



BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT

INTERIM STATEMENT

March 2002

FOREWORD FROM THE LEADER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Authority will improve services over the next few years by redesigning those services around customer needs and by harnessing new technology.

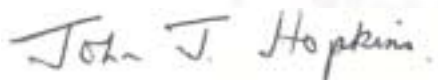
The Council has well-established links with its partner organisations in the public, voluntary and private sectors. We intend to combine our efforts as part of the community planning regime to redesign services and support a more collaborative approach to ICT developments. Our aim is to offer a more 'joined up' service to the people of Blaenau Gwent.

It needs to be recognised that the task ahead is likely to require changes to our current organisation and processes. Additionally a significant investment of time, money and effort will be required at the outset if we are to achieve the longer-term service and efficiency improvements that a whole-hearted adoption of e-government can bring about.

It is important to us, however, that all of these new developments are driven by what the public wants. Accordingly a target will be set to ensure that not only do we put in place new methods of accessing all services - via one stop shops, call centres the web etc. – but that they are methods that are wanted and used by the Blaenau Gwent people.

It is staff across the Council, and in our partner organisations who will make this transformation possible. Staff, essentially those in the front line, are in the best position to help in the necessary redesign of services.

Achievement of the aims and targets set out in this challenging and ambitious statement will enable the Council to provide better services which are designed around people's needs, and delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible. In short it will help us to continually improve our services in line with the Wales programme for improvement and thus over the coming months and years deliver Best Value.



Leader



Chief Executive

**IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT
FOR BLAENAU GWENT. (IEG)**

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Overview and purpose	4
What is Electronic Service Delivery?	5
The Blaenau Gwent Vision	6
Delivering on the Blaenau Gwent Vision	7
Electronic Service Delivery	7
Delivering Services Better	7
Making Services more Accessible	9
Provide New Options for Access	9
The Community	10
Developing Local ICT Skills and Access	11
Fostering Local Democracy and Civic Society	11
Contributing to the Local Economy	12
Internal Electronic Government	13
Managing Customer Relationships	13
Streamlining Processes	13
Improving Communications	13
Organising Information	13
Working Differently	14
Effective Purchasing	14
Better Decision Making	14
The Current Position	14
The Way Forward	16
Practical Steps and Milestones	16
Overview of costs	16
Overview of potential benefits	17
Risk Assessment	18
Recommendations	20
Appendix I Action Plan	22
Appendix II Broadband Infrastructure	25
Appendix III Social Services SSID Replacement	26

1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The following statement sets out how we will improve Council services for people who live and work in Blaenau Gwent. It involves re-designing our services around our customers and making better use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to deliver services electronically. This could include : Council website accessible by PC or TV or mobile telephones, telephone call centres, Kiosks and one-stop shops where Council staff use PC based technology to help Council customers access services.

This statement provides a framework for the use of ICT as a means of delivering many aspects of the modernisation agenda. Better use of information and ICT will enable the reduction of social exclusion, better access to training and skills that will support the Councils corporate and community plan objectives. It will also help us to find out what local people want and need, promote community leadership and have more open and transparent decision making.

1.1 Potential use of new channels

It is hard to accurately assess the proportion of people who will access services via new channels in the future. However there are strong indications that increasing numbers of people will access services via means such as the Web, the telephone and e-mail rather than over the counter, so long as their security and confidentiality is safeguarded. And even though there will be a proportion of people who will always prefer or need face to face service, the use of new technology by all staff who help the public will bring benefits to users and providers alike.

Our citizens already communicate with the authority on a daily basis. They call us on the telephone, visit local offices and are nowadays sending e-mails and corresponding via our website. The community is becoming more and more demanding of the quality of service that they receive. They want us to consider improvements that will allow them to expect that each contact made to the authority will reach a successful conclusion in one interaction, whatever the subject. They want us to consider extending our hours of availability to deal with their issues at a convenient time to themselves. This may include evenings and Saturday contact via the telephone. They want us to be able to deal completely electronically via web and e-mail conversations at times that suit themselves.

Authorities who have introduced call centres are almost universally reporting an increase in the number of calls they receive. As the public become more confident in the service on offer they are prepared to use it more.

1.2 Electronic Government is important to our partners

Electronic Government is important to our partners in local service provision. Organisations such as the Police, the National Health Service, the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) and other government agencies are under equal pressure to make progress. We together with our partners on the Community plan (which includes representatives from all the sectors) are keen to develop joint working with a view to delivering on the strategic aims. The sharing of information and the transfer of data,

as appropriate, are areas that require us to look for partnerships for common improvement. The Councils best value performance plan lists many of our partnership arrangements. We will be involving our partners in the development of service delivery to ensure a joined up approach to continuous improvement.

2. WHAT IS ELECTRONIC SERVICE DELIVERY?

- 2.1 The mechanism by which we deliver modern electronic government is to expand the use of Electronic Service Delivery. This can be described as *the delivery of information and transaction capability via electronic means to the point where it is needed*. Whatever the service and whatever the location (be it telephone, personal contact or website or others) we must deliver the support for that service effectively and efficiently.
- 2.2 The government has outlined 4 guiding principles that underline Electronic Service Delivery (ESD). These are: -
 1. Citizen focused government. The strategy should help departments and agencies, in both central and local government, cooperate in partnerships that will offer their services in ways that make sense to the customer.
 2. Accessible services. The Government intends that all services that can be electronically delivered should be. The target dates for achieving this are 25% by 2002 and 100% by 2005. The Government's strategy proposes that these services should be accessible over the Internet and through mobile phones, digital TV and call centres as well as through personal computers.
 3. Social inclusion. New services must be developed that are available to all and are easy to use. While the telephone will remain a preferred means of contact for many, the Government is committed to making it easier for all people to access the Internet, whether from their own homes or through community facilities.
 4. Using information better. The strategy requires organisations to adopt coherent and compatible information policies in support of better policymaking, better service delivery and more efficient working.
- 2.3 Concentration upon ESD as the vehicle for modernization gives government the ability to measure and monitor the progress of each authority year on year.
- 2.4 The NAW Performance Indicator 1.5 has been developed to provide a standard measure towards the target of all services being available online by 2005. We are aware that the NAW has not yet ratified the 2005 deadline but accept that it nevertheless offers us a goal to which we can aim our sights.
- 2.5 In June 2001 the Authority published performance indicators including NAWPI 1.5. This value at that time was 0% as we had not yet published our Website. In June 2002 we will be updating the value of NAWPI 1.5.

