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For all enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Charlotte Evans
(Tel: 01443 864210   Email: evansca1@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Date: 7th October 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

A digital meeting of the **Cabinet** will be held via Microsoft Teams on **Wednesday, 14th October, 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.

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

Yours faithfully,

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.

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Correspondence may be in any language or format | Gallwch ohebu mewn unrhyw iaith neu fformat

To approve and sign the following minutes: -

Circulation:
Councillors S. Cook, N. George, C.J. Gordon, P.A. Marsden, S. Morgan, L. Phipps, J. Ridgewell,
Mrs E. Stenner and R. Whiting

And Appropriate Officers

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CABINET

MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY, 30TH SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor P. Marsden (Leader) - Chair

Councillors:

S. Cook (Social Care), N. George (Waste and Public Protection), C.J. Gordon (Corporate Services), S. Morgan (Economy and Enterprise), L. Phipps (Housing and Property), J. Ridgewell (Environment and Infrastructure), E. Stenner (Performance and Customer Services) and R. Whiting (Learning and Achievement).

Together with:

C. Harrhy (Chief Executive), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director – Education and Corporate Services), D. Street (Corporate Director – Social Services and Housing).

Also in Attendance:

M. Betts (Tenant and Community Involvement Manager), S. Harris (Acting S151 Officer), Shaun Couzens (Chief Housing Officer), Paul Hudson (Business Enterprise Renewal Team Leader), R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), K. Watkins (Communications & Tenant Engagement Officer), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), C. Evans (Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from M.S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director – Communities.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. CABINET – 9TH SEPTEMBER 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2020 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 9th September 2020 to 28th 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.   LEASEHOLDER CHARGES

The report, which was considered by Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 17th September 2020 outlined a proposal to revise existing charges to leaseholders, so that Caerphilly Homes can recover the actual cost incurred for providing the service and the establishment of a leasehold buy back policy.

The report outlined Caerphilly Homes' proposal to increase the leaseholder management fee currently charged to reflect the actual costs incurred for providing the service, these costs are currently subsidised by tenants via the Housing Revenue Account.

Cabinet also noted the proposal to introduce charging for specific services that are recoverable under the terms set out in the various leases that are in place.

It was noted that currently the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) bears the burden of unrecovered costs incurred for providing services to leaseholders. However, Caerphilly Homes should neither subsidise the services received by leaseholders nor seek to make a surplus income from the levied charges. Therefore, it is important that Caerphilly Homes adopts a more robust and transparent charging policy in order to demonstrate fairness and value for money.

Cabinet noted that Officers recognise the financial impact the proposals contained within the report will have on leaseholders and therefore included, for information, the mechanisms in place to assist leaseholders in meeting the various costs incurred and proposals for introducing a leasehold property buy back policy.

Cabinet were asked to note an amendment in the report at 5.6, that the first increased payment would not be requested until September 2022 not 2021, as stated in the report.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

A Cabinet Member sought clarification on the deferral of the start date to September 2022 and whether this was as a direct result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Officers referred to the typing error in the report and explained that the bill for leaseholder charges often take up to 18 months to collate and send and therefore the charge date of September 2022 is as a result of service delivery and timeframes and not a direct impact of the Pandemic.

The Leader thanked the Officer for the report and was pleased to note that charges will be made on actual costs and welcomed the phased increase.

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

i)   The proposed increase in leaseholder management fees and the introduction of recharges for providing specific services be approved;

ii)   A phased increase of the leaseholder management fees as outlined in section 5.6, option 2 of the Officers report to become effective from April 1st, 2021, be approved;

iii)   To establish a Caerphilly Homes leasehold property 'buy back' policy, to be implemented in consultation with the Cabinet Member for housing and Property.

6.   A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR RECOVERY

The report sought Cabinet agreement on a Strategic Framework for Recovery that will support the Council and the wider County Borough to recover whilst continuing to support the Wellbeing Objectives set out in the Corporate Plan 2018-23.

The Covid-19 pandemic has provided an unprecedented set of challenges to Council's and the communities they serve since March 2020. During this time the Council's strategic focus has been to "protect people and place".

Cabinet received a report in June 2020 that provided an update on the significant work that had been undertaken by the Council and its staff to support these strategic aims. The same report was received by full Council on the 10th September 2020.

The events of late August and early September have revealed that the pandemic is still "live" and the growth in cases within the County Borough proves categorically that we remain with the response phase. Such occurrences can lead to reprioritisation of resources and disruption to routine work schedules as staff concentrate on an immediate emergency response. However, prior to these recent events, the council has been beginning to plan for and move to recovery. It is therefore important that a Framework for managing the recovery across Caerphilly is in place to guide next steps and a new strategic focus is adopted.

Cabinet noted that the report outlines a strategic aim for our Recovery, together with a set of underlying principles and values through which our recovery work will be guided.

The Chief Executive outlined that Caerphilly are currently in the Response mode of the plan, in which flexibility is critical in order to meet the needs of the borough and its residents. Members were reminded that the Pandemic is very much with is and could take a long time to recover, however the priority continues to protect our people and our place.

Cabinet noted the learning experiences which have been gained as a result of the current Pandemic and the positive relationships built with communities during this time. It was noted that this relationship is imperative as we move towards a recovery phase, in particular as work with the community will be required to reshape the organisation, and meet the social, economic and environment needs which will be presented.

The Chief Executive highlighted the links to the Wellbeing Objectives and provided Cabinet with a detailed outline of each of the 5 Strategic Principles within the report.

The Director for Education added the recovery work was paused as a result of the local lockdowns, and therefore some staff members have been redeployed in order to meet the current demands and Heads of Service have been asked to revise plans and consider the implications the second wave will have during the winter period.

A Cabinet Member, in noting the reference to the Wellbeing Objectives within the report sought assurances that the Corporate Review will reflect the principles of the Wellbeing of

Future Generations Act. Officers assured Cabinet that this will be considered throughout the process.

A Cabinet Member sought further information on the regional work to implement the Framework. Officers explained that in order to deliver on the Framework, there will be a partnership approach required. Work is underway with the PSB in order to embed the agenda, as well as G10 and Emergency Planning Platforms, in order to mitigate the impact of the Pandemic on communities and businesses alike. In addition, regular meetings are underway with partners on the Cardiff City Capital Region and partner agencies in Social Services in order to consider the approach to protecting care homes and the health sector during the winter period. Cabinet were asked to note that there will be an expectation from Welsh Government for a greater focus on partnership working moving forward.

A Cabinet Member thanked the Officers for the report and noted the exceptional work that has commened since the beginning of the Pandemic and lockdowns in March, for the flexibility of the authority and for the rapid change in service delivery and thanked Officers for their commitment and efforts during this difficult time.

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 the Strategic Recovery Framework for Caerphilly be approved.

7. COVID 19 – ECONOMIC RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

The report provided Cabinet with an overview of the economic recovery framework which comprises of three distinct phases:
- The Restart Phase;
- The Revive Phase;
- The Renew Phase

Cabinet noted that the Covid-19 pandemic is causing unprecedented disruption to our communities and the local economy. In response the Council has prepared a framework for recovery which aims to support the Council and the wider county borough to recover. The framework sets out 5 underlying principles, one of which includes "Business support".

The County Borough faces immediate challenges as the effects of Covid-19 are impacting across all sectors, businesses and jobs. Business Partners face the urgent task of understanding the evolving implications of Covid-19 for their business and are struggling to understand how to respond. Therefore, the Council are trying to support businesses and people who are facing redundancy with the massive challenges that lie ahead. The Economic recovery framework supports the "Business support" principle and the report outlines the economic recovery framework in use, based on three distinct phases as outlined above.

The Officer explained that there are three phases within the programme, Restart, Revive and Review Phase. It was noted that works are underway within the Restart Phase of the Framework, and timescales are uncertain at this time, but significant works are underway to assist Businesses and Employees alike to mitigate the implications of the Pandemic on the Business environment. Communications are key throughout the process and as a result of a robust communications plan, several grants have been allocated to support local businesses during the lockdown phases.

Work with partners is underway to consider the implications of the end of the furlough scheme and redundancies that follow as a result of businesses downsizing. Links have been made to look at job matching and upskilling employees where possible to meet the demand for temporary and permanent employment, in particular in manufacturing.

Collaborative works have been underway with Licensing and Trading Standards to support the Hospitality Sector, in particular with furniture and accommodating outdoor space for service delivery, as well as utilising schemes such as the 'Eat out to help out' scheme.

It was noted that the Economic Plan will feed the Revival Phase, and a consultant has been employed to provide a preliminary report. There are a lot of uncertainties at this phase, such as the outcomes of Brexit and development of a suitable vaccine against the spread of Covid-19.

Cabinet noted that the Renewal Phase will link in with Masterplans, looking to accelerate some projects outlined within the plans, to encourage and aid recovery.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

The Leader thanked the Officer for the report and significant work undertaken by the Business Support Team and Finance to disseminate the grants. In addition, it was noted that staff within unionised businesses have access to Wales Learning Fund, in which training opportunities are available.

A Cabinet Member, in noting the comprehensive report, sought further information on the funding available for Creative Arts. Officers explained that there is funding of just under £60m available to businesses within the field of Creative Arts, which encompasses a number of areas, including Freelance. The grants will be administered by the Arts Council Wales, Welsh Government and Local Authorities, and information is available online in respect of the eligibility criteria. Officers agreed to provide the link to the criteria, for Members to disseminate.

A Cabinet Member sought further information around redundancies, in particular the support and job match opportunities in place for highly skilled engineers and utilisation of vacancies within businesses in the Cardiff Capital Region Areas. Officers explained that there are works under way to consider job match where possible and employment mentors and support from the Department of Works and Pensions are being utilised where possible. In addition, it was noted that there is a focus to support retraining, in particular in the manufacturing sector, where gaps have been identified and job matches may take place.

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 significant government response and rapid role out of financial and business support that has taken place in the Restart Phase be noted, to help businesses in the County Borough;
>
> ii) The research that is being undertaken during the Revive Phase to understand any longer lasting impacts of Covid and a potential no deal Brexit on the local economy be noted;
>
> iii) The Strategic Direction proposed for the Renew Phase be agreed.

The meeting closed at 11.35.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 14th October 2020.

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CHAIR

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Cabinet Date	Title	Key Issues	Author	Cabinet Member
14/10/20 10:30	Agile/Flexible Working	To propose a flexible working model for the council	Edmunds, Richard (Ed);	Cllr. Gordon, Colin J;
14/10/20 10:30	Proposal for amending the Council's approach to handling cash	To put in place the necessary mechanisms to enable cash to be collected in the short term as well as making a number of proposals for changing the Council's approach to handling cash over the medium to long term	Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
14/10/20 10:30	Annual Equalities Report 2018/19	To seek Cabinet approval for the Statutory Annual report 2018/19	Cullinane, Anwen;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
14/10/20 10:30	Cashless Catering	To update Members on the current position with regards to the Councils Cashless catering solution in schools and to seek approval of funding to expand the provision.	Richards, Sue;	Cllr. Whiting, Ross;
28/10/20 10:30	(16) Community Asset Transfer Policy	Strategic Plan - Development of a policy and options to deliver a framework for Community Asset Transfer	Peters, Kathryn;Broadhur	Cllr. Phipps, Lisa;
28/10/20 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
28/10/20 10:30	Freedom of the Borough - Royal British Legion	To seek Council approval to bestow the Freedom on the Borough to the Royal British Legion	Forbes-Thompson, Cath	Cllr. Marsden, Philippa;
28/10/20 10:30	Pavement Licences	To review and update the council's approach to the issuing of pavement licences for placing items and trading on the highway.	Williams, Mark S;	Cllr. Ridgewell, John;

Page 8

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CABINET – 14TH OCTOBER 2020

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN – ANNUAL MONITORING AND
                    IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2018-2019

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1.   **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1   To inform Cabinet of the progress made during the financial year 2018-2019 against targets in the Council's current Strategic Equality Plan, and for Cabinet to approve for submission to the Equality and Human Rights Commission and publication online.

2.   **SUMMARY**

2.1   The Council has a statutory duty to produce an annual monitoring report on Equalities issues under current legislation. The requirements are very detailed as to what relevant information must be included in the annual monitoring and improvement report (attached in full as an appendix).

2.2   The amount of information presented is therefore in order to ensure that the regulatory body involved (the Equality and Human Rights Commission) are provided with full evidence of the Council's compliance and commitment to those statutory duties.

2.3   The Strategic Equality Plan – Annual Monitoring and Improvement Report must be published by the 31 March the following year. In March this year the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) wrote to all local authorities to advise that they had taken the decision to suspend their compliance check on the publication of annual reports and Strategic Equality Plans until October. This decision was taken as a recognition of the incredibly difficult circumstances within which listed bodies are operating due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. For this reason, although the 31st March 2020 deadline has passed, we expect that the EHRC will be tolerant of the delay.

3.   **RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1   For Cabinet to approve the annual monitoring and improvement report for submission to the Equality and Human Rights Commission and publication online.

4.   **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1   The council is required under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties)(Wales) Regulations 2011 to produce an annual monitoring report on the steps it has taken to meet the public sector equality duty and its own Equality Objectives.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty in Wales, an annual report on the Strategic Equality Plan must be published within 12 months after the end of the financial year that is covered by that report.

5.2 Appended to this report is the Strategic Equality Plan – Annual Monitoring and Improvement Report 2018-2019.

5.3 In summary however, the following performance information should be noted covering the financial year in question:

- In our 2018 submission to Stonewall's Education Equality Index Caerphilly maintained its first place ranking in Wales in terms of inclusive practice, and improved its UK ranking from 21st to 19th. The index looks at the work that we have done to tackle homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic bullying in schools.
- Our Gender Pay Gap Statement for 2018 was published. The data showed the Mean Gender Pay Gap for the year was 7.4%.
- £90,000 of funding was used to support disability access improvement works, which included access improvements to reception facilities and main entrances within leisure centres, youth clubs and day centres. Automatic doors, ramps, handrails and lifts were also installed within some schools where identified.
- A full audit of the Council's website saw us increasing bilingual webpage content to 100%. A number of microsites that remain in English are being upgraded through a work programme to ensure they are bilingual and accessible.
- We had a presence at Pride Cymru 2018, with staff, LGBT Ambassadors and the Mayor joining in the parade for the first time under the banner 'Proud Council'.
- In partnership with Menter Iaith Caerffili and partners of the Welsh Language Forum, we developed a booklet for parents and prospective parents to consider Welsh medium education for their children. The work meets an action the county borough's Welsh Language Strategy.
- We received a Silver Award in recognition of our commitment to the Defence and Armed Forces Community. The award recognised the work we had done to ensure HR policies and procedures are in place to allow flexibility for training and mobilisation commitments and focusing on improving employment opportunities for service personnel.

5.4 **Conclusion**

The report demonstrates the Council's progress during the financial year 2018-2019 against targets in the Council's current Strategic Equality Plan.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions have been made in preparing this report.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1 **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

7.2   There are also a number of national Welsh Government strategies or regulations that the Council's Equalities work links to;

- **"Prosperity for All"** and **"The Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan"** – the Welsh Government's Community Cohesion Strategies
- **"Tackling Hate Crimes and Incidents: a Framework for Action"** – the Welsh Government's commitment to challenge hostility and prejudice, with the aim to drive greater leadership and partnership work across Wales to challenge and tackle hate crimes.
- **"Travelling to a Better Future"** – the Welsh Government's Gypsy and Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery Plan;
- **"Cymraeg 2050: Welsh Language Strategy"** – the Welsh Government's framework to support and extend usage of the Welsh language, and various aspects of Planning, Licensing and Building regulations.

8.   WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1   Equalities issues are crosscutting themes of the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 and impact 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

- Long Term – Ensuring that the Council provides services which are delivered in accordance with the needs of its residents.
- Prevention – The report evidences the work that has been undertaken to ensure that staff are trained and that services are delivered in an inclusive, non-discriminatory manner.
- Integration – Integrating equalities and Welsh language into the policies and plans the council has in place will ensure consistency in meeting objectives and reporting duties and build a stronger joined-up link between services.
- Collaboration – the report evidences work that has taken place through joint working with a number of the council's partners.
- Involvement – it is very important that we involve people and partners in the work that we do, so that the work is joined up and consistent but also so that people from a range of diverse backgrounds can influence change through service delivery and policies.

9.   EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1   A full Equalities assessment and consultation was undertaken on the Strategic Equality Plan when being developed, therefore no full assessment has been made on this annual report. The report itself is an assessment of achievements made by the Council under the Plan.

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.

11.   PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

11.1   There are no personnel implications to this report, although this continues to be reviewed as the work specified in our Strategic Equality Plan progresses.

12. CONSULTATIONS

12.1 The report is based on data gathered across the service areas on implementing the Strategic Equality Plan during 2018-2019.

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

13. STATUTORY POWER

13.1 Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017
Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015
Human Rights Act 1998
Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

Author: Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer – Equalities, Welsh Language and Consultation – cullima@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Christina Harrhy – Chief Executive,
                 Richard Edmunds – Corporate Director – Education and Corporate Services
                 Cllr Eluned Stenner – Cabinet Member for Finance – Performance and Planning
                 Cllr James Pritchard – Chair of Policy and Resources Committee
                 Sue Richards – Head of Education Planning and Strategy
                 Stephen Harris – Head of Corporate Finance and S151
                 Robert Tranter – Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
                 Lynne Donovan – Head of People Services
                 Keri Cole – Chief Education Officer
                 Mark Williams – Interim Head of Property Services
                 Kathryn Peters – Service Improvement and Partnerships Manager
                 Ros Roberts – Business Improvement Manager
                 Christopher Hunt – Community Cohesion Coordinator (West Gwent)
                 Elizabeth Sharma – Consultation and Engagement Officer
                 Sian Wolf-Williams – Policy Officer
                 Mark Jennings – Housing Strategy Officer
                 Lisa Rawlings – Regional Armed Forces Covenant Officer
                 Emma Bush – Educational Psychologist
                 Lyndon Samuel – Regional School Liaison Coordinator, Gwent Police

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
- Report to Cabinet on the 18th January 2017 – Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022
- Various Guidance Documents *(These are available electronically for information on the Intranet Portal and on the Council's website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities)*

Appendices:
Appendix 1   Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2018-2019

Caerphilly County Borough Council Strategic Equality Plan

Annual Monitoring and Improvement Report 2018 – 2019

This Council recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within and between our communities, residents, elected members, job applicants and workforce.

We will also work to create equal access for everyone to our services, regardless of ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, use of Welsh, BSL or other language, nationality, responsibility for any dependents or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

Published 23 October 2020

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Contents

Introduction

The council is required under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties)(Wales) Regulations 2011 to produce an annual monitoring report on the steps it has taken to meet the public sector equality duty and its own Equality Objectives. Welsh Government was the first government to impose specific duties on public services over and above those required by the Act. The Act places a duty on public bodies to consider how to positively contribute to a fairer society through the delivery of services having due regard to eliminating discrimination. The specific duties cover:

- annual reporting
- equality impact assessments
- pay differences
- publishing Strategic Equality Plans
- workforce information
- engagement
- equality information
- procurement
- staff training

Each section of this report looks at the council's progress during 2018-2019, with a number of case studies included to demonstrate the work that service areas have undertaken to ensure compliance and improving service delivery year on year.

The Council continues to work in partnership with other organisations, some of which are members of the Caerphilly Public Services Board. The Public Services Board brings public bodies together to work to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Caerphilly County Borough, part of this is ensuring that the goal of a 'More Equal Wales' is met.   Members, who come from the public, health, voluntary and private sectors, strive to be creative and innovative in delivering against their statutory duties.

A great deal of the Council's Equalities related information is already published in greater detail on the Equalities pages of the Council's website, where you can also download a pdf version of this report:- **www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities**.

The Council remains committed to ensuring that everyone within the county borough of Caerphilly is treated with equal respect and that their individual circumstances are not a barrier to them receiving the services they need from the Council or its partners.

In order for this Equalities Annual Report to be properly considered, it was taken through an internal endorsement process via Cabinet on the 14 October 2020. The annual report will then be submitted to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Office by 23 October 2020.

Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive
Cllr Philippa Marsden, Leader

Tackling Identity-Based Violence and Abuse

The Reporting and Monitoring of Discriminatory Bullying in Schools 2018-2019

The Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020 contains a specific Equality Objective in relation to 'Tackling Identity-based Violence and Abuse'. The objective aims to reduce the levels of real or perceived instances of identity-based abuse, bullying, harassment and violence, hate crime and hate incidents in the county borough.

To measure this objective in accordance with the Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020, we need to ensure that improved monitoring and reporting measures are in place. This will lead to more accurate recording and *may* result in an increase in the number of recorded incidents.

Data is collected and reported in various ways to identify trends, target support and demonstrate that the Council and schools are complying with legal duties around these issues. For any data collected and reports published, anonymised totals are used, with only examples of good practice by individual schools, or those that have had bespoke training being specifically named at any time.

Discriminatory bullying is a matter of concern for every local authority, this report highlights that Caerphilly County Borough Council and its partners are actively monitoring the situation and tackling the issues by working with organisations to make positive progress each year.

There are 88 education establishments that provide monitoring data to the Directorate of Education, a summary of the reported incidents are detailed in Table 1:

Table 1 – Table of Reported Incidents

	Autumn Term			Spring Term			Summer Term		
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Caring	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Cultural	4	-	2	9	4	-	5	-	1
Disability	1	2	1		1	3	1	-	2
Gender	2	4	1	3	-	2	2	1	2
Homophobic	20	8	9	18	2	10	4	12	9
Language	9	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	1
Nationality	1	-	4	8	-	1	-	-	-
Race	18	25	21	21	8	44	22	24	16
Religion or Belief	2	1	1	3	-	12	2	4	2

Bullying Survey 2018-2019

Data was obtained from 804 pupils across Caerphilly County Borough from years 4, 5 and 6 between the summer term 2018 and autumn 2019. There were less than 10 responses from secondary schools. Secondary heads felt the Schools Health Research Network (SHRN) survey provided them with sufficient bullying data alongside other well-being measures and this was a higher priority for completion given the logistical difficulties in ensuring large numbers of pupils could access an online survey. Whist the SHRN survey provides information on bullying (i.e. percentage of pupils who have experienced bullying in the last year) it does not disaggregate this information on the basis of identity based bullying or bullying because of a protected characteristic. SHRN data has not been included in this report.

Data for 34 pupils were removed from the survey as they were unable to identify the behaviour that constitutes bullying (from a choice).

Of those pupils who understood what bullying is
- 523 pupils (68%) indicated that they **had not been bullied** in the last year.
- 247 pupils (32%) indicated that they had been bullied in the last year.

Of those that had experienced bullying
- 31% felt they were bullied because they were good/not good at something
- 31% felt they had been bullied due to the way they look
- 28% indicated the bullying was due to their friendship groups
- 17% due to the clothes they wear
- 13% due to family or origin
- 8% religion
- 10% my disability

Children were able to tick more than one to box in order to reflect different reasons for being bullied.

An analysis of the data highlighted that that the questionnaire needs to be amended to capture clearer data in relation to protected characteristics (for example the phrase "the way I look" could refer to a number of different characteristics). Our survey for 2019-2020 will be amended accordingly.

The results suggest developing a better approach to helping young people accept diversity in schools and the need for bullying prevention strategies. Individual schools who took part in the survey were provided with school based data and recommendations to tackle bullying.

The total number of reported discriminatory incidents in **Table 1**, is low and does not suggest discriminatory incidents are widespread, however this does not seem to be consistent with the number of reports from pupils themselves (as gathered in the Bullying Survey).

Further work needs to be undertaken to ensure reporting is consistent and in line with guidance provided to schools. Analysis shows that there has been an increase in discriminatory incidents relating to cultural identity and language and this might reflect a changing population or national trends. The LA is working with partners such as the regional Community Cohesion Team to support children to value diversity in their schools (for example through a school twinning project). The Additional Learning Needs service is also working with schools to address the needs of refugee pupils and consider how to tackle discriminatory views.

Other trends within individual schools are being addressed by the authority and action plans have been devised.

Training for Schools and Young People settings

Schools in Caerphilly county borough receive training through the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme (AWSLCP) delivered by Gwent Police. These sessions cover subjects such as respect, bullying and diversity issues across primary and secondary schools in the county borough to the students.

The AWSLCP is an example of Partnership Working between the Welsh Government and the four Welsh Police Forces and consists of a series of Crime Prevention inputs / lesson deliveries and Supportive School Policing initiatives that aim to:
- educate children and young people about the harm substance misuse can cause to their health, their families and the wider community
- promote the principles of positive citizenship through the medium of education
- achieve a reduction in the levels of crime and disorder within our young communities

All sessions will continue to be delivered by pre-booked appointment with a School Community Police Officer (SCPO). SCPOs provide a variety of Supportive School Policing (SSP) and safeguarding activities including the resolution of incidents using the School Crime Beat Policy and restorative approaches. SCPOs have also delivered a variety of age appropriate school assemblies.

It is anticipated that an enhanced safeguarding role will further develop links between the local and school communities as well as partner agencies e.g. Youth Offending Service, Safeguarding Services etc. This is particularly relevant to identity-based and discriminatory bullying where crimes may also have been committed.

The AWSLCP is fully supported by a dedicated website – School Beat Website link which contains further information and guidance for teachers, pupils and parents.

During 2018-2019, 1,050 lessons were delivered generating 28,045 pupil contacts. 372 lessons that addressed bullying, diversity, coercion and respect or lack of respect were delivered generating 10,148 pupil contacts.

In addition to the AWSLCP training delivered by Gwent Police, the council also provided specific equalities training and guidance for school staff. Equalities has been a regular item at Termly Pastoral Leads meeting. Topics covered have included:
- Respect and Resilience
- Violence Against Women
- Mental Health
- Supporting Vulnerable Groups
- recognising and reporting Discriminatory Incidents and,
- Supporting LGBTQ+ Young people.

To support this work, the council has issued written guidance to schools that explicitly promotes mutual respect, access to all services and clearly outlines the legal duty on schools to produce their own equality plans and report discriminatory incidents. The council has provided a model Equality Plan to schools and equalities guidance is included within other guidance documentation e.g. Model Behaviour Policy, Bullying Prevention Strategy.

The council's Equalities, Welsh Language and Consultation Team has provided training for school staff and governors and has actively promoted events which raise awareness such as LGBT History Month, Black History Month etc.

Council staff are aware of partner agencies and are able to signpost and support schools and youth workers to access resources such as workshops and curriculum materials from agencies such as Umbrella Cymru, Stonewall Cymru, Show Racism the Red Card, Gwent Ethnic Minority Service (GEMS) etc.

The Council works with stakeholders (schools, youth service, young people, neighbouring authorities, partnership agencies etc.) to develop guidance reflecting changes to legal requirements or the needs of young people within the authority e.g. developing plans and policies in relation to changes in the Personal, Social,

Health and Education (PSHE) curriculum to address sexuality, health and relationships education and which explicitly refers to sexuality and gender, in age appropriate ways.

The Council's Youth Service runs an LGBTQ+ Youth Group called "Guys, Gals and Non-binary Pals" (GGNP). The group is a unique initiative which supports young people aged between 11 and 25 years who identify as LGBTQ+. This full-time project provides access to support, information and advocacy for those across the county borough and surrounding areas. Young people are provided with a safe and confidential environment to express themselves whilst having the opportunity to engage and socialise with other young people that share the same experiences and challenges.

Education Equality Index – Stonewall Cymru

Stonewall's Education Equality Index ensures that measures are in place and positive steps are being taken to support Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans young people living in the local community. Measures relate to how well local authorities
- help and support schools to be inclusive,
- celebrate difference and
- prevent and tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. .

Stonewall's Education Equality Index is the only nationwide tool used to benchmark progress being made in this area. It is an effective way to demonstrate good practice but also to realise and understand the gaps where improvement is needed.

Caerphilly is ranked first in Wales in terms of inclusive practice, and was 21st across the UK in 2016 and 2017. In 2018 we maintained our place as 1st in Wales and improved our ranking within the UK, being ranked 19th.

In 2017, Caerphilly gained "full marks" in relation to its written guidance that was rated as "green" (i.e. good) in relation to community engagement and youth service. The feedback received on the 2017 submission identified that the council needs more robust monitoring of young people's experiences. As a result the council has developed the Bullying Survey of children's experiences of bullying including that relating to gender, race and identity (see **Page 4 – Bullying Survey**). Our improvements in monitoring young people's experiences were noted by Stonewall Cymru and are in line with the most recent version of Welsh Government's Bullying Prevention Guidance.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

Caerphilly county borough council has made significant progress towards fulfilling its requirements within the National Training Framework. Please see **Section 10. Diversity in the Workforce** for training details.

Page 20

Addressing the Gender Pay Gap

The Council published its second Gender Pay Gap Statement for 2018. This is a requirement under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 that all organisations listed at Schedule 2 that employ over 250 employees report annually on their gender pay gap. The data is published on the Council's website and a government website by the 30th March each year.

The regulations also require employers to calculate and publish a gender bonus pay gap report but the Council does not have a bonus in place.

Total Number of Employees included in this data: 6848

Number of Females: **4820 (70.4%)**
Number of Males: **2028 (29.6%)**

Table 2 – Gender Pay Gap Summary

	%
1. Mean gender pay gap - Ordinary pay	7.4%
2. Mean hourly Rate - Ordinary pay (Male/Female)	(£12.29 / £11.38)
3. Median gender pay gap - Ordinary pay	11.7%
4. Median hourly rate - Ordinary Pay (Male/Female)	(£11.38 / £10.05)
1. Mean gender pay gap - Bonus pay in the 12 months ending 31 March	0%
4. Median gender pay gap - Bonus pay in the 12 months ending 31 March	0%
5. The proportion of male and female employees paid a bonus in the 12 months ending 31 March:	Male 0 Female 0

Note: In Table 2 ‚Ordinary Pay' means basic pay; allowances; pay for leave; and shift premium pay. It does not include overtime pay; redundancy pay; pay in lieu; or non-monetray renumeration. The Council does not offer precework or bonus incentive schemes.

Table 3 - Proportion of male and female employees in each quartile

Quartile	Female % (People)	Male % (People)
First (lower) quartile (£7.83 - £8.75)	82% (1403)	18% (309)
Second quartile (£8.75 - £10.43)	72.1% (1235)	27.9% (477)
Third quartile (£10.44 - £12.71)	62.8% (1075)	37.2% (637)
Fourth (upper) quartile (£12.72 - £74.61)	64.7% (1107)	35.3% (605)

As shown in **Table 3** the data identifies that significantly more women than men occupy posts in every quartile due to a predominantly female Council workforce.

Proportionately, the data shows that of the male workforce (2028):
- 15.23% occupy posts in the lower quartile,
- 23.52% in the 2nd quartile,
- 31.41% in the 3rd quartile and
- 29.83% in the 4th quartile.

Comparatively, amongst the female workforce (4820):
- 29.1% occupy posts in the lower quartile,
- 25.62% in the 2nd quartile,
- 22.3% in the 3rd quartile and
- 23% in the 4th quartile.

The Council is confident that its gender pay gap does not stem from paying male and female employees differently for the same or equivalent work. The gender pay gap is the result of roles in which male and females currently work and the salaries that these roles attract.

Our gender pay gap is reflective of the causes of gender pay gap at a societal level. For example research has identified that, although parents are increasingly flexible, the responsibility of childcare still falls disproportionately upon women. It is a fact within this data that the vast majority of part time posts are held by females and that these are the posts that attract salaries in the lower quartiles.

The Council's services are diverse and include cleaning, catering, refuse and recycling, housing, social services/care services, leisure, youth, libraries, education services including adult education, technical services, planning and highways.

To view the full statement - CCBC Gender Pay Gap Statement 2018

Page 22

Improving Physical Access

The Disability Access Work Programme

The Council's Corporate Property Services Division has continued to deliver improvements to make public buildings accessible for all via the Disability Access Work Programme. Each year a programme of work is arranged to update and improve the physical access capacity of a range of Council-owned buildings.

During 2018-2019, £90,000 of funding was available to support disability access improvement works.

The works included:

- Schools –the provision of automatic doors, ramps, handrails and lift – £66,000

- Social Services –improved internal and external access - £19,000

- Leisure Centres – improvements to reception facilities – £2,000

- Youth Centres – improvements to the accessibility of main entrances - £3,000

Improvements to Corporate Buildings

A number of changes have been made to improve the accessibility of corporate buildings:

- Lighting has been changed to improve the working environment for members of staff, in particular those with disabilities or sight impairments.

- Signage throughout corporate offices has been reviewed and improved to comply with the requirements of Welsh Language standards and consider the needs of those with dementia and visual impairments.

- Accessible toilets: taking the needs of those with non-visible disabilities/those who do not identify as a gender into account, signage on toilet facilities has been replaced.

Improving Communication Access

Council Website

The website is 100% bilingual in terms of webpage content; however, there are some pages whereby the English has been updated and not the Welsh. We have conducted a full audit of the website and are in the process of correcting these anomalies to ensure the Council's website is fully bilingual.

The current website was checked by the Digital Accessibility Centre (Link to Digital Accessibility Centre website) in order to achieve Website Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA Compliance.

On the website, under the 'Accessibility' option, links are provided to guides on the following areas:
- making your mouse easier to use
- using your keyboard to control your mouse
- alternatives to a keyboard and mouse
- increasing the size of the text in your web browser
- changing text and background colours
- how to magnify your screen
- screen readers and talking browsers

Partnership Working

Work is ongoing in relation to the Public Services Board (PSB) Communications and Engagement Strategy that CCBC has signed up to. The PSB Communications and Engagement group now has representation from a number of organisations including Menter Iaith Caerffili and the 50+ Forum.

Sensory Loss Communication Guide

Last year the Sensory Loss Guide was developed by the Council's Caerphilly Homes team in conjunction with the Sensory Loss group. The guidance helps staff improve the way they communicate with people experiencing sensory loss.

Following the launch of the guide, the Caerphilly Homes team organised and ran two focus groups. Tenants, specifically people with hearing and sight loss, were invited to attend in order to capture their views on the services provided.

It was an opportunity for tenants with hearing and sight loss to offer suggestions on how our services could be improved to ensure they are accessible to people living with these impairments.

The focus groups identified a number of areas that needed to be explored further, so the Caerphilly Homes Team are planning to 'pop up' in the community to undertake a survey to obtain more views before identifying key themes.

Email News Bulletin Subscription Service

Work is continuing to improve the service and ensuring subscribers to Gov Delivery email bulletins receive the information in their language of choice to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. Residents can subscribe to and select the subjects they would like to hear about. When there is an update, subscribers to the system will receive an email update automatically in their preferred language. There are currently 284 subscribers to the Welsh language version of the bulletin.

Inclusive Engagement and Participation

In order to strengthen the links between equalities and consultation and engagement within the Council, the role of Consultation and Public Engagement Officer moved from the Communications Unit to the Equalities and Welsh Language team in September 2019.

Live consultation and engagement activities are promoted on the front page of the Council's website. Further details of current engagement activities (including links to live surveys where appropriate) and the outcomes of recent engagement activities are also recorded on the Caerphilly CBC website Link to Caerphilly Council's Consultations Webpage

A key corporate consultation/engagement activity undertaken during the last year, the "Caerphilly Conversation – Budget Consultation 2019-2020" exemplifies how the Council uses a variety of approaches to encourage participation, promote consultations and ensure that all sectors of the community are enabled to have their say.

All promotional and consultation correspondence was made available bilingually. Face to face activities including town centre/supermarket engagement; drop in sessions at libraries across the borough and a Viewpoint Panel meeting were supported by digital media (including Facebook, Twitter and NewsOnline), video and web content, Newsline, targeted e-mails to stakeholders and paper and online surveys.

