



BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT

(IEG2)

STATEMENT

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Introduction

This is an individual statement for this Authority.

It contains a description of our Partnership with Cardiff City Council for the delivery of improved services in Blaenau Gwent.

Other partners in this partnership project are:

Cardiff City Council	- Partner for Delivery
Welsh Assembly Government	- Strategy and Funding
Welsh Development Agency (Corus Regeneration Fund)	- Funding
Cymru-ar-lein	- Strategy and Communications
Welsh Broadband Unit	- Strategy and Communications
Torfaen County Borough Council	- Strategy and Service Delivery

The document has been prepared by the Chief Policy Officer and the Divisional Manager, I.T.

The format is based upon the SOCITM Implementing Electronic Government Statement 2002 Pro Forma.

The evidence base that led the authority towards its plan for modernisation was drawn from the following sources:

1. Studies within Blaenau Gwent:

Local Voices pilot survey
Public satisfaction survey

2. Local Forum meetings – discussions on modernisation

The Citizens Advice Bureau response summed up the requirement that ‘face to face’ was required under all costs. They saw their function in our community as one that champions those who have difficulty in entering conversations with the authority. They themselves feel that face to face contact is essential in many of their interactions with the Authority.

3. We have referred to Cardiff’s own survey

4. Other sources have been from programmes such as:

Cymru Ar-lein
Lifelong Learning
WDA Broadband aimed at our SMEs
E-Communities Pilot

This IEG2 Statement has been approved by the Management Team, Executive and by the Council.

The Statement will be published on the Website and be made available at local offices and libraries.

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1. Vision

The Council has a vision that it will improve its services by redesigning them around customer needs and by harnessing new technology. This vision has crystallised over the last 12 months following research and by taking an opportunity to enter into a partnership which meets our identified needs in the first step to redesign the way we undertake our business.

The journey has started through work with partners, in particular Cardiff City Council, to develop a Call Centre facility in Blaenau Gwent.

The Council intends to continue to work with the community planning regime to redesign services to support a more collaborative approach to ICT development. One key objective is to offer a sense of 'joined up' services to the people of Blaenau Gwent.

This statement sets out what progress we have made on the modernisation journey and how we intend to take the E-government agenda forward to ensure that we meet the needs of the people of Blaenau Gwent.

1.1 Our Objectives

To make it easier for people to contact us and have their enquiry dealt with.

To make it easier for people and organisations to undertake their business with us.

To modernise the ways in which our employees undertake their work.

To include everyone in this vision.

1.2 Evidence of Need

Analysis of the above surveys and studies has resulted in the following five requirements:

1. As 80% of our contacts are by telephone, this gives us the mandate to improve our responsiveness to callers by telephone.
2. The 16% personal visit plus the Citizens Advice bureau gives us the mandate to improve our responsiveness to personal visitors.
3. Our predicted increase in other platforms for electronic conversations shows that this aspect must be accommodated in the solution.
4. A common technology solution that can be made available to operatives in a telephone answering facility as well as at any point of face to face contact will provide the best available solution.
5. To make an improvement in the back office delivery at the same time.

1.3 Our Modernisation Plan

The *best practice* shown by the leading authorities that facilitates all of the above is to create a contact centre that is supported by an underlying technology that can be distributed into any required public contact points.

The delivery mechanism chosen by the Council to deliver a modernised service to our community is both innovative and unique. It encompasses a Partnership agreement between two Welsh Authorities that collaborates and shares both technology deployment and future developments. It utilises an infrastructure that was conceived and supported within the Assembly's own Cymru Ar-lein strategic framework and implemented within the 'Lifelong Learning' Broadband project.

In summary, it is a collaboration between Cardiff City Council and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to deliver an integrated Contact Centre for the benefit of the customers of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

The initial partnership will run for 3 years from 01/04/2003, with a formal joint operational review after 18 months.

The partnership requires services and commitments from both parties. These are described in the Service Level Agreement now accepted by both parties.

Blaenau Gwent Communications Centre

The Authority has assembled a CCTV monitoring facility in a temporary location in order to monitor camera images filmed at locations within the County Borough.

The Authority has for many years managed a 24 hour emergency call facility for the aged and infirm in the area. This is based upon the 'Piper Alarm' system.

It has been agreed that these similar services, together with the Contact Centre, will be housed together within a new 24-hour communications centre.

1.4 Critical Tests of Success

The 7 critical tests of success are shown below, together with an explanation of how each is met.

Joined up in ways that make sense to the customer- internal services and with external public and voluntary services.

Our own Council services will be integrated, one by one, into the Contact Centre. Once integrated, it is expected that 60% to 80% of calls for a service can be dealt with at point of contact. Calls for services not yet integrated will be first referred against a 'frequently asked questions' database. If the enquiry can not be satisfied then the call will be directed to the service officers.

Torfaen has produced a report defining the interactions between the community and Public Authorities during some specific important 'Life Events'. We will use this work to create processes within the Contact Centre that will enhance the information provided by the Centre. This will link Local Authority support together with all other associated support agencies.

Examples of such agencies are:

- Inland Revenue
- Benefits Agency
- Local Health Authority
- Gwent Police
- Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations

We are working internally to create a system of managing data which is common to the Benefits Payment service and the Social Services Supporting People service. In this system all customer information required by both services can be collected once through a common form.

Accessible at times and places most convenient to the customer. Customers will have more choice over the way in which they contact and receive public services.

The most effective service improvements are to be gained through the extensive use of a Contact Centre by each of our services. This provides the following benefits to members, officers and the public:

- The public will use only one point of contact for any service, this being the Contact Centre. The channels available on day one will be telephone, E-mail, Website and a special 'chat line'. Other channel options will be phased in such as Digital TV, and mobile 'phone, that will allow Blaenau Gwent's customers to use the medium of their choice. The timescale will be in line with the development schedule agreed between Cardiff, Mitel and the Council.
- The public users of the Contact Centre will receive a more efficient and user-friendly service from properly trained operatives, backed up by information and processes delivered through modern technology.
- Blaenau Gwent can maintain a consistency of customer service.

After successful implementation of the Contact Centre, it will be possible to make the system available at other remote locations within the Borough. Sites such as Housing District Offices, Member Surgeries, Halls and Meeting Places can have the contact centre technology installed. This will allow the same system to support 'face to face' contact with our customers. Remote communications will be via existing networked points or the mobile GPRS channel.

