilities on or after the transfer date up to the point of winding up of the Company).</p> <p>It was noted that the estimated financial impact remains within the budget envelope as previously agreed.</p> <p>Approval was provided for the delegation of Officers to negotiate and agree the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • final terms of the hiving up agreement and any other ancillary agreements which may be required in the future to give effect to the transfer between the Council and Silent Valley Waste Services Limited; and • the Deed of Performance (including the financial commitment) between the Council and Natural Resources Wales to support transfer of the Environmental Permit. <p>The shareholder resolution as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report be approved.</p> |

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: SPECIAL CABINET – 3RD MAY, 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 and Regeneration
Councillor J.C. Morgan**

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

**Cabinet Member – People & Education
Councillor S. Edmunds**

WITH:
Interim Chief Executive
Chief Officer Resources
Interim Corporate Director Social Services
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
Head of School Improvement & Inclusion
Head of Partnerships & Governance
Chief Officer Customer and Commercial
Team Manager – Trading Standards and Licensing
Communications Officer

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

| <u>ITEM</u> | <u>SUBJECT</u> |
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| 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 was received. |
| No. 3 | <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u> No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported. |
| | <u>DECISIONS</u> |
| No. 4 | <u>CABINET</u> Consideration was given to the decisions of the Cabinet Meeting held on 19 th April, 2023. RESOLVED that the decisions be received as a true record of proceedings. |
| | <u>PEOPLE AND EDUCATION PORTFOLIO</u> |
| No. 5 | <u>BLAENAU GWENT RESPONSE TO ESTYN LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES (LGES) INSPECTION</u> Consideration was given to the report of the Head of School Improvement and Inclusion. RESOLVED that the report and information as provided be accepted and to receive future monitoring reports against the action plan and self evaluation report (Option 2). |

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| <p>No. 6</p> | <p><u>CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION SERVICES ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of School Improvement and Inclusion.</p> <p>The Leader referred to the location of schools noted by Wards in Appendix 1 of the report and advised that Badminton was no longer a Ward in Blaenau Gwent. The Tredegar, Central and West Ward had been renamed to Tredegar Ward, Abertillery and Six Bells Wards had now been combined as had Rassau and Garnlydan. The Leader asked if this could be amended within the Appendix.</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 2).</p> |
| | <p><u>PLACE AND ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO</u></p> |
| <p>No. 7</p> | <p><u>ENFORCEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ENERGY PERFORMANCE OF BUILDINGS (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2012 (AS AMENDED)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager - Trading Standards and Licensing.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the proposal to provide reciprocal enforcement arrangements with Torfaen County Borough Council, as described in the report be agreed (Option 1).</p> |

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: CABINET – 7TH JUNE, 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 and Regeneration
Councillor J.C. Morgan**

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

**Cabinet Member – People & Education
Councillor S. Edmunds**

WITH: Chief Officer Resources
Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services
Head of School Improvement & Inclusion
Head of Democratic Services, Partnerships & Governance
Chief Officer Customer and Commercial
Interim Head of Childrens' Service
Communications Officer

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

| <u>ITEM</u> | <u>SUBJECT</u> |
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| 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:- Interim Chief Executive Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance Interim Corporate Director Social Services |
| No. 3 | <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u> No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported. |
| | <u>DECISIONS</u> |
| No. 4 | <u>CABINET</u> Consideration was given to the decisions of the Cabinet Meeting held on 19 th April, 2023. RESOLVED that the decisions be received as a true record of proceedings. |
| No. 5 | <u>SPECIAL CABINET</u> Consideration was given to the decisions of the Cabinet Meeting held on 28 th April, 2023. |

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| | RESOLVED that the decisions be received as a true record of proceedings. | | | | | | | | | |
| No. 6 | <p><u>SPECIAL CABINET</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the decisions of the Cabinet Meeting held on 3rd May, 2023.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the decisions be received as a true record of proceedings.</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| | <p><u>GENERAL MATTERS</u></p> | | | | | | | | | |
| No. 7 | <p><u>CONFERENCES, COURSES, INVITATIONS AND EVENTS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the following:-</p> <p><u>Leadership Programme for Councillors in Wales 2023/24</u></p> <p>RESOLVED that approval be given for 2 Members to attend the 2023/24 Leadership Programme for Councillors in Wales.</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| | <p><u>CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO</u></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 BG RFC</td> <td>£100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td>Chillax</td> <td>£100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.</td> <td>Abertillery Workmen's Institute</td> <td>£100</td> </tr> </table> | 1. | Abertillery BG RFC | £100 | 2. | Chillax | £100 | 3. | Abertillery Workmen's Institute | £100 |
| 1. | Abertillery BG RFC | £100 | | | | | | | | |
| 2. | Chillax | £100 | | | | | | | | |
| 3. | Abertillery Workmen's Institute | £100 | | | | | | | | |

Llanhilleth Ward - Councillor N. Parsons

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| 1. | Knit and Natter | £100 |
| 2. | Abertillery Bluebirds AFC | £250 |
| 3. | Abertillery Operatic Society | £100 |

Llanhilleth Ward - Councillor H. Cunningham

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| 1. | Soffryd Community Centre | £265 |
| 2. | Brynithel Community Centre | £265 |
| 3. | Llanhilleth Miners Institute | £265 |
| 4. | Aberbeeg Community Centre | £265 |

RESOLVED accordingly.

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

No. 9

FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT UP TO MARCH 2023

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager – Performance and Democratic.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and suggestions were provided to the content of the Finance and Performance Report in order to make it more efficient and effective as a management tool (Option 1).

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: SPECIAL CABINET – 21ST JUNE, 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 – People & Education
Councillor S. Edmunds**

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

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

WITH: Interim Chief Executive
Chief Officer Resources
Interim Corporate Director of Education
Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
Service Manager Children’s Services
Communications Officer

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

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

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| <p>No. 2</p> | <p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>The following apologies for absence were received:-</p> <p>Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services Chief Officer Customer & Commercial</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>PEOPLE & EDUCATION PORTFOLIO</u></p> |
| <p>No. 4</p> | <p><u>OUTTURN REPORT - CONSULTATION ON ALN RESOURCE BASE CAPACITY</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and the Outturn Report, associated documents and course of action, including proceeding to Statutory Notice be accepted (Option 1).</p> |

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
- 28th FEBRUARY, 2023**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: Councillor T. Smith (Chair)

Councillors J. Morgan, J.P.
C. Bainton
D. Bevan
J. Holt
G.A. Davies
D. Wilkshire
G. Thomas

WITH: Interim Chief Executive
Corporate Director of Education
Interim Head of Children's Services
Head of Adult's Services
Head of Governance & Partnerships
Head of School Improvement & Inclusion
Service Manger Education Transformation & Business Change
Service Manager Young People & Partnerships
Strategic Education Improvement Manager
Press & Publicity Officer
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer

AND: Councillor H. Trollope – Cabinet Member People & Social Services

Mr. Mark Champion) Estyn
Mr. Farrukh Khan)

| <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 Councillor K. Chaplin and Mr. Tim Baxter.</p> | |
| No. 3 | <p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>Councillor D. Wilkshire declared an interim in Item No. 9 - Business Case to purchase 2 properties for use as Residential Children's Homes.</p> | |
| No. 4 | <p><u>PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The decisions of the People Scrutiny Committee held on 17th January, 2023 were submitted.</p> <p>It was reported that Councillor J. Holt's apologies had been omitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p> | |
| No. 5 | <p><u>ACTION SHEET – PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17th JANUARY, 2023</u></p> <p>The Action sheet arising from the meeting held on 17th January, 2023, was submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the action sheet be noted.</p> | |
| No. 6 | <p><u>BLAENAU GWENT ESTYN LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES (LGES) INSPECTION OUTCOME</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate</p> | |

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| | <p>Director of Education.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted as provided (Option 2).</p> | |
| No. 7 | <p><u>BLAENAU GWENT ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR NURSERY AND STATUTORY EDUCATION 2024/25</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Education / Service Manager Education Transformation and Business Change.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the policy document be accepted (Option 1).</p> | |
| No. 8 | <p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 18TH APRIL, 2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Scrutiny & Democratic Officer.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Forward Programme for the meeting 18th April 2023 be noted.</p> | |
| No. 9 | <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, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Interim Head of Children’s Services.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report which</p> | |

contained information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted; and the Committee:

- Support the business case for the purchase of 2 properties to be developed into a children's residential home. The identified revenues savings to be built into Bridging the Gap to support the Council's budget pressures in 2024/25 and future years (Part 1 Option 1); and
- Support the purchase of the 2 properties above market value and the use of the capital contingency fund to fund the £65,000 shortfall in capital costs for the purchase (Part 2 Option 1)

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE
8TH MARCH, 2023**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: MS JOANNE ABSALOM (CHAIR)

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

WITH: Corporate Director of Education
Interim Corporate Director of Social Services
Chief Officer Resources
Chief Officer Commercial & Customer
Senior Finance Business Partner
Audit & Risk Manager
Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships
Interim Head of Children’s Services
Service Manager Performance & Democratic
Service Manager Customer Experience & Transformation
Professional Lead – Internal Audit
Chief Operating Officer (SRS)
Deputy Chief Operating Officer (SRS)
Data Protection & Governance Officer

AND: Mike Jones) Audit Wales
Charlotte Owen)

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

| <u>ITEM</u> | <u>SUBJECT</u> | <u>ACTION</u> |
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| <p>No. 1</p> | <p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p> | |
| <p>No. 2</p> | <p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Councillor J. Wilkins.</p> | |
| <p>No. 3</p> | <p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declaration of interest was reported:-</p> <p>Councillor W. Hodgins – Item No. 8 Shared Resource Services (SRS).</p> | |
| <p>No. 4</p> | <p><u>GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The decisions of the Governance & Audit Committee held on 30th January, 2023 were submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p> | |
| <p>No. 5</p> | <p><u>ACTION SHEET – 30TH JANUARY, 2023</u></p> <p>The Action Sheet arising from the meeting held on 30th January, 2023 was submitted and the following points were raised:-</p> <p><u>Item 8 - Forward Work Programme – mapping exercise</u> Members had received a briefing note and a verbal update from the Audit & Risk Manager on the results of the mapping exercise.</p> <p><u>Item 6 – Forward Work Programme – current position on the Statement of Accounts 2021/22</u> Members had received a briefing note and verbal update from the Senior Finance Business Partner with regard to the Statement of Accounts 2021/22.</p> | |

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| | RESOLVED that the Action sheet be accepted. | |
| No. 6 | <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. 7 | <p><u>BLAENAU GWENT ESTYN LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES (LGES) INSPECTION OUTCOME</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Governance & Audit Committee approved Option 2; and that further assurances around the process for measuring success be provided to the Governance & Audit Committee in future monitoring and reporting.</p> | |
| No. 8 | <p><u>SHARED RESOURCE SERVICE (SRS)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Commercial & Customer.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee approved Option1, namely</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) To support the position statement confirming Audit and Governance arrangements were in place against the objectives set out in the Business Case; and (b) To receive annual updates as part of the ongoing partnership with SRS. | |

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| <p>No. 9</p> | <p><u>AUDIT WALES: ASSURANCE AND RISK ASSESSMENT REVIEW – BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources and the Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee approved Option 2, namely:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided comment on the Audit Wales review and Next Steps, identified in paragraph 2.5, to address the recommendation for Officers to implement in order to provide continuous improvement (Option 2); and • a report on the process for implementation of the Audit Wales recommendations be prepared to provide further reassurance to the Governance & Audit Committee. | |
| <p>No. 10</p> | <p><u>AUDIT WALES: CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING FOLLOW-UP – BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Interim Corporate Director of Social Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee approved Option 2, namely:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided comment on the Audit Wales review and Next Steps, identified in paragraph 2.5, to address the recommendation for Officers to implement in order to provide continuous improvement (Option 2); and • a report on the process for implementation of the Audit Wales recommendations be prepared to provide further reassurance to the Governance & Audit Committee. | |
| <p>No. 11</p> | <p><u>AUDIT WALES: ‘A MISSED OPPORTUNITY’ – SOCIAL ENTERPRISES</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of</p> | |

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| | <p>Regeneration & Community Services and the Interim Corporate Director of Social Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee approved Option 2, namely:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided comment on the Audit Wales review and Next Steps, identified in paragraph 2.4, to address the recommendation for Officers to implement in order to provide continuous improvement (Option 2); and • a report on the process for implementation of the Audit Wales recommendations be prepared to provide further reassurance to the Governance & Audit Committee. | |
| <p>No. 12</p> | <p><u>AUDIT WALES: SPRINGING FORWARD – BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources, the Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships, the Head of Organisation Development and the Director of Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee approved Option 2, namely:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided comment on the Audit Wales review and Next Steps, identified in paragraph 2.6, to address the recommendation for Officers to implement in order to provide continuous improvement (Option 2); and • a report on the process for implementation of the Audit Wales recommendations be prepared to provide further reassurance to the Governance & Audit Committee. | |
| <p>No. 13</p> | <p><u>AUDIT WALES: ‘TIME FOR CHANGE’ – POVERTY IN WALES</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 and the Committee</p> | |

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| | <p>approved Option 2, namely:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided comment on the Audit Wales review and Next Steps, identified in paragraph 2.6, to address the recommendation for Officers to implement in order to provide continuous improvement (Option 2); and • a report on the process for implementation of the Audit Wales recommendations be prepared to provide further reassurance to the Governance & Audit Committee. | |
| <p>No. 14</p> | <p><u>AUDIT WALES: 'TOGETHER WE CAN' COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial & Customer and the Head of Governance, Partnerships & Democratic Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee approved Option 2, namely:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided comment on the Audit Wales review and Next Steps, identified in paragraph 2.5, to address the recommendation for Officers to implement in order to provide continuous improvement (Option 2); and • a report on the process for implementation of the Audit Wales recommendations be prepared to provide further reassurance to the Governance & Audit Committee. | |

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 14TH MARCH, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M. CROSS

Councillors P. Baldwin
 S. Behr
 J. Gardener
 J. Hill
 J. Holt
 J.P. Morgan
 D. Rowberry

WITH: Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
 Team Manager - Streetscene
 Service Manager Business and Regeneration
 Service Manager – Development and Estates
 Principal Project Officer
 Communications Officer
 Scrutiny and Democratic Officer

| <u>ITEM</u> | <u>SUBJECT</u> |
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| No. 1 | <p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p> |
| No. 2 | <p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>The following apologies for absence was received:-</p> <p>Councillor R. Leadbeater; and Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities.</p> |

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| <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 31st January, 2023.</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>BRYNMAWR PLACEMAKING PLAN</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and supported the Brynmawr Placemaking Plan, its vision and core ambitions for the future and recommend approval by Cabinet. This would enable the Authority to finalise the draft of the delivery plan and steps towards implementation of the projects that will be contained within it (Option 2).</p> |
| <p>No. 7</p> | <p><u>SHARED PROSPERITY FUND</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Business and Regeneration.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and supported and recommend that Cabinet endorse the SLA between BGCBC and RCTCBC subject to clarification received from RCTCBC and for the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services alongside the S151 Officer to be given delegated authority to accept revisions to the SLA to facilitate the implementation of the SPF within Blaenau Gwent (Option 2).</p> |

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| No. 8 | <u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 25TH APRIL, 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 to be held on 25 th April, 2023 be approved (Option 2). |
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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 – 16TH MARCH, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. WILKINS (CHAIR)

Councillors J. Thomas
 C. Bainton
 M. Day
 G. Humphreys
 C. Smith
 T. Smith

WITH: Interim Chief Executive
 Interim Corporate Director Social Services
 Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
 Chief Officer Resources
 Service Manager Accountancy
 Head of Governance and Partnerships
 Head of Organisational Development
 Service Manager – Customer Experience and Benefits
 Service Manager – Infrastructure
 Policy Officer (Engagement & Equality)
 Scrutiny and Democratic Officer

| <u>ITEM</u> | <u>SUBJECT</u> |
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| 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> |

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| | <p>The following apologies for absence were received:-</p> <p>Councillor E. Jones; Councillor R. Leadbeater; and Chief Officer Customer and Commercial</p> |
| 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 2nd February, 2023.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p> |
| No. 5 | <p><u>SPECIAL CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the decisions of the meeting held on 21st February, 2023.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p> |
| No. 6 | <p><u>MEETING SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE EQUALITY ACT 2010: ANNUAL REPORTING AND IMPACT ASSESSING</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Governance and Partnerships.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and</p> <p>a) Annual Reporting – considered the Annual Report being presented for 22/23 and noted progress made against the Council’s Equality Objectives; and</p> <p>b) Impact Assessing – noted the new IIA process, and that member briefing sessions for all elected members would be</p> |

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| | <p>arranged to cover the specific duty for assessing impact to include, the process, examples of its use, and its role in decision-making.</p> |
| No. 7 | <p><u>REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - 2022/2023, FORECAST OUTTURN TO 31ST MARCH 2023 (AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2022)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Resources Officer.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted (Option 1) and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report; and • noted the forecast application of reserves. |
| No. 8 | <p><u>CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, FORECAST FOR 2022/2023 FINANCIAL YEAR (AS AT 31 DECEMBER 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 (Option 1) and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided the appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report; • continued to support appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council; and • noted the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding. |
| No. 9 | <p><u>PROGRESS REPORT CONTRACTS OVER £500K</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and recommended endorsement by Cabinet (Option 1).</p> |
| No. 10 | <p><u>TREASURY MANAGEMENT – TREASURY STRATEGY STATEMENT,</u></p> |

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| | <p><u>INVESTMENT STRATEGY & MRP POLICY STATEMENT 2023/2024 (INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS)</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 considered 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) and do not consider any amendments, prior to submission to Council for formal approval (Option 2).</p> |
| <p>No. 11</p> | <p><u>CAPITAL STRATEGY 2023/2024</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 considered the Capital Strategy for the 2023/24 financial year (attached as appendix 1) and do not consider any amendments, prior to submission to Council for formal approval (Option 1).</p> |
| <p>No. 12</p> | <p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 27TH APRIL, 2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and Members agreed the Forward Programme for the meeting on 27th April, 2023, as presented (Option 2).</p> |

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 27TH MARCH, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. WILKINS (CHAIR)

Councillors C. Bainton
 D. Bevan
 E. Jones
 J.C. Morgan
 L. Parsons
 C. Smith
 L. Winnett

ALSO: Scrutiny Chairs & Vice-Chairs

Vice-Chair of Corporate & Performance Scrutiny Committee
 Councillor J. Thomas

Chair and Vice-Chair of Partnerships Scrutiny Committee
 Councillor W. Hodgins & P. Baldwin

Chair of People Scrutiny Committee
 Councillor T. Smith

Chair and Vice-Chair of Places Scrutiny Committee
 Councillor M. Cross & R. Leadbeater

**AND: Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships (Statutory Head of Democratic Services)
 Organisational Development Manager**

| ITEM | SUBJECT | ACTION |
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| No. 1 | <p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p> | |
| No. 2 | <p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <p>Councillors Jen Morgan and M. Day Service Manager, Performance & Democratic</p> | |
| No. 3 | <p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p> | |
| No. 4 | <p><u>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th November, 2021.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be received as a true record of proceedings.</p> | |
| No. 5 | <p><u>INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES ANNUAL REPORT 2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and that the determinations in the final IRPW Annual Report for 2023/2024 be noted.</p> | |
| No. 6 | <p><u>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES 2022/23</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Statutory Head of Democratic Services.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and endorsed Option 1; namely that the report be recommended to Council for approval.</p> | |

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| <p>No. 7</p> | <p><u>DIVERSE COUNCIL ACTION PLAN UPDATE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships and the Service Manager Performance and Democratic.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and endorsed Option 1; namely that the Committee was satisfied with the action taken to date, identified in Appendix 1, and did not make any amendments to future actions.</p> | |
| <p>No. 8</p> | <p><u>COUNCIL'S SUITE OF MEMBER DEVELOPMENT POLICIES</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorsed Option 1; namely that the suite of Policies as set out in the appendices be agreed prior to approval at Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) | |
| <p>No. 9</p> | <p><u>BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL PETITIONS PROTOCOL 2023-27</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorsed Option 1; namely that the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Petitions Protocol 2023-2027 (found at Appendix 1) be agreed prior to approval at Council.</p> | |

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28TH MARCH, 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
- D. Woods

WITH: Head of School Improvement & Inclusion
Service Manager Performance & Democratic
Professional Lead for Strategic Partnerships
Scrutiny and Democratic Officer

AND: Ed Pryce) EAS
Jonathan Keohane)

| <u>ITEM</u> | <u>SUBJECT</u> |
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| 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. |

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| 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>PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The decisions of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on, 7th February, 2023 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the decisions be accepted as a true recording of proceedings.</p> |
| No. 5 | <p><u>ACTION SHEET – 7TH FEBRUARY, 2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Action Sheet.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the action sheet be noted.</p> |
| No. 6 | <p><u>EAS BUSINESS PLAN 2023-2025 (CONSULTATION VERSION – ACCESSIBLE)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted; and Members considered the plan and offered further comment for consideration by the EAS; written feedback on the draft Business Plan should be provided to the EAS Managing Director following the scrutiny meeting. This feedback will be taken into consideration in the final version of the Business Plan. (Option 2)</p> |
| No. 7 | <p><u>GWENT WELL-BEING PLAN 2023-28</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Professional Lead for Strategic Partnerships, and the Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the Gwent Well-being Plan 2023-28 be endorsed as presented (Option 1).</p> |

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE
26TH APRIL, 2023**

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

WITH: Chief Officer Resources
Audit & Risk Manager
Senior Finance Business Partner
Interim Director of Social Services
Service Manager Performance & Democratic
Strategic Education Improvement Manager
Data Protection & Governance Officer

AND: Mike Jones, Audit Wales

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

| <u>ITEM</u> | <u>SUBJECT</u> | <u>ACTION</u> |
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| 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> | |

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| | <p>Apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <p>Mr Martin Veale Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships</p> | |
| No. 3 | <p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interests reported.</p> | |
| No. 4 | <p><u>GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The decisions of the Governance & Audit Committee held on 8th March, 2023 were submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p> | |
| No. 5 | <p><u>ACTION SHEET – 8TH MARCH, 2023</u></p> <p>The Action Sheet arising from the meeting held on 8th March, 2023 was submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Action sheet be noted.</p> | |
| No. 6 | <p><u>CODE OF GOVERNANCE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee approve and adopt the revised Code of Governance (Option 1).</p> | |
| No. 7 | <p><u>AUDIT PLAN OUTTURN 2022-23</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee noted the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the levels of audit coverage in each service area, | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the plan outturn for the financial year, and • the performance of the Internal Audit Service for the financial year 2022/23. | |
| No. 8 | <p><u>BLAENAU GWENT RESPONSE TO ESTYN LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES (LGES) INSPECTION</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Head of School Improvement and Inclusion.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee was assured that the action plan in response to Estyn’s recommendations and the structure of the revised Self Evaluation Report would appropriately respond to the Estyn Recommendations (Option 1).</p> | |
| No. 9 | <p><u>AUDIT WALES REVIEWS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSES</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Service Manager Performance and Democratic.</p> <p>Councillor Jules Gardner joined the meeting at this juncture.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Committee was assured that the actions outlined in Appendix 1 against each proposal for improvement would appropriately respond to the Audit Wales findings (Option 1).</p> | |

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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 – 27TH APRIL, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. WILKINS (CHAIR)

Councillors J. Thomas
 C. Bainton
 M. Day
 G. Humphreys
 E. Jones
 R. Leadbeater
 C. Smith
 T. Smith

WITH: Interim Chief Executive
 Chief Officer Resources
 Interim Corporate Director Social Services
 Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services
 Chief Officer Commercial and Customer
 Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
 Service Manager Commercial & Business Development
 Head of Governance & Partnerships
 Service Manager Performance and Democratic
 Service Manager Customer Experience & Benefits
 Team Leader - Performance
 Scrutiny and Democratic Officer
 Communications Officer

| <u>ITEM</u> | <u>SUBJECT</u> |
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| 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> |

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| | No apologies for absence were reported. |
| 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>SPECIAL CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the decisions of the meeting held on 16th March, 2023.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p> |
| No. 5 | <p><u>FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT UP TO MARCH 2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Performance and Democratic.</p> <p>It was proposed that an Executive Summary be created using the report infographics to be used as the public facing document. The Summary should provide readers with details of the full document if they wished to read the full version.</p> <p>This proposal was AGREED and seconded and</p> <p>The Committee thereupon AGREED that the report be accepted and provided suggestions to the content of the Finance and Performance Report in order to make it more efficient and effective as a management tool for consideration by Cabinet (Option 1).</p> |

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE PRESIDING MEMBER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
- 28th APRIL, 2023**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: Councillor T. Smith (Chair)

Councillors C. Bainton
D. Bevan
K. Chaplin
J. Holt

Mr. T. Baxter (Co-opted Member)

WITH: Head of School Improvement & Inclusion
Service Manger Education Transformation & Business Change
Service Manager Young People & Partnerships
Interim Corporate Director of Social Services
Interim Head of Children’s Services
Team Leader Performance
Sharon Rowlands
Senior HR Business Partner
Press & Publicity Officer
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> | |

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| <p>No. 2</p> | <p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were reported for Councillors Jen Morgan, J.P. and G.A. Davies.</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>PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The decisions of the People Scrutiny Committee held on 28th February, 2023 were submitted.</p> <p>It was reported that the word ‘interim’ at Item No. 3 (Declarations of Interest and Dispensations) should be amended to read ‘interest’.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p> | |
| <p>No. 5</p> | <p><u>ACTION SHEET – PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28TH FEBRUARY, 2023</u></p> <p>No actions arising.</p> | |
| <p>No. 6</p> | <p><u>CONSULTATION ON ALN RESOURCES BASE CAPACITY</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Service Manager, Education Transformation & Business Change.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the consultation document be accepted (Option 1).</p> | |
| <p>No. 7</p> | <p><u>BLAENAU GWENT RESPONSE TO ESTYN LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES (LGES) INSPECTION</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Head of School Improvement & Inclusion.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report and</p> | |

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| | information provided be accepted, and to receive future monitoring reports against the action plan and self-evaluation report. (Option 2) | |
| No. 8 | <p><u>CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION SERVICES</u> <u>ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23</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 presented. (Option 2)</p> | |

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

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

SUBJECT: **GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE**
21ST JUNE, 2023

REPORT OF: **DEMOCRATIC OFFICER**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S. BEHR (VICE-CHAIR IN THE CHAIR
Item Nos 1 – 4 only)

Councillors D. Bevan
K. Chaplin
W. Hodgins
C. Smith
J. Wilkins

Joanne Absalom
Martin Veale

WITH: Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services
Chief Officer Resources
Chief Officer Commercial & Customer
Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships
Professional Lead – Internal Audit
Solicitor

AND: Alice King, Audit Wales
Deborah Woods, 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. | |

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| <p>No. 2</p> | <p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from the Audit and Risk Manager and the Data Protection & Governance Officer.</p> | |
| <p>No. 3</p> | <p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interests or dispensations reported.</p> | |
| <p>No. 4</p> | <p><u>APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR 2023/2024</u></p> <p>Nominations were sought for the appointment of Chair of the Governance & Audit Committee for 2023/2024.</p> <p>A Member proposed that Ms Joanne Absalom be appointed to the role, and this proposal was seconded.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Ms Joanne Absalom be appointed Chair of the Governance & Audit Committee for 2023/2024.</p> <p>Ms. Absalom took the Chair at this juncture.</p> <p>It was agreed that Item No. 11 – Civic Centre Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) would be considered at this juncture.</p> | |
| <p>No.11</p> | <p><u>CIVIC CENTRE INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)</u></p> <p>Members considered the report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services.</p> <p>Following a discussion, the following actions were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The final costs associated with the demolition of the Civic Centre be provided. ➤ Updated footfall figures relating to visits to all the community hubs be provided for February – June 2023 including the nature of usage and how residents were interacting through these channels. ➤ The report relating to the new Council Operating Model which was agreed at Council on 25th March, 2021 be circulated. | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Further information be provided in relation to parking/access issues, specifically disabled access at community hubs. ➤ Visitor footfall in Ebbw Vale Town Centre to be provided. <p>It was, thereupon, unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and it was confirmed that the Committee was assured that an Integrated Impact Assessment had been completed in line with legislation to be formally agreed at Council.</p> | |
| No. 5 | <p><u>GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The decisions of the Governance & Audit Committee held on 26th April, 2023 were submitted.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p> | |
| No. 6 | <p><u>ACTION SHEET – 26TH APRIL, 2023</u></p> <p>The Action Sheet arising from the meeting held on 26th April, 2023 was submitted.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Action sheet be noted.</p> | |
| No. 7 | <p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2023/2024</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the proposed Forward Work Programme 2023/2024.</p> <p>Following a discussion, it was agreed that the following items be included within the Forward Work Programme 2023/2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd – to provide detail around the finalisation of the in-house transfer. | |

| | | |
|--------------|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Annual Report of the Governance & Audit Committee. ➤ Review how Committee can be assured of progress against External and Internal Audit recommendations. ➤ A discussion to take place with appropriate officers regarding the provision of a report relating to Artificial Intelligence. <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 2 be endorsed, namely that the Forward Work Programme be approved, subject to the above amendments.</p> | |
| No. 8 | <p><u>STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2021/2022</u></p> <p>At this juncture, Deborah Woods the new Audit Lead for Blaenau Gwent was introduced to the Committee.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources gave a verbal update relating to the 2021/2022 Statement of Accounts and advised the Committee that subject to Audit Wales competing their audit including the ISA 260 and audit opinion, the 2021/2022 Statement of Accounts would be considered at the Committee meeting on 12th July, 2023.</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p> | |
| No. 9 | <p><u>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND RISK MANAGER 2022/2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Audit and Risk Manager.</p> <p>Following a discussion, it was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The wording of the Welsh translation advert relating to the lay member vacancy be revised, if required. ➤ An update be provided on the three large investigations that had commenced during the year, at the appropriate juncture. | |

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| | <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the Annual Audit Opinion of the Audit and Risk Manager be noted, namely that based on the findings of the audit work undertaken during 2022/23, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's system of internal control during the financial year 2022/23 operated to a level which gave Reasonable Assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's framework of governance, risk management and control.</p> | |
| <p>No. 10</p> | <p><u>INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023-2028</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the basis for audit selection / prioritisation as described in section 2 of the report be noted, and the audit plan be approved, deeming it to provide sufficient coverage upon which the Audit and Risk Manager could provide an annual audit opinion, enabling the Governance & Audit Committee to fulfil its assurance role.</p> | |
| <p>No. 12</p> | <p><u>TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS</u></p> <p>Members considered the time of future Governance & Audit Committee meetings.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that all future Governance & Audit Committees commence at 9.30 a.m.</p> | |

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Agenda Item 30

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 19.06.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 19.06.2023

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **20th July, 2023**

Report Subject: **Proposed Council Forward Work Programme 2023-24**

Portfolio Holder: **All Portfolio Holders**

Report Submitted by: **Ceri Edwards-Brown - Democratic Officer**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance & Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| July 2023 | | | | | June/July 2023 | July 2023 | 20.07.23 | |

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present and seek approval for the Council Forward Work Programme for 2023-24 (Appendix 1).

2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Work Programme is a key aspect of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and supports the requirements of the Constitution.
 - 2.2 The topics set out in the Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's Corporate Plan, agreed by the Council in October 2022, corporate documents and supporting business plans.
 - 2.3 All Scrutiny Committees and the Cabinet Forward Work Programmes have been aligned to the Council Forward Work Programme.
 - 2.4 As the document is fluid there is flexibility to allow for regular review between the Presiding Member and the Council.

3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 The Work Programmes have been endorsed by the relevant departments of the Council, and all Scrutiny Committees and the Council will agree their work programmes as part of the June/July cycle of meetings.
 - 3.2 **Option 1**
To agree the Forward Work Programme for Council for 2023-24.

 - Option 2**
To suggest any amendments prior to agreeing the Forward Work Programme.



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Council
DRAFT Forward Work
Programme 2023/24

Presiding Member: Councillor C. Smith

Deputy Presiding Member: Councillor D. Wilkshire

Council Forward Work Programme 2023/24

Meeting Date: Thursday 20th July 2023

Report Submission Deadline Date to Ceri Edwards-Brown: Friday 7th July 2023

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

| Report Title | Purpose of Report | Lead Officer | Other Committee Meeting Date |
|--|--|---------------------------|--|
| Portfolio: Leader / Corporate and Performance | | | |
| Council Forward Work Programme 2023/24 | Approval To approve the Council Forward Work Programme 2023/24 | Democratic Officer | Scrutiny FWPs – June/July |
| Annual Scrutiny Report 2022/23 | Approval To approve the Annual Scrutiny Report. | Gemma Wasley | N/A |
| Schedule of Members Remuneration 2023/24 | Approval To consider and agree the Schedule of Members Remuneration for 2023/24. | Andrea Prosser | Democratic Services – 03.07.23 |
| Annual Report of the Head of Democratic Services 2023 | Approval To approve | Sarah King | N/A |
| IVF Policy | Approval To approve the policy | Andrea Prosser | N/A |
| Fire Safety Policy | Approval To approve the policy. | Andrea Prosser | Corporate Overview & Performance – 22.6.23 |
| Diverse Council Action Plan Policy | Approval To approve action plan. | Sarah King / Gemma Wasley | N/A |
| Petitions Protocol Policy | Approval To approve the policy | Sarah King | N/A |
| Shortlisting – JNC Officers – 7 th March Policy | To approve | | |

Council Forward Work Programme 2023/24

| Report Title | Purpose of Report | Lead Officer | Other Committee Meeting Date |
|---|---|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Appointments Committee – JNC Officers – 21 st March Policy | Approval | | |
| Portfolio: Deputy Leader / Environment | | | |
| Civic Centre Closure – Integrated Impact Assessment | Approval | Bernadette Elias / Ellie Fry | Governance and Audit – 21.06.23 |
| Highways Asset Management Plan | Approval To approve the Highways Asset Management Plan. | Clive Rogers | Place Scrutiny Committee – 22.6.23 |
| Silent Valley Waste Services | Approval To approve | Bernadette Elias | |

Council Forward Work Programme 2023/24

Meeting Date: Thursday 21st September 2023

Report Submission Deadline Date to Ceri Edwards-Brown: Friday 1st September 2023

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

| Report Title | Purpose of Report | Lead Officer | Other Committee Meeting Date |
|--|--|----------------|---|
| Portfolio: Leader / Corporate and Performance | | | |
| Annual Amendments to the Constitution | Approval To approve the updates to the Council's Constitution | Andrea Jones | N/A |
| Treasury Management – Outturn 2022/23 | Budget Monitoring Provides the Treasury Management out-turn position for the 2021/22 financial year, including details of all Treasury management activities undertaken during the year. | Rhian Hayden | Corporate Overview and Performance – 14.09.23 |
| Statement of Payments made to Elected Members | Approval To consider and agree the publication of the Statement of Payments made to Members. | Andrea Prosser | Democratic Services – date to be confirmed |
| Portfolio: People and Social Services | | | |
| Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2022/23 | Performance Monitoring Members to receive the Director of Social Services Annual report 2022/23. | Tanya Evans | People Scrutiny Committee – 19 th September 2023 |

Council Forward Work Programme 2023/24

SPECIAL Meeting Date: October – Tuesday, 24th October, 2023

Report Submission Deadline Date to Ceri Edwards-Brown: Monday, 9th October, 2023

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

| Report Title | Purpose of Report | Lead Officer | Other Committee Meeting Date |
|--|--|----------------|--|
| Portfolio: Leader / Corporate and Performance | | | |
| Annual Self-Assessment of Council Performance 2022/23 To be published by 31 st October each year | Approval To approve the Assessment of Performance. | Sarah King | Corporate and Performance Scrutiny Committee – Date to be confirmed Governance & Audit – 18.10.26 |
| Health and Safety Annual Review | Approval To agree the review. | Andrea Prosser | Corporate Overview and Performance – 14.9.23 |

Council Forward Work Programme 2023/24

Meeting Date: Thursday 23rd November 2023

Report Submission Deadline Date to Ceri Edwards-Brown: Friday 3rd November 2023

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

| Report Title | Purpose of Report | Lead Officer | Other Committee Meeting Date |
|---|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Portfolio: Leader / Corporate and Performance | | | |
| Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Draft Annual Report | Approval To inform Members of the proposals contained with the draft report of the Independent Remuneration | Andrea Prosser | Democratic Services – 13.11.23 |
| Diverse Council Action Plan | Approval | Gemma Wasley | Democratic Services – 13.11.23 |
| Portfolio: People & Social Services | | | |
| Regional Partnership Board Area Plan | Approval To endorse the Area Plan. | Tanya Evans / Phill Diamond | N/A |

Council Forward Work Programme 2023/24

Meeting Date: Thursday 25th January 2024

Report Submission Deadline Date to Ceri Edwards-Brown: Friday 5th January 2024

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

| Report Title | Purpose of Report | Lead Officer | Other Committee Meeting Date |
|--|--|--------------|---|
| Portfolio: Leader / Corporate and Performance | | | |
| Treasury Management – Mid-Year Review | Budget Monitoring To scrutinise the Treasury Management activities carried out by the Authority during the first half of the 2023/24 financial year. | Rhian Hayden | Corporate and Performance Scrutiny Committee – 18.01.24 |
| | | | |
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Council Forward Work Programme 2023/24

SPECIAL Meeting Date: February 2024 – Date to be confirmed

Report Submission Deadline Date to Ceri Edwards-Brown:

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

| Report Title | Purpose of Report | Lead Officer | Other Committee Meeting Date |
|--|--|--------------|---|
| Portfolio: Leader / Corporate and Performance | | | |
| Revenue Budget 2024/25 | Approval To approve the Revenue Budget. | Rhian Hayden | Corporate and Performance Scrutiny Committee – Cabinet – |
| Fees & Charges Register 2024/25 | Approval To approve the Fees and Charges Register. | Rhian Hayden | N/A |

Council Forward Work Programme 2023/24

Meeting Date: Thursday 21st March 2024

Report Submission Deadline Date to Ceri Edwards-Brown: Friday 1st March 2024

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

| Report Title | Purpose of Report | Lead Officer | Other Committee Meeting Date |
|--|---|----------------|---|
| Portfolio: Corporate Services | | | |
| Treasury Management – Strategy Statement 2024/25 | Budget Monitoring To present the Treasury Management Strategy, Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy recommended for adoption in the 2024/25 financial year. | Rhian Hayden | Corporate and Performance Scrutiny Committee – 14.03.24 |
| Capital Strategy Review | Performance Monitoring To consider the implementation of the Capital Strategy. | Rhian Hayden | Corporate and Performance Scrutiny Committee – 14.03.24 |
| Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | Approval To seek approval of the Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25. | Andrea Prosser | N/A |
| IRPW Final Annual Report | Approval To approve | Andrea Prosser | Democratic Services – 11.03.23 |
| Annual Report of the Head of Democratic Services 2023/24 | Approval To approve the annual report of the Head of Democratic Services. | Sarah King | Democratic Services – 11.03.23 |
| Standards Committee Annual Report | Approval To approve. | Andrea Jones | Standards Committee – |

Council Forward Work Programme 2023/24

Annual General Meeting Date: Thursday 23rd May 2024

Report Submission Deadline Date to Ceri Edwards-Brown: Friday 10th May 2024

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

| Report Title | Purpose of Report | Lead Officer | Other Committee Meeting Date |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------|------------------------------|
| Portfolio: Corporate Services | | | |
| Annual Meeting Reports | | | |
| Annual Cycle of Meetings 2024/25 | To approve the Annual Cycle of meetings. | Gemma Wasley | N/A |

Council Forward Work Programme 2023/24

Meeting Date: DATES FOR ITEMS TO BE CONFIRMED

Report Submission Deadline Date to Ceri Edwards-Brown:

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

| Report Title | Purpose of Report | Lead Officer | Other Committee Meeting Date |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Portfolio: Corporate Services | | | |
| Foster Friendly Policy | Approval To approve the policy | Andrea Prosser | Corporate Overview & Performance |
| Multi-Location Meeting Policy | Approval To review the policy | Gemma Wasley | Democratic Services |

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Agenda Item 31

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: **20th July, 2023**

Report Subject: **IVF Policy**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader of the Council /
Executive 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) |
| 5/10/22 | 8/12/22 | | | | | | 20.07.23 | Trade Unions 27/10/22 |

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for an amendment to the Council's IVF Policy.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The IVF Policy outlines the support employees can expect when undergoing fertility treatment, especially as this is a stressful and emotionally demanding experience.
- 2.2 Organisational Development (OD) have recently reviewed and updated the policy, and a draft is attached as appendix 1.
- 2.3 As part of the review, we consulted with Council's across Wales to establish what support they offered employees, which varied by authority.
- 2.4 To support an employee undergoing treatment, the Council currently grants up to 2 days paid leave, which is also granted for partners of those undergoing the treatment, if needed. This provision is in addition to time off to attend hospital appointments. The days may be taken as a block or separately and may also be taken as half days or hours, as necessary around appointments.
- 2.5 The above paid time off is currently available for only one cycle of IVF treatment, but it is proposed to increase this to two cycles, which would bring the entitlement in line with other Local Authorities provisions. Additionally, NHS Wales typically offers patients two cycles of funded treatment.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

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

Option 1: That Council support increasing paid time off to two cycles of IVF treatment.

Option 2: Council does not support the increase in provision.

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

N/A

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

There would be an impact on budgets if the employee taking time off for IVF treatment was covered by another member of staff for their absence from work. Cover would mainly be arranged for frontline workers e.g. home carer.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

N/A

5.3 ***Legal***

N/A

5.4 ***Human Resources***

The increase in paid time off would support employees during a stressful and emotionally demanding time. This links directly to the HR Strategy and the Council's aims of becoming an employer of choice and improving the wellbeing of our workforce.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

N/A

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

N/A

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

The Trade Unions and CLT have been consulted on the review of this policy and support the proposal to increase the provision of leave to two cycles of IVF Treatment.

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

N/A

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

N/A

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

This Policy has been updated following consultation with other local authorities, OD DMT, CLT and the Trade Unions.

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

N/A

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

N/A

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment*** *(the screening template should be completed for any decisions to identify if a full integrated impact assessment (IIA) is needed. A full IIA will need to be completed if the decision is part of the socio-economic duty to consider how the decision might help to reduce the inequalities of outcome associated with socio-economic disadvantage).*

Updated Integrated Impact Assessment completed.

Language in the policy has been updated to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for all employees of the Council; to ensure that no individuals are limited by the use of terminology and that the Council is compliant with the Equalities Act 2010.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

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

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

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – draft IVF Policy

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IVF Policy



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: xx Review: xx

Version Control

This document is intended for:

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

| Version | Key Changes | Approved By |
|-----------|---|-------------|
| July 2020 | Reformatted only | DMT |
| Mar 2023 | Paid time off increased to two cycles of IVF Treatment. | xx |

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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| 5. Supportive Management Action | 3 |
| 6. Illness during Treatment..... | 4 |
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| 8. Requesting Leave for Fertility Treatment | 4 |

1. Introduction

The Council/School recognises that fertility treatment is a stressful and emotionally demanding experience, and therefore wishes to support employees as much as possible when undergoing this procedure.

2. Scope

To be eligible for leave for fertility treatment, employees must have been continuously employed by the Council/School for 12 months or more.

This includes part time, temporary and fixed term employees, after the qualifying period of 12 months.

3. Provision available

To support an employee undergoing treatment, the Council/School will grant up to 2 days paid leave, this will also be granted for partners of those undergoing the treatment, if needed. This provision is in addition to time off to attend hospital appointment.

The days may be taken as a block or separately and may also be taken as half days or hours, as necessary around appointments.

If an employee requires time off beyond the paid days, they should discuss with their manager the options available to them including taking unpaid leave.

Paid time off is available for up to two cycles of IVF Treatment.

4. Flexible Working

Due to the nature of IVF and other fertility treatment it is recognised that there may be a requirement for flexibility in an individual's working pattern which should be discussed between the employee and manager. Employees working for the local authority could utilise the range of flexible working options available. The Manager, in consultation with Occupational Health advice if necessary, will be responsible for managing and approving the flexibility required by the individual, during and following any procedures.

5. Supportive Management Action

Where a manager is made aware that an employee is undergoing or likely to be undergoing treatment, they should ensure the employee concerned is supported and made aware of the provisions outlined in this policy.

6. Illness during Treatment

It is recognised that anyone undergoing the treatment may suffer from a range of side effects after the treatment has taken place. In these circumstances if an employee goes on sick leave their absence will be managed in line with the Council/School's Attendance Management Policy.

7. Confidentiality

Managers will maintain strict confidentiality around this matter, and will respect the dignity of the individual at all times during any treatment.

8. Requesting Leave for Fertility Treatment

- Employees should advise their manager that they require leave as soon as they are aware that they will be undergoing treatment.
- Employees should try and have as many details about dates, etc available so that arrangements can be made to work around their treatment and the needs of the service.
- Employees may be requested to provide their manager with confirmation of their treatment/appointments.
- As far as is reasonably practicable, appointments should be made at times that will cause the least disruption to service delivery.

Agenda Item 32

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 06.07.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 10.07.2023

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **20th July, 2023**

Report Subject: **Fire Safety At Work Policy**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Steve Thomas, Leader / Cabinet Member
Corporate Overview and Performance**

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

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance and Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| X | 15.6.23 | 12.06.23 | | | 22.06.23 | | 20.7.23 | |

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement from Council for the implementation of the proposed Fire Safety at Work Policy (appendix 1).

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 It is important that the Council can show that they are managing the risks to their employees and others while they are undertaking their duties within buildings managed by the Council. Fire Safety legislation imposes specific requirements on employers in respect of prevention of fires and precautions that should be in place to minimise the spread of fire and to ensure that staff can escape from a building should a fire start.

- 2.2 Health and Safety Executive state that most fires are preventable and those responsible for workplaces and other buildings can avoid them by taking responsibility for and adopting the right behaviours and procedures. The new policy will provide information for the council buildings concerning the fire safety prevention and precautions. These include that:

- Fire risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly and communicated to staff
- Fire safety information, instruction and training should be communicated
- Appropriate fire safety measures are in place and maintained
- Emergency plans are in place

- 2.3 This policy applies to all workplaces within the Council's portfolio (and buildings that are leased depending on the contractual agreements in place).

- 2.4 Employers owe the same duty of care under health and safety law to staff and members of the public that access Council buildings.

- 2.5 The Fire Safety Policy will provide guidance for managers to ensure that the risks to employees and others can be managed and will also provide

information to employees and others should they encounter any issues while working within the Council managed buildings.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1**

That Council endorse the Fire Safety at Work Policy for implementation.

Option 2

3.2 Make suggestions or changes to the Fire Safety at Work Policy.

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

4.1 The proposed Fire Safety Policy has direct links with the Council's Corporate Plan, Health and Safety Policy and Workforce Strategy.

4.2 The Corporate Plan's core values include Trust and Integrity and to support and develop a workforce that has the capacity and capability to be productive and responsive to future demands.

4.3 Priority outcomes for the Council's Workforce Strategy includes "A highly motivated and engaged workforce" and a "Modern Employer of Choice"; the introduction of a Fire Safety Policy directly contributes to both priorities. Clear information and understanding of legislative requirements can have a significant impact on a person's health and well-being. It can reduce stress levels and improve motivation. Two of the aims of the strategy are:

- Safe working situations/environments and promotion of workforce health and wellbeing.
- The workforce demonstrates expected behaviours, standards and culture in line with the Council's values.