Menter Iaith Caerffili facilitated a Welsh discussion group at the Viewpoint Panel face to face meeting. Members of the Caerphilly Parent Network and Youth Forum Members also attended. There was written correspondence to all key groups as listed in the council's "Consultation and Monitoring Guidance". For drop in sessions, residents who had any specific requirements such as access, hearing loop, required translation facilities or wishing to use the Welsh language at the drop in sessions were asked to contact us in advance of attending.

A full summary report can be found here: The Caerphilly Conversation - Full Report

Pride Cymru 2018 – Proud Councils

Caerphilly County Borough Council was pleased to be represented at Pride Cymru's Big Weekend in Cardiff under the banner 'Proud Councils'.

Pride Cymru's Big Weekend is the biggest celebration of diversity, inclusion and the LGBT+ community in Wales, and is an opportunity for everyone, no matter their age, gender, sexuality or race to come together and celebrate all that makes Wales such a welcoming place.

Pride Cymru 2018 marked the 5th year of the 'Proud Councils' network, which brings together a number of councils across South Wales, highlighting the partnership work that councils across the region undertake to advance equality within South Wales and to celebrate the diversity across our communities.

Representatives from Caerphilly County Borough Council, had a 'Proud Councils' stall at Pride Cymru's Big Weekend. Staff engaged with visitors to discuss how councils can further improve upon the work they undertake to ensure equality for LGBT+ residents and employees, as well as signposting to services offered by councils and partners.

Caerphilly County Borough Council, as part of Proud Councils, took part in the Pride Cymru Parade for the first time, marching and celebrating through the streets of the city centre.

Proud Councils are committed to promote equalities in public services and remove the barriers faced by LGBT people. Plans are already underway for Pride Cymru 2019 where the 'Proud Councils' will be even bigger.

Press release: **CCBC Press Release - Proud Council August 2018**

Facebook Post: **CCBC Facebook Post - Proud Councils August 2018**

Twitter Post: **CCBC Twitter Post - Proud Councils 2018**

Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards

Welsh Language Standards

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 replaced the Welsh Language Act 1993 and as part of the new legislation, in Wales the Welsh language has equal legal status with English and must not be treated less favourably. Public bodies must comply with a set of national Welsh Language Standards.

The Welsh Language Commissioner has issued a Compliance Notice which sets out which of the 176 standards in the legislation apply to the local authority, along with any relevant exemptions.

Our progress is recorded each year in the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2018-2019, and is published on our website on the Welsh Language Standards page.

Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards

An annual monitoring report is published on the Council's website every summer to report on its compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.

The annual report covers four areas required of it under the regulatory framework and demonstrates the Council's ongoing commitment to providing bilingual services to the public and staff members.

The four areas to report on are as follows:

- Complaints from the Public
- Staff Language Skills
- Welsh Medium Training Provision
- Recruiting to Empty Posts

Four of the Strategic Equality Objectives explicitly include Welsh language issues, namely:

| Equality Objective 4	Improving Communication Access
Equality Objective 6	Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards
Equality Objective 10	Diversity in the Workplace
Equality Objective 11	Corporate Compliance

Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022

A requirement of the Welsh Language Standards is to publish a 5 Year Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022. The strategy sets out how the local authority, in collaboration with its partners, proposes to promote the Welsh language and facilitate its use across the county borough. More information on the strategy can also be found on our website Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022.

To monitor development of the Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022, a progress report was published as an appendix to the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2017-2018. The progress report highlights the proactive partnership working that is taking place between the Council and third party organisations. Click here to view the full report: Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2018-2019

A key piece of work developed as an action under the Welsh Language Strategy is a booklet for parents and prospective parents to consider Welsh medium education for their children. The booklet contains answers to common questions, addresses parents' concerns and highlights the advantages of being bilingual. It maps a clear path that children will follow from nursery, primary, secondary and beyond.

The booklet has been distributed widely via libraries, the Family Information Service, Flying Start, Cymraeg i Blant, Menter Iaith Cearffili and a number of other partner organisations. The booklet is currently being developed as an online resource to improve accessibility.
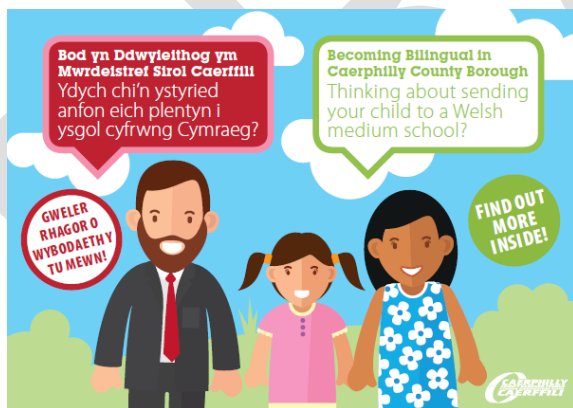
Diwrnod Shwmae / Su'mae

Caerphilly council staff joined thousands of people and organisations across Wales to mark Diwrnod Shwmae / Su'mae (Monday 15th October).

Caerphilly County Borough Council took great strides to become a bilingual authority as part of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. As part of this work, the promotion of Diwrnod Shwmae/ Su'ame with staff, the community and schools has provided an opportunity for everyone across the borough to celebrate the Welsh language.

Libraries across the county borough celebrated 'Diwrnod Shwmae/Su'mae' using a selfie frame to prompt and encourage staff and visitors to say "#ShwmaeSumaeCaerffili"!

Council, staff were encouraged to start every conversation with Shwmae, and information was displayed which included a time line for the Welsh language explaining how the language has evolved.

Staff were provided with information regarding new corporate software called Cysill. The software is available on all computers to support staff with their Welsh language skills and encourage learners to put their written skills to use in the workplace. Cysill, the spell checker, and Cysgeir, the dictionary, are useful resources to be utilised as required.

Provision of this software for staff is a requirement of Welsh Language Standard 120:

You must provide staff with computer software for checking spelling and grammar in Welsh, and provide Welsh language interfaces for software (where an interface exists)

Page 30

Welsh Language Commissioner Audit and Menter Iaith Caerffili Mystery Shopper Exercise

During 2018-2019, the Welsh Language Commissioner's office conducted verification work to identify areas of good practice and improvement across all organisations that are covered by the Welsh Language Standards. Findings were analysed and used to inform the Commissioner's annual assurance report.

An area of good practice identified in the Welsh Language Commissioner's assurance report (2018-19) relates to the independent assessment the local authority commissioned from undertaken by Menter Iaith Caerffili to establish how inclusive council services are to those who wish to access those services through the medium of Welsh.

The independent assessment showed that, overall, the response to enquiries and requests for Welsh medium services were positive, effective and pro-active. The majority of staff also demonstrated a clear awareness regarding the process of providing a Welsh medium service when Welsh speakers or learners were not available within a particular team.

Telephone services through the medium of Welsh were extremely effective overall with services clearly demonstrating their understanding of the required process in terms of transferring calls to a Welsh speaker.

Email correspondence was dealt with quite effectively on the whole with service areas arranging for emails to be translated as required, although some service areas did not follow the correct process.

However, it was identified that staff in some service areas were unable to communicate face to face through the medium of Welsh.

During the exercise, many committed Welsh learners were observed and were extremely happy and eager to use their language skills who and are to be commended. The exercise also observed some fluent speakers within service areas who are the only Welsh speakers within that service and who have not had many opportunities to use their language skills. Developing support for these members of staff and championing their efforts would be beneficial.

The challenge of recruiting a bilingual workforce is clear; however the impact of developing such a workforce would be significant and transform the council's ability to provide a fully bilingual service.

Page 31

The findings of both exercises, the Commissioners assessment and the Menter Iaith assessment, will be fed back to service areas and good practice will be shared across the organisation with the aim of improving the provision of the Welsh Language service. Suggestions for improvement include:

1. Displaying more bilingual signage
2. Displaying more signage encouraging and welcoming communication through the medium of Welsh,
3. Ensuring that all staff are aware of the process to get correspondence translated,
4. The need to build a bilingual workforce to ensure that we can deliver Welsh language services in the future,
5. Supporting Welsh speakers and learners who work for the Council to use and develop their skills.

Supporting Age-friendly Communities

Older People's Commissioner

In January 2019, the Caerphilly 50+ Forum received a visit from the newly appointed Older People's Commissioner, Heléna Herklots CBE, to meet and speak with members about her priorities as Commissioner; the development of her work programme; and to hear from members about how we can make Wales the best place in the world to grow older.

Discussions during the meeting were very helpful and it was clear that members are committed to using their wealth of knowledge and experience to ensure that older people have a strong voice and are able to influence policy and practice, both locally and nationally, to improve older people's lives.

Working with other community groups

In October 2018, members of the Forum visited Blackwood Stroke Association, continuing their programme of meeting older people's groups throughout the County. Their first visit was to give a presentation about the Forum, explaining their purpose.

It transpired that the groups were interested in learning about using digital devices and the Forum arranged a follow-up session, delivered in January 2019, regarding the internet and how to stay safe online.

Responding to Consultations

The Forum responded to Welsh Government's consultation on loneliness and isolation. There is a wealth of evidence that demonstrates that loneliness and social isolation are significant issues affecting our older population. Over 50,000 older people in Wales are lonely. Projections show that there will be a 50% increase in the number of people over 50 experiencing loneliness can be twice as unhealthy as obesity. For further information on the main points raised in the Forum's response, or to see what other activities the Forum have been involved in, please view the Spring 2019 Newsletter.

Page 33

Chatty Café

In early 2019, members of Caerphilly 50 + Forum met with Martin Cook the 'Visit Caerphilly' Centre Manager. Martin has been responsible for transforming the Centre into the vibrant and profitable entity that it now is. The Forum wanted to introduce Martin to the concept of the "Chatty Café" as they felt the Visitor Centre had all the right attributes to make Chatty Café a success. Martin was most enthusiastic about the concept and plans were put in place to introduce it in late March 2019.

Picture of Heléna Herklots CBE What is a Chatter & Natter table? Somewhere that you know anybody sitting there is prepared to interact and have a chat; just a good old human interaction. The Visitor Centre Coffee lounge was considered to be an ideal venue to introduce this concept.

Dementia Friendly Libraries

Caerphilly Libraries are committed to help support those living with dementia across the county borough. Working in partnership with The Alzheimer's Society, Caerphilly Library Service has trained library staff to become 'Dementia Friends'.

Staff were given an insight into the condition and gain a better understanding of people affected by dementia in order to improve the customer experience. In addition to creating a welcoming and supportive environment, the service is ensuring it provides the best range of resources for those living with dementia, as well as tools to support those who care for them. This includes expanding the already popular range of 'Pictures to Share' books, which are available at libraries, or can be delivered to an individual's home or care home.

All 18 libraries participate in the 'Reading Well for Dementia in Wales' project, making information and advice available for people living with dementia, as well as fiction, memoir and photographic books used in reminiscence therapy.

The library service has developed 20 Dementia Memory Bags for loan to customers. These resources are available to library customers, to create a better understanding of dementia and change community perceptions by transforming the way residents in the borough think and talk about the condition.

Supporting the Armed Forces Covenant

Armed Forces in Caerphilly
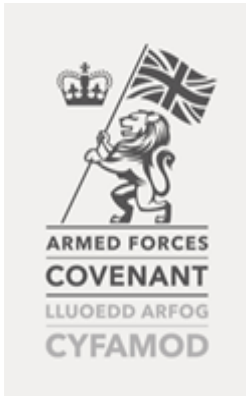
In Wales there are estimated to be 385,000 members of the Armed Forces Community, this equates to 12% of the population. This includes serving personnel, reservists and cadets as well as their families and ex-Service personnel. Many will have experienced conflict, directly or indirectly, and the challenges that can arise following this. It is known that 14,700 left the UK Regular Armed Forces in 2018. It is estimated 3000 settled in Wales.

Caerphilly County Borough Council was one of the first local authorities in Wales to sign the Armed Forces Covenant and honour their pledge to support the Armed Forces Community.

It is has been a very productive year in raising the profile of the Armed Forces Covenant within Caerphilly County Borough Council and the wider Gwent area. This has been achieved by policy amendments, training, events and publicity. The Regional Armed Forces Covenant Officer post has been extended until March 2023 with funding received from Welsh Government.

Training

The Armed Forces Covenant e-learning package has been released and is available via intranet for staff and hosted on CCBC website. Bespoke training for departments has been delivered however; there is a need to extend to the wider frontline staff which is scheduled in the coming months.

Public Awareness

Raising public awareness of the work of the local authorities in terms of the Armed Forces is progressing well. The **Facebook** (Gwent Armed Forces Community) and **Twitter** @GwentAFC page that promotes the work and events for the Armed Forces Community has gained a lot of traction and analytics are positive. The quarterly newsletter is produced which is sent to all GP surgeries, job centres, libraries and the wider community are very well received and are managing to reach the wider community that may not have access to the internet. Third sector organisations, ABUHB, Community drop-ins, including stand-alone veteran breakfast clubs also contribute to the content of the newsletter.

An [Armed Forces Directory of Support Gwent](#) has been compiled and will be distributed to frontline staff, GP surgeries and job centres. The document will be hosted on the CCBC website for public access.

Caerphilly Armed Forces Day

Caerphilly County Borough Council has a long history of support for the Armed Forces which they have demonstrated by holding South Wales Armed Forces Day for many years. This has gained momentum year on year, 2017 figures indicated around 12,000 residents and visitors took to the streets of Caerphilly to show their support for the Armed Forces Community. This magnificent event continued over a two day period in 2019. Armed Forces 'A Day to Remember' was aimed at commemorating the events of the World Wars while bridging the gap between military services and civilian community life. The event helped challenge perceptions of the military, particularly among young people and families, to help bridge generational/civilian/military gaps to mutual benefit.

Additionally, the authority organised and hosted 'Caerphilly County Remembers' that commemorated the centenary of WW1. This involved the installation of a plaque to commemorate those local government employees and community members who fell; a schools project; as well as unveiling a plaque which remembers the contribution Reservists make to the Armed Forces and society today.

Welsh Veterans Awards

Caerphilly County Borough Council was pleased to become a shortlisted finalist for this year's Welsh Veterans Awards in the category of Employer of the Year sponsored by Student Digz. The awards were held in the Village Hotel and Leisure Club Swansea on 26th June 2019.

Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

Caerphilly County Borough Council received the Silver Award in recognition of their commitment to the Defence and Armed Forces community.

The Silver Award focuses on a set standard of principles that Caerphilly County Borough Council meet. As an authority, Caerphilly County Borough Council has been committed to providing an active approach towards the Armed Forces community. HR policies and procedures are in place to allow flexibility for training and mobilisation commitments and there has been a focus on improving employment opportunities for service personnel.

Cllr Andrew Whitcombe (Caerphilly Council's Armed Forces Champion) with Kath Peters (Caerphilly Council's Corporate Policy Manager) at the ERS Silver Awards Ceremony at St Fagans National History Museum

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

Armed Forces service leavers, reservists, veterans and their spouses are to be guaranteed interviews for Caerphilly County Borough Council vacancies, providing they meet the essential criteria for the role, in the latest move by the council to demonstrate its support for the Armed Forces community.

The Guaranteed Interview Scheme doesn't guarantee appointment to a vacant position – selection procedures still ensure the best candidate for the position is appointed.

Page 37

Working with Gypsy and Traveller Communities

The Council's Gypsy and Traveller Group meets biannually to monitor changes to the local situation since the publication of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment completed in 2015 and approved by Welsh Government in 2016. The group uses data and service reports to see if there is a change of situation from that reported in the 2016 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

Caerphilly Council is a member of the All Wales Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Forum, which is coordinated by Welsh Government and meets 3/4 times per year.

The Supporting People programme have recently completed a pilot project around delivery of Housing Related Support, and while there is evident need within the borough, it is not deemed significant enough to dedicate a worker to this role. From April 2019 Supporting People will continue to receive referrals for Gypsy and Traveller communities and provide support through generic housing related support services.

Diversity in the Workforce

Improvements to the CCBC Workforce Data

The Council must keep up to date information of all employees on its HR database to ensure that it can communicate with staff effectively and fulfil its contract obligations as an employer. The Council must collect information about employees by law, for example their Welsh language skills and equalities data which gives the Council an insight to the workforce profile to satisfy the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The ability to record Welsh language information 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 31st March 2018 are shown below and overleaf.

Compared with last year, the number of recorded Welsh speakers has increased significantly. The increase can partly be explained by a staff Survey undertaken by People Services during the summer of 2017, which asked staff to identify their Welsh language skills based on the ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe) Levels 1-5. The ongoing data collection of staff skills is also based on skills levels outlined in the staff survey.

At the time of reporting, the total number of staff and Welsh speakers within the organisation was as shown in **Table 4**:

Table 4 – Total number of staff and Welsh speakers recorded on iTrent

	Total Staff	**Welsh Speakers**	**%**
2016-2017	8,682	402	4.63
2017-2018	8,767	436	4.97
2018-2019	8,533	1,581	18.53

The staff Survey undertaken to ascertain staff's Welsh language skills was also used an opportunity to cleanse and update staff's equalities data being held on the Council's HR employment management system. Data being published is up to date and being collected continuously, with new starters being required to provide this data when commencing work with the organisation.

Overview of the 2018-2019 Equalities Training Programme

The provision of a comprehensive training programme for staff and elected members on equalities and Welsh language topics, which includes courses to learn Welsh and British Sign Language, was a huge success again this year.

In total, **820** members of staff registered to attend specific equalities related courses as listed in **Table 5**:

Table 5 – Staff registered to attend equalities related courses

Course Title	Attendance	Numbers withdrawn
British Sign Language (levels 1-4)	17	1
Dementia Friends Training	467	0
Equality Impact Assessment	134	13
Equalities Awareness	32	0
Gender Bias (Members)	21	0
Human Trafficking	21	0
Mindfulness Awareness	6	0
Prevent (Counter-terrorism)	122	0

A key area of work this year was to improve their ability to undertake robust Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) when planning, revising or considering reducing / terminating any Council service, policy, function, strategy or project. The catalyst for this was a Judicial Review Judgement where it was deemed that an Equality Impact Assessment was insufficient.

A key area of success was the delivery of the Dementia Friends training and the "training to train" system for Dementia Champions. Dementia Champions are also now delivering the Dementia Friends training within their own service areas.

Page 40

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Training

Caerphilly county borough council has made significant progress towards fulfilling its requirements within the National Training Framework. The focus for 2018/19 has remained the co-ordination and delivery of **Group 1** (Awareness Raising) and **Group 2** (Ask and Act) training. Internal delivery capacity has also been developed.

In early 2019 our VAWDASV Training Plan was reviewed and updated to reflect progress made since 2016/17 and to detail our training goals up to 2022. . The new training plan was submitted to the Regional VAWDASV Team in March 2019.

The number of staff trained is very high reflecting the size of our workforce.

Group 1 progress:
- At the end of March 2019, 3295 current employees had completed Group 1 training (Awareness Raising). This equates to 42% of the workforce (increased from 28% 31/3/2018)

Group 2 progress:
- At the end of March 2019, 427 staff had completed Group 2 (Ask and Act) training. This is 24% of staff identified as requiring the training (increased from 11% 31/3/2018)

Group 6 (Elected Members) progress:
- At the end of March 2019, 72 Elected Members (99%) had completed Group 6 training (increased from 89% 31/3/2018)

Moving forward, **Group 1** and **Group 2** training sessions are scheduled throughout 2019/20. Training will also be rolled out to staff working within schools and early years settings.

Welsh Language Training

A requirement of the Welsh Language Standards in relation to staff training is the provision of Welsh language training courses.

Since 2001, **1811** of the Council's staff and staff of partner organisations have attended conversational Welsh classes ranging from taster courses for absolute beginners, up to and including 'A' level courses.

The relevant Standards are as follows:

130	You must provide opportunities during working hours – (a) for your employees to receive basic Welsh language lessons, and (b) for employees who manage others to receive training on using the Welsh language in their role as managers.
131	You must provide opportunities for employees who have completed basic Welsh language training to receive further training free of charge, to develop their language skills.
132	You must provide training courses so that your employees can develop – (a) awareness of the Welsh language (including awareness of its history and its role in Welsh culture); (b) an understanding of the duty to operate in accordance with the Welsh language standards; (c) an understanding of how the Welsh language can be used in the workplace.

There was a significant increase in the number of staff who attended Welsh language training during the year in question, with the Council arranging conversational and awareness raising training for staff and elected members.

The data for the courses offered and attended by Caerphilly CBC staff for the academic year 2018-2019 is as illustrated in **Table 6**:

Table 6 - Welsh Language courses offered and attended by Caerphilly CBC staff for the academic year 2018-2019

TITLE OF COURSE OFFERED	NUMBER OF COURSES OFFERED	NUMBER OF STAFF ATTENDING
30 Week	37	53
2 Day Welsh Taster	3	14
10 Hour Online Taster	3	75
Say Something in Welsh (Online)	1	2
Withdrawn	6	

Page 42

A 10 Hour Online Welsh Course called **Cymraeg Gwaith** (Work Welsh) was launched in Spring 2018 and has been developed to be used by those providing frontline reception type services. This course was targeted at those service areas which Standard 64 directly impacts in the first instance.

Standard 64	
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. **You must comply with standard 64 in relation to the following by 30 September 2017:** • The body's main reception service. **You must comply with standard 64 in relation to the following by 30 September 2018:** • Bargoed, Risca, Rhymney, Blackwood, Caerphilly & Ystrad Mynach libraries; • Caerphilly Visitor Centre; • Llancaiach Fawr Manor House; • Registration Services at Penallta House; • Caerphilly, Heolddu, Newbridge and Risca leisure centres.	30/09/17

The course can be undertaken in stages and takes the learner through a series of scenarios followed by a set of questions. On completion of the course, learners are emailed a certificate. A follow-on course is now also available and this will be rolled-out to those who have completed the first 10 hours in the Summer of 2019.

Further online courses of this type are now available for specific service areas including social care and business which will also be rolled out to relevant service areas in the Summer of 2019.

No courses were requested to be delivered through the medium of Welsh; therefore there are no staff training figures to record.

Recruitment and the Welsh Language

A requirement of the Welsh Language Annual Report is to report on our progress in relation to recruitment and the Welsh language.

Standard 136

> When you assess the requirements for a new or vacant post, you must assess the need for Welsh language skills, and categorise it as a post where one or more of the following apply –
> (a) Welsh language skills are essential;
> (b) Welsh language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post;
> (c) Welsh language skills are desirable; or
> (ch) Welsh language skills are not necessary.

A total of **632** new and vacant posts have been advertised between 31 March 2018 and 31 March 2019. Welsh language requirements of these posts were as follows:

(i)   Welsh language skills were essential

6

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

1

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

(iii)   Welsh language skills were desirable,

626

(iv)   Welsh language skills were not necessary

1*

*This post was assessed as no Welsh language skills necessary due to the Welsh language skills of the other team members. However, all vacancies are advertised as Welsh desirable as a minimum.

All vacant or new posts must have a Welsh language Skills Assessment (undertaken as required by Standard 136 and recorded by People Services since October 2016). All posts are advertised as **Welsh desirable** as a standard requirement. The assessment considers whether that needs to change to **Welsh essential**. The assessment and supporting evidence then forms part of the business case required to gain permission to fill a vacant post or create new ones.

Please see **Appendix A – CCBC Workforce Data Summary** for further details and breakdown of the Council's workforce.

Page 44

Corporate Compliance

An analysis of the complaints received during 2018 - 2019

Section **4** of the **Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020** defines what is considered a complaint in terms of Equalities and Welsh language issues. This is in order to maintain consistency of approach when dealing with any complaint of this nature as the Council operates an integrated Equalities and Welsh Language service.

v) Complaints

4.10   A complaint can be defined as a situation where a member of the public, or a group, is not satisfied with the standard of a service, or the action or lack of action by the Council or a member of staff.

*4.11   All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the corporate Complaints policy, but with the added need for translation of all incoming and outgoing correspondence on the matter, in line with the **Welsh Language Translation Guidance 2016** and any other relevant translation, design or format issue.*

4.12   Complaints will be fully monitored by Equalities category and in which language or format they were initially made.

*4.13   Complaints can be made in writing, by telephone or via email to the Council's dedicated email address **complaints@caerphilly.gov.uk**.*

*4.14   Further guidance can be found in the **Equalities and Welsh Language Complaints Guidance** document located on our website.*

Equalities and Welsh language complaints data forms part of the quarterly reporting to the Audit Committee as part of the Corporate Complaints process where appropriate, and the Senior Policy Officer (Equalities, Welsh Language and Consultation) now sits on the corporate Learning from Complaints Group that meets quarterly to discuss specific and cross-cutting complaints.

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 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.

During 2018-2019, no equalities complaints were received; we did receive **4** service requests which related to equalities. Three of these requests referred to text that needed to be updated on our website due to a change in terminology being used. The fourth service request was from an individual who wanted all correspondence to be in English only.

During 2018-2019, **4** service requests and **4** complaints were received relating to the Welsh language. All were responded to within the required timescales and all were upheld. 1 of the 4 service requests related to road markings and the other 3 related to signage. The 4 Welsh language complaints related to breaches of the Welsh Language Standards; including failure to provide a Welsh language service in a library, the compliance of car parking machines and service areas not having Welsh speaking staff to deal with enquiries. The 4 complaints received were all responded to within corporate timescales.

In the **Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2018-2019**, we reported that we had received 6 new Welsh Language Commissioner investigations. 3 of these investigations had been closed by the Commissioner's office, 2 because the complainant failed to respond to requests for additional information and the third because the Council did not have to comply with said breached Standard at the time the complaint was received.

Of the 3 remaining investigations, all the actions set out in the final report for one of the investigations have been fulfilled and the Commissioner has been provided with a copy of the evidence. 1 of them has been fulfilled and required further action in relation to the Council's website and providing information to staff. The one remaining investigation is still ongoing and we are currently awaiting the Commissioner's response to our response to the evidence notice received.

Good Practice, Tailoring Services and Promotion

The following stories show how Council service areas have tailored their day-to-day work to suit the requirements and needs of individual service users. All are excellent examples of putting Equalities and Welsh language related principles to practical use for the benefit of people in the county borough.

LGBT History Month

Caerphilly Council marked LGBT history month throughout February, with a number of activities and events to celebrate diversity and inclusivity.

The rainbow flag was flown proudly throughout the month of outside Penallta House, with the building also lit up in rainbow colours.

On 22 February 2019 the Council hosted at Penallta House a marketplace event where businesses and organisations such as Gwent Police, Chwarae Teg and Caerphilly Library Service were on hand to promote, raise awareness and celebrate LGBT History Month as well as signposting people to support services that they may need to speak to for advice.

Schools were also being encouraged to get involved with LGBT History Month. All Secondary School pupils were asked to take part in a design competition to produce a project (artwork, model or similar) which represents what LGBT means to them. Pupils were also encouraged to consider this year's theme of 'peace, activism and reconciliation' as a part of the design.

LGBT History Month celebrates the past and present achievements of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people's lives (both past and present). The month provides role models, builds community and represents a civil rights statement about the contributions of the LGBT community.

Dementia Friendly School

Heolddu Comprehensive School in Bargoed celebrated becoming the first Secondary School in the borough to be awarded with a Dementia Friends award. The award was presented to the school by Cllr Carol Andrews who, alongside her daughter Megan, worked very closely with the school to achieve their goal of becoming Dementia Friendly. This included delivering training and awareness sessions to every child.

For further information regarding Dementia Friend visit
www.dementiafriends.org.uk

Walkies for Autism

Risca Community Comprehensive School held their second fund-raising dog walk on Sunday 7April year at Cwmcarn Forest. The 'Walkies for Autism' is a 2-mile walk at Cwmcarn Forest to celebrate and raise awareness and funds for Risca Comprehensive School ASD Centre at the end of World Autism Awareness Week, which this year took place from 1-7 April 2019.

The ASD Centre supports young people aged 11 to 16 in a mainstream setting. Currently 14 students attend the ASD centre at Risca Community Comprehensive School, where they are supported by a key worker to attend lessons and also spend time in the centre to focus upon key skills. The ASD Centre also helps students to develop essential social and life skills to prepare pupils for life outside of the school.

Funds raised at last years' walk helped to develop the centre's life skills suite; creating a setting that fosters independence and fundamental organisation skills built around students learning essential routines and skills that they require for their future. These real life practical skills are vital in ensuring students feel confident and develop self-esteem. The funding also helped provide the centre with a new kitchen area to learn cooking skills that will teach our students to prepare and eat healthy food, learn how to live independently and work with and alongside others.

Page 48

The funds raised from the 2019 walk will help the school purchase a greenhouse, seating area, more seeds and to complete the calming area in the nurture garden.

Please read our **Frequently Asked Questions (PDF)** to find out more about the walk or for further information regarding the event please email **taffyterrier@gmail.com**

International Women's Day

Caerphilly County Borough Council planned a number of activities to celebrate International Women's Day. The global day, held on 8 March 2019, celebrates the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The theme of this year's International Women's Day was 'Balance for Better'; focussing on striving towards a fairer, more gender balanced world, where women can access every opportunity available to men and a more gender-balanced workforce.

Activities planned by the council included a networking event at Bryn Meadows Hotel, arranged in partnership with Chwarae Teg, where women could share experiences and success stories with like-minded individuals and companies from across the Caerphilly county borough. The event also saw the launch of a new programme of Working Women events for the coming year.

Throughout the day, the council used its social media channels to share inspiring stories from female employees who've chosen careers in traditionally male dominated roles.

- Christina Harrhy (Chief Executive) - **YouTube Clip of Christina Harrhy**
- Anouska Beaumont (Senior Assistant Engineer) - **YouTube Clip of Anouska Beaumont**
- Nichola Tiley (Highway Inspector) - **YouTube Clip of Nichola Tiley**
- Liz Lucas (Head of Customer and Digital Services) - **YouTube Clip of Liz Lucas**
- Karen Price (Heating Clerk of Works) - **YouTube Clip of Karen Price**
- Rhian Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning) - **YouTube Clip of Rhian Kyte**

A women's health event - 'Women of the World' also took place on Wednesday 13March 2019 at Llancaiach Fawr.

Page 49

The event showcased the work of the Council's Community Regeneration Team involving areas such as period dignity, as well as giving participants the opportunity to access workshops including body confidence and screening services/cervical screening awareness.

Holocaust Memorial Day

On Friday 25th January 2019, Caerphilly Council commemorated Holocaust Memorial Day at the Winding House Museum, New Tredegar. The event included the reading of poems by pupils from White Rose Primary School and Idris Davies School 3-18, a display of artwork created by pupils from Ysgol Gymraeg Caerffili, a prayer and the symbolic lighting of a candle.

Holocaust Memorial Day is an international day of remembrance for victims of the Holocaust and other genocides. This day honours the survivors and remembers those who have lost their lives. It also provides an opportunity to reflect on the way in which we live our lives today.

Mental Health

Time to Change Wales launched a new campaign to encourage men to talk about their mental health without the fear of being judged. 'Talking is a Lifeline' emphasises that talking about mental health is one of the bravest things a man can do.

The campaign aims to empower men to open up about their mental health struggles and Caerphilly Council's very own Lee Carpenter (Environmental Health Officer), participated in the video and photo materials being used to promote the campaign.

Research conducted by Time to Change Wales found that self-stigma, and a lack of understanding of mental health stops many men from talking to family and friends about their mental health problems because of fear and anxiety about negative consequences. Many men have told Time to Change Wales that the pressure to 'man up' and 'be strong' has led to them suffering in silence.

The campaign includes a series of short videos highlighting the importance of talking to the people around you when you aren't feeling 100%.

The Time to Change Wales website is packed with information and advice about mental health. Visit timetochangewales.org.uk to watch the 'Talking is a Lifeline' videos. Show your support for the campaign by downloading resources from the website. You can follow the campaign on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Page 50

10 Days to Well-being

A series of workshops and information sessions were available to all staff, filled with ways to increase and maintain physical and mental well-being in the lead up to World Mental Health Day.

The sessions included:
- Mindfulness taster session
- HR policies information stand.
- Health MOT
- Yoga & Relaxation
- Nutrition & healthy eating
- 'Make every work day a well day!
- Fit Friday
- The Wellbeing Challenge
- Breaking down the barriers of mental health in the workplace

The Wellbeing Challenge | 10 days to Wellbeing (PDF)

Success for South East Wales Shared Lives Carers at Wales Carers Awards

Three sets of Shared Lives Carers received prizes following the announcement of the winners of the Wales Carers Awards.

The scheme collaboration covers six local authorities which include Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Merthyr Tydfil, Newport, and Caerphilly as the host authority.

Held by Care Forum Wales, these awards aim to celebrate carers who provide excellence in their fields and this year carers were selected in recognition of their hard work, commitment and dedication.

Safeguarding Week

Safeguarding Week was marked (12 – 16 November 2018) with the Council reminding all its employees, Elected Members, volunteers and contractors of their legal duty to take action if they are concerned about the well-being of any child, young person or vulnerable adult.

Every individual has a responsibility for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults and Caerphilly County Borough Council is committed to creating caring communities where residents feel safe and protected.

Caerphilly's Youth Service hosted the launch of a new initiative that trains youth workers and raises awareness of modern slavery. The national training programme provides front-line youth workers with the skills and knowledge to recognise instances of modern slavery.

Cash Boost for Welsh Medium Schools

The council has welcomed the news that five Welsh medium primary schools across the area will benefit from over £6 million in Welsh Government funding. The investment will see 41 projects across 16 local authority areas, benefit, to the tune of £51 million.

The funding will be used to increase Welsh medium capacity, provide enhanced childcare provision, enhance classroom facilities and allow for the removal of demountable classrooms from many of the sites.

Ras yr Iaith

Ras yr Iaith is the only world-wide race that promotes the Welsh language. The race started in Wrexham on 4 July, and worked its way across the country to finish in Caerphilly town centre on 6 July. The event offers 3 full days of running, noise, energy and enjoyment, while celebrating the Welsh language in a variety of communities across Wales.

The race is organised by Mentrau Iaith Cymru, with the Caerphilly section managed by Menter Iaith Caerffili with the support of Caerphilly County Borough Council, Caerphilly Town and Community Council, local businesses, schools and the community.

Various organisations across Wales also benefit from the race, as the funding received is distributed in the form of grants to the communities involved. The last race held in 2016 raised over £42,000 which was shared between forty five Welsh language organisations across the areas visited with the aim of promoting the Welsh language in their areas.

For more information on Ras yr Iaith, please visit Ras yr Iaith's Website.

Page 52

Appendix A - Workforce Data Summary

The following information is high-level data of what the *iTrent* payroll system holds as at 31st March 2019 regarding the Caerphilly CBC workforce profile, in terms of protected characteristics and language ability of staff.

You will notice

- Gender, Ethnicity and Disability data is currently shown by Directorate.
- Religion or Belief and Sexual Orientation data is currently shown by Corporate totals only. Data has improved during the last financial year.
- Language Ability is available by Service Area but the data is provided here as Corporate totals for information.
- Other information has not been presented as the categories are currently showing zero records.