Delivered or supported electronically, facilitating faster, more reliable and better value services. E.g via web site, call centres, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Automatic Call Distribution (ACD), cross-agency working and information links.

The delivery model consists of a switch and associated software providing an integrated Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system that integrates with a Workflow and Messaging process. The CRM system manages a history of all contacts with the customer. The Workflow and Messaging system delivers service requests to the back office staff who are now free from answering all but the most complex calls from the public. The CRM Workflow and messaging system can, if necessary, link with any computer application software the authority uses to support the service.

The Blaenau Gwent delivery to the public, through the partnership arrangement, will have its own Contact Centre and staff sited within the County Borough (C2B). It will use a Blaenau Gwent specific portion of a CRM database used to support multiple Contact Centres. The delivery will then utilise the Cardiff Workflow and Messaging system to complete transactions with the public. The CRM system, Workflow and Messaging part of the model resides in Cardiff under their support, although the application software supporting each service is its own.

Delivered jointly, where appropriate, by local and regional partnerships, and connected to a national infrastructure, e.g. Life events, national projects, staff and skills-sharing issues.

It encompasses a never before seen Partnership agreement between two Welsh Authorities that collaborates and shares both technology deployment and future developments.

Torfaen has produced a report defining the interactions between the community and Public Authorities during some specific important 'Life Events'. We will use this work to create processes within the Contact Centre that will enhance the information provided by the Centre.

Delivered seamlessly, so that customers are not asked to provide the same information more than once and service providers are better able to identify, reach and meet the needs of service users, e.g. Change of Address - internal and external.

The delivery will use a CRM database and a Postcode Lookup system to facilitate the storing and subsequent retrieval of customer information.

Open and accountable so that information about the objectives, standards and performance of local service providers and their elected representatives will be freely and easily available, e.g. Council minutes and agendas, Local Plan, budgets, spending, up-to-date performance indicators, electronic member contact, complaints, work schedules.

Plans exist to make the Council minutes and agendas available on the Website in this year. All other documents listed above are currently available on the Council website.

Used by e-citizens through effective promotion of available and accessible new technologies and helping local people to gain the necessary skills to take advantage of the Internet, e.g. Internet, Digital TV, marketing and promotion, community-based training and development, involvement of the community in design and development.

The channels available on day one will be telephone, E-mail, Website and a special 'chat line'. Other channel options will be phased in such as Digital TV, and Mobile 'phone, that will allow Blaenau Gwent's customers to use the medium of their choice.

2. Priority Outcomes and Services

2.1 Local Governance

The priorities for local governance within Blaenau Gwent are found within the areas defined below. Each priority area below lists supporting local projects.

Education

Lifelong Learning Broadband initiative.

External Funding of £1.2 million has been secured to ensure that all Lifelong Learning sites are linked by 10Mb connections to the Internet link provided free to the Authority by the Assembly.

Currently connected are:

- All Libraries
- All Comprehensive Schools.

To be connected this year are:

- All Adult Education Centres
- All Primary Schools.

Health & Social Care

Movement towards implementing the 'Supporting People' changes.
Members of the Wales Consortium for replacing the 'SSID' database.

Crime Reduction

The Contact Centre includes the CCTV monitoring Centre.

Encouraging the use of the corporate GIS utilisation throughout the Authority.

Project Dragon information and data exchange.

We are currently investigating the content for Community Safety advice for the public to be made available on the Website.

Employment

ADSL awareness scheme within Blaenau Gwent has targetted the following with our awareness campaign:

- Information included in every Council Tax bill in March.
- Information included in every employee payslip in May.
- Press releases.
- Information breakfast held for the local Business Forum.

Environment

Contact Centre services to be available on day one include:

- Abandoned Vehicle Reports
- Bulky Refuse Collection Requests
- Disabled Badge Applications
- Street Lighting Repairs
- Litter Clearance
- Indirect Services
- General Enquiries
- Complaints
- Knowledge Database covering all Service Areas

E-citizens

Lifelong Learning Broadband initiative, outlined above is a deliberate attempt to raise the awareness, the skills and available access within the community to Internet and ICT applications.

E-democracy

Blaenau Gwent is investigating the possibility of becoming a pilot Authority for E-voting in the 2004 elections.

2.2 Cross cutting objectives

Customer Service

Social Inclusion

Democracy and Accountability

Each of the above cross cutting objectives were considered to be essential elements to accommodate in our plan of implementation. The partnership for the delivery of a Blaenau Gwent Contact Centre that is sited within a 24 hour Communications Centre provides the opportunity to improve our performance in each area.

3 Self Assessment of Local E-Organisation

Our analysis of our customer needs has led us to concentrate upon ‘Theme 2: Access Channels’ as the focal point for improvement. The delivery plan includes a partnership with Cardiff City Council for the delivery of technology and integration into services.

The comprehensive integration of services into a Contact Centre, one by one, allows us to simultaneously improve the other themes at service level. These include:

Theme 1: Transactions

Theme 4: Organisational Development

3.1 Theme 1: Transactions

The Communications Centre is the main thrust of the policy towards improving transactions with the Council.

The Authority maintains a payments collection system whereby door to door collections are made every week to all council properties. The collectors are able to accept cash and cheque payments of all types. With this collection medium in place, electronic payments have not yet been a priority.

A new software package for Cash Receipting has been purchased and is now being installed. It will enable all forms of electronic payment as described below.

Providing Information:

It is hoped that the services integrated into the Contact Centre will each achieve 60%–80% success rate in terms of transactions completed electronically at the first point of contact.

Much of our service information is currently available on the website, but this form of delivery will be updated in parallel with the integration of each service into the contact centre.

The combining of the CCTV monitoring station with the Contact Centre provides the centre with a ‘first line’ link with the local police 24 hours by 7 days.

Collecting Revenue:

The Authority maintains a collection system whereby door to door collections are made every week to all council properties.

All types of payment method are currently available at our District Cash Offices in each major town.

The newly installed Cash Receipting software will be enabled for electronic payments via the Website during this financial year. It will also provide internal service improvements by allowing electronic reconciliation with other collecting agencies such as schools, leisure centres etc.

