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**Date: 17th June 2020**

Dear Sir/Madam,

A digital meeting of the **Cabinet** will be held via Microsoft Teams on **Wednesday, 24th June, 2020 at 10.30 am** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation will be provided if requested.

This meeting will be recorded and made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. Therefore the images/audio of those individuals present and/or speaking at Cabinet will be publicly available to all via the recording on the Council website at [www.caerphilly.gov.uk](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk)

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chrissy', enclosed in a large, loopy oval shape.

**Christina Harrhy**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## A G E N D A

	Pages	
1	To receive apologies for absence.	
2	Declarations of Interest.	

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on the agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

A greener place Man gwyrddach



To approve and sign the following minutes: -

3 Cabinet held on 11th March 2020. 1 - 10

To note the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

4 Cabinet Forward Work Programme. 11 - 12

To receive and consider the following reports on which executive decisions are required: -

5 Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2019-2020. 13 - 42

6 The Council Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic. 43 - 74

7 COVID-19 Decision-Making Arrangements. 75 - 90

**Circulation:**

Councillors

And Appropriate Officers

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# Agenda Item 3



## CABINET

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 11TH MARCH 2020 AT 10.30 A.M.

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PRESENT:

Councillor P. Marsden (Leader) - Chair

Councillors:

C. Cuss (Social Care and Wellbeing), N. George (Environment and Neighbourhood Services), C.J. Gordon (Corporate Services), S. Morgan (Regeneration, Transportation and Sustainability), and E. Stenner (Finance, Performance and Planning).

Together with:

C. Harry (Chief Executive), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director – Education and Corporate Services), M.S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director – Communities).

Also in Attendance:

K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), A. Cullinane (Senior Policy Officer - Equalities, Welsh Language and Consultation), K. Peters (Corporate Policy Manager), M. Lloyd (Head of Infrastructure), G. Roberts (Team Leader, Transport Officer ITU), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection, Community & Leisure Services), S. Harris (Interim Head of Business Improvement Services and Acting S151 Officer), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

K. Bevan (Director – EAS), J. Wood (Assistant Director – Professional Learning/ School Improvement – EAS), E. Pryce (Assistant Director

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor B. Jones (Education and Achievement) and L. Phipps (Homes, Places and Tourism) and D. Street (Corporate Director – Social Services and Housing).

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

#### 3. CABINET – 26TH FEBRUARY 2020

RESOLVED that subject to an amendment in relation to Minute number 7 –

Consultation and Engagement Framework 2020-2025, the fact that the Leader of the Independent group was not present at the Policy and Resources committee and therefore did not have the opportunity to discuss the matter as stated in the minutes, the minutes were approved as a correct record.

#### **4. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – TO NOTE**

Cabinet were provided with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, which detailed the scheduled reports from 25th March 2020 to 7th October 2020. Members were reminded that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme is a working document and therefore subject to change.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the Forward Work Programme be noted. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme be noted.

#### **MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED**

#### **5. EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE (EAS) BUSINESS PLAN (2020-2021) AND LOCAL AUTHORITY ANNEX 2020-2021**

The report, which was considered by the Education Scrutiny Committee on 24th February 2020 and outlined the Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan (2020-2021) and Local Authority Annex 2020-2021.

Cabinet noted that the EAS is required to submit an annual overarching regional Business Plan with accompanying annexes for each of the five Local Authorities (LAs). The report sought Cabinet consideration of the draft EAS Business Plan and Caerphilly LA Annex as part of the regional consultation process.

It was noted that the business plan sets out how the EAS plans to deliver school improvement services across all schools, pupil referral units and funded non-maintained nursery settings on behalf of each LA. The plan sets out how LAs be supported to deliver their statutory function, by addressing their individual improvement priorities and promoting improved pupil outcomes.

The business plan priorities have been derived from LA strategic plans, progress from the previous business plan and areas identified through self-evaluation and external research. Cabinet were advised of the strengths and areas for development within Caerphilly which are detailed in the LA Annex, which can be aligned to the provision of LA services to ensure that all pupils meet their full potential.

Cabinet were asked to note that the EAS is a not for profit limited company that is owned by the five LAs in South East Wales. The EAS delivers, through an agreed Business Plan, a wide range of school improvement services to all schools (all key stages, including all through schools and special schools), pupil referral units and funded non-maintained nursery settings on behalf of each LA. This plan supports the role LAs have in delivering their statutory function, addressing their individual improvement priorities and promoting improved pupil outcomes.

It was noted that priorities for the Business Plan have been derived from Local Authority Strategic Plans, the progress that has been made towards the previous Business Plan, areas that have been identified as requiring improvements through internal self-evaluation processes and external research.

Cabinet were asked to note that the EAS is subject to a robust governance model that is underpinned by a Collaboration and Members agreement (CAMA) and Articles of Association. Ensuring that the EAS provides value for money is of utmost importance. As recipients of public funding it is important that budgets are allocated wisely. EAS endeavour to deliver even better value for money through achieving financial balance and delivering services within the constraints of their budget, making further efficiency savings wherever possible and ensuring delegation rates to schools are maximised.

Delegation rates to schools has increased by 94% whilst the EAS staff profile by 48% since 2012. An element of the EAS was originally set a trading income target of £1.25m from schools to enable balanced year end account position. This has now been totally eradicated from income dependency and schools are no longer charged for any training or services provided in line with the business plan.

Local authority funding for consortium working is underpinned by the National Model for Regional Working, published by the Welsh Government in 2014. The model recommended a core funding allocation of £3.6m for the EAS. The current LA core contribution is based on these figures less year on year efficiencies of £1.17m since 2012 agreed in collaboration with the 5 local authorities. The local authorities' indicative figures for 2020/21 are as follows: Caerphilly LA's contribution from 2020/21 is £1,005,705 compared with £1,021,020 in 2019/20.

Cabinet were asked to note some amendments to 5.26 of the report, which refers to Caerphilly LA Risks:

- Not a high enough percentage of learners make the expected rate of progress and achieve appropriate outcomes at Key Stage 4, particularly in the English language and Capped 9 measures.
- The pace of improvement in the quality of leadership across all phases of education does not continue on its current trajectory.
- The number of pupils achieving A-A\* at Key Stage 5 remains too low.
- Vulnerable learners across all phases do not make sufficient progress.
- Pupils' do not acquire sufficient digital competency skills.

Cabinet thanked the Officers for the report and discussion ensued.

A Cabinet Member, in noting the Risks, raised concerns around Quality of Leadership and Digital Competency. Officers explained that they have been identified as Risks, as it is unlikely that all schools will be performing in such a way all of the time. However, Members were assured that there has been significant investment in Leadership Skills for certain schools, and it is anticipated that this same project will be rolled out across other schools. There are, in addition, a number of checks and balances in place to mitigate the impact of these identified Risks. Further information was provided around Digital Competency and it was clarified that this Risk relates to a new programme of technology which will be rolled out across all schools.

In light of the concerns, it was moved and seconded that an additional recommendation be added to monitor and review the progress of the identified Risks.

Following consideration and discussion and the inclusion of the additional recommendation, it was moved and seconded that the report be deferred. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report and subject to an additional recommendation (iii):

- i) The comments of the Education Scrutiny Committee be considered and noted;

- ii) The EAS Business Plan be agreed and submitted to Welsh Government.
- iii) the risks, as identified within the report be regularly reviewed and monitored and reported to Cabinet.

## 6. STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS 2020-2024

The report, which was considered by Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 25th February 2020, sought Cabinet views on the draft Strategic Equality Plan.

Cabinet noted that since April 2016, the Council has had in place a four-year operational document known as the Strategic Equality Plan – Equalities and Welsh Language Strategic Objectives, which has been accompanied by a separate Action Plan.

The Public Sector Equality Duty in Wales requires all public authorities to develop and publish a Strategic Equality Plan every four years.

The Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 has undergone a full revision compared with the previous version, in order to reflect changes in best practice and objectives or to provide additional information. The combined Objectives and Action Plan have been developed to take achievements and progress into account and merged them into one operational document.

The plan has been developed so that the Council can set out how it aims to meet its commitment to equality and how it will meet its legal obligations contained within the Equality Act 2010. We have used key documents to help develop the revised plan such as the Corporate Plan 2018-2023 and Education's Shared Ambitions Strategy as well as information provided by service managers.

The Plan includes 7 Equality Objectives, which are:

- Service Planning and Delivery
- Education, Skills and Employment
- Community Cohesion
- Inclusive Engagement and Participation
- Welsh Language
- Inclusive, Diverse and Equal Workforce
- Reducing the Gender Pay Gap

It was noted that a formal consultation took place in November 2019. This included targeted engagement with stakeholders with a specific interest in equalities e.g. Disability, Welsh Language, and Parents etc., elected Members, service managers and staff. The Consultation Report is attached at Appendix B of the report.

Cabinet noted that feedback on the consultation process was very supportive of the draft objectives on the whole. Areas for improvement and barriers identified have been included as actions under each relevant Equality Objective. Members were asked to note in the Consultation Report, alongside the feedback received as part of the consultation, referenced were made to comments that have been embedded within the Strategic Equality Plan.

Cabinet were asked to note a few amendments that have been made to add clarity only, since the draft was presented to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee:

- The newly adopted **Consultation and Engagement Framework** will be added to Equality Objective 4 under **Supporting Documents**.
- Strategic Equality Objective 6 – Action 4, we will specify the specific regulations

mentioned, as the: **Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011**

- A sentence will be added to the last paragraph on page 31 of the Plan, which will say; ***Whilst an effort was made to consult with all sectors of the community, it is evident that some stakeholders did not engage in the process.***

The Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 and associated actions; will ensure that the Council has a fit-for-purpose document which demonstrates compliance with the latest statutory Equalities and Welsh Language duties. It has been developed in line with legislative requirements and guidance produced by the Equality & Human Rights Commission.

Therefore Cabinet were asked to consider the report and recommend to Council for approval on 21st April 2020.

Cabinet thanked the Officers for the report and discussion ensued.

A Cabinet Member raised concerns around a recent consultation being undertaken by the UK Government in respect of the Gender Recognition Act and sought further information around the actions of the Council to support the Transgender Community and individuals in the work place. Officers explained that training is available for all staff and members. Leisure Services previously requested Transgender Awareness training for staff, in order to deal with issues around the use of changing rooms in leisure centres. The team work closely with Umbrella Cymru and other partners, including the LGBT Youth Group to provide support and advice as required. In addition, staff awareness days are held to highlight specific awareness days relating to equalities and Welsh language, and as an opportunity to seek advice and support in relation to their work.

Cabinet were reassured that the Council aims to empower staff and provide the required support, which is embedded throughout the organisation, supported and celebrated.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's Report:

- i) The views expressed by the Scrutiny Committee be considered;
- ii) The Strategic Equality Plan, Objectives and Actions 2020-2024 be presented to Council for its approval and adoption as Council policy.

## **7. INTEGRATED TRANSPORT UNIT COLLABORATION**

The report, which was presented to Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on 11th February 2020 and outlined the proposal for the Integrated Transport Units (ITUs) of both Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Councils to work collaboratively to create a centre of excellence for the delivery of passenger transport services across both local authorities.

It was noted that Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf have been discussing the potential for the creation of a joint Integrated Transport Unit (ITU). Both councils already have well-run and adequate resourced ITUs providing services for public bus services, home to school transport and Social Services transport for vulnerable adults and children. The proposal is to underpin the good work that each council undertakes through its respective ITUs, and create resilience and capacity that will ensure business continuity.

The proposal is for a joint management structure to be put in place to manage the respective ITUs of each Council, and through this collaboration the two councils would share resources

to create a centre of excellence for the delivery of passenger transport services across Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

It was noted that the collaboration supports the plans of Welsh Government and the Local Authority is a lead in Transport, therefore a collaboration with another local authority, sharing resources and services, with an aim to provide regional provision supports the Caerphilly transformation agenda “Team Caerphilly” and Welsh Government Collaboration agenda.

A Member sought further information on the timescales for the implementation of the service and future planning. Officers explained that it is still early days for the project, however it is hoped that the collaboration can be utilised as a commercial enterprise, targeting the wider city deal area. Work is underway with the Business Development Officers in order to consider a commercial expansion of the collaboration.

It was noted that this is a specialist service, and therefore a Member queried the utilisation of apprentices. Officers explained that this has not yet been developed due to infancy of the project; however it is something to be considered for the future, especially with an aging workforce and the specialism of the subject. It was noted that there are currently apprentices employed within the wider division, which will shortly be moved to technical roles, and therefore it is hoped that additional apprentices can be recruited.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report:-

- i) The Council working with Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council to create a centre of excellence for the delivery of passenger transport services across Caerphilly and RCT be agreed.
- ii) Delegated authority be sought from Cabinet for the approval and amendment of the business and delivery plan to the joint management team, and for the preparation and agreement of Terms of Reference for the joint board/ steering group in consultation with the respective Cabinet/ Executive Members.

## **8. PUBLICATION OF GENDER PAY GAP DATA 2019 – EQUALITY ACT 2010 (SPECIFIC DUTIES AND PUBLIC AUTHORITIES) REGULATIONS 2017.**

The report sought the approval of Cabinet for the publication of the Authority’s gender pay gap written statement 2019.

Under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, all organisations listed at Schedule 2 to the regulations that employ over 250 employees are required to report annually on their gender pay gap from 2017.

The provisions under these Regulations only apply to employees directly appointed and managed by the Council. Employees who are appointed and managed by school head teachers/ Governing Bodies are, therefore, not required to be included within the scope of the Council’s Gender Pay Gap Data. This reflects the unique employment legislation position whereby all school employees are employed by the local authority, but decisions about the appointment and management of such employees are mostly discharged by head teachers/ governing bodies, as appropriate. Caerphilly Schools will not be required to publish and report their own specific figures as no School employs more than 250 staff.



The Council's gender pay gap data is required to be published on our own website and a government website by 30 March each year. The data must include the hourly pay, as both a mean figure (identifying the difference between the average of men's and women's pay) and the median figure, (identifying the difference between the midpoints in the ranges of men's and women's pay). Employers are encouraged to produce a written statement explaining the data.

The Regulations further require the Council to publish the mean and median gender pay gap relating to bonus pay. Cabinet will be aware that the Council does not offer piecework or bonus incentive schemes.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

Cabinet reiterated that the report does not stem from paying male and female employees differently for the same or equivalent work but is the result of the roles in which male and females currently work and the salaries that these roles attract. The gender pay gap is reflective of the causes of gender pay gap at a societal level. The vast majority of posts in the lower quartile of data are part time posts. These are posts that continue to predominantly attract female applicants.

A Member queried why roles such as carers, caterers and cleaners are predominantly occupied by females. Officers explained that this is mostly due to work/life balance, the roles are usually part-time and often fit in around caring responsibilities and is a reflection of the Council's continued support to staff and promoting work/life balance. It was noted that there was a requirement previously to employ male carers, for which this was difficult to recruit.

In reference to the recording of the posts, in which a number of employees undertake a number of part time roles, it was queried as to how these are recorded. Officers explained that the posts are recorded, until the end of 2019, therefore an employee working 2 roles could effectively be counted twice.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report the written Statement, as attached to the Report detailing gender pay gap data be agreed for publication on the Council's website and the Government website on line using the gender pay gap reporting service.

## **9. AUTHORISATION OF OFFICERS IN PUBLIC PROTECTION – MINIMUM UNIT PRIVING (MUP) OF ALCOHOL**

The report informed Cabinet of the new legislation on the Minimum Pricing of Alcohol in Wales and sought authorisation under The Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Act 2018 for officers of the Public Protection Division.

The report also requested that the Councils Monitoring Officer makes the necessary changes to the Constitution to reflect the implementation of The Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Act 2018 and this reflected in the update of the Constitution at the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2020.

It was noted that Officers within the Public Protection Division require additional authorisation under The Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Act 2018 in order to enforce the legislation and carry out their duties.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

In noting the Legislation, concerns were raised for the shop keepers, and small retailers within the Borough. Officers explained that Welsh Government have implemented a Communications Campaign, and a list of retailers has been provided by the Local Authority, with the aim of providing retailers with the details of the changes to MUP. Further support will be provided by Trading Standards Officers as part of their regular inspections. Members were reassured that a gentle approach will be undertaken prior to enforcement action, to allow the MUP to embed.

A Member sought further information on the MUP and who benefits as a result of the cost increase on alcohol. Officers explained that the increase is not a tax, therefore the retailers would benefit, however the aim is to reduce the volume of alcohol sold, as a result, this should balance out. It was noted that similar legislation is in place in Scotland, for which feedback has not yet been received. Officers agreed to provide Cabinet with the reports released on the scheme implemented in Scotland, however Health reports have not been provided at present.

A Member raised a query in relation to prices printed on packaging of alcohol and the implementation of the Act. Officers explained that it will be an offence to sell alcohol below the MUP and whilst there is Consumer Protection Legislation in place, The Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Act 2018 supersedes the Consumer legislation.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the Officers report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report: -

- i) the Head of Public Protection be authorised under the Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol)(Wales) Act 2018 so that officers within the division can utilise delegated powers to carry out their duties.
- ii) That the Council's Constitution be amended by added the Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Act 2018.

## **10. STORM DENNIS**

The report sought approval from Cabinet for the funding of the financial assistance package announced at Council on the 20th February 2020.

It was noted that the recent flooding events in the county borough, as a consequence of Storm Dennis has affected many properties and residents and businesses were left facing the devastating clean-up operation.

At a meeting of Council on the 20th February 2020 the Leader announced details of a financial assistance package for residents and businesses impacted by the floods. This consists of a one-off payment of £500 for qualifying households and £1,000 for businesses. Council was also informed that an initial sum of £250k would be set aside.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

It was noted that there have been 242 premises affected, the majority of which have been contacted and offered support and work continues to reach the remaining premises. In addition, the Welsh Government has offered a Discretionary Assistance Scheme, for which 86 applications have been completed with the support of Officers, and 48 remain incomplete, however, Officers are working to ensure these are submitted as soon as possible.

Cabinet and Officers wished it noted that the efforts and support of staff across a number of

services was exemplary during the most critical times of the floods. Staff mobilised very quickly to meet the needs of residents, ensuring care services were in place for the vulnerable members of the borough and assisting with the flood crisis. The Leader added that lobbying is underway of both Central and Welsh Government for support provision for those affected by Storm Dennis and for assistance for the major infrastructure works required.

Finally, the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer, in respect of 7.1 of the report and the Financial Regulations, outlined the good governance undertaken as part of the process.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the Officers report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report that the £250k set aside for the financial assistance package be funded from a projected underspend in 2019/20 Capital Financing budgets.

#### **11. EXEMPT ITEM**

Members considered the public interest test certificate from the Proper Officer and concluded that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information. By show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as identified in paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

#### **12. SALE OF LAND ADJACENT TY DYFFRYN, YSTRAD MYNACH**

Cabinet were asked to withdraw the report.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the report be withdrawn. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons given at the meeting, it was resolved that the item be withdrawn.

The meeting closed at 11.42am.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 24th June 2020.