The Fire Safety Policy directly supports both of those aims by helping managers consider the risks to workers and others and providing clear expectation of behaviours.

4.4 The Blaenau Gwent Statement of Safety Policy states that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, together with each employee is committed to ensuring that the highest standards of Health, Safety and Welfare are maintained throughout the organisation. The Fire Safety Policy will support that aim through clarifying requirements and responsibilities.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

There are no direct negative budgetary implications as a result of implementing the policy.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Risk Management should be improved following implementation of the Fire Safety Policy.

- 5.3 **Legal**
The Fire Safety Policy will provide support and evidence of legal compliance with risk management and specific fire safety legislation.
- 5.4 **Human Resources**
The Fire Safety Policy will provide support and guidance to managers and employees.
6. **Supporting Evidence**
- 6.1 **Performance Information and Data**
N/A
- 6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**
N/A
- 6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**
The Trade Unions have received the policy for review and raised no objections. The Fire Safety at Work Policy was considered at the Corporate Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee and was supported to progress to Council for endorsement.
- 6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**
Directly links the Council's Plans and Strategies as detailed above.
- 6.5 **Preventative focus**
N/A
- 6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**
N/A.
- 6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**
Policy applies to all Council staff only.
- 6.8 **Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions**
N/A
- 6.9 **Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)**
N/A
7. **Monitoring Arrangements**
- 7.1 The Policy will be reviewed in July 2028 or sooner if required in line with the Organisational Development Policy Framework.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 –Fire Safety at Work Policy



Fire Safety at work
Policy.docx

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Fire Safety at Work Policy



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: July 2023

Reviewed: N/A

Next Review: July 2028

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Version Control

This document is intended for:

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

| Version | Key Changes | Approved By |
|---------|-------------|-------------|
| | | |
| | | |

This document may be reviewed and amended at any time and without consultation in response to legal requirements, in line with best practice or in response to an organisational requirement and where the changes do not affect the spirit or intent of the document.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Fire is a potential hazard in all Council premises. The consequences of fire in some premises can be especially serious because of difficulties and dangers associated with the emergency evacuation of children or vulnerable adults, who may be dependent or have mobility impairment.
- 1.2 The aim of the Council is to ensure, as far as possible, that outbreaks of fire do not occur. If an outbreak cannot be prevented it must be rapidly detected, effectively contained and when safe to do so quickly extinguished, with minimal risk to staff or others due to robust fire safety protection and evacuation procedures.

2. Scope of Policy

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all buildings under the control of the Council. All Council places of work must comply with the Policy.

3. Legislation and Guidance

3.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO 2005)

The above together with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and other associated legislation and Codes of Practice impose duties on all employers in respect of fire safety at work.

- 3.2 These duties extend to the Authority, its employees and other persons who may be affected by the Council's work activities.
- 3.3 The RRO applies to any person or organisation that is responsible for the building e.g.
 - Duty holder for leased buildings such as Community Asset Transfers (CATs) would usually be the leaseholder however this can vary depending on the details of the lease.
 - Duty holder for rented buildings would be the landlord for common areas and facilities and the tenant for those areas tenants renter occupies.
 - Duty holder for most schools would be Headteachers and Council
 - Duty holder for foundation schools would be the Headteacher and the Governing body
 - Duty holder for those in shared premises such as the General Offices, Anvil Court, Foxes Lane etc would be those managing the building.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Definition of Responsible Person

The Responsible Person has the duty to implement the articles and regulations of The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (see Appendix 2).

The main regulatory authority for fire safety is the Fire and Rescue Service who have the power to inspect premises and records, investigate, serve notice or begin lawful proceedings to responsible persons. The Fire Authority will determine who in their opinion the responsible person/s is, when there is a need for them to do so. This ultimate duty will sit with the Chief Executive of the Authority.

4.2 The Chief Executive (Responsible Person)

The Chief Executive (Responsible Person) is responsible for ensuring that the Council complies with current fire safety legislation and the implementation of this policy in all the premises that it owns or occupies.

It will be the responsibility of the Chief Executive to ensure:

- The Authority has an effective Fire Safety Management System, an agreed programme of investments in fire safety improvements, and that they are accounted for in the relevant business plans.
- An audit and reporting system of Fire Precautions is in place to advise the Corporate Leadership Team of the current state of fire safety within the Authority's premises.
- All agreements for the provision of services by third parties are in place to include sufficient contractual arrangements to ensure compliance with the Authority's fire safety guidelines.
- Championing fire safety issues at board level, which for example, would include ensuring any agreed programmes of investment in fire precautions are taken forward.
- That the Fire Safety Policy and associated Fire Strategies are uniformly and correctly applied across the Authority.
- Appropriate levels of management are always available to make decisions and give instructions regardless of the time of day;
- A fit for purpose reporting system for fire incidents is in place
- The Authority has in place clearly defined fire safety guidelines and relevant supporting protocols and procedures, and these are supported by sufficient resources and staffing to implement the Authority's Fire Safety policy.
- The development, delivery and audit of an effective fire safety training programme.

4.3 Corporate Landlord

The Authority operates a Corporate Landlord model for the maintenance of Buildings. Operationally the responsibility regarding fire safety sits with Technical Services and Responsible Persons (see Appendix 2 for details). This means that any repairs or statutory inspections fall under the remit of Technical Services.

4.4 Technical Services management (Responsible person)

- Responsible for providing solutions for the building recommendations and premises risks identified by the Health and Safety advisor, that they are correctly dealt with, and if necessary, entered onto the Authority's business plan or risk register
- They should ensure adequate consideration and priority in the allocation of resources for the safe management of fire precautions.
- Responsible for commissioning Competent Person's (Fire) who are installers and maintainers of fire safety equipment due to their skill, knowledge and qualification.
- They are also required to:
 - Obtain expert advice on fire legislation and/or technical matters.
 - Have an awareness of all fire safety features in their buildings.
 - Understand the fire safety risks particular to the organisation.
 - Consider precautions for mobility impaired individuals, staff and visitors with regard fire procedures.
 - Comply with legislation, taking into account advice from the Health and Safety advisor or instruction from the Fire Authority.
 - Ensure co-operation between employers where two or more share the premises.
 - Monitor and the mitigate fire incidents.
 - Liaise with enforcing authorities.
 - Liaise with other managers and provide a link to Council committees.
 - Monitor the inspection and maintenance of fire safety systems and equipment to ensure it is compliant.
 - Undertake reviews of identified risks in fire risk assessments and if necessary, place on the Council risk register.
 - Ensure the day-to-day implementation of the fire safety policy where applicable.

4.5 The Health and Safety Advisor

The Health and Safety Advisor provides competent fire safety advice and will be responsible for:

- Recording and reporting fire risk assessments on behalf of the corporate landlord.
- Providing advice on fire legislation.
- Providing technical advice on the application and interpretation of the fire safety policy
- Reviewing the content of the Authority's fire safety policy.
- Assisting with training, with the development of a suitable and sufficient training programme for staff, and delivery as necessary.
- Liaising with the enforcing authorities on technical issues.
- Liaising with managers and staff on fire safety issues.

Where specialist solutions are required to resolve fire safety issues the Health and Safety Advisor would not necessarily be expected to have the level of skill required but would know the limits of their capabilities and, when necessary seek specialist advice from an Authorising Engineer (Fire).

4.6 The Responsible Person (e.g. Headteacher, Manager etc)

The Responsible Person(s) must be of a position to be able to take charge in a fire situation. They should appoint a Deputy(s) who can cover the role in their absence. Advice and guidance can be sought from the Health and Safety Advisor and technical services.

The Person in charge at a premise or part of a premise has the following responsibilities:

- To initiate and monitor actions to ensure the day-to-day maintenance of the fire precautions provided
- To provide induction training to all new staff to include volunteers, part time and agency staff. This familiarisation training should include;
 - Local fire procedures and evacuation plan,
 - Means of escape
 - Location of fire alarm manual call points
 - Location of portable fire-fighting equipment
 - Any identified premises fire risks
 - Evacuation meeting/muster points
- To organise and record a fire evacuation practice at least twice a year.
- To ensure that weekly alarm checks are undertaken

- To ensure records of testing and maintenance of fire alarms, emergency lighting and firefighting equipment are being maintained.
- To ensure staff are aware of the procedures and actions required for reporting fire safety defects.
- To record number of fire activation at premises
- To familiarise themselves with the Fire Risk Assessment
- To ensure written records are updated in the fire risk assessment action plan and the fire logbook to include all fire safety defects and action taken to rectify said defects
- To contact and inform the Council's Health and Safety Advisor on the following occasions:
 - Any threat to means of escape or fire detection system.
 - In advance of major alterations/extensions
- To ensure sufficient Fire Wardens are appointed and they receive regular refresher training in their duties and responsibilities.
- To ensure staff in the premise participates in fire safety evacuation at least twice per year.
- To ensure that on handover of responsibility to a deputy or acting person-in-charge, that person is aware of the legal duty to provide supervision of premise fire procedures in the event of a fire or false alarm situation.
- To ensure all fire safety related records are available for inspection by the Fire Service at any reasonable time.
- To ensure any Fire or Automatic Fire Alarm activation is reported to Tech Services.
- To report to Tech Services and keep progress records of any building or equipment defect/risk that has an effect on fire safety.
- To co-ordinate and direct staff in the event of a fire in accordance with the premise emergency procedures and evacuation plan.
- To ensure local emergency action plans are developed and brought to the attention of staff.
- To ensure that sufficient trained staff are available at all times to implement the local emergency plan.
- To ensure sufficient numbers of key holders are identified.
- To report any actual fires to Health and Safety, Technical Services and the insurance advisor.

4.7 Responsible Person in Multiple Occupancy (shared Buildings)

In a building with more than one occupier Fire Safety Legislation requires that there is in place consultation and co-operation between all occupants' management and the landlord over Fire Safety matters. A Responsible Person must be appointed for the building by the Host Organisation (e.g., this could be the Council who owns, holds the lease, or is the main occupier).

Each occupier should appoint a Responsible Person for the areas under their control (this would normally be the Person-in-charge of a department or manager). It is desired that Responsible Persons are based within the building.

The Responsible Person has a legal obligation to ensure there is a Fire Risk Assessment(FRA) that covers their building or area; this document may be provided by the premise management/owner for the whole building, consultation with the building management will determine if this is provided. If not then each occupier must provide a Fire Risk Assessment for their area, and building management or the Host Authority must always provide the FRA for all common areas. Identified risks and remedy information must be shared with all occupiers and management of the premise.

The Host Authority/landlord/leaseholder has responsibility for the building. However, fire procedures and policies of all organisations within the premise must be compatible with those of the Host or they should adhere to those of the Host Authority/leaseholder/landlord.

The Host Authority/leaseholder/landlord is responsible for the testing and keeping records of:

- The fire alarm system.
- Emergency lighting.
- Firefighting equipment.
- Provide opportunity of at least an annual fire practice evacuation training for staff working within the building.

4.8 Fire Marshal / Warden

An appropriate number of Fire Wardens should be appointed in all departments or buildings to give local leadership and direction in Fire Safety matters. They are not in an enforcing role but report to their line manager, and if necessary to the Health and Safety Advisor and/or Trade Union representative. Fire wardens should refresh their training every 3 years.

The Fire Warden should: -

- Act as a focal point on fire safety issues for local staff
- Organise and assist in the fire safety regime within local areas
- Raise issues regarding local area fire safety with local management
- Assist with coordination of the response to an incident within the immediate vicinity
- Be responsible for the confirmation of an empty building during an incident
- Support the local managers on regular fire safety checks
- Participate in regular fire warden training and apply the information and duties to the workplace

4.9 Technical Services Staff

Technical services maintenance staff/provider should respond to requests following a Fire Risk Assessment.

All projects should consider the requirements of fire safety during the planning phase of the project and have developed fire strategies at the design stage. Projects staff must take particular care to ensure that any aspect of new, refurbishment or maintenance works where it is likely to affect the fire integrity of a premises that the Health and Safety Advisor is informed and becomes actively involved. Specific and sufficiently detailed instruction should be agreed to enable the works to be undertaken.

4.10 General Duties and Responsibilities of all staff

All Council employees have a duty to ensure that they comply with the fire safety arrangements and procedures at their workplace and that they do not commit acts which could lead to an outbreak of fire. All employees have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act, to take reasonable care of their own health and safety at work, and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

All Council employees are required to complete fire safety training and to familiarise themselves with the content of the premises' fire procedures.

Staff shall take particular care to ensure that the Health and Safety Advisor is informed and becomes actively involved with any aspect of their or others work or actions that is likely to affect the fire integrity of premises.

5. Fire Training

5.1 Fire Awareness

Training is an essential element of fire safety precautions.

All Council Managers must provide staff with induction fire training on or before their first day in a new workplace (this includes part-time, volunteer and agency staff).

All managers must monitor and encourage their team to attend fire awareness training.

Staff can also complete fire awareness training using the Council Fire safety e-module.

All staff and management should receive training as a minimum at least every 3 years. An alternative method is for a department/service manager to request the Health and Safety Advisor to provide instruction as part of a team or premise training session.

5.2 Fire Warden/Marshals

Staff identified as Fire Marshals must attend an initial course and refreshed every 3 years or sooner. Both the initial and refresher course are face to face with the Health and Safety Advisor or a qualified trainer.

Additional, specialised training may be required for specific high risk activities.

All staff have a duty to be aware of safety precautions and actions to take in the event of a fire in their area of employment, and when visiting other premises in the course of their duties. All staff have a responsibility to seek this knowledge from the Person-in-Charge as required by Health and Safety legislation.

5.3 Evacuation Chair Training

In premises that have more than one floor, evacuation chairs may be used to aid those with mobility impairment reaching the building exit safely. Sufficient staff should be trained in the use of evacuation chairs to ensure that safe evacuation can be affected whenever the building is occupied. Refresher training is required every 3 years.

5.4 Premise Evacuation Drills

The Council requires general buildings to have at least two fire drills each year and school buildings to have a fire drill once per term. The time and date of these evacuations should be recorded along with any salient details or issues (see Appendix 3).

The legal requirement to undertake fire evacuation is a requirement of the Regulatory Reform Order 2005 and the Health and Safety at Work Act. The law states that responsibility for completion and records of premise evacuation practice is with the person-in-charge of the occupants or building manager.

Evacuation drill co-operation should be done in conjunction with any landlord or main lease holder arrangement. Health and Safety Advisors and Fire Regulatory Authority will inspect fire records and audit compliance during fire risk assessments and other premise visits.

An evacuation practice drill can be done in consultation with the Health and Safety advisor who can provide advice and agree the method plan used. The Health and Safety Advisor may observe the fire drill, provide advice and the evacuation drill debrief.

All evacuation drills must be recorded in a premise fire logbook by the manager, fire records are required to be compliant with regulations. Details that need to be recorded include:

- Date and time that the evacuation is undertaken
- Time that is taken to fully evacuate the building
- Any issues or problems with the evacuation

6. Alarm Testing

For electrical systems a manual call point should be activated (using a different call point for each successive test) every week (see Appendix 1). Manual call points should be numbered to ensure they are sequentially tested. Date of testing of the manual points should be recorded along with the location of the point that was tested.

6.1 Emergency Lighting

The following minimum inspection and tests should be carried out at the intervals recommended below.

6.1.1 Monthly Emergency Lighting Testing

All emergency lighting systems should be tested monthly. This is a short functional test in accordance with BS EN 50172:2004 / BS 5266-8:2004.

The duration of the test should be sufficient to ensure that the luminaire operates correctly, whilst minimising any damage to the system components, e.g. Lamps, Battery.

It is important to note that the entire system doesn't have to be tested at the same time. The system can be tested in sections, over a testing schedule, so long as each luminaire is tested each calendar month and that the test is recorded

6.1.2 Annual Emergency Lighting Testing

The annual test should be a full rated duration test to ensure that the emergency lights are still working and producing the acceptable level of light at the end of the test. For example, if a luminaire is rated for a 3 hour duration, then after 3 hours in an emergency situation the light should still be lit.

It is worth noting that this full duration test should be completed at a time of low risk of an emergency situation so that the batteries have sufficient time to recharge.

7. The Fire Risk Assessment (FRA)

- 7.1 The FRA will give detailed and specific measures to minimise:
- The incidence of fire throughout the premises.
 - The impact from fire on life safety, delivery of service, the environment and property.
- 7.2 The FRA will give detailed and specific recommendations to ensure that the appropriate fire safety standards are being maintained and that the appropriate management systems are in place.
- 7.3 Fire Risk Assessments produced will be copied to the person(s)-in-charge or in control of the premise and to any others that need to be informed or take action.
- 7.4 The FRA must be subject to a regular review by the Premise Manager or

Person(s)-in-Charge and they must record the progress of the identified fire risks and remedial work in the FRA Action Plan and they should add any further identified risk items.

7.5 The FRAs should be undertaken on a periodic basis as shown in Table 1 shows our minimum fire risk assessment time intervals.

| Premises | Interval |
|---|---------------------------|
| High risk premise e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sleeping locations • high amounts of Gas, Chemical, Flammable or Combustible storage or use • any area that causes or uses anything that is a high fire or explosive risk | Within each calendar year |
| Medium risk, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schools • offices | At least every 2 years |
| Low risk, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • empty or low risk storage unit | At least every 3 years |

Table 1: FRA Intervals

7.6 Changes to buildings, plant or equipment, will require review of the FRA to ensure that the fire risk has been considered.

7.7 Specific fire risks must be considered when procuring new equipment.

8. Hot Works at Council Premises and Fully Leased Buildings

8.1 In any planned hot works on or in Council owned, or Council controlled premises, no contractor should not be permitted to start until Technical Services have agreed the contractor's safety precautions are sufficient and that this has been agreed in writing in the form of a Permit to Work.

8.2 Hot works includes hot bitumen roof repair or laying, welding, gas flame metal cutting etc.

- 8.3** For emergency work/repairs contractors and maintenance staff should always check with the Technical Services for agreement of Hot Work precautions.

9. Smoking / Use of E- cigarette devices

- 9.1** The Authority has a zero-tolerance policy against smoking inside or immediately next to Council controlled buildings, it is recognised that smoking materials are a fire risk and that they are not allowed in Council owned or controlled properties other than in designated areas.
- 9.2** Electronic/Vapour Cigarettes should not be used on any sites in the Council other than in designated areas.
- 9.3** There have been a number of serious fires and injury/near miss incidents within the UK where electronic/vapour cigarettes have been connected to a computer via a charge lead. In the interest of safety for all within Council owned or controlled premise, or Council departments, the charging of electronic cigarettes via any computer is not allowed.

10. Kitchens and Tea Points etc

- 10.1** Kitchens and tea points are located in premises throughout the Authority. A tea point has a kettle and microwave and can be in an open plan office and has no direct heat sources. A kitchen may also have toasters and hobs and will be in an enclosed space with the relevant fire safety mitigation (e.g., fire doors, heat detection etc).
- 10.2** Fire legislation allows Fire Authorities the right to impose fines or take other action against premises that have false alarms that are not justified. The use of cooking appliances (oven, hob, toasters etc) must only be in a designated kitchen or similar fire resistant enclosure.

11. Electrical Extension Cables and Multi Socket Plugs

- 11.1** The use of extension cables and multi socket plugs is discouraged. Using these items could prevent safety devices performing correctly leading to a fire situation.
- 11.2** Multi socket plugs are easily dislodged due to their design and weight which can then give arcing sparks, so this type of device is banned from use or supply within the Council.
- 11.3** Extension cables are to be avoided whenever possible as the cable can easily be damaged leading to possible short circuit, so the design of a room should always be followed by staff who should place desks and equipment so that they can use all the available plug sockets provided in the room. It is further identified that the reason to achieve one plug to one socket, is that not all persons understand the power required by devices or equipment, and if a combination of devices/equipment is powered from one socket this could give a deterioration of the plug socket and/or supply cable.
- 11.4** At no time can a reel type extension cable be used for static office as they are known to self-heat within the reel.
- 11.5** The joining together of any extension cables by plugging into one another is banned within Council owned or controlled buildings or areas, as this can have a detrimental effect on the correct operation of safety devices.

12. Reporting of Fire and False Alarms

- 12.1** The collection of data for fire/fire alarm incidents and the requirement for investigation of incidents is important. Lessons can be learned from routine reports as well as from the comparatively few serious fires experienced.
- 12.2** Managers and staff who at the time of an incident would be deemed as the lead person of a department or building, or their job position makes them the responsible person, then they must report fire incidents, false alarms or evacuations, to Technical Services. If a building has an actual fire, then an additional initial report to the Health and Safety Advisor and Insurance Risk Manager should be sent as soon as possible either by telephone message or e-mail.

13. Fire Alarm Actions and Calling the Fire Service

- 13.1 A Government directive to the Fire Service is to encourage and ensure that in all non-domestic, occupied premises with a fire alarm activating, the staff should identify the zone that has the activated sensor is in and to carry out a search of the area to ascertain if a fire situation exists before calling the Fire Service.

When an emergency call is made to the Fire Services if an actual fire situation cannot be confirmed or genuinely suspected, and a premise search has not been completed, then the Fire and Rescue Service operator may carry out a 'call challenge' and give instruction to search before any response will be mobilised. The Fire Service should not be called for any false fire alarms and they are to be dealt with by the Council staff or the Council maintenance provider and reported to Technical Services.

- 13.2 Staff should first read the fire panel to gain information of the zone and location of the activation. Staff should **never place themselves in danger** when searching, if signs of fire or smoke are seen, smell, cracking sounds within a room or void space are heard, or heat can be felt on an approach to an area or on the outside of the entrance door or the door handle, then they should halt the search, ensure evacuation of all, and immediately report their findings as an emergency to the Fire Service.

References

1. BS 5839-6: 2019 *Fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings*
2. Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 [The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1483/contents/made)

Appendix 1 Alarm Test Procedure

Alarm test procedure

1. If the alarm is being monitored (i.e. has an emergency response set up if the alarm activates), the ARC (Alarm Receiving Centre) will need to be notified of this test. *(People usually call and just give a time frame of around 15 minutes so that it will give you enough time to carry it out before it automatically goes into alarm mode again.)*
2. A report from the ARC should be requested to make sure they received the signal, demonstrating that the connection between the alarm system and them is still operational.
3. Each manual call point (MCP) you test will be registered to a specific zone in your building. *(Next to your fire alarm panel should be a Zone Chart which is a floor plan of your building with all of the zones colour coded and labelled so you know which zone relates to which area.)*
4. A different call point should be tested each week. If there are 10 call points on site, all should have been tested by the end of the 10th week before rotating round again. This is to ensure that there are no faults e.g., one of them does not trigger the alarm as it should, which you would not be able to identify if you kept testing the same one each time.
5. After the MCP has been triggered, go to the panel to silence the alarm, first it must be checked that the screen on the panel displays the correct zone. E.g. if the MCP by the Entrance was triggered, Zone 1, the panel should say this.
6. If the correct zone is not displayed, then is an issue there which will need to be rectified.
7. The weekly testing must be carried out during normal working hours.
8. The fire alarm is designed to disrupt. The reason why the fire industry recommend testing at the same time on the same day each week, during working hours, is so that the building occupants know to expect it at this time and become accustomed to what their fire alarm sounds like. If the fire alarm sounds *outside* of this time-frame, they know it's not a test but potentially a real fire, and it is time to get out.
9. The date and time of the test should be recorded along with the location of the MCP and any issues found

Appendix 2 - Activities/Tests/Checks required

| Activities/Checks | Frequency | Responsibility | Action by | Recorded |
|---|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Fire Evacuation Drills | Two per year | Responsible person for building | Responsible person | Yes |
| Fire alarm check–rotating fire points activated | Weekly | Responsible person for building | Responsible Person | Yes |
| Emergency Lighting Test | Monthly | Responsible person for building | Responsible person | Yes |
| Lift goes to ground floor on activation of alarm | Weekly | Responsible person for building | Tech Services | Yes |
| Fire extinguisher Checks | Monthly | Responsible person for building | Responsible person | Yes |
| Fire extinguisher inspections | Annually | Responsible person for building | Tech Services | Yes |
| Emergency Lighting inspections | Annually | Responsible person for building | Tech Services | Yes |
| Fire Systems inspections | Annually | Responsible person for building | Tech Services | Yes |
| Fire Risk Assessment for most premises | Biennially | Responsible person for building | Health and Safety | Yes |
| Fire Risk Assessment for those with sleeping arrangements | Annually | Responsible person for the building | Health and safety | Yes |

Appendix 3: Fire Evacuation Report Example

Fire Evacuation Drill Report

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Drill Coordinator | |
| Location | |
| Date | |
| Time of Drill | |

Duration and Fire Evacuation Marshals

| | |
|---|--|
| Duration (mins and secs) | |
| Number of Marshalls on site at practice | |
| Is this sufficient? | |

Did/were the FEMs: (tick all that apply, comment where necessary)

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Clearly visible? | |
| Well Organised? | |
| Prevent Re-entry? | |
| Maintain clear exits? | |
| Any other FEM comment? | |

Comments on the drill and any issues identified

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Name | |
| Signature | |
| Date | |

Appendix 4: Managers Induction Check List for Staff

Managers should check

- Staff should know how to report an incident, risk or near miss or safety concerns (Incident/Accident reporting system)
- That staff must always visually assess (known as a dynamic risk assessment) the availability of exit routes which should be kept clear
- Staff to understand that at no time will they place themselves in danger, it is more important that they are able to escape and raise the alarm to the emergency services
- If staff consider a client, the home of the client, or the situation, is not safe they should leave the premise, and they should always report this to their manager and onto the Incident Report system.

Agenda Item 33

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 19.06.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 19.06.2023

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **20th July, 2023**

Report Subject: **Schedule of Members Remuneration 2023-24**

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

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

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| x | 15.06.23 | | | 13.07.23 | | | 20.07.23 | |

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To consider and agree the Schedule of Members Remuneration for 2023-24.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 To comply with Part 8 (sections 141 to 160) and schedules 2 and 3 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) regulations the Council is required to produce annually a schedule of payments it intends to make to its members and co-opted members.
- 2.2 The proposed schedule for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is provided at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 This report outlines the information that the Schedule should contain including the arrangements for the payment of salaries, allowances and fees to all members and co-opted members.

3. Options for Recommendation

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

- 3.1 Option 1 (**preferred option**) – to agree and publish the Schedule of Members Remuneration for 2023/24.

Democratic Services Committee considered the report at its meeting on 13th July, 2023.

3.2 Option 2 – to make suggestions to amend the Schedule although the process is prescriptive in line with the legislation quoted above.

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

4.1 In agreeing and publishing the Schedule of Members Remuneration, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is complying with its statutory responsibilities under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the requirements of the IRPW aligning to the Council's priority of being an ambitious and innovative Council.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

Option 1 - It is estimated that the publication costs will be approximately £200.

There are no other direct financial implications as a result of this report - the remuneration levels of Members of the Council for 2023/24 are identified in the attached Appendix 1.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Option 1 – There are no significant risks for the Council with this option.

Option 2 - Non-compliance with the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) could result in reputational damage for the Council.

To mitigate this risk, agreeing and publishing the Schedule of Members Remuneration is proposed (option 1).

5.3 ***Legal***

Option 1 – This option ensures the Council complies with statutory responsibilities.

Option 2 – This would result in non-compliance within the statutory requirements.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no Human Resources implications that impact upon the report other than the time required to produce and maintain the Schedule of Members Remuneration throughout the year.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

The Schedule should confirm that the Council's maximum limit of Senior Salaries has not been exceeded and include a declaration of whether:

- A statement of the basic responsibility of a councillor is in place.
- Role descriptions of senior salary office holders is in place.

Records are kept of councillor attendance.

It is also statutory to set out arrangements for the payment of salaries, allowances and fees to all members and co-opted members and must include a statement of allowable expenses together with details of the duties for which they may be claimed.

The Council must as soon as practicable after determining its Schedule for the year and no later than 31st July of the year to which the Schedule relates, make arrangements for its publication within the Council's area and in addition forward the Schedule to the IRPW.

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

Publication provides taxpayers and citizens with information about the remuneration of their elected members.

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

The IRPW consulted with Councils and elected members prior to determining remuneration levels to be paid, this included visiting all 22 Welsh councils

The Schedule of Members Remuneration will be published on the Councils website.

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

It is a requirement that similar information is published on an annual basis.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

Not relevant to this report.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Not relevant to this report.

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

Not relevant to this report.

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

Not relevant to this report.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IAA) (All decisions, policy reviews or policy implementation will now require a completed Integrated Impact Assessment) To note a screening template no longer needs to be completed***

Not relevant to this report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

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

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 – Schedule of Members Remuneration 2023/24*



Appendix 1 2022
2023 English.doc

- *IRPW Annual Report 2023/24*



Independent
Remuneration Panel fi

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

MEMBERS' SCHEDULE OF REMUNERATION

This Scheme is made under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 with regard to Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Regulations which apply to payments made to members and co-opted members of local authorities.

1. Basic Salary

- 1.1 A Basic Salary shall be paid to each elected Member of the Authority.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Regulations, the rate of the Basic Salary shall be reviewed annually as determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
- 1.3 Where the term of office of a Member begins or ends other than at the beginning or end of a year, their entitlement to the Basic Salary will be pro-rata.
- 1.4 No more than one Basic Salary is payable to a Member of the Authority.

2. Senior Salaries & Civic Salaries

- 2.1 Members occupying specific posts shall be paid a Senior Salary as set out in **Schedule 1**.
- 2.2 In accordance with the Regulations, the rates of Senior Salaries and Civic Salaries shall be reviewed annually as determined by the Annual or Supplementary Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
- 2.3 Only one Senior Salary or Civic Salary is payable to a Member of the Authority.
- 2.4 A Member of the Authority cannot be paid a Senior Salary and a Civic Salary.
- 2.5 All Senior and Civic Salaries are paid inclusive of Basic Salary.
- 2.6 A Senior Salary may not be paid to more than the number of members specified by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in its Annual Report and cannot exceed fifty percent of the total membership of the authority, except to include a temporary Senior Salary office holder providing temporary cover for the family absence of the appointed office holder.
- 2.7 A Member of the Authority in receipt of a Band 1 or Band 2 Senior Salary **cannot** receive a salary from any National Park Authority (NPA) or Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) for which they have been nominated.
- 2.8 Where the term of Senior Salary or Civic Salary of a Member begins or ends other than at the beginning or end of a year, their entitlement to the Salary will be pro-rata.

3. Election to Forgo Entitlement to Allowance

- 3.1 A Member may, by notice in writing delivered to the Proper Officer of the authority, personally elect to forgo any part of their entitlement to any salary, allowance or fee payable under this Scheme from the date set out in the notice.

4. Suspension of a Member

- 4.1 Where a Member of the Authority is suspended or partially suspended from their responsibilities or duties as a Member of the Authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 (Conduct of Members), or regulations made under the Act, the part of the Basic Salary payable to them in respect of that period for which they are suspended will be withheld by the Authority (Section 155 (1) of the Measure).
- 4.2 Where a Member in receipt of a Senior Salary is suspended or partially suspended from being a Member of the Authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 (Conduct of Members), or regulations made under the Act, the Authority must not make payments of the Member's Senior Salary for the duration of the suspension (Section 155 (1) of the Measure). If the partial suspension relates only to the specific responsibility element of the payment, the Member may retain the Basic Salary.

5. Repayment of salaries, allowances or fees

- 5.1 Where payment of any salary, allowance or fee has been made to a Member of the Authority or Co-opted Member in respect of any period during which the Member concerned:
- (a) is suspended or partially suspended from that Member's or Co-opted Member's duties or responsibilities in accordance with Part 3 of the 2000 Act or regulations made under that Act;
 - (b) ceases to be a Member of the Authority or Co-opted Member; or
 - (c) is in any other way not entitled to receive a salary, allowance or fee in respect of that period,

The Authority will require that such part of the allowance as relates to any such period be repaid.

6. Payments

- 6.1 Payments of all allowances will be made by the Chief Officer Resources by direct bank credit in instalments of one-twelfth of the Member's annual entitlement on the 28th day of each month.
- 6.2 Where payment has resulted in a Member receiving more than their entitlement to salaries, allowances or fees the Authority will require that such part that is overpayment be repaid.
- 6.3 All payments are subject to the appropriate tax and National Insurance deductions.

7. Contribution towards Costs of Care and Personal Assistance

- 7.1 Contribution towards Costs of Care and Personal Assistance shall be paid to a Member or Co-opted Member, who has caring responsibility for dependent children or adults, or a personal care requirement, provided the Member incurs expenses in the provision of such care whilst undertaking 'approved' council duties.
- 7.2 Contribution towards Costs of Care and Personal Assistance applies in respect of a dependant under 16 years of age, or a minor or adult who normally lives with the member as part of their family and who cannot be left unsupervised for whom the Member or Co-opted Member can show that care is required. If a Member or Co-opted Member has more than one dependant the Member may claim more than one allowance, provided the Member can demonstrate a need to make separate arrangements for care.
- 7.3 Eligible Members may claim contribution towards costs of care and personal assistance for actual and receipted costs as set out in **Schedule 1**. All claims for the contribution towards costs of care and personal assistance should be made in writing to Democratic Services detailing times, dates and reasons for claim. Receipts are required for both informal and formal care arrangements.

8. Family Absence

- 8.1 Members are entitled under the provisions of the Family Absence for Members of Local Authorities (Wales) Regulations 2013 to a period of family absence, during which if they satisfy the prescribed conditions they are entitled to be absent from authority meetings.
- 8.2 When taking family absence Members are entitled to retain a basic salary irrespective of their attendance record immediately preceding the commencement of the family absence.
- 8.3 Should a senior salary holder be eligible for family absence they will be able to continue to receive their senior salary for the duration of the absence.
- 8.4 If the authority agrees that it is necessary to make a substitute appointment to cover the family absence of a senior salary holder the Member substituting will be eligible if the authority so decides to be paid a senior salary.
- 8.5 If the paid substitution results in the authority exceeding its maximum number of senior salaries, an addition to the maximum will be allowed for the duration of the substitution.

9. Co-optees' payments

- 9.1 A daily fee (with a provision for half day payments) shall be paid to Co-optees, provided they are statutory Co-optees with voting rights.
- 9.2 Co-optees' payments will be capped at a maximum of the equivalent of 10 full days a year for each committee to which an individual may be co-opted.

- 9.3 Payments will take into consideration travelling time to and from the place of the meeting, reasonable time for pre meeting preparation and length of meeting (up to the maximum of the daily rate).
- 9.4 The Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance (Monitoring Officer) is designated as the “appropriate officer” and will determine preparation time, travelling time and length of meeting, the fee will be paid on the basis of this determination.
- 9.5 The Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance (Monitoring Officer) can determine in advance whether a meeting is programmed for a full day and the fee will be paid on the basis of this determination even if the meeting finishes before four hours has elapsed.
- 9.6 A half day meeting is defined as up to 4 hours.
- 9.7 A full day meeting is defined as over 4 hours.
- 9.8 The daily and half day fee for the Chairpersons of the Standards Committee and Audit Committee, as determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, is set out in **Schedule 1**.
- 9.9 The daily and half day fee for other statutory Co-optees with voting rights, as determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, is set out in **Schedule 1**.

10. Travel and Subsistence Allowances

10.1 General Principles

- 10.2 Members and Co-opted Members are entitled to claim travelling expenses when travelling on the Authority’s business for ‘approved duties’ as set out in **Schedule 2**. Where Members travel on the Authority’s business they are expected to travel by the most cost effective means. In assessing cost effectiveness regard will be given to journey time. A Member who does not travel by the most cost effective means may have their claim abated by an appropriate amount.
- 10.3 Where possible Members should share transport.
- 10.4 The distance claimed for mileage should be the shortest reasonable journey by road from the point of departure to the point at which the duty is performed, and similarly from the duty point to the place of return.
- 10.5 The rates of Members’ Travel and Subsistence Allowances are set out in **Schedule 3** and are subject to annual review by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
- 10.6 Where a Member is suspended or partially suspended from their responsibilities or duties as a Member of the Authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 (Conduct of Members), or regulations made under the Act, any travel and subsistence allowances payable to them in respect of that period for which they are suspended or partially suspended must be withheld by the Authority.

11. Travel by Private Vehicle

- 11.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales has determined that the maximum travel rates payable should be the rates set out by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs for the use of private cars, motor cycles and pedal cycles plus any passenger supplement.
- 11.2 The mileage rates for private vehicles as determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales are set out in **Schedule 3**.
- 11.3 Where a Member makes use of their private vehicle for approved duty purposes, the vehicle must be insured for business use. Proof of appropriate insurance must be provided to the Authority on request.

12. Travel by Public Transport

12.1 Rail or Coach Travel

Unless otherwise authorised rail tickets will be second-class.

12.2 Taxi Fares

Taxi fares will only be reimbursed where their use has been authorised for cases of urgency, where no public transport is reasonably available, or a Member has a particular personal need. Re-imburement will be upon receipt only.

12.3 Air Fare

Travel by air is permissible if it is the most cost effective means of transport. Authorisation of the Head of Democratic Services is required and tickets will be purchased directly by the Council.

12.4 Travel Abroad

Travel abroad on the Authority's business will only be permitted where authorised by Head of Democratic Services. Democratic Services will arrange travel and accommodation.

12.5 Other Travel Expenses

Members are entitled to reimbursement of toll fees, parking fees, overnight garaging and other necessary travel associated expenses. Re-imburement will be upon receipt only.

13. Overnight Accommodation

- 13.1 Overnight stays will only be permitted where the Authority's business extends to two days or more, or the venue is at such a distance that early morning or late night travel would be unreasonable. All overnight stays must receive prior authorisation from the Head of Democratic Services.
- 13.2 Overnight accommodation will be booked by the Council. Wherever possible the overnight accommodation will be pre-paid or invoiced.

13.3 Direct booking of overnight accommodation by a Member will only be permitted in the event of an emergency. Reimbursement will only be made upon the production of a receipt and will be at a level deemed reasonable and not in excess of the rates set out in **Schedule 3**.

14 Subsistence Allowance

14.1 The day subsistence rate to meet the costs of meals and refreshments in connection with approved duties (including breakfast when not provided as part of overnight accommodation) is set out in **Schedule 3**. The maximum daily rate covers a 24 hour period and can be claimed for any meal that is relevant, providing such a claim is supported by receipt(s)

14.2 No provision is made for subsistence claims within the Authority.

15. Claims and Payments

15.1 A claim for travel and subsistence allowances must be made in writing within two months of the end of the calendar month in which entitlement to allowances arises and must be accompanied by the relevant receipts.

15.2 Allowances will be paid by the Chief Officer Resources by direct bank credit.

16. Pensions

16.1 The Authority shall enable its Members who are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

17 Supporting the work of Authority Members

17.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales expects Members to be provided with adequate support to carry out their duties and that the support provided should take account of the specific needs of individual Members. The Authority's Democratic Services Committee is required to review the level of support provided to Members and should take proposals for reasonable support to the full council.

17.2 All elected Members and Co-opted Members should be provided with adequate telephone, email and internet facilities to give electronic access to appropriate information.

17.3 Such support should be without cost to any Member. Deductions must not be made from Members' salaries as a contribution towards the cost of support which the Authority has decided is necessary for the effectiveness and or efficiency of Members.

18 Compliance

18.1 In accordance with the Regulations, the Authority must comply with the requirements of Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in respect of the monitoring and publication of payments made to Members and Co-opted Members as set out in **Schedule 4**.

Members and Co-opted Members are reminded that expense claims are subject to both internal and external audit.

SCHEDULE 1

SCHEDULE OF REMUNERATION 2023-24

| MEMBERS ENTITLED TO BASIC SALARY | ANNUAL AMOUNT OF BASIC SALARY |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <p>The following named elected members of the authority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Keith Chaplin2. Julie Holt3. Ross Leadbeater4. Godfrey Thomas5. Dean Woods6. John P Morgan7. Jules Gardner8. John Hill9. Derrick Bevan *10. George Humphreys11. Malcolm Day12. Dai Davies13. Jen Morgan14. Carl Bainton15. Jacqueline Thomas ***16. Lee Parsons17. Peter Baldwin18. Sonia Behr **19. Gareth A Davies20. David Wilkshire21. Dianne Rowberry22. Ellen Jones ** <p><i>* Denotes relinquished amount of £200 per annum</i> <i>** Denotes relinquished amount of £240 per annum</i> <i>*** Denotes relinquished amount of £480 per annum</i></p> | £17,600 |

| | SENIOR SALARIES ENTITLEMENTS (includes basic salary) | | ANNUAL AMOUNT OF SENIOR SALARY |
|-----|---|------------------|---|
| | ROLE | MEMBER | |
| 1. | Leader / Cabinet Member – Corporate Overview & Performance | Stephen Thomas | £56,100 (Relinquished £3,240 per annum) |
| 2. | Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member – Place & Environment | Helen Cunningham | £39,270 (Relinquished £1500 per annum) |
| 3. | Cabinet Member – Place & Regeneration and Economic Development | John C Morgan | £33,660 (Relinquished £1,200 per annum) |
| 4. | Cabinet Member – People & Education | Sue Edmunds | £33,660 (Relinquished £240 per annum) |
| 5. | Cabinet Member – People & Social Services | Hayden Trollope | £33,660 (Relinquished £1,200 per annum) |
| 6. | Chairperson of People Scrutiny Committee | Tommy Smith | £26,400 (Relinquished £240 per annum) |
| 7. | Chairperson of Place Scrutiny Committee | Malcolm Cross | £26,400 (Relinquished £240 per annum) |
| 8. | Chairperson of Partnerships Scrutiny Committee | Wayne Hodgins | £26,400 |
| 9. | Chairperson of Planning Committee/General Licensing/Statutory Licensing Committees | Lisa Winnett | £26,400 |
| 10. | Leader of the Independent Group / Chairperson of Corporate & Performance Scrutiny Committee | Joanna Wilkins | £26,400 |
| 11. | Presiding Member of the Council | Chris Smith | £26,400 (Relinquished £600 per annum) |

| SENIOR SALARIES ENTITLEMENTS (includes basic salary) | | ANNUAL AMOUNT OF SENIOR SALARY |
|--|-------------|---|
| | ROLE | MEMBER |
| 12. | Not Used | |
| 13. | Not Used | |
| 14. | Not Used | |
| 15. | Not Used | |
| 16. | Not Used | |
| A maximum of 16 senior salaries for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council may be paid and this has not been exceeded. | | |
| | | |

| ENTITLEMENT TO CIVIC SALARIES | | ANNUAL AMOUNT OF CIVIC SALARY |
|---|---------------|--|
| ROLE | MEMBER | |
| Civic Head (Mayor or Chair) | Not Used | N/A |
| Deputy Civic Head (Deputy Mayor or Chair) | Not Used | N/A |

| ENTITLEMENT AS STATUTORY CO-OPTees | | AMOUNT OF CO-OPTees ALLOWANCES |
|---|---|---|
| ROLE | MEMBER | |
| Chairperson Of Standards Committee | TBC | £268 Daily Fee £134 ½ Day Fee |
| Chairperson of Governance & Audit Committee | TBC | £268 Daily Fee £134 ½ Day Fee |
| Statutory Co-optees – Ethics & Standards Committee, Education OVSC Committee, Governance & Audit Committee, Crime and Disorder OVSC | <u>Ethics & Standards:</u> R. Lynch S. Williams S. Rosser H. Roberts Vacant <u>Audit</u> M. Veale J. Absalom Vacant <u>People Scrutiny Committee</u> T. Baxter | £210 Daily Fee £105 ½ Day Fee |

| ENTITLEMENT AS STATUTORY CO-OPTees | | AMOUNT OF CO-OPTees ALLOWANCES |
|---|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ROLE | MEMBER | |
| | T. Pritchard Vacant | |
| Statutory Co-optees -ordinary members of Standards Committee who also chair Standards Committees for Community Councils | Not Used | £238 Daily Fee £119 ½ Day Fee |

| Contribution towards costs of care and personal assistance | |
|--|--|
| All Members | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal (registered with Care Inspectorate Wales) care costs to be paid as evidenced. • Informal (unregistered) care costs to be paid up to a maximum rate equivalent to the Real UK Living Wage at the time the costs are incurred. | |

| Members Support – what is provided in terms of telephone, internet or email (see Determination 6) | |
|---|--|
| Telephone Support for Cabinet Members | |
| Telephone Support for Chairs of Committees | |
| Telephone Support for all other Members | |
| Access to Email for Cabinet Members | |
| Access to Email for Chairs of Committees | |
| Access to Email for all other Members | |
| Internet Support for Cabinet Members | |
| Internet Support for Chairs of Committees | |
| Internet Support for all other Members | |

SCHEDULE 2

Approved duties: -

- attendance at a meeting of the Authority or of any committee of the Authority or of any body to which the Authority makes appointments or nominations or of any committee of such a body;
- attendance at a meeting of any association of authorities of which the Authority is a member;
- attendance at any other meeting the holding of which is authorised by the Authority or by a committee of the Authority or by a joint committee of the Authority and one or more other Authorities;
- a duty undertaken for the purpose of or in connection with the discharge of the functions of Cabinet;
- a duty undertaken in pursuance of a standing order which requires a Member or Members to be present when tender documents are opened;
- a duty undertaken in connection with the discharge of any function of the Authority which empowers or requires the Authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises;
- attendance at any training or developmental event approved by the Authority or its Cabinet;
- Any other duty approved by the authority, or any other duty of a class so approved, undertaken for the purpose, of or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the authority or any of its committees.

SCHEDULE 3

Mileage Rates

| | |
|---|--|
| All sizes of private motor vehicle Up to 10,000 miles Over 10,000 miles | 45 pence per mile 25 pence per mile |
| Private Motor Cycles Pedal Cycles | 24 pence per mile 20 pence per mile |
| Passenger supplement | 05 pence per mile |

Subsistence Allowance

The day subsistence rate is up to a maximum of £28 and covers a 24 hour period and can be claimed for any meal if relevant provided such a claim is supported by receipts.

Re-imbusement of alcoholic drinks is not permitted.

Overnight Stay

The maximum allowances for an overnight stay are £200 for London and £95 for elsewhere. A maximum of £30 is available for an overnight stay with friends or relatives whilst on approved duty.

SCHEDULE 4

Compliance

- The Authority will arrange for the publication on the council's website the total sum paid by it to each Member and Co-opted Member in respect of salary, allowances, fees and reimbursements not later than 30 September following the close of the year to which it relates. In the interests of transparency this will include remuneration from all public service appointments held by elected Members.
- The Authority will publish on the council's website a statement of the basic responsibility of a councillor and role descriptors for senior salary office holders, which clearly identify the duties expected.
- The Authority will publish on the council's website the annual schedule of Member Remuneration not later than 31 July of the year to which the schedule refers.
- The authority will send a copy of the schedule to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales not later than 31 July of the year to which the schedule refers.
- The Authority will maintain records of Member or Co-opted Members attendance at meetings of council, cabinet and committees and other approved duties for which a Member or Co-opted Member submits a claim for reimbursement.
- The Authority will arrange for the publication on the council's website of annual reports prepared by Members.
- When the Authority agrees a paid substitution for family absence it will notify the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales within 14 days of the date of the decision of the details including the particular post and the duration of the substitution.



Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

Annual Report

February 2023

Annual Report 2023 to 2024

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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 34

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 28.06.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 28.06.2023

Committee: **Council**
Date of Meeting: **20th July, 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 | | | 20/07/23 | |

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 Option 1 – The Council approves the report on the basis that it is satisfied there is a sufficient level of support for Elected Members.