Providing Benefits & Grants

This will be one of the early services to be integrated into the Contact Centre. Benefit surgeries are run periodically in our Housing Offices. These can be supplemented by taking the Contact Centre CRM and service integration solution into these community sessions as the technology can be delivered remotely to any site.

Consultation

The Website has been available for electronic surveys for some time.

Regulation (such as issuing licences)

This service area has not been progressed due to legislation changes pending.

Applications for Services

Some application forms are available on the Website. Applications for services will be integral within the service offered by the Contact Centre. The addition of forms into the Website will move parallel with the integration of services into the Centre.

Booking Venues, Resources & Courses

A form is currently being prepared for insertion into the Website to allow e-mail delivery of booking requests for the local Beaufort Theatre and Abertillery Community Theatre.

Paying for Goods & Services

We currently pay 25% of payments electronically. Our target for 2003/04 is 35%.

We are encouraging the increase of electronic percentage in each group.

Providing Access to Community, Professional or Business Networks

The Social services Department has a network connection into the local Hospital.

A local E-Communities project has a link into the Authority network providing 10Mb Internet access.

Procurement

The Authority is reviewing corporate procurement this year.

3.2 Theme 2: Access Channels

The Local Voices pilot survey showed how the public wished to contact us:

80% by telephone
16% by personal visit
2% letter
>1% e-mail

24% indicated that Internet access was available from home.
66% indicated that they could not access the Internet at all.

Analysis from all sources has resulted in the following three requirements:

- 1 To improve our responsiveness to callers by telephone.
- 2 To improve our responsiveness to personal visitors.
- 3 A predicted increase in the use of other platforms for electronic conversations shows that this aspect must be accommodated in the solution. Thus E-mail, Website access, Chat-room, and Fax will be available from day one, plus eventually, Interactive TV will follow.

A common technology solution that can be made available to operatives in a telephone answering facility as well as at any point of face to face contact will provide the best available solution.

Local Service Websites

The addition of information and transaction forms into the Website will move parallel with the integration of services into the Contact Centre.

Telephone

This is the main thrust of the first phase of implementation.

Face To Face

After the initial deployment of the Contact Centre service via telephone, e-mail and webchat, trained operatives can take the solution into remote sites where face to face transactions already take place. Such sites as District Housing Offices and Social Services Offices are currently limited in their ability to deal with wide ranging service transactions. The technology will deliver transactions for all of the integrated services to any site, be it for temporary or permanent deployment.

Smartcards

There are no current plans to use Smartcards. However it will be examined as part of the action plan from the corporate review of procurement.

Other Electronic

Digital TV will become incorporated within the access channel options. The timescale is to be agreed between Cardiff City, Mitel and ourselves.

3.3 Theme 3: Enablers

Blaenau Gwent is aware that each of the technologies listed below are valuable enablers that can improve our services. However we have committed all of our modernisation funding, together with our own resources, to the Contact Centre delivery. DIP and Workflow, Knowledge Management, and Case Based Reasoning/Query Handling are each costly products that are outside the spending commitments of the Authority in 2003/04. However ongoing projects exist that incorporate GIS, Mobile technology and customer based software support.

NLPG and NLIS

Blaenau Gwent will not commit resources to these projects in 2003/04. If additional modernisation funding becomes available in 2004/05 then the projects can be considered.

DIP and Workflow

Blaenau Gwent will not commit resources to these projects in 2003/04. If additional modernisation funding becomes available in 2004/05 then the projects can be considered.

GIS

Blaenau Gwent has a corporate GIS solution used by all departments. We have a central server that holds all overlay information. These overlays are designated as 'private' or 'public' and can be used by other GIS users.

Mobile Technology

The Social Services Department is making effective use of Notepads and handwriting recognition software for mobile workers.

Customer Database and Customer Relations Management

These technology enablers are embedded within the contact centre delivery.

Case Based Reasoning/Query Handling

Blaenau Gwent will not commit resources to these projects in 2003/04. If additional modernisation funding becomes available in 2004/05 then the projects can be considered.

Knowledge Management

Blaenau Gwent will not commit resources to these projects in 2003/04. If additional modernisation funding becomes available in 2004/05 then the projects can be considered.

3.4 **Theme 4: E-Business**

Intranet

The Blaenau Gwent Intranet has been operational for over a year. It contains many subjects of use to our staff including the following:

Extranet

We have a number of users who access our network remotely. They include I.T. and Social Services staff. This is an area that will expand in use in the next year.

Financials

The 'Powersolve' financial application has been in use for 6 years and is very stable. We have replaced our 'Cash Receipting' software recently and integrated it into the main system. We can now accept cash, cheque and all card based transactions at our many cash offices. We can accept card transactions via telephone. We will this year integrate online payments into our Website.

Procurement

The Authority is reviewing corporate procurement this year.

Human Resources and Payroll

The Midland payroll and HR application has been in use for 6 years and is very stable.

Asset Management

A new asset management team has been created. It is currently examining the marketplace for a suitable software package to manage the asset database.

Office Systems and Teleworking

Our Office System delivery is based upon the Microsoft suite. This is supported by an infrastructure of servers based in each of our major administrative sites. Fast lines that support both administrative and Lifelong Learning traffic link these sites. The infrastructure is sound and will support teleworking use as it grows.

3.5 Theme 5: Organisational Development

Progress of the Organisation

Change Management

Business Process Reengineering Schemes

In the past year we have moved from defining our intentions to confirming a partnership for the delivery of a modernising solution.

We have identified and refurbished a building to house a 24*7 operation that will centralise CCTV monitoring, Emergency Support for the community and also a 'one telephone number' contact centre that will expand to take enquiries for all services during an elongated day.

Those areas relating to Progress of the Organisation, Change Management and Business Process Re-engineering Schemes are detailed in the Business Plan for our Communications Centre. The Business Plan is included at Appendix 1.

Management structure for E-government

The modernisation process is managed by a Steering Group made up of:

The Chief Executive
The Director of Resources
Chief Personnel Officer
Chief Policy Officer
The Divisional Manager, I.T.

This group submits reports to the Executive defining modernisation progress.

