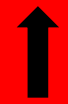


**Risk Reference** CRR1  
**Risk Description:** Failure to deliver and sustain the changes required to ensure that vital services are prioritised within the financial constraints faced by the Council.  
**Risk Owner:** Corporate Leadership Team / Interim Chief Executive  
**Risk Updater:** Chief Officer Resources / Chief Officer Customer and Commercial  
**Portfolio holder:** Councillor Steve Thomas

**Direction of travel**  
 Increasing risk 



Triggers	Consequences	Inherent Risk			Current Controls	Residual Risk			Proposed further controls to mitigate / reduce risk	Target Score L x I = Score		
		Likelihood	Impact	Status		Likelihood	Impact	Status				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council priorities are unclear and unrealistic / Budgets not aligned with corporate priorities</li> <li>• Failure to put the customer at the centre of changes</li> <li>• Risk that the preventative agenda does not deliver</li> <li>• Risk that savings identified as part of business as usual and efficiencies have not been robustly reviewed for achievability and will not deliver as planned</li> <li>• Governance arrangements for achievement of priorities and delivery of significant projects are not robust.</li> <li>• Lack of ownership and accountability of the need for change</li> <li>• Council unable to overcome the challenges to become more commercially minded i.e. Inability to make the cultural shift</li> <li>• The ICT platforms (desktop, software, network, servers etc.) will not be able to support the technologies required by the corporate change programme and deliver effective service to the council.</li> <li>• Transformation and commercial projects require significant capital investment</li> <li>• Failure to obtain political support for proposed changes.</li> <li>• Failure to develop the skills and capacity required to manage significant change at a time of increased demand.</li> <li>• Failure to maximise existing assets / Lack of understanding of how changes to service delivery will impact on long-term asset needs. / Failure to develop a long-term asset strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to meet the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.</li> <li>• Vital services will not be protected if the Council fails to find more efficient ways of working</li> <li>• Reputational impact if services do not meet increasing customer expectations and Council is unable to deliver on its aspirations</li> <li>• Services not delivered efficiently or effectively and fail to deliver joined up services to the public</li> <li>• Failure to respond to the key financial and organisational challenges that dominate the medium-term planning horizon of the Council.</li> <li>• Improvements to social economic and environmental wellbeing of the areas not achieved.</li> <li>• Failure to meet statutory obligations</li> <li>• Risk of Judicial Review in respect of new models of service delivery.</li> </ul>	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Plan 2022 - 2027 sets out the Councils vision, values and priorities for the next 5years. The plan is intended to clarify the future direction of the Council, mobilise the resources and planning of services and activities to ensure all are being directed to deliver against the agreed priorities. Corporate Plan incorporates the Wellbeing - Objectives</li> <li>• Medium Term Financial Strategy reviewed and updated on an annual basis to reflect known and emerging pressures and ensure alignment with the Corporate Plan.</li> <li>• Community engagement underpins budget reduction decisions</li> <li>•The Council has a Corporate Leadership Team in place with a focus on the need to invest in prevention, change and sustaining priority services</li> <li>• Council actively pursuing partnership opportunities to sustain service delivery and manage service pressures.</li> <li>• Commercial Team and Strategy which will identify income generation and service transformation opportunities to reduce costs, improve efficiency and release resources for investment into priority areas;</li> <li>•Strategic Commercial Commissioning Board</li> <li>•Commercial Strategy</li> <li>•Corporate Digital and ICT Programme</li> <li>•Development of the Business and Commercial Network (BaCON)</li> <li>•Investment Strategy</li> <li>• New operating model to improve further efficiency of the organisation.</li> </ul>	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Strengthened performance management to ensure accountability at senior manager level for the delivery of change and efficiency.</li> <li>• Enhanced awareness raising with Members of pressures</li> <li>• Developed Corporate Business Planning Workshops to update Business plans</li> <li>• Increased the scope of Wider Corporate Leadership Team to increase accountability.</li> <li>• Looking at collaboration opportunities with neighbouring authorities.</li> <li>• Programme of Business Reviews (Bridging the Gap) supports Budget setting and in previous years (2019 -2023) enabled the Council to invest in services where there were pressures thereby sustaining service delivery</li> </ul>	1	4	Medium


**Quarter 2 Progress Update (July – September 2023)**

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy has been developed and shared with Members through briefing sessions but it is highlighting a budget gap in excess of £33m between 2024/25 to 2028/29 which is being driven by higher than forecast pay awards, the continuing high levels of inflation and demand for services as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.

Progress Against Further Controls	Responsible Officer	Due Date	Comments / Update on Progress	BRAG Status of further controls
Strengthened performance management to ensure accountability at senior manager level for the delivery of change and efficiency.	CLT	Ongoing	Several proposals have been introduced during quarter 2 to increase senior management accountability and to provide wider support and assistance to build and develop consistent business cases. Workshops have been ongoing between Wider CLT and performance colleagues to ensure greater accountability and strengthen performance management.	On track
Enhanced awareness raising with Members of pressures	RH	Commenced in quarter 2	<p>Work has commenced in outlining the Council’s budget position for 2024/25 to Members and the cuts necessary to obtain a balanced budget going forward. As part of the current financial pressures with inflation and high energy costs, we agreed that we would introduce Budget Monitoring Briefing allowing all Members to be aware of the current financial position of the authority. The initial briefing took place during September 2023 (Q2)</p> <p>As part of financial management framework, it was agreed to reintroduce the Members Cross Pressure Sub-group to monitor in year cost pressures and the mitigating actions introduced.</p>	Complete. Will move to current controls as ongoing.
Developed Corporate Business Planning Workshops to update Business plans	GW	Commence in quarter 2	Corporate business planning workshops to update business plans commenced in Quarter 2. Discussions at CLT as part of ensuring greater accountability across senior management and to share good practice and provide a protected space for leaders to review and update the previous work within the plan.	Complete. Will move to current controls as ongoing.
Increased the scope of Wider Corporate Leadership Team to increase accountability.	CLT	Commence in quarter 2	The membership and scope of Wider CLT has been increased to ensure a consistent message is provided to managers and staff and gain greater accountability for performance and financial management.	Complete. Will move to current controls as ongoing.
Looking at collaboration opportunities with neighbouring authorities.	CLT	Ongoing	Directors and Heads of Service continue to discuss opportunities with neighbouring authorities of working together to deliver shared services.	Ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)

<p>Programme of Business Reviews (Bridging the Gap) supports Budget setting and in previous years (2019 - 2023) enabled the Council to invest in services where there were pressures thereby sustaining service delivery.</p>	<p>CLT</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Being more commercially minded is key to supporting the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), we are slowly progressing some commercial business cases although due to the decline in the economy the ability to attract private investment to make these business cases stack up is becoming increasingly difficult.</p> <p>Business cases will continue to be developed and will provide Members with the information required to make informed decisions in the coming months, before going out to public consultation at the end of quarter 3.</p> <p>There is recognition that the speed at which business cases are being developed needs to gather pace.</p>	<p><b>ongoing with issues that need further intervention</b></p>
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Direction of Travel from previous quarter	Forecasted direction of travel	
		<p>Our ability to be able to deliver statutory services within the current financial envelope has been difficult given the continuation of high inflation and energy costs. Coupled with the worrying position being expressed by Welsh Government around future funding is moving us in a downward trend and increasing our risks as we move through the year and into the next financial year. Based on the messages received from Welsh Government it is recommended that the score remains at critical.</p> <p>Work continues on targets to reduce overall risk / the forecasted direction of travel is a worsening position. Although we are maintaining our delivery of services and continue to be on track overall, we are seeing the impacts of future funding settlements put greater pressure on the authority to find greater cuts in delivering its statutory functions.</p>