Option 2 – The Council provides comment and amendments to the report of the Head of Democratic Services prior to approval.

Democratic Services Committee endorsed the report on 27th March, 2023 and recommended that it be referred to Council for consideration.

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.

The Democratic Services Team comprises 5 members of staff providing member services, committee secretariat and support to the Leadership, Cabinet and Presiding Member. There is also 1 Scrutiny Adviser.

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 2022 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 comments and considerations can be raised formally at the Chairs and Vice Chairs meetings as necessary.

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.

Agenda Item 35

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: **20th July, 2023**

Report Subject: **Diverse Council Action Plan Update**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor S. Thomas - Leader of the Council/Cabinet Member Corporate and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Sarah King, Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships
Gemma Wasley, Service Manager Performance and Democratic**

| 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 | | | 20.07.23 | |

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide a progress update on the Diverse Council Action Plan.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 Providing opportunities to become a more diverse Council can lead to better engagement with individuals and communities, in turn leading to greater levels of confidence and trust and better decision making informed by a wider range of perspectives and lived experiences.

2.2 The evidence base, barriers and challenges to attracting more diverse councillors has been identified as:

- Time-commitment and meeting times;
- Political and organisational culture;
- Childcare and other caring responsibilities;
- Public criticism and online abuse;
- Remuneration and impact on employment; and
- Lack of diverse role models and incumbency.

2.3 On 29th July 2021, Blaenau Gwent Council signed up to becoming a diverse Council in order to:

- Provide a clear, public commitment to improving diversity;
- Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all;
- Consider staggering council meeting times and agreeing recess periods to support councillors with other commitments; and
- Set out an action plan of activity ahead of the 2022 local elections.

- 2.4 As part of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 there are a number of expectations on Councils to support diversity in the democratic process and also for political parties to support the process of becoming a councillor and supporting councillors once they become elected.
- 2.5 In order to progress the requirements and promote diversity in democracy, a Diverse Council Action Plan was established and agreed by Council in September 2021.
- 2.6 The agreed action plan, including progress updates is attached at appendix 1.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
To include Recommendation(s) / Endorsement by other groups, e.g. CLT/Committees/Other groups)
- 3.1 The report and action plan were considered by CLT at their meeting on 2nd March 2023 and by Democratic Services Committee on 24th March 2023.
- 3.2.1 **Option 1**
For Council to be satisfied with the action taken to date, identified in appendix 1, and not make any amendments to future actions.
- 3.2.2 **Option 2**
For Council to consider the action plan, attached at appendix 1, and provide comment for amendment.
4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 4.1 The Council has a responsibility to support more diverse Councils and to work with partners and the community to encourage people from underrepresented groups to stand for election. Political parties across Wales are also encouraged to support this process.
- 4.2 Being a diverse Council supports the Corporate Plan Objective, '*An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place*'.
5. **Implications Against Each Option**
Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)
- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications from implementing the Diverse Council Action Plan and all activity will be undertaken within current resources.
- Risk including Mitigating Actions***
- 5.2 There is a reputational risk to the Council if it does not support actions to becoming a diverse Council.

Legal

- 5.3 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Human Resources

- 5.4 The WLGA is working with the Welsh Government and Councils on promoting and supporting greater diversity.

6. Supporting Evidence *Performance Information and Data*

- 6.1 The action plan identified 30 actions, of these:
- 19 are completed; and
 - 11 are in progress.

Appendix 1 provides information on the activity undertaken to date.

Expected outcome for the public

- 6.2 It is widely acknowledged that equal representation is not only an issue of representational fairness but essential for the quality of policy development and decision making. Decisions will be better when they are taken by people with lived experience of an issue. The 'right person for the job' of councillor needs to be a member of the community they serve, in order to fully and consistently understand the lives and needs of that community.

Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)

- 6.3 The implementation of the Action Plan is to be undertaken across a number of teams, including partners.
- 6.3.1 The Engagement and Participation Strategy will be key in the implementation and achievement of the action plan and it will outline how we, as a Council, will work with the community to promote and encourage a diverse Council.

Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)

- 6.4 By supporting a more representative approach to democracy the Council will be supporting long term thinking.

Preventative focus

- 6.5 By supporting a more representative approach to democracy the Council will be able to make decisions that support all aspects of the community. Decisions will be made to positively impact any underrepresented groups in the community.

Collaboration / partnership working

- 6.6 The Council will work alongside the Welsh Government, WLGA and other Local Authorities to support diverse Councils.

6.7 Integration (across service areas)

In order to effectively implement the action plan actions have been allocated to a number of teams supporting the council to become more diverse.

6.8 Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions

The action plan supports the promotion and delivery of holding remote committee meetings and using IT rather than paper to support a reduction in travel and printing.

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

- 6.9.1 The Professional Lead for Engagement, Equalities & Welsh Language has been involved in the development of this action plan.

The action plan looks to support those from all under represented backgrounds.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

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

- 7.1 The action plan will form part of the Forward Work Programme for the Democratic Services Committee and Council.

- 7.1.1 The plan will be kept under review with additional actions considered during the life of the plan.

- 7.1.2 Actions will be included within the relevant business plans.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 Diverse Council Action Plan*

Diversity in Democracy Programme – Action Plan

| Requirement | Blaenau Gwent Action | Lead/s | Status |
|---|---|---|--------------------|
| <p>Increase engagement with the public and support communication and awareness to potential candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to raise awareness of the role and activities of the Council • to provide clarity about how the public can better inform local decision making • building greater community cohesion through a greater presence at community events • creating and building upon community networks | <p>1. Promote national marketing materials on becoming a Councillor including communication and awareness, training and development, remuneration, safe and flexible work and targeted support on the Council's website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a Councillor website https://www.beacouncillor.wales/ • WLGA online Councillors Guide to be developed for Councillors for the 2022 elections. • National Competency framework for elected members is now being developed prior to the 2022 • LGA have produced a tool to enable women, parents and carers to become councillors https://www.local.gov.uk/twenty-first-century-councils | Election Team Communications | Complete |
| | <p>2. Promote national marketing materials on becoming a Councillor and how to vote with local engagement forums (Citizens Panel, BG Youth Network and Youth Forum, 50+ Forum, Democracy Box)</p> | Engagement Team | Complete |
| | <p>3. Develop Public Participation Strategy Scheme (for compliance with duty under the 2021 Act). Encouraging people to participate in decision making and promoting awareness of how to become a Member, what membership entails, promoting / facilitating processes.</p> | Engagement Team Democratic Team Election Team Communications | In progress |
| | <p>4. Recommend for Political Groups to identify Diversity Champions.</p> | Group Leaders | Complete |
| | <p>5. Develop a BG election plan in line with any regional or national approaches</p> | Election Team | Complete |
| | <p>6. Dissemination and promotion of Welsh Government guidance / materials / educational resources for 16 and 17 year olds regarding Democracy in Wales.</p> | Engagement Team Education | Complete |
| | <p>7. Publication of Council's Constitution on the Council's website.</p> | Monitoring Officer | Complete |
| | <p>8. Development of a Constitution guide and inclusion on the website (a requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021).</p> | Monitoring Officer | In progress |
| | <p>9. Improve awareness of opportunities to participate – promote the options available via local groups, the website and various social media platforms.</p> | Communications Democratic Team Engagement Team | In progress |

Diversity in Democracy Programme – Action Plan

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| | | | Engagement Strategy to consider how best to raise awareness of how to participate. |
| | 10. Provide opportunities to engage on specific topics – include forward work programmes on the Council’s Website, promote ways to engage, promote that meetings are available online. | Communications Democratic Team Engagement Team | <p>In progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward work programmes included on the Council’s website and advertised in the local press annually • Democratic section of the Council website • Work to be undertaken as part of the Council’s Participation and Engagement Strategy to consider how best to provide opportunities for the public to engage on topics. |
| | 11. Include on the website and social media platforms the decisions being made by Committees. | Communications Democratic Team Engagement Team | <p>In progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting recordings and papers are included on the website. • Work to be undertaken as part of the Council’s Participation and Engagement Strategy to consider how best to inform the public of the decisions being made by Committees. |
| | 12. Work more closely with the Youth Forum to create more opportunities for young people to feed into decision making and improve the feedback loop to young people who participate | Engagement Team Democratic Team | <p>In progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Person represented on People Scrutiny. • Forward work programmes are shared with the Youth Forum • Presiding member has attended the Youth Forum and was involved in the inauguration of the Youth Mayor. Presiding Member meeting with the schools. • Engage Youth Forum in future for them to highlight the areas that they feel they would like to be included |

Diversity in Democracy Programme – Action Plan

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| | | | with regards to the forward work programmes. |
| | 13. Respond to the WG Race Equality Action Plan Consultation | Democratic Team Engagement Team | Complete |
| Provide a comprehensive training and awareness programme available through a variety of routes available for members to support them in their role. | 14. Undertake a review of the Member Development Strategy identifying areas and development available for Members. | Democratic Team | Complete <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Development Programme has been reviewed and is to be approved at Council • The Member Development Programme and Induction Programmes are linked to forward work programmes. |
| | 15. Review areas of training and development which can be made available online, core set of training materials which can be used for all Members. | Democratic Team | Complete <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National e Learning modules freely available via the NHS learning@wales website • Included as part of induction programme. • Included within the members library. |
| | 16. Development of the Members Induction Programme | Democratic Team | Complete |
| | 17. Provide the opportunity for mentoring / shadowing for newly Elected Members. | Democratic Team | In progress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring Process has been reviewed and is to be approved at Council. |
| | 18. Review the Members Competency Framework. | Democratic Team | In progress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competency Framework has been reviewed and is to be approved at Council. |
| | 19. Undertake Personal Development Reviews for Senior Salary Holders and offer to non SRAs. | Democratic Team | In progress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDR Process has been reviewed and is to be approved at Council. |
| | 20. Promoting the WLGA's online "Councillor Guide" for the 2022 elections and the suite of National e-learning modules specifically developed for Members and freely available. | Democratic Team | Completed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic copies available • Found within Member Library |

Diversity in Democracy Programme – Action Plan

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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included within Induction Programme Handbook |
| <p>Promote health and safety with Members including, lone working, providing access to counselling services, safety and wellbeing while performing their role and taking a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment by members including through social networks.</p> | <p>21. Promote, as part of the Member Induction Programme, that members undertake health and safety training, lone working training, cyber security and social media training.</p> | <p>Democratic Team Health and Safety Communications</p> | <p>Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All listed training provided as part of the Induction Programme Online Councillors guide for handling intimidation https://www.local.gov.uk/councillors-guide-handling-intimidation |
| | <p>22. Publish official addresses on council website rather than personal addresses for Members (where requested).</p> | <p>Communications Team</p> | <p>Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed following the election with the GO as the main address. |
| | <p>23. Include in the Members library the WLGA’s advice and support service to individual Members who receive online abuse.</p> | <p>Democratic Team</p> | <p>Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information included in the member’s library as well as a number of other documents. |
| | <p>24. Include in the Members library the “Personal Safety of Councillors” which has been developed by Swansea Council and the Welsh Local Government Association.</p> | <p>Democratic Team</p> | <p>Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information included in the member’s library as well as a number of other documents. |
| <p>Agrees that councils should set targets to be representative of the communities they serve at the next elections</p> | <p>25. Undertake a diversity and inclusion survey with Members which will provide a benchmark for future elections and allow the feedback to be reviewed to support / barriers that may have been experienced by a Member during their term of office.</p> | <p>Elections Team Democratic Team</p> | <p>In progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A local exit survey can be undertaken for outgoing members. The WLGA undertook an exit survey in 2022, for Blaenau Gwent, 10 members stood down and 1 member completed the survey. There is a role for the political groups to promote diversity and inclusion. Work to promote the role of an elected member will be undertaken throughout the political cycle. |

Diversity in Democracy Programme – Action Plan

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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis will be undertaken to understand the diversity of the community following the release of the Census 2021. |
| | 26. Share survey feedback with Members. | Elections Team Democratic Team | In progress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In line with the above action. |
| Maximise opportunities for Members to work in ways that enable them to achieve a work / life balance which protects their welfare and wellbeing and allows them to manage any caring / dependency relationships. | 27. Agree at AGM to have an August recess and for no formal meetings during school holidays. This is done every year. | Members | Complete <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council has approved for August recess for a number of years. Council has agreed for meetings to not be scheduled during school holidays unless urgent |
| | 28. Provide flexibility in council business by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaking a review of meeting times each year with each committee at the first meeting of each cycle, including the option to stagger meeting times Encourage members, officers, public and press to attend meetings remotely. Promote job-sharing by executive leaders and other office holders. | Members Democratic Team Organisational Development Communications | Complete <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timing of meeting survey undertaken annually and meetings scheduled as per the survey findings. Hybrid meetings offered Council has approved a multi location meeting policy Information is included within the Constitution. Well-being leaflet for members distributed Well-being meetings put in place for members |
| | 29. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the remunerations that are available to Members on the Council website and to candidates standing for Election Promote family absence provisions. Promote the IRPW Contribution Towards Costs of Care and Personal Assistance Encourage all Members to claim any necessary allowances or expenses incurred. | Organisational Development | Complete <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remuneration information is reported to the relevant committees and then published online. Information is provided on the provisions available to members and promoted as part of the Report of the IRPW. |

Diversity in Democracy Programme – Action Plan

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the Welsh Government’s and IRPW’s commitment to explore Resettlement grants or ‘parachute payments’ payments for Members who lose their seats at election. <i>Note – this action was previously not supported by the Council however, as this is to be determined by the IRPW it is to remain for information purposes.</i> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information has been included in the Members Well-being leaflet |
| | <p>30. Hold a Member awareness raising session, as part of the induction process on members remuneration and allowances</p> | | <p>Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaken by OD at the orientation day. |

Agenda Item 36

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 27.06.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 28.06.2023

Committee: **Council**
Date of Meeting: **20th July, 2023**
Report Subject: **Annual Scrutiny Report 2022-23**
Portfolio Holder: **Councillor S. Thomas, Leader / Cabinet Member
Corporate Overview & Performance**
Report Submitted by: **Elizabeth Thomas, Scrutiny and Democratic Officer**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| | 22.06.23 | | | | | | 20.07.23 | |

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present to Members of Council the Annual Scrutiny report 2022/23 in accordance with the Council's Constitution (attached at Appendix 1).
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Annual Scrutiny Report has been produced in accordance with Section 7.4.3 of the Council's Constitution which states that 'The Overview and Scrutiny Committee must report annually to the Full Council on their workings with recommendations for their future working programme and amended working methods if appropriate'.
 - 2.2 The Annual Scrutiny Report 2022/23 sets out the key areas of work that have been undertaken by each Scrutiny Committee during 2022/23.
 - 2.3 Actions in relation to the delivery of scrutiny in Blaenau Gwent are set out within the Business Plan of the Performance and Democratic Section and monitored throughout the year.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 **Option 1:** That Council approves the 'scrutiny activity' that has been undertaken by each Scrutiny Committee during 2022/23, and agree that the report is published on the Blaenau Gwent website.

Option 2: That Council suggest amendment to the Annual Scrutiny Report 2022/23 prior to publication on the Council's website.
4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

The submission of an Annual Scrutiny Report is a statutory responsibility under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

5. Implications Against Each Option

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

There are no direct financial implications linked to this report.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

Scrutiny has a pivotal role in promoting improvement, efficiency and collaboration across public services and in holding those responsible for delivering services to account.

Scrutiny is an important element of the governance and democratic arrangements of the Council and is often reviewed externally by Audit, Inspection and Review Bodies. If Scrutiny is considered to not be working well this will then have a negative impact on the reputation of the Council as well as on the governance arrangements of the Council.

5.3 **Legal**

There are no legal implications linked to this report.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There is one officer supporting the implementation of Scrutiny throughout the Council.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

The service monitors and collects performance data, examples of which are included in the Annual Scrutiny report (Appendix 1).

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

Pre decision scrutiny aims to improve the needs and requirements of local people via the policy work and service area developments that the scrutiny committees undertake; on behalf of the local community, members consider, challenge and make recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet or Council prior to decisions being made.

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

As part of ongoing Scrutiny development consideration is provided to encourage within the scrutiny process.

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

The Annual Scrutiny report includes area for future development to ensure that the Council's Scrutiny arrangements continue to be developed, monitored and reviewed so that it continues to be part of the Council's robust governance arrangements.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

Scrutiny Committees consider policies and procedures in order to recommend improvements for the future, taking a preventative approach to planning.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Peer learning and support from other local authorities is used to continue to develop the approach to Scrutiny.

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

The internal evaluation arrangements that involve both Members and Officers are ongoing throughout the meeting cycle. Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny meetings are held regularly throughout the cycle to support the implementation of the scrutiny arrangements.

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

The Scrutiny Committee process supports the promotion and delivery of holding remote committee meetings and using IT rather than paper to support a reduction in travel and printing.

6.8 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)***

This is not a decision-making report. However, it is anticipated that there would not be any negative impact on the protected characteristics.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 When necessary, scrutiny support arrangements are monitored by the Democratic Services Committee who recommend to Council via the Democratic Arrangements Report.

Actions in relation to the delivery of scrutiny in Blaenau Gwent are set out within the Business Plan of the Performance and Democratic Section and monitored throughout the year.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23

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Introduction

Welcome to Blaenau Gwent's Annual Scrutiny Report 2022/23 which gives an overview of work undertaken by each Scrutiny Committee. This year has seen significant changes to Elected Members following the local elections in May 2022 and a new committee structure agreed at the Annual General Meeting of the Council in May 2022.

Both returning and newly elected Members have effectively challenged and influenced the Council's decision-making process and added value to a wide range of activity, in order to deliver effective outcomes for the people of Blaenau Gwent, some of this work is highlighted in the following sections of this report.

Following changes to the democratic structure in 2022, Blaenau Gwent now has four scrutiny committees that collectively support the work of the Cabinet and Council, and the new structure continues to allow non-Cabinet members to influence how local and strategic policy can work more effectively for the people they serve and effectively challenge Cabinet on the decisions it makes.

The Council's Scrutiny function is made up of non-Cabinet Members. The non-Cabinet Members are appointed to sit on the Scrutiny Committees to support the work of the Cabinet and the Council as a whole.

The Committees have no decision-making powers, however, they act as a check and balance on the powers exercised and decisions taken by the Cabinet.

Introduction (continued)

The Scrutiny Committees allow non-Cabinet Members to have a greater say in Council matters by:

- ◆ Assisting the Cabinet in the development of policy;
- ◆ Monitoring performance of the Council and its partners;
- ◆ Examining the impact and implementation of Cabinet decisions and policies;
- ◆ Holding the Leader, Cabinet and Corporate Leadership Team to account;
- ◆ Listening to the views of the public and make sure the public voice is heard; and
- ◆ Scrutinising external organisations who provide services to our residents.

Scrutiny is most effective when it is focussed on a limited number of in-depth topics and priorities. When considering agenda items, Scrutiny Committees should have regard to the likely value and impact gained for any report or review. This will need to be carefully balanced against the time and resources required to undertake the activity.

Other items of interest or information required to enhance the Members knowledge and skills in a particular area, can be provided to Members via Member Briefing Sessions, Directorate Briefing Sessions and Member Training and Development.

All Democratic Meetings are arranged as hybrid meetings, i.e. Committee Members and Officers can attend virtually via Microsoft Teams or physically attend the meeting in the General Offices. Members of the public are also able to attend the meetings either virtually or physically.

All Democratic Meetings are recorded and uploaded onto the Blaenau Gwent website.

Changes to the Democratic Structure

During 2021/22 we undertook a comprehensive desk top research exercise to consider where the democratic function of the Council could be strengthened and modernised. The research has included:

- ◆ Evaluation comments received from both officers and members;
- ◆ Data analysis;
- ◆ Network meeting discussions;
- ◆ Chairs and Vice Chair meetings;
- ◆ Consideration of processes in other areas; and
- ◆ Comparative data analysis.

Owing to changes made by the Boundary Commission Blaenau Gwent reduced from 16 to 14 Wards and the number of Elected Members reducing from 42 to 33. Following the reduction and the research a number of findings and proposals were considered and agreed by Council for implementation during 2022/23 municipal year.

As part the changes to the democratic structure, Blaenau Gwent now has four scrutiny committees that collectively support the work of the Cabinet and Council.

Further changes agreed in 2022 were:

- The number of Elected Members sitting on Scrutiny Committees was reduced from 15 to 9
- More focussed and succinct scrutiny agenda — with a maximum of two items, in the categories of Pre-decision and high level performance monitoring
- Minutes of committee meetings — minutes to include: attendance, apologies, declarations of interest and decisions or recommendations (the full meetings can be viewed via the recording on the Blaenau Gwent website).

We have also established recommendation pro formas as part of the scrutiny process. This enables recommendations from Scrutiny to Cabinet / Council to be easily accessed via the relevant committee meeting page.

Scrutiny in Blaenau Gwent

The Four scrutiny committees of the Council are:

- ◆ Corporate Overview and Performance
- ◆ Partnership
- ◆ People
- ◆ Places

As agreed at the May 2022 AGM, each scrutiny committees is made of 9 Elected Members.

Each scrutiny committee has a specific remit. Full details of the areas covered by each scrutiny committee are highlighted later in this report.

The new scrutiny agenda structure, has ensured members undertake in-depth challenge for each item under discussion. The reduction in the number of items for scrutiny has also ensured that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme is not being overburdened with monitoring items.

Expert witnesses / invitees have been invited and contributed to scrutiny meetings, including the Education Achievement Service (EAS), the Aneurin Leisure Trust (ALT) and the Shared Resource Service (SRS). Cabinet members have also attended by invitation to answer questions on specific topics.

Outside of the formal scrutiny committee, members have attended numerous briefing sessions, which have been informative and developed their knowledge and understanding of specific topics. Feedback from officers has also supported the new way of working, officers reported that they had received better member engagement in these sessions.

Members have also undertaken a number of site visits, e.g. Housing Advice Centre, Social Services Residential provision and Silent Valley.

Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny meetings are held quarterly to discuss and review the operational activity of Scrutiny in Blaenau Gwent to contribute to improvements, and ensure consistency of practice where appropriate.

Directorate briefings are also held quarterly with individual Directorates, to which all Members are invited. These closely focussed sessions provide information and detail on service areas to raise the interest and enthusiasm of Members.

Forward Work Programmes

Work to develop the **Forward Work Programmes (FWPs) for 2022/23** began in April 2022, work included:

- Meeting with service areas to consider topics for inclusion in the Draft Scrutiny, Council and Cabinet draft Forward Work Programmes.
- Following the Annual General meeting, met with the new Chairs and Vice-Chairs to discuss the Scrutiny FWPs and with Cabinet Members to discuss the draft Cabinet and Council draft FWPs.
- The FWPs were formally signed off by each of the Committees in September 2022, then translated and made available for public view on the BG website.
- The Forward Work Programmes being fluid documents, were regularly reviewed by Chairs and Vice-Chairs and officers at Agenda Management meetings and by all committee members at each scrutiny committee meeting.
- The Forward Work Programmes are available on the Blaenau Gwent Council website, links to individual Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programmes can be found in the relevant Scrutiny Committee pages below.

Blaenau Gwent Scrutiny in Figures 2022/23



21 Pre Decision Scrutiny Agenda Items



236 Unique Views of Committee Meetings Online



75 Member Briefings Sessions held



87% of Members attended Scrutiny Committee meetings



3 Number of expert witnesses / invitees invited and contributed to scrutiny meetings



Places Scrutiny Committee
Most Viewed Scrutiny Committee Meeting on **14th March 2023**.



24 Formal Scrutiny Committee Meetings held



4 Number of meetings attended by Cabinet Member

Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Chair's Overview

The Corporate and Performance scrutiny has had a productive year, holding 9 meetings.

The members of this committee (some of which are new to the role of councillor) have continued to develop and learn and provide appropriate challenge to reports. There has been a really good level of questioning and debate and the committee has made use of action sheets and the forward work programme.

My thanks must be expressed to all members of the committee for their excellent attendance and valuable input over the year. Special thanks to the Vice-Chair, Cllr J Thomas for her support and to all officers for their comprehensive reports, participation, help and guidance.

To see the items that have been scrutinised during the year, the Forward Work Programmes can be accessed on the following link [Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme 2022/23](#)

Cllr Joanna Wilkins

***Chair, Corporate Overview and
Performance Scrutiny Committee.***



Member Attendance at Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Chair:

Councillor Joanna Wilkins (9 of 9 meetings attended)

Vice-Chair:

Councillor Jacqueline Thomas (9 of 9 meetings attended)

Councillor Carl Bainton (8 of 9 meetings attended)

Councillor Malcolm Day (8 of 9 meetings attended)

Councillor George Humphries (9 of 9 meetings attended)

Councillor Ellen Jones (8 of 9 meetings attended)

Councillor Ross Leadbeater (8 of 9 meetings attended)

Councillor Chris Smith (9 of 9 meetings attended)

Councillor Tommy Smith (7 of 9 meetings attended)

Remit of the Committee:

The main areas of responsibility of the **Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee** is to develop and review strategies, plans and policies and monitor performance of the Council as a whole; and Organisational Development, Communication and Marketing, Equalities, Customers and Citizens, Welsh Language, Medium Term Financial Strategy. In addition, this new committee also monitor the financial management of the Council.

Scrutiny Forward Work Programme Highlights

Topic: Discretionary Cost of Living Scheme

Activity

A report was presented requesting support for funding provided by Welsh Government to enable councils to provide support under a discretionary scheme to help households in need of assistance with their living costs. The Committee were asked to supporting a payment of £100 to eligible households. As part of the scheme, the committee was also asked to support the Council in making a contribution of £100k to the Blaenau Gwent Foodbank and £50k to Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

Outcome

The committee supported the £150 payment to eligible households and also the £50k contribution to CAB, however, the committee recommended an amendment to the Scheme, that £30k be provided to BG Foodbank as the main recipient and a discretionary fund of £70k be established to allow other local food distribution groups / organisations to apply for funding from the council to assist in delivery work within their respective communities.

At the Council meeting in September 2022, members considered and agreed the scrutiny recommendation.

Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee

The Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee considered a number of policies, plans and strategies and high level performance reports. Members also attended Member Briefing sessions to enhance their skills and knowledge. Some examples of these are listed below:

Policies, Plans and Strategies



- ◆ Cost of Living Discretionary Scheme
- ◆ Welsh Language Promotion Strategy
- ◆ Workforce Strategy Review and Year 2 Action Plan
- ◆ Driving at Work Policy
- ◆ Commissioning and Procurement Strategy
- ◆ Revenue Budget Proposals 2023/24
- ◆ Capital Strategy Review
- ◆ Review of the Agile Working Policy

High Level Performance Monitoring



- ◆ Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring
- ◆ Sickness Absence Performance 2021/22
- ◆ Annual Assessment of Council's Performance 2021/22
- ◆ Treasury Management 2021/22
- ◆ Joint Finance and Performance report
- ◆ Strategic Equality Plan Annual report

Member Briefing Sessions



- ◆ The Work of the Corporate Services Directorate
- ◆ Council Constitution
- ◆ Managing Social Media and the Media
- ◆ Local Government Finance
- ◆ Council Budget 2023/24
- ◆ Financial Monitoring
- ◆ Equalities & Diversity / Welsh Language
- ◆ Sickness Absence Performance

People Scrutiny Committee

Chair's Overview

The People Scrutiny Committee has continued its work to scrutinise and challenge across a wide-ranging work programme, with committee members using skills and experience to put forward recommendations to Cabinet for consideration.

In Children's Services, the Committee has examined critical areas such as The Childcare Offer, National Adoption Service, Corporate Parenting, and regular reporting of the safe reduction of children looked after.

A notable development has been the introduction of a four-bed children's residential home and further four-bed emergency accommodation in the Tredegar area; the Committee felt that it was vital to establish new ventures such as this and take advantage of additional Welsh Government capital funding in a time of diminishing council budgets. Members felt that the project would allow children looked after to live within their communities for education purposes and to live as close to friends and family as possible while in the care of Blaenau Gwent. They also welcomed the opportunity that the home could bring in helping to reduce revenue funding in a critical area.

In Adult services the committee has examined critical areas such as the Integrated Care Fund, Living Independently.

In Education, the Committee have scrutinised reports and made recommendations to the Cabinet in areas that include home-to-school transport, ALN provision and strategies, Education and safeguarding, schools' admissions policy and the improving schools' programme. Members also scrutinised a report on the Estyn Inspection and deliberated on an end-of-year report from the Director of Education.

The Committee agreed that both departments have responded well to external audits and developed solid action plans to address the recommendations received.

To see the items that have been scrutinised during the year, the Forward Work Programmes can be accessed on the following link [People Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme 2022/23](#)



Cllr Tommy Smith

Chair, People Scrutiny Committee.

Member Attendance at People Scrutiny Committee

Chair:

Councillor Tommy Smith (6 of 6 meetings attended)

Vice-Chair:

Councillor Jen Morgan (4 of 6 meetings attended)

Councillor Derrick Bevan (6 of 6 meetings attended)

Councillor Carl Bainton (6 of 6 meetings attended)

Councillor Keith Chaplin (5 of 6 meetings attended)

Councillor Gareth A Davies (5 of 6 meetings attended)

Councillor Julie Holt (5 of 6 meetings attended)

Councillor Godfrey Thomas (4 of 6 meetings attended)

Councillor David Wilkshire (4 of 6 meetings attended)

Remit of the Committee:

The main areas of responsibility of the **People Scrutiny Committee** is to develop and review strategies, plans and policies and monitor performance of the Education and Social Services Directorates and Corporate Safeguarding.

Scrutiny Forward Work Programme Highlights

Topic: Financial Liabilities of the Regional Integration Fund (RIF)

Activity

The committee was presented with a report to consider the financial liabilities and implications of the Regional Integration Fund and its tapered funding model.

The committee was asked to consider and make recommendations to Council, as to whether the council accepts or rejects the liabilities and to provide its response to the Gwent Regional Partnership Board via the Assistant Director of Partnership and Integration in Health.

Outcome

The committee considered the report and presentation and discussed the financial implications and the risks in relation to the projects both in Children's and Adult Services that are support by RIF funding and recommended that Council provided a response to the Gwent Regional Partnership Board stating that it does not accept the financial liabilities and implications of the new Regional Integration Fund and its tapered funding model.

Council considered the report and the Scrutiny Committee recommendation and unanimously agreed that the Council not accept the financial liabilities of the new RIF and its tapered funding model.

People Scrutiny Committee

The People Scrutiny Committee considered a number of policies, plans and strategies and high level performance reports. Members also attended Member Briefing sessions to enhance their skills and knowledge. Some examples of these are listed below:

Policies, Plans and Strategies



- ◆ Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy
- ◆ Proposal to Explore and develop a Business Case for Children’s Residential Provision in Blaenau Gwent
- ◆ ALN Policies and Strategies
- ◆ Schools Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education

High Level Performance Monitoring



- ◆ Annual report of the Director of Social Services 2021/22 and Half yearly report
- ◆ Safeguarding Performance Education and Social Services
- ◆ Improving Schools Programme
- ◆ Half Yearly and End of Year —Director of Education reporting
- ◆ Summary Self-Evaluation Report 2022
- ◆ Response to Estyn LGES Inspection

Member Briefing Sessions



- ◆ Estyn Preparedness
- ◆ Gwent and Regional Market Position Statement
- ◆ Flying Start Expansion
- ◆ Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone—Post 16 Results
- ◆ Youth Service
- ◆ Fostering and Adoption
- ◆ Youth Offending Service
- ◆ Proposed Children’s Home in Blaenau Gwent
- ◆ Early Years Integration Transformation Programme Pilot / Flying Start Expansion
- ◆ Estyn Feedback

Place Scrutiny Committee

Chair's Overview

The Place Scrutiny Committee brought together two former committees, Community Services Scrutiny Committee and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. The main areas of responsibility of the Place Scrutiny Committee includes the Community Services and Regeneration Directorates, Decarbonisation and Climate Change, and Community Safety including CCTV.

The committee met four times throughout 2022/23 and provided consideration and recommendations on a number of reports, such as providing considerations to the Cabinet on:

- The options for highways works across the borough;
- Placemaking Plans for Tredegar and Brynmawr;
- Prioritisation of funding streams from the Shared Prosperity Fund; and
- The replacement Local Development Plan.

The members have also attended a number of interesting and informative briefing sessions, covering a wider remit of areas.

Members have been engaging and have asked a number of probing and challenging questions to ensure a full understanding of the reports presented.

We look forward to continuing the work of this committee into 2023/24 and the consideration of various reports such as the Place Making Plans for Abertillery and Blaina and the new Highways Maintenance Plan.

I would like to thank all members of the committee for their attendance and constructive input over the year. Special recognition and thanks must go to the Vice-Chair, Cllr Ross Leadbeater for his support throughout the year.



Cllr Malcolm Cross

Chair, Place Scrutiny Committee.

Member Attendance at Place Scrutiny Committee

Chair:

Councillor Malcolm Cross (4 of 5 meetings attended)

Vice-Chair:

Councillor Ross Leadbeater (4 of 5 meetings attended)

Councillor Peter Baldwin (4 of 5 meetings attended)

Councillor Sonia Behr (5 of 5 meetings attended)

Councillor John Hill (4 of 5 meetings attended)

Councillor Julie Holt (5 of 5 meetings attended)

Page 268 Councillor Jules Gardner (3 of 5 meetings attended)

Councillor John P Morgan (4 of 5 meetings attended)

Remit of the Committee:

The main areas of responsibility of the **Place Scrutiny Committee** is to develop and review strategies, plans and policies and monitor performance of the Community Services and Regeneration Directorate, Decarbonisation and Climate Change, and Community Safety including CCTV.

Scrutiny Forward Work Programme Highlights

Topic: Waste Management and Recycling Strategy Review

Activity

The committee was presented with an update of the progress made to date and were also asked to consider and suggest improvements to the three-year review of the Waste Management and Recycling Strategy 2018-25.

Outcome

The committee acknowledged the progress made to date and suggested amendments to the three-year review of the strategy:

- To review the receptacles provided to residents to ensure they are fit for purpose; and where appropriate and practical for litter pickers to separate waste they collect for recycling; and
- That a programme of targeted engagement activity be undertaken to reach the 70% recycling target.

Cabinet received the report at its meeting in January 2023 and wholly agreed the scrutiny committee's recommendations.

Place Scrutiny Committee

The Place Scrutiny Committee considered a number of policies, plans and strategies and high level performance reports. Members also attended Member Briefing sessions to enhance their skills and knowledge. Some examples of these are listed below:

Policies, Plans and Strategies



- ◆ Waste and Recycling Strategy Review
- ◆ Replacement Local Development Plan
- ◆ Highways Capital Works Programme
- ◆ Public Space Protection Order
- ◆ Tredegar Placemaking Plan
- ◆ Public Protection and Environment Enforcement Services—Revised Enforcement Policy
- ◆ Replacement Local Development Plan
- ◆ Brynmawr Placemaking Plan

High Level Performance Monitoring



- ◆ Community Services and Regeneration Directorate Performance

Member Briefing Sessions



- ◆ Local Development Plan
- ◆ Regional Wood Facility
- ◆ Civil Parking Enforcement
- ◆ Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan
- ◆ Winter Maintenance
- ◆ Energy Prospectus
- ◆ Homelessness and Bed & Breakfast Accommodation
- ◆ Public Transport

Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Chair's Overview

2022 saw the establishment of a new Scrutiny Committee, with a focus on Partnerships. The Committee focused on those Partnerships which the Council has an interest in and is delivering public services on our behalf.

The Committee has looked to scrutinise the main areas of oversight and governance arrangement of Partners so that they are adequate and effective, covering off the principles of good governance namely Accountability; Leadership; Integrity; Stewardship and Transparency.

The main Partners scrutinised included:

- The Regional Partnership Board
- SRS
- Aneurin Leisure Trust
- Education Achievement Service

Recommendations were made to Cabinet regarding the Education Partnership Agreement, the Gwent Well-being Plan, the National Collaborative Arrangements for Welsh (Local Authority) Adoption and Fostering Services and the EAS Business Plan.

Page 270 Performance monitoring was conducted on Aneurin Leisure Trust, the Welsh Public Library Standards and the SRS.

Outside of the formal scrutiny committee, members have attended numerous briefing sessions, which have been informative and further developed our knowledge and understanding of specific topics.

Members of this new committee worked well together and provided constructive challenge, assisted the Cabinet in the development of Policy as well as monitoring the performance of Partners.

To see the items that have been scrutinised during the year, the Forward Work Programmes can be accessed on the following link

[Partnership Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme 2022/23](#)



Cllr Wayne Hodgins

Chair, Partnership Scrutiny Committee.

Member Attendance at Place Scrutiny Committee

Chair:

Councillor Wayne Hodgins (4 of 4 meetings attended)

Vice-Chair:

Councillor Peter Baldwin (3 of 4 meetings attended)

Councillor Keith Chaplin (4 of 4 meetings attended)

Councillor David C Davies (4 of 4 meetings attended)

Councillor Ellen Jones (4 of 4 meetings attended)

Councillor Lee Parsons (3 of 4 meetings attended)

Councillor Chris Smith (4 of 4 meetings attended)

Councillor Lisa Winnett (4 of 4 meetings attended)

Councillor Dean Woods (1 of 4 meetings attended)

Remit of the Committee:

The main areas of responsibility of the **Partnership Scrutiny Committee** is to monitor the oversight and governance arrangements of identified partners: Aneurin Leisure Trust, Shared Resource Service and Education Achievement Service.

The Committee also received updates from the Regional Partnership Board.

Scrutiny Forward Work Programme Highlights

Topic: EAS Business Plan 2023-25—Consultation

Activity

The Committee were asked to consider the plan and provide comments on the draft Plan. Any feedback from the committee would be taken into consideration when completing the final version of the Business Plan.

Outcome

The committee considered the draft Business Plan and raised concerns regarding the reduction in funding provided to the EAS across all Gwent LAs. Members were assured that the Business Plan had been constructed with a view to protecting front line services to schools and settings for 2023/24. Members, therefore, accepted the report and Business Plan.

Partnership Scrutiny Committee

The Place Scrutiny Committee considered a number of policies, plans and strategies and high level performance reports. Members also attended Member Briefing sessions to enhance their skills and knowledge. Some examples of these are listed below:

Policies, Plans and Strategies



- ◆ Statutory Maintained Schools Partnership Agreement
- ◆ Gwent Well-being Plan
- ◆ National Collaborative Arrangements for Welsh (Local Authority) Adoption and Fostering Services
- ◆ Education Achievement Service Business Plan 2022/23

High Level Performance Monitoring



- ◆ Regional Partnership Board update
- ◆ Shared Resource Service
- ◆ Aneurin Leisure Trust

Member Briefing Sessions



- ◆ Working with the Education Achievement Service
- ◆ Shared Resource Service
- ◆ Aneurin Leisure Trust SLA Partnership Agreement
- ◆ CCRC / Tech Valleys
- ◆ South Wales Fire and Rescue

Member Attendance at Scrutiny Committees

| | Total Members to Attend Sept 22 - Apr 23 | Actual Attendance Sept 22 -Apr 23 | % of Attendance Sept 22-Apr 23 | Number of Meetings Held Sept 22-Apr 23 | * Committee Structure June 21– Mar 22 | % of Attendance June 21– Mar 22 | Number of Meetings Held June 21 - Mar 22 |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| Corporate Overview and Performance | 81 | 75 | 92 | 9 | Corporate Overview | 81 | 7 |
| People | 54 | 45 | 83 | 6 | Education and Learning | 94 | 7 |
| | | | | | Social Services | 82 | 4 |
| Place | 45 | 37 | 82 | 5 | Community Services | 89 | 6 |
| | | | | | Regeneration | 90 | 7 |
| **Partnership | 36 | 31 | 86 | 4 | - | - | - |
| Overall Total | 216 | 188 | 87 | 24 | | 85 | 31 |

* New committee structure as from September 2022

** New committee, no comparison to previous years.

How the public can get involved in the Scrutiny Process

Members of the public are welcome to attend any Committee meeting to observe proceedings (unless there is an exempt item), agenda are published one week in advance of the meeting, on the Council's website. However, during 2022/23 owing to changes being made to the Democratic Hub at the General Offices, meetings have been held virtually via Microsoft Teams and recorded and uploaded to the council website, normally by the following day, to enable members of the public to view the meetings online. Nevertheless, should a member of the public request to attend the General Offices to observe a meeting, provisions would be put in place to enable the committee meeting to be viewed.

In the new municipal year 2023/24, Members of the public will be able to observe meetings virtually or physically at the General Offices.

The Council is currently preparing a Participation Strategy to include ways in which members of the public can engage in the democratic process.

Agendas, reports and minutes of meetings can be found on the Council's Website: [Councillors and Committees | Blaenau Gwent CBC](#)

Members of the public can suggest items for the Scrutiny Committees either by writing, emailing or phoning the Democratic Team. Information can also be found on the Council's Website: [Blaenau Gwent CBC: Get Involved with Democracy \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](#)

All contact information can be found at the end of this document.

Legislation

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 contains a number of provisions to promote diversity, involvement and participation in council democratic arrangements. Some of these provisions include:

- Encouraging local people to participate in decision making
- Development of a Participation Strategy
- The electronic broadcasting of meetings and multi location meetings
- A review of the council's petition scheme
- Job sharing for members of the Executive.

The Council is looking to implement the required areas from the Act and has included this within an implementation plan which in future can be monitored by the Democratic Services Committee as appropriate.

The Act has enabled councils to operate multi-location meetings, whereby Elected Members, Officers and the public and press are

given the opportunity to attend meetings physically at the General Offices in Ebbw Vale or virtually via Microsoft Teams. Councils may not mandate physical attendance at meetings. Blaenau Gwent Council approved its Multi-Location Meetings Policy in September 2022.

Decarbonisation

The Welsh Government published its Net Zero Carbon Status by 2030: Public Sector Road Map in July 2021. The document provided a strategic overview of the key priority areas for action and milestones needed for the Welsh public sector to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

Blaenau Gwent Council adopted its Decarbonisation Plan in September 2021. The Plan sets out how Blaenau Gwent would deliver its commitment to the ambition of the Welsh Public Sector to achieve net Zero by 2030.

The democratic corporate reporting template requires officers to consider how the report topic impacts on the Council's Decarbonisation Plan.

Well-being of Future Generations (WBFG) Act

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 requires public bodies to carry out sustainable development - the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, ensuring that all our service areas are giving it due consideration so that the services we provide meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council as a designated public body under the WBFG Act, therefore, has a duty to ensure it is giving due consideration to the act.

The democratic corporate reporting template requires officers to consider how the report topic supports the WBFG Act.

This led to a new Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process being developed which incorporated wider policy considerations beyond equality and socio-economics:

- ◆ Well-being of Future Generation Act Goals
- ◆ New Corporate Objectives
- ◆ Armed forces (new national duties)
- ◆ Community Safety considerations

The Policy Team continues to provide on-going support, advice and guidance to those completing the IIA process.

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

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.

Where it has been deemed there is a substantial (or likely) negative impact the Council must report this accordingly, outlining any decisions taken with any mitigations considered/ actioned.

A review of the way the Council carries out impact assessments was undertaken in 2021/22 . This fell in-line with new legal expectations from the Act, the Socio-Economic Duty.

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.

Future Planned Developments

- The Council is currently preparing a Participation Strategy to include ways in which members of the public can engage in the democratic process.
- Live broadcasting of full Council meetings will commence within the 2023/24 cycle. This may be expanded to other Democratic meetings dependent on Welsh Government guidance.
- Identifying young persons to support the scrutiny process, e.g. attending formal committee meetings, committee task and finish groups, consultations and member briefing sessions.
- Undertake a review of the remits and arrangements for the Partnership Scrutiny Committee.
- Co-ordinate and manage the development of the Gwent Public Service Board Scrutiny Committee.
- Supporting members with the research function.
- Undertake annual review of the Multi Location Meetings Policy.

Contact Information

If you would like to find out more about the work we have undertaken or how to become involved in future Scrutiny activity please contact:

| Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships | Service Manager Performance and Democratic (Deputy Head of Democratic Services) | Scrutiny and Democratic Officer (Committee Adviser) |
|---|---|---|
| Sarah King | Gemma Wasley | Elizabeth Thomas |
| Tel: 07870 402616 | Tel: 07977158983 | Tel: (01495) 354795 |
| Email: Sarah.king@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk | Email: Gemma.wasley@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk | Email: Liz.thomas@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk |

You can contact your local Councillor and talk to them about Scrutiny.

Contact details for Councillors can be found on our website at [Blaenau Gwent CBC: Councillor Directory \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](http://Blaenau Gwent CBC: Councillor Directory (blaenau-gwent.gov.uk))

Address:

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
General Offices
Steelworks Road
Tyllwyn
Ebbw Vale
NP23 6AA

Web: [Blaenau Gwent CBC: Blaenau Gwent \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](http://Blaenau Gwent CBC: Blaenau Gwent (blaenau-gwent.gov.uk))

Additional documents which may be of interest to you can be found on our website.

Council Minutes, Agendas and Reports

[Blaenau Gwent CBC: Council Minutes, Agendas & Reports \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](http://Blaenau Gwent CBC: Council Minutes, Agendas & Reports (blaenau-gwent.gov.uk))

Council's Constitution Blaenau Gwent CBC: The Council Constitution

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 [Local Government and Election \(Wales\) Act 2021](http://Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021)

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Well-being of Future Generations Wales

Scrutiny Evaluations Report

Evaluation is an important part of the Scrutiny process. Regular evaluation of our scrutiny processes helps us to reflect on existing practice and performance and will support us in continuing to develop and enhance the scrutiny processes in Blaenau Gwent.

In Blaenau Gwent an evaluation session is held after every meeting and evaluation forms are circulated to all those members who attended following every meeting. The aim is to obtain positive feedback as well as constructive comments on areas for further improvement.

The report is split by Member and officer evaluation.

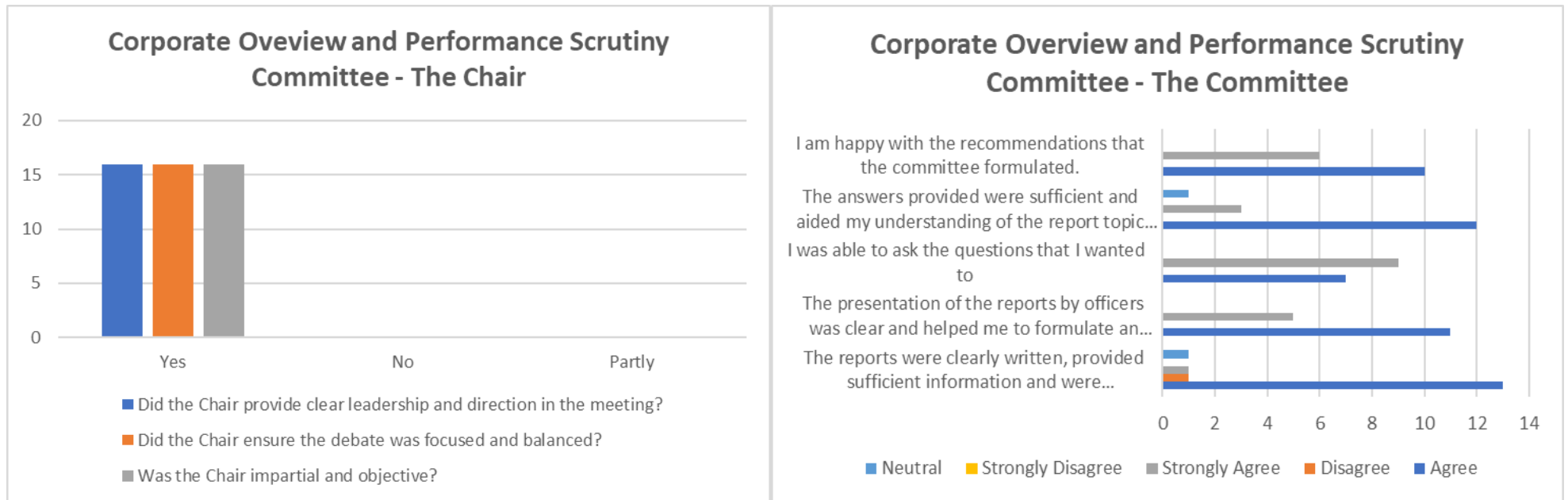
Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee

The information is gathered from meetings held during the period September 2023 to April 2023, encompassing 9 Scrutiny Committee meetings in total.