4 Resources

4.1 Funding Overview

Expenditure by Funding source	Actual	Forecast			
	(£'000s)	(£'000s)			
Resources	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06
IEG money in 02/03 and 03/04		102 deferred until 03/04	102 126		
Financial contributions from WDA			100		
Financial contributions from other sources of Government funding, such as Invest to save (ISB) <i>Requested from WAG. No decision yet given.</i>			79	74	57
Resources being applied from internal revenue and capital budgets to improve quality of services through e-enablement.			120		
Total			527	74	57

4.2 Project Costs

Project Cost Summary		2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	Total
		£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Project							
1	Partnership with Cardiff for Contact Centre delivery plus Communication Centre including CCTV and Emergency Support			527	74	57	658
TOTAL				527	74	57	658

Other Projects that will not commence without funding additional to project that above.

See description of projects below the table.

Project Cost Summary	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	Total
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Street Gazetteer / NLPG and NLIS				30	30	60
Corporate Mobile Computing				200	200	400
DIP and Workflow for Benefits processing and other Corporate use				200	50	250
Client/Contractor interface for Highways Jobs				30	10	40
Electronic Procurement and Purchase Cards				80	20	100
Online Library catalogue				25		25
Replacement Leisure Centre software to include Internet transactions					30	30
Implementation costs for SSID replacement system within the Wales consortium				50		50
Display current account personal details on Website for Council Tax, NNDR, Housing Rents etc					50	50
TOTAL				615	390	1,005

The Partnership project to deliver a Contact Centre will take all of the known funding in 2003/04 and 2004/5. If additional funds are made available then the following projects are those chosen to provide maximum corporate gain.

Street Gazetteer / NLPG and NLIS

NLPG was a commitment within the IEG1 Statement. It is not achievable in this year as all available funding has been directed towards the Contact Centre partnership project. The completion of the local Street Gazetteer is a prerequisite to fulfilling this aim. External funding is required to complete the Street Gazetteer and to 'cleanse' the land and property gazetteer once the data has been extracted from the source application databases. It does however require an additional ongoing resource to maintain the central database and facilitate common changes out to all of the other system databases.

Corporate Mobile Computing

The effective use of Mobile Computing technology is a cross cutting theme for all departments and many services within the authority. Treating it corporately is the most effective way of acquiring and distributing the technology. Among the services that can gain from the technology are:

Social Service Visitors

Highways and Housing Inspectors

Housing Grants, Environmental Health and Trading Standards Inspectors

Education

Street Lighting and Cleansing

DIP and Workflow for Benefits processing and other corporate use

We have investigated the costs and benefits of this technology many times. Each time concluding that improvements in processing turnaround and efficiencies have been made within each of the authorities visited. One supplier, Comeno, has installed the product locally in Monmouthshire, and also in our Modernisation Partner Cardiff, with both authorities giving very positive feedback.

Each time it has been reviewed the required capital investment could not be made available.

Our Cardiff partners have analyzed the calls from the public made to their benefits section. They have concluded that the vast majority of calls that it is possible to answer in one call to the Contact Centre will be answered by examining the workflow software rather than the benefits application itself. They have therefore decided to integrate the workflow application with the Contact Centre.

If Blaenau Gwent is to make best use of our partnership then it should follow a proven path of development that was successful for Cardiff.

Client/Contractor Interface for Highways Jobs

We have a long established electronic interface between the Housing Client and Contractor systems that has proven to be an effective tool for increased efficiency. We wish to replicate the savings made in this interface to the large number of Contract Jobs within the Highways area.

Electronic Procurement and Purchase Cards

The Authority is undertaking a corporate review of this subject at present.

Online Catalogue for Libraries

Project to make the Library stock available for browsing online via the Internet. The system will also allow online ordering of books and other media.

Leisure Centre Software including Internet enabled transactions

This project to replace the existing software will help to meet the electronic transaction requirements of modernisation within a priority area of interest for the public.

Implementation costs for SSID replacement system within the Wales consortium

The Social Services Client system is to be replaced with a modern application that is e-gif compliant and able to support the delivery of our desired e-government improvements. The replacement application will require a significant resource to properly effect the business analysis and re-engineering plus all of the data migration issues. This sum will fund this resource.

Display current account personal details on Website for Council Tax, NNDR, Housing Rents etc.

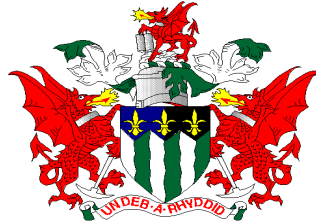
Make available electronically, together with the necessary level of security, the above personal information.

5 Risk Assessment

Risks	Int or Ext	Impact	Probability	Countermeasure/mitigating action
Lack of Clear Vision, Objectives and Strategy				
Lack of Political will/engagement.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members accept the communications plan.
Lack of engagement with Chief Officers.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> plans for the implementation of the ICT Strategy address key issues of senior officers.
Extent of communications of Vision and Strategy at all levels.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Plan will identify different audiences and mechanisms for communications.
Strategy becomes static.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The partnership agreement includes periodic reviews.
Technology fails to deliver improvements expect by citizens				
Universal Broadband capability not available to support the developments.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External funding has secured the successful roll-out.
Need to achieve Wide Area Network (WAN) as foundation to delivering electronic government targets.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will be complete this year.
Technology may not be "future proof".	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented.
Legacy systems may not be suitable for delivering services electronically. (e.g. inability to integrate to overall systems architecture).	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> legacy systems are stable. We have plans to replace Social Services(SSID) and to examine e-procurement.
Lack of capacity to deliver (People/Skills)				
Potential lack of skills/expertise to support/implement new technologies.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> partnership for the delivery of technology.
Large Change Programme required to transform the Council.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> built into the implementation plan.
Lack of skills/capacity to support Strategy implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme/Project Management Skills Change Management Skills Knowledge Management Skills 	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training plan in place.
Current working practices not flexible enough to support new ways of working.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> new policies and procedures to support flexible working will be part of service implementation.
Staff may not have sufficient skills in using technology.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECDL pilot is organised.