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CHAIR

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Cabinet Date	Title	Key Issues	Author	Cabinet Member
24/06/20 10:30	Covid response	To provide Cabinet with an overview of the Council's response to Covid19 To provide Cabinet with an overview of the approach taken to identify and mitigate and manage risks in response to Covid19. To highlight the current key risks the Council is managing To reaffirm the principles of the TeamCaerphilly transformation objectives and principles upon which services will be provided.	Harrhy, Christina;	Cllr. Marsden, Philippa;
24/06/20 10:30	Covid19 Decision making	To update Cabinet on the impact Covid19 has had upon council decision making To set out next steps.	Edmunds, Richard (Ed); Tranter, Robert J.	Cllr. Gordon, Colin J;
24/06/20 10:30	Welsh Language Standards Annual report 2019-20	To seek Cabinets endorsement of the progress made during the financial year 2019-2020 against four specific areas of Welsh language work, as required under the regulatory framework for implementing the Welsh Language Standards	Cullinane, Anwen;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
01/07/20 10:30	MIM 21st Century Schools Welsh Education Partnership – Strategic Partnering Agreement	To agree the principles of the agreement between WG and the Council.	West, Andrea;	Cllr. Jones, Barbara;
01/07/20 10:30	Flexible Retirement	To request member support to extend the existing flexible retirement arrangement beyond the two years as original agreed in line with the flexible retirement policy. This is to ensure we retain the required level of resource and expertise to complete the external works of the WHQS programme in line with WG deadlines due to delays incurred in continuing works as a consequence of the ongoing Covid pandemic.	Couzens, Shaun;	Cllr. Phipps, Lisa;

01/07/20 10:30	19/20 Provisional Outturn Report	To provide Cabinet with details of the provisional outturn for the 2019/20 financial year prior to the conclusion of the annual audit by the Authority's External Auditor, Grant Thornton.	Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
22/07/20 10:30	Public Spaces Protection Order: Dogs on sport pitches	To seek Cabinet approval to undertake a consultation on a draft Public Spaces Protection Order to ban dogs from Council sports pitches.	Hartshorn, Robert;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
22/07/20 10:30	Place Shaping	To share with Cabinet a series of Place Shaping proposals for Caerphilly County Borough Council	Harrhy, Christina;	Cllr. Marsden, Philippa;
22/07/20 10:30	Agile/Flexible Working	To consider an agile/flexible working approach for the authority.	Edmunds, Richard (Ed);	Cllr. Gordon, Colin J;
09/09/20 10:30	UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS)	To provide an update on the authority's participation in the UK's Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. and how the resettlement programme is being reformed post 2020	Peters, Kathryn;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
09/09/20 10:30	Leaseholder Management Charges	To seek Cabinet approval to increase leaseholder service charges to recover actual costs and avoid ongoing subsidisation by the Housing Revenue Account	Couzens, Shaun;	Cllr. Phipps, Lisa;
09/09/20 10:30	Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel - Review of General Criteria Grants	To seek Cabinet approval of proposed increases in General Criteria Grants which have been recommended by the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel.	Doyle, Vicki;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
23/09/20 10:30	Safer Recruitment Procedure	For Cabinet to consider the safer recruitment procedure and the DBS Policy that clearly outlines the Council's commitment to safe recruitment and DBS practice and officer accountability to ensure this. The DBS policy relating to Schools also shows commitment to ensuring robust DBS practice within schools	Donovan, Lynne;	Cllr. Gordon, Colin J;



## CABINET – 24TH JUNE 2020

**SUBJECT: WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020**

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

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members and seek their endorsement of the progress made during the financial year 2019-2020 against four specific areas of Welsh language work, as required under the regulatory framework for implementing the Welsh Language Standards.
- 1.2 The report will then be published online by the deadline date of 30th June 2020, as required by Welsh Language Standard 158.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory duty to produce an annual monitoring report on implementing Welsh Language issues under current legislation and in compliance with Standard 158.
- 2.2 The information required for 2019-2020 covers four required key areas.

Detail of Reporting Requirement	Standard No. (and sub-clause)
<p><b>Complaints from the Public</b></p> <p>The annual report must include the number of complaints that you received during that year which related to your compliance with the standards with which you were under a duty to comply.</p>	<p>147, 148, 149 156, 158(2), 162, 164(2), 168(a), 170(2)(d)</p>
<p><b>Staff Language Skills</b></p> <p>The number of employees who have Welsh language skills at the end of the year in question (on the basis of the records kept in accordance with standard 151);</p>	<p>170(2)(a) 151</p>
<p><b>Welsh Medium Training Provision</b></p> <p>The number of members of staff who attended training courses you offered in Welsh during the year (on the basis of the records you kept in accordance with standard 152);</p> <p>If a Welsh version of a course was offered by you during that year, the percentage of the total number of staff attending the course who attended the Welsh version (on the basis of the records you kept in accordance with</p>	<p>170(2)(b) 170(2)(c) 152</p>

standard 152).	
<p><b>Recruiting to Empty Posts</b></p> <p>The number of new and vacant posts that you advertised during the year which were categorised as posts where:</p> <p>(i) Welsh language skills were essential  (ii) Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post  (iii) Welsh language skills were desirable,  (iv) Welsh language skills were not necessary</p> <p>(on the basis of the records you kept in accordance with standard 154);</p>	170(2)(ch) 154

- 2.3 The report provides an update to Members on the Council's current position in relation to the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 statutory requirements.
- 2.4 The report outlines the good progress made by service areas in embedding arrangements for delivering services through the medium of Welsh and increasing the Welsh language skills capacity of the workforce.
- 2.5 It is evident from the content of the report that the work done to date is moving in the right direction. The good progress and momentum will be maintained by continuing to work with partners and responding to help, advice and best practice from the Welsh Language Commissioner and other regional and national bodies.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet Members note the content of the annual report and endorse the publication of this information as a record of progress towards, and compliance with, the relevant Welsh Language Standards.

### 4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 As per Standard 158 of the Council's Compliance Notice, the Council must;
- Produce an annual report which deals with the way in which it has complied with the service delivery standards with which it is under a duty to comply during that year.
  - Include in the annual report the number of complaints received during that year which relate to its compliance with the service delivery standards with which it is under a duty to comply.
  - Publish the report on its website by 30 June 2020.

### 5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The annual report highlights the following performance information;
- We received 1 formal complaint and 0 formal Welsh Language Commissioner Investigations during 2019-2020. The complaint received related to the **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Community Response** letter, which was sent to all residents in English only. The complaint was responded to within corporate deadlines and upheld.
  - The increase in the number of staff with Welsh language skills continued to increase, with all but 2 service areas recording additional staff with skills varying in fluency. The increase can partly be explained by a more robust process being in place to capture this information, e.g. at appointment stage.



- For the third year in a row there has been a consistent increase in the number of staff learning Welsh with 223 learners. Following the audit of our Welsh language front line services, undertaken in November 2018 by Menter Iaith Caerffili, the results have been used to identify gaps in service delivery and the 10 Hour Online courses have been used as a starting block, with many of the courses tailored to specific areas of work.
- 2401 vacancies were advertised in total. 24 posts were advertised as Welsh Essential. 10 posts were advertised where Welsh language skills needed to be learnt, 2327 posts were assessed as Welsh desirable and 2336 where no Welsh language skills were required, due in part to existing staff already possessing Welsh language skills. All posts have a default of Welsh desirable as a minimum.

We identified, from analysing the data recorded regarding vacant posts, that the question being asked on the Welsh Language Assessment Form '**No Welsh Language Requirement**' is either not being answered correctly or recorded correctly. This is an area that we will aim to improve and clarify guidance as we work with recruiting managers and People Services during the next 9 months.

5.2 In previous years, in addition to reporting on the four main areas of work, we also provide an update on the progress being made against the actions set out in the Welsh Language Strategy. However, in considering the national situation relating to the Coronavirus at the time of writing this report, gathering information from everyone involved with the delivery of the strategy is difficult. We have therefore decided to delay the progress reporting until autumn 2020, and we anticipate to have had the time also to fully review and update the actions originally set to keep the document current.

### 5.3 **Conclusion**

It is evident from the content of the report that there has been progress during 2019-2020, however we must not be complacent, instead we need to continue to achieve and maintain compliance with the standards in everything we do.

## 6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 No assumptions made.

## 7. **LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES**

7.1 Welsh language is a crosscutting theme of the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 and impacts on every Council policy, function and procedure, covering those aimed at the public and internal policies covering the Council's staff members. The report contributes to the following Well-being Goals:

- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

7.1.1 The Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020, which includes Welsh language and compliance with the Welsh Language Standards as a strategic equality objective in its own right, has direct links with a number of other current policies and strategies, both within the Council and in terms of partnership working.

7.1.2 There are also Welsh Government strategies or regulations that the Council's Welsh Language work links to, including "Mwy Na Geiriau / More Than Words" (the National Health and Social Care Welsh Language Strategy), "Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers" (Welsh Government's Welsh language strategy) and **Prosperity for All**.

## 7.2 **Corporate Plan 2018-2023.**

This report ties in with the following objectives of the Corporate Plan 2018-2023;

Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all

Objective 2 - Enabling employment

Objective 6 - Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being

## 8. **WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

8.1 This report contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in **Section 7- Links to Relevant Council Policies**. It is also consistent with the five ways of working:

- Long Term – Ensuring that staff have the skills to deliver bilingual services now and in the future
- Prevention – Improving services and upskilling staff will ensure that everyone regardless of language choice has equal access to services and thus preventing complaints and Welsh Language Commissioner Investigations.
- Integration – By providing bilingual services to the public we make everyone feel equal and valued.
- Collaboration – Partnership working is key to this and assists the council in meeting its duties under the Welsh Language Standards. Working in collaboration with partners is further evidenced in the Five-Year Welsh Language Strategy.
- Involvement – As noted under collaboration, we must involve our partners to deliver on the Five-Year Welsh Language Strategy and to assist us with service delivery.

## 9. **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Full Equalities and Welsh Language assessments and consultation were undertaken on the Strategic Equality Plan as it was being developed; therefore no full assessment has been made on this annual report. The report is an assessment of progress made by the Council under the Welsh Language Standards.

## 10. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no direct financial implications to this report as the annual report covers work already undertaken in the previous financial year. However it should be noted that moving the agenda forward will incur financial implications, particularly in relation to Welsh language training of staff.

The cost of supporting staff to attend courses to learn Welsh for the workplace for the year 2019-2020, which assists in the delivery of bilingual Council services under the Standards, was £3,512.56.

## 11. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no personnel implications to this report, although this continues to be reviewed as the work of implementing the Welsh Language Standards progresses. This is relevant to Section 4 of the annual report, which focuses on Recruiting to Empty Posts.
- 11.2 No posts will be advertised without a Welsh Language Skills Assessment.

## 12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 All responses from consultations have been incorporated in the report.

## 13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.
- 13.2 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

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Consultees: Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director – Education and Corporate Services  
Cllr Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Planning  
Cllr James Pritchard, Equalities Champion  
Christina Harray, Chief Executive  
Sue Richards, Head of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools  
Stephen Harris, Interim Head of Business Improvement Services  
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer  
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services  
Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager  
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer  
Ros Roberts, Performance Manager

Appendices:  
Appendix The Welsh Language Annual Standards Report 2019-2020

### Background Papers:

- Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020
- Equalities and Welsh Language Objectives and Action Plan 2016-2020
- Compliance Notice – Section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022
- Various Guidance Documents

*(These are available electronically for information on the Intranet Portal and on relevant internet pages at [www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities))*

# Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2019-2020

Prepared in accordance with the requirements of the



Comisiynydd y  
Gymraeg  
Welsh Language  
Commissioner

30<sup>th</sup> June 2020

A greener place  
Man gwyrddach

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## **Introduction**

This annual monitoring report for 2019-2020 covers the four areas required under the regulatory framework and demonstrates the Council's ongoing commitment to providing bilingual services to the public and staff members.

<b>Detail of Reporting Requirement</b>	<b>Related Standard Number (&amp; sub-clause)</b>
<p><b>Complaints from the Public</b></p> <p>The annual report must include the number of complaints that you received during that year which related to your compliance with the standards with which you were under a duty to comply.</p>	<p>147, 148, 149, 156, 158 (2), 162, 164 (2), 168 (a), 170 (2) (d)</p>
<p><b>Staff Language Skills</b></p> <p>The number of employees who have Welsh language skills at the end of the year in question (on the basis of the records kept in accordance with standard 151);</p>	<p>170 (2) (a) 151</p>
<p><b>Welsh Medium Training Provision</b></p> <p>The number of members of staff who attended training courses you offered in Welsh during the year (on the basis of the records you kept in accordance with standard 152);</p> <p>If a Welsh version of a course was offered by you during that year, the percentage of the total number of staff attending the course who attended the Welsh version (on the basis of the records you kept in accordance with standard 152).</p>	<p>170 (2) (b) 170 (2) (c) 152</p>
<p><b>Recruiting to Empty Posts</b></p> <p>The number of new and vacant posts that you advertised during the year which were categorised as posts where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Welsh language skills were essential</li> <li>(ii) Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post</li> <li>(iii) Welsh language skills were desirable,</li> <li>(iv) Welsh language skills were not necessary</li> </ul> <p>(on the basis of the records you kept in accordance with standard 154);</p>	<p>170 (2) (ch) 154</p>

On the 1 April 2016 the Council adopted an updated Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020. Four of the Strategic Equality Objectives explicitly include Welsh language issues, namely:

Strategic Equality Objective 4	-	Improving Communication Access
Strategic Equality Objective 6	-	Compliance with the Welsh language Standards
Strategic Equality Objective 10	-	Diversity in the Workplace
Strategic Equality Objective 11	-	Corporate Compliance

The Council’s Cabinet and Corporate Management Team have been actively involved in discussions and debates around the implementation of the Welsh language Standards since January 2014 and have received a number of reports and presentations in order to keep them fully informed of progress prior to the final Compliance Notice date of 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017.

We would like to highlight the following work successes from 2019-2020, which include:

- Standardisation of Place Names List** – Work undertaken with the Welsh Language Commissioner’s Office to review and agree a standard list of place names for the county borough. The list takes into consideration local usage, history, pronunciation, grammar and spelling. This work, which started in summer 2018 and concluded in autumn 2019, included presenting a panel of experts with evidence of local usage and pronunciation of place names in the county borough. The work has been regarded as best practice in Wales and the open and supportive dialogue between the Council and the Commissioner’s staff was instrumental. Having an agreed list ensures consistency in the way local place names are spelt and pronounced in the future.
- Commissioner’s Assurance Report 2018-2019** – Caerphilly Council was mentioned in the Welsh Language Commissioner’s annual assurance report ‘Rights in Use’. The report references the audit of our Welsh Language Services, which we commissioned Menter Iaith Caerffili to undertake, with the results being used to identify gaps and celebrate successes.

Our partnership work with Menter Iaith Caerffili continues through linkages within the Welsh Language Strategy and is invaluable in relation to some of our service delivery e.g. Menter Iaith Caerffili were commissioned by Tourism to deliver the public address announcements at the Big Cheese 2019, so that they were bilingual and compliant with the relevant standards.

- Complaints and Investigations** – Only 1 recorded complaint and 7 service requests relating to the Welsh language were received during 2019-2020. See **Section 2**. We also use this section of the report to provide information relating to Welsh Language Commissioner Investigations. For the duration of 2019-2020 we received 0 new investigations, which is extraordinary and shows the work undertaken to comply with the Standards is beginning to take effect.

In previous years we have used the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report as an opportunity to provide an update on the progress being made against all the actions set out in the Welsh Language Strategy. Considering the national situation relating to the Coronavirus at the time of writing this report, gathering information from everyone involved with the delivery of the strategy is difficult. We have therefore decided to delay the progress reporting until autumn 2020, and we anticipate we will have had the time also to fully review and update the actions originally set to keep the document current.

This annual report will be published online by the 30 June 2020.

It is also available to download in pdf format on the Council's website on the dedicated Welsh language page at [www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities).

**This report is available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request.  
Mae'r adroddiad hwn ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd neu fformatau eraill ar gais**



# 1. Welsh Language Standards: Action Plan

Since the Welsh Language Standards were introduced on 30 March 2016, we have developed a Compliance Work Programme to ensure that services we deliver are in accordance with the Standards, that staff are aware of their obligations and that they have the required language skills where possible.

The Compliance Work Programme is summarised below:

## **Correspondence - Standards 4, 5 & 7**

These standards relate to correspondence which must be bilingual if we do not know language choice, or are sending letters out to a number of people regarding the same subject matter. We must ensure that our letterhead is also compliant.

### **Action taken**

- FACTSHEET for staff – General Correspondence – 15/05/17
- New letterhead template already in place

## **Telephone – Standards 8, 9, 11, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21 & 22**

These standards relate to how we deal with telephone calls and that a bilingual greeting is given. Staff must be equipped with the relevant language skills to deal with calls in Welsh, and if they are unable, that they know who the Welsh speakers are that are able to deal with the matter, and how to transfer calls. If no Welsh speaker is available to provide the subject specific information the call can be put through to a non-Welsh speaker.

We must state, when we publish main telephone numbers, that we welcome calls in Welsh and all our automated telephone systems must be bilingual.

### **Action taken**

- FACTSHEET for staff– Telephone Greetings – updated 24/01/20
- Training delivered to staff to ensure they can give basic greetings and provide reception services in our main locations
- Welcoming Welsh language calls has been published in **Newsline** since the June 2017 edition
- Employees provided with desk stands which are Quick Reference Guides – 15/05/17
- Automated telephone messages for service areas recorded bilingually
- Recruitment of additional Welsh speaker, via the apprenticeship programme, who divides their time between the Contact Centre and main reception at Penallta House
- Contact Centre staff have been provided with updated protocol for receiving calls through the medium of Welsh
- Management Network were given information regarding new guidance relating to Standard 11, which was to be disseminated to staff via Heads of Service and Senior Management

## **Meetings - Standards 24, 24A, 27, 27A, 27D, 29 & 29A**

These standards are about how we invite individuals to meetings and when we must offer them the opportunity to use the Welsh language. If they so wish, we must then arrange simultaneous translation to facilitate that meeting.

If inviting more than one individual to a meeting they must all be asked if they wish to use the Welsh language. However, if at least 10% wish to use Welsh then simultaneous translation must be arranged. If less than 10%, the Welsh speakers must be informed that on this occasion we are not required to fulfil their request to speak Welsh at the meeting.

If the meeting with the individual is regarding their well-being, and they wish to speak Welsh, then simultaneous translation must be provided so that the individual can speak in their language of choice. Well-being meetings must be conducted with simultaneous translation if any attendee has requested that they use Welsh.

### **Action taken**

- FACTSHEET for staff– Meetings with individuals – 15/05/17
- When inviting individuals to a meeting services are required to include a standard sentence asking their language choice and if they wish to use or conduct the meeting through the medium of Welsh

## **Public Meetings and Events – Standards 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35 & 36**

Any advert or notice publicising public meetings/events/activities must state that Welsh can be used.

Any invitations to public meetings/events/activities must be sent in Welsh and English and all material displayed at the public meeting must be bilingual, Welsh first.

Any speakers at public meetings/events/activities must be asked if they wish to use Welsh, and if so simultaneous translation must be arranged. All attendees at public meetings/events/activities must be informed orally that they are welcome to use Welsh and that simultaneous translation is available for the non-Welsh speakers.

### **Action taken**

- FACTSHEET for staff – Public Meetings – 15/05/17
- FACTSHEET for staff – Event Planning – 15/05/17
- Translation and Interpretation Framework in place since May 2017 for simultaneous translation requests

## **Agendas, minutes and other public documents – Standards 41 & 47**

These Standards relate to producing the following documents in Welsh;

- Agendas and minutes for Cabinet
- Agendas and minutes for Education for Life Scrutiny and Full Council

In addition if a document is produced for public use, and is not caught by any other standard it must be produced in Welsh if the subject matter suggests it should be produced in Welsh, or if the anticipated audience and their expectations suggests that it should be produced in Welsh e.g. Reports relating to Welsh medium education.