Committee Member Feedback:

Of the 76 evaluations sent out over the nine meetings: 16 evaluations were completed. The results of those evaluations can be seen in the graphs below:

Page 280

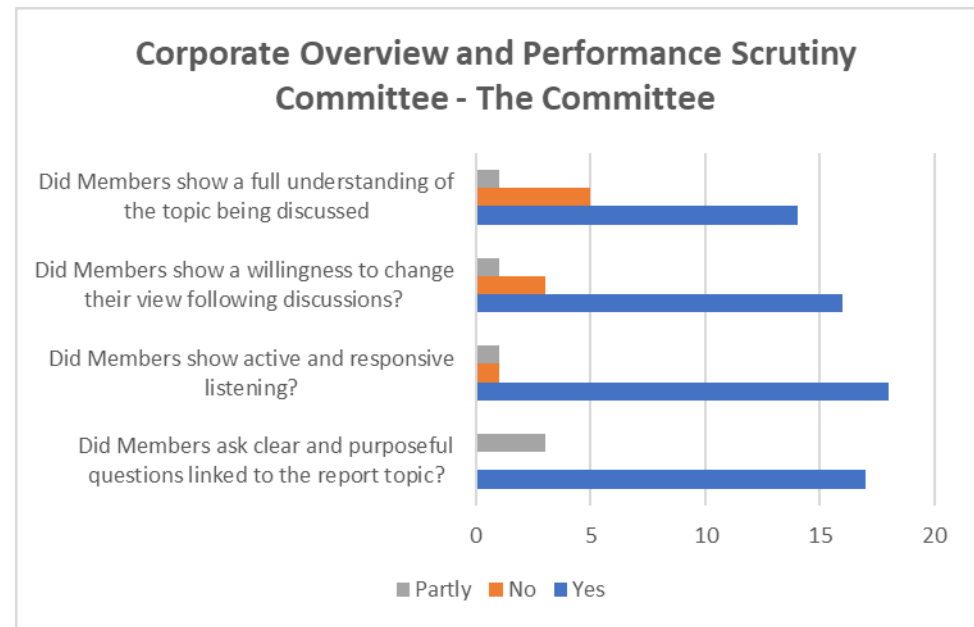
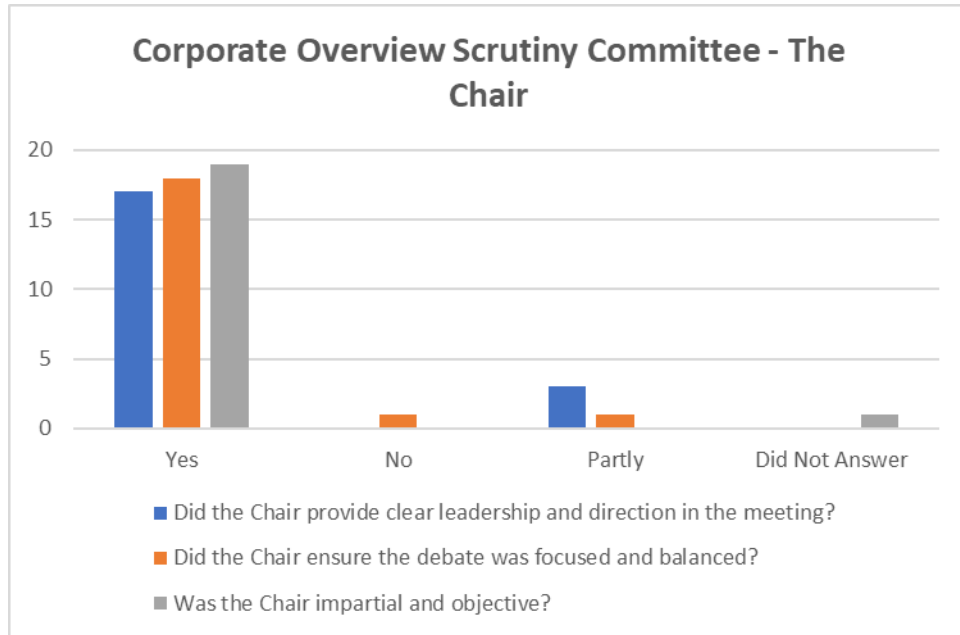


Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Officer Feedback:

Of the **74** evaluations sent out over the nine meetings: **20** evaluations were completed. The results of those evaluations can be seen in the graphs below:

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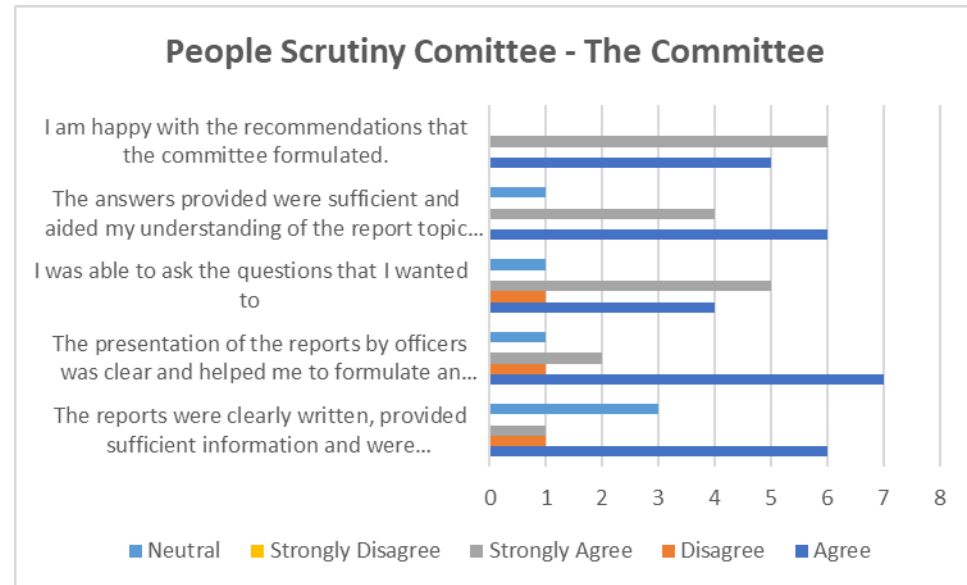
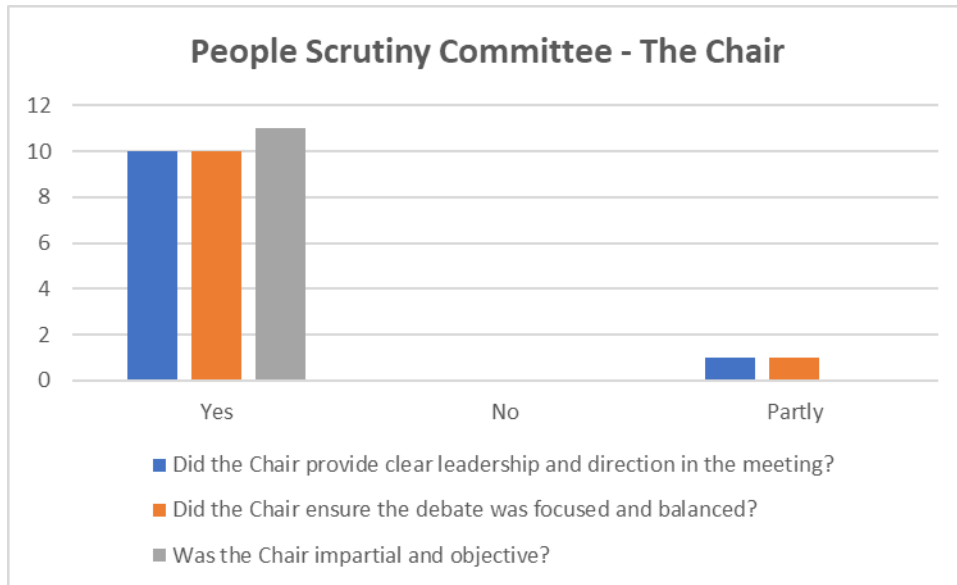
People Scrutiny Committee

The information is gathered from meetings held during the period September 2023 to April 2023, encompassing 6 Scrutiny Committee meetings in total.

Committee Member Feedback:

Of the 37 evaluations sent out over the six meetings: 16 evaluations were completed. The results of those evaluations can be seen in the graphs below:

Page 282

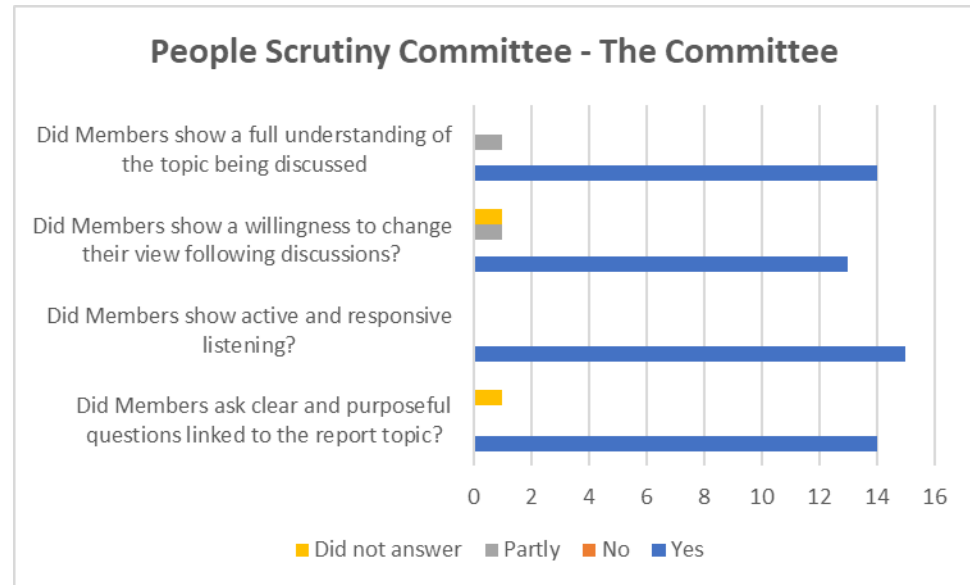
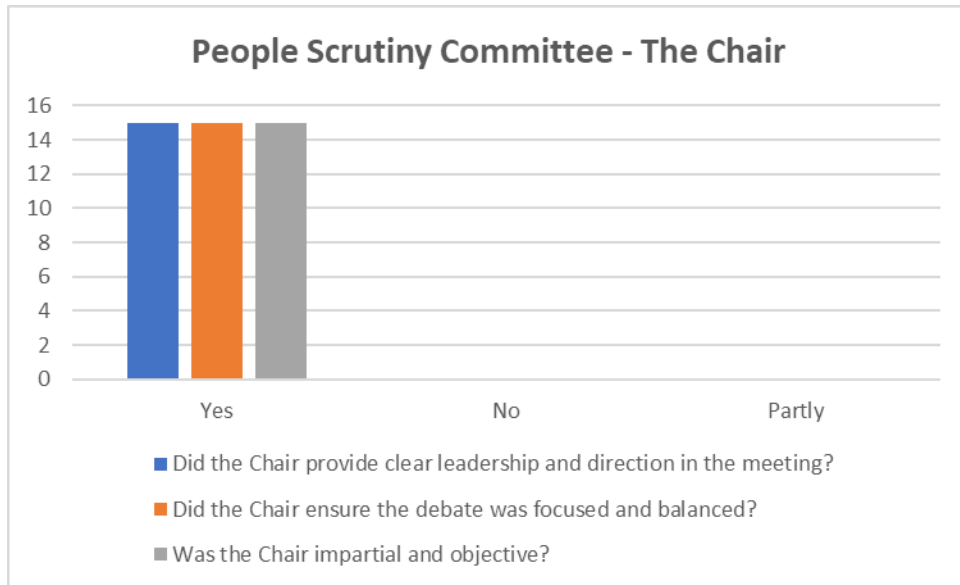


People Scrutiny Committee

Officer Feedback:

Of the **38** evaluations sent out over the six meetings: **18** evaluations were completed. The results of those evaluations can be seen in the graphs below:

Page 283

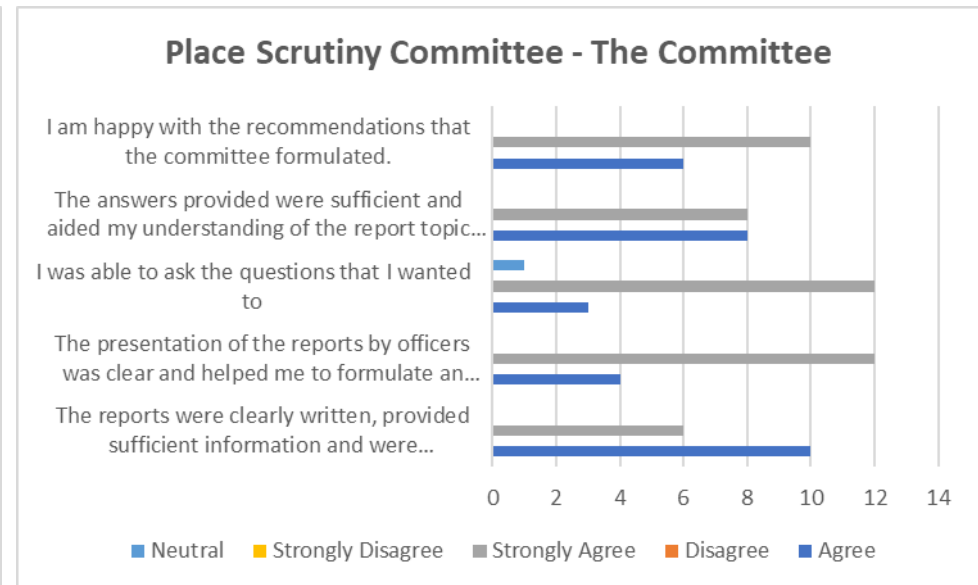
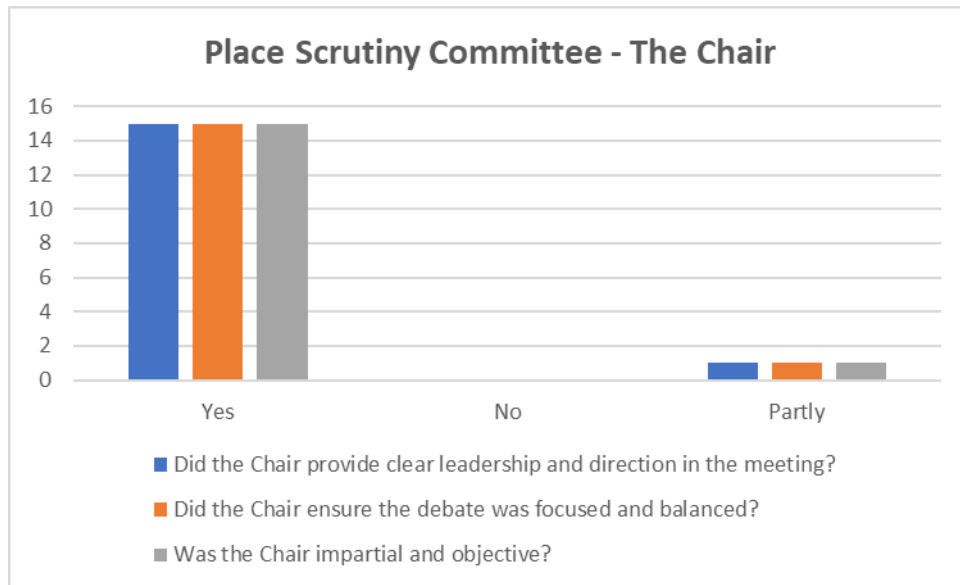


Place Scrutiny Committee

The information is gathered from meetings held during the period September 2023 to April 2023, encompassing 5 Scrutiny Committee meetings in total.

Committee Member Feedback:

Of the 38 evaluations sent out over the six meetings: 16 evaluations were completed. The results of those evaluations can be seen in the graphs below:

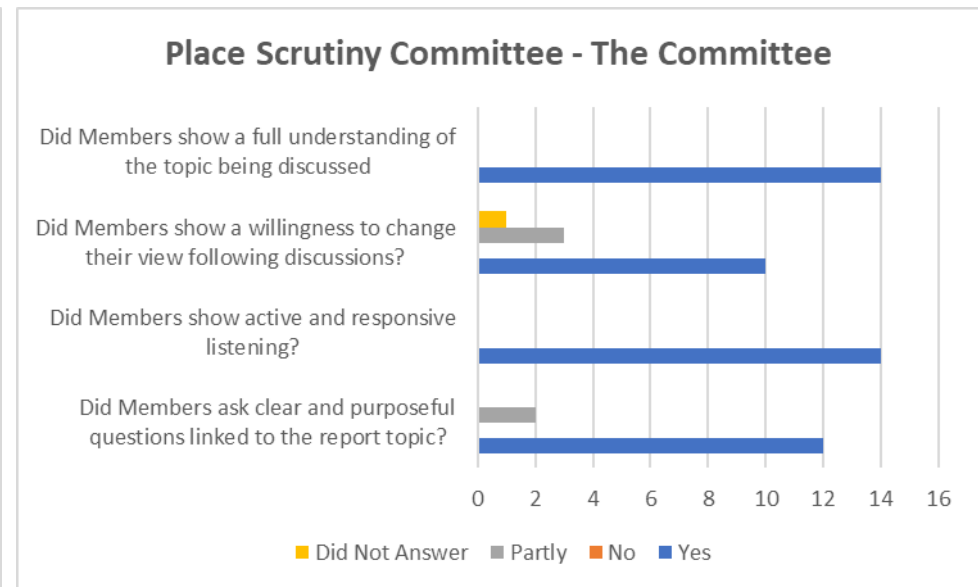
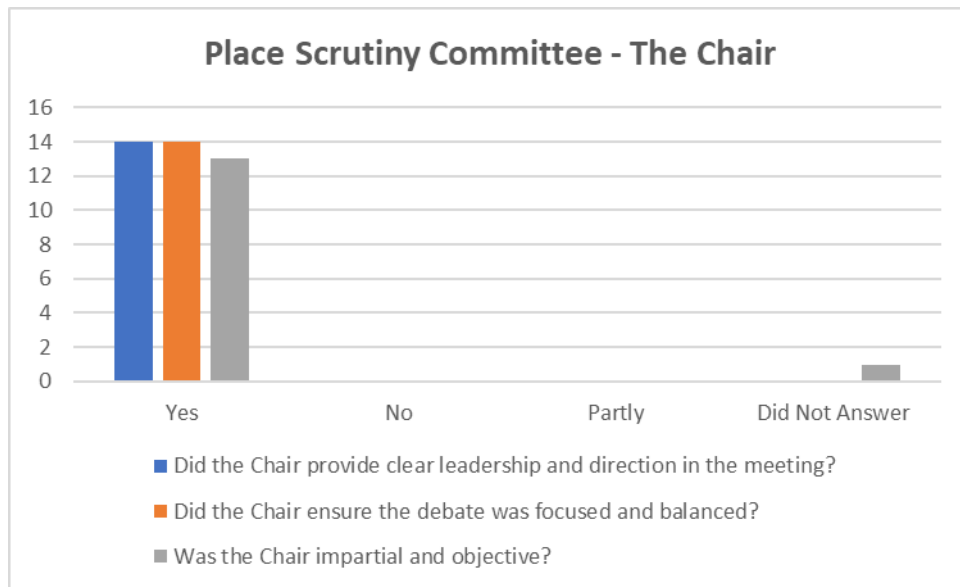


Place Scrutiny Committee

Officer Feedback:

Of the **43** evaluations sent out over the five meetings: **14** evaluations were completed. The results of those evaluations can be seen in the graphs below:

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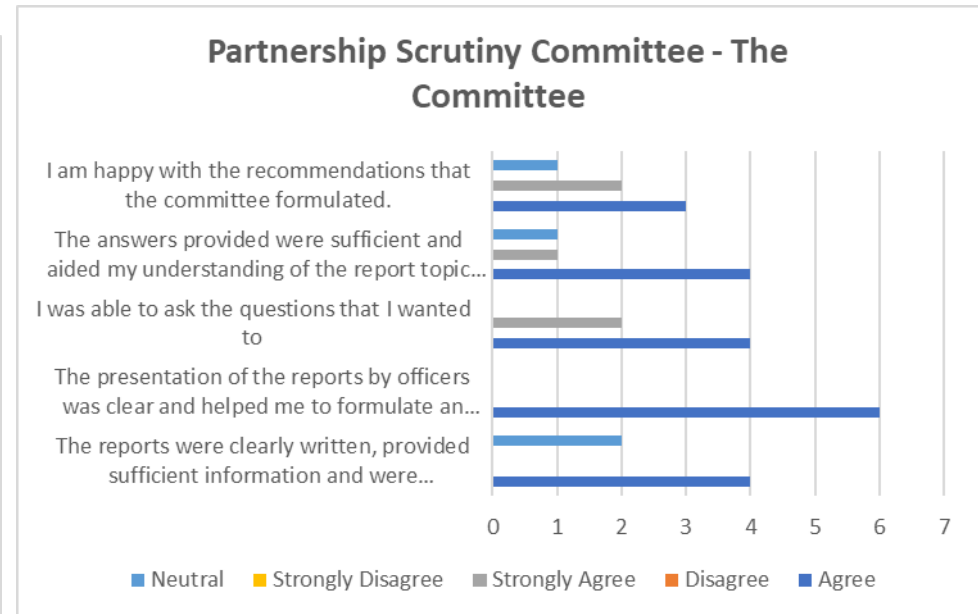
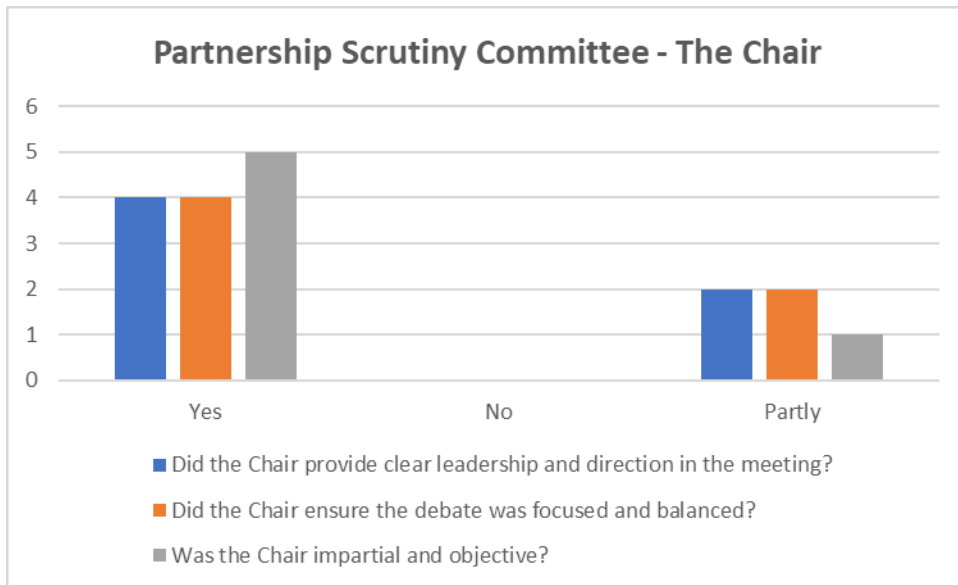


Partnership Scrutiny Committee

The information is gathered from meetings held during the period October 2023 to March 2023, encompassing **4** Scrutiny Committee meetings in total.

Committee Member Feedback:

Of the **30** evaluations sent out over the four meetings: **6** evaluations were completed. The results of those evaluations can be seen in the graphs below:

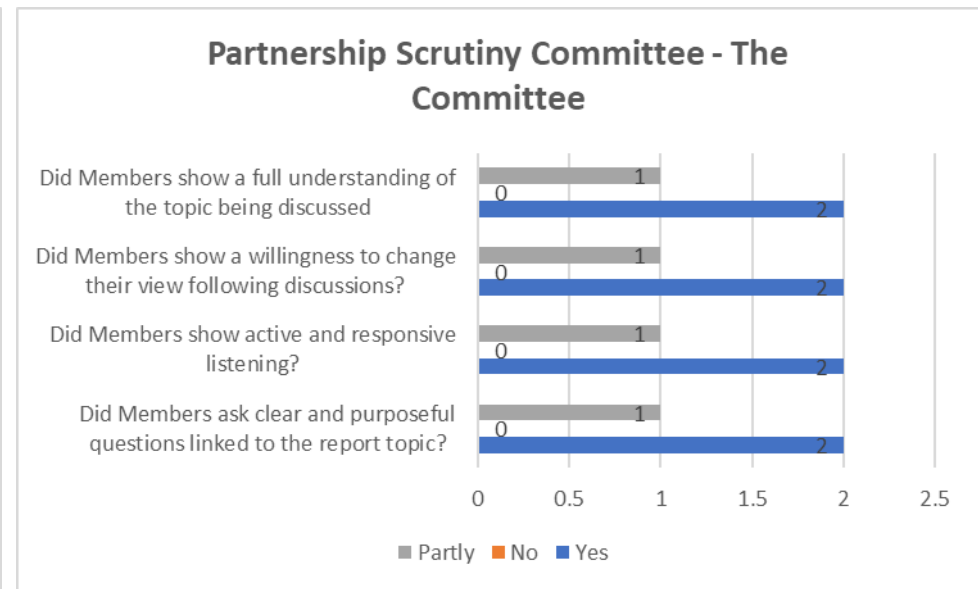
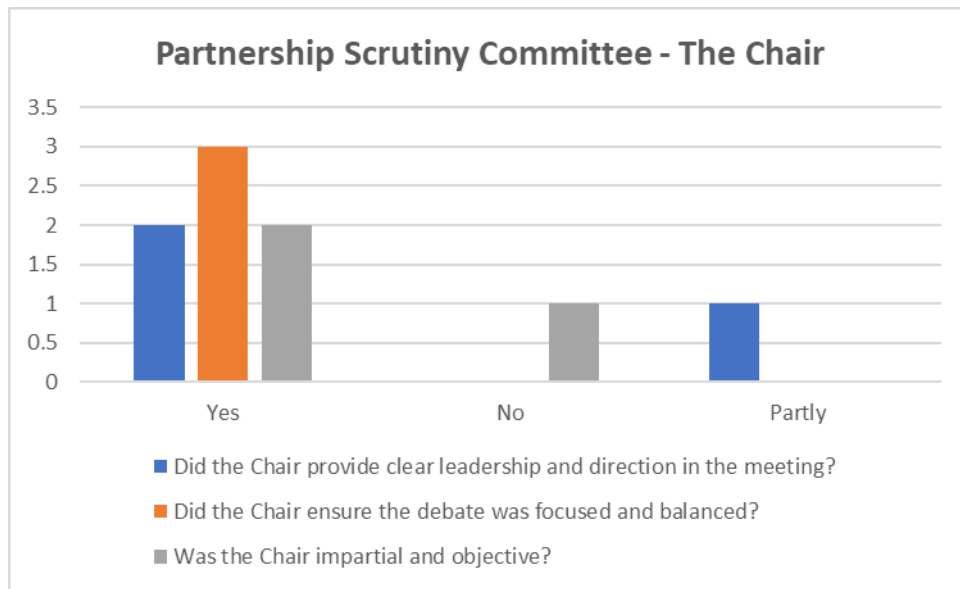


Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Officer Feedback:

Of the **17** evaluations sent out over the four meetings: **3** evaluations were completed. The results of those evaluations can be seen in the graphs below:

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Agenda Item 37

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: **20th July, 2023**

Report Subject: **Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Petitions Protocol 2023/27**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor S. Thomas - Leader of the Council / Cabinet Member Corporate and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Sarah King, 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) |
| | 09/03/23 | | | 24/03/23 | | | 20.07.23 | |

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 For Council to consider and approve the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Petitions Protocol 2023/27.

1.2 The Petitions Protocol outlines the methodology to be applied when submitting a petition, who can submit a petition, the restrictions for what can be included in a petition, as well as how the Council will respond.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 places a duty on a Principal Council to make and publish a Petitions Scheme setting out how the Council intends to handle and respond to Petitions.

2.2 Rule 42 of the Act 2021 states that the Council must publish a petition scheme that includes:

- How a petition may be submitted to the Council;
- How and by when the Council will acknowledge receipt of a petition;
- The steps the Council may take in response to a petition received by it;
- The circumstances (if any) in which the Council may take no further action in response to a petition;
- How and by when the Council will make available its response to a petition to the person who submitted the petition and to the public.

2.3 This Petitions Scheme will form a part of the Council's Public Participation Strategy.

- 2.4 Petitions are documents (whether electronic or physical) that contain details of issues that are important to communities and the Blaenau Gwent area as a whole, signed by local electors who are in support of the proposed action.
- 2.5 The Council last approved its Petition Protocol in 2018, therefore, alongside the requirements of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021, and the establishment of a new Council in May 2022, it felt timely to undertake a review of the Protocol.
- 2.6 This iteration of the Petitions Protocol includes the establishment of electronic petitions, known as e-petitions.
- 2.7 The Petitions Protocol will be included on the Council's website bilingually once approved.
- 3. **Options for Recommendation**
To include Recommendation(s) / Endorsement by other groups, e.g. CLT/Committees/Other groups)
- 3.1 CLT considered the Petitions Protocol at their meeting on 2nd March 2023. Democratic Services Committee reviewed the protocol at their meeting on 24th March.

Option 1

Consider and approve to the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Petitions Protocol 2023/2027 (found at appendix 1).

Option 2

Consider the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Petitions Protocol 2023/2027 (found at appendix 1) and make recommendations for amendment before approval.

- 4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 4.1 The Council is working to embed the requirements as outlined under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
 - 4.1.1 The Council is fully committed to supporting the community to engage in Council activity. This is supported by the Council's Corporate Plan priority: *An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place*
 - 4.1.2 At the heart of everything the Council does is the community of Blaenau Gwent. Engagement, participation and customer experience feature as a key theme which runs across the Council in order to shape services and make decisions.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**
Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

5.1 The Petitions Protocol itself has no budgetary requirements, however, the Protocol does include detail of Petitions which will not be considered by the Council and this includes if it would require the expenditure of a disproportionate amount of time, money or effort to prepare the answer.

Risk including Mitigating Actions

5.2 There is a risk of follow up intervention if the Council does not implement the statutory requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and this includes the provision of having a Petitions Protocol in place and for this to include the provision of e-petitions.

Legal

5.3 There is a statutory requirement for the Council to have a Petitions Protocol in place and for this to include the provision of e-petitions.

Human Resources

5.4 In receipt of a Petition there will be a requirement for staff involvement in order to consider the number of signatures and appropriateness of the Petition. Staff may also be involved should the Petition relate to a specific service area.

5.4.1 Elected members will be informed of a Petition if it relates to their Ward or if the subject matter relates to their lead role. Depending on the number of signatures received, there may be a requirement for the Petition to be considered at Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet or Council.

5.4.2 As outlined in 5.1 a Protocol will not be considered if it would require the expenditure of a disproportionate amount of time, money or effort to prepare the answer.

6. **Supporting Evidence**
Performance Information and Data

6.1 The petitions protocol arrangements have been operating since 2018. Since that time:

- 27 petitions have been received – all received an officer response.
- 6 of these petitions were aligned to the service review of School Crossing Patrollers – so these were considered as part of that review.
- 1 petition was considered as part of the Planning protocol
- No petition has required consideration by a Committee or Council.

Expected outcome for the public

- 6.2 Petitions are one way in which individuals, community groups and organisations can express their views and concerns about something for which the Council is responsible, providing an opportunity for change.

Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)

- 6.3 The Petitions Protocol has been developed in line with the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and also considering the Protocols from a number of Local Authorities across Wales.

Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)

- 6.4 The submission of a Petition enables the community to bring about a change in Council policy which will impact over the long term.

Preventative focus

- 6.5 The submission of a Petition enables the community to bring about a change in Council policy, raise an issue or propose a different way of working which will prevent issues from getting greater.

Collaboration / partnership working

- 6.6 The Petitions Protocol is specifically for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council but does include provision should the topic area fall within the remit of another Local Authority or partner agency.

Integration (across service areas)

- 6.7 Depending on the subject area of a Petition all Council services can be involved in responding to a Petition.

Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions

- 6.8 The Petitions Protocol will have no direct impact on decarbonisation or the reduction of carbon emissions unless the Petition specifically calls for action in this area.

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

- 6.9 An integrated impact assessment is not required for the Petitions Protocol.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

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

- 7.1 The Head of Democratic Services has responsibility for the Petitions Protocol.

7.1.1 The Petitions Protocol will be reviewed every five years in line with Council elections.

7.2 **Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- *Appendix 1 – Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Petitions Protocol 2023/27*

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Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Petition Protocol



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

Introduction

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council welcomes petitions and recognises that they are one way in which individuals, community groups and organisations can express their views and concerns about something for which the Council is responsible.

Petitions can be submitted to the Council in written form or via an e-petition, with this protocol covering both options.

Petitions will not be accepted from other on-line petition systems.

What is a petition?

Petitions are one of the most direct ways to suggest how something could change in Blaenau Gwent. Petitions can:

- Raise awareness of an issue;
- Bring about a change in Council policy or a different way of delivering services;
- Lead to, or influence, a debate in the Council;
- Prompt a Committee or individual Member of the Council to take further action themselves, for instance by asking questions.

Before submitting a Petition, residents are encouraged to:

- Contact the Council to see whether an ordinary service request would resolve the issue.
- Contact a relevant ward Member (s) to see whether they can help. Details on how to contact your local Member are available on the Council's website:
<https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/council/councillors-and-committees/councillor-directory/>

Who can raise / sign / submit a petition?

Anyone aged 10 or above who lives, works or studies in the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council area can raise, submit or sign a petition.

The name and contact details of the person that started the Petition (Lead Petitioner) is required, to allow contact between the Council and the Lead Petitioner. Only the Lead Petitioner will be contacted in relation to the Petition. The contact details of the Lead Petitioner will not be placed on the website.

If the petition does not identify a Lead Petitioner the Council will contact the first signature on the petition to agree who should act as the Lead Petitioner.

Please note that you can only sign an e-petition / Petition once. The list of signatories will be checked by Officers and any duplicate signatures or inappropriate responses will be removed.

Petitions can be submitted in one of the following ways:

- E-petitions can be created, signed and submitted using the following link <https://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/ieLogon.aspx?RPID=4339227&HPID=4339227&Forms=1&LLL=0>
- To create, sign or submit a petition you will need to provide a few basic details, including a valid email address, for verification purposes.
- Petitions can also be sent via email to – Committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
- Paper petitions can be sent to:
The Head of Democratic Services
Democratic Services Section
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
General Offices
Ebbw Vale
NP23 6DN

Submitting a Paper Petition - the Petition wording must be set out in full on each sheet (or side of a sheet) where signatures are asked for. The Petition will be returned if the wording is unclear. Appendix 1 sets out the "Petition Template Form". The Form provides the main information required when submitting a Petition.

The requirements of this Petition Protocol will apply to whichever of the above submissions is used. Please ensure you follow this protocol in order to submit a Petition.

What should a Petition include?

Petitions submitted to the Council must include:

- a clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition - it should state what action the petitioners wish the Council to take (or stop taking). It must relate to something the Council has responsibility for or can reasonably and proportionately influence to create an improvement in the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the local area.
- the name and address and individual signature of any person supporting the Petition.
- contact details, including an address, for the Lead Petitioner.
- If the petition has been sent to anyone else as well as the County Borough Council.

If the Council receives a Petition that does not relate to something under the Council's control or direct influence, it will be returned to the Lead Petitioner with an explanation of the decision as to why the Council cannot progress the matter further.

The minimum number of valid signatures should be at least 50 (including the petition organiser) for a petition to be accepted as valid. The petition will be considered as follows:

- 50 - 200 signatures - Response from the relevant Director / lead Member (treated as normal correspondence) .
- At least 200 signatures - Referred to the Leader / Cabinet and or Scrutiny Committee for a response.
- At least 500 signatures - Referred for a debate at a meeting of the Full Council.

What happens next?

When the Council receives a petition acknowledgment of receipt will be provided within 10 working days and this will include a link to the petition. The acknowledgment will set out what the Council plan to do in response to the petition, how you may be involved and when you can expect to hear from us again.

Your petition could result in one or a combination of the following:

- raising publicity for and awareness of an issue.
- implementing the action requested in the petition.
- considering the petition at a Full Council meeting.
- undertaking research into the matter.
- referring the matter to Cabinet, a Scrutiny Committee or other Committees.
- responding to the petition organiser setting out the council's view on the request set out in the petition.
- some other appropriate response.

When you create an ePetition, it may take 5 working days before it is published online. This is to check that the content is suitable before it is made available for signature. If it is suitable, the Council will ensure that the ePetition is displayed in Welsh & English on the website.

If it is considered that your ePetition cannot be published for any reason, the Council will contact you within this time to explain. You will be able to change and resubmit your petition if you wish. If you do not do this within 5 working days, a summary of the ePetition and the reason why it has not been accepted will be published under the 'Rejected Petitions' section of the website.

When an ePetition has closed for signature, a copy of your Petition will be forwarded to the relevant Head of Service & relevant Cabinet Member.

Where a Petition is in respect of a particular local issue affecting a specific ward(s) then the Democratic Services Team will notify the appropriate Member(s).

The Petition will be published on the Council's Petitions Register on the Council's website.

If the Council considers it can meet what the Petition asks for, the acknowledgement may confirm what action has been taken on the request and the Petition will be closed.

To ensure that people know what the Council are doing in response to the Petitions received, the details of all the Petitions submitted, including those pending action will be published on the Council's website.

What Petitions will not be accepted by the Council?

Petitions must be in relation to something which falls under the remit of the Council. The Head of Democratic Services will have discretion as to whether a Petition meets the criteria set out in the Petitions Protocol. No further action will be taken in response to a Petition that fails to meet the criteria.

If your petition is about something over which the Council has no direct control we will consider making representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body. Where possible we will work with these partners to respond to your petition. If we are not able to do this for any reason, then we will explain this to you.

The Council recognises that petitions are also submitted in support of or to object to planning applications. For the avoidance of doubt, those petitions are not covered by this policy. Petitions submitted to the Development Management Team will continue to be a material consideration in the planning process and inform the decision whether to approve or refuse planning permission. However, they are not subject to the protocols outlined in this document.

If your petition is about something that a different Council is responsible for we will give consideration to what the best method is for responding to it. This might consist of simply forwarding the petition to the other council, but could involve other steps. In any event, we will always notify you of the action we have taken.

So that people know what we are doing in response to the petitions we receive, the details of all the petitions submitted to us will be published on our website, together with the acknowledgment and notification of the response (except in cases where this would be inappropriate).

A Petition will not be accepted by the Council if:

- It duplicates another, concurrent Petition. In this case, signatures will be added to the first such Petition to be received by the Council.
- It repeats or is substantially the same as one submitted within the previous 12 months. It is advised that details of previous Petitions are checked on the website at the start of your Petition **xxxx**
- it refers to employee matters as these will be addressed via existing internal frameworks.
- In the period immediately before an election or referendum we may need to deal with your petition differently - if this is the case we will explain the reasons and discuss the revised timescale which will apply.
- the petition does not follow the guidelines, the council may decide not to do anything further with it. In this case, we will write to you to explain the reasons.
- It is considered to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate.
- Is defamatory, discriminatory or otherwise offensive or contains false statements
- It becomes apparent that any local elector's name, address or signature has been added to the Petition without their explicit consent.
- It is not in relation to a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which does not affect the administrative area or citizens of the Council.
- It would require the disclosure of confidential or exempt information in response.
- It relates to the personal circumstances or conduct of any officer and Member or conditions of service of employees.
- It relates to an individual, particular group or business or the petitioner's own particular circumstances.
- Names individuals or provides information where they may be easily identified and is contradictory to GDPR regulations.
- It would be unlawful for the Council to consider.

- It relates to a matter which is the subject of legal or enforcement proceedings or an appeal to a court or tribunal or to a Government Minister or the National Assembly or an investigation by the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.
- Relates to planning or licensing decisions and where there is an appeals procedure in place.
- Refers to a complaint about the conduct of a Member – complaints need to be made to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales [PSOW] [How to complain](#)
- It relates to the activities and aims of a political party or organisation.
- It would require the expenditure of a disproportionate amount of time, money or effort to prepare the answer.
- A Petition seeks to overturn a lawfully made decision.
- Contains advertising statements or is nonsense.
- It can be more appropriately dealt with as part of a consultation response in which case it will be referred to the appropriate Council body and included as part of the consultation documentation.
- Is either a Freedom of Information [FOI] request, a comment, compliment or complaint, in these cases the following need to be used:
- Freedom of Information Requests [Freedom of Information Requests | Blaenau Gwent CBC \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](#)
- Submitting comments, compliments and complaints [Compliments & Complaints | Blaenau Gwent CBC \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](#)

If a petition is considered unacceptable the petition organiser will be advised and provided with the reasons for its rejection.

If the Council rejects your Petition or you feel that the Council has not dealt with your Petition properly, please make a complaint via the Council's Corporate Complaints Process [Compliments & Complaints | Blaenau Gwent CBC \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](#)

The Council reserves the right to verify signatories as required. Petitioners should ensure that a valid address and postcode is included for all Petitioners that relates to a home address (if living in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council area) or work address (if working or run a business in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council area). These details will be taken into account when identifying if there are enough signatories from people who live or work in the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council area to trigger a debate.

Petitions which warrant evidence and debate at a Scrutiny Committee

If your petition contains at least 200 signatures, the relevant senior officer will give evidence at a public meeting of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee. You should be aware that the Scrutiny Committee may decide that it would be more appropriate for another officer to give evidence instead of any specific officer named in the petition – for instance if the named officer has changed jobs. The Committee may also decide to call the relevant Cabinet Member to attend the meeting.

Committee Members will ask the questions at this meeting, but we will let you know the specific arrangements for the meeting and how you may be involved. The Scrutiny

Committee will make a report on its findings which may include recommendations for action to the Cabinet, or the Council.

Petitions requiring full Council debate

If a petition is signed by more than 500 people it will be debated by the full Council (unless it is a petition asking for a senior council officer to give evidence at a public meeting). This means that the subject raised in the petition will be discussed at a meeting which all Council Members can attend.

If the Petition has enough signatories to trigger a debate at a meeting of Council, then the acknowledgment will confirm this and advise when and where the meeting will take place. The Council will endeavour to consider the Petition at its next meeting, although on some occasions this may not be possible and consideration will then take place at the following meeting. *Petitions **will not** be considered at the Annual Meeting of Council, Extraordinary Council, Special Council or at the Budget Setting Council meeting.*

If the Lead Petitioner wishes to attend Council they will be 3 minutes to address the Council on the subject of the petition.

The relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder will then be given 3 minutes for a right of reply and the petition will then be discussed by Members. The relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder has a further right of reply, for no more than **3** minutes, at the end of the debate on the matter.

The Council will decide how to respond to the Petition at this meeting. They may decide to take the action the Petition requests, not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant Committee.

Where the issue is one on which the Council's Cabinet are required to make the final decision, the Council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision.

The Lead Petitioner will receive written confirmation of the decision as soon as practicable following the decision having been made. This confirmation will also be published on the Council's website.

Data protection and GDPR

If you create and submit an e-petition or sign an e-petition you will be asked to provide personal information. Personal information is also needed when you sign a paper petition.

The Council is the data controller for personal information collected for both e-petitions and paper petitions. The following link is to the Council website regarding Data Protection and Privacy [Data Protection & FOI | Blaenau Gwent CBC \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/Data-Protection-FOI)

Following a period of 21 days after the Council has responded formally, a paper petition will be destroyed and all e-signatories on an e-petition will be erased, unless during that period, the petition organiser has requested a review.

Appendix 1

How to submit petitions by email or in paper format. Please use this template. Additional pages should also include the petition subject at the top of the page and also the page number and total of pages for example page 7 of a 10 page petition would show the following: 7 of 10 pages.

Petition to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Contact details of the Petition organiser

| | |
|---|--|
| Full Name | |
| Address for Correspondence: | 1 st line _____ 2 nd line _____ 3 rd line _____ Postcode _____ |
| Home Telephone No. | |
| Mobile No. | |
| Email Address | |
| Live/Work/Service User/ Study (please indicate all that apply) | |
| Signature | |

PETITION

| Name | Address (including postcode) | Signature | Email Address (if possible) | If you are not a Blaenau Gwent resident, please supply the name and address of your place of work or place of study |
|------|------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|---|
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Agenda Item 38

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 17.05.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 28.06.2023

Committee: **Council**
Date of Meeting: **20th July, 2023**
Report Subject: **Civic Centre Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Helen Cunningham, Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member Place and Environment**
Report Submitted by: **Ellie Fry, Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services**

| 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 | | 21.06.23 | | | | 20.07.23 | Audit Wales |

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To supply an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to accompany the process of closure of the Civic Centre and the move to the Hubs model for public access to services.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 In 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic the Civic Centre was vacated as part of the lockdown instructions from Government. At that point, the Council was looking at five years or less of the useful life of a large proportion of the infrastructure of the Civic Centre building. At the same time, as the pandemic was affecting communities an initiative to move services closer to communities was rolled out.
- 2.2 During the next few years the Council was one of the first to formally move to an agile working arrangement. It made sense from an operational perspective, following the pandemic shutdown of the building, to then formerly close the Civic Centre as the timeline had moved closer to the end of the five-year deadline. At this point the maintenance required to fix the problems in the building was disproportionate to the benefits.
- 2.3 Reports were written and taken through the Council process on the new operating model and working arrangements for the Council and included the recommendation for the closure of the Civic Centre and the development of the hubs model. The report for the new Council Operating Model was taken to Council on 25th March 2021 whereby Council agreed for the new Operating Model based on Agile Working, Democratic Hub and Community Hubs, and confirmed work could proceed to decommission the Civic Centre. [CO2103D7 Council Report TOM 25032021 Final 003.pdf](#)
- 2.4 One of the key aims, the development of the Community Hubs model located in libraries has brought access to council services closer to the heart of the communities.