Gender by Directorate	Male	Female	Undisclosed
Communities	923	628	0
Education Corporate Services	904	4,300	0
Social Services and Housing	522	1,417	0
Authority Total	**2,300**	**6233**	**0**

Disability by Directorate	Disabled	No	Undisclosed	Unwilling to declare
Communities	56	1,401	94	0
Education and Corporate Services	75	4,425	704	0
Social Services and Housing	53	1,815	71	0
Authority Total	**181**	**7,489**	**863**	**0**

Sexual Orientation (totals)	Numbers
Bisexual	13
Gay	34
Heterosexual	2,664
Lesbian	22
Other	22
Undisclosed	5,670
Unwilling to Declare	108
Authority Total	**8,533**

Page 53

Ethnicity by Directorate	White	BME	Undisclosed	Unwilling to declare
Communities	1,452	18	80	1
Education and Corporate Services	4,521	40	640	3
Social Services and Housing	1,867	32	40	0
Authority Total	**7,691**	**80**	**758**	**4**

Religion or Belief (totals)	Numbers
Buddhist	6
Christian (All Denominations)	1,176
Hindu	6
Jewish	1
Muslim	2
Sikh	2
Humanist	3
No Religion	1,463
Undisclosed	5,775
Unwilling to Declare	66
Other	33
Authority Total	**8,533**

Nationality	Numbers
British (Not Channel Islands or IOM)	963
English	78
Northern Irish	3
Irish	6
Welsh	2,018
Scottish	7
Cornish	1
Other	34
Undisclosed	5,418
Unwilling to Declare	5
Authority Total	**8,533**

Language Ability (Other than English)	Numbers
Arabic	1
Braille	2
Breton	0
BSL (British Sign Language)	51
Croatian	1
Dutch	1
French	44
German	15
Greek	1
Hebrew	1
Hindi	2
Hungarian	1
Italian	4
Kurdish	1
Makaton Sign Language	1
Malayalam	2
Nepali	1
Rumanian	2
Russian	1
Serbian	0
Spanish	13
Tamil	1
Turkish	2
Welsh	1,581
(No staff total is recorded as some staff speak more than two languages)	

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CABINET – 14TH OCTOBER 2020

SUBJECT: **FLEXIBLE WORKING**

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

1. **PURPOSE**

   The attached report was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 29th September 2020. The report sought the views of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee of a more formal approach to flexible working that builds upon the progress made in respect of working in a flexible manner throughout the lockdown prior to its consideration and determination at Cabinet.

2. **SUMMARY**

2.1 The Scrutiny Committee were advised that because of the speed and nature of the COVID-19 lockdown, the Council was required to equip and train a significant proportion of its workforce to work and to provide services remote from their usual places of work and, in many cases, from home.

2.2 While the transformation to this new model of service delivery happened at a significant pace, the technology platforms that have formed the foundations of remote working have proven to be intuitive and stable.

2.3 Some sections of the workforce have been operating remotely and very effectively since the beginning of lockdown and, over time, further services have been enabled and brought back online with much less of a reliance on buildings, premises and travel.

2.4 This has enabled many services to the public to be delivered safely and continuously and for the Council's employees to manage multiple aspects of their professional and personal lives in a way that has brought about a much greater balance than was possible previously.

2.5 Of course, not everyone has found the isolated nature of working remotely a positive experience and the results of the Flexible Working survey provide a healthy note of caution. Whatever the Council does from here on in, must be truly flexible and meet the differing needs of its employees, as well as reducing any operating costs associated with service delivery.

2.   **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE COMMENTS**

2.1   The scrutiny committee received evidence from Mrs L Dallimore of Unison on the report and noted that the Trade Unions are committed to working with the Authority on the proposals and her thanks to senior officers for their engagement.

2.2   Mrs Dallimore highlighted several issues that Unison wished members to be aware of when considering the proposals. She asked that Members consider who the beneficiaries of flexible working would be and how will the additional energy costs to staff that are home working can be mitigated. That further consideration of both the benefits alongside the drawbacks needs more consideration. The availability of staff working from home with clear boundaries put in place and the importance of establishing a culture that is embedded into the organisation. The differences between staff that carry out roles that are public facing and cannot be flexible was highlighted and how the flexible working hours system will work with this proposal. At present there is confusion and staff have been told they have to have managers approval to work beyond their contracted hours. This will mean many fundamental changes to many personnel policies and it was suggested that pilot schemes be established before policy changes are put forward alongside Equality Impact Assessments.

2.3   Members agreed that management support is needed for staff and by colleagues supporting each other. It is important for staff to have a sense of belonging and regular contact via team meetings and informal methods, to ensure appropriate safeguarding.

2.4   The committee were advised that this is the start of the process with a lot of work left to do and it should be noted that this is how the Authority has worked over the past 6 months. The views of trade unions are important for this process and it is appreciated that one size doesn't fit all but the overall aim is to make the organisation fit for purpose going forward. Further reports and policies will follow and scrutiny will be involved receiving reports and policies. The staff survey indicated that the majority who responded were in favour of a 50/50 split of home and office-based work going forward. However, it was important to note that flexible working also includes working from other locations such as other council offices, or partners organisations.

2.5   Members were assured that that managers have had the message that regular contact with staff must take place. The personnel manager has met regularly with the trade unions and there has been discussion on how authority and trade unions can work together to offer emotional support to staff. Members agreed that it was important to consider potential impact of working from home of those who may be isolated or perhaps at risk of domestic abuse. The need to consider how career paths and morale will be impacted was also mentioned.

2.6   The scrutiny committee asked if plans to close office were premature and there is a need to ensure that the pros and cons were thoroughly considered first. Members asked if consideration has been given to which buildings may be sold off and the impact of communities if office staff are no longer using local shops and facilities. Members were assured that there are no plans at present to sell off any buildings and we would need to be sure this approach was working, and further reports would need to come forward with any detailed proposals.

2.7 Members also asked for assurance that the public were considered as part of this proposal, with 25% still not having digital skills there is still a need for them to access services. The committee were advised that this has happened over the past six months, services have been maintained and the public supported. Members were also reminded of the customer and digital strategy approved last year this has given us a flexible customer service and this flexible working approach would enhance this allowing us to provide a 24/7 service.

2.8 The scrutiny committee appreciated that this is the start of the process and felt it was important that Members are kept fully informed and consulted going forward. The committee would like to see a report in January 2021 that will include details on the issues raised by staff in the consultation and highlighted by the trade unions on the impact upon staff, including their mental health with appropriate Equality Impact Assessments. The report to also include the potential impact on communities if offices close.

3. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 Therefore, the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee recommend by the majority present that Cabinet approve the following recommendations as detailed in the attached officers report and for the reasons contained therein: -

3.2 Cabinet acknowledge the benefits of the flexible working arrangements that have supported service delivery across the council since March 2020.

3.3 Cabinet agree to formally adopt the flexible working principles set out at appendix 1 of the report to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee as a core principle for supporting service delivery.

3.4 Cabinet delegates authority to the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, to determine on a service by service basis the optimum approach to flexible working and accommodation requirements.

3.5 Cabinet note the need to consider how the current flexi system can be aligned with and support the principles of flexible working through ongoing discussions with trade unions.

3.6 Cabinet note the potential investment associated with the deployment of flexible working in relation to it equipment and furniture as well as the potential savings that can be generated through the rationalisation of buildings and reductions in other operating expenditure.

3.7 Cabinet agrees to receive additional reports, as required, to agree funding and any associated hr and it policy changes that might be required.

3.8 Cabinet endorse the proposal to set aside an initial one-off sum of £500k to be funded from capital earmarked reserves to ensure that the council can respond proactively in the short-term to commence the roll-out of new flexible ways of working.

3.9 Cabinet endorses the development of an appropriate training and development programme for managers and staff to ensure the benefits of flexible working are maximised

3.10 Cabinet note the additional recommendation made that the Policy and

Resources Scrutiny Committee hold a special meeting in order to consider in detail the principles of flexible working and its impact on staff and service users and communities.

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Appendices: Report to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee 29th September 2020 –
              Agenda Item 7

**POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
29TH SEPTEMBER 2020**

SUBJECT: **FLEXIBLE WORKING**

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek the views of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee of a more formal approach to flexible working that builds upon the progress made in respect of working in a flexible manner throughout the lockdown prior to its consideration and determination at Cabinet.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 Because of the speed and nature of the COVID-19 lockdown, the Council was required to equip and train a significant proportion of its workforce to work and to provide services remote from their usual places of work and, in many cases, from home.

2.2 While the transformation to this new model of service delivery happened at a significant pace, the technology platforms that have formed the foundations of remote working have proven to be intuitive and stable.

2.3 Some sections of the workforce have been operating remotely and very effectively since the beginning of lockdown and, over time, further services have been enabled and brought back online with much less of a reliance on buildings, premises and travel.

2.4 This has enabled many services to the public to be delivered safely and continuously and for the Council's employees to manage multiple aspects of their professional and personal lives in a way that has brought about a much greater balance than was possible previously.

2.5 Of course, not everyone has found the isolated nature of working remotely a positive experience and the results of the Flexible Working survey provide a healthy note of caution. Whatever the Council does from here on in, must be truly flexible and meet the differing needs of its employees, as well as reducing any operating costs associated with service delivery.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 In terms of recommendations, Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee are asked to recommend that Cabinet:

3.1.1 Acknowledge the benefits of the flexible working arrangements that have supported service delivery across the Council since March 2020.

3.1.2 Agree to formally adopt the flexible working principles set out at Appendix 1 as a core principle for supporting service delivery.

3.1.3 Delegates authority to the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, to determine on a service by service basis the optimum approach to flexible working and accommodation requirements.

3.1.4 Note the need to consider how the current flexi system can be aligned with and support the principles of flexible working through ongoing discussions with Trade Unions.

3.1.5 That Members note the potential investment associated with the deployment of flexible working in relation to IT equipment and furniture as well as the potential savings that can be generated through the rationalisation of buildings and reductions in other operating expenditure.

3.1.6 Agrees to receive additional reports, as required, to agree funding and any associated HR and IT Policy changes that might be required

3.1.7 Endorse the proposal to set aside an initial one-off sum of £500k to be funded from Capital Earmarked Reserves to ensure that the Council can respond proactively in the short-term to commence the roll-out of new flexible ways of working.

3.1.8 Endorses the development of an appropriate training and development programme for managers and staff to ensure the benefits of flexible working are maximised

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The authority has gone through an unprecedented period of flexible working in relation to the current Coronavirus pandemic. It is wholly evident that there are options to enhance the standard approach to office accommodation that will benefit staff, the Council, the residents of Caerphilly County Borough and the wider environment.

4.2 The progress achieved over recent months in delivering services through flexible arrangements must now be captured and built upon to ensure services can remain sustainable over the long term, whatever challenges may emerge.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 The current pandemic has provided a stimulus to show the benefits of working in a more flexible manner. The progress made and the lessons learned over the last four months can directly shape the blueprint for future service delivery and redesign. Embedding flexible practices will enable the organisation to be ready to manage any future crisis as well as reflect the Council's need to remain an attractive and progressive employer.

5.2 It is acknowledged that it is not going to be possible to design a one size fits all approach and that flexible working models will need to be developed and tailored to each service area and, in some cases, these models will differ depending upon role. The core focus, however, will remain a reduction in the reliance of the workforce and services upon physical buildings.

5.3 The success of any flexible implementation will be linked to a clear set of objectives, a consistently applied corporate approach, a strong communication and engagement plan as well as a suite of policies that support the new ways of working.

5.4   Team management and appropriate support will also be vital to the success of flexible working and Managers will need to be provided the necessary training and tools to be able to manage and support a distributed workforce while maintaining and optimising the benefits of team working.

5.5   It should also be noted that flexible working is not simply home working. Home working will form part of a range of flexible arrangements. Some employees will use their home as their office base, some will operate across multiple office buildings and some may even take advantage of working at times from other buildings. The flexible working approach should support staff to work where and when it best suits them while still ensuring the needs of the business are supported.

5.6   The introduction of a broader flexible working approach will be a move to a trust-based organisation with employees empowered to deliver their roles flexibly. Measures will still be in place, however, to ensure staff achieve their required tasks and outputs and fulfil their contracted hours.

5.7   Organisations that have introduced 'flexible working' opportunities (such as the NHS, other local authorities, business in general), have confirmed improvements in the following areas:

For the employer:

- Increased motivation and engagement of staff
- Increased productivity and Efficiency
- Improved business continuity – less disruption due to weather, office security issues, travel problems etc.
- Reduction in organisational and personal carbon footprint
- Reduced parking
- Improved staff performance
- Ability to attract and retain high quality talent
- Reduced absenteeism and related costs
- Reduced staff turnover with associated costs and reduction in lost knowledge, skills and experience
- Asset rationalisation

For employees:

- Reduced travel time and related cost.
- Personal productivity linked to fewer distractions, improved focus, concentration, creativity, better use of skills and less frustration due to fewer barriers.
- Improved work life balance
- Increase in wellbeing, health and happiness linked to reduced stress, better sense of control, ability to integrate healthy eating, childcare responsibility, caring responsibilities and exercise into the day
- Increased engagement as a result of the autonomy and trust at work

5.8   One of the other gains typically witnessed through flexible working is around productivity. In many cases, productivity when working flexibly can be maintained, even enhanced, because commutes and office distractions are often gone.

5.9   It is equally important to set out the potential negative impacts to flexible working. Some of the downsides can include the following:

- Communication difficulties
- Longer working hours
- Poor posture
- Staff can be more difficult to oversee

Page 63

- IT issues
- Lone working issues
- Different management skills required
- Individual well-being
- Manual handling

5.10   Through effective and targeted training for managers and staff and appropriate investment in the tools and resources needed to work flexibly, many of these negatives can be addressed

5.11   The appendices to this report contain a detailed exploration of some of the requirements of a flexible workforce as well as some of the key considerations. Some of the headlines from the appendices are set out over the coming paragraphs.

5.12   Flexible Working Principles

The Council has in a place a set of 'Agile Working Principles' which set out guidance on working flexibly. These were introduced in 2019 as a means of encouraging the use of flexible working and providing the necessary guidance and support to staff and managers who wished to deliver their roles flexibly. These principles will need to be reviewed and adjusted as the numbers of staff working flexibly has increased exponentially.

5.13   The New Normal?

The pandemic has created a new normal that has transformed the organisation and society alike. The use of flexible working approaches over recent months has demonstrated the opportunities that exist to create new services that meet specific needs, break down barriers across services, bring previously disparate resources together and quickly meet the changing needs of staff and residents. It has also become clear that a 'one size fits all' approach to flexible working should not be introduced. Instead, a blended approach should be developed that ensures the needs of all staff and customers can be met.

5.14   Foundations for a Successful Flexible Working Programme

Our staff will be key to the delivery of this major change programme and their buy in will be key to its success. What will be equally important will be the policies that support it, access to the right systems, tools and training and the communication strategy that will bring this new way of working to life. There will also be a need to develop management systems that get the best out of staff and managers, providing the necessary support and enabling the needs of the business to be met across a distributed workforce.

5.15   A New Customer Interface - Public Interaction and Digital Capability

The restrictions on movement that have underpinned lockdown have demonstrated that many of our residents have the access and the skills to conduct many aspects of their daily lives online. The assessment of digital capability across Caerphilly explored in Appendix 4 identifies that 75% of the adult population in the Borough have all five of the basic digital skills required. While this provides an opportunity to increasingly engage our residents in new ways and across different hours of business, our services must continue to support those that do not have either the access or the digital skills at present.

5.16   Health, Safety and Wellbeing Considerations

With a potential move to a more formal approach to flexible working there are multiple benefits that emerge in terms of Health and Wellbeing. Increases in productivity, being able to better balance the competing demands of increasingly busy work and home lives and the positive impact of feeling trusted to get the job done, have all been proven to enhance an individual's wellbeing. Conversely, there are individuals whose wellbeing could be negatively impacted by

working remotely and the Council will need to work hard to strike the right balance, put in place the right support and ensure that the wellbeing needs of all of our staff are being met.

5.17   Flexible Working Policy Considerations

The Council already has 'Agile Working Principles' in place to support flexible working approaches but their use has been sporadic to date. Similarly, the Council has a range of HR and IT policies designed to support work life balance and safe systems of work. Over the coming months, these policies will each need to be reviewed and potentially adjusted to support a broader application of flexible working. Any changes that result would be developed in consultation with staff and our Trade Union partners.

In the short term, and as a means of ensuring the ongoing wellbeing of our staff, those staff working away from the office will be asked to seek line manager approval in advance to work longer than their contracted hours. This interim adjustment will not restrict staff from being able to accrue time off in lieu, but it will help managers ensure that workloads are being appropriately balanced while staff are operating remotely.

5.18   Environmental Impact

During the pandemic, there has been a significant reduction in the number of journeys undertaken by staff to and from work and travelling to and from meetings during the working day. This has resulted in a sizeable increase in the air quality, not just in Caerphilly, but across the world. An enhanced approach to flexible working would clearly provide these benefits over a sustained period as well as reducing the Council's operating expenditure.

5.19   IT and Equipment

As a result of the need to transition to flexible working arrangements in only a matter of days, many Council staff are working remotely at present using their own IT equipment, desk etc. As the Council moves to formalise its flexible working arrangements over the coming months Council staff must be provided with fit for purpose equipment, tools and systems that support them to do their job as efficiently and effectively as possible. It is likely that these packages will be linked to particular roles and separate reports will be brought forward over the coming months to provide a sustainable funding package.

5.20   Investment and Property Requirements

An initial exercise undertaken by Property Services has identified that currently there are circa 2000 desks available within the authority for use by staff. If service provision was undertaken in a flexible manner, property portfolio rationalisation opportunities could emerge which could result in 8 buildings being surplus to requirements and savings being generated in terms of building occupancy and reduced running costs.

5.21   Flexible Working Staff Survey June 2020

Nearly 1500 employees completed a flexible working staff survey during June 2020 giving some fantastic insights in to the benefits and challenges facing staff working remotely. There some very positive views shared on flexible working in overall terms as well as some concerns. The overarching results are provided in Appendix 10.

The key aspects of the survey revealed that 50% of respondents would like to split their time between home and office working, 23% having a preference for working from home and 21% wanting to work from the office but have the option to work from home occasionally. These results clearly demonstrate that with the expansion of flexible working there is likely to be a surplus of office accommodation linking back to the outcome set out in 5.20.

5.22   **Conclusion**

When considering the way the world has adapted and changed, particularly in the light of the current pandemic, it is wholly evident that a new way of working can and should be supported to ensure that the organisation remains as flexible as possible and is able to react to any future pandemics or similar events that would restrict service provision. The organisation may well need to turn on and off services more frequently as we respond to the current pandemic.

5.23   Flexible working has been proven to work in Caerphilly. Services provided by the Council have not "fallen over" or ceased, in fact, it has been possible to continue to deliver many of them as a direct result.

5.24   The gains made over the last few months, albeit out of necessity, cannot now be lost. Now is the time to embrace transformational change and shape an organisation that is able to meet the challenges of the 21st century head on.

6.   ASSUMPTIONS

6.1   There have been no assumptions made within this report.

7.   LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1   **Corporate Plan 2018-2023.**

7.1.1   The report links to the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2023, and contributes to the Well-being Objectives, as follows:

7.1.2   Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all – Flexible working has and will continue to allow teachers to deliver lessons remotely.

7.1.3   Objective 2 - Enabling employment – Flexible working promotes more autonomy over where and when staff work, thus affording flexibility for enabling balance between work, leisure, family and caring responsibilities. This will open up more opportunities for people to apply for roles that may have previously been unsuitable due to the lack of flexibility around working hours and locations.

7.1.4   Objective 3 - Address the supply, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's health and well-being – The ability to better balance the professional and personal aspects of our employees lives, combined with application of appropriate wellbeing and management support for these new ways of working should create an environment where employee health and well-being will flourish.

7.1.5   Objective 4 - Promote a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impacts on the environment - There are clear environmental benefits realised by flexible working in terms of office/asset rationalisation and lesser journeys attributed to commuting or work based travel. This will assist in reducing the impact on the climate and improving air quality. With less cars on the road it is already evident that more people are prepared to engage in active travel.

7.1.6   Objective 5 - Creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the sustainable Development Principle within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 - Improving work life balance and reducing the need to commute utilising flexible working offers the opportunity for staff to partake in more social, sports and leisure activities and to utilise active travel options which will improve health and well-being.

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

working when linked into a digital transformation of service delivery will assist residents to access services at the time and location that suits them helping them to remain independent.

7.2   There are further links to the TeamCaerphilly transformation strategy, firstly echoing the mantra - *A new "whole-authority" operating model to ensure a resilient Caerphilly County Borough for the future.*

7.3   Further synergies include – "*We will need to move away from traditional models of service delivery, embrace change, be prepared to innovate and take well managed risks. We will also need to modernise through harnessing emerging technologies and fully engaging with our workforce and communities".*

7.4   The recognition of strong corporate will and clear strategy, with equal buy-in by the leadership team, is again reflected in the TeamCaerphilly transformation statement;

        "This ambitious programme of change articulates the combined vision of the Cabinet and the Corporate Leadership Team and has been developed over the last 12 months. In making this Strategy a reality, courageous political and officer leadership will be essential to ensure that we successfully deliver the outcomes that we are aiming to achieve."

7.5   Furthermore, the Cabinet commitments already defined, include: -

        • We will build on Caerphilly County Borough Council's reputation as an innovative, high performing local authority.
        • We will ensure we have an engaged and motivated workforce.
        • We will always strive to ensure Caerphilly County Borough Council delivers value for money in everything it does.

7.6   Similarly, the notion of harnessing the success of the recent transformation in view of flexible/digital working and customer interaction (equally with the corporate appetite for such) can be harmonised with the **Customer and digital strategy**; whereby the Cabinet Members foreword describes being brave / bold in approach to embracing technologies and innovation to deliver citizen centric services, including an flexible, iterative approach to our work.

8.   WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1   This report links directly to the Well–being goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015:

        • A prosperous Wales
        • A resilient Wales
        • A healthier Wales
        • A more equal Wales
        • A Wales of cohesive communities
        • A globally responsible Wales

8.2   It is consistent in all of the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act that it supports:

8.2.1   **Long-term –** Flexible working promotes many long-term benefits for the organisation as a whole, with both employer and employee recognising substantial improvements as outlined within the report. The introduction of flexible working will have a positive impact on future generations and primarily will offer safeguard in view of; improved business continuity, reduction in organisational and personal carbon footprint, improved work life balance and increase in wellbeing, health and happiness. Equally, the Council's customer-centric ethos will be enhanced and the needs and demands of Caerphilly's citizens best met.

8.2.2 **Integration –** A flexible workforce will form an integral part of the Council's overall transformation strategy and complements the suite of policies that serve to balance home and work life commitments. There current crisis has provided opportunities for the many varied services of the authority to become truly "One Council". Each service area is clearly assisting others to ensure the highest priority objectives are delivered to the customer. There is clear evidence that the flexible working approach has allowed true service integration across the council, with other service sectors and primarily with its residents and customers at the heart of its approach.

8.2.3 **Involvement –** All staff need to be fully engaged in view of the flexible working transformation as not all roles and responsibilities are conducive to flexible working, and there will be a notable disparity between blue and white-collar workers and those that need to provide front line service delivery. There needs to be an effective communication plan to ensure the strategy behind flexible working, along with the suitability of application, is transparent to all parties. This will require the involvement of staff (staff survey already conducted) and engagement with all relevant stakeholders.

8.2.4 **Collaboration –** Flexible working not only brings the Council's internal departments closer together to deliver the best working model and to move to the "One Council" approach, it has also already promoted wider collaboration within the private / public sector due to the ease in which meetings and working arrangements have continued almost seamlessly with the utilisation of a digital approach.

8.2.5 **Prevention –** Carefully prioritised and justified budget commitment for flexible working platforms will ensure confidence in both application and investment. This will assist in ensuring service continuity, reducing the risk to service failure during any future crisis or emergency. Embracing transformation to flexible working will ensure the Council is both resilient and flexible in terms of business continuity during adverse conditions and aligns with priorities to improve the way the council operates in order to protect the environment for future generations in many aspects but particularly from an impact on the climate.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 An EIA screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and supplementary guidance. No potential for unlawful discrimination and/or low level or minor negative impact has been identified; therefore, a full EIA has not been carried out. The flexible working approach will allow more flexibility in where and how people undertake their roles which will assist in providing equality.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Moving forward there will be far reaching financial implications from this report. The detailed financial implications will be firmed up in the medium to longer-term as specific requirements become clearer following further discussions with Heads of Service. Further reports will be prepared for Scrutiny and Cabinet which will include detailed costings and funding proposals, along with details of where revenue budget savings will arise from the new working models.

10.2 It is also is vitally important that we are able to respond proactively in the short-term to commence the roll-out of new flexible ways of working. Cabinet is therefore asked to approve a proposal to set aside an initial one-off sum of £500k to be funded from Capital Earmarked Reserves.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

11.1   There will be wide-ranging personnel implications from this report. There will need to be consultations undertaken with the trade unions and staff in relation to policies and procedures.

11.2   A staff survey has already been undertaken in relation to flexible working which identified overwhelming support for the initiative. Details of the survey results are highlighted in Appendix 10.

12.   CONSULTATIONS

12.1   A full list of consultees is included at the end of the report. Comments from all consultees are summarised below.

12.2   The Consultations responses received from the Trade Unions have been included in full as a separate Response Pack attached to this report.

13.   STATUTORY POWER

13.1   Local Government Act 1972 and 2000

Author: Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure

Consultees: Cllr Philippa Marsden, Leader of the Council
                   Cabinet Members
                   Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive
                   Corporate Management Team
                   Leadership Team
                   Cllr Jamie Pritchard, Chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
                   Cllr Gez Kirby, Vice Chair of Policy and resources Scrutiny Committee
                   Cllr Colin Mann, Leader of the Plaid Group
                   Cllr Graham Simmonds, Leader of the Independent Group
                   Trade Unions

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Caerphilly County Borough Council - Agile Working Principles
                   Appendix 2 – The New Normal?
                   Appendix 3 – Some Foundations for a Successful Flexible Working Programme
                   Appendix 4 – A New Customer Interface - Public Interaction and Digital Capability
                   Appendix 5 - Health, Safety and Well-Being Considerations
                   Appendix 6 - Flexible Working Policy Considerations
                   Appendix 7 - Environmental Impact
                   Appendix 8 - IT and Equipment
                   Appendix 9 - Investment and Property Requirements
                   Appendix 10 – Flexible Working Staff Survey June 2020
                   Appendix 11 – Trade Union Response Pack

Appendix 1 – Caerphilly County Borough Council - Agile Working Principles

1   INTRODUCTION

(i)   The concept of Agile Working

Agile working is a transformational tool that enables organisations to work smarter by eliminating all barriers to working efficiently. It uses communications and information technology to enable people to work in ways which best suit their needs without the traditional limitations of where and when tasks must be performed.

Agile working can support staff to:

- Have more autonomy over where they work.
- Have more autonomy over when they work.

Agile working is based on the complete flexibility of work to drive long-term organisational success. It can unlock value for both the employer and the employee.

(ii)   The Benefits of Agile Working?

Organisations that have introduced 'agile working' opportunities (such as the NHS), have confirmed improvements in the following areas:

For the employer:

- Increased motivation and engagement of staff
- Increased productivity and Efficiency
- Improved business continuity – less disruption due to weather, office security issues, travel problems etc.
- Reduction in organisational and personal carbon footprint
- Reduced parking
- Improved staff performance
- Ability to attract and retain high quality talent
- Reduced absenteeism and related costs
- Reduced staff turnover with associated costs and reduction in lost knowledge, skills and experience
- Asset rationalisation

For employees:

- Reduced travel time and related cost.
- Personal productivity linked to fewer distractions, improved focus, concentration, creativity, better use of skills and less frustration due to fewer barriers.
- Improved work life balance

- Increase in wellbeing, health and happiness linked to reduced stress, better sense of control, ability to integrate healthy eating, childcare responsibility, caring responsibilities and exercise into the day
- Increased engagement as a result of the autonomy and trust at work

2.   AGILE WORKING IN THE CONTEXT OF CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL (CCBC)

This section identifies why CCBC might consider starting an agile working programme.

(i)   Cabinet's clear vision

Caerphilly's Cabinet have set a clear vision for the Council with staff engagement at its core. The standards that underpin this vision that agile working could compliment, are highlighted in bold:

- We will always do our best to protect jobs and services within the current challenging financial climate
- We will build on Caerphilly County Borough Council's reputation as an innovative, high performing local authority
- We will ensure we have an engaged and motivated workforce
- We will always strive to ensure Caerphilly County Borough Council delivers value for money in everything it does
- We will help protect the most vulnerable people in our society and make safeguarding a key priority
- We will always welcome feedback and consider the views of residents, staff and other key stakeholders
- We will be open, honest and transparent in everything we do

(ii)   The catalyst / drivers for agile working:

There are a number of catalysts that encourage further exploration of agile working and the benefits that it could bring to Caerphilly.

For CCBC the clear drivers are:

The Council's need to keep up with the pace of change as a progressive employer in the 21st Century.

Our approach to working life is changing fast. Both men and women want to find a balance between work, leisure, family and caring responsibilities.

Studies commissioned by the Employment Human Rights Commission (EHRC) support that people (regardless of gender) want a wider range of flexible job opportunities in all types of jobs. They want policies that reflect the social and economic benefits of integrating work life balance and care.

Agile working methodologies that afford staff more autonomy over where and when they work can support this position.

CCBC's Business Continuity Plan Review (Inclement Weather)

The Guardian Newspaper reported in 2018 that gridlocked motorways, multiple rail cancellations, a string of crashes on motorways, empty restaurants and idle diggers seen across Britain at that time could cost the economy at least £1bn a day.

In March 2018 the Council felt it was important to acknowledge the fantastic work undertaken by employees during the 4 days of difficult conditions. Without whom all our roads would not have been cleared, care could not have been provided to the most vulnerable in our society and emergency conditions could not have been dealt with to name just a few.

Conversely however, the inclement weather forced many staff to stay close to home and hundreds of Caerphilly staff did not attend work for this reason. The enforced office closures for health & safety reasons exacerbated this position.

In this context, many staff might have been equipped to work from home or nearer to home during the office closure period through the effective implementation of a refined business continuity plan that caters for such events, i.e. a plan that takes advantage of the technology and/or the office space at its disposal.

A truly agile workforce is a mobile one and there is great strength in a mobile workforce to meet the needs of the Council and its residents during periods of inclement weather. This was proven in the context of the hundreds of staff who did turn up to work and who did step out of role with transferrable skills to assist colleagues/residents to go about their business safely.

If a post suits agile working in terms of Location, the relevant service area can build this into its business continuity plan and extend the opportunity to staff to continue working safely during periods of inclement weather.

Savings targets / MTFP

Some of the most successful companies have led the way on re-assessing how their workplaces operate and have introduced flexible and agile options for their employees. They did this to improve their business but it has also got them in good shape for tougher times and fit to take on new opportunities in the future.

The Council's vision for the future is ambitious against the MTFP target savings of £39m over the next four years. In meeting the MTFP targets, there is always the potential for asset rationalisation to be an outcome. The impact of any such asset realisation on office space is unknown at this time and cannot be predicted. It would however serve the Council well to know the extent to which agile working could extend across Services if necessary in the future.

The Gender Pay Gap

Flexible working and agile working methodologies are intrinsic in supporting the reduction of the gender pay gap.

The government has supported a series of incremental changes in statutory entitlements to increase men's take up of family leave and make it better paid and more flexible, for example greater flexibility in how paternity and parental leave can be taken including shared parental leave. Organisations are being encouraged to raise awareness of entitlements and to open up flexible working/agile working opportunities particularly for men.

3   **AGILE WORKING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ONGOING WORKFORCE PLANNING EXERCISE**

The Council must ensure that it continues to have a workforce that is sustainable over the long term and is equipped with the necessary skills to meet the needs of our citizens as well as the changing demands for our services.

In July 2018, the Interim Chief Executive wrote to all staff inviting expressions of interest for reduction in our hours of work, flexible retirement or wish to leave the Council's employment under the premise of Voluntary early retirement and/or Severance.

In the Autumn Term of 2018, all who have submitted a form will receive feedback on their expressions of interest. All expressions of interest will be carefully considered and those that can reasonably be supported will progress to the next stage.

The results of this workforce planning exercise will have an impact on the Council's staffing structure. The extent of that impact is yet to be determined but will inevitably steer service managers to plan accordingly in support of staff who will continue to provide their service to the Council following it.

4.   **HOW FLEXIBLE ARE SERVICES**

(i)   **Is it reasonable to think that staff can be given more autonomy over where and when they work?**

Yes it is but one size methodology will not fit all. Major economic and technology-driven shifts have caused significant social change. New technologies, data analytics and social networks have all had an impact on the way that people communicate, collaborate and work. The rapid acceleration of technology has changed what is possible in the workplace.

The way in which we think about office space, how and when we work has started to change. With the ownership of smartphones ever increasing, the internet, cloud communications and smart devices, it has never been easier to plug in and work from anywhere.

(ii)   **Which jobs suit agile working?**

Most jobs will have some scope for agility in the context of where staff work and/or when staff work.

The Council's services however are diverse and include cleaning, catering, refuse and recycling, housing, social services/care services, leisure, youth, libraries, education services including adult education, technical services, planning and highways. 5

Before any service manager can advise on which posts suit agile working, a table top exercise should be undertaken to consider how much flexibility is available in each and every role in their Service Area.

(iii)   **What Heads of Service might consider in the table top exercise?**

Heads of Service should consider if posts are:

- Location Dependent or Location Independent
- Time Dependent or Time Independent, i.e.

By mapping every job in their service area to identify how much flexibility can realistically be achieved for each role. For example:

Post	Location Dependent	Location Independent	Time Dependent	Time Independent	Comment – Be clear on how much flexibility the post affords
Post 1		X		X	Offers full choice over where to work. Significant flexibility over when to work.
Post 2	X		X		No choice of where to work. Working hours are set. Flexible working applications welcome.
Post 3	X			X	No choice over where to work but infrastructure supports significant time independence

(iv) Explanation of terms:

Location Dependent   Receptionist, home carer, refuse collector, highway maintenance operative, youth worker and/or any other such post that requires the member of staff to work from, or, at a specified venue to carry out specific works.

These will mostly be front line facing posts that provide a service directly to/for the public from a fixed location and no other location will do. Location Dependent Posts do not support staff to have autonomy over where they actually work.

Location Independent A post is location independent if it does not fall within the descriptor for location dependent.

These are posts that suit hot desking; drop in and work locations; Mobile working where technology supports staff to work remotely; Home working (substantial or ad-hoc); mixed seating (where different roles are located together to gain efficiencies); multi-site (fixed or flexible).

As technology improves, the traditional limitations of having to report to a specific office or place of work to carry out the duties of location independent posts could become a thing of the past.

<u>Time Dependent</u>   A post is time dependent if staff working hours are set and immoveable. In such posts staff must be contactable and able to commit to their post at a specified time and no other time will do.

Time Dependent Posts do not support staff to have complete autonomy over when they actually work.

Most posts however will afford some time autonomy. In Time Dependent Posts this is likely to take the form of part time hours or compressed hours, term time only working, i.e. agreed working patterns around which there is clarity and others are working alongside each other to meet the full needs of the service in terms of total time required to be covered.

<u>Time Independent</u>   A post is time independent if it supports staff to have complete autonomy or part autonomy over when they work.

Most jobs lend themselves to part autonomy, which means that staff could to a greater or lesser extent determine their own working pattern throughout the week and/or hours throughout the day but that at certain times they would need to be available to attend scheduled meetings, training etc.

(v)   What might Heads of Service do with the results of the table top exercise?

The results of the table top exercise will give a good indication of how much flexibility is available in each role and lead to the development of an agile working model that suits that Service Area. One size will not fit all.

The Head of Service might also give consideration to the results of this desk top exercise in relevance to reviewing business continuity in the event of enforced Council/office closure in the case of Inclement weather, etc.