<b>Risk Reference CRR 2</b> <b>Risk Description: Failure to ensure that the Councils ICT arrangements provide assurance in terms of operational functionality and data security and enable the required digital transformational change.</b> <b>Risk Owner: Corporate Leadership Team / Chief Officer Customer and Commercial Risk Updater: Digital Board / Information Security Officer (SRS)</b> <b>Portfolio holder: Councillor Steve Thomas</b>						<b>Direction of Travel</b>  <b>No change</b> 						
Triggers	Consequences	Inherent Risk			Current Controls	Residual Risk			Proposed further controls to mitigate / reduce risk	Target Score		
		Likelihood	Impact	Status		Likelihood	Impact	Status		L x I =	Score	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure of IT software provider</li> <li>• Lack of investment in IT systems / obsolete equipment</li> <li>• Failure of the SRS to provide service</li> <li>• Lack of specialist support</li> <li>• Cyber security breach</li> <li>• Expansion of the SRS as more partners could affect resilience</li> <li>• Failure to maximise technology and digital innovation through a user centred service design</li> <li>• Global Supply chain shortages</li> <li>• Recruitment &amp; retention difficulties for IT specialists</li> <li>• Replacement of the WCCIS system by January 2026.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential security breach</li> <li>• Service provision affected</li> <li>• Does not meet the needs of evolving council services</li> <li>• Loss of critical / sensitive data</li> <li>• Inability to meet deadlines in business as usual and projects aimed at producing savings through technology use.</li> </ul>	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market leading national software providers.</li> <li>• Maintenance contracts &amp; agreements in place covering IT infrastructure.</li> <li>• Investment undertaken to improve the Council's resilience e.g. core system upgrade. ICT budget- security of the infrastructure and security is prioritised, when any ICT spending is required</li> <li>• Shared information security team in place (providing advice and threat assessments to partners (collaboration with Torfaen, Monmouthshire, and Gwent Police) Working with the SRS Information Security team partners are provided with assurance on IT security and cyber resilience.</li> <li>• Servers are now located at the Vantage Data Centre providing an increased level of resilience.</li> <li>• Corporate Digital Programme Developed</li> <li>• SLA with SRS in place approved at Strategic Board annually.</li> <li>• Monthly meetings between SRS and officers to review the programme progress.</li> <li>• Service Design and Digital Leadership board</li> <li>• Monitoring of SRS budget</li> <li>• SRS report for Scrutiny developed</li> <li>• SRS Risk Register</li> <li>• Investment framework</li> <li>• Digital Champion network and Community of practice</li> <li>• Development of Office 365</li> <li>• SOC / SIEM</li> </ul>	2	4	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is anticipated that a more in-depth review of the SLA for 2024/25 onwards will be undertaken with partners in due course</li> <li>• Programme of work to be developed as set out by Digital Board which will also support any Bridging the Gap projects.</li> <li>• Follow up on Digital Maturity Assessment</li> <li>• Maximising use of key corporate systems that have been invested in to include reduction of other systems which duplicate functions</li> <li>• Digital Strategy to be developed</li> <li>• Annual Updates to Governance and Audit Committee as part of the ongoing partnership with SRS.</li> <li>• Further controls in respect of WCCIS replacement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attendance and involvement at all national meetings regarding WCCIS and replacement system.</li> <li>- Regular engagement with the regional team</li> <li>- Advocating as a region with Gwent Local Authorities on a position statement and options appraisal</li> <li>- WLGA working on behalf of Local Authorities</li> <li>- Once agreed, work alongside WG, DHCW and the National team on a new best of breed model.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	1	4	Medium


**Quarter 2 Progress Update (July – September 2023)**

Update provided in the progress against further controls.

Progress Against Further Controls	Responsible Officer	Due Date	Comments / Update on Progress	BRAG Status of further controls
It is anticipated that a more in-depth review of the SLA for 2024/25 onwards will be undertaken with partners in due course	Digital Team	Q3 onwards	This is still planned to be undertaken. Will link into Strategic Group – SRS 5-year plan recently presented to Strategic Group attendees	On track
Programme of work to be developed as set out by Digital Board	Digital Team	Ongoing	Programme of work to include maximisation of use of MCS – CRM system across the LA and full use of Microsoft platform to support 3 <sup>rd</sup> party spend review. This will also support any BTG projects put forward with digital aspirations. Programme update to CLT late November	Ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)
Follow up on Digital Maturity Assessment	Digital Team	Ongoing	The Digital Maturity Assessment results are in the process of being analysed, some of the results supported the development of the Digital and Transformation strategy.	Ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)
Maximising use of key corporate systems that have been invested in to include reduction of other systems which duplicate functions.	L Roberts	Ongoing	<p>This is an ongoing process. In Q2 Bridging the Gap (BTG) focus on all things digital (review of licences). BTG Telephony project, focussing on reduction in lines across the LA will result in savings being identified.</p> <p>Explore the full use of My Council Services platform across the LA, this will support services to use this software and potentially turn other systems off, similarly with the full use of Microsoft platforms – this will also result in contracts being reduced if the full roadmap is pushed out across the LA (example of database use – supporting the removal of INCHECK CEPR – there are other database applications used across the LA we can focus on – need full support from all Service Managers to support this – feeds back into Programme of work being undertaken above – will produce savings – all will be captured under the financial modelling exercise</p> <p>Financial Modelling template being devised – to be provided to CLT at programme update late November</p>	On track
Digital Strategy to be developed.			The Council’s Digital Transformation Strategy for 2023 – 2027 was considered by CLT on 24 <sup>th</sup> Aug and Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 14 <sup>th</sup> September. The Strategy will be ratified early October by Cabinet. The strategy sets out the principles and priorities which are essential to improving and delivering Council	Complete. Will move to current controls from Q3

			<p>services in the future. There will be a set of delivery plans against each priority with a number of success measures.</p> <p>The Service Design and Digital Leadership Board will oversee the delivery of the Digital Transformation Strategy. Each year the strategy will have a set of Delivery Plans developed against each priority. The delivery plans will support the strategy and governance arrangements include the Digital board and future working board.</p> <p>The strategy will help the council maximise the opportunity to build good quality systems with those that use and provide them.</p>	
Annual Updates to Governance and Audit Committee as part of the ongoing partnership with SRS	Digital Team	Ongoing	As part of the Forward Work Programme report to go to CLT early November and then Partnership Committee mid-November on progress update	On track
<p>Further controls in respect of WCCIS replacement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attendance and involvement at all national meetings regarding WCCIS and replacement system.</li> <li>- Regular engagement with the regional team</li> <li>- Advocating as a region with Gwent Local Authorities on a position statement and options appraisal</li> <li>- WLGA working on behalf of Local Authorities</li> <li>- Once agreed, work alongside WG, DHCW and the National team on a new best of breed model.</li> </ul>	G Wasley / N Harper	Ongoing	There is concern owing to the timing of the work, the current CareDirector system is out of support in January 2026, and we will need to be on a new system by the closing months of 2025. There is also a risk of transferring all of the current data onto a new system.	On track

Direction of Travel from previous quarter	Forecasted direction of travel	
		There is no change to the direction of travel in this quarter. The potential impact of the replacement of the WCCIS system could affect the forecasted direction of travel.



<b>Risk Reference CRR4</b> <b>Risk Description: Safeguarding - Failure to ensure adequate safeguarding arrangements are in place for vulnerable people in Blaenau Gwent</b> <b>Risk Owner - Corporate Leadership Team / Interim Director of Social Services</b> <b>Portfolio holder: Councillor Hayden Trollope</b> <b>Risk Updater: Interim Director of Social Services / Director of Education / Strategic Safeguarding Leads Group</b>							<b>Direction of Travel</b>  <b>No change</b> 					
Triggers	Consequences	Inherent Risk			Current Controls	Residual Risk			Proposed further controls to mitigate / reduce risk	Target Score		
		Likelihood	Impact	Status		Likelihood	Impact	Status		L x I =	Score	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is inadequate assessments and monitoring</li> <li>• If there is a lack of documentation</li> <li>• If there are increasing referrals for services</li> <li>• If there is a lack of appropriate guidance and training</li> <li>• If there is poor communication between all parties (internal / external)</li> <li>• If there is a high turnover of staff and difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff.</li> <li>*If there are increased levels of sickness in key areas.</li> <li>• Failure to recognise that all staff have a duty to report abuse, harm or neglect.</li> <li>• Lack of appropriate guidance and training on safeguarding</li> <li>• Failure to progress the corporate safeguarding action plan via the corporate safeguarding leads group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential significant harm / loss of life</li> <li>• Long term reputational damage and confidence in the Council undermined</li> <li>• Increase in complaints / Potential litigation / prosecution</li> <li>• External intervention</li> <li>• Increased pressure on budgets</li> <li>• Low staff morale</li> </ul>	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint Social Services and Education Scrutiny established (PEOPLE scrutiny committee)</li> <li>• Education Designated Lead and Deputy Officer nominated</li> <li>• Education Safeguarding Officer established and in post</li> <li>• Gwent Adult Safeguarding Board</li> <li>• SE Wales Safeguarding Children’s Board</li> <li>• Safeguarding is a standing item on CMT agenda</li> <li>• Lead Executive Member has been identified for having responsibility for safeguarding</li> <li>• Senior leadership have received Level 1 safeguarding training.</li> <li>• Programme of training for schools underway.</li> <li>• Corporate safeguarding leads established for each directorate who have been requested to identify staff for Level 1 training (3 dates have already been set)</li> <li>• Safeguarding in Education matrix regularly updated</li> <li>• Use of MyConcern software in schools will be used to gather data, monitor positive cases and create consistency across the school estate. The roll-out project team is fully established.</li> <li>• A corporate safeguarding leads group has been established to drive forward the safeguarding agenda and action the recommendations made by the BG Wales Audit Office report</li> </ul>	2	4	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All directorate business Plans to include safeguarding and include actions required to ensure safeguarding arrangements are in place</li> <li>• Safeguarding Reports into PEOPLE Scrutiny contain corporate safeguarding information from all directorates. Plus and update from the corporate safeguarding leads group</li> <li>• Safeguarding training data to be reviewed by each Directorate to ensure all staff are undertaking this</li> <li>• Regularly review the councils volunteering register to ensure DBS checks are up to date</li> <li>• Ensure the audit Wales BG safeguarding report recommendations continue to be reviewed and met</li> <li>• Each Directorate to undertake a safeguarding self-assessment</li> </ul>	1	4	Medium


