

T: 01495 355001

E: committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk



Blaenau Gwent

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

THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

11th January 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

CORPORATE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Corporate & Performance Scrutiny Committee will be held via MS Teams on Thursday, 18th January, 2024 at 10.00 am. (if you wish to view this meeting please contact michelle.hicks@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)

Yours faithfully

Damien McCann
Interim Chief Executive

AGENDA

Pages

1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation will be provided if requested.

2. APOLOGIES

To receive.

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. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**
- To receive.
4. **CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** 5 - 6
- To consider the decisions of the Corporate and Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 6th December, 2023.
- (N.B. the decisions are submitted for accuracy points only)*
5. **ACTION SHEET** 7 - 10
- To receive.
6. **ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION STRATEGY** 11 - 30
- To consider the report of the Service Manager Policy and Partnerships.
7. **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY** 31 - 60
- To consider the report of the Head of Organisational Development.
8. **WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2021-2026** 61 - 86
- To consider the report of the Head of Organisational Development.
9. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 14TH MARCH 2024** 87 - 90
- To receive.
10. **EXEMPT ITEM**
- To receive and consider the following report which in the opinion of the proper officer is an exempt item taking into account consideration of the public interest test and that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting (the reason for the decision for the exemption is available on a schedule maintained by the proper officer).

11. **ANVIL COURT, ABERTILLERY**

91 - 132

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

To: Councillor J. Wilkins (Chair)
Councillor J. Thomas (Vice-Chair)
Councillor J. Hill
Councillor J. Holt
Councillor E. Jones
Councillor R. Leadbeater
Councillor C. Smith
Councillor T. Smith

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

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 6TH DECEMBER, 2023

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. WILKINS (CHAIR)

Councillors J. Thomas (Vice-Chair)

- J. Holt
- J. Hill
- E. Jones
- R. Leadbeater
- C. Smith
- T. Smith

**WITH: Chief Officer Resources
Interim Corporate Director Social Services
Democratic and Scrutiny Officer**

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>An apology for absence was received from the Interim Chief Executive.</p>
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>

<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the decisions of the meeting held on 12th October, 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 information therein be noted.</p>
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY UPDATE REPORT – JUNE 2023</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 scrutinise the treasury management activity undertaken during the first 3 months of 2023/24 and do not consider any amendments to the previously agreed Treasury strategies and performance indicators (Option 1).</p>
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 18TH JANUARY, 2024</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 Committee agreed the Forward Programme for the meeting 18th January, 204, as presented (Option 1).</p>

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Action Sheet

Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Date	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
12.10.23	Item 6: Blaenau Gwent Council Self-Assessment 2022/23 Page 4 – Appendix 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">In relation to economically inactive disabled residents – what is the Council doing to support those residents.	All	Example attached. Action Complete: 19.12.23

This page is intentionally left blank

Item 6: Blaenau Gwent Council Self-Assessment 2022/23

Page 4 – Appendix 1

- In relation to economically inactive disabled residents – what is the Council doing to support those residents.

Adult Services-Community Options (Day Opportunities)

Across Community Options we have a range of work-related opportunities for citizens with disabilities and those with additional support needs.

We also work closely with a number of third sector partners such as the Aneurin Leisure Trust where we have service level agreements to support individuals in training and work-related activities.

One example of these is Vision 21 which is a social enterprise/charity operating across South Wales providing support for people with learning disabilities to develop skills, work experience and gain qualifications in the catering industry. Each week up to ten individuals attend the service where they are supported to develop their skills in a busy kitchen environment.

The students gain confidence and experience as well as the opportunity to undertake qualifications across all aspects of a catering enterprise such as customer service, front of house, food preparation and food hygiene, as well as developing valuable social skills.

We are also developing our own catering enterprise working in conjunction with the Blaenau Gwent Community Meals Service where we prepare tea trays for our Community Meals customers to enjoy a tasty snack and cake in the evening, as well as providing buffets on a commercial basis.

We have students that are trained by a qualified cook learning to prepare and get involved with the preparation and presentation of the tea trays and buffets. In doing so they learn cooking and food preparation skills as well as enhancing knowledge of food safety and legislation.

One of our more recent developments has seen us enter into a partnership arrangement with Blaina Institute, where we have taken over the running of a Café at the Institute, where we have dedicated support workers working with individuals with disabilities who are supported with all aspects of working within a busy commercial Café environment.

The students develop the knowledge and experience to interact with the customers, take orders, help prepare teas, coffees and light meals/sandwiches and provide table service, once again developing crucial social skills and building confidence, whilst helping to integrate people with disabilities into the local community.

It is hoped that in the longer term some those that we support will aspire to move into mainstream or supported employment and becoming more economically active in the process.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 6

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Corporate Overview & Performance Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **18th January 2024**

Report Subject: **Engagement and Participation Strategy**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Stephen Thomas, Leader / Cabinet Member Corporate Overview and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Andrew Parker, Service Manager for Policy & Partnerships**

Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance and Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
	03/01/24	05.01.24			18/01/24			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To consider the draft Engagement and Participation Strategy for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in advance of wider public, staff and member consultation.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 Our previous engagement strategy document, 'Our Approach to Engagement' has now concluded and a new approach needs to be developed and implemented. As well as this, we have a statutory requirement within the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, to publish our intentions regarding how we intend to participate with the people of Blaenau Gwent. (see section 4)
 - 2.2 The intention is to combine the two elements into one strategy document and to assist in the development of the strategy document there is an intention to involve members, staff and the public to ensure that we are 'engaging' appropriately and allowing sufficient 'participation'.
 - 2.3 The document will set out why we need to engage, who with and how we will achieve this. We will use the same principle for the participation element, although this will be more specific to address the requirements detailed in section 4 of this report to ensure that local people are able to participate in the making of decisions by the council.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 Option 1: to consider and support the draft Engagement and Participation Strategy at Appendix 1 and progress to the wider consultation phase.

Option 2: to provide additional comments or changes to the draft Engagement and Participation Strategy at Appendix 1 before progressing to the wider consultation phase.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Statutory Responsibilities**

4.1 The Corporate Plan 2022/27 sets out that the community of Blaenau Gwent is at the heart of everything the Council does. Engagement, participation and customer experience feature as a key theme which runs across the Council in order to shape services and make decisions.

4.2 We are committed to engage effectively and this is underpinned by a range of legislation including the:

- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- The Equality Act 2010, - The Welsh Language Measure 2011
- Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 – wherein we must address,

- a) ways of promoting awareness among local people of the principal council's functions;
- b) ways of promoting awareness among local people of how to become a member of the principal council, and what membership entails;
- c) ways of facilitating access for local people to information about decisions made, or to be made, by the principal council;
- d) ways of promoting and facilitating processes by which local people may make representations to the principal council about a decision before, and after, it is made;
- e) arrangements made, or to be made, for the purpose of the council's duty in section 62 of the 2011 Measure (bringing views of the public to attention of overview and scrutiny committees);
- f) ways of promoting awareness among members of the principal council of the benefits of using social media to communicate with local people.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget***

Whilst there are no direct costs associated with the adoption of an Engagement and Participation Strategy, the public consultation process will utilise existing staff resources to develop and deliver any engagement activities, whilst the commitments within the final Strategy may require consideration of the resources currently committed to corporate engagement.

5.2 ***Risk***

Failure to develop an Engagement and Participation Strategy would lead to the council not complying with its' obligations under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

5.3 **Legal**

Failure to develop an Engagement and Participation Strategy would lead to the council not complying with its' obligations under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

5.4 **Human Resources**

The Policy and Performance Division leads on the delivery of the councils' duties under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Ongoing training and development will also be required during the life of the Strategy to successfully embed the engagement framework across all council services.

5.5 **Health and Safety**

No associated health and safety considerations for the development of the draft strategy.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

To enable effective monitoring of the impact of the Engagement and Participation Strategy, monitoring of key metrics relating to increased engagement and participation will be considered during the development of the plan. Progress updates will be reported through the Joint Report and via a mid-term report to the Committee.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

It is anticipated that there will be an improvement in the public interest in the workings of the council, especially concerning the decision-making process. There is an expectation that the public will have an improved understanding of council business, as well as a greater direct contribution to the democratic process.

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

Consultation and engagement with the public, staff and members will take place during early 2024 to seek views on the draft Strategy. The public consultation process will comprise of an online survey / questionnaire as well as more targeted engagement through the established engagement forums and community groups to ensure the views of harder to reach / seldom heard groups are considered.

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

The Strategy will take consideration of the data and future trend information in terms of increasing levels of engagement and participation in democratic processes. An enhanced, more coordinated engagement framework can enable richer public engagement on what local people consider would make the area a better place for the future and have most positive impact on their well-being. Increased levels of participation will help ensure future generations continue to participate in local government decision-making.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The Corporate Plan considers prevention as one of the five ways of working under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. The Engagement and Participation Strategy will outline a series of steps for enhancing local engagement and participation, taking preventative action to help achieve the objectives.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The Strategy will support collaborative and partnership working. The Council's Engagement Team are active members of several regional and national networks, designed to develop and share best practice and ensure that our engagement and participation activities focus on economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being outcomes.

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

The corporate engagement and participation framework needs to be shaped by members and must be integrated and embedded across all council service areas to ensure a consistent approach to engaging with our residents, community groups, and businesses. This will be an ongoing approach throughout the development and delivery of the final Strategy.

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

Increasing participation in hybrid/virtual committee meetings for members of the public and building on opportunities to engage with residents, businesses and community groups virtually as well as in person, reducing the need to travel to a central location by car.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment***

An assessment is being considered as part of the development of the Strategy. It is anticipated that the Strategy, alongside the new Strategic Equalities Plan, will have a positive impact on people with protected characteristics.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Through the Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee and the Democratic Services Committee.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 - Engagement and Participation Strategy 2024/27

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Engagement and Participation Strategy

2024-2027

DRAFT



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Foreword/Supporting Statement

As a Council we are committed towards everyone playing their part in delivering our vision and ambitious programme for action and change. Instrumental to this will be how we engage you - our people, communities, stakeholders, partners, staff members and elected representatives.

We recognise the importance of holding engaging events and programmes that help you find out the facts and ensure you have the opportunity to share your thoughts to shape future plans and service delivery.

You having these opportunities are really important as we have to take really difficult decisions during times of significant financial constraints and important changes in expectation in terms in public service improvement in Wales.

Our commitment to this approach to engage also presents us with a real opportunity to show you that as a Council we are actively taking you into account as part of our new duties set in law by our government in Wales, such as the Well-being of Future Generations Act. These laws fully expect us to involve you in our ways of working.

We recognise the importance of engaging with you, and want to continue to improve how we do it and we are committed to monitoring, reviewing and learning from our practices.

Why Engagement and Participation is important to us

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.

The Council is committed to supporting communities in the long term and looks to achieve this through active engagement with the community, understanding data and need and by developing plans and strategies that will be implemented over a number of years to ensure the future investment and improvement of services in Blaenau Gwent. Effective engagement is crucial to ensure the Council runs effectively, the services delivered are appropriate and meet the needs of those that use them.

We are committed to engage effectively and this is underpinned by a range of legislation including the:

- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- The Equality Act 2010, - The Welsh Language Measure 2011
- Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

This will ensure that we will meet its' statutory duty to carry out effective engagement and participation to inform and improve effective decision making.

We will also follow best practice and national standards, for example the Children and Young People's National Participation Standards and the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales. This policy sets out our corporate approach to engagement with the people of Blaenau Gwent.

This policy reflects the council's core values:

- Respectful
- Inclusive
- Collaborative
- Accountable
- Supportive

The council has an obligation and recognises the importance of participation. Participation is the involvement of the public in the council decision making process, before, during and after. Utilising public opinion is a vital part of designing policies and making decisions. This promotes transparency and allows residents to feel that decisions have been made together.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 states that as a local authority we must address:

- a) ways of promoting awareness among local people of the principal council's functions;
- b) ways of promoting awareness among local people of how to become a member of the principal council, and what membership entails;
- c) ways of facilitating access for local people to information about decisions made, or to be made, by the principal council;
- d) ways of promoting and facilitating processes by which local people may make representations to the principal council about a decision before, and after, it is made;
- e) arrangements made, or to be made, for the purpose of the council's duty in section 62 of the 2011 Measure (bringing views of the public to attention of overview and scrutiny committees);
- f) ways of promoting awareness among members of the principal council of the benefits of using social media to communicate with local people.

It is hoped that by underpinning our commitment to our Engagement and Participation strategy, we will improve services, standards and experiences for all those who live in, work in or visit Blaenau Gwent. Our 4 key Objectives are set out below and in the Action Plan in Appendix 1.

Objective 1: To mainstream effective engagement and participation approaches across the Council

Objective 2: To ensure that we engage with the people of Blaenau Gwent in the most effective, collaborative way

Objective 3: To actively encourage our communities & future generations to participate in council decision-making activity

Objective 4: To maintain best practice in engagement & participation and keep up to date with the latest innovations to help support our communities

Who do we Engage with?

Community Engagement - Engaging with people that live, work and visit our area to help shape the way we run our Council. We recognise that a community may not be defined by 'a specific place' and welcome engagement from communities of interest or representation where groups or people come together collectively or are represented by an advocate or supporter.

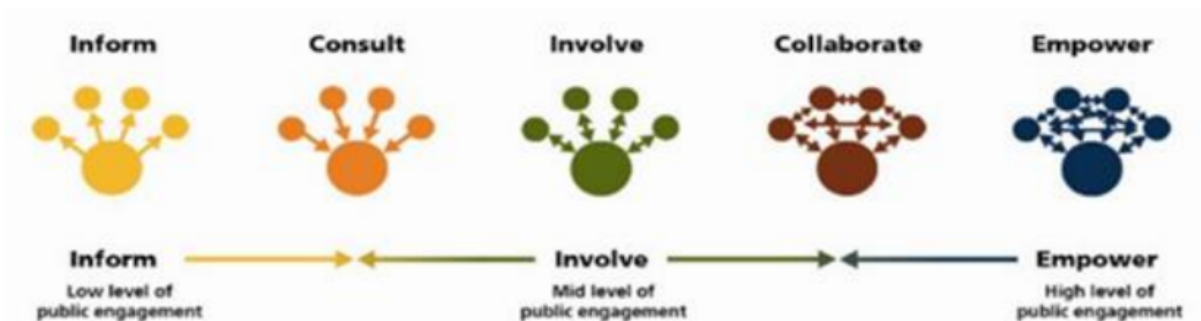
Stakeholder Engagement - Engaging with our stakeholders and partner organisations that have an interest or are actively involved in our area. Part of this will be working through our established partnership arrangements, but we are also keen to actively engage with our non-traditional stakeholders and break down barriers to aid involving everyone.

Staff Engagement - Our staff are our big asset, and we recognise that a workforce that is engaged is crucial if we are to make our engagement approach effective. We know it is important for our staff to be informed, listened to, and involved in shaping decisions which lead to improved service delivery.