5.   POLICIES THAT UNDERPIN FLEXIBLE WORKING

The Council already offers numerous benefits aimed at making it easier for employees to balance home and work life commitments including flexible working, home working, career breaks, adoption leave, carers' leave, salary sacrifice childcare voucher scheme, job share, leave of absence, parental, shared parental and paternity leave, part-time working, shift/day swapping and term-time working opportunities.

Agile working in terms of offering more flexibility over when and where staff work, could complement this suite of policies.

The flexible working policy and the home working policy specifically lend themselves to agile working in the context explained. A review of these policies in the context of promoting agile working / mobile working could be prioritised.

Other policies/procedures requiring review within the context of agile working will include 'expenses'; 'Insurance'; 'Data Privacy and Guidelines';

6.   MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES

(i)   Keep an open mind /a willingness to embrace change – Managing employees in a flexible / agile working environment can be a challenge and this in itself can encourage the continuation of traditional working patterns and rituals.

In an agile working environment where posts are largely Location Independent, employees will need to understand:

The specific parameters of the agile working arrangement in respect of location and time as appropriate.

- What they are expected to do (will involve prioritising, planning ahead and clear objective setting)
- The methodology for agreeing and monitoring workload
- How success will be measured
- How this feeds into the performance development cycle
- What communication is required from them
- How the line manager will communicate with them

Managers will need support too. Agile working will lead to a change in corporate culture that includes the dissipation of control frameworks in favour of 'TRUST'

(ii)   Develop a business plan – following the table top exercise, Service Managers might develop a business case – clarifying the business benefits and gains for their service area in relevance to the drivers/catalysts referred to in point 2 above. Within the business plan:

Clarify the agile working model that will suit the area of service - This would be largely led by the results of the table top exercise and reference to point 4 above.

Identify the barriers and enablers that would support the introduction of agile working opportunities in the Service Area, for example:

- Changes to working practices and IT support required.
- Culture, performance management and training requirements
- Policies required to support the new ways of working (note point 4 above)
- Costs and benefits
- Impact Assessment
- Communication plans
- Implementation timetable

Appendix 2 – The New Normal?

Directors have all reviewed their services and have considered what a "New World Norm" could look like for the future. The key outcome is a supportive approach to introduce flexible working as a normal part of service delivery going forward. Flexible working in many sectors is already seen as the norm and although Caerphilly could be seen as slightly behind the curve this is a great opportunity for the authority to embrace a truly positive transformational change.

As a result of the pandemic response there has been much cross-fertilisation of teams across the Council which has demonstrated the benefits of skill sharing, synergies in projects and creating more diverse and responsive teams. This style of working promotes opportunities to create more flexible service delivery to support customer needs and to help manage a more flexible and diverse workforce which could lead to greater retention, engagement and opportunities for staff.

The co-location of services and delivery, at times and locations when residents are most likely to engage, could change our relationship with residents so that we are seen less as an institution and more as a supportive Council here to help and assist our communities.

Increasing our use of digital tools to help support our staff and customers will help limit demand on a return to the previous "normal". There is clear recognition amongst staff that the pandemic has proven the ability for technology to expand service capacity and that skills / tools now being employed should form the blueprint for future settings.

It is important to recognise that sometimes face to face is the only method for some residents and such reassurance services (particularly for vulnerable/older people) should continue, particularly in areas such as social services. There may always be requirements to send letters and paper forms, appreciating that there are those citizens that will not or cannot engage digitally. However, to further promote / enable the digital front door to Caerphilly's services, there is a recognised benefit to having Digital Champions and greater Wi-Fi / Mi-Fi provision in the community to support service needs.

There is wider research that promotes the use of voice activated services to help those who wouldn't engage with digital interface as it can be perceived as too hard. This is an area that many organisations have already successfully introduced and will need further research and possible trials.

Business continuity is key going forward. The Council has proven that it can and has delivered the vast majority of services remotely. Although this has been through necessity it is evident that it can be achieved and that it works. It is essential that the momentum gained in the past few months must not be lost as services need to be responsive to further peaks in infection rates or even new pandemics that could occur in the future. There is a need to maintain the ability to flex services or even turn on and off as the situation necessitates.

Greater digital presence is called on to allow a more integrated and autonomous customer service offer, adopting new or building on existing initiatives. There are many opportunities if suitably navigated in tandem with greater transparency of service provisions, to deliver improved customer relationships and lessen the burden of time-consuming complaints and service requests.

In the medium to longer term there may be the opportunity to reduce office accommodation requirements. This could produce ongoing revenue savings and possible one-off capital receipts that could be re-invested in service provision.

To move to a more flexible and digitally focussed service provision there is a requirement for a significant financial investment which will need to be fully identified and funded. This could be considered on an invest to save basis. However, the savings are much wider than purely direct financial impacts. There are savings in regard fuel usage, carbon emissions, building requirements, etc that will impact positively on the residents of the borough.

Appendix 3 – Some Foundations for a Successful Flexible Working Programme

Staff buy-in will be key to the success of any change in approach to service delivery. Staff will need to be provided with the equipment to allow them to work more flexible. They will need to be trained appropriately and be clear on how they can best work in this manner. Appropriate mechanisms for ensuring staff welfare will need to be introduced to ensure any required support is available and easily accessible

Staff will need to understand that this new way of working will provide much more flexibility in how they undertake their roles. There will be a clear need for outcome-based measures to be put in place along with many other support mechanisms such as HR, Manager and peer support, etc

A culture change will be needed at all levels of the Council, from staff to Managers to Elected Members. The days of doing what we have always done have gone. A clear, effective communications and engagement strategy will be key. This will also need to emanate out to the public interface. The customers will also need to understand the necessity for change.

Not everyone will be equipped to work flexible. There will be instances where the new working environment is not suitable for staff to undertake their roles. This could be down to security and privacy from both a personal and work perspective. Although the service may suit flexible working Managers will need to review each role and circumstance individually to ensure that it can be undertaken safely and appropriately.

Social distancing requirements are likely to be in place for the longer term or at least until a proven vaccine is available and this could be a number of years away. In order to facilitate social distancing, all staff working across buildings over a traditional 9 to 5 pattern is no longer an option. New ways of working must be found and implemented.

Appendix 4 – A New Customer Interface - Public Interaction and Digital Capability

Public interaction with services has been changing over the years with a reduction in face to face contact and an increase in telephony and online contact. This is likely to increase over the short term as residents become increasingly used to undertaking many everyday activities over the internet. The pandemic has proven that a significant proportion of the population is now digitally enabled.

An assessment of the "Digital Capability Within Caerphilly Population" highlights the extent to which our residents are able to access digital services for many aspects of their lives. The move to support a more digitally enabled and aware customer fits neatly with the proposal to have a more flexible approach to service delivery.

While the assessment highlights that 15% of adults in the wider Gwent region are not currently on-line, it also highlights that 75% of the Caerphilly adult population have all 5 basic digital skills.

Housing rent payments to the Council have seen a 20% reduction in the use of cash/cheque and now only 12% of rents are being paid in this way. Conversely the Council has seen an increase of 8% in internet payments and 10% in telephone payments.

Across our Customer First offices there has been a marked downturn in footfall for a variety of payments at these locations. There has also been a significant increase in the use of the automated payment option – IVR (Integrated Voice Response).

On average footfall has reduced by 19% between 2018/19 and 2019/20 and has resulted in an average reduction of 33% in the value of payments collected in person.

Since March 2020 Customer services offices have been closed and all customer interactions have been via telephone or digital services. There is a growing confidence and acceptance of on-line, real times services.

For those that are not digitally enabled there are a variety of training options already in place and a variety of further initiatives are being considered to assist in moving them to a more appropriate payment channel.

The authority has already obtained support to make Caerphilly and Blackwood town centres wi-fi enabled with funding from Brexit. This is ready to be rolled out in the coming weeks/months. There is no reason that this cannot be widened for other towns and villages to provide greater access opportunities for residents. This could be coupled with community hub type locations where residents could attend to undertake online payments if they have limited wi-fi access at home and also obtain assistance in the early days on how to undertake this payment option at these facilities. This could be centred around helping people to help themselves in the longer term.

Appendix 5 - Health, Safety and Well-Being Considerations

Living and working through an unprecedented event such as the Coronavirus pandemic can be a worrying time for everyone. It's all too easy in uncertain times to neglect your health, especially when it's necessary to reduce your social contact and time spent outdoors.

Caerphilly County Borough Council employees all have access to the Care first Service. Care first provides confidential, impartial advice and support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Employees don't need to ask permission from their manager before contacting Care first.

When working from home there are clear guidelines that need to be considered and implemented to ensure staff feel confident and capable that they are able to manage the separation between work and homelife. A good work life balance is essential to personal well-being.

Caerphilly has implemented many support mechanisms for staff which are available via the HR intranet pages. Weekly updates have been communicated to staff via e-mail entitled Wellbeing@work. Line managers have ensured that those frontline staff not on e-mail are fully aware of the support mechanisms available. This support, advice and guidance for staff is invaluable and would be an area that would need to receive a key focus moving forward.

It has become apparent during the pandemic that although there has been coronavirus, social distancing, childcare and shielding absences the authority general sickness absence levels have reduced significantly to just over 3%. This is reflective of other sectors who have introduced flexible working principles. By providing the flexibility to staff to work their hours to suit their personal circumstances sickness absence reduces.

The authority already has flexible working principles (home working and lone working policies) and solutions that can be adapted to suit this new way of flexible working to ensure that staff health, safety and well-being is not compromised in any way. In-fact with more flexible working, risks of accidents, pressure, stress, etc are significantly reduced as staff will need to travel less and will not feel pressured to be present at an office for a set number of hours every day.

Beyond the obvious business benefit of reduced office costs and environmental benefits, research also tells us that flexible working improves morale and reduces stress levels, increases staff retention and importantly widens and unlocks a bigger talent pool, wherein a business can recruit and retain a greater range of talent.

Appendix 6 - Flexible Working Policy Considerations

There are a number of key policies such as but not limited to - use of IT equipment, IT security and flexible working principles that will need to be updated and amended to facilitate a flexible workforce. These will be reviewed and will be subject to the necessary consultation process.

There are already flexible working and home working principles in place since 2015 and 2012 respectively which will require updating accordingly alongside other well-being policies.

Given the significant flexibility that results from flexible working, the Councils existing "Flexi Scheme" will need to be considered to ensure there is a seamless fit in approach. As such, it is proposed to review the scheme to be more in line with the proposed flexible working approaches which in themselves provide employees with additional time management opportunities that can help balance work and personal commitments.

To support the organisation with this transformation, it will be necessary to review the current flexible working scheme to ensure that it provides maximum opportunities to work in a more flexible way to support service delivery, which will benefit the Council and employees.

Caerphilly is currently behind the curve in its approach to flexible working and this is a great opportunity to become a leading light in how services can be delivered in the future.

Appendix 7 - Environmental Impact

Cardiff, London, Manchester, Birmingham and other cities across the UK have seen a huge decline in toxic nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) levels, according to a study by the National Centre for Atmospheric Science (NCAS). Nitrogen dioxide is a harmful gas released when fossil fuels are burnt, usually by power plants and motor vehicles. Many of the activities that generate nitrogen dioxide are also responsible for the world's carbon emissions and the current climate crisis.

Comparing recent pollution levels to the average from the same period in the previous five years, NCAS states: **"The air is definitely much healthier".** This is clearly evident from the chart below.

$$NO_2 / \mu gm^{-3}$$

City	2015-2019	Feb - Mar 2020
Birmingham	22	12
Bristol	25	14
Cardiff	26	16
Glasgow	25	20
London	37	21
Manchester	44	34
Newcastle	32	23

Road traffic accounts for about 80% of nitrogen dioxide emissions in the UK, according to Paul Monks, Professor of Air Pollution at the University of Leicester, and former chair of the UK government's science advisory committee on air quality. The average diesel car emits 52mg of polluting gas for every kilometre it travels, so it's no surprise that the lockdown-induced reduction in traffic is leading to a substantial improvement in air quality.

Caerphilly is one of only two councils in Wales (the other being Cardiff) that have been identified as having a significant air quality problem due to exceedances of permitted nitrogen dioxide levels on the A473 at Hafodrynys Hill.

Specifically considering the air quality changes for Hafodrynys between January to May 2019 to the same period this year it is evident that the reduced vehicle usage during lockdown has had a significant impact as illustrated below.

Hafodyrynys Road AQE - NO2 Levels (µg/m3)

Caerphilly has declared a climate emergency via a Notice of Motion by the Deputy Leader Cllr Sean Morgan. Cllr Morgan stated "The world is on the cusp of a climate catastrophe and the negative trends we are already seeing can only be halted by transformative change in every aspect of how humans interact with nature. As a council we are continuously seeking ways to improve the way we do things to protect the environment for future generations. We must also look to take advantage of the positive economic and wellbeing impacts that transformative change can bring, and I am pleased that the motion was supported as this is a hugely important cause that requires our action."

The motion sets out a clear commitment to reduce carbon by developing an energy plan and calling on the UK and Welsh Government to provide the necessary resources and support to enable effective carbon reduction, also to work with the Public Service Board and Cardiff Capital Region City Deal partners to develop opportunities to develop carbon savings.

Moving to a more flexible platform for service delivery the authority makes a clear statement to supportive transformative change. The authority is the county borough's largest employer and has thousands of employees who make journeys to offices, to sit at desks to undertake their job. It has been proven that the vast majority of these roles can become a lot more flexible and can be effectively delivered from home or other settings drastically cutting vehicle journeys. Enhancing the level of flexible working across the Council would have a significant and positive impact on the climate.

It is estimated that the during 2018 the Council's fleet of vehicles (including grey fleet):

- drove 8.5 million miles,
- produced 5,538 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e),

Page 83

- consumed 22,298 megawatt hours of energy,
- emitted up to 18.4 tonnes of nitrogen oxides (NOX),
- and up to 245 kg of particulates (PM).

The directly operated fleets (including Plant and "Unknowns") burnt at least 1.77 million litres of fuel at an estimated cost of £1.79 million (based on 2018 average price, ex VAT) and produced 4,745 tonnes of CO_2e. Even a small percentage change of say 5% in vehicle mileage will make a significant difference to emissions and expenditure.

If Caerphilly is serious about supporting transformational change that will benefit the climate and environment where we live, work and play then flexible working must have its place. Flexible working can be deployed to make better use of people and space assets, which can greatly improve sustainability while reducing cost and a company's carbon footprint. If you allow for homeworking as part of the move to flexible working, then this potentially supports a significant reduction in car journeys. What's more, designing a new, flexible-ready office offers the opportunity to "go green".

Appendix 8 - IT and Equipment

Prior to March 2020, the Authority operated in a fairly traditional manner with administrative staff mainly working from office accommodation using static IT infrastructure and fixed location equipment. Flexible working across the Authority was ad hoc and to an extent limited.

In March 2020 the Authority transformed overnight moving to become a fully flexible workforce. The move from office based working to home working was completed almost overnight.

Due to the relatively low levels of investment in flexible IT equipment such as laptops, surfaces and i-pads to date, the Authority has encouraged some staff to use their own devices to access Corporate systems via secure virtual private network during the pandemic. This has allowed the Council to maintain the delivery of vital community services.

As flexible working becomes the "new norm" the Authority will need to ensure that it equips its flexible workforce with the appropriate IT tools and equipment to ensure they can undertake their roles as productively and safely as possible.

In recent months, as part of the Customer and Digital Strategy implementation, Cabinet have already taken the decision to deploy modern software in the form of Microsoft Office 365, Abavus and Thoughtonomy. These tools have been fundamental to the Council's recent success in dealing with Covid 19 and maintaining key public services. To maximize the use of these tools and flexible working the Authority will now need to invest in appropriate IT equipment and infrastructure.

Digital Services are currently undergoing a strategic service review with the support of an external party. The future direction of travel in terms of IT infrastructure and operating model will be subject to an additional Cabinet report during the autumn 2020.

As a result of recent work it is estimated that the Authority will need to develop a full device strategy and future operating model which will require a significant investment in flexible working equipment.

It is not possible to fully estimate the cost of this migration at this point but the development of a sustainable investment plan for this equipment will be required going forward if the Council is to ensure its staff can maintain these flexible approaches.

In addition to the procurement of appropriate IT equipment the authority will need to consider options for additional support for equipment such as desks and chairs to ensure a safe working environment for all flexible workers who could potentially be using their home as their office base in the future.

Appendix 9 - Investment and Property Requirements

The goals of organisations in adopting flexible working are to create a more responsive, efficient and effective organisation, which improves business performance and increases customer satisfaction.

By empowering employees to work how, where and when they choose, there is evidence that productivity is increased and service improvement can be provided by employees working in a way that suits them best. This in turn provides savings for the organisation. These savings should be seen as the investment needed to stimulate the transformational change.

In an American based study, Global Workplace Analytics reports that the average business would save $11,000 per person per year if staff with remote-compatible jobs worked from home just half the time.

A flexible Working Business Case was reported to Carmarthenshire County Council CMT in May 2017, which concluded potential significant 5-year cumulative savings of £5.3m after an initial capital investment of £2.1 million. This could be achieved from the implementation of flexible working, there would also be significant implications for the Council's office accommodation portfolio in terms of potential release of buildings.

Pembrokeshire County Council also moved to a flexible working approach in 2018 and identified that revenue savings in the order of £925k per annum could be achieved. Further, Monmouthshire County Council have also moved to a flexible working model and their Headquarter building provides only 88 desks for 200 staff that can use the facility coupled with their flexible working option.

This invest to save approach could be developed for a Caerphilly business case. The savings would not happen overnight. However, in the longer term the property portfolio could be rationalised and reconfigured to suit flexible working. The office layouts would need to change and be more aligned with flexible working principles. There would be limited desks and more docking type workstations to provide flexibility on when and where you could work.

The current pandemic may limit the reduction on office space in the short term due to social distancing measures. Longer term there would be significant savings if the accommodation requirements were halved as a result of flexible working. There would be reduced annual running costs for the wider property portfolio and possible one-off capital receipts from the sale of assets that would no longer be required.

An initial exercise undertaking by the Property Services has identified that currently there are circa 2000 desks available within the authority for use by staff. If service provision was undertaken in a flexible manner, there could be a property portfolio rationalisation which could result in 8 buildings being surplus to requirements.

Service provision would be delivered from 3 core locations, Ty Penallta, Tredomen and Tir y berth. This rationalisation would limit desk availability to approx. 1300 desks, a reduction of about one third. However, with social distancing requirements the availability of desk space will be significantly less than 1300.

If the move to a flexible working platform is supported there will need to be a detailed property portfolio report presented detailing the options available along with the relevant cost implications.

Appendix 10 – Flexible Working Staff Survey June 2020

The flexible working staff survey undertaken in June 2020 had 1483 respondents. Some of the main highlights from the survey include the following:

- 83% worked in a flexible way during the coronavirus restrictions.
- 95% worked away from the office full-time during this period.
- 66% of respondents normally work from either Ty Penallta or Ty Tredomen.
- **78% stated that they would like to work in a more flexible way in the future.**
- **Only 8% stated that they did not want to work in a more flexible way in the future.**
- 98% stated that flexible working provided a better work-life balance for them.
- 84% stated that flexible working demonstrated trust in staff from the organisation.
- 84% stated that flexible working would allow them to achieve greater productivity.
- 93% stated that flexible working would support better mental health and well-being.
- 80% considered flexible working would provide a positive impact on the environment.

However:

- 74% stated that they thought that would have less effective teamworking.
- 93% stated that it could be open to abuse.
- 77% had concerns that the authority could see less productivity.
- 78% stated that flexible working may have a negative impact on mental health.
- 67% thought that lack of equipment may be an obstacle to flexible working.

Overall:

- 50% stated that they like to split their time between home and office working.
- 23% had a preference for working from home
- 21% wanted to work from the office but have the option to work from home occasionally.
- Only 2% wanted to be office based.

The analysis above provides a good indication that the staff preference is that the authority should work in a more flexible way. **73%** preferred to work from home or have a balance between home and office working and only **2%** preferred an office-based approach.

There is support and concern in equal measure in relation to mental health and well-being. 93% have stated that flexible working would be better for mental health but 78% were also concerned over the effect that it would also have on mental health.

Some of the other main outcomes indicate the positive impact that flexible working could have on productivity, 84% stating it would improve, along with the trust that this approach demonstrated in staff, 84% supporting this statement. Again, this is balanced off with 93% indicating that this approach could be open to abuse and 77% stating that they would have concerns over productivity.

The outcome is clear that **78% want to work in a more flexible way** in the future and only 8% were against this approach. A fuller analysis of the survey and comments is included in appendix 2.

Unite Feedback
Flexible Working Report

Flexible working and the benefits to the workforce is something Unite has argued for many years. We very much welcome the CCBC approach to a move towards flexible working. The crisis has highlighted that it can be done but changes on this level need to be carefully considered with EIAs and regular reviews with the trade unions. We welcome this report but like our sister unions ask that this is done with the primary focus of staff well-being and not just with cost saving being the driving force. If done properly CCBC can be seen as an attractive employer for those with caring responsibilities and those wanting a better work life balance.

Individual preferences are important in making this a success and consideration to what support can be given for those who don't have internet etc set up at home. It shouldn't be for managers to impose new ways of working but allow people to have choice.

Ensuring positive use of services like access to work and real consideration of implementing to social model of disability will be just as important when moving towards a more flexible way of working and should always be considered. The working environment wherever that may be is still governed by the same principles of being in an office environment.

We can never underestimate the benefits of socialising and personal interaction with colleagues and this approach should allow for this.

There are serious benefits of flexible working. However, the negative implications should always be given serious consideration on an individual basis. This crisis has highlighted a serious spike in domestic violence cases and homophobic incidents in the home. There is also the serious impact on mental health, isolation and the inability for some people to know when to switch off. For some workers the workplace is their escape and safe haven. The safe guarding of employees and personal Implications of this system of working can't be overlooked.

To conclude we look forward to working with the council and cabinet to allow workers more freedom and control over their work life balance. Careful monitoring and formal training of middle management will be critical to making it work for all.

Appendix 11

<p style="text-align:center">GMB FEEDBACK ON AGILE WORKING REPORT.</p>

The GMB supports the principal of agile working, we believe it could be beneficial to, both staff, and the employer alike. The agile working report which has been created by Caerphilly CBC, for consideration by cabinet provides a great deal of information, however we believe the document could be more concise for Elected members to allow them to make a decision on the future working arrangements, for employees of the Council.

The GMB believe that the wellbeing and mental health of its members and all other employees should be at the forefront of Elected Members and CMT minds when making their decision on agile working.

The report covers the positives and not so positives with moving to these new working arrangements, in order to support those staff who could be working from home, we should ensure that there will be regular contact from Managers, through both, team meetings using the virtual technology available, and face to face office meetings, where Managers can offer support and staff can interact with their colleagues, thus reducing the feeling of isolation.

The GMB believe that the Council could realise some significant savings that can be made through staff not attending the offices on a daily basis, lighting and heating would have a reduced usage. Mileage expenses would significantly reduce.

Several policies will need to be reviewed, including the mileage policy, we would ask that HR consider if there would be any HMRC implications for staff, and to advise the Trade Unions accordingly.

GMB would also propose a 6 month or annual review of agile working policy as there may be areas which this is not working, and a review would be able to pick up any issues that are being raised.

Appendix 11

Flexible Working Cabinet Report 30 September 2020 – Consultation Feedback from Caerphilly Unison

<u>Foreword</u>

As the largest trade union in Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) we are fully committed to working with the leadership team on this proposal and believe that significant gains can be made for the organisation and its staff as a result. However, we also have a responsibility to our membership to put forward their concerns and to highlight those issues that we believe may pose a challenge for the organisation and will require partnership discussion and debate.

It is our intention throughout this time to be a critical friend to CCBC and hope that our comments are taken in the constructive manner in which they are offered to achieve the best possible outcomes for all.

Accordingly, given the significance of this report for the workforce and the organisation, we have taken the time to consider each paragraph of the report in detail and offer our comments below. Our comments are shown directly under each paragraph and coloured purple.

Lianne Dallimore   Juan-Antonio Garcia
Branch Secretary Caerphilly Unison   Branch Chair Caerphilly Unison

CABINET 22ND JULY 2020

SUBJECT: FLEXIBLE WORKING

REPORT BY: RECOVERY GROUP

1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To seek Cabinet endorsement of a more formal approach to flexible working that builds upon the progress made in respect of working in a flexible manner throughout the lockdown.

The move to flexible working is a significant change in working practice. We fully support, as per the Caerphilly Constitution, that this is a Cabinet decision to endorse such as change. However, given the long term significance of this report, we would also suggest that the appropriate Scrutiny Committee is engaged. To its credit, Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) has an open and transparent decision making structure which we would recommend is made full use of in this instance.

2.   SUMMARY

2.1   Because of the speed and nature of the COVID-19 lockdown, the Council was required to

equip and train a significant proportion of its workforce to work and to provide services remote from their usual places of work and, in many cases, from home.

We would concur with this statement. CCBC staff has been exemplary. Their efforts and commitment has been unwavering and we believe that all staff must be recognised and celebrated for this.

2.2   While the transformation to this new model of service delivery happened at a significant pace, the technology platforms that have formed the foundations of remote working have proven to be fairly intuitive and extremely stable.

We agree with this statement.

2.3   Some sections of the workforce have been operating remotely and very effectively since the beginning of lockdown and, over time, further services have been enabled and brought back on line with much less of a reliance on buildings, premises and travel.

We agree with this statement.

2.4   This has enabled many services to the public to be delivered safely and continuously and for the Council's employees to manage multiple aspects of their work / home balance in a way that has brought about a much greater balance than was typically possible.

We agree with this statement.

The ability to work from home has delivered considerable benefits. It has allowed those who were shielding (if well enough to do so) to work from home and assisted those who were experiencing childcare difficulties. From an organisational perspective, it has allowed CCBC services to continue to function and its workforce to remain as productive as possible, which has been to the benefit of our communities.

2.5   Of course, not everyone has found the isolated nature of working remotely a positive experience and the results of the Flexible Working survey provide a healthy note of caution that whatever the Council does from here on in must be truly flexible and meet the differing needs of its employees as well as reducing any operating costs associated with service delivery.

We agree with this statement.

We would suggest that careful consideration is given to the words *'truly flexible'* and as an organisation that we are clear on what this means, for example, are we seeking a flexible workforce i.e. the employee, or a flexible organisation i.e. the employee and the employer? We believe only a flexible organisation will deliver the positive outcomes that CCBC are seeking.

We would also suggest that the organisation gives consideration to who will benefit from this flexibility. We would ask that a robust assessment is undertaken to identify those roles that would benefit and those that would not. Again, to ensure transparent decision making, we believe that Cabinet, Scrutiny and the Trade Unions have sight of this information prior to making any decision.

3.   **RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1   In terms of recommendations, Cabinet are asked to:

3.1.1   Acknowledge the benefits of the flexible working arrangements that have supported service delivery across the Council since March 2020.

We support this recommendation.

3.1.2 Agree to formally adopt the flexible working principles set out at Appendix 1 as a core principle for supporting service delivery.

From the information given in Appendix 1, unfortunately, it is unclear what the flexible working principles are. We would welcome sight of a clear set of principles to which the local authority will work.

With regards to the principles of agile working, we would expect that the overriding principle would be one of fairness and equality across all workforces and places of work.

3.1.3 Delegates authority to the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, to determine on a service by service basis the optimum approach to flexible working and accommodation requirements.

We support this recommendation but would suggest that any assessment of the optimum approach to flexible working and accommodation requirements is done under normal working conditions i.e. when we are operating at full service delivery. To do so at any other time may produce less than accurate data and impede decision making.

3.1.4 Note the need to consider how the current flexi system can be aligned with and support the principles of flexible working through ongoing discussions with Trade Unions.

We support this recommendation and welcome discussions on this matter.

3.1.5 That Members note the potential costs associated with the deployment of flexible working in relation to IT equipment and furniture as well as the potential savings that can be generated through the rationalisation of buildings and reductions in other operating expenditure.

We support this recommendation but would ask that the additional costs that may be incurred by those working from home be taken into account i.e. heating, lighting, home insurance etc. These costs should be considered within any cost benefit analysis as I am sure that CCBC would not wish to see their employees burdened with additional expenditure as a result of any new working practice.

3.1.6 Agrees to receive additional reports, as required, to agree funding and any associated HR and IT Policy changes that might be required.

We support this recommendation and would welcome the opportunity to be consultees on any additional reports.

3.1.7 Endorses the development of an appropriate training and development programme for managers and staff to ensure the benefits of flexible working are maximised.

We support this recommendation. Reskilling and upskilling across the whole workforce will be a critical component to ensure any shift towards flexible working is achieved. In some instances, employees may not have the skills or behaviours to operate in this new agile environment which could lead to feelings of frustration and ineffectiveness. As an organisation with staff wellbeing at its heart we trust this will be given full consideration.

4.   **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1   The authority has gone through an unprecedented period of flexible working in relation to the current Coronavirus pandemic. It is wholly evident that there are options to enhance the

standard approach to office accommodation that will benefit staff, the Council, the residents of Caerphilly County Borough and the wider environment.

We support this statement.

4.2   The progress achieved over recent months in respect of delivering services through flexible arrangements must now be captured and built upon to ensure services can remain sustainable over the long term whatever challenges may emerge.

We support this statement.

5.   THE REPORT

5.1   The current pandemic has provided a stimulus to show the benefits of working in a more flexible manner. The progress made and the lessons learned over the last three months can now directly shape the blueprint for future service delivery and redesign. Embedding flexible practices will enable the organisation to be ready to manage any future crisis as well as reflect the Council's need to remain an attractive and progressive employer.

We support this statement.

We would welcome the opportunity to have sight of the 'lessons learned' to which the report refers.

Ensuring that the organisation is 'future proofed' will be the ultimate success factor and this will demand a culture change within the organisation alongside operational changes. CCBC has in the past been described as a 'traditional' local authority. Research has shown that the often lose nature of agile workplaces make them poorly suited to more traditional operating structures. It would be remiss of us not to mention the impact that culture may have on a shift of this magnitude and we would ask that this factor is carefully considered.

5.2   It is acknowledged that it is not going to be possible to design a one size fits all approach and that flexible working models will need to be developed and tailored to each service area and in some cases will differ depending upon role. The core focus, however, will remain a reduction in the reliance of the workforce and services upon physical buildings.

We support this statement.

We note that the report makes reference to the fact that *'it is not going to be possible to design a one size fits all approach',* this is understood, however policies such the Flexible Working Hours Scheme, Mileage, Flexible Working Policy and Procedure, Leave of Absence etc. will likely be applied in to **all**. This could mean that some staff may benefit and some may be subject to poorer working practices/conditions as a result. We would request that:

- Impact assessments are undertaken on all HR Policies;
- A number of workplace scenarios be developed with the Trade Unions to assess how HR policies and the management thereof will operate in practice, and finally,
- A number of real-time service area pilots undertaken, in jointly agreed areas, and analysed prior to the implementation of any change.

5.3   The success of any flexible implementation will be linked to a clear set of objectives, a consistently applied corporate approach, a strong communication and engagement plan as well as a suite of policies that support the new ways of working.

We support this statement.

We would also like to suggest that clear boundaries are communicated which sets out the organisations expectations from its employees and conversely what the employee can expect from the organisation in terms of flexibility.

5.4   Team management and appropriate support will also be vital to the success of flexible working and Managers will need to be provided the necessary training and tools to be able to manage and support a distributed workforce while maintaining and optimising the benefits of team working.

We support this statement. Reskilling and upskilling across the whole workforce will be a critical component to ensure any shift towards flexible working is achieved. In some instances, employees may not have the skills or behaviours to operate in this new agile environment which could lead to feelings of frustration and ineffectiveness. As an organisation with staff wellbeing at its heart we trust this will be given full consideration.

5.5   It should also be noted that flexible working is not simply home working. Home working will form part of a range of flexible arrangements. Some employees will use their home as their office base, some will operate across multiple office buildings and some may even take advantage of working at times from other buildings. The flexible working approach should support staff to work where and when it best suits them while still ensuring the needs of the business are supported.

We support this statement.

The Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service has clearly stated that *"Work is a thing we **do** not a place we **go"**.* We agree wholeheartedly with this statement, however, we would ask that further scrutiny is given to clearly establish who within the organisation this would most likely benefit. For those that may not benefit from flexible working, we would not wish to see a loss of flexibility i.e. possible removal of the flexi clocking system, or having to ask permission from their line manager before working beyond their daily contracted hours, which was introduced on 22nd July 2020. Consideration needs to be given to ensure that this does not manifest into a benefit for the few at the detriment of the many.

5.6   The introduction of a broader flexible working approach will be a move to a trust based organisation with employees empowered to deliver their roles flexibly. Measures will still be in place, however, to ensure staff achieve their required tasks and outputs and fulfil their contracted hours.

We support this statement.

Agile working is operated within a framework of trust and therefore it is with disappointment that in paragraph 5.17 a proposal has been suggested (and implemented on 22.07.20 by the Head of Paid Service) informing staff that *'those staff working away from the office will be asked to seek line manager approval in advance to work longer than their contracted hours.'* As a Trade Union we have a responsibility to represent the voice of our members, some of which have expressed their disappointment on this decision. For those working in an office environment this instruction does not apply, and therefore, the question must be asked – is location and/or being 'seen' the deciding factor? It must also be pointed out that this practice would have a greater impact on those at the lower end of the organisational structure given that they are subject to higher levels of management oversight.

5.7   Organisations that have introduced 'flexible working' opportunities (such as the NHS, other local authorities, business in general), have confirmed improvements in the following areas:

For the employer:

- • Increased motivation and engagement of staff
- • Increased productivity and Efficiency

Page 95

- Improved business continuity – less disruption due to weather, office security issues, travel problems etc.
- Reduction in organisational and personal carbon footprint
- Reduced parking
- Improved staff performance
- Ability to attract and retain high quality talent
- Reduced absenteeism and related costs
- Reduced staff turnover with associated costs and reduction in lost knowledge, skills and experience
- Asset rationalisation

For employees:

- Reduced travel time and related cost.
- Personal productivity linked to fewer distractions, improved focus, concentration, creativity, better use of skills and less frustration due to fewer barriers.
- Improved work life balance
- Increase in wellbeing, health and happiness linked to reduced stress, better sense of control, ability to integrate healthy eating, childcare responsibility, caring responsibilities and exercise into the day
- Increased engagement as a result of the autonomy and trust at work

When home becomes a workplace there are a wide range of issues to be addressed, from finding a suitable and separate place to work to having the right equipment, and knowing about insurance and who pays the bills. Information security is also high priority.

There is no general legal obligation on employers to fund a home office set up, but their duty to take reasonable care of safety means they must fund reasonable costs and ensure equipment is suitable.

There are clear threats to workers mental health in the explosion of new home working, but also hopes that - with reasonable adjustments – increased flexibility might help.

Lines between personal life and work can easily become blurred and isolation can lead to loneliness and lack of connection with work colleagues.

Balancing home working with childcare can be a source of stress, while the rise of domestic violence can not be overlooked.

5.8 One of the other gains typically witnessed through flexible working is around productivity. In many cases, productivity when working flexibly can be maintained, even enhanced, because commutes and office distractions are often gone.

We support this statement, however, the notion of core working hours can disappear when homeworking begins, as an expectation of always being available takes hold. This should be dealt with sensitively – overtime should be voluntary and not without appropriate compensation; workers need regular breaks, switching off at the end of day; and employers should show that they trust employees.