3. THE BLAENAU GWENT VISION

- 3.1 The Partnership Council committed itself to a strategy of Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) in July 2001. Blaenau Gwent has endorsed this by delivering this statement by March 2002 and in being committed to developing a full strategy by March 2003.
- 3.2 Electronic Government is important to the improvement of our own services. Best Value principles and specific NAW objectives such as the Wales Programme for Improvement require our serious investigation of how technology can support new ways of communicating both internally and externally, and thereby provide better information for decision making and scrutiny. Electronic Government is an integral part of what we want to achieve as a local authority. It is a tool for meeting political and managerial objectives and a potential source of change.
- 3.3 The development of the IEG statement is an important part of the overall modernisation of the Council in line with the NAW drive to provide continuous improvement in public services.

The mission statement of this Authority is to:

Provide services which enhance the quality of life of the people of Blaenau Gwent

The mission statement reflects the key strategic aims of the Blaenau Gwent Community Plan 2001/2004 and in particular links into the strategic aim to develop equality of opportunity, especially to ensure that services for the community, whether provided by the Council or others, are accessible to all.

Our Best Value Performance Plan defines one of our purposes as to:

Set challenging targets which will improve our services

- 3.4 The Council has entered into a policy agreement with the NAW that sets targets to improve Service Delivery using Information and Communication Technology (ICT). We are also committed to develop an inclusive Consultation Strategy, which must include communication, both internally and externally and to include arrangement for communicating in the language of choice.
- 3.5 Finally, the BVPP confirms the Council's commitment to developing a web-site which will be a valuable resource not only for the purpose of increased consultation but also for easier access to information about services.
- 3.6 We understand that Electronic Service Delivery (ESD) is an essential part of modern government services. With the use of improved ESD in support of our services we can meet the challenge of delivering Best Value to our Community. The performance targets that we set must reflect the desire to improve our services by improving the electronic support of their delivery.

- 3.7 ESD has been formally linked with the Best Value duties of each Authority which are now to be reflected in the Wales Programme for Improvement. As such it must be included as part of the whole authority assessment and as part of any future service or thematic reviews. Improvements in ESD must also feature within the action plans for each service year on year.

4. DELIVERING ON THE BLAENAU GWENT VISION

In order to consider how we are going to deliver on our vision we have grouped the principles of e-government to which we have to have regard into the following areas of investigation:-

- 1 Electronic Service Delivery
- 2 The Community
- 3 Internal Electronic Government

4.1 ELECTRONIC SERVICE DELIVERY

Our vision is that citizens and businesses will be offered an efficient, joined up, electronically enabled service. The service will be delivered via a range of customer focused public, private and not for profit organisations working in partnership with all service providers.

In the short term they will be delivered from manned contact points where staff are supported by technology. However the volume of purely electronic delivery of services via Internet technology will gradually grow.

Our three priority areas are:

4.1.1 Delivering Services Better

We are under constant pressure to deliver better services at less cost. Best Value principles encourage radical thinking about our service provisions. We already have almost all of our services supported by individual computer applications. These include inter alia Council Tax, Planning, Housing Rents and Repairs, Sims, Ssid.

These systems now need to be combined with new technology to improve service delivery in the following ways.

- Services from a single point

One-stop shops, contact centres and websites are examples of a single point of delivery.

A properly conceived strategy can mean that the underlying technology can be implemented once and used to support each of the above deliveries.

- Flexibility of Services

Flexibility can be improved by using video conferencing to link citizens at contact centres with officers based in buildings elsewhere.

Conversations can also be carried out between citizens and officers via e-mail. Website services using home PC's or other devices add greater flexibility to our services.

- Personalising Responses

We can use technology to bring together personal information for a citizen from many currently separate services and make them available to the front line advisor in a contact centre or call centre

Customer Relations Management Systems provide the basis of a properly structured record of citizen interactions over topics managed by many non-related applications. Providing those officers who face the public from all of our service delivery provisions with CRM access to is key to successful customer contact.

- Technology

Technology will allow us to develop new service options such as citizens portals. This may be a way of creating convenient entry points for citizens into a range of related services and information. The portal should be able to consolidate into one access point all services which relate to the particular individual. This will include linkage with other authorities and partners, Such provision will eventually lead to self service via the internet for those with the desire to use it.

Information at the level of 'Life Event' is already available via other government web sites and our website already links to these.

The Blaenau Gwent website currently refers to, and links with, over 30 related Internet sites and continues to include new ones as they become known.

- Continued Internal Improvement

Continually expanding the use of internal systems such as e-mail, intranet, shared extra nets and video conferencing amongst officers will make integrated service delivery easier and more efficient.

Blaenau Gwent Council has begun its rollout of Intranet with the Social Services and Personnel departments. Office systems rollout to staff will continue as budgets allow.

The importance of E-Business related improvements are understood and will be implemented. The use of e-mail and fax as replacements for paper and post will bring savings of consumables and staff time.

