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Am unrhyw ymholiad yn ymwneud â'r agenda hwn cysylltwch â Julie Lloyd
(Rhif Ffôn: 01443 864246 Ebst: lloydj4@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Dyddiad: Dydd Mercher, 21 Medi 2022

I bwy bynnag a fynno wybod,

Cynhelir cyfarfod aml-leoliad o'r **Pwyllgor Craffu Polisi ac Adnoddau** yn Nhŷ Penallta, a thrwy Microsoft Teams ar **Dydd Mawrth, 27ain Medi, 2022** am **5.30 pm** i ystyried materion a gynhwysir yn yr agenda canlynol. Gall cynghorwyr ac aelodau'r cyhoedd sy'n dymuno siarad ar unrhyw eitem wneud hynny drwy wneud cais i'r Cadeirydd. Mae hefyd croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, mae angen o leiaf 3 diwrnod gwaith or rybudd os byddwch chi'n dymuno gwneud y naill neu'r llall. Bydd gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd yn cael ei ddarparu ar gais.

Gall aelodau'r Cyhoedd neu'r Wasg fynychu'n bersonol yn Nhŷ Penallta neu gallant weld y cyfarfod yn fyw drwy'r ddolen ganlynol: <https://civico.net/caerphilly>

Bydd y cyfarfod hwn yn cael ei ffrydio'n fyw a bydd recordiad ar gael i'w weld drwy wefan y Cyngor, ac eithrio trafodaethau sy'n ymwneud ag eitemau cyfrinachol neu eithriedig. Felly, bydd delweddau/sain yr unigolion sy'n siarad ar gael yn gyhoeddus i bawb drwy wefan y Cyngor: www.caerffili.gov.uk

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christina Harrhy'.

Christina Harrhy
PRIF WEITHREDWR

AGENDA

Tudalennau

- 1 I dderbyn ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb

A greener place Man gwyrddach



2 Datganiadau o Ddiddordeb.

Atgoffi'r Cynghorwyr a Swyddogion o'u cyfrifoldeb personol i ddatgan unrhyw fuddiannau personol a/neu niweidiol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw eitem o fusnes ar yr agenda hwn yn unol â Deddf Llywodraeth Leol 2000, Cyfansoddiad y Cyngor a'r Cod Ymddygiad ar gyfer Cynghorwyr a Swyddogion.

I gymeradwyo a llofnodi'r cofnodion canlynol:-

3	Pwyllgor Craffu Polisi ac Adnoddau a gynhaliwyd ar 12 Gorffennaf 2022.	1 - 4
4	Ystyried unrhyw fater a gyfeiriwyd at y Pwyllgor hwn yn unol â'r drefn galw i mewn.	
5	Rhaglen Waith y Dyfodol Pwyllgor Craffu Polisi ac Adnoddau.	5 - 20

I dderbyn ac ystyried yr adroddiadau Craffu canlynol:-

6	Gallu'r gweithlu a heriau cysylltiedig	21 - 34
7	Diweddariad ar Weithio Ystwyth	35 - 42
8	Llunio safbwynt y Polisi ar gasglu arian parod	43 - 46

Cylchrediad:

Cynghorwyr M.A. Adams, Mrs E.M. Aldworth, C.J. Cuss, G. Enright, D. Ingram-Jones, G. Johnston (Cadeirydd), C.P. Mann, B. Miles (Is Gadeirydd), A. McConnell, D.W.R. Preece, J. Reed, J. Taylor, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe, L.G. Whittle a C. Wright

A Swyddogion Priodol

SUT FYDDWN YN DEFNYDDIO EICH GWYBODAETH

Bydd yr unigolion hynny sy'n mynychu cyfarfodydd pwyllgor i siarad/roi tystiolaeth yn cael eu henwi yng nghofnodion y cyfarfod hynny, weithiau bydd hyn yn cynnwys eu man gweithio neu fusnes a'r barnau a fynegir. Bydd cofnodion o'r cyfarfod gan gynnwys manylion y siaradwyr ar gael i'r cyhoedd ar wefan y Cyngor ar www.caerffili.gov.uk. ac eithrio am drafodaethau sy'n ymwneud ag eitemau cyfrinachol neu eithriedig.

Mae gennych nifer o hawliau mewn perthynas â'r wybodaeth, gan gynnwys yr hawl i gael mynediad at wybodaeth sydd gennym andanoch a'r hawl i gwyno os ydych yn anhapus gyda'r modd y mae eich gwybodaeth yn cael ei brosesu.

Am wybodaeth bellach ar sut rydym yn prosesu eich gwybodaeth a'ch hawliau, ewch i'r Hysbysiad Preifatrwydd Cyfarfodydd Pwyllgor Llawn ar ein gwefan <http://www.caerffili.gov.uk/Pwyllgor/Preifatrwydd> neu cysylltwch â Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol drwy e-bostio griffd2@caerffili.gov.uk neu ffoniwch 01443 863028.

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POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 12TH JULY 2022 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor G. Johnston – Chair
Councillor B. Miles – Vice Chair

Councillors:

M. Adams, Mrs E. M. Aldworth, C. Cuss, G. Enright, D. Ingram-Jones, C. P. Mann, A. McConnell, D. Preece, J. Reed, J. Taylor, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe, L. G. Whittle, and C. Wright.

Cabinet Member:

Councillor Mrs. E. Stenner (Finance and Performance).

Together with:

Officers: R. Edmunds (Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services), L. Donovan (Head of People Services), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), L. Lucas (Head of Customer and Digital Services), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer), and J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer).

Also in attendance: Councillors N. George, J. Jones, and J. Pritchard.

RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being live-streamed and a recording would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click Here to View](#).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 22ND FEBRUARY 2022

A Member queried whether the Minutes, going forward, could include a list of Action Points. Members were advised that in the future, they would be copied into the email circulated to Officers, listing all the Action Points, following each meeting.

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd February 2022 be approved as a correct record and by way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 7 for, 0 against and 8 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 22nd February 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

5. POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

This item was deferred to the end of the meeting agenda, in order for Members to receive the presentation from Mr. R. Edmunds (Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services) prior to considering the Forward Work Programme.

6. CABINET REPORTS

There had been no requests for any of the Cabinet reports to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following report.

7. COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – KEY CHALLENGES AND ISSUES (PRESENTATION).

The Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services gave a presentation to Members. Members were informed of the scheduled meeting dates for the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for 2022/23 and advised there is a maximum of 4 main agenda items per meeting, plus information items.

Members were advised of the proposed high priority items, which included Workforce Capacity, Agile Working, Customer Services, Procurement Reform, Policy on Cash Collection, Community Empowerment Fund, Corporate Plan and Well-being Objectives, Corporate Services Directorate Performance Assessment, and Transformation Programme 6 monthly updates.

Members were also advised of other potential main agenda items, which included Whole-Authority Revenue Budget Monitoring Report (annual report), Capital Strategy Report (annual report), Treasury Management Strategy (annual report), Reserves Report (annual report), IT

Security, Digital, Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Update Report, Development of a new CCBC intranet (which includes Members portal), and ICT.

Members were informed of potential information items, which included Workforce Development Strategy Progress Update, Employee Wellbeing Strategy Progress Update, 12-month update on the impact of the Councils Volunteering Policy, Revenue budget monitoring reports for Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance (x 3 per annum), Capital budget monitoring reports (x 2 per annum), and Treasury Management monitoring reports (x 2 per annum), and were advised of the process by which Members could request that an information item be considered and discussed at the main meeting.

Members were advised of the Forward Work Programme from September 2022 onwards and their view were sought on the proposed main agenda items and information items for each meeting. Members agreed that 3 main agenda items for each meeting were ample, as there was more potential for these reports to be discussed in depth. Members noted that consideration could be given for guest speakers/relevant Officers to be invited to specific meetings in relation to reports due to be considered. Members also discussed whether any proposed information items could become main agenda items. The proposed timetable for future reports outlined in the presentation was accepted by Members.

A Member requested that the presentation be circulated to Members following the meeting, and this was agreed. In addition, advice was sought as to whether there were any future plans to provide IT equipment in the meeting rooms, to avoid Members having to bring in items, such as laptops, for each meeting. Members were advised that the system was currently being implemented and that this would hopefully be resolved by the end of recess.

A Member queried the Transformation project and the duration of completing the work. Members were advised that it was a large-scale project and hence the reason for the 6-monthly update reports.

A Member noted his support for the proposed items for the next meeting scheduled in September, in particular, the Workforce Policy report which he noted, needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Members were informed that the report was due to be considered in the current meeting, however it was thought timelier to be dealt with in the September meeting. Members were also informed that other Authorities were experiencing the same workforce issues as Caerphilly.

A Member requested that a review of the Reserves Strategy be brought before the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, as it hasn't been reviewed since 2016, and enquired if this could be done before the end of the calendar year. Members were advised that this could be possible and proposed this be scheduled for the meeting in November. Members were also advised that if this was not possible, there may be a possibility of an additional meeting scheduled in December just for this item.

A Member queried whether any main agenda item could be re-scheduled for consideration at a future meeting, if required. Members were advised that by scheduling 3 main agenda items on the Forward Work Programme, for each meeting, this allowed for more flexibility to add another item if required and have a maximum of 4 main agenda items, where necessary.

A Member sought clarification on the Recruitment and Retention Policy and queried whether the proposal to include this in the next meeting agenda in September was too long to wait for this information. It was also requested that future reports on recruitment and retention challenges include any associated costs to the Council. In addition, clarification was sought as to whether any emergency issues could be referred to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for earlier consideration. Members were again advised that recruitment and retention of staff was not just an issue for Caerphilly, and that it was a country wide issue.