Member Engagement - Elected members play a crucial role for our Council in shaping and taking decisions for our area, but also in being a representative voice for the community that they have been elected to serve.

How will we Engage and encourage Participation?

We will employ a varied plan for engaging with the people of Blaenau Gwent and encouraging enhanced participation in decision-making, depending on the circumstances and audience. We will follow the spectrum of engagement as set out below and work towards our four Objectives in the Action Plan (Appendix 1).



	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Purpose	To provide the public with balanced information to allow understanding of concepts, issues, opportunities and potential options or solutions	To obtain feedback on proposals, decisions and strategies.	To work directly with the public throughout a process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision-making process including developing preferred solutions.	We will implement directly what you decide.
Promise	We will keep you informed, we will not withhold any relevant information.	We will consult, listen, consider and keep you informed via constructive feedback.	We will work with you to ensure your input is considered in the decision making process and feedback how it influenced the final outcome.	We will look to you for ideas and innovation in formatting solutions. We will incorporate your ideas and recommendations into the decision making process as far as practically possible.	We will work with you and support you through the process.
Examples	Details of provision and services.	Setting an annual budget.	Developing new policies.	Integrated impact assessments	Participatory Budgeting

We will embrace an approach to Engagement and Participation that follows the *National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales*:

1. Engagement is effectively designed to make a difference
2. Encourage and enable everyone affected to be involved, if they so choose
3. Engagement is planned and delivered in a timely and appropriate way
4. Work with relevant partner organisations
5. The information provided will be jargon free, appropriate and understandable
6. Make it easier for people to take part
7. Enable people to take part effectively
8. Engagement is given the right resources and support to be effective
9. People are told the impact of their contribution
10. Learn and share lessons to improve the process of engagement

We will employ a variety of **methods** to engage with individuals and groups within our communities, such as;

- **Consultations** – To consult on particular issues & provide outcomes
- **Surveys** – To gauge opinions and obtain feedback
- **Engagement Forums** – To involve & empower residents on specific issues
- **Committees & Decision-making** – To communicate & involve people in how decisions are made
- **Face-to-face Events**– To inform, involve & collaborate directly with communities via drop-in sessions, surgeries, town centre engagement etc.
- **Community Groups** – to empower & involve our existing community groups with place-based engagement activity
- **Partnerships & stakeholder networks** – To collaborate with stakeholders, partner organisations and community group representatives
- **Social media and Digital Platforms**– To inform of local provisions and services, gather & provide feedback
- **Community Hubs** – To inform, consider feedback & provide council services
- **Website** – To inform, provide feedback and collaborate with visitors to the website
- **Press Releases** – To inform on specific subjects

How will we facilitate participation in democracy?

Blaenau Gwent residents themselves can also play a key role in how they can participate in the Council decision-making process. The Council commits to facilitate the following methods of participation, addressing the duties as stated in the Local Government & Elections Act (Wales), by making it as simple as possible for residents to:

1) Understand how the Council Works

The Council comprises 33 Councillors representing 14 Electoral Wards. Further information may be found [here](#). The full Council normally meets every other month and has a list of functions including adopting and changing the Constitution, approving and adopting the Budget and Policy Framework, appointing the Leader of Council, determining and agreeing Committees and their terms of reference. The Council has a fluid work programme identifying the business to be addressed at each Committee, which is available [here](#).

The Cabinet is responsible for carrying out all the Local Authority functions which are not the responsibility of the Council. The Cabinet consists of the Leader (a Councillor appointed annually by the Council) and 4 other Councillors (also appointed annually by Council) to take forward 'Key Decisions.' Cabinet Members are responsible for decision making within specific areas, known as Cabinet Portfolios, which are echoed by a Scrutiny Committee comprising other Members of the Council. More information about Cabinet and Scrutiny is available [here](#).

2) Attend Council Meetings

Members of the public can attend meetings of Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny, Planning, Licensing, Audit, Democratic Services and Standards Committee, except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed.

The Council also broadcasts some Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny and Regulatory meetings on the internet. You can watch live meetings and download relevant documents such as reports, plans or presentations. Recordings are available to watch free of charge. You can view them live or alternatively you can catch up on past meetings using the [library of archived recordings](#).

3) Speak at some Council meetings

Members of the public may attend meetings of the Planning Committee and speak if they have objected in writing to a planning application that is being considered. Members of the public may speak at Licensing Panel Hearings if they have objected in writing to a Licensing application that is being considered. Members of the public may also speak at Scrutiny meetings, but only by invitation of the Chair.

4) View Council documents

Members of the public can see the agendas to meetings and background papers for all of the meetings mentioned above and, where appropriate, see any records of decisions made, except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed. All available documents can be seen in the [Committee Directory](#).

5) View Committee Work Programmes

Members of the public can inspect the forward work programmes of Committees. Scrutiny Committees may invite people and organisations to comment on the way things are currently done and how things can be improved. One of the biggest challenges for scrutiny committees is to obtain more interest in the process, by demonstrating that effective scrutiny can make a difference.

6) Ask questions at Council meetings

Members of the public may ask questions of Members of the Council at ordinary meetings of the Council. A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to the Chief Executive no later than midday, three working days before the day of the meeting. Each question must give the name and address of the questioner. At any one meeting no person may submit more than one question and no more than one such question may be asked on behalf of one organisation.

Any question which cannot be dealt with during the meeting will be dealt with by a written answer. For further information about public involvement in meetings in Blaenau Gwent please contact the Head of Democratic Services on committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

7) Submit petitions at Council meetings

The Council has a [Petitions Protocol](#) that can be used when there are circumstances where the public feel strongly about an issue and they wish to directly communicate their views to the Council through a petition.

8) Vote in Local Government Elections

You can also participate in the Council decision-making process by exercising your right to vote. Young people aged 14 and 15 are now able to register to vote and 16 and 17 year olds can now vote in Welsh Parliament (Senedd) elections and Local Government elections.* More information on how to vote is available [here](#).

*Young people's new voting powers do not extend to UK general elections, as you still have to be 18 to vote in general elections.

9) Become a Councillor

A candidate for election must complete a set of nomination papers that must be signed by the candidate in the presence of a witness who must attest the signature. You then need to win a majority of the votes cast at the ballot box (if there is a contest for the seat). Electoral wards have up to two or three Councillors, depending on the Ward's population size, therefore the top three would be elected.

Nomination packs for the next elections will be available early in 2027. If you would like to register your interest, please contact electoral.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

If you are thinking of standing as a candidate for a particular political party, then you should first contact that party's local organisation. If you plan to stand for election as an independent Councillor, contact the Council and Electoral Services will be pleased to give you more information.

In summary, we will continue to deliver our services by underpinning them with effective engagement and participation principles. We will ensure our staff are using engagement in a clear, consistent manner to best support the people in Blaenau Gwent, that feedback is provided to communities about the outcomes from any engagement activity, and ensure residents feel empowered to participate in local democracy.

Welsh Language

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council works in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. This measure sets out standards the Council must comply with to ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than English. All documents, promotional materials, forms and surveys made available to the public are produced bilingually.

The Council's intranet has a link to the Welsh language guidance section on its homepage that includes the written and verbal translation procedure. The Council strives to provide all services available through the medium of Welsh, encouraging staff to attend training to strengthen their ability to engage with residents and colleagues in Welsh; supported by a number of resources to aid Welsh language engagement created and promoted internally to staff.

Equality

The principles and objectives outlined throughout this document and its appendices aim to deliver a positive impact on any people or groups of people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act (Wales) 2010. The purpose of the Equality Act is to

- Put fairness at heart of society.
- Bring 116 pieces of legislation together.
- Level up protection.
- Clarify the law.
- Protect everyone in society.
- Strengthen & advance equality.

As part of the Public Sector Equality Duty we **must** demonstrate due regard to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
2. Advance equality of opportunity.
3. Foster good relations.

The Act outlines that as a Local Authority we **must** involve people covered by the protected characteristics within council functions and decision making. By engaging people, it will help to

- Deliver/design better outcomes and services meeting the needs of the community.
- Allow people in our community to feel heard and considered.
- Provide a clear picture of the disadvantages, reasons for low participation and poor relationships.
- Determine next steps and priorities.
- Understand the impact of initiatives/services have on those with protected characteristics.
- Monitor delivery effectively by gaining person centred insight.

The Policy & Partnerships Team oversee the Integrated Impact Assessment process across Blaenau Gwent Council which ensures that those with protected characteristics are considered during service change, service implementation, policy change and policy implementation to fully understand the impact of such decisions the council may take. The team also provides advice and guidance in regard to Integrated Impact Assessments and any engagement across Blaenau Gwent County Council.

Stakeholders & Partners

There are four **Town and Community Councils** in Blaenau Gwent which play an important part in reaching and representing people within their own community. More information is available here: [Borough, Town & Community Councils | Blaenau Gwent CBC \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/About-us/Our-structure/Borough-Town-&-Community-Councils)

The council will continue to engage with the relevant **Trade Unions** on employment and other matters as appropriate. Engagement with **Businesses** and partners will be key to support economic growth and job creation / opportunities.

The **Blaenau Gwent Local Well-being Partnership** is a local delivery group of the statutory Gwent Public Services Board established by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. The Partnership should ensure that citizen voice is taken into account during decision-making processes. This will take the form of community and stakeholder engagement with community groups, the wider Partnership network and citizens, sharing relevant survey and consultation data wherever possible to avoid duplication and over-consultation.

APPENDIX 1

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Engagement & Participation Strategy – Action Plan

Objective 1	Action	Outcome	Timeframe	Responsibility
To mainstream effective engagement and participation approaches across the Council	To maintain a coordinated approach to Engagement across the Council, using this engagement framework, and ensure staff are kept informed on how to engage and consult through an agreed approach.	A better corporate understanding and management of engagement. Better & more opportunities for members of the public to have their say in their community/place.		
	To maintain a timetable of consultation and engagement exercises carried out by Council Services.	Effective co-ordination of engagement across all Services. Reduced 'consultation fatigue.'		
	Ensure that staff surveys are designed effectively to capture appropriate information to influence change.	Increased staff satisfaction A better corporate understanding and management of engagement.		

Objective 2	Action	Outcome	Timeframe	Responsibility
<p>To ensure that we engage with the people of Blaenau Gwent in the most effective, collaborative way</p>	<p>To maintain and further develop our collaboration with schools, forums and community groups.</p>	<p>Improved engagement with a broad spectrum of representative groups</p>		
	<p>Commit to engaging on proposals for taking difficult financial decisions.</p>	<p>Setting an informed balanced budget</p>		
	<p>To develop the use of online engagement platforms and maintain the use of non-digital, face to face engagement methods in our communities.</p>	<p>Improved levels of engagement with all Blaenau Gwent residents. Increased engagement forum membership and website & social media engagement numbers.</p>		
	<p>To improve the way that we feedback to participants in our engagement exercises via a variety of communication channels, using simple and easy language.</p>	<p>Increased satisfaction from residents and better understanding of how their views are taken into consideration and impact decision-making across the Council</p>		
	<p>To provide mechanisms that allow effective feedback from the people of Blaenau Gwent to ensure the issues that matter are addressed.</p>	<p>Increased satisfaction from residents that issues that affect them are being considered. Improved insight gathering based on Councillors' experiences engaging with constituents.</p>		

Objective 3	Action	Outcome	Timeframe	Responsibility
To actively encourage our communities & future generations to participate in council and decision-making activity, meeting our statutory duties and responsibilities under legislation	To build on existing mechanisms in place that enable the public to participate in Council meetings in person or remotely, making the process as accessible and easy to understand as possible.	To facilitate better access for local people to decisions made by the council. Increased participation at Council committee meetings		
	To use our Integrated Impact Assessment procedure and approaches from the Strategic Equalities Plan to ensure people with protected characteristics are effectively engaged with.	Appropriate engagement is carried out across all parts of our community that can influence strategic decisions and policy changes.		
	To establish an e-petition system and publish a protocol that sets out how the Council intends to handle and respond to petitions.	Blaenau Gwent residents who take the time to submit petitions to the Council have a positive experience.		
	To ensure communities are informed about the role of the Council, what it means to be a Councillor and how to become one.	Making it easier and more attractive for future generations to get involved in local government. Increased voter turnout at local government elections.		

Objective 4	Action	Outcome	Timeframe	Responsibility
To maintain best practice in engagement & participation and keep up to date with the latest innovations to help support our communities	To review the Engagement & Participation Policy regularly e.g. every four years in line with each Administration.	Ensures the Policy is kept up to date and in line with the corporate plan.		
	To ensure the engagement framework is embedded within all Council departments and available for all staff to use.	Consistent approach across all departments.		
	To liaise with Engagement and Equalities networks regionally and across Wales.	Best practise is shared across Wales.		
	To utilise a data led approach to ensure effective targeting of those who are unwilling or unable to engage.	Effective targeting of hard-to-reach residents		
	To develop a strategy for ensuring those approaching voting age have an understanding of the election process.	Increased voter turnout at local government elections.		

Committee: **Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee**
 Date of meeting: **18th January 2024**
 Report Subject: **Recruitment and Selection Policy**
 Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader of the Council / Cabinet Member Corporate Overview & Performance**
 Report Submitted by: **Andrea Prosser, Head of Organisational Development**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
	14.12.23	05.01.24			18.01.24		25.01.24	

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to give Scrutiny Members the opportunity to scrutinise, challenge and give views on the proposed amendments to the Recruitment and Selection Policy, and seek a recommendation to Council to adopt the revised Policy. (“the Policy”) (Appendix 1).

2 Scope and Background

2.1 The Organisational Development (OD) Service has reviewed the Council’s recruitment and selection processes contained in the Council’s current Recruitment Charter. This review was delayed as a result of competing priorities to include the Covid pandemic, staff capacity, increasing demand and complexity and alignment to developments with the Council’s integrated HR/Payroll system, iTrent.

2.2 The Policy sets out the Council’s approach to recruitment and selection and reflects current legislation, best practice, organisational priorities and strategy. The Policy applies to the recruitment and selection of all permanent, temporary and fixed term employees with the exception of school-based employees under the delegated powers of the Governing Body who are subject to a separate policy.

2.3 The key aims of the Policy are to:

- support the achievement of the Council’s Workforce Strategy and wider corporate objectives;
- ensure recruitment and selection is fair, objective and transparent.
- recruit and retain individuals with the right experience, knowledge and competencies in a timely manner;
- recruit openly, ensuring opportunities are available to all and to attract from a diverse pool of talent;
- ensure safer recruitment is central to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk;
- have in place a modern, efficient and cost-effective process which offers a positive experience.

