









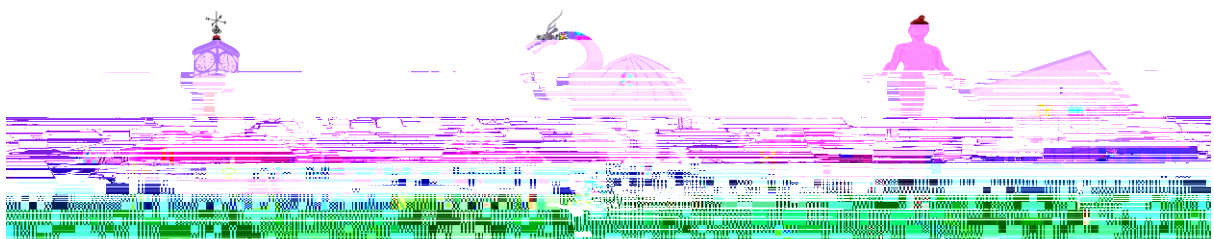


inherent in everything it does and that some level of risk-taking is necessary to achieve its ambitions and aspirations for the county. However, the Council also acknowledges that it has a duty to protect the public interest and safeguard the resources entrusted to it by the residents and taxpayers of

Blaenau Gwent. Therefore, the purpose of risk management is to ensure that the Council has a robust and consistent framework for identifying, evaluating, and managing the risks that may affect our strategic and operational objectives, as well as the Council's reputation and public confidence.

A risk register is provided to senior leaders and reported through Governance and Audit Committee to help monitor the key risks facing the Council. It is a document that records risks and importantly contains the actions that are needed to be made to mitigate or manage them. It helps to priorities resources and can help address any emerging risks in a timely manner. As of March 2024, the Council had identified 11 corporate risks 7 of these are classified as High and 4 classified as Critical.

Risk Reference and Description	Risk Score (as at March 2024)	Direction of Travel from Previous Quarter
CRR1: Failure to deliver and sustain the changes required to ensure that vital services are prioritised within the financial constraints faced by the Council.	Critical	
CRR2: Failure to ensure that the Councils ICT arrangements provide assurance in terms of operational functionality and data security and enable the required digital transformational change.	High	
CRR4: Safeguarding - Failure to ensure adequate safeguarding arrangements are in place for vulnerable people in Blaenau Gwent	High	
CRR5: There is a risk that the Council's Business Continuity processes are not robust enough to enable the provision of critical services in an emergency.	High	
CRR14: Failure to improve staff attendance rates within the Council will lead to an unacceptable impact on the ability of the Council to deliver services effectively and financially.	High	
CRR19: If the Council does not manage its information assets in accordance with requirements set down within legislation, then it may be faced with financial penalties and possible sanctions that hinder service delivery.	High	
CRR21: The Financial resilience of the Council could be at risk if the Council does not ensure that financial planning and management decisions support long term stability and sustainability	Critical	
CRR22: Failure to deliver the Council's priorities within the agreed annual budget resulting in the increased use of emergency finance measures and the drawdown of reserves.	High	
CRR25: The school in an Estyn category and currently in receipt of Council Intervention fails to make appropriate progress against the Statutory Warning Notice to Improve Statu ag		



CRR31: Replacement of Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) (CareDirector v5) by January 2026	Critical	New Risk
---	----------	----------

To help mitigate these risks several controls are either in place or being developed, this includes:

Undertaking a fundamental review of our Performance Management Framework to ensure we are providing Elected Members with a balanced picture of the strength and weaknesses of the Council going forward

Strengthening performance management to ensure accountability at senior manager level for the delivery of change and efficiency.

Looking at collaboration opportunities with neighbouring authorities.

Delivery & further development of the Bridging the Gap Programme.

Although several controls are in place and the financial stability is closely monitored, financial stability is likely to continue to be a corporate risk for the organisation in the near future.

Moving forward, risk management is to be one of the first areas that Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent Council's will look to align. Meetings have taken place with the relevant officers to establish the differences in each approach and to consider which aspects to take forward so that one effective framework can be implemented across both Councils.

[GOVAUDIT2407D5 Corporate Risk Register Report Quarter 4 2023 2024.pdf \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](#)

### Council Property

A corporate property management group has been established to look at the medium to long term position of council buildings. The Council Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) is being produced.

As the Council has moved to a more agile model of working, there are less staff using offices on a daily basis and consideration will be given to how best meet the future needs of staff. A review of accommodation, with the potential view to reduce it further, is currently being considered in order to protect jobs and cut costs.