Members were advised that the extra time until the next meeting in September would allow for full information and evidence to be provided to Members.

A Member requested that when the reports on workforce capacity and sickness absence figures come before the Committee, information also be provided that would show a comparison with the top 6 authorities and to also include a response from the trade unions. A request was also made for more clarity on the additional revenue that was being received by the authority and a proposal that this information be provided more frequently than the current annual report. Members were advised that the trade union representatives could be invited to the next meeting and that Members would be provided with as much information as possible in relation to sickness absence. Members were also advised that the requested financial information was available within the current finance reports.

The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the presentation.

5. POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report which outlined the reports planned for the period July 2022 to March 2023 and included all reports that were identified at the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Tuesday 22nd February 2022. Members were asked to consider the Forward Work Programme, alongside the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, prior to publication on the Council's website. In addition, Members were requested to consider the proposals included in the presentation in agenda item 7 and the additions to the Forward Work Programme, as discussed in the meeting.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 13 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme be published on the Council's website.

The meeting closed at 6.30 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 27th September 2022, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 27TH SEPTEMBER 2022

**SUBJECT: POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 Forward Work Programmes are essential to ensure that Scrutiny Committee agendas reflect the strategic issues facing the Council and other priorities raised by Members, the public or stakeholder.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That Members consider any changes and agree the final forward work programme prior to publication.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To improve the operation of scrutiny.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee forward work programme includes all reports that were identified at the scrutiny committee meeting on Tuesday 12th July 2022. The work programme outlines the reports planned for the period September 2022 to March 2023.

5.2 The forward Work Programme is made up of reports identified by officers and members. Members are asked to consider the work programme alongside the cabinet work programme and suggest any changes before it is published on the

council website. Scrutiny committee will review this work programme at every meeting going forward alongside any changes to the cabinet work programme or report requests.

5.3 The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1, which presents the current status as at 5th September 2022. The Cabinet Work Programme is attached at Appendix 2. A copy of the prioritisation flowchart is attached at appendix 3 to assist the scrutiny committee to determine what items should be added to the forward work programme.

5.4 **Conclusion**

The work programme is for consideration and amendment by the scrutiny committee prior to publication on the council website.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 No assumptions are necessary.

7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 As this report is for information only an Integrated Impact Assessment is not necessary.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no specific financial implications arising as a result of this report.

9. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no specific personnel implications arising as a result of this report.

10. **CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been included in this report.

11. **STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 The Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Mark Jacques, Scrutiny Officer jacqu@carphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services/ Monitoring Officer

Lisa Lane, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer,
Legal Services
Councillor Gary Johnston, Chair Policy and Resources Scrutiny
Committee
Councillor Brenda Miles, Vice Chair Policy and Resources Scrutiny
Committee

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme
- Appendix 2 Cabinet Forward Work Programme
- Appendix 3 Forward Work Programme Prioritisation Flowchart

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Forward Work Programme - Policy and Resources

Date	Title	Key Issues	Author	Cabinet Member
27/09/22 17:30	Workforce capacity and associated challenges	For members to consider the recruitment and retention challenges	Donovan, Lynne;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
27/09/22 17:30	Agile Working Update	To receive an update on the Councils approach to Agile Working	Donovan, Lynne;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
27/09/22 17:30	Shaping the Policy position on cash collection	To seek a Cabinet position on the collection of cash across Council Services	Lucas, Liz;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
27/09/22 17:30	Information Item - Workforce Development Progress Update		Donovan, Lynne;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
27/09/22 17:30	Information Item - Wellbeing Framework Progress Update		Donovan, Lynne;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
27/09/22 17:30	Information Item - 12-month update on the impact of the Councils Volunteering Policy		Richards, Sue;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
27/09/22 17:30	Information Item - Revenue budget monitoring reports for Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance (Period 3)		Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
08/11/22 17:30	Development of a new CCBC intranet	(which includes Members portal) – shaping the Member offer.	Donovan, Lynne;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
08/11/22 17:30	Customer Services update	Is the current model fit for purpose and can it be improved post covid to provide an improved service to residents?	Lucas, Liz;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
08/11/22 17:30	Procurement Reform Update	How will Procurement reform and the new Procurement Bill impact the organisation?	Lucas, Liz;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
08/11/22 17:30	Audit Wales Report - Springing Forward Assets	To received Audit Wales report on how we are managing our assets with a focus on office accommodation and buildings	Pearce, Joanna;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
08/11/22 17:30	Information Item - Revenue budget monitoring reports for Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance (Period 5)		Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
10/01/23 17:30	Treasury Management Strategy Annual Report		Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
10/01/23 17:30	Community Empowerment Fund and other Voluntary Grants.		Richards, Sue;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
10/01/23 17:30	Capital Strategy Annual Report		Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
21/02/23 17:30	Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Update Report		Richards, Sue;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
21/02/23 17:30	Whole-Authority Revenue Budget Monitoring Report (Period 9) P&R		Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
21/02/23 17:30	Annual Reserves Report		Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
21/02/23 17:30	Information Item - Capital budget monitoring reports (Period 7)		Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
21/02/23 17:30	Information Item - Revenue budget monitoring reports for Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance (Period 7)		Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
04/04/23 17:30	IT Security Update	Seeking assurance on the Councils Cyber Security arrangements.	Lucas, Liz;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
04/04/23 17:30	Digital Update	Understanding how the Council is using Automation to enhance customer service	Lucas, Liz;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
04/04/23 17:30	Information Item - Workforce Development Strategy 2021 – 24 (6-month update)		Donovan, Lynne;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
04/04/23 17:30	Information Item - Employee Wellbeing Strategy 2021 – 24 (6-month update)		Donovan, Lynne;	Cllr. George, Nigel;

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Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Presenting Officers:	Cabinet Member:
26/09/2022 14:00	Car Parking Charges 2022	To update Cabinet on the outcome of the car parking scrutiny task and finish group and to seek decisions on future strategy for town centre car parking charges	Marcus Lloyd	Cllr. Julian Simmonds
26/09/2022 14:10	Cost of living Crisis	To provide Cabinet with an update with regard to work undertaken and future travel	Dave Street	Cllr. Carol Andrews
26/09/2022 14:20	Shared Prosperity fund	To update Cabinet on the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund as part of the UK Government's Levelling Up programme following submission of the regional investment plan and to seek Cabinet approval of the Caerphilly local investment plan.	Rhian Kyte	Cllr. James Pritchard
26/09/2022 14:30	Provisional Revenue Budget outturn for 2021/22	To provide Cabinet with details of the provisional revenue budget outturn for the 2021/22 financial year prior to the completion of the annual external audit of the accounts by Audit Wales.	Stephen Harris	Cllr. Eluned Stenner
26/09/2022 14:40	Bryn Carno, Rhymney Remediation Works	To update Members on a business case submitted to WG to undertake remedial works to address issues associated with failed external wall insulation to both Caerphilly Homes' and private residential properties at Bryn Carno, Rhymney, and to seek approval for an HRA contribution towards the project should the business case be approved.	Nick Taylor-Williams	Cllr. Shayne Cook

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Presenting Officers:	Cabinet Member:
26/09/2022 14:50	Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme	To make members aware of the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme, and officer views on potential sites within the county borough and to understand the possible financial implications for the authority and possible grant assistance with the scheme.	Nick Taylor-Williams	Cllr. Shayne Cook
05/10/2022 13:00	Trinity Fields update	To update Members on the plans to expand Trinity Fields	Sue Richards/ Andrea West	Cllr. Carol Andrews
05/10/2022 13:10	Outline Business Case for Cwm Ifor Solar Farm Proposal	To seek Cabinet approval to proceed with the planning application, initiate the consultation processes and to sign the option agreement and lease that sits behind the proposed Solar Farm development	Anna Lewis, Sue Richards, Allan Dallimore	Cllr. James Pritchard

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Presenting Officers:	Cabinet Member:
05/10/2022 13:20	Agile Working Update	To receive an update on the Councils approach to Agile Working.	Lynne Donovan	Cllr. Nigel George
05/10/2022 13:30	Shaping the Policy on cash collection	To receive an update on the payment methods currently available to our residents and service users and to consider recommendations in respect of the future policy on cash payments.	Stephen Harris	Cllr. Eluned Stenner
05/10/2022 13:40	Authorisation of Officers in Public Protection	For Cabinet to note the introduction of new legislation relevant to the responsibilities of the Public Protection service and to approve additional authorisation so that Officers may carry out their duties.	Robert Hartshorn, Jacqui Morgan	Cllr. Philippa Leonard
05/10/2022 13:50	Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership	For Cabinet to note an update on the work of the Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership, to endorse the latest Terms of Reference, and to approve the Cabinet Member as a voting representative on the Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership.	Robert Hartshorn	Cllr. Philippa Leonard

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Presenting Officers:	Cabinet Member:
19/10/2022 13:00	Workforce capacity and associated challenges	For members to consider the recruitment and retention challenges	Lynne Donovan	Cllr. Nigel George
19/10/2022 13:10	Bryn Community Engagement Proposal	To propose a terms of reference for a Community Group to be established.	Mark S Williams	Cllr. Philippa Leonard
19/10/2022 13:20	Annual Corporate Complaints Report	To provide Cabinet with an overview of the complaints dealt with under the Corporate Complaints policy for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 together with the outcomes and lessons learned.	Robert Tranter, Lisa Lane	Cllr. Nigel George
19/10/2022 13:30	Final Report from the Task and Finish Group on Tackling Potential Mental Health Issues Post-Pandemic	This report seeks to inform Members of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee of the findings of the task and finish group that was established to review how Caerphilly County Borough Council works with partners to tackle any potential mental health issues post-pandemic.	Mark Jacques/Cath Forbes-Thompson	Cllr. Elaine Forehead
02/11/2022 13:00	Caerphilly Homes (Development) Forward Work Programme	To discuss the next set of sites that will be brought forward as part of the Caerphilly Homes development programme and Caerphilly Homes governance arrangements	Nick Taylor-Williams, Jane Roberts-Waite	Cllr. Shayne Cook