- 2.5 As part of their 'Springing Forward' Review, covering the 2021/22 year, Audit Wales found that the Council made significant changes to its assets and the way that its workforce operates, but identified that further work is needed for the Council to understand its future asset and workforce needs and to ensure that future Council decisions are appropriately informed by Equality Impact Assessments and the sustainable development principle.
- 2.6 As part of this the Council received the following recommendation for implementation: *'Ensure that all decisions are informed by a timely equality impact assessment where required'*.
- 2.7 The attached retrospective IIA sets out the benefits and dis-benefits of the two schemes that were undertaken in parallel. There are a number of services that have benefited by being delivered closer to the customer at the BG Hubs although the Civic Centre was a well know centre and it has taken some time for communities to use the hubs as their main contact points as opposed to the civic building. Overall the changes have resulted in a positive approach to Customer Service delivery, with services moving closer to customers from the six hubs.
- 2.8 Transport is limited in Blaenau Gwent but as the Hubs are closer to the communities and are based in the local towns, it is felt from the IIA evidence that overall it is generally easier to travel to access services from Hubs than just from the Civic Centre. Lastly, the services being offered from the Hubs have encouraged other activities like children doing homework from the Hubs which wouldn't have happened if they had been delivered from the Civic Centre.
- 2.9 In terms of the civic centre building itself, there was significant concern about the integrity of the existing structure. The steel reinforcement framework that would have been embedded within the concrete construction was aging and failing. This would not have been included within the findings of the Condition Survey undertaken in 2018. Recently a piece of the external concrete fell away from the steel reinforcement.
3. **Recommendation**
- 3.1 This report has been agreed by Corporate Leadership Team and the Governance and Audit Committee.
- 3.2 It is recommended that Council consider and accept the retrospective Integrated Impact Assessment, completed in line with legislation.
4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
The report subject matter supports both:
- 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.

5. Implications Against Recommendation

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

There are no further implications on the budget further to those identified in the reports already taken through Council process on the demolition of the Civic Centre and the development of the Community Hubs reports.

5.2 *Risk including Mitigating Actions*

The risks around this project have been set out in the previous reports. The residual risk is that the site remains empty following demolition of the building for a longer period than is acceptable.

5.3 *Legal*

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 *Human Resources*

There are no HR implications associated with this report.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

The supporting evidence is provided in the Appendices.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendices 1 - 8*

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| 2021 | Ebbw Vale | Tredegar | Brynmawr | Abertillery | Cwm | Blaina | Llanhilleth | Overall |
|-----------|---------------------------------|----------|----------|-------------|-----|--------|-------------|---------|
| June | 10 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 40 |
| July | 39 | 39 | 17 | 20 | 23 | 19 | 8 | 165 |
| August | 133 | 110 | 54 | 89 | 15 | 13 | 5 | 419 |
| September | 110 | 112 | 55 | 87 | 12 | 14 | 0 | 390 |
| October | 135 | 94 | 82 | 57 | 30 | 36 | 12 | 446 |
| November | 149 | 114 | 80 | 64 | 23 | 41 | 10 | 481 |
| December | 105 | 112 | 45 | 35 | 13 | 20 | 3 | 333 |
| 2022 | | | | | | | | |
| January | 95 | 101 | 23 | 30 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 264 |
| February | 101 | 84 | 20 | 42 | 10 | 7 | 5 | 269 |
| March | 154 | 127 | 36 | 52 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 380 |
| April | 205 | 132 | 82 | 76 | 19 | 26 | 5 | 545 |
| May | 430 | 230 | 129 | 198 | 46 | 63 | 53 | 1149 |
| June | 186 | 147 | 87 | 116 | 23 | 23 | 17 | 599 |
| July | 205 | 131 | 76 | 80 | 21 | 20 | 19 | 552 |
| August | 158 | 129 | 77 | 70 | 7 | 20 | 5 | 466 |
| September | 178 | 77 | 53 | 94 | 12 | 17 | 7 | 438 |
| October | 161 (approx 127 unlogged) | 268 | 85 | 133 | 23 | 32 | 15 | 717 |
| November | 159 | 118 | 77 | 82 | 14 | 21 | 6 | 477 |
| December | 95 | 67 | 49 | 58 | 20 | 6 | 3 | 298 |
| | 2647 | 2196 | 1134 | 1387 | 331 | 389 | 183 | 8428 |

| 2023 | Abertillery | Blaina | Brynmawr | Cwm | Ebbw Vale | Llanhilleth | Tredegar | Overall |
|----------|-------------|--------|----------|-----|-----------|-------------|----------|---------|
| January | 98 | 17 | 109 | 16 | 168 | 9 | 192 | 609 |
| February | 139 | 20 | 120 | 11 | 177 | 8 | 208 | 759 |
| March | 179 | 23 | 204 | 14 | 273 | 15 | 190 | 898 |
| April | 124 | 24 | 110 | 16 | 162 | 12 | 147 | 595 |
| May | 120 | 8 | 105 | 16 | 180 | 6 | 158 | 593 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| June | | | | | | | | |
| July | | | | | | | | |
| August | | | | | | | | |
| September | | | | | | | | |
| October | | | | | | | | |
| November | | | | | | | | |
| December | | | | | | | | |

Case Study – Financial, Housing, Fuel and Food bank, Partnership working

An individual visited the Community Hub relating to Housing issues. The person stated that they were a recovering alcoholic with anxiety and depression. The individual was frank and honest and was transparent in sharing the issues and barriers that had been created to maintaining their tenancy. The individual shared that they hadn't been paying rent for some time whilst struggling with addiction and now found themselves in large debt.

In order to help the customer I liaised with the landlord over the telephone and a Housing Sustainability Officer. We agreed to put together a plan so the client could continue the tenancy and not be evicted. A Discretionary Housing Payment application was made to help the client with paying the rent going forward. Usually the Discretionary Housing Payments applications are looked at in date order, this would have meant the customer continued to not pay the full amount of rent. Due to the risk of homelessness if this situation wasn't resolved I contacted the Council's Benefits Managers to request the Discretionary Housing Payment be prioritised, this was agreed and the application was looked at quickly and awarded. I also contacted Universal Credit to arrange for the client's rent to be paid directly to the landlord to avoid lack of payment. This multi-agency approach supported the client to remain in their home and promoted their independence by keeping them involved in the process.

The customer was pleased that they could speak to someone face to face and receive help, as they felt unable to deal with the whole situation alone. They were very self-aware and knew that they needed to resolve the situation which made the interaction a really positive one. I logged the outcome of the interaction on the My Council Services system so my colleagues were aware of what was agreed and they could further support if they saw the customer again. To further support the customer a fuel voucher of £49 was issued along with the organisation of a food parcel via the Trussel Trust food bank.

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Case study – DAF

Customer visited library with Bridges into work support worker asking for help with white goods. A DAF was completed for a new fridge and it was established the customer was struggling with a rental shortfall so we gave the support worker an income and expenditure form which she took with her to complete with the client and helped them to complete a DHP application online and we gave her the links to use the BG online application system. The support worker returned to the library and provided bank statements for the customer which was photographed and sent to the benefits email address.

Outcome 06/07/2021: The client was awarded and received a new Fridge Freezer and the DHP has been processed and awarded. Support worker has been informed.

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Case Study 1

Customer came into Library wanted a library card and help with getting a replacement bus pass due to theirs being stolen, along with some money. Library staff set them up with a library card. Transport for Wales were contacted to see if we could get a replacement, the person I spoke to advised it was a £10 payment. I advised that the customer didn't have the funds so they agreed to issue a new one free of charge due to circumstances but this would only be done once! I issued a Food bank voucher and due to customer not having a phone I made the arrangements with Food Bank for delivery and advised customer they needed to be at their property for the delivery. Also advised the Food Bank of the essentials that the client needed. Applied for a DAF, awaiting confirmation that this will be granted.

Case study 2

A young person came in with their parent as they had received a Notice seeking possession from the landlord and a court summons for over £2,000 rent arrears and both were very distraught and did not know what to do. I spoke to one of the Housing options team and sent copies of all the paperwork the client had brought in. The officer in the Housing Options Team said they would make a small payment to the landlord from the Tenancy hardship grant fund so it would be enough to stop the eviction and then set up a repayment plan with the landlord to suspend the court summons. The officer also made an appointment to complete a Housing application to get the client more affordable accommodation. I spoke to Council Tax as there were large arrears on the account and they agreed to hold any further action and set up a repayment plan which the client said they could afford. I have also arranged for the client to come back with some more information and we will apply for a DHP to help with the shortfall on the rent. I also completed a CTR app for them to get some help with their current council tax liability. When they left they both said how they felt a weight had been lifted off their shoulders as they did not know where to go for help.

Case study 3

Customer struggling to manage their electric bill. After a conversation it was clear the customer had budgeting issues/an issue with buying online games. Customer advised that they struggled to trust people/accept help but feels safe and supported in the libraries with AL and BG staff. Referral made to NEA and Citizens Advice for specialist debt advice.

Case Study 4

Hub received a telephone call from a Pobl support worker. Their customer had recently been released from jail and was struggling to claim Universal Credit due to no ID or bank account and homeless. We told the support worker if she sent us the customers details and authorisation we would make the referral on Refer.net. Referral was made for Help to claim Universal credit and debt management for large rent arrears on a previous property.

Outcome: Customer has now been placed in a Hostel and has applied for HB/CTR based on nil income and support worker is helping get a bank account, ID and Universal credit

Case study 5

Individual emailed info@ in regards to applying for a IAP DAF. They were unable to find the application on my council services. After speaking to them and advising how to apply I requested a copy of their tenancy agreement which they were able to email to me. I then asked questions about their circumstances at present which were not good. They had little food, no gas, no talk time on phone and their next payment from us was in 2 weeks' time.

I completed the IAP and requested a washer/dryer and a cooker which they were unable to purchase when they moved into the property. I explained how the food bank worked and requested a fuel voucher. I also requested a SIM card for their phone so at least they would be able to make calls for the next 6 months. The person wasn't aware of the service we provide, however, now they are aware and can attend for support from the hubs.

Case Study – Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)

Customer moved to the area in February 2018. They took on a private rental and immediately started to struggle paying the shortfall because they were not aware that the LHA rates differed from borough to borough. The one bedroom rate in their previous property was £36.82 per week higher than Blaenau Gwent (2022/23).

In September 2018 the customer applied for DHP for help paying the shortfall. Customer has limited capability for work and has been claiming basic ESA since 2017 (Work Related Activity Group). They had also tried to get back into work to boost their income through permitted work. A DHP was awarded and paid continuously up to September 2022 apart from a three month period where applications were unsuccessful during periods of higher earnings.

In September 2022 customer applied for help with moving costs. The house they were renting was being sold and they were issued with a Section 21. The client was directed to us for financial help by Housing Options. The rent for property the client was looking to move into appeared to not be affordable as the client was already claiming a DHP and I had concerns there was a shortfall in affording the property. I contacted Housing to discuss. I put forward my concerns around the affordability of the rent based on the customer's income but was advised that there is a shortage of rental properties available and based on the current market it would be extremely rare to find somewhere cheaper. Due to the circumstances surrounding the move and the fact the client was supporting in this move by Housing Options, I agreed to pay a one off DHP to cover rent in advance and a second one off payment to cover a removal van.

Six weeks into the tenancy a new DHP application was made for help with the shortfall and the customer was advised the following:

- Look for alternate accommodation and see if they could exit the 12 month tenancy early as it was not sustainable.
- Ensure their name was on the housing register and update Housing of current circumstances around shortfall and uncertainty of DHP award moving forward.
- Contact DWP regarding PIP application and if possible speed up assessment due to urgency of circumstances. PIP would boost weekly income with ESA too (addition of SDP)

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Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) referrals made

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| 2021 (July-Dec) | 18 |
| 2022 (Jan-Dec) | 116 |
| 2023 (Jan onwards) | 12 |

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| |
|-----------|
| Reception |
|-----------|

| Month | Jan-20 | Feb-20 | Mar-20 | Totals |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Caller | | | | |
| Building Control | 5 | 13 | 0 | 18 |
| Bus Pass | 18 | 18 | 4 | 40 |
| C2BG | 320 | 280 | 25 | 625 |
| CAB | 51 | 43 | 0 | 94 |
| Cemeteries | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Council Tax | 176 | 127 | 27 | 330 |
| Dog/Food Bags | 97 | 235 | 33 | 365 |
| Electoral Registration | 7 | 5 | 0 | 12 |
| Environmental Health | 21 | 27 | 0 | 48 |
| Estates | 27 | 21 | 3 | 51 |
| Fast Track | 664 | 0 | 0 | 664 |
| Homelessness | 4 | 7 | 0 | 11 |
| Housing | 28 | 26 | 0 | 54 |
| IT | 0 | 69 | 9 | 78 |
| Licencing | 17 | 52 | 3 | 72 |
| Mail | 40 | 124 | 16 | 180 |
| Miscellaneous | 69 | 51 | 12 | 132 |
| NNDR | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Planning | 27 | 34 | 1 | 62 |
| Recovery | 21 | 32 | 0 | 53 |
| Regeneration | 0 | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| Registrars | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Social Services | 32 | 29 | 0 | 61 |
| Sundry Accounts | 38 | 37 | 0 | 75 |
| Sundry Accounts Paypoint Card | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Toilet | 26 | 65 | 1 | 92 |
| Total | 1690 | 1305 | 135 | 3130 |

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Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been designed to help support the Council in making informed and effective decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of statutory legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010. It consists of 7 main sections as outlined below:

- Section 1 - Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Section 2 - Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards
- Section 3 - Socio-economic Duty
- Section 4 - Children’s Rights Approach – The Right Way
- Section 5 - Data
- Section 6 - Consultation
- Section 7 - Decision

| Lead Officer | Head of Service | Service Area & Department | Date |
|--------------|--|---------------------------|------|
| Ellie Fry | Clive Rogers Bernadette Elias – Chief Officer Sarah King | | |

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?**

The Civic Centre was vacated in March 2020 due to the pandemic lockdown arrangements. At this point in time it was on a less than five years’ trajectory to being vacated due to the age and condition of the building. The building was over 50 years old – the expected life-span of a building of that nature is probably 50-60 years depending on condition. An alternative provision of community facing services based in ‘hubs’ was being developed and during the pandemic this was rolled out quickly across the towns in Blaenau Gwent.

Following the roll out of the 'Hubs' service the Civic Centre was formally closed to be demolished as soon as was practicably possible.

Section 1 – Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

Briefly outline below if there will be any positive or negative impacts, on any groups of people with protected characteristics, who are covered by the Equality Act 2010, 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> | All Ages | Negative (Civic closure) Positive (Hub openings) | By moving the services offered from the Civic Centre into individual towns the services moved closer to those individuals who would have had difficulty travelling to the Civic Centre. More buses go to town centres than to outskirts of towns. |
| Disability <i>(people with disabilities/ long term conditions)</i> | Yes | Negative (Civic closure) Positive (Hub openings) Negative – parking near to a Community hub may be restricted due to the library locations | By moving the services offered from the Civic Centre into individual towns the services moved closer to those individuals who would have had difficulty travelling to the Civic Centre. Also, each venue has toilets and full wheelchair access to the hub office if/when required. |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| | | Positive – more buses go to/through town centres, although are infrequent | |
| Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth)</i> | N/A | | |
| Protected characteristics | Will the proposal have any positive impacts on those with a protected characteristic? | Will the proposal have any negative impacts on those with a protected characteristic? | Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this. |
| Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i> | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave)</i> | Yes | Negative (Civic closure) Positive (Hub openings) Positive (locality/accessibility) Negative (parking near to a Community hub may be | By moving the services offered from the Civic Centre into individual areas, the services have moved closer to those individuals who may have found travelling to the Civic Centre more challenging. They are based in towns which means that mutiple tasks can be achieved e.g. shopping, Hub visit, library, benefits in one trip. |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | | restricted due to the library locations) Positive – more buses go to/through town centres although are infrequent | |
| Race <i>(people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds)</i> | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Religion or Belief <i>(people with different religions and beliefs including people with no beliefs)</i> | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 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. |
| Sex <i>(women and men, girls and boys and those who self-identify their gender)</i> | N/A | N/A | N/A |

| | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|
| Sexual Orientation <i>(lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, other)</i> | N/A | N/A | N/A |
|---|-----|-----|-----|

Section 2 - Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards

The Welsh Language Measure 2011 and the [Welsh Language Standards](#) require the Council to have 'due regard' for any positive or negative impacts that proposal may have on opportunities to use the Welsh language.

| Requirements | Does the proposal have any positive, negative, or neutral impacts with regards to the below? | What can be done to mitigate any negative impacts? | Please demonstrate any evidence used to form this opinion. |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. <i>For example, Standards 88 - 93 – policy development and review of existing policies)</i></p> | <p>Neutral impact as same application of WLS as in Civic Centre</p> | <p>No negative impacts in this area as far as compliance.</p> | <p>Our Community Hubs will offer the same Welsh language services as the former arrangements in the Civic Centre.</p> |
| <p>What opportunities are there to promote the Welsh Language? <i>For example, status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work / community</i></p> | <p>Neutral impact as same situation as in Civic Centre</p> | <p>No negative impacts in this area as far as compliance is concerned.</p> | <p>Any posters/leaflets displayed in the Community Hubs are bilingual. Promotion of and information displayed on the Community Hubs is shown in both Welsh and English languages</p> |
| <p>What opportunities are there for a person to use the Welsh Language?</p> | <p>Neutral impact. Community Hub officers will offer the same Welsh language service as in</p> | <p>(Negative) We need to inform residents if there is no</p> | <p>Any posters/leaflets displayed in the Community Hubs are bilingual. Promotion</p> |

| | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--|---|
| <i>For example, staff, residents and visitors</i> | the Civic Centre where required. | immediate Welsh language service available (Positive) Community Hub staff will be carrying out basic Welsh language training. | of and information displayed on the Community Hubs is shown in both Welsh and English languages |
| Is the Welsh language being treated no less favourably than the English language? | Yes | Some Community Hub staff have a basic understanding of the Welsh language and further training will be carried out. | Any posters/leaflets displayed in the Community Hubs are bilingual. Promotion of and information displayed on the Community Hubs is shown in both Welsh and English languages |

Section 3 - Socio-economic Duty (Strategic Decisions Only – Please refer to our Corporate Reporting Guidance)

Welsh Government’s [Socio-economic Duty](#) provides a framework to ensure tackling inequality of outcome is at the forefront of decision making.

Please consider how your proposal could affect the following groups:

- 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 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
- People misusing substances

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| Socio Economic Disadvantages | Will the proposal have a positive, negative, or neutral impact? | How could you mitigate the negative impacts outlined? | Please highlight any evidence that has been considered (quantitative or qualitative) |
|--|---|---|--|
| Low Income / Income Poverty <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i> | Positive | Hub officers provide help and support. | Case studies can evidence this e.g. links into Benefits, foodbank and FSM. |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>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> | Positive | Hub officers provide help and support. | Case studies can evidence this e.g. Budgetary advice and Debt management support |
| <p>Material Deprivation (<i>unable to access basic goods and services i.e., financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, are located in warm home, hobbies etc.</i>)</p> | Positive | Hub officers provide help and support. | Case studies can evidence this e.g. applications made to Discretionary Assistance Fund |
| <p>Area Deprivation (<i>where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport) Impact on the environment?</i>)</p> | Positive (Community Hubs located in town centres) Negative (Bus services into town centres not frequent enough) | Community Hubs opening times are advertised widely and on our website. | Footfall is monitored in each Community Hub. |
| <p>Socio-economic Background (<i>social class i.e., parents' education, employment and income</i>)</p> | Neutral | Anyone of any social class can visit a Community Hub as they could the Civic Centre. | N/A |
| <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> | Positive | Community Hubs present in all town centres makes it easier for people or groups to access support. | The footfall and diversity of queries being presented to the Community Hubs. |

Section 4 – 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) | N/A | | |
| Provision (the basic rights of children and young people to survive and develop) | N/A | | |
| Protection (children and young people are protected against exploitation, abuse or discrimination) | N/A | | |

Section 5 - Data

Please outline any data or evidence that has been used to develop the proposal. For example, this can be previous consultations, national/regional/local data, pilot projects, reports, feedback from clients etc.

| What data/evidence was used? - provide any links. | What were the key findings? | How has the data/evidence informed this proposal? |
|--|--|---|
| <p>An Independent Condition Survey was carried out in 2018 by 'Property Data Solutions'. This Survey analyses the buildings condition and advises on what measures are required to return it to an acceptable standard.</p> | <p>Backlog Maintenance in the region of £1.5 Million was required in order to return the building to an acceptable standard after which an annual planned maintenance budget would need to be ring fenced in order to maintain the integrity of the investment or the building would fall back into disrepair.</p> | <p>Due to the significant financial investment required for this proposal, the business case for retaining the building is not a viable option for the Council given the ongoing difficult financial situation.</p> |

Are there any data or information gaps and if so what are they and how do you intend to address them?

The original building was erected in 1964 with additional elements added in the mid 1970's. The life span of a building of this time/type is between 30 to 60 years (best case 2024). Maintenance on the building was undertaken as and when budget was available, repaired as and when necessary and remodelled inside, required to improve the office environment. These works would have had no impact on the overall lifespan of the building.

More recently, there was significant concern about the integrity of the existing structure, a steel reinforcement framework that would have been embedded within the concrete construction. This would not have been included within the findings of the Condition Survey undertaken in 2018. Recently a piece of the external concrete fell away from the steel reinforcement.

It would not be prudent to invest a significant sum of money into a building with a limited lifespan, this building had almost achieved its best case lifespan by the time it was vacated as a result of the pandemic in 2020/21.

In addition, the fabric of the building was not energy efficient and would have required a significant financial outlay in addition to the Condition Survey findings to begin to 'decarbonise' the building. Without this additional investment the building would also be extremely expensive to heat due to heat loss and would have been a significant issue for the Welsh Governments objectives to decarbonise the public sector estate by 2050.

Finally, there would have been very limited opportunity to improve the Carbon Footprint for this building - as one of our key Corporate Buildings, and given the evidence above, this was a major concern for the Council moving forward.

Section 6 - Consultation.

Using the questions below please provide details of any planned consultations or consultations that have been undertaken to support the proposal, referring to the Gunning Principles as appropriate:

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

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 with regards to the decision?

| Section 7 - 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

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 39

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 27.06.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 28.06.2023

Committee: **Council**
Date of Meeting: **20th July, 2023**
Report Subject: **Adoption of the Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) 2023-2028**
Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Helen Cunningham Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member – Place & Environment]**
Report Submitted by: **David Watkins – Team Manager – Street Scene**

| 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) |
| 06/06/23 | 08/06/23 | | | | 20/06/23 | | 20/07/23 | |

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To formally adopt Blaenau Gwent's Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) 2023-2028

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) describes how the Council will maintain the road network under its control. It details the procedures used to plan and execute all works and functions associated with the management, operation and maintenance of the highway asset including how the activities are monitored to ensure compliance with council policies.

- 2.2 The HAMP (appendix 1) outline the methods and specifications for the recording and maintenance of all highway assets and has been divided into the following sections:

Section 1: Introduction/Policy

Section 2: Highways Asset Management Strategy for the Adopted Highway

Section 3: Highways Data Management Plan for the Adopted Highway

Section 4: Highways Asset Maintenance Plan for the Adopted Highway

Section 5: Risk Based Approach Methodology for the Adopted Highway

Section 6: Highways Drainage Cleansing Service for the Adopted Highway

Section 7: Skid Resistance Policy for the Adopted Highway

2.3 The HAMP will guide Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council acting as the Highway Authority, in the management of the adopted highway network to ensure that:

- All assets continue to deliver a service to the community and highway users at an agreed level.
- There is clear direction for Elected members and Council staff to make informed decisions regarding the adopted highway network.
- Legislative requirements are satisfied.
- Exposure to safety risk is mitigated to agreed and acceptable levels.
- Asset purchases, increases or construction are only approved after whole life costs and benefits are assessed and agreed.
- Clear and transparent allocation of responsibilities for the management of individual assets is recorded.

2.4 The HAMP will assist Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in meeting its legal duties and to support this the following National Guidance has been used. The methods adopted in the HAMP are based upon the contents of the following:

- “Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice, UK Roads Liaison Group, 2016”
- “Risk Based Approach: Method”, 2018, County Surveyor Society (WALES) CSSW, 2018
- “Highway Inspection Defect Recording Manual”, CSSW, 2018

2.5 As of February 2023, the Council, in its role as Highway Authority, have assets made up of the following major groups:

- 518 Km of carriageway.
- 52 road bridges & 35-foot bridges.
- 232 retaining walls.
- 11 subways.
- 188 storm water culverts of which 73 are classed as “critical”
- 68 large culverts >0.90m
- 12,936 streetlights, of which 12,936 are lit between the hours of dusk and midnight and then 05:00 a.m. and dawn and 190 are not currently illuminated,
- 40 sets of traffic signals, (including Pelican, Puffin and Toucan crossings),
- 1,798 Illuminated traffic signs and bollards,
- 13,500 road gullies,
- 21,867m of safety barrier
- 464m Pedestrian barrier
- 1 tunnel (Cwm Bypass)

- 2.6 The HAMP relates only to the Council's obligations as a Highway Authority and therefore only includes those assets on the publicly adopted highway. Private streets and roads transferred to social landlords are not included.
- 2.7 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council as a landowner is responsible for assets that are not classed as "adopted highway", such as Council owned streets and footways, and will maintain these in a safe state, as required by legislation or judicial precedent, however, this may be below the level of service afforded to the adopted highway network.
- 2.8 The HAMP for the adopted highways 2023-2028 records the methods used to manage the road assets, specifically it records how and when the Authority:
- Inspects
 - Categorises and prioritises reactive repairs
 - Assesses condition
 - Identifies and prioritises sites or assets for replacement or strengthening.
 - Prepares works programmes
 - Procures and manages works
 - Records and reports Costs
 - Records and responds to customer contacts
- 2.9 A presentation has recently been given to Members around Highway Maintenance and the importance of the Highway Asset Maintenance Plan in defining how the Highways will be inspected and maintained and the significance this has in defending Insurance claims in Court.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
- 3.1 This report was considered by the Place Scrutiny Committee on 20th June, 2023. Members recommended Option 1 - that Council adopt the Highways Asset Management Plan 2023-28.
- Scrutiny Committee members also asked that Cabinet / Corporate Leadership Team seek to identify appropriate funds to implement a future Capital Works Programme.
- 3.2 **Option 1 [preferred]** – Members provide comment and support the adoption of the Highways Asset Maintenance Plan (HAMP) 2023-2028.
- Option 2** – Members do not support the adoption of the Highways Asset Maintenance Plan (HAMP) and offer comments to this effect.

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

4.1 This proposal supports the amendments made to the Outcome Statements within the Corporate Plan 2022/27 Outcome Statements:

- Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities
- Support a fairer sustainable economy and community
- To enable people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities
- An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place

4.2 This report supports the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan 2018-2023 by ensuring that having a “Street Scene and Landscape” that is well maintained enhances the perception of the area and can contribute to Blaenau Gwent being a better place to live, visit, invest in and work.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

5.1.1 **Cost Implications Option 1**

5.1.1.1 There are no cost implications associated with this report, however, highways maintenance does come at a price and funding will need to be identified in 2023/24 and future years to meet the maintenance needs of the highway’s assets and infrastructure.

5.1.1.2 The HAMP identifies some priority highway infrastructure works (Appendix F) estimated at £1.2m that needs to be considered in the short term.

5.1.1.3 The estimated value of the highway assets is over £1,044,000,000 (One £Billion+). The current annual revenue maintenance budget for 2023/24 associated with highways assets (including street lighting) is £2,669,520, this represents 0.26% of the value of the assets.

5.1.2 **Cost Implications Option 2**

2.1.2.1 The cost implications would remain even if option 2 was the preferred option.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

There are a range of risks to the Council and to the Community if the HAMP is not adopted, including:

- There being no strategic plan for dealing with highways maintenance matters.
- Insurance claims will be difficult to defend.
- Highway maintenance will be difficult to plan and schedule.
- Risk based maintenance intervention levels will not be documented and adopted by Council.
- A consistency approach to highways maintenance across several local authorities will not be in place.

5.3 ***Legal***

5.3.1 As the Highway Authority the Council has a duty to meet the requirement of the following legislation:

- **The Highways Act 1980:** This places a duty upon Highway Authorities to maintain highways, adopted and maintainable at public expense, and to keep them safe for public use
- **New Roads and Street Works Act 1991:** This places a duty upon Highway Authorities to co-ordinate all works in the highway for the purposes of ensuring safety, minimising inconvenience to highway users, and protecting the highway and apparatus in it.
- **The Traffic Management Act 2004:** This places a duty on Highway Authorities to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic on their road network and networks of surrounding authorities.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

6.1.1 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council will collate data to report on several national and local suites of performance indicators. Whilst this data does not form part of the HAMP it does provide results which are required to be included in performance reports.

6.1.2 A list of performance indicators (PI's) has been established through working with CSSW and can be found in appendix H of the HAMP, these will be explored in more detail with the intention to report upon an annual basis.

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

6.2.1 The council providing a well-maintained highways infrastructure that is safe to use.

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

6.3.1 As part of the highway asset management process, BGCBC will consult the public and partners on general highway related matters via the Council's website. It is proposed that this is carried out bi-annually from

2023/24. The survey will ask the same questions so that customer trends and satisfaction rates can be assessed.

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

6.4.1 The HAMP sets out a strategy for dealing with highways maintenance in the short, medium, and long term.

6.4.2 Investment in the residential highway network in Blaenau Gwent is identified to ensure sustainability for the future, bringing our roads up to a good standard and improving our highway infrastructure to meet the service requirements of the future.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

6.5.1 The HAMP sets out a strategy to preventing incidents on the highway networks through identifying detailed adopted maintenance intervention levels for all highways assets.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

6.6.1 The HAMP has been developed through partnership working with neighbouring authorities and professional working groups at local and national level, working closely with utility companies to plan future works through a collaborated approach.

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

6.7.1 The highways maintenance team works closely with a number of services in the delivery of maintenance programmes including Education, Regeneration and the Council's Engineering section.

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

6.8.1 It is essential that the highway is maintained to acceptable levels to allow for traffic to flow without obstruction. A well-maintained highways infrastructure will reduce the need for unprogrammed and unnecessary road maintenance works and thus extending the life of the asset.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment***

N/A

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The HAMP will be monitored through team and management meetings together with reporting through the Council's democratic process, through Scrutiny and other Council meetings.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP)

Appendix 2 – IIA HAMP

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Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council
Highway Asset Management Plan
2023 – 2028
01 June 2023

Document Control

| Version Number | Amendments Made | Date |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| V3.0 | Document review – Original | June 2023 |
| Next Review Due | | May 2025 |

Council Approval

| Version Number | Council Committee | Date |
|----------------|--|----------------------------|
| V3 | Scrutiny Committee Cabinet Council | 20 th June 2023 |

Responsibility for the Manual

The responsibility for the delivery of and updating of this plan are shown below:

| Council Officer | Responsible for |
|----------------------------|--|
| Head of Community Services | Ensuring compliance with the manual and updating of the manual |

This set of documents outlines the methods and specifications for the recording and maintenance of all highway assets and has been divided into the following sections:

- Section 1: Introduction/Policy
- Section 2: Highways Asset Management Strategy for the Adopted Highway
- Section 3: Highways Data Management Plan for the Adopted Highway
- Section 4: Highways Asset Maintenance Plan for the Adopted Highway
- Section 5: Risk Based Approach Methodology for the Adopted Highway
- Section 6: Highways Drainage Cleansing Service for the Adopted Highway
- Section 7: Skid Resistance Policy for the Adopted Highway

Appendix;

- A. Asset Hierarchy
- B. Frequency of Inspections
- C. Defect Type and Intervention levels
- D. Competency Requirements (To be developed)
- E. Extract From Highways Act 1980
- F. Identified Highest Priority Classified Road Repairs 2023/24 and Assessment Matrix Example
- G. Traffic Sensitive Streets
- H. Performance Indicators PI's

Section 1

BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION AND POLICY

2023 - 2028

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Date | 02/06/2023 |
| Author | David Watkins |
| Issued to | |
| Version No. | |
| | |

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1. The purpose of this manual is to document how the council manages highway maintenance. The manual shows how the council aims to meet its duties as the highway authority. It documents the methods used to ensure that the risk to users is appropriately monitored and managed.

1.2 Scope

- 1.2.1 The Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) describes how the council will maintain the road network under its control. It details the procedures used to plan and execute of all works and functions associated with the management, operation and maintenance of the highway asset including how the activities are monitored to ensure compliance with council policies.

1.3 Plan Objectives

- 1.3.1 The HAMP guides Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council acting as the Highway Authority, in the management of the adopted highway network to ensure that:

- All assets continue to deliver a service to the community and highway users at an agreed level.
- There is clear direction for Elected members and Council staff to make informed decisions regarding the adopted highway network.
- Legislative requirements are satisfied.
- Exposure to safety risk is mitigated to agreed and acceptable levels.
- Asset purchases, increases or construction are only approved after whole life costs and benefits are assessed and agreed.
- Clear and transparent allocation of responsibilities for the management of individual assets is recorded.

1.4 Legal Requirements

- 1.4.1 As the Highway Authority the council has a duty to meet the requirement of the following legislation:

- **The Highways Act 1980:** This places a duty upon Highway Authorities to maintain highways, adopted and maintainable at public expense, and to keep them safe for public use
- **New Roads and Street Works Act 1991:** This places a duty upon Highway Authorities to co-ordinate all works in the highway for the purposes of ensuring safety, minimising inconvenience to highway users, and protecting the highway and apparatus in it.
- **The Traffic Management Act 2004:** This places a duty on Highway Authorities to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic on their road network and networks of surrounding authorities.

1.5 National Guidance

- 1.5.1 To assist authorities in meeting their duties the following National Guidance is provided. The methods adopted in this manual are based upon the contents of the following:

- "Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice, UK Roads Liaison Group, 2016"
- "Risk Based Approach: Method", 2018, CSSW, 2018
- "Highway Inspection Defect Recording Manual", CSSW, 2018

1.6 Relevant Council Plans and Documents

1.6.1 This manual is part of a proposed suite of documents that will support the council's approach to managing the highway asset. These will include:

- Highway Asset Management Plan.
- Highway Data Improvement Plan.
- Annual Status and Options Reports.

1.7 Definitions

1.7.1 **Asset(s):** Any physical item(s) the Highway Authority acquires or constructs which gives a benefit or service to highway users.

1.7.2 **Asset Group/Class:** Any assets that are of similar type, role or construction.

1.7.3 **Asset Lifecycle:** The period of time from asset acquisition to disposal, or renewal.

1.7.4 **Asset Management:** Activities and practices through which the Highway Authority optimally manages all assets including intellectual property associated to the adopted network, their performance, safety risk and expenditure over their lifecycle for the purpose of achieving the agreed objectives of the Highway Asset Management Plan.

1.7.5 **Asset Management Plan:** An agreed plan that details the financial expenditure on and technical treatments to, an asset or asset class over its lifecycle to optimise its availability to highway users.

1.7.6 **Asset Register:** A record of asset information considered worthy of separate identification.

1.7.7 **Level of Service:** The agreed, measurable service standard set for an asset, group of assets or asset class against which the Highway Authorities performance can be assessed.

1.7.8 **Whole of Life Costs:** The sum of all costs incurred by an asset over its lifecycle, containing any construction, capital, maintenance, and disposal costs.

Section 2

**BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

FOR THE ADOPTED HIGHWAY

2023- 2028

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Date | 01/06/2023 |
| Author | David Watkins |
| Issued to | |
| Version No. | |
| | |

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Highway asset management is defined as:

1.1.1 “A strategic approach that identifies the optimal allocation of resources for the management, operation, preservation and enhancement of the highway infrastructure to meet the needs of current and future customers”

1.1.2 The adoption of an asset management approach is now deemed by Welsh Government as a proven means to demonstrate effective husbandry of the highway network by providing significant financial understanding. This strategy records and reports how Blaenau County Borough Council will adopt and use these principles to manage the public highway assets.

1.1.3 This Strategy commits Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to:

- a. Affordable Standards: the strategy establishes standards that can be afforded with current budgets and communicates them to the public and other users such that they know what service to expect.
- b. Long Term Planning: the strategy enables the medium term (10 year) and long term (20 year) time periods to ensure the correct balance of short-term fixes, preventative actions and replacement of aged assets.
- c. Budget Allocation: the strategy requires data to be collected about the highway assets that will enable informed decisions to be made about how best to spend the available budgets.
- d. Managing Risk: the strategy requires the analysis of asset data to gauge and manage the risk associated with any decisions resulting from the strategy.

1.2 The implementation of the strategy will support:

- a. The introduction of Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) and specifically the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Transport Asset Code.
- b. The continuing desire by Welsh Government to see Authorities use asset management for highways, to realise and demonstrate the associated cost benefits and transparent governance of the assets associated with the road network.
- c. The need to manage increasing budget pressures resulting from the national and local financial position.
- d. The agreed aims of Blaenau County Borough Council’s Corporate Plan 2022-2027

1.3 The extent of the adopted highway is held by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, and the highway asset is any structure, system, construction, or land associated with the adopted highway.

1.4 As of February 2023 the Council, in its role as Highway Authority, have assets made up of the following major asset groups:

- 518 Km of carriageway,
- 52 road bridges, 35-foot bridges and 11 subways.
- 188 storm water culverts of which 73 are classed as “critical”
- 68 large culverts >0.90m
- 12,936 streetlights, of which 12,936 are lit between the hours of dusk and midnight and then 05:00 a.m. and dawn and 190 are not currently illuminated,
- 40 sets of traffic signals, (including Pelican, Puffin and Toucan crossings),
- 1,798 Illuminated traffic signs and bollards,
- 13,500 road gullies,
- 21,867m of safety barrier
- 464m Pedestrian barrier
- 1 tunnel (Cwm Bypass)
- 232 Retaining walls

A full list of highways assets is available electronically from file.

- 1.5 The HAMP relates only to the Council’s obligations as a Highway Authority and therefore only includes those assets on the publicly adopted highway. Private streets and roads transferred to social landlords are not included the extents of the adopted highway are available via the Council’s web site.
- 1.6 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council as a landowner is responsible for assets that are not classed as adopted highway, such as Council owned streets and footways, and will maintain these in a safe state, as required by legislation or judicial precedent, however, this may be below the level of service afforded to the adopted highway network.
- 1.7 All public enquiries or complaints that are highway related are dealt with through the Council’s customer call centre and “My Council Services” (MCS) systems. These include contacts using telephone, e-mail, or social media platforms and face-to-face and are recorded and logged onto a highways database, (currently Mayrise), and these are electronically transferred to the relevant sections and officers for action or comment. This flow of information is analysed to ensure that all communications are within the Council’s targets for dealing with such interactions.
- 1.8 As part of the highway asset management process, BGCBC will consult the general public on general highway related matters via the Council’s website. It is proposed that this is carried out bi-annually from 2023/24. The survey will ask the same questions so that customer trends and satisfaction rates can be assessed.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document summarises Blaenau County Borough Council's asset management planning practices for the period 2023 until 2028. It details the tasks and activities that are required through the year and provides details of the instruction documents, spreadsheets and template documents required of this strategy.

2 Asset Management Policy Statement

- 2.1 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Highways Asset Management Policy Statement confirms the Council's commitment to:

- Applying asset management systems to manage its adopted highway asset
- Publish a Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP)
- Report achievements and performance annually

3 Performance Indicator Returns

- 3.1 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council will collate data to report out several National and local suites of performance indicators. Whilst this data does not form part of the HAMP it does provide results which are required to be included in performance reports.

4 Highways Asset Maintenance Plan

- 4.1 The HAMP for the adopted highways 2023-2028 records the methods used to manage the road assets, specifically it records how and when the Authority:

- Inspects
- Categorises and prioritises reactive repairs
- Assesses condition
- Identifies and prioritises sites or assets for replacement or strengthening
- Prepares works programmes
- Procures and manages works
- Records and reports Costs
- Records and responds to customer contacts

5 Annual Status and Options Report (ASOR)

- 5.1 An Annual Status and Options Report (ASOR) will summarise the status of each asset group in terms of its condition, compliance with meeting repair standards, level of public complaint/contact etc. The report will describe the result of the previous year's investment in terms of meeting the target service standards. The status report will enable the Council to note if the standards in the HAMP are being met or not. Based upon the current status, the report will then set out the options available to the Council for the future. These will include relevant data sufficient to enable the Council to choose how to best allocate the following years budgets and to decide whether any of the service standards contained in this HAMP need to be revised. In particular they will address the types of works that are planned and state the approach to be used.

6 Asset Levels of Service

6.1 Fundamental requirement of a HAMP is to record the service standards that the Council is aiming to deliver for each asset group and the plan will endeavour to identify any risks that may prevent the plan being realised. The strategy will reflect local context in terms of traffic levels, customer preferences and the Council's corporate strategies.

7 Annual Works Programme

7.1 The Annual Programme once agreed and scrutinised will detail each asset class with a proposed schedule of works together with the current target Level of Service.

8 Annual Updating Regime

8.1 It is intended that the HAMP documents and spread sheets are reviewed and updated annually, and in line with the County Surveyors Society (Wales) (CSSW) training workshops the following timetable will be utilised:

| Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Annual HAMP Update Programme | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
| 1 | Annual Policy Review | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Data Assessment | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Asset Valuation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Collation of Performance Information | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Maintenance Manual Update | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Annual Status and Options Report | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | HAMP Update and Sign Off | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Works Programme | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Section 3

**BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

HIGHWAYS DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN

FOR THE ADOPTED HIGHWAY

2023- 2028

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Date | 01/06/2023 |
| Author | David Watkins |
| Issued to | |
| Version No. | |
| | |

1 Introduction

1.1 Asset Data

1.1.1 This Plan records the data held about each of the Asset groups that make up the road asset, it details where the data is stored, and the systems used for data storage. It identifies how and when this data is updated, verified, and validated, and where data or system deficiencies exist these are acknowledged and, either a plan is included for how and when improvements will be made to the data systems or an explanation why the data is not recorded.

1.2 Types of Data

1.2.1 The type of data required to manage all asset classes will include:

Inventory: the number, location, size, type and age of the components that make up each asset.

Condition: measurement and a rating of the condition of the asset from testing, visual or other means.

Inspection: the inspection regime, inspection results and actions initiated by the inspection.

Use: the use of individual asset, such as traffic counts or heavy vehicle routes etc.

Safety: records of accidents or incidents that occur on the asset.

Cost: details of the unit cost of common activities and the overall cost to enable cost benchmarking.

1.3 Asset Management Data Uses

1.3.1 The use of asset management data allows BGCBC to:

- Provide public information to offer greater transparency
- Monitor and report on the condition of the assets that make up the highway network
- Predict and report on funding needs
- Identify and prioritise sites, areas or assets for maintenance work
- Monitor and report the performance of assets to inform local and national Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
- Assess the expected life of individual assets or asset components
- Place a value on the asset and calculate depreciation due to age and use to comply with Whole of Government Accounts (WGA)

1.4 Data Management

1.4.1 It is essential that the quality of the asset data that BGCBC hold is known and that the appropriate measures are taken to maintain this data. It is also important to identify where there are deficiencies and the timescales for collecting this data. Not all data needs to be collected, and BGCBC will identify those sets that have low-cost benefit together with any relevant review dates and reasoning.

1.5 Roles, Responsibilities

1.5.1 The designated officer who will assume the responsibility for data management for the asset group is as follows:

| Asset Group | Person Responsible for Asset Data |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Carriageways | Team Leader - Highways |
| Footways/Footpaths | Team Leader - Highways |
| Cycleways | Team Leader – Green Team |
| Highways Drainage | Team Leader - Highways |
| Land Drainage Systems | Team Leader - Engineering |
| Street Lighting& Illuminated Signs | Team Leader – Street Lighting |
| Non-illuminated Signs | Team Leader - Highways |
| Structures | Team Leader - Infrastructure |
| Traffic Signals | Team Leader – Street lighting |
| Street furniture | Team Leader - Highways |
| Highways Verges | Team Leader - Highways |

1.5.2 It is the responsibility of the officer listed above to ensure that data relating to the asset group for which they are responsible is updated, verified, validated, and reviewed as shown in the following sections and that any actions required to improve data are reported to the Highway Asset Management Officer.

1.5.3 Overall the responsibility for road asset data quality lies with The Head of Community Service.

1.6 Data Updates

| Inventory Updating Timings | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Type | Timing |
| New Assets – Council Built | Annually update in November |
| New Assets - Adoptions | Within 3 months of confirmation of order |
| Major maintenance e.g. resurfacing | Annually update in November |
| Removals | Within 3 months of confirmation of order |

1.7 Data Verification

1.7.1 In BGCBC individual officers, as part of their job description are responsible for individual or groups of assets classes. Where these officers gather new data in the course of their duties, a random sample no smaller than 10% will be abstracted and its accuracy verified by a line manager, colleague, or highway operative. Any inaccuracies or deficiencies in the data will be re-surveyed and re-verified by the same officer that carried out the original verification, the name, data and sample size will be attached where suitable as meta-data to the new data.

1.7.2 Where data is received for outside sources, the receiving officer or officer responsible for the asset will require the data provider to furnish an assurance or meta-data to prove a verification process. This will be then added to the new data as meta-data when entered into the appropriate electronic system.

1.8 Data Validation

1.8.1 BGCBC, hold large sets of asset data that will be used on an annual basis providing important information to programme future works, Key performance indicators and valuations etc. This data can lie dormant for long periods of time, and so errors can arise due to inadequate systemic updates. Therefore, at the bi-annual and end of the HAMP 2023-2028 this data will be verified by each officer responsible for that asset to ensure that the data is correct and current by selecting a random 10% of that data, and resurveying that data.

Section 4

**BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

HIGHWAYS ASSET MAINTENANCE PLAN

FOR THE ADOPTED HIGHWAY

2023- 2028

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Date | 01/06/2023 |
| Author | David Watkins |
| Issued to | |
| Version No. | |
| | |

1 Introduction

1.1 Scope

1.1.1 This manual is part of a suite documents that comprise Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's (BGCBC) policy in managing highway maintenance. It details how the adopted highway network is categorised into a hierarchy and how this network is inspected and repaired. This maintenance manual will have a proposed lifespan of 5 years (2028) and will be updated by the end of 2024 and 2026.

1.2 Purpose

1.2.1 This document will detail how the Highway Authority (HA) carries out its duties and demonstrate that the safety risks to users are appropriately managed with regard to both local, national and UK guidance.

1.3 Legal Requirements

1.3.1 The Highway Authority has a duty to meet the requirements of the Highways Act 1980, The New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 and The Traffic Management Act 2004. These acts require the HA to maintain the highway at public expense, to co-ordinate all works in the Highway and to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic.

1.4 Guidance

1.4.1 BGCBC has reviewed, refreshed and aligned its highway asset management policies and procedures and this manual is the result. It has been produced to reflect the local conditions that take into account the guidance produced by the County Surveyors Society (Wales), (CSS Wales) – CSSW Nationally Consistent Response to the Code of Practice 2016 and the 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice, UK Roads Liaison Group 2016' (WMHI 2016).

2 Roles Responsibilities and Competencies

2.1 The roles, responsibilities and competencies required of those involved in managing the council's highway asset are defined below:

Roles and Responsibilities

| Role | Responsibility |
|------|----------------|
|------|----------------|

| | |
|--|---|
| Councillors (Executive Member for the Environment) | Approve the use of this document as council policy. |
| Team Manager Highway Maintenance | Develop the policy and standards, ensure their effective implementation, moitor the results, and undertake an annual risk assessment update. |
| Highway Maintenance Team Leader - reactive maintenance | Develop the policy and standards to be used, ensure their effective implementation, monitor the results, and undertake an annual risk assessment update. |
| Infrastructure Team Leader | Undertake inspections on Highway structures to check that they are safe for use and fit for purpose and to record the data on the structures AMX database system. |
| Highway Inspectors | Carry out inspections as per the inspection regime, recording the appropriate data for input into the "Mayrise" system. |
| Highways On-Call (Standby) Officers | To record, inspect and or assess any highways safety related report ensuring that this risk is mitigated until working hours. |
| Works Gangs | Carrying out repairs as per the repair regime and record the required data for input into the "Mayrise" system. |
| Contractors | Carry out repairs as instructed and record the required data for input into the "Mayrise" system. |

3 Competencies and Training

- 3.1 The CSSW HAMP Project are currently working on a suite of competency and training requirements to meet the 2016 Code of Practice recommendations. Once completed this section of the maintenance manual will be updated. However, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council highways inspectors undertake highways competency inspection training every 2 years. As identified in Appendix D.