### **Action taken**

- Producing agendas and minutes for Cabinet, Education for Life Scrutiny and Full Council in Welsh is current practice

### **General Publications – Standards 42, 43, 44, 45, 46 & 47**

These Standards relate the following being produced in Welsh if they are for the public or provide information to the public;

- licences, certificates, brochures, leaflets, pamphlets, cards, policies, strategies, annual reports, corporate plans, guidelines, codes of practice or any rules that apply to the public

Any statement that we issue to the press must be bilingual unless the statement is issued during an “emergency” as defined in Section 1 - Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

If a document is produced for public use, and is not caught by any other standard it must be produced in Welsh if, the subject matter suggests it should be produced in Welsh or if the anticipated audience and their expectations of the audience suggests that it should be produced in Welsh.

### **Action taken**

- Producing licences, certificates, brochures, leaflets, pamphlets, cards, policies, strategies, annual reports, corporate plans, guidelines, codes of practice or any rules that apply to the public, in Welsh, is already current practice
- Communications Team aware regarding the issuing of public statements

### **Consultation Documents – Standards 44, 91, 92 & 93**

Consultation documents must be bilingual and must consider and seek views on;

1. what the effects whether positive or negative the proposal would have on; or
2. how the proposal could be developed or revised so that it would have positive or increased positive effects on; or
3. how the proposal could be developed or revised so that it would not have negative effects, or so that it would have decreased negative effects on;

a) opportunities to use the Welsh language

b) not treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language

### **Action taken**

- Consultation and Monitoring Guidance in place and refers to the Welsh Language. This document is currently being revised
- A Welsh Language in Consultation Checklist is being created so that officers undertaking consultation exercises are aware of their obligations
- Questions embedded in the impact assessment process asking if considerations have been given to Welsh language in the consultation process

### **Website, Social Media and Electronic Devices – Standards 52, 56, 58 & 60**

Each page of the Council's website must be bilingual, fully functional with Welsh treated no less favourably than the English pages. The interface and menus on pages must be bilingual.

Any social media accounts which belong to the Council must treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Self-service machines must treat Welsh no less favourably e.g. parking ticket machines.

#### **Action taken**

- Audit of entire website and its functionality was completed in September 2019
- Staff informed of process for publishing bilingual information on Council's website
- Social Media Usage Guidance includes a section on the Welsh Language Standards and those with accounts have been asked to acknowledge the requirements to comply. Monitoring will start shortly and those not complying will be reminded of their obligations
- Parking machines give people the option to select language choice
- Audit of corporate social media accounts started in March 2020 – work ongoing and are staff reminded of compliance with Welsh Language Standards
- Self-service coffee machine at Penallta House is fully bilingual

### **Public Signage – Standard 62, 67, 70, 141, 142 & 143**

New and renewed signs must be bilingual and treat Welsh no less favourably than English and the Welsh language must be positioned so it is likely to be read first.

#### **Action taken**

- New and renewed signs are compliant
- FACTSHEET – Signage – 15/05/17
- All translation work received is returned in the correct format. This is current practice

### **Visitors to Buildings – Standards 64, 65, 65A, 67 & 68**

A bilingual reception service must be provided at the following Council buildings and the Welsh language must not be treated less favourably than the English language;

- Penallta House
- Bargoed, Risca, Rhymney, Blackwood, Caerphilly and Ystrad Mynach libraries;
- Caerphilly Visitor Centre;
- Llancaiach Fawr Manor House;
- Registration Services;
- Caerphilly, Heolddu, Newbridge and Risca Leisure Centres.

Signs must be displayed on receptions that state the Welsh language may be used. Welsh speaking staff at receptions must display a badge stating that they can speak Welsh.

### **Action taken**

- Training programme completed for staff on reception at Penallta House and Contact Centre. Further training being rolled-out along with ongoing support
- Cymraeg Gwaith - 10-hour online course rolled out to staff since September 2018
- All venues listed under Standard 64 have been given the poster to display in reception areas indicating that a Welsh language service is available
- Information available to staff on the Corporate Policy Unit Portal
- All learners and Welsh speakers have received a Iaith Gwaith lanyard or badge
- Iaith Gwaith posters reissued to be displayed in reception areas

### **Grant Awarding – Standards 71, 72 & 72A**

Application forms for grants must be bilingual. Anything published regarding a grant must state that applications may be submitted in Welsh and will not be treated less favourably than the English, this includes timescales set for assessment etc.

### **Action taken**

- FACTSHEET for staff – Grants – 15/07/17
- The Welsh Language Commissioner's Thematic Review looked at the process of awarding grants. Most service areas are compliant and those who weren't have been advised accordingly. They've also been told to ask the language choice of the applicant and to issue the forms in that language or to issue bilingually

### **Education Courses – Standards 84 & 86**

Education courses must be offered in Welsh unless an assessment under Standard 86 has been carried out.

### **Action taken**

- Asking people if they wish to receive the course in Welsh at registration or enquiry point and then assessing the demand for the course through the medium of Welsh

### **Public Address – Standard 87**

All public addresses must be bilingual with Welsh first.

### **Action taken**

- Fire Alarm Test and Minute Silence messages are bilingual
- Emergency Evacuation – English Only
- Tourism has been asked to look at their events programme and the need to ensure that all public announcements are bilingual, Welsh first
- Big Cheese 2019 event – public address messages were bilingual
- Libraries' automated public address messages are fully compliant

### **Policy Making – Standards 88, 89 & 90**

New, revised or reviewed policies must consider the effect the policy will have on opportunities to use Welsh and must not treat Welsh less favourably.

### **Action taken**

- The Equalities Implications in Committee Reports Guidance was updated to include reference to the Welsh language

### **Intranet / Internet Pages - Standards 122 & 124**

The intranet home page must be bilingual, fully functional and treat Welsh no less favourably. English language pages must state that a corresponding Welsh page is available, with a link if applicable.

### **Action taken**

- A bilingual intranet is not current practice. There is a dedicated Welsh Language page on the Corporate Policy Unit Portal for staff to access

### **Welsh Language Training and Staff Communication – Standards 128, 129, 130, 133, 134 & 135**

We must provide training in Welsh for staff if it is provided in English on; recruitment, performance management, complaints, disciplinary, induction, dealing with the public, health and safety, on using Welsh in meetings, interviews, complaints and during disciplinary procedures.

Staff must be given opportunities in work hours to receive basic Welsh lessons and for employees who manage others to receive training on using Welsh in their role as managers.

We must provide new employees with information on the Welsh language and text or logo for Welsh speaking employees to use in e-mail signatures that indicates they are willing to use Welsh, whether fluently or as a learner.

Welsh language version of contact details in emails and out of office messages must also be in Welsh.

### **Action taken**

- FACTSHEET for staff – HR – 15/05/17
- If any training requests were received, we would work with neighbouring councils to make courses viable
- Annual Welsh language training programme delivered since 1999, which offers staff a variety of different courses, which include online, self-study, residential and weekly courses. 223 learners undertook Welsh language training during 2019-2020
- Information on the Welsh language should be included in HR Induction Packs
- The Equalities, Welsh Language and Consultation Team are involved in the Social Services Induction Programme for new starters
- IT has provided all staff with a bilingual auto-signature for all emails
- IT has been unable to pre-populate a bilingual email out of office message, therefore desk stands were created for all staff to raise awareness of the requirement to ensure their out of office messages are bilingual

### **Workplace Signage – Standards 141,142 and 143**

New and renewed signs must be bilingual and treat Welsh no less favourably than the English and the Welsh language must be positioned so it is likely to be read first.

#### **Action taken**

- All public facing signage is bilingual and if new or renewed is produced Welsh first

### **Welsh Language Strategy – Standards 145 & 146**

We must produce and publish on the website, a 5-year strategy that sets out how we propose to promote the Welsh language and facilitate its use more widely in the county borough. The Strategy must include –

(a) a target (in terms of the percentage of speakers in your area) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in your area by the end of the 5 year period concerned, and

(b) a statement setting out how you intend to reach that target; and you must review the strategy and publish a revised version on your website within 5 years of publishing a strategy (or of publishing a revised strategy).

#### **Action taken**

- The Strategy was launched at Ffiliffest 2017 by the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language
- An action plan was developed in collaboration with partners in local Welsh language organisations, through the Welsh Language Forum
- A progress report is presented annually to Cabinet. The report for this year has been delayed until Autumn 2020 due to the Coronavirus
- A review of the targets originally set need to be revised and updated, with some having already been met. The revision and update to be completed in Autumn 2020
- The Strategy was adopted by Caerphilly Public Services Board in December 2018

### **Publicising Compliance – Standards 161, 167, & 163**

We must publish on the website a document that states the policy making standards we must comply with and how we do so and this must be available in each office open to the public.

We must publish on the website a document that states the operational standards we must comply with and how we do so and this must be available in each office open to the public.

We must have arrangements in place to oversee compliance with the policy making standards, publish the arrangements on the website and make the document available in each office open to the public.

#### **Action taken**

- See - [CCBC Compliance Notice Report 30.03.16](#) on website
- Compliance Notice on website to allow any queries from the public to be dealt with by accessing the internet on their behalf.

**Complaints – Standards 147, 148, 149, 156, 158 (2), 162, 164 (2), 168 (a), 170 (2) (d)**

We must keep a record of the number of complaints received which relate to compliance with the Standards.

**Action taken**

- Reported annually in the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report, which is published on the Council's website by the 30<sup>th</sup> June every year

**Staff Language Skills – Standards 151 & 170 (2) (a)**

We must keep a record (following an assessment) of the number of employees who have Welsh language skills at the end of every financial year to include the skill level.

**Welsh Language Training – Standards 152, 170 (2) (b) & 170 (2) (c)**

We must keep a record of the number of staff that attend training courses through the medium of Welsh and the percentage of the total number of staff who attended a course in Welsh.

**Recruitment – Standards 154, 170 (2) (ch) & 154**

We must keep a record of the number of new and vacant posts advertised during the year which were categorised as posts where:

- (a) Welsh language skills were essential
- (b) Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post
- (c) Welsh language skills were desirable,
- (ch) Welsh language skills were not necessary

**Action taken**

- ***Staff Language Skills, Welsh Language Training Provision and Recruitment*** are reported on annually in the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report, which is published on the Council's website by the 30<sup>th</sup> June every year



## 2. Complaints from the Public

The Council's **Strategic Equality Objective 11 – Corporate Compliance** commits the Council to monitoring Equalities and Welsh language complaints, and staff guidance has been issued on the staff Portal and the external website giving details of how staff should deal with these issues.

During 2019-2020, **7** service requests and **1** complaint were received relating to the Welsh language. The **1** complaint related to a Covid-19 information letter sent out to all residents in English only. A strategic decision was made that due to the urgent nature of the Covid-19 information; all information regarding this matter would be published and sent in English only. The complaint was responded to within corporate timescales. All other documentation and social media messaging related to the current Coronavirus crisis are fully bilingual.

The **7** service requests included issues with digital online services on our website and a lack of awareness and of Welsh language skills amongst staff in dealing with calls, emails and face to face queries. The service requests have been discussed with the relevant service areas and any issues have been or are currently being resolved via staff awareness raising, Welsh language training or amendments to online digital systems where issues were identified.

### General Definitions

Corporate complaints are those that are due to failure of process or failure to operate Council policy correctly. These are complaints that could ultimately be forwarded to the Public Services Ombudsman or Welsh Language Commissioner, for example.

Code of conduct issues around staff behaviour or attitude are dealt with via internal HR processes. Equalities and Welsh language complaints are however something of a hybrid, in that a failure of process may be as a result of the attitudes or opinions of a staff member towards a particular group for example.

### Complaints by Directorate

DIRECTORATE	WELSH LANGUAGE
Communities	0
Education & Corporate Services	1
Social Services & Housing	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1</b>

## Welsh Language Commissioner Investigations

In 2019-2020 we received **0** new Welsh Language Commissioner Investigations. We had **1** which was ongoing from the previous financial year, details of which are listed on the following pages;

### Investigations Ongoing since 2018-2019

#### CSG304

DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION	OUTCOME
<p>The Welsh language Commissioner received a complaint from a member of the public alleging;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an online Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) reporting form on the Council's website submitted in Welsh and has not received a response. Also some text on the webpage was in English only</li> </ul>	<p>The investigation determined that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Standard 1</b> – CCBC did not fail to comply with Standard 1 in this instance. The basis of the determination is that the Council provided a Welsh language response to correspondence dated 22/12/2017 in accordance with the requirements of Standard 1</li> <li><b>Standard 52</b> – CCBC failed to comply with this Standard 52 on the basis that English only text appeared on one of the Council's Welsh language web pages in December 2017</li> </ul>
<h4><b>UPDATE</b></h4>	
<p>The proposed report received on the 30/10/18 outlined the following further action was required:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a review of the website to ensure that the text of every page of the website is available in Welsh.</li> <li>Take steps to ensure that staff responsible for the website's content are aware of the requirements of Standard 52.</li> <li>Prepare and provide guidelines for staff responsible for loading and monitoring website content in order to ensure compliance with Standard 52.</li> <li>Provide sufficient written evidence to satisfy the Welsh Language Commissioner that it has completed enforcement actions 1 – 3.</li> </ol> <p>The original deadline to complete the actions and respond was the 11.07.19. We wrote to the Commissioner requesting a 3 month extension to complete the work.</p> <p><b>Work completed and a final response sent on 30.09.19.</b></p>	

## CSG487

DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION	OUTCOME
<p>The Welsh Language Commissioner received a complaint from a member of the public alleging;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the complaint, dated 16/01/19, is regarding an allegation that the complainant contacted the Council at 15:00 on 08/01/19 regarding a council tax enquiry on 01443 815 588 and was unable to discuss his enquiry in Welsh.</li></ul>	<p>Response sent to the Welsh Language Commissioner on 21/01/19 confirming that CCBC is responsible for providing the service.</p> <p>Terms of Reference and Evidence Notice received.</p>
UPDATE	
<p>The Final Report from the Commissioner was received on 17.12.19, which outlined the following further action with a 4 month timescale;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Council must ensure that staff members from the Switchboard team, who receive telephone calls from persons who wish to be dealt with in Welsh, are able to deal with calls in Welsh in their entirety until such point as:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>it is necessary to transfer the call to a member of staff who does not speak Welsh who can provide a service on a specific subject matter; and</li><li>no Welsh speaking member of staff is available to provide a service on that specific subject matter.</li></ol></li><li>The Council must revise and amend the content of the protocol for how to deal with Welsh language calls that are received to the Switchboard. The Council must revise and amend the protocol in a manner that means that:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>once the Council is aware that the person wishes to be dealt with in Welsh, the member of staff receiving the call is able to have an initial conversation with that person (including being able to establish the nature of the call) in Welsh at all times;</li><li>the staff member does not transfer the call to other staff members in order to have an initial conversation with a person in Welsh;</li><li>the protocol explains what is considered a '<i>specific subject matter</i>' in the context of the Council's services;</li><li>the protocol explains how Welsh speaking staff members who could provide a service on specific subject matters within the context of the Council's services should and could be identified and located;</li><li>the protocol explains how it should be explained to persons that there is no Welsh language service available, because there are no Welsh speaking staff members available to provide a service on that specific subject matter. Sample wordings (in Welsh) could be provided for use.</li></ul></li><li>The Council must share the amended protocol with the Switchboard staff and provide the staff with training on how to follow the protocol.</li></ol>	

4. The Council must revise and amend the content of the staff factsheet on how to deal with Welsh language calls received to the Council's contact centres, receptions or main telephone numbers. The Council must revise and amend the factsheet so that it does not convey unconditionally that staff may deal with a call in English when no Welsh speakers are available to deal with the call.
5. The Council must share the amended staff factsheet with Council staff.
6. The Council must provide written evidence that satisfies the Welsh Language Commissioner that enforcement steps 1-5 have been completed.

As part of your evidence, the Council should update the Commissioner on the particular actions taken to prevent any continuation or repetition of the failure to comply with standard 11, including:

- information on the extent to which the apprenticeship programme succeeded to ensure that the Switchboard team has sufficient Welsh language skills to comply with standard 11;
- information on upgrading the corporate telephony network in order to facilitate compliance with the requirements of standard 11.

**A final response was sent to the Commissioner on 09.04.20.**

### 3. Staff Language Skills

The ability to record Welsh language issues in terms of staff data and analysis is an integral part of the payroll system within Caerphilly County Borough Council. Financial year-end figures to 31 March 2020 are shown below and overleaf.

Compared with last year, again we have recorded additional Welsh speakers on the HR system across almost all service areas. The increase can partly be explained by a more robust process being in place to capture this information, e.g. at appointed stage.