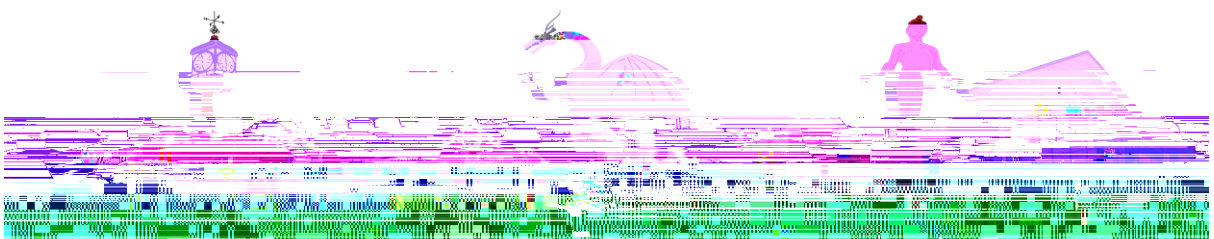
A Specialist Surveyor has been engaged to undertake a Condition Survey of the Council's main office, the General Offices to undertake an appreciation of schedule of maintenance costs for the medium and long term.

Work continues to increase the occupancy rate of the Industrial Portfolio, working closely with the Estates team and Technical Services. The portfolio remains steady at around 95% occupancy. The portfolio continues to house a large number of our SMEs and about 800 jobs in total.

Work is continuing to address the water ingress issues at the Hybrid Units with Kier. This continues to be a challenge alongside managing the relationship with the tenants.

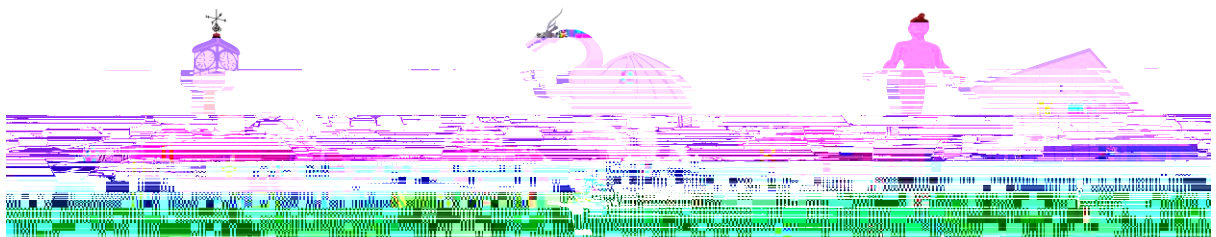
### Council Assets

The Council continues to ensure that the buildings and assets we have are reflective of our current working arrangements. In 2023/24 a review was held focusing on the current use of operational buildings and the future requirements the Council will need to deliver services that meets the needs of our residents. This review was



the Councils Assets and moving to more agile ways of working as well as delivering services via a community hub model helps to deliver our services both economically and efficiently.

A Corporate Property and Asset Management Group has been established to discuss accommodation needs, building status and potentials for cost savings. As part of this Community Asset Transfers (CATs) have been undertaken by the Council. Many (CATs) are on short term leases or tenancies, so the focus on completing longer term leases continues, where this is possible, and addressing any issues which stop the Council

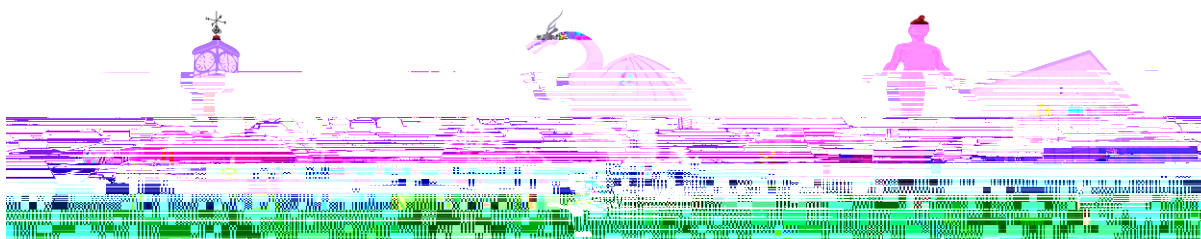






practice solutions.

Key deliverables and performance metrics are being developed to ensure that outcomes from the

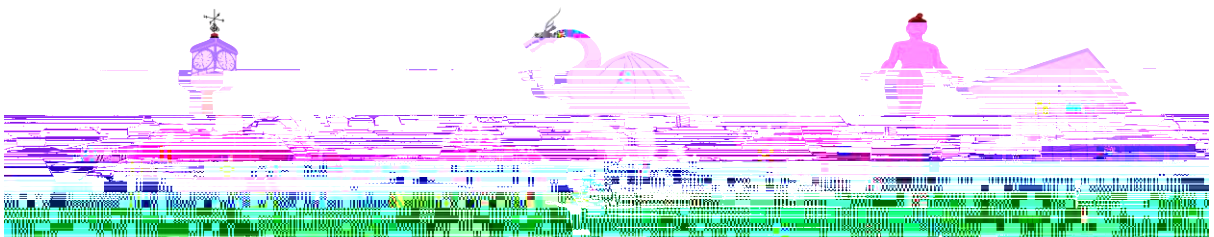


to oversee and track progress towards the new Strategic Equality Plan. The group includes representatives from various service areas within the Council, ensuring a broad and balanced perspective, and enhancing transparency throughout the organisation. The group also provides an opportunity to discuss any challenges in meeting the objectives and serves as a platform to find potential solutions.