**Quarter 2 Progress Update (July – September 2023)**

Update provided in the progress against further controls. In addition, due to recommendations from Wales Audit report not fully implemented and Directorate self-assessments still outstanding the risk need to remain high.

Progress Against Further Controls	Responsible Officer	Due Date	Comments / Update on Progress	BRAG Status of further controls
All directorate risk registers to include safeguarding and include actions required to ensure safeguarding arrangements are in place.	CLT	Ongoing	Safeguarding is included in all Directorate Risk Registers.	On track
Safeguarding Reports into PEOPLE Scrutiny contain corporate safeguarding information from all directorates.	Corporate Safeguarding Leads Group	Ongoing	<p>The Corporate Safeguarding Performance Report which contains corporate safeguarding activity as well as specific information in relation to Social Services and Education was reported to People Scrutiny Committee in July.</p> <p>The half yearly safeguarding report is in the process of being drafted to present to scrutiny in November.</p>	On track
Safeguarding training data to be reviewed by each Directorate to ensure all staff are undertaking this	Corporate Safeguarding Leads Group	Ongoing	<p>The Corporate Safeguarding Leads Group are looking at the collation and accuracy of training data and reviewing the control measures to ensure its accuracy due to ongoing reporting concerns. Raising awareness for managers via DLT's to ensure staff are completing training in line with the Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework – e.g., Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3.</p> <p>The corporate safeguarding leads group continue to take this forward to ensure accurate capture information to ensure all staff have undertaken this training</p>	Ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)
Regularly review the councils volunteering register to ensure DBS checks are up to date	Corporate Safeguarding Leads Group	Ongoing	<p>The volunteering register has been updated across the council and all DBS checks are up to date.</p> <p>Periodic checks of the register will need to continue</p>	On track
Ensure the audit Wales BG safeguarding report recommendations continue to be reviewed and met	Corporate Safeguarding Leads Group	Ongoing	The corporate safeguarding leads group continue to lead this work and reporting on progress will be contained in the next scrutiny report.	On track
Each Directorate to undertake a safeguarding self-assessment	Corporate Safeguarding Leads Group	Ongoing	This is in the process of being undertaken by each Directorate with a deadline of 30 <sup>th</sup> September being set. The safeguarding leads meeting are overseeing this and will be analysing data collection to present at the next CSGL meeting.	On track





Direction of Travel from previous quarter	Forecasted direction of travel	
		<p>There is no change in the risk score from the last quarter.</p> <p>Due to recommendations from Wales Audit report not fully implemented and Directorate self-assessments still outstanding the risk need to remain High.</p>


<b>Risk Reference CRR 5</b> <b>Risk Description: There is a risk that the Council's Business Continuity processes are not robust enough to enable the provision of critical services in an emergency.</b> <b>Risk Owner: Corporate Leadership Team / Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships.</b> <b>Portfolio holder: Councillor Steve Thomas</b> <b>Risk Updater: Civil Contingencies Manager</b>							<b>Direction of Travel</b>  No change 					
Triggers	Consequences	Inherent Risk			Current Controls	Residual Risk			Proposed further controls to mitigate / reduce risk	Target Score		
		Likelihood	Impact	Status		Likelihood	Impact	Status		L	x I =	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disruption due to pandemic influenza / human infectious disease.</li> <li>• Council resources are extremely stretched due to difficulties in recruitment / retention of staff.</li> <li>• High levels of sickness</li> <li>• Power cuts (local / regional / national)</li> <li>• Adverse Weather</li> <li>• Loss of / failure of ICT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical services not provided to an acceptable standard during disruptive incidents</li> <li>• Impact on the community and reputation of the Council</li> <li>• Loss of organisational resilience</li> <li>• Inability to continue or recover urgent (critical) services following an incident / loss / disruption affecting the delivery of services</li> </ul>	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative working arrangements will continue to manage pressures</li> <li>• Service provision prioritised and Critical services sustained</li> <li>• Planned work/projects reprioritised</li> <li>• Action taken to ensure support in place to promote staff well-being including flexibility on taking annual leave and ensuring officers do take leave</li> <li>* Corporate Plan reviewed and agreed to ensure focus on priorities taking into account the learning from the pandemic</li> <li>• New Working Arrangements implemented including Community Hubs (June 2021), Democratic Hub (September 2021) and Agile Working Policy (September 2021 onwards).</li> <li>• Move of servers from the Civic Centre to Vantage Data Centre to provide resilience.</li> </ul>	2	4	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the Corporate Business Continuity plan (2023), along with the associated policy, business impact assessments and service plan template.</li> <li>• Service area BC plans and arrangements to be reviewed.</li> <li>• Consider resilience of BGCBC buildings</li> <li>• Review of business impact assessments</li> </ul>	1	4	Medium

**Quarter 2 Progress Update (July – September 2023)**

Update provided in the progress against further controls

Progress Against Further Controls	Responsible Officer	Due Date	Comments / Update on Progress	BRAG Status of further controls
Review the Corporate Business Continuity plan (2023), along with the associated policy, business impact assessments and service plan template.	DG	Ongoing	Policy and service plan template has been reviewed.	Amber - ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)
Service area BC plans and arrangements to be reviewed.	DG	Ongoing	Not yet started. Awaiting completion of BIAs	Amber - ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)
Consider resilience of BGCBC buildings	DG	Ongoing	Some consideration around resilience to power outage underway.	Amber - ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)
Review of business impact assessments	DG	Ongoing	Review of BIAs with service areas is underway.	Amber - ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)

Direction of Travel from previous quarter	Forecasted direction of travel	
		<p>There is no change in the risk score from the last quarter.</p> <p>No changes to the risk score. Work is underway in quality assuring the BIAs undertaken so far, and services without updated BIAs are being contacted. The work has been delayed due to staffing issues.</p>