2.4 The Policy has undergone a review however the revisions to policy do not fundamentally change the recruitment and selection processes. Detailed below are the key features of the Policy:

- Jobs will be advertised internally and externally concurrently, in order to facilitate a wider and more diverse pool of candidates from which to select the best candidate(s). An additional caveat has been included in the Policy which states that a role can be advertised internally only where there is a clear business case to do so. Internal recruitment will be applicable to all those currently engaged via a contract of employment with the Council.
- OD will usually only participate in the appointment process for positions graded 10 and above.
- Wherever possible recruitment panels will reflect the diversity of the workforce and to ensure consistency the same officers will normally be involved throughout the process.
- The guaranteed interview schemes, Disability Confident and the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme continue to apply.
- Safer recruitment and practice and re-emphasising the need to ensure that all pre-employment checks are completed prior to an individual commencing employment with the Council.
- The Policy is now applicable for senior officer recruitment.
- The inclusion of the principles of 'Positive Action' taking specific steps to improve equality in the workplace by working to increase the number from under-represented groups in the workforce.
- Flexibility for recruiting managers to design the selection process to suit the requirements of the role to include the option to facilitate recruitment days or to use executive search as a means to identify suitable candidates in cases of hard to fill or senior positions.
- During times of national or 'Gold command' emergency situations, or any other significant local event the Corporate Leadership Team may seek to suspend aspects of the policy in order to appropriately respond to a critical situation.
- The secondment and market supplement policies have been incorporated into the Policy. Combining these allows for ease of reference and reduces the number of individual policies.
- Clarity has also been provided in relation to the appointment of former employees as detailed in the Council's Pay Policy.
- The complaints section is updated, to include a first and second stage complaints process.
- A definition of workers has been added as an appendix to the Policy.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 **Option 1:** (preferred option) Members of the Committee to consider the amendments to the Policy and recommend approval to Council.
- 3.2 **Option 2:** Members of the Committee suggest further amendments/additions to the Policy.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
The Recruitment and Selection Policy supports the achievement of the Council's Workforce Strategy and Council's objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.
5. **Implications Against Each Option**
 - 5.1 **Impact on Budget (*short- and long-term impact*)**
There are no direct financial implications relating to the approval of the Policy.
 - 5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**
The risk of not implementing the proposed policy would mean that the policy is not reflective of current best practice. There are no risks associated with implementing the Policy.
 - 5.3 **Legal**
The Policy has been reviewed in line with employment legislation, to ensure Blaenau Gwent is compliant with relevant legislation.
 - 5.4 **Human Resources**
The human resources implications are set out in the body of the report.
 - 5.5 **Health and Safety**
There are no Health and Safety implications relating to the approval of the Policy.
6. **Supporting Evidence**
 - 6.1 **Performance Information and Data**
N/A
 - 6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**
It is anticipated that the proposed changes to the recruitment policy, and modernisation of our systems will make it more streamlined and easier for external applicants to apply for roles with Blaenau Gwent.
 - 6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) considered this report on the 14th December 2023 and support the proposed policy.

Consultation, engagement and participation regarding the amended policy has been internal to the Council, along with the Trade Unions. The feedback from the trade union consultation requested that the policy be amended that all recruitment in the first instance is internal. CLT considered that the policy provided the flexibility for posts to be advertised internally if there was a business case to do so.
 - 6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**
The Policy is intended to support Blaenau Gwent to recruit the right people into the right roles, and in turn support with retention of staff in the longer term to ensure services can be delivered to the residents of Blaenau Gwent.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

N/A

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

N/A

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

N/A

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)***

Integrated Impact Assessment completed – no adverse impact.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 All policies and procedures are monitored by OD in line with the Policy Schedule. The proposed policies and procedures will be reviewed in line with the OD policy review timetable or if there are any legal or best practice changes that may arise in the meantime.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 - Recruitment and Selection Policy

Recruitment & Selection Policy



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: xx Review: xx

Version Control

This document is intended for:

- Council employees only School-based employees only Council & School-based employees

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.

Contents

1. Policy Statement	4
2. Scope	5
3. Legislation and Equality	5
4. Responsibilities	6
5. Code of Conduct	7
6. Safeguarding	7
7. Assessing the need to recruit	8
8. Restructuring	8
9. Recruitment and Selection Paperwork	9
10. Longlisting / Shortlisting	11
11. Selection	12
12. Informing candidates of the outcome	15
13. Pre-Employment Checks	16
14. Probation	18
15. Induction	19
16. Record Keeping	19
17. Appointment of Former Employees	19
18. Complaints	20
19. Review	20
20. Training	20
21. Collaborative Working	20
22. Secondments	21
23. Temporary/Fixed Term Appointments	22

24. Market Supplements22

25. Agency Workers22

26. Apprenticeships22

Leavers Questionnaires and Exit Interviews23

Market Supplements – NJC Local Government Services24

Definition of Workers25

DRAFT

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Council recognises that its employees are crucial in delivering the highest standards of service and achieving its priorities as an organisation. The Council also understands the need to attract the best talent and ensure that fair and effective recruitment and selection procedures are adopted, complying with relevant employment legislation. This will ensure that the Council recruits and retains the right people with the necessary skills, attributes, and commitment to deliver high quality services to the community.
- 1.2 It is essential that the approach to recruitment and selection responds to an increasingly competitive market and fits with the overall needs of the organisation, through a carefully planned and systematic approach to workforce planning, alongside consideration of service delivery, and new ways of working which could prove more effective.
- 1.3 The aims of this policy are, but not limited to:
- Attracting and retaining talented individuals with the appropriate skills, experience and competencies;
 - Promoting the Council as an Employer of Choice, and showcasing the organisational brand and values; ensuring all candidates have a positive experience;
 - Supporting the achievement of the Council's Workforce Strategy;
 - Safer recruitment being central to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk;
 - Recruiting openly, ensuring opportunities are available to all and to attract from a diverse pool of talent;
 - Making selection decisions which are non-discriminatory and based on objective and justifiable criteria that are impartial and applied consistently;
 - Demonstrating commitment to the responsibilities within the Public Sector Equality Duty, as highlighted within the Equality Act 2010;
 - Appointing in accordance with Welsh language guidance;
 - Ensuring an efficient and cost-effective recruitment and selection process;
 - Understanding why employees are leaving the Council and aim to address the issues by informing strategies to reduce turnover and improve employee retention.
- 1.4 The Council is committed to being an Employer of Choice, and operates the following schemes in respect of recruitment:
- Disability Confident – under this scheme, where candidates with a disability, defined under the Equalities Act 2010, meet the essential criteria for a job the Council guarantees an interview.
 - Defence Employer Recognition Scheme - under this scheme, the Council guarantees an interview to the Armed Forces Community (those currently serving, have previously served, reservists and their partner / spouse) if they meet the essential requirements for the job.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy is applicable to all recruitment and selection except where precluded for valid operational reasons, such as organisational restructuring, redeployment, relief appointments, or apprenticeships with the Council.
- 2.2 This policy applies to the recruitment and selection of all permanent, temporary and fixed term employees of the Council with the exception of school-based employees under the delegated powers of the Governing Body who are subject to a separate policy.
- 2.3 During times of national or 'Gold command' emergency situations, or any other significant local event the Corporate Leadership Team may seek to suspend aspects of this policy in order to appropriately respond to a critical situation.

3. Legislation and Equality

- 3.1 This policy has been developed in line with employment and equalities legislation and will be reviewed periodically in line with changes in legislation.
- 3.2 The Council cares about building a more representative and inclusive workplace, and that begins with our recruitment and selection process. In order to deliver the best service possible, diversity of perspectives and experiences, and a fair recruitment and selection process free from bias, is the first step in getting there. On this basis, the Council does not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, responsibility for dependents, trade union or political activities; or any other reasons which cannot be justified.
- 3.3 This policy provides a clear framework within which all Council employees, managers and trade unions can work to achieve equality of opportunity, with particular regard to the protected characteristics outlined in legislation.
- 3.4 Reasonable adjustments will be made for candidates who indicate they require adjustments through the recruitment and selection process.
- 3.5 The Council welcomes applications from across the community and is committed to increase applications from those groups who are under-represented in particular areas of work, in line with the principles of "Positive Action", outlined within the Equality Act 2010. This should be discussed with Organisational Development prior to an offer of employment being made.
- 3.6 The Council will only specify gender or race as a genuine occupational qualification for a position where absolutely necessary and where lawful under the Equality Act 2010. Where a manager decides that a position should have a Genuine Occupational Qualification they will be required to present detailed information that supports their decision.

- 3.7 Employees involved in the recruitment process have a responsibility for ensuring compliance with relevant data protection legislation. This legislation regulates the use of personal data and covers some manual records as well as electronic records and is concerned with the processing of personal data. Under this legislation individuals have certain rights relating to personal data about them during the recruitment process.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Council is a large, diverse employer; and therefore, the recruitment and selection of employees will be the responsibility of individuals across the organisation to ensure maximum effectiveness of the process and decision-making.
- Senior appointments, to include the Chief Executive, Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer positions, are subject to separate arrangements as detailed in the Council's Constitution. Whilst there are separate arrangements in place the recruitment to these posts will normally reflect the principles detailed in this Policy.
 - Chief Officers have delegated authority to appoint to all other positions within their approved structure. They may delegate such authority to managers and must ensure that those involved in the recruitment and selection process comply with the provisions of this Policy. Employees who lead recruitment processes (otherwise referred to as 'recruiting managers') will hold responsibility for ensuring that recruitment processes are undertaken in line with this Policy.
- 4.2 Where the authority to appoint is delegated to officers it is recommended that the recruitment and selection panel will comprise of three officers. Wherever possible panels will reflect the diversity of the workforce and to ensure consistency the same officers will normally be involved throughout the process. In circumstances where there is a need to involve more than three officers or external partners on a recruitment and selection panel then this should be discussed in advance with Organisational Development. A representative from Organisational Development will participate in the appointment process for positions graded 10 and above. Involvement below this level will be in exceptional circumstances only and where required, this support should be requested at the outset of the recruitment and selection process.
- 4.3 Occasionally, it may be appropriate to run recruitment days or use Executive Search as a method of identifying suitable candidates. This should be discussed with Organisational Development.
- 4.4 Organisational Development will provide advice and guidance throughout the recruitment and selection process and the Head of Organisational Development or their representative can intervene at any point in the process where non-compliance has occurred or is likely to occur.
- 4.5 Operating outside of this policy may leave the Council vulnerable to challenge and as such all employees involved in the recruitment and selection process should be made aware of their responsibilities and undertake appropriate training to ensure the effective application of the policy. Failure to comply with this policy, may lead to action under the Councils' Disciplinary Policy.

5. Code of Conduct

- 5.1 Appointments must be made on merit and in line with the Council's Code of Conduct (Section 27 – Appointments and Other Employment Decisions). In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, members of the recruitment and selection panel should not be involved in any stage of an appointment if they are related to a candidate or have a close personal relationship with a candidate outside work.
- 5.2 Line management of an employee by a relative is to be avoided wherever possible, in line with the Council's Code of Conduct (Section 26.7 – Line Management of Relatives), to avoid conflicts of interest or allegations of nepotism or favouritism. In a situation where a manager may be required to manage a relative, efforts will be made to relocate one of the parties.

6. Safeguarding

- 6.1 The Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy sets out the Council's commitment to ensuring that everyone living within the County Borough is safe and protected and that the statutory responsibilities to safeguard and protect children, young people and adults at risk are effectively met. Safeguarding children and adults from abuse is everyone's responsibility, both corporately and individually, to ensure that all children and adults are treated with respect and protected from others who may abuse them.
- 6.2 Safer recruitment is central to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk. This policy sets out robust recruitment and selection processes to deter, identify and prevent individuals who might abuse children and / or adults or are otherwise unsuitable for employment.

Recruiting managers need to ensure safer practice in recruitment by giving consideration to safeguarding arrangements at every step of the process which includes:

- Information provided to candidates on safeguarding responsibilities and the requirement for the successful candidate to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service check in accordance with statutory and regulatory requirements where appropriate.
- Application forms scrutinised to ensure that they are fully and properly completed; the information is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies or any gaps in employment history.
- The selection process assesses and explores a candidate's suitability to work with children / young people / adults at risk.
- Any appointment being conditional on a series of pre-employment checks being satisfactorily completed.

7. Assessing the need to recruit

- 7.1 A vacancy can arise for a number of reasons, such as employee turnover, restructuring, or internal promotion. Where vacancies arise as a result of employee turnover, managers should read the leavers guidance in Appendix 1.
- 7.2 When a vacancy arises, there may be a need to review the position and / or structure considering both the current and future service needs ensuring that any recruitment is consistent with the workforce plan for the directorate.
- 7.3 Where there are significant changes to an existing position, or the required qualifications / experience, this must be subject to job evaluation to determine the appropriate grade prior to advertising. Where a job evaluation has already determined a grade for a position, a vacancy must be advertised using the job description / person specification that was submitted as part of the evaluation process. This is to ensure that the Council maintains the integrity of the evaluated grading structure.
- 7.4 If there are any changes to a directorate structure, or creation of a new position this must be the subject of an approved restructure report.
- 7.5 The principles and approval process to be followed to initiate recruitment is available on the Council's Intranet. These processes are subject to review and amendment in accordance with Council operational priorities.

8. Restructuring

- 8.1 There may be occasions where, due to organisational needs, there will be a requirement to operate outside of the recruitment policy, such as occasions where there is a restructure. Before operating outside of this Policy advice must be sought from Organisational Development.
- 8.2 Redeployment
- When a vacancy first arises, consideration must be given to the suitability of the position for any employees who are identified as 'at risk' and on the redeployment list. Further details can be found in the Redeployment Policy.
- 8.3 Direct Appointment / Ring-fencing
- Direct appointments are where appointments are made without subjecting it to competition and therefore, there must be valid reasons for doing so to avoid any accusations of unequal opportunity.
 - The only circumstance in which managers may directly appoint are those circumstances where following a restructure an employee's position will no longer exist or will substantially change and they may potentially become redundant or if they require redeployment for health reasons. Employees cannot be directly appointed to positions above their substantive grade, and in these circumstances a recruitment process must take place.

- Where restructuring takes place and there are a number of employees who meet the person specification, the available position will be ring-fenced, and where there is more than one suitable candidate, normal recruitment and selection procedures will take place. In the case of redundancies, please refer to the Redundancy Policy.
- In all cases of direct appointments or ring-fencing there must be prior consultation with Organisational Development and the Trade Unions, which will then be followed by consultation with the employee(s).
- Temporary employees covering a permanent position will not normally be directly appointed. The filling of that position will normally be subject to open competition via the recruitment policy.

9. Recruitment and Selection Paperwork

9.1 Recruitment and selection paperwork is crucial in a successful recruitment and selection process, as it provides the first impression of the position, directorate, and the Council to potential candidates. Recruitment provides a fantastic marketing opportunity to promote the Council as a great place to work. All recruitment and selection paperwork should be of high-quality and in line with the standardised templates which are available on the intranet.