Meeting date: **Report title:** **Key issue:** **Presenting Officers:** **Cabinet Member:**

02/11/2022 13:10	Low Cost Home Ownership Policy (Decision)	The LCHO (Low Cost Home Ownership) report will document the formulation, implementation and the publication of a new policy which governs the process by which the Council will sell homes to people living and/or working in the borough wanting to access homeownership but cannot afford to do so without some form of public subsidy.	Nick Taylor-Williams, Jane Roberts-Waite	Cllr. Shayne Cook
16/11/2022 13:00	Street lighting	Review of current street lighting part night lighting policy in view of increasing carbon reduction targets and the declared climate emergency.	Marcus Lloyd	Cllr. Julian Simmonds
16/11/2022 13:00	The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Ecosystem Resilience Duty	To consider and approve a report on the actions taken to help maintain and enhance biodiversity prior to publication in accordance with the biodiversity duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.	Robert Hartshorn, Philip Griffiths	Cllr. Chris Morgan

Meeting date: **Report title:** **Key issue:** **Presenting Officers:** **Cabinet Member:**

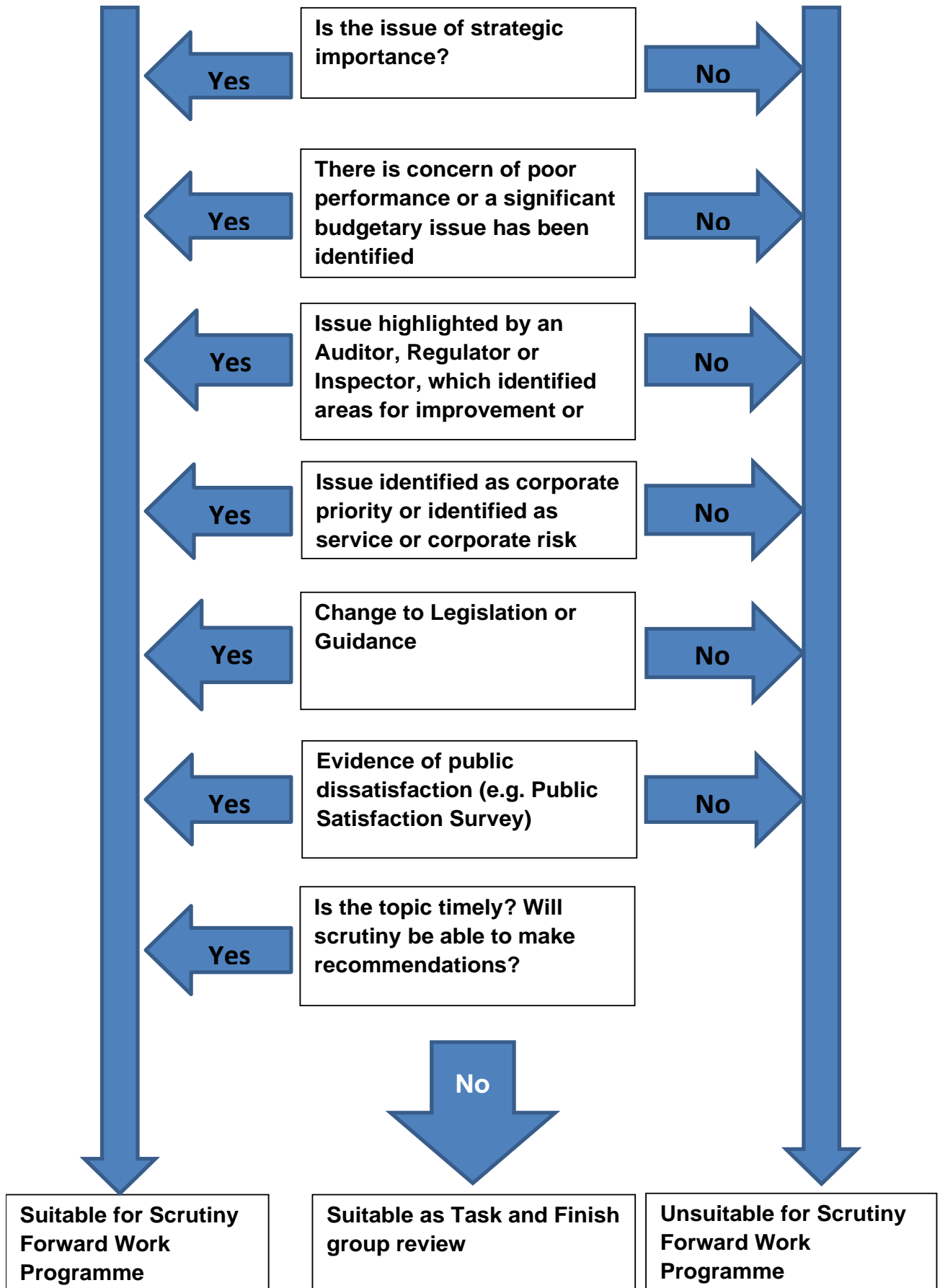
16/11/2022 13:00	Notice of Motion - Wyllye Bends	For Cabinet to consider the proposals put forward by Cllr. Janine Reed/Cllr. Jan Jones.	Emma Sullivan	Cllr Janine Reed/Cllr Jan Jones
30/11/2022 13:00	Redevelopment of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site by Caerphilly Homes	For Cabinet to approve the contract, cost plan, design and environmental credentials of the scheme, along with continuation of the SCAPE framework agreement, social value plan and sales & marketing strategy.	Nick Taylor-Williams, Jane Roberts-Waite	Cllr. Shayne Cook
30/11/2022 13:10	Redevelopment of the former Ty Darran Care Home by Caerphilly Homes	For Cabinet to approve the contract, cost plan, procurement, design and environmental credentials of the scheme.	Nick Taylor-Williams, Jane Roberts-Waite	Cllr. Shayne Cook
30/11/2022 13:20	Cyber Security Strategy	To recommend endorsement and implementation of the Strategy	Lucas, Liz, Ian Evans	Cllr. Nigel George

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Presenting Officers:	Cabinet Member:
30/11/2022 13:30	Programme for Procurement	To extend the Council’s existing Programme for Procurement, which is due to expire in May 2023 for a period of up to 12 months to consider and where applicable incorporate aspects of the UK Procurement Bill and Social Partnership & Public Procurement (Wales) Bill in the Council’s new Procurement Strategy (the new Procurement Strategy will replace the existing Programme for Procurement).	Liz Lucas, Ian Evans	Cllr. Nigel George
14/12/2022 13:00	Waste Strategy Proposals	Consideration of options to achieve compliance with Welsh Government statutory recycling targets and other waste service improvements.	Mark S Williams, Marcus Lloyd	Cllr. Chris Morgan
14/12/2022 13:10	Local Housing Market Assessment	The Delivery Plan sits underneath the Local housing Strategy which was approved in October 2021. It is designed to be a collaborative document that contains a number of key actions designed to take forward the objectives of the strategy.	Nick Taylor-Williams, Jane Roberts-Waite	Cllr. Shayne Cook
14/12/2022 13:20	Updated Welsh Government Prospectus (Decision)	Cabinet are asked to approve the principle of residential development on identified sites (subject to viability) and acquisition policy, the principle of package deals and new governance arrangements to underpin the development programme.	Nick Taylor-Williams, Jane Roberts-Waite	Cllr. Shayne Cook

Meeting date: **Report title:** **Key issue:** **Presenting Officers:** **Cabinet Member:**

14/12/2022 13:30	HRA Charges (Rent Increase) (Dec)	Members to agree the level of rent increase for council tenants effective from April 2023	Nick Taylor-Williams, Lesley Allen	Cllr. Shayne Cook
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Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme Prioritisation



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POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 27TH SEPTEMBER 2022

SUBJECT: WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND ASSOCIATED CHALLENGES

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Scrutiny Members with an update of some of the major issues and challenges currently impacting on workforce capacity and to present some initial proposals to provide additional resources into key areas.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Council, its staff and elected members have been attempting to manage a pandemic response, to maintain service delivery, to oversee the introduction of new services such as Caerphilly Cares, and to recover from the pandemic, while also seeking to transform the whole organisation and the communities it serves.