5.9 It also important to set the potential negative impacts to flexible working. Some of the downsides can include the following:

- Communication difficulties
- Longer working hours
- Poor posture
- Staff can be more difficult to oversee
- IT issues
- Lone working issues

- Different management skills required
- Individual well-being
- Manual handling

We support this statement and would expect such issues to be addressed as part of any managing change process. Risk assessments will need to be carried out (these can be undertaken by the employee using a health and safety questionnaire to avoid intrusiveness) and should include how work-life balance will be managed, for example taking regular breaks and switching off from work at the end of the day, so expectations are clear.

5.10   Through effective and targeted training for managers and staff and appropriate investment in the tools and resources needed to work flexibly, many of these negatives can be addressed

We support this statement.

5.11   The appendices to this report contain a detailed exploration of some of the requirements of a flexible workforce as well as some of the key considerations. Some of the headlines from the appendices are set out over the coming paragraphs.

5.12   Flexible Working Principles

The Council has in a place a set of 'Agile Working Principles' which set out guidance on working flexibly. These were introduced in 2019 as a means of encouraging the use of flexible working and providing the necessary guidance and support to staff and managers who wished to deliver their roles flexibly. These principles will need to be reviewed and adjusted as the numbers of staff working flexibly has increased exponentially.

We would welcome sight of a clear set of 'Agile Working Principles'.

5.13   The New Normal?

The pandemic has created a new normal that has transformed the organisation and society alike. The use of flexible working approaches over recent months has demonstrated the opportunities that exist to create new services that meet specific needs, break down barriers across services, bring previously disparate resources together and quickly meet the changing needs of staff and residents. It has also become clear that a 'one size fits all' approach to flexible working should not be introduced. Instead, a blended approach should be developed that ensures the needs of all staff and customers can be met.

We support this statement.

We are aware that Directors have been working on their 'New World Norms'; to date this information has not been shared with Caerphilly Unison. As key partners in a changing workplace we would value the opportunity to discuss these 'New World Norms' with the Leadership team.

5.14   Foundations for a Successful Flexible Working Programme

Our staff will be key to the delivery of this major change programme and their buy in will be key to its success. What will be equally important will be the policies that support it, access to the right systems, tools and training and the communication strategy that will bring this new way of working to life. There will also be a need to develop management systems that get the best out of staff, provide the necessary support and enable the needs of the business to be met across a distributed workforce.

We support this statement.

We also believe that it will be essential to put in place:

- A performance management system developed that is outcomes based and fairly assessed;
- Development opportunities for staff to ensure they can get the best out of the new environment;
- A clear Home Working Agreement aligned with the Working Time Regulations;
- A clear policy across all workforces and workplaces which fairly compensates staff for working in excess of their hours, which is in many cases done out of goodwill at present, and
- A clear policy on agile working based on sound argument to avoid perceptions of favouritism.

5.15   A New Customer Interface - Public Interaction and Digital Capability

The restrictions on movement that have underpinned lockdown have demonstrated that many of our residents have the access and the skills to conduct many aspects of their daily lives online. The assessment of digital capability across Caerphilly explored in Appendix 4 identifies that 75% of the adult population in the Borough have all five of the basic digital skills required. While this provides an opportunity to engage our residents in new ways and across different hours of business our services must continue to support those that do not have either the access or the digital skills at present.

We support this statement.

5.16   Health, Safety and Wellbeing Considerations

With a potential move to a more formal approach to flexible working there are multiple benefits that emerge in terms of Health and Wellbeing. Increases in productivity, being able to better balance the competing demands of increasingly busy work and home lives and the positive impact of feeling trusted to get the job done, have all been proven to enhance an individual's wellbeing. Conversely, there are individuals whose wellbeing could be negatively impacted by working remotely and the Council will need to work hard to strike the right balance, put in place the right support and ensure that the wellbeing needs of all of our staff are being met.

We support this statement.

5.17   Flexible Working Policy Considerations

The Council already has 'Agile Working Principles' in place to support flexible working approaches but their use has been sporadic to date. Similarly, the Council has a range of HR and IT policies designed to support work life balance and safe systems of work. Over the coming months, these policies will each need to be reviewed and potentially adjusted to support a broader application of flexible working. Any changes that result would be developed in consultation with staff and our Trade Union partners.

We support this statement and would welcome the opportunity to be an active partner in the development of these policies. However, having sight of the Directors 'New World Norms' would be advantageous so that we are all clear on what our Policies are being re-designed to achieve.

In the short term, and as a means of ensuring the ongoing wellbeing of our staff, those staff working away from the office will be asked to seek line manager approval in advance to work longer than their contracted hours. This interim adjustment will not restrict staff from being able to accrue time off in lieu, but it will help managers ensure that workloads are being appropriately balanced while staff are operating remotely.

We support this statement in terms of the wellbeing of our staff being of paramount importance. However, we do not support the proposal put forward on how this will be

managed and note that this is a temporary measure which should be reviewed at the earliest opportunity.

As a Trade Union we have a responsibility to represent the voice of our members, some of which have expressed their disappointment on this decision. For those working in an office environment this instruction does not apply, and therefore, the question must be asked – is location and/or being 'seen' the deciding factor? It must also be pointed out that this practice would have a greater impact on those at the lower end of the organisational structure given that they are subject to higher levels of management oversight. This decision does little to reinforce the message of 'trust' being communicated to the workforce.

UNISON would urge the council to also consider the position of staff outside of the flexi or overtime system who report working above their hours – sometimes for short periods – but in a way that can be easily overlooked. UNISON members working in care and our schools have reported to us that coming in a little early, or staying on a little extra, can easily occur when the needs of service users are immediate. Rather than just accept this as a feature of the job, we want to work with the council to consider ways to proactively challenge this norm where it is present.

5.18   Environmental Impact

During the pandemic, there has been a significant reduction in the number of journeys undertaken by staff to and from work and travelling to and from meetings during the working day. This has resulted in a sizeable increase in the air quality, not just in Caerphilly, but across the world. An enhanced approach to flexible working would clearly provide these benefits over a sustained period as well as reducing the Council's operating expenditure.

We support this statement.

5.19   IT and Equipment

As a result of the need to transition to flexible working arrangements in only a matter of days, many Council staff are working remotely at present using their own IT equipment, desk etc. As the Council moves to formalise its flexible working arrangements over the coming months Council staff must be provided with fit for purpose equipment, tools and systems that support them to do their job as efficiently and effectively as possible. It is likely that these packages will be linked to particular roles and separate reports will be brought forward over the coming months to provide a sustainable funding package.

We support this statement.

5.20   Investment and Property Requirements

An initial exercise undertaken by Property Services has identified that currently there are circa 2000 desks available within the authority for use by staff. If service provision was undertaken in a flexible manner, property portfolio rationalisation opportunities could emerge which could result in 8 buildings being surplus to requirements and savings being generated in terms of building occupancy and reduced running costs.

We support this statement.

We would welcome the opportunity to have sight of the assessment on how many workers will likely benefit from agile working. Given that initial costings and property rationalisation benefits have been discussed in this report it is assumed that the Leadership team have a broad idea of numbers.

5.21   Flexible Working Staff Survey June 2020

Nearly 1500 employees completed a flexible working staff survey during June 2020 giving some fantastic insights in to the benefits and challenges facing staff working remotely. There some very positive views shared on flexible working in overall terms as well as some concerns. The overarching results are provided in Appendix 10.

The key aspects of the survey revealed that 50% of respondents would like to split their time between home and office working, 23% having a preference for working from home and 21% wanting to work from the office but have the option to work from home occasionally. These results clearly demonstrate that with the expansion of flexible working there is likely to be a surplus of office accommodation linking back to the outcome set out in 5.20.

We welcome the survey undertaken with staff and hope that similar exercises will be undertaken as part of the change management process.

5.22 **Conclusion**

When considering the way the world has adapted and changed, particularly in the light of the current pandemic, it is wholly evident that a new way of working can and should be supported to ensure that the organisation remains as flexible as possible and is able to react to any future pandemics or similar events that would restrict service provision. The organisation may well need to turn on and off services more frequently as we respond to the current pandemic.

We support this statement.

5.23 Flexible working has been proven to work in Caerphilly. Services provided by the Council have not "fallen over" or ceased, in fact, it has been possible to continue to deliver them as a direct result.

We support this statement and would like to give credit to the workforce for their outstanding achievements.

5.24 The gains made over the last few months, albeit out of necessity, cannot now be lost. Now is the time to embrace transformational change and shape an organisation that is able to meet the challenges of the 21st century head on.

We support this statement.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 There have been no assumptions made within this report.

7. **LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES**

7.1 **Corporate Plan 2018-2023.**

7.1.1 The report links to the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2023, and contributes to the Well-being Objectives, as follows:

7.1.2 Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all – Flexible working has and will continue to allow teachers to deliver lessons remotely.

7.1.3 Objective 2 - Enabling employment – Flexible working promotes more autonomy over where and when staff work, thus affording flexibility for enabling balance between work, leisure, family and caring responsibilities. This will open up more opportunities for people to apply for roles that may have previously been unsuitable due to the lack of flexibility around working hours and locations.

7.1.4 Objective 4 - Promote a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases

opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impacts on the environment - There are clear environmental benefits realised by flexible working in terms of office/asset rationalisation and lesser journeys attributed to commuting or work based travel. This will assist in reducing the impact on the climate and improving air quality. With less cars on the road it is already evident that more people are prepared to engage in active travel.

7.1.5 Objective 5 - Creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the sustainable Development Principle within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 - Improving work life balance and reducing the need to commute utilising flexible working offers the opportunity for staff to partake in more social, sports and leisure activities and to utilise active travel options which will improve health and well-being.

7.1.6 Objective 6 - Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being – Flexible working when linked into a digital transformation of service delivery will assist residents to access services at the time and location that suits them helping them to remain independent.

7.2 There are further links to the TeamCaerphilly transformation strategy, firstly echoing the mantra - *A new "whole-authority" operating model to ensure a resilient Caerphilly County Borough for the future.*

7.3 Further synergies include – "*We will need to move away from traditional models of service delivery, embrace change, be prepared to innovate and take well managed risks. We will also need to modernise through harnessing emerging technologies and fully engaging with our workforce and communities".*

A particular focus needs to be placed on *'How'* we undertake our work. This is probably one of the biggest opportunities to modernise the organisation and to help move towards an agile working model. We note within the report Strengthening Team Caerphilly that a number of corporate/service reviews have been undertaken - Caerphilly Unison has not been involved or consulted on any of this work which we would welcome.

7.4 The recognition of strong corporate will and clear strategy, with equal buy-in by the leadership team, is again reflected in the TeamCaerphilly transformation statement;

"This ambitious programme of change articulates the combined vision of the Cabinet and the Corporate Leadership Team and has been developed over the last 12 months. In making this Strategy a reality, courageous political and officer leadership will be essential to ensure that we successfully deliver the outcomes that we are aiming to achieve."

7.5 Furthermore, the Cabinet commitments already defined, include: -

- We will build on Caerphilly County Borough Council's reputation as an innovative, high performing local authority.
- We will ensure we have an engaged and motivated workforce.
- We will always strive to ensure Caerphilly County Borough Council delivers value for money in everything it does.

7.6 Similarly, the notion of harnessing the success of the recent transformation in view of flexible/digital working and customer interaction (equally with the corporate appetite for such) can be harmonised with the **Customer and digital strategy**; whereby the Cabinet Members foreword describes being brave / bold in approach to embracing technologies and innovation to deliver citizen centric services, including an flexible, iterative approach to our work.

Overall, while we recognise that there are many positive benefits and a golden opportunity to reshape our services, it is essential that we are realistic on our assumptions and approach. We would

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1   This report links directly to the Well–being goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A globally responsible Wales

8.2   It is consistent in all of the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act that it supports:

8.2.1   **Long-term –** Flexible working promotes many long-term benefits for the organisation as a whole, with both employer and employee recognising substantial improvements as outlined within the report. The introduction of flexible working will have a positive impact on future generations and primarily will offer safeguard in view of; improved business continuity, reduction in organisational and personal carbon footprint, improved work life balance and increase in wellbeing, health and happiness. Equally, the Council's customer-centric ethos will be enhanced and the needs and demands of Caerphilly's citizens best met.

8.2.2   **Integration –** A flexible workforce will form an integral part of the Council's overall transformation strategy and complements the suite of policies that serve to balance home and work life commitments. There current crisis has provided opportunities for the many varied services of the authority to become truly "One Council". Each service area is clearly assisting others to ensure the highest priority objectives are delivered to the customer. There is clear evidence that the flexible working approach has allowed true service integration across the council, with other service sectors and primarily with its residents and customers at the heart of its approach.

8.2.3   **Involvement –** All staff need to be fully engaged in view of the flexible working transformation as not all roles and responsibilities are conducive to flexible working, and there will be a notable disparity between blue and white-collar workers and those that need to provide front line service delivery. There needs to be an effective communication plan to ensure the strategy behind flexible working, along with the suitability of application, is transparent to all parties. This will require the involvement of staff (staff survey already conducted) and engagement with all relevant stakeholders.

It is stated that there will be *'notable disparity between blue and white collar workers'*. We would request that information on this statement is shared with the Trade Unions and Councillors.

8.2.4   **Collaboration –** Flexible working not only brings the Council's internal departments closer together to deliver the best working model and to move to the "One Council" approach, it has also already promoted wider collaboration within the private / public sector due to the ease in which meetings and working arrangements have continued almost seamlessly with the utilisation of a digital approach.

8.2.5   **Prevention –** Carefully prioritised and justified budget commitment for flexible working platforms will ensure confidence in both application and investment. This will assist in ensuring service continuity, reducing the risk to service failure during any future crisis or emergency.   Embracing transformation to flexible working will ensure the Council is both resilient and flexible in terms of business continuity during adverse conditions and aligns with

priorities to improve the way the council operates in order to protect the environment for future generations in many aspects but particularly from an impact on the climate.

Overall, while we recognise that there are many positive benefits, again we must be realistic on our assumptions and approach. We would strongly advocate that robust Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken **prior** to service change taking place.

9.   EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1   An EIA screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and supplementary guidance. No potential for unlawful discrimination and/or low level or minor negative impact has been identified; therefore, a full EIA has not been carried out. The flexible working approach will allow more flexibility in where and how people undertake their roles which will assist in providing equality.

We would welcome the opportunity to have sight of the EIA Screening that has been undertaken. Given the scale of the change being outlined, and *the 'far reaching financial implications from this report'* (section 10.1) which will affect both staff and the general public, it is difficult to conceive that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

10.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1   There are far reaching financial implications from this report. As such, there will need to be a series of detailed financial reports prepared should the general principles cited within the recommendations be supported by Cabinet.

10.2   The detailed financial implications of the new operating model will be firmed up as specific requirements become clearer following further discussions with Heads of Service. Detailed funding proposals will be developed as part of this process and the costs will be met from a call on usable reserves.

10.3   Furthermore, a number of potential areas of savings have been identified throughout the report. As the detail of these areas develops, further reports to Cabinet will be submitted.

We would welcome sight of these reports once they have been prepared.

11.   PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

11.1   There will be wide-ranging personnel implications from this report. There will need to be consultations undertaken with the trade unions and staff in relation to policies and procedures.

11.2   A staff survey has already been undertaken in relation to flexible working which identified overwhelming support for the initiative. Details of the survey results are highlighted in Appendix 10.

We would welcome full engagement in this process.

12.   CONSULTATIONS

12.1   Comments from all consultees have been included within the report.

12.2   A full list of consultees is included at the end of the report.

13.   STATUTORY POWER

13.1   Local Government Act 1972 and 2000

Author:	Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure
Consultees:	Cllr Philippa Marsden, Leader of the Council
	Cabinet Members
	Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive
	Corporate Management Team
	Leadership Team
	Cllr Jamie Pritchard, Chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
	Cllr Gez Kirby, Vice Chair of Policy and resources Scrutiny Committee
	Cllr Colin Mann, Leader of the Plaid Group
	Cllr Graham Simmonds, Leader of the Independent Group
	Trade Unions
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Caerphilly County Borough Council - Agile Working Principles
	Appendix 2 – The New Normal?
	Appendix 3 – Some Foundations for a Successful Flexible Working Programme
	Appendix 4 – A New Customer Interface - Public Interaction and Digital Capability
	Appendix 5 - Health, Safety and Well-Being Considerations
	Appendix 6 - Flexible Working Policy Considerations
	Appendix 7 - Environmental Impact
	Appendix 8 - IT and Equipment
	Appendix 9 - Investment and Property Requirements
	Appendix 10 – Flexible Working Staff Survey June 2020

Appendix 1 – Caerphilly County Borough Council - Agile Working Principles

1   INTRODUCTION

(i)   The concept of Agile Working

Agile working is a transformational tool that enables organisations to work smarter by eliminating all barriers to working efficiently. It uses communications and information technology to enable people to work in ways which best suit their needs without the traditional limitations of where and when tasks must be performed.

Agile working can support staff to:

- Have more autonomy over where they work.
- Have more autonomy over when they work.

Agile working is based on the complete flexibility of work to drive long-term organisational success. It can unlock value for both the employer and the employee.

(ii)   The Benefits of Agile Working?

Organisations that have introduced 'agile working' opportunities (such as the NHS), have confirmed improvements in the following areas:

For the employer:

- Increased motivation and engagement of staff
- Increased productivity and Efficiency
- Improved business continuity – less disruption due to weather, office security issues, travel problems etc.
- Reduction in organisational and personal carbon footprint
- Reduced parking
- Improved staff performance
- Ability to attract and retain high quality talent
- Reduced absenteeism and related costs
- Reduced staff turnover with associated costs and reduction in lost knowledge, skills and experience
- Asset rationalisation

For employees:

- Reduced travel time and related cost.
- Personal productivity linked to fewer distractions, improved focus, concentration, creativity, better use of skills and less frustration due to fewer barriers.
- Improved work life balance

- Increase in wellbeing, health and happiness linked to reduced stress, better sense of control, ability to integrate healthy eating, childcare responsibility, caring responsibilities and exercise into the day
- Increased engagement as a result of the autonomy and trust at work

2. AGILE WORKING IN THE CONTEXT OF CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL (CCBC)

This section identifies why CCBC might consider starting an agile working programme.

(i) Cabinet's clear vision

Caerphilly's Cabinet have set a clear vision for the Council with staff engagement at its core. The standards that underpin this vision that agile working could compliment, are highlighted in bold:

- **We will always do our best to protect jobs and services within the current challenging financial climate**
- **We will build on Caerphilly County Borough Council's reputation as an innovative, high performing local authority**
- **We will ensure we have an engaged and motivated workforce**
- **We will always strive to ensure Caerphilly County Borough Council delivers value for money in everything it does**
- **We will help protect the most vulnerable people in our society and make safeguarding a key priority**
- **We will always welcome feedback and consider the views of residents, staff and other key stakeholders**
- **We will be open, honest and transparent in everything we do**

(ii) The catalyst / drivers for agile working:

There are a number of catalysts that encourage further exploration of agile working and the benefits that it could bring to Caerphilly.

For CCBC the clear drivers are:

The Council's need to keep up with the pace of change as a progressive employer in the 21st Century.

Our approach to working life is changing fast. Both men and women want to find a balance between work, leisure, family and caring responsibilities.

Studies commissioned by the Employment Human Rights Commission (EHRC) support that people (regardless of gender) want a wider range of flexible job opportunities in all types of jobs. They want policies that reflect the social and economic benefits of integrating work life balance and care.

Agile working methodologies that afford staff more autonomy over where and when they work can support this position.

CCBC's Business Continuity Plan Review (Inclement Weather)

The Guardian Newspaper reported in 2018 that gridlocked motorways, multiple rail cancellations, a string of crashes on motorways, empty restaurants and idle diggers seen across Britain at that time could cost the economy at least £1bn a day.

In March 2018 the Council felt it was important to acknowledge the fantastic work undertaken by employees during the 4 days of difficult conditions. Without whom all our roads would not have been cleared, care could not have been provided to the most vulnerable in our society and emergency conditions could not have been dealt with to name just a few.

Conversely however, the inclement weather forced many staff to stay close to home and hundreds of Caerphilly staff did not attend work for this reason. The enforced office closures for health & safety reasons exacerbated this position.

In this context, many staff might have been equipped to work from home or nearer to home during the office closure period through the effective implementation of a refined business continuity plan that caters for such events, i.e. a plan that takes advantage of the technology and/or the office space at its disposal.

A truly agile workforce is a mobile one and there is great strength in a mobile workforce to meet the needs of the Council and its residents during periods of inclement weather. This was proven in the context of the hundreds of staff who did turn up to work and who did step out of role with transferrable skills to assist colleagues/residents to go about their business safely.

If a post suits agile working in terms of Location, the relevant service area can build this into its business continuity plan and extend the opportunity to staff to continue working safely during periods of inclement weather.

Savings targets / MTFP

Some of the most successful companies have led the way on re-assessing how their workplaces operate and have introduced flexible and agile options for their employees. They did this to improve their business but it has also got them in good shape for tougher times and fit to take on new opportunities in the future.

The Council's vision for the future is ambitious against the MTFP target savings of £39m over the next four years. In meeting the MTFP targets, there is always the potential for asset rationalisation to be an outcome. The impact of any such asset realisation on office space is unknown at this time and cannot be predicted. It would however serve the Council well to know the extent to which agile working could extend across Services if necessary in the future.

The Gender Pay Gap

Flexible working and agile working methodologies are intrinsic in supporting the reduction of the gender pay gap.

The government has supported a series of incremental changes in statutory entitlements to increase men's take up of family leave and make it better paid and more flexible, for example greater flexibility in how paternity and parental leave can be taken including shared parental leave. Organisations are being encouraged to raise awareness of entitlements and to open up flexible working/agile working opportunities particularly for men.

3 **AGILE WORKING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ONGOING WORKFORCE PLANNING EXERCISE**

The Council must ensure that it continues to have a workforce that is sustainable over the long term and is equipped with the necessary skills to meet the needs of our citizens as well as the changing demands for our services.

In July 2018, the Interim Chief Executive wrote to all staff inviting expressions of interest for reduction in our hours of work, flexible retirement or wish to leave the Council's employment under the premise of Voluntary early retirement and/or Severance.

In the Autumn Term of 2018, all who have submitted a form will receive feedback on their expressions of interest. All expressions of interest will be carefully considered and those that can reasonably be supported will progress to the next stage.

The results of this workforce planning exercise will have an impact on the Council's staffing structure. The extent of that impact is yet to be determined but will inevitably steer service managers to plan accordingly in support of staff who will continue to provide their service to the Council following it.

4. **HOW FLEXIBLE ARE SERVICES**

(i) **Is it reasonable to think that staff can be given more autonomy over where and when they work?**

Yes it is but one size methodology will not fit all. Major economic and technology-driven shifts have caused significant social change. New technologies, data analytics and social networks have all had an impact on the way that people communicate, collaborate and work. The rapid acceleration of technology has changed what is possible in the workplace.

The way in which we think about office space, how and when we work has started to change. With the ownership of smartphones ever increasing, the internet, cloud communications and smart devices, it has never been easier to plug in and work from anywhere.

(ii) **Which jobs suit agile working?**

Most jobs will have some scope for agility in the context of where staff work and/or when staff work.

The Council's services however are diverse and include cleaning, catering, refuse and recycling, housing, social services/care services, leisure, youth, libraries, education services including adult education, technical services, planning and highways. 5

Before any service manager can advise on which posts suit agile working, a table top exercise should be undertaken to consider how much flexibility is available in each and every role in their Service Area.

(iii) **What Heads of Service might consider in the table top exercise?**

Heads of Service should consider if posts are:

- Location Dependent or Location Independent
- Time Dependent or Time Independent, i.e.

By mapping every job in their service area to identify how much flexibility can realistically be achieved for each role. For example:

Post	Location Dependent	Location Independent	Time Dependent	Time Independent	Comment – Be clear on how much flexibility the post affords
Post 1		X		X	Offers full choice over where to work. Significant flexibility over when to work.
Post 2	X		X		No choice of where to work. Working hours are set. Flexible working applications welcome.
Post 3	X			X	No choice over where to work but infrastructure supports significant time independence

(iv)   Explanation of terms:

Location Dependent   Receptionist, home carer, refuse collector, highway maintenance operative, youth worker and/or any other such post that requires the member of staff to work from, or, at a specified venue to carry out specific works.

These will mostly be front line facing posts that provide a service directly to/for the public from a fixed location and no other location will do. Location Dependent Posts do not support staff to have autonomy over where they actually work.

Location Independent A post is location independent if it does not fall within the descriptor for location dependent.

These are posts that suit hot desking; drop in and work locations; Mobile working where technology supports staff to work remotely; Home working (substantial or ad-hoc); mixed seating (where different roles are located together to gain efficiencies); multi-site (fixed or flexible).

As technology improves, the traditional limitations of having to report to a specific office or place of work to carry out the duties of location independent posts could become a thing of the past.

<u>Time Dependent</u>   A post is time dependent if staff working hours are set and immoveable. In such posts staff must be contactable and able to commit to their post at a specified time and no other time will do.

Time Dependent Posts do not support staff to have complete autonomy over when they actually work.

Most posts however will afford some time autonomy. In Time Dependent Posts this is likely to take the form of part time hours or compressed hours, term time only working, i.e. agreed working patterns around which there is clarity and others are working alongside each other to meet the full needs of the service in terms of total time required to be covered.

<u>Time Independent</u>   A post is time independent if it supports staff to have complete autonomy or part autonomy over when they work.

Most jobs lend themselves to part autonomy, which means that staff could to a greater or lesser extent determine their own working pattern throughout the week and/or hours throughout the day but that at certain times they would need to be available to attend scheduled meetings, training etc.

(v)   What might Heads of Service do with the results of the table top exercise?

The results of the table top exercise will give a good indication of how much flexibility is available in each role and lead to the development of an agile working model that suits that Service Area. One size will not fit all.

The Head of Service might also give consideration to the results of this desk top exercise in relevance to reviewing business continuity in the event of enforced Council/office closure in the case of Inclement weather, etc.

5.   POLICIES THAT UNDERPIN FLEXIBLE WORKING

The Council already offers numerous benefits aimed at making it easier for employees to balance home and work life commitments including flexible working, home working, career breaks, adoption leave, carers' leave, salary sacrifice childcare voucher scheme, job share, leave of absence, parental, shared parental and paternity leave, part-time working, shift/day swapping and term-time working opportunities.

Agile working in terms of offering more flexibility over when and where staff work, could complement this suite of policies.

The flexible working policy and the home working policy specifically lend themselves to agile working in the context explained. A review of these policies in the context of promoting agile working / mobile working could be prioritised.

Other policies/procedures requiring review within the context of agile working will include 'expenses'; 'Insurance'; 'Data Privacy and Guidelines';

6.   MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES

(i)   Keep an open mind /a willingness to embrace change – Managing employees in a flexible / agile working environment can be a challenge and this in itself can encourage the continuation of traditional working patterns and rituals.

In an agile working environment where posts are largely Location Independent, employees will need to understand:

The specific parameters of the agile working arrangement in respect of location and time as appropriate.

- What they are expected to do (will involve prioritising, planning ahead and clear objective setting)
- The methodology for agreeing and monitoring workload
- How success will be measured
- How this feeds into the performance development cycle
- What communication is required from them
- How the line manager will communicate with them

Managers will need support too. Agile working will lead to a change in corporate culture that includes the dissipation of control frameworks in favour of 'TRUST'

(ii)   Develop a business plan – following the table top exercise, Service Managers might develop a business case – clarifying the business benefits and gains for their service area in relevance to the drivers/catalysts referred to in point 2 above. Within the business plan:

Clarify the agile working model that will suit the area of service - This would be largely led by the results of the table top exercise and reference to point 4 above.

Identify the barriers and enablers that would support the introduction of agile working opportunities in the Service Area, for example:

- Changes to working practices and IT support required.
- Culture, performance management and training requirements
- Policies required to support the new ways of working (note point 4 above)
- Costs and benefits
- Impact Assessment
- Communication plans
- Implementation timetable

Appendix 2 – The New Normal?

Directors have all reviewed their services and have considered what a "New World Norm" could look like for the future. The key outcome is a supportive approach to introduce flexible working as a normal part of service delivery going forward. Flexible working in many sectors is already seen as the norm and although Caerphilly could be seen as slightly behind the curve this is a great opportunity for the authority to embrace a truly positive transformational change.

As a result of the pandemic response there has been much cross-fertilisation of teams across the Council which has demonstrated the benefits of skill sharing, synergies in projects and creating more diverse and responsive teams. This style of working promotes opportunities to create more flexible service delivery to support customer needs and to help manage a more flexible and diverse workforce which could lead to greater retention, engagement and opportunities for staff.

The co-location of services and delivery, at times and locations when residents are most likely to engage, could change our relationship with residents so that we are seen less as an institution and more as a supportive Council here to help and assist our communities.

Increasing our use of digital tools to help support our staff and customers will help limit demand on a return to the previous "normal". There is clear recognition amongst staff that the pandemic has proven the ability for technology to expand service capacity and that skills / tools now being employed should form the blueprint for future settings.

It is important to recognise that sometimes face to face is the only method for some residents and such reassurance services (particularly for vulnerable/older people) should continue, particularly in areas such as social services. There may always be requirements to send letters and paper forms, appreciating that there are those citizens that will not or cannot engage digitally. However, to further promote / enable the digital front door to Caerphilly's services, there is a recognised benefit to having Digital Champions and greater Wi-Fi / Mi-Fi provision in the community to support service needs.

There is wider research that promotes the use of voice activated services to help those who wouldn't engage with digital interface as it can be perceived as too hard. This is an area that many organisations have already successfully introduced and will need further research and possible trials.

Business continuity is key going forward. The Council has proven that it can and has delivered the vast majority of services remotely. Although this has been through necessity it is evident that it can be achieved and that it works. It is essential that the momentum gained in the past few months must not be lost as services need to be responsive to further peaks in infection rates or even new pandemics that could occur in the future. There is a need to maintain the ability to flex services or even turn on and off as the situation necessitates.

Greater digital presence is called on to allow a more integrated and autonomous customer service offer, adopting new or building on existing initiatives. There are many opportunities if suitably navigated in tandem with greater transparency of service provisions, to deliver improved customer relationships and lessen the burden of time-consuming complaints and service requests.

In the medium to longer term there may be the opportunity to reduce office accommodation requirements. This could produce ongoing revenue savings and possible one-off capital receipts that could be re-invested in service provision.

To move to a more flexible and digitally focussed service provision there is a requirement for a significant financial investment which will need to be fully identified and funded. This could be considered on an invest to save basis. However, the savings are much wider than purely direct financial impacts. There are savings in regard fuel usage, carbon emissions, building requirements, etc that will impact positively on the residents of the borough.

Appendix 3 – Some Foundations for a Successful Flexible Working Programme

Staff buy-in will be key to the success of any change in approach to service delivery. Staff will need to be provided with the equipment to allow them to work more flexible. They will need to be trained appropriately and be clear on how they can best work in this manner. Appropriate mechanisms for ensuring staff welfare will need to be introduced to ensure any required support is available and easily accessible

Staff will need to understand that this new way of working will provide much more flexibility in how they undertake their roles. There will be a clear need for outcome-based measures to be put in place along with many other support mechanisms such as HR, Manager and peer support, etc

A culture change will be needed at all levels of the Council, from staff to Managers to Elected Members. The days of doing what we have always done have gone. A clear, effective communications and engagement strategy will be key. This will also need to emanate out to the public interface. The customers will also need to understand the necessity for change.

Not everyone will be equipped to work flexible. There will be instances where the new working environment is not suitable for staff to undertake their roles. This could be down to security and privacy from both a personal and work perspective. Although the service may suit flexible working Managers will need to review each role and circumstance individually to ensure that it can be undertaken safely and appropriately.

Social distancing requirements are likely to be in place for the longer term or at least until a proven vaccine is available and this could be a number of years away. In order to facilitate social distancing, all staff working across buildings over a traditional 9 to 5 pattern is no longer an option. New ways of working must be found and implemented.

Appendix 4 – A New Customer Interface - Public Interaction and Digital Capability

Public interaction with services has been changing over the years with a reduction in face to face contact and an increase in telephony and online contact. This is likely to increase over the short term as residents become increasingly used to undertaking many everyday activities over the internet. The pandemic has proven that a significant proportion of the population is now digitally enabled.

An assessment of the "Digital Capability Within Caerphilly Population" highlights the extent to which our residents are able to access digital services for many aspects of their lives. The move to support a more digitally enabled and aware customer fits neatly with the proposal to have a more flexible approach to service delivery.

While the assessment highlights that 15% of adults in the wider Gwent region are not currently on-line, it also highlights that 75% of the Caerphilly adult population have all 5 basic digital skills.

Housing rent payments to the Council have seen a 20% reduction in the use of cash/cheque and now only 12% of rents are being paid in this way. Conversely the Council has seen an increase of 8% in internet payments and 10% in telephone payments.

Across our Customer First offices there has been a marked downturn in footfall for a variety of payments at these locations. There has also been a significant increase in the use of the automated payment option – IVR (Integrated Voice Response).

On average footfall has reduced by 19% between 2018/19 and 2019/20 and has resulted in an average reduction of 33% in the value of payments collected in person.

Since March 2020 Customer services offices have been closed and all customer interactions have been via telephone or digital services. There is a growing confidence and acceptance of on-line, real times services.

For those that are not digitally enabled there are a variety of training options already in place and a variety of further initiatives are being considered to assist in moving them to a more appropriate payment channel.

The authority has already obtained support to make Caerphilly and Blackwood town centres wi-fi enabled with funding from Brexit. This is ready to be rolled out in the coming weeks/months. There is no reason that this cannot be widened for other towns and villages to provide greater access opportunities for residents. This could be coupled with community hub type locations where residents could attend to undertake online payments if they have limited wi-fi access at home and also obtain assistance in the early days on how to undertake this payment option at these facilities. This could be centred around helping people to help themselves in the longer term.

Appendix 5 - Health, Safety and Well-Being Considerations

Living and working through an unprecedented event such as the Coronavirus pandemic can be a worrying time for everyone. It's all too easy in uncertain times to neglect your health, especially when it's necessary to reduce your social contact and time spent outdoors.

Caerphilly County Borough Council employees all have access to the Care first Service. Care first provides confidential, impartial advice and support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Employees don't need to ask permission from their manager before contacting Care first.

When working from home there are clear guidelines that need to be considered and implemented to ensure staff feel confident and capable that they are able to manage the separation between work and homelife. A good work life balance is essential to personal well-being.

Caerphilly has implemented many support mechanisms for staff which are available via the HR intranet pages. Weekly updates have been communicated to staff via e-mail entitled Wellbeing@work. Line managers have ensured that those frontline staff not on e-mail are fully aware of the support mechanisms available. This support, advice and guidance for staff is invaluable and would be an area that would need to receive a key focus moving forward.

It has become apparent during the pandemic that although there has been coronavirus, social distancing, childcare and shielding absences the authority general sickness absence levels have reduced significantly to just over 3%. This is reflective of other sectors who have introduced flexible working principles. By providing the flexibility to staff to work their hours to suit their personal circumstances sickness absence reduces.

The authority already has flexible working principles (home working and lone working policies) and solutions that can be adapted to suit this new way of flexible working to ensure that staff health, safety and well being is not compromised in any way. In-fact with more flexible working, risks of accidents, pressure, stress, etc are significantly reduced as staff will need to travel less and will not feel pressured to be present at an office for a set number of hours every day.