9.2 Job Advert

- The job advert is the first opportunity to sell the Council brand and attract potential candidates to apply for a position. Adverts should follow the standard template available on the intranet; and be concise and attractive.
- All vacancies will be advertised both internally and externally concurrently. This will allow permanent employees to apply for alternative opportunities; temporary, fixed term, and relief employees to apply for permanent positions whilst advertising to a wider, more diverse talent pool external to the Council. Where there is a clear business case a decision may be taken to advertise a vacancy internally only, and in these cases, advice must be sought from Organisational Development. Internal recruitment will be applicable to all those currently engaged via a contract of employment with the Council.
- Vacancies will be advertised weekly on the Council's recruitment bulletin, website and social media, and managers may choose to use a variety of websites or publications. Open adverts will normally be advertised for a minimum of 10 working days.
- The costs for advertising will be funded by the service placing the advert. Cost effective online advertising is strongly encouraged.
- If there is a requirement to extend the closing date for any reason, the recruiting manager should discuss this with Organisational Development.

9.3 Job Description

- The job description is a crucial part of the recruitment process, and its purpose is to provide an accurate account of the main duties, responsibilities, and any special conditions applicable to the position. The job description should be clear, concise and non-discriminatory and contain the information outlined within the template job description available on the intranet.
- Certain positions in the Council are identified as politically restricted as outlined in legislation. Details of any restrictions must be outlined on the job description, as any successful candidate to a politically restricted position must comply with any restrictions during the course of their employment. Further details are available in the Council's Guide to Politically Restricted Positions.
- A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is requested after a risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. The job description should clearly state if a DBS is required for a position and the level required. In addition, the job advert will usually contain a statement that a DBS check will be requested in the event of the candidate being offered the position.
- In line with our Agile Working Policy, all positions with the Council are designated as either; agile worker, home worker or service-based worker. The job description should clearly state the designation of the position, which must be in line with the approved designation. For newly created positions, careful consideration should be given to the requirements of the position, before selecting a designation.

9.4 Person Specification

- The person specification forms part of the job description and is an essential tool in the process of selection, ensuring that there is clear agreed information on the relevant criteria against which a candidate's suitability for the position can be assessed. This will ensure that the recruitment and selection process is transparent, fair and effective.
- The requirements within the person specification should be derived from the job description, the Council's Competency Framework and align to those set out in the job evaluation of the position. It should list the skills and abilities, knowledge, experience, qualifications, competencies, professional registration and personal attributes required. Where qualifications are required any acceptable equivalents or alternatives should be stated. Information on the Council's Competency Framework is available on the Intranet.
- When advertising a position, a decision should be taken on the most appropriate methods of selection. There are a number of methods to assess a candidate's suitability for a position, including interviewing, selection tests, and assessment centres. It is important to identify the best ways of assessing potential employees and the selection methods are vital to ensure that a candidate holds a particular skill or knowledge level. It should be clear in the person specification what methods of selection will be used during the recruitment and selection process.

- During the course of the recruitment and selection process, consideration should be given to Welsh language guidance. The Welsh language requirements of the position must be clearly indicated in the person specification.
- The person specification must describe the person sought for the job in terms of essential and desirable qualities. The essential criteria must be justifiable, measurable and essential for the effective performance of the job and the desirable criteria will enable a person to perform more effectively.
- The person specification should be clear, concise and non-discriminatory. It should not create any barriers for potential candidates as a result of any protected characteristics covered by the Equalities Act 2010.

9.5 Recruitment Authorisation

- In order to initiate the advertising process, it is the recruiting managers responsibility to obtain authorisation to recruit. Once the authorisation has been sought, the Recruitment Authorisation Proforma should be forwarded to Organisational Development along with the following organisational branded documents, including Welsh translations:
 - Job Description and Person Specification
 - Advert
 - Recruitment pack (where required)
 - Report / Recruitment Authorisation Proforma

9.6 Applications

- The Council operates an on-line recruitment system and all vacancies will be advertised on the Council's website. Candidates should apply for the relevant position online by completing the Council's application form. Curriculum Vitae's will not normally be accepted. However, if candidates covered by the Equality Act 2010 experience difficulties applying online, they are able to request an alternative format from Organisational Development.
- Application forms must be submitted by the specified closing date and will be acknowledged via email. Late applications will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances agreed by the recruiting manager in conjunction with Organisational Development. No late applications will be considered once the shortlisting process has commenced and no application forms will be issued after the closing date.

10. Longlisting / Shortlisting

- 10.1 Following the closing date, the longlisting / shortlisting of candidates should take place in a timely manner and all members of the recruitment and selection panel should be involved.
- 10.2 In relation to senior appointments to include the Chief Executive, Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer positions the shortlisting will be undertaken in line with Council's Constitution.

- 10.3 Where no applications have been received, a decision should be taken on whether or not to re-advertise or re-visit the job design and / or structure.
- 10.4 In the unlikely event that a decision is taken to delay an appointment the recruiting manager will be responsible for informing candidates, via email if possible, of the situation as soon as possible after the decision has been taken.
- 10.5 Shortlisting should be determined by considering the information within a candidate's application form, against the requirements of the position as detailed within the person specification. The criteria will be applied equally and consistently to all candidates and no additional criteria may be introduced at the shortlisting stage, nor can the original criteria be applied at a more advanced or exacting level. Only those who meet the criteria within the person specification should be shortlisted.
- 10.6 Where high volumes of candidates meet the essential criteria for a vacancy, the desirable criteria should be used to assess the long list of candidate's suitability for the position, and a short list of candidates should be selected to move forward in the process.
- 10.7 The recruiting manager will be responsible for completing the Shortlisting Assessment Proforma, which provides a record of the assessment of candidates and must be returned to Organisational Development to be kept on the recruitment file.
- 10.8 When shortlisting, managers should follow the principles of the Guaranteed Interview Schemes, as outlined in the policy statement, and candidates who fall within the eligible categories should be offered an interview if they meet the essential criteria of the advert, even where shortlisting comes down to the desirable criteria. These schemes do not guarantee a job offer, and the appointment must come down to the candidate(s) that is most suited for the position.
- 10.9 No appointments must be made direct at this stage in the process. All appointments must be confirmed following an interview/selection process, even in the situation where there is only one shortlisted candidate.

11. Selection

- 11.1 The main objective of the selection process is to obtain as much relevant information about each short-listed candidate as possible in order that the panel may make an objective and informed decision in terms of which candidate is the most suitable for the position. There is flexibility in which assessments can be used to assess candidates.
- 11.2 The recruiting manager will be responsible for the selection process. A member of Organisational Development will only be involved if additional support or coaching is requested or considered necessary in discussion with the manager, or for positions graded 10 and above.

- 11.3 Panel members should not take part in the recruitment and selection process, if they are related to, or a close friend of a candidate. Panel members should not normally take part in the recruitment process if they have agreed to act as a referee for a candidate except where the appointment may be internal and the situation cannot be avoided. In this situation the referee must inform the other members of the panel before the process begins.
- 11.4 Candidates who have been successful at shortlisting and invited to the next stage of the recruitment and selection process, will be formally notified by email, using the approved templates in the online recruitment system.
- 11.5 In relation to senior appointments to include the Chief Executive, Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer positions the selection and appointment will be undertaken in line with Council's Constitution.
- 11.6 Shortlisted candidates should be given as much notice as possible of the dates of the selection process.
- 11.7 Unsuccessful candidates will be formally notified via email.
- 11.8 It is advised, where the successful candidate is required to work with children and/or vulnerable adults that all shortlisted candidates visit the establishment/service area. This will be the responsibility of the recruiting manager to co-ordinate. It may prove valuable in offering an additional opportunity to assess the candidate's interaction with possible colleagues and / or clients. If this method is to be utilised as part of the selection process candidates must be informed.
- 11.9 It is recommended that a reserve candidate(s) is selected, and this should be the next appointable candidate ensuring that a safe appointment is made.
- 11.10 All results will be properly documented and recorded against each candidate. Feedback in relation to a candidate's participation during the recruitment and selection process will be available upon request from the recruiting manager.
- 11.11 Organisational Development can request to defer an appointment being made pending consultation with the Head of Organisational Development or their representative where they are not satisfied that standards have been met.
- 11.12 Interviews
- It is vital that interviews are carried out in a systematic, objective and professional manner to ensure that the most suitable candidate is selected.
 - Each candidate should receive a consistent experience during the interview process, and all candidates should be treated fairly.
 - Prior to the commencement of an interview, panel members should agree interview questions which focus on the requirements of the role, care should be taken to avoid questions, which could be interpreted as being discriminatory. Whilst the same core questions should be asked of all candidates, the process should also be tailored to individual candidates as necessary and supplementary questions may be asked as a means of assessing each candidate's individual skills, experience and suitability for the post.

- Following the completion of the interview, panel members must separately consider the candidate's responses provided during the interview and recorded on the Interview Record and Assessment Proforma and make an assessment of the candidate's performance.
- The overall assessment of candidates should normally wait until after all the interviews have been conducted. At which stage each candidate will be assessed, and all panel members will discuss the individual scores they have awarded each candidate for each question and the evidence this is based on and arrive at a consensus and agree a score for each question.
- The agreed score for each candidate must be recorded on the Interview Candidate Assessment Proforma by the recruiting manager and the individual marks added up to give the total score for each candidate's responses at the interview. This provides an objective system for determining who should be appointed, which is usually the candidate with the highest overall total score.

11.13 Selection Tests

- Selection tests can provide objective information about a candidate, and the choice of selection tests should be matched to the criteria identified within the person specification. The content of the tests must assist the objective assessment of candidates against the person specification and should specifically relate to the position and should measure an individual's suitability to do the work. The selection method chosen must be appropriate to the level and type of position. Selection tests could include the following, but this is not an exhaustive list, and Organisational Development can advise on the use of tests:
 - Scenario / Case Study
 - Written exercises
 - Preparing a report / press release
 - Analysis of data / data entry
 - Driving Test
 - Manual Handling / COSHH exercise
- It is important that any selection test does not have a disproportionate impact on any candidates who have protected characteristics. Therefore, it is essential that all tests should be reviewed to ensure they are relevant and free from any unjustifiable bias.
- Following the completion of any selection tests, panel members must score the candidate's performance.

11.14 Presentations

- For some positions, the use of a presentation can provide critical information as part of the recruitment and selection process, particularly where this skill will be required.
- Presentations allow the panel to assess the candidate on their knowledge, skills, values and understanding of the particular position / area of work for which they are applying.

- This process needs to be as open and transparent as the interview process, and all results will be documented, and recorded as part of the selection stage.
- Where recruiting managers are considering the use of a presentation, this should be clearly outlined to the candidates who are selected for the next stage of the process, and they should be provided with sufficient time to prepare for the presentation.
- Each member of the recruitment and selection panel must score the candidate's performance.

11.15 Assessment Centres

- An assessment centre is a structured event that includes a mixture of selection tests, presentations and interview methods, usually taking place over one or two days. They are an effective means of identifying candidate behaviours, and suitability for the position. It allows the recruitment and selection panel to assess whether candidates hold particular skills, knowledge and values.
- This method of selection is not suitable for all positions within the Council however, for the Chief Executive, Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer positions recruitment usually involves an assessment centre. The use of an assessment centre does allow the opportunity to reduce the number of candidates that progress forward to the final stage of the process. An assessment centre may be facilitated internally by the recruitment and selection panel, or by an external provider.
- It is important that assessment centres do not have a disproportionate impact on any candidates who have protected characteristics. Therefore, it is essential that all methods of assessment should be reviewed to ensure they are relevant and free from any unjustifiable bias, and reasonable adjustments should be made if required.
- During the assessment centre the candidate's performance must be assessed.

12. Informing candidates of the outcome

- 12.1 The recruiting manager will make all verbal conditional offers of employment within a reasonable timeframe of the completion of the selection process. Such offers are legally binding and subject to the terms and conditions detailed in the formal offer letter that will follow. The salary offered will be in accordance with the Council's Pay Policy and graded structure.
- 12.2 Organisational Development will send out the formal offer letter and relevant documentation after receiving the completed Interview Candidate Assessment Proforma.
- 12.3 Unsuccessful candidates will normally be advised of the outcome of the selection process by e-mail. Where unsuccessful candidates request feedback, the recruiting manager should offer specific and constructive feedback.

- 12.4 If a decision to appoint is delayed for whatever reason the candidates must be advised accordingly.
- 12.5 The recruiting manager is responsible for completing the relevant payroll processes to commence the employee.

13. Pre-Employment Checks

- 13.1 All new and existing employees who have been appointed to a position will be subject to pre-employment checks. Any offer of employment will be conditional upon the Council being satisfied as to the satisfactory completion of the checks.
- 13.2 It is essential to safeguard all concerned and ensure that all pre-employment checks are completed **prior to** an individual commencing employment with the Council.
- 13.3 Where any issues arise as part of the pre-employment process, these will need to be discussed between the recruiting manager, Organisational Development; and where appropriate, the candidate.
- 13.4 References
- All appointments will be subject to the receipt of at least two satisfactory written references. The two references should be from the candidate's last two employers, one of which should be from their current employer. Where an appointment is made internally, a reference will be sought from the candidate's current manager. Where candidates have no previous employers they should nominate individuals that can provide a character reference such as a schoolteacher, college tutor etc. Personal references from a relative, close friend or a Council Member will not be acceptable. The Council reserves the right to contact any previous employer of the candidate in order to verify their employment history.
 - References will only be requested for the successful candidate(s), using a standard template.
 - References should be used to check important factual information. Where there is a significant issue highlighted within the reference this should be discussed with Organisational Development.
 - All information supplied by referees must be treated in confidence and must only be shared with those relevant to the recruitment process, such as the recruiting manager and Organisational Development.
 - If an organisation will not provide a reference or has gone out of business then the candidate should provide an alternative referee.
- 13.5 Right to Work in the U.K.
- The Council is legally required to ensure that all employees have the legal right to work in the United Kingdom (U.K.) in line with relevant legislation. As part of the pre-employment checks, all potential employees are required to provide evidence to demonstrate their eligibility to legally work in the U.K.

- All documentation must be sent to Organisational Development to be retained on the employee's file. All right to work checks, will be conducted in line with the latest Government guidelines.

13.6 Disclosure and Barring Checks (Recruitment of ex-offenders)

- Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar a candidate from working with the Council. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.
- The Council actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills, and potential and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. Candidates are selected based on their skills, qualifications, and experience.
- As an organisation using the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) to assess a candidate's suitability for positions of trust, the Council complies with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all candidates for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a DBS on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
- A DBS is only requested after a risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a DBS is required, the job description will clearly state if a DBS is required and the appropriate level. In addition, the job advert will usually contain a statement that a DBS check will be requested in the event of the candidate being offered the position.
- We will ensure that officers in the Council who are involved in the recruitment process are able to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Where a DBS is to form part of the recruitment process, candidates are encouraged to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. This information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.
- Unless the nature of the position permits the Council to ask questions about a candidate's entire criminal record the Council only asks about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- At interview, or in a separate discussion, the Council will ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- Any matters disclosed in a DBS will be discussed with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- DBS checks are undertaken on eligible positions within the Council and are renewed every three years.

- The Council will not normally accept certificates carried out by other organisations unless the candidate is registered to use the update service.
- In circumstances where employees are externally seconded from another organisation into the Council, the above process will apply. Where employees are externally seconded from the Council into another organisation, the above process would continue to apply for their substantive position.