Risks	Int or Ext	Impact	Probability	Countermeasure/mitigating action
Administrative processes do not support e-ways of working				
Current policies and procedures do not currently support/recognise the development of 'e-government'.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> new policies and procedures will be part of service implementation.
e-government not fully recognised within other Council Plan (eg BVPP, Dept Service Plans).	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that officers responsible for the development of other Council plans are kept informed of the development of e-government. involve key officers 'champions' in departments in the development and implementation of the ICT Strategy. ensure that e-government is a key aspect of Best Value performance reviews and the development of other Council plans.
Unwillingness to change policies and procedures.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include in change management plan
Operational/Service Processes do not support e-ways of working				
Many services are delivered in partnership.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify key partners in service delivery and include within communication plan. work with partners to achieve electronic service delivery.
Lack of resources within services to devote to the implementation of E-government.	Int	H	VH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WAG Modernisation Unit has been approached for additional funding to support new posts in Contact Centre.
Inability to support extended access hours (24x7).	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The communications centre policy facilitates this.
Failure to meet the expectations of customers.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our partners have very high levels of satisfaction and provide a model for us to follow.
Technology Failure.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner responsibility.
Disaster/Catastrophic Failure.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop IT Service Continuity plan.
Customers Dis-satisfaction				
Do not currently know what customers require: - Availability - Access Channels	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consultation with customers on an on-going basis to ensure that electronic service deliver and access channels meet customer needs is part of the customer callback service to be implemented.
Customer Requirements may Change.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that customer feedback is an integral process within electronic service deliver and that this feeds into the development and implementation of strategy. This is part of the customer callback service to be implemented.
Electronic Service Delivery may expose 'latent' demand.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> need to ensure that 'back-office' improvements are linked to enhancements in access. need to manage expectations as to the service that the Council can deliver. WAG Modernisation Unit has been approached for additional funding to support new posts in contact centre.

Risks	Int or Ext	Imp act	Proba bility	Countermeasure/mitigating action
May not be able to deliver joined up services to customers needs.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with our technology partners and other authorities/agencies to understand common priorities and deliver joined up services.
Need to avoid service inequality arising out of inequality of access.	Int	H	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that same quality of service is delivered regardless of access means. maintain existing access channels as long as there is a significant demand or removing them would create inequality.
Lack of Funding				
Not enough resources to deliver electronic service delivery.	Int	H	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it is unlikely that quick wins will release early resources for electronic service delivery. WAG Modernisation Unit has been approached for additional funding to support new posts in Contact Centre.
Over dependence on competitive funding.	Int	H	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify and join up all sources of funding both internal and external.
Failure to deliver 'best-value'.	Int	H	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> projects will only proceed where a robust business case has been demonstrated.



BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

BUSINESS PLAN

for

**ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO SUPPORT THE MODERNISATION
AGENDA**

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Plan

In March 2002 the Authority responded to the request of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) by submitting its Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Draft Statement.

The statement defined our vision for electronic modernisation as well as providing an Action Plan for the first steps during the year 2002/03 towards achieving the goals identified in the plan.

Much has been achieved in this year and our plans are well on the way towards completion.

The solution chosen by the Council to deliver a modernised service to our community is both innovative and unique. It encompasses a never before seen Partnership agreement between two Welsh Authorities that collaborates and shares both technology deployment and future developments. It utilises an infrastructure that was conceived and supported within the Assembly's own Cymru Ar-lein strategic framework and implemented within the 'Lifelong Learning' Broadband project.

However there is a need to request additional funding in order to secure a robust and future proof outcome that is self-funding within the time span outlined in this plan.

Our request is for funding to help the Authority support the initial revenue costs of 5 Contact Centre Operatives who will take the calls from the public.

2 CONTEXT

2.1 Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Draft Statement.

The Foreword of the IEG Statement, written jointly by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive, summarises the aims of the Council for this agenda and is repeated below.

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.

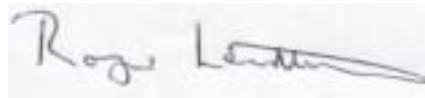
It is important to us, however, that all of these new developments are driven by what the public wants. Accordingly a target will be set to ensure that not only do we put in place new methods of accessing all services – via one stop shops, call centres the web etc. – but that they are methods that are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

2.2 Our Aims

The IEG Statement defined in detail the following aims for our modernisation:

To better Manage Customer Relationships
To Streamline Processes
Improve Communications
To better Organise Information
To work Differently
Better Decision Making

The most effective single element of modernisation that comprehensively engages each of the above is the creation of a Contact Centre. The necessary changes of working practices and the integration of technology into the process will result in the best payback via improvement.

2.3 Evidence of Need

The evidence base that led the authority towards its plan for modernisation was drawn from the following sources:

1. The existing studies within Blaenau Gwent:

i. Local Voices pilot survey

This survey showed how the public wished to contact us:

80% by telephone
16% by personal visit
2% letter
>1% e-mail

24% indicated that Internet access was available from home.
66% indicated that they could not access the Internet at all.

This showed that the telephone service was the main area that we should concentrate on. Improvements here will have the biggest effect on our overall level of service.

It also indicated that personal visits were very important.

ii. Public satisfaction survey

80% thought that our service was satisfactory

2. Local Forum meetings – discussions on modernisation

The Citizens Advice Bureau response summed up the requirement that 'face to face' was required under all costs. They saw their function in our community as one that champions those who have difficulty in entering conversations with the authority. They themselves feel that face to face contact is essential in many of their interactions with the authority.

3. We have referred to Cardiff's own survey

Each survey is only of a certain usefulness. The fact is that across Wales we are all working on strategies to change the above figures by increasing Internet availability and increasing the skills of the population to enable the Internet driven forms of communication such as e-mail, Website response and Web-chat. Here are some examples of these projects:

Cymru Ar-lein
Lifelong Learning
WDA Broadband aimed at our SMEs
E-Communities Pilot

The Blaenau Gwent findings are similar to those of Cardiff in 1999. However the Cardiff ratio of contacts via the centre now shows **e-mail to be 16%**. It is certain that Blaenau Gwent will follow this electronic trend, though at our own pace.