<p><b>Risk Reference CRR 14</b>  <b>Risk Description: Failure to improve staff attendance rates within the Council will lead to an unacceptable impact on the ability of the Council to deliver services effectively and financially.</b>  <b>Risk Owner: Corporate Leadership Team / Chief Officer Customer and Commercial</b>  <b>Portfolio holder: Councillor Steve Thomas</b>  <b>Risk Updater: Head of Organisational Development</b></p>							<p><b>Direction of Travel</b></p> <p>No change </p>					
Triggers	Consequences	Inherent Risk			Current Controls	Residual Risk			Proposed further controls to mitigate / reduce risk	Target Score L x I = Score		
		Likelihood	Impact	Status		Likelihood	Impact	Status				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Downsizing the workforce to meet necessary savings</li> <li>Alternative service delivery models</li> <li>Financial planning inhibits strategic workforce planning</li> <li>Service specifications not amended in line with cuts to services adding pressure to the workforce.</li> <li>Uncertainty of future arrangements</li> <li>Lack of managerial action in applying the attendance management policy</li> <li>Ongoing impact of Covid and long covid on sickness absence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not having the capacity and capability to deliver services</li> <li>Failure to deliver priorities</li> <li>Direct Impact on service delivery</li> <li>Increased sickness / absence</li> <li>Risk of not meeting statutory or legislative requirements in relation to specific workforce requirement e.g. social care.</li> <li>Breakdown in employer relations and representation at tribunal cases.</li> <li>Increased demand on support services e.g. OD</li> </ul>	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An Attendance Management Policy</li> <li>Occupational Health Service</li> <li>Employee Assistance Programme</li> <li>Strategic focus on wellbeing to include Wellbeing Wednesday Bulletin and Mental Health Training.</li> <li>Dying to Work Charter</li> <li>Training/briefing sessions for managers</li> <li>A policy and toolkit for managing stress</li> <li>An extensive range of flexible working arrangements</li> <li>Regular discussion and learning nationally and regionally</li> <li>Managers recognising good attendance and supporting wellbeing</li> <li>Sickness absence targets set by the Corporate Leadership Team</li> <li>Development of iTrent to provide sickness absence data to manager's in real time and access to a dashboard of sickness absence data.</li> <li>Performance data provided to the Corporate Leadership Team, Heads of Service and Elected Members on a quarterly basis.</li> <li>Sickness performance on Directorate Management Teams, team meetings and an objective for managers as part of annual performance coaching.</li> <li>Health, Safety and Welfare Corporate Group.</li> <li>Workforce engagement (regular 1 – 2 – 1's / performance coaching/ team meetings, weekly managing director newsletter, dedicated engagement and consultation framework with TU's)</li> <li>Bi annual staff surveys, engagement and communication</li> <li>Workforce Strategy 2021 – 2026 was agreed by Council July 2021</li> <li>Agile Working policy agreed by Council March 2021</li> </ul>	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Management of sickness absence :-</b></li> <li>-Quarterly directorate reviews of top 20 cases</li> <li>-OD review of long-term sickness – monthly</li> <li>-Recognition of good attendance through one to one and team meetings.</li> <li>-Communication with the workforce on impact of sickness and support available for employees.</li> <li><b>Strategies to address the impact of Covid and sickness absence:-</b></li> <li>-Workforce plan for each directorate</li> <li>-review of agile working commencing September 2022</li> <li>- staff engagement through a staff survey and workshops</li> <li><b>Understanding the data :-</b></li> <li>- Setting Performance targets</li> <li>-Workforce profiles to plan and lead service performance.</li> <li>Review of the Attendance Management Policy</li> </ul>	2	4	High

**Quarter 2 Progress Update (July – September 2023)**

Sickness levels remain high, however, the trend over 2022/23 and the first two quarters of 2023/24 is an improving picture with sickness levels reducing. 2022/23 saw a reduction of 1.29 days per FTE employee compared to 2021/22 and the 2nd Quarter 2023/24 has seen a reduction of 2.33 days (31%) from 7.42 days in 2022/23 to 5.09 days 2023/24.



The annual review 2022/23 has been presented to Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee October 23. The Committee considered the report and supported the ongoing actions to support improving attendance and requested that the outcome of the internal audit of compliance is reported back to the Committee. This report will also be reported into Cabinet November 23.


Based on the unpublished All Wales data the Council reports the highest days lost for 2022/23 and is 1.49 days above the next highest Council.

Sickness in the U.K. rose to its highest level since 2004, with workers living in Wales having the highest sickness rate compared to other UK regions. (Office for National Statistics)

<b>Updates Against Further Controls Action Title</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Comments / Update on Progress</b>	<b>BRAG Status of further controls</b>
<b>Management of sickness absence;-</b>				
Quarterly directorate reviews of top 20 cases OD review of long-term sickness – monthly	Heads of Service / Managers in conjunction with OD	Ongoing	Regular reviews of the long-term cases are undertaken and ongoing OD support is provided to managers on the management of sickness absence.	On track
Recognition of good attendance through one to one and team meetings. Communication with the workforce on impact of sickness and support available for employees	Managers	Ongoing	Attendance and communication with the workforce on the impact of sickness forms part of regular one to one and team meetings.	On track
Review of the Attendance Management Policy	OD Manager (HR)	February 24	Current policy fit for purpose, review to be finalised	On track
<b>Strategies to address the impact of Covid and sickness absence: -</b>				
Workforce plan for each directorate	CLT	Completed	Workplans developed for each directorate	Completed
review of agile working commencing September 2022	Head of OD	December 23	Review concluded - Report on the conclusion of the review / policy approval to be developed	On track
staff engagement through a staff survey and workshops	Head of OD	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey closed - analysis to support review of policy</li> <li>• Focus groups (180 staff) on agile working facilitated by Insight held to gather qualitative data to inform review</li> <li>• A session held to gather feedback from the trade unions</li> <li>• Feedback on the staff engagement presented to CLT</li> <li>• Sessions held with CLT and WCLT</li> <li>• Revised policies drafted</li> </ul>	Completed

			• Briefing held for Elected Members	
<b>Understanding the data :-</b>				
Setting Performance targets	CLT / Heads of Service	Completed	Service and Corporate targets set by CLT	Completed
Workforce profiles to plan and lead service performance.	OD Manager	Annually	Annual workforce plans published ➤ April 23 - Corporate	Completed
	OD Manager	Annually	Annual workforce plans published ➤ October 23 – Schools to be discussed with Headteachers as part of the HR annual visits	On track
Hotspot analysis	OD Manager	October 23	A detailed review and analysis of the 5 'hotspots' where the service outturn in 2022/23 was higher than the Council outturn has commenced and will be presented to CLT ( Provider Services, Adult Services, Legal and Corporate Compliance, Community Services and School based staff excluding teachers )	On track
	Internal Audit	November 23	An internal audit of policy compliance of the 5 'hotspots' is being undertaken.	

Direction of Travel from previous quarter	Forecasted direction of travel	
		<p>It is recommended that the risk scores remain unchanged, and focus remains on reducing the impact of sickness absence. This is suggested for the following reasons:</p> <p>Whilst sickness levels are reducing the Council had the highest level of sickness in Welsh Local Government in 2022/23 based on the available data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need of financial savings and efficiencies on capacity given the significant financial challenges facing Local Government over the next 3-5 years as well as the continuing cost of sickness absence</li> <li>• The first two quarters are showing a 31% reduction in comparison to the previous year however this covers the period April to September and the next two quarters over the winter months will present more of a challenge. If the Council continues on the same path over the next two quarters and at the end of 2023/24 the reduction in sickness continues for a second year, then it will be appropriate to revisit the scores at that time.</li> </ul>

<b>Risk Reference CRR 19</b> <b>Risk Description: If the Council does not manage its information assets in accordance with requirements set down within legislation, then it may be faced with financial penalties and possible sanctions that hinder service delivery.</b> <b>Risk Owner: Corporate Leadership Team / Chief Officer Resources Risk Updater: Information and Governance Officer</b> <b>Portfolio holder: Councillor Steve Thomas</b>							<b>Direction of Travel</b> <b>No change</b> 					
Triggers	Consequences	Inherent Risk			Current Controls	Residual Risk			Proposed further controls to mitigate / reduce risk	Target Score L x I = Score		
		Likelihood	Impact	Status		Likelihood	Impact	Status				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human error</li> <li>Lack of staff knowledge of requirements of the Act due to lack of awareness and training</li> <li>Inexperienced staff / staff turnover</li> <li>Rogue employee</li> <li>Lack of supervision of less experienced staff.</li> <li>IT failure (e.g. virus)</li> <li>Inadequate data sharing and data security arrangements.</li> <li>Cyber Attack</li> <li>Changes to legislation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reputational risk</li> <li>Fines for breach and financial loss from compensation claims</li> <li>Loss of service due to time taken to recover information</li> <li>Enforcement action</li> <li>Considerable Risks and potential Detrimental effects for the Data Subjects (Individuals concerned)</li> <li>Safeguarding issues (The service users are often vulnerable individuals so there could be safeguarding issues)</li> <li>Information theft or misuse</li> <li>Financial fraud.</li> <li>A malicious attack on ICT could result in a loss of confidence from those transacting with the Council</li> <li>Legal, asset, system, operational and financial implications</li> </ul>	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data Protection Officer advises on Data Protection compliance and provides specific advice to officers when required.</li> <li>The Shared Information Security service will provide assurance on IT security and review current systems to advise on the appropriate level of technical security required.</li> <li>Shared information security team in place (providing advice and threat assessments to partners (collaboration with Torfaen, Monmouthshire, and Gwent Police) Working with the SRS Information Security team partners are provided with assurance on IT security and cyber resilience.</li> <li>SIRO is responsible for the organisation's overall information risk policy and risk assessment processes and ensuring they are implemented consistently.</li> <li>Information Governance Forum (organised by the SIRO) has key Officers from across the Authority to review our current Information management arrangements and drive forward improvements to our existing arrangements. Chaired by the SIRO now meet quarterly to ensure a comprehensive information governance framework is in place and operating effectively throughout BGCBC</li> <li>Officer formally appointed in the statutory role of data protection officer</li> <li>Training is provided to staff through e-learning, Teams channels and face to face sessions on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>Adequate Information Security arrangements, technical security etc.</li> <li>IAO's (Information Asset Owners) formally recognised who will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand and address risks to the information they own</li> <li>Provide assurance to the SIRO on the security and use of these Assets</li> <li>Ensure their team and those interacting with info assets understand information security and are confident in their handling of information</li> <li>Establishment of information asset register</li> </ul> </li> <li>A GDPR page is available on the intranet, providing additional guidance for staff</li> <li>In place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) a SOC / SIEM solution to monitor the Council's network providing an enhanced level of protection against Cyber threats</li> <li>ii) Ransomware impact reduction product to reduce the impact of an attack when it does happen</li> </ul> </li> <li>SRS Risk Register</li> </ul>	2	4	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further training for Information Asset Owners and Operational Asset Leads</li> <li>GDPR training refresh programme.</li> <li>Development of web pages and intranet to reduce incoming queries and request</li> <li>Review of all Information Governance Policies and promote awareness</li> <li>Briefing session to Members to raise awareness</li> <li>Annual security awareness programme</li> <li>PCIDSS (Payment card industry data security standard) is being worked towards</li> </ul>	2	4	High