- 2.2 During the pandemic for example, the Council:

- strengthened its Team Caerphilly Transformation Programme by bringing on stream ten Corporate Reviews
- launched a £231m pound PlaceShaping Investment Programme
- introduced a revised Regeneration Strategy
- began the process of introducing five Regeneration Area Master Plans
- introduced an Economic Recovery Framework

- 2.3 Since the pandemic, the Council has also found itself needing to resource and manage:

- the submission of three Levelling Up Fund bids totalling £140m
- the submission of a number of Shared Prosperity Fund bids totalling circa £35m (including Multiply)
- the resettlement pressures associated with the War in the Ukraine
- the impact of the cost of living increases on the Community
- the impact of the cost of living increases on Council staff
- the fragility of the Social Care sector

- the covid recovery across our schools and communities
- 2.4 The sheer breadth and depth of the transformation and regeneration work the Council is now involved in, above and beyond regular service delivery, is proving to be a significant challenge. Add into this the wider challenges associated with global conflict, the impact of rising inflation, the progression of Welsh Government's wide-ranging Programme for Government and the development of a new Corporate Plan and it is clear that the Council's resource base is attempting to deliver against challenges of the size, scale and complexity never previously imagined.
- 2.5 With some of this work being required to provide much needed additional support to our communities as well as other facets having the potential to significantly transform and regenerate the social and economic landscape of Caerphilly and beyond, it cannot simply be parked or put on hold.
- 2.6 The Council has faced further capacity challenges as a result of sickness absence, the loss of experienced staff to retirement; officers thinking differently about their work / home balance; staff moving on to better paid jobs in other organisations as a result of certain skills now attracting greater premiums, as well as the removal of traditional barriers such as long and challenging commutes.
- 2.7 It is unrealistic to believe that the Council can deliver this additional work 'on top of the day job' while also dealing with the ongoing pandemic response and unprecedented workforce capacity issues.
- 2.8 This report seeks to highlight the challenges being faced, sets out the potential impacts of increased expectations and diminished capacity, highlights the work already being done as well as putting forward some specific proposals to bring additional resources into core areas and functions as a foundation upon which to try and address current pressures.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Scrutiny Members are asked to consider and offer views on the options available to the Council in order to manage the challenges detailed within the report, namely:
- i) Do nothing;
 - ii) Reduce the workload of the organisation and focus upon the absolute core statutory requirements of our business, recognising that many areas of the council's existing offer would be reduced significantly;
 - iii) Introduce additional staffing resource as detailed in 5.18 – 5.40 of the report, consisting of:
 - the development of an internal recruitment team
 - the proposal to create an additional post and designate as a Deputy Chief Executive
 - Proposal to create an additional post and designate as Deputy Section 151 officer.
- 3.2 Endorse the recent appointment of a Cost of Living Co-ordinator as detailed at paragraph 5.50.
- 3.3 If Members are minded to support recommendation 3.1 (iii) above, Members are asked

to endorse the financial implications as detailed in paragraphs 8.1 – 8.3 and specifically note that the proposals will not result in any additional financial resources. being required as they will be fully funded through the virement of existing budgets.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Council, like all other public sector organisations, is currently facing many challenges which are impacting on the workforce and its overall capacity to meet the expectations placed upon it.
- 4.2 It is important Scrutiny members are aware of these pressures and what the Council is trying to do to address them in order to ensure that services can continue to be provided to the public.
- 4.3 The views of Members are also being sought on the options available to the Council and specifically proposals to further increase capacity in key areas.

5. THE REPORT

Recruitment

- 5.1 The Council is currently facing recruitment and retention challenges across the whole organisation in many service areas and unfortunately, the services affected seem to be under increasing demand in accordance with the national picture. This is by no means a specific challenge to Caerphilly.
- 5.2 In July 2022, the Local Government Associations Head of Workforce, Naomi Cooke, delivered a speech to the LGAs annual conference. In the speech, Naomi referred to “*a crisis of recruitment in local government*” and therefore “*a crisis in capacity*”. According to the LGA, over half of Councils report having insufficient staff to run all services normally.
- 5.3 The LGA also report that over the last ten years every other part of the public sector has grown more than local government, which has, in fact, lost about 40 per cent of its workforce
- 5.4 It isn't just in the local government sector, however. In a survey of 5,700 businesses for its Q2 2022 Quarterly Recruitment Outlook, the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) found that three in five businesses (61%) were currently looking to find staff, while 76% reported recruitment difficulties, dropping just two percentage points from Q1 (78%).
- 5.5 The fact that these challenges are not unique to Caerphilly means that any interventions introduced by the Local Authority to resolve issues it is experiencing will impact on the ability of other Local Authorities to recruit and retain staff. In essence, the more successful the Council is at addressing these challenges, the more acutely those challenges will likely be felt by our partners and neighbours.
- 5.6 Members will be aware that the introduction of Single Status in Local Authorities saw the end of nationally agreed salary ranges for groups of staff, except for Teaching staff who have their own nationally agreed terms and conditions.
- 5.7 Some Council services are also affected by competition from the private sector, for

example, I.T., Engineering, Social Care and Construction. The demand for staff in these disciplines has massively increased during and since the pandemic, as have the salaries that the individuals with these skills can now attract.

5.8 Whilst the opportunities for agile working can assist some Council services, they can also cause problems in others, as people who were perhaps previously unwilling to travel long distances for work can now look further afield for employment without the need to travel at all in some cases.

5.9 For Members information, the headcount as at the close of each of the last five financial years is detailed below:

Date	Headcount	FTE Headcount
31.03.18	8,682	6,318.69
31.03.19	8,533	6,256.64
31.03.20	8,402	6,141.56
31.03.21	8,296	6,124.17
31.03.22	8,348	6,245.04

5.10 The table above shows a reduction over the last five years, in both its overall headcount and “Full Time Equivalent - FTE” headcount. Whilst it firstly appears a relatively small reduction, these staff numbers are heavily supported with the use of agency staff, as a consequence of the difficulties experienced with recruitment at this time. Consideration must also be given to the volume and complexity of the challenges we are now facing and that it is being stretched over a workforce that has not changed significantly over recent years.

5.11 The workforce age profile of the organisation is as follows:

Age Group	Female	Male
Under 20	78	78
21 – 30	759	356
31 – 40	1436	434
41 – 50	1653	507
51 – 60	1613	605
61 – 65	407	190
66 +	162	69
Total	6108	2239

5.12 Despite the perceived difficulty in recruitment and retention, Members can be assured that the Council is still making successful appointments. The details of internal appointments and progression for the previous three financial years is set out below:

	2019 / 20	2020 / 21	2021 / 22
New starters	765	500	864
Internal transfers	1,514	1,040	1,487
Total appointments	2,279	1,540	2,351

Of course, internal transfers, often subsequently create further vacancies which require further recruitment and selection processes. Naturally this places additional pressure on recruiting managers and People Services.

- 5.13 To complete the picture, the details of the leavers from the Council for the previous three financial years is detailed below:

	2019 / 20	2020 / 21	2021 / 22
Leavers	873	597	765

- 5.14 Heads of Service have been working proactively with People Services to attempt to overcome some of the challenges within their services by utilising some of the opportunities already available to the Council. These include:

- workforce planning
- the appointment of Apprentices
- considering run through grades
- review of contracts and hours
- introducing market supplements.

- 5.15 These alone will not, however, help the Council to overcome this national recruitment and retention crisis. It is also worth noting that market supplements are also traditionally only supposed to be used as a temporary measure.

- 5.16 The Council is reviewing its recruitment processes and has begun to make steps to better position the Council as an employer of choice and also to improve the overall experience for prospective candidates. Listed below are some of the areas of improvement currently being progressed:

5.16.1 **Modernising our recruitment** – new application form and portal designed and launched; new web pages created; videos developed to profile the Council, its service areas and the opportunities available.

5.16.2 **Market position** – the Council is trialling a new approach to social advertising; has procured recruiter membership with market leader LinkedIn; has trialled targeted recruitment campaigns for front line posts; has run and attended community recruitment events.

5.16.3 **Apprentices** – the Council has committed recurrent funding for the ongoing recruitment of apprentices and in many cases Heads of Service are growing the number of apprentices by matching this funding form core budgets; strengthened partnership working with Careers Wales and schools.

5.16.4 **Caerphilly's offer** – HR & the Employment Teams are working together to consider how to provide more placement opportunities across the Council that could lead to employment opportunities.

5.16.5 **Recruitment consultant** – the Council has recently trialled the use of a Recruitment Consultancy for a Head of Service post. The trial has given significant insight into the private sector approaches associated with modern recruitment and selection as well as some of the tools and techniques that increase the likelihood of identifying and ultimately employing high quality candidates. Not only has the Council appointed, where it had failed to do so

previously but the experience has also given the Council additional insight into the needs of prospective candidates and the strategies that need to be deployed to positively engage potential recruits.

5.16.6 **Exit Survey Process** – the exit survey process has been reviewed and automated in order to increase the number of exit interviews being undertaken, provide trend analysis and benchmarks, as well as provide higher quality insight into why employees are leaving the employment of the Council. Any emerging themes and context can then be used to refine the recruitment, selection and retention processes even further.

5.16.7 **Payline Assessment** – exploratory work is underway to assess the pay and grading structure to consider whether the Council's salary ranges are competitive.

5.16.8 **HR Policy Refresh** – HR policies are also being reviewed to ensure that our terms and conditions are supportive to recruitment and retention wherever possible. These will be presented in a separate report for consideration.

5.17 It is too early in the process to state whether these refinements will make a significant difference but clearly, doing nothing is not an option. The whole matter of recruitment and retention will be subject to continuous review and modernisation and be adaptable to external pressures whilst remaining a safe process.

5.18 Members should be aware that it is unlikely that the Council will be able to successfully recruit to all vacant posts and retain all staff due to the national crisis, but it must continue to do all it can to differentiate itself and position itself at the leading edge.

Proposal: Development of an Internal Recruitment Team

5.19 As stated, the Council, along with other public sector bodies across the UK is facing a number of recruitment and retention challenges. More traditional methods of recruitment such as placing job advertisements in relevant trade journals or local newspapers are no longer delivering high numbers of quality candidates and, in some cases, no candidates at all.