Beyond the obvious business benefit of reduced office costs and environmental benefits, research also tells us that flexible working improves morale and reduces stress levels, increases staff retention and importantly widens and unlocks a bigger talent pool, wherein a business can recruit and retain a greater range of talent.

Appendix 6 - Flexible Working Policy Considerations

There are a number of key policies such as but not limited to - use of IT equipment, IT security and flexible working principles that will need to be updated and amended to facilitate a flexible workforce. These will be reviewed and will be subject to the necessary consultation process.

There are already flexible working and home working principles in place since 2015 and 2012 respectively which will require updating accordingly alongside other well-being policies.

Given the significant flexibility that results from flexible working, the Councils existing "Flexi Scheme" will need to be considered to ensure there is a seamless fit in approach. As such, it is proposed to review the scheme to be more in line with the proposed flexible working approaches which in themselves provide employees with additional time management opportunities that can help balance work and personal commitments.

To support the organisation with this transformation, it will be necessary to review the current flexible working scheme to ensure that it provides maximum opportunities to work in a more flexible way to support service delivery, which will benefit the Council and employees.

Caerphilly is currently behind the curve in its approach to flexible working and this is a great opportunity to become a leading light in how services can be delivered in the future.

Appendix 7 - Environmental Impact

Cardiff, London, Manchester, Birmingham and other cities across the UK have seen a huge decline in toxic nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) levels, according to a study by the National Centre for Atmospheric Science (NCAS). Nitrogen dioxide is a harmful gas released when fossil fuels are burnt, usually by power plants and motor vehicles. Many of the activities that generate nitrogen dioxide are also responsible for the world's carbon emissions and the current climate crisis.

Comparing recent pollution levels to the average from the same period in the previous five years, NCAS states: **"The air is definitely much healthier".** This is clearly evident from the chart below.

NO_2 / μgm^{-3}

Road traffic accounts for about 80% of nitrogen dioxide emissions in the UK, according to Paul Monks, Professor of Air Pollution at the University of Leicester, and former chair of the UK government's science advisory committee on air quality. The average diesel car emits 52mg of polluting gas for every kilometre it travels, so it's no surprise that the lockdown-induced reduction in traffic is leading to a substantial improvement in air quality.

Caerphilly is one of only two councils in Wales (the other being Cardiff) that have been identified as having a significant air quality problem due to exceedances of permitted nitrogen dioxide levels on the A473 at Hafodrynys Hill.

Specifically considering the air quality changes for Hafodrynys between January to May 2019 to the same period this year it is evident that the reduced vehicle usage during lockdown has had a significant impact as illustrated below.

Hafodyrynys Road AQE - NO2 Levels (µg/m3)

Caerphilly has declared a climate emergency via a Notice of Motion by the Deputy Leader Cllr Sean Morgan. Cllr Morgan stated "The world is on the cusp of a climate catastrophe and the negative trends we are already seeing can only be halted by transformative change in every aspect of how humans interact with nature. As a council we are continuously seeking ways to improve the way we do things to protect the environment for future generations. We must also look to take advantage of the positive economic and wellbeing impacts that transformative change can bring, and I am pleased that the motion was supported as this is a hugely important cause that requires our action."

The motion sets out a clear commitment to reduce carbon by developing an energy plan and calling on the UK and Welsh Government to provide the necessary resources and support to enable effective carbon reduction, also to work with the Public Service Board and Cardiff Capital Region City Deal partners to develop opportunities to develop carbon savings.

Moving to a more flexible platform for service delivery the authority makes a clear statement to supportive transformative change. The authority is the county borough's largest employer and has thousands of employees who make journeys to offices, to sit at desks to undertake their job. It has been proven that the vast majority of these roles can become a lot more flexible and can be effectively delivered from home or other settings drastically cutting vehicle journeys. Enhancing the level of flexible working across the Council would have a significant and positive impact on the climate.

It is estimated that the during 2018 the Council's fleet of vehicles (including grey fleet):

- drove 8.5 million miles,
- produced 5,538 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e),

Page 118

- consumed 22,298 megawatt hours of energy,
- emitted up to 18.4 tonnes of nitrogen oxides (NOX),
- and up to 245 kg of particulates (PM).

The directly operated fleets (including Plant and "Unknowns") burnt at least 1.77 million litres of fuel at an estimated cost of £1.79 million (based on 2018 average price, ex VAT) and produced 4,745 tonnes of CO_2e. Even a small percentage change of say 5% in vehicle mileage will make a significant difference to emissions and expenditure.

If Caerphilly is serious about supporting transformational change that will benefit the climate and environment where we live, work and play then flexible working must have its place. Flexible working can be deployed to make better use of people and space assets, which can greatly improve sustainability while reducing cost and a company's carbon footprint. If you allow for homeworking as part of the move to flexible working, then this potentially supports a significant reduction in car journeys. What's more, designing a new, flexible-ready office offers the opportunity to "go green".

Appendix 8 - IT and Equipment

Prior to March 2020, the Authority operated in a fairly traditional manner with administrative staff mainly working from office accommodation using static IT infrastructure and fixed location equipment. Flexible working across the Authority was ad hoc and to an extent limited.

In March 2020 the Authority transformed overnight moving to become a fully flexible workforce. The move from office based working to home working was completed almost overnight.

Due to the relatively low levels of investment in flexible IT equipment such as laptops, surfaces and i-pads to date, the Authority has encouraged some staff to use their own devices to access Corporate systems via secure virtual private network during the pandemic. This has allowed the Council to maintain the delivery of vital community services.

As flexible working becomes the "new norm" the Authority will need to ensure that it equips its flexible workforce with the appropriate IT tools and equipment to ensure they can undertake their roles as productively and safely as possible.

In recent months, as part of the Customer and Digital Strategy implementation, Cabinet have already taken the decision to deploy modern software in the form of Microsoft Office 365, Abavus and Thoughtonomy. These tools have been fundamental to the Council's recent success in dealing with Covid 19 and maintaining key public services. To maximize the use of these tools and flexible working the Authority will now need to invest in appropriate IT equipment and infrastructure.

Digital Services are currently undergoing a strategic service review with the support of an external party. The future direction of travel in terms of IT infrastructure and operating model will be subject to an additional Cabinet report during the autumn 2020.

As a result of recent work it is estimated that the Authority will need to develop a full device strategy and future operating model which will require a significant investment in flexible working equipment.

It is not possible to fully estimate the cost of this migration at this point but the development of a sustainable investment plan for this equipment will be required going forward if the Council is to ensure its staff can maintain these flexible approaches.

In addition to the procurement of appropriate IT equipment the authority will need to consider options for additional support for equipment such as desks and chairs to ensure a safe working environment for all flexible workers who could potentially be using their home as their office base in the future.

Appendix 9 - Investment and Property Requirements

The goals of organisations in adopting flexible working are to create a more responsive, efficient and effective organisation, which improves business performance and increases customer satisfaction.

By empowering employees to work how, where and when they choose, there is evidence that productivity is increased and service improvement can be provided by employees working in a way that suits them best. This in turn provides savings for the organisation. These savings should be seen as the investment needed to stimulate the transformational change.

In an American based study, Global Workplace Analytics reports that the average business would save $11,000 per person per year if staff with remote-compatible jobs worked from home just half the time. Furthermore, a poll of 1,500 technology professionals revealed that 37% would take a pay cut of 10% if they could work from home. This implies that there is a trade off in relation to the benefits that the employee values from working in an flexible manner against the desire to be financially driven.

The highlighted section is of concern to us and would ask that it is removed from the report in its entirety. We would not advocate or support any 'trade off' of pay and working from home.

A flexible Working Business Case was reported to Carmarthenshire County Council CMT in May 2017, which concluded potential significant 5-year cumulative savings of £5.3m after an initial capital investment of £2.1 million. This could be achieved from the implementation of flexible working, there would also be significant implications for the Council's office accommodation portfolio in terms of potential release of buildings.

Pembrokeshire County Council also moved to a flexible working approach in 2018 and identified that revenue savings in the order of £925k per annum could be achieved. Further, Monmouthshire County Council have also moved to a flexible working model and their Headquarter building provides only 88 desks for 200 staff that can use the facility coupled with their flexible working option.

This invest to save approach could be developed for a Caerphilly business case. The savings would not happen overnight. However, in the longer term the property portfolio could be rationalised and reconfigured to suit flexible working. The office layouts would need to change and be more aligned with flexible working principles. There would be limited desks and more docking type workstations to provide flexibility on when and where you could work.

The current pandemic may limit the reduction on office space in the short term due to social distancing measures. Longer term there would be significant savings if the accommodation requirements were halved as a result of flexible working. There would be reduced annual running costs for the wider property portfolio and possible one-off capital receipts from the sale of assets that would no longer be required.

An initial exercise undertaking by the Property Services has identified that currently there are circa 2000 desks available within the authority for use by staff. If service provision was undertaken in an flexible manner, there could be a property portfolio rationalisation which could result in 8 buildings being surplus to requirements.

Service provision would be delivered from 3 core locations, Ty Penallta, Tredomen and Tir y berth. This rationalisation would limit desk availability to approx. 1300 desks, a reduction of about one third. However, with social distancing requirements the availability of desk space will be significantly less than 1300.

If the move to a flexible working platform is supported there will need to be a detailed property portfolio report presented detailing the options available along with the relevant cost implications.

Appendix 10 – Flexible Working Staff Survey June 2020

The flexible working staff survey undertaken in June 2020 had 1483 respondents. Some of the main highlights from the survey include the following:

- 83% worked in a flexible way during the coronavirus restrictions.
- 95% worked away from the office full-time during this period.
- 66% of respondents normally work from either Ty Penallta or Ty Tredomen.
- **78% stated that they would like to work in a more flexible way in the future.**
- **Only 8% stated that they did not want to work in a more flexible way in the future.**
- 98% stated that flexible working provided a better work-life balance for them.
- 84% stated that flexible working demonstrated trust in staff from the organisation.
- 84% stated that flexible working would allow them to achieve greater productivity.
- 93% stated that flexible working would support better mental health and well-being.
- 80% considered flexible working would provide a positive impact on the environment.

However:

- 74% stated that they thought that would have less effective teamworking.
- 93% stated that it could be open to abuse.
- 77% had concerns that the authority could see less productivity.
- 78% stated that flexible working may have a negative impact on mental health.
- 67% thought that lack of equipment may be an obstacle to flexible working.

Overall:

- 50% stated that they like to split their time between home and office working.
- 23% had a preference for working from home
- 21% wanted to work from the office but have the option to work from home occasionally.
- Only 2% wanted to be office based.

The analysis above provides a good indication that the staff preference is that the authority should work in a more flexible way. **73%** preferred to work from home or have a balance between home and office working and only **2%** preferred an office-based approach.

There is support and concern in equal measure in relation to mental health and well-being. 93% have stated that flexible working would be better for mental health but 78% were also concerned over the effect that it would also have on mental health.

Some of the other main outcomes indicate the positive impact that flexible working could have on productivity, 84% stating it would improve, along with the trust that this approach demonstrated in staff, 84% supporting this statement. Again, this is balanced off with 93% indicating that this approach could be open to abuse and 77% stating that they would have concerns over productivity.

The outcome is clear that **78% want to work in a more flexible way** in the future and only 8% were against this approach. A fuller analysis of the survey and comments is included in appendix 2.

CABINET – 14TH OCTOBER 2020

SUBJECT: **CASH HANDLING**

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

1. The attached report was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 29th September 2020. The report provided the Scrutiny Committee with an update on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on cash payments, and outlined the steps that need to be taken in the short-term, and the medium to longer-term to ensure the continuity of income levels

2. Section 5.2 of the report provides details of the key activity currently being undertaken in the areas where cash payments have traditionally been of significant financial value. Particular attention was drawn to the doorstep cash collection service provided by Caerphilly Housing which was temporarily withdrawn in March 2020 when "lockdown" was announced.

3. The scrutiny committee were advised that the tenants using the service have all been contacted by the Rents Team and informed that the service could not be provided in the short-term and were assisted to either make payments at the post office or via telephone payments to the contact centre. Members were assured that the proposed consultation outlined in the report, for the longer term, will ensure that all tenants are listened to and will be provided with an appropriate response.

4. Members noted that prior to lockdown the rent collector spent a great deal of time travelling across the county borough to collect payments on a fortnightly basis. It was noted that this method costs the Authority £6.75 per transaction. By changing to either a post office or telephone payment tenants can pay weekly at their convenience.

5. The scrutiny committee were advised that should the doorstep cash collection service cease on a permanent basis the rent collector will be transferred to the tenancy support team who can support any tenants in difficulty.

6. Members were also advised that in terms of wider cash payments there are no immediate plans to reopen our cash offices and that prior to the implementation of the recent "local lockdown", the potential for offering a limited cash payment service at Ty Penallta was considered. However, on balance it was concluded that the potential benefits of reopening the cash desks at Ty Penallta were outweighed by the disadvantages.

7.   Following consideration and discussion the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee agreed by the majority present to recommend to Cabinet:

(I)   That current service users be consulted on the termination of the doorstep collection service for housing rents and council tax.

(II)   That subject to the outcome of the consultation being supportive the decision to terminate the doorstep collection service be delegated to the Chief Housing Officer and Cabinet Member.

(III)   That the option of reopening the cash desks in Ty Penallta is not pursued at this time as the potential benefits are outweighed by the disadvantages. Alternatively, it is proposed that we continue to build on the good work undertaken in recent months to promote further channel shift as our current default position.

(IV)   That the medium to longer-term service offer should be determined by the pending review of customer services and the wider reviews that will be undertaken as part of the strengthening team Caerphilly report that was approved by Cabinet on the 22nd July 2020.

Author: Catherine Forbes-Thompson, Scrutiny Manager – forbecl@caerphilly.gov.uk

Appendices: Report to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee 29th September 2020 – Agenda Item 8.

POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
29TH SEPTEMBER 2020

SUBJECT: **CASH HANDLING**

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

1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To provide the Scrutiny Committee with an update on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on cash payments, and to consider the steps that need to be taken in the short-term, and the medium to longer-term to ensure the continuity of income levels.

1.2   To seek the views of the Scrutiny Committee on recommendations that will subsequently be presented to Cabinet for consideration.

2.   SUMMARY

2.1   Covid-19 has had a significant impact on income levels for the council for a range of reasons. These include the temporary closure of income generating services, the closure of cash offices and the economic impact of the pandemic on our residents and businesses.

2.2   The Welsh Government (WG) has funded much of the income lost for the first quarter of the 2020/21 financial year and has recently announced additional funding of £264m for local authorities to meet the ongoing financial challenges presented by Covid-19. An element of this newly announced funding will be targeted at addressing income losses moving forward. However, it should be noted that WG will not fund any income losses for the HRA on the basis that not all local authorities have retained their housing stock, and the sector would not be treated equally when Large Scale Voluntary Transfers and traditional Registered Social Landlords are also not receiving any assistance.

2.3   Appendices 1 and 2 provide details of the cash payments received by the council during the 2019/20 financial year. These total some £10.24m albeit that the details provided in Appendix 2 include both cash and cheque payments as it is not possible to report on these separately.

2.4   The most significant categories of cash payments during 2019/20 were Council Tax (£2.41m), Housing Rents (£2.79m), Schools (£2.81m) and Leisure Centres and Tourism Venues (£0.962m).

3.   RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   Members are asked to consider the content of the report and the following recommendations to Cabinet: -

3.1.1   That current service users be consulted on the termination of the doorstep collection service for housing rents and council tax.

3.1.2   That subject to the outcome of the consultation being supportive the decision to terminate the doorstep collection service be delegated to the Chief Housing Officer and Cabinet Member.

3.1.3   That the option of reopening the cash desks in Ty Penallta is not pursued at this time as the potential benefits are outweighed by the disadvantages. Alternatively, it is proposed that we continue to build on the good work undertaken in recent months to promote further channel shift as our current default position.

3.1.4   That the medium to longer-term service offer should be determined by the pending review of Customer Services and the wider reviews that will be undertaken as part of the Strengthening Team Caerphilly report that was approved by Cabinet on the 22nd July 2020.

4.   REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   To ensure that the views of the Scrutiny Committee are considered by Cabinet.

5.   THE REPORT

5.1   Current Position

5.1.1   The temporary closure of the Council's Cash Offices due to the ongoing pandemic situation has removed the facilities for our residents to pay with cash. Appendix 3 provides details of total payments made by type during April and July 2020 compared to the same period last year.

5.1.2   Total receipts have reduced by some £2.7m for the reasons already set out above. WG funding has been confirmed for the majority of these losses but notably not for income lost on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). WG will not fund any income losses for the HRA on the basis that not all local authorities have retained their housing stock, and the sector would not be treated equally when Large Scale Voluntary Transfers and traditional Registered Social Landlords are also not receiving any assistance.

5.1.3   Whilst cash payments were virtually zero between April and July 2020 it is interesting to note the channel shift to alternative types of payment methods being used by our residents. The most significant increases compared to the same period last year are noted in the following areas: -

Payment Method	Increase (%)
Bank Payments	4.23
CCBC Internet Payments	11.94
CCBC Automated Telephone Line	4.16
Telephone Payment via Advisor	11.34
Post Office Cards	3.28

5.1.4   The above shows a positive shift from cash to alternative payment methods and this should be maintained and encouraged in the longer-term as the receipting and processing of cash payments is resource intensive and expensive. However, we must not lose site of the fact that cash is the preferred method of payment for a cohort of our residents, albeit that this can be done in different ways e.g. the use of Post Office payment cards.

5.2 **Steps Being Taken to Promote Channel Shift**

5.2.1 The following paragraphs summarise some of the key activity currently being undertaken in the areas where cash payments have traditionally been of significant financial value.

Council Tax

5.2.2 Council tax collection rates have been adversely impacted by the economic consequences of Covid-19. Our collection rate is currently 2.5% lower than for the same period last year, albeit that an element of this will be due to payment deferments being agreed where requested.

5.2.3 Due to Covid-19 our normal recovery action processes were suspended at the beginning of the financial year with our alternative approach being to issue "soft reminders" to those council tax payers who are in arrears. This approach has resulted in improved collection rates albeit that we are still below normal levels. We have worked closely with those residents experiencing financial difficulties and have helped them access Universal Credit where eligible and have also assisted them with applying for support through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS). We have also encouraged council tax payers to pay through alternative methods including direct debits and the use of Post Office cards and we are making good progress with this.

5.2.4 From September 2020 we have reinstated our formal recovery processes and this will enable us to pursue payment from those council tax payers who are persistently in arrears.

Housing Rents

5.2.5 Channel shift in respect of housing rent payments broadly follows the trends set out above in paragraph 5.1.3.

5.2.6 Since 1996 a doorstep rent collection service has been offered to our tenants to collect rent and council tax. Initially the service was offered to all tenants but over the years has been restricted based on the circumstances of the household. The fortnightly service is available to tenants in sheltered accommodation or those in receipt of Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payments.

5.2.7 The number of tenants using the service has steadily reduced as more tenants have become familiar with other methods of payment e.g. online and direct debit. As at March 2020 only 365 tenants (3%) used this service out of a total of 10,740. Ten years ago there were in excess of 2000.

5.2.8 Only 1 full-time equivalent rent collector remains and an electronic receipting machine is used to collect cash from tenants at their home. No other forms of payment can be made to the rent collector only cash.

5.2.9 The doorstep cash collection service provided by Caerphilly Housing was temporarily withdrawn in March 2020 when "lockdown" was announced. The tenants using the service have all been contacted by the Rents Team by telephone and informed that the service could not be provided in the short-term and have been supported to move to other payment methods. As a result of this: -

 ➢ 41% are currently paying using Post Office payment cards in their local Post Office;
 ➢ 39% are paying over the phone with an advisor; and
 ➢ 20% are using the council's online payment system.

5.2.10 Previously it was thought that tenants would have found it difficult to pay rent without the rent collector calling. Despite some initial reluctance and concern, experience over the last few months has shown that tenants can pay by other methods but have previously chosen not to.

5.2.11 In the past, visits from the rent collector were seen as contributing to the well-being of tenants who had few visitors. However, the Council currently supports residents in many ways e.g. Community Connectors, Estate Management Officers, Tenant Support Officers, Tenant Liaison Officers and Surveyors.

5.2.12 In addition, the Rents Section has developed a comprehensive support service to tenants that provides advice on welfare benefit entitlement, water rate tariffs and payment of rents. The team has contacted 950 tenants and assisted them to claim over £1 million additional income during the 2019/20 financial year.

5.2.13 Caerphilly is now the only council in Wales providing a doorstep rent collection service and it is proposed that current service users be consulted on the termination of the doorstep collection service.

5.2.14 In the broader context, a large percentage of council tenants previously paid in cash at the council's local cash offices. These tenants are also in the process of being contacted by the Rents Team and supported to move to other payment methods. This includes Post Office payment cards where they can continue to pay locally using cash, and telephone payments where they have the support of an advisor to make the payment.

5.2.15 Across all council services 1,860 new Post Office cards have been ordered between April and August 2020. This is an increase of 1,613 on the same period last year. The use of these cards not only reduces the need for the council to handle cash but also drives footfall to Post Offices and town centres at a key time.

Schools

5.2.16 A significant proportion of the cash income for schools relates to charges for the provision of school meals.

5.2.17 Cashless catering has been piloted in a small number of schools and a proposal has been prepared to roll this out across the wider school estate. This is the subject of a separate report on this evening's agenda.

Leisure Centres and Tourism Venues

5.2.18 Leisure Centres are opening on a phased basis from September 2020 and will not be accepting cash payments, at least in the short to medium-term. Non-cash payments are also being encouraged for Tourism Venues but cash payments will be accepted in some areas due to current limitations in payment systems. This will be addressed moving forward to ensure that non-cash payments will become the default position.

5.3   Potential for Opening Ty Penallta to take Cash Payments

5.3.1 The content of this report has demonstrated the significant channel shift that has already taken place in response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is important that we continue to build on this and as part of the budget proposals agreed by Council in February 2020 a service review is already planned for our Customer Services offer.

5.3.2 There are no immediate plans to reopen our cash offices. However, prior to the implementation of the recent "local lockdown" in Caerphilly CBC, the potential for offering a limited cash payment service at Ty Penallta was considered.

5.3.3 From the outset it is important to stress that providing a cash payment facility at Ty Penallta would only contribute to the collection of council tax and housing rent payments. It is also worth noting that Neath Port Talbot CBC is the only other council in Wales that still has a manned cash desk and they are looking at using the Covid-19 response as a lever to stop taking cash payments in the future.

5.3.4 The proposal to reopen the cash desks at Ty Penallta was considered feasible but there are a number of practical considerations: -

- There would be a requirement for a security guard at the front door to ensure safe distancing/numbers in the building at a cost of circa £13.50 per hour.
- Facilities Management would need to reconfigure the current layout using existing furniture to ensure that all waiting areas are set at a safe distance of 2 metres as per current WG guidance. There are already Risk Assessments approved by the Corporate Management Team and the Trade Unions that would ensure compliance with the latest WG guidance.
- Signage would be required but this can be produced in-house.
- We would need to ensure that hand sanitiser is available and that a strict cleaning regime is in place.
- Protocols for the safe handling of cash would need to be established in line with Health & Safety requirements.

5.3.5 Whilst the above are manageable there are a number of other factors that require consideration: -

- The impact on the Contact Centre's current call capacity. Some staff have already been redeployed to support contact tracing, and opening the cash desks at Ty Penallta will require a minimum of 3 staff.
- The Customer First service is currently handling all calls for the majority of the council including the high-volume areas of Sundry Debtors, Housing benefits and Council Tax. We have recently recommenced formal recovery action in these areas, which has led to a significant increase in call volumes.
- Ty Penallta is not on a bus route or in a town centre. Residents will have to drive to the site to make cash payments and we may come under pressure to open other cash offices throughout the county borough.
- Visitors to Ty Penallta are likely to demand access to a wider range of services than just the ability to pay by cash.
- Government advice is to use cashless processes wherever possible so the enabling of cash payment facilities is contrary to this.
- The recently announced "local lockdown" is also a further major consideration.

5.3.6 On balance it is concluded that the potential benefits of reopening the cash desks at Ty Penallta are outweighed by the disadvantages. It is also worth noting that the council's communications team has advised that the current closure of cash payment facilities has not featured as an issue on any of our communication channels.

Conclusion

5.3.7 Covid-19 has had a significant impact on income levels for the council and there has been significant channel shift in the types of payment methods being used by our residents.

5.3.8 Recent months have shown that housing tenants do not rely upon the doorstep rent collection service. It is an expensive service that brings risks to both tenant and landlord. The council has far more effective support and engagement mechanisms in place.

5.3.9 There are no plans to reopen cash offices at the present time. The option of providing a limited cash payment service at Ty Penallta has been considered. However, on balance the advantages are considered to be outweighed by the disadvantages at the present time.

5.3.10 It is proposed that the medium to longer-term service offer should be determined by the pending review of Customer Services and the wider reviews that will be undertaken as part of the Strengthening Team Caerphilly report that was approved by Cabinet on the 22nd July 2020.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 It is assumed that the Covid-19 pandemic will continue to impact on services for the foreseeable future.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1 Effective financial planning and financial control, including ensuring that effective arrangements are in place for the collection of sums due to the Council, contribute to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015: -

- 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. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1 Effective financial management is a key element in ensuring that the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 are met.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed in respect of the possible removal of the doorstep rent collection service and is attached at Appendix 4.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 As set out throughout the report the council offers a range of alternative types of payment methods to our residents, all of which are funded through the core revenue budget.

10.2 Cash payments are generally resource intensive and expensive to process. This is illustrated by the figures below for the doorstep rent collection service: -

- Cost for rent collector - £6.70 per transaction (this includes salaries, mileage, IT and internal overheads).
- In comparison, the Post Office charges an initial set-up cost of £1.90 and an ongoing transaction cost of £0.54.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Should a decision ultimately be taken to end the doorstep rent collection service the remaining member of staff will be redeployed to the tenancy support team within Housing Rents to increase capacity for this service.

12. CONSULTATIONS

12.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

13.   STATUTORY POWER

13.1   Local Government Act 1972 and 2000.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Cash Transactions by Location/Fund 2019/10

Appendix 2 – Cash/Cheque Transactions by Site 2019/20

Appendix 3 – Income by Payment Method

Appendix 4 – Equalities Impact Assessment – Removal of Doorstep Rent Collection Service

Cash Transactions by Location 2019-20																												
	Bargoed		Blackwood		Caerphilly		Newbridge		Pontlottyn		Risca		Ty Penallta		Planning		Bereavement Services		Park Services		Rent Collectors		Grand Total	
Month	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £
April	1083	96,340	1184	112,644	2144	184,421	350	34,821	622	51,702	760	69,103	616	79,753	16	996	4	1659	6	501	729	37078	7514	669,019
May	1008	75,492	1194	103,851	2062	165,026	303	23,623	563	42,837	759	58,769	602	62,321	21	4,781	6	3662	3	251	809	36667	7330	577,281
June	953	71,988	1087	89,668	1918	145,571	293	24,033	534	38,795	713	60,106	523	59,877	7	595	2	740	2	296	696	38195	6728	529,864
July	1034	74,261	1074	91,689	1997	149,515	310	24,080	616	46,103	715	53,882	595	68,410	20	3,446	5	1819	2	195	775	37711	7143	551,110
August	828	61,991	943	83,186	1690	137,252	251	20,537	508	39,103	590	49,604	499	61,225	20	160	2	160	8	744	435	20576	5774	478,482
September	955	70,797	1048	88,267	1862	139,459	303	24,734	533	39,999	665	48,742	566	63,032	10	18,171	3	1424	7	835	875	37732	6827	533,192
October	899	67,373	1003	90,843	1904	149,362	303	26,503	538	40,693	696	53,492	579	61,095	9	1,500	2	517	3	200	712	30955	6648	522,535
November	898	62,875	1043	90,224	1857	140,600	307	24,243	507	38,855	646	52,284	568	70,000	6	1,347	2	2636	2	100	367	23467	6203	506,632
December	636	46,739	697	60,306	1337	104,916	221	17,573	369	29,415	459	34,867	382	41,088	14	2,726	0	0	2	96	278	13262	4395	350,989
January	885	64,445	998	85,641	1814	140,970	292	24,090	515	41,045	665	55,298	539	62,643	9	2,214	2	875	4	422	522	25412	6245	503,056
February	698	54,804	722	67,274	1375	102,524	192	14,726	394	27,530	501	41,004	339	37,003	13	2,667	1	430	0	0	596	25381	4831	373,344
March	454	38,713	482	57,256	922	85,668	133	12,978	268	27,971	337	35,236	290	46,910	5	920	0	0	0	0	298	11719	3189	317,371
Total	10331	785,818	11475	1,020,848	20882	1,645,283	3258	271,942	5967	464,048	7506	612,388	6098	713,360	150	43,468	29	13,922	39	3,640	7092	338,156	72827	5,912,873

Cash Transactions by Fund 2019-20																										
	Council Tax		NNDR		Rents		Sundry Debtors		Overpaid Housing Benefits		Housing Loans		Housing Advance		Misc. Income		Welsh Water		Excess Notices		Grand Total	
Month	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £
April	2527	322,520	25	7,895	4300	280,534	226	28,672	13	324	1	54	1	69	328	24,275	92	4,646	1	30	7514	669,019
May	2474	240,037	26	9,045	4229	273,113	155	21,842	13	433	1	38	1	69	345	28,381	86	4,322	0	0	7330	577,281
June	2276	218,687	24	9,103	3908	255,705	126	17,080	13	419	0	0	1	69	295	24,141	85	4,660	0	0	6728	529,864
July	2306	222,563	28	10,211	4133	258,242	188	23,585	20	1,269	0	0	1	69	379	31,074	88	4,096	0	0	7143	551,110
August	2360	224,072	25	9,863	2840	195,427	131	19,453	24	550	0	0	1	69	294	24,109	99	4,940	0	0	5774	478,482
September	2262	215,673	23	8,838	4040	237,333	151	25,162	22	565	0	0	1	69	253	41,874	75	3,678	0	0	6827	533,192
October	2234	220,589	21	8,738	3854	237,892	187	22,772	21	675	0	0	1	69	247	27,472	83	4,327	0	0	6648	522,535
November	2129	204,819	24	8,002	3537	241,621	163	21,109	28	3,674	0	0	1	69	242	23,604	79	3,733	0	0	6203	506,632
December	1614	159,117	19	7,997	2395	147,883	112	16,668	16	376	0	0	1	69	173	15,371	65	3,508	0	0	4395	350,989
January	2022	200,467	23	9,748	3674	236,084	195	28,244	20	902	0	0	1	69	238	23,876	72	3,665	0	0	6245	503,056
February	767	66,869	13	7,371	3686	256,797	111	15,741	17	2,784	0	0	1	69	185	21,273	51	2,439	0	0	4831	373,344
March	475	113,414	6	6,496	2439	166,025	80	10,321	15	270	0	0	1	69	121	15,110	52	5,666	0	0	3189	317,371
Total	23446	2,408,827	257	103,307	43035	2,786,657	1825	250,650	222	12,241	2	92	12	828	3100	300,561	927	49,680	1	30	72827	5,912,873

Site Name	April £	May £	June £	July £	August £	September £	October £	November £	December £	January £	February £	March £	Total £
Blackwood Miners Institute	7,096	5,269	4,692	4,598	1,674	2,986	8,258	14,300	22,812	5,722	10,278	737	88,422
Aberbargoed Skate Park	261	187	0	351	282	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,081
Music Services	1,560	971	2,448	903	0	1,500	2,200	2,920	3,350	4,022	1,203	295	21,372
Ty Penallta Glass Restaurant/Meals Direct	12,825	13,310	12,776	12,879	11,568	13,154	14,511	13,552	12,356	12,601	11,475	8,476	149,481
Parc Cwm Darran	988	1,454	1,647	1,958	1,451	748	115	0	0	0	0	0	8,360
Learning Centre Pengam	74	57	294	16	0	17	38	255	195	253	241	45	1,484
Bedwas Comp Kitchen	1,206	1,492	1,590	1,104	0	2,609	1,985	1,867	1,253	1,742	1,343	940	17,131
Blackwood Comp Kitchen	2,437	3,142	3,085	3,104	0	4,963	4,087	4,271	3,140	4,087	2,722	2,251	37,290
Heolddu Comp Kitchen	2,972	3,673	3,976	3,756	0	5,627	3,954	4,476	3,068	4,544	2,777	2,583	41,405
Islwyn Comp Kitchen	3,157	3,790	3,356	2,184	0	5,290	3,928	3,731	3,254	4,172	2,856	2,676	38,394
Lewis Girls Comp Kitchen	1,546	1,826	1,955	1,289	0	3,091	2,225	2,293	1,695	1,873	1,131	1,053	19,978
YGC Cwm Rhymni Kitchen	1,646	2,049	2,331	1,809	0	3,639	2,391	2,660	1,769	2,519	1,536	1,464	23,812
Risca Comp Kitchen	1,322	1,760	2,481	1,332	0	3,364	2,590	2,542	1,850	2,127	1,452	1,072	21,891
St Cenydd Comp Kithcen	3,311	3,715	4,975	2,849	0	7,365	4,916	5,478	3,223	4,516	3,202	2,474	46,024
YGG Y Gwyndy Comp Kitchen	1,366	1,563	2,118	1,094	0	2,553	1,552	2,073	1,463	1,820	1,452	1,166	18,220
Aberbargoed Library	17	40	21	38	30	23	32	24	16	23	9	11	285
Abercarn Library	87	60	81	75	114	88	107	96	55	61	55	56	935
Aertridwr Library	85	99	80	123	107	104	161	95	63	69	71	50	1,107
Bargoed Library	387	356	404	416	424	460	425	413	217	392	304	169	4,367
Bedwas Library	75	124	86	132	123	104	65	45	40	82	56	34	967
Blackwood Library	513	506	414	458	487	547	470	383	269	449	390	227	5,113
Caerphilly Library	771	909	912	988	802	1,147	1,017	816	516	778	965	603	10,222
Deri Library	17	9	24	25	15	20	21	16	25	15	14	6	207
Llanbradach Library	18	39	35	26	52	47	49	41	43	25	19	18	415
Machen Library	40	25	26	32	36	26	24	10	12	32	28	4	293
Nelson Library	121	113	106	145	92	113	159	128	65	126	90	62	1,321
New Tredegar Library	88	102	87	134	105	70	114	147	128	139	96	97	1,307
Newbridge Library	162	229	244	181	188	252	180	154	92	154	158	63	2,056
Oakdale Library	79	109	74	96	92	83	90	93	67	89	80	30	983
Pengam Library	60	30	38	22	21	22	20	32	6	28	18	4	301
Rhymney Library	259	181	166	193	216	182	230	227	112	181	182	121	2,249
Risca Library	750	773	893	783	694	810	945	830	499	148	719	499	8,343
Ystrad Mynach Library	271	329	321	332	393	347	379	353	213	319	235	157	3,650
Beatrice Webb	20	3	22	16	16	0	0	9	3	16	13	50	168
Blackberry Catering	1,098	1,073	1,416	1,268	1,057	1,286	1,449	2,152	1,802	1,607	1,492	1,237	16,936
Brodawel	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	41	19	4	0	80
Brondeg Day Centre	2,366	2,844	2,831	3,682	2,628	2,799	2,713	2,803	2,694	2,932	3,148	1,602	33,042
Brooklands Day Centre	1,425	1,226	1,444	1,637	1,322	1,915	1,975	1,963	1,720	1,694	1,766	1,112	19,199
Castle View	9	28	25	28	75	50	0	158	19	99	0	136	628
Enrgleyn Resource Base	1,547	1,627	1,568	1,971	1,850	1,846	1,958	1,813	1,671	1,642	1,739	1,248	20,478
Gwerin Day Centre	228	193	97	113	137	330	387	322	290	516	475	242	3,331
Markham Resource Base	59	81	64	81	64	81	129	97	64	89	89	56	954
Oaklands Day Centre	924	1,034	999	1,243	1,143	1,244	1,169	1,102	1,030	1,286	1,238	958	13,370
Pontllanfraith Woodcraft	1,044	973	1,586	1,399	955	1,441	1,338	2,657	1,572	1,708	1,057	875	16,605
Sirhowy Crafts	468	496	1,001	674	938	1,556	2,100	2,753	1,778	1,980	1,866	1,136	16,746
Springfields	363	314	330	306	322	626	677	753	596	870	1,153	846	7,157
Twyncarn Day Centre	623	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	623
Ty Clyd	95	3	141	14	9	6	9	123	3	139	34	96	675
Ty Iscoed	125	113	132	124	41	157	134	45	84	167	102	89	1,313
Windy Ridge	368	60	678	0	0	0	0	507	935	0	0	0	2,548
Ystrad Mynach Day Centre	3,051	3,147	2,586	3,985	3,409	5,539	5,449	4,795	4,302	5,318	5,126	3,454	50,160
Blackwood Adult Education	49	558	64	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	681
Oxford House Adult Education	443	599	526	142	1,787	983	890	710	33,424	894	533	533	41,464
Cwmcarn Fforest Drive	20,192	20,820	13,801	23,111	28,756	16,557	15,342	14,916	12,125	18,343	10,292	6,759	201,014
Llancaiach Fawr Manor	7,801	14,297	9,706	10,151	18,416	12,104	11,221	14,104	11,418	9,222	7,098	2,620	128,159
Visit Caerphilly	10,762	11,504	10,772	13,684	13,860	10,114	9,863	9,258	10,233	8,646	3,890	0	112,585
Winding House	1,049	825	750	754	1,326	1,177	746	917	753	1,048	1,301	318	10,964
Bedwas Leisure Centre	991	730	789	758	769	1,195	702	1,061	361	985	796	1,018	10,153
Caerphilly Leisure Centre	9,863	11,048	10,691	11,382	11,796	9,597	10,869	9,061	6,707	12,888	12,439	5,877	122,217
Cefn fforest Leisure Centre	2,697	2,588	2,595	3,088	3,488	2,473	2,639	2,285	1,654	3,337	3,708	1,972	32,524
Centre Of Excellence	1,516	985	315	747	785	418	1,684	1,821	2,596	2,223	2,473	2,113	17,675
Heolddu Leisure Centre	4,084	4,121	4,102	4,284	5,678	3,730	3,991	3,082	2,604	6,522	4,593	3,645	50,435
New Tredegar Leisure Centre	1,937	1,362	1,886	1,551	1,303	1,463	1,641	1,082	552	1,706	885	350	15,717
Newbridge Leisure Centre	7,910	6,869	8,790	8,933	10,734	7,192	7,446	6,012	3,900	9,204	7,639	4,060	88,689
Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre	4,655	4,983	3,502	3,558	3,287	4,016	3,050	3,331	4,490	4,641	4,542	3,737	47,791
Risca Leisure Centre	10,518	10,673	8,901	9,040	9,572	9,457	9,358	8,402	5,624	13,648	9,418	5,811	110,421
Sue Noakes Leisure Centre	1,266	907	1,511	1,431	974	900	1,938	849	736	1,080	1,129	936	13,659
Bedwas High School	0	698	890	2,967	0	7,020	3,665	1,536	437	2,188	3,657	6,594	29,651
Blackwood Comprehensive	844	4,197	74	1,445	596	568	5,249	3,181	383	0	415	22,524	39,474
Heolddu Comprehensive	0	0	1,553	2,993	0	11,319	1,435	0	0	853	1,007	0	19,159
Idris Davies Comprehensive	7,900	25,794	9,456	11,860	7,564	5,695	11,216	12,274	11,733	16,965	12,671	0	133,127
Islwyn High School	3,055	5,205	4,436	9,228	0	1,108	4,454	1,337	5,811	2,736	5,051	4,326	46,748
Lewis Girls School	602	841	2,151	3,119	0	3,250	4,455	504	2,186	565	4,806	619	23,098
Lewis School - Pengam	0	516	2,003	1,532	0	1,057	4,884	2,236	470	496	1,178	4,437	18,810