13.7 Other pre-employment checks include:

- Academic / professional qualifications and registration where applicable
- Work health assessment

14. Probation

- 14.1 All new employees joining the Council will be required to successfully complete a 6-month probationary period. This is the opportunity for new employees to establish themselves in the position and for the manager to assess how well they are settling in, monitor the employees' performance, and identify any development needs. Regular supervision is provided for all employees and notes from these sessions will be used to inform the successful completion of the probationary period.
- 14.2 If the manager is satisfied with performance then the probation period will be signed off and the employee's appointment in the position will be confirmed.
- 14.3 Any areas of concern in the employee's performance should be highlighted as soon as possible and the employee should be provided with the appropriate support and training necessary for them to achieve an acceptable standard of performance. Any expectations and goals should be given clearly, and in good time so that the employee has the opportunity to improve their performance. A comprehensive record should be kept of the areas that require improvement, the requirement to improve performance and how that can be achieved. In all cases the manager must show that they have acted fairly and given the employee the opportunity to improve.
- 14.4 In some cases it may be appropriate to extend the probationary period where an individual has shown progress in achieving the required standards but further time is required to assess; or take the necessary steps to terminate the employee's employment when all other options have been exhausted. Advice should be sought from Organisational Development when consideration is being given to extending a probationary period, and this should normally only be for a maximum of a further three months.
- 14.5 Upon satisfactory completion of the probationary period, the manager will forward the completed probationary paperwork to Organisational Development. The employee will then be notified in writing that they have successfully completed their probationary period.
- 14.6 In the event that the employee fails to reach the required standard then the manager, with support from Organisational Development, should hold a meeting with the employee to terminate their employment. This should be followed up in writing with the reasons for termination clearly stated in the letter.
- 14.7 In some cases where an employee within their probationary period has a significant proportion of the six-month period away from the workplace, advice should be

sought from Organisational Development regarding an extension to the probationary period to take account of this period.

15. Induction

- 15.1 After a successful recruitment and selection process, supporting a new employee through a robust induction programme is the best way to help a new employee settle into the organisation and is the first part of a successful retention programme. All new employees who commence with the Council, whether an internal or external appointee will need to receive an induction into their position and service as well as information about the broader priorities and operations of the Council.
- 15.2 Local, job-specific induction will be the responsibility of the employing directorate and managers should ensure that a programme is in place to welcome the newly appointed individual, encourage them to feel part of the organisation and to be effective in their new position. A good induction programme reinforces positive first impressions and makes the new employee feel welcome and ready to contribute fully. A manager's guide to induction and induction checklists are available on the intranet. It is every manager's responsibility to ensure that new employees are appropriately inducted and the relevant checklists (e.g., Health & Safety) are completed and retained for future reference.
- 15.3 All new employees will be provided with login details to enable them to complete the Council's online Corporate Induction, which should be completed within one month of starting. Employees without IT access should be supported by their manager to complete the online induction.

16. Record Keeping

- 16.1 Recruiting managers should forward all recruitment paperwork through to Organisational Development, where it will be retained for a specified period from the date of the interview and then destroyed in line with the Record Retention and Disposal Policy. For the successful candidate, all appropriate recruitment paperwork will be retained on their Organisational Development personal file.

17. Appointment of Former Employees

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

18. Complaints

- 18.1 If a candidate considers that their non-appointment is on the basis of procedural irregularities or suspected unfair treatment the candidate may make a complaint.

First Stage - Complaint

The complaint should initially be raised with the recruiting manager or their manager and a written response provided to the complainant within a reasonable timescale.

Second Stage - Complaint

If after the first stage the candidate is still dissatisfied, the candidate may complain in writing to the Head of Organisational Development outlining the details of the complaint. Such complaints will be investigated by the Head of Organisational Development, their representative or an independent person, where the interview notes and all other documentation on the recruitment file may be reviewed. There may be a need to interview employees involved in the recruitment process for the purpose of ascertaining and analysing the facts. A report of the investigation will be discussed with the Corporate Director. Depending on the individual circumstances in each case, substantiation of the complaint could lead to the application of the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

19. Review

- 19.1 This Policy will be reviewed periodically in light of developments in recruitment and selection practice and legal requirements to ensure that best practice is maintained.

20. Training

- 20.1 Training for officers involved in the recruitment and selection process is mandatory to ensure that they recruit in a fair and consistent manner and that they are aware of their legal responsibilities and is available through our online learning platform.

21. Collaborative Working

- 21.1 Increasingly as an organisation the Council is working with partner organisations. This may have implications on the recruitment and selection of employees, for instance in the following areas:
- Development of joint advertisements.
 - Involvement of representatives from several organisations in the process.
 - The need to determine which organisation will manage the process e.g. paperwork and record keeping.
- 21.2 It is essential, therefore, that consideration is given to such matters when initially entering into partnerships and joint working arrangements.

22. Secondments

- 22.1 A secondment is where an employee temporarily covers the full duties of a higher graded, or alternative position within the Council for a period of at least four weeks for any other reason than the annual leave of an officer. Secondment opportunities can provide valuable opportunities for both career and personal development.
- 22.2 Secondments can offer an effective means of filling vacancies; however, it is important to recognise that secondments are only a short-term solution to a particular situation and should not be used as a substitute for permanent, or for long term temporary appointments. It is recommended that a secondment, in normal circumstances should be no longer than one years duration and should be subject to regular review.
- 22.3 Managers will exercise their discretion to decide whether a vacancy is a suitable secondment opportunity with advice from Organisational Development.
- 22.4 Selection will be based solely on merit and the candidate's ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position and will be subject to the normal selection process.
- 22.5 An employee interested in applying for a secondment opportunity must obtain the consent of their manager before making an application. The manager should make the decision based on the exigencies of the services and in the case where a request is denied then the employee should be provided with the reasons for the refusal.
- 22.6 The manager will be responsible for ensuring that measures can be put in place to backfill the seconded employee, this could be by means of employing a temporary employee, paying an honorarium or a consequential secondment.
- 22.7 Once appointed an employee will be formally notified in writing of the terms and conditions of the secondment. The salary to be paid will be the salary that would apply were the employee promoted to the higher graded post.
- 22.8 The successful employee should be released from their substantive position at the earliest opportunity, taking account of operational considerations and no later than their normal required notice period. Seconded employees must be afforded regular contact with their service area.
- 22.9 Secondments will be expected to run for their projected period but may be terminated early by either the employee on secondment, or management subject to one month's notice. Where an employee is absent for a period of one month consideration may be given to ending the secondment.
- 22.10 An employee will return to their substantive position at the end of the secondment.
- 22.11 Where a manager has a request for a secondment external to the Council, advice should be sought from Organisational Development.

23. Temporary/Fixed Term Appointments

- 23.1 Temporary appointments are only acceptable for short term unplanned temporary vacancies or to arrange temporary cover for a permanent vacancy in the short term while arrangements are being made to advertise the position. Fixed term appointments should only be made where it is deemed a position will last for a specific period, such as to cover a project, or where a position is externally funded.

24. Market Supplements

- 24.1 The Council recognises that in certain exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to apply a market supplement. Further detail on market supplements is set out in Appendix 2.

25. Agency Workers

- 25.1 The use of employment agencies to supply temporary workers must be regulated and any manager wishing to engage the services of an agency should seek the necessary approval.
- 25.2 The Council has a main preferred supplier for agency workers details can be sought from Organisational Development.
- 25.3 Prior to any agency worker starting an assignment with the Council, the recruiting manager should ensure that all relevant checks are requested from the Agency at the outset and are in place prior to any assignment starting with the Council.
- 25.4 Agency workers should not be used to fill long term vacancies and should be used as a short-term measure.

26. Apprenticeships

- 26.1 There are many benefits to apprenticeships such as developing a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce. Apprenticeships could provide opportunities to upskill existing employees, who may be interested in a new position or career development, or there may be opportunities to advertise a vacancy as an external apprenticeship opportunity.
- 26.2 It is important to note, that apprenticeships should provide the apprentice with the skills and experience to gain employment following the completion of their qualification.
- 26.3 The Council does not guarantee a role upon completion of an apprenticeship programme, however, where an apprentice has successfully completed their apprenticeship programme and there is a suitably graded post within the directorate, they may be slotted into this post as long as they meet the essential criteria of the role. The manager and Aspire Mentor will need to assess the Apprentices suitability for the role, and complete the appropriate paperwork prior to a decision being made to slot an apprentice into a vacancy with the Council.

Leavers Questionnaires and Exit Interviews

Leaver's questionnaires and interviews are voluntary but are good practice to gather valuable feedback on how well the Council is performing as an employer. They help to understand the reasons why employees are leaving and where change is necessary to improve the employment experience and assist with employee retention.

All employees voluntarily leaving the employment of the Council will be given the opportunity to provide feedback normally prior to their employment ending. The following sets out the process for leavers questionnaires and exit interviews:

- Upon receipt of a letter of resignation, the manager should acknowledge the letter in writing, and complete the termination of employment form to avoid any overpayment.
- The letter of resignation and a copy of the acknowledgement letter should be forwarded to Organisational Development to be retained.
- On receipt of the termination of employment form, Organisational Development will send the employee a leaver's questionnaire for completion with the opportunity to attend an optional leaver's discussion.
- A leavers discussion will be conducted by the employee's manager; or where requested by the leaver, an appropriate alternative manager or a representative from Organisational Development prior to termination.
- The purpose of a leaver's discussion is to allow the employee the opportunity to expand on, and discuss, the area's they have highlighted within their Leavers Questionnaire. A template for the leaver's discussion can be found on the intranet.
- If any issues arise during the course of the interview that need to be dealt with, these should be managed in accordance with Council policies, and advice sought from Organisational Development.
- Information provided during the exit process must be treated in confidence and used solely for the purpose for which it was collected.
- Leaver's discussions are voluntary, and as such if the leaver does not wish to discuss their reasons for leaving this should be respected.

Market Supplements – NJC Local Government Services

The Council recognises that it may be necessary from time to time to apply a market supplement to an assessed grade of a position. Usually this will be as a result of a skill shortage in the jobs market (local or national), or because the market rate for a particular skill set is higher than that determined by local job evaluation and the grading structure.

A market supplement is a discretionary payment which is paid in addition to the basic salary of a position(s). The payment is designed to address exceptional circumstances when the Council is experiencing or clearly identifies severe recruitment and retention difficulties, and in particular when those difficulties are as a result of offering a lower salary than that which is being offered by other employers within the market identified for that particular post. There must be clear evidence that the basic pay for a specific post determined by the Council's job evaluation process is significantly less than the relevant market rate of pay for a similar post.

The payment of a market supplement will need to be subject to objectively justified grounds i.e., that recruitment and retention difficulties exist in relation to the job(s) concerned which would result in foreseeable organisational and/or operational problems. The decision to pay a market supplement will only be taken when all other non-pay related measures to recruit and / or retain a staff member have been reasonably explored. The extent to which the various measures are explored depends entirely on each individual case.

The Council will justify a market supplement by gathering clear and detailed evidence for awarding such a payment, including information on recruitment and/or retention problems within the Council and external pay data. Types of evidence will include:

- Salary benchmark data, what is the 'going rate' for the job?
- Comparisons with the public and/or private sector depending on the nature of the post.
- Evidence of any recent (unsuccessful) recruitment processes e.g. How has the post been advertised in the past? Has the correct media been used? What is the response rate to adverts? What is the turnover rate for the post?
- The level and overall cost of the recommended supplements.
- Any alternative measures that have or could be considered e.g., could the post be remodelled to deliver the service required?
- Details of any perceived detrimental impact on service delivery including operational and/or reputational risks of failure to recruit (or retain) the right calibre of employee(s).
- Details of any potential knock-on effects and how they might be resolved e.g., maintenance of pay relativities between posts within a section or work group.

The business case for a market supplement is subject to approval of the Corporate Director in consultation with the Head of Organisational Development. In exceptional circumstances for those staff not employed under the NJC for Local Government Services it will be a matter for CLT or Council's consideration as appropriate.

The duration of the market supplement will be determined at the outset with a maximum period of 1 year. The terms of the market supplement will be clearly defined in the advertisement and contract of employment. All payments will cease at the end of the approved payment time. In exceptional circumstances where there is a need to continue the payment of a market supplement a new business case will need to be approved. Market supplements are funded by the employing directorate.

Definition of Workers

Permanent Employees

A permanent employee is a full time or part time individual who is employed by the Council on a permanent contract. The employee will have full employment rights in line with current legislation, as outlined in their statement of particulars. There is no expected end date of their employment and they will accrue continuous service.

Permanent employees will accrue all relevant entitlements and benefits in line with the Council's terms and conditions i.e. sick pay and annual leave.

Fixed Term Employees

A fixed-term contract is one that ends on a specified date or on the occurrence of a particular event such as the loss of funding or the completion of a task. A fixed term employee can be a temporary replacement for an absent employee whose contract will terminate upon the return of the regular employee. After four years' continuous service in a fixed term position the manager should refer to the Fixed Term Regulations for further guidance, as the employee will be entitled to permanent status.

Employees recruited on such a contract should be done so on the basis that there is a fixed period for which the work is expected to last and that the weekly hours are definitive e.g. to cover maternity leave or an externally funded project.

Fixed term employees will be entitled to the same benefits as a permanent worker, i.e. annual leave and sick pay.

Temporary Employees

Temporary contracts will have no expectation of permanence as the termination date or the event on which the employment will terminate is not known. An employee on a temporary contract will accrue continuous service from the start date of that contract.

Temporary employees will be entitled to sick pay, annual leave and the range of other benefits the Council offers, where applicable.

An employee should be recruited on a temporary contract if the work is expected to be of a temporary nature but the end date is not known e.g. to cover a period of sickness of a permanent employee. Contractual hours should be stipulated for the purposes of a temporary contract.

Relief Employees

Relief employees should be recruited as a way of dealing with a variable need for work i.e. short term absences. Employees of this nature should only be used on an ad hoc basis and will not work regularly and consistently.

Relief employees should only be paid at the bottom of the grade and will not move through any grade increments. A relief employee will not benefit from the range of entitlements to which other employees of the Council are entitled.

If relief employees are allowed to build up regular and consistent hours then this will become a risk to the Council.

Relief employees should be regularly monitored by managers and termination paperwork completed routinely when the employee is no longer required, to ensure there is an accurate record of all current employees.

Term-Time Employees

A term-time contract is defined by an employee working only during periods that coincide with the school terms and is not required to work during school holidays. Term-time employees will be employed based on the number of weeks they work per year and remuneration will be calculated on a pro rata basis which will be inclusive of their annual leave entitlement.

Term-time employees will not be permitted to take leave during school time but will be entitled to the same other benefits of the Council such as sick pay.

Part Time Employees

A part time employee will be defined as such if they work fewer hours than the Council's normal full time hours (37 hours per week). Part time employees will not be treated less favourably than comparable full time workers, nor will they be entitled to any benefits which exceed a full time equivalent.

