


Risk Reference CRR1							Direction of travel					
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.							Increasing risk 					
Risk Owner: Corporate Leadership Team / Interim Chief Executive				Risk Updater: Chief Officer Resources / Chief Officer Customer and Commercial								
Portfolio holder: Councillor Steve Thomas												
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"> • Council priorities are unclear and unrealistic / Budgets not aligned with corporate priorities • Failure to put the customer at the centre of changes • Risk that the preventative agenda does not deliver • 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 • Governance arrangements for achievement of priorities and delivery of significant projects are not robust. • Lack of ownership and accountability of the need for change • Council unable to overcome the challenges to become more commercially minded i.e. Inability to make the cultural shift • 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. • Transformation and commercial projects require significant capital investment • Failure to obtain political support for proposed changes. • Failure to develop the skills and capacity required to manage significant change at a time of increased demand. • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to meet the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. • Vital services will not be protected if the Council fails to find more efficient ways of working • Reputational impact if services do not meet increasing customer expectations and Council is unable to deliver on its aspirations • Services not delivered efficiently or effectively and fail to deliver joined up services to the public • Failure to respond to the key financial and organisational challenges that dominate the medium-term planning horizon of the Council. • Improvements to social economic and environmental wellbeing of the areas not achieved. • Failure to meet statutory obligations • Risk of Judicial Review in respect of new models of service delivery. 	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Medium Term Financial Strategy reviewed and updated on an annual basis to reflect known and emerging pressures and ensure alignment with the Corporate Plan. • Community engagement underpins budget reduction decisions •The Council has a Corporate Leadership Team in place with a focus on the need to invest in prevention, change and sustaining priority services • Council actively pursuing partnership opportunities to sustain service delivery and manage service pressures. • 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; •Strategic Commercial Commissioning Board •Commercial Strategy •Corporate Digital and ICT Programme •Development of the Business and Commercial Network (BaCON) •Investment Strategy • New operating model to improve further efficiency of the organisation. • Quarterly All Member briefing sessions on budget spend and pressures. • Corporate Business Planning Workshops to update business plans. • Wider Corporate Leadership has been increased and meetings are opened to a larger cohort of senior managers 	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Strengthened performance management to ensure accountability at senior manager level for the delivery of change and efficiency. • Undertake a fundamental review of our Performance Management Framework to ensure we are providing Members with a balanced picture of the strength and weaknesses of the Council going forward • Looking at collaboration opportunities with neighbouring authorities. • 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 	1	4	Medium



Quarter 3 Progress October – December 2023


The Medium-Term Financial Strategy has been developed and shared with all Members through briefing sessions, but it is highlighting a budget gap in excess of £34m 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.

Welsh Government’s draft budget announcement prior to Christmas has confirmed the difficult financial position the Council finds itself in and the enormity of the task to make the necessary cuts over the coming months and years ahead, therefore the overall risk score remains critical. The further controls of All Members briefing sessions on budget spend and pressures; Corporate Business Planning workshops and the creation of a larger cohort of managers in Wider Corporate Leadership Team have now been embedded into practice. We are going to undertake a fundamental review of our Performance Management framework will be undertaken to ensure we are collecting the right information which shows both the areas of strength and areas to improve on over the next 3-6 months.

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	To Be Completed by June 2024	<p>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.</p> <p>A fundamental review of our Performance Management framework will be undertaken to ensure we are collecting the right information which shows both the areas of strength and areas to improve on over the next 3-6 months.</p>	On track
Looking at collaboration opportunities with neighbouring authorities.	CLT	Different timescales and priorities need addressed - 6-9 months	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)
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.	CLT	Proposals due April 2024 onwards	<p>Draft business cases proposing cuts to services, cost savings, budget reductions and income generation have been developed, the financial impact of these range from £6m to £10m. If all proposals are agreed, at the lower end of estimated achievement this will result in the Council having to utilise reserves, for the second consecutive year, to balance the budget for 2024/25. Continued depletion of the Council’s reserve will impact on its long-term financial resilience.</p> <p>Initial consideration of the proposals have been undertaken by Members during Q3 and public consultation will take place during January / February 2024. The Council will make its final 2024/25 budget decisions on 27 February 2024, however no significant proposals have as yet been identified for 2025/26 onwards.</p>	ongoing with issues that need further intervention

Direction of Travel from previous quarter	Forecasted direction of travel	
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		<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 by Welsh Government confirmation around the future funding is creating a downward trend and increasing our risks as we move through the year and into the next financial year. Based on the draft budget announcement 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>

<p>Risk Reference CRR 2</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Risk Owner: Corporate Leadership Team / Chief Officer Customer and Commercial Risk Updater: Digital Board / Information Security Officer (SRS)</p> <p>Portfolio holder: Councillor Steve Thomas</p>	<p>Direction of Travel</p> <p>No change </p>
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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"> • Failure of IT software provider • Lack of investment in IT systems / obsolete equipment • Failure of the SRS to provide service • Lack of specialist support • Cyber security breach • Expansion of the SRS as more partners could affect resilience • Failure to maximise technology and digital innovation through a user centred service design • Global Supply chain shortages • Recruitment & retention difficulties for IT specialists • Replacement of the WCCIS system by January 2026. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential security breach • Service provision affected • Does not meet the needs of evolving council services • Loss of critical / sensitive data • Inability to meet deadlines in business as usual and projects aimed at producing savings through technology use. 	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market leading national software providers. • Maintenance contracts & agreements in place covering IT infrastructure. • 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 • 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. • Servers are now located at the Vantage Data Centre providing an increased level of resilience. • Corporate Digital Programme Developed • SLA with SRS in place approved at Strategic Board annually. • Monthly meetings between SRS and officers to review the programme progress. • Service Design and Digital Leadership board • Monitoring of SRS budget • SRS report for Scrutiny developed • SRS Risk Register • Investment framework • Digital Champion network and Community of practice • Development of Office 365 • SOC / SIEM • Digital Maturity Assessment has been undertaken and supported the development of the Digital Strategy 	2	4	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLA for 2024/ 25 is due to presented to Strategic Group in April 2024 for sign off to be agreed amongst all SRS partners • Corporate Digital Programme of work has been developed which is supported by SRS and links to the Digital Strategy for the Local Authority. . • Maximising use of key corporate systems that have been invested in to include reduction of other systems which duplicate functions. • Adoption of Digital Strategy across the Local Authority • Further controls in respect of WCCIS replacement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance and involvement at all national meetings regarding WCCIS and replacement system. - Regular engagement with the regional team - Advocating as a region with Gwent Local Authorities on a position statement and options appraisal - WLGA working on behalf of Local Authorities - Once agreed, work alongside WG, DHCW and the National team on a new best of breed model. 	1	4	Medium


Quarter 3 Progress Update (October - December 2023)

In November 2023, the Vantage data centre was audited by the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) to ensure their Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity arrangements were fit for purpose. In November 2023 the CISO also tested the backups of VEEAM and DRUVA and found them to be satisfactorily working. The Vodafone SOC/SIEM alerts continue to be monitored by BGs dedicated security team and the SRS security team. A Disaster Recovery test of Vantage is being planned for March 2024. The SRS Risk Register continues to be reviewed by SRS Senior Leadership Team and Chief Information Security Officers monthly. The BGCBC Information security risk register continues to be reviewed monthly by the Senior Information Risk Owner, SRS and CISO. The Blaenau Gwent dedicated security team continue to run monthly scans across the BG network to highlight/identify any threats prior to them being exposed. All systems are reviewed on an ongoing basis to understand supporting requirements and create a plan to mitigate any upcoming obsolete systems/out of support systems – this is also reviewed in ISLB (attended by SRS, BGCBC, Torfaen CBCB, Monmouthshire CC, and Gwent Police).

Progress Against Further Controls	Responsible Officer	Due Date	Comments / Update on Progress	BRAG Status of further controls
SLA for 2024/ 25 is due to presented to Strategic Group in April 2024 for sign off to be agreed amongst all SRS partners	Digital Team	Q1 onwards	This is on track and due to be completed in April 2024 link into Strategic Group – SRS 5-year plan recently presented to Strategic Group attendees	On track
Corporate Digital Programme of work has been developed which is supported by SRS and links to the Digital Strategy for the Local Authority.	Digital Team	Q4 update	Programme of work to include maximisation of use of MCS – CRM system across the LA and full use of Microsoft platform to support 3 rd party spend review. This will also support any BTG projects put forward with digital aspirations. Programme update to CLT planned for quarter 4	On Track
Maximising use of key corporate systems that have been invested in to include reduction of other systems which duplicate functions.	L Roberts	Deadlines assigned to each project.	<p>This is an ongoing process. BTG Telephony project is on track for implementation in Q4 a , report will be submitted to CLT for consideration of moving to Teams Telephony. This will support reduction in lines across the LA and potential savings being identified in future years. Review of telephony is required to support resilience across the Local Authority.</p> <p>Maximising key corporate systems supports services to potentially turn other systems off, i.e. full use of Microsoft platforms – with roadmap pushed out across the LA (example of database use – supporting the removal of INCHECK CEPR – need full support from all Service Managers to support this – feeds back into Programme of work producing potential savings – captured within financial modelling ongoing updates provided to CLT within Corporate Digital programme (next update to CLT Feb 2024) and also contained within relevant project updates (i.e. telephony / EDRM)</p>	On track
Further controls in respect of WCCIS replacement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance and involvement at all national meetings regarding WCCIS and replacement system. 	G Wasley / N Harper	This is a national issue, and we are working towards the	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.	Ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular engagement with the regional team - Advocating as a region with Gwent Local Authorities on a position statement and options appraisal - WLGA working on behalf of Local Authorities - Once agreed, work alongside WG, DHCW and the National team on a new best of breed model. 		January 2026 deadline.	Full costs of implementation and annual running costs of the replacement system are not known, however indicative costs suggest that they will be significantly higher than current annual costs. Welsh Government funding is not yet guaranteed, nor is its potential value and subsequent allocation process known. Clarity on the funding will likely not be known until Q1 2024/25. Letter to be sent written by Blaenau Gwent Council on behalf of all Gwent Local Authorities to Digital Health and Care Wales in January 2024 setting out concerns and requesting clarity on proposals.	
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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.



Risk Reference CRR4 Risk Description: Safeguarding - Failure to ensure adequate safeguarding arrangements are in place for vulnerable people in Blaenau Gwent Risk Owner - Corporate Leadership Team / Interim Director of Social Services Portfolio holder: Councillor Hayden Trollope Risk Updater: Interim Director of Social Services / Director of Education / Strategic Safeguarding Leads Group							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"> • If there is inadequate assessments and monitoring • If there is a lack of documentation • If there are increasing referrals for services • If there is a lack of appropriate guidance and training • If there is poor communication between all parties (internal / external) • If there is a high turnover of staff and difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff. *If there are increased levels of sickness in key areas. • Failure to recognise that all staff have a duty to report abuse, harm or neglect. • Lack of appropriate guidance and training on safeguarding • Failure to progress the corporate safeguarding action plan via the corporate safeguarding leads group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential significant harm / loss of life • Long term reputational damage and confidence in the Council undermined • Increase in complaints / Potential litigation / prosecution • External intervention • Increased pressure on budgets • Low staff morale 	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Social Services and Education Scrutiny established (PEOPLE scrutiny committee) • Education Designated Lead and Deputy Officer nominated • Education Safeguarding Officer established and in post • Gwent Adult Safeguarding Board • SE Wales Safeguarding Children’s Board • Safeguarding is a standing item on CMT agenda • Lead Executive Member has been identified for having responsibility for safeguarding • Senior leadership have received Level 1 safeguarding training. • Annual safeguarding training is in place which all schools are up to date with. Training is updated on an annual basis to ensure it reflects any emerging safeguarding concerns. • Corporate safeguarding leads established • Safeguarding in Education matrix regularly updated • MyConcern safeguarding software is being used by schools. An annual health check of how the software is being used is in place and the findings of the audit are used to provide bespoke training for each school. A MyConcern working group meets termly to look at how the software can be used more effectively to record safeguarding concerns. An annual audit of school’s usage of MyConcern has identified that more schools are using MyConcern appropriately to record safeguarding incidents, but there is inconsistency across schools. • 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 	2	4	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All directorate risk registers to include safeguarding and include actions required to ensure safeguarding arrangements are in place • Safeguarding Reports into PEOPLE Scrutiny contain corporate safeguarding information from all directorates. Plus and update from the corporate safeguarding leads group • Safeguarding training data to be reviewed by each Directorate to ensure all staff are undertaking this • Regularly review the councils volunteering register to ensure DBS checks are up to date • Ensure the audit Wales BG safeguarding report recommendations continue to be reviewed and met • Each Directorate to undertake a safeguarding self-assessment 	1	4	Medium


Quarter 3 Progress Update (October - December 2023)

Update from Corporate Safeguarding Leads Group

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		All Directorate Risk Registers now include a risk on Safeguarding	Complete
Safeguarding Reports into PEOPLE Scrutiny contain corporate safeguarding information from all directorates.	Corporate Safeguarding Leads Group	Review of content of Corporate Safeguarding report to be undertaken in Quarter 4.	<p>The Corporate Safeguarding Performance Report which contains corporate safeguarding activity as well as specific information in relation to Social Services and Education is due to be presented at January's People's Scrutiny meeting.</p> <p>A review of Corporate Safeguarding is due to be undertaken within Quarter 4 which will seek to review the data and narrative content of the report provided to People's Scrutiny.</p>	On track
Safeguarding training data to be reviewed by each Directorate to ensure all staff are undertaking this	Corporate Safeguarding Leads Group	Recommendations for improvements in collation of accurate safeguarding training data to be developed by the end of Quarter 4.	<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 planned review of corporate safeguarding within Quarter 4 will seek to consider more effective measures to track training compliance and instigate actions for non-compliance.</p> <p>The review of Corporate Safeguarding will also seek to update the Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework to align with National Safeguarding Training Standards and Framework which were launched in November 2023.</p> <p>It is noted that the absence of an electronic Learning Management System is a particular barrier to having an accessible and effective system to monitor training compliance across the council.</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	Awaiting outcome of internal audit related to safeguarding volunteers to consider any good	The volunteering register has been updated across the council and all DBS checks are up to date. The volunteer register will be disseminated to all directorates on a bi-annual basis to be updated and the register will be reviewed by the Corporate Safeguarding Leads Group.	On track

		practice and learning recommendations	<p>The Internal Audit Team are undertaking an audit related to Safeguarding Volunteers which seeks to determine the effectiveness of the internal control procedures for safeguarding arrangements of appointment of volunteers at schools, to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and departmental (internal) policies and procedures.</p> <p>The outcome of this audit will be considered by the Corporate Safeguarding Leads Group to consider any learning which may be relevant to the management of all volunteers across the council.</p>	
Ensure the audit Wales BG safeguarding report recommendations continue to be reviewed and met	Corporate Safeguarding Leads Group	The Corporate Safeguarding review scheduled to take place during Quarter 4 will be further considering the progress made against the Audit Wales recommendations	<p>The corporate safeguarding leads group continue to lead this work and reporting on progress will be contained in the bi-annual scrutiny report.</p> <p>The Corporate Safeguarding review scheduled to take place during Quarter 4 will be further considering the progress made against the Audit Wales recommendations and will consider additional actions to ensure recommendations are met fully. It is identified that a Corporate Safeguarding forward work plan will be beneficial to support in focusing the work of the CSLG and providing a clear overview of progress against agreed recommendations/actions not only from Audit Wales but the learning captured from safeguarding related internal audits and self assessments.</p>	On track
Each Directorate to undertake a safeguarding self-assessment	Corporate Safeguarding Leads Group	2023 self-assessments completed. To be repeated in 2024.	Safeguarding self-assessments were completed in line with the agreed return date of 30 th September 2023. The Children's Safeguarding Team have analysed the returns and will be presenting the key themes and trends from the self-assessments at January's Corporate Safeguarding Leads meeting. The learning from the self assessments will be central to the corporate safeguarding review and the development of a forward work plan for 24/25.	On track



Direction of Travel from previous quarter	Forecasted direction of travel	
		There is no change in the risk score from the last quarter


Risk Reference CRR 5 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. Risk Owner: Corporate Leadership Team / Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships. Portfolio holder: Councillor Steve Thomas Risk Updater: Civil Contingencies Manager							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	I =	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Disruption due to pandemic influenza / human infectious disease. • Council resources are extremely stretched due to difficulties in recruitment / retention of staff. • High levels of sickness •Power cuts (local / regional / national) •Adverse Weather • Loss of / failure of ICT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Critical services not provided to an acceptable standard during disruptive incidents •Impact on the community and reputation of the Council •Loss of organisational resilience •Inability to continue or recover urgent (critical) services following an incident / loss / disruption affecting the delivery of services 	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative working arrangements will continue to manage pressures where necessary • Service provision prioritised and Critical services sustained • Planned work/projects reprioritised where necessary • Action taken to ensure support in place to promote staff well-being including flexibility on taking annual leave and ensuring officers do take leave * Corporate Plan reviewed and agreed to ensure focus on priorities taking into account the learning from the pandemic • New Working Arrangements implemented including Community Hubs (June 2021), Democratic Hub (September 2021) and Agile Working Policy (September 2021 onwards). • Move of servers from the Civic Centre to Vantage Data Centre to provide resilience. • Work underway with all services areas to review Business Impact Assessments. • Service business continuity plan template revised. • Work underway to review Service business continuity plans throughout the Council. 	2	4	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Corporate Business Continuity plan once all critical services are identified through the business impact assessment process • Service area BC plans and arrangements to be assessed once completed by the services areas •Review of business impact assessments • Consider resilience of BGCBC buildings • Review the ICT disaster recover priorities in line with the business impact assessment priorities. 	1	4	Medium

Quarter 3 Progress Update (October – December 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(BIAs) and service plan template.	DG	September 2024	Policy and service plan template has been reviewed. Work is underway with service areas in reviewing their BIAs and service plans. The Corporate Plan will be reviewed once all BIAs have been completed by services areas.	On track – due to additional staffing capacity a substantial amount of work is underway.
Service area BC plans and arrangements to be reviewed.	DG	July 2024	Work is underway with services areas in reviewing their service business continuity plans and arrangements.	Amber – potential to change to green for the update next quarter as there is additional staffing capacity in Civil Contingencies until 30/6/24 to support with this work.
Review of business impact assessments	DG	April 2024	A review of all BIAs is underway with services areas. 14 have been updated so far. Additional staffing capacity has supported this work.	On track
Consider resilience of BGCBC buildings			Some consideration around resilience to power outage underway. There are no BGCBC buildings with generator back up power at present. Identified through a power outage exercise. With Corporate Landlord.	Amber Ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)
Review the ICT disaster recover priorities in line with the business impact assessment priorities.	DG	April 2024	<p>The review of priorities to recover ICT following a disruption to commence February 2024.</p> <p>In November 2023, the Vantage data centre was audited by the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) to ensure their Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity arrangements were fit for purpose. In November 2023 the CISO also tested the backups of VEEAM and DRUVA and found them to be satisfactorily working. A Disaster Recovery test of Vantage is being planned for March 2024.</p>	On track



Direction of Travel from previous quarter	Forecasted direction of travel	
		This still remains as overall Amber in terms of status of further controls, however with additional staffing capacity there has been movement in some elements from 'further controls' into 'current controls'.


Risk Reference CRR 14 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. 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 L x I = Score		
		Likelihood	Impact	Status		Likelihood	Impact	Status				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Downsizing the workforce to meet necessary savings Alternative service delivery models Financial planning inhibits strategic workforce planning Service specifications not amended in line with cuts to services adding pressure to the workforce. Uncertainty of future arrangements Lack of managerial action in applying the attendance management policy Ongoing impact of Covid and long covid on sickness absence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not having the capacity and capability to deliver services Failure to deliver priorities Direct Impact on service delivery Increased sickness / absence Risk of not meeting statutory or legislative requirements in relation to specific workforce requirement e.g. social care. Breakdown in employer relations and representation at tribunal cases. Increased demand on support services e.g. OD 	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Attendance Management Policy Occupational Health Service Employee Assistance Programme Strategic focus on wellbeing to include Wellbeing Wednesday Bulletin and Mental Health Training. Dying to Work Charter Training/briefing sessions for managers A policy and toolkit for managing stress An extensive range of flexible working arrangements Regular discussion and learning nationally and regionally Managers recognising good attendance and supporting wellbeing Sickness absence targets set by the Corporate Leadership Team Development of iTrent to provide sickness absence data to manager's in real time and access to a dashboard of sickness absence data. Performance data provided to the Corporate Leadership Team, Heads of Service and Elected Members on a quarterly basis. Sickness performance on Directorate Management Teams, team meetings and an objective for managers as part of annual performance coaching. Health, Safety and Welfare Corporate Group. Workforce engagement (regular 1 – 2 – 1's / performance coaching/ team meetings, weekly managing director newsletter, dedicated engagement and consultation framework with TU's) Bi annual staff surveys, engagement and communication Workforce Strategy 2021 – 2026 was agreed by Council July 2021 Agile Working policy agreed by Council March 2021 Workforce plans in place for each directorate Corporate, Service and Schools workforce profiles published for 2023/4 	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies to address the impact of sickness absence:- -Quarterly directorate reviews of top 20 cases -Monthly review of long-term sickness - Review of the Attendance Management Policy - Review of agile working commencing September 2022 - CLT requested actions plans to be developed by Services to address sickness hotspots -An internal audit of policy compliance of the 2022/23 'hotspots' . - Report on sickness hotspots to progress to scrutiny (timeline to be determined) together with the outcome from the internal audit and identified action plans. 	2	4	High

Quarter 3 Progress October – December 2023

- Sickness levels remain high the outturn for Quarter 3 is 8.34 days per full time equivalent employee which is above the target set of 7.50 days. The trend over the year is an improving picture for the Council with the three quarters to December 2023 all having a reduction in sickness levels in comparison to the previous year. Quarter 3 has had a reduction of 3.56 days from 11.9 days the previous year.
- There is continued support for managers with sickness absence management
- Annual review and report presented to Corporate and Performance Scrutiny Committee 12.10.23 and Cabinet 29.11.23
- The working patterns automated in ITrent has had an impact in ensuring statistics are more accurate particularly in services where there are high numbers of part-time employees
- A detailed review of 'hotspots' for 22/23 has been completed and presented to CLT
- An Internal Audit of compliance of 'hotspots' for 22/23 is being undertaken by internal audit.
- Report on sickness hotspots to progress to scrutiny (on receipt of audit report) together with the outcome from the internal audit and identified action plans.

Updates Against Further Controls Action Title	Responsible Officer	Due Date	Comments / Update on Progress	BRAG Status of further controls
Strategies to address the impact of sickness absence: -				
Quarterly directorate reviews of top 20 cases / Monthly review of long-term sickness	Heads of Service / Managers in conjunction with OD	Ongoing	Regular reviews of the long-term cases are undertaken and ongoing Continued OD support is provided to managers on the management of sickness absence.	On track /Ongoing
Review of the Attendance Management Policy	OD Manager (HR)	February 24	Current policy fit for purpose, review to be finalised	On track
Review of agile working commencing September 2022	Head of OD	December 23	Review concluded - Member Briefing held 28 th July 2023 Report on the conclusion of the review / policy approval to go to Scrutiny March 24	On track
Hotspot analysis	Internal Audit	November 23	An internal audit of policy compliance of the 5 'hotspots' is being undertaken. CLT have requested further information to be included.	Ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)
Hotspot analysis	CLT OD Manager / Internal Audit	TBA - On receipt of Audit Report	- CLT requested actions plans to be developed by Services to address sickness hotspots - Report on sickness hotspots to progress to scrutiny together with the outcome from the internal audit and identified action plans.	Ongoing but encountering some Issues (that can be addressed)

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 in terms of costs to the Council and workforce capacity. 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"> • The need for 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 • The first three quarters are showing a reduction of 3.56 days in comparison to the previous year however sickness remains high and above target for the year. If the Council continues with the same trend over the final quarter then it will be appropriate to revisit the scores at that time.



Risk Reference CRR 19							Direction of Travel					
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.							No change 					
Risk Owner: Corporate Leadership Team / Chief Officer Resources Risk Updater: Information and Governance Officer												
Portfolio holder: Councillor Steve Thomas												
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"> • Human error • Lack of staff knowledge of requirements of the Act due to lack of awareness and training • Inexperienced staff / staff turnover • Rogue employee • Lack of supervision of less experienced staff. • IT failure (e.g. virus) • Inadequate data sharing and data security arrangements. • Cyber Attack • Changes to legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputational risk • Fines for breach and financial loss from compensation claims • Loss of service due to time taken to recover information • Enforcement action • Considerable Risks and potential Detrimental effects for the Data Subjects (Individuals concerned) • Safeguarding issues (The service users are often vulnerable individuals so there could be safeguarding issues) • Information theft or misuse • Financial fraud. • A malicious attack on ICT could result in a loss of confidence from those transacting with the Council • Legal, asset, system, operational and financial implications 	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Protection Officer advises on Data Protection compliance and provides specific advice to officers when required. • 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. • 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. • SIRO is responsible for the organisation's overall information risk policy and risk assessment processes and ensuring they are implemented consistently. • 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 • Officer formally appointed in the statutory role of data protection officer • Training is provided to staff through e-learning, Teams channels and face to face sessions on an ongoing basis. • Adequate Information Security arrangements, technical security etc. • IAO's (Information Asset Owners) formally recognised who will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand and address risks to the information they own - Provide assurance to the SIRO on the security and use of these Assets - Ensure their team and those interacting with info assets understand information security and are confident in their handling of information - Establishment of information asset register • A GDPR page is available on the intranet, providing additional guidance for staff • In place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) a SOC / SIEM solution to monitor the Council's network providing an enhanced level of protection against Cyber threats ii) Ransomware impact reduction product to reduce the impact of an attack when it does happen • SRS Risk Register • Continued review and evolution of effective Information Governance and Information Security Policies 	2	4	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further training for Information Asset Owners and Operational Asset Leads • GDPR training refresh programme. • Development of web pages and intranet to reduce incoming queries and request *Review of all Information Governance Policies and promote awareness *Briefing session to Members to raise awareness *Annual security awareness programme *PCIDSS (Payment card industry data security standard) is being worked towards 	2	4	High


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During the quarter the Council experienced a total of 8 data breaches (3 Social Services, 3 Regen & Environment, 2 Corporate Services) which is slightly less than the same quarter of the previous year when 11 breaches were recorded. No patterns have been identified with the breaches recorded which would warrant amending practices and it is recommended that the risk score remain that same.

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	Q2 2024/2025	<p>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.</p> <p>New eLearning solution is intended to be the solution to provide training to Information Asset Owners. The current eLearning solution does not have the course available to deliver this. The new eLearning solution is expected to be available for pilot purposes in Q1 2024 2025 so delivery of the training is likely to be Q2 2024 2025 at earliest.</p> <p>In the meantime work will continue to ensure the review of Information Asset Owners is up to date.</p>	ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)
GDPR training refresh programme	Steve Berry DPO/ Rhian Hayden SIRO	Q2 2024/2025	<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	Q3 2024/2025	<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. However, this is not a small piece of work in order to meet the needs of all the varied departments and staffing levels have not permitted the time. There are also considerations to be made on whether this is best suited to the current intranet or whether a Sharepoint solution would be a better fit.</p>	ongoing but encountering some issues (that can be addressed)
Security awareness and training programme	Information Security Officer / Rhian Hayden	Q3 2024 / 2025	<p>In October 2023, a Data protection and Cyber Awareness week was conducted. Two sessions were held as planned based on 'retention' and 'general Q&A'. During the course of this week the top UK data breaches were shared with BGCBC employees. A one-pager was also provided during this week on passwords, MFA, phishing and keeping your software up to date.</p> <p>In December 2023 a Cyber Tabletop Exercise was held with all business continuity managers to test our cyber resilience and effectiveness of the cyber incident response plan and BC plans.</p> <p>January 2024 – week commencing 29th Jan is National Data Protection Awareness week – during this week, we will be providing all BG staff with two pages detailing – what is DP? What is Cyber?</p>	On track
PCIDSS (Payment card industry data security standard) is being worked towards	Information Security Officer / Rhian Hayden	Q3 2024 / 2025	<p>PCIDSS (Payment card industry data security standard) accreditation is being worked towards and this is almost achieved.</p> <p>Training for all staff who take card payments is being arranged for Feb 2024.</p> <p>We continue to align to the 12-PCIDSS requirements, and have undertaken a gap analysis on the PCIDSS V4 controls which are scheduled to go live March 2025.</p>	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.

Risk Reference CRR 21 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. Risk Owner: Corporate Leadership Team / Chief Officer Resources Portfolio holder: Councillor Steve Thomas Risk Updater: Chief Officer Resources							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"> ● Sustained funding reductions ● Cost of Living effect on increases and associate reduction in Council income from Council Tax / Rates ● Increased third party spend due to increase in supply cost of labour / energy prices / ● Increased demand and cost for services ● Inability to effectively manage budgets in order to achieve balanced budgets within year ● Financial planning arrangements not long term in its perspective or aligned to corporate priorities. ● Medium Term Financial Strategy is not robust or flexible enough to adapt to change. ● Medium Term Financial Strategy is not aligned with other key strategies ● Inability to deliver intended savings ● Lack of capacity within Finance Teams ● Lack of Member engagement and scrutiny of savings plans. Lack of political support for business cases ● Not receiving an audit opinion on accounts ● Failure to become more commercially minded ● Potential impact of equal pay claims – representations on equal pay and one case as part of employment tribunal system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inability to deliver effective services or provision of lower quality services to residents and businesses of the Borough. ● Unplanned reduction in services provided ● Lack of improvement in key areas ● Failure to achieve corporate priorities ● Depletion of reserves ● Potential impact on ability to borrow and be awarded grants ● Significant reputational risk from intervention 	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Budgets firmly aligned with Council priorities ● Service prioritisation and planning ● 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) ● Impact of new and existing burdens / budget pressures being continually assessed ● Risks associated with potential budget reductions evaluated prior to implementation ● Budget monitoring refined and forecasting included within financial monitoring reports. ● 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. ● Financial monitoring arrangements include quarterly briefings for (scrutiny) and consideration of forecasts by the Cabinet. ● MTFS proposes a contribution to reserves on an annual basis ● Multi skilled teams involved in development / assessment of business cases. 	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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. 	2	4	High



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The Welsh Government (WG) announced its provisional local government settlement in December 2023 and was able to maintain the average 3.1% uplift to Aggregate External Funding announced during 2022. As a result of consequential funding from UK government in February 2024 WG announced an additional £25m to local government which increased the average uplift to 3.3%. Blaenau Gwent’s core increase for 2024/25 will be below the average at 2.8%, although this will see Blaenau Gwent’s funding from WG increase by £3.9m this is not keeping pace with the increasing costs of delivering services (inflation, energy, pay and increasing demand in some areas). The latest Medium Term Financial Strategy is estimating a £33m budget gap over the next 5 years with £8.5m needing to be identified to set a balanced budget. Unfortunately, unlike recent years WG have not provided any indication of likely settlement increases for future years, this makes the assessment of future budget gaps more difficult.

Draft business cases proposing cuts to services, cost savings, budget reductions and income generation have been developed, the financial impact of these range from £6m to £10m. If all proposals are agreed, at the lower end of estimated achievement this will result in the Council having to utilise reserves, for the second consecutive year, to balance the budget for 2024/25. Continued depletion of the Council’s reserve will impact on its long term financial resilience.

Initial consideration of the proposals have been undertaken by Members during Q3 and public consultation is taking place during January / February 2024. The Council will make its final 2024/25 budget decisions on 27 February 2024, however no significant proposals have as yet been identified for 2025/26 onwards. It is recommended that the 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	2024 Proposals – 02/24 Future years – ongoing	The review of the MTFS identified increased budget gaps of approximately £33m over the next 5 years, with £8.5m needed to balance the budget in 2024/25. During Q3 Members gave initial consideration to the draft business cases, the financial impact of these range from £6m to £10m for 2024/25. If agreed these will go some way to contributing to the budget gap for next year however limited progress has been made on identifying proposals for 2025/26 onwards. Public engagement on proposals with the public is taking place in January / February 2024.	ongoing with issues that need further intervention

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>Whilst the Council has made some progress in identifying proposals to bridge the budget gap for 2024/25, limited progress has been made in identifying proposals that will have a positive financial impact in future years. This combined with the Council’s reliance on Welsh Government funding and the overall national picture it is recommended that the score remains at critical.</p>

Risk Reference CRR 22 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. Risk Owner: Corporate Leadership Team / Chief Officer Resources Portfolio holder: Councillor Steve Thomas Risk Updater: Chief Officer Resources							Direction of Travel Decreased 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"> • Council priorities are unclear and unrealistic • Cost of Living effect on increases and associate reduction in Council income from Council Tax / Rates • Increased third party spend due to increase in supply cost of labour / energy prices / • Increased demand and cost for services in • Significant challenge arising from increased demand and cost of services • Budgets not aligned with corporate priorities • 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 • Priorities of political administration may have an impact on budget decisions • Customer participation not as expected. e.g. recycling / waste • Unexpected financial challenges or additional obligations arising. • Monitoring failure / lack of financial information / budgetary control information. • Failure of projects under the preventative agenda. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement to implement emergency measures to reduce spending during the financial year thus adversely impacting on ability to meet corporate plan objectives • Increasing adverse effects on the community of Blaenau Gwent that rely on the services being delivered. • Requirement to draw from general reserves at the year end • Risk of failing to meet statutory obligations • Risk that financial constraints and budget proposals result in unintended consequences such as increased instances of non-compliance and financial impropriety • Unplanned cutbacks in staffing and potential for increased sickness absence in the workforce due to increasing workload • Impact on capital programme and 21st Century Schools Programme 	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgets firmly aligned with Council priorities • Service prioritisation and planning • The Medium Term Financial Strategy is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect known and emerging pressures and ensure alignment with the Corporate Plan. • Impact of new and existing burdens / budget pressures being continually assessed • Risks associated with potential budget reductions evaluated prior to implementation • 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) • Public engagement events held annually to ascertain public opinion on savings proposals. • 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. • 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 	2	4	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement relevant opportunities for savings and service improvement to address current and emerging cost pressures and underperformance (Strategic review, internal service reviews) • Bridging the Gap Programme 	1	4	Medium



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The quarter 3 forecast outturn position for 2023/24 remains positive compared to agreed budget (both capital and revenue). Capital budgets are expected to be on target at the year end whilst the forecast against revenue budget show an improving picture compared to Q2. Cost pressures identified during the year continue however high vacancies in some areas combined with improving inflation rates and additional grant income is offsetting some of these pressures overall resulting in a lower use of reserves than anticipated.

Current indications suggest an improving position in year therefore it is proposed that the risk is downgraded to High.

To note for 2024/25, a number of favourable / underspending budgets which are contributing to the positive picture in 2023/24 are proposed to be reduced as part of proposals to achieve a balanced budget for next year and could impact negatively upon this risk during the year.

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	03/24	Existing & emerging in year cost pressures are being managed within the Council's overall revenue budget during 2023/24. Where overspends cannot be offset by compensatory savings within individual budgets then either cross portfolio budget virements are being actioned or Action Plans to address the pressures have been developed to mitigate the risk.	On track
Bridging the Gap Programme 2023 2024	CLT / Service Managers	03/24	In setting its budget for 2023/24 the Council agreed proposals of £3m. 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. Where possible alternative savings are being identified or the pressures are being absorbed within underspending budgets.	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 31 December 2023, is a favourable variance £1.6m after utilising £2.3m from reserves. Whilst there is a significant use of reserves forecast this is an improving position compared to previous quarters . At the end of Q2 when the forecast was a favourable variance of £1.6m (Q1 £0.97m) including a forecast use of reserves of £3.5m (Q1 £4m).</p> <p>Given the improving position for 2024/24 it is proposed the risk reduced to high. There is a possibility that it will again increase to critical during 2024/25.</p>

Risk Reference CRR 25 Risk Description: The school in an Estyn category and currently in receipt of Council Intervention fails to make appropriate progress against the Statutory Warning Notice to Improve and Post Inspection Action Plan. Risk Owner: Corporate Leadership Team / Director of Education Risk Updater: Director of Education / Education DMT Portfolio holder: Councillor Sue Edmunds							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"> • There is insufficient progress through each Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) as recognised by the Local Authority and ESTYN. • 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. • Failure to improve standards • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Not being removed from the statutory follow up categories within appropriate timescales. • Failure to improve standards in key identified areas • Failure to meet the requirements of the national reform agenda and improve learner outcomes and wellbeing appropriately • Failure to secure good performance in line with new national performance indicators i.e. for 2019 and beyond • Failure to address the requirement as set out in the current Statutory warning notices to improve 	3	3	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Around the School meetings that are now held on a half-termly basis • Bespoke support from the EAS and relevant Council wide services provided to school leadership and governing body • Improvement Conference • ESTYN monitoring visits • Works undertaken on the school building to address health and safety concerns. 	3	3	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further use of provision as set in the School Standards and Organisation Act Wales 2013 as deemed appropriate and based on evidence. • LA/EAS Review • Review of SWN's 	2	3	Medium


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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. Following a re-visit by Estyn BFS was removed from a statutory category in December 2023. To mitigate any risk of the school not continuing to progress, the school has agreed to continue to be a Team Around the School which means there will be termly multi-agency meetings where the school can continue to access support as appropriate.

Progress Against Further Controls	Responsible Officer	Due Date	Comments / Update on Progress	BRAG Status of further controls
Further use of provision as set in the School Standards and Organisation Act Wales 2013 as deemed appropriate and based on evidence. LA/EAS Review	Interim Corporate Director of Education	By end of the Spring term 2024 Review of current progress against PIAP to be undertaken by LA and EAS Summer 2024	River Centre 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 concentrate 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. There was an Estyn re-visit in Q3. Estyn recognised that there had been progress against some of the Estyn recommendations, and in particularly around health and safety, policies and procedures, the learning environment on the secondary site and some provision for the learners. However, Estyn raised concerns around stability of staff due to an ongoing temporary leadership structure and high levels of staff absence. The school has continued to engage with the Team Around the School process. There remains a high level of support from the LA and the EAS. The School Improvement Partner has been changed to someone who was the SIP previously, this is a positive change as the SIP is a headteacher in a special school so has significant experience.	On track

Direction of Travel from previous quarter	Forecasted direction of travel	
		In respect of the River Centre there is confidence that the next ESTYN inspection will show 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. The risk remains high and I would suggest it has escalated in particular around increased instability in leadership and high levels of staff sickness.

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"> 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) Competition from other employers and the private sector where there is more flexibility in respect of salary and terms and conditions. Fixed term contracts rather than permanent are not attractive. Downsizing the workforce to meet necessary savings Alternative service delivery models Large numbers of workforce over the age of 55 years of age meaning that staff with significant knowledge and experience could leave. Service specifications not amended in line with cuts to services adding pressure to the workforce. Impact of sickness absence on workforce Post pandemic staff priorities Reliance on key staff for response to key issues / incidents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not having the capacity and capability to deliver services Failure to deliver priorities and direct impact on service delivery Increased sickness / absence Risk of not meeting statutory or legislative requirements in relation to specific workforce requirement e.g., social care. Over reliance on agency staff Inability of Council to provide support in response to emergencies (e.g., support provided during the pandemic and cost of living crisis). 	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce Strategy 21-26 Directorate Workforce Plans Annual workforce profiles containing recruitment and retention data to support workforce planning. Commitment to paying the real living wage Good terms and conditions and pension provisions. Flexible working Agile working Grow our own – Apprenticeships Career paths for staff to develop and progress Focus on health and wellbeing Occupational Health Service and Employee Assistance Programme Recruitment and Market Supplement Policy Competency framework and performance coaching Recruitment and retention review presented to CLT Development opportunities for staff Career Promotion Officer to focus on recruiting and retaining in key areas in social services Use of recruitment days / events to target and support potential candidates through the process Social Worker Development Strategy Jobs Bulletin re-introduced Inclusion of leavers data in the annual workforce profiles for directorates Workforce Plans to be reviewed as part of business planning review process. Effective management of sickness absence Maximisation of any regional campaigns particularly in Social Services Newly approved Recruitment Policy 	3	3	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Modernisation of recruitment content on website Development of recruitment and onboarding within ITrent 	2	2	Medium



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Temporary arrangements continue in place for the vacant Chief Executive post, to include backfill in Social Services, temporary leadership arrangements in place in Education Workforce plan to support the delivery of council savings to include deletion of vacant posts and statutory consultation for redundancies.

Labour turnover at 2023/24 Quarter 3 – 6.01% (Target 6.8%)

73% of vacancies advertised during 2023/24 Quarter 3 were recruited (excluding school posts appointed by the Governing Body)

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.	Communication Manager	Ongoing / subject to ITrent development timescales - The work to improve the website and standard brand templates will commence in January 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post in place in Social Services to support with promoting careers in care and improving advertisements for roles in Care; • New standard branded job advert templates have been produced for social media and will be rolled out from April 2024. • The recruitment section of the corporate website has been reviewed and improvements to the content have been made. This includes reducing the number of pages, simpler language, links to job vacancies and including relevant case studies and making the page easier to find using search engines. 	On track
Modernisation of recruitment content on website	OD Manager (HR)	Ongoing / subject to ITrent development timescales likely commencement February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Linked to the development of the recruitment module in ITrent and work to enhance the application processes 	On track
Development of recruitment and onboarding within ITrent	OD Manager	Tbc in conjunction with Midland HR following initial scoping exercise - likely commencement February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to CLT to agree development plan for ITrent 2023/24 • 2 Scoping sessions held with OD staff to plan development of the recruitment module in ITrent • Linked with another local authority to learn from their experience, • Scoping session held with Midland and scoping document developed. Timeline and detailed plan to be developed 	On Track
Review of the Recruitment Policy	OD Manager	December 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment Policy presented to Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee 18 January and Council for approval 25 January 2024. 	Complete

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

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

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This risk will no longer appear on the Corporate Risk Register from Quarter 3 onwards. CLT assessment is that this is an issue which the Council is responding to rather than a risk.

Any impacts which might result in a specific significant risk e.g. increased homelessness will be monitored via the appropriate Directorate Risk Register and escalated to the Corporate Risk Register in line with the Council's risk management framework.

The Council continues to respond to the cost-of-living crisis. An action plan for winter 2023 / 2024 is in place and the high-level actions within the plan centre on 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.

Risk Reference CRR 30 (b)

Risk Description: Impact of cost of living (inflationary) increases on businesses in Blaenau Gwent.

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
		Likelihood	Impact	Status		Likelihood	Impact	Status	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • War in the Ukraine • Negative impact of the exit from the EU • Post pandemic • Reliance on grant funding to develop and deliver key regeneration projects / programmes. • Outside EU and new laws/charges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business closure due to energy costs, inflation, and Cost of living implications. • new EU import duty on goods and raw materials affecting overall production costs for business (automotive hard hit) • new export procedures still posing exporting issues for goods to EU – potential to slow or stop productivity, can result in job losses 	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of living crisis operational group set up which is seeking to address challenges across the community • Action plan in place for 2023 2024 • Cross Party Working Group in place • Employability Group in place • Regular emails on business development to local businesses. In addition to this business engagement meetings with key business based in BG. • 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 • Working closely with partners on sending out information and guidance where possible. • Working with key partners, Business Wales, Dev Banc, Chamber Wales that has export documentation service for SMEs • Shared Prosperity Funding. Businesses advised on grant eligibility with the new Business Development Grant Scheme. 	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Stimulus measures to be introduced. • Kick Start plus grant for businesses wishing to grow within three years of business trading.

Quarter 3 Progress October – December 2023

This risk will no longer appear on the Corporate Risk Register from Quarter 3 onwards. The assessment is that this is an issue which the Council is responding to rather than a risk.

The Council continues to respond to the cost-of-living crisis and support businesses and any impacts which might result in a specific significant risk will be monitored via the appropriate Directorate Risk Register and escalated to the Corporate Risk Register in line with the Council’s risk management framework.