Blaenau Gwent Council will research the needs and preferences of our citizens via polls and focus groups. The design of our new service deliveries must include the ability to gather feedback from those who use the services.

Blaenau Gwent will always be mindful of issues of customer sensitivity and privacy as well as data protection. These issues will be considered when we add to or change delivery processes.

Once the Council is in a position to evaluate methods of ESD it will be able to develop detailed action plans relating to tele-working groups of staff, the use of mobile technology and set out plans for rationalising assets and accommodation.

4.1.2 **Making Services more accessible**

We must resolve public concerns about the difficulties experienced in gaining access to services. Improvements in the commercial sector have set higher expectations of local authorities. Areas for consideration will be: Managing existing contacts better; providing new access options; support people with particular needs which otherwise may lead to exclusion.

4.1.3. **Provide new options for access**

- Call Centre

Faster and more efficient handling of telephone queries mean that people will no longer need to be persistent in order to get through to our services.

Once in place, a call centre will provide a means of extending hours of service at a reasonable additional cost.

- Contact Centres or One Stop Shops

For those who prefer personal contact.

- Kiosks

We will consider the use of Kiosks sited strategically within the borough. We will investigate the options of partnership with other interested bodies in this form of service delivery.

- Website

The Council will endeavour to continue to develop its website in such a way that it will support access via new technologies such as Digital TV, Internet enabled mobile phones and palmtops. When the time is right we will move to make it available within these channels. Fully transactional websites allow a means to a round the clock availability.

These facilities will also allow us to extend hours of contact at a reasonable cost.

Citizens have the ability today to use facilities such as online forms filling and submission, the delivery of information about our services, as well as the means to deliver feedback, complaints and online surveys. These facilities will be developed to envelope more and more service areas.

4.1.4 **Broadband Network**

The Council is committed to providing free Broadband Internet access to the community by the end of 2002. This service will be made available to all citizens via the following outlets:

Each of the collection of 7 local libraries will have PCs available for free public use. Each site will have a 10Mb connection into a corporate 155Mb highway to the Internet.

All 6 Secondary schools will have PCs with Internet access. Each site will have a 10Mb connection into a corporate 155Mb highway to the Internet. This facility into each school will be completed as soon as funds allow, with the expectation being by the end of 2002.

All 13 Adult Education Centres will have PCs with Internet access. Each site will have a 10Mb connection into a corporate 155Mb highway to the Internet. This facility into each centre will be completed as soon as funds allow, with the expectation being by the end of 2002.

All 37 Primary schools will have PCs with Internet access. Each site will have a 2Mb connection into a corporate 155Mb highway to the Internet. This facility into each school will be completed as soon as funds allow, with the expectation being by the end of 2002 or soon after this date.

The improved access options listed above will make contacting the Council easier for the following groups of people:

People who find it difficult to travel due to age, disability or lack of transport should be less inconvenienced and find our electronic services more accessible.

Those with sight impairments are supported via our website. Facilities exist to make website browsing easier for those with reading difficulties. We have used the BOBBY test to measure the suitability of our website and will continue to monitor this aspect of our site.

The Welsh language will be easier to support via a properly supported call or contact centre.

4.2 THE COMMUNITY

We have discussed making the full range of our services available electronically to both the citizen (web & kiosk) and to our service support staff in contact centres etc.

We have already recognised the importance of helping our local population to access those service provisions and to develop their skills in using them as part of the community plan development.

In order to support the community and enhance the social and economic wellbeing of the area our three priority areas are:

4.2.1 **Developing Local ICT Skills and Access**

There already are many initiatives aimed at developing skills and access to I.T technology. We should not look to duplicate these but to support and encourage them when appropriate.

The Council is involved in the People's Network initiative and is committed to provide free access to the internet and free use of PC's at all of its Libraries in 2002.

Other initiatives include inter alia:-

BGC and the Valleys ICT training initiative

BGC and e-communities project

BGC and Schools and Adult Learning Centres Internet access

Important groups can be targeted by the authority for ICT skills training and access.

- Council Members – Budgetary pressures have year after year prevented Blaenau Gwent C.B.C from making home PC's available to our Councillors. However each Councillor can be individually contacted via our website e-mail facility.
- Council employees – Developing skills for our own use while at the same time creating a reserve for the wider community.
- Suppliers – Encourage them to use electronic processes for e-business (use e-mail and fax to both send and receive transactions with suppliers).
- Young People – Blaenau Gwent C.B.C have committed to provide a community Broadband network as quickly as possible. It has identified funding to complete this task which will provide broadband internet access to every school.
- Blaenau Gwent C.B.C will look to promote wider possible uses of technology such as electronic learning programmes.
- Social Excluded Groups – Blaenau Gwent C.B.C will continue to be aware of the needs of groups excluded because of physical, mental, culture reasons. We will endeavour to meanwhile help these groups via the website and e-mail support.

4.2.2 **Fostering Local Democracy and Civic Society**

Blaenau Gwent has already used its website as a vehicle for canvassing the views of local citizens. We will expand the use of Internet Supported Surveys during all future consultation processes.

Blaenau Gwent is currently investing in the development of a web based access to Council decision making. It is intended that we will publish web support that will allow citizens to examine the council official minutes in full and enable them to track the progress of decisions through the committee process by the summer of 2002.

Blaenau Gwent will encourage community activity in our area. We will look to publish on our website the large collection of pictures and written information that makes up a detailed account of local history in our area. This is data that is rarely exhibited in the borough due to lack of public display space. It will be of interest locally and worldwide. It will also be of interest to those families who have moved away from our area in the past.