**Quarter 2 Progress Update (July – September 2023)**


For Quarter 2 there were 12 data breaches recording (5 in Social Services, 5 in Corporate Services, 1 in Education and 1 in Regen and Environment) of which 1 in Social Services required reporting to the ICO. The ICO have since assessed this and determined that no further action is necessary at this time. In comparison only 6 data breaches were recorded for the same period last year so this is an increase. However, when Q1 and Q2 are combined there are 17 for the year this year compared to 23 for Q1 and Q2 of last year so overall there is a reduction. There have been no patterns identified for the data breaches which have caused concern but a request has been made to SRS following the breach reported to the ICO to establish what options are available to us to minimise the risk when sending marketing emails to large groups of external recipients.

Progress Against Further Controls	Responsible Officer	Due Date	Comments / Update on Progress	BRAG Status of further controls
Further training for Information Asset Owners and Operational Asset Leads	Steve Berry DPO/ Rhian Hayden SIRO	Ongoing	New eLearning solution is hoped to provide the solution for training for IAOs and avoid significant costs of external training. In the meantime, a review is to be undertaken of Information Asset Owners in the authority to ensure the right people are trained when this becomes available.	ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)
GDPR training refresh programme	Steve Berry DPO/ Rhian Hayden SIRO	Ongoing	<p>Progress has been made on the new eLearning pilot and demos have been provided with some discussions taking place on the contracts, data sharing agreements etc on a national basis for the piloting authorities. It is anticipated that this will be available for use in 2024 as a pilot. It is hoped the new eLearning solution (Thingi) will make vast improvements and enable the team to track and monitor GDPR training, send reminders, inform line managers etc.</p> <p>In the meantime, training continues via the existing eLearning solution All Wales Academy eLearning continues to be used to ensure training is available and delivered but this lacks the monitoring, controls and flexibility that the new system promises to offer. The team continues to promote the training however to ensure our obligations are met for training staff. Reminders are being sent manually and training conducted as part of inductions. Where identified face to face or directed training is undertaken where teams identify a need.</p>	ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)
Development of web pages and intranet to reduce incoming queries and request	Steve Berry DPO/ Rhian Hayden SIRO	Ongoing	<p>A new "Schools GDPR Toolkit" intranet page has been developed for use by schools to provide templates, forms and guidance on how they should handle their Information Governance at the school.</p> <p>Now that this has been rolled out the intention is to widen this and improve the current corporate GDPR pages and resources.</p>	ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)
Review of all Information Governance Policies and promote awareness	Steve Berry DPO/ Rhian Hayden SIRO	Complete	The Freedom of Information and Data Protection policies were reviewed in Q2 and now approved and live. Further policy updates are planned throughout the course of the year.	ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)



Briefing session to Members to raise awareness	Steve Berry DPO/ Rhian Hayden SIRO	Complete	Members briefing session took place in July 2022 as part of the members induction and has therefore been completed.	Completed
Security awareness and training programme	Information Security Officer / Rhian Hayden	Ongoing	There is an annual security awareness programme that runs January (to coincide with Data Protection awareness week), June, October (to coincide with national cyber awareness month) and a one-pager at Christmas. It is tracked on the Information Security risk register. Audit Wales have provided confirmation that they are satisfied with the on-going programme we undertake.  a Data Protection and Cyber Awareness week will be undertaken in Q3 (October). During this week, it is intended to hold sessions on "retention" and a general "Q&A" session. We are now in the process of finalising the "12 scams of Christmas".	On track
PCIDSS (Payment card industry data security standard) is being worked towards	Information Security Officer / Rhian Hayden	Ongoing	PCIDSS (Payment card industry data security standard) accreditation is being worked towards and this is almost achieved. PCIDSS (Payment card industry data security standard) relates to credit card payments Any company that takes card payments (debit/credit) must align to 12 requirements and the Council only had one point to resolve which was addressing call recording where card numbers were not masked, this has now been removed (the calls with card numbers). The ISO has now carried out successful dip sampling to test and these tests will be carried out quarterly. The PCIDSS policy has been updated as part of our annual policy review schedule.  A gap analysis of the 12 requirements of PCIDSS has been undertaken, and we are in a good position to submit our attestation of compliance. The date for this will be confirmed in due course.	On track

Direction of Travel from previous quarter	Forecasted direction of travel	
		No change in risk score. No significant changes to the risk occurred during this period with progress being made on many of the controls.

<b>Risk Reference CRR 21</b> <b>Risk Description: The Financial resilience of the Council could be at risk if the Council does not ensure that financial planning and management decisions support long term stability and sustainability.</b> <b>Risk Owner: Corporate Leadership Team / Chief Officer Resources</b> <b>Portfolio holder: Councillor Steve Thomas</b> <b>Risk Updater: Chief Officer Resources</b>							<b>Direction of travel</b> Increasing risk 					
Triggers	Consequences	Inherent Risk			Current Controls	Residual Risk			Proposed further controls to mitigate / reduce risk	Target Score		
		Likelihood	Impact	Status		Likelihood	Impact	Status		L x I = Score		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sustained funding reductions</li> <li>● Cost of Living effect on increases and associate reduction in Council income from Council Tax / Rates</li> <li>● Increased third party spend due to increase in supply cost of labour / energy prices /</li> <li>● Increased demand and cost for services</li> <li>● Inability to effectively manage budgets in order to achieve balanced budgets within year</li> <li>● Financial planning arrangements not long term in its perspective or aligned to corporate priorities.</li> <li>● Medium Term Financial Strategy is not robust or flexible enough to adapt to change.</li> <li>● Medium Term Financial Strategy is not aligned with other key strategies</li> <li>● Inability to deliver intended savings</li> <li>● Lack of capacity within Finance Teams</li> <li>● Lack of Member engagement and scrutiny of savings plans. Lack of political support for business cases</li> <li>● Not receiving an audit opinion on accounts</li> <li>● Failure to become more commercially minded</li> <li>● Potential impact of equal pay claims – representations on equal pay and one case as part of employment tribunal system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Inability to deliver effective services or provision of lower quality services to residents and businesses of the Borough.</li> <li>● Unplanned reduction in services provided</li> <li>● Lack of improvement in key areas</li> <li>● Failure to achieve corporate priorities</li> <li>● Depletion of reserves</li> <li>● Potential impact on ability to borrow and be awarded grants</li> <li>● Significant reputational risk from intervention</li> </ul>	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Budgets firmly aligned with Council priorities</li> <li>● Service prioritisation and planning</li> <li>● Medium Term Financial Strategy regularly reviewed and updated to reflect known and emerging pressures and ensure alignment with the Corporate Plan. agreed in December 2022 (currently undergoing review)</li> <li>● Impact of new and existing burdens / budget pressures being continually assessed</li> <li>● Risks associated with potential budget reductions evaluated prior to implementation</li> <li>● Budget monitoring refined and forecasting included within financial monitoring reports.</li> <li>● Council have an agreed target level (minimum) of general reserve (4%) and reserves regularly reviewed by the Chief Officer – Resources and relevant officers. General and Earmarked Reserves are also scrutinised by Corporate Leadership Team, members of Scrutiny Committees and the Cabinet as part of the Council’s financial reporting framework.</li> <li>● Financial monitoring arrangements include quarterly briefings for (scrutiny) and consideration of forecasts by the Cabinet.</li> <li>● MTFs proposes a contribution to reserves on an annual basis</li> <li>● Multi skilled teams involved in development / assessment of business cases.</li> </ul>	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Delivery &amp; further development of the Bridging the Gap Programme. This will include the development and consideration of new business cases relating to commercial opportunities, service changes and budget cuts / additional income generation to balance Council budget.</li> </ul>	2	4	High



**Quarter 2 Progress Update (July – September 2023)**


The review of the MTFS identified increased budget gaps of approximately £33m over the next 5 years, with £10m needed to balance the budget in 2024/25. High inflation continues to have a significant impact on the cost of delivering services to the public and the funding outlook in the medium term looks difficult. The current forecast for 2023/24 remains positive with outturn as at Q2 a favourable variance (continuing from Q1 which may give the Council a little flexibility for 2024 / 2025 however there remains some uncertainty round pay and prices with inflation remaining higher than expected into the immediate future.