To help guide the delivery of the Strategic Equality Plan a Lived Experience Network has also been established. This network is for people who have protected characteristics who want to share their stories, challenges, and achievements with the Council. The network aims to be a platform to raise awareness and influence change.

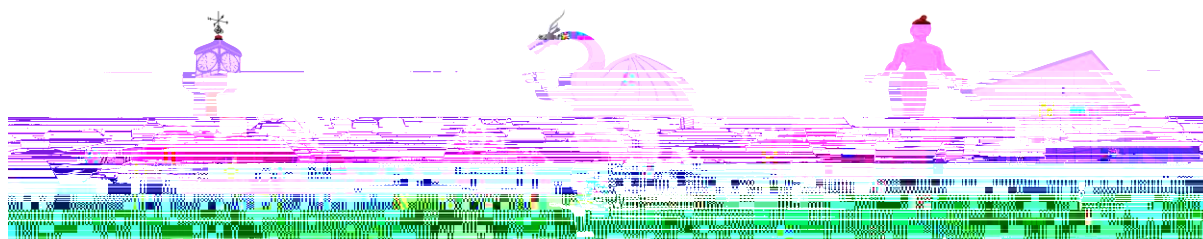
The progress of the Strategic Equality Plan and updates from the network will be provided by an annual monitoring report.

[2-strategic-equality-plan-2428.pdf \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](#)



available to all staff via the Council's new e-learning portal (currently being commissioned); and Develop procedure for ensuring Welsh language training is repeated periodically via e-learning portal (including refresher training).

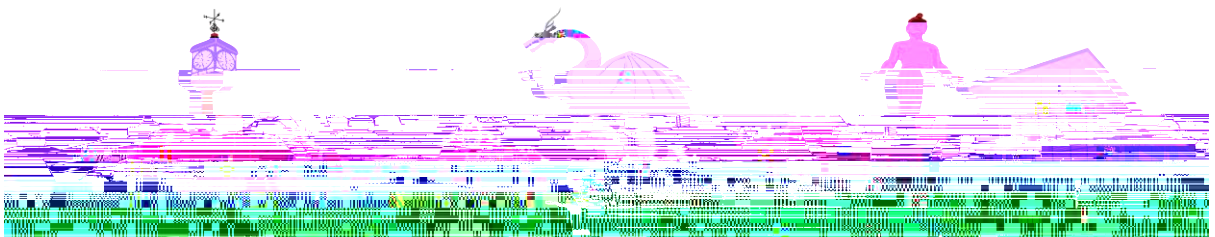
Due to technical issues outside of the Council's control the launch of the new e-learning portal has been



and aims to achieve this through active community engagement. Effective engagement is essential for the Council's efficient operation, ensuring that the services provided are suitable and meet the needs of users.

A new Engagement and Participation Strategy setting out the Council's vision for Engagement and Participation has been developed following consultation with the public. 170 responses were received from the community who shared views on the draft objectives in the strategy and how the Council should engage with citizens in the future.

A detailed action plan has been developed to support the implementation of the strategy setting out a range of





to self serve. The Council's preferred method of delivering services is via digital means but a high number of Blaenau Gwent people are not digitally able. In order to move to a more digitally operating model, the Council will need to ensure that the residents are able to keep up with this pace. A Digital Inclusion Officer has been appointed and will look to work from the Community Hubs to support those unable to self serve.

Work is ongoing to develop key performance measures to help monitor the impact of the strategy. The outcome of the first-year implementation of the Digital Transformation Strategy will be reported at the next self-assessment report.

[Blaenau Gwent Council Digital Transformation Strategy 2023 – 2027 | Blaenau Gwent CBC \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)

### Data Maturity

Data and insight are critical for the success of an organisation. Becoming a 21st Century Council means using data and insight to constructively and proactively challenge and learn in order to drive improvement and inform decision making. This can be achieved by having an effective Data Strategy in place. In order to develop a Data Strategy, it is important to understand the Council's data maturity. That is, its capability, effectiveness, and readiness to use data to achieve the strategic, operational, and corporate priorities.

Corporate Leadership Team agreed for the Council to progress with undertaking a Data Maturity Assessment in order to pursue the development of a corporate, one council approach to improve us as a data-driven Council, with the intention to develop an appropriate strategy and action plan.

The assessment is currently underway with Wider Corporate Leadership Team undertaking the process first, followed by performance officers from across the Council, and then an opportunity for all officers to take part.

The findings should assist the Council in understanding its data maturity, where it has strengths and also weaknesses in order to inform a delivery plan moving forward.

### Elected Members and the Constitution

The Council has set out minimum standards of behaviour and has provided guidelines to help maintain and improve standards. The Council's Constitution is a key document which sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made, and the procedures followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. It also includes a code of conduct for both officers and members.

The Council has in place comprehensive arrangements for E3(e)55W/hBT/F2 3.44 re3 EMC /P /MCID 18-BD3(g)6(a)99.0