Newbridge Comprehensive	10,760	19,424	13,012	17,490	0	22,104	21,122	0	15,982	19,399	14,181	0	153,474
Risca Comprehensive	0	0	0	10,017	0	0	0	0	0	1,369	0	180	11,566
St Cenydd Comprehensive	247	3,116	4,140	1,644	0	2,346	455	434	7,800	3,791	4,129	0	28,103
St Martins Comprehensive	5,700	13,296	12,839	12,874	0	17,074	19,985	13,089	7,644	15,835	10,382	12,295	141,014
Trinity Fields	1,698	4,232	4,536	3,996	0	3,540	3,167	4,242	3,017	5,328	29,025	2,426	65,208
YGG Cwm Rhymni	2,223	2,572	101	2,884	0	70	993	0	0	0	10,767	16,029	35,638
Aberbargoed Primary	1,845	1,797	2,491	2,761	0	2,456	2,457	3,974	2,786	2,424	1,908	1,875	26,774
Abercarn Primary	2,300	29	3,215	19	0	0	248	0	848	210	457	0	7,324
Bedwas Infants	912	819	5,703	857	0	933	980	1,163	941	1,375	760	832	15,275
Bedwas Juniors	3,443	1,535	1,919	1,618	0	1,425	1,375	1,576	1,126	2,360	1,164	4,617	22,159
Blackwood Primary	560	543	719	778	0	133	1,141	4,241	525	558	376	785	10,359
Bryn Awel Primary	485	3,518	3,988	514	0	497	326	315	1,148	2,263	0	1,089	14,142
Bryn Primary	1,014	1,616	1,864	5,435	0	1,328	1,336	1,890	2,614	1,895	1,214	2,230	22,436
Cefn Fforest Primary	1,509	1,979	6,337	2,792	0	1,673	1,817	1,420	1,488	2,630	3,147	1,038	25,829
Coed Y Brain Primary	4,779	1,702	2,456	1,835	0	12,562	2,249	2,586	2,314	2,551	1,757	3,618	38,407
Crumlin High Level	1,117	3,434	1,272	799	0	2,558	1,589	2,363	3,379	1,524	632	2,180	20,846
Cwm Aber Infants	480	866	1,368	548	0	487	638	1,164	901	799	580	547	8,379
Cwm Aber Juniors	644	1,129	823	1,663	0	1,158	1,772	1,229	1,899	2,814	1,474	1,242	15,848
Cwm Glas Infants	1,163	1,041	1,031	951	0	2,254	611	893	868	824	1,504	713	11,853
Cwm Ifor Primary	806	1,563	1,594	1,643	0	1,643	1,643	4,671	1,878	6,782	4,537	4,565	31,325
Cwmcarn Primary	1,649	4,162	2,199	2,290	0	4,546	3,143	3,911	7,857	2,686	1,678	7,268	41,389
Cwmfelinfach Primary	1,616	4,555	3,277	2,230	0	1,832	1,413	3,305	1,753	2,151	2,191	1,537	25,862
Cwrt Rawlin	4,539	5,053	8,369	11,393	0	2,891	9,046	3,660	9,654	7,501	5,505	6,451	74,060
Deri Primary	1,155	1,135	1,476	876	0	1,231	1,057	1,713	1,314	2,681	1,095	954	14,687
Derwendeg Primary	2,427	1,256	2,848	2,905	0	1,057	3,590	3,927	3,023	1,653	3,345	1,620	27,649
Fleur De Lys Primary	79	33	15	1,113	0	0	82	164	0	0	317	0	1,802
Fochriw Primary	1,993	1,817	2,269	809	0	834	1,056	1,165	1,622	1,184	1,075	630	14,453
Gilfach Fargoed Primary	1,079	1,118	1,255	812	0	1,336	1,258	1,604	1,400	1,543	1,079	1,175	13,659
Glyngaer Primary	1,652	2,270	4,609	1,711	0	2,692	2,839	2,698	2,122	2,477	1,994	2,448	27,513
Graig Y Rhacca Primary	545	483	1,236	1,001	0	356	591	1,024	1,535	931	315	540	8,556
Greenhill Primary	619	3,606	1,279	893	0	1,104	823	1,004	3,803	2,656	690	799	17,276
Hendre Infants	894	1,180	1,520	1,180	0	1,295	1,094	1,641	1,046	1,303	877	1,159	13,189
Hendre Juniors	1,321	4,144	4,570	2,690	0	3,596	4,673	2,687	2,978	5,543	2,358	4,680	39,239
Hendredenny Park	1,782	929	573	545	0	715	255	4,272	1,330	251	269	835	11,755
Hengoed Primary	840	5,482	1,293	772	0	658	1,417	3,253	1,155	1,272	703	720	17,566
Idris Davis Primary	647	1,171	1,578	1,167	0	1,047	1,251	1,417	1,465	1,879	920	1,468	14,011
Libanus Primary	2,170	737	579	0	0	0	0	0	0	11,491	0	0	14,977
Llancaeach Juniors	1,036	3,534	1,477	1,631	0	1,988	0	2,090	2,307	2,025	1,812	3,890	21,791
Llanfabon Infants	661	1,315	1,327	1,082	0	1,328	1,308	1,216	1,001	1,594	961	469	12,262
Machen Primary	1,874	2,011	2,056	2,540	0	4,399	2,262	2,714	2,076	2,490	2,243	1,519	26,182
Maesycwmmer Primary	757	698	841	694	0	1,015	2,677	1,106	931	968	895	795	11,376
Markham Primary	515	1,009	960	1,676	0	670	2,444	1,347	864	1,359	1,042	938	12,824
Nant Y Parc Primary	17,455	6,641	1,897	1,395	0	1,669	3,088	1,592	1,908	1,482	1,778	1,115	40,019
Pantside Primary	970	937	1,221	3,939	0	1,432	1,163	1,225	1,076	1,266	2,230	809	16,268
Park Primary	514	464	606	1,157	0	551	340	303	402	316	304	288	5,245
Pengam Primary	205	45	30	912	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,191
Penllwyn Primary	982	801	887	893	0	773	1,458	851	772	1,406	612	728	10,164
Pentwynmawr Primary	645	1,112	1,081	4,897	0	852	1,285	1,373	2,342	887	903	1,121	16,498
Phillipstown Primary	299	504	639	3,640	0	1,037	1,717	1,424	1,246	661	692	459	12,319
Plasyfelin Primary	1,010	1,755	1,618	1,650	0	1,586	2,378	1,907	5,476	1,858	1,562	1,301	22,101
Pontllanfraith Primary	1,326	1,893	2,262	1,178	0	3,703	1,434	2,043	1,503	2,155	6,723	1,988	26,208
Rhiw Syr Dafydd Juniors	4,844	19,946	8,185	8,525	0	5,405	6,339	11,595	8,224	7,700	5,744	5,223	91,729
Rhydri Primary	591	1,546	10,532	904	0	2,120	3,118	1,277	856	2,366	358	862	24,530
Risca Primary	2,271	1,688	3,295	1,789	0	3,499	2,219	2,706	2,539	2,606	1,709	1,778	26,100
St Gwladys Primary	2,432	3,108	3,648	2,766	0	3,936	5,243	4,019	4,232	3,704	3,152	2,649	38,889
St Helens Primary	2,443	2,695	2,075	2,556	0	2,947	3,414	2,489	11,241	17,882	1,376	3,572	52,690
St James Primary School	2,079	1,347	2,035	1,190	58	2,380	1,791	2,251	6,984	1,972	1,043	0	23,131
Tir-y-berth Primary	2,031	3,954	2,301	2,569	0	2,891	2,463	2,846	2,453	2,581	1,900	2,725	28,713
Trinant Primary	403	747	854	570	0	2,356	727	683	2,235	762	558	578	10,473
Twyn Primary	3,662	4,991	5,684	7,757	0	5,367	6,006	5,841	4,210	6,353	3,550	0	53,421
Ty Isaf Infants School	944	851	821	3,674	0	994	727	914	953	1,230	786	1,180	13,073
Ty Sign Primary	2,401	6,432	3,688	14,110	0	6,817	5,492	5,124	2,666	6,942	5,141	3,055	61,869
Tynewydd Primary	2,449	5,211	6,769	2,096	0	2,234	3,916	1,945	1,999	4,174	1,258	0	32,050
Tyn-y-wern Primary	2,142	2,095	2,377	2,015	0	3,571	2,102	2,412	14,037	3,319	2,117	1,909	38,095
Upper Rhymney Primary	220	908	998	6,239	0	0	2,685	0	0	6,051	357	7,194	24,651
Waunfawr Primary	1,213	1,961	2,477	1,541	0	1,499	2,584	2,051	1,969	2,017	2,191	1,853	21,357
White Rose Primary	131	97	987	6,164	0	134	124	130	28,722	216	92	66	36,862
YG Bro Sannan	1,711	3,694	2,481	3,548	0	3,278	6,910	2,313	4,352	2,021	1,491	3,142	34,943
YGG Caerffili	1,003	2,541	3,077	1,407	0	2,217	2,594	4,061	4,019	6,325	2,287	1,879	31,408
YGG Y Castell	3,328	3,540	4,441	4,083	0	3,487	12,298	8,573	7,017	6,325	4,029	4,640	61,762
Ynysddu Primary	612	2,955	1,852	768	0	1,444	1,175	1,418	927	1,376	1,120	959	14,607
Ysgol Cwn Derwen	267	106	209	28	0	85	15,011	28	48	17	0	0	15,797
Ysgol Gym Bargoed	2,039	1,198	1,520	1,019	0	3,272	1,746	2,484	2,606	1,863	1,387	1,419	20,552
Ysgol Gym Trelyn	1,006	1,014	1,357	1,256	0	939	1,859	1,488	2,095	1,738	2,229	973	15,954
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Allta	3,880	2,843	3,270	3,610	0	3,800	3,203	3,739	3,558	4,667	4,457	2,163	39,191
Ysgol Gynradd Gwyddon	1,933	2,558	700	593	0	297	287	257	358	85	0	40	7,108
Ysgol Ifor Bach	1,220	1,804	2,040	1,937	0	1,490	2,336	2,321	4,373	1,565	1,607	1,319	22,012
Ysgol Penalltau	6,277	2,174	2,819	1,538	0	5,603	1,735	4,669	1,869	2,611	4,479	1,956	35,730
Ysgol Y Lawnt	12,387	2,216	1,660	3,510	0	1,160	964	2,931	4,032	1,447	0	4,128	34,436
Ystrad Mynach Primary	286	166	2,202	1,576	0	463	337	0	316	307	226	195	6,073
Total	318,653	402,068	375,527	405,863	153,695	385,735	411,912	366,780	448,678	431,996	352,783	278,253	4,331,945

Income by Payment Method April 2019 to July 2019

Method Of Payment	April		May		June		July		Total		Number
	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Percentage
Bank Payments	£12,536,647	6,978	£10,140,461	7,623	£11,419,752	6,966	£10,237,229	8,057	£44,334,089	29,624	17.46%
Debit Card	£445,448	2,755	£327,578	2,600	£331,623	2,479	£386,525	2,700	£1,491,174	10,534	6.21%
CCBC Interent Payments	£685,122	5,128	£704,925	5,685	£701,640	5,510	£758,012	5,808	£2,849,699	22,131	13.05%
CCBC Automated telephone Line	£204,251	1,118	£188,470	1,319	£219,406	1,282	£258,202	1,440	£870,330	5,159	3.04%
Cash at Cash Offices	£631,941	6,785	£540,613	6,521	£491,896	6,033	£513,399	6,368	£2,177,850	25,707	15.15%
Cheque at cash Offices	£353,429	982	£268,162	806	£199,418	823	£246,952	791	£1,067,961	3,402	2.01%
Mixed Payment at Cash Office	£459,746	3,408	£411,192	3,545	£383,398	3,376	£447,993	3,445	£1,702,329	13,774	8.12%
Telephone payment Via Advisor	£840,542	4,928	£769,065	5,382	£697,564	4,614	£754,193	5,425	£3,061,364	20,349	11.99%
Postal Remittance	£200,713	449	£237,868	397	£123,024	349	£99,272	378	£660,876	1,573	0.93%
Post Office Card	£205,254	3,344	£219,235	3,640	£196,844	3,318	£230,806	3,705	£852,139	14,007	8.26%
Establishment Income	£466,298	1,474	£629,408	1,740	£554,932	1,815	£639,153	1,809	£2,289,792	6,838	4.03%
DWP Payments	£100,846	1,248	£104,982	1,229	£116,044	1,296	£133,618	1,363	£455,490	5,136	3.03%
Credit Card	£55,537	304	£16,802	97	£13,678	63	£12,989	84	£99,006	548	0.32%
Bailiff Payments	£79,397	1,007	£71,522	969	£79,031	938	£67,832	986	£297,783	3,900	2.30%
Rent Collectors	£41,573	769	£46,315	871	£44,939	745	£46,013	839	£178,839	3,224	1.90%
CCBC Pay Deductions	£5,331	52	£10,719	69	£8,418	43	£12,038	81	£36,507	245	0.14%
Income Via Cash Admin Journals/Other	£515,842	756	£343,212	1,025	£42,716	868	£26,207	849	£927,977	3,498	2.06%
Total	**£17,827,918**	**41,485**	**£15,030,529**	**43,518**	**£15,624,323**	**40,518**	**£ 14,870,434**	**44,128**	**£63,353,205**	**169,649**	**100.00%**

Income by Payment Method April 2020 to July 2020

Method Of Payment	April		May		June		July		Total		Number
	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Value £	Number	Percentage
Bank Payments	£14,878,322	6,002	£10,225,401	6,028	£10,457,873	6,767	£11,167,242	6,703	£46,728,837	25,500	21.69%
Debit Card Chip & Pin	£0	0	£0	0	£0	0	£0	0	£0	0	0.00%
CCBC Interent Payments	£978,725	6,635	£958,401	7,009	£1,025,085	7,349	£1,188,963	8,376	£4,151,175	29,369	24.98%
CCBC Automated telephone Line	£311,974	1,783	£339,462	2,004	£442,347	2,132	£463,884	2,551	£1,557,667	8,470	7.21%
Cash at Cash Offices	£0	0	£605	5	£52	7	£662	4	£1,318	16	0.01%
Cheque at Cash Offcies	£0	0	£0	0	£0	0	£0	0	£0	0	0.00%
Telephone payment Via Advisor	£981,034	5,970	£1,075,630	6,210	£1,080,395	7,390	£1,175,412	7,862	£4,312,471	27,432	23.34%
Postal Remittance	£543,840	497	£142,165	500	£135,209	656	£313,596	784	£1,134,810	2,437	2.07%
Post Office Card	£209,752	2,659	£232,751	2,815	£372,790	3,574	£444,819	4,512	£1,260,112	13,560	11.54%
Establishment Income	£2,904	69	£535	34	-£2,198	26	£66,363	94	£67,604	223	0.19%
DWP Payments	£293,914	1,830	£317,989	1,369	£370,805	1,931	£420,151	2,251	£1,402,859	7,381	6.28%
Credit Card Chip & Pin	£0	0	£0	0	£0	0	£0	0	£0	0	0.00%
Bailiff Payments	£12,177	207	£6,102	136	£25,856	367	£0	0	£44,135	710	0.60%
Rent Collectors	£0	0	£0	0	£0	0	£0	0	£0	0	0.00%
CCBC Pay Deductions	£12,204	77	£8,238	36	£9,754	65	£7,488	39	£37,685	217	0.18%
Income Via Cash Admin Journals/Other	-£66,174	558	£80,691	359	-£31,838	497	-£17,446	826	-£34,765	2,240	1.91%
Total	**£18,158,672**	**26,287**	**£13,387,970**	**26,505**	**£13,886,131**	**30,761**	**£ 15,231,135**	**34,002**	**£60,663,908**	**117,555**	**100.00%**

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

THE COUNCIL'S EQUALITIES STATEMENT

This Council recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within and between our communities, residents, elected members, job applicants and workforce.

We will also work to create equal access for everyone to our services, irrespective of ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, use of Welsh language, BSL or other languages, nationality, responsibility for any dependents or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

EIAs are a legal requirement under equalities legislation (Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011) where the potential for a significant negative impact has been identified. This legislation has been in place since 2000. We also have a legislative duty to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Re-assignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity

- Race
- Religion, Belief or Non-Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Welsh Language*

CAERPHILLY
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
CAERFFILI

THE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

NAME OF NEW OR REVISED PROPOSAL*	Removal of Doorstep rent collection service
DIRECTORATE	Social Services
SERVICE AREA	Housing
CONTACT OFFICER	Sandra Isaacs
DATE FOR NEXT REVIEW OR REVISION	

*Throughout this Equalities Impact Assessment Form, 'proposal' is used to refer to what is being assessed, and therefore includes policies, strategies, functions, procedures, practices, initiatives, projects and savings proposals.

The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is to ensure that Equalities and Welsh Language issues have been proactively considered throughout the decision making processes governing work undertaken by every service area in the Council as well as work done at a corporate level.

The Council's work across Equalities, Welsh Language and Human Rights is covered in more detail through the **Equalities and Welsh Language Objectives and Action Plan 2016-2020**.

When carrying out an EIA you should consider both the positive and negative consequences of your proposals. If a project is designed for a specific group e.g. disabled people, you also need to think about what potential effects it could have on other areas e.g. young people with a disability, BME people with a disability.

There are a number of supporting guidance documents available on the **Corporate Policy Unit Portal** and the Council's Equalities and Welsh Language team can provide advice as the EIA is being developed. Please note that the team does not write EIAs on behalf of service areas, the support offered is in the form of advice, suggestions and in effect, quality control.

Contact **equalities@caerphilly.gov.uk** for assistance.

PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSAL

1	**What is the proposal intended to achieve?** *(Please give a brief description and outline the purpose of the new or updated proposal by way of introduction.)* Caerphilly Housing has offered a doorstep rent and council tax collection service since 1996 at Local government reorganisation, the predecessor Authorities Rhymney Valley and Islwyn also operated a similar service. The numbers using the service have gradually reduced over the years to a pre-Covid level of 365 properties, from a stock of over 10,000 properties. The payments are collected from the tenants on a fortnightly or monthly basis. Each visit takes no longer than 5 minutes. The majority of payments are made using cash. Since lockdown was implemented in March 2020 this service has been temporarily withdrawn due to COVID restrictions. There has now been a significant channel shift in the way these tenants make their payments. 40% continue to pay cash fortnightly at the post office, 39% pay online where assistance is offered by and customer service advisor and 20% have chosen to pay online. All tenants have been contacted by phone, letter and offered assistance to pay their rent in another way. Tenants can still continue to pay in cash at their local post office and this appears to be the slightly preferred payment method In view of this it is proposed to permanently terminate the doorstep collection service and re-deploy staff elsewhere within the Rent section to support tenants This proposal will remove a service that is naturally declining and support tenants to continue to use alternative payment methods. This in turn will reduce the associated costs and risks to the Authority and tenant of cash handling.

2	**Who are the service users affected by the proposal?** *(Who will be affected by the delivery of this proposal? e.g. staff members, the public generally, or specific sections of the public i.e. youth groups, carers, road users, people using country parks, people on benefits etc. Are there any data gaps?)* 2 members of staff equating to 1 x full time equivalent post. 365 tenants who were in receipt of the service prior to Covid restrictions

IMPACT ON THE PUBLIC AND STAFF

3	**Does the proposal ensure that everyone has an equal access to all the services available or proposed, or benefits equally from the proposed changes, or does not lose out in greater or more severe ways due to the proposals?** *(What has been done to examine whether or not these groups have equal access to the service, or whether they need to receive the service in a different way from other people?)*

The doorstep collection service is only offered to tenants who are resident in one of the councils sheltered schemes or who are in receipt of disability benefits.
As a result the service is predominantly used by those tenants who are elderly. A breakdown of the profile of the service users is presented below. NB the totals add up to more than 365 as some tenancies are joint tenancies.

Gender	Age range						Total
	<50	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+	
Female	8	15	45	101	89	26	**284**
Male	5	7	35	73	36	6	**162**
Total	**13**	**22**	**80**	**174**	**125**	**32**	

4	Is your proposal going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics? *(Has the service delivery been examined to assess if there is any indirect effect on any groups? Could the consequences of the policy or savings proposal differ dependent upon people's protected characteristics?)*	

Protected Characteristic	Positive, Negative, Neutral	What will the impact be? If the impact is negative how can it be mitigated?
Age	Negative	Alternative payment options available. Support will be provided to move over to alternative payments methods if needed
Disability	Negative	Alternative payment options available. Support will be provided to move over to alternative payments methods if needed
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	No negative impact due to this specific protected characteristic
Marriage & Civil Partnership	Neutral	No negative impact due to this specific protected characteristic
Pregnancy and Maternity	Neutral	No negative impact due to this specific protected characteristic
Race	Neutral	No negative impact due to this specific protected characteristic
Religion & Belief	Neutral	No negative impact due to this specific protected characteristic
Sex	Neutral	No negative impact due to this specific protected characteristic
Sexual Orientation	Neutral	No negative impact due to this specific protected characteristic

5	In line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. (No.1) Regulations 2015, please note below what effects, if any (whether positive or adverse), the proposal would have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. *(The specific Policy Making Standards requirements are Standard numbers 88, 89, 90, 91, 92 and 93. The full detail of each Standard is available on the Corporate Policy Unit Portal. Although it is important that what is outlined in the proposal is available in Welsh and English, please consider wider impacts on Welsh speakers.)* The alternative payment types are available bilingually with the tenant able to chose their language preference

INFORMATION COLLECTION

6	**Please outline any evidence and / or research you have collected which supports the proposal? This can include an analysis of service users.**
	(Is this service effectively engaging with all its potential users or is there higher or lower participation of uptake by one or more protected characteristic groups? If so, what has been done to address any difference in take up of the service? Does any savings proposal include an analysis of those affected?)
	Tenants
	All tenants affected by the temporary suspension of the doorstep service in March 2020 have been contacted by the Rents Team by telephone and informed that the service could not be provided in the short to medium term and have been supported to move to other payment methods. As a result of this: -
	• Online payment 20% (initiated from home)
	• Over the phone to an advisor 39% (initiated from home)
	• Using a post office card to pay in the local post office 41%
	Risks
	Caerphilly is now the only council in Wales providing a doorstep rent collection service. This is due to both the costs of the service and the inherent health and safety risks:-
	•Tenants need to keep cash in their homes and carry large sums of cash home from Post Office etc
	•The rent collector carries a significant amount of cash.
	Costs
	Transactional cost for rent collector - £6.70 per transaction – (this includes salaries, mileage, IT and internal overheads).
	The cost per transaction has escalated as economies of scale have been lost as tenant take up has reduced, with increased travelling times.
	In comparison, the Post Office charges an initial set-up cost of £1.90 and an ongoing transaction cost of £0.54.
	In the past, visits from the rent collector were seen as contributing to the well-being of tenants who had few visitors and opportunities for interaction.
	Today, the Council supports residents in many ways e.g. community connectors, Estate Management Officers, Tenant Support Officers, Tenant Liaison Officers, Surveyors. A range of opportunities for interaction are also provided by other Council services, and the third sector.
	In addition, the Rents section has developed a comprehensive support service to tenants that provides advice on welfare benefit entitlement, water rate tariffs and payment of rents. The team has contacted 950 tenants and assisted them to claim over £1 million additional income during 19/20 financial year.

	The number of staff providing this support service has steadily increased and should a decision be taken to end the doorstep rent collection service the remaining of staff (1FTE) will be redeployed into one of these roles.

CONSULTATION

7	*Please outline the consultation / engagement process and outline any key findings.* *Methods* All tenants receiving the service have been contacted by phone and alternative payment methods discussed in the short to medium term, as this service has been temporarily withdrawn due to COVID restrictions Some of the tenants we contacted wanted to continue to pay in cash and we assisted to arrange for a post office card to be paid where they could pay in their local post office. Many tenants were not aware they could pay their rent in the post office The tenants were contacted during the lockdown period tenants and a few had concerns how they would pay their rent if they were self isolating. Assistance was offered and telephone numbers were provided to enable them to pay over the phone with the assistance of the customer services team within Caerphilly and guidance was offered to access the online payment facility. Caerphilly Council tenancy support team number was left with the tenants if they needed any further support All tenants have been assisted to channel shift to other payment methods. 41% of tenants now pay in cash at the post office 20% pay online 39% pay over the phone

MONITORING AND REVIEW

8	**How will the proposal be monitored?** *(What monitoring process has been set up to assess the extent that the service is being used by all sections of the community, or that the savings proposals are achieving the intended outcomes with no adverse impact? Are comments or complaints systems set up to record issues by Equalities category to be able analyse responses from particular groups?)*

	Prior to the formal termination of the rent collection service all users of the service will be written to/telephoned advising them of the termination of the service and additional support will be offered with alternative payments methods should tenants require it. The team will also support tenants to access other council services eg community connectors and raise awareness of other key Council services, and the third sector.
9	**How will the monitoring be evaluated?** *(What methods will be used to ensure that the needs of all sections of the community are being met?)* Payments by the tenants who were formerly on the rent collection round will be checked on a monthly basis and if payments are not being made then a support officer will contact the tenant to discuss any problems they may be encountering and provide support. This monitoring will be in place for a period of 6 months after the removal of the service.

10	**Have any support / guidance / training requirements been identified?** *(Has the EIA or consultation process shown a need for awareness raising amongst staff, or identified the need for Equalities or Welsh Language training of some sort?)* None identified

11	**If any adverse impact has been identified, please outline any mitigation action.** The only adverse impact on tenants will be the loss of a fortnightly or monthly visit by the collection officer. This is mitigated by the range of alternative payments methods and support options that are available to tenants. The Rent section will also be able to provide support with moving to an alternative payment method should a tenant require assistance.

12	**What wider use will you make of this Equality Impact Assessment?** *(What use will you make of this document i.e. as a consultation response, appendix to approval reports, publicity etc. in addition to the mandatory action shown below?)* This assessment will be used as an appendix to approval reports

13	An equality impact assessment may have four possible outcomes, through more than one may apply to a single proposal. Please indicate the relevant outcome(s) of the impact assessment below.	
	Please tick as appropriate:	
	No major change – the impact assessment demonstrated that the proposal was robust; there was no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. All opportunities to promote equality have been taken.	X
	Adjust the proposal – the impact assessment identified potential problems or missed opportunities. The proposal was adjusted to remove barriers or better promote equality.	
	Continue the proposal – the impact assessment identified the potential problems or missed opportunities to promote equality. The justification(s) for continuing with it have been clearly set out. (The justification must be included in the impact assessment and must be in line with the duty to have due regard. Compelling reasons will be needed for the most important relevant proposals.)	
	Stop and remove the proposal – the impact assessment identified actual or potential unlawful discrimination. The proposal was stopped and removed, or changed.	

Form completed by:	
Name:	Sandra Isaacs
Job Title:	Rents Manager
Date:	

Head of Service Approval	
Name:	Shaun Couzens
Job Title:	
Signature:	
Date:	

CABINET – 14TH OCTOBER 2020

SUBJECT: **CASHLESS CATERING SOLUTION - SCHOOLS**

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

1. The attached report was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 29th September 2020. The scrutiny committee was advised that the purpose of the report is to update Members on the current position with regards to the Council's Cashless catering solution in schools, and to seek endorsement of a recommendation to Cabinet for further funding to expand the provision.

2. Mr J Lloyd the Headteacher at Ystrad Mynach Primary School provided Members with an overview of the pilot scheme which has been in place at Ystrad Mynach Primary School for the past two years. He explained that this system has been welcomed and is used by 94% of parents. It allows parents to make online payments to the school, keep track of the amounts paid and also monitor the meals that children are having. Mr Lloyd also explained that the introduction of this scheme has saved effectively 10-12 hours of the school clerks time allowing her to support other work within the school. The solution ensures that the school cook gets accurate information on meal requirements and children in receipt of free school meals are not differentiated from other children. The school has also been audited during the past year and it was found to work very well with no issues reported.

3. Members sought clarification with regard to how parents who are not using the system will manage when catering resumes in schools, considering the current covid-19 restrictions and the need to social distance. Mr Lloyd was able to reassure the committee that appropriate and discreet processes will be in place for money to be passed on to the school.

4. The Scrutiny Committee discussed the system used at schools currently not using Caerphilly Catering, it was explained that the system outlined in this report would only be available to those schools using the Caerphilly Catering Service, although the contract does allow for further schools to be added at a later date.

5. Members expressed concerns regarding the charges to be applied to schools after the first year and whether they were affordable. The benefits of time and efficiency as well as the potential increased uptake of free school meals, and the subsequent financial benefits to the school were highlighted.

6. Assurance was sought regarding the reliance of the cashless system and if

schools could opt out in future. Members were advised that there was a very robust procurement process to secure this system and the contract includes appropriate break clauses to safeguard the Authority. Members were informed that schools want this system and they accept the charges because of the benefits that will result in terms of efficiency and accountability.

7.   Members discussed how arrears in payments will be dealt with and wanted to be assured that children will still be provided with a meal. The committee were informed that the school already have good relationships with parents and would address any arrears as soon as possible and that the school would ensure that a meal is provided.

8.   Following consideration and discussion the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to Cabinet that:

(I)   To proceed to purchase the cashless catering solution for 84 school settings.

(II)   The residual funding requirement of £246.5k be met from Education and Corporate Services Reserves.

Author: Catherine Forbes-Thompson, Scrutiny Manager – forbecl@caerphilly.gov.uk

Appendices: Report to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee 29th September 2020 – Agenda Item 9.

**POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
29TH SEPTEMBER 2020**

SUBJECT: **CASHLESS CATERING SOLUTION - SCHOOLS**

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

1.   **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1   The purpose of this report is to update Members on the current position with regards
to the Council's Cashless catering solution in schools, and to seek endorsement of a
recommendation to Cabinet for further funding to expand the provision.

2.   **SUMMARY**

2.1   A Cashless catering provision allows pupils and parents to pay for school lunches via
an online payment solution, enabling cash handling and associated administration to
be significantly reduced in schools.

2.2   There is a cashless catering system currently operating in 9 of our secondary
schools, which needs updating due to IT advancements, 10 primary schools
(operating as part of a pilot) and 65 primary settings have no current cashless
catering provision.

2.3   A procurement process has been undertaken and will be finalised if funding is
approved.

2.4   Due to the recent events of Covid 19, it has become an urgent requirement for
schools to reduce the amount of cash handled. The implementation of the cashless
catering system would enable the service to significantly reduce cash payment for
school meals and other school activities. The system will also support teachers and
staff to keep pupils in individual classrooms.

2.5   The system will also enable schools to prevent any discrimination between paid and
free school meals pupils.

2.6   Each individual schools administration officers will be able to support parents without
online access. This support will consist of an online account being set up on behalf of
the parent by the schools administration team.

2.7   The system will also provide additional features to allow parents to pay for school
uniforms, trips and activities, photographs, tuck shops etc.

2.8   The system would also allow the accounting and administration of the payments for
visitors and staff meals without cash payments being required.

2.9   Other efficiencies are also envisaged such as reduction / elimination of the need for a secure cash collection service

3.   RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   Members are asked to: -

  a) Consider the information contained in the report.

  b) Endorse a recommendation to Cabinet to proceed to purchase the cashless catering solution for 84 school settings.

  c) Endorse a recommendation to Cabinet that the residual funding requirement of £246.5k be met from Education and Corporate Services Reserves.