At the time of reporting last year, the total number of staff and Welsh speakers within the organisation was as follows;

<b>COUNCIL TOTALS for 2018-2019</b>	<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>Welsh Speakers</b>	<b>%</b>
	<b>8533</b>	<b>1581</b>	<b>18.53</b>

### LINGUISTIC PROFILE OF WORKFORCE - WELSH LANGUAGE ABILITY BY SERVICE AREA AND FLUENCY AS AT 31 MARCH 2020

#### i) OVERALL STAFF FIGURES

<i>Communities</i>	2019-2020			2018-2019		
	Total Staff	Welsh Speakers	%	Total Staff	Welsh Speakers	%
Community & Leisure Services	<b>762</b>	135	17.71	<b>811</b>	101	12.45
Infrastructure	<b>236</b>	31	13.13	<b>234</b>	24	10.25
Property Services	<b>61</b>	17	27.86	<b>59</b>	17	28.81
Public Protection	<b>115</b>	20	17.39	<b>109</b>	16	14.67
Regeneration & Planning	<b>338</b>	53	15.68	<b>346</b>	39	11.27
<b>Total</b>	<b>1499</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>16.87</b>	<b>1551</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>12.51</b>

	2019-2020			2018-2019		
<i>Education &amp; Corporate Services</i>	<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>Welsh Speakers</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>Welsh Speakers</b>	<b>%</b>
Business Improvement Services	<b>968</b>	142	14.66	<b>966</b>	127	13.15
Corporate Finance	<b>163</b>	24	14.72	<b>169</b>	23	13.61
Customer & Digital Services	<b>133</b>	24	18.04	<b>145</b>	19	13.10
Education Planning & Strategy	<b>171</b>	41	23.97	<b>171</b>	35	20.47
Learning Education & Inclusion	<b>463</b>	96	20.73	<b>489</b>	88	17.99
Legal & Governance	<b>58</b>	9	15.51	<b>57</b>	8	14.03
People Services	<b>99</b>	31	31.31	<b>101</b>	25	24.75
Schools	<b>3366</b>	978	29.05	<b>3425</b>	899	26.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>5123</b>	<b>1285</b>	<b>25.08</b>	<b>5204</b>	<b>1161</b>	<b>22.31</b>

	2019-2020			2018-2019		
<i>Social Services &amp; Housing</i>	<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>Welsh Speakers</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>Welsh Speakers</b>	<b>%</b>
Adult Services	<b>1138</b>	140	12.30	<b>1139</b>	127	11.15
Business Support	<b>6</b>	2	33.33	<b>6</b>	2	33.33
Caerphilly Homes	<b>502</b>	66	13.14	<b>517</b>	63	12.18
Children Services	<b>293</b>	68	23.20	<b>275</b>	54	19.64
<b>Total</b>	<b>1941</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>14.21</b>	<b>1939</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>12.69</b>

<b>Council Total for 2019-2020</b>	<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>Welsh Speakers</b>	<b>%</b>
	<b>8402</b>	<b>1796</b>	<b>21.37</b>

## NOTES

- The figures per service area for **Total Staff** and **Welsh Speakers** do not equal the overall total per Directorate due to some members of staff having more than one post within the organisation and those posts are within different service areas.
- As with previous reports, the figures in **3 i)** above are the total number of people per directorate who have completed the Linguistic Skills form noting Welsh Language skills.
- The figures shown in **3 ii)** to **3 iv)** that follow refer to levels of fluency of Welsh speakers per service area and cannot be compared directly with the totals shown in **3 i)** because for example, in Corporate Finance (the second section below in **3 ii)** the "Level 4" column refers to a staff member who can read, speak, understand and write at Level 4, not 3 different members of staff.

ii) **Communities**

<b>Community &amp; Leisure Services</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>No Skills</b>	<b>Undisclosed</b>
<b>Listening / Speaking</b>	14	9	6	15	86	5	0
<b>Understanding</b>	14	10	8	15	71	15	2
<b>Writing</b>	13	4	12	20	42	41	3
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>135</b>						

<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>No Skills</b>	<b>Undisclosed</b>
<b>Listening / Speaking</b>	0	0	1	2	24	2	2
<b>Understanding</b>	0	1	1	1	24	2	2
<b>Writing</b>	0	0	1	2	16	8	4
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>31</b>						

<b>Property Services</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>No Skills</b>	<b>Undisclosed</b>
<b>Listening / Speaking</b>	0	1	1	1	13	1	0
<b>Understanding</b>	0	1	1	2	11	2	0
<b>Writing</b>	0	1	0	1	7	8	0
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>17</b>						

<b>Public Protection</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>No Skills</b>	<b>Undisclosed</b>
<b>Listening / Speaking</b>	2	0	3	3	11	1	0
<b>Understanding</b>	4	1	1	5	8	1	0
<b>Writing</b>	2	0	3	1	11	3	0
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>20</b>						

<b>Regeneration &amp; Planning</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>No Skills</b>	<b>Undisclosed</b>
<b>Listening / Speaking</b>	7	1	1	12	29	3	0
<b>Understanding</b>	7	4	2	5	29	5	1
<b>Writing</b>	8	0	2	6	22	14	1
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>53</b>						

### iii) SOCIAL SERVICES and HOUSING

<b>Adult Services</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>No Skills</b>	<b>Undisclosed</b>
<b>Listening / Speaking</b>	12	9	7	6	92	14	0
<b>Understanding</b>	15	12	4	4	82	19	4
<b>Writing</b>	14	8	2	10	47	54	5
<b>Total staff</b>	<b>140</b>						

<b>Business Support</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>No Skills</b>	<b>Undisclosed</b>
<b>Listening / Speaking</b>	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
<b>Understanding</b>	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
<b>Writing</b>	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
<b>Total staff</b>	<b>2</b>						

<b>Caerphilly Homes</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>No Skills</b>	<b>Undisclosed</b>
<b>Listening / Speaking</b>	2	4	6	6	44	4	0
<b>Understanding</b>	1	8	2	2	36	15	2
<b>Writing</b>	1	4	4	4	20	30	3
<b>Total staff</b>	<b>66</b>						

<b>Children Services</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>No Skills</b>	<b>Undisclosed</b>
<b>Listening / Speaking</b>	3	2	4	1	54	3	1
<b>Understanding</b>	3	4	3	2	41	13	2
<b>Writing</b>	3	2	3	2	30	26	2
<b>Total staff</b>	<b>68</b>						

### iv) EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

<b>Business Improvement Services</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>No Skills</b>	<b>Undisclosed</b>
<b>Listening / Speaking</b>	18	4	3	16	88	10	3
<b>Understanding</b>	20	6	5	15	65	28	3
<b>Writing</b>	20	3	2	9	34	67	7
<b>Total staff</b>	<b>142</b>						

<b>Corporate Finance</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>No Skills</b>	<b>Undisclosed</b>
<b>Listening / Speaking</b>	0	1	1	3	15	4	0
<b>Understanding</b>	1	1	0	1	16	5	0
<b>Writing</b>	0	2	0	1	9	12	0
<b>Total staff</b>	<b>24</b>						



<b>Customer &amp; Digital Services</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>No Skills</b>	<b>Undisclosed</b>
<b>Listening / Speaking</b>	0	1	1	3	15	4	0
<b>Understanding</b>	1	1	0	1	16	5	0
<b>Writing</b>	0	2	0	1	9	12	0
<b>Total staff</b>	<b>24</b>						

<b>Education Planning &amp; Strategy</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>No Skills</b>	<b>Undisclosed</b>
<b>Listening / Speaking</b>	0	1	2	6	29	3	0
<b>Understanding</b>	0	1	3	3	28	4	2
<b>Writing</b>	0	0	3	2	18	15	3
<b>Total staff</b>	<b>41</b>						

<b>Learning Education &amp; Inclusion</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>No Skills</b>	<b>Undisclosed</b>
<b>Listening / Speaking</b>	5	6	0	10	72	3	0
<b>Understanding</b>	6	5	3	7	60	14	1
<b>Writing</b>	7	0	6	4	44	32	3
<b>Total staff</b>	<b>96</b>						

<b>Legal &amp; Governance</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>No Skills</b>	<b>Undisclosed</b>
<b>Listening / Speaking</b>	0	1	0	1	6	0	1
<b>Understanding</b>	1	0	1	0	7	0	0
<b>Writing</b>	0	1	0	1	6	1	0
<b>Total staff</b>	<b>9</b>						

<b>People Services</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>No Skills</b>	<b>Undisclosed</b>
<b>Listening / Speaking</b>	1	1	2	7	18	2	0
<b>Understanding</b>	1	3	1	4	19	3	0
<b>Writing</b>	0	2	0	6	12	11	0
<b>Total staff</b>	<b>31</b>						

<b>Schools</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>No Skills</b>	<b>Undisclosed</b>
<b>Listening / Speaking</b>	177	39	39	186	515	17	5
<b>Understanding</b>	177	58	74	143	431	64	31
<b>Writing</b>	181	29	39	166	311	212	40
<b>Total staff</b>	<b>978</b>						

## 4. Welsh Medium Training Provision

Caerphilly CBC has provided conversational Welsh courses for staff and elected members since 2001. Courses are also accessible for member of the public and staff members from partner organisations to attend. The courses range from basic taster courses for beginners to courses which cater for those who are now fluent Welsh speakers.

The data for the courses offered and attended by Caerphilly CBC staff for the academic year 2019-2020 is as follows;

<b>COURSE OFFERED</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COURSES OFFERED</b>	<b>NUMBER OF STAFF ATTENDING</b>
30 Week	41	36
Online 10 Hour Course	15	159
2 Day Welsh Taster	3	15
Say Something in Welsh - Online Welsh Course	3	13
Withdrawn	N/A	0

### Caerphilly Staff Figures – 2001-2020

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Year courses</b>	<b>Taster Courses</b>	<b>Total Learners</b>	<b>(Numbers withdrawn)</b>
2001 – 2002	46	0	46	<i>(0)</i>
2002 – 2003	66	0	66	<i>(11)</i>
2003 – 2004	84	37	121	<i>(17)</i>
2004 – 2005	70	43	113	<i>(15)</i>
2005 – 2006	61	77	138	<i>(10)</i>
2006 – 2007	66	27	93	<i>(12)</i>
2007 – 2008	68	38	106	<i>(7)</i>
2008 – 2009	43	58	101	<i>(9)</i>
2009 – 2010	48	50	98	<i>(13)</i>
2010 – 2011	50	33	83	<i>(1)</i>
2011 – 2012	52	21	73	<i>(2)</i>
2012 – 2013	52	22	74	<i>(3)</i>
2013 – 2014	61	142	203	<i>(16)</i>
2014 – 2015	56	58	114	<i>(13)</i>
2015 – 2016	40	28	68	<i>(14)</i>
2016 – 2017	45	14	59	<i>(3)</i>
2017 – 2018	50	61	111	<i>(4)</i>
2018 – 2019	53	91	144	<i>(6)</i>
2019 – 2020	62	185	223	<i>(0)</i>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1073</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>2034</b>	<b><i>(152)</i></b>

The 2 day Welsh Taster courses are run collaboratively with several other South East Wales authorities and organisations. These courses always prove to be popular, with Caerphilly CBC hosting a course in July 2019, attended by **12** members of staff, with 4 of them attending the same course hosted by a neighbouring authority.

A 10 Hour Online Welsh Course called **Cymraeg Gwaith** (Work Welsh) was launched in spring 2018 and developed to be used by those providing frontline reception type services. We initially offered the course to staff working in these areas to assist us with complying with relevant standards, namely Standard 64.

<b>Standard 64</b>	<p>Any reception service you make available in English must also be available in Welsh, and any person who requires a Welsh language reception service must not be treated less favourably than a person who requires an English language reception service.</p> <p><b>You must comply with standard 64 in relation to the following by 30 September 2017:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The body's main reception service.</a></li> </ul> <p><b>You must comply with standard 64 in relation to the following by 30 September 2018:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Bargoed, Risca, Rhymney, Blackwood, Caerphilly &amp; Ystrad Mynach libraries;</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Caerphilly Visitor Centre;</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Llancaiach Fawr Manor House;</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Registration Services at Penallta House;</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Caerphilly, Heolddu, Newbridge and Risca leisure centres.</a></li> </ul>	30/09/17
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The courses can be undertaken in stages and takes the learner through a series of scenarios followed by a set of questions. On completion of each course, the learners are emailed a certificate.

Further online courses of this type are now available, including teacher specific modules and courses to encourage Welsh speakers who may have lost their confidence to use Welsh in different settings. There are also courses for staff working in health and social care settings, business and the tourism industry.

We have enabled staff to access more courses online through Say Something in Welsh, with 2 members of staff successfully completing the 'Fluent in 6 Months' course.

Again this year no staff members requested that any course be delivered through the medium of Welsh, therefore there are no staff training figures to record. The above information is published here to provide continuity with previous reports.

## 5. Recruiting to Empty Posts

A total of **2401** new and vacant posts advertised since 30<sup>th</sup> March 2019 were categorised as posts where:

- (i) Welsh language skills were essential

**24**

- (ii) Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post

**10**

Welsh language training courses have been available to all staff and elected members free of charge since the 2001-2002 academic years (see **Section 3**)

- (iii) Welsh language skills were desirable,

**2327**

- (iv) Welsh language skills were not necessary

**2336\***

**\*These posts were assessed as no Welsh language skills necessary due to the Welsh language skills of the other team members. All vacancies however are advertised as Welsh desirable as a minimum requirement.**

It has been identified, from analysing the data recorded, that the question being asked on the Welsh Language Assessment Form **'No Welsh Language Requirement'** is either not being answered correctly or recorded correctly. This is an area that we will aim to improve and clarify guidance as we work with recruiting managers and People Services during the next 9 months.

The Welsh Language Skills Assessments in relation to vacant or new posts are undertaken as required by Standard 136, and have been recorded by Human Resources since October 2016. The assessment and supporting evidence then forms part of the business case that is required to gain permission to fill a vacant post or create a new one.

Following last year's report the recruitment process has been strengthened with a Welsh Language Skills Assessment being completed for all vacant or new posts, which are advertised as **Welsh desirable** as a standard requirement. The assessment undertaken determines whether any new or vacant posts should be advertised as **Welsh essential**, in accordance with the job role and contact with the public.



## CABINET - 24TH JUNE 2020

**SUBJECT: THE COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

**REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with an overview of the Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic to date.
- 1.2 To provide Cabinet with an overview of the approach taken to identify, mitigate and manage strategic risks in response to Covid19.
- 1.3 To highlight the current medium level risks the Council is managing.
- 1.4 To reaffirm the policy principles of "TeamCaerphilly – Better Together" transformation plans and the key principles upon which services will be provided.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The emergence of the Coronavirus across the world and more recently across the UK has posed a significant and unprecedented challenge to our way of life and the way upon which we provide services.
- 2.2 In response to the Coronavirus Pandemic and "lock-down", and over a number of days, we refocussed, repurposed and reshaped our priorities and how we work. This ensured we were best placed and equipped to respond to the immediate needs of our communities. The report presented provides an overview of the far reaching "TeamCaerphilly" response to date and sets out the next steps.
- 2.3 Our primary purpose throughout this pandemic has been to "*protect our people and place*". We have continued to provide much needed services to our people and we continue to protect our place. Our important and pivotal role as a civic leader has been brought to the forefront over recent weeks; reassuring and protecting our communities and staff.
- 2.4 Our staff have been exemplary, and we owe a debt of gratitude to so many of them. The ethos of "TeamCaerphilly – Better Together" really has been demonstrated on so many levels, each and every day. Something that we are all so very proud to be part of and privileged to serve our communities.

- 2.5 Clearly, the virus will remain with us for some time yet and the resilience of the organisation and our communities must be ensured and protected throughout and it is this primary objective we will continue to focus upon over the forthcoming months.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **3.1 That Cabinet:**

- i. Note the scale of the Council response to the Coronavirus pandemic to date.
- ii. Note the approach taken to identify, mitigate and manage strategic risks in response to Covid 19.
- iii. Note and comment upon the current medium level risks the Council is managing.
- iv. Reaffirm the policy principles of “TeamCaerphilly – Better Together” transformation plans and the key principles upon which services will be provided.
- v. Recognise that there is a “trade-off” between the need to preserve life and stop the spread of the virus and the achievement of the goals set out within the Corporate Plan.
- vi. Request a further report is presented to Cabinet, estimating the potential financial impact of the Council’s response to the pandemic.
- vii. Note that further progress reports will be presented to future Cabinet meetings.
- viii. Approve the overall approach taken by the Council in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

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

- 4.1 To provide a summary of the action taken by the Council in response to the Coronavirus pandemic since the lockdown restrictions were imposed by UK and Welsh governments; and to set out future steps the Council will take to prepare for the future lifting of these restrictions.

### **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 The emergence of the Coronavirus across the world and more recently across the UK has posed a significant and unprecedented challenge to our way of life and the way upon which we provide services. Furthermore, the position within the Gwent (Aneurin Bevan Health Board) area emerged as the worst in Wales with infection and death rates higher than any other Health Board area. This position was a key factor in decision making both locally and regionally.

The lockdown which was announced on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March, was designed to essentially force people to remain at home, other than key workers. The main purpose of the lockdown has been very clear throughout the period from all four UK governments; articulated clearly through the message of “Stay at Home; Protect the NHS; Save lives”. The focus of the lockdown has been to delay the spread of the virus and to ensure the demand for NHS services did not exceed supply, which could result in many more deaths.

The lockdown position has been reviewed at regular three-week periods and recent reviews, has brought a divergence between Westminster Government and the devolved governments. The First Minister for Wales stated that whilst the virus infection rate had fallen, progress had

not been sufficient enough to lift the lockdown restrictions as quickly as in other parts of the UK. (with the infection “R” rate between 0.7-0.9 across Wales).

## 5.2 **The Council response**

Officers and Councillors have worked relentlessly to meet the needs of our communities in new ways. In a matter of days, the Council repurposed, refocussed and reshaped itself in order to respond to the immediate needs of our communities. Our primary purpose has been throughout and remains, “*to protect our people and place*”.

The Council immediately enacted its Emergency Management Plan and business continuity arrangements to deliver and co-ordinate the response, working across Council services along with our key partners, neighbouring local authorities and Welsh Government. These bodies continue to operate in a dynamic and challenging environment, adapting and responding to a range of risks to service delivery and well-being of our staff and residents.

The Council has established an internal response structure that links to a wider Gwent wide structure and directly into Welsh and central Governments. This is attached at Appendix 1.

The main element of the Council’s response is via the Emergency Leadership Team (ELT). The Chief Executive chairs this group and a Corporate Risk register, identifies specific risks relating to the Covid19 response. The key risks currently assessed as medium/high risks are attached at Appendix 2. This risk register is constantly reviewed and this overview provides the latest position at the point this Cabinet report was circulated.

The Council links with external responding organisations via the Gwent Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) which sits under the Gwent Local Resilience Forum (Gwent LRF). The SCG is chaired by Gwent Police and covers their geographic area. The SCG are responsible for setting the strategic objectives and co-ordination of the multi-agency response. The Council provides a daily situation report to the SCG and these are sent daily to the Emergency Co-ordination Centre Wales (ECCW). The ECCW reports to Welsh Government who then report to COBR – the Cabinet Office briefing room.

In addition to the above, the Leader of the Council also meets with other council leaders and Welsh Government Ministers to discuss the response at regular points each week and a weekly meeting takes place between WLGA and Chief Executives with regular dialogue with WG senior civil servants.

## 5.3 **Activity so far**

The majority of our 500+ services continue to operate, albeit with reduced staffing levels. Staff have completely changed the way they work – either working directly on the front line; redeployed into newly introduced services or working remotely from home. New services have been introduced, such as childcare hubs for key workers, paying just under £30m to date, in grants to businesses and working with volunteers to distribute food and medicines, to highlight just a few.

The following provides further detail regarding the level of service provided in response to the pandemic based upon the overarching principle of “*protecting our people and place*”

## 5.4 **People**

### **Social Services**

From a Social Services perspective, it is pleasing to say that the majority of our services have been able to remain in place. At the start of the outbreak we took a decision to close our day centres and one of our respite care facilities. This decision was taken on the basis that the

majority of people who would have been attending were on the shielding list and the fact that we needed to redeploy the staff into older people's services to cover sickness absence.

In the early days of the outbreak, the supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to both our own staff and those people employed by the independent sector was problematic for us. The position was made more complex by a change in guidance from Public Health Wales which increased the amount of PPE that needed to be used. Over the weeks and thanks to a whole range of staff the position improved greatly but it is an issue we continue to monitor on a daily basis.

Adult Services staff were initially tasked with discharging patients from the Royal Gwent Hospital and Ysbyty Ysrad Fawr in to care homes and back to their own homes. This was to assist the transition of wards into Covid 19 wards in anticipation of a significant demand for acute hospital beds.

Problems in relation to the spread of Covid 19 in care homes has received UK wide coverage. Care homes in Caerphilly county borough have not been immune from these issues with Covid related deaths reported in a number of homes. Work is ongoing with the Health Board, Public Health Wales and the Strategic Co-ordination group, to get a better understanding of the impact of the virus in care homes.

The ongoing provision of Children's Services has been complex. Social work contact with children and / or families has often had to be done over the phone or by video link and all but the most essential assessments / reviews were put on hold. In addition care proceeding in the courts were also suspended. As the position with regard to lockdown changes, we are beginning to revert back to our normal operating model.

## **Housing**

At the time of the outbreak the authority was well on target towards bringing to a conclusion its WHQS programme in 2020 but obviously all but emergency work was stopped immediately. Welsh Government have acknowledged the issue and accepted the need to extend the deadline for the completion of WHQS, we are still waiting for formal notification of a revised date. As the restrictions have eased, we have recommenced a small number of external works where tenants have been in agreement and employees / contractors are able to social distance. Our position will continue to be reviewed as the position of government changes. A number of staff not required for WHQS were redeployed to the "Buddy Scheme", which is detailed further within the report.