4.2.3 **Contributing to the Local Economy**

- Developing the local infrastructure

We support the NAW drive to provide broadband internet access into our Community. Grants for libraries, schools and adult learning centres to receive broadband access are being used today to progress that goal. Blaenau Gwent has also bid for funds from the Corus Regeneration fund to quickly build a high speed core backbone in the area to support not just the above mentioned 'Lifelong Learning' centres but also the local business community.

We feel that the Authority must do all that it can to encourage business growth. We will participate in the Welsh Development Agency initiative to provide broadband access to our industrial sites and local businesses. We have taken the planning process much further as described in Appendix II.

- Supporting local businesses

Blaenau Gwent will use existing channels as well as its website to fully advertise the benefits on offer to businesses, both new and existing.

Blaenau Gwent will examine effective use of its website to give competitive edge to local businesses

- Attracting inward investment

The NAW has agreed to apportion £3.55million of Corus regeneration money towards ICT related projects within Blaenau Gwent. A report is currently being studied that outlines plans for using the funds to raise the profile of ICT. The overall programme is designed to provide a holistic set of complementary support programmes to facilitate Blaenau Gwent SMEs and citizens in successfully exploiting ICT. Projects will include:

- An awareness-raising programme will be undertaken, including a series of tailored seminars and a one week event using the WIS trailer.
- Support the roll out of Blaenau Gwent Community Network.
- Encourage the take up of Satellite ADSL services by providing a subsidy to end users, bringing the cost of satellite broadband in line with ADSL services provided through traditional terrestrial means.
- To establish an ICT Support Centre facility within Blaenau Gwent, to offer first line advice and demonstration facilities. The Centre would be modeled on the existing network of ICT Support Centres bringing the services offered into the heart of the Blaenau Gwent Business community.
- Accelerate the development of VITCC Centre.
- An Integrated Business Support Package to accelerate the roll out of the E-Communities Programme by running a pilot, including the development of Community Enterprises.

4.3 INTERNAL ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT

Our seven priority areas are:

4.3.1 Managing Customer Relationships

Traditional Local Authority systems in Social Services, Housing, Planning etc, were designed for internal use rather than for customer interaction. They are poor at giving easy access to the basic details that will allow the initiation and development of a conversation with a citizen – Had he/she been in contact before? What was the query? What was the outcome? Was the query resolved?.

The introduction of call centres and one-stop shops by other organisations has verified the need to install contact management systems to manage this information. Such a system (CRM) should link front and back office systems and handle a range of contact routes such as telephone, fax, e-mail, personal contact and website generated traffic.

Blaenau Gwent realizes that the project costs for implementing a call centre with compatible CRM software and also middleware which links to back office applications is one which may not be affordable by this Authority. It is also possibly beyond the grant allocated by NAW to fund modernization. We therefore expect that inter-authority partnership may be required to achieve these aims. We therefore suggest that before too much individual work is undertaken within each authority a joint investigation is established in order to achieve standardization across partners. The NAW have given a commitment to peruse all IEG statements from Welsh Authorities and examine them for common themes/issues with a view to encourage partnership arrangements in both the public and private sectors. A possible way forward is described in Appendix III.

4.3.2 Streamlining Processes

Electronic systems such as Document Management, Document Image Processing and workflow allow structured processes such as Benefits or Planning Application processing to be better managed and work in progress to be better maintained. Once installed they can be linked to call and contact centre systems and even the website to allow citizens to monitor progress themselves. These systems can be costly projects.

4.3.3 Improving Communications

Blaenau Gwent is committed to the provision of a local intranet for its employees. It is currently piloting its use with the Social Services and Personnel Departments. The advantages of an extensive intranet service are clear and can be supported. They include one time electronic publishing, internal feedback, electronic learning and procedure support.

4.3.4 Organising Information

Contact management systems allow word processed documents to be stored and managed centrally and automatically converted to suit appropriate access formats

such as websites and intranets. They will also manage access issues to the data. Such systems will be evaluated for cost and benefit.

4.3.5 **Working Differently**

Modern technology changes may require the rethinking of working patterns in the authority. An example is the exploration the possible benefits of teleworking. This can lead to the re-evaluation of the need and use of buildings.

4.3.6 **Effective Purchasing**

One Best Value review currently in progress within the authority is that of Procurement policy and practice. Modernisation of the purchasing process includes the implementing of electronic procurement, developing integrated links between purchasing, accounting, stock control and distribution, and thereby reducing prices.

A second aspect of purchasing that Blaenau Gwent is currently investigating is the policy of local business regeneration by encouraging and electronically facilitating procurement from local businesses. This topic is further discussed in Appendix II.

4.3.7 **Better Decision Making**

Tools and technologies exist which facilitate access to corporate data for the purposes of decision-making. In order to properly formulate policy and manage performance, the use of data evidence is a key theme in decision making.

The use of software tools for data mining and data extraction is encouraged, especially when linking data with geographic information systems (GIS) that facilitate the understanding and display of data.

Blaenau Gwent has corporate software for such tools and will review the use of these to better aid its managers.

5. **THE CURRENT POSITION**

5.1 The Council now has an almost totally centralised I.T. resource. This starting position we believe is important for the heavy demands which will be placed upon I.T. in the forthcoming modernisation agenda.