Agency Workers

The Council has a contract to source all agency workers. All administration relating to annual leave and sick pay will be administered by the contractor directly. It should be understood that Agency Workers are not employees of the Council.

When recruiting, a manager should carefully consider the type of contract that would best suit the required need to ensure efficiency of the service. Due consideration should be given throughout the duration of any contract that is not permanent to ensure that it is still fit for purpose and meets the need of the service. Managers should change the nature of the contract if the situation changes e.g. a relief employee who has started to pick up regular shifts as a result of long term sickness should be terminated as a relief employee and given a temporary contract.

Agenda Item 8

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **18th January 2024**

Report Subject: **Workforce Strategy 2021-2026**

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 Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
	14.12.23	05.01.24			18.01.24	21.02.24		

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee with progress against the Council's Workforce Strategy delivery plan for 2022/23, progress to date in 2023/24 and deliverables for 2024/25.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The Council's Workforce Strategy 2021-26 ('the Strategy') was endorsed at Council on the 29th July 2021 and is attached at Appendix 1.

2.2 The Strategy is a key enabler in delivering the Council's ambition, the Council Operating Model, and key priorities. It has a focus on the future, integrating the Council's vision, objectives and financial planning arrangements. It links service outcomes with the workforce required to deliver them and an on-going understanding of how the workforce should look in the future through continual review, re-alignment and measurement of how outcomes are achieved. The Strategy aims to ensure we have the right number of people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right level, at the right cost and on the right contract to deliver its short and long-term objectives.

2.3 The five-year Strategy is underpinned by an annual delivery plan that supports its implementation. The delivery plans are developed and prioritised following engagement with key stakeholders including senior management and trade union representatives. Engagement will be with Headteachers in the new year following the end of the action short of strike.

2.4 The Strategy sets out five priority outcomes for the workforce:

- Healthy culture, effective leadership
- Excellence in management across the Council
- A highly motivated and engaged workforce
- Evidence based decision making, planning and delivery
- Modern 'Employer of Choice'

2.5 The delivery plan for 2022/23 focused on supporting the future working model - “Agile Services delivered by an Agile Workforce” and set out the key actions under each of the priority outcomes. The key actions delivered in 2022/23 are set out in Appendix 2 and include:

- Annual workforce profiles published and an internal review of recruitment and retention, diversity and age in the current workforce to support the development of directorate workforce plans.
- Introduction of a new workforce planning framework. All Directorates have workforce plans that feed into the Workforce Delivery Plan for the Workforce Strategy.
- A leadership development model has been developed and discussions have taken place with a neighbouring authority with a view to developing a joint delivery model.
- A review of agile working has been carried out which engaged the workforce through a pulse survey, a series of focus groups, a dedicated session with trade unions to gain feedback and suggestions for improvement. Facilitated workshops with the Corporate Leadership Team and Wider Corporate Leadership Team focussed on developing actions to improve senior leadership visibility and the opportunity for collaboration across the workforce.
- Review of the Agile Working and Flexible Working policies commenced.
- Equal Pay audit commissioned and carried out with the draft report due summer 2023.
- Further development of the ITrent HR/Payroll system with the implementation of working patterns and a development plan in place in readiness for 2023/24.
- A facilities review was completed of the Agile Working hubs. Action plans are in place for all hubs to make improvements and a management structure developed as part of the Corporate Business Support Service.
- Medium / long term actions developed as part of corporate decarbonisation plan.
- Continued focus on wellbeing with for example; Weekly Wellbeing bulletins published including a range of provisions for supporting staff wellbeing, Care First awareness sessions for managers and Mental Health Wellbeing sessions for employees.
- A range of policies were developed and implemented which included a suite of Disciplinary policies, pay policy, employer supported volunteer policy.
- Annual review of sickness absence reported to CLT, Scrutiny and Cabinet.

2.6 The delivery plan for 2023/25 has been developed and builds on the progress (appendix 3) of the previous year and takes account of the key national, regional and local drivers, workforce trends and financial challenges that will be facing the Council. In addition, it has taken account of the Wales Audit Office Review, Springing Forward which was reported in 2022/23. The new framework for workforce planning prioritises the recommendations above and was rolled out at a directorate level, key themes and actions from this process have been aligned to the Strategy priority outcomes. These include recruitment and retention, workforce planning and wellbeing. The delivery plan for 2023/25 is attached at Appendix 3.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 This report and delivery plan has been reviewed and prioritised with the Corporate Leadership Team.

3.2 **Option 1:** Members to review and note the progress against the 2022/23 delivery plan and endorse the 2023/25 delivery plan.

3.3 **Option 2:** Members to review and note progress against the 2022/23 delivery plan and considers the 2023/25 delivery plan making suggestions/amendments for improvement.

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

4.1 The Strategy aligns to the Corporate Plan and supports the delivery of Council priorities. It has been drafted in accordance with, and to comply with key employment legislation such as, the Equality Act 2010 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and to promote and support workforce wellbeing.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget**

There are no direct budget implications with the review and development of the delivery plan. Any financial implications linked to the priorities will be scoped out and considered as part of the implementation of the delivery plan.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

The Strategy is a strategic plan to ensure the Council has a fit for purpose workforce to deliver services in line with Council priorities for the future.

5.3 **Legal**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 **Human Resources**

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

5.5 **Health and Safety**

The health and safety of the workforce is a key strand in the Workforce Strategy and delivery plans. There are no direct health and safety implications associated with this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 Performance information and data as at the end of March 2023:

Headcount 2953, Council 1650, Schools 1303

Labour turnover Council 15.05%, Schools 8.55% (academic year 2022/23)

Council – 34% agile workers, 8% homeworkers, 58% service based (frontline workers)

69% of those who declared describe themselves as British, Welsh, Scottish, English, Northern Irish – 500 staff with no declaration

Average days lost per employee due to sickness 15.45 days with the top 5 reasons for sickness:

- 30.94% psychiatric/mental health
- 21.1% Musculo-skeletal and injuries
- 11.21% Covid 19
- 6.93% gastro- intestinal
- 5.72% infectious disease

33% short term sickness and 67% long term sickness

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

There has been engagement with the Corporate Leadership Team, Elected Members and Trade Unions in the development of the Strategy. The Corporate Leadership Team has shaped and prioritised the delivery plan in line with Council priorities.

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

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

6.4 **Preventative focus**

Not applicable

6.5 **Collaboration / partnership working**

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

6.6 **Integration (across service areas)**

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

6.7 **Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions**

Medium to long term workforce actions have been developed as part of the corporate decarbonisation plan.

6.8 **Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)**

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

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

The Strategy has an annual delivery plan and this will be monitored on an annual basis by the Corporate Leadership Team and Corporate and Performance Scrutiny Committee.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Workforce Strategy 2021 – 2026

Appendix 2 – Workforce Strategy Delivery Plan 2022-23 Headline Achievements

Appendix 3 – Workforce Strategy Delivery Plan 2023-24 and 2024-25

Workforce Strategy 2021 - 2026

*“Agile Services delivered
by an Agile Workforce”*



FOREWARD

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

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

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

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

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



Handwritten signature of Nigel Daniels in black ink.

Councillor Nigel Daniels
Leader of the Council



Handwritten signature of Michelle Morris in black ink.

Michelle Morris
Managing Director

AIMS OF THE STRATEGY

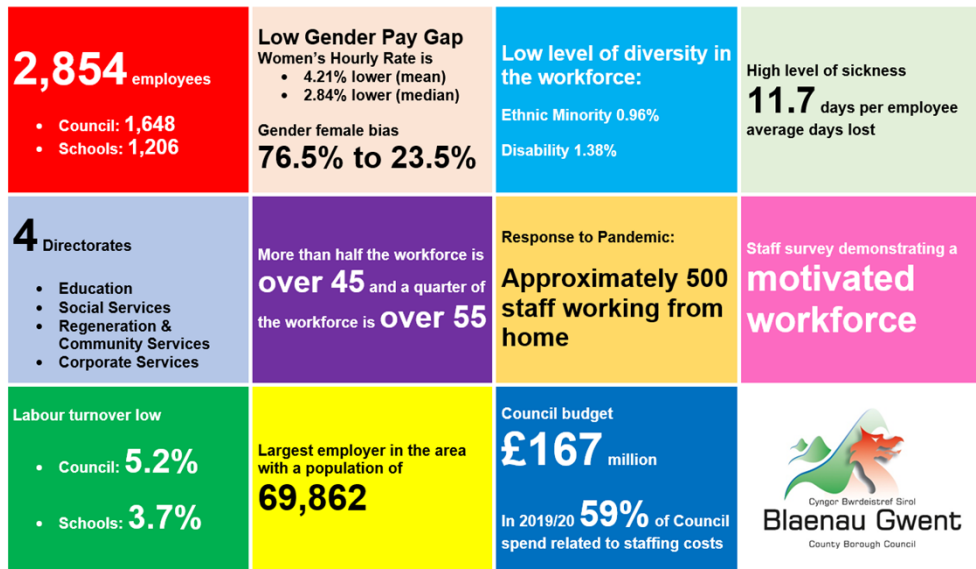
- The workforce voice will be heard and have influence in shaping the future of the Council
- The right people with the right skills, in the right place, at the right level and at the right cost
- An agile collaborative workforce delivering high quality services to the residents of Blaenau Gwent
- Safe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



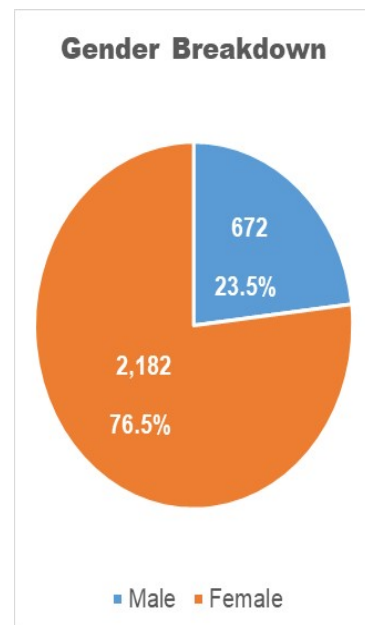
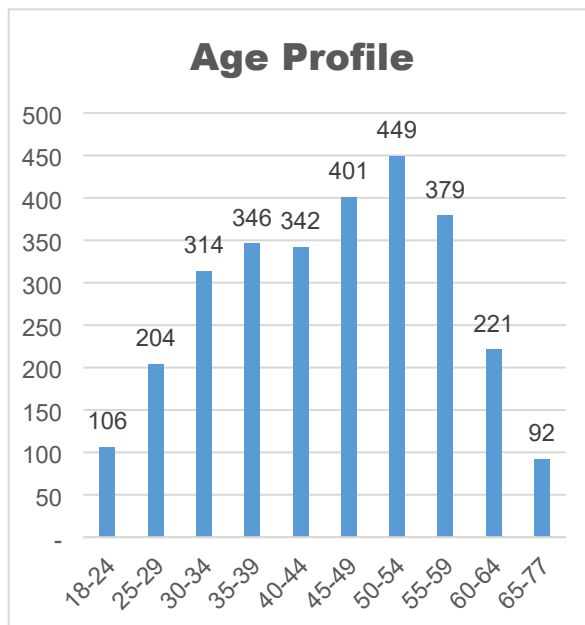
WHERE ARE WE NOW?

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

What do we currently look like?



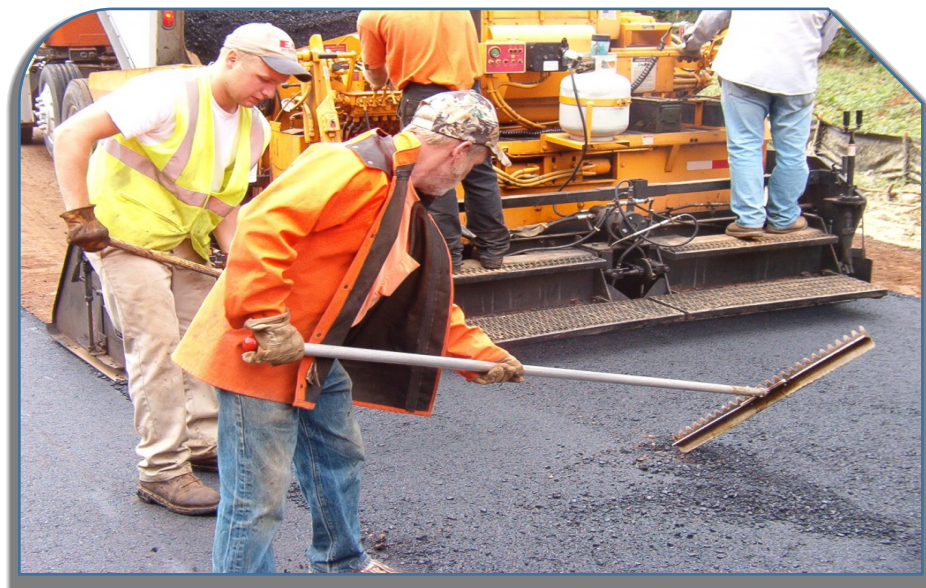
Workforce Profile		
Age Profile	See graphic below	31.3.21
Gender Profile	See graphic below	31.3.21
Turnover (Quarter 4)	4.69% (9% target)	1.4.20 - 31.3.21
Disability (Quarter 4)	1.38%	31.3.21
Ethnic Origin (Quarter 4)	0.96%	31.3.21
Sickness (Quarter 4)	11.67	1.4.20 - 31.3.21



Workforce Engagement

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

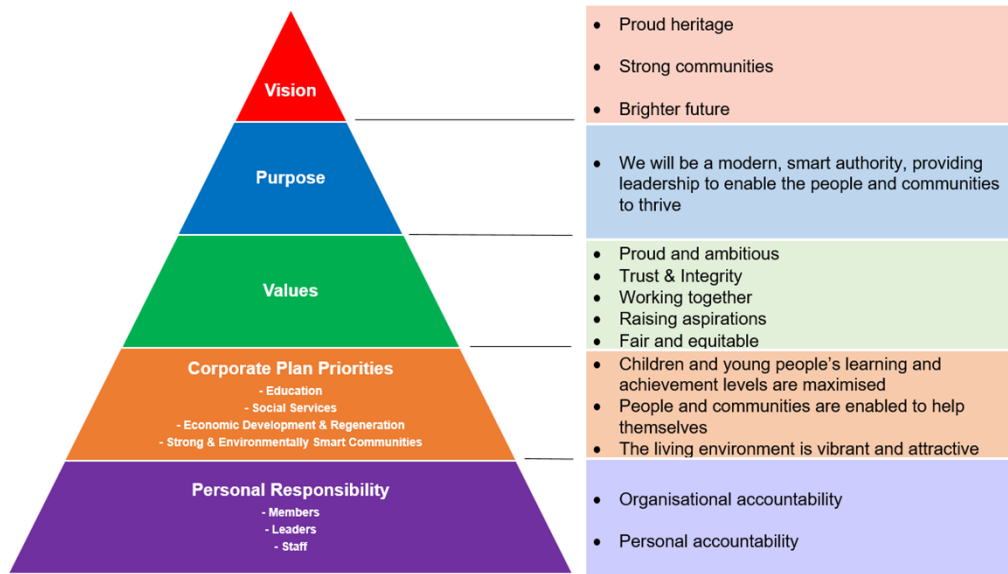
- Regular one to one performance coaching
- Annual performance review
- Team meetings
- Staff meetings
- Management team meetings
- Wider Leadership group
- Regular newsletter from the Managing Director
- Staff newsletter
- Managers brief
- Engagement in financial planning
- A dedicated engagement and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



WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

The Council's Vision and Organisational Ambition

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



WHAT DOES THE COUNCIL NEED TO LOOK LIKE?