The analysis summarised above resulted in the following five requirements:

- 6. 80% telephone gives us the mandate to improve our responsiveness to callers by telephone.**
- 7. The 16% personal visit plus the Citizens Advice bureau gives us the mandate to improve our responsiveness to personal visitors.**
- 8. Our predicted increase in other platforms for electronic conversations shows that this aspect must be accommodated in the solution.**
- 9. A common technology solution that can be made available to operatives in a telephone answering facility as well as at any point of face to face contact will provide the best available solution.**
- 10. To make an improvement in the back office delivery at the same time.**

2.4 Modernisation Plan

The objectives outlined above came from the Evidence process. The solution to our modernisation objectives was being developed in many Pathfinder authorities, as well as those with the finance and the desire to modernise themselves.

The *best practice* shown by the leading authorities was to create a contact centre that is supported by an underlying technology that can be distributed into any required public contact points.

This *best practice* example is the best-fit solution to our own objectives.

The authority required that if contact centre jobs were to be created to take calls from our residents, then the new jobs should be sited within Blaenau Gwent where there is a jobs shortage rather than in any other part of England or Wales.

2.5 Funding available

The WAG has made available via SCA grant the sum of £228,000 for the two financial years 2002/03 and 2003/04.

The Council has made £120,000 available to the project in the year 2003/04.

The Corus Regeneration Fund has contributed £100,000.

WAG 2002/03	£102,000
WAG 2003/04	£126,000
Blaenau Gwent 2003/04	£120,000
Corus Regeneration2003/04	<u>£100,000</u>
Total	£448,000

2.6 Risks

The IEG Statement identified risks attached to the modernisation process. Some important ones are shown below.

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 significant risk of failing to complete the programme.

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

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.

Failure of IT system

Risk: That 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

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

2.7 Partnering Solution

The main reasons for adopting a partnering approach to modernisation are:

1. Financial Savings
2. Government Guidelines
3. Minimising the Risk of Failure in the modernisation process

These reasons are discussed in more detail.

Financial Savings can be gained from the following:

- Share software licences with Cardiff where possible to prevent our need to purchase systems at market rates.
- Share hardware with Cardiff where possible to prevent our need to purchase.
- Follow a proven implementation path that has worked for Cardiff.
- Save on the lengthy process of system investigation, procurement and integration. This will ensure that one solution is made from the many inter-linking products.
- Learn from their experiences.
- Cardiff offer to provide all necessary training of our staff. They also offer that our staff can gain experience after training by working for a period in their Contact Centre. Thus they can start work in the Blaenau Gwent Centre trained.

- The Council could have all background, research and supporting materials on which to make an informed decision on the way forward.
- Make effective use of the Broadband Internet connection supplied to the Welsh Authorities by the Welsh Assembly Government to utilise high-speed telephone and data connections.

The £228,000 allocated to Blaenau Gwent by the WAG over the next two years is far short of that required to properly implement all of the modernisation targets. This partnership offers the best value for that money with a proven implementation path.

Government Guidelines are well understood and include the following principles:

- Implementation of the modernisation agenda via the Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Statement and its Action Plan.
- Authorities are to consider working in partnership and sharing resources.

Minimising the Risk of Failure in the modernisation process.

- Almost all authorities in Wales are currently recruiting I.T. staff in order to meet the agenda obligations. New development teams of three to five staff are being added to support local projects.
- Without such staff increase, projects above and beyond the day to day responsibilities of the I.T. staff must have a high chance of failure.
- Alternatively, the cost of outsourcing such a project is beyond the scope of the Council's existing and anticipated budgets.
- There are few authorities well on the way to implementing a working solution. Almost all of these have received Pathfinder funding to support the project. Blaenau Gwent cannot finance any of these fore-runner solutions itself and would have to find alternative cheaper, unproven and higher risk solutions.

The solution chosen by the Council was to seek a partner Authority with whom we could develop the agenda. In seeking such a partner the following objectives were considered:

- It was preferable that the partner was a Welsh Authority.
- It was also preferable that the partner could demonstrate a proven and successful implementation of both the technical delivery and also the change management requirements within the organisation.

Cardiff City Council was seen to be the ideal partner.

- They themselves were keen to partner another authority.
- Their IEG statement aims seemed to reflect our own aims.
- Both councils saw the opportunity to develop an innovative solution.

- All I.T. technology in use within each partner was compatible and some applications suppliers are common to both which should aid back office integration.

2.8 Definition of the Partnership

In summary, it is a collaboration between officers of Cardiff City Council and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to deliver an integrated Contact Centre for the benefit of the customers of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

The initial partnership will run for 3 years from 01/04/2003, with a formal joint operational review after 18 months.

The partnership requires services and commitments from both parties. These are described in the Service Level Agreement now accepted by both parties. It is attached as Appendix II of this plan.

2.9 Benefits of the Partnership

The most effective service improvements are to be gained through the extensive use of a Contact Centre by each of the services. This provides the following benefits to members, officers and the public:

- The public will use only one point of contact for any service, this being the Contact Centre. The channels available on day one will be telephone, E-mail, Website and a special 'chat line'. Other channel options will be phased in such as Digital TV, and Mobile 'phone, that will allow Blaenau Gwent's customers to use the medium of their choice. The timescale will be in line with the development schedule agreed between Cardiff, Mitel and the Council.
- As Blaenau Gwent re-engineers each service, one by one, to integrate with the Contact Centre, so they can find the most efficient and effective delivery process for that service.
- Each service integrated into the Contact Centre should realise a saving in staff time.
- The public users of the Contact Centre will receive a more efficient and user-friendly service.
- Blaenau Gwent can maintain a consistency of customer service.

3 CURRENT POSITION

3.1 Partnership Agreement

Blaenau Gwent and Cardiff have each created a high level Steering Group that meets to oversee the project. This officer working party consists of:

Blaenau Gwent:

The Chief Executive
The Director of Resources
The Personnel Manager
The Head of Policy
The Divisional Manager, I.T.

Cardiff:

ICT Manager
Contact Centre Manager
Mitel Project Manager

The Leaders of each Council are hoping to sign a form of agreement on June 18th this year.

The Service Level Agreement provides the documentation of the agreement between the parties.

3.2 Project Development to date

Location

The authority has no obvious building to house the new Contact Centre facility. However:

- The authority is currently assembling a CCTV monitoring facility in a temporary location in order to monitor camera images filmed at locations within the County Borough.
- The Authority has for many years managed a 24 hour emergency call facility for the aged and infirm in the area. This is based upon the 'Piper Alarm' system.
- It has been agreed that these three similar services will be housed together within a new 24 hour communications area that will be the Contact Centre.