4 Network Hierarchy

4.1 Establishing the Network Hierarchy

- 4.1.1 Within the both the CSS(Wales) and the Well Managed Highways Infrastructure CoP (WMHI) 2016 guidance, road hierarchy should be based on use, function, and the exposure to safety risk, at present the hierarchy is exclusively based on the road classification, which does not reflect this in all cases. Unlike in England, the process to alter the road classification is time consuming and costly, so it has been determined that the road classification need not be altered.
- 4.1.2 BGCBC in conjunction with CSS (Wales) have produced a revised road hierarchy based on the actual or estimated traffic flows. This has been used to produce a table that when populated has given an indication of the safety risk that a user can expect to be exposed to when passing any condition variation, (a sudden of dramatic change in the nature of the asset likely to increase the risk of harm) in a carriageway's surface. Therefore, all roads have been divided into network hierarchy categories that reflect their use, function, and the exposure to safety risk, this enables the creation of inspection and repair regimes that mitigate this.
- 4.1.3 CSS (Wales) and WMHI 2016 guidance suggests that a category of 'minor road' be included for traffic flows of below 200 movements per day. BGCBC have included this category into the Local Access Road definition, on the basis the traffic movements are so small that it offers no discernible benefit to determining highway safety risk within the Borough.
- 4.1.4 The highway assets have been divided into network hierarchy categories that reflect use and function. This enables the inspection and repair regimes to be related to their associated risk.
- 4.1.5 The network hierarchies have been derived in accordance with the Code of Practice "Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice, UK Roads Liaison Group, 2016" and the CSSW "Risk Based Approach: Method". Details of how the hierarchies were derived is held in the "4RA Annual Highway Asset Risk Review 2018" as an excel document.

"Details of the hierarchies used for each asset group can be found in appendix A. The details of the hierarchy allocated to each individual asset are held in the council's asset management systems (Mayrise)."

4.2 Regional Consistency

- 4.2.1 CSSW recommends that to achieve regional consistency consultation is undertaken with neighbouring authorities to enable consistent hierarchies to be allocated to assets which cross boundaries. At this time the consultation process is yet to be completed once done the assets with differing hierarchies between the council and a neighbouring authority will be listed in appendix A along with the reason for the difference.

4.3 Update and Review

- 4.3.1 The hierarchies are reviewed on an ongoing basis where changes to the asset occur and or significant changes in use happen (e.g. significant changes in traffic volume). As a minimum the hierarchy is reviewed and confirmed every 2 years. Records of the review are held in the "Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council 4RA Annual Highway Asset Risk Review". Any resultant recommended changes to the hierarchy will be proposed to council and their approval recorded.

4.4 Carriageways

- 4.4.1 The Well-maintained Highways Infrastructure (WMHI) 2016 Code of Practice Section A:4.3.11 states: -

“The carriageway hierarchy will not necessarily be determined by the road classification, but by functionality and scale of use. Table 1 is intended to be used as a reference point from which to develop local hierarchies. The descriptions relate to the most usual circumstances encountered in the UK. There are likely to be, some very significant variations and Authorities should take their own circumstances into account.”

4.4.1.1 The table below is abstracted from the WMHI 2016:

Table 1 – Factors to Consider - Carriageways

| Category | Type of Road General Description | Description |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Motorway | Limited access -motorway regulations apply | Routes for fast-moving long-distance traffic. Fully grade separated and restrictions on use. |
| Strategic Route | Trunk and some Principal 'A' class roads between Primary Destinations | Routes for fast-moving long-distance traffic with little frontage access or pedestrian traffic. Speed limits are usually in excess of 40 mph and there are few junctions. Pedestrian crossings are either segregated or controlled and parked vehicles are generally prohibited. |
| Main Distributor | Major Urban Network and Inter-Primary Links. Short - medium distance traffic | Routes between Strategic Routes and linking urban centres to the strategic network with limited frontage access. In urban areas speed limits are usually 40 mph or less, parking is restricted at peak times and there are positive measures for pedestrian safety. |
| Secondary Distributor | B and C class roads and some unclassified urban routes carrying bus, HGV and local traffic with frontage access and frequent junctions | In residential and other built-up areas these roads have 20 or 30 mph speed limits and very high levels of pedestrian activity with some crossing facilities including zebra crossings. On-street parking is generally unrestricted except for safety reasons. In rural areas these roads link the larger villages, bus routes and HGV generators to the Strategic and Main Distributor Network. |
| Link Road | Roads linking between the Main and Secondary Distributor Network with frontage access and frequent junctions | In urban areas these are residential or industrial interconnecting roads with 20 or 30 mph speed limits, random pedestrian movements and uncontrolled parking. In rural areas these roads link the smaller villages to the distributor roads. They are of varying width and not always capable of carrying two-way traffic. |
| Local Access Road | Roads serving limited numbers of properties carrying only access traffic | In rural areas these roads serve small settlements and provide access to individual properties and land. They are often only single lane width and unsuitable for HGVs. In urban areas they are often residential loop roads or cul-de-sacs. |
| Minor Road | Little used roads serving very limited numbers of properties. | Locally defined roads. |

4.4.1.2 In Blaenau Gwent, the WMHI2016 Section 4: Table 1 (above) has been considered and the table below has been developed and will be utilised when defining hierarchy:

| Table 1.1 Carriageways | |
|---|---|
| Strategic Route – Carriageway Hierarchy Strategic Route (CHSR). | Route enabling travel between regionally important locations, (in this document these routes are based on local significance and not on traffic volumes) in Blaenau Gwent the WMHI 2016 has been considered and only the A467, A4046 and the A4048 – Tredegar to Blackwood fit these criteria. |
| Main Distributor – Carriageway Hierarchy 1 (CH1) <u>Blaenau Classification – A</u> | Routes that have between 10,000 and 20,000 + vehicle movements per day. In Blaenau Gwent the WMHI 2016 has been considered and only the A467 (Brynmawr to Newbridge), A4248 (Brynmawr to Blaenavaon), A4046 (Ebbw Vale to Aberbeeg) and the A4048 (Tredegar to Blackwood) fit the criteria. |
| Secondary Distributor – Carriageway Hierarchy 2 (CH2) <u>Blaenau Gwent Classification – B</u> | Routes that have between 5,000 and 10,000 vehicle movements per day and as set out in the WMHI 2016 these may include B and C class routes, should have maximum 30mph speed limits, have high pedestrian footfall, and are generally bus routes. This criteria has been applied to the network. |
| Link Road – Carriageway Hierarchy 3 (CH3) <u>Blaenau Gwent Classification – C</u> | Routes that have between 1,000 and 5,000 vehicle movements per day and as set out in the WMHI 2016 these may include lesser used urban streets with random or tidal pedestrian footfall. This criteria has been applied to the network. |
| Local Access Road – Carriageway Hierarchy 4 (CH4) <u>Blaenau Gwent Classification – U</u> | Routes that have between 200 and 1,000 vehicle movements per day and as set out in the WMHI 2016 these may include roads serving limited numbers of properties carrying only access traffic. This criteria has been applied to the network. |
| Minor Road – Carriageway Hierarchy 5 (CH5) | Routes that have less than 200 vehicle movements per day as set out in the WMHI 2016. Access to properties (houses and farms) |
| Note: The number of roads currently listed in this table will change as traffic flows increase or decreases and will be reassessed at the “Mid Life Update” of this plan. | |

4.4.2 As of February 2023 there are 438km of roads on the adopted network with Unique Street Reference Numbers (USRN) that are maintained at public expense but, as traffic flow data has not been routinely collected since 2012, to establish vehicular flows for each street an estimation exercise has been

undertaken based on local knowledge, engineers estimates and where possible, cross referenced with any ad hoc data that is available to the HA.

4.4.3 Each street has been subject of a desktop exercise to determine the maximum vehicular movements per day split into 6-hour periods: 00:00 to 06:00, 06:00 to 12:00, 12:00 to 18:00, and 18:00 to 00:00. This allows engineers to have a better understanding and therefore more accurately model the usage profile of any given road. Until more accurate data is available this method will be used and revisited by the end of 2024 and 2026 to ensure that traffic flows for any given street remain as consistent as the data allows.

4.4.4 The table below has been produced to aid highway engineering staff to estimate the maximum expected vehicle movements on any given road:

| Table 1.2 | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|-------------|
| Estimated Maximum Traffic Flow | | | | | | | | | |
| | 00:00 – 06:00 | Total | 06:00 – 12:00 | Total | 12:00 – 18:00 | Total | 18:00 – 00:00 | Total | Daily Total |
| | Vehicle every | | Vehicle every | | Vehicle every | | Vehicle every | | |
| Very High | 2.5 seconds | 8640 | 1.25 seconds | 17280 | 1.25 seconds | 17280 | 2.5 seconds | 8640 | 51840 |
| High | 5 seconds | 4320 | 2.5 seconds | 8640 | 2.5 seconds | 8640 | 5 seconds | 4320 | 25920 |
| Medium | 30 seconds | 720 | 7.5 seconds | 2880 | 7.5 seconds | 2880 | 10 seconds | 2160 | 8640 |
| Low | 90 seconds | 240 | 30 seconds | 720 | 30 seconds | 720 | 60 seconds | 360 | 2040 |
| Very Low | 5 minutes | 72 | 2 minutes | 180 | 2 minutes | 180 | 5 minutes | 72 | 504 |

4.5 Footways

4.5.1 The following hierarchies included in the CSS (Wales) and WMHI 2016 guidance have been considered when establishing the footway hierarchy:

| Table 1.3 Footways | |
|---|---|
| Category | Description |
| Pedestrian Areas in City Centre Shopping/Business Areas | Very Busy areas of towns as cities with high public space and Street scene contribution |
| Pedestrian Areas in Town Centre Shopping/Business Areas | Busy urban shopping and business areas and main pedestrian routes |
| Footways Outside Public Buildings or Facilities | Footways outside busy public buildings such as train/bus stations, hospitals, schools and colleges or small parades of shops etc. that experience significantly higher levels of use than the adjacent footways |
| Link Footways | Footways linking housing or industrial estates to other centres or routes |
| Local Access Footways | Footways in housing areas |
| Minor Footways | Rural footways with infrequent use |

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

- 4.5.2 Both the CSS (Wales) and the WMHI 2016 suggests that a category of ‘minor footway’ be included where footfall is described as ‘little used rural footways serving very limited numbers of properties’, BGCBC have included this category into the Local Access Footway on the basis the footfall counts are so small and offers no discernible benefit to determining highway safety risk.
- 4.5.3 BGCBC has not historically collected routine pedestrian footfall figures, to establish a base figure for pedestrian footfall an estimation exercise has been undertaken based on local knowledge and where possible cross referenced with any ad hoc data that is available to the HA. BGCBC is intending to investigate ways to determine figures in future years
- 4.5.4 Each footway has been the subject of a desktop exercise to determine the maximum pedestrian movements per day split into 6-hour periods: 00:00 to 06:00, 06:00 to 12:00, 12:00 to 18:00, and 18:00 to 00:00. This allows engineers to have a better understanding and therefore more accurately model the usage profile of any given footway. Until more accurate data is available this method will be used and revisited annually as set out in the Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) to ensure that pedestrian footfall flows for any given footway remain as consistent as the method allows.
- 4.5.5 The table below gives an estimation of the maximum expected pedestrian movements over any part of a street:

| Table 1.4 | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|-------------|
| Estimated Maximum Pedestrian Footfall | | | | | | | | | |
| | 00:00 – 06:00 | Total | 06:00 – 12:00 | Total | 12:00 – 18:00 | Total | 18:00 – 00:00 | Total | Daily Total |
| | Movement every | | Movements every | | Movement every | | Movement every | | |
| Very High | 5 min | 72 | 10 seconds | 2160 | 5 seconds | 4320 | 15 seconds | 1440 | 7992 |
| High | 30 min | 18 | 15 seconds | 1440 | 10 seconds | 2160 | 30 seconds | 720 | 4338 |
| Medium | 1 hour | 6 | 90 seconds | 240 | 30 seconds | 720 | 1 min | 360 | 1326 |
| Low | 3 hours | 2 | 3 min | 120 | 90 seconds | 240 | 3 min | 120 | 482 |
| Very Low | 6 hours | 1 | 10 min | 36 | 6 minutes | 60 | 10 min | 36 | 133 |

- 4.5.6 Combining tables – and – the hierarchies for BGCBC footways are:

Table 1.5

BGCBC Footway Hierarchy

| Category | CSSW Description | WMHI 2016 Description | Estimated Maximum Pedestrian Footfall | Location |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Main Distributor | High use pedestrianised zone and footways in town centres | High use pedestrianised zone and footways in town centres | Very High | Abertillery TC Ebbw Vale TC Tredegar TC Brynmawr TC The Works site EV including the train station & General Offices |
| Secondary Distributor | Footways outside busy public buildings such as train/bus stations, hospitals, schools and colleges or small parades of shops etc. that experience significantly higher levels of use than the adjacent footways | Busy urban shopping and business areas and main pedestrian routes | High | Blaina TC Llanhilleth TC Nantyglo Garn Cross Cwm Ebbw Vale All school and college entrances including leisure and sports facilities and residential footways housing estates. |
| Link Access | Footways linking housing or industrial estates to other centres or routes | Linking local access footways through urban areas and busy rural footways | Medium | Cycleways, non-residential footways |
| Local Access | Footways in housing areas/ Rural footways with infrequent use | Footways associated with low usage, short estate roads to the main routes and cul-de-sacs/little used rural footways serving very limited numbers of properties | Low/Very Low | All other footways |

4.6 Structures

4.6.1 The CSSW guidance indicate that structures require a slightly different approach to carriageways and footways and the hierarchy should be based more on risks to the functionality of the network. The structures hierarchies have been defined as follows:

| Table 1.6 Structures | |
|----------------------|--|
| Category | Description |
| Vital Structure | structure that is vital to the network and if required to have restricted use or removed from service would result in significant adverse disruption/delay to traffic movement |
| Important Structure | A structure that is deemed important to the functioning of the networks and restricted use or loss would cause disruption to traffic movement |
| Standard Structure | All other highway related structures |

4.6.2 All structures across the Blaenau Gwent network have been listed and considered then given a hierarchy in line with the above categories. Details of the hierarchies used for each asset group can be found in appendix A. The details of how the hierarchies were derived are held in the council's "4RA Annual Highway Asset Risk Review 2018".

4.7 Street Lighting

4.7.1 In recent years BGCBC has invested in options to reduce the Council's Carbon footprint through changing lanterns to LED and adopted a policy of risk assessed switch off or part night lighting of streetlights to achieve this. Historically the safety hierarchy of streetlights has been based on the electrical safety of individual columns, however, to ensure that there was no increased safety risk or legal issues by deactivating lights across the County Borough a safety risk assessment exercise was undertaken to identify those lights that were to remain on during the hours of darkness. This included roundabouts, junctions, roads with traffic calming and lights within 30 mph areas to meet the requirement of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, Section 82(1)(a).

4.7.2 Maintenance of the asset is carried out via a small internal team which is supported by an external contractor who supports at times when required for attendance for faults and outages. The inspection regime is included in appendix B.

4.8 Traffic Signals

4.8.1 Based on the CSSW guidance the following hierarchies have been used:

| Table 1.7 Traffic Signals | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Category | Description |
| Vital Junction | Due to the limited number of traffic signal-controlled junctions in the Borough all illuminated traffic signals at any junction in the Borough are classed as vital |
| All other Signals | This will include all illuminated pedestrian signal crossings |

4.8.2 BGCBC maintain their traffic signal assets via a small internal team supported by external contractors the hierarchy is therefore set as per table 1.7 and maintenance and call out regimes are included in this document.

4.9 Regional Consistency

4.9.1 Consultation has been undertaken prior to adopting this policy with Caerphilly, Torfaen, Monmouth and Newport HA's and nationally with all Local Authorities in Wales via the CSS (Wales) HAMP project, to ensure that a broadly consistent approach to Highway Asset Management is taken. BGCBC has confirmed that where routes cross into neighbouring Authorities hierarchies and so inspection regimes have a high level of commonality.

4.10 Update and Review

4.10.1 The carriageway hierarchies and associated inspection frequencies will be reviewed by the end of 2023 and again in 2024 for the lifecycle of this plan, and will only be altered if:

- Evidence is available to prove that the current traffic flow data has changed
- Case law is cited to which the CSS Wales HAMP project accept is relevant
- New statute or guidance is issued

5 Inspection Regime

5.1 Types of Inspection

5.1.1 In order to monitor the condition and repair needs of the asset the council deploys a regime of inspections of varying types and frequencies.

5.1.2 The council undertakes the following types of inspection:

- **Reactive Inspections/Response:** inspections undertaken in response to the notification to the authority of potential defects by other sources (council employees, members of the public, emergency services etc.).
- **Planned/Routine Inspections:** A regime of planned inspections the purpose of which is to identify defects that have the potential to cause harm to users and to identify defects that require repair in order to prevent escalation of deterioration and increased (avoidable) maintenance needs.
- **Condition Surveys:** A regime of condition surveys that record the condition of components of the asset such that a programme of renewal/replacements can be derived. Condition surveys can be visual, or machine based and may include testing where such is appropriate for the asset type.

Planned routine inspections are a combination of:

- **Driven Inspections:** inspections of the carriageway undertaken with a driver and a Highway Inspector, carried out from a slow-moving vehicle at a speed appropriate to the road conditions.
- **Walked Inspections:** inspections undertaken by a Highway Inspector on foot at a walking pace on the footway, where the footway and carriageway are assessed.

5.2 Inspection Frequencies

5.2.1 Reactive Inspections

5.2.1.1 Where a “safety” defect is notified to the council by a third party an inspection of the defect will take place within 48 Hours and action will be taken as per the Council’s repair regime. (See section 6.1.1) repair regime for details of safety defect criteria).

5.2.1.2 Where a “maintenance” defect is notified to the council by a third party an inspection of the defect will take place within 7 Days and action will be taken as per the Council’s repair regime. (See section 6.1.1) repair regime for details of maintenance defect criteria).

5.2.2 Routine Inspection Frequencies

5.2.2.1 Routine Inspection frequency is based on the Network Hierarchy. It has been determined using the CSSW Highway Asset Risk Review Method and is reviewed every 2 years. The frequency of routine inspections is shown in Appendix B along with the CSSW minimum recommended standards.

5.2.3 Inspection Tolerance

5.2.3.1 Due to the effect of adverse weather and to allow for sickness or leave it is possible that the specified frequencies cannot be met in some circumstances. For this reason a tolerance in frequency of inspections is permitted with details provided in Appendix B. Any changes to the frequencies must be approved by the Director of Community Services before they are implemented.

5.2.4 Inspection Schedule

5.2.4.1 Inspection routes in compliance with the regime above are held in the council’s asset management system (Mayrise). The asset management system (Mayrise) contains details of the inspection regimes, the inspections undertaken and the date of the next scheduled inspection. The use and character of a road will be considered when scheduling inspections, for example to avoid periods with higher numbers of parked vehicles. Best endeavours will be made to ensure that the timing of the inspection enables defects to be identified effectively.

5.2.5 Inspected Assets

5.2.5.1 The assets inspected during the routine inspection include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Carriageways
- Footways
- Covers, Gratings & Frames (inc. Statutory Undertakers apparatus)
- Kerbs, Edgings and Channels
- Drainage
- Guardrails, Fencing and Restraint Systems
- Verge, Trees and Hedges
- Road Studs and markings
- Signage
- Street Lighting,
- Traffic Systems, Controlled Crossings, Illuminated Bollards and Cabinets
- Cleanliness and Weed Growth

5.2.6 Recording of Inspection Records

5.2.6.1 Records of the inspection and the resulting observations are recorded in hard copy notebooks (diaries) the hand-written notes are then transferred by the inspectors into the Mayrise system daily, work is currently underway to move to an electronic system to prevent double handling of information.

5.2.7 Condition Assessments

5.2.7.1 BGCBC undertake the following condition assessments on their highway assets. The frequency of condition assessment is given in Appendix B. The visual condition assessments intervals for carriageway and footway are being reviewed and this document will be updated following the results of the review.

a) Carriageways

i. SCANNER (Surface **Condition Assessment** of the National Network of Roads)

SCANNER is a machine condition survey undertaken from a vehicle moving at traffic speeds. The results of the survey are held offsite by WDM and accessed via the WDM / WIP online interface.

ii. SCRIM (Sideway-force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine)

The SCRIM data measuring wet road skidding resistance is stored in the Mayrise asset management system.

iii. Visual Condition Assessment

A visual condition survey of all roads has been undertaken using the CSSW Visual Condition Assessment Method. The carriageway condition has been assessed by a CSSW trained inspector. Carriageway visual condition information is stored in the Mayrise database.

SCANNER and SCRIM surveys are arranged via a central contract managed by the Welsh Government. The contract covers A, B and C Roads. SCANNER surveys are not undertaken on the unclassified road network.

b) Footways

Visual Condition Assessment

A visual condition survey of all footways has been undertaken using the CSSW Visual Condition Assessment Method. The footway condition has been assessed by a CSSW trained inspector. Resulting condition information is stored in the Mayrise database.

c) Structures

Visual Condition Assessment

Structures are inspected using two levels of inspection:

- i. General Inspections (GIs); GIs are visual inspections, possibly with some hands-on and basic assessment e.g. hammer tapping and measurements.
- ii. Principal Inspections (PIs); PIs are a more detailed visual inspection, with hands-on assessment of most/all elements plus detailed assessment e.g. hammer tapping, half-cell, chloride measurements etc.

A General Inspection involves recording the extent and severity of observed defects on a form the data from which is subsequently entered into the CSS Bridge Management System "Asset Management Expert" (AMX) data base.

A Principal Inspection involve the creation of a detailed report along with the data recorded on the form. The results of these inspections are also entered into the BGCBC Bridge Management System (AMX).

d) Street Lighting

The condition of street lighting assets is assessed as follows:

i. Visual Condition

Visual condition assessment is carried out on an adhoc basis during maintenance visits with any obvious defects or poor condition assets being reported and actioned accordingly.

ii. Electrical Safety

Electrical testing is carried out by an external contractor on all equipment. The results of the electrical testing are entered onto the Mayrise asset management system.

iii. Lighting Column Structural Testing

A programme of structural testing is being undertaken on all lighting columns using an external contractor. The results of the structural testing provide condition rating as follows:

- Red: Programme for removal (normally within 5 days)
- Amber: Retest within 3 years
- Green: Retest within 6 years

The results of the structural testing are entered onto the Mayrise asset management system.

Vi Remote Monitoring

The council operates a remote monitoring system on 12,936 street lights the system, Telensa, allows wireless remote control for each street and real-time fault monitoring to identify and react to outages.

6 Repair Regime

6.1 Repairs identified via inspection or by 3rd party notification, are prioritised for repair based upon the risk that pose to users. The methods used to do this are set out below.

6.1.1 Defect Categories

6.1.1.1 The data recorded during inspections is used to determine defect categories. Defect categories prioritise repairs using the defect response times adopted by the council and shown below:

| Defect Categories | Description | Response Time |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------|
|-------------------|-------------|---------------|

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Critical Defect | A situation where the inspecting officer considers the risk to safety high enough to require immediate action, e.g. Collapsed cellar, missing utility cover, fallen tree, unprotected opening | 2 Hours* |
| Safety Defect | Service requests or defects requiring a response as soon as possible to remove a potential risk of injury to users | By end of Next Working Day |
| Maintenance Defect (High) | Other defects that warrant treatment, in order to prevent them deteriorating into a safety defect prior to the next scheduled inspection | 10 Working Days (a working day is Monday to Friday and includes bank holidays) |
| Maintenance Defect (Medium) | Defects that warrant treatment to prevent them deteriorating into a safety defect prior to the next scheduled inspection | 30 Working Days |
| Maintenance Defect (Low) | Other defects that warrant treatment, in order to prevent them deteriorating to such an extent that additional works or costs are incurred | As per the local works programme |

Response time for critical defects refers to the time to attend site, make safe or repair will then be asap thereafter. Making safe may constitute displaying warning notices, coning off or fencing off to protect the public from the defect.

6.1.2 Defect Types and Intervention Levels

6.1.2.1 Details of the defect types identified and the intervention levels that have been prescribed for each defect category are provided in Appendix C.

6.1.3 “24 Hour” Emergency Cover

6.1.3.1 The Council operates an emergency service via an out of hours Contact Centre “Car Call” based in Abertillery between 16:00 and 08:00 when the office is closed. Incidents are reported to the contact centre who forward them to the Duty Officer and emergency response is provided if required.

6.1.3.2 This service provides where necessary an immediate and co-ordinated response to maintain highway safety at all times. Hazards dealt with include problems such as flooding, ice and snow, unsafe street works, abandoned vehicles, traffic signal failure, electrical danger at street lighting installations, and clearing of the highway following a road traffic accident.

6.1.3.3 An incident log is produced by the Contact Centre for every out of hours period. When action can be safely deferred, this log is used to initiate any additional action required in respect of particular incidents on the next working day.

6.1.4 Works Ordering

6.1.4.1 Works orders are generated automatically using the council’s asset management system (Mayrise) following the input of the inspection records.

6.1.5 Recording of Repair Records

-
- 6.1.5.1 On completion of the repair the works representative record details of the type of work undertaken, the materials used and the dimensions of the repair in hard copy and pass the information to the business support team.
 - 6.1.5.2 The business support team update the Council's asset management system (Mayrise) with the supplied information.
 - 6.1.5.3 The defect will only be deemed 'fully repaired' once all records have been entered into the asset management system.

7 Winter Maintenance

- 7.1 Section 111 of the Railways and Transport Act 2001 amended Section 41(1A) of the Highways Act 1980 (duty of a highway authority to maintain the highway) which reads:

a) The authority who are for the time being the highway authority for a highway maintainable at public expense are under a duty, subject to subsection (2) and (3) below, to maintain the highway.

b) (1) In particular, a highway authority is under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the safe passage along the highway is not endangered by snow and ice.

This is not an absolute duty, given the qualification of 'reasonable practicability', but it does effectively overturn previous legal precedence, albeit not with retrospective effect. Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure recognises that it is not practical or possible to provide the service on all parts of the network and ensure that running surfaces are kept free of ice and snow at all times, even on treated parts of the network. To comply with the legislation BGCBC have formulated and agreed a Winter Maintenance Plan, which is updated annually.

8 Flooding

- 8.1 Heavy Rain

- 8.1.1 BGCBC have an extensive historic database of the possible locations of flooding to the highway network and have formulated a system of pre-inspection and cleansing using the Gully and Culverts Maintenance Schedule. All roads within the Borough have some method of transporting rainwater from their surface, this ranges from a channel at the side of the carriageway through a formal system of gullies and outfall pipes creating a storm water system. The most common type of highway drainage system employed in BGCBC is of the gully and outfall pipe system. It is recognised that in times of storm the highway can flood and cause a danger to highway users, to reduce the risk of this BGCBC carry out routine cyclical gully maintenance. Gullies located in the adopted highway are inspected, and where necessary cleansed on a cycle determined by the route of a single gully machine operated by dedicated highway operatives to ensure the drainage system is functioning correctly. The Gully cleansing schedule also includes a list of what has been identified as "critical gullies" gullies that are known to be at risk to flooding which are inspected and cleansed more often, normally every four weeks.

It must be noted that the primary function of a highway drainage system is to reduce the risk of flooding to the highway; it is not to protect adjacent landowners. It is accepted that by cleansing the highway drainage system some landowners adjacent to the highway gain a benefit from this operation, however, road safety is the primary consideration when prioritising operations during storm events.

8.1.2 BGCBC realise that due to the unique topography of “the three Valley’s” covering BGCBC, that watercourses feeding the Ebbw Fach, Ebbw Fawr and Sirhowy rivers have in the past caused severe flooding to the highway network. A schedule of culvert entrances known or likely to cause such flooding is held by BGCBC and these are inspected and cleansed as per the maintenance schedule for Gullies and Culverts.

9 Statutory Undertakings (Utility Companies)

9.1 The condition and management of the highway is affected by third party works. The management of these third-party activities is governed by legislation (New Roads and Street Works Act (NRSWA) 1991). The manner in which the council complies with its duties under this act is set out below.

9.1.1 Street Works

9.1.1.1 All utility activity undertaken on the council’s highway network is co-ordinated by the Street Works Team and recorded within the Mayrise asset management system. The Street Works Team ensure that all statutory undertakers comply with the New Roads and Street Works Act (NRSWA) 1991 and all amendments as notified in the Traffic Management Act 2004, to ensure that all works undertaken on the highway are completed to the required standards and are programmed to achieve the least disruption to members of the public.

9.1.2 Procedures

9.1.2.1 The detailed procedures used for undertaking this work include:

- **street works licenses;** the license that utilities must apply for in order to work on a council road
- **street works register;** the register kept by the council in the “Mayrise” asset management system that records where and when utilities are working on the highway
- **notices of works;** the notices that have to be issued prior to works commencing, that should be issued by the organisation that is carrying out the works (which may be the council)
- **restrictions on works;** preventing works being carried out on roads that have been recently resurfaced for a period of time after completion of those works
- **co-ordination of works;** coordinating works in an appropriate sequence and at appropriate intervals where more than one organisation needs to work on the same street
- **designation of protected streets,** where the council can assign a protection on specific streets being used by utilities
- **standards of re-instatement;** the council’s specification for what the standards of reinstatement should be on categories of road including materials and depths etc.
- **apparatus affected by highway works:** where the council notifies utilities where road works are planned to ensure that provision is made for the protection or diversion of the existing utility apparatus

9.1.2.2 Utility works have a significant effect upon the condition of the highway and the user’s perception of it. In the future ASOR reporting will reference the number of openings made and the standards of reinstatement being achieved such that a true picture of condition and its causes are known.

9.1.3 Reinstatement Specification

9.1.3.1 The works carried out by Statutory Undertakers are controlled and co-ordinated by a BGCBC officer dedicated to dealing with the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 utilising the specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in Highways 2nd edition 2006. All non-emergency works are presented to the South East Wales Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee, where suitable timings and working practices are agreed in order to resolve any local conflicts.

10 Verge Maintenance

10.1 BGCBC utilises the in-house grounds maintenance resource to cut and manage the highway verge, visibility splays and any associated shrubs or trees contained therein. Grass cutting is carried out from April until September each year on a rolling programme. The extents of the asset are recorded and held on the Council's GIS database. Weather permitting this gives a maximum number of 4 cuts per year. All arising's are removed from the highway via mechanical sweeper and from footways by air blower. On high speed or traffic sensitive streets where traffic management is deemed to be required the cutting regime will be organised on a risk basis. Depending on location the grass and vegetation is cut using a variety of mechanical methods appropriate to the site and time of year.

11 Cost Recording

11.1 The cost of the activities required to maintain the highway are recorded to enable them to be monitored and managed. The coding used to record costs is shown below.

11.1.1 Cost Coding

Highway maintenance costs are allocated to one of the following categories.

| Cost Category | Activity |
|--|---|
| Planned Maintenance - Preventative | Planned maintenance activities that are designed to ensure that more expensive future repairs may not be needed. |
| Planned Maintenance - Corrective | Planned maintenance activities that correct the condition of the asset and which would not cost significantly more if delayed. |
| Routine Cyclic Maintenance | Scheduled works consisting of activities that are based on a prescribed time interval. |
| Routine – Reactive Maintenance (Emergency) | Reactive repair of potentially dangerous defects identified from inspection or customer complaint / notification. |
| Routine - Reactive Maintenance (Non-Emergency) | Other less urgent minor repairs |
| Routine – Inspection and Survey | Cost of specialist inspection and surveys |
| Operating Costs | Costs of operating elements of the asset |
| Overhead | Internal costs associated with the management of the asset. NB it is accepted that these costs may not be available at an asset group level |
| Loss | Money expended that is effectively "lost" to the council from which no benefit to the asset or user is gained. |
| Improvements | Works that add new infrastructure to the asset. |

11.2 Reviewing and Reporting of Costs

11.2.1 Outturn cost information is used for status reporting (ASOR) including reporting if sustainable levels of investment are being made in each asset and for the reporting of future funding needs.

12 Risk Management

The risks associated with maintaining the highway are managed using the methods described below. This includes how the methods comply with the risk-based approach required by the Code of Practice.

12.1 Code of Practice

12.1.1 A revised Code of Practice (the code) for Highways “Well Managed Highway Infrastructure” was published in October 2016 providing guidance that authorities are expected to follow and may rely upon when defending themselves against third party claims.

12.1.2 The most significant change to the previous guidance, proposed by the new CoP, is the introduction of a risk-based approach to all decision making to be undertaken by each authority individually.

12.1.3 CSSW have developed a method in response to the code that it recommends authorities adopt. The method includes development of Hierarchy, Inspection Regime and Repair Regime for the highway assets, along with recommended minimum standards for inspection and defect repair.

12.2 Use of the CSSW Risk-Based Approach

12.2.1 The Highways sections intention is to undertake an annual risk assessment as detailed in the “CSSW Highways Asset Management Framework Recommended Practices - Task 4 Annual Performance & Risk Review”. With the results being recorded in the “4RA Risk Assessment – Spreadsheet”

12.2.2 The details of the asset hierarchy, inspection and repair regimes adopted by the council and where they differ from (exceed) the CSSW recommended standards is detailed later in this document.

12.3 Blaenau Gwent Corporate Risk Management

12.3.1 The Council manages risk via the ‘County Council Risk Management Framework, September 2017’. An electronic copy of this document can be found at <http://intranet/facilities-services/insurance-risk-management/risk-management.aspx>

13 Procurement

Detail of how maintenance works for each asset are procured are shown below. Works are procured using a combination of internal and external resources.

13.1 Principle

Day to day highway maintenance is mainly undertaken by in house council resources. Where specialist skills are required, external contractors are employed. How the service is delivered for each asset is shown below.

| Asset | Work Type | In-House or Contractor | Contract Details |
|-------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Carriageway | Routine and Reactive | In-house | NA |
| | Planned | Resurfacing –Contractor | All schemes tendered - either individually or in batches |

| Asset | Work Type | In-House or Contractor | Contract Details |
|--------------------|----------------------|--|---|
| | | Surface Dressing –Contractor | All schemes tendered - either individually or in batches |
| Footways | Routine and Reactive | In-house | NA |
| | Planned | Reconstruction – Contractor | Site Specific Contract |
| | | Resurfacing – Contractor | All schemes tendered - either individually or in batches |
| | | Slurry Seal – Contractor | All schemes tendered - either individually or in batches |
| Street Lighting | Routine and Reactive | In-house | NA |
| | Planned | Column (New / Replacement) – Contractor | All schemes tendered - either individually or in batches |
| | | Luminaire (New / Replacement) – Contractor | All schemes tendered - either individually or in batches |
| Highway Structures | Routine and Reactive | Contractor | All works tendered - either individually or in batches |
| | Planned | Contractor | All schemes tendered - either individually or in batches |
| Traffic Signals | Routine and Reactive | Contractor | Outside contractor (Centregreat) contract ends March 2024 |
| | Planned | Contractor | Outside contractor (Centregreat) Contract ends March 2024 |
| Street Furniture | Routine and Reactive | In-house | NA |

13.2 Contract Reviews

13.2.1 Contracts are reviewed under the evaluation of Contractors Performance section on the South East Wales Framework, as and when contracts are put out to Tender and awarded on the framework.

14 Asset Register and Inventory

The asset register defines the roads that belong to and are maintained by the council. The inventory of the highway assets is based on the asset register and contains the detailed information required to manage the asset. The information includes amount, size, construction material, current condition etc.

14.1 Asset Register

14.1.1 The definitive record of the roads that are the council’s responsibility including the full list of adopted streets is located on the Street Gazetteer held in the council’s highway asset management system (Mayrise),

15 Inventory

15.1 A data assessment spreadsheet is located and maintained under the Mayrise and GGP accounts. The spreadsheet records the specific inventory held for each highway asset. The quality of the inventory

details held is recorded on the data assessment spreadsheet. The data is held for each asset in the following software systems:

- Carriageways and Footways – Mayrise
- Structures and Drainage – “Asset Management Expert” (AMX) Data Base
- Street Lighting and Traffic Signals – Mayrise

16 Data and System Improvement

16.1 The quality of the inventory details held is reviewed annually based on the information recorded on the data assessment spreadsheet. A plan for improvements to data and the highway asset management system are recorded in the Highway Data Improvement Plan.

17 Budget Allocation

The budget for highway maintenance is set annually by the council. Status reports are provided to assist the council in establishing the overall budget. The highway maintenance budget is allocated between asset groups and work types in accordance with the method set out below.

18 Annual Status and Options Reporting

The Annual Status Options Reports (ASORs) are provided by annually detailing the current condition of the asset.

The Options Report (OR) detail the options available for its future maintenance/management based on differing budget scenarios and are provided prior to the updating of the HAMP.

19 Annual Budget Setting

The budget for highway maintenance and how it is to be split between asset groups and between routine and planned works is determined following the review by the council committee of annual status and options reports (ASRs and OR). By Council Members and in coordination with the Head of Community Services and Highway Maintenance Manager.

20 Confirmation of Service Standards

Service standards are chosen based on the options presented in the OR. The standards are based upon the allocated budget and the estimated amounts of work required to achieve them.

21 Updating of Highway Asset Management Plan

The service standards, works required and proposed budgets are detailed in the Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP), which is reviewed annually and updated annually.

22 Customer Consultation

Customer consultation is used to understand how the condition and management of the highway asset is viewed by the road users, including identifying any aspects that may need to be improved.

23 Customer Relationship Management System

The 'Connect to Blaenau Gwent Contact' (C2BG) receives communications from the public (customer) and members of the council. Each request is logged on a database and referred to the relevant Officer for attention. The target to determine appropriate action is ten working days.

Progress in dealing with complaints is monitored and pursued to a conclusion. When the matter has been addressed, the database is updated to record the action taken and, where applicable, the date on which the defect was rectified. Subsequently, the customer is advised of the action taken where necessary.

The council also provides a customer contact application for use on smartphones (ABAVUS) that allows customers to report queries and complaints.

24 Roadwork's Reports

Public frustration can stem from delays caused by roadworks. To provide the public and others with information on where disruption to road traffic can be expected, a weekly Roadwork's Report is circulated to third parties and emergency services. This information is also available via the council's web site (www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk). The weekly Roadwork's Report gives details of works being undertaken on all classified routes, including the nature and anticipated duration of the works, and the method of traffic management being employed. Additional publicity is provided where exceptionally severe traffic delays are anticipated.

25 Third Party Claims

Third party claims are made against the council when members of the public believe that negligence on the part of the council, has resulted in injury or property damage.

25.1 Processing 3rd Party Claims

The details of the third-party claim process can be found with members of our insurance section. BGCBC handles claims internally, up to £250,000.

25.2 Review of Claims

The Highways Service Manager receives an annual report from the Insurance team. The report details:

- the number of claims
- a breakdown of the type of claim (personal injury/property damage),
- the asset to which it refers,
- the specific details of the claim and
- whether the claim was successful or repudiated.

25.3 Reporting Claims Outcomes

The Service Manager reviews the information and includes a summary of the claims data in the ASORs.

26 Traffic Management

The Council as local traffic authority has a duty to manage the road network to secure the expeditious movement of traffic on the network and facilitate the same on road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority. The duties are set out in the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the arrangements that the Council has in place to meet these duties is detailed below.

Full details of the arrangements put in place for managing traffic on the county's roads including the following items can be found in BGCBCs Streetworks Register and Standard Traffic Manuals.

26.1 Traffic Manager

The Council has appointed a “traffic manager” to perform such tasks as the authority consider will assist them to perform their network management duty. – The Traffic Manager for BGCBC is Clive Rogers (Head of Community Services).

26.2 Traffic Disruption

The Council has in place processes for ensuring that the authority identifies cause, or potential to causes of road congestion or other disruption and takes action in response to (or in anticipation of) anything so identified.

26.3 Policies and Objectives

The Council has determined specific policies or objectives in relation to different roads or classes of road in their road network and have procedures in place to monitor the effectiveness of their decision-making processes and the implementation of their decisions and assess their performance in managing their road network.

26.4 Traffic Sensitive Streets

The county contains a number of streets that due to the amount or make up of traffic that use them have been designated as traffic sensitive and have working time restrictions placed upon them. The list of traffic sensitive streets is contained in appendix G.

27 “Cyclic” Planned Maintenance

Cyclic maintenance activities include gully emptying and verge maintenance. The frequencies at which Cyclic Maintenance activities are conducted are shown below.

| Activity | Frequency |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Gully Cleansing | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Standard Gullies | On a cycle determined by the route of the single gully cleaning machine |
| Priority/Critical Gullies | May – October every eight (8) weeks November – April every four (4) weeks |
| Road Signage Cleaning | |
| All Road/Highway Signage | As identified through routine highway inspection regimes |
| | |
| Grass Cutting* | |
| Urban Roads | Four cuts per year |
| Rural Roads | Two cuts per year |
| Visibility Splays | Minimum four cuts per year |
| Safety Cutting | Additional cuts where unusual growth has created a hazard as identified by inspection |
| | |
| Weed Removal | |
| Weed Spraying | Twice per year footways, channels and kerbs |
| Application of Retarders | Limited use only |
| Noxious Weed Removal | Selective spraying and hand pulling where weeds constitute a menace |
| | |
| * Grass cutting comprises a one metre swathe immediately adjacent to the carriageway or footway. Where rare flowers exist in the verge, cutting is delayed until after the seeds have set | |

There are currently no cyclic maintenance activities undertaken for lighting or structures assets.

28 Highway Works Scheme Prioritisation Regime

Assets that are identified as in need of substantial repair or replacement are included on a works programme of potential schemes. A prioritisation regime is used to identify which of the proposed schemes should be undertaken during the following year/s.

29 Rolling Programme

A list of schemes to be entered onto the annual programme/s is produced to meet the standards, strategies & budgets for each asset and treatment type as detailed in the Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP). This list contains more schemes than it is possible for fund and as such a list of reserve sites is also produced to be used if the originally selected sites cannot be undertaken due to unforeseen circumstances.

30 Scheme Prioritisation

Details of the prioritisation processes can be found in appendix F.

31 Performance Monitoring Regime

To ensure that the standards set out in this manual are adhered to the council operate a performance monitoring regime as set out below.

31.1 Operational Performance Measures

A series of operational performance measures are used to monitor ongoing activities such as inspections and routine and reactive repairs.

The operational measures are designed to enable the service manager to take corrective action if performance has fallen below the required standards. As such the reporting of these measures is undertaken at frequencies within the year i.e. monthly, quarterly etc.

31.2 Performance Indicators

CSSW has developed a suite of performance measures designed to enable authorities to monitor the performance of their highway assets. The PIs are detailed in Appendix H. The council has adopted the recording and reporting of these PIs to enable review of progress in meeting condition targets set in the asset management plan and to facilitate appropriate comparison with peer authorities.

31.3 Benchmarking

The council will participate in appropriate benchmarking activities using the data recorded for appropriate Performance Indicators (PIs). This benchmarking is facilitated via the CSSW HAMP project. It is recognised that some of the measures are a direct result of council choice in terms of standards and targets adopted and as such comparison with other authorities may not be appropriate. There are elements of performance however where understanding equivalent performance in similar authorities will enable the authority to share and learn from good practice and to implement improvements. The council actively pursues this via collaboration facilitated by CSSW and the various committees and groups that CSSW support.

Section 5

**BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

RISK BASED APPROACH METHODOLOGY

FOR THE ADOPTED HIGHWAY

2023- 2028

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Date | 01/06/2023 |
| Author | David Watkins |
| Issued to | |
| Version No. | |
| | |

1 Introduction

The risks associated with maintaining the highway are managed using the methods described below. This includes how the methods comply with the risk-based approach required by the Code of Practice.

1.1 Code of Practice

1.1.1 A revised Code of Practice (the code) for Highways “Well Managed Highway Infrastructure” was published in October 2016 providing guidance that authorities are expected to follow and may rely upon when defending themselves against third party claims.

1.1.2 The most significant change to the previous guidance, proposed by the new CoP, is the introduction of a risk-based approach to all decision making to be undertaken by each authority individually.

1.1.3 CSSW have developed a method in response to the code that it recommends authorities adopt. The method includes development of Hierarchy, Inspection Regime and Repair Regime for the highway assets, along with recommended minimum standards for inspection and defect repair.

1.2 Use of the CSSW Risk-Based Approach

1.2.1 The Highways Department undertake an annual risk assessment as detailed in the “CSSW Highways Asset Management Framework Recommended Practices - Task 4 Annual Performance & Risk Review”.

1.2.2 The details of the asset hierarchy, inspection and repair regimes adopted by the council and where they differ from (exceed) the CSSW recommended standards is detailed later in this document.

1.3 Blaenau Gwent Corporate Risk Management

1.3.1 The Council manages risk via the ‘County Council Risk Management Framework, September 2017’. An electronic copy of this document can be found at <http://intranet/facilities-services/insurance-risk-management/risk-management.aspx>

1.3.2 The following is based upon the ‘CSSW’s Risk Based Approach to Highway Management – Rationale Behind the Approach’.

1.3.3 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council accepts both the County Surveyors Society (Wales) (CSS Wales) and ‘Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice, UK Roads Liaison Group 2016’ (WMHI 2016), method to use asset information to produce risk assessments, informed by usage data, (including the reference documents used to compile this code of Practice). This is based on the simple premise that if an asset exists and it contains a variation in its condition, but no-one uses it, the safety risk is zero. As more people use the asset then it is argued that the probability of them being physically affected by the variation increases and this can be modelled mathematically.

1.3.4 It is now possible to acquire and analyse data regarding areas where the condition of an asset varies from its previous inspection or original state. Categorising the type size and location of the Condition Variation (CV) will be used as a reference in establishing the foundation for setting the Council’s highway asset hierarchies and repair regimes. These records will also be used to inform and influence annual budget assessment and allocation.

- 1.3.5 The current draft Highway Asset Management Plan 2019-2025 had two bi-annual reviews to confirm and/or alter the hierarchies based on any changes to the data affecting the asset, such as increased traffic flows, changes to condition data etc. This document will do the same.

1.4 Establishing Hierarchies

- 1.4.1 The CSSW's Risk Based Approach to Highway Management – Rationale Behind the Approach and the WHMI 2016 requires that highway assets are split into hierarchies, but the latter states that **'hierarchy will not necessarily be determined by the road classification, but by functionality and scale of use'**, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council have considered the examples provided in the Code of Practice (CoP) and determined that the major factor determining safety risk is use. Others factors specific to the asset are incorporated into final hierarchies and where this is the case these have been noted.