5.20 It is important from a business continuity perspective that the Council develop a leading edge approach to recruitment and selection that maximises its chances of securing the appointment of high quality candidates into roles, especially critical roles, while keeping the very best interests and values of the Council at the centre of the new approaches.

5.21 For the reasons set out above the Council would like to resource and appoint a specialist internal Recruitment Team. The Team would focus on marketing and promoting the organisation to prospective candidates; making use of commercial recruitment tools to identify individuals that meet the Council's needs; reaching out and engaging potential candidates about the benefits of coming to work for Caerphilly, proactively communicating the opportunities that exist within the Council across Social Media and other professional channels, as well as hosting local recruitment events across the Borough on an ongoing basis.

- 5.22 The Team would strengthen further the relationships with key partners such as Careers Wales, our schools, local colleges and Universities to engage and encourage prospective applicants as well as developing tailored opportunities to join the Council. The Team would also operate a dedicated 'recruitment hotline' where prospective applicants could ring for a chat about possible employment options in the Council rather than just ring about a job that is already advertised.
- 5.23 Beyond this, the Team would further develop and modernise the Council's Recruitment web pages, streamline the application process, be proactive and outward facing in its approach to recruitment as well as mirroring the skills and disciplines typically employed by sector leading recruitment consultants.
- 5.24 With the organisation short of the capacity it needs to deliver even existing services as well as seeking to provide the platform for whole borough regeneration and transformation and the wider global challenges being faced, a dedicated internal recruitment team as referenced above, has the potential to seek out and attract a wide range of skilled and experienced candidates to the organisation.
- 5.25 The Council has recently piloted some of the approaches that would be central to this new team in terms of its recruitment of the Transformation Manager (Commercial and Investment) and a strong field of candidates were available for shortlist and interview with a successful appointment ultimately made.
- 5.26 Initially, the structure that would be required to support this concept, supplemented by existing resources within the HR team to deal with the appointment process, evaluations, etc would be as follows:

Recruitment and Selection Manager x 1	Grade 12
Principal Officer (Recruitment and Selection) x 2	Grade 10
HR Officer (Recruitment and Selection) x 2	Grade 8
HR Assistant (Recruitment and Selection) x 2	Grade 6

- 5.27 The total costs estimated in accordance with existing HR grades and oncosts would circa be £320k to secure this new team. In order to enable the Team to take advantage of commercial recruitment tools, the Team would also require additional budget for LinkedIn Premium, as well as a range of additional options around advertising, recruitment material, events, etc. That would mean a total investment of an additional £358k per annum to establish the Team and also provide the necessary supporting tools.

Statutory Capacity

- 5.28 The Council has three main statutory roles: the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) as well as the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer. Of these three statutory roles, on the Monitoring Officer has an appointed Deputy.
- 5.29 At differing points over the last twelve months, the Council has found itself without two of its Statutory Officers at critical times, and over what proved to be extended periods.
- 5.30 The absence of designated deputy positions for those two key statutory roles have emerged as risks that have been brought into sharp focus during these periods with the officers that would ordinarily act up not having the constituted statutory authority to do so in the absence of the post holders.

Deputy Chief Executive

- 5.31 Under Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, it is the role of the Chief Executive, formerly known as the Head of Paid Service, to ensure that all the authority's functions are properly co-ordinated as well as organising staff and appointing appropriate management.
- 5.32 The Chief Executive has the following functions and areas of responsibility, although this list is not exhaustive:
- Overall corporate management and operational responsibility (including overall management responsibility for all officers);
 - Provision of professional advice to all parties in the decision making process;
 - Responsibility for a system of record keeping for all the Council's decisions;
 - Responsibility for promoting and maintaining probity in all of the Council's activities;
 - Representing the Council on partnerships and external bodies as required by Council or by statute;
 - Acting as co-ordinator in Emergencies;
 - Be the Electoral Registration Officer and the Local Government Returning Officer and to be empowered in relation to all electoral matters;
 - Be the proper officer for all statutory purposes unless otherwise determined by this constitution;
 - Be able to exercise all the powers delegated to the Corporate Directors unless there is a legal or professional impediment;
 - Take urgent decisions in respect of either an executive or non- executive function which is considered necessary to protect the interests of or for advancing the business of the Council. In those circumstances, the Chief Executive is authorised to take urgent decisions following consultation with the Leader of the Council and the relevant portfolio holder in respect of executive matters and the Chairman (or Vice Chairman) of Council or the relevant committee in respect of non-executive functions. All urgent decisions will be reported to the next appropriate meeting of Council, Cabinet or the relevant committee;

Proposal to Create an Additional Post and designate as a Deputy Chief Executive

- 5.33 The Council is seeking to appoint a permanent Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Deputy Head of Paid Service as an additional post on the establishment. This will enable the Council to address the risk of not being able to meet certain statutory requirements should the appointed statutory officer be unavailable. It will also provide a much needed and dedicated resource that can lead the significant, cross cutting challenges facing the organisation and its surrounding communities at present, such as the cost of living crisis, and climate change.
- 5.34 The total cost of the appointment inclusive of on costs would be subject to agreeing an appropriate set of duties and responsibilities and would need to be agreed by Members. Based on the existing range, it is anticipated that the costs would be circa £189k including on costs.

Deputy Section 151 Officer

- 5.35 Under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 (c.11), the Council has a duty to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs. The Council

does this by appointing a Section 151 Officer. The Section 151 officer must be a qualified accountant belonging to one of the recognised chartered accountancy bodies.

- 5.36 The Section 151 Officer is a statutory role and has overall responsibility, subject to any instructions given by the Council, for determining the system of accounting control and the form of the published accounts.
- 5.37 The Section 151 Officer has a number of statutory duties, including the duty to report any unlawful financial activity involving the authority (past, present or proposed) or failure to set or keep to a balanced budget.
- 5.38 The Officer appointed under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 also has overall responsibility for providing financial advice on all budgetary and accounting matters affecting the Council's corporate financial affairs. In the case of Caerphilly this officer is also the Head of Financial Services & S151 Officer.
- 5.39 The role and responsibilities of the S151 Officer are extensive and integral to the strategic management of the organisation as a whole. Some of the responsibilities of the S151 Officer cannot be delegated and without an appointed deputy the Council's abilities to meet its statutory requirements can be impacted.

Proposal to Create an Additional Post & designate as Deputy Section 151 Officer

- 5.40 The Council is seeking to appoint a Deputy Head of Financial Services & Deputy Section 151 Officer as an additional post to address the risk of not being able to meet certain statutory requirements should the Section 151 Officer be unavailable for any reason. This will provide much needed additional capacity to the Financial Services functions and will also support the delivery of the Council's key priorities through the provision of sound strategic financial advice.
- 5.41 The post will need to be evaluated but the total cost of the appointment inclusive of on costs is estimated to be circa £108k p.a.

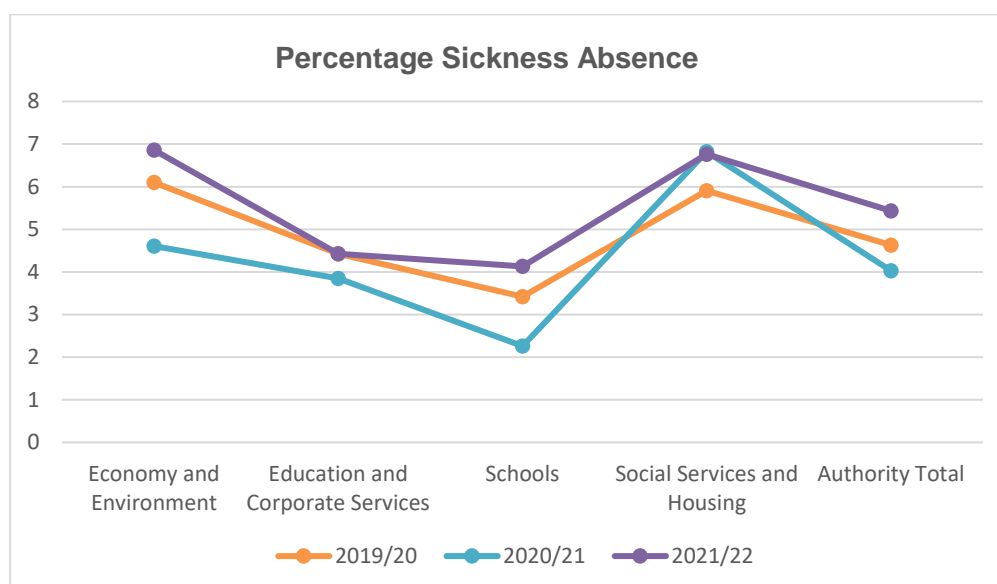
Sickness

- 5.42 The Council's Managing Sickness Absence Procedure provides a structured framework to allow Managers to effectively manage sickness absence. The Procedure has also been adopted by all Schools. The purpose of the Procedure is to:
- Maximise employee attendance at work.
 - Support employees in returning to work in a timely manner.
 - Have a clear and agreed process for managing the sickness absence of all the Council's employees, which is applicable to all.
- 5.43 The following paragraphs provide an overview of levels of absence within the Council for the previous 3 financial years.
- 5.44 In 2021 / 22 the Council reported 14.12 days lost per full-time equivalent (FTE) Local Authority employee due to sickness absence including schools. The FTE days lost in 2020 / 21 were 10.0 and in 2019 / 20 were 11.98. Reporting Councils across Wales are reporting higher FTEs absence levels this year.

5.45 The table below provides the total percentage absence per Directorate for three financial years. Schools are reported separately for ease of reference for Scrutiny Members.