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

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



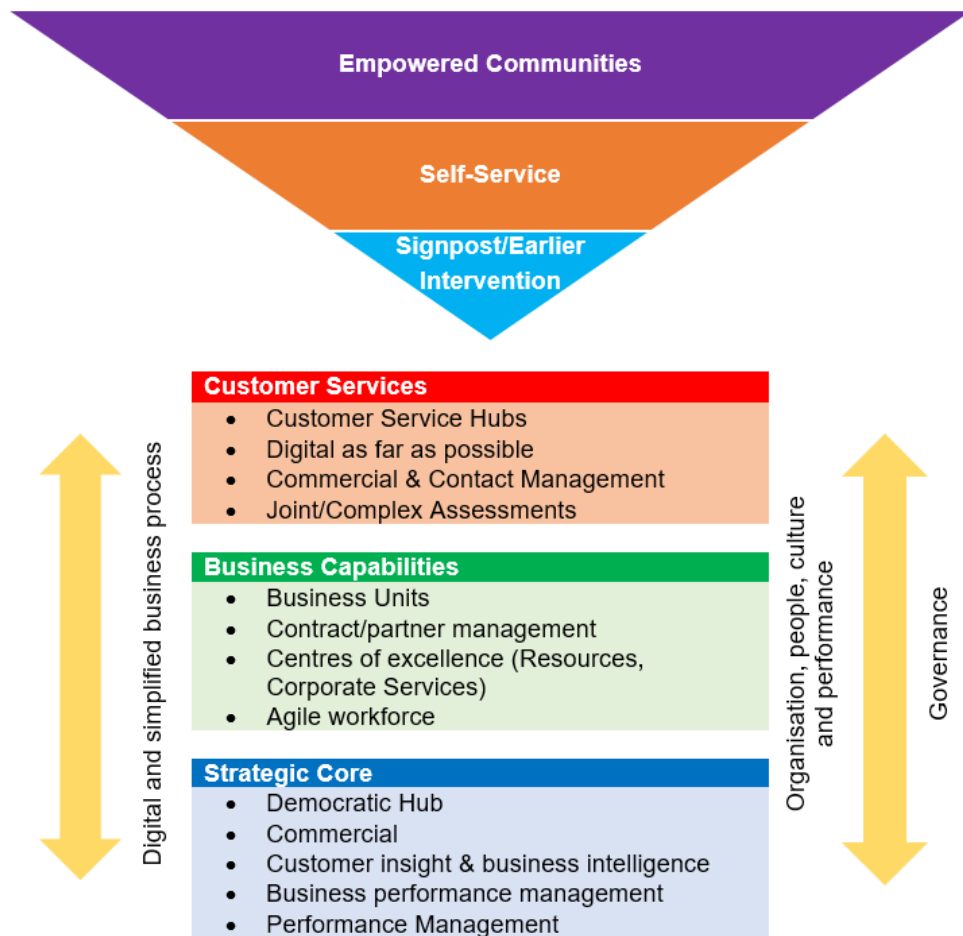
THE FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

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

This will be achieved by:

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

The following diagram illustrates the future service delivery model:



HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE?

Workforce Strategy Priority Outcomes

Healthy Culture, Effective Leadership

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

Excellence in management across the Council

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

A highly motivated and engaged workforce

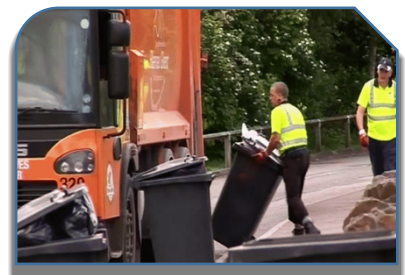
- Suggestions and feedback are valued – organisational listening and action
- Modern ongoing opportunities to engage
- Equipped to be flexible to respond to future challenges
- Staff empowered to make decisions and participate in service delivery and development

Evidence based decision making, planning and delivery

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

Modern Employer of Choice

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



WORKFORCE STRATEGY: ACTION PLAN 2021/2022

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

Healthy Culture, Effective Leadership

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

Excellence in management across the Council

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

Modern Employer of Choice

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

A highly motivated and engaged workforce

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

Evidence based decision making, planning and delivery

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

WORKFORCE STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN 2022/23

Strategic Priority Outcome	Actions	Lead Officer	Governance	Timescale	Progress	BRAG	Actions Carry Forward
Healthy Culture, Effective Leadership	• Workforce Strategy Year 1 - Progress Review	Head of OD	CLT and Scrutiny Committee	31 December 2022	• Completed – reported to Scrutiny and Cabinet		
	• Workforce Strategy Year 2 - Action Plan	Head of OD	CLT and Scrutiny Committee	31 December 2022	• Completed – reported to Scrutiny and Cabinet		
	• Review of Agile Working	Head of OD	CLT and Scrutiny Committee	31 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce engagement through pulse survey and focus groups November/December 2022 • Results communicated to the workforce and Elected Members briefing completed • Review of Agile and Flexible Working commenced 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of actions to improve agile working • Implementation of reviewed agile working and flexible working policies • Final report to CLT and Scrutiny with reviewed agile working and flexible working policies
	• Development of leadership delivery model	Head of OD	CLT	31 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft leadership development model developed • Discussions held with neighbouring council to consider a joint delivery model 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options to be developed for a delivery model and facilitation • Issues with resources, affordability and lack of budget
	• Senior management recruitment	Head of OD	Leader and Council	31 January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and appointment process for Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services completed • Interim arrangements in place for Chief Executive, Corporate Director of Social Services, Corporate Director of Education to include back fill arrangements 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of Chief Executive • Review of senior leadership arrangements
Excellence in management across the Council	• Facilitation of elected member training specific to workforce policy	OD Manager HR	Head of OD and Head of Governance and Partnership	30 September 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Training on the appeals process ➢ Health and Safety training 		
	• New suite of disciplinary policies - Disciplinary training for managers	OD Manager HR	Head of OD and CLT	30 November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Disciplinary policies implemented ➢ Training delivered to managers during October to November 2022 – 116 managers trained ➢ Webinar developed which is available on the intranet for those that did not attend and new managers ➢ Disciplinary Procedure for school-based staff ➢ Managers Guide to Handling Disciplinary Matters 		
	• Enable managers in managing workforce attendance and reducing levels of sickness absence	OD Manager HR	Head of OD, CLT and Scrutiny	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of sickness and report completed • Quarterly statistics and briefing papers to CLT • Management reporting tools within ITrent • Ongoing support with sickness absence case management to include regular review of top 20 sickness cases on a directorate basis. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More detailed review of hotspots based on 22/23 • Audit of compliance to be undertaken of hotspots • Ongoing support with sickness absence case management

WORKFORCE STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN 2022/23

Strategic Priority Outcome	Actions	Lead Officer	Governance	Timescale	Progress	BRAG	Actions Carry Forward
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable managers to achieve high performing teams and respond to instances of poor performance, attendance, and behaviour, strengthening the management of employee relations and casework 	OD Manager HR	Head of OD and CLT	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Management on an ongoing basis with individual case management which has increased in complexity and demand. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing support with case management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed the principles of working in social partnership 	Chief Officer Commercial & Customer	CLT	31 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilities agreement with trade unions reviewed – secondment arrangements agreed for the GMB and additional time for teaching trade union Establishment of health and safety corporate working group chaired by trade unions 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Social Partnership working
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a corporate approach for lone working 	Service Manager Customer Experience and Transformation	CLT	31 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process in place in managing risk with line management – Lone Worker Policy in place Exploration of a digital system (smart phone based with Digital Team) to support the Council with managing lone working – trial of system postponed to 2024 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action carried forward for 2024/25
Modern Employer of Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of recruitment and retention 	Head of OD	CLT	31 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with Wider CLT Briefing and presentation delivered to CLT 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of Recruitment module in ITrent and enhancement to the applicant experience including marketing and website content.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the implications of 2022/23 pay award on the pay structure 	OD Manager Payroll	CLT, Scrutiny, Cabinet & Council	31 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay Policy 23/24 	OD Manager HR	CLT and Council	31 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed – Pay Policy agreed at Council and published Completed Pay Policy for Schools 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further development of the agile working workspace 	Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services	CLT	31 March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed - Review of facilities management of the agile working hubs completed 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update HR & Health and Safety policies 	OD Manager HR & Payroll	CLT Scrutiny and Council	Rolling timetable of reviews	Policies reviewed and published: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adverse Weather Guidance ➤ Capability Policy ➤ Paternity/Maternity Support Leave ➤ Code of Conduct ➤ Critical Illness & Working Guidelines ➤ Right To Request Flexible Working Policy ➤ Post Entry Training Policy ➤ Annual Leave & Holiday Pay - A Manager's Guide ➤ Schedule of Leave of Absence ➤ Adoption and Surrogacy Leave ➤ Maternity and Parental Leave 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing reviews in line with timetable

WORKFORCE STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN 2022/23

Strategic Priority Outcome	Actions	Lead Officer	Governance	Timescale	Progress	BRAG	Actions Carry Forward
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement neuro-diversity guidance 	OD Manager HR	CLT	31 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance developed and implemented July 22 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training for managers to be facilitated
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an Employer Supported Volunteering Policy 	OD Manager HR	CLT and Council	31 July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed - Policy developed and implemented 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver initiatives to further promote diversity of the workforce 	OD Manager HR	CLT	31 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research completed, briefing papers prepared and to be presented to OD DMT 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and implement key actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver initiatives to support the ageing workforce 	OD Manager HR	CLT	31 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research completed, briefing papers prepared and to be presented to OD DMT 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and implement key actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a network of equalities and inclusivity champions, who will act as representatives for all staff with protected characteristics; working in collaboration with the Equalities Team and the Trade Unions to drive the equalities agenda locally To develop and facilitate targeted events, promotions, and initiatives to celebrate diversity. Explore opportunities to enhance equalities training provision 	Head of Governance & Partnerships	CLT	31 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of a network for Equalities and inclusivity Champions is yet to be progressed. Members continue to show support to national and regional equality campaigns. The organisation continues to champion national and international equality campaigns from both professional and political leadership. We have delivered organisational campaigns and events for International Women’s Day 2023, International Holocaust Memorial Day 2023, and LGBTQ+ History Month. Each of the above examples have had active participation of the Council’s Member Champion for Equalities, Welsh Language and Diversity, Cabinet Members and Senior management. Regular educational bulletins are prepared to provide schools with key equality and diversity information, resources, policy information, training and support. A series of equalities training opportunities have been made available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Racial equality – delivered to Leadership Team and being rolled out further to staff and Members in early 2024 ➤ Cultural Diversity ➤ Unconscious Bias – online training module available to all staff In addition, we have developed a new Integrated Impact Assessment and associated guidance document for staff which is available on the intranet for staff to use. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is the intention to consider the development of equalities and inclusivity advocates in-line with the newly developed action plans within the Strategic Equality Plan for 2024/28. Racial equality training to be rolled out further to staff and Members in early 2024

WORKFORCE STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN 2022/23

Strategic Priority Outcome	Actions	Lead Officer	Governance	Timescale	Progress	BRAG	Actions Carry Forward
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decarbonisation - embed the new operating model and assess its impact in terms of decarbonisation. Decarbonisation - consider how to further reduce commute / travel impact in wider areas of the business e.g., Schools and Social Services. Decarbonisation - explore how staff can be encouraged to switch to ULEV. 	Head of OD	CLT / Decarbonisation Board	31 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New operating model embedded and impact assessed Representation at Board and position statement and action plan considered and agreed at DMT and fed into board 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver on action plan
<i>A highly motivated and engaged workforce</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver the internal Communications Plan 	Chief Officer Commercial & Customer	CLT	In line Communication Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campaign based approach to communications Regular Chief Executive newsletter to all workforce – to include to personal email addresses Regular managers brief Weekly email Wellbeing Wednesday Chief Executive ‘live call’ – Teams meeting with invite to all staff in December 2023 Workforce Facebook page live Implementation of various Microsoft tools to include chat, sway, teams channels Weekly advertisement of job opportunities in the Council 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement the internal communications plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of delivery options for workforce development - paper to CLT to include investment 	Head of OD	CLT	February / March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Workforce Development Model for a modern local government worker developed Discussions with neighbouring Council to develop a joint delivery model to be able to afford as part of the Joint Workforce Development Service progressing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise plans and develop options for delivery model
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement of a learner management / experience system to support workforce development and training 	Head of OD	CLT	2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alpha phase of a collaborative project with 3 other Councils to procure a learner management/experience system completed – to include successful bids for funding to support the project All 22 Councils and other agencies have declared an interest in the system Beta phase of project started to move to procurement of system 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop joint commissioning and contract arrangement Plan procurement of system Plan implementation
<i>Evidence based decision making, planning and delivery</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Directorate Workforce Plans 	Head of OD / CLT	DMT’s and CLT	December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed - directorate workforce plans implemented 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual sickness absence review and reporting 	Head of OD/CLT	CLT, Scrutiny and Cabinet	30 September 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed - Annual review and report to Scrutiny and Cabinet and briefing session delivered to Members with CLT in attendance 		

WORKFORCE STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN 2022/23

Strategic Priority Outcome	Actions	Lead Officer	Governance	Timescale	Progress	BRAG	Actions Carry Forward
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual workforce profiles (data dashboard) - Directorates & Schools to inform workforce planning 	OD Manager HR	DMT's / Schools and CLT	31 October 2022 (Schools) 30 May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed - Annual Corporate, Service and Schools workforce profile published. Review of the presentation of the sickness data and workforce profiles in readiness for publishing in 2023 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly sickness performance data to CLT and Elected Members 	OD Manager HR	CLT and Scrutiny	In line performance framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed - quarterly sickness performance data published 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of digital solutions to support delivery of modern HR/Payroll service – Paper to CLT to scope and plan including investment 	Head of OD	CLT	February 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of working patterns in iTrent – August 2022 – January 23 Report to CLT setting out capacity requirement to deliver key modules in iTrent - Plan moving forward agreed 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement developments in iTrent as agreed by CLT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equal Pay Audit 	Head of OD	CLT	January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equal pay audit commissioned Draft report received and response provided Further work required to refine data for report which was delayed as a result of capacity 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to be presented to CLT on findings and recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support schools causing concern 	Corporate Director of Education and OD	Education Directorate	2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted support provided on an ongoing basis 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing support