Additional financial support for the location has been provided by the WDA from the Corus Regeneration Fund.

The building project is currently under way, with a completion date of 3rd Quarter 2003 estimated.

Technology

A contract has been signed with Mitel for the provision of a Telephone Switch to support incoming calls to the Contact Centre from all electronic sources. (Telephone, e-mail, Website and Chat-line to date.)

Agreement has been reached with Cardiff regarding the sourcing of the CRM system and back office integration.

Agreement has been reached with the Broadband Wales Unit such that communications between the Cardiff and Blaenau Gwent systems will use the network backbone created for the Wales Lifelong Learning Network.

Miscellaneous

All other aspects of the project such as Licence fees, Service charges, Training costs have been identified and are costed within the modernisation Supplementary Credit Approval for 2002/03 and 2003/04.

Blaenau Gwent is funding one additional developer within the Cardiff team to support joint development into all additional service areas.

3.3 Services currently integrated

Abandoned vehicle reports	Child Fostering Requests
Bulky refuse collection requests	Litter Clearance
Free school meals applications	Concessionary Bus Passes
Paying your council bills	Surveys and Consultations
Disabled badge applications	Special Events/News hotline
Complaints	Indirect Services
Job applications	General enquiries
Street lighting repairs	Knowledge Database covering all Service Areas

These services will be supplemented at start up with a full list of Frequently Asked Questions, supplied to the centre by our service managers and made available from a searchable database.

Method of choosing the first services.

The Cranfield Benefit Management Analysis Model was used by Cardiff to select the initial services. This took account of a number of factors, such as:

- Service demand
- current state of service
- existing IT provision
- cost
- impact
- political priorities
- perceived areas of public concern and demand.

Feedback from the Public showed that their concern is mainly with regard to visible issues such as street cleansing, abandoned vehicles, grass cutting etc.

The ones finally chosen were a representative sample across all services. It would not have been feasible to take too many high demand services from day one as they cannot be just simply 'switched on', particularly if you are also looking to transform the way in which the service itself is delivered.

More complex services with potentially higher gains are part of phase II, with Benefits targeted for go live in Cardiff during August and Social Care Referrals presently commencing feasibility assessment.

3.4 Integrating new services

Engaging the Service Managers

The task of ensuring that all of the service managers understand the advantages of this partnership delivery has been approached in the following way.

1. The Executive Members have twice visited the Cardiff Contact Centre where they were given a presentation on the performance and benefits of the centre.
2. The Divisional Manager, I.T. has met with the Director, Management Team and relevant Executive Member of each Department to hold information and discussion sessions to describe the operation and advantages of the solution.
3. Mitel, the prime suppliers of technology, held a 'Benefits Workshop' day in Blaenau Gwent that was attended by 35 senior managers. This day was used to enthuse the managers and show that there are benefits, not disadvantages to the delivery.
4. The Contact Centre Manager, who will be implementing the service integration, has already made contact with the managers responsible for the first group of services to be integrated.

Integrating services

The above list of services, together with all of those services delivered subsequently, will be integrated into centre using the following principles:

- Define the data collection requirements for the service request
- Define the information to be given to the public “ ”
- Agree with Cardiff the screen layout format for Blaenau Gwent
- Define the destination in Blaenau Gwent of each back office service request
- Map the delivery for the Blaenau Gwent mode of operation
- Agree with each Blaenau Gwent Service Manager the implementation
- Ensure that service FAQs are fully included
- **Define the procedure for complaints to this service**
- **Define the expectations for success**
- **Define the indicators that will be used to measure success for this service**

3.5 Project Partners

The partners in this project are:

Welsh Assembly Government	- Strategy and Funding
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	- Funding and Implementation
Cardiff City Council	- Partner for Delivery
Welsh Development Agency (Corus Regeneration Fund)	- Funding
Cymru-ar-lein	- Strategy and Communications
Welsh Broadband Unit	- Strategy and Communications
Torfaen County Borough Council	- Strategy and Service Delivery

Torfaen has produced a report defining the interactions between the community and Public Authorities during some specific important 'Life Events'. We will use this work to create processes within the Contact Centre that will enhance the information provided by the Centre. This will link Local Authority support together with all other associated support agencies.

Examples of such agencies are:

Inland Revenue
Benefits Agency
Local Health Authority
Gwent Police
Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations

4. PROPOSAL FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING

4.1 Staffing the Contact Centre

The Authority has established that 6 full time Contact Centre posts need to be created from day one of operation. This will provide the minimum cover necessary to offer a satisfactory service to our customers. Initially, the centre will take calls from the public during the hours of 9am until 5pm.

The initial number of operatives has been defined by the following analysis:

- An examination of expected number of calls initially directed to the centre.
- The Service areas integrated into the centre by the partnership.
- Cardiff's own experience and advice.
- The requirement to cover annual leave and sickness.

The posts will be scale 3/4. This is the rate used by Cardiff as the 'Industry standard' for the job specification. It is pitched in order to attract a suitable standard of candidate.

The project foresees that longer term the centre has the capability to answer calls 24hrs by 7 days per week by combining the skills of the emergency Piper Alarm staff with those of the

Contact Operatives. This will allow those operatives on overnight emergency response duty to use the Contact Centre software and deal effectively with non-emergency type calls.

4.2 Consolidate Calls

Cardiff has currently integrated the list of services described in 3.3 above through the Contact Centre. It is our intention that on day one these services are available in the Blaenau Gwent centre.

All calls for these service areas will be directed to the new operation centre. It is necessary to provide the 6 posts of Operative 'up front' in order to start the process of modernisation through the Contact Centre.

As more service areas are integrated into the centre then more time becomes available to the 'back office' service staff. The efficiencies thus gained will improve our service delivery. These efficiencies can later, (in years two, three and beyond,) be turned into savings for the Authority that can fund more Contact Centre Operatives, as they become required.

This model is employed at Cardiff, albeit at a slower pace. After almost two years of operation, they have accepted that back office savings are being used to improve those services. They have not yet created staff savings in any of the integrated back office service areas.

4.3 Partnering other Agencies

Blaenau Gwent is aware that creating a centre for efficiently dealing with calls relating to our own services is only one part of the comprehensive service that we should offer.