Directorate	% Sickness Absence		
	2019 / 20	2020 / 21	2021 / 22
Economy and Environment	6.10	4.61	6.86
Education and Corporate Services	4.43	3.85	4.43
Schools	3.42	2.26	4.13
Social Services and Housing	5.91	6.82	6.76
Authority Total	4.63	4.03	5.43

This information is also provided in graph format below for Scrutiny Members.



5.46 The table below provides the top 10 stated reasons for absence across the Council for the previous three financial years.

Top 10 Reasons of Absence for the Authority

Top 10 Ranking

2019/20 2020/21 2021/22

Personal Stress; depression; anxiety; neurasthenia; mental health; fatigue	1	1	1
Other musculo-skeletal problems	2	2	3
Stomach; liver; kidney and digestion inc. gastroenteritis	3	4	4
Infections inc. colds & flu	4	8	5
Injury	5	5	9
Back and neck problems	6	6	6

Chest and respiratory inc. chest infections	7		9	7
Work related stress	8		7	10
Neurological including headaches & migraines	9		N/A	8
Eye; ear; nose & mouth/dental to inc. sinusitis	10		N/A	N/A
Covid	N/A		3	2
Heart, blood pressure and circulation	N/A		10	N/A

- 5.47 Members will note that apart from the introduction of Covid as a reason for absence, the rank order of reasons has remained fairly consistent across the 3 years.
- 5.48 Within People Services, the HR team provides advice and guidance to Managers in relation to all aspects of people management. Listed below are some of the other areas of support that are currently in place:
- 5.48.1 **A dedicated Managing Attendance Team** to support Managers to manage absence effectively and consistently across the Authority.
- 5.48.2 **An Occupational Health Unit**, with Occupational Health Physician, Physiotherapist and Nurse expertise provided to support the management of sickness absence.
- 5.48.3 **A confidential counselling service** offered via Care First that can be accessed by all employees.
- 5.48.4 **An Employee Wellbeing Strategy 2021 – 24** is now in place which supports us to work with our employees to promote and facilitate good health and wellbeing, and to provide excellent services to those who need our support.
- 5.48.5 **A digital ‘Health Wall’** has been established featuring some of the links to organisations that provide expert information and advice for a number of health related issues.
- 5.48.6 **Directorate Performance Assessments** also include sickness information broken down by Directorate and classified as either short term or long term which are kept under review by Senior Management on a cyclical basis.
- 5.49 Managing employee wellbeing remains a priority for Managers, but Members should be aware of the matters below that have resulted from the pandemic:
- Introduction of a new absence reason i.e. Covid and the many variants
 - Vaccinations and staff falling ill afterwards
 - Staff waiting much longer for NHS treatments
 - The fit note process changed for a while where it was 28 days before they were required
 - A Long Covid Protocol was introduced
 - Managers may have had less time to attach to managing absences due to staff shortages and services needing to be provided to residents.

- 5.50 The Council's Managing Sickness Absence Procedure is currently being reviewed and will take account of any learning from the pandemic. Furthermore, officers are exploring an opportunity to bring in some further external assistance, seeking learning and potentially support from neighbouring local authorities where sickness levels are lower than in Caerphilly.

Cost of Living

- 5.51 Scrutiny Members will be aware that The UK has been experiencing a cost of living crisis since late 2021, caused predominantly by high inflation outstripping wage and benefit increases, which has been further exacerbated by recent tax increases, resulting in the fall in disposable incomes. This crisis is acutely affecting our communities and the need for targeted additional Council support is paramount. A separate report was presented to Cabinet on 26th September which set out our current position and presented a proposed package of additional support in order to guide and help our communities through these difficult financial conditions. The report also highlights that the corporate Cost of Living package of support, will be led by a recently appointed Cost of Living Co-ordinator. This report is scheduled to be considered by Council on 4th October 2022.
- 5.52 The cost of living crisis is also affecting all of our employees financially in one way or another, leading to some making choices to stop working or to reduce their hours, which is impacting on recruitment and retention, which is already proving to be a significant challenge.
- 5.53 The Council is naturally being asked by the Trade Unions to offer support to employees. The Council is looking at possible options but have to take account of national conditions of service and pay negotiating bodies, financial regulations and work being considered by national committees.
- 5.54 The Corporate Director Social Services and Housing is leading on the cost of living crisis for residents and employees and together with the Head of People Services is consulting with the Trade Unions with regard to the latter.

Conclusion

- 5.55 There are many factors affecting the workforce which may impact on the Council's ability to deliver services. Whilst the Council will do what it can to respond to some of these local challenges, it will clearly be unable to influence many of the national and global factors, which have increased the complexity and scale of the challenges being faced by local government and the public sector as a whole.
- 5.56 If the Council is to remain resilient and responsive to these challenges, the acquisition of the additional capacity proposed within this report is required. This will go some way to addressing some of the workforce challenges being faced and provide extra resource to focus on the things that matter most to our communities and our organisation.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 It is assumed that the additional investment being sought will provide the capacity that enables the organisation to meet the expectations currently placed upon it but each

intervention will also be monitored to assess impact and where necessary refine the approach.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has not been completed as this report provides Scrutiny Members with an update on matters impacting on the workforce.
- 7.2 The Council has in place policies to support matters such as recruitment, sickness absence, pay and grading and terms and conditions, etc. which would have been assessed at the time of agreement and take Equalities related issues into account.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The total costs of progressing the proposals set out in paragraphs 5.18 to 5.40 are as follows:

Internal Recruitment Team	£358k
Deputy Chief Executive	£189k
Deputy Section 151 Officer	£108k

Total: - £655k

- 8.2 There are currently 3 vacant Head of Service posts within the approved staffing structure as follows: -

Head of Business Improvement Services	£135k
Head of Education Planning & Strategy	£106k
Head of Prosperity	£135k

Total: - £376k

- 8.3 It is proposed that the budgets for the above three vacant posts are redirected to part fund the proposals set out in this report. This will leave a balance of £279k to be funded and it is proposed that this is met through a permanent virement from the existing Miscellaneous Finance Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay Budget.
- 8.4 It should be noted that the proposals in the report will not result in any additional resources being required as they will be fully funded through the virement of existing budgets.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The personnel implications are included in the report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The consultation responses have been incorporated in the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 1972

Author: Christina Harray, Chief Executive

Consultees: Dave Street, Corporate Director Social Care and Housing
Richard (Ed) Edmunds, Corporate Director Education & Corp Services
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director Economy and Environment
Cllr Sean Morgan, Leader of Council
Cllr Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Property Services
Cllr Lindsay Whittle, Leader of Plaid Group
Cllr Kevin Etheridge, Leader of Independent Group
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services & S151 Officer
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 27TH SEPTEMBER 2022

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON AGILE WORKING

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on the progress that has been made in respect of embedding Agile Working principles across the organisation and to outline the steps necessary to formalise these practices.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 During the pandemic, the Council's back office, or administrative staff, were asked to begin working remote from the office almost overnight. It was these agile practices that secured the Council's ability to deliver key services to the public even when our communities were 'locked down'. Contact Centre staff were able to seamlessly receive and manage customer enquiries from home; Revenues and Benefits staff were able to process multiple grant payments, and officers involved in the emerging requirements of the pandemic response could instantaneously switch between meetings with multiple responders.
- 2.2 While the democratic process was initially suspended at the very beginning of the pandemic, the rollout of equipment and Microsoft Teams, enabled the Council to reinstate its decision-making processes with elected members then fully able to participate in decision-making initially from their homes.
- 2.3 These practices have continued during the last 24 months or so with agile (or flexible) working practices now very much the de facto way of working for many back office staff and legislation being introduced that makes hybrid meeting capabilities a requirement of Council businesses. across the Council. During that timeframe customers have also become accustomed to accessing Council services that are being supported by staff who are working from a wide range of locations.
- 2.4 These new ways of working have already enabled the council to:
- reduce levels of unproductive time that officers previously spent travelling to and from work and to and from meetings across the Borough and across Wales

- reduce its CO2 emissions in terms of business travel and staff journeys
 - see our employees find a better balance between their home and work lives
 - see staff with specific caring responsibilities find a way to wrap their jobs around those responsibilities avoiding the need for either aspect to suffer unnecessarily
 - increased service resilience by introducing a way of working that would buck the elements (snow days, red weather warnings etc)
 - embed a range of more efficient mechanisms for dealing with customer engagement
 - reduce the number of administrative buildings that it has in operation
- 2.5 During this period, the Council has amassed significant learning about what will be required if it is to formally adopt agile working practices within its operating model, something that it has not done at this point.
- 2.6 The most recent staff surveys which included specific questions on Agile demonstrated a shift in staff preference towards these modern methods or working with circa 80% of staff either preferring to 'mostly' work from home or split themselves equally between work and home.
- 2.7 The relaxation of restrictions on staff accessing Council's buildings during the autumn last year has seen a modest increase in the numbers attending those buildings on a daily basis. The attendance at Ty Penallta, for example, peaked at around 22% and demonstrates a clearly link to the fact that many administrative jobs can be delivered from a range of locations, if suitable tools and connectivity are available.
- 2.8 A future capacity planning exercise carried out through the Spring of 2022 asked Heads of Service to work with staff to establish staff working patterns and capacity requirements for buildings against the needs of our citizens. This exercise once again confirmed that the surplus capacity being experienced at the majority of buildings would likely continue moving forward.
- 2.9 This additional capacity provides a range of opportunities for the Council in the coming years in terms of its overall requirements for premises, its operating expenditure, overall service resilience, its position as an employer of choice, its carbon footprint and the way in which its staff are equipped to support service delivery.
- 2.10 This report gives members a position statement on the Council's current approach to Agile working, sets out some of the potential benefits that a formalised approach to agile working will provide, seeks to focus the work of the Agile Corporate Review Team on the development of an Agile Hub at Ty Penallta, and in doing so, provide all necessary foundations for a broader rollout across all Council buildings.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Scrutiny Members:
- 1) Note the progress of the Agile Working Corporate Review to date
 - 2) Note the strategic intent and proposed Outcomes for the Agile Working Corporate Review
 - 3) Comment on the intention to develop Ty Penallta as an Agile Working Hub
 - 4) Note the progress against the workstreams to support this development

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To support the development of an Agile Hub at Ty Penallta and the development of all of the necessary policies and practices to formally embed agile principles as a core principle of Council service delivery.