1.5 Carriageway Traffic Counts

- 1.5.1 BGCBC does not have and cannot be reasonably expected to have up to date use information for every street, therefore, Officers have devised methods of estimation, detailing their assumptions which are based on specific knowledge and experience of the Borough and the street concerned.
- 1.5.2 All local roads are already described a class; A, B C or Unclassified and historically BGCBC has based its highway hierarchy exclusively on its road classification, as these were set prior to local government reorganisation in 1996, and the process for changing them is time consuming and costly, it has been decided that road classification will be only a consideration in the establishment of the current hierarchy. Whilst road class is broadly indicative of use and so safety risk, nationally and locally, there are major variations that means keeping the hierarchy based only on road classification is not appropriate in Blaenau Gwent.
- 1.5.3 The Department of Transport collects and publishes 761 traffic counts on A class roads in all local authorities in Wales, and in 2017-18 these show a range of annual traffic (AADT) from 83,000 to 431. Analysis of this data shows that approximately 29% of the counts fall in the range of 10,000 to 20,000 vehicle movements per day, with approximately 52% falling in the range of 500 to 10,000. The 19% of roads with higher counts are those feeding and linking the cities in the southeast and north.
- 1.5.4 It should be noted that in Wales Trunk roads are maintained by The South East Wales Trunk Road Agency (SEWTRA) and so the data highlighted are not BGCBC maintained roads.
- 1.5.5 To establish a hierarchy based on national and local traffic counts BGCBC uses the CSSW developed table below, with the 10,000 to 20,000 movements per day as the datum. It is this range that has been taken to represent a generic busy main distributor type road.

| Table 1.8 | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Carriageway Hierarchy Level | Approximate Traffic Flow |
| Strategic Route | Based on Local Importance |
| Main Distributor | 10,000 - 20,000 |
| Secondary Distributor | 5,000 - 10,000 |
| Link Road | 1,000 - 5,000 |
| Local Access Road | 200 – 1,000 |
| Minor Road | Below 200 |

1.5.6 BGCBC have concluded that the category of Minor Road can be incorporated into the category above and inspection frequencies can be carried out at the higher level appropriate to a Local Access Road.

1.5.7 Due to current lack of traffic flow data, a model based upon local knowledge has been developed to better describe estimated traffic movements. Based on four, six-hour time segments a total number of traffic movements has been based on the combined Highway network sections experience to determine 5 categories as shown in the following table:

| Table 1.9 | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|-------------|
| Estimated Maximum Traffic Flow | | | | | | | | | |
| | 00:00 – 06:00 | Total | 06:00 – 12:00 | Total | 12:00 – 18:00 | Total | 18:00 – 00:00 | Total | Daily Total |
| | Vehicle every | | Vehicle every | | Vehicle every | | Vehicle every | | |
| Very High | 2.5 seconds | 8640 | 1.25 seconds | 17280 | 1.25 seconds | 17280 | 2.5 seconds | 8640 | 51840 |
| High | 5 seconds | 4320 | 2.5 seconds | 8640 | 2.5 seconds | 8640 | 5 seconds | 4320 | 25920 |
| Medium | 30 seconds | 720 | 7.5 seconds | 2880 | 7.5 seconds | 2880 | 10 seconds | 2160 | 8640 |
| Low | 90 seconds | 240 | 30 seconds | 720 | 30 seconds | 720 | 60 seconds | 360 | 2040 |
| Very Low | 5 minutes | 72 | 2 minutes | 180 | 2 minutes | 180 | 5 minutes | 72 | 504 |

1.5.8 The length of time placed in the 'Vehicle Movement Every' column is based on an estimate of traffic flow based on the number of car lengths at 4m between vehicles travelling 30 mph, thus 1,25 seconds is approx. 4 car lengths, 2.5 seconds is approx. 8 car lengths, 5 seconds is approx. 17 car length etc.

1.6 Footways

1.6.1 Due to the current lack of pedestrian count data, a model based upon local knowledge has been developed by BGCBC to better describe estimated pedestrian movements. Based on six-hour time segments a total number of pedestrian movements has been based on the combined highway network to determine 5 categories as shown in the following table:

| Table 1.10 | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|-------------|
| Estimated Maximum Pedestrian Footfall | | | | | | | | | |
| | 00:00 – 06:00 | Total | 06:00 – 12:00 | Total | 12:00 – 18:00 | Total | 18:00 – 00:00 | Total | Daily Total |
| | Movement every | | Movements every | | Movement every | | Movement every | | |
| Very High | 5 min | 72 | 10 seconds | 2160 | 5 seconds | 4320 | 15 seconds | 1440 | 7992 |
| High | 30 min | 18 | 15 seconds | 1440 | 10 seconds | 2160 | 30 seconds | 720 | 4338 |
| Medium | 1 hour | 6 | 90 seconds | 240 | 30 seconds | 720 | 1 min | 360 | 1326 |
| Low | 3 hours | 2 | 3 min | 120 | 90 seconds | 240 | 3 min | 120 | 482 |
| Very Low | 6 hours | 1 | 10 min | 36 | 6 minutes | 60 | 10 min | 36 | 133 |

1.6.2 From the above BGCBC has established the hierarchy as identified in the table below:

| Table 1.11 | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| BGCBC Footway Hierarchy | | | | |
| Category | CSSW Description | WMHI 2016 Description | Estimated Maximum Pedestrian Footfall | Location |
| Main Distributor | High use pedestrianised zone and footways in town centres | High use pedestrianised zone and footways in town centres | Very High | Abertillery TC Ebbw Vale TC Tredegar TC Brynmawr TC The Works site EV including the train station & General Offices |
| Secondary Distributor | Footways outside busy public buildings such as train/bus stations, hospitals, schools and colleges or small parades of shops etc. that experience significantly higher levels of use than the adjacent footways | Busy urban shopping and business areas and main pedestrian routes | High | Blaina TC Llanhilleth TC Nantyglo Garn Cross Cwm Ebbw Vale All school and college entrances including leisure and sports facilities and residential footways housing estates. |
| Link Access | Footways linking housing or industrial estates to other centres or routes | Linking local access footways through urban areas and busy rural footways | Medium | Cycleways, non-residential footways |

| | | | | |
|--------------|--|---|--------------|--------------------|
| Local Access | Footways in housing areas/ Rural footways with infrequent use | Footways associated with low usage, short estate roads to the main routes and cul-de-sacs/little used rural footways serving very limited numbers of properties | Low/Very Low | All other footways |
|--------------|--|---|--------------|--------------------|

1.7 Structures

1.7.1 In BGCBC the structures hierarchy is calculated against the safety risk for users in association with the risk to the functionality of the network, such as loss or restriction (weight limit) of the asset. In BGCBC where a structure is the primary method of gaining access to a community even though this might be for a small number of people then the structure has been categorised with regard to those users rather than the network as a whole.

1.7.2 The hierarchy has been defined as follows:

1. Vital Structure: This is a structure that is vital to the network and if restricted or out of service would cause very significant adverse effects, such as, major traffic delays or loss of access to emergency services etc.
2. Important Structure: This is a structure that is important but not vital to the functioning of the network and if restricted or out of service would result in inconvenience to the network, such as, slower or longer routes due to diversion or longer times to access for emergency services.
3. Standard Structure: This category contains all other structures.

Initially the above categories have been matched to the hierarchy for roads and footways as these have already defined use parameters:

| Table 1.12 | |
|--|------------------------|
| Road Bridges, Culverts, Retaining Walls etc. | |
| Carriageway Hierarchy | Structure Hierarchy |
| Strategic Route | 2. Important Structure |
| Main Distributor | |
| Secondary Distributor | |
| Link Road | 3. Standard Structure |
| Local Access Road/Minor Road | |

| Table 1.13 | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Road Bridges, Culverts, Retaining Walls etc. (Footways) | |
| Footway Hierarchy Category | Structure Hierarchy |
| Pedestrian Areas in City Centre Shopping/Business Areas | 2. Important Structure |
| Pedestrian Areas in Town Centre Shopping/Business Areas | |
| Footways Outside Public Buildings or Facilities | |
| Link Footways | 3. Standard Structure |
| Local Access Footways/Minor Footways | |

1.8 Street Lighting

1.8.1 In recent years BGCBC has invested in options to reduce the Council's Carbon footprint through changing lanterns to LED and adopted a policy of risk assessed switch off or part night lighting of streetlights to achieve this. Historically the safety hierarchy of streetlights has been based on the electrical safety of individual columns, however, to ensure that there was no increased safety risk or legal issues by deactivating lights across the County Borough a safety risk assessment exercise was undertaken to identify those lights that were to remain on during the hours of darkness. This included roundabouts, junctions, roads with traffic calming and lights within 30 mph areas to meet the requirement of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, Section 82(1)(a).

1.8.2 Maintenance of the asset is carried out via a small internal team which is supported by an external contractor who supports at times when required for attendance for faults and outages. The inspection regime is included in appendix B.

1.9 Traffic Signals

1.9.1 All traffic management assets across the network in Blaenau Gwent have been assigned an initial category on the hierarchy of the road it is located on as set out in the table below:

| Table 1.14 | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Carriageway Hierarchy | Traffic Management Hierarchy (As per highest Carriageway hierarchy) |
| CHSR | Primary Junction |
| CH1 | |
| CH2 | Secondary Junction |
| CH3 | Local Junction |
| CH4 | |

1.9.2 All other traffic management assets (pedestrian crossings) are assigned the hierarchy of the adjacent road or footway hierarchy (the highest of the two).

1.9.3 Other highway Assets not covered above e.g., Drainage, Street Furniture.

Drainage and street furniture assets for the purpose of this HAMP are mainly items that are inspected during routine inspections and as such the appropriate carriageway or footway hierarchy dictates the frequency on inspection and will influence the categorisation and response to defects.

Section 6

**BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

HIGHWAY DRAINAGE CLEANSING SERVICE

FOR THE ADOPTED HIGHWAY

2023- 2028

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Date | 01/06/2023 |
| Author | David Watkins |
| Issued to | |
| Version No. | |
| | |

1 The Service

- 1.1 As the Highway Authority, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has a duty imposed by the Highways Act 1980, to maintain a network of roads that is safe to use. To minimise the safety risk to users, due to standing and running water, systems of road drains, channels, gutters and pipes have been provided to drain rainwater off the road surface. These drains channel and gutter require regular inspection and where necessary maintenance work to ensure they work as designed.
- 1.2 To carry out this operation Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council employ a dedicated road drain cleansing vehicle (Gully suckers X 2) and crew of two operatives. The road drains, channels and gutters serving the highway are inspected and cleansed on a scheduled basis, with identified “critical” gullies being inspected and cleansed more often, to ensure the safety risk of flooding is minimised. A schedule of inspections and/or cleansing has been compiled and records of inspections and work carried out are kept providing a defence under Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980.

2 The Asset

- 2.1 The Authority at February 2023 has approximately 13,500 highway drains/gullies of various types and construction in the highway. This is serviced by underground drainage pipework together with associated inspection chambers and catch-pits whose maintenance lies with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. The rainwater from the highway system is discharged into storm water systems across the 3 valleys.
- 2.2 Welsh Water or national Resources Wales are responsible for combined and surface water sewers and watercourses including the three main rivers; Ebbw Fach, Ebbw Fawr and Sirhowy that are running through the County Borough.

3 Operational Policy

- 3.1 Planned gully cleansing operations will be carried out during normal Council working hours with records being kept of work carried out and amounts of waste generated. Each working day a crew will be assigned either:
- a predetermined schedule of tasks to inspect, cleanse and report or cleanse and report any defects about the road gullies and drains,
- 3.2 Prefilling of the Gully sucker with water will take place at predetermined locations across Blaenau Gwent and the vehicle will always be parked up under cover and refilled as appropriate. During days when compulsory testing is required on the Gully sucker or when it is unavailable due to mechanical breakdown the operatives will be supplied with an alternative method of transport and detailed to inspect a geographical zone only, with cleansing works being carried out as and when the vehicle becomes available. Gullies on very busy roads i.e. category CH1 and CH2 will be inspected and cleansed at quieter times, that could include weekend working.
- 3.3 Where reports of ponding or flooding due to defects in the road drainage system are received the safety risk associated with that location will be assessed, and a works programme, generated if appropriate and required and will provide a target completion date for these proposed actions.

4 **Cleansing Frequency**

- 4.1 The authority has a detailed cleansing schedule for gullies/drains on the highway network including a course of initial visual inspections to identify obviously blocked road drains. Where defects are not immediately visually apparent and rainfall results in water ponding due to the road drain not working, the Authority will, when resource allows carry out proactive surveys and record the location of any problem areas. All reports from non-authority agencies and individuals will be investigated based on the timescales and resources available, and any works resulting from these inspections will be included in the non-scheduled works programmes. The Authority will endeavour to visit every gully drain and culvert within a twelve-month period.

5 **Operational Issues**

- 5.1 It is accepted that the policy of inspection and then cleanse of gullies will rarely identify any blocked connecting pipes or carrier drains. These will become apparent after rainfall and where these cause a significant safety risk to highway users they will be addressed as they are reported or observed.
- 5.2 Where the gully drain has been cleansed, and evidence shows that the majority of blockages are caused by outside influences such as tree root ingress or by damage by Statutory Utility contractors. As these problems are discovered an assessment of the safety risk will be carried out and this then fed into an ongoing planned works programme for excavation and repair. This programme will be prioritised, however where the damage can be proved to be as a result of Statutory Undertakers the Authority will utilise the provisions of the New Street Work Act 1991 to reclaim any costs incurred.
- 5.3 There will be streets and individual sites where access to a gully or series of gullies will be prevented by parked vehicles, where this is the case, the crew has been instructed to attempt to identify the owner and have the car moved at the first visit. This information will be logged on the daily work sheet as this will have an effect on the number of gullies that be cleansed in any day. If the owner cannot be found at the time of the first visit, then the crew will make a further attempt within 5 working days, if this is unsuccessful or operationally impractical, the safety risk of not cleansing the gully will be assessed and a decision recorded. If after reference to the Gully cleansing Risk Matrix the safety risk is deemed as significant then other agencies will be employed to remove the obstruction on the highway.

6 **Unscheduled Cleansing (Reactive Drainage Work)**

- 6.1 Where blocked gullies are reported outside the cleansing schedule these will initially be assessed by an experienced officer using the Gully Cleansing Risk Matrix and any appropriate action taken in line with the guidance. If the officer decides to vary from the guidance, then, the reasons for this deviation, and the actions taken, will be recorded.

7 **Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's Responsibilities and Duties**

- 7.1 There is a perception that home/landowners adjacent to the highway are owed a 'duty of care' to have the road drainage protect their property in times of rainfall or storm. To date the legal system does not recognise this and holds that if the Authority has an agreed schedule of maintenance and this in compliance then the Highway Authority has a defence under Section 58 of the Highway Act 1980. The Authority will always investigate these complaints/requests for service in a timely manner but not always have the resources or ability to rectify them to the satisfaction of the resident or landowner with regard to their property.

7.2 It is known that untreated discharge from gully cleansing operations carry high levels of pollutants. To minimise the environmental effects, where it is obvious, or it has been recorded that a road drain discharges directly into a watercourse cleansing operation will be carried out in line with the following hierarchy:

1. Hand cleansing
2. Cleansing using clean water (high pressure jetting)
3. Cleansing using vacuum action only
4. Cleansing using vacuum action and clean water (high pressure jetting)

The 'blow back' facility should not be used on these drains as pollutants contained in the vehicle holding tank are harmful to the environment and are not adequately filtered.

7.3 Sandbags

BGCBC keep a minimum stock of 2000 sandbags for highway and other emergencies and will issue these on occasions to the general public at risk to flooding.

GULLY CLEANSING RISK MATRIX

Measured and Scheduled response will have a tolerance of 10% to allow for unforeseen emergencies and operative sickness.

| Description | Safety Risk Score |
|--|-------------------------|
| Strategic Route | |
| Main Distributor | |
| Secondary Distributor | |
| Link Road | |
| Local Access Road | |
| Description | |
| Located where if blocked will cause a known significant safety danger to highway users | 2 |
| Located where if blocked will require an on-site assessment of the safety danger to highway users | 1 |
| Located where if blocked does not cause a safety danger to highway users | 0 |
| Description | |
| Gully is located where a drivers view of any standing water would be obscured, such as a dip or a corner | 2 |
| Gully is located where the drivers view of any standing water is not obscured or on a hill where the gully above and below is also blocked | 1 |
| Gully is located on a hill and the gully above and below are working | 0 |
| Description | |
| If blocked will allow rainwater to flow over vehicle wheel track | 3 |
| If Blocked will allow rainwater to flow over footway | 2 |
| If blocked rainwater will remain within carriageway channel | 1 |
| If blocked rainwater will not flow over footway | 0 |
| Add Scores from Road Classification, Cleansing Priority, Road Alignment and Gully Sensitivity | |
| Response | Safety Risk Score total |
| Immediate response (area made safe and gully attended within 24 hours) | 11-15 |
| Measured response (gully attended within 1 calendar month) | 6-11 |
| Schedule response (gully will be cleansed next cycle) | 0-5 |

Section 7

**BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

SKID RESISTANCE POLICY

FOR THE ADOPTED HIGHWAY

2023- 2028

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Date | 01/06/2023 |
| Author | David Watkins |
| Issued to | |
| Version No. | |
| | |

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This instruction sets out Blaenau County Borough Council's approach to monitoring skid resistance of carriageways and interpreting data arising from any measurement made. It also sets out the requirements to ensure that new surfacing will have appropriate surface characteristics to develop adequate levels of skid resistance. It makes reference to the Highways England's Standards HD 28/15 and HD 36.(DRMB 7.5.1).
- 1.2 This instruction applies to all surfaced carriageways and surfaces designed to be shared with pedestrians on the adopted highway network. Requirements for surfaces used only by pedestrians will be described separately.
- 1.3 The procedures adopted to monitor skid resistance on the network are risk based and rely on an integrated approach involving Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council highway and traffic practitioners and outside Contractors.
- 1.4 In this document, the term "skid resistance" refers to the frictional properties of the road surface measured using a specified device under standardised conditions. The term always refers to measurements made on *wet* roads, unless specifically stated otherwise. These measurements are used to characterise the road surface and assess the need for maintenance but ***cannot be related directly to the friction available to a road user making a particular manoeuvre at a particular time.***
- 1.5 This Instruction has been made to accommodate the changes in procedures introduced in the Highways English Standards HD 28/04 and IAN 98/08.
- 1.6 All data related to the measurement and ongoing monitoring of skid resistance is to be treated as confidential between the Council and its Consultant and must not be communicated to Third Parties (including the Police) without the written consent of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

2 Road Network Identified for Routine Monitoring

2.1 Network Review

A annual risk assessment of the BGCBC network is undertaken to confirm that the Sideways-force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine (SCRIM) network meets the requirements of the Highways Act 1980 and current maintenance guidance. The skid resistance of all the network was assessed using five years of Injury Road Traffic Collision data and Traffic Information supplied by BGCBC. It was concluded that the risk of Road Traffic Collisions (RTC's) occurring on the Classified Un-numbered Roads (R) and the Unclassified roads (U) was low enough to not warrant an annual survey. It was also noted that many of the Rural R and U roads were unsuitable for SCRIM survey due to lane width preventing the vehicle obtaining survey speed.

2.2 Principal Road Network (PRN) and B Classified Road Network (CRN)

For the purposes of this instruction the PRN and CRN are defined as the roads which generally carry 'A' and 'B' road traffic.

2.3 Method of Survey

- 2.3.1 Routine monitoring of skid resistance is carried out using a SCRIM vehicle operated in accordance with BS 7941–1 and HD28. The Single Annual survey method will be used to determine the Characteristic SCRIM Coefficient (CSC) for 10m sub-sections of the network. Under this procedure the extent of the A and B road networks identified in Appendix A will be surveyed once each year and in successive years the surveys will be carried out in rotation during early season, mid-season and late season.

Please note: All references to CSC in this policy will also include the following caveat:

“Until the fourth year of operation, i.e. when an early, mid or late season survey is repeated, the Mean Summer SCRIM Coefficient equivalent will be quoted, where the single summer reading will be adjusted by the SCRIM Seasonal Factor, which is obtained from surveys of benchmark sites at three times during the testing season.”

- 2.3.2 Routine monitoring of Sensor Measured Texture Depth is undertaken annually as part of the data collection for the SCANNER survey to determine Best Value Performance Indicators.

2.4 Data Storage

The Council's Pavement Management System (PMS) (Mayrise/Horizon Systems) is used to store and process the survey data.

2.5 Investigatory Levels

Investigatory Levels are defined and reviewed as described in section 4.

2.6 Site Investigation

Site Investigations are carried out in accordance with section 5. They may also be instigated as part of accident investigation procedures.

2.7 Complaints about Skid Resistance

If complaints are received or other concerns are raised about skid resistance at any point on this network, then, if the location of the site lies within the SCRIM survey parameters, the data obtained from routine testing can be used to respond initially. Initially a Coarse Visual Inspection (CVI) will be undertaken and if appropriate a surface condition report relevant to the site will be prepared by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, in consultation with appropriate specialised Consultants or Contractors. Site specific testing will not normally take place unless agreed by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

3 Road Network NOT Identified for Routine Monitoring

3.1 Network

- 3.1.1 These are all other adopted, surfaced roads that are not included in the Skid Resistance Policy. These roads are deemed not appropriate for routine monitoring and include a small number of roads including the majority of unclassified roads.

-
- 3.1.2 No routine survey of these roads is to be undertaken although testing may be deemed to be necessary on a site-specific basis following complaints, repeated incidents of damage involving vehicles in wet conditions, regular damage to street furniture or as part of accident investigation procedures. Testing will only be undertaken after an initial assessment of the data required for a site investigation (except test results) and consultation with an appropriate Consultants or Contractors and following approval by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.
- 3.1.3 Site specific testing will be undertaken either as part of the routine SCRIM survey or as a separate exercise using the Griptester.
- 3.1.4 The CSC will be derived in the normal manner for results from SCRIM surveys. The results from Griptester surveys will be converted to equivalent CSC values using correlations developed by the County Surveyors' Society Griptester User Group.
- 3.2 **Investigatory Levels**
- 3.2.1 Investigatory Levels (ILs) are defined as described in section 4 below and should be recorded on the PMS.
- 3.3 **Site Investigation**
- 3.3.1 Site Investigations are carried out in accordance with Section 5 below.
- 4 **Assignment**
- 4.1.1 Where adjustments are made to the use of the network which would mean a redefinition of site category is required (e.g. the installation of a pedestrian crossing or a new section of road is opened), then the lowest of IL for the appropriate site category will be adopted, unless a site-specific risk assessment undertaken by a qualified Safety Engineer, indicates that a higher value is appropriate. This risk assessment should address the factors detailed in paragraph 4.12 of HD28.
- 4.1.2 For sites not on the road network identified in Appendix A, the Site Categories and ILs will be determined initially by pavement engineering staff as part of the site investigation process and will generally be within the bands in Table 4.1 of HD28. These will be reviewed as part of the investigation process and the values assigned will be recorded on the PMS.
- 4.2 **Review**
- 4.2.1 Reviews of ILs will be undertaken in the following circumstances: -
- When SCRIM results indicate that a section lies below the current IL and the site investigation procedure is invoked.
 - When site-specific accident investigations are being undertaken.
 - When changes are made to the network.

Any review of IL's will be instigated by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council using appropriate consultants or contractors and the following information should be obtained as a minimum: -

- The latest CSC and Investigatory Level data from the Pavement Management System.
- Site details: -
 - changes that have taken place in the site use or road layout e.g. the installation of traffic signals, pedestrian crossings or roundabouts.
 - relevant local factors such as non-injury accidents, complaints, or repeated reports of damage.
- Details of accidents extracted from the Police Authority's Road accident system (currently Macdonald Douglas database) and validated by Capita Symonds Road Safety Engineering Department, and data input into the Capita Symonds AccsMap system. Only accidents occurring in the previous 36 months should be considered and only wet road accidents will be used against SCRIM survey results. Blaenau County Borough Council, using appropriate consultants or contractors, will review this data to establish, if possible, the extent to which the road surface is a factor in the recorded accidents.

The principles outlined in HD28 should be followed in the review process and any adjustments deemed necessary to Investigatory Levels should be made in steps of 0.05 units of CSC.

There are two sets of circumstances where the inter-relationship between wet road accidents and SCRIM results will have the potential to affect the SCRIM Investigatory Level. These are:

- Where CSC is below Investigatory Level and there are no recorded wet road accidents within the last 36 months, there is potential to reduce the Investigatory Level.
- Where analysis of accident records show there are wet road accidents, but the CSC is above Investigatory Level, there is scope to raise the Investigatory Level.

Recommendations to adjust the Investigatory Levels shall be agreed by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council for approval prior to implementation.

The basis of decisions to amend Investigatory Levels should be recorded together with confirmation that the Pavement Management System has been updated accordingly.

4.3 **Texture Depth**

The Investigatory Level for texture depth (Sensor Measured Texture Depth) on all sites will be 0.7mm.

5 **Site Investigation**

5.1 Purpose

Sites where the analysis of Accident details suggests a concentration of wet surface accidents or sites where the CSC is at or below the IL require a site investigation. The objective is to:

- Determine whether a surface treatment is justified to reduce the risk of accidents, particularly accidents in wet conditions.
- Determine whether some other form of action may be required.
- Determine whether the current IL is appropriate.
- Determine whether to keep the site under review and not carry out any works.

5.2 Procedure

Blaenau County Borough Council will instigate a site investigation and will follow the Site Investigation and associated procedures detailed in Chapter 5 and Annexes 4 & 5 of HD28 shall be followed (with the exception of 5.3 & 5.4).

Sites requiring investigation shall be identified and prioritised as soon as practicable after the CSC values have been received from the routine SCRIM survey.

Site prioritisation will be on the basis of the amount by which the skid resistance is below the IL. If a substantial number of sites are identified by this procedure, then further prioritisation on the basis of other factors such as traffic type and volume will be necessary.

A programme of remedial treatments will be developed from the conclusions of the site investigations and priority should be given to treating the following sites:

- Where the accident history shows there to be a clearly increased risk of wet or skidding accidents.
- Where the skid resistance is at least 0.05 CSC units below the Investigatory Level.
- Where low skid resistance is combined with low texture depth (less than 0.7mm).

At all sites where surface treatment is recommended, slippery road warning signs shall be erected and maintained until the treatment is carried out. This shall be done as soon as practicable after the identification of such sites.

5.3 Records

A copy of the site investigation report should be held on the Management System.

6 Properties of Surfacing Materials

Specifications for all surfacing laid in maintenance works (including patching) and new construction will include requirements for Polished Stone Value (PSV) and Aggregate Abrasion Value (AAV) of the aggregate and texture depth of the surface.

The PSV and AAV shall be selected from the tables in the current edition of HD36. The designer should record the commercial vehicle flow used and the source of that data.

For sites on the road network identified in Appendix A and other locations where Investigatory Levels have been assigned, then the PSV specified should be derived from the IL held on the pavement management system for that location and the commercial vehicle flow.

For all other sites, the site definition and the commercial vehicle flow should be used to determine the PSV required. (This is because a non-standard value of IL may apply on sites subject to IL reviews or accident investigations).

Texture Depth values for new surfacing, other than Thin Surface Course Systems, measured by the volumetric patch method (BS EN 13036-1), shall be determined from the table below:-

| Site Description | Texture Depth |
|--|---------------|
| Roads subject to a speed limit of 40mph or above | 1.5mm |
| All other roads | 1.0mm |

For Thin Surface Course Systems, texture depths measured by the volumetric patch method (BS EN 13036-1) shall be as shown below: -

| | Untrafficked | After 2 years |
|--|--------------|---------------|
| Roads subject to a speed limit of 40mph or above | 1.5mm | 1.0mm |
| All other roads | 1.2mm | 0.08mm |

7 Early Life Skid Resistance of Surfacing's

IAN49/03 provided advice for Slippery Road signs to be erected, for up to six months, after a road had been newly resurfaced. This advice has been superseded by IAN49/13 which has been produced after more research; the conclusion of IAN49/13 is that there is an increase in road traffic collisions on all newly resurfaced roads and not just Thin Surfacing's.

IAN49/13 also states that even though there is a high chance of road traffic incidents occurring on newly resurfaced roads, the probability of a fatal injury occurring is significantly lower and the probability of incidents occurring on high-risk sites is reduced, however more incidents were recorded on lower risk sites.

IAN49/13 recommends that Highway Authorities no longer need to erect slippery road signs along the length of newly resurfaced road.

8 References

- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, TSO, London
- HD28/04, Skid Resistance (Volume 7, Section 3, Part 1)
- HD36/99, Surfacing Materials for New and Maintenance Construction (Volume 7, Section 5, Part 1)

Appendix A: Asset Hierarchy Categories

| Carriageways | |
|---------------------|--|
| New Category | Description (approximate daily traffic volume) |
| CHSR | Route enabling travel between locations of regional significance (NA, Strategic routes are identified based on their importance regionally rather than their traffic volume) |
| CH1 | Travel between locations (traffic volume 10,000 - 20,000) |
| CH2 | Travel between locations (5,000 - 10,000) |
| CH3 | Travel between locations (1,000 - 5,000) |
| CH4 | Access to housing (200 – 1,000) |
| CH5 | Access to properties (housing and farms) (< 200) |

| Footways | |
|-----------------|---|
| Category | Description (approximate daily footfall) |
| FH1 | High use pedestrianised zones and footways in town centres (5,000 – 10,000) |
| FH2 | Footways outside busy public building such as train/bus stations, hospitals, schools and colleges or small parade of shops etc. that generate significantly higher levels of use than the adjacent footways (1,000 – 5,000) |
| FH3 | Footways that link housing estates and industrial estates to other centres /routes (500 – 1,000) |
| FH4 | Footways in housing areas (<500) |
| FH5 | Rural footways used very infrequently (<100) |

| Structures | |
|---------------------|--|
| Category | Description |
| Vital Structure | A structure that is vital to the network i.e. if restricted or out of service it would cause a very significant adverse effect such as major traffic delays and a lengthy diversion route with the potential to affect other important services or community severance |
| Important Structure | A structure that is important to the functioning of the network, i.e. if restricted out of service would have an adverse effect on the operation of the network |
| Standard Structure | All other structures |

Street Lighting Hierarchy

There is no hierarchy for street lighting assets managed by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. All assets are inspected at the same frequency and repaired within the same response time

| Traffic Signals Hierarchy | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Category | Description |
| Vital Junction | A junction the operation of which is vital to the operation of the network i.e. its failure would cause major traffic disruption |
| Important Junction | A junction that is important to the operation of the network, the failure of which would cause traffic disruption |
| Standard Junction | A signalised junction on the network |
| Pedestrian Crossing | Pedestrian crossing |

Details of the hierarchy allocated to each individual asset are held in the asset management systems (Mayrise, GIS and AMX systems).

Hierarchy differences between authorities (TBC)

| Asset | BGCBC Hierarchy | Neighbouring Authority | Neighbouring Authority Hierarchy | Reason for differing Hierarchy |
|--------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Appendix B: Frequency of Inspections

The frequency of routine inspections is shown in the following tables along with the CSSW minimum recommended standards:

| Carriageway: Routine Inspection Frequencies | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Carriageway Hierarchy | Inspection Interval (Rural) | Inspection Method | Inspection Frequency Tolerance | CSSW Recommended Minimum |
| CHSR | Monthly | Driven and walked | 2 weeks | Monthly |
| CH1 | Monthly | Driven and walked | 2 weeks | Monthly |
| CH2 | Monthly | Walked | 2 weeks | Every 3 Months |
| CH3 | Every 3 Months | Walked | 6 weeks | Every 6 Months |
| CH4 | Every 6 Months | Walked | 3 months | Annually or 2 yearly Dependant on condition |
| CH5 | Every 6 Months | Walked | 3 months | Reactive Only |

#BGCBC has chosen to exceed the minimum standard for CH3, CH5, CH5 and CH6

| Footway Routine Inspection Frequencies | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Footway Hierarchy | Inspection Frequency | Inspection Method | Inspection Frequency Tolerance | CSSW Recommended Minimum |
| FH1 | Monthly | Walked | 2 weeks | Monthly |
| FH2 | Every 3 Months | Walked | 6 weeks | Every 3 Months |
| FH3 | Every 6 Months | Walked | 3 months | Every 6 Months |
| FH4 | Every 6 Months | Walked | 3 months | Annually or 2 yearly Dependant on condition |
| FH5 | Every 6 Months | Walked | 3 months | Reactive Only |

#BGCBC has chosen to exceed the minimum standard for FH4 and FH5

Where adjacent carriageways and footways are inspected during the same inspection the higher frequency level is applied.

Inspection Tolerances

A tolerance as shown, is included to allow for unavoidable incidences such as bad weather or inspector sickness.

Condition Assessments

Carriageway

The SCANNER and SCRIM assessments are undertaken at the following frequencies:

| Carriageway Annual Inspection Coverage | | |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Road Class | SCANNER | SCRIM |
| A Roads | 100% (one direction) * | 100% (both direction) * |
| B Roads | 100% (one direction) * | 100% (one direction) * |
| C Roads | 25% (one direction) | |

Visual condition assessments are undertaken at the following frequencies:

| Category | Survey Coverage |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| CHSR | 100% Annually |
| CH1 | 100% Annually |
| CH2 | 100% Annually |
| CH3 | 100% Annually |
| CH4 | 100% Annually |
| CH5 | 100% Annually |

Footway

Visual condition assessments are undertaken at the following frequencies.

| Category | Survey Coverage |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| FH1 | 100% Annually |
| FH2 | 100% Annually |
| FH3 | 100% Annually |
| FH4 | 100% Annually |
| FH5 | 100% Annually |

Structures

Structures include bridges, subways and retaining walls. Condition assessments are undertaken at the following frequencies:

| Inspection Type | Survey Coverage |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| General Inspection | 100 % Every 2 Years |
| Principal Inspection | Every 6 Years (where required*) |

* Restricted bridges that span over Network Rail Land.

Street Lighting

Condition assessments are undertaken at the following frequencies.

| Inspection Type | Survey Coverage |
|------------------------|---|
| Electrical | 100 % Every 6 Years |
| Column Structural Test | As per result of previous test (3 or 6 years) |
| Visual | Ad hoc (during each maintenance visit) |

Appendix C: Defect Types and Intervention Levels

The following is a list of defect types and intervention levels used within the authority.

Critical Defects

| Asset Type | Defect | Magnitude | Hierarchy | Road Character | Response Time |
|------------|---|---|-----------|---|---------------|
| All | A situation where the inspecting officer considers the risk to safety high enough to require immediate action, typically include items such as; Carriageway / footway / cycleway collapse with high risk of accidents / loss of control; Critically unstable overhead wires, trees or structures; Exposed live wiring; Isolated standing water with high risk of loss of control; Missing or seriously defective ironwork with high probability of injury to highway users. | Not Applicable. Critical defects are defined by their potential to cause immediate injury not by defect size | All | Not Applicable. Critical defects are defined by their potential to cause immediate injury not by defect size | 2 hours |

the response time for a critical defect is the time until the site is made safe, this may be achieved by closing all or part of the road or coning off the hazard. In some instance a repair may be immediately possible but in many instances the repair will occur later

Safety Defects

| Safety Defects Criteria | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|
| Asset Type | Defect Type | Hierarchy | Dimensional Criteria BGCBC | | CSSW National Minimum Standard | |
| | | | Depth/Height | Extent | Depth/Height | Extent |
| Carriageways | Pothole | CHSR, CH1 and CH2 | > 50mm | Maximum horizontal dimension greater than 150mm | > 50mm | Maximum horizontal dimension greater than 150mm |
| | Pothole | CH3, CH4 and CH5** | >50mm | Maximum horizontal dimension greater than 150mm | >75mm | Maximum horizontal dimension greater than 150mm |
| Footways | Pothole | All | > 25mm | Maximum horizontal dimension greater than 75mm | > 40mm | Maximum horizontal dimension greater than 75mm |
| | Crack or Gap | All | > 25mm | Any Size | > 40mm | Maximum horizontal dimension greater than 75mm |
| | Trip | All | > 25mm | Any Size | > 40mm | Maximum horizontal dimension greater than 75mm |
| | Rocking Slabs | All | > 30mm | N/A | > 40mm | N/A |

| Safety Defects Criteria | | | | | CSSW National Minimum Standard | |
|-------------------------|--|-----------|----------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|--------|
| Asset Type | Defect Type | Hierarchy | Dimensional Criteria BGCBC | | Depth/Hieght | Extent |
| | | | Depth/Height | Extent | | |
| Kerbing | Dislodged, Loose, Missing, Damaged - Causing a trip hazard | All | > 25mm | N/A | > 40mm | N/A |

| Maintenance Defects Criteria | | | | | CSSW National Minimum Standard | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|
| Asset Type | Defect Type | Hierarchy | Dimensional Criteria BGCBC | | Depth/Hieght | Extent |
| | | | Depth/Height | Extent | | |
| Carriageways | Pothole | CHSR, CH1 and CH2 | > 40mm | Maximum horizontal dimension greater than 150mm | > 40mm | Maximum horizontal dimension greater than 150mm |
| | Pothole | CH3, CH4 and CH5** | > 40 mm | Maximum horizontal dimension greater than 150mm | > 50 mm | Maximum horizontal dimension greater than 150mm |
| | Crowning / Depression | All | > 100mm | < 2M Length | > 100mm | < 2M Length |
| Footways | Pothole | All | >20mm | N/A | 25mm - 40mm | Maximum horizontal dimension greater than 75mm |
| | Crack or Gap | All | >20mm | N/A | 25mm - 40mm | Maximum horizontal dimension greater than 75mm |

| Maintenance Defects Criteria | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|-----------|----------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|--|
| Asset Type | Defect Type | Hierarchy | Dimensional Criteria BGCBC | | CSSW National Minimum Standard | |
| | | | Depth/Height | Extent | Depth/Height | Extent |
| | Trip | All | >20mm | N/A | 25mm - 40mm | Maximum horizontal dimension greater than 75mm |
| | Rocking Slabs | All | >20mm | N/A | 25mm - 40mm | N/A |
| | Badly cracked or damaged ironwork | All | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Kerbing | Dislodged, Loose, Missing, Damaged - Causing a trip hazard | All | >20mm | N/A | 25mm - 40mm | N/A |

**Defect triggers on CH5 roads are to be considered an investigatory level.

#BGCBC has chosen to exceed the CSSW national minimum standards for safety and maintenance defects.

The standards in the preceding tables are a guide only. Reference should be made to the CSSW Highway Inspection Defect Recording Manual. It is an essential part of the authorities' inspection regimes that inspectors are appropriately trained. In doing so inspectors are able to complement application of the standard with their own assessment of individual defects, which may result in a different response time.

Street Lighting

The defect types and response times for street lighting faults are:



| Category of Fault | Response Time |
|--|--|
| Routine | 5 Working Days - subject to fault being reported and resources being available |
| Illuminated Regulatory Sign | |
| Three or more Lighting Units | |
| Other Routine Jobs | |
| Non-Routine | Not specified, works are undertaken as time and resources allow |
| Illuminated Regulatory Sign | |
| Other Routine Jobs | |
| Emergency | |
| To make safe potential electrical danger | 2 hours |
| Temporary repair of traffic bollards | 4 hours |

Appendix D: Competency Requirements

Highways Inspectors undertake Highway Asset Competency accredited training for inspections every two years.

The Highway “Asset Management Competency Scheme for Wales: Highway Inspection” qualification is delivered by the County Surveyors Society Wales (CSSW) and is undertaken in two phases:

Phase 1 A online test (where inspectors need to exceed the pass mark)

Phase 2 A practical on-site assessment.

Highway’s maintenance teams are all Chapter 8 qualified and undertake a range of Health and Safety qualifications.

Appendix E: Extract from highways Act 1980

As the highway authority the council is subject to legal requirements that include:

The 1980 Highways Act,

- Section 41; to maintain those roads, footways and cycle tracks that are '*Highways maintainable at public expense*'.
- Section 58; states that a statutory defence against third party claims is provided where the Highway Authority can establish that reasonable care has been taken to 'secure that the part of the highway to which the action relates' to a level commensurate with the volume of ordinary traffic such that it 'was not dangerous to traffic'.

Section 58: Special defence in action against a highway authority for damages for non-repair of highway.

(1) In an action against a highway authority in respect of damage resulting from their failure to maintain a highway maintainable at the public expense it is a defence (without prejudice to any other defence or the application of the law relating to contributory negligence) to prove that the authority had taken such care as in all the circumstances was reasonably required to secure that the part of the highway to which the action relates was not dangerous for traffic.

(2) For the purposes of a defence under subsection (1) above, the court shall in particular have regard to the following matters: —

- a) the character of the highway, and the traffic which was reasonably to be expected to use it.
- b) the standard of maintenance appropriate for a highway of that character and used by such traffic.
- c) the state of repair in which a reasonable person would have expected to find the highway.
- d) whether the highway authority knew, or could reasonably have been expected to know, that the condition of the part of the highway to which the action relates was likely to cause danger to users of the highway.
- e) where the highway authority could not reasonably have been expected to repair that part of the highway before the cause of action arose, what warning notices of its condition had been displayed.

but for the purposes of such a defence it is not relevant to prove that the highway authority had arranged for a competent person to carry out or supervise the maintenance of the part of the highway to which the action relates unless it is also proved that the authority had given him proper instructions with regard to the maintenance of the highway and that he had carried out the instructions.



The New Roads & Street Works Act 1991 imparts a duty on Statutory Undertakers to maintain their apparatus in the Highway, but it has been established in Case Law that they can rely on the Highway Authority's Safety Inspection regime to some extent when defending Claims.

The Council can avoid being held jointly liable for defective apparatus by issuing a Section 81 Notice - New Roads & Street Works Act 1991 to the Utility Company whenever a defect is identified by the Authority within the Highway.

Appendix F: Identified Highest Priority Classified Roads (ranked in order of priority) 2023/24 and Assessment Matrix Example

1. A467 Warm Turn Carriageway Resurfacing
2. Tafarnaubach Ind Est (Top Road) Resurfacing
3. Blaenant Ind Est Roundabout Resurfacing
4. Big Arch / Steelworks Road / GO Resurfacing
5. A4046 - Waun-Y-Pound Road, Ebbw Vale
6. College Road, Ebbw Vale
7. Pond Road, Nantyglo

Identified Highway Safety Works

Highway Safety Traffic Management Works 2023/24: -

1. Crash Barriers
2. Road Markings
3. Road Safety Signs and Bollards
4. Speed Humps
5. Traffic Order Reviews

All the above works are subject to financial resources being made available

Highways Capital Works Assessment Matrix

| 1A Highway Condition (50%) - FRONT / MAIN LANES | | | | 2 Maintenance Costs (30%) | |
|---|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| Category / Score | Square Area / Score | Total Score / % | Costs over 5 years | Score / % | |
| 4 (5) | Plus 2000 (5) | 10 (50%) | | | |
| 4 (5) | 1000 - 2000 (4) | 9 (45%) | Plus £10,000 | 10 (30%) | |
| 4 (5) | 1000 - 500 (3) | 8 (40%) | £9,999 - £5,000 | 8 (24%) | |
| 4 (5) | less than 500 (2) | 7 (35%) | £4,999 - £3,000 | 5 (15%) | |
| | | | £2,999 - £1,000 | 3 (9%) | |
| 3 (4) | Plus 2000 (5) | 9 (45%) | Less than £1,000 | 1 (3%) | |
| 3 (4) | 1000 - 2000 (4) | 8 (40%) | £0.00 | 0 (0%) | |
| 3 (4) | 1000 - 500 (3) | 7 (35%) | | | |
| 3 (4) | less than 500 (2) | 6 (30%) | | | |
| 1B Highway Condition (50%) - REAR LANES x 0.5 = (25%) | | | | 3 Insurance Claims (10%) | |
| 4 (5) | Plus 2000 (5) | 10 (25%) | No. in last 10 years | Score / % | |
| 4 (5) | 1000 - 2000 (4) | 9 (22.5%) | plus 5 | 10 (10%) | |
| 4 (5) | 1000 - 500 (3) | 8 (20%) | 4 | 8 (8%) | |
| 4 (5) | less than 500 (2) | 7 (17.5%) | 3 | 5 (5%) | |
| | | | 2 | 3 (3%) | |
| | | | 1 | 1 (1%) | |
| 3 (4) | Plus 2000 (5) | 9 (22.5%) | 0 | 0 (0%) | |
| 3 (4) | 1000 - 2000 (4) | 8 (20%) | | | |
| 3 (4) | 1000 - 500 (3) | 7 (17.5%) | | | |
| 3 (4) | less than 500 (2) | 6 (15%) | | | |
| Example: Location A Street | | | | 4 Property Location (10%) | |
| | | | | No. of Houses | Score / % |
| | | | | *150 + | 10 (10%) |
| | | | | * 100 - 150 | 8 (8%) |
| | | | | 50 TO 99 | 5 (5%) |
| | | | | 20 TO 49 | 3 (3%) |
| | | | | 1 TO 19 | 1 (1%) |
| | | | | 0 / rear access | 0 (0%) |
| TOTAL | | | | 82% | |

* Also linked with other highways and can be combined in to one scheme

| Highway Assessment Matrix – Residential Roads: Worked Example | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------------------|-----|-----|----|----|--------------------------------|-----|----|----|----|-----------------------------|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|-----|--|--|--|--|----|-----|
| PRUDENTIAL BORROWING SCHEME | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | (1A) HIGHWAY CONDITION FRONT LANE (50%) | | | | | (1B) HIGHWAY CONDITION REAR LANE (25%) | | | | | (2) MAINTENANCE COSTS (30%) | | | | | (3) No. INSURANCE CLAIMS (10%) | | | | | (4) PROPERTY LOCATION (10%) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 10 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 10 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 10 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | TOTAL | F % | | | | | | |
| SCORES | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 10 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 10 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 10 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | | | | | | | | |
| PERCENTAGE % | 50% | 45% | 40% | 35% | 30% | 25% | 23% | 20% | 18% | 15% | 30% | 24% | 15% | 9% | 3% | 0% | 10% | 8% | 5% | 3% | 1% | 0% | 10% | 8% | 5% | 3% | 1% | 0% | | | | | | | | |
| STREET / ROUTE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| EXAMPLE STREET | X | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | X | | | | | | 30 | 82% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Appendix G: Traffic Sensitive Streets

A full list of the Traffic Sensitive Streets is held on the Council's Mayrise System.

There are streets in Blaenau Gwent that are designated as Traffic Sensitive under Section 64 of the New Road Street Works Act 1991 and play a vital role in street works coordination.

Traffic sensitive streets are streets where roadworks will cause delays and disruption to road users, and include streets:

- Which are used by more than 500 vehicles per hour per lane
- that link to major routes
- that are major public transport routes

Road works are coordinated so that traffic can move freely as possible, the Highways Authority can restrict working times and add specific conditions for roadworks on traffic sensitive streets i.e. times of day / days of the week / days of the year.

Designation of streets as traffic-sensitive

- (1) Subject to paragraphs (3) and (5), a street authority may only designate a street as traffic-sensitive under section 64 if one or more of the criteria set out in paragraph (2) are met.
- (2) The criteria referred to in paragraph (1) are that the street —
 - (a) is one on which at any time the street authority estimates the traffic flow to be greater than 500 vehicles per hour per lane of carriageway, disregarding bus or cycle lanes.
 - (b) is a single carriageway two-way road, the carriageway of which is less than 6.5 metres wide, having a traffic flow in both directions of not less than 600 vehicles per hour.
 - (c) falls within an area covered by an Order in respect of congestion charges made under section 169 of the Transport Act 2000.
 - (d) is one on which more than 25% of the traffic flow in both directions consists of heavy commercial vehicles.
 - (e) is one on which the traffic flow in both directions includes more than eight buses per hour.
 - (f) is designated by the local highway authority, as part of its winter maintenance programme, as one requiring the treatment of any part of it with salt or other chemicals, when low temperatures are expected, to prevent the formation of ice.
 - (g) is within 100 metres of a critical signalised junction or a critical gyratory or roundabout system.
 - (h) has a pedestrian traffic flow of at least 1300 people per hour, per metre width of footway; or
 - (i) is on a tourist route or within an area where international, national, or significant major local events take place.
- (3) A street authority may only designate a street as traffic-sensitive in accordance with paragraph (1) for the times and on the dates when one or more of the criteria set out in paragraph (2) apply.
- (4) The procedure for making or withdrawing a designation under paragraph (1) is set out in the Schedule.
- (5) A street authority may, notwithstanding paragraphs (1) to (3), designate a street as traffic-sensitive with the agreement of the majority of statutory undertakers whom they know to have apparatus in the street.
- (6) The information to be made available by the street authority in respect of each street for the time being designated by them as traffic-sensitive must include —
 - (a) the date of designation.
 - (b) particulars of the street in sufficient detail to enable it to be identified; and
 - (c) in the case of a limited designation, the times of day, days, periods, or occasions when the designation applies

Appendix H: Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

| Highways and Structures KPI's | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Indicator Ref. | Indicator Category | Measurement |
| PAM/020 | % Of principle "A" roads that are in poor condition (red Scanner) | Kilometres of principle "A" roads in overall poor condition |
| | | Kilometres of principle "B" roads surveyed |
| PAM/021 | % Of principle "B" roads that are in poor condition (red Scanner) | Kilometres of principle "B" roads in overall poor condition |
| | | Kilometres of principle "A" roads surveyed |
| PAM/022 | % Of principle "C" roads that are in poor condition (red Scanner) | Kilometres of principle "C" roads in overall poor condition |
| | | Kilometres of principle "C" roads surveyed |
| Local | The percentage of Drainage Complaints / Incidents / Advice requests where the initial investigation was carried out within 3 working days. | % Target to be set |
| Local | Percentage of Bridges compliant with statutory inspections. | % Target to be set |
| Local | Number of Road traffic accidents (RTA's) followed up and insurance damage funding secured. | % Target to be set |
| Local | Number of Insurance claims received. | Total claims against target to be set |
| Local | Number of insurance claims lost due to not adhering to inspection regimes. | % Against total claims |
| Local | Number of insurance claims lost for other reasons. | % Against total claims |

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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 |
|---------------|-----------------|---|----------|
| David Watkins | Clive Rogers | Highways – Neighbourhood Services (Community Services) | 01/06/23 |

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?

The proposal is to adopt a new Highways Asset Maintenance Plan (HAMP) for the Council.

The purpose of the new Highways Asset Maintenance Plan is to enable the Council to comply with the *Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice* published by the UK Roads Liaison Group on 28 October 2016 it has derived from the County Surveyors Society Wales (CSSW) working group. CSSW carried out consultation with Insurance Companies, Consultants and Highway Authorities throughout Wales as part of a Wales wide project.

The *Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice* sets out the policy and standard for undertaking inspections of the adopted highway network. Its primary aim is to ensure that inspection, defect, and recommended repair details are correctly assessed and accurately recorded, together with subsequent details of response and repairs undertaken on the highway. The underlying principle of the code is that Highway Authorities will adopt a standard risk-based approach to asset management in accordance with local needs, priorities and affordability.

Compliance with the *Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice* will also provide the Council with reasonable protection from financial risk in terms of liabilities and claims, higher insurance premiums or restriction of insurance cover, and from the reputational risk of undermining of the public's perception of, and confidence in, the way in which it delivers its Services.

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 \(www.gov.uk\)](http://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>) | The new HAMP will result in better maintained roads, making it safer and easier for individuals to travel for work and leisure, and for families to travel and meet together. | No | As detailed within the report the HAMP will ensure for a well-maintained highways infrastructure that is safe for all to use. |
| Disability (<i>people with disabilities/ long term conditions</i>) | The HAMP will have a positive impact- on those who have a physical or visual impairment as it ensures that the highway infrastructure, such as footpaths/pavements, are inspected, well maintained and remain clear of any obstructions. | No | The HAMP will be subject to regular review. Each formal review will take into account any negative public responses, lessons learnt, improvement opportunities and any innovative techniques available to strengthen the HAMP. |
| Gender Reassignment (<i>anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is</i> | As above | No | As above |

| | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>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>) | As above | As above | As above |
| Pregnancy and Maternity (<i>women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave</i>) | As above | As above | As above |
| Race (<i>people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds</i>) | As above | As above | As above |
| Religion or Belief (<i>people with different religions and beliefs including people with no beliefs</i>) | As above | As above | As above |
| Sex (<i>women and men, girls and boys and those who self-identify their gender</i>) | As above | As above | As above |

| | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|
| Sexual Orientation <i>(lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, other)</i> | As above | As above | As above |
|---|----------|----------|----------|

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.

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Section 2 Socio-economic Duty (Strategic Decisions Only) <i>The Welsh Governments Socio-economic Duty provides a framework in order to ensure tackling inequality is at the forefront of decision making.</i></p> | | | |
| <p>.Please consider the below vulnerable groups and consider how the proposal could affect them:</p> <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> | Neutral impact | | |



| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>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> | <p>As above</p> | | |
| <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>As above</p> | | |
| <p>Area Deprivation (<i>where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport) Impact on the environment?</i>)</p> | <p>The new HAMP will allow more effective management of the adopted highway network. This will result in safer access to services and improvement of the physical infrastructure to support a growing economy.</p> | | |
| <p>Socio-economic Background (<i>social class i.e. parents education, employment and income</i>)</p> | <p>As above</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> | <p>As above</p> | | |




Section 3-Corporate Plan

Please outline any Corporate Plan linkages of the proposal -[BG Corporate Plan 22-27](#)

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Priority 1 - Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent</p> | <p>A well-maintained highway infrastructure will provide for ease of access to local community facilities such as schools, libraries and colleges.</p> |
| <p>Priority 2 - Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities</p> | <p>A well-maintained highway infrastructure will reduce the need for unprogrammed and unnecessary road maintenance, allowing for free-flowing traffic, extended life of the asset and reduced cost. Planned rather than reactive response will result in a reduction in travel time and therefore vehicle emissions.</p> |
| <p>Priority 3 - An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place</p> | <p>As above</p> |
| <p>Priority 4 - Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient</p> | <p>The new HAMP will allow resources to be deployed in such a way that highway maintenance activities can be programmed, preventing deterioration of maintenance defects into safety defects thus prolonging the life of the road and facilitating safer travel. The purchase of materials can be planned more easily, reducing numbers of deliveries. Community resilience will be improved through the provision of better maintained and safer access</p> |

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>The collection of pertinent data such as traffic counts and identifying trends in defect types and severity will be carried out. The impact of the HAMP will be monitored, and regular reviews will take place as this data is made available.</p> <p>The HAMP provides a risk-based approach to Highway Safety Inspections and offers an opportunity to optimise resource</p> <p>The purpose of the HAMP is to prevent longer term deterioration of the highway network through targeted inspection and maintenance regimes.</p> |
| <p>Prevention</p>  | <p>Consider how the proposal is preventing problems from occurring or getting worse</p> <p>The key principle of the HAMP is to implement a risk-based approach to Highway Inspection and Response</p> <p>The methodology behind the HAMP utilises data relating to the risk of damage to persons or property and recommends a way of optimising available resources that allows this to be mitigated effectively.</p> <p>The collection of pertinent data will be ongoing.</p> <p>Regular reporting will be in place to facilitate monitoring of the impact of the new HAMP.</p> <p>All data, reports and stakeholder feedback will be considered as part of regular review and revision.</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>By taking a risk-based approach and focussing on preventative maintenance, the HAMP will improve the condition of the adopted highway within Blaenau Gwent and impact positively on its people, economy, environment and culture.</p> <p>All data, reports and stakeholder feedback will be considered as part of regular review and revision.</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>Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council will continue to work with other stakeholders including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Surveyors Society Wales (CSSW) • Insurance Companies • Other Highway Authorities • Council Departments • Town and community Councils • Local community Groups <p>to implement the new HAMP successfully.</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> <p>Preparation of the HAMP has involved consultation with and involvement from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSSW • Insurance Section • Welsh Highway Authorities • Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services • Council Members • Other affected departments within Blaenau Gwent CBC <p>It is intended in the future to communicate with local community groups and the general public in relation to the HAMP. Feedback received from stakeholders in response to the HAMP will inform review.</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.

The HAMP will ensure the efficient use of public resources – both within the County Council and those of other public agencies and organisations.

The HAMP will benefit all road users, local businesses and service providers by improving the condition of the adopted highway within Blaenau Gwent and providing safe and efficient travel.

An improved highways maintenance regime will extend the life span of the assets allowing for free-flowing traffic, thus reducing the carbon footprint.

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.

Planned Maintenance and well-maintained highways will be more energy efficient. Efficiencies and targeted response / planning will serve to reduce the impact on the environment and at all times where it is possible protect and enhance that environment.

Work programmes will be planned / programmed in a targeted and efficient manner which will reduce travel time and associated negative impacts such as CO2 emissions.

Better maintained roads will contribute towards ease of travel, reducing traffic congestion and emissions from transport and travel across the County.

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.

The HAMP details how to manage risks which will provide a safer environment for highway users.

Highways that are in a good condition will make access to the services of the Council and other organisations that support health and wellbeing safer and easier.

Improved condition of the highway will also encourage active and leisure travel.

The Department of Transport statistics identify the road environment, including poor or defective road surface, as a contributory factor in some reported road accidents, well inspected and maintained roads will help mitigate this.

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).

The new HAMP will benefit all age groups by improving the condition of carriageways and footways, providing a safer environment for all those who use them.

5. A WALES OF COHESIVE COMMUNITIES ... attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

The HAMP will support the continued economic, social and cultural viability of towns and local communities across the County by allowing the Council’s resources to be managed more effeciently, improving maintenance of the highway and thus providing safe access to services and opportunities.

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.

As above the HAMP will support the continued economic, social and cultural viability of towns and local communities across the County by allowing the Council’s resources to be managed more effeciently, improving maintenance of the highway and thus providing safe access to services and opportunities.

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.

Work programmes will be planned / programmed in a targeted and efficient manner which will reduce travel time and associated negative impacts such as CO2 emissions.

Better maintained roads will contribute towards ease of travel, reducing traffic congestion and emissions from transport and travel across the whole County.

Section 5-Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards

(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](#)



| 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> | All road signage is produced bilingual. | | |
| 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> | In compliance with the Standards all signage, media, communications of events and campaigns will be bilingual | | |
| What opportunities are there for a person or person to use the Welsh | No | | |

| | | | |
|---|----|--|--|
| Language? e.g. staff, residents and visitors | | | |
| Has the Welsh Language been considered in order to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language? | No | | |

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) | None | No | |

| | | | |
|--|------|----|--|
| Provision (the basic rights of children and young people to survive and develop) | None | No | |
| Protection (children and young people are protected against exploitation, abuse or discrimination) | None | No | |

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 | A well maintained environment will have a positive impact on crime. | No | |

| | | | |
|--|-----------------|----|--|
| (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) | As above | No | |
| Misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances (Think vulnerable children, adults, families and communities) | As above | No | |
| Re-offending (Think young people and adults, victims, families, communities) | As above | No | |
| Serious Violence (Think vulnerable young people, vulnerable adults, victims, families, communities) | As above | No | |

| | | | |
|---|----|----|--|
| Counter Terrorism (People and places that are vulnerable to terrorism or violent extremism) | No | No | |
| Community Cohesion (Asylum seekers, Migrants, Victims or Hate Crime, Community tensions) | No | No | |

| 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. |
| Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of services • Planning and funding • Co-operation between bodies and professionals | The proposal will have a positive impact and support and comply with the Armed Forces Covenant to give 'Due Regard' in respect of the Armed Forces | No | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <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 and emergency care, hospital and community services, specialist care, mental health services, and additional needs services (as applicable). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authority-delivered healthcare services, including sexual health services and drug and alcohol misuse services | <p>Community and the challenges they face.</p> | | |
| <p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Educational attainment and curriculum • Child wellbeing | | | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 education. The Duty does not cover nursery (early years education), higher education, or other voluntary adult education settings</p> | | | |
| <p>Housing</p> <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? |
|---|--|--|
| <p>The HAMP will assist Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in meeting its legal duties and to support this the following National Guidance has been used. The methods adopted in the HAMP are based upon the contents of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice, UK Roads Liaison Group, 2016” - “Risk Based Approach: Method”, 2018, County Surveyor Society (WALES) CSSW, 2018 - “Highway Inspection Defect Recording Manual”, CSSW, 2018 - Works orders and highway repair work backlog figures (potholes/patching/structures). - Inspection reports. - Customer complaints. | <p>The HAMP will guide Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council acting as the Highway Authority, in the management of the adopted highway network to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All assets continue to deliver a service to the community and highway users. - There is clear direction for Elected Members and Council staff to make informed decisions regarding the adopted highway network. - Legislative requirements are satisfied. - Exposure to safety risk is mitigated to agreed and acceptable levels. - Asset purchases, increases or construction are only approved after whole life costs and benefits are assessed and agreed. - Clear and transparent allocation of responsibilities for the management of individual assets is recorded. | <p>The evidence and data have identified the need to introduce additional financial resources to enable the related strategies to be delivered successfully.</p> |

Are there any data or information gaps and if so what are they and how do you intend to address them?

Yes, there are data gaps that need to be addressed going forward, these include;

- Accurate vehicle movement figures on the highway network.
- Pedestrian footfall on pavements, walkways and within town centres.
- Highway detailed condition survey

It is the intention to look to introducing monitoring counters at locations to assess pedestrian and vehicle volumes. There are now opportunities to explore digital highway surveys from moving vehicles.

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?

- CSSW Codes
- Insurance Section
- Welsh Highway Authorities through CSSW
- Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services
- Council Members through members briefing 18th April 2023
- Other affected departments within Blaenau Gwent CBC

2. When did the consultation take place and was adequate time given for a response?

During 2022/23 through meetings and member briefing

3. Was there enough information provided to respond effectively?

Yes

4. What were the findings?

To identify the necessary information to create a Highways Asset Maintenance Plan for adoption by Blaenau Gwent CBC.

5. Have the findings been considered in regard to the decision?

Yes

| Section 11-Monitoring and Review | |
|---|---|
| How will the implementation of the proposal be monitored, including the impacts or changes made? | <p>The HAMP will be monitored through the following methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service inspections/Team briefings • Customer complaints • Annual committee performance reports/including PI's • Service reviews (every 2 years) Commencing 2025. |
| What monitoring tools will be used? | <p>Electronic - Mayrise system, AXA system, My Council Services</p> <p>Other tools available are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gazetteer Asset Inventory • Highways conditions surveys (Scanner & SCRIM annual reports). • Inspection reports • Highways user figures (to be developed) • Safety/Accident records • Financial resources |
| How will the results be used for future development? | <p>The results will be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify necessary financial resources required • Identify highway assets to be updated/replaced • Establish an improved planned maintenance regime • To prioritise resources for immediate and future highways maintenance |
| How and when will it be reviewed? | The HAMP will be reviewed every 2 years and reported through the Council's committee/democratic process |
| Who is responsible for ensuring this happens? | Head of Service |

Section 12 - Decision

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.

| | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
| Continue with the proposal in its current form | Yes <input checked="" 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"/> |

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| Name of person completing the IIA | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Name: | David Watkins |
| Job Title: | Team Manager – Street Scene |
| Date: | 01/06/23 |

| Head of Service Approval | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|--|
| Name: | Clive Rogers | | |
| Job Title: | Head of Community services | | |
| 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.

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Agenda Item 40

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 11.07.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 11.07.2023

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **20th July, 2023**

Report Subject: **Transfer of Silent Valley Waste Services back to the Council**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Helen Cunningham, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Place and Environment**

Report Submitted by: **Bernadette Elias, Chief Officer Commercial and Customer
Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer Resources
Andrea Jones, Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| | 6/7/23 | | | | | | 20/7/23 | |

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Council with a position statement on the Council resolution of 7 February 2022 to bring back in house the services provided by Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd, transfer of the assets and liabilities and winding up of the company.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 On 7 February 2022, full Council considered a report on the future management and operation of the Waste Transfer Station and Household Waste Recycling Centres. At that time the Council resolution set out that:

- The services be brought back in-house and the winding up of the company named therein.
- Additional costs be built into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and agreed budget with £390,000 included for 2022/23 and £283,000 for 2023/24 (£673,000 in total).

- 2.2 Immediately after the Council resolution, programme management arrangements were established to support the transition. The Chief Officer Commercial and Customer was assigned to the role of Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and has led on the work to deliver the decision.

2.3 The transfer of Silent Valley Waste Services back to the Council was successfully undertaken on 1st May 2023.

3. **Recommendations**

3.1 That Council note;

- i) The position statement on the successful transfer of Silent Valley Waste Services back to the Council undertaken on 1st May 2023 (including the transfer of assets and liabilities on or after the transfer date up to the point of winding up of the Company).
- ii) That given the assumptions currently applied, the estimated financial impact remains within the budget envelope agreed previously (see Appendix 1).
- iii) The assessment by Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd of financial benefits to the Council since inception of the Company (Appendix 3)

3.2 Council agree that the balance of the Silent Valley Aftercare provision and the profit and loss reserve be utilised to establish appropriate provisions / earmarked reserves within the Council to support the ongoing financial commitment of aftercare and maintenance at the Silent Valley landfill site and other liabilities.

3.3 Council approve that Officers continue to look at the Legal advice on the option of making the company dormant as an alternative to dissolution. Any proposal to make the company dormant will be reported to Council for consideration & agreement.

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

4.1 The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is legislation that seeks to improve the social, economic, environment and cultural well-being of Wales. It will ensure that the Council thinks more about the long-term, works collaboratively with people and communities along with trying to prevent future problems and take an approach that will help to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

4.2 To assist with working towards this vision seven well-being goals have been established. Throughout the areas considered within this report and across this service the Council will be focused upon ensuring that the way in which

the Services are delivered in the future works towards achievement of all these goals.

- 4.3 This topic links with the Corporate Plan 2022-27. The aim is to increase rates of recycling to enable us to achieve national targets set by Welsh Government.

5. Implications Against Each Option
Impact on Budget (short- and long-term impact)

5.1 *Annual Operating Costs*

- 5.1.1 The report considered by Council in February 2022 highlighted that the estimated annual costs of operating the services were in the region of £1.635m resulting in a cost pressure to the Council of between £563,820 and £673,000 (compared to the budget available in 2021/22 - £1.03m).
- 5.1.2 Consequently, the Council agreed to build these additional costs into the Medium-Term Financial strategy and agreed budget, with £390,000 included for 2022/23 and a further £283,000 for 2023/24.
- 5.1.3 After applying the agreed MTFS inflationary uplifts, the Council's agreed net operating budget for the services transferring in (for 2023/24) is therefore £1.74m. The financial modelling undertaken as part of the Transition work currently estimates that the net costs of providing the services in house during 2023/24 will be £1.7m within the budget envelope agreed by Council.

5.2 *Other Financial Commitments:*

Landfill Aftercare Obligations

- 5.2.1 Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd, as the lease holder and permit holder were responsible for the Landfill Aftercare Obligations of the Silent Valley Landfill Site. These responsibilities transferred to the Council following the transfer of the Landfill Permit and the early termination of the lease on 1 May 2023. As the owner of the site these would have reverted to the Council following the natural end of the lease in 2044.

Leachate Disposal Obligations

- 5.2.2 The Council has and will continue to be responsible for the Leachate Disposal Obligations. Historically SVWS agreed to either fully fund or more recently contributed to the costs of Leachate disposal. However as reported in February 2022 these contributions have now ended.

- 5.3 As a result of the Council's application to transfer the environmental permit for the landfill, Natural Resources Wales asked the Council to prepare an updated financial model for the future landfill / leachate obligations. The model highlights a potential financial commitment of £8.76m between 2023

and 2076 (the current end of the permit). This commitment will be reassessed on a regular basis.

- 5.4 The potential financial commitment can be analysed as £2.14m for the landfill element and £6.6m for leachate disposal. The financial commitment will be satisfied over the period of the model by a mix of contributions from the agreed annual budget (leachate disposal costs are already built into the base budget) and the establishment of a reserve following the transfer of assets & liabilities from SVWS.

As at 31 March 2022, SV's aftercare provision was £1.86m and their Profit & Loss Reserves were £1.5m (this includes £186K relating to pensions), a total of £3.36m. The final accounts for SVWS are currently being prepared, the overall level of reserves and provisions will be confirmed as part of this process. As per the proposal from the February 2022 report it is recommended that the balance on the Silent Valley Aftercare provision and the profit and loss reserve be transferred into an earmarked reserves within the Council to support ongoing financial commitments at Silent Valley.

- 5.5 The Deed of Performance between the Council and Natural Resources Wales places an obligation upon the Council to undertake the landfill aftercare required from an environmental permitting perspective. If the Council fails to undertake this work the agreement enables NRW to carry out the required work and to recover the costs from the Council.

5.6 ***Financial Benefits – Silent Valley Waste Service Ltd (since inception of the Company in 1994)***

- 5.6.1 The Company was established in 1994 (almost 30 years ago), at the time of closure (2023) the Company estimates that the Council will have derived benefits in excess of £14m. Appendix 5 provides Members with a recent report to the Silent Valley board.

Risk including Mitigating Actions

- 5.7 The approach was to identify and manage risk through the process as part of the programme management arrangements.

The financial model included within the Deed of Performance assesses the potential financial commitment for the Aftercare of the site (including leachate disposal) over the next 54 years of landfill aftercare. These are only estimates and there is a risk that the actual works required, and costs incurred will exceed (or be less) than profiled. The Financial Commitment will be reassessed on a regular basis.

- 5.8 Failure to agree the Deed of Performance (which includes the financial commitment) with Natural Resources Wales would have resulted in NRW declining to transfer the landfill environmental permit and the Council would have been unable to operate or control the site. The agreement of the Deed of Performance has mitigated this risk. The ongoing risk is now around not meeting the agreed Deed of Performance, and to mitigate this monitoring of activity will be undertaken as part of normal procedures and arrangements.

Legal

- 5.9 External professional legal advice had been sought as part of the transition planning and having regard to the advice received, it was necessary for Cabinet to give final approval to the arrangements for acquisition/transfer of Silent Valley Waste Services to the Council. The report to Cabinet on the 28th April 2023 sought and secured this approval.

Human Resources

- 5.10 Employees of Silent Valley Waste Services transferred to the Council under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006) arrangements. Organisational Development has carried out consultation and engagement with staff who were in scope to transfer to the Council. This has been done in conjunction with Silent Valley Waste Services Limited and the joint trade unions (GMB and Unison). As part of the work to transfer staff it was agreed that staff transfer under their current terms and conditions with the intention to move to the Council terms and conditions as soon as practically possible, and by the latest from 2 years from the date of transfer.
- 5.11 To maintain compliance with the Environmental Permit a suitably qualified and competent officer is required to be employed by the permit holder. The successful permit transfer satisfied this requirement. 20 staff transferred to Regeneration and Community Services with a further 1 to Resources and 1 to Payroll, all transferred under Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) TUPE.

6. Supporting Evidence

Performance Information and Data

6.1 Programme Management

An officer Transition Working Group was established, with term of reference agreed. Senior Management support for the different elements of the programme has been significant, including work involving members of corporate leadership team and the Head of Legal and Compliance supporting the final stages of the transition, The working group was chaired by the Chief Officer Commercial and Customer as the SRO, the Chief Officer Resources acted as vice chair, and the Team Manager, Regeneration Opportunities took the programme manager role. The working group developed a transition plan and risk register to manage the multiple work streams that were required, with leads for each work stream identified. The main activity covered;

- Organisational Development
- Legal
- Procurement- including a specific work stream on the gas contract arrangements
- Financial

- Technical / Operational
 - Communications
- 6.2 An agile project management approach was adopted so that meetings were timely, and activity could be agreed and monitored in short bursts, keeping pace and momentum. The agile approach assisted the SRO and the working group to keep good oversight of emerging issues and risks, and enabled officers to prioritise issues as they needed to be addressed. This approach also maximized the capacity and expertise of the working group and enabled the activity to be planned and delivered in a coherent way and joined up way. In line with the Council resolution, external support has been used to support the work as needed. This included legal advice which was considered and acted upon.
- 6.3 The Technical Manager from Silent Valley joined the working group which proved valuable given their knowledge of the site and operations. The group assessed which areas needed external support based on a number of factors including the level of in-house knowledge, expertise and capacity. Officers worked together with external advisors and a feature of the approach taken was to use the opportunity to develop officer knowledge and skills in areas that there was less experience in, aiming to maximizing the benefit of the external support.
- 6.4 Following the transfer, an assessment of ongoing activity was considered by the working group. It was agreed that it was appropriate to stand down the working group and set up a task and finish group to prepare for the winding up of the Company. The ongoing operational arrangements are being taken forward by the operational group established by the Directorate. Any future commercial opportunities on the site will be developed through the established arrangements in the Council. Development of a business case for a wind turbine on the site is underway as part of the agreed Bridging the Gap Programme, supporting the Councils Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Governance

- 6.5 The programme was complex, multi-faceted and involved a range of external partners. The need for careful sequencing of the transition programme to ensure all appropriate arrangements to meet requirements were in place was paramount. There was a slight delay from the anticipated transfer date- of 1st February whilst all the required legal documentation was completed.
- 6.6 As part of the final stages of the transition process a report to Cabinet on 28th April 2023 sought and gained;
- approval for the delegation of Officers to agree final terms of the hiving up agreement and any other ancillary agreements which may be required in the future to give full effect to the transfer between the Council and Silent Valley Waste Services Limited; and
 - approval for the delegation of officers to agree the Deed of Performance (including the financial commitment) between the Council and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to support transfer of the Environmental

Permit.

- ratification (exercising shareholders role) of the resolutions passed by the Silent Valley Board of Directors.

6.7 Programme updates were provided at key points in the transition planning to council senior leadership.

6.8 The Board of Directors will remain in place until the company has been wound up, which cannot take place until a minimum of three months after ceasing trading.

6.9 To complete the transfer of Silent Valley Waste Services, the Council was required to transfer the environmental permits held by Silent Valley. Without these the Council would not legally be able to operate the sites. The process to transfer the permits commenced early into the process alongside NRW and permits for the waste transfer station and household waste recycling centres were transferred without issue.

6.10 In order to finalise the Environmental permit, transfer the Council was required to enter into a Deed of Performance with NRW that includes a financial commitment from the Council in terms of meeting the ongoing landfill obligations. The financial implications have been outlined in section 5.1-5.5 of this report.

6.11 To finalise the transfer the Council was also required to enter into a hiving up agreement with Silent Valley Waste Services Limited. This is an agreement that transfers the assets and liabilities of the company to the Council. Officers worked with legal advisors to draft the agreement and following review by legal advisors to Silent Valley Waste Services Limited it was agreed and subsequently approved by Cabinet on 28th April 2023.

Failure to agree the hiving up agreement with Silent Valley Waste Services limited, would have meant the transfer of the assets and liabilities of Silent Valley Waste Services to the Council would not take place and the winding up process would not be able to be progressed.

6.12 Following the transfer on the 1 May 2023, work on planning winding up has begun. An officer task and finish group of will work with legal advisors who specialise in Company Law to set out the plan. Winding up the company cannot take place until 3 months after the Company has ceased trading. The current timescales for Companies House to process applications for winding up is 2 months.

6.13 In recent weeks an alternative option to winding the company up has been mooted. The Council could consider making the company Dormant, this could result in tax advantages should the Council in future establish another company undertaking broadly complementary activities. Independent legal advice is currently being considered,

Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)

- 6.14 Consultation has been undertaken amongst existing staff of Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd to advise them of their situation and assist with any concerns relating to their future employment terms and conditions. This work has been undertaken with support from the Councils Organisational Development team and the joint trade unions (GMB and Unison) As part of planned communication activity a 'welcome' newsletter for transferring staff was developed and induction sessions delivered.
- 6.15 Engagement has been undertaken with Natural Resources Wales to enable the transfer of the Environmental Permit to take place.

The summary decision making route is attached at appendix 2.

Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)

- 6.16 The work around the long-term liabilities associated with the aftercare of the landfill site has assisted the Council to understand the financial resources potentially required to ensure that the landfill aftercare arrangements are managed.

Integration (across service areas)

- 6.17 Officers from across the Council have been involved in the Working Group and together with the Trade Unions a wide range of stakeholders have been involved with work through the actions required to enable the transfer of Silent Valley Waste Services in-house. These include (but are not limited to):

- Organisational Development
- Legal
- Procurement
- Financial
- Technical / Operational
- Communications

Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions

- 6.18 As outlined above this topic links with the Corporate Plan 2022-27. Silent Valley Waste Services Limited carry out activities that support the Council in delivering their waste and recycling services. The aim is to increase rates of recycling to enable us to achieve national targets set by Welsh Government.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1 Performance monitoring will be established within the Directorate alongside the existing waste monitoring, and external monitoring by Natural Resource Wales (NRW) will also transfer to the authority as the incumbent.

8. **Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- Financial Information – Appendix 1
- Future Management of the Waste Transfer Station and Household Waste Recycling Centre

http://cc-mgov-01/documents/s13925/SACB2304A1_SV_Report_230425v0.4.pdf?LLL=0

http://cc-mgov-01/documents/s13925/SACB2304A1_SV_Report_230425v0.4.pdf?LLL=0

http://cc-mgov-01/documents/s13921/SCAB2304A1A1_Appendix_One_SVWS_Estimates_and_BGC_Budget_Envelope_2023-24.pdf?LLL=0

http://cc-mgov-01/documents/s13926/SCAB2304A1A2_Shareholder_Resolution_-_Silent_Valley.pdf?LLL=0

- Decision making template – Appendix 2
- Silent Valley Waste Ltd - report to Board of Directors – Appendices 3a & b

SILENT VALLEY WASTE SERVICES 23/24

Appendix 1

| <u>Revised Estimate*</u> | Landfill £ | Transfer Station £ | Civic Amenity Sites £ | Transport £ | Overheads £ | Total £ |
|---|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Expenditure | | | | | | |
| Employees | 0 | 518,227 | 403,843 | 0 | 423,970 | 1,346,039 |
| Premises Related Expenses | 45,479 | 58,850 | 2,052 | 0 | 37,180 | 143,561 |
| Transport Related Expenses | 43,956 | 82,455 | 75,049 | 20,492 | 0 | 221,952 |
| Supplies & Services | 32,618 | 329,701 | 19,561 | 52,497 | 48,190 | 482,567 |
| Depreciation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 76,420 | 76,420 |
| Total Expenditure | 122,053 | 989,233 | 500,505 | 72,989 | 585,760 | 2,270,539 |
| Income | | | | | | |
| External Income | 0 | (148,060) | (11,201) | 0 | 0 | (159,261) |
| Electricity Generation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (201,000) | (201,000) |
| Application of Provision | (18,702) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (18,702) |
| Total Income | (18,702) | (148,060) | (11,201) | 0 | (201,000) | (378,963) |
| Net Expenditure | 103,351 | 841,173 | 489,304 | 72,989 | 384,760 | 1,891,576 |
| Interest | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (112,500) | (112,500) |
| Capital Adjustment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (76,420) | (76,420) |
| Net Cost of Transferred Services | 103,351 | 841,173 | 489,304 | 72,989 | 195,840 | 1,702,656 |
| Blaenau Gwent CBC Estimate for Silent Valley | | | | | | |
| Estimated recharges to Silent Valley | | | | | | (1,739,723) |
| Excess of BGC Budget Envelope over Estimated Cost of Transferred Services | | | | | | (37,067) |

*Modelling suggests costs / income will differ slightly from that reported in April 2023 but remains within the budget envelope.

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Silent Valley Reporting

| Meeting / Date | Report Subject | Decision |
|--|--|---|
| Council – 7 th December 2017 | Future Household Waste Recycling Centre Provision | <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Members approve the preferred Option of the Executive Committee, i.e. The preferred Option identified by Scrutiny was 2: Improvement to New Vale HWRC site and development of a second facility at Roseheyworth South, subject to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A business case be developed and prepared for the redevelopment of the New Vale HWRC and a second facility in Ebbw Fach Valley at the south of the Roseheyworth Industrial Estate; - The final business case be presented for approval by Full Council would contain the detailed design, waste flow modelling and financial implications for developing and operating both sites; and - The Final business case would also provide a detailed programme plan for the implementation of the proposals at both sites. |
| Council – 12 th December 2019 | Future Management of the Waste Transfer Station and Household Waste Recycling Centre | <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report which related to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority) be accepted and Option 1 – Collaboration with the Public Sector (Shared Services) be endorsed, namely that approval be granted to proceed to the following:</p> <p>Take forward Option 1 and carry out soft market testing to better understand the opportunity to achieve a public sector collaboration.</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | <p>Should there not be sufficient interest from public sector partners to take forward the preferred option it was requested that Council endorse a proposal for officers to develop a contingency plan for the delivery of services.</p> <p>To mitigate against the risks associated with depleting the general reserves that should be retained to cover the costs associated with the aftercare liabilities of the landfill site it was proposed that the Council explored options for securing sufficient reserves to meet the assessed costs and liabilities up to 2076.</p> |
| Special Council – 7 th February 2022 | Report of the Audit General for Wales – Deficiencies in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council’s governance and oversight arrangements in respect of the Council Owned company, Silent Valley Waste Services Limited | <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and</p> <p>The contents of the Report of the Auditor General for Wales “Deficiencies in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council’s governance and oversight arrangements in respect of the Council Owned company, Silent Valley Waste Services Limited” (the report) be agreed.</p> <p>The recommendation within the report be agreed, namely that:</p> <p>‘The Council should commission a review to seek assurance that its governance and oversight arrangements in respect of other companies in which it had an interest were adequate and effective, and that the deficiencies identified in the report were not more widespread’.</p> <p>Appropriate Council officers meet with Audit Wales with a view to jointly determining the approach and scope of commissioning that review in order to ensure it was acceptable to all concerned. The findings of this review be reported back via the democratic process.</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | | <p>The Managing Director be authorised to prepare a written response, to be agreed with the Auditor General, to be published in a local newspaper as required under the Public Audit (Wales) Act.</p> <p>A full internal Council investigation be undertaken into the events referred to and the findings reported back to Council accordingly.</p> |
| Special Council – 7 th February 2022 | Waste Transfer Station and Household Waste Recycling Centre | <p>Option 3 (preferred option) was, thereupon, carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report which related to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority) be accepted and Option 3 be agreed, namely that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The services be brought back in-house and the winding up of the company named therein. · A transition plan be prepared by end of March 2022 to ensure the transition of services was managed correctly and that appropriate management arrangements were put in place. · Engagement of external specialist support to work with the Council to develop the transition plan. · In accordance with the Shareholders’ Reserved Powers contained within the Articles of Association, a special resolution (to be agreed at full Council in its capacity as sole shareholder of the Company) be served upon the Company instructing the Directors of the Company to work with the Council to ensure co-operation and progress in two areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) In the timely publication of the pending Audit Wales report. (ii) During the transition period, any use of the Company’s provisions and reserves would require agreement of the Council. |

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| | | <p>Additional costs be built into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and agreed budget from 2022/23 onwards. It was estimated that this would be £390,000 for 2022/23 increasing to £673,000 in 2023/24, prior to cost mitigation opportunities.</p> <p>A Business Plan be developed alongside the Transition Plan.</p> |
| Cabinet – 19 th April 2023 | Advanced Engineering Centre (HIVE) Ebbw Vale | <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 report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report which contained exempt information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted, and Option 1 be approved.</p> |
| Cabinet – 28 th April 2023 | Future Management of the Waste Transfer Station and Household Waste Recycling Centre | <p>Due to the need to consider the following item as a matter of urgency, the Leader of the Council and the Presiding Member confirmed that the following matter can be considered under the Provisions of Paragraph 4(b), Section 100(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report and update be accepted on the proposed transfer of services from SVWS to the Council on 1st May, 2023 (including the transfer of assets and liabilities on or after the transfer date up to the point of winding up of the Company).</p> <p>It was noted that the estimated financial impact remains within the budget envelope as previously agreed.</p> |

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| | | <p>Approval was provided for the delegation of Officers to negotiate and agree the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• final terms of the hiving up agreement and any other ancillary agreements which may be required in the future to give effect to the transfer between the Council and Silent Valley Waste Services Limited; and• the Deed of Performance (including the financial commitment) between the Council and Natural Resources Wales to support transfer of the Environmental Permit. The shareholder resolution as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report be approved. |
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Financial Support to Blaenau Gwent CBC

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper has been produced to update earlier reports which identified financial support to Blaenau Gwent CBC and its predecessor authority since the inception of Silent Valley Waste Services Limited.
- 1.2 The analysis in this report identifies the level of support provided to 30th April 2023.
- 1.3 The elements of financial support are shown on table 1 attached to this report.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 The subsidy from 2016/17 onwards identifies the non-recovery of overheads as well as on element of direct costs.
- 2.2 The Board decided in 2016 to support the Local Authority as it faced financial austerity measures that were imposed nationally by the United Kingdom Government. The Company discussed this approach with its Auditors as the effect of providing this support would ensure the Company traded at an operating loss. The support took the form of freezing its charges; therefore, an element of Direct Services Costs and no Overheads would not be recharged for the period 2016/17 and 2017/2018. The price base for recharging the one Civic Amenity Site at that time was on the basis of 2014, while the Transfer Station was on 2016 price basis. The Council nominated Directors undertook to grow the Environment Department budget so that no subsidy would be required from 2018/19.
- 2.3 The Local Authority requested that the Company continue the charging levels into the 2018/19 year and this continued up to the 31st March 2022 while the Local Authority carried out due diligence and a soft market testing exercise. The Company assisted in the process by providing a Business Plan in November 2020 and a subsequent Business case (August 2021) in the form of an Offer Letter, a fully costed Bill of Quantities and a detailed Service Delivery Plan. This eventually resulted in a report to the Council in February 2022, Which took the decision to transfer the Company back in-house.
- 2.4 It is understood the Chief Officer Resources requested a growth item of £400,000 in anticipation of the true cost of service provision for the 2022/23 financial year and ongoing. Consequently, the Company has budgeted for a break-even budget that should ensure its last year of trading will not be at an operating loss which is extremely positive from the Company's viewpoint.

- 2.5 The final trading period for the Company will be for a 13 month period with Account Closure as at 30th June 2023 to allow for the finalisation of Debtors and Creditors. This has been brought about due to a delay in the transfer process.
- 2.6 It is pleasing to report that the final trading period is likely to show a profit in excess of £100k which is excellent news for the Board.
- 2.7 The Company is likely to return in excess of £3m to the Council at closure which includes £1.6m currently in an escrow account with the remainder made up of Cash at Bank.
- 2.8 The positive news for the Board that the level of support provided to the Council upon closure will exceed £14m. The Board can take pride that from an initial investment of £250,000 this has resulted in a return of 5,600% which by any measure is outstanding.
- 2.9 From the attached table the Board can see the support has been a mixture of Reserve and Capital over a number of years. The biggest element has been the company's support of Leachate Disposal which exceeds £3.4m.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The final trading period of the Company should show a profit in excess of £100,000. This is welcome news and proves that with full cost recovery the Company is profitable.
- 3.2 It is of some significant pride to the Board that the level of support to the Council upon closure will have exceeded £14m and should be acknowledged by the Council as an excellent investment.
- 3.3 The Board is asked to note the report.

David Waggett
General Manager
22nd June 2023

Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd
Financial Support to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

SV719B

| Description | Period | Costs |
|---|---------------|-----------------------|
| Royalties | 1994/2008 | £1,536,383.00 |
| Dividends | 1994/2011 | £775,000.00 |
| Landfill Tax Credit Scheme - Donor Contributions | 1998/2011 | £244,742.00 |
| Extra costs incurred in disposal of British Steel oily wastes - waived by SVWS | 1994/1997 | £45,000.00 |
| Waiving of British Steel disposal charges (BGBC responsibility under site purchase) | 2005/2006 | £232,175.00 |
| SVWS funding of improvements to Borough's Civic Amenity Sites | 1994/1997 | £25,000.00 |
| Funding for New Vale C.A.Site | 2005/2006 | £285,000.00 |
| Leachate Disposal | 2005/2022 | £3,459,009.00 |
| Reclaim Landfill Tax/returned to B.G. | 2006/2008 | £8,125.00 |
| B.G.Gate Price Savings | 2006/2010 | £793,018.00 |
| B.G.Phase 1 Landfill Capping (outside of Silent Valley's boundary) | 2014/2015 | £1,700,000.00 |
| Cardiff University-Student-Leachate Study | 2002/2005 | £20,000.00 |
| WTS non recharged costs | 2016/2017 | £52,034.00 |
| Trade Effluent Monitoring (Titan Env.) | 2008/2022 | £95,541.00 |
| Overheads - Non Recovery | 2016/2022 | £1,386,203.00 |
| Direct Costs - Subsidy | 2016/2022 | £364,711.00 |
| Escrow Account | | £1,600,000.00 |
| *Estimated Cash at Bank | | £1,400,000.00 |
| | | £14,021,941.00 |

*This figure is a conservative estimate and the actual figure may be higher at Company Closure.

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Agenda Item 41

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 13.07.2023

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 12.07.2023

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **20th July, 2023**

Report Subject: **Free School Meal Holiday Payments – Summer Holiday 2023**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Sue Edmunds, Cabinet Member - People & Education**

Report Submitted by: **Luisa Munro-Morris, Acting Director of Education**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance & Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| | | | | | | | 20.7.23 | |

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Welsh Government have recently decided to no longer fund Free School Meal holiday payments from the Summer of 2023.
- 1.2 This report seeks Council's agreement to allocate one-off funding to continue the Free School Meal Holiday payments to eligible families across Blaenau Gwent during the Summer Holiday period 2023.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 In March 2020, the Council commenced a free school meals scheme supported by Welsh Government as a temporary response to the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2020 Wales became the first UK nation to guarantee free school meals for eligible families during the school holidays. For the next 2 years the Council has continued to deliver this scheme which has been fully funded by Welsh Government.
- 2.2 On Wednesday 28 June 2023 Welsh Government Informed Councils across Wales that they would no longer be able to support the payment of Free School Meal Holiday payments.
- 2.3 The ever-increasing cost of living crisis has become a significant burden on our communities, especially those from low-income backgrounds. Rising prices has placed a severe strain on households finances.
- 2.4 Vulnerable families have indicated that the funding of £19.50 per child, per week has been invaluable in supporting them to purchase food items during school holidays and in the current cost of living crisis.

- 2.5 Due to the late notification, and the impact that this will have, it is proposed that the Council provides a one-off payment of £19.50 per week, per child, to eligible families for the school holiday period commencing Friday 21 July 2023 and ending on Thursday 31 August 2023.
- 2.6 This will require the allocation of one-off funding of approximately £300,000 based on current take up levels. This funding does not set a precedent but does provide some immediate support for vulnerable families during this continuing cost of living crisis, while also giving families forewarning that no further direct payment will be available for any future holiday periods.
- 2.7 There will be no future payments, unless Members are minded to build in an extra £700,000 of pressures into future budgets or Welsh Government change their policy on this matter.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 Council are asked to either agree:

Option 1 to approve one-off funding in the sum of approximately £300,000 from General Reserves to enable the extension of the free school meal holiday payments for the period outlined in 2.5.

Option 2 not to approve one-off funding in the sum of approximately £300,000 from General Reserves to enable the extension of the free school meal holiday payments for the period outlined in 2.5.

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

The Corporate Plan 2022-27 vision is that 'Blaenau Gwent – a place that is fair, open and welcoming to all by working with and for our Communities' and the proposal to support vulnerable families during these difficult times through the additional payment of those families eligible for Free School Meals during the Summer period fits within our vision.

It further supports our objectives by 'Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient' and that we are a 'An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place' and finally that we can 'Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent'.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

- 5.1 The estimated cost for extending the scheme for the Summer Holidays 2023 is approximately £300,000 based on the current level of take up. This is one-off funding and does not set a precedent.
- 5.2 It is proposed that this sum is funded from General Reserves.

5.3 To not allow the extension of the Free School Meal Holiday Payments Scheme for Summer 2023 for eligible families, considering the Welsh Government decision to stop this payment will create hardship on existing vulnerable families at a time of continuing pressure on household budgets due to the 'cost of living crisis'.

5.4 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

5.5 There are risks that without this one-off payment vulnerable families will suffer significant hardship in providing food for their children during the summer period particularly during this continuing 'cost of living crisis'.

5.6 By agreeing Option1 this will mitigate the impact this late decision will have on families who have grown to rely on this funding and were expecting it for the Summer period.

5.7 There is a risk that eligible families not currently applying for free school meals will make an application. This will increase costs for the period.

5.8 Prioritising this area and increasing cost pressures for future years will necessitate Members having to de-prioritise other service areas.

5.9 ***Legal***

There are no legal implications.

5.10 ***Human Resources***

There are no personnel implications.

5.11 ***Health and Safety***

There are no health and safety implications.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

The ever-increasing cost of living crisis has become a significant burden on our communities, especially those from low-income backgrounds. Rising prices have placed a severe strain on household's finances.

Vulnerable families have indicated that the funding of £19.50 per child, per week has been invaluable in supporting them to purchase food items during school holidays and in the current cost of living crisis.

There was approximately 2,626 learners claiming the direct payment during the on May 2023 half-term , the last time the scheme was delivered across Blaenau Gwent.

- 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***
This additional payment will help ensure children from our vulnerable families will not go without food throughout the summer break during this particularly difficult time with rising prices.
- 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
Vulnerable families have indicated that the funding of £19.50 per child, per week has been invaluable in supporting them to purchase food items during the current cost of living crisis. Many families have come to rely on this direct payment to ensure they can feed their children during school holidays.
- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
Although this is a short-term measure it will hopefully help families to get through the current cost of living crisis and we hope that inflation begins to reduce to take pressure of their household finances.
- 6.5 ***Preventative focus***
This proposal is trying to mitigate against potential hardship for vulnerable families during the summer holidays by ensuring they have funding to buy food to feed their children.
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
This proposal is seeking to work with our communities to support them during these difficult times by ensuring they receive funding to enable them to buy food for their children.
- 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
We are taking a 'one Council' approach to support our communities during these difficult times with the 'cost of living' crisis, this is just another example of services coming together to ensure we meet the needs of our vulnerable children within our communities.
- 6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***
The continuation of this direct payment will have a limited impact on decarbonisation and reducing carbon emissions.
- 6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)***
The decision to terminate the funding has been made by Welsh Government. The recommendation within this report is a measure to support families during an interim period due to the short notice of funding withdrawal provided by Welsh Government.
7. **Monitoring Arrangements**
- 7.1 A further report will be presented to Council following the Summer period to identify the final cost of delivering the Free School Meals direct payment scheme across the 6 week holiday period.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

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Agenda Item 42

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: **20th July, 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) |
| | | | | | | | 20/07/23 | |

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 10th July, 2023:

All Saints RC Primary School – Mr Tim Baxter (with effect from 1st September, 2023)

Ebbw Fawr 3-16 Learning Community – Ms. Joanne Davies

2.2 HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

To ratify the establishment of the above-named Working Group and confirm the following appointments on the Group:

Cabinet Member – Place & Environment (Chair)

Cabinet Member – Place & Regeneration and Economic Development

Councillor S. Behr

Councillor W. Hodgins

3. **Options for Recommendation**

To consider the above.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 15 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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