5.2 The in-house delivery has been built upon corporate standards such as:

- All Unix servers are RS6000 using AIX operating system
- Corporate software uses Oracle database technology whenever possible
- Corporate delivery of Microsoft Office products
- Corporate GIS software in use
- All major corporate software has won a competitive selection process and is our users' preferred choice of supplier

- All major corporate software has been installed within the last 4 to 5 years and is not yet due for consideration regarding replacement. The only major software under review at present is the Social Services SSID system which is mentioned in Appendix III and our Cash Receipting system.
 - Our systems are stable and ready for the modernisation agenda
 - Plans are in place and action has started to modernise our communications network, pump funded by the 'Lifelong Learning' broadband initiative supported by the NAW
 - The authority has started a project to deliver a Local Land and Property Gazetteer with BS7666 compliance. This project will result in a corporate central database containing property addresses which all of the authority can reference. It will be the local copy of that which will become part of the National scheme of land and property references and may also play a pivotal role in our modernisation plans regarding Call/Contact Centre and CRM delivery.
- 5.3 It has already been shown that there are few corporate systems that need replacement in this authority. However we are aware of the need that all new purchases must follow the requirement to achieve compliance with certain accepted standards. Standards such as e-gif, XML and the aforementioned BS7666 must underpin all new purchases as well as supplier upgrades of existing software.
- 5.4 Today we have a published website that is updated daily with new content. It provides service information, allows applications for some of our services to be made, it receives service requests of any kind, accepts feedback and has already been used for local surveys. The site is receiving over 1000 hits per week with a small number of requests for service or information each day.
- 5.5 We have a liason team in place containing staff from each department who gather content for web publication. They meet regularly with I.T. staff who manage all website updates.
- 5.6 Our website has been picked out by SOCITM in their annual review of all local government websites for inclusion in their 'most improved' section.
- 5.7 For some years now the Council has made the decision not to invest in the costs of delivery and maintenance of the IT equipment and services needed to support Members online. However from day one of its publication, the website has supported community/Member communication. A facility exists in the website that allows e-mails to be sent two ways between Members and the public.
- 5.8 The Council is committed to the delivery of broadband services to its community and has already started to develop its network, having spent almost £300,000 to date. We see this facility as an important part of the regeneration of our area. It offers a facility which can be available in the next year and offer benefits for both the business community and the people for years to come. To this end we will work in close partnership with the NAW and WDA in the months to come.
- 5.9 We have in place a well run and proven support system for the elderly and infirm of our community. Based upon the Piper Alarm system we provide 24 hours emergency care to those who need it. Allied to this is our 24hour emergency support for

incidents such as fire and flood. We also manage CCTV cameras in some of our main towns and route these images to one monitoring centre. The use of CCTV cameras to support crime reduction at schools and other council owned buildings as well as other community locations is likely to expand with the introduction of broadband networking throughout the Borough.

- 5.10 These call answering and monitoring functions will be included within our planned communications review as defined in our action plan.

6. THE WAY FORWARD

6.1 Practical Steps And Milestones

An action plan is included as Appendix I, the contents of which include those milestones considered important in the NAW guidelines together with those agreed by ourselves.

- 6.2 These milestone actions will be included in the action plans of each of the services responsible for delivery. ICT action plans will contain many of these. It must be understood that the completion of these milestones within reasonable timescale will largely depend upon external factors such as available funding and the success of any partnership with other Authorities on purchasing common solutions and shared development.

7. OVERVIEW OF COSTS

- 7.1 The Authority understands that many of the e-government projects described in this statement require funding which the Council would find difficult to resource. However, to ensure that as much progress as possible is made, it is proposed that resources will be made available in the following way:-

1. Using ring-fenced funds for modernisation that will be made available for the task by the NAW.
2. Partnership working with other authorities.
Officers have visited Newport for exploratory talks on a common approach. Officers and Members have also visited Cardiff for a demonstration of progress made there.

We offer a suggested approach to inter authority partnering in III below.

3. Using solutions and where possible products pioneered by pathfinder projects in English authorities, this way some of the software tools should be cheaper as funding for their development has already been met in these projects. Also many of the pitfalls of the solution will be known and hopefully avoidable.
- 7.2 There are however, many other modernisation tasks outlined above which can be progressed within existing frameworks.

- 7.3 All of these tasks will be examined for appropriateness as part of the whole Authority analysis and as part of individual service review and acted upon accordingly. Furthermore performance indicators will be developed at a local level.
- 7.4 It is inescapable that the costs of providing the larger building blocks such as Call Centres, Contact Centres, back office integration and CRM systems will run into many hundreds of thousands of pounds, if not millions, per authority. These projects as far as the Council is concerned will best proceed via consortias across the principality in order to standardise on procurement and implementation and realise savings due to scale.
- 7.5 Other projects can be identified and completed locally (eg NLPG compliance) at less cost.
- 7.6 We must examine our approach to new technology and ensure that resources purchased for one purpose (i.e. workflow system for benefits) can be rolled out to other services afterwards (i.e. workflow in planning). Scanned images captured in one system may be effectively used for citizen view on the Webster or for internal use via the intranet. We must look to cheaply replicate or reuse technology in other areas.
- 7.7 If we successfully implement a modernisation strategy then future savings will be automatically forthcoming. We provide below an outline of the costs/ benefits arising from the options that will be considered over the coming year.

8. OVERVIEW OF POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- 8.1 Although we have not undertaken a complete cost-benefit analysis our research has highlighted the following as potential benefits of introducing a modern approach to service delivery.
- 8.2 Introduction of Customer Relationship Management system (CRM)
The use of a CRM system across all customer facing services is essential if we are to develop a Call or Contact Centre as part of service delivery. It will provide:
- a common contact management interface for different channels including face to face, telephone and web – thus realising the benefits of greater standardisation of systems and improved systems integration across the Council
 - an holistic view of the customer no matter where the contact originates or where the query is processed
 - customer profiling to target services where they are most needed
 - up-to-date data about service users available at people / community / area level to help inform service planning and regeneration projects
- 8.3 **Developing our Website**
Content management will become a stronger requirement as development progresses. We would hope to purchase the middleware for back office integration and develop the links with corporate systems ourselves within the I.T Division. We are aware of

the need for continued support from staff within each department to undertake this task.