During Q2 business cases have and continue to be developed for Council to consider – if agreed these will contribute to budget gaps required in future years however there is still some way to go to identify the full budget reductions / savings required for 2024/25 and the longer term.

It is recommended risk score remains Critical.

Progress Against Further Controls	Responsible Officer	Due Date	Comments / Update on Progress	BRAG Status of further controls
Delivery & further development of the Bridging the Gap Programme. This will include the development and consideration of new business cases relating to commercial opportunities, service changes and budget cuts / additional income generation to balance Council budget.	CLT	Ongoing	<p>The review of the MTFS identified increased budget gaps of approximately £33m over the next 5 years, with £10m needed to balance the budget in 2024/25.</p> <p>During Q2 business cases have and continue to be developed for Council to consider – if agreed these will contribute to budget gaps required in future years however there is still some way to go to identify the full budget reductions / savings required.</p> <p>Significant pace now needs to be injected into business case development to commence engagement on proposals with Members and the public.</p>	<p><b>ongoing with issues that need further intervention</b></p>

Direction of Travel from previous quarter	Forecasted direction of travel	
		<p>There are increasing concerns surrounding the financial sustainability of Welsh local authorities. The Welsh Local Government estimate a budget gap of between £330m £480m in 2024/25 which will have serious impacts on local service delivery. The Welsh Government has described its budgetary position as 'the most difficult financial situation since the dawn of devolution'.</p> <p>Given the Council's reliance on Welsh Government funding and the national picture it is recommended that the score remains at critical.</p>



<b>Risk Reference CRR 22</b> <b>Risk Description: Failure to deliver the Council's priorities within the agreed annual budget resulting in the increased use of emergency finance measures and the drawdown of reserves.</b> <b>Risk Owner: Corporate Leadership Team / Chief Officer Resources</b> <b>Portfolio holder: Councillor Steve Thomas</b> <b>Risk Updater: Chief Officer Resources</b>							<b>Direction of Travel</b> <b>Decreased risk</b> 					
Triggers	Consequences	Inherent Risk			Current Controls	Residual Risk			Proposed further controls to mitigate / reduce risk	Target Score L X I = Score		
		Likelihood	Impact	Status		Likelihood	Impact	Status				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council priorities are unclear and unrealistic</li> <li>• Cost of Living effect on increases and associate reduction in Council income from Council Tax / Rates</li> <li>• Increased third party spend due to increase in supply cost of labour / energy prices /</li> <li>• Increased demand and cost for services in</li> <li>• Significant challenge arising from increased demand and cost of services</li> <li>• Budgets not aligned with corporate priorities</li> <li>• Risk that savings identified as part of business as usual and efficiencies have not been robustly reviewed for achievability and will not deliver as planned</li> <li>• Priorities of political administration may have an impact on budget decisions</li> <li>• Customer participation not as expected. e.g. recycling / waste</li> <li>• Unexpected financial challenges or additional obligations arising.</li> <li>• Monitoring failure / lack of financial information / budgetary control information.</li> <li>• Failure of projects under the preventative agenda.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirement to implement emergency measures to reduce spending during the financial year thus adversely impacting on ability to meet corporate plan objectives</li> <li>• Increasing adverse effects on the community of Blaenau Gwent that rely on the services being delivered.</li> <li>• Requirement to draw from general reserves at the year end</li> <li>• Risk of failing to meet statutory obligations</li> <li>• Risk that financial constraints and budget proposals result in unintended consequences such as increased instances of non-compliance and financial impropriety</li> <li>• Unplanned cutbacks in staffing and potential for increased sickness absence in the workforce due to increasing workload</li> <li>• Impact on capital programme and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme</li> </ul>	3	4	critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgets firmly aligned with Council priorities</li> <li>• Service prioritisation and planning</li> <li>• The Medium Term Financial Strategy is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect known and emerging pressures and ensure alignment with the Corporate Plan.</li> <li>• Impact of new and existing burdens / budget pressures being continually assessed</li> <li>• Risks associated with potential budget reductions evaluated prior to implementation</li> <li>• Budget monitoring refined and forecasting embedded into financial monitoring reports. Financial monitoring arrangements include quarterly scrutiny by members of Joint (Budget) Scrutiny Committee and consideration of forecasts by the Cabinet (and Cost Pressure subgroup)</li> <li>• Public engagement events held annually to ascertain public opinion on savings proposals.</li> <li>• Council have an agreed target level of general reserve (4%) and reserves regularly reviewed by the Chief Officer – Resources and relevant officers. General and Earmarked Reserves are also scrutinised on a quarterly basis by Corporate Leadership Team, members of Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet.</li> <li>• Use of the Market Intelligence gathered from the Strategic Commercial Commission Board (SCCB) to support the council's budget setting process for 23/24 and beyond</li> </ul>	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement relevant opportunities for savings and service improvement to address current and emerging cost pressures and underperformance (Strategic review, internal service reviews)</li> <li>• Bridging the Gap Programme</li> </ul>	1	4	Medium


**Quarter 2 Progress Update (July – September 2023)**

The current forecast for 2023/24 remains positive with outturn as at Q2 a favourable variance (continuing from Q1). The cost pressures identified during Q1 continue and there remains some uncertainty round pay and prices with inflation remaining higher than expected into the immediate future.

Current indications suggest no deterioration in the position in year however there has been no significant positive movement, the risk score therefore remains critical.



Progress Against Further Controls	Responsible Officer	Due Date	Comments / Update on Progress	BRAG Status of further controls
Implement relevant opportunities for savings and service improvement to address current and emerging cost pressures and underperformance (Strategic review, internal service reviews)	CLT / Service Managers	Ongoing	<p>Emerging in year cost pressures are being managed within the Council’s overall revenue budget.</p> <p>Where overspends cannot be overset by compensatory savings within individual budgets then either cross portfolio budget virements are being actioned or Action Plans to address the pressures are being developed.</p>	On track
Bridging the Gap Programme 2023 2024	CLT / Service Managers	Ongoing	<p>In setting its budget for 2023/24 the Council agreed proposals of £3m.</p> <p>Whilst good progress is being made against delivering some of these proposals others have / are experiencing difficulty and are not delivering as expected. Currently the Council is on track to deliver £2.2 million of the £3 million savings proposed.</p> <p>Where possible alternative savings are being identified or the pressures are being absorbed within underspending budgets.</p>	ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)

Direction of Travel from previous quarter	Forecasted direction of travel	
		<p>The overall forecast outturn across all Portfolios as of 30 September 2023, is a favourable variance £1.42m after utilising £3.5m from reserves. Whilst there is a significant use of reserves forecast this is an improving position compared to quarter 1 when the forecast was a favourable variance of £0.97m including a forecast use of reserves of £4m.</p> <p>Given the continuing uncertainty it is proposed the risk remains critical.</p>


