



## **SPECIAL COUNCIL – 10TH SEPTEMBER 2020**

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

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

- 
- 1.1 The report provided Cabinet with an overview of the Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic to date along with an overview of the approach taken to identify, mitigate and manage strategic risks in response to Covid19.
  - 1.2 The report highlighted that the current medium level risks the Council is managing and reaffirmed the policy principles of 'TeamCaerphilly – Better Together' transformation plans and the key principles upon which services will be provided.
  - 1.3 Cabinet noted that the emergence of the Coronavirus across the world and more recently across the UK has posed a significant and unprecedented challenge to the way of life and service provision. In response to the Coronavirus pandemic and lock-down, and over several days, priorities and ways of working were refocussed, repurposed and reshaped to ensure the Council is best placed and equipped to respond to the immediate needs of communities. The report presented an overview of the far reaching "TeamCaerphilly" response to date and outlined the next steps.
  - 1.4 Members noted that the primary purpose throughout the pandemic has been to "to protect our people and place". Cabinet were assured that the much-needed service provision continued to the people of the borough and work continued to protect our place. The important and essential role as a civic leader has been brought to the forefront over recent weeks; reassuring and protecting communities and staff.
  - 1.5 Cabinet noted that staff have been exemplary, and a debt of gratitude is owed to so many of them. The ethos of "TeamCaerphilly – Better Together" has been demonstrated on so many levels, each day, and Senior Management are all so very proud to be part of and privileged to serve our communities.
  - 1.6 It was outlined that the virus will remain with us for some time yet and the resilience of the organisation and communities must be ensured and protected throughout and it is this primary objective we will continue to focus upon over the forthcoming months.
  - 1.7 Each of the Cabinet Members thanked their portfolio areas and all staff across the Local Authority, as well as Members for their hard work, resilience and commitment during the pandemic, with particular focus on those redeployed to provide critical support services to the vulnerable residents and local businesses, hardest hit during the Pandemic.
  - 1.8 Cabinet were asked to consider a number of questions posed by Councillor Kevin Etheridge in relation to the report. The Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer addressed the questions:

1. *In relation to recommendation 3.1.4 “Reaffirm the policy principles of “TeamCaerphilly – Better Together” transformation plans and the key principles upon which services will be provided” and whether this Policy would need to be presented to Council.*

The Monitoring Officer explained that this would not require a Council decision as this policy was a cabinet function and the recommendation requests that Cabinet reaffirm the policy.

2. *In relation to recommendation 3.1.6 “Request a further report is presented to Cabinet, estimating the potential financial impact of the Council’s response to the Pandemic”*

The Monitoring Officer explained that this decision may require a decision of Council, depending on the funding source identified and having consideration for financial procedure rules of the council.