Introduction of One Stop Services

Our research has shown that a shift in customer-focused services towards one-stop provision would have a number of benefits for both the customer and the Council. Some of these include:

- delivering more "joined-up" services for the customer and the possibility of adopting the "life events" being developed for the Government web portal "UK Online"
- enabling the move towards service outside normal office hours
- resolving customer enquiries quickly and easily without the customer having to contact several people / departments to resolve a query.
- creating better links with other public services, extending the one-stop service to all local public services

8.4 **Reducing the proportion of face-to face enquiries**

A shift away from face-to-face contact for transactions which could be done through electronic means will have a number of benefits for both the customer and the Council. Some of these are as follows:

- releasing resources to allow greater concentration on face-to-face contact for those who require it and to channel back into priority services
- making it significantly easier for customers to access services without the need to visit the Council
- self-service access 24 hours per day

8.5 **Electronic enablement of payments to the Council**

We must consider the priority for this development given that Collectors visit all Council Houses each week to collect Rents, Council Tax, Sundry Debts etc.

8.6 **E-Procurement**

It is understood that a wholehearted move toward internet purchasing will realise savings for the Authority. However such a move would certainly be to the detriment of our local businesses. We expect to consider partner working with local businesses using Corus regeneration funding and support from the WDA in the next 12 months.

9. **RISK ASSESSMENT**

9.1 The guidance requires the Council to undertake a full risk assessment of the options for future ESD. The following provides some initial information on risks of implementing this agenda. A more detailed financial plan will be constructed between now and December 2003, alongside the more detailed implementation plans which will allow us to comply with the NAW requirement to provide a final IEG statement by 31st March 2003.

9.2 There are a number of risks which, if not well managed or contingency planned for, could jeopardise the achievement of our target of 100% electronic service delivery by 2005.

Our research has identified some of the potential risks and these are summarised below.

9.3 **Lack of Funding**

Risk: The full cost of a properly implemented modernisation programme is in excess of 1 million pounds. If the Council is unable to match fund the pump-start money supplied by the NAW then there is a certain risk of failing to complete the programme.

Action: Our plans must realise the limitations of funding and we must prepare accordingly.

9.4 **Resistance to change by Members and Staff**

Risk: Electronic service delivery may be adopted as an add-on without underlying change to business processes or realisation of efficiency savings

Action: Staff and Member development and training, Leadership Programme, adoption of Benefits Management Framework

9.5 **Resistance to change by the public**

Risk: Citizens may not move to new channels. Savings that will enable the delivery of the complete programme will not be achieved.

Action: Design services around customer wants and needs. Develop and adopt a communications strategy. Provide incentives to move to new channels.

9.6 **Co-ordination of programme**

Risk: It is important that the programme is well integrated with other corporate developments, so that as business is transformed, all the changes are complementary. Poor co-ordination could lead to poor front-line services during periods of change, and failure to achieve the 2005 target.

Action: The development of good project management skills. Involvement of all services in planning and implementation so that there is no disruption in services to the public.

9.7 **Failure of IT system**

Risk: IT systems which enable electronic service delivery are not capable of meeting our requirements, or systems fail once implemented and customer service is disrupted, or the Council fails to receive payments with a consequent impact on cashflow

Action: Careful design, specification, and procurement of any new systems, planned phasing in of new systems, running in parallel with old ones where necessary, contingency plans for continuation of service where systems fail

9.8 **Legal constraints**

Risk: Legal constraints on the sharing of information between different Council departments and other organisations may prevent us achieving the level of “joined-up” working and associated benefits that this statement envisages.

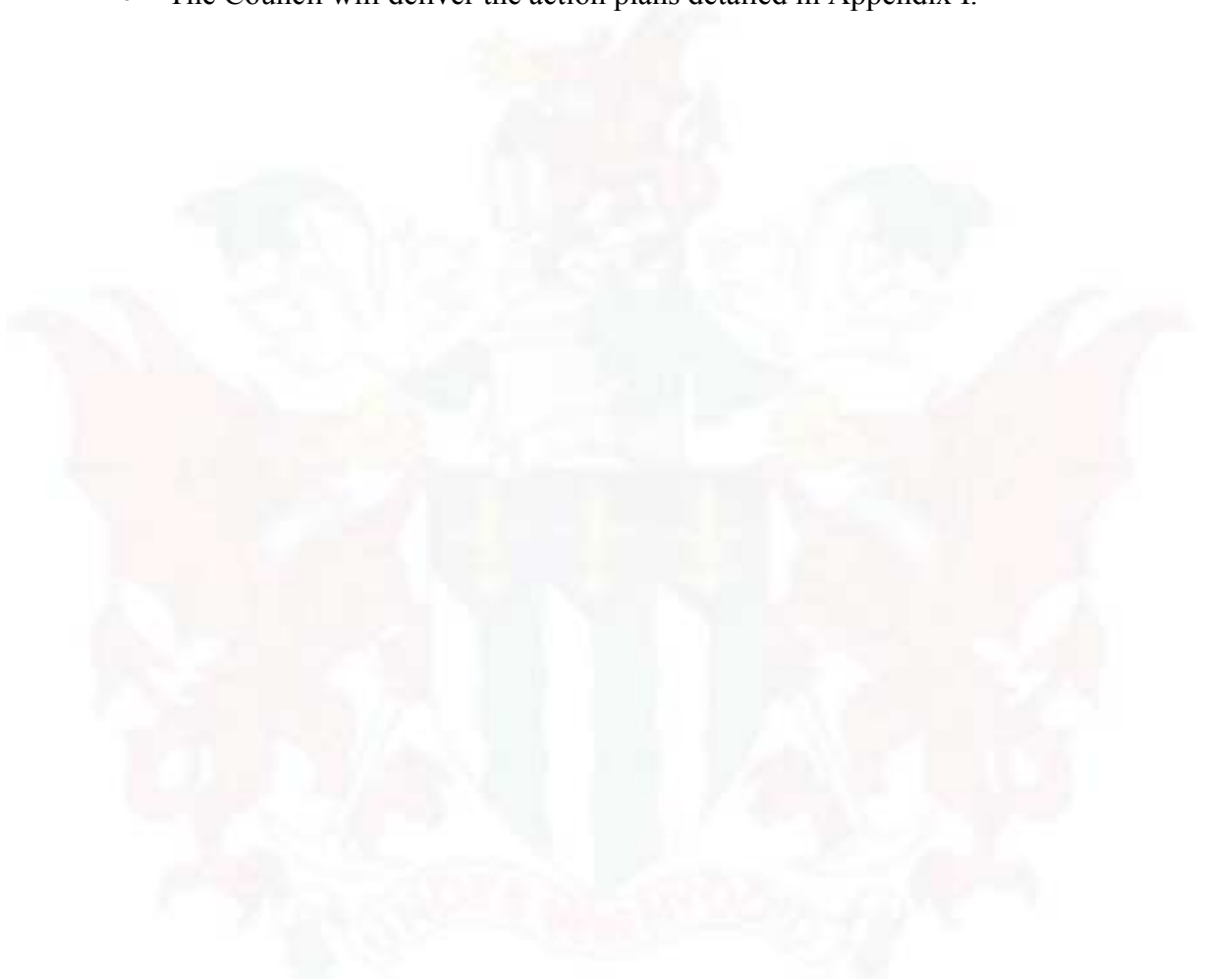
Action: Work with NAW and other relevant bodies to establish possible solutions, including use of the Power of Well Being where appropriate.