<b>Risk Reference CRR 25</b> <b>Risk Description: The 2 schools in an Estyn category and currently in receipt of Council Intervention fail to make appropriate progress against the Statutory Warning Notice to Improve and their Post Inspection Action Plans.</b> <b>Risk Owner: Corporate Leadership Team / Director of Education Risk Updater: Director of Education / Education DMT</b> <b>Portfolio holder: Councillor Sue Edmunds</b>							<b>Direction of Travel</b>  <b>No change</b> 					
Triggers	Consequences	Inherent Risk			Current Controls	Residual Risk			Proposed further controls to mitigate / reduce risk	Target Score		
		Likelihood	Impact	Status		Likelihood	Impact	Status		L	I	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is insufficient progress through each Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) as recognised by the Local Authority and ESTYN.</li> <li>The priorities for leadership within the school are deflected to other external factors which in turn impact upon their ability to focus upon school and regulators priorities.</li> <li>Failure to improve standards</li> <li>Governing Body does not provide effective support and challenge on relevant school priorities and hence hinder the progression of key actions and processes in order to improve the school and as set out in each PIAP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The implementation of further statutory interventions available under provisions set out in the school Standards and Organisation Act Wales 2013 i.e. implementation of additional grounds</li> <li>Not being removed from the statutory follow up categories within appropriate timescales.</li> <li>Failure to improve standards in key identified areas</li> <li>Failure to meet the requirements of the national reform agenda and improve learner outcomes and wellbeing appropriately</li> <li>Failure to secure good performance in line with new national performance indicators i.e. for 2019 and beyond</li> <li>Failure to address the requirement as set out in the current Statutory warning notices to improve</li> </ul>	3	3	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team Around the School meetings that are now held on a half-termly basis</li> <li>Bespoke support from the EAS and relevant Council wide services provided to school leadership and governing body</li> <li>Improvement Conference Statutory Warning Notice in place and being monitored.</li> <li>ESTYN monitoring visits</li> <li>Works undertaken on the school building to address health and safety concerns.</li> </ul>	3	3	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further use of provision as set in the School Standards and Organisation Act Wales 2013 as deemed appropriate and based on evidence.</li> <li>LA/EAS Review</li> <li>Review of SWN's</li> </ul>	2	3	Medium

**Quarter 2 Progress Update (July – September 2023)**

Progress Against Further Controls	Responsible Officer	Due Date	Comments / Update on Progress	BRAG Status of further controls
<p>Further use of provision as set in the School Standards and Organisation Act Wales 2013 as deemed appropriate and based on evidence.</p> <p>Review of SWN's</p> <p>LA/EAS Review</p>	<p>Interim Corporate Director of Education</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p><b>Brynmawr Foundation School</b>                      Following 2 Estyn review visits which identified positive progress against the recommendations and higher than anticipated key stage 4 results in August 2023 the Statutory Warning Notice was reviewed in Sept 2023 and has been lifted. Progress against the further controls has been evidenced by the Estyn visits and an EAS review in Summer as well as the Key stage 4 results. As the school remains in an Estyn category at present there is no revision to the score at the moment.</p> <p><b>River Centre</b>                      Leadership has been strengthened with a secondment to the Head of the Secondary Phase. The Local Authority has taken over transport to school arrangements enabling the school to concrete on behaviour and curriculum development. Further work is being undertaken on the outdoor area of the school site and there has been further recruitment to teachers and teaching assistants. Some staff have agreed packages to end contracts. There is a new school improvement partner who is a Headteacher at a specialist school</p> <p>An Estyn visit is awaited in Q3 in both schools and both schools are still receiving enhanced support from the Education Achievement Service.</p>	<p>On track</p>

Direction of Travel from previous quarter	Forecasted direction of travel	
		<p>The direction of travel in respect of Brynmawr Foundation School is a lowering risk. In respect of The River Centre there is no change at present, but progress against the PIAP is evident and recognised by Estyn in their re-visit in Summer 2023. Improving position. There is confidence that BFS will come out of an ESTYN category in either Autumn or Spring Term</p> <p>In respect of the River Centre there is confidence that the next ESTYN inspection will show good progress against the PIAP. However, it is recognised that the Estyn inspection identified a number of recommendations and that significant improvements need to be made in the school in a number of areas</p>

**Risk Reference** CRR 28  
**Risk Description:** Failure to maintain appropriately skilled, adequate staffing resources will lead to an unacceptable impact on the ability of the Council to deliver services effectively.  
**Risk Owner:** Corporate Leadership Team / Chief Officer Customer and Commercial  
**Portfolio holder:** Councillor Steve Thomas  
**Risk Updater:** Head of Organisational Development

**Direction of Travel**  
 No change 

Triggers	Consequences	Inherent Risk			Current Controls	Residual Risk			Proposed further controls to mitigate / reduce risk	Target Score		
		Likelihood	Impact	Status		Likelihood	Impact	Status		L x I =	Score	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to recruit / retain sufficient permanent staff to a significant number of posts due to significant market challenges experienced nationwide (post leaving the EU and Post COVID 19)</li> <li>Competition from other employers and the private sector where there is more flexibility in respect of salary and terms and conditions.</li> <li>Fixed term contracts rather than permanent are not attractive.</li> <li>Downsizing the workforce to meet necessary savings</li> <li>Alternative service delivery models</li> <li>Large numbers of workforce over the age of 55 years of age meaning that staff with significant knowledge and experience could leave.</li> <li>Service specifications not amended in line with cuts to services adding pressure to the workforce.</li> <li>Impact of sickness absence on workforce</li> <li>Post pandemic staff priorities</li> <li>Reliance on key staff for response to key issues / incidents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not having the capacity and capability to deliver services</li> <li>Failure to deliver priorities and direct impact on service delivery</li> <li>Increased sickness / absence</li> <li>Risk of not meeting statutory or legislative requirements in relation to specific workforce requirement e.g., social care.</li> <li>Over reliance on agency staff</li> <li>Inability of Council to provide support in response to emergencies (e.g., support provided during the pandemic and cost of living crisis).</li> </ul>	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workforce Strategy 21-26</li> <li>Directorate Workforce Plans</li> <li>Annual workforce profiles containing recruitment and retention data to support workforce planning.</li> <li>Commitment to paying the real living wage</li> <li>Good terms and conditions and pension provisions.</li> <li>Flexible working</li> <li>Agile working</li> <li>Grow our own – Apprenticeships</li> <li>Career paths for staff to develop and progress</li> <li>Focus on health and wellbeing</li> <li>Occupational Health Service and Employee Assistance Programme</li> <li>Recruitment and Market Supplement Policy</li> <li>Competency framework and performance coaching</li> <li>Recruitment and retention review presented to CLT</li> <li>Development opportunities for staff</li> <li>Career Promotion Officer to focus on recruiting and retaining in key areas in social services</li> <li>Use of recruitment days / events to target and support potential candidates through the process</li> <li>Social Worker Development Strategy</li> <li>Jobs Bulletin re-introduced</li> </ul>	3	3	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing of the Council as an Employer of Choice. Effective use of social media / linked-in for recruitment and targeted campaigns including use of video case studies.</li> <li>Modernisation of recruitment content on website</li> <li>Development of recruitment and onboarding within ITrent</li> <li>Directorates to implement and review workforce plans</li> <li>Review of the Recruitment Policy</li> <li>Inclusion of leavers data in the annual workforce profiles for directorates</li> <li>Effective management of sickness absence</li> <li>Recruitment and retention data to be presented to CLT</li> <li>Maximisation of any regional campaigns particularly in Social Services</li> </ul>	2	2	Medium





**Quarter 2 Progress Update (July – September 2023)**


Temporary arrangements in place for the vacant Chief Executive post, to include backfill in Social Services, temporary leadership arrangements in place in Education  
 Discussions held with the Leader to progress with the recruitment to the Chief Executive post. Report to Council July 2023 with plan for recruitment autumn 2023.  
 Business Cases started to be developed to meet the savings requirements for 2024/25.

Updates Against Further Controls	Responsible Officer	Due Date	Comments / Update on Progress	BRAG Status of further controls
Marketing of the Council as an Employer of Choice. Effective use of social media / linked-in for recruitment and targeted campaigns including use of video case studies.	OD Manager (HR)	Ongoing / subject to ITrent development timescales to be agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post in place in Social Services to support with promoting careers in care and improving advertisements for roles in Care;</li> <li>• Social Media used to advertise roles further discussion on enhancing</li> </ul>	On track
Modernisation of recruitment content on website	OD Manager (HR)	Ongoing / subject to ITrent development timescales to be agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial work completed to modernise the content on the website further discussion on marketing and website to be held with the Communications and Marketing Team</li> <li>• Linked to the development of the recruitment module in ITrent and work to enhance the application processes</li> </ul>	On track
Development of recruitment and onboarding within ITrent	OD Manager	Tbc in conjunction with Midland HR following initial scoping exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report to CLT to agree development plan for ITrent 2023/24</li> <li>• 2 Scoping sessions held with OD staff to plan development of the recruitment module in ITrent</li> <li>• linking with another local authority to learn from their experience,</li> <li>• Scoping session planned with Midland with a view to develop timeline and plan for development</li> </ul>	On track
Directorates to implement and review workforce plans	CLT	Annual review in line with business planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce plans developed</li> <li>• HR development session held with WLGA on workforce planning</li> <li>• Leadership development sessions planned with the WLGA on workforce Planning</li> <li>• Discussion document to CLT on review of Workforce Plans, to include the workforce profile - agreed that Workforce Plans would be reviewed as part of business plan review process.</li> </ul>	On track
Review of the Recruitment Policy	OD Manager	December 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft policy developed and unions consulted.</li> </ul>	On track