All tenants, other than those living in sheltered accommodation have received reassurance calls. We began by initially targeting vulnerable tenants but have now expanded the service to all households. Of the 9489 households who have provided us with contact information, we have contacted 6,004, plus reattempts for 396 vulnerable tenants that we were unable to contact within the first round.

The outcome of the calls have included:

- Provided guidance on how to access financial support.
- Provided contact details and advice on how tenants can pay their rent. Rents team and Cashiers have called tenants back when they required additional support.
- Provided information about how to report an emergency repair and advice on the repairs service.
- Referred issues of anti-social behaviour to the relevant officer and advice to contact the Police.



- Provided information on how to make a self-referral for a food parcel and also made arrangements on their behalf.
- Provided information on how to request a free school meal (FSM)
- Advising what council facilities/service are and are not open.

In terms of financial support, below is a summary of activity;

- i. 372 residents have been assisted to claim with Universal credit.
- ii. 224 in claiming Council Tax reduction.
- iii. 215 Discretionary Housing Payment applications have been made to assist tenants with short falls in housing benefits.
- iv. 127 claims submitted for a reduction in water rates.
- v. 58 residents assisted to claim free school meals.
- vi. 38 referrals for food parcels and also 60 applications for emergency funding through the Discretionary Assistance Fund.

Probably the biggest challenge for Housing staff has been the ongoing pressure relating to homelessness services. At the beginning of April, a number of the bed and breakfast facilities we used for urgent accommodation purposes closed for business. This was quickly followed by the closure of Premier Inns and Travel lodges. A Ministry of Justice decision to release from prison early some prisoners who had served half of their sentences, caused some initial concern as we would have a clear responsibility to accommodate any prisoners without a home. However, numbers for Caerphilly CBC were very low.

In order to facilitate some emergency accommodation an agreement was reached with the Abbeyfield Society to access 4 beds in Caerphilly, ten placements were made at the Maes Manor and a further ten at a hotel in Barry, with the agreement of the Vale Of Glamorgan Council. These placements were funded via Welsh Government grants.

The focus of Welsh Government is now moving very clearly to reducing homelessness on a permanent basis and officers are currently in dialogue with Government officials to identify possible funding sources.

### **Childcare Hubs**

Since Caerphilly's schools closed, six mainstream Childcare Hubs were set up almost immediately with Trinity Fields also established as an additional Additional Learning Needs (ALN) hub. LA staff worked through the weekend of 20-22<sup>nd</sup> March to assess and process the first 800 applications for childcare from key workers. The Hubs opened on Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> March with 88 children, releasing 75 key workers with 21 families being supported at Trinity Fields.

As at the 2<sup>nd</sup> June there are now 9 mainstream hubs, 1 ALN hub and 1 hub for the most vulnerable pupils.

Pupil numbers have now increased to 362 a day, with provision also being offered through school holidays, including bank holidays. The hubs are supported every day by 255 volunteer school staff as well as catering and cleaning staff, health and safety officers, educational psychologists, Caerphilly Sports, Caerphilly Music Service, Youth Service and central staff.

There has been an understandably strong emphasis on hygiene with hourly hand washing becoming a vital and integral part of the day. Children have received meals and have enjoyed these sessions immensely despite being in a different building with many different staff and children.

The Hubs have pioneered the practices that will no doubt be replicated in other schools and other educational settings as children eventually begin to return and the Council is grateful to all of the staff who have worked so hard to earn the confidence and trust of our key worker parents and vulnerable children and their families alike.

The recent announcement of the Minister of Education regarding the re-opening of schools to some pupils as of 29<sup>th</sup> June, will require careful planning and this is currently the focus of Education staff and headteachers.

### **Free School Meals (FSM)**

Following the announcement that schools would close, the Council was faced with a huge challenge in continuing to meet the needs of over 5,500 FSM pupils within the county borough. While other Local Authorities explored the use of voucher schemes and cash payments, Caerphilly took the stance that they wished to put food directly on to the plates of our FSM pupils.

To make this happen the Council worked in partnership with several local suppliers to set up a cold storage vehicle and a packing and distribution centre at Ty Penallta. The meals being delivered to FSM pupils incorporate a box of 5 frozen meals, a loaf of bread, 2 pints of milk and a selection of desserts, a weekly fresh vegetable and fruit pack accompanied with recipe cards to encourage parents/guardians to use the ingredients to cook along with their children.

The scheme continues to grow as word has spread regarding the high-quality service provided. The team are now planning delivery routes for over 60 vehicles to over 5000 children and young people, with a rise in the FSM take-up from 70% to 91%.

The delivery of the FSM meal package would not have been possible without a true “Team Caerphilly” approach with involvement of staff from over 20 areas of the Council.

Although the scheme has been a great success, with extensive positive media coverage, there is no greater endorsement than the extensive and overwhelmingly positive feedback from our community and the customers who actually receive the service. This quote sums up the community feeling:

*“Fair play CCBC. Another great delivery of meals and surprised to see the fruit. You really have taken care of things through this pandemic. Every staff member that have dropped things have been so nice and polite. Thank you again so much.”*

### **Early Years**

Early Years staff are supporting more than 400 of the most vulnerable families with children, aged 0-3 years with a weekly e-mailed individual activity plan for child development and family support, followed up by a phone call appointment to check how the development is progressing and whether there are any other family needs or concerns. The parenting programmes are moving to online courses in the coming months and will be available to everyone in the county borough. Additionally, over 1000 activity packs for children aged 0-3 including a book, have been delivered to Flying Start families engaged in the programme but unable to access childcare, parenting or language groups currently. Health teams are also phoning all parents of new births discharged from hospital to establish any support needs.

The wider early years team is facilitating on average, 20 applications per day for either childcare or hub placements for children of critical workers. For those most vulnerable children a co-ordinated approach between Education and Social Services is provided, where places within Childcare Hubs is routinely offered.

## **Distance Learning**

Schools are receiving ongoing guidance from the Education Achievement Service (EAS) on the implementation of a distance learning strategy that aims to maintain continuity of learning for pupils whilst at home. This support is in line with the Welsh Government strategy and utilises Hwb, a digital platform for teaching and learning, as the main tool for communication and professional learning. Developing practice and research is shared with schools, with the intent of improving and refining current strategies to engage pupils via remote access. Other areas within the education directorate, such as the Music Service and the Healthy Schools Team, provide additional learning opportunities for pupils. The Youth Forum has been a useful tool to gauge feedback on the effectiveness of the distance learning strategy.

The local authority is also currently implementing a Welsh Government initiative that supports 'digitally excluded' learners that do not have access to appropriate technology or sufficient broadband. This initiative will help pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds have the same learning opportunities as their peers by equipping them with laptops and broadband connections.

## **The Youth Service**

The Youth Service has demonstrated flexibility and innovation in providing support for vulnerable young people and their families throughout the pandemic response. In conjunction with colleagues across the council, Youth workers are distributing emergency food parcels for those qualifying for free school meals and activity packs designed to motivate young people and provide informal education. They are also helping to reduce the spread of the virus by working in the community with Gwent Police advising young people, face to face, regarding appropriate behaviour.

Over one thousand young people are being supported during lockdown by the Youth Service, the majority of whom have one or more vulnerabilities. The service remains on track to meet its post-16 NEETs target, that is, below 2.5% not in employment, education or training.

The Youth Service's curriculum has been adapted for online delivery. This includes the use of technology to communicate with groups of young people on a one-to-one, support-oriented basis.

## **Community Response**

Following the imposed lockdown, the Council wrote to over 76,620 households. The letter invited those residents who met a strict criteria (over 70 / with a health condition, are shielding/self-isolating and had no alternative support available to them from friends, family, neighbours or local community group) to get in touch to see how the council could assist.

Over 1,550 vulnerable residents responded to the letter and 590 members of council staff came forward (350 of those volunteering in their own time). Every vulnerable person was 'matched' with a member of staff and the council's 'buddy scheme' was formed. From that point forward the volunteer army have provided vital support to those vulnerable residents picking up shopping and supplies, delivering medicines and making regular telephone calls to help prevent isolation during this time.

The feedback from the vulnerable residents on the buddy scheme has been extremely positive and it is clear that this scheme has made a significant difference. Volunteering has also been a rewarding role for those supporting the vulnerable with 97.3% of those surveyed stating that they have found the scheme either a positive or extremely positive experience. This service is supplemented and supported by the ongoing Meals direct offer, which has continued to serve high quality hot meals.

In seeking to ensure sustainability into the longer term and creating a positive legacy to an unprecedented situation, the team are working with GAVO on a model which would enable community members to provide similar support to vulnerable residents moving forward.

The Registration service has re-focussed its work on registering deaths (many covid related) as marriage ceremonies and birth registrations have been suspended. The death registration service has operated remotely under some very emotional conditions, but the staff have remained extremely professional throughout. Remote registrations of births are currently re-commencing but the re-introduction of wedding ceremonies (other than for those with terminal illness) remains suspended.

Staff within the Public Protection Service have worked tirelessly and remotely to enforce social distancing legislation in business premises as well as playing a key role in developing the contact tracing model and infection control in care homes. Contact tracing remains a key Public Health function and Environmental Health Officers who are trained in epidemiology will continue to play a major role as the track, trace and protect scheme rolls out across the ABUHB arear.

### **Council Tax**

The Council has been very mindful of the financial impact of the pandemic on our residents. Whilst it is essential that Council Tax continues to be collected to support our financial resilience, requests to defer Council Tax payments to assist residents during this difficult period have been agreed.

The Council has agreed in excess of 3,000 requests from Council Tax payers to defer the commencement of their monthly payments until June 2020 and continues to work with those experiencing financial difficulties by helping them apply for Council Tax support through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and by agreeing affordable repayment plans wherever possible. Where rent relief has been requested from our Industrial premises tenants, these are considered favourably.

### **Business Support Grants**

The pandemic and associated lockdown is having a severe economic impact. As part of the response to this the Welsh Government launched a number of grants which have been made available to support business. Payment of these grants has been administered by Local Authorities and Caerphilly CBC has made payments to in excess of 2,500 businesses with a total value of £30m. Indeed, the Council has made the highest percentage and value of business support grant payments across Gwent and is in the top quartile across Wales. The closing date for businesses to apply for these grants is 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 so in recent weeks the Council has been contacting eligible businesses who have yet to apply to ensure that take-up of the available funding is maximised.

Staff in the council's Business Enterprise and Renewal Team have been providing advice and support to businesses that are not eligible for the Business Grants and have been sign-posting them to other alternative sources of funding that may be available.

## **5.5 Place**

The Council has generally continued to provide many of its front-line services seamlessly to residents but has adjusted working practices in order to implement social distancing measures to protect its staff.

In summary:

### **Waste and Cleansing Service**

- Waste collections services have operated normally across the 3 collection streams.

- Bulky household waste collections were re-introduced on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020 concentrating on items of furniture.
- HWRC's were initially closed to prevent unnecessary public travel in accordance with lockdown requirements but re-opened on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020.
- The street cleansing service initially operated on a limited basis but has now been fully re-introduced, including the removal of fly tipping.

#### **Parks, Cemeteries and Grounds Maintenance**

- Cemeteries initially closed in accordance with lockdown requirements but re-opened on 25<sup>th</sup> April. An initial restriction on funeral numbers (5 maximum) was relaxed on 25<sup>th</sup> May (to 10 maximum)
- Grass cutting operations were initially suspended (with the exception of fine turf management such as bowling greens) but have been re-introduced on a phased basis commencing with highway verge vision splays and roundabouts, sports fields and parks, OAP complexes and sheltered housing. Other areas are currently being planned on a reduced frequency basis.
- Municipal and Country Parks car parks were closed to avoid large gatherings in accordance with the initial social distancing requirements (although pedestrian access was still available) but these were re-opened on 30<sup>th</sup> May.

#### **Highways**

- Highway inspection and emergency highway works (pot holes) have continued to ensure safety of the highway network.
- Other major resurfacing works are currently being planned for the remainder of the summer.
- Design of capital schemes has continued, particularly assessment of flood damaged structures and design for repair or replacement.
- Work with transport providers (public, school, and social services transport) to ensure long term sustainability and viability post Covid-19 has been undertaken and continues.
- Regulatory tasks linked to planning and Sustainable Drainage (SAB) applications have continued to ensure that developments can commence.
- Some staff (e.g.: civil parking enforcement) have been redeployed to assist with pharmacy collections for our most vulnerable.

#### **Land and Property**

- Facilities management have risk assessed and implemented physical measures where possible in all corporate buildings to enable the safe re-opening once the lockdown is reduced/released.
- A risk assessment process for unlocking construction has been developed and each scheme has been evaluated to establish whether it can re-commence safely after an initial closure of all construction projects. Some construction schemes are now being unlocked.

#### **Planning and Regeneration**

- Delegated powers planning decisions have been taken for the least controversial developments to ensure that planning decisions are issued within statutory timescales and that development can commence. The first digital planning committee is scheduled for on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020 to consider a number of applications.

#### **Sport and Leisure**

- All Council leisure centres remain closed to the public and will not re--open until government announcements permit.
- Many sport and leisure staff have been redeployed in delivering free school meals across the County Borough.
- On-line training programmes and assistance continues to be provided to National

Exercise Referral Scheme clients.

### **Libraries**

- On the 8th May, the First Minister announced that Local Authorities could begin to plan the reopening of their Libraries. Staff have since worked to develop a five-phase plan for the reintroduction of library services with an emphasis on safe working practices and limiting the need for non-essential journeys. At present the Library Management System is being upgraded to support alternative models of delivery and Risk Assessments are being finalised ahead of the planned implementation of the first of the five phases. This first phase will focus exclusively on regular book delivery to those individuals in the community who are vulnerable with the service then planning to expand its offer further over coming months.

## **5.6 Staffing**

Since the start of this pandemic, the Authority has managed services with hundreds of staff unavailable for work at any given time due to Covid related reasons i.e. sickness, self-isolating, shielding, vulnerability due to underlying health conditions, childcare and emergency volunteering. This number peaked at 1,064 on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 (10.8% of the workforce) but is now down to less than 500.

Some of these employees are able to undertake work alternative to their substantive posts and, through the Council's Temporary Redeployment Policy agreed with the Trade Unions in response to the Covid 19 outbreak, staff are being temporarily redeployed across the organisation. So far, 185 employees have been formally redeployed but informal arrangements are also in place in support of the childcare hubs, free school meals, buddy scheme and foodbanks, as detailed above.

To support the communication of key information to residents, the Council's web-pages and social media channels have provided key service and public health messages. The Council has developed its own social media content and has proactively and consistently reinforced the importance of social distancing and the "Stay at Home" message. Aside from corporate communications senior officers and politicians have regularly posted content designed to inform the public and recognise the significant efforts of Team Caerphilly.

Attached at Appendix 3 are three infographic factsheets prepared by the Communications Team as a means of showing the size and scale of the response across Caerphilly in numbers.

The manner upon which staff from across all parts of the Council have responded to the challenge of the Coronavirus pandemic services has been exceptional – "stepping up" and "stepping into" whatever has been asked of them, many working in different roles and all working in very different ways.

It is also recognised that the Council's digital services team, within a matter of days, transformed the way in which the Council now operates. Since the Council's response began Digital Services have configured and distributed nearly 500 laptops and over 2700 Office 365 and Microsoft Teams Licenses enabling thousands of staff to work from home and many tasks and actions to be undertaken remotely. This significant change has been recognised and welcomed and provides one of the main pillars of the "Team Caerphilly – Better together" new operating model.

The support of the Trade Unions throughout this challenging time has been very much appreciated by both Corporate Management Team and Cabinet. The Leader and Chief Executive have held regular briefings with the Trade unions throughout and these have been supplemented with daily meetings between the Head of People Services. Their support, and constructive comments have been welcomed and embraced throughout.

## 5.7 Next Steps

It is clear that the virus will be with us for some time yet and the impact of ongoing social distancing requirements will change the way we operate as an organisation and how we run our lives. Over the next few months, the UK and Welsh Governments will seek to phase the release of lockdown measures and try to ensure that throughout, the rate of spread of the infection (“R” level) remains below 1. The risk of further peaks of the virus remain very much under review and the ability to “switch off” services quickly, will need to be considered throughout. As part of this “unlocking the lockdown” strategy, the Council has a number of tasks:

- Contact tracing
- Recovery and Service Planning
- Decision Making and Democratic Engagement
- The financial impact of the pandemic (upon the Council and its communities)
- Economic Resilience

**Contact Tracing** – the Council is playing a key role in leading on Contact Tracing across the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) area, working with our partner local authorities, Health and Public Health Wales. Contact Tracing forms part of the national “Track, Trace and Protect” framework set out by WG. The purpose of the contact tracing element is to interrupt chains of transmission in the community by identifying Covid19 cases and tracing the people who may have become infected by them. Those people will then be required to self-isolate, so they are less likely to transmit it on to others.

The Council’s Head of Public Protection, Community & Leisure Services is leading the process across ABUHB area. This task is significant in that we are seeking to initially establish teams across the region with over 300 staff principally from local government. Across Gwent over 100 staff have been trained with 30 of those staff from Caerphilly county borough. These staff will be required for a number of months and will initially focus upon high risk settings, such as care homes, school hubs and supported living accommodation.

At a local level we are responsible for the interviewing of cases and follow up of contacts, supported by a case and contact information management system, and organised in local contact tracing teams. These teams consist of 12 to 17 Contact Tracers and Contact Advisors making outbound calls to positive cases and their contacts. Each local team will be supported by a clinical lead/supervisor. The service is operating from 8am to 8pm seven days a week.

**Recovery and Service Planning** – The Corporate Management team have been preparing recovery plans that consider how the Council can begin to re-open services as the WG begin to lift the restrictions. There are a number of factors that we are considering in developing these plans. We know from the latest medical advice that some forms of social distancing will be required for the remainder of the year at least and any service offer we provide, must ensure compliance with this requirement. Therefore, our primary aim must be to ensure the safety of the public and safety of our staff and as such a risk-based approach has been adopted to service planning, which prior to any service re-introduction, is discussed in detail with the Trade Unions and Cabinet.

In preparing these plans, officers are also mindful of the changes that we have made to our services over recent months, the different needs of our communities, as well as the different ways we have engaged with our residents. The need to minimise the number of staff at our buildings, whilst maximising the opportunities for agile working is also a key requirement in designing service re-introduction.

Furthermore, the Council's adopted "TeamCaerphilly – Better together" strategy, sets out a number of key components upon which we will re-shape our services, and these will be embedded into any service offer we will provide from hereon in:

- Digital
- Community Engagement
- Collaboration
- Resources
- Workforce Planning
- Innovation
- Culture
- Commercialisation
- Service Review

In planning for the future, detailed work is being undertaken in the following areas:

- **Schools** – following the recent announcement to re-open schools on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020, our Education and teaching staff are making the necessary preparations to ensure the new school offer, which will initially focus upon pupil wellbeing and readiness for September term, is currently taking place.
- **Corporate Buildings** – a review of the Council's accommodation has been undertaken to ascertain the maximum number of staff we can facilitate whilst social distancing. This work will inform service managers of the required balance between office, agile and home working.
- **Town Centres** – Consideration is being given to how we can assist with the social distancing requirements through the installation of temporary measures.
- **Grounds maintenance** – the temporary suspension of grass cutting has highlighted the beauty of our flora and fauna as well as the biodiversity value of our grass verges and communal areas. As these operations return on a phased basis, consideration is being given to how our grass cutting operations can be adapted to maximise the biodiversity value and minimise the impact upon climate change.
- **Safeguarding** – consideration is being given to how we resume the full range of services that will be required and reviews undertaken accordingly. This will include looked after children placements, and the emotional and mental wellbeing of children, young people and families.
- **Decision Making and Democratic engagement** – In response to the lockdown, urgent decision making was delegated to the Chief Executive. Over this period, only 5 such decisions have been made and each was made in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet and each was posted on the Council's intranet. Regular informal Cabinet briefings have been in place throughout the period and a range of operational decisions have been made by the respective Directors, in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation.
- Welsh Government introduced "The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020 which allows remote meetings to take place. A separate Cabinet report details the timetable for reintroducing virtual meetings on a phased



basis. The focus of future decisions is likely to be Covid19 related, for the foreseeable future.