- 1.9 A Cabinet Member queried the work undertaken in the Hubs and how this has helped shape the preparations for schools returning. Officers explained that over 1500 staff have been working within the Hubs under the stewardship of 20 Head Teachers to provide childcare to over 800 children of Key Workers. As a result of this, a number of key safety measures have been implemented and tested. Full risk assessments have been conducted, and reduced capacity has been tested as a result. Signage, routines, social distancing, cleaning routines, personal hygiene and pupil and staff wellbeing practices have all been tested and shared. In addition, it was noted that Idris Davies 3-18 School has provided a tour on Social Media to demonstrate their safety measures in place prior to pupils returning.
- 1.10 A Member sought the current position on Business Grants. The Acting S151 Officer explained that the Business Rates Team is effectively acting as an agent for the Welsh Government and has made 2,781 payments, totalling £32.4m. This puts Caerphilly CBC in the top quartile of Welsh Local Authorities in terms of the percentage of allocated funding that has been distributed to businesses and other eligible organisations. Members were asked to note that the deadline for applications is 30 June and extensive work has been underway to contact those businesses and eligible organisations yet to apply. Correspondence has been sent via letter and email, as well as posts on Social Media. It has proved successful in that a further 89 grants have been approved in just the last 2 days totalling £920k.
- 1.11 A Cabinet Member sought further information on future plans for Health, taking into account recent experiences and the possibility of a second spike. Officers explained that the preparation is 2-fold, in that preparations are being made on a corporate level, and in partnership with other Local Authorities across Gwent, and the Aneurin Bevan Health Board in order to develop an emergency plan. It was noted that partnership working plays a significant role in the preparatory works and the challenges and experiences gained to date will be learned from. Members noted that the Grange Hospital has opened in order to assist with hospital admissions due to the virus, which hasn’t been required to date, but is there if required.
- 1.12 A Cabinet Member, in considering the changes made to the Local Authority very quickly in order to deal with the pandemic, sought further information on whether the ‘normality’ would ever go back. Officers agreed that the transformation was indeed overnight and wouldn’t have been possible without the unprecedented effort from Customer and Digital Services. In referring to the report, it was noted that over 500 laptops and nearly 3000 Office 365 and Microsoft Teams Licences were issued in order for staff to remain connected. Many staff or Members had not had the use of Teams previously, which has been a learning curve, and with support and training, the challenge has been overcome and services continue to be delivered. In addition, the Officer explained that as a result of the Pandemic, it is clear that work is something you do and not a place you go, and with the prospect of social distancing being around for some time it is anticipated that the building will be used very differently and is unlikely to return to the previous working practices, with a blend of agile or office-based working.

- 1.13 A Cabinet Member sought further information on the impact the Pandemic has had on construction projects and how this has been managed. The Officer explained that there has been a fantastic effort from services such as waste, parks and leisure to ensure the continuation of services. In terms of construction, it was noted that Central Government had never stopped construction projects, provided safe social distancing measures could be in place. However, it was decided that all construction projects would be suspended during lockdown and since this time, a safety matrix has been developed, in which each of the projects undergo a risk assessment and provided they meet the requirements, are unlocked and works continue.
- 1.14 A Cabinet Member queried whether there had been an increase in tonnage of waste collected has increased as a result of more people working from home during the Pandemic. Officers explained that with the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) closed during the lockdown and the collection of bulky items also suspended, there has been a 15% increase in tonnage. The refuse collection services have maintained a seamless service throughout the pandemic, continuing to collect food, green, household and recycling waste from homes in the same manner as before the lockdown commenced. In addition, it was noted that the Community lockdown commenced. In addition, it was noted that the Community has recognised the efforts of the waste development, providing praise for their work, which is greatly appreciated.
- 1.15 A Member sought further information on the work of Leisure Centre Staff during the Pandemic, as a result of the Leisure Centre's being closed. Officers explained that many of the staff have been redeployed into different roles, such as assistance with business grant administration, delivery of Free School Meals and part of the buddy scheme, providing services to vulnerable residents for example collecting prescriptions or shopping. In addition, it was noted that the National Exercise Referral Scheme has continued to provide a service to those in need. Online classes have been made available to users and for those unable to access the internet, exercise DVDs have been developed and provided to users.
- 1.16 The Chief Executive thanked Cabinet for the gratitude expressed to staff, and also for their string leadership, commitment, flexibility and the excellent working relationship with Officers, which has enabled these efforts to take place so seamlessly, and our people and place have continued to be protected. It was added that the 'TeamCaerphilly' Mantra, be bold, be brave, be brilliant has been done collectively.
- 1.17 Council is therefore asked to consider and note the report.

Author: C. Evans, Committee Services Officer, Ext. 4210

Appendices:

Appendix Report to Cabinet on 24th June 2020 - Agenda Item 6



## CABINET - 24TH JUNE 2020

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

**REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

---

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

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

### **2. SUMMARY**

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

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

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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

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

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

### **5. THE REPORT**

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

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

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

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

## 5.2 The Council response

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 5.3 Activity so far

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

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

## 5.4 People

### Social Services

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Housing**

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

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

The outcome of the calls have included:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Childcare Hubs**

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Early Years**

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

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

## **Distance Learning**

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

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

## **The Youth Service**

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

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

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

## **Community Response**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Council Tax**

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

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

### **Business Support Grants**

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

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

## **5.5 Place**

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

In summary:

### **Waste and Cleansing Service**

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

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

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

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

### **Highways**

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

### **Land and Property**

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

### **Planning and Regeneration**

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

### **Sport and Leisure**

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

Exercise Referral Scheme clients.

### **Libraries**

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

## **5.6 Staffing**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 5.7 Next Steps

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 5.8 **One Council – a new approach**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

### **Economic Resilience**

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

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

### **5.9 Conclusion**

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

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

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

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## 9. CONSULTATIONS

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

## 10. STATUTORY POWER

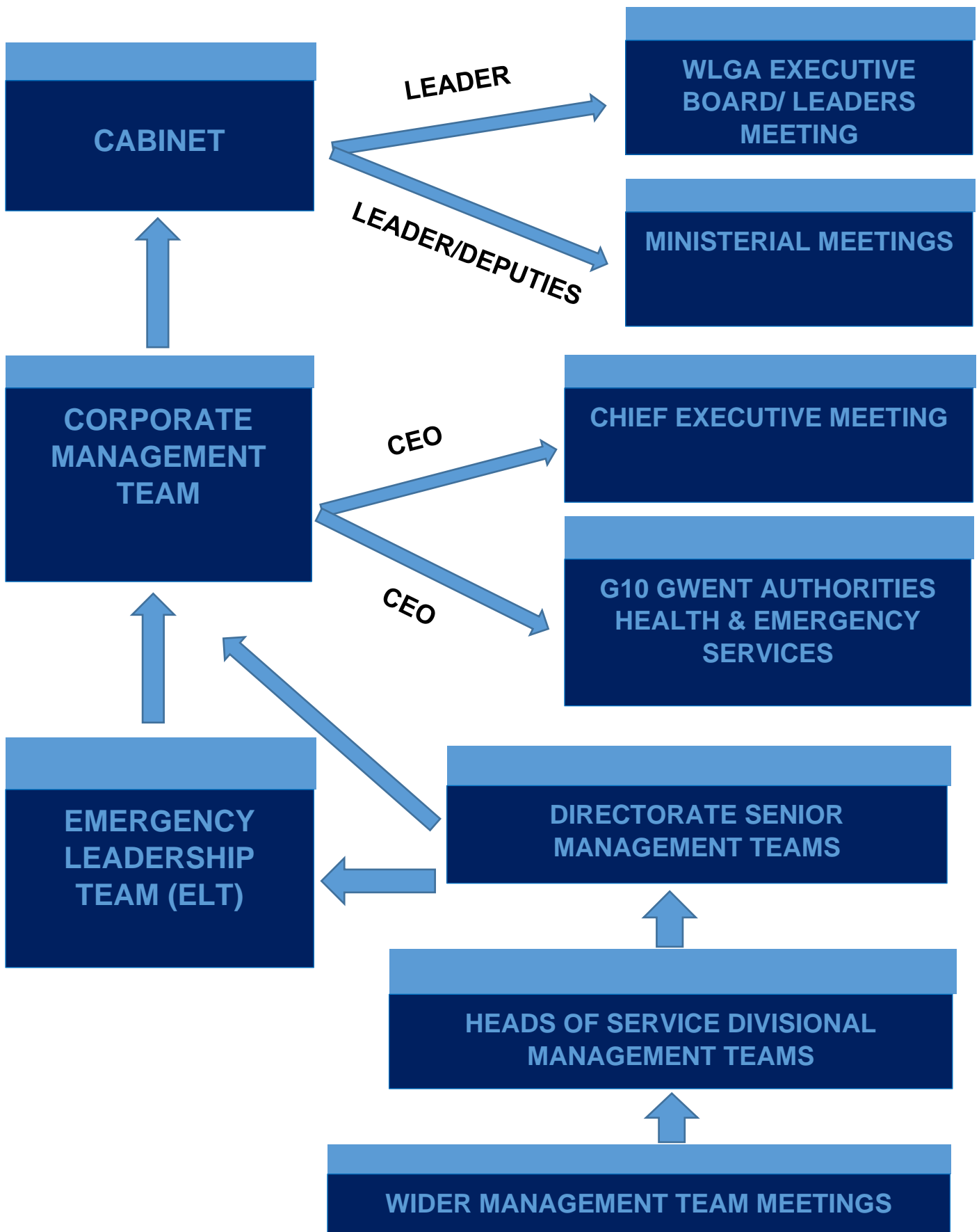
10.1 Various emergency COVID regulations passed by the Welsh Government to deal with the crisis.