5. THE REPORT

Progress to Date

- 5.1 Since its inception, the Agile Corporate Review Project Team has been developing and beginning to embed all of the policies, processes, equipment and management development required to support modern methods of working. The Team and the workforce have proven over the last two years or so that this has become a way of working that is now very much the norm for staff in certain roles and can be successfully applied to the Council's operating model without determined to our customers.
- 5.2 Through the introduction of Hybrid Meeting Technology, Members have also been able to make choices about whether they participate in meetings in person or join from remote locations. Again, this promotes choice, is in keeping with the new legislation and provides flexibility while not removing any aspect of the democratic role.
- 5.3 These new ways of working have already enabled the council to:
- reduce levels of unproductive time that officers previously spent travelling to and from work and to and from meetings across the Borough and across Wales
 - reduce its CO2 emissions in terms of business travel and staff journeys
 - see our employees find a better balance between their home and work lives
 - see staff with specific caring responsibilities find a way to wrap their jobs around those responsibilities avoiding the need for either aspect to suffer unnecessarily
 - increased service resilience by introducing a way of working that would buck the elements (snow days, red weather warnings etc)
 - embed a range of more efficient mechanisms for dealing with customer engagement
 - reduce the number of administrative buildings that it has in operation
- 5.4 Staff that are able to take advantage of agile working, to a large extent now have the IT equipment and connectivity they require to fulfil their role from multiple locations. Elements of the Council's infrastructure has been upgraded to support these new ways of working. The Council has a set of draft policies to formally support agile working which are ready for consultation over the Autumn.
- 5.5 A categorisation exercise was carried out with Heads of Service that has helped establish the roles that have the potential to be undertaken from home, as a mix of home or office based or purely as office based. The work also looked at the degree to which roles might be time bound. This work has helped establish working patterns over the last twelve months or so with the mix of home and office forming the predominant pattern for back office staff.
- 5.6 Cabinet agreed to make £500k of funding available to equip officers with the mobile

devices and / or furniture required to support new ways of working. The majority of service areas have, to date, equipped their staff from local budgets so this funding remains available to be allocated to provide the equipment and furniture that will be in place across the Council's Agile hubs.

5.7 The Council has invested in the creation of an Agile Working space on the ground floor at Ty Penallta and adapted its glass restaurant provision, now known as "The Hive" to ensure that it better supports agile approaches.

5.8 The Council has framed its strategic intent in respect of next steps as follows:

Our aim: "To formalise the working practices and patterns that have successfully supported service delivery and individual needs throughout the pandemic, and to plan and implement any changes that may be required to ensure these mixed or hybrid methods of service delivery remain successful over the long term."

5.9 The Council has proposed a number of outcomes that will provide a framework upon which the success of the Project can be judged, and to which future decisions can be aligned.

FW 01	Work becomes something that people do, not somewhere they go
FW 02	Officers and Members have the equipment, skills and desire to work in an agile way
FW 03	Employees are trusted to get their job done flexibly
FW 04	An appropriate mix of home / remote and office-based working is defined and supported
FW 05	Staff productivity, work / life balance and wellbeing is improved
FW 06	Council's Carbon footprint is reduced
FW 07	Organisational sickness levels are reduced
FW 08	Administrative buildings are repurposed to provide an appropriate mix of fixed desks / hot desks, touch down points, quiet space and meeting space
FW 09	The monitoring regimes and administrative burdens associated with managing 'flexi time' are reduced

5.10 The Council has undertaken a future capacity planning exercise on a wide range of its buildings based on discussion between Heads of Service and their staff. The findings of the exercise have only been triangulated for Ty Penallta at this point, but the early results appear to confirm that there is significant desk capacity available across the whole estate which could now be repurposed. This clearly presents opportunities for the Council to migrate staff out of outlying buildings into a base at one of its emerging Agile Hubs, reducing costs (such as rent, heating and lighting) and maximising the number of individuals operating out of the available space.

5.11 The future capacity planning exercise was designed to take into consideration current and future working patterns for all staff based at our administrative buildings. The triangulated results for Ty Penallta are as follows:

	Current Desk Capacity	Future Desk Requirements	Surplus Capacity
Ty Penallta	964	452	512 (53.2%)

5.12 Scoping work has also been undertaken with an external contractor to explore the potential to reconfigure one wing of one floor at Ty Penallta as an agile working

space. The initial designs, coupled with projected costs and the added bonus of providing collaborative space, team space, touch down facilities and a more social space from which to work, may also prove beneficial and something the Council would wish to progress.

Developing an Agile Hub @Ty Penallta

- 5.13 With the building previously hosting nearly 1000 desks and with a future requirement of around 46% of those desks to service those 1000 staff, it may well be possible for several hundred additional staff to be based here. As well as freeing up outlying buildings, this also provides the opportunity for the Council to bring together groups of staff and teams that have never previously been able to work together.
- 5.14 With this in mind, the Agile Corporate Review Team is seeking to focus its work on creating Ty Penallta as the Council first Agile Working Hub. The principles of this work are set out below:
- As an Agile Hub, Ty Penallta will provide a mix of opportunities for Council staff who wish to use the building as part of their modern working practices (it is likely to provide a mix of fixed desks, hot desks, touch down spaces, quiet spaces, collaborative spaces and meeting rooms)
 - Over time it is expected that the daily occupancy at Ty Penallta rises and is as close to the maximum (964) as possible
 - Each service (or Team) located at Ty Penallta will be allocated a 'zone' on either floor 2, 3 or 4 with a specified number of desks (see capacity exercise in Appendix 1) for use by team members.
 - Each zone will have a clear desk policy in place and will provide fixed and remote working desks that can be used by multiple staff.
 - One wing on floor one will be developed as a truly flexible workspace to support modern working methods, greater collaboration and opportunities for staff who are visiting or in between meetings to have access to a well equipped, modern work space
 - All desks within the zones across the Agile Hub, be they for fixed use or remote working use, will have the requisite equipment in situ to support the work of those officers who choose to use them (including any specific DDA provisions).
 - All staff will have access to the necessary equipment and furniture they require to undertake their role in accordance with the role category agreed with their line manager and Head of Service
 - The Council will have an agreed Agile Working Policy in place along with a series of supporting Policies that enable these new ways of working
 - The Council will transition to a modern and progressive manner of delivering Mail that enables delivery to remote / agile as well as location dependent workers
 - Where necessary, a small number of lockers will be made available to staff close to their respective zone that would enable personal effects to be temporarily secured

- All staff will be informed and regularly updated of the plans and timescales for creating an Agile Hub at Ty Penallta and will also be made aware of all of the agile locations that could be utilised across the Borough
- The Council will links its asset management plans to its emerging Agile approaches and is able to reduce the use of costly and expensive buildings over time in accordance with a pre-agreed plan
- Paper files and associated physical storage reduces over time in accordance with Information Governance and Records Management protocols
- Systems that support the booking and allocation of rooms, quiet spaces and other resources will be developed and implemented over time
- As the use of the building increases, consideration will also be given to wrap around facilities that could better support a modern workplace and potentially a wider public service offer
- Once the Hub at Ty Penallta is fully functioning, the approaches will be rolled out to other key administrative buildings

Workstreams and Projects

5.15 The following workstreams and projects are currently in train in respect of the development of Ty Penallta as an Agile Hub. Each project has a lead head of Service and is underpinned by a Project Plan. The Transformation Team are providing project support. The estimated completion dates are also included, albeit some of these are likely to be amended as the programme progresses and detail is firmed up:

#	Project Description	Estimated Completion
1	To develop, consult and gain approval for an Agile Working Policy and a suite of related Policies to support modern methods of working. (HR & Health and Safety)	January 2023
2	To develop a communication and engagement programme for staff, Members and Trade Unions that provides an insight into the project and keeps key stakeholders informed	September 2022 (and ongoing)
3	Define and create the specifications for the IT and Voice Equipment that will be provided to each specific Agile role category	September 2022
4	Define and create the specification for furniture that will be provided to each specific Agile role category	September 2022
5	Review the IT Infrastructure at Ty Penallta and then, if necessary upgrade it to ensure it is fit to support a well used Agile Hub	October 2022 and thereafter
6	Design and develop a Digital Mail Room facility to enable physical mail to be distributed electronically to staff where possible	January 2023
7	Develop and publicise an electronic inventory of existing Agile Workspaces (those Council buildings and facilities that support touch down working for Council staff)	October 2022
8	Develop and implement a Room / Resource Booking	January 2023