## 5.8 One Council – a new approach

We have been amazed by how our service offer has changed over a number of months and clearly there is a lot to learn from this experience as a whole. CMT are keen that we do not routinely return to the old norm and use this opportunity to accelerate and embed the “TeamCaerphilly – Better Together” strategy. The use of technology such as Microsoft “Teams” has changed the way in which many managers, staff and Members have engaged with each other over recent months and the feedback received suggests that we are far more productive.

We have also seen first-hand the impact of our “one Council” approach where the focus has been upon providing services that our citizens need and delivering these through a blurring of the hierarchical organisational structures that we have in place. We have also demonstrated that we can be very decisive and make a massive impact when we are all collectively working towards a shared purpose and objectives. In a matter of days, we completely reshaped and repurposed the organisation – something that would normally take years to achieve! This experience has given us the confidence to trial different approaches and solve problems as we encounter them. All of this learning can form part of a lasting legacy of transformation with needs being met in new ways.

As we move forward, we also need to be mindful that the virus will be with us for some time yet and the likelihood of further peaks remains a real risk. It is therefore likely that some residents will have to self-isolate and will continue to need our direct support and some staff too will be affected by the virus. We will need to balance the need for additional services, the re-introduction of core services and manage this potentially with less staff. As such, our ability to meet the key objectives set out in the Council’s Corporate Plan may be affected, given that our main focus must remain upon the Covid 19 corporate response for the foreseeable future. The resilience of the organisation and our communities is a key factor and one that is and will continue to be constantly reviewed.

Over the next few weeks and months, as guidance becomes available from the Governments, further reports will be presented to Cabinet.

### **Financial implications (upon the organisation and our communities)**

Additional costs of circa £4.5m are estimated for the first quarter of the 2020/21 financial year for Caerphilly CBC as a direct consequence of Covid-19.

The key areas where additional expenditure is being incurred include Social Care, the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Information Technology, Community Hubs for childcare provision and Free School Meals.

The £4.5m does not include an increase in applications for Council Tax support through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. We have experienced a significant increase with 43% more new applications to date compared to the same period in the previous financial year.

Income loss is projected to be circa £3.2m for the first quarter of the 2020/21 financial year. Key areas include Leisure Centres, Tourism Venues and School Catering income.

The £3.2m estimate does not include expected shortfalls in Council Tax where collection rates will be adversely affected by the economic impact of the pandemic.

Current levels of confirmed Welsh Government grant support will only address additional costs and lost income directly attributable to Covid-19 in the short-term. Should the pandemic continue over the medium to long-term we will need to lobby for additional funding as the financial resilience of Local Authorities will come under increasing pressure. This will create

a very difficult environment for Local Government where significant real-terms reductions in funding have been experienced over an extended period.

The financial impact of Covid-19 will be closely monitored throughout the year using our established budget monitoring processes. A separate report will also be prepared for Cabinet in due course updating our Medium-Term Financial Plan.

### **Economic Resilience**

Clearly the impact upon the lockdown and the virus as a whole has impacted our business community significantly. However, during this period we have seen a local supply chain emerge across the county borough and the region as a whole. We have seen local businesses diversify quickly to supply various items of PPE. Local procurement has already protected and created many jobs over recent weeks and we don't want to lose this opportunity to grow this cluster further.

This is not something we can achieve alone and working with the Cardiff Capital Region (CCCR) and the WG we can seek to understand the economic impact upon our town centres and local economy and how we can support them appropriately. The CCCR have recently agreed and adopted 10 priorities upon which to focus upon, in order to provide specific support to business across the region and locality in direct response to the Covid 19 pandemic.

### **5.9 Conclusion**

The UK, Wales and our county borough are responding to the biggest challenge we have faced for some time. The flooding event we experienced earlier in the year, was significant and had a detrimental impact upon many in our communities, but we responded positively and promptly.

Our latest challenge has been taken to another level. We have continued to provide much needed services to our people and we continue to protect our place. Our role as a civic leader has been brought to the forefront over recent weeks; reassuring and protecting our communities.

Our staff have been exemplary, and we owe a debt of gratitude to so many of them. The ethos of "TeamCaerphilly – Better Together" really has been demonstrated on so many levels, each and every day. Something that we are all so very proud to be part of and privileged to serve our communities.

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 An Equality impact assessment has not been carried out in connection with the recommendations set out in this report as the contents and actions do not require a policy or service changes, resulting in no reasonably foreseeable differential impacts.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The financial implications of the Council responding to the Covid19 pandemic are considered in paragraph 5.8 -Financial implications (upon the organisation and our communities) of this report.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The personnel implications have been discussed throughout the report.

## 9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 The comments of all consultees are included within the body of the report.

## 10. STATUTORY POWER

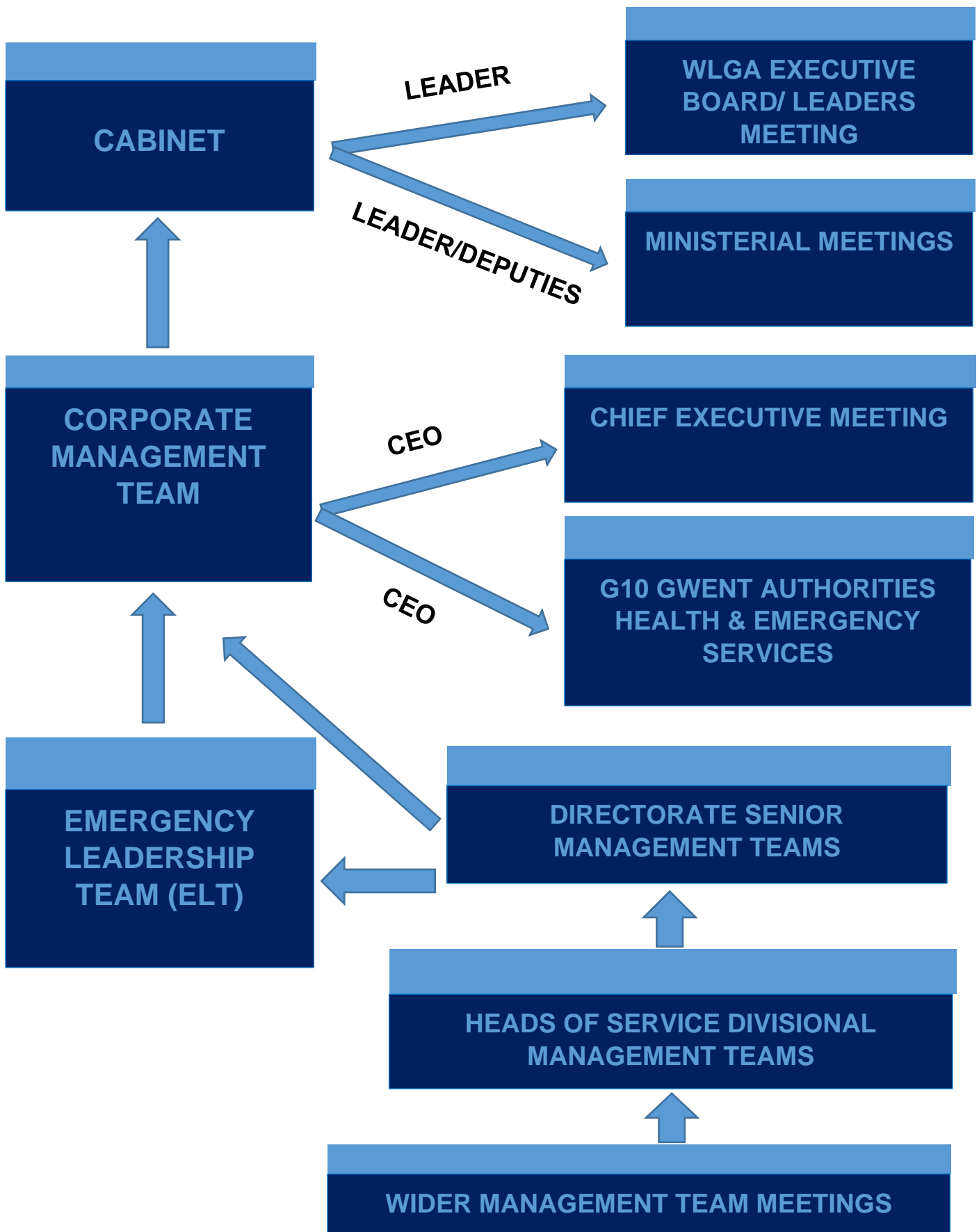
10.1 Various emergency COVID regulations passed by the Welsh Government to deal with the crisis.

Author: Christina Harray, Chief Executive- harrhc@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: David Street - Corporate Director Social Services & Housing  
Richard Edmunds - Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services  
Mark S Williams - Interim Corporate Director Communities  
Robert Tranter - Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer  
Lynne Donovan - Head of People Services  
Stephen Harris - Interim Head of Business Improvement Services & Acting S151 Officer  
Cllr P Marsden – Leader of Council  
Cllr G Simmonds – Leader of Independent Party  
Cllr C Mann – Leader of Plaid Cymru  
Cllr T Parry – Chair, Education Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr C Andrews – Vice-Chair, Education Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr L Binding – Chair, Social Services Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr J Bevan - Vice-Chair, Social Services Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr J Pritchard – Chair, Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr G Kirby - Vice-Chair, Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr D.T. Davies - Chair, Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr A Hussey - Vice-Chair, Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr J Ridgewell – Chair, Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr C Forehead - Vice-Chair, Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

Appendices:  
Appendix 1 Coronavirus Emergency Response structure  
Appendix 1b Command Structure  
Appendix 2 Corporate Coronavirus risk register  
Appendix 3 Free School Meals Information  
Appendix 3b Covid response in numbers - general  
Appendix 3c Covid response in numbers – community response

# CAERPHILLY CBC CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY STRUCTURE



## Appendix 1b

### **NATIONAL**

(UK Government Cabinet Office)

#### **UK Civil Contingencies Secretariat**

Provides guidance and implements legislation at a UK Level

### **REGIONAL**

(Welsh Government)

#### **Wales Resilience Forum**

Promotes good communication and the enhancement of emergency planning across agencies and services in Wales

#### **Wales Resilience Partnership**

Acts as a mechanism for assessing the implications for Wales of the resilience work produced through the UK Capabilities Programme

### **GWENT POLICE AREA**

#### **Gwent Local Resilience Forum**

Provides a forum for the co-ordination of a multi-agency response to planning for, and dealing with major emergencies in Gwent

**Category 1 responders who have a primary role in the establishment of a Strategic Co-ordinating Group include:**

<b>Local Authorities</b>	All principal local authorities
<b>Emergency Services</b>	Police Forces British Transport Police Fire and Rescue Services Ambulance Services
<b>Government Agencies</b>	Natural Resources Wales
<b>NHS Bodies</b>	Health Bodies Any Welsh NHS Trust providing public health services

The purpose of the Strategic Co-ordinating Group is to take overall responsibility for the multi-agency management of an emergency and to establish the policy and strategic framework within which lower tier and co-ordinating groups will work.

## **INCIDENT PHASE AND RESPONSIBILITY**

The purpose of the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) is to take overall responsibility for the multi-agency management of an emergency and to establish the policy and strategic framework within which lower tier and co-ordinating groups will work. It will prioritise the use of resources, formulate and implement a media-handling and public communications strategy and consider recovery planning.

The SCG does not exercise collective authority over individual responder agencies. Each organisation retains its own command authority and defined responsibilities and exercises command of its own operations in the normal way. The SCG has collective responsibility for decision-making and implementation, based on discussion and consensus. Agency representatives are to be of appropriate seniority and authority to make executive decisions in respect of their organisations' resources.

The SCG should have a good appreciation of the dynamic risk environment in which they operate. This includes identifying when established risks recede, when new risks emerge and when the balance between risks changes.

The police or lead agency is responsible for the initial activation of the SCG, organising the location and administrative support. All meetings of the SCG and its sub-groups are to be recorded and retained for audit purposes. All decisions should be:

- Proportionate
- Necessary
- Recorded
- Legal
- In accordance with 'good practice'

**OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE**

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**COVID -19**  
**CAERPHILLY SITUATION REPORT**

**DATE: 10/06/2020**

# OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

BRAG Rating Definitions	
Black	<p><b>Definition:</b> Immediate and tangible Threat to Life, Limb or National Security – Requiring IMMEDIATE ACTION</p> <p><b>Options:</b> <b>Collaborate Immediately – normal SitRep reporting timelines do not apply</b></p>
Red	<p><b>Definition:</b> Sector experiencing significant impacts that will not get better without significant intervention. Sector is not functioning at a practical level or at all. At the Top Level, these issues require Ministerial intervention and decisions. Threat to National Security, Property, the Economy, the Environment, provision of supplies etc.</p> <p><b>Options:</b> <b>Collaborate – must be articulated in the SitRep, normal reporting timelines do not apply.</b></p>
Amber	<p><b>Definition:</b> Sector experiencing moderate impacts. Services reduced but functioning; or impacts are being felt but the wider consequences are not yet fully understood; or issues have been identified within the sector that could create major impacts. Action is required to mitigate the worst of the impacts or to find a resolution in the short term.</p> <p><b>Options:</b> Treat, Tolerate or Collaborate – must be articulated in the SitRep</p>
Green	<p><b>Definition:</b> Sector is functioning within acceptable limits. Minor impacts are being experienced but these are understood. Lower level Operations are functioning within the tolerances.</p> <p><b>Options:</b> Treat, Tolerate or Collaborate – must be articulated in the SitRep</p>
Blank	<p>Please leave blank if things are business as usual, and there is nothing important to say. [Please only use green if there is an escalating situation.</p>



## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

Ref	Risk	BRAG Level	Date Added to Register	Description and Mitigation
50	Economic impact on businesses and town centres across CCBC		10/06/2020	The pandemic and resultant forced closure of many businesses and town centre shops has had a significant impact on the economy of the County Borough. There are a number of general work streams already in place to assist businesses. These include initiatives such as the Covid 19 retailer grant, online training, webinars, signposting to advice and guidance, survey work, rollout of free wifi, etc.
49	Return to School for all Children in the summer term		03/06/2020	<p>The Ministerial Announcement on the 03/06 has confirmed that all schools will reopen to all learners on the 29<sup>th</sup> June. A staffing audit is currently being undertaken to ascertain the level of available resources but with shielding still in place the staff population may be diminished at the outset. The potential impact of TTP to require wide scale self-isolation may also mean that schools are at risk of having to close to pupils almost overnight.</p> <p>Welsh Government have circulated draft operational guidance and draft learning guidance which have provided the context for our planning to continue. A set of underlying principles have now been developed which set the tone for the guidance that we will work through with Head Teachers as they formulate local plans. No hot catering facilities will be provided at Schools during the four weeks to the end of term with packed lunches being required. FSM learners will receive packed lunches as part of their daily deliveries. We are currently exploring the opportunity to redeploy catering staff to other aspects of the return to school effort.</p>
32	Care Home Infection Control		17/04/2020	<p>There remains uncertainty regarding data on COVID cases/outbreaks in care homes. Environmental Health Officers are supporting care homes with infection control advice. Mass testing and contact tracing for care homes has recently been introduced. This could potentially have an impact on the number of available staff within care homes as both symptomatic and asymptomatic residents and staff are tested.</p> <p>A 28 day self-isolation rule has been introduced across Care Homes which places the sector under strain with the clock restarting upon identification of a new case. This reduces a care homes ability to take in new patients and has the potential to put privately run Homes under financial strain.</p> <p>The Gwent SCG are currently developing terms for a review of Covid 19 in relation to care homes. This relates to lessons learnt, difficulties around PPE and testing and the inability to gain accurate data.</p>

## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

Ref	Risk	BRAG Level	Date Added to Register	Description and Mitigation
33	Homelessness		03/04/2020	We have sourced accommodation for increased numbers of homelessness despite a shortage of available accommodation, but this is a difficult area to predict so this could change at short notice. In addition to continuing to look for new temporary accommodation we are also considering 'move on' opportunities to release existing units of temporary accommodation and closely monitoring the situation including the release of prisoners. £20m additional funding has been provided by WG with bids required to access the funding by end of June 2020
43	Managing Public and Member Expectations and Priorities		20/04/2020	It will be important that the Council and other Local Authorities align their plans for lockdown being released. This will increase the likelihood of services being brought back online in a manner that can be managed sensibly and will also place an undue pressure on critical support services such as transport, catering, cleaning and availability of PPE. Key communication risk here as public and members will need to be informed of plans and any caveats.
44	New Approach to Service Delivery		20/04/2020	Work underway to identify a new operating model for the organisation. Some of the work currently on hold will become an immediate pressure, some work will from this point forward be delivered differently and some work that has been ceased may remain switched off. Alternatively, there may be new elements of service not seen before that may be introduced This needs to be carefully thought through and well planned.
46	EHO role in contact tracing of Covid-19 cases		21/04/2020	WG and PHW have now decided that EHO's have the key skills and training to undertake contact tracing as part of an overall outbreak control strategy. While skills and capabilities are not an issue, there may be resource deficiency in terms of numbers of EHO's. Clarity of required level of tracing is being sought and is being discussed at Directors of Public Protection Wales (DPPW) level with WG, WLGA and Chartered Institute of Environmental Health in order to quantify numbers of EHO's required and available pool across Wales. This clarity should materialise over the coming days.
23	Cyber Attacks on Caerphilly IT Infrastructure		01/04/2020	SIRO issued an advice note to CMT w/c 13/04 outlining the continued attacks on our IT Infrastructure as well as highlighting the growing importance of good cyber security practices being in place while people are working remotely. An E-Learning package has been developed to help raise awareness and the Council has the option of carrying out a 'fake phishing' exercise to quantify the level of awareness. Further correspondence received from National Cyber Security Centre indicate that the threat will increase the longer staff continue to work from home.

## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

Ref	Risk	BRAG Level	Date Added to Register	Description and Mitigation
48	Maintaining Financial Sustainability over the medium to long-term		18/05/2020	<p>Should the pandemic continue over the medium to long-term the Council's financial resilience will come under increasing pressure. Current levels of Welsh Government grant support will only address additional costs and lost income directly attributable to Covid-19 in the short-term. The funding cannot be guaranteed over the medium to long-term and it will therefore be necessary to assess the financial impact for both the 2020/21 financial year and beyond. Our established budget monitoring arrangements will look at the impact of COVID-19 on the 2020/21 budget including the potential for some of the planned in-year savings not being fully realised. The Medium-Term Financial Plan will be reviewed in light of the pandemic and a report will be presented to Cabinet in due course.</p> <p>This risk also includes the former risks (4) Income Loss and (3) Cashflow.</p>
47	Community contact tracing and testing		28/04/2020	<p>On 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020 Welsh Government issued a Test, Trace and Protect Strategy Local Authorities and Health Boards are asked to work together to deliver contact tracing services in their regions. The Gwent SCG has established a Contact Tracing sub-group which has prepared a draft Operational Plan. Over 100 staff in Gwent have received contact tracing training. Approximately 30 Caerphilly CBC staff have been redeployed to the initial phase. National contact tracing began 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 and in Gwent using existing and redeployed staff from the 5 local authorities and the Health Board. Estimates vary, but a workforce of approximately 320 staff might be required in Gwent to undertake contact tracing. Welsh Government have stated that necessary costs will be met, but further detail is still awaited. Decisions need to be made imminently about the nature and recruitment of this longer term workforce and clarity and confirmation of funding is now required. A letter has been received from Welsh Government with a workforce modelling tool and a request for cost estimates to be submitted by 15<sup>th</sup> June. The national contact tracing CRM is due to go live this afternoon and CCBC Contact Tracers and Advisors have successfully logged into the system in readiness.</p>
1	Testing		18/03/2020	<p>Issues with the timeliness and accuracy of test results have improved greatly, however, there are occasional delays and results are no longer notified to the employer.</p> <p>We are liaising with ABUHB regarding antibody testing for child care hub staff during the week commencing 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020</p>

## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

Ref	Risk	BRAG Level	Date Added to Register	Description and Mitigation
5	Childcare Hub Staffing Levels		26/03/2020	<p>Sufficient capacity exists currently but this could be change with the two additional hubs due to go live on the 20<sup>th</sup> April; a spike in sickness absence among staff supporting the hubs or any WG mandated changes to the access criteria for the Hubs or extended hours of provision</p> <p>The announcement on schools reopening may apply further pressure to staff childcare hubs as the 29<sup>th</sup> June moves closer.</p>
2	PPE Availability and Provision		13/03/2020	PPE stock levels for social care staff have improved as larger deliveries have been received and there is now some confidence in the re-supply schedules. However, stock levels may come under pressure as services are reintroduced.
18	Excessive Green Garden Waste Collection		27/03/2020	Problems coping with garden waste quantities have been mitigated by a 4 bag limit introduced week commencing 20 <sup>th</sup> April 2020 combined with change to longer, summer working hours.
24	Impact of NHS Shielding Letter		02/04/2020	As WG redelivers the 13,000 letters that were sent to incorrect postal addresses it is conceivable that the Council will receive additional enquiries from the public. Levels of traffic considered manageable at present.
42	Building Repatriation		20/04/2020	<p>There is a need to carefully plan the repatriation of Council buildings in terms of infection control as well as ensuring that those services transformed through agile working are able to maintain newly established working practices. Protocol developed by Head of Property for reducing infection risk through physical contact in ty Penallta developed and currently being trialled – the approach may work in other council buildings.</p> <p>C19 Office Working Guidance for Managers and Staff has been developed and shared with our Trade Union partners. Heads of Service will be asked to assess their staffing requirements and approaches to building use using the Guidance.</p>
45	Bringing Construction Work back online safely		20/04/2020	Work is currently underway to consider the possibility of bringing certain construction works back online. MSW Team is exploring the different categories of construction work and developing an approach for each.
29	Risk Assessments in place for all front line services and interfaces with the public		25/03/2020	CX asking for assurances that risk assessments and, where possible, safe ways of working guidance are in place for services that are currently being delivered. Heads of Service tasked with completing relevant documentation with their service managers and updating relevant Director accordingly.
17	Requirement to Close accounts in accordance		27/03/2020	Initially, it looked likely that CIPFA and our Regulators would support a simplified version of our accounts for closure. The Regulators have refused the simplified accounts

## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

Ref	Risk	BRAG Level	Date Added to Register	Description and Mitigation
	with previously agreed timescales			insisting instead that full accounts closure is followed again this year. Pressure is now being applied to relax the deadlines for account closure but no decision has been made as yet.
25	Impact of COVID-19 Legislation		02/04/2020	A number of legislative changes have been brought about through the COVID-19 Bill and associated regulations. As these are progressed any impacts are being worked through and communicated by the Monitoring Officer. A significant positive for the Council will be the decision to relax the 'six month rule' for Councillors to attend a public meeting. This removes the requirement for the Council to hold a meeting in July and affords us greater timeframes to introduce Remote Meeting capability. Legislation in relation to remote / digital meetings came into force on 22/4/20.
30	WG Continuity of Learning Plan		08/04/2020	Minister seeking to formalise arrangements for distance learning while schools are closed as well as set the tone for a new approach to accessing learning once the new normal has been defined. Document in its current form is a touch unhelpful, somewhat contradictory and requires significant data to be gathered within tight timeframes across a set of distributed Head Teachers currently focused entirely on childcare hub provision.
9	Flexible Workforce		25/03/2020	Council currently has more staff than it requires to support the services it is currently delivering. As guidance changes and new legislation is brought in it is possible that the flexible workforce will become increasingly called upon and that in turn could result in some workforce challenges
15	Staff Absence Levels insufficient to support service delivery		25/03/2020	Following an initial spike in staff absence following the government guidance on shielding, self-isolation and childcare matters, daily absence reporting has indicated a consistent trend of staff returning to the workplace over the last week. This risk will also need to be carefully managed at the point at which the Council begins to repatriate its buildings. There will be anxiety among staff about returning too soon or into a building that doesn't have the necessary level of infection control in place. This may result in a refusal to work from a building or potentially a refusal to work full stop.
36	Access to Leisure Facilities		22/03/2020	Leisure Facilities are closed to the public but still require routine checks and maintenance work to be carried out as well as opening for waste collection crews
41	Control Room		23/03/2020	CCTV monitoring & Out Of Hours emergency number are critical to the council in emergency situations. Closer working relationship and shared system support in place between contact centre and OOH control room – this was put in place after flooding emergency in February and has therefore increased resilience during Covi-19 outbreak.
27	Trade Union Engagement and Support		25/03/2020	Head of People Services holding a teleconference with all TUs on a daily basis. TUs on record as being pleased with the continued engagement and the continued commitment

## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

Ref	Risk	BRAG Level	Date Added to Register	Description and Mitigation
				to work together to overcome issues that arise. Chief Education Officer in regular contact with Teaching and Head Teacher Union reps.
8	Ageing IT Infrastructure		25/03/2020	Ways of working have been transformed overnight alongside service delivery methods. Significant progress made to create an agile workforce and to support new service models as well as bringing additional capacity on stream but the Council is still reliant in some cases on ageing infrastructure.
6	Sustainability of existing Free School Meal Delivery Service		25/03/2020	Caerphilly provision differs to other LAs. Frozen meals, loaves of bread, milk and desserts are being delivered to FSM learners. Sufficient capacity exists currently but this could change if catering staff or delivery staff numbers reduce dramatically.
12	Adjustments to Safe Working practices in Refuse		25/03/2020	Trade union concerns over 2 collection operatives + driver in collection vehicle cabs were expressed in late March / early April 2020. New working practices introduced across all waste collection and cleansing services week commencing 13 <sup>th</sup> April 2020 to ensure maximum 2 staff in cab of larger vehicles with additional staff transported separately.
13	Capacity of organisation to receive and manage telephone enquiries		26/03/2020	Significant spikes in call traffic following lockdown and with the rollout of the volunteering / buddy scheme for the vulnerable. Telephone traffic has now diminished and the call centre is also able to operate remotely.
14	Reduction in Service Provision and Building Closures		26/03/2020	At the point at which the lockdown was announced the Council needed to close buildings and shut down or pause services. Initial risk related to the impact of these moves but no real adverse feedback from the community was received so risk reduced.
7	Speed of payment of Business Support Grants		27/03/2020	Significant progress made over the last week to get a sizeable number of payments out to businesses. Council is now in to the territory of having to reject some non qualifying businesses which could result in reputational damage that will need to be managed
16	Lack of sufficient availability of 'agile' IT Kit		27/03/2020	Significant levels of staff were not equipped to work remotely due in part to the use of the i-Gel dumb terminal devices used within Ty Penallta. Additional stocks of laptops were procured alongside staff being encouraged to identify all spare mobile equipment and visit IT surgeries to have necessary software installed. High levels of need emerging as Ty Penallta was being closed to the public. Heads of Service tasked with prioritising equipment requests. Requirements settling down now with a small surplus of equipment, although this may be used to equip members in readiness for remote meetings.
19	Resourcing and meeting the needs of the Council Volunteering Scheme		27/03/2020	Additional senior leadership resource added in to the response. 1350 vulnerable residents now being supported by around 500 staff prepared to operate flexibly.

## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

Ref	Risk	BRAG Level	Date Added to Register	Description and Mitigation
				Numbers are manageable at present, although the impact of the redelivery of the NHS Shielding Letter could stretch this need further.
21	Pressure to promote Council Tax payment deferrals		27/03/2020	Political pressure locally and nationally to actively promote the opportunity for residents to defer Council Tax payments through a payment holiday. Welsh LAs aligned in opposition to this, specifically as these schemes are already in place. LA alignment continued and the Council is dealing with each request on merit.
11	Tenant Support – Business Rent Deferral		27/03/2020	All business tenants contacted in order to establish if they require a three month rent deferral to aid their cashflow at this time. Limited uptake to date and ongoing discussion with tenants is taking place. Tenants appear keen to continue paying rent at this stage.
39	Premises Licensing		01/04/2020	<p>Ways of working were transformed overnight. All Officers have worked remotely using tokens. Aside from odd visits to office to collect /distribute mail and produce badges service has continued.</p> <p>Consideration will need to be given to bringing this service back in the early days after lockdown.</p>
40	Taxi Licensing		01/04/2020	<p>Ways of working were transformed overnight. All Officers have worked remotely using tokens. Aside from odd visits to office to collect /distribute mail and produce badges service has continued.</p> <p>Ahead of shutdown licensees brought in early for renewals. Changes in procedures / processes and deviation and relaxation of existing policies. Pragmatic approach taken where possible to resolve issues. Updates provided to the taxi trade. Close monitoring of advice / guidance being issued by WG / LGA /Institute of Licensing. Contact with fellow LA's to try and find consistent approach</p>
22	Cabinet Office Guidance on Supplier Payments		01/04/2020	Supplier payment process was set up to follow the Cabinet Office guidance explicitly.
34	Coronavirus Regulations Compliance		01/04/2020	<p>New duties imposed on Public Protection staff relating to advising on and ensuring compliance with Coronavirus Regulations. Advice given to businesses via email and posters also provided. Follow up visits have been undertaken to assess compliance.</p> <p>Provision of infection control advice in care homes is latest added responsibility (see risk 32 above).</p>

## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

Ref	Risk	BRAG Level	Date Added to Register	Description and Mitigation
35	Food Safety		01/04/2020	<p>Ensuring food safety in businesses re-purposed to provide food takeaway services. Guidance developed by FSEP. Directed by Food Standards Agency that the inspection of food businesses will be deferred for 3 months.</p> <p>This will need further review and dialogue with FSA in light of additional burden on EHOS to undertake contact tracing of covid -19 patients</p>
26	WG Guidance on Childcare Hubs		06/04/2020	WG issued guidance on Childcare Hubs which aligned extremely well with Caerphilly's own Hub Protocol. Hubs are now operating in accordance with both sets of guidance.
28	Statutory Testing / Maintenance and Essential health and safety works at Schools		06/04/2020	With non-essential construction work paused and only essential work permitted, there was some uncertainty among head teachers around whether to allow statutory testing and maintenance to continue at their schools. This uncertainty continued in respect of essential Health and Safety works at schools such as Legionella Flushing as well as the progression of 50:50 or capital improvement schemes. Following an e-mail issued to Head Teachers by Corp Dir Ed & Corp Servs on the 8 <sup>th</sup> April Heads are now clear on what is required of them – essentially, all statutory testing and survey work can continue as can statutory maintenance work.
10	Additional Pressure on foodbanks		06/04/2020	Additional pressure being placed on the existing foodbanks throughout the area. Community Regeneration staff supporting the foodbanks needed to consider alternative ways of delivering the service with partners. Moved away from a collection to a delivery model of service to avoid social unrest, keep people safe and ensure appropriate health and safety measures can be implemented.
31	School Admissions Deadlines and Appeals process		08/04/2020	Reception admissions have been completed electronically instead of the usual process of issuing letters and is now complete within statutory deadlines. Attention now turns to nursery admissions. Likely that the admissions e-mails will bring about a number of appeals which may need to be addressed remotely.
37	Registration of Deaths		08/04/2020	<p>Limited number of officers able to register deaths. Resilience implications if numbers reduced by sickness absence or self-isolation as a result. RO's required to sign paperwork to release bodies for burial or cremation. Additional administrative support provided to assist with additional workload pressures.</p> <p>Dependant on the next phase of the outbreak and lockdown period, there may be a need to provide additional admin. assistance within the Registrar service and the</p>



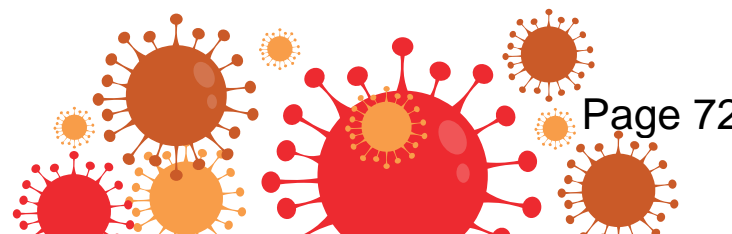
# OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

Ref	Risk	BRAG Level	Date Added to Register	Description and Mitigation
				council's redeployment protocol will then be key. Need for additional support will be kept under review.
38	Registrations of Marriages / Partnerships		08/04/2020	No weddings or civil partnership ceremonies currently taking place .Traditional seasonal flow of this work to registration service likely to be disrupted and there may be a spike later in the year. Links to risk 37 above so will need to be kept under review.

# Caerphilly Council's FREE School Meals Response - In Numbers:



**TO SIGN UP FOR OUR FREE SCHOOL MEALS - PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE:  
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/3BNXJ3M](https://bit.ly/3BNXJ3M)**



# Caerphilly Council's

## Coronavirus Response - In Numbers:



**475** Hours of  
childcare in school  
hubs provided a week



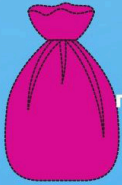
**186,765**  
visits to the Covid-  
19 website page



**23,150** Free  
School Meals are  
delivered a week



**£27.585m**  
Has been paid to  
2,352 businesses



**8,293.63**  
Tonnes of refuse and  
recycling collected



**45,500**  
Calls have been  
answered by our  
contact centre



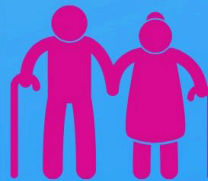
**80,000**  
Hours of Home  
Care provided



**76,620**  
Households have  
been written to



**50,000**  
Good Neighbour  
cards delivered



**1,445**  
Vulnerable  
residents supported



**1,400**  
Volunteers  
registered



**284,198**  
engagements on  
social media

# Caerphilly Council's Coronavirus Community Response - In



**76,620**  
HOMES  
WRITTEN TO

TeamCaerphilly  
BETTER TOGETHER

**68%**

SAID IT GAVE THEM  
A 'GREATER SENSE  
OF PRIDE IN BEING  
A MEMBER OF TEAM  
CAERPHELLY'



**1,550**  
VULNERABLE  
PEOPLE BEING  
SUPPORTED



**95%**

SAID THEY'D BE KEEN  
TO BE INVOLVED IN A  
SIMILAR VOLUNTARY  
CAPACITY IN THE  
FUTURE



**590**  
MEMBERS OF  
COUNCIL STAFF  
SIGNED UP AS  
'BUDDIES'



**7**

COMMUNITY  
PHARMACIES  
BEING SUPPORTED  
WITH EXTRA DRIVER  
CAPACITY



**97.3%**  
FOUND BEING A  
'BUDDY' A  
POSITIVE  
EXPERIENCE



**50,000**

GOOD NEIGHBOUR  
CARDS PRODUCED AND  
DISTRIBUTED TO HELP  
SUPPORT THE  
AMAZING COMMUNITY  
EFFORTS

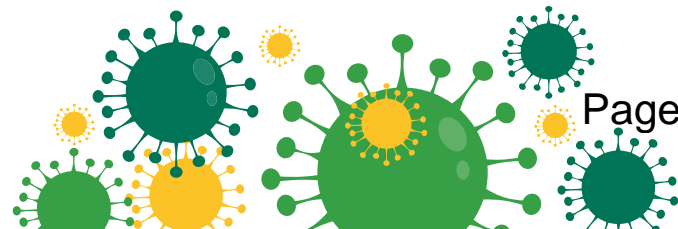


**350**  
PEOPLE ARE  
VOLUNTEERING IN  
THEIR OWN TIME



**400**

PRESCRIPTIONS  
DELIVERED  
WEEKLY TO THE  
VULNERABLE





## CABINET - 24TH JUNE 2020

**SUBJECT: COVID-19 DECISION-MAKING ARRANGEMENTS**

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

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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report reflects the changes that have had to be introduced to ensure decisions could continue to be made during the period of lockdown, as well as setting out the plans for a return to elected member led decision-making in accordance with the new Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) regulations 2020.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 On March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020, UK Government introduced a period of national lockdown which restricted the free movement of the public and sought to shield and protect the vulnerable in our community.
- 2.2 With the movements of staff and elected members restricted and elected members unable to meet to make decisions, the council's constitution provides for decision-making powers to be delegated to the Chief Executive.
- 2.3 The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020 were passed by Welsh Government on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020 and made a series of amendments to local government legislation that pave the way for a return to political decision-making for Councils across Wales.
- 2.4 This report sets out the changes that were made, explains some of the key changes to decision-making that the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020 have introduced and provides a timescale for the reintroduction of the political decision-making and scrutiny committee structures.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1.1 Cabinet are asked to:
- (a) Note the decisions made by the Chief Executive under delegated powers
  - (b) Note the implications of the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) regulations 2020 on decision-making
  - (c) Endorse the timetable and approach for the reintroduction of elected member led decision-making

- (d) Note that in the first instance the actual cost of providing members with the necessary IT equipment to participate in remote decision-making meetings will be claimed against the Welsh Government (WG) Covid grant.
- (e) Agree that if the costs are not deemed as eligible expenditure from the WG grant then they be funded from the Member Services Reserve, which currently has a balance of £202k.

**4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To ensure that the Council can return to elected member led decision-making and scrutiny as soon as is practically possible and in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) regulations 2020.

**5. THE REPORT**

5.1 Delegated Decision-Making

As the lockdown restrictions made it impractical to convene any political decision-making meetings, decision-making powers have been temporarily transferred to the Chief Executive in accordance with Part 3 of the Constitution:

**5. GENERAL DELEGATIONS OF POWERS: COUNCIL & EXECUTIVE POWERS**

		<b>POWER DELEGATED TO</b>
(b)	Determination of any urgent matter in the purview of the Council, the Cabinet or any committee of these where it is impractical to convene a meeting of that body to consider the matter.	Chief Executive or in his/her absence any Director

During the period March 23<sup>rd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020, the Chief Executive has been required to take 5 urgent decisions under these delegated powers. These have been posted to the Council’s Intranet and will be reported for information to the first available meeting of full Council.