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

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

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

# CAERPHILLY CBC CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY STRUCTURE



## Appendix 1b

### **NATIONAL**

(UK Government Cabinet Office)

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

Provides guidance and implements legislation at a UK Level

### **REGIONAL**

(Welsh Government)

#### **Wales Resilience Forum**

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

#### **Wales Resilience Partnership**

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

### **GWENT POLICE AREA**

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

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

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

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

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

## **CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **INCIDENT PHASE AND RESPONSIBILITY**

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

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

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

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

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

**OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE**

---



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

**DATE: 10/06/2020**

# OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

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

## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

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



## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

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

## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

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

## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

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

## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

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

## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

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

## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

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



## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

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

# OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

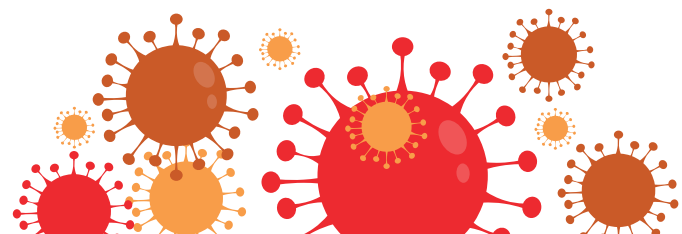
Ref	Risk	BRAG Level	Date Added to Register	Description and Mitigation
				council's redeployment protocol will then be key. Need for additional support will be kept under review.
38	Registrations of Marriages / Partnerships		08/04/2020	No weddings or civil partnership ceremonies currently taking place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



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



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



# Caerphilly Council's

## Coronavirus Response - In Numbers:



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



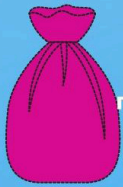
**186,765**  
visits to the Covid-  
19 website page



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



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



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



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



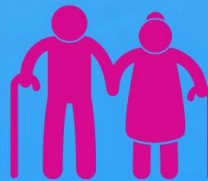
**80,000**  
Hours of Home  
Care provided



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



**50,000**  
Good Neighbour  
cards delivered



**1,445**  
Vulnerable  
residents supported



**1,400**  
Volunteers  
registered



**284,198**  
engagements on  
social media



# Caerphilly Council's Coronavirus Community Response - In



**76,620**  
HOMES  
WRITTEN TO

TeamCaerphilly  
BETTER TOGETHER

**68%**

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



**1,550**  
VULNERABLE  
PEOPLE BEING  
SUPPORTED



**95%**

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

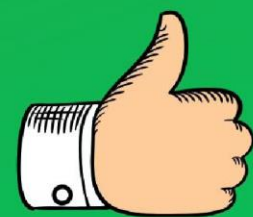


**590**  
MEMBERS OF  
COUNCIL STAFF  
SIGNED UP AS  
'BUDDIES'



**7**

COMMUNITY  
PHARMACIES  
BEING SUPPORTED  
WITH EXTRA DRIVER  
CAPACITY



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



**50,000**

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



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



**400**

PRESCRIPTIONS  
DELIVERED  
WEEKLY TO THE  
VULNERABLE