	System and associated management arrangements that will enable staff to book meeting rooms and quiet space across Agile Workspaces [linked to 7]	
9	Develop a Procurement Ready specification for a Flexible Workspace on one wing of Floor 1 [linked to 10]	October 2022
10	Carry out the procurements to enable the delivery of a Flexible Workspace on one wing of one floor of Ty Penallta [linked to 9 and 16] as well as the provision of the specified IT equipment and furniture [linked to 3, 4 and 16]	November 2023
11	Develop a plan for preparing each floor at Ty Penallta to support modern methods of working, to include a general building clean up, standardised desk layouts, removal of broken and damaged equipment and cabinets, development of a clear desk policy	November 2022
12	Using the capacity planning exercise and working with Heads of Service, propose some designs as to how the floors at Ty Penallta could be configured into a number of sufficiently sized zones to house the existing 452 required desks (above and beyond the proposed flexible working space on floor 1)	October 2022
13	Identify the Council buildings that house council staff and whether they are leased or owned and propose which might be suitable for disposal, with staff moving back to the spare capacity at Ty Penallta [linked to 12].	October 2022
14	Ensure Information Governance and Retention policies are in place, communicated and are appropriately applied across the disposal of any paper records and digitisation associated with the creation of the Agile Hub	January 2023
15	Identify a list of critical customer services as a means of ensuring those services are physically represented by staff at Ty Penallta in order to service face to face enquiries from customers.	October 2022
16	Ensure the finances and budgets required associated with developing an Agile Hub and equipping staff are in place	Ongoing
17	Ensure the back-office telephony arrangements are enhanced to support remote customer management and provide first class customer service	December 2022
18	Continue to enhance and refine the processes, management arrangements and training programmes that will ensure remote working remains a success	December 2022

5.16 Conclusion

Significant progress has been achieved through the Council's swift move to Agile working and the period that has followed but in order to formalise arrangements, maximise the use of key administrative buildings and reduce the costs associated with the Council's property portfolio, work will now centre on the creation of the Council's first Agile Hub.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 It is assumed that any costs associated with the equipping staff or remodelling agile hubs will be funded from the reserve set aside by Cabinet for IT Equipment and Furniture
- 6.2 It is assumed that the development of Agile Hubs will bring about cost savings associated with the release of surplus buildings and facilities.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 No IIA is required as this report is a report to update members on progress.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There will need to be financial investment in order to formalise agile working but is expected that the £500k already set aside should be appropriate to support the provision of equipment, furniture and building remodelling.
- 8.2 A national position is currently being sought on the potential provision of a Home Working allowance for staff. This has become more pressing with the cost of living increases. Should a national position be achieved, there will likely need to be additional investment secured to support its payment.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The need to review and refine policies in order to formally embed agile working will have a number of personnel implications and the support of the Trade Unions will be sought in overcoming any obstacles that emerge through consultation and engagement.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The consultees listed at the end of the report have received a copy of this report and their views and comments have been captured within.

Author: Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services

Consultees: Christina Harray, Chief Executive
Sean Morgan, Leader
Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Dave Street, Corporate Director Social Services and Housing
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director Economy and Environment
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services
Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure
Mark Faulkner, Facilities Manager
Cllr Gary Johnston, Chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 27TH SEPTEMBER 2022

SUBJECT: SHAPING THE POLICY ON CASH COLLECTION

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on the payment methods currently utilised by our residents and to consider recommendations to Cabinet in respect of the future policy on cash payments

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on income levels for the Council for a range of reasons. These included the temporary closure of income generating services, the closure of Customer Services Offices, and the economic impact of the pandemic on our residents and businesses.
- 2.2 The Welsh Government (WG) funded much of the income lost as a consequence of the pandemic through the Covid-19 Hardship Fund, with funding totalling £6.087m being received for the 2020/21 financial year and £2.237m for 2021/22. The Hardship Fund ceased on 31 March 2022 with Local Authorities now having to manage any ongoing income losses through their own revenue budgets.
- 2.3 Another consequence of the pandemic was the impact on the various methods available to our residents to make payments to the Council. This “channel shift” resulted in a significant move away from cash payments with a range of alternative payment methods being utilised.
- 2.4 This report updates Members on the current position regarding the range of payment methods utilised by our residents and makes a recommendation to Cabinet in respect of the future policy on cash payments.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider the content of the report and the following recommendations to Cabinet: -
- 3.1.1 That Cabinet agrees that due to the move to alternative payment methods experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic, cash payments will not be re-introduced in Customer Services Offices.
- 3.1.2 That Cabinet notes that cash payments will continue to be accepted in Schools, Tourism Venues, Leisure Centres, Libraries and Social Services establishments, and that opportunities to move to alternative payment mechanisms will be fully explored wherever possible.

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 During the 2019/20 financial year (i.e. pre-pandemic) cash payments totalled circa £10.24m, with the most significant categories of cash payments being Council Tax (£2.41m), Housing Rents (£2.79m), Schools (£2.81m) and Leisure Centres and Tourism Venues (£0.962m).

5.2 The temporary closure of the Council's Customer Services Offices due to the pandemic removed the facilities for our residents to pay with cash. Data for the latest full financial year, i.e. 2021/22, shows that cash payments have now reduced to £1.93m, which is a reduction of 81.2% when compared to 2019/20. This demonstrates the significant "channel shift" that has arisen from residents utilising a range of alternative payment methods. The table below shows the most significant increases in payment method types when comparing 2021/22 transactions with 2019/20: -

Payment Method	Increase (%)
Bank Payments	22.32
CCBC Internet Payments	66.58
CCBC Automated Telephone Line	69.06
Telephone Payment via Advisor	24.74
Post Office Cards	44.27

5.3 It is proposed that this change to alternative payment methods 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 sight of the fact that cash is the preferred method of payment for a cohort of our residents. However, cash payments can be done in different ways at no cost to the payee, for example the use of Post Office payment cards, which also has the added benefit of increasing footfall in our town centres. There are currently 4,146 active Post Office payment card accounts compared to 2,652 in 2019/20.

5.4 From 04 October 2021, the Customer Services Office in Ty Penallta was reopened for 5 days a week on an appointment only basis. Under this arrangement payments would only be accepted as part of a service request, for example paying for a bulky collection or a van and trailer permit, and any such payments would be processed by card with no cash payments being taken.

5.5 During the period 04 October 2021 to 01 July 2022 there only 5 appointments made at Ty Penallta, so with effect from 04 July 2022 it was decided to reduce the service to one day per week but to also offer services at other sites as shown in the following table: -

Office	Day	Time
Bargoed	Monday	09:30 – 15:30
Caerphilly	Tuesday	09:30 – 16:00
Ty Penallta	Wednesday	09:30 – 16:30
Blackwood	Thursday	09:30 – 16:00
Risca	Friday	09:30 – 15:30

5.6 In terms of payments, these are still only accepted as part of a service request and will be processed by card with no cash payments being taken.

5.7 Since 04 July 2022 there have been a total of 11 appointments across all sites. There have been instances of members of the public presenting without appointments but these have been limited in number and have not been specifically for Customer Services, with

customers being sign-posted to the other relevant service areas by Library and Customer Services staff. Furthermore, there have been no requests for payments as people are paying by the other methods highlighted earlier in this report.

- 5.8 The footfall at the Customer Services Offices is being kept under review and if there is an increase in demand then the opening hours will be subject to further review. Currently, staff are travelling to the Offices to call handle or deal with online requests as it is these channels where demand is being experienced.
- 5.9 As mentioned in paragraph 5.2 cash payments during the 2021/22 financial year totalled £1.93m, which is a reduction of 81.2% when compared to 2019/20. The majority of these cash payments related to Schools (£1.521m), Tourism Venues (£0.276m) and Leisure Centres (£0.071m), with the residual small sums relating to Libraries and Social Services establishments.
- 5.10 A large proportion of the cash income for schools relates to charges for the provision of school meals. However, with the rollout of cashless catering having now been completed across all schools and the advent of Universal Free School Meals there will be a further and more significant reduction in cash payments in this area. Furthermore, there are plans to extend the cashless system to other areas such as payments for school trips, uniforms etc.
- 5.11 Cash payments continue to be accepted in Tourism Venues, Leisure Centres, Libraries and Social Services establishments but this will be subject to review and where opportunities arise to move to cashless approaches they will be fully considered.

Conclusion

- 5.12 Covid-19 impacted on income levels for the Council and there has been a significant “channel shift” in the types of payment methods being utilised by our residents. This has resulted in a large reduction in the level of cash payments.
- 5.13 Customer Services Offices have reopened on a limited appointment only basis with payments only being accepted by card for service requests. The footfall has been very low since the reopening.
- 5.14 It is recommended to Cabinet that due to the move to alternative payment methods experienced during the pandemic that cash payments will not be re-introduced in Customer Services Offices.
- 5.15 Cash payments are still accepted in Schools, Tourism Venues, Leisure Centres, Libraries and Social Services establishments but opportunities to move to alternative payment mechanisms will be fully explored wherever possible.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 There are no assumptions within this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 There has been a significant reduction in cash payments arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, largely due to the temporary closure of Customer Services Offices. This has resulted in large increases in other payment methods being used by our residents which are now fully embedded.
- 7.2 No negative impacts have been identified from the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) on the proposal to continue to not accept cash payments in Customer Services Offices. The IIA is available through the following link: -

[Link to Integrated Impact Assessment](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 During the 2019/20 financial year costs of £31k were incurred for the cash collection service provided by G4S. In 2021/22 this reduced to £6k.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 The Local Government Acts 1998 and 2003.

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Consultees: Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive
Cllr Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property
Cllr Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance
Cllr Gary Johnston, Chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Brenda Miles, Vice-Chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Dave Street, Corporate Director Social Services and Housing
Richard (Ed) Edmunds, Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director Economy and Environment
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services
Karen Williams, Customer Services Digital Hub Manager