- 9.9 **Fraud**
Risk: Fraudulent use of systems may result in personal details being disclosed to the wrong parties, or the Council not receiving payments due.
Action: Design of secure systems, appropriate controls, separation of duties, other specific anti-fraud and fraud detection measures etc
- 9.10 **Partnership working**
Risk: Partners may not wish to support electronic service delivery, or their current priorities may not match ours
Action: Consultation, workshops etc with Partners, sharing of risks, costs and benefits
- 9.11 **Entry to the Euro**
Risk: Preparation for the Euro may affect timescales and resources available for implementation of the IEG statement should the Government decide to proceed with a referendum prior to 2005.
Action: Continue to follow developments

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The Council is recommended to confirm the following policies for e-government:
- 10.2 Every Service Area must have plans to contribute to the Council's interim Implementing Electronic Government statement to the NAW. These must be included in Departmental Improvement plan revisions in June 2002 and show a total commitment to e-government across Blaenau Gwent and to the targets set out by the NAW.
- 10.3 The Council must continue to play a leading role in local and Welsh e-government initiatives, participating enthusiastically in NAW led initiatives such as the National Grid for Learning and Life Long Learning.
- 10.4 The Council must work to ensure that in the longer term it complies with Government and NAW standards such as the e-GIF inter-operability framework.
- 10.5 All service areas must, in parallel with other e-government initiatives, wholeheartedly commit to the development and maintenance of their areas of the Council's website. They must ensure procedures are in place that enable the information and services they offer through the Internet are provided quickly and efficiently and that these complement the development of all Wales or national portals.
- 10.6 All Service Areas must take advantage of the opportunities that e-government provides for making their services more accessible by those who may otherwise be socially excluded.
- 10.7 The Council must aim to comply with all current ICT related legislation and best practice.
- 10.8 The Council should undertake an awareness and training programme for staff so that they are able to play their part in the Council's e-government programme.
- 10.9 The Council must establish the organisational framework necessary to meet its e-government objectives by:

- Requiring Service Areas to designate a person to take responsibility for pursuing e-government within their service areas or units, including this as a key result area in their Performance Management targets.
- Requiring all Reviews as part of the Wales Programme for Improvement to include the move to e-government as a key target.
- Monitor e-government progress through the Corporate Management team and the Executive Member for e-government.
- The Council will deliver the action plans detailed in Appendix I.



11 APPENDIX I

ACTION PLAN

Action	Critical Success Factor	Time-scale	Responsibility	Financial Implications	Outcome
1. Modernisation plan completed in readiness for the 2003 statement	1. Completed consultation on a strategy of communication. This consultation will be with the community and the staff. 2. Completion of a strategy of full implementation of e-gov agenda	Jan 2003 Mar 2003	Exec /CMT /CSP Exec /CMT	Staff time in preparation of analysis / report Staff time in preparation of analysis / report	A plan for improved service delivery which meets the need of the community via ESD
2. Website Development	NAW5.1 = 25% NAW5.1 = 100%	Mar 2003 Mar 2005	Exec /CMT /DM IT /DM IT	Approx £50,000 to £100,000	
3. Call Centre	Completion of business case and partnership consultation	Mar 2003	Exec /CMT /DM IT	Staff time in preparation of analysis / report	To enable the council to make an informed decision on future ESD based upon all relevant information
4. Contact centre	Completion of business case and partnership consultation	Mar 2003	Exec /CMT /DM IT	Staff time in preparation of analysis / report	To enable the council to make an informed decision on future ESD based upon all relevant information
5. Kiosks	Completion of business case and partnership consultation	Mar 2003	Exec /CMT /DM IT	Staff time in preparation of analysis / report	To enable the council to make an informed decision on future ESD based upon
6. Broadband provision for 'Lifelong Learning'	Progress towards the completion of the 'Lifelong Learning' network as funding allows	Mar 2003	Broadband Project Team /DM IT	Funded by NOF, NAW, Corus regeneration	Provide broadband Internet access capabilities for the community