Inclusion of leavers data in the annual workforce profiles for directorates	OD Manager	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leavers data has been added to the annual workforce profiles</li> </ul>	Completed
Effective management of sickness absence	Managers	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual review of sickness absence report developed for CLT and scrutiny, to include request for audit to undertake a compliance audit in areas identified as hot spots</li> <li>Ongoing management of sickness absence – quarter 2 2023/24 is an improving picture in comparison to the previous year</li> <li>Refer to Risk CRR14 for full details</li> </ul>	On track
Recruitment and retention data to be presented to CLT.	Head of OD	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment and retention information presented to CLT</li> <li>Workforce Profiles Corporate reviewed at CLT, Directorate profiles reviewed at management teams and schools being rolled out autumn 2023</li> </ul>	Completed
Maximisation of any regional campaigns particularly in Social Services	Heads of Service in conjunction with OD	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Services are linking into regional approaches, an example being care roles within Social Services</li> </ul>	On track

Direction of Travel from previous quarter	Forecasted direction of travel	
		No change in direction of travel since the last quarter however the forecasted direction of travel is a worsening position in line with the financial savings plans and potential downsizing of the workforce and the impact on capacity

**Risk Reference** CRR 30 (a)  
**Risk Description:** Impact of cost of living (inflationary) increase driven by a number of crosscutting forces on our communities and staff have created significant challenges for those already in need.  
**Risk Owner:** Corporate Leadership Team / Interim Director of Social Services  
**Portfolio holder:** Councillor Hayden Trollope  
**Risk Updater:** Cost of Living Crisis Operational Working Group

**Direction of Travel**  
 No change 



Triggers	Consequences	Inherent Risk			Current Controls	Residual Risk			Proposed further controls to mitigate / reduce risk
		Likelihood	Impact	Status		Likelihood	Impact	Status	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased costs of household energy bills, food and fuel and stagnation in wages.</li> <li>Volatility in the energy market as a result of the war in Ukraine</li> <li>Shortages and delays as a result of exiting the EU</li> <li>Legacy of COVID disruption to supply chains</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased Debt</li> <li>Reduction in Household income</li> <li>Negative impact on health and wellbeing of communities.</li> <li>Increased homelessness</li> </ul>	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of living crisis operational group set up which is seeking to address challenges across the community and staff.</li> <li>Cross Party Working Group in place to monitor</li> <li>Links in place with key organisations</li> <li>(Wellbeing Partnership in place)</li> <li>Warm HUBS in place during the colder months</li> <li>Communication campaigns running to provide information to residents about support available</li> <li>Discretionary grants</li> <li>Employability Group in place</li> <li>Food Poverty Action Plan</li> </ul>	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of Action Plan for 2023 / 2024</li> </ul>


**Quarter 2 Progress Update (July – September 2023)**

The cost-of-living crisis has created a scenario where the cost of everyday essentials such as energy and food is rising over and above average incomes.

There will need to be consideration in Quarter 3 as to whether this is an issue rather than a risk. If the view is that it is an issue which the Council is currently responding to, then it will be removed from the Corporate Risk Register.

Progress Against Further Controls	Responsible Officer	Due Date	Comments / Update on Progress	BRAG Status of further controls
Development of Action Plan for winter 2023 / 2024	Cost of Living Operational Group	Complete	Action plan for winter 2023 / 2024 completed and shared with the cross party Member led working group in Quarter 2 (September). The high-level actions within the plan centre around Support for residents (Housing / Food / general support and Communication / Engagement with the public / staff. The action plan is updated and monitored by the Cost-of-Living Operational Group who meet on monthly basis. A review of warm hubs and foodbanks is underway and a cost of living events are planned for Q3 (November). Cost of living advice communication is currently being developed to run through the winter months for the public and staff members.	Complete

Direction of Travel from previous quarter	Forecasted direction of travel	
		As an authority we recognise that we do not control all the necessary levers to mitigate against the full impact of this crisis however we recognise the need to focus on the steps we can take to alleviate the effects of the crisis.



Risk Reference CRR 30 (b)							Direction of Travel				
Risk Description: Impact of cost of living (inflationary) increases on businesses in Blaenau Gwent.							No change 				
Risk Owner: Corporate Leadership Team / Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services Risk Updater: Cost of Living Crisis Operational Working Group											
Portfolio holder: Councillor Hayden Trollope or Councillor John Morgan											
Triggers	Consequences	Inherent Risk			Current Controls	Residual Risk			Proposed further controls to mitigate / reduce risk	Target Score	
		Likelihood	Impact	Status		Likelihood	Impact	Status		L x I = Score	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• War in the Ukraine</li> <li>• Negative impact of the exit from the EU</li> <li>• Post pandemic</li> <li>• Reliance on grant funding to develop and deliver key regeneration projects / programmes.</li> <li>• Outside EU and new laws/charges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business closure due to energy costs, inflation, and Cost of living implications.</li> <li>• new EU import duty on goods and raw materials affecting overall production costs for business (automotive hard hit)</li> <li>• new export procedures still posing exporting issues for goods to EU – potential to slow or stop productivity, can result in job losses</li> </ul>	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of living crisis operational group set up which is seeking to address challenges across the community</li> <li>• Action plan in place for 2023 2024</li> <li>• Cross Party Working Group in place</li> <li>• Employability Group in place</li> <li>• Regular emails on business development to local businesses. In addition to this business engagement meetings with key business based in BG.</li> <li>• Priority for team business start-ups, local businesses with growth and business retention issues. We continue to seek new inward investment projects i.e. business relocation projects to create further employment opportunities</li> <li>• Working closely with partners on sending out information and guidance where possible.</li> <li>• Working with key partners, Business Wales, Dev Banc, Chamber Wales that has export documentation service for SMEs</li> <li>• Shared Prosperity Funding. Businesses advised on grant eligibility with the new Business Development Grant Scheme.</li> </ul>	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Stimulus measures further to be introduced.</li> <li>• Kick Start plus grant for businesses wishing to grow within three years of business trading.</li> </ul>		

**Quarter 2 Progress Update (July – September 2023)**

Update provided below

There will need to be consideration in Quarter 3 as to whether this is an issue rather than a risk. If the view is that it is an issue which the Council is currently responding to, then it will be removed from the Corporate Risk Register.

Progress Against Further Controls	Responsible Officer	Due Date	Comments / Update on Progress	BRAG Status of further controls
Business Support and Economic Stimulus measures to be introduced. (Enterprise Facilitation and Business Development Grant scheme).	Moe Forouzan	Ongoing	<p>The Business Development Grant scheme, which targets business growth and new enterprises developing in BG (Capital grant £25k and revenue £25k).</p> <p>Business Development Grant Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 53 Expressions of Interest received resulting in 46 applications issued.</li> <li>• 23 Full applications received – 8 withdrawn or ineligible.</li> <li>• 14 Grants approved, totalling £257,831.55.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o £310,839.05 of private sector investment (78%)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 21 FTE jobs to be created and 60.5 FTE jobs to be safeguarded.</li> </ul> <p>The Enterprise Facilitation project was relaunched in June 2023. Enterprise Facilitation is a free, informal, and confidential service for aspiring entrepreneurs and business owners within Blaenau Gwent. The Enterprise Facilitation® model places no time constraint on an Enterprise Facilitator’s time or length of support available, which means clients will always have access to the form of support needed, as and when issues arise.</p> <p>Two new Enterprise Facilitators have been recruited to deliver the Enterprise Facilitation model as well as lead on the day-to-day marketing and communications for the Business &amp; Innovation team, including implementing new digital ways of working via Evolutive and Blaenau Gwent Business Hub, to improve customer experience and promote local business support initiatives and ensure local business development opportunities are maximised. The EFs will also support the development of an effective business networking forum for start-up, new and small businesses in Blaenau Gwent</p>	On track

Direction of Travel from previous quarter	Forecasted direction of travel	
		<p>We continue to monitor the economy within Blaenau Gwent but note the economic stimulus measures are making a difference. 29.9% more businesses start-ups in Blaenau Gwent during the first eight months of this year compared with the corresponding period of last year, according to latest data from BankSearch. This growth rate ranks Blaenau Gwent at 2 out of the 22 Welsh districts.</p>