- 24/03/2020 -In consultation with the Cabinet and the Leader to set aside £602,969 underspend & secure WG income to support the multi-year Ed Tech (Hwb) programme - ref: Draft Cabinet Report 25/03/2020.
- 30/03/2020 - To authorise the Head of Public Protection, Community & Leisure Services under the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020 to sanction officers within the Division to carry out associated duties under the Regulations.
- 16/04/2020 – Following consultation with the Leader and Cabinet, to release the bond payment of £100K to Transcend and repayment of the bond through 18 monthly payments commencing January 2021.
- 07/05/2020 - In consultation with the Cabinet the WG Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rate Relief Scheme has been formally adopted which allows for a 100% reduction in the rates payable for eligible businesses in the 2020/21 financial year.
- 01/06/2020 - In consultation with the Leader, to set up a contact tracing hub for Caerphilly to support PHW “Track, Trace, Protect” national scheme. (Detail set out in report: Gwent Contact Tracing)

## 5.2 Implications of Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) regulations 2020

The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020 have introduced a number of changes to the mechanisms and regulations attached to Council decision-making functions. The WLGA issued a guidance note on the regulations for Councillors on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April, which was distributed to all members and is included at appendix 1. Some of components of the guidance are set out below:

### 5.2.1 **Remote attendance**

All members can remotely participate in meetings. This applies to meetings held before 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021. Audio participation is all that will be required. Members should be able to speak and be heard by each other. Despite this welcome flexibility, it is unlikely that local authority meetings will return to normal for some months and authorities will need to continue to focus on urgent business relating to COVID-19.

### 5.2.2 **Annual Meetings**

If a council has not held an annual meeting after the 1<sup>st</sup> March or before the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020 then the annual meeting can be held on any date in 2020.

### 5.2.3 **Other meetings**

Other meetings that would normally be required to be held at specific times in the council calendar can now be held at any time before May 1<sup>st</sup> 2021.

### 5.2.4 **Attendance at meetings (The “Six Month Rule”)**

The rule that disqualifies members for failing to attend a meeting in a six-month period is suspended as of April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2020. The time counted will restart from when a member would be expected to attend a meeting when the meeting cycles begin once again.

### 5.2.5 **Election of chairs**

If a new council or committee chair (or similar position such as vice chair, representative on an outside body) has not been elected at an annual meeting held prior to the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020, then the existing chair can remain in office until 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021.

### 5.2.6 **Summonses to meetings**

Members can now be summoned to meetings through electronic communication.

### 5.2.7 **Public attendance**

Due to the public health risks, public and press attendance at meetings is no longer required. However if practicable, public viewing or listening of any meetings should be arranged.

### 5.2.8 **Meeting papers**

A note of meeting proceedings should be published electronically within 5 days of the meeting being held. This note should include a list of attendees, declarations of interest, any decisions taken (except exempt items) and the outcomes of any votes.

### 5.2.9 Executive decisions

When a decision is taken by the Executive any written statements or reports relating to the decision should be published on the council website.

### 5.2.10 Planning

Members on planning committees can now be substituted.

5.3 The WLGA guidance also references the fact that whilst the new regulations allow greater flexibility around managing council business, council resources and staff have been refocused and reprioritised to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic, and that Members should bear in mind that meetings are only likely to be held to take decisions on urgent and business critical issues until the pandemic subsides.

5.4 The timetable that is set out in 5.6 attempts to bring decision-making back online in a sensible, practical and manageable timeframe. Two of the key considerations in delivering this timetable are the availability of the technology to support remote decision-making and the extensive training and development programme that will be required to ensure that every elected member can participate fully.

5.5 At present Customer and Digital Services are undertaking a programme of equipping all 73 elected members with the necessary IT equipment to participate in remote decision-making meetings using the Council's preferred platform, Microsoft Teams. Staff from Democratic Services have initiated training and development for elected members to familiarise them with the new technology and equip them with the necessary skills to utilise the Microsoft Teams platform. This work is being prioritised in accordance with the meetings timetable set out in 5.6 and includes further training for the Committee Chairs.

### 5.6 Future Decision-Making

The current decision-making meetings have been agreed and will take place on the following dates:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date</b>
Planning Committee	17/06/2020
Cabinet	24/06/2020
Planning Committee	01/07/2020
Cabinet	01/07/2020
Annual Meeting of Council	03/09/2020
Audit Committee	03/09/2020
Extraordinary Meeting of Council (2019/20 Financial Statements)	10/09/2020

5.7 Democratic Services are currently exploring the possibility of live-streaming committee meetings. Should this not prove possible or practical at this point, a full video and audio capture of the meetings will be uploaded to the web so that interested parties can view the meeting in full.

5.8 A minute of the meeting will be taken but the regulations also require that a notice of the meeting must be published within 5 days of the meeting stating, amongst other things, who attended the meeting, declarations and what was decided. The notice provides an additional safeguard in the virtual world.

5.9 Consideration will be given to restarting the remaining Regulatory Committees and Scrutiny Committees. In the absence of formal Scrutiny Committees being able to meet, Committee



Chairs and Vice Chairs will be consulted on draft decision reports ahead of decisions being taken by Cabinet.

- 5.10 It is possible that by September the council chamber will be available for some of the members and officers to use, subject to social distancing. This should help with the smooth running of the annual meeting and offer the potential for other meetings to operate part remotely and part in the chamber.

## 6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 All elected members will have the requisite IT devices and connections to be able to participate in committee meetings at the point at which those meetings take place.
- 6.2 All elected members will have the skills and capabilities to utilise the remote meeting software, Microsoft Teams.

## 7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

- 7.1 Caerphilly County Borough Council Constitution.

## 8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 8.1 The Well-Being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. It requires public bodies to think more about the long-term, working with people and communities, looking to prevent problems and take a more joined up approach. This will create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales.
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales.
- A Wales of cohesive communities.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.
- A globally responsible Wales.

- 8.2 The Act sets out the sustainable development principle against which all public bodies in Wales should assess their decision-making. The aim of the legislation is to ensure the well-being of future generations through maximising the contribution public bodies make towards the well-being goals. In using the sustainable development principle, it is incumbent that the authority considers the whole of the population it serves and considers the effect of its actions on future generations. The principle, also known as the five ways of working is assessed below:

- **Long Term** – While the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) regulations indicate Members can participate remotely in meetings up until May 2021, it is highly likely that use of remote participation technology up until that time will mean it is retained over the longer term.
- **Prevention** – The sooner the Council returns to member led decision-making the stronger the decision-making processes will become.
- **Integration** – The Council would wish to return to making strategic decisions about key policy areas as soon as is practically possible. The introduction of remote attendance

technology across the Council will enable decision-making to happen while complying with social distancing guidance.

- **Collaboration** – The Council is working in partnership to introduce this new technology with Welsh Government, other Local Authorities through the WLGA as well as key private sector technology providers.
- **Involvement** – As the technology is refined and embedded into decision-making practices, remote attendance holds the potential to not only reengage elected members into the decision-making process but also a much wider set of stakeholders and experts

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 It is anticipated that the cost of providing members with the necessary IT equipment to participate in remote decision-making meetings will not exceed £50k. In the first instance the actual costs incurred will be claimed against the Welsh Government (WG) Covid grant funding.

10.2 If the costs are not deemed as eligible expenditure from the WG grant then it is proposed that they be funded from the Member Services Reserve, which currently has a balance of £202k.

## **11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 None

## **12. CONSULTATIONS**

12.1 This report has been sent to the Consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected in this report.

## **13. STATUTORY POWER**

13.1 Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) regulations 2020.

Author: Richard (Ed) Edmunds, Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services

Consultees: Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive  
Dave Street, Corporate Director for Social Care and Housing  
Mark S Williams, Interim Corporate Director for Communities  
Steve Harris, Acting S151 Officer  
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer  
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services  
Cllr Philippa Marsden, Leader of Council  
Cllr Colin Gordon, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services  
Cllr Colin Mann, Leader of the Plaid Cymru Group

Cllr Graham Simmonds, Leader of the Independent Group  
Cllr Jamie Pritchard, Chair of Policy & Resources Scrutiny  
Cllr Gez Kirby, Vice Chair of Policy & Resources Scrutiny  
Cllr Lyndon Binding, Chair of Social Services Scrutiny  
Cllr John Bevan, Vice Chair of Social Services Scrutiny  
Cllr Teresa Parry, Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr Carol Andrews, Vice Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr Tudor Davies, Chair of Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny  
Cllr Adrian Hussey, Vice Chair of Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny  
Cllr John Ridgewell, Chair of Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny  
Cllr Christine Forehead, Vice Chair of Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny

Appendices:

Appendix 1 WLGA Guidance for Councillors on Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings)  
(Wales) regulations 2020.



COVID-19 Outbreak  
Remote Attendance at Meetings A  
Guide for Councillors

23rd April 2020

## **Introduction**

New meeting regulations have now been Issued by the Welsh Government. The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) regulations 2020 came into force on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020. The regulations and a statement from the Minister can be found [here](#)

They apply to Principal Councils, Community Councils, National Park Authorities, Fire and Rescue Authorities and the Swansea Bay Port Health Authority.

Monitoring officers and Democratic Services leads will be able to provide members with more detailed information about these regulations and how these apply and are being implemented locally. Broadly however the regulations set out the following:

### **Remote attendance**

All members can remotely participate in meetings. This applies to meetings held before 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021. Audio participation is all that will be required. Members should be able to speak and be heard by each other. Despite this welcome flexibility, it is unlikely that local authority meetings will return to normal for some months and authorities will need to continue to focus on urgent business relating to COVID-19.

### **AGMs**

If a council has not held an AGM on or after the 1<sup>st</sup> March or before the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020 then the AGM can be held on any date in 2020.

### **Other meetings**

Other meetings that would normally be required to be held at specific times in the council calendar can now be held at any time before May 1<sup>st</sup> 2021.

### **Attendance at meetings (The “Six Month Rule”)**

The rule that disqualifies members for failing to attend a meeting in a six-month period is suspended as of April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2020. The time counted will restart from when a member would be expected to attend a meeting after the Covid impacted period.

### **Election of chairs**

If a new council or committee chair (or similar position such as vice chair, representative on an outside body) has not been elected at an AGM held prior to the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020, then the existing chair can remain in office until 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021.

### **Summonses to meetings**

Members can now be summoned to meetings through electronic communication.

### **Public attendance**

Although it won't always be practicable, public viewing or listening of any meetings should be arranged wherever possible.

Where the public are to be invited this should happen electronically 3 clear days before the meeting is due to be held. Or, if the meeting is called at short notice, as soon as reasonably practicable.

### **Meeting papers**

A note of meeting proceedings should be published electronically within 5 days of the meeting being held. This note should include a list of attendees, declarations of interest, any decisions taken (except exempt items) and the outcomes of any votes.

### **Executive decisions**

When a decision is taken by the Executive or individual executive members, any written statements or reports relating to the decision should be published on the council website.

### **Planning**

Members on planning committees can now be substituted.

Many councils have already agreed urgent delegations to leaders, cabinets, and senior officers in their constitutions, to deal with the ongoing emergency situation. Although the new regulations will allow greater flexibility around managing council business, councils' resources and staff have been refocused and reprioritised to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic. Members should therefore bear in mind that meetings are only likely to be held to take decisions on urgent and business critical issues until the pandemic subsides. Council staff, including democratic, scrutiny and committee services staff may have been redeployed to help support front-line services, so research and reports will be limited and will have to be prioritised according to business need.

Different councils will use different meeting technologies and will be able to guide members in its use. The LGA has published Information about the range of meeting software [here](#)

## **Meeting Styles and Preparation**

During the current special circumstances, the style and tone of meetings will be very different from conventional physical meetings. There will be fewer meetings and some committees may not be convened. Those which are held, will focus on issues which are critical to the business of the council and may require swift decisions. Meetings may also be held with fewer members participating, with a political balance agreed with political groups.

These changes will require members to prepare thoroughly and focus on the outcomes required. There may not be time for extensive debate and members will need to understand information and reports thoroughly prior to the meeting. Members may find it useful to have prior discussions, remote pre-meetings or information briefings in addition to formal committee meetings. Members of quasi-judicial committees should, as always, guard against pre-determination.

Delegated decision making in some areas will mean that senior officers will need to work closely with portfolio leads and committee chairs. Streamlined and rapid scrutiny processes (not necessarily through formal committees) may need to be developed to ensure that policy development and decisions are supported with effective research and challenge, prioritising issues posing the greatest risk to the authority.

Officers will have increased or different responsibilities. Members cannot expect 'business as usual' rather, committee support will be reduced, reports will be succinct, and less formal ways will be found to provide members with information. The current period will require some adjustment to the democratic and political process and will require constructive group work, particularly where meetings need to be called at short notice and quorum requirements need to be met. Remote or virtual meetings require some patience and work much more effectively when members demonstrate respect for each other and the Chair.

## **Committee Chairs**

Chairs will need to be prepared to work differently. Timescales will be squeezed, and chairs will need to work closely with other members and officers on work which does not require the whole committee. Chairs will also have to work with officers to help members understand the different ways of working, manage their expectations and ensure that they are provided with all the information they need.

Chairs and officers should agree and advise members of the different 'rules of debate' before each meeting. This may include:

- Muting when not contributing
- Mutual respect of all participants
- Alphabetical approach to bringing members into proceedings under the strict direction of the chair (through participants' names alphabetically – to be fair on all participants, it may be appropriate to go from A-Z for one part of the meeting and then Z-A for another part)
- Avoidance of repetition where possible
- Respecting the chair and wait in turn to be called
- Methods for voting, for example calling each name alphabetically with a response of 'for' or against

It is also important to clarify how questions from committee members can be raised during meetings, either via email beforehand or via email, text or online chat during a meeting, depending on the system being used.

## **Participating in meetings**

Like most people at the moment, members are having to get to grips with unfamiliar technology. Training and guidance will inevitably be limited so the advice is to jump in and

give it a try and have some dry runs to build your confidence. You'll probably be teleconferencing and video conferencing and using other channels for less formal communication. You'll be supplied with guidance from your officers about how to participate and the following may also help you be fully prepared.

## **Phone meetings or Teleconferencing**

### **Suggestions for participants**

1. Equipment – make sure you have appropriate equipment. Speaker phones with mute functions are more effective for teleconference meetings (you may be online for over an hour – speakerphone/hands free means you can take notes, type or multi-task). If you do not have one, the council may be able to provide one (or reimburse you for a purchase-they can be purchased cheaply online). If your phone signal is poor, you may be able to use your computer to make calls over the Internet. Headphones can help you hear more clearly; headsets will also cut out background noise.
2. Meeting preparation
  - Know how to join the meeting (remember that numbers for landlines and mobiles may be different). Practice in advance to check numbers
  - Know how to adjust your settings such as microphone sensitivity and volume levels
  - Know how to announce your presence
  - Know how to mute/unmute your equipment – this is very important
  - Know how to take part in any offline chats running alongside the meeting i.e. via text, email or online chats
  - Know what to do if your equipment fails, have a phone number to hand to call in case of technical difficulties
3. Fully charge your equipment, long meetings can take a lot of battery.
4. Landline signals tend to be clearer than mobiles – and cheaper!
5. Prepare thoroughly. The chair will assume that everyone has read any reports being considered and be looking for observations and focussed debate.
6. Call in from a noiseless location where possible. Even if you can mute your equipment, while you are speaking, everyone participating in the teleconference can hear every noise that you, your children, your pets and the birds in the garden are making.
7. Make sure that you can view papers. If you are using printed copies, try not to shuffle them too much when you are unmuted. Remember that you can view papers by using two devices or splitting your screen.
8. Call from a comfortable position, as the meeting may take some time, have some water handy.



9. Call in on time. Call in a couple of minutes before the meeting starts so that the meeting can start on time. Participants will know who is joining late. Some teleconference systems include audible notifications when callers join or leave the 'meeting', this can interrupt and disrupt meetings.
10. When joining the meeting and before speaking, introduce yourself with your full name so participants and minute takers are in no doubt who is speaking.
11. Don't shout, adjust volume as necessary.
12. Turn off any noisy gadgets such as mobile phones which may be distracting to yourself or other participants.
13. Focus on the business at hand. Make sure that your contributions are necessary and helpful for securing the outcomes that the committee is seeking.
14. Don't put the call on hold to make another call as there may be unwanted sound.
15. Remember that you should be the only person able to hear any confidential and exempt items being discussed.

### **Suggestions for Chairs**

Chairing telecon meetings can be challenging. You might consider the following:

1. Make sure that you are personally prepared as for participants above, arrange pre meets with officers and members if necessary.
2. Join the meeting early to check that everyone is present and greet them personally as they join.
3. Check at the beginning that everyone is able to participate and has no problems accessing papers, knowing what other communication channels to use for off-line discussion with, for example, other group members.
4. Hold a roll call at the start of the meeting for the benefit of officers taking minutes.
5. Remind participants that they should mute their equipment when not speaking and remind them to say their full names before speaking.
6. Provide guidance on how members should signify that they want to speak or vote.
7. Adhere to the usual requirements but consider ways of streamlining processes such as reading apologies yourself rather than having officers read them.
8. To avoid people speaking over each other or long silences, ask each member in turn for their contribution to an item. You may wish to do this alphabetically.
9. Check occasionally through the meeting that no one has been 'lost' due to technical issues.
10. Pay more attention than usual to framing the meeting with reminders of the purpose of each agenda item and summarising decisions and actions for each item and again at the end of the meeting.
11. Check at the end of each agenda item that all members are content that they have been able to contribute.

12. Be more rigorous than usual in insisting that members stay focussed on the issue under discussion and do not waste time with irrelevant contributions or agreement with previous contributions.

### **Video conferencing**

Many members will have used 'videoconferencing' software previously on their mobile phones, tablets or laptops, most will have used apps such as FaceTime, Skype or WhatsApp. Whilst some of these may be suitable for smaller meetings, you are likely to use apps such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom or Skype for Business for larger meetings. Your council will advise you on which system is to be used.

There are additional issues to be borne in mind when participating in a video conference

1. Check that your equipment has a camera.
2. Have a test run a few days in advance of the meeting to iron out any technical issues – using this equipment and software will become more familiar and straightforward the more you use it.
3. Check that you can see the chair of the meeting.
4. Make sure that you are in the centre of the screen by positioning your device or camera appropriately and look into the camera. Aim for a head and shoulders shot similar to a passport photo.
5. Keep your device still and on a flat surface.
6. Consider your personal appearance, you'll be on show throughout the meeting.
7. Consider the background, aim for a plain wall backdrop as your bookshelves or notice board may be distracting for other meeting participants. You may have confidential or inappropriate information on the wall behind you. Is there enough light for people to see you? Is the sun or artificial lighting 'bleaching' out your face? Some applications provide you with an option to blur the background, so no detail is shown.
8. Ask family members to stay out of shot as people wandering about making coffee can be distracting.
9. Check how the chair will be calling on you to speak.
10. Check how you will signify a wish to speak.
11. Remember that meetings, if not live, may be made available to the public on websites, so it is important to conduct yourself as you would in any public meeting. Some applications make whatever is available on your computer screen visible to those participating in the meeting, this may also be seen by the public.

### **Suggestions for Chairs**

1. Make it clear how people will participate and how you will invite people to contribute.
2. Make sure that you can be seen by all participants if this is an available function, perhaps by setting yourself up as a meeting convenor.

3. For larger meetings, you may wish to work with an officer convenor to handle some of the meeting logistics.
4. Ensure that members use any 'chat' facilities for meeting business only.
5. Evaluate the meeting at the end for suggestions on how systems can be improved in the future.

Overall, with a little trial and error remote attendance should be fairly easy with patience and respect. This may even be an opportunity to pilot approaches for the future as councils use the learning from these new ways of working to plan for more flexible arrangements.

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