7. Audit of current interactions with customers	1. Completion of audit 2. Development of action plan to deliver 100% services by 2005	1. Jan 2003 2. Mar 2003	Exec /CMT /DM IT	Staff time in preparation of analysis / report	Improved service delivery plan which meets the requirements of the community
8. Intranet	Continued development of the Intranet	Mar 2005	CMT /DM IT	Staff time for I.T. and departments	To create a larger, more effective range of information readily available online to support of our staff
9. NLPG/NLIS project	1. Produce cleansed property databases for all suitable applications 2. Produce and maintain central, corporate, BS6777 compliant database	Mar 2003 Mar 2003	/DM IT /DM IT	£10-20,000	To meet government requirements for NLPG production and use.
10. UK Online	Monitor progress of UK online	Mar 2003	/DM IT	Staff time	To provide a common entry point into all aspects of government for all citizens.
11. Preparation of transitional plan	1. Appointment of e-champions, both Member and officer. 2. Completion of detailed analysis of costs, benefits and savings from e-government proposed funding and resourcing. 3. Completion of detailed analysis of costs, benefits and savings from traditional service delivery processes together with targets. 4. Investigation of possible partnerships with private, public and voluntary sectors	1. Mar 2002 2. Mar 2003 3. Mar 2005 4. Mar 2003	Council /CMT Exec /CMT /DM IT Exec /CMT /DM IT Exec /CMT /DM IT	None Staff time in preparation of analysis / report Staff time in preparation of analysis / report Not quantifiable	Better management of the delivery of e-government To provide clear evidence on which the Council can base it's decisions for future ESD To support the business case for future ESD in Blaenau Gwent Better, more 'joined up' service delivery across the community

	to improve ESD via the Community Planning route. 5. Completion of full basic assessment	5. Mar2003	/CSP Exec /CMT /DM IT	Not quantifiable	Evidence to support future ESD
12. Portals	Examine the cost/benefits of Portals for the community	Mar 2003	/DM IT	Staff time	Provides a personalised view of our website to each regular user.

Exec=Executive CMT=Corporate Management Team DM IT=Divisional Manager, I.T.
CSP=Community Strategy Partnership

NLPG = National Land and Property Gazeteer.

Each Authority in England and Wales has to produce a complete register of all properties in its own area. There is a standard format for the property and address structure and each is given a unique identifying number. On completion of this task this register must be held and updated as a master version. All of our computer systems that include a property and address element must then be reconciled with this master version. Examples of such systems are Electoral Registration, Council Tax, Housing Rents and Repairs, Planning and Social Services systems.

Central government will then keep a nationwide list that will be published on a website and made available to all at a charge. Anticipated uses for example are solicitors requiring information during conveyancing. Payments received on the website will be returned to the Authority that supplied the data which has been inquired about.

NLIS = A similar central register based upon parcels of land.

12 APPENDIX II BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

- 12.1 The Council has embraced the vision of broadband Infrastructure for the community. We have merged funding from the Lottery New Opportunity Fund for Libraries and the NAW grants available for Schools and Adult Education Centres together with the latest broadband funding initiative with its corresponding Internet connection.
- 12.2 The combined funding is being used within one project to build a corporate infrastructure for the benefit of both the above-mentioned services and our community.
- 12.3 We are aware that the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) is preparing to subsidise Internet connection to Business Parks and local businesses via our network. We welcome this initiative and will work towards its goals.
- 12.4 We have applied for Corus Regeneration funds to support the building of the core of our proposed network in the hope of completing the installation during 2002-2003. This will allow Blaenau Gwent the opportunity of making early use of the WDA initiative in our deprived area.
- 12.5 We have also applied to the Local Regeneration Fund for support for a further local initiative to encourage the startup of new businesses in our area. The aim of the funding is to provide a new business package with the following supplies and services:
- Internet ready PC with printer and suitable software
 - Basic PC use training
 - Network hardware
 - Line installation charge
 - First year line rental
 - Network support and development
 - Payroll processing service and advice
 - Business startup pack and initial advice in association with a partner
 - 4 seminar/training events
 - Business support (tax and Insurance advice)
 - Printing stationary
- 12.6 Support and funding will be for the first year of startup and will be in addition to the existing provision that includes:
- Business Advice
 - Provision of industrial premises in a range of sizes
 - Vocational training
 - Economic Development Grants
 - Web Page Funding
- 12.7 The Authority is also examining within its Community and Business Plans the development of a new local procurement policy. The intention is to examine policies which favour where possible purchasing from our local businesses. We are also examining the possibility of facilitating any new business activity by supplying these companies with software compatible with that used by the authority in support of e-business transactions.

13 APPENDIX III SOCIAL SERVICES SSID REPLACEMENT

- 13.1 Blaenau Gwent is one of eight Welsh authorities currently working with the NAW with the aim of procuring a replacement for the Sheridan SSID system. The NAW facilitated a presentation in January from the Systems Integration company Unisys.
- 13.2 The presentation suggested that this procurement was an opportunity for authorities to think on a wider plane. The procurement process could provide the cornerstone of a larger corporate procurement by the group, thereby facilitating the move towards the modernisation and ESD agenda.
- 13.3 The Council understands that between Social Services and Housing (Benefits, Rents, Repairs and Allocations) are contained the majority of citizen to authority interactions. Therefore any corporate decisions made on the procurement and implementation of the e-government model of Front Office/CRM/Back Office integration must include these service managers.
- 13.4 It therefore makes sense to examine the wider perspective as a Welsh consortium and treat SSID replacement as the first part of an integrated procurement for modernisation. There should be substantial savings to be gained from a consortium selection and implementation in terms of purchase costs and the sharing of integration tasks.
- 13.5 The NAW is providing the funding for both Social Services Management Support Systems and Local Authority modernisation and so is in the right position to facilitate the two as one project.