4.   REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   To ensure Members are updated on the reasons why a cashless catering solution is vital within the school environment.

4.2   To allow a catering service to be provided in schools, a cashless catering solution is essential to be able to take payments for school meals.

4.3   To comply with internal audit recommendations.

4.4   To support the education settings to minimise the risk of cash handling associated with Covid 19.

5.   THE REPORT

5.1   A cashless catering provision allows pupils and parents to pay for school lunches via an online payment solution, enabling cash handling to be minimised in schools.

5.2   A cashless catering system is currently in 9 of our secondary settings, which needs updating due to IT advancements, 10 primary settings already operate the system, as a pilot, and 65 primary settings have no current cashless catering provision, so will require a complete install.

5.3   This report covers schools that are operated by the in-house provider Caerphilly Catering. Newbridge, St Martins, Ysgol Gyfyn Cwm Rhymni (Gellihaf site) and Lewis Secondary Schools, all run their own catering provision and operate their own cashless catering solution, so have not been considered as part of this report. However additional schools/sites are able to join throughout the contract duration subject to implementation costs being secured.

5.4   Cashless Catering has been in place in secondary schools since 2000. Over the years the systems have been developed and improved using the latest technology that has been available to us. Currently we offer online payments via apps or customers are able to pay online and in the Secondary sites payment can also be at either at a till point or a loader situated within the school canteen. Cash collected at these sites is collected 2 times a week by a secure cash collection service and each visit incurs a contractual charge.

5.5   In March 2016 an Internal audit was undertaken to establish how cash was collected and banked within our Primary Schools and the values and management of school

meal arrears within the system. The audit was based on a number of objectives and identified areas of improvements. Based on the findings of the audit report a cashless catering pilot system was introduced into 4 of our Primary Schools.

5.6   The pilot was for a year and involved colleagues across service areas from Internal Audit, Procurement, IT, Education Finance, Corporate Finance and key school representatives. The pilot was a great success, please refer to appendix 7. Cash collected and banked in these schools reduced by 91% and parental and school feedback was extremely positive, and this allowed an additional 5 schools to use this system please refer to appendix 6. To address all the findings raised in the audit report of March 2016, this solution needed to be rolled out to all remaining schools.

5.7   A full procurement process has very recently been completed, to implement and update cashless catering across 84 school settings.

5.8   Due to the recent events of Covid 19, it has become an urgent requirement for schools to reduce the amount of cash handled. The implementation of the cashless catering system would enable the service to minimise cash payment for school meals and other school activities. The system will also support teachers and staff to keep pupils in individual classrooms.

5.9   The system will also enable schools to prevent any discrimination between paid and free school meals pupils. The system will also be able to be updated daily with FSM entitlement, the current system only allows updates weekly.

5.10   Each individual schools administration officers will be able to support parents without online access. The schools administration team will set up an account on the parents behalf and manage this where necessary by adding funds in the back office administration system held at the school.

5.11   The system also provides additional features to allow parents to pay for school uniforms, trips and activities, photographs, tuck shops etc, and where primaries and secondary's within a cluster all use the system it will enable parents to manage school meal and other payments for their children from ages 4 to 16.

5.12   The cost of the cashless system is broken down as follows

- A yearly maintenance charge for a primary school will be £598.39
- A yearly maintenance charge for a secondary school will be £1,963.23.
- A yearly maintenance charge for a middle school will be £2,561.62
- A yearly maintenance charge for a special school will be £598.39
- 5 year Hardware Cost for 9 Secondary Schools based on average of 5 tills - £51,108.75 (per school £5,678.75);
- 5 year Hardware Cost for 75 Primary Schools based on average of 2 tablets - £89,088.30 (per school £1,187.84);
- One off WIFI costs are £6,000.
- Installation, training, and software costs are £201,480.99
- Staff Costs initially on an 18 month fixed term contracts are £72,255
- The total cost of the cashless catering is £482,481.22.
- Uniware's set up and preparation time is 41 days from start to finish..
- Tablets will be configured by Uniware and Internal IT requirements can be undertaken at Tredomen. Anticipated resource for implementation is 3 days for 2 members of staff.

It is proposed that the Authority meets the installation, training, hardware and sofware costs and maintenance costs for the remainder of this financial year.With maintenance costs from year 2 on being met by individual schools. This will allow

schools time to budget for this increased cost.

5.13   It is proposed that training is undertaken by virtual webinars and a train the trainer approach.

5.14   There is an extensive range of YouTube videos available for both customers and backend office users on how to use the system. Please see https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUZC0K5IQfENzOpP0jBq1DA/videos?disable_polymer=1

5.15   It is proposed, subject to member approval to rollout the provsion to all schools with immediate effect if approval is given.

5.16   If approval is given there will be benefits to both the organisation and service user.

5.17   The organisational benefits of the cashless catering system is to:

- Be able to operate a catering provision whilst managing the risks associated with Covid 19;
- Reduce the audit reports finding of "High Risk" to "Low Risk";
- Maximise income levels;
- A reduction in schools meals arrears;
- Every child's account has an overdraft facility that allows a credit for one meal. The school can add additional funds if required from the schools account. This will prevent any child going without a meal, and where appropriate e.g. welfare concerns, additional meals can be authorised by Head Teachers
- Guest and staff meals can also be administered more effectively than the current system.
- Ensuring financial regulations are met and all income is collected and banked in a timely and efficient manner;
- Reduction or elimination of the need to use secure cash collection services or the onsite administration of bank deposits of the cash collected.
- Management information that is timely, accurate and can be easily audited and monitored to measure performance and customer satisfaction;
- Establishment of a fully supported IT system. The schools meals register currently used is unsupported and has reached the end of its life cycle;
- Implementation of a single system would have direct benefits on the Income Team (Corporate Finance) in terms of staff resources;
- Ensure the Authority is better prepared for the future of meeting customer's needs within a digital world.
- Any additional duties required to reconcile income takings will be undertaken centrally and therefore will have no impact on school clerk's duties.

5.18   Service User Benefits

- Online system that allows parents to access the system either through the App Store, Google Play or in the Windows Store; Please see appendix 1 for an example;
- Allows parents to view the menu selection made by their child. The access also enables parents to view an up to date statement of the account balance, purchases made and any promotional offers available. Please see appendix 2 for an example;
- Provides peace of mind for parents who can see the meals their children are purchasing. Alternatively, should they wish, parents can dictate the school meals to be provided with allergen & nutritional information presented to them online. This will help us comply with the recent legislation on allergen awareness; Please see appendix 3 for an example;
- The money automatically goes to a central bank account, avoiding cash and

cheques having to be sent to the school. Parents can also check balances and transactions online. The service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- A reward system is available for healthy eating choices; (Please refer to appendix 8)
- There are currently restrictions placed on how parents are able to pay for school dinners depending on the resources available in individual schools. Implementation of a digital system would remove these restrictions ensuring parity and equality and also free up resources within schools;
- Allow 24hrs a day / 7 days a week access for customers. If there are any technical issues the system has a backup facility which will allow the system to be functional and when the system is back up and running it will update accordingly.
- Improvement in governance control measures;
- Reduce volumes of cash held by the schools which improves security measures currently in place;
- Free school meals are easily manageable alongside paid meals;
- The school will not be working in deficit and waiting to collect the debt from parents as lunches, trips etc. are paid upfront;
- Simplification and streamlines the process for parents and administrators;
- Reduces queueing time and the risk of theft/loss of cash; If a child loses / stolen their card then as soon as it is reported an immediate block is put on the account to stop any unauthorised usage.
- All parents / guardians are encouraged to use the online top up facility to remove the risk of a child losing money or being bullied and having the money taken off them.
- Reduce amount of unnecessary trips and school traffic at peak times;
- Parents can be more organised for the school day;
- The system ensures funds are spent appropriately on food at the schools as intended by parents and not taken to the shops by the children to purchase sweets etc.;
- Avoids instances of bullying as the online funds are kept private;
- If a school clerk is absent the parent / guardian can still pay for school meals. School clerks are very often part time;
- Prevents pupils carrying money into school which will help to reduce the potential for bullying;
- Creates a personalised shopping experience for customers;
- Offers the potential for additional features to allow parents to pay for school uniforms, trips and activities, photographs, tuck shops etc;
- Where the system is in use within all schools in a cluster accounts will be able to be ported from primary to primary or from primary to secondary.
- If children are showing a credit amount on their account and move to another LA school the credit sum on the account will be refunded.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions have been made in relation to this report.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1 Caerphilly's Attainment Strategy: To raise standards and ensure our learners are healthy, confident, proud and ambitious and can access high quality educational opportunities, settings and experience.

7.2 Caerphilly's Wellbeing Objectives 2018 to 2023. This proposal will assist the Authority in meeting these objectives in particular the following:

Well-being Objective 1 – Improve Education opportunities for all.

Well-being Objective 2 – Enabling Employment.

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 -** Management information on free school meal uptake which is necessary for the Revenue Support Grant (RSG). We want to improve accessibility throughout the county borough, through a range of ways including better digital access. Our goal is that every child should have the best start in life, and the opportunity to achieve success as a young person and as an adult.
- **Prevention -** To help people make the best use of their household income and manage their debts. Close the gap in life expectancy for residents between the most and least deprived areas in the Borough.
- **Integration -** Improve outcomes for all leaners, particularly those vulnerable to under achievement
- **Collaboration –** The cashless catering solution is collaboration between Catering Services and Education establishments to remove any discrimination between pupils who are either paying or receiving a free school meal allowance.
- **Involvement –** Throughout the pilot there has been consultation between all relevant stakeholders, e.g. Head Teachers, Education Officers, Internal Audit, IT, Procurement, Governing bodies, parents and pupils.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This will also have a positive impact on the children and young people attending schools that have allergies and medical needs.

9.2 The majority of customers are children and young people. Children will no longer have to carry cash. This is a positive outcome due to there being less opportunity for them to be bullied or to lose the money.

9.3 The Cashless system works the same for all children whether they pay or have a free school meal. The amount allocated for the free school meal will be automatically added onto the system.

9.4 For those families that don't have IT equipment at home the system can be accessed using smart phones. This system allows children to put money on to their account via a cash revaluation terminal located in the school (in secondary schools) and in primary schools cash can be given to the school clerk who will update the child's account in systems back office. This is then used to pay for food and drink in the canteen.

9.5 Schools will also have the ability to add additional funds to pupil's accounts in extreme cases to ensure that any vulnerable / safeguarding issues with individual pupils / families are able to be managed by the Head teacher or nominated school representative.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 To support the rollout of the cashless catering provision, two additional posts will be required, one within finance and one within catering. The posts will initially be fixed term for 18 months and reviewed before the end of the fixed term period. The costs for these posts are estimated as £72k.

10.2 The 2019/20 Provisional Outturn Report included a proposal to set aside £236k for cashless catering and this was agreed by Cabinet on the 1st July 2020.

10.3 The annual Maintenance costs for the system for all school settings provisions will be charged to the individual schools, from year 2, which equates to £62,5k.

10.4 The total sum of the system is £482.5k, the yearly maintenance costs of £62,5k will be charged to schools settings from year 2. The additional funding requirement is £246.5k. It is proposed that this will be funded from Education & Corporate Services Reserves.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no personnel implications.

12. CONSULTATIONS

12.1 The following consultees have had been involved and consulted.

13. STATUTORY POWER

13.1 The Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2013
       Requirement (Wales) Regulations 2013 Free Breakfast Clubs

Author: Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy

Consultees: Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services
               Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive
               Mark S Williams, Interim Corporate Director of Communities
               Dave Street, Corporate Director Social Services & Housing

Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Steve Harris, Acting S151 Officer
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning & Strategy
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer
Jane Southcombe, Finance Manager, Education, Lifelong Learning & Schools
Clare Rogers, Business Development Manager
Neil Rich, IT Development Officer
Jess Thomas, Procurement Officer
Deborah Gronow, Audit Group manager
A Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities & Welsh Language)
Marcia Lewis, Catering Manager
Cllr Jaimie Pritchard, Chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Gez Kirby, Vice Chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Teresa Parry, Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Carole Andrews, Vice Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Ross Whiting, Cabinet Member for Learning and Achievement
Cllr Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Customer Services

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Screen shot of Upay Chilli logon screen
Appendix 2 – Screen shot of users' statement
Appendix 3 – Screen shot of allergens for a pupil
Appendix 4 – Screen shot from Saffron of nutritional information for a week
Appendix 5 – Online ordering screen shot
Appendix 6 – Percentage uptake of online payments for the first 4 schools pilot schools (after the completion of 1 term)
Appendix 7 – Feedback comments from Head Teachers and parents
Appendix 8 – Sample of reward scheme currently in place within the Secondary sector
Appendix 9 – Equality Impact Assessment Form

Appendix 1

Screen shot of Upay Chilli Logon Screen

Appendix 2

Screen shot of users' statement

Appendix 3

Screen shot of allergens for a pupil

Update Allergies ✕

Allergies:

☐ GLUTEN	◉ CRUSTACEANS
◉ EGGS	◉ FISH
☐ PEANUTS	☐ SOYA
◉ MILK	☐ NUTS
☐ CELERY	☐ MUSTARD
☐ SESAME	☐ SO2 AND SULPHITES
☐ LUPIN	◉ MOLLUSCS
☐ WHEAT	☐ RYE
☐ BARLEY	☐ OATS
☐ ALMONDS	☐ HAZELNUTS
☐ WALNUTS	☐ BRAZIL NUTS
☐ CASHEWS	☐ PECANS
☐ PISTACHIOS	☐ MACADAMIA NUTS

UPDATE ALLERGIES

CANCEL

CONTINUE

Appendix 4

Screen shot from Saffron of nutritional information for a week

Appendix 5

Online Ordering Screen Shot

Appendix 6

Percentage uptake of online payments for the first 4 schools pilot schools (After the completion of 1 term)

	SCHOOL NAME	Totals		
		Total	Cash %	Online
4020	Pengam Primary (2058)	£19,852.60	18%	82%
4025	Fleur-De-Lys Primary (2061)	£13,595.19	6%	94%
4064	Blackwood Primary (2379)	£39,468.22	17%	83%
4534	Ysgol Cwm Derwen (2394)	£27,105.12	1%	99%

NB

It should be noted that when the pilot was initially introduced the take up of the online payments resulted in a slower up take by parents in both Pengam Primary and Blackwood Primary. The catering service worked in partnership with both schools to help parents to load on line at the school or through the catering head office which resulted in greater up take at both sites. Cash has reduced in all areas and been maintained and debt has been reduced across all sites.

Comment from School Clerk Pengam and Fleur Dy Lys Primary

"At the beginning of the cashless catering trial, we were still taking 18% cash after the first term. We found that Pengam parents were a little nervous to use the new cashless system.

We discussed the benefits of the system with the parents who were still sending in cash. We then encouraged them to register on the Upay Chilli app and see how easy it was to use.

We noticed after that that we were taking less cash, and now all parents use the cashless system"

Appendix 7

Feedback comments from Head Teachers and Parents

Comment from a parent of a pupil in Whiterose Primary

"The cashless system that the school uses for our children's dinners as made life a lot easier, I use the app to top up my child's account, making life easier in the morning not having to find money. It is so quick and easy to use and was so simple to set up.   The app is really good, you can keep track on how much money is on your child's account and not have t worry about not having money to give every week."

Comment from a parent of a pupil in Abercarn Primary

"The cashless catering system has been an absolute life saver and made the whole process of my children having dinners so much easier. It saves me having to find money each week or day to pay for their meals; I simply use the system to top up for me. It means that it's one less thing for me to worry about on a daily basis. I would highly recommend any school using it, they won't be sorry".

Comment from Head Teacher in Abercarn Primary

"The cashless catering system has proven to be very effective and worthwhile. It's super convenient with a lot less admin. It means we have no cash coming into school for dinners – no money is lost or mislaid. Admin staff can be very proactive checking the system and we have no debts. Parents find it super convenient and have really welcomed the system".

Comment from Cook in Charge of Blackwood Primary

"When I was asked to become a pilot site for the cashless catering system I was so nervous and apprehensive as I was not used to using IT. Once the system was implemented it was so simple to use it has encouraged me to use IT more widely in both work and at home".

Comment from Head Teacher of Ystrad Mynach Primary

"The cashless system has transformed the way that we administer meals to children. Time effective, efficient, and easy to analyse data and reports. Parents and Office staff find is easy and accessible to use. We advocate its implementation in schools".

Comment from School Clerk from in Ysgol Cwm Derwen

"I think the system is fantastic, not only has it made administration far more streamlined and auditable, it reduces any difficult conversations taking place between myself and parents who dispute cash payments made to the school as the system is fully auditable and receipts are issued to parents when payment is made".

Comment from a parent of a pupil in Ysgol Cwm Derwen

"Cashless catering takes a weight of my mind as I have automated top ups which means there is always credit on my child's account so I know they will always have a meal".

Comment from Pengam Primary

"We were asked to take part in a pilot for cashless catering some time ago. The Headteacher, Governors and office staff were happy and very keen to trial the system.

The system is easy to use for both office staff and also parents. They top up on line and are able to use an auto top up which tops up their child's account when it goes below a certain amount, which parents find useful.

The office staff are able to run a report in the morning which shows who has a low balance, they then text parents who then top up before lunchtime. This works well in Pengam.

When we first piloted the system we would take cash but encourage parents to sign up for the Upay Chilli app. We then made the decision to stop taking cash as office staff would be banking very small amounts of cash. We helped the parents to sign up for the app and all parents are happy to top up on line.

The benefits of the cashless system are vast but the main benefits are that office staff do not have to record every individual cash/cheque payments against pupils on an outdated spreadsheet, which was extremely time consuming, office staff do not have to count money and bank several times a week. There is no debt in the school which is a huge benefit. If a child has a minus balance we ask that the parent either tops up or provides a packed lunch until the debt is paid. This system works as parents then top up their child's account. The system is easy to use and office staff only have to spend a small amount of time on dinners. This has given them more time to concentrate on other duties. All reports are easy to navigate. It is easy to find a pupil's unique number and check their accounts and amend anything if needed.

The Headteacher, Governors, office staff and cook in charge would not be without the system now, it is easy to use. "

Comment from a parent of a pupil in Pengam Primary

"As a parent I find the app and the system as a whole really simple to use and great for seeing what the children have had for their school dinners each day. I find the auto top-up beneficial as I don't have to remember to add funds to their accounts each week (although this is far easier than having to dash to the cash point every Sunday night before this system was introduced!), and it saves the school clerks having to chase payment. I'm really pleased the school have this system in place as it makes my life as a busy working parent much simpler!"

Appendix 8

Sample of reward scheme currently in place within the Secondary sector. The cashless catering proposal would facilitate similar schemes across all schools

Points Make Prizes – Parental Guidance

The Points Make Prizes scheme was developed by Caerphilly County Borough Council's Catering department to promote healthy eating. A new healthy menu range was launched a few years ago with tariff incentives for healthier food items and a range of health promotion initiatives.

We have introduced a web-based points reward scheme administered via the cashless system which promotes the uptake of healthy options. Students can request a statement of accumulated points at the end of each term for healthy eating, which they can then use to exchange online for a range of appealing prizes such as High Street vouchers and cafeteria reward vouchers.

We have been supported by partnership working with schools, NPHS, Health Challenge Caerphilly, the Welsh Assembly Government, suppliers and other partners to ensure that the borough's young people are offered the best in school catering facilities.

More recently, the service provided by Caerphilly Catering has been reviewed in line with the guidelines detailed in the Welsh Assembly Government's "Appetite For Life" Guidance. This has prompted a number of changes to the service style, menu and the website - most notably, full nutritional analysis of all menu items to ensure a balanced menu is on offer to all pupils.

How do I redeem my prizes?

Please email **catering@caerphilly.gov.uk**, stating **POINTS REDEMPTION** in the header. Please state your name, school, school year, how many points you have on your account, and what prize you would like to claim. If you do not have access to email, you can write to us to redeem your points – please send the letter to Caerphilly Catering, Penallta House, Tredomen Business Park, Hengoed CF82 7PG

 Your prize will be taken to your school cafeteria and delivered to you personally. Please note, that if you redeem your points in the summer holidays, you will have to wait until the start of the new school term to receive your prize.

What kind of prizes can I buy with my points?

Caerphilly County Borough Council have a selection of exciting products for you to spend your hard-earned points on. These prizes will vary monthly and will be publish at you school site.

Terms and Conditions

Listed below are the Caerphilly County Borough Councils Point Scheme terms and conditions. If you have any questions about these terms, or any other related issue, please write to us at the following address: Caerphilly Catering, Penallta House, Tredomen Business Park, Hengoed CF82 7PG.

1. The Points Make Prizes Scheme is administered by and remains the property of Caerphilly County Borough Council, who reserve the right to decline issue or withdraw the scheme at any time without notice.
2. All participants in the scheme must be a pupil within a Caerphilly Catering-run school.
3. The Cashless Catering account is not transferable, and can only be used by the person whose name is on the account.
4. Members may be removed from the scheme at any time at the discretion of Caerphilly County Borough Council.

POINTS

1. To earn points for a transaction in the Points Makes Prizes Scheme, you must be a member of the cashless catering system which is run by either a card transaction or the biometric system.
2. Pupils can only use their card / biometric system to purchase food for their own consumption. Regular checks are carried out and pupils found to be buying food for others to accumulate points will receive no reward.

REWARDS

1. Rewards can only be redeemed if you have the appropriate number of points on your card / biometric system.
2. There are a limited number of prizes available each year.
3. Meal Deal prizes are for the value of the current price.
4. A reward can be removed/ replaced without notice, and are subject to availability.
5. Should a reward become unavailable, Caerphilly County Borough Council reserve the right to send an equivalent replacement.
6. Rewards run from a school academic year i.e. September to July each year.
7. Remaining points will be reset back to zero at the end of the school academic year
8. All redemption requests for each school academic year must be made by 31st July of that year.

Please note that there is a redemption processing period of up to 28 days for all prizes that are external to the school site i.e. vouchers Prizes that can be used in the school cafeteria (such as Meal Deals Priority Pass tickets) will be made available within a month of the claim.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

July 2019

THE COUNCIL'S EQUALITIES STATEMENT

This Council recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within and between our communities, residents, elected members, job applicants and workforce.

We will also work to create equal access for everyone to our services, irrespective of ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, use of Welsh language, BSL or other languages, nationality, responsibility for any dependents or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

EIAs are a legal requirement under equalities legislation (Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011) where the potential for a significant negative impact has been identified. This legislation has been in place since 2000.   We also have a legislative duty to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Re-assignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity

- Race
- Religion, Belief or Non-Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Welsh Language*

* The Welsh language is not identified as a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, however in Wales we also have to treat Welsh and English on an equal basis as well as promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language.

A greener place
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CAERPHILLY
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
CAERFFILI

THE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

NAME OF NEW OR REVISED PROPOSAL*	Provision of Cashless Catering System
DIRECTORATE	Education and Corporate Services
SERVICE AREA	Catering
CONTACT OFFICER	Marcia Lewis
DATE FOR NEXT REVIEW OR REVISION	August 2025

*Throughout this Equalities Impact Assessment Form, 'proposal' is used to refer to what is being assessed, and therefore includes policies, strategies, functions, procedures, practices, initiatives, projects and savings proposals.

The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is to ensure that Equalities and Welsh Language issues have been proactively considered throughout the decision making processes governing work undertaken by every service area in the Council as well as work done at a corporate level.

The Council's work across Equalities, Welsh Language and Human Rights is covered in more detail through the **Equalities and Welsh Language Objectives and Action Plan 2016-2020**.

When carrying out an EIA you should consider both the positive and negative consequences of your proposals. If a project is designed for a specific group e.g. disabled people, you also need to think about what potential effects it could have on other areas e.g. young people with a disability, BME people with a disability.

There are a number of supporting guidance documents available on the **Corporate Policy Unit Portal** and the Council's Equalities and Welsh Language team can provide advice as the EIA is being developed. Please note that the team does not write EIAs on behalf of service areas, the support offered is in the form of advice, suggestions and in effect, quality control.

Contact **equalities@caerphilly.gov.uk** for assistance.

PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSAL

1	**What is the proposal intended to achieve?** *(Please give a brief description and outline the purpose of the new or updated proposal by way of introduction.)* To install and maintain a cashless payments systems within the Council's Primary Schools and Secondary Schools. It should be noted that the Council already has a cashless catering contract in place with Uniware, which expires on 31 March 2021. However, a new arrangement needed to be put in place for the solution to be rolled out to all Primary Schools in readiness for the schools returning in September to reduce cash handling and minimise associated risks as detailed in Covid 19 guidance.

2	**Who are the service users affected by the proposal?** *(Who will be affected by the delivery of this proposal? e.g. staff members, the public generally, or specific sections of the public i.e. youth groups, carers, road users, people using country parks, people on benefits etc. Are there any data gaps?)* Young people and families, teaching and catering staff.

IMPACT ON THE PUBLIC AND STAFF

3	**Does the proposal ensure that everyone has an equal access to all the services available or proposed, or benefits equally from the proposed changes, or does not lose out in greater or more severe ways due to the proposals?** *(What has been done to examine whether or not these groups have equal access to the service, or whether they need to receive the service in a different way from other people?)* There are currently restrictions placed on how parents are able to pay for school meals depending on the resources available in individual schools. Implementation of a digital system would remove these restrictions ensuring parity and equality and also free up resources within schools. •Allow 24hrs a day / 7 days a week access for customers. If there are any technical issues the system has a backup facility which will allow the

system to be functional and when the system is back up and running it will update accordingly.

•Improvement in governance control measures;

•Reduce volumes of cash held by the schools which improves security measures currently in place;

•Free school meals are easily manageable alongside paid meals;

•The school will not be working in deficit and waiting to collect the debt from parents as lunches, trips etc. are paid upfront.

•Simplification and streamlines the process for parents and administrators;

•Reduces queueing time and the risk of theft/loss of cash; If a child loses / stolen their card then as soon as it is reported an immediate block is put on the account to stop any unauthorised usage.

•All parents / guardians are encouraged to use the online top up facility to remove the risk of child losing money or being bullied and having the money taken off them.

•Reduce amount of unnecessary trips and school traffic at peak times;

•Parents can be more organised for the school day;

•Provides peace of mind for parents who can see the meals their children are purchasing. Alternatively, should they wish, parents can dictate the school meals to be provided with allergen & nutritional information presented to them online. This will help us comply with the recent legislation on allergen awareness;

•The system ensures funds are spent appropriately on food at the schools as intended by parents and not taken to the shops by the children to purchase sweets etc.;

•Avoids instances of bullying as the online funds are kept private;

•If a school clerk is absent the parent / guardian can still pay for school meals. School clerks are very often part time;

•Prevents pupils carrying money into school which will help to reduce the potential for bullying;

•Creates a personalised shopping experience for customers;

•Offers the potential for additional features to allow parents to pay for school uniforms, trips and activities, photographs, tuck shops etc.

| 4 | **Is your proposal going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?** *(Has the service delivery been examined to assess if there is any indirect effect on any groups? Could the consequences of the policy or savings proposal differ dependent upon people's protected characteristics?)* |

Protected Characteristic	Positive, Negative, Neutral	What will the impact be? If the impact is negative how can it be mitigated?
Age	**Positive**	The majority of customers are children and young people. Children will no longer have to carry cash. This is a positive thing because there is less opportunity for them to be bullied or to lose the money. Cashless system works the same for all children whether they pay or have a free school meal. The amount allocated for the free school meal will be automatically added onto the system. For those families that don't have IT equipment at home the system can be accessed using smart phones. This system allows children to put money on to their account via a cash revaluation terminal located in the school (in secondary schools) and in primary schools cash can be given to the school clerk who will update the child's account in systems back office. This is then used to pay for food and drink in the canteen.be able to use the system. Schools will also have the ability to add additional funds to pupil's accounts in extreme cases to ensure that any vulnerable / safeguarding issues with individual pupils / families are able to managed by the Head teacher or nominated school representative.
Disability	**Neutral**	
Gender Reassignment	**Neutral**	
Marriage & Civil Partnership	**Neutral**	
Pregnancy and Maternity	**Neutral**	**The impact of cashless catering does not impact additionally on these groups**
Race	**Neutral**	
Religion & Belief	**Neutral**	
Sex	**Neutral**	
Sexual Orientation	**Neutral**	

5	**In line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. (No.1) Regulations 2015, please note below what effects, if any (whether positive or adverse), the proposal would have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.** *(The specific Policy Making Standards requirements are Standard numbers 88, 89, 90, 91, 92 and 93. The full detail of each Standard is available on the Corporate Policy Unit Portal. Although it is important that what is outlined in the proposal is available in Welsh and English, please consider wider impacts on Welsh speakers.)* The system complies with the Welsh Language Standards. Parents will be written to regarding the system bilingual communication etc.

INFORMATION COLLECTION

6	**Please outline any evidence and / or research you have collected which supports the proposal? This can include an analysis of service users.** *(Is this service effectively engaging with all its potential users or is there higher or lower participation of uptake by one or more protected characteristic groups? If so, what has been done to address any difference in take up of the service? Does any savings proposal include an analysis of those affected?)* An initial pilot included 4 primary schools, which was extended to 10 was run for 1 year. The evaluation of the pilot evidenced that the system had been a great success and resulted in cash handling at individual sites reducing. Uptake of parents / guardians using the online payments system in each of these schools was 90%. Feedback from parents, Head teachers and school clerks stated that the system had - reduced the amount of time they spent on cash handling - improved relationships with parents / guardians as difficult conversations relating to non-payment of monies had reduced significantly - the system was very easy to use and could be accessed from multiply sites - provided full traceability of payments or any refunds made - online statements detailing purchase history for individual customers - full auditable - instant communication with parents / guardians available via email automatic link - parents had instant access to top up their child's accounts - easier for transition days as the system is compatible with the current cashless catering solutions in Secondary's - system fully automated including an excellent reporting system available to monitor on-line payments - system is bilingual – multiple languages can be offered - would not want the system removed due to the ease of use and the success with parents / guardians. - reduction of the level of bad debt. We worked closely with education finance, schools, governing body, audit, IT and central income (Corporate Finance) to capturing feedback of how the system benefited all parties. The trial was successful in all areas that were evaluated. The evaluation of the project has enabled the 10 pilot schemes to be brought into the 21st century and has, changed our business and provides new revenue and value-producing opportunities to meet the demand and expectations of our 28,000 customers and we would now like to introduce this into the remaining 68 primary schools and update the 9 secondary schools.

7	**Please outline the consultation / engagement process and outline any key findings.**
	(Include method of consultation, objectives and target audience. What steps have been taken to ensure that people from various groups have been consulted during the development of this proposal? Have you referred to the Equalities Consultation and Monitoring Guidance?)
	A case study was undertaken by a school clerk based in Pengam and Fleur de Lys Primary of how cash was collected in their school. The objective of the case study identified how cash handling could be improved within their school for all users i.e. staff, pupils, parents, governing body and administration users.
	The feedback off the 10 primary schools that currently use the system from parents, Head teachers and school clerks stated that the system had
	- reduced the amount of time they spent on cash handling - improved relationships with parents / guardians as difficult conversations relating to non-payment of monies had reduced significantly - the system was very easy to use and could be accessed from multiply sites - provided full traceability of payments or any refunds made - online statements detailing purchase history for individual customers - full auditable - instant communication with parents / guardians available via email automatic link - parents had instant access to top up their child's accounts - easier for transition days as the system is compatible with the current cashless catering solutions in Secondary's - system fully automated including an excellent reporting system available to monitor on-line payments - would not want the system removed due to the ease of use and the success with parents / guardians.
	Equalities consultation and monitoring guidance was considered throughout the consultation and engagement process and all parties included in the consultation were happy that there were no gaps in the process that was undertaken.
	The following officers were also consulted alongside Senior Management Team of the authority.
	Steve Harris, Acting S151 Officer Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning & Strategy Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager Clare Rogers, Business Development Manager Neil Rich, IT Development Officer Jess Thomas, Procurement Officer Matthew Death, IT Officer Deborah Gronow, Senior Audit Officer

If we are unable to implement this initiative we will need an alternative solution in Primary Schools as the manual entry system is at the end of its current lifespan, and is incompatible for other payment methods and is not supported by IT services. Failure to replace existing technology will result in an inability to process income payments worth over £1.4 million to the Authority.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

8	**How will the proposal be monitored?** *(What monitoring process has been set up to assess the extent that the service is being used by all sections of the community, or that the savings proposals are achieving the intended outcomes with no adverse impact? Are comments or complaints systems set up to record issues by Equalities category to be able analyse responses from particular groups?)* A regular contractual monitoring meeting will take place in line with current procurement guidelines which will enable the authority to closely monitor the performance of the system, contractor and users i.e. monitor up-take, nutritional information, allergen requirements of individual pupils, debt management, user uptake and product sales etc. This monitoring process will ensure that the product is kept up to in line with our customers' needs.
9	**How will the monitoring be evaluated?** *(What methods will be used to ensure that the needs of all sections of the community are being met?)* The system allows instant feedback from customers via automated survey which will be evaluated and acted as part of our internal quality management system. The system will also be monitored at our regular contract review meetings. Take up and usage figures will also be monitored.

10	**Have any support / guidance / training requirements been identified?** *(Has the EIA or consultation process shown a need for awareness raising amongst staff, or identified the need for Equalities or Welsh Language training of some sort?)* 19 schools will need no training as they currently have the system in place, however, 68 primary school clerks and catering staff will require training. This has been planned via webinars and train the trainer schemes (maintaining current guidance of 2 meter social distancing).

Alongside the above all users of the system i.e. parents, pupils will need written guidance of simple step by step bilingual instructions of how to use the system. School clerks will be trained how to support parents / guardians who have no IT skills or equipment, internet connection or have additional learning needs.

User manuals and YouTube videos are also available.

11	**If any adverse impact has been identified, please outline any mitigation action.** Every child will be allowed an overdraft facility of 1 meal. This will prevent any child going without food. To support this action the system has an automated notification to all parents / guardians notifying them of when their account will require topping up. Schools will also have the ability to add additional funds to pupil's accounts in extreme cases to ensure that any vulnerable / safeguarding issues with individual pupils / families are able to managed by the Head teacher or nominated school representative.

12	**What wider use will you make of this Equality Impact Assessment?** *(What use will you make of this document i.e. as a consultation response, appendix to approval reports, publicity etc. in addition to the mandatory action shown below?)* This document will be included in any reports connected with cashless catering reviews, together with being publicised on CCBC website for members of the public to review and comment on.

13	An equality impact assessment may have four possible outcomes, through more than one may apply to a single proposal. Please indicate the relevant outcome(s) of the impact assessment below.	
	Please tick as appropriate:	
	No major change – the impact assessment demonstrated that the proposal was robust; there was no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. All opportunities to promote equality have been taken.	X
	Adjust the proposal – the impact assessment identified potential problems or missed opportunities. The proposal was adjusted to remove barriers or better promote equality.	
	Continue the proposal – the impact assessment identified the potential problems or missed opportunities to promote equality. The justification(s) for continuing with it have been clearly set out. (The justification must be included in the impact assessment and must be in line with the duty to have due regard. Compelling reasons will be needed for the most important relevant proposals.)	
	Stop and remove the proposal – the impact assessment identified actual or potential unlawful discrimination. The proposal was stopped and removed, or changed.	

Form completed by:	
Name:	Marcia Lewis
Job Title:	Principal Officer Catering
Date:	28/07/20

Head of Service Approval	
Name:	
Job Title:	
Signature:	
Date:	

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