We should be able to provide a seamless link between our Contact Centre and the all other agencies, both public and voluntary, that our customers rely upon.

To this end we are aware of the leading work done by our neighbours Torfaen in defining the inter-agency dependancies that exist between all public bodies in our domain.

We will use their soon to be published report as a guide to the 'joining up' of services, and information sharing, that can be achieved at our centre. Each of the agencies will be contacted to discuss the possibilities of integration between ourselves.

5. FUNDING REQUEST

5.1 Funding Overview

The project costs are divided into three sections:

i. Building and furnishing Costs:

The building costs for this centre are £220,000

Identified funding:

Blaenau Gwent	£120000
Corus Regeneration Fund	<u>£100,000</u>
Total	£220,000

ii. Miscellaneous Project Costs:

Technology	
Software Licences	
Hardware	
Recruitment	
Training	
Promotion / Marketing	
	£128,000

Identified funding:

WAG Modernisation	£128,000
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iii. Contact Centre Operatives

	Funded Posts	Amount
Year 1 *	6 posts @ £17,617	£79,277
Year 2 **	4 posts @ £18,523	£74,092
Year 3 ***	3 posts @ £18,967	£56,901
Total		£210,270

Identified funding: Nil

- * Scale 3, 1st point *plus* standard oncost for 9 months from July 2003
- ** Scale 3, 2nd point *plus* standard oncost *plus* 3% pay award
- *** Scale 3, 3rd point *plus* standard oncost *plus* 3% pay award

5.2 Years 2003/04 to 2005/06
Our request for funding over three years is:

2003/04	6 Operatives @ £17,617	= £79,277
2004/05	4 Operatives @ £18,523	= £74,092
2005/06	3 Operatives @ £18,967	= £56,901

5.3 Subsequent Years

After the Contact Centre becomes operational it will filter out a large percentage of those calls to 'back office' services that have been integrated. The reduction in calls will allow the back office to become more efficient in its delivery. In Blaenau Gwent we plan that by the end of 2005/06 the Contact Centre will have created sufficient savings in the 'back office' to fully fund the staffing of the centre. We plan that thereafter efficiencies in the back office will fund all necessary posts in the Centre.

The partnership provides a framework of technology that will deliver access to services electronically to the desktop of the Contact Centre operatives. The same technology delivery can later support a mobile facility that can spread throughout the Borough. It can be deployed into 'One stop shops' located in suitable locations in our towns such as Housing and Social Services offices. It can also support mobile temporary locations such as Halls and surgeries via laptop and wireless networking.

5.4 Welsh Assembly Government Support

Blaenau Gwent believes that the additional support requested in this Business Plan will enable us to achieve a significant step towards achieving a fully modernised Local Authority.

The technology acquired within the Partnership will facilitate effective delivery of services to our community, as well as bringing future savings. It can in the future be deployed to reach into the community itself.

We will use the project to improve communication and information sharing between ourselves and other local agencies, centred initially on 'Lifelong Events'. This will lead to the 'joining up' of information and services for the benefit of our community.

6. APPENDIX I

6.1 The Delivery Mechanism

Blaenau Gwent have examined the Contact Centre in operation in Cardiff City Council and has been impressed by the service efficiencies, increased effectiveness and rapport with the public that it has achieved. Blaenau Gwent believe that to share the technology used, the experience and expertise gained, and the ongoing drive and commitment shown by the implementation staff in Cardiff is the most effective way of achieving a similar result.

Blaenau Gwent have therefore investigated the way forward for modernisation and have concluded that a partnership between Blaenau Gwent and Cardiff offers the best opportunity to achieve their modernisation aims. Blaenau Gwent will use the Cardiff model of delivery in the Contact Centre (C2C).

This delivery model consists of a switch and associated software providing an integrated Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system that integrates with a Workflow and Messaging process. The CRM system manages a history of all contacts with the customer. The Workflow and Messaging system delivers service requests to the back office staff who are now free from answering all but the most complex calls from the public. The CRM Workflow and messaging system can, if necessary, link with any computer application software the authority uses to support the service.

The Blaenau Gwent delivery to the public, through the partnership arrangement, will have it's own Contact Centre and staff sited within the County Borough (C2B). It will use a Blaenau Gwent specific portion of a CRM database used to support multiple Contact Centres. The delivery will then utilise the Cardiff Workflow and Messaging system to complete transactions with the public. The CRM system, Workflow and Messaging part of the model resides in Cardiff under their support, although the application software supporting each service is it's own.

After successful implementation of the Contact Centre, it will be possible to make the desktop system available to other remote locations within the Borough. Sites such as Housing District Offices, Member Surgeries, Halls and Meeting Places can be visited and the support within the solution made use of. Communications will be using existing networked points or the mobile GPRS channel.

The technical aspects of the partnership delivery are not described here in detail, however it must be noted that in this solution transaction data passes regularly between Cardiff County Hall and both the Contact Centre and I.T. applications within Blaenau Gwent. This data will be encrypted for the sake of privacy and security. It will make use of network lines supplied to both Cardiff and Blaenau Gwent by the WAG within the 'Lifelong Learning' project.

Blaenau Gwent will examine the requirements of the Data Protection Act. There may be a need to register the new data to be held for the Contact Centre and the use made of this data.

The consequence of partnering with Cardiff is that Blaenau Gwent accepts the whole solution that Cardiff has pioneered. This solution includes the use of many interacting parts, both hardware and software, provided by different suppliers. Mitel Networks Ltd, who was selected by Cardiff after a rigorous European tendering exercise, has integrated the various components within the project. The partnering model relies upon a Contact Centre being located within Blaenau Gwent and linking to technology supported by Cardiff and located in Cardiff. Blaenau Gwent is therefore committed to making purchases within this project using companies that have already contracted to supply Cardiff's Contact Centre services. The advantage of this is that Blaenau Gwent can take advantage of a complete solution that is proven to work successfully. This will take one large element of risk away from the project. Mitel Networks Ltd. will oversee the integration between the Blaenau Gwent Contact Centre and the Cardiff supporting systems. It is a condition of the partnership that Blaenau Gwent accepts Mitel Networks Ltd. and its hardware and software solution in this project.

Below is a representation of the partnership model:

