



## **CABINET – 29<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021**

**SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT - MANAGING BUILDING AND SERVICE RISK AT ALERT LEVEL ZERO**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This is a supplementary report requested by Cabinet following the decision to endorse the Managing Building and Service Risk at Alert Level Zero report received on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.
- 1.2 Cabinet's previous decision required a template based on the hierarchy of controls to be completed for every Council building that was currently closed to the public, and for those templates to be received at this meeting.
- 1.3 This report includes completed templates along with some proposals for Cabinet to consider on how to reopen buildings with a suite of location specific reasonable measures in place that sufficiently minimise any risks to staff or visitors.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Wales is now at Alert level zero but coronavirus has not gone away and remains a serious health risk. The Council has a responsibility to minimise risks and to protect employees and customers when providing 'in person' services.
- 2.3 The guidance introduced by WG as part of the move to Alert Level Zero requires the 'responsible person' at businesses, workplaces, public places and events to put in place a set of 'reasonable measures' to minimise the risks associated with accessing services in person.
- 2.4 The hierarchy of controls set out within the recent WG guidance has provided a helpful framework through which reasonable measures can be defined, whilst recognising the different challenges that may exist in different buildings.
- 2.5 At its meeting of the 1<sup>st</sup> September, Cabinet endorsed the use of a template based on the hierarchy of controls, as a mechanism for assessing and subsequently reducing any risks attached with delivering in person services from buildings not currently open to the public.

- 2.6 The outcome of those assessments are set out within the templates attached at Appendix 1 and 2 along with a recommendation as to whether or not the building should be reopened and, if so, what additional safeguards need to be put in place in advance.
- 2.7 Cabinet are asked to note the content of the templates and the proposals set out by relevant Heads of Service within and to consider the recommendations set out below.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That Cabinet agree to:
- 1) Reopen the Council premises set out in 5.6 in accordance with the templates and recommended controls set out in Appendix 1
  - 2) Agree that the premises set out in 5.7 should remain closed in accordance with the templates attached at Appendix 2
  - 3) Reintroduce Customer First and Reception provision at Ty Penallta from the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021, in accordance with the template and recommended controls set out in Appendix 3.
  - 4) Agree the reopening recommendations and timescales set out in 5.11 for the remaining Customer First Offices in accordance with the templates set out in Appendix 4.
  - 5) To receive ongoing reports over coming months that outline any further changes that need to be made should the guidance or risk levels change again.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 With the current prevalence of the COVID-19 virus and rising numbers of positive cases across Caerphilly, it is paramount that the reopening of any Council buildings currently closed to the public, occurs with risks appropriately assessed and controls put in place. The recommendations set out in 3.1 are based on assessments that have been undertaken by Officers responsible for specific Council buildings and utilise the template adopted by Cabinet on September 1<sup>st</sup> and based on the hierarchy of controls framework.

### **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 The risks attached to contracting or transmitting COVID-19 are significantly reduced when buildings are not being accessed by people. Moving from a closed setting to one that is then accessible by workers, visitors, clients and face to face customers naturally increases that risk.
- 5.2 Each building will also differ in terms of the levels of available space, required staffing levels, ventilation and the ability to support separate access and egress. As a result the risks of reopening buildings that are currently closed will differ depending on a range of local factors.

- 5.3 Council buildings currently closed to the public have all been individually risk assessed using a recently adopted template based on a hierarchy of control framework set out within Welsh Governments latest guidance.
- 5.4 The hierarchy of controls is widely accepted as an effective way of determining how to implement feasible and effective control solutions that lead to inherently safer systems where the risk of illness or injury has been substantially reduced.
- 5.5 The hierarchy of control model includes five levels which range from 'Elimination' as the most effective method of managing the risk to 'PPE' as the least effective.

<b>Elimination</b>	-	Physically remove the hazard
<b>Substitution</b>	-	Replace the hazard
<b>Engineering Controls</b>	-	Isolate people from the hazard
<b>Administrative Controls</b>	-	Change the way people work
<b>Personal Protective Equipment</b>	-	Protect the worker with PPE

- 5.6 The buildings set out in the table below have been assessed through the new template and the resulting recommendations for reopening and any associated control levels are also stated:

<b>Building</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Reopen</b>	<b>Recommended Control Level(s)</b>
Tredomen House	Planning	Yes	Elimination
Ty Pontygwindy	Children's Services / Adult Services	Yes	Engineering
Ty Risca	Children's Services	Yes	Engineering
Ty Bargoed	Children's Services	Yes	Engineering
Ty Gilfach	Children's Services	Yes	Engineering
Woodfieldside Units 2, 3, 4 & 5	Children's Services / Adult Services	Yes	Engineering
Foxes Lane, First Floor	Children's Services	Yes	Engineering
Ty Graddfa	Adult Services	Yes	Engineering
Rhymney Youth Centre	Youth Service	Yes	Elimination
The Hangar Youth and Community Centre, Aberbargoed	Youth Services	Yes	Elimination
Crosskeys Youth Centre – Youth Services	Youth Services	Yes	Elimination
Crumlin Community Education/ Youth Centre	Youth Services	Yes	Elimination

Blackwood Youth Centre	Youth Services	Yes	Elimination
Risca Youth Centre	Youth Services	Yes	Elimination
The Basement 'drop in' centre-Blackwood Library	Youth Services	Yes	Elimination
Business Technology Centre	Housing	Yes	Elimination
Ty Gilfach	Housing	Yes	Elimination

If Cabinet are minded to support these proposals, planning can begin with a view to buildings reopening as soon as the relevant controls and reasonable measures have been put in place.

- 5.7 In accordance with the templates set out in Appendix 2, the following buildings are not recommended for reopening at this time:

<b>Building</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Reopen</b>
Lansbury Park Neighbourhood Housing Office	Housing	Not Yet (Review in April 2022)
Graig Y Rhacca Neighbourhood Housing Office	Housing	Not Yet (Review in April 2022)
Community Housing Office Holly Road	Housing	Not Yet (Review in April 2022)

- 5.8 As an addendum to the assessments on closed buildings, the Head of Customer and Digital has also made use of the templates to assess Customer Service desks that are co-located and provided from buildings that are already open, such as Libraries.
- 5.9 In many cases, the recommendations made on the recommencement of those functions run beyond the assessment of risk. The service continues to support critical services such as Test Trace and Protect (TTP) through the redeployment of its staff.
- 5.10 Should Cabinet be minded to recommend a broader reopening of buildings than that proposed in the table below, or indeed to propose a more aggressive timescale, then a decision will need to be taken to cancel those redeployments so that staff operating in those critical functions can be made available again to support Customer Services.
- 5.11 It should also be noted that during the pandemic, all Customer First offices have been closed to the public, while online and telephone-based access have remained in place and well used.

<b>Building</b>	<b>Reopen</b>	<b>Controls (and Notes)</b>
Customer First @ Ty Penallta	Yes	Substitution (Reopen from w/c 4 <sup>th</sup> October)
Customer First @ Newbridge Library	Not Yet	Review in April 2022
Customer First @ Caerphilly Library	Not Yet	Elimination (Open in April 2022 for Appointments Only)
Customer First @ Risca Library	Not Yet	Elimination (Open in April 2022 for Appointments Only)

Customer First @ Blackwood Library	Not Yet	Review in April 2022
Customer First @ Bargoed Library	Not Yet	Review in April 2020
Customer First Office at Pontlottyn	Not Yet	Review in April 2022

## 5.12 Conclusion

Having assessed a range of Council buildings currently closed to the public against the adopted hierarchy of controls template, this report seeks agreement from Cabinet to reopen certain buildings subject to the reintroduction of a series of controls designed to minimise risk and to keep some buildings and services closed for the moment.

## 6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 None.

## 7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Full Integrated Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 5. The additionality provided by the reopening of the specific Council buildings is identified as a benefit for residents that would prefer to access services in person. The potential risk of transmission of COVID-19 through accessing services within a building, rather than remotely, is acknowledged and a number of reasonable measures are proposed to mitigate the risk.

## 8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There should be no significant adverse financial implications attached to this report as budgets remain in place for the operation of core council buildings.

8.2 There may be ad hoc expenditure required should recommendations be to open specific settings that require additional safety features (partitions, signage etc) to be purchased.

## 9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Where reasonable measures include the deployment of staff that are double vaccinated there may be some personnel implications that emerge if staff employed in front facing roles are not sufficiently vaccinated. Vaccinations remain a matter of personal choice, therefore there may be a need to redeploy staff in order to mitigate any risks highlighted, which will be worked through accordingly.

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The consultees are set out at the bottom of this report and any views received are set out below:

Author: Richard (Ed) Edmunds Corporate Director Education & Corp Services

Consultees: Cllr. Philippa Marsden, Leader of the Council  
Cllr. Colin Gordon, Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance  
Christina Harray, Chief Executive  
Corporate Management Team  
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer  
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services  
Steve Harris, Head of Corporate Finance & S151 Officer  
Leadership Team  
Cllr Gez Kirby, Chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr Brenda Miles, Vice Chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Buildings Recommended for Reopening  
Appendix 2 Buildings Not Recommended for Reopening at this Time  
Appendix 3 Proposals for Customer Services and Reception at Ty Penallta  
Appendix 4 Proposals for Customer Service Functions  
Appendix 5 Integrated Impact Assessment Building Reopening