This page is intentionally left blank

WORKFORCE STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN 2023/24 and 2024/25

Strategic Priority Outcome	Actions	Lead Officer	Governance	Timescale	Progress to date	BRAG	Actions Carry Forward
Healthy Culture, Effective Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce Strategy Year 2 progress review and Year 3 & 4 priorities 	Head of OD	CLT and Scrutiny Committee	31 January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to be presented to CLT in December 2023 and Scrutiny January 2024 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce Strategy Year 3 & 4 progress review and Year 5 priorities 	Head of OD	CLT and Scrutiny Committee	Autumn 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Years23/24 and 24/25 delivery plans have been combined Progress review to Corporate Leadership Team and Scrutiny autumn 2024 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agile Working - implementation of actions to improve further to review of Agile Working Report to CLT and Scrutiny Implementation of reviewed agile working and flexible working policies 	Head of OD	CLT and Scrutiny Committee	31 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops with CLT and Wider CLT to consider feedback and develop actions completed CLT reaffirmed wellbeing principles for agile working Agile working and Flexible working policies reviewed Report on the conclusion of the review / policy approval being developed 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Delivery model and facilitation to be developed ➤ Delivery of Workforce Planning Training for Senior Managers ➤ Delivery of Race Awareness Training ➤ Delivery of Health and Safety Training ➤ Delivery of social partnership training 	Head of OD	CLT	2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce Planning training - OD held on 31.07.23 and 03.08.23 Workforce Planning training session with CLT 23.10.23 and with Wider CLT Race Awareness training delivered to Wider CLT Leadership/management training opportunities offered via the Infuse and CEIC programmes. Leadership training offered through the Summer and Winter schools 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment of Chief Executive 	Head of OD	Leader and Council	31 December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment timeline developed and agreed Advert and recruitment pack developed and agreed Selection processes agreed Advert closing – 23.11.23, Shortlisting -28.11.23 Assessment Centre - 06.12.23 – no appointment Work with the Leader and Deputy Leader to develop solution for Chief Executive role 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for review of senior management 	TBA	TBA	TBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not commenced subject to arrangements for Chief Executive – to be determined 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and refresh senior leadership performance review and coaching 	Head of OD and Chief Executive	Leader and Council	2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not commenced 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and modernise induction in line with the implement of digital Learner Management Experience system 	Head of OD	CLT	2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not commenced 		
Excellence in management across the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable managers to achieve high performing teams and respond to instances of poor performance, attendance, and behaviour, strengthening the management of employee relations and casework 	OD Manager HR	Head of OD and CLT	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Management on an ongoing basis with individual case management which has increased in complexity 		

WORKFORCE STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN 2023/24 and 2024/25

Strategic Priority Outcome	Actions	Lead Officer	Governance	Timescale	Progress to date	BRAG	Actions Carry Forward
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable managers in managing workforce attendance and reducing levels of sickness absence 	OD Manager HR	Head of OD, CLT and Scrutiny	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued support with sickness absence management Detailed review of 'hotspots' for 22/23 undertaken and presented to CLT Audit of compliance of 'hotspots' for 22/23 being undertaken by internal audit Outcome of audit / 'hotspots' to be reported to CLT and Cabinet Tender review process commenced for the Occupational Health Service and Employee Assistance Programme Briefing sessions on attendance management facilitated 	Green	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed the principles of working in social partnership 	Chief Officer Commercial & Customer	CLT	31 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of trade union engagement framework completed 	Green	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a corporate approach for lone working 	Service Manager Customer Experience and Transformation	CLT	2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploration of digital solution to support the lone working policy with use of smart phones 	Yellow	
Modern Employer of Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundamental review of the Recruitment Policy 	Head of OD	CLT	31 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy reviewed and drafted Unions consulted Report and policy to be presented to CLT December 23 	Green	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of annual pay awards 	OD Manager Payroll	CLT, Scrutiny, Cabinet and Council	In line with nationally agreed pay negotiations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2023/24 Pay Awards implemented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teachers - 28.11.23 ➤ JNC Chief Executive - 28.11.23 ➤ JNC Chief Officers -28.05.23 ➤ NJC Local governments services - 28.11.23 	Green	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Pay Policy 24/25 Annual Pay Policy 25/26 	OD Manager HR	CLT and Council	31 March 2024 31 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not commenced 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of short, medium, and long-term plans for Agile Working Hubs and Council buildings 	Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services	CLT	31 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position statement on all buildings developed highlighting issues/risks and opportunities Bid for funding to further develop the Blaina ICC has been submitted Facilities management arrangements in place for Agile Working Hubs as part of the Corporate Business Support Service 	Green	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update HR & Health and Safety policies 	OD Manager HR & Payroll	CLT Scrutiny and Council as appropriate	Rolling timetable of reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies reviewed and published: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In the Interests of Efficiency of the Service Policy ➤ Induction - A Manager's Guide ➤ Redundancy Policy ➤ IVF Policy ➤ Dignity at Work Policy 	Green	

WORKFORCE STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN 2023/24 and 2024/25

Strategic Priority Outcome	Actions	Lead Officer	Governance	Timescale	Progress to date	BRAG	Actions Carry Forward
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Health and Safety Report 	OD Manager Payroll	CLT, Scrutiny	31 December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed - report presented to CLT and Scrutiny 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and align School's Grievance Policy 	OD Manager HR	Governing Bodies	31 December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed - Policy finalised and published 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a Foster Friendly Policy 	OD Manager HR	CLT Scrutiny and Council as appropriate	31 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft policy developed based on best practice and in line with the Foster Network fostering friendly employers' scheme Union consultation undertaken Policy finalised to be progressed to CLT – December 2023 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate training to support the implementation of the neurodiversity guidance 	OD Manager HR	CLT	31 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secured WULF and internal funding to run awareness raising training. Sessions to be organised and run for the Manager Cohort in new year 2024 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver initiatives to further promote diversity of the workforce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate Wider CLT training on race funding through WULF and marketed by Unison Update recruitment charter to include diverse interview panels Consider ways to capture further field of candidates including statements in job adverts to encourage applications from under-represented groups, Proactively promote diversity events through staff communications 	Head of Governance and Partnerships	CLT	31 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Race Awareness training delivered to Wider CLT Recruitment policy reviewed and progressing through approval processes 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver initiatives to support the ageing workforce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of workforce planning template to incorporate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the potential number of staff likely retire in the next 5 years Analysis of sickness and workplace injuries, explore the reasons within Attendance Management meetings Identifying skills gaps as a result of experienced staff retiring Review of future demands and challenges and consider the resilience of the services Delivery of retirement seminars 	OD Manager HR	CLT	31 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Workforce Planning template to commence January 2024 7 Retirement seminars delivered 2023/24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24 April 2023 4 May 2023 26 June 2023 5 September 2023 17 October 2023 21 November 2023 11 December 2023 		

WORKFORCE STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN 2023/24 and 2024/25

Strategic Priority Outcome	Actions	Lead Officer	Governance	Timescale	Progress to date	BRAG	Actions Carry Forward
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider the development of equalities and inclusivity advocates in-line with the newly developed action plans within the Strategic Equality Plan for 2024/28. To develop and facilitate targeted events, promotions, and initiatives to celebrate diversity. Explore opportunities to enhance equalities training provision 	Head of Governance & Partnerships	CLT	2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Racial equality – delivered to Leadership Team and being rolled out further to staff and Members in early 2024 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how to further reduce commute / travel impact in wider areas of the business e.g., Schools and Social Services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run data to analyse which groups of staff are claiming the most business mileage, report to be developed for CLT. Communicating with staff on impact of mileage, looking at most efficient routes and encouraging travel in a smarter way i.e., diary management, type of vehicle using, car sharing Explore how staff can be encouraged to switch to ULEV. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Car Loans and proposal for new scheme Fuel types to be added to iTrent to allow us to provide further data on the types of vehicles staff are using for business mileage. 	Head of OD	CLT	2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions carried forward as a result of staff capacity Audit completed on staff mileage to support move to agile working and development of new mileage policy Tusker car scheme continues to be offered 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further roll out of staff benefits 	Head of OD	DMT and CLT	31 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology and cycle to work schemes have been rolled out a number of time over last 2 years Further promotion of the Vectus Card benefits scheme Tusker car scheme continues to be available Lots of offers through Wellbeing Wednesday 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing contract arrangements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupational Health Employee Assistance Programme Midland iTrent 	Head of OD	DMT and CLT	31 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning meetings held with procurement Direct award for Employee Assistance Programme – new provider will be in place March 2024 Draft specification developed for Occupational Health Service and tender process commenced Planning meetings held with procurement to review contract arrangements with Midland for iTrent Meetings planned with Midland December 2023 and new year 2024 		
<i>A highly motivated and engaged workforce</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of delivery options for workforce development - paper to CLT to include investment 	Head of OD	CLT	February / March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion held with Caerphilly CBC and interest confirmed in developing joint arrangement. Awaiting meeting with Corporate Director of Caerphilly CBC to develop CLT report. Models for leadership and workforce developed as well as a draft delivery model. 		

WORKFORCE STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN 2023/24 and 2024/25

Strategic Priority Outcome	Actions	Lead Officer	Governance	Timescale	Progress to date	BRAG	Actions Carry Forward
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement of a learner management / experience system to support workforce development and training 	Head of OD	CLT	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BG leading on commissioning and contracting for collaboration. Successful bid for further funding to support project management Preparation and planning for implementation Development of project management arrangements to implement corporately 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop process for staff survey and facilitate staff survey 	Head of OD	CLT	Autumn 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not commenced 		
Evidence based decision making, planning and delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitation of Workforce Planning development session for OD and Wider CLT Review workforce planning framework further to learning 	Head of OD / CLT	DMT's and CLT	31 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce Planning development sessions for OD held with LGA on 31.07.23 and 03.08.23 and session with CLT held 23.10.23 Presentation to CLT on workforce planning completed agreed ongoing reviews to be undertaken as part of wider CLT business planning sessions. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual sickness absence review and reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More detailed review of 'hotspots' based on 22/23 outturn Audit of compliance to be undertaken of Hotspots Annual sickness absence review and reporting Ongoing support with sickness absence case management 	Head of OD/CLT	CLT, Scrutiny and Cabinet	30 November 2023 30 September 2024 Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and report completed for consideration at CLT 28.09.23 Report progressed to Corporate and performance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet Detailed review of 'hotspots' for 22/23 undertaken and presented to CLT Audit of compliance of 'hotspots' for 22/23 being undertaken by internal audit Outcome of audit and hotspots to be reported to CLT and Cabinet Tender review process commenced for the Occupational Health Service and Employee Assistance Programme Briefing sessions on attendance management facilitated as required 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual workforce profiles (data dashboard) - Directorates & Schools to inform workforce planning 	OD Manager HR	DMT's / Schools and CLT	2023/24 2023/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2023/24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual corporate profiles published and circulated Annual Schools profiles published and to be discussed as part of annual visits 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly sickness performance data to CLT and Elected Members 	OD Manager HR	CLT and Scrutiny	In line performance framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2023/24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2023/24 Quarter 1 sickness stats and briefing note to CLT 03.08.23 2023/24 Quarter 2 sickness stats and briefing note to CLT 27.10.23 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of digital solutions to support delivery of modern HR/Payroll service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of Recruitment Module within iTrent module in iTrent and enhancement to the applicant experience including marketing and website content 	Head of OD	CLT	Subject to scoping document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project group set up to support development of recruitment and onboarding Two scoping session held on current processes Further scoping work on the website and app form to include communications Scoping day with Midland held 19.10.23 Awaiting scoping document from Midland 		

WORKFORCE STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN 2023/24 and 2024/25

Strategic Priority Outcome	Actions	Lead Officer	Governance	Timescale	Progress to date	BRAG	Actions Carry Forward
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equal Pay Audit 	Head of OD	CLT	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised equal pay report received and response provided Final report received Report to be presented to CLT on equal pay audit findings and recommendations and agree next steps Actions to be determined 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equal Pay claim (Care Staff) 	Head of OD	CLT	ET timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responding to claim form 80+ care staff at an Employment Tribunal Preliminary Hearing held October 2023 Further preliminary hearing scheduled for January 2024 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support schools causing concern 	Corporate Director of Education and OD	Education Directorate	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted support provided on an ongoing basis 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Council financial savings plans which includes downsizing the workforce 	Head of OD	DMT's and CLT	2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial business case proposals drafted Discussions held with trade unions and elected members Communication issued to staff on expression of interest Workforce plan to be developed for statutory consultation – January 2024 		

Agenda Item 9

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **18th January 2024**

Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme: 14th March 2024**

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

Report Submitted by: **Scrutiny and Democratic Officer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance and Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
x	x				18.01.24			

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present to Members the Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 14th March 2024 for discussion and agreement.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Work Programmes are key aspects of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and support the requirements of the Constitution.
- 2.2 The topics set out in the Forward Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's revised Corporate Plan, corporate documents and supporting business plans.
- 2.3 Effective work programmes are essential to ensure that the work of scrutiny makes a positive impact upon the Council's delivery of services.
- 2.4 The Committee's Forward Work Programme was agreed in June 2023, recognising the fluidity of the document to enable the Committee to respond to urgent and emerging issues, and included timescales when reports will be considered by the Committee. The work programme is managed and implemented by the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer under the direction of the Chair and Committee.
- 2.5 The forward work programme for the forthcoming meeting will be presented to Committee on a 6 weekly cycle in order that Members can consider the programme of work; request information is included within the reports, as appropriate and / or make amendments to the work programme.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1:** The Scrutiny Committee agree the Forward Programme for the meeting 14th March 2024, as presented.

3.2 **Option 2:**

The Scrutiny Committee consider the Forward Work Programme for the meeting 14th March 2024, and

- Make any amendments to the topics scheduled for the meetings;
- Suggest any additional invitees that the committee requires to fully consider the reports; and
- Request any additional information to be included with regards to the topics to be discussed.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme – Meeting on 14th March 2024

Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

Dates	Topic	Purpose	Lead	Cabinet / Council
14 th March 2024 Deadline: 29 th February 2024	Capital Strategy Review	Performance Monitoring To consider the implementation of the Capital Strategy 2024/25.	Rhian Hayden	Council
	Treasury Management – Strategy Statement 2023/24	Budget Monitoring To present the Treasury Management Strategy, Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy recommended for adoption in the 2023/24 financial year.	Rhian Hayden	Council
	Strategic Equality Policy	Pre-Decision To consider the policy prior to approval by Council.	Andrew Parker	Council
	A Review of Agile Working	Pre-Decision To consider the review.	Andrea Prosser	Cabinet
	Foster Friendly Policy	Pre-Decision To consider and recommend approval.	Andrea Prosser	Council

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank