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Bridgend County Borough Council



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*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.
Rhowch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich
dewis iaith.*

*We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please
let us know if your language choice is Welsh.*



Dear Councillor,

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

A meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 will be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices Angel Street Bridgend CF31 4WB, on **Monday, 29 April 2019 at 10:00**.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
To receive apologies for absence from Members.
2. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008 (including whipping declarations.)
3. Approval of Minutes 3 - 10
To receive for approval the minutes of the meeting of 30/01/2019.
4. Corporate Landlord 11 - 16
Invitees:
Cllr Hywel Williams, Deputy Leader
Mark Shephard, Interim Chief Executive
Zak Shell, Head Of Operations - Community Services
Tim Washington, Temporary Head of Corporate Landlord
Mike Butler, Managing Director, Peopletoo
5. Member and School Engagement Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Plasnewydd Primary 17 - 22
6. Forward Work Programme Update 23 - 32
7. Remodelling Fostering Services Project 33 - 46
8. Urgent Items
To consider any item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should by reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

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Yours faithfully

K Watson

Head of Legal and Regulatory Services

Councillors:

JPD Blundell

NA Burnett

RJ Collins

PA Davies

SK Dendy

DK Edwards

Councillors

J Gebbie

M Jones

DG Owen

B Sedgebeer

RME Stirman

JH Tildesley MBE

Councillors

LM Walters

KJ Watts

CA Webster

AJ Williams

cc Registered Representatives

Agenda Item 3

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - WEDNESDAY, 30 JANUARY 2019

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 30 JANUARY 2019 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor CA Webster – Chairperson

TH Beedle	JPD Blundell	NA Burnett	RJ Collins
J Gebbie	B Sedgebeer	RME Stirman	LM Walters
KJ Watts	AJ Williams		

Apologies for Absence

PA Davies and M Jones

Officers:

Andrew Rees	Democratic Services Manager
Tracy Watson	Scrutiny Officer

Invitees:

Carmen Beveridge	Head Teacher St Robert's R C Primary School
Hannah Castle	Head Teacher, Cynffig Comprehensive School
Neil Clode	Head Teacher, Llangwydd Primary School
Rhiannon Dixon	Head Teacher Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Y Ferch O'r Sger
Jeremy Evans	Head of Heronsbridge School
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Lisa James-Smith	Deputy Head Teacher Heronsbridge School
Meurig Jones	Head Teacher Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd
Angela Keller	Head Teacher Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School
Andy Rothwell	Senior Challenge Advisor Central South Consortium
Andrew Slade	Head Teacher, Porthcawl Comprehensive School
Councillor Charles Smith	Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration
Jeremy Thompson	Head Teacher Oldcastle Primary School
Andrew Williams	Assistant Managing Director Central South Consortium

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Declarations of Interest were made:

Councillor N Burnett declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 – Education Outcomes as her son attends Brynteg Comprehensive School.

Councillor J-P B Blundell declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 – Education Outcomes as a governor of Cefn Glas Infants School.

Councillor B Sedgebeer declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 – Education Outcomes as a governor of Pencoed Comprehensive School and Croesty Primary School.

Rev Canon E Evans declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 – Education Outcomes as he is a governor of Bryntirion Comprehensive School and his wife works for the Inclusion Service.

Councillor AJ Williams declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 – Education Outcomes as a governor of Coety Primary School and she has a child who attends Brynteg Comprehensive School.

Councillor R Stirman declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 – Education Outcomes as a governor of Tynyrheol Primary School.

Councillor C Webster declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 – Education Outcomes she has a child in Secondary education in the County Borough.

Councillor TH Beedle declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 – Education Outcomes as he is the Chair of the Bridgend Governors Association.

45. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 of 3 December 2018 be approved as a true and accurate record.

46. EDUCATION OUTCOMES

The Committee received a report which provided information relating to school categorisation, pupil attainment (including pupils with additional learning needs), challenges faced by schools and the work of the Central South Consortium.

The Corporate Director Education and Family Support clarified an inaccuracy in the report and commented that Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd leads and fully attends the Welsh Medium Hubs connected with Gyda'n Gilydd and Cyfleoedd+, which are which are funded through the Consortium, but also the work the school does with Cydag. The work of YG Llangynwyd had been noted within past Challenge Advisor reports and visits and that engagement happens across Welsh medium schools across the Consortium.

The Senior Challenge Advisor reported on the school categorisation information for 2018-19, which is currently being moderated and verified and due for release in February 2019. He highlighted the support categories of Bridgend schools over the last 3 years. He informed the Committee that most schools have shown an improvement in post-16 outcomes from a comparable baseline in 2011-12 and he illustrated the performance of Bridgend's secondary schools performance for the Level 3 threshold for pupils achieving 2 or more A levels A* to E. The Committee was further provided with information on the ranking of Bridgend schools for key stage 4; outcomes for foundation phase Outcome 5+ and 6+; key stage 2; outcomes for key stage 2 Level 4+ and 5+ and key stage 3; outcomes for key stage 3 Level 5+, 6+ and 7+. He stated that targets and actuals in key stage 2 were closely aligned with all targets being missed or exceeded by a small margin. For key stage 3, at level 5, targets were missed by a slightly wider margin than key stage 2, this is being addressed by Challenge Advisers to ensure that as many pupils as possible reach their targets and narrow the gap. Targets at Level 2+ threshold were missed by 7.8%, which requires further reduction to bring it in line with performance in 2015-16. He stated that the reduction represents a better understanding of the revised exam specification and the work that Challenge Advisers have undertaken in supporting schools.

The Committee asked what steps the Consortium is taking to get schools back to the Green category. The Senior Challenge Advisor informed the Committee that where a school moves from the Green to Yellow categorisation it demonstrates that it is getting

the required support. Schools in the Yellow category may get 10 days of support per year and schools will change during the year through leadership. The Assistant Managing Director of the Consortium informed the Committee that schools might have moved to the Yellow categorisation as they have identified the support needed. He commented that categorisation will have changed this year.

The Committee requested clarification of the support offered to schools. The Senior Challenge Advisor commented that a range of bespoke packages are offered to schools, with a very strong core support team in place. No schools are ever off the radar of the Consortium and are always kept safe.

The Committee questioned how the Consortium's targets are met. The Assistant Managing Director informed the Committee that the Consortium will produce a report each year for the Director of Education in respect of the performance of Bridgend schools.

The Committee questioned whether there is a correlation between categorisation and Estyn reports and which report will offer the best information. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support commented that sometimes the two reports bear little resemblance to each other, categorisation is to do with the support provided to support to schools and Estyn reports will measure different things.

The Committee asked for the Head Teachers' perspective on categorisation. The Head Teacher of Cynffig Comprehensive School informed the Committee there had been no change in the leadership of the school, but the school had moved from Yellow to Green to Red, while the Estyn inspection went from Green to Amber. Regular meetings are held with the Challenge Advisor and support to the leadership function had been accelerated. She stated that the experience of the Consortium is both supportive and challenging and other schools are encouraged to work with Cynffig and to learn from others. The Head Teacher of Cynffig informed the Committee that when the school was in the Green categorisation there was not as much input from the Consortium as now. The Assistant Managing Director of the Consortium informed the Committee that the Consortium had changed the way in which it works with schools in the Green categorisation with Challenge Advisors being asked to have more dialogue with those schools.

The Head Teacher of Heronsbridge School commented that it was about having the quality of support and he had received the best support from someone who had been in the same role which he occupies.

The Committee questioned the support available when teachers struggle to meet with new demands. The Head Teacher YG Llangynwyd commented that there is strong support in the Welsh medium sector with the Gyda'n Gilydd programme supporting new teachers. This programme had now been broadened out to support Welsh medium primary schools. He commented that education is constantly changing with different demands being placed on teachers, but he saw this as a positive step. The Committee questioned what happens when performance issues occur. The Head Teacher of YGG y Ferch O'r Sger commented that she had experienced this situation over a 3 year period which were health related, support was forthcoming and all the issues had now been resolved.

The Committee questioned whether there is too much pressure put on schools and if so, how is it managed. The Head Teacher of Heronsbridge School commented that success does breed success and schools and staff are asked to do more. He commented on the pioneer training programme in place, though schools were not forced to take part in this, but there is a need to strike a balance.

The Committee asked what leadership is given from within the Council. The Head Teacher of Heronsbridge School commented that the school would know as soon as it had received a bad report. The Head Teacher of Porthcawl Comprehensive commented there is more pressure to deliver results on the core subjects to meet targets, where there are also 2 tiers. The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration thanked the school leaders for their invaluable contribution and with professionalism comes the expectation that people will do more. The Head Teacher of Oldcastle Primary commented that schools are commissioned to do an increasingly diverse amount of projects and there is a culture of accountability.

The Committee questioned what steps are being taken to address subject leadership. The Assistant Managing Director of the Consortium informed the Committee that the Consortium has looked at developing a more strategic approach to schools upskilling their leadership, with schools being paired up. The Head Teacher of Porthcawl Comprehensive informed the Committee that the Head of English at Porthcawl and Cynffig Comprehensives meet regularly to solve issues.

The Committee requested views on the Festival of Learning. The Head Teacher of Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School commented that it had been very innovative and was a celebratory event, which all participants had benefitted hugely from. The Head Teacher of Heronsbridge commented on the range of workshops offered and that special schools were able to work with mainstream schools. He felt that the next Festival of Learning would be better. The Senior Challenge Advisor commented that he was struck by new innovations which had not been seen before. The Head Teacher of Porthcawl Comprehensive was similarly impressed at the innovation and fresh ideas which was also focused on the wellbeing and resilience of staff.

The Committee questioned the performance of Level 2 Science decreasing by -7%. The Senior Challenge Advisor informed the Committee that this was attributed to a change in the performance measure and to the curriculum. The Head Teacher of Porthcawl Comprehensive informed the Committee that the move away from BTEC Science to the WJEC Science had impacted results but he believed there would be an upturn in results next year. The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration commented on the importance of BTEC qualifications as benefitting individual students and believed there had been an error made by the Welsh Government in removing BTEC Science qualification from schools. The Committee questioned whether the drop in performance in Science was solely due to the removal of BTEC and why were schools not warned of the change. The Senior Challenge Advisor commented there had been a similar picture across Wales to performance in Bridgend. The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration commented that the change made was unwise and incorrect. The Head Teacher of YG Llangynwyd commented that the change had been implemented halfway through the learning pathway, which was a massive shift for any school to accommodate. He stated that the BTEC course is a well-accepted course for a number of different career paths. He also stated that the Welsh Government had introduced a requirement for double GCSE and schools were having to spread themselves too thinly, along with the difficulty in recruiting Science Teachers. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support informed the Committee that a change will be seen in performance and Heads of Science Departments know exactly where they need to be.

The Committee questioned whether the Consortium is experiencing difficulties in recruitment. The Assistant Managing Director of the Consortium informed the Committee that the Consortium benefits from regional working and was not experiencing difficulty in recruiting, with new members of staff being recruited in the area of Science. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support commented on the impressive

practice of school improvement throughout the schools in the County Borough and there is a lot of good practice to share.

The Committee questioned the roles of the Consortium and the local authority to ensure there is no duplication and equally there are no gaps in provision. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support commented that the introduction of a Consortium was a very new model, but there are clear roles and responsibility. He informed the Committee that he holds regular meetings with the Consortium where he is able to hold the Consortium to account. The Senior Challenge Advisor confirmed the Consortium is held to account by the local authority and is heavily supported in terms of the support given to the authority. The Head Teacher of Heronsbridge commented that he believed there to be a small gap in responsibilities between the Consortium and local authority.

The Committee questioned whether new Head Teachers are offered a mentoring package. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support commented that all new Heads are offered mentoring and professional support and there is a very good network of support in Bridgend. The Head of YG Llangynwyd informed the Committee that he had previously received mentoring support and he was now providing that mentoring support to another.

The Committee commented that it did not believe the report reflected the work of the Consortium. The Committee questioned what steps could be taken to encourage schools to become more engaged with the Consortium. The Senior Challenge Advisor commented that networking meetings are held regularly and there could be a host of reasons why schools are not able to attend. He confirmed there is a host of networking taking place and data available to schools. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support also confirmed there is a lot of good work and positive things going on to support schools, with some really high achieving schools and delivering fantastic pastoral care. The Committee commented that this good practice needs to be shared with the public as schools do receive unfair criticism. The Head Teacher of Heronsbridge commented that the 2 special schools within the County Borough should not be included in the Table showing schools' attendance at network meetings as they use different network meetings.

The Committee expressed concern that a number of outcomes at Key Stages 2 and 3 did not meet targets and questioned the steps being taken to rectify that performance. The Committee also expressed concern at the standard of written English of students in Higher Education. The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration stated that the standard of written English was due to a lack of nursery education in some cases and that nursery education should be left alone from budget cuts. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support commented that improving levels of literacy is a challenge and there is good work taking place in Bridgend to improve literacy levels, with wellbeing, safeguarding and literacy being the focus. He stated that the standard of literacy amongst boys is a concern, with Bridgend being below the Wales average at Key Stage 2 and 4 and he stressed the importance of getting things right as far as literacy levels are concerned. The Head Teacher of Cynffig Comprehensive stated there is a push to improve English grammar which would mean changes for the better. The drop in standards of English literacy was not unique to Wales.

The Committee questioned whether good practice was shared in England. The Assistant Managing Director of the Consortium informed the Committee that the Consortium had recently appointed retired Head Teachers to assist schools in ensuring pupils are prepared properly around PISA. He stated that PISA tests took place in the autumn and there needs to be a focus on education outcomes for pupils. The Head of Heronsbridge stated that it was very difficult to pinpoint responsibility but of utmost importance is outcomes for children.

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - WEDNESDAY, 30 JANUARY 2019

The Committee requested that any future reports on education outcomes be sent to Head Teachers to give some narrative. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support to do that. The Head Teacher of YGG Y Ferch O'r Sger commented that schools set themselves targets which are designed to be challenging. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support commented that he was encouraged that aspirational targets are set by schools and that he wanted all schools to be ambitious.

The Committee requested further information on Pupil Referral Units improving education and life outcomes. The Assistant Managing Director of the Consortium informed the Committee that a meeting had taken place yesterday with PRUs in order to signpost support for them. He stated that 3 PRUs had recently been reviewed and there is a need to have shared accountability, facilitate support and funding.

The Committee requested the Cabinet Member's long term vision for education in the County Borough. The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration said he would come back with a response.

The Committee commented there needs to be more scrutiny of the work of the Consortium and questioned how that same level of support would be offered when the authority is proposing to reduce its contribution to the Consortium. The Assistant Managing Director of the Consortium informed the Committee that there are a number of layers of scrutiny within the Consortium and that he would meeting the Corporate Director Education and Family Support tomorrow who would be challenging the Consortium. He stated that the Consortium was having to be smarter in its use of resources with authorities reducing their contributions.

The Committee asked whether the Consortium believed educational outcomes are improving. The Assistant Managing Director of the Consortium commented that a conference was being held on 20 February where it would be looking at what cultural change needs to happen to support school leavers. He stated that poverty has increased and there is a need to support those youngsters. The Committee considered that support to young carers should also be considered. The Assistant Managing Director of the Consortium informed the Committee that further support would need to be considered particularly in light of changes in Additional Learning Needs legislation. He also informed the Committee that despite the Consortium's funding reducing by 19%, educational outcomes had improved year on year and the Consortium had continued to be successful in its delivery.

The Committee asked the Head Teachers what would be the impact of a reduction in budgets to schools. The Head Teachers commented that with austerity measures there was very little that could be done without affecting staff, resulting in larger and split classes, there would be difficulty in offering a full curriculum and attracting staff and Heads felt their positions could become untenable. The Head Teachers also commented that there would be a negative impact on learners.

The Committee thanked the Head Teachers and representatives of the Consortium for their contribution.

Conclusions

Members requested that the report would benefit from additional narrative. It was recommended that next year's report comes back to Scrutiny in 12 months' time.

Members welcomed the input from staff from those schools present, and recommended that it would be useful for next time to have input from schools in the Red Category to understand their journey better, as well as other schools.

Members raised concern that large events organised by the WG, LA's and CSC should be synchronised to avoid diary clashes for head teachers. Members recommended writing to the WG, LA and CSC to ask them to consider allowing greater co-ordination and lead times to avoid clashes with other high profile events and exam periods.

Members asked Cllr Smith if he could set out his long term vision for Education in BCBC and what this would look like.

While it was acknowledged that schools have made use of informal networks, this is not captured in the report. It was therefore recommended that this data is included in future reports.

Members questioned what support CSC was giving to governing bodies in respect of managing their budgets?

It was also noted by Members that training for governors seemed to have moved geographically and is often provided out of the Borough? Members require further clarification on this.

Members asked what the process looked like for those underperforming teachers involved within the capability route, how many had gone through this process in the last 12 months and are currently going through the process?

Members noted that due to budget constraints, some schools are likely to have a higher number of new qualified teachers. What pathway of support is given to these teachers from CSC?

While acknowledging the benefits of school-to-school working, members would like to be assured that the workload of staff at highly effective schools is not being negatively impacted by such arrangements.

47. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Forward Work Programme and informed the Committee that following a meeting of the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees Chairs the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 at its meeting would consider a report on the Homelessness Strategy and that members of this Committee would be invited to attend.

48. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 12:00

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1
29 APRIL 2019

REPORT OF THE INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CORPORATE LANDLORD

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to update Committee on progress being made in implementing a “Corporate Landlord” model across the authority’s property portfolio, achievements to date and next steps, including the link with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1** The report contributes to the following outcome within the Corporate Plan 2016-20:

Priority 1 – Supporting a successful economy - taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.

Priority 3 – Smarter use of resources - ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council’s priorities.

3. Background

- 3.1** The Council had historically managed its property portfolio in a dispersed manner. Prior to commencement of the Corporate Landlord Project, responsibility for the Council’s estate was spread over three directorates and multiple service areas, leading to an inconsistent and ad-hoc approach to property.

- 3.2** Corporate Landlord is recognised as the good or best practice model for estate and property management in the public sector, and is endorsed by numerous industry bodies including the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), who through their Strategic Assets Network (SAN) series of training have released a number of documents, Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) in their “Property Asset Management Guidelines

2nd Edition”, and Government; *“This principle was identified as an example of best-practice in the Welsh Government Report: A Regional Approach to Collaboration: Cwm Taf Pilot Study – Final Report.*

- 3.3 In its simplest terms, Corporate Landlord is about centralising all property related functions under a single integrated team, allowing them to be managed corporately and strategically, and importantly freeing up time for the service areas to focus on their core objectives, rather than on running buildings.
- 3.4 The Council has almost 1,000 assets, of which over 400 are buildings. The Council spends around £20,000,000 of revenue funding a year on these assets, including over £4,000,000 on staff. This is in addition to the Council’s capital programme, with over £70,000,000 being spent on new schools alone.
- 3.5 Peopletoo, a nationally recognised consultancy with a specialism in this type of work, have been working in partnership with Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) Communities Directorate over the last 18 months to transform Built Environment services, and help the Council move towards an integrated Corporate Landlord service.
- 3.6 The financial challenge for BCBC is reflected in the Corporate Plan and the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The financial forecast for 2019-23 is predicated on £35 million budget reductions, which is in addition to the £30 million budget reductions made over the last four years. The MTFS identified that, of the likely £35 million, £21 million is to be developed and £5 million is at red risk. In support of making smarter use of resources, the Council has set out its aims:
 - To achieve the budget reductions identified in the MTFS;
 - To improve the efficiency of, and access to, services by redesigning our systems and processes;
 - To make the most of our physical assets, including school buildings;
 - To develop the culture and skills required to meet the needs of a changing organisation; and
 - To make the most of our spend on goods and services.

4 Current Situation/Proposal

- 4.1 Significant progress has been made on this project, and the Council now operates a Corporate Landlord Model:
- 4.2 There are three key areas under Corporate Landlord coordinated by a single point of accountability and control – the Interim Group Manager of Corporate Landlord, now reporting into the Head of Operations – Communities.

Define & Plan – Strategic Asset Management & Investment

Responsible for developing asset management plans to ensure the asset base meets the needs of the Council. Acts as “client agent” for service areas. The team is predominantly made up of Surveyors and Asset Managers.

Create & Deliver – Major Projects

Responsible for design and construction of new capital assets and major refurbishments, including the ambitious C21st Schools Programme. The team is predominantly made up of Architects, Designers, Surveyors and Engineers.

Operate & Maintain – Total Facilities Management

Responsible for maintaining and operating the estate, including management of repairs and maintenance. The team is predominantly made up of Facilities Management [FM] professionals, surveyors and tradespeople.

These three teams work as a single business unit to ensure proactive management of the Council's estate.

- 4.3 On creation of the above service, all of the Core Building Budgets were transferred to the new team. Facilities Management is usually split between “Hard FM” (building repairs, maintenance and compliance) and “Soft FM” (cleaning and caretaking). The majority of Hard FM budgets were also centralised, and it is these newly centralised budgets where most of the savings have been delivered, primarily through economies of scale and joined up thinking.
- 4.4 Savings of over £500k were removed from the budget for 2018/19 but achievement cannot be confirmed until the completion of financial closedown, also delivering additional added value and avoided cost. Significant further savings initiatives are currently being developed and agreed. Quality improvements have been made across the board, including a noticeable improvement on asset compliance and customer satisfaction. Numerous innovative sub-projects include a new integrated technology system, new approach to compliance, new schools Service Level Agreement's (SLA's) and a shift to sustainable, proactive estate management across the portfolio.
- 4.5 The new Corporate Landlord service is well integrated and acts as a solid platform on which to launch additional assistance for asset and property based change projects. The next phase of this project, between April 2019 and October 2020 looks at strategic shift to become more sustainable, including planned preventive maintenance. The scope of Corporate Landlord will also be expanded and remaining Hard FM budgets and all Soft FM budgets will now be centralised, with the teams replicating the original process to deliver further savings from these newly centralised budgets. Under the next phase the service area will also become more intelligent, moving to an integrated technology system to get better insights and understanding, and improve productivity. The service will also be further commercialising and offering additional traded services to schools and other customers to improve economies of scale.

- 4.6 The Council is currently in the process of procuring the next phase of this project, expected in April 2019, including confirming costs of delivery and anticipated savings, to ensure a robust return on investment for the authority. Following the commissioning of the next phase, we will be able to provide an update to scrutiny report, including details of future savings and plans.

5 Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.

6 Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

7 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

- 7.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be positive impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.
- a. The new service model implemented under “Total Facilities Management” (or TFM) aspect of the Corporate Landlord Model has a mixed economy of insourced and outsourced services. The Insourced “Direct Labour Organisation” (or DLO) supports the Well-being of Future Generations Act through the provision of training, development and apprentice roles as well as through the new “Strategic Maintenance” function, focusing on long term sustainability across our built estate.
 - b. The new approach being developed for sustainable procurement under the Corporate Landlord Service will have a strong emphasis on community and social value, further increasing the positive impact on the FGA2015.

8 Financial implications

- 8.1 The Corporate Landlord Project was required to deliver savings of £500,000 in the MTFs for 2018/19.
- 8.2 Additional savings of £350,000 are identified in the proposed MTFs for 2020/21. It is likely there will be some implementation costs of the next phase of this project, however the authority is taking a commercial approach to procurement of these services and will ensure that a strong, positive return on investment is generated for the authority as part of any such procurement.

9 Recommendation

9.1 That the Committee note and comment on the content of this report.

Contact Officer: Mark Shephard, Interim Chief Executive

Background documents:

None

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

29 APRIL 2019

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES

MEMBER AND SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – PLASNEWYDD PRIMARY

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the Committee with the findings and recommendations from a Member and School Engagement Panel (MSEP) meeting with Plasnewydd Primary School.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 This report relates to the following Corporate Priorities:

- Supporting a successful economy – taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
- Helping people to be more self-reliant – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.
- Smarter use of resources – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council's Scrutiny function has an important role to play in enhancing the transparency and accountability of public services. The purpose of engaging Head Teachers together with Chairs of Governors with Members of Scrutiny is to explore school performance with a view to improving levels of understanding in support of the Committee's accountability function.
- 3.2 Plasnewydd Primary School had been highlighted as a school for the Panel to consider with the rationale that the school currently has a Red status under the National Schools Categorisation System.
- 3.3 The MSEP met with the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors and Officers from the Education and Family Support Directorate on 11 March 2019.

3.4 The Panel received detailed information to assist them in their deliberations and development of questions including recent school data, Estyn reports, the School Post Inspection Action Plan and the Authority's Statement of Action.

4. Current situation / proposal.

4.1 Following their discussions with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors, the Panel highlighted a series of key points and recommendations:

Key Points

- a) The Headteacher reported that the priority for the school was always on wellbeing particularly given the number of vulnerable pupils attending the school.
- b) Regarding questioning around timescales and the pace of progress, the Headteacher informed the Panel that whilst they would like to progress change faster, unfortunately policies and process were holding things up.
- c) The Panel were advised that they were looking at restructuring the leadership team.
- d) Recent staff training has focused on how to make classrooms more differentiation friendly. There is more focus on monitoring and tracking pupils, raising expectations of both pupils and staff. There is ongoing work with St Marys and St Patricks schools on upskilling teachers on the Foundation Phase and the school were also looking at Maes Y Haul for good practice. It was further reported that there have been improvements in sharing best practice across the school.
- e) The Headteacher reported that they have experienced difficulties in engaging with parents and as a result have difficulties in recruiting Parent Governors from the local community with persistent vacancies.
- f) Work was being undertaken to try and engage parents more, such as Family Learning Sessions, workshops and parent evenings. There was particular focus on Year 3 parents due to the transition at this stage but there was a suggestion that this engagement needed to be a lot earlier, possibly even from birth for potentially vulnerable families.
- g) The Headteacher advised that more multi-agency support was needed. The Panel were advised that the Health Authority have now appointed a dedicated Learning Officer who will attend education meetings. The Senior Challenge Adviser stated that an example of good practice was used by Gwent Police when they contact schools immediately on a Monday morning if there has been an incident over the weekend, however schools in other localities do not receive this information.
- h) In relation to the school's preparations for the introduction of the new curriculum, the Panel were advised that planning was being undertaken around new areas of learning and experiences, with a tracking literacy and numeracy focus. Leadership planning and reporting for this was a particular focus to ensure the

messages were being cascaded down throughout the school as well as fed back to monitor and review.

- i) Following a comment from the Headteacher regarding an increasing intake of pupils from local Welsh Medium schools, the Group Manager Inclusion and School Improvement reported that the Authority is undertaking a piece of work into such movements of pupils across the County Borough.
- j) On the subject of School Governors, the Panel were advised that Governors were now heavily involved in the school, with pupils and staff able to recognise them. Staff were now directly feeding back to Governors. There was recognition that there was a need to continuously renew training. The school has received bespoke training through a Consultant Governor and has developed a Governor Pack. The school still had ongoing vacancies for both Parent Governors and Local Authority vacancies.
- k) The Headteacher reported that there were difficulties regarding the environment for Foundation Phase in that it was not necessarily fit for purpose with no designated green space for the pupils. However, the school has looked at different ways of providing these experiences such as mud kitchens and visits outside of the school to green spaces.

4.2 Recommendations made by the Panel

Recommendations to the Authority

- a) In order to support the school further the Panel recommend that the Authority look at putting in 'Team Around the School' support (group of practitioners working with a particular child or young person and their family) for Plasnewydd Primary as soon as possible.
- b) The Panel recommend that a direct and urgent connection be made with a school when social services have been involved, such as over a weekend, with a particular pupil of that school. Members stressed the need for a prompt reaction from social services to ensure that a school is made aware so that they are ready and able to provide immediate support to that child in an appropriate way.

Recommendations to School/Consortium

- c) The Panel recommend that the Governor Pack that Plasnewydd Primary has recently developed with their Challenge Advisor be considered for sharing across other schools in the County Borough with a view to assisting other School Governing Bodies.
- d) The Panel recommend that School Governors from Plasnewydd Primary School consider visiting and attending School Governor meetings in other schools in order to view best practice and possibly obtain ideas which could be adapted and used within their own school. Furthermore, the Panel recommend that the Consortium and the Authority promote this method for all School Governing Bodies so that they can optimise on the best practice that is available throughout the County Borough and ultimately improve school performance across schools.

- e) Following confirmation of the two Local Authority School Governor Vacancies, the Panel recommend that a job description be provided for advertising these vacancies so that individuals understand what the position entails and furthermore that different ways of advertising be considered.

Further points for Scrutiny

- f) Based on evidence received, the Panel requested that a scoping exercise be carried out by Scrutiny Officers to determine whether there is an item suitable for Scrutiny in relation to the movement of pupils from Welsh Schools to English schools within the County Borough.
- g) The Panel expressed concerns over Governor training and whether it was sufficient enough to enable School Governors to carry out their role effectively. The Panel requested that this be investigated by Scrutiny with a view to a recommendation that Governor training be reviewed and improved to make it more effective and fit for purpose. Members proposed that a job description, for example, be provided when schools advertise for Parent Governors to ensure that the right people apply for the position and understand what is expected of them.
- h) The Panel agreed to monitor the performance of the school, reviewing it again early next year when results are published to determine whether they wish to carry out any further investigation into the school.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

- 5.1 The work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees undertakes the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Council's Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 There are no equality implications directly attached to this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment

- 7.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:

- Long-term - The work of the Member and School Engagement Panel supports the improvement of standards and outcomes in schools.
- Prevention - Monitoring school performance allows the Authority to identify trends over time and to identify areas of good practice to be shared to help raise standards and to identify areas for school development. In making

recommendations for change and further exploration by Scrutiny, the aim is to prevent standards from slipping across the County Borough.

- Integration - Providing effective Member and School Engagement Panel support, has a positive impact on well-being objectives through engagement with schools. This ultimately means that learners can learn and achieve and can play active roles in their communities, contributing positively to society as a whole.
- Collaboration - The Member and School Engagement Panel and Scrutiny Committees work specifically with Local Authority Officers, schools and with the Central South Consortium (CSC) to help towards the delivery of the well-being objectives related to school improvement. Receiving information from those listed assists in the production of recommendations that are made to a combination of all those involved to support the delivery of school improvement.
- Involvement – The work of the Member and School Engagement Panel and the Scrutiny Committee involves Officers from within the Authority, CSC, schools including Headteachers and Chairs of Governors to identify areas for improvement, further support and future monitoring.

8. Financial Implications.

8.1 There are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

9. Recommendation.

9.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Accept the comments and recommendations of the Member and School Engagement Panel in relation to Plasnewydd Primary School;
- b) Determine whether it wishes to send the comments and recommendations to Cabinet, the Directorate and the Consortium for a response.

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Background documents

None

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

29 APRIL 2019

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

1. Purpose of the Report

- a) To present the items prioritised by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee including the next item delegated to this Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- b) To present the Committee with a list of further potential items for comment and prioritisation;
- c) To ask the Committee to identify any further items for consideration using the pre-determined criteria form;
- d) To consider and approve the feedback from the previous meetings of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 and note the list of responses including any still outstanding at Appendix A.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The key improvement objectives identified in the Corporate Plan 2016–2020 have been embodied in the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes. The Corporate Improvement Objectives were adopted by Council on 1 March 2017 and formally set out the improvement objectives that the Council will seek to implement between 2016 and 2020. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees engage in review and development of plans, policy or strategies that support the Corporate Themes.

3. Background

- 3.1 Under the terms of Bridgend County Borough Council's Constitution, each Overview and Scrutiny Committee must publish a Forward Work Programme (FWP) as far as it is known.
- 3.2 An effective FWP will identify the issues that the Committee wishes to focus on during the year and provide a clear rationale as to why particular issues have been selected, as well as the approach that will be adopted; i.e. will the Committee be undertaking a policy review/ development role ("Overview") or performance management approach ("Scrutiny").

Feedback

- 3.3 All conclusions made at Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SOSC) meetings, as well as recommendations and requests for information should be responded to by Officers, to ensure that there are clear outcomes from each topic investigated.
- 3.4 These will then be presented to the relevant Scrutiny Committee at their next meeting to ensure that they have had a response.
- 3.5 When each topic has been considered and the Committee is satisfied with the outcome, the SOSC will then present their findings to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) who will determine whether to remove the item from the FWP or to re-add for further prioritisation at a future date.
- 3.6 The FWPs will remain flexible and will be revisited at each COSC meeting with input from each SOSC and any information gathered from FWP meetings with Corporate Directors and Cabinet.

4. Current Situation / Proposal

- 4.1 Attached at **Appendix B** is the overall FWP for the SOSCs which includes the topics prioritised by the COSC for the next set of SOSCs in Table A, as well as topics that were deemed important for future prioritisation at Table B. This has been compiled from suggested items from each of the SOSCs at previous meetings as well as the COSC. It also includes information proposed from Corporate Directors, detail from research undertaken by Scrutiny Officers and information from FWP Development meetings between the Scrutiny Chairs and Cabinet.
- 4.2 The Committee is asked to first consider the next topic they have been allocated by the COSC in Table A and determine what further detail they would like the report to contain, what questions they wish Officers to address and if there are any further invitees they wish to attend for this meeting to assist Members in their investigation.
- 4.3 The Committee is also asked to then prioritise up to six items from the list in Table B to present to the COSC for formal prioritisation and designation to each SOSC for the next set of meetings.

Corporate Parenting

- 4.4 Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility of a local authority towards looked after children and young people. This is a legal responsibility given to local authorities by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. The role of the Corporate Parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The Council as a whole is the 'corporate parent', therefore all Members have a level of responsibility for the children and young people looked after by Bridgend.

- 4.5 In this role, it is suggested that Members consider how each item they consider affects children in care and care leavers, and in what way can the Committee assist in these areas.
- 4.6 Scrutiny Champions can greatly support the Committee in this by advising them of the ongoing work of the Cabinet-Committee and particularly any decisions or changes which they should be aware of as Corporate Parents.

Identification of Further Items

- 4.7 The Committee are reminded of the Criteria form which Members can use to propose further items for the FWP which the Committee can then consider for prioritisation at a future meeting. The Criteria Form emphasises the need to consider issues such as impact, risk, performance, budget and community perception when identifying topics for investigation and to ensure a strategic responsibility for Scrutiny and that its work benefits the organisation.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

- 5.1 The work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Council's Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend. Any changes to the structure of the Scrutiny Committees and the procedures relating to them would require the Bridgend County Borough Council constitution to be updated.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 There are no equality implications attached to this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment

- 7.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:

- Long-term - The approval of this report will assist in the Planning of Scrutiny business in both the short-term and in the long-term on its policies, budget and service delivery
- Prevention - The early preparation of the Forward Work Programme allows for the advance planning of Scrutiny business where Members are provided an opportunity to influence and improve decisions before they are made by Cabinet
- Integration - The report supports all the wellbeing objectives

- Collaboration - Consultation on the content of the Forward Work Programme has taken place with the Corporate Management Board, Heads of Service, Elected Members and members of the public
- Involvement - Advanced publication of the Forward Work Programme ensures that the public and stakeholders can view topics that will be discussed in Committee meetings and are provided with the opportunity to engage.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications attached to this report.

9. Recommendations

9.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- (i) Approve the feedback from the previous meetings of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 and note the list of responses including any still outstanding at Appendix A;
- (ii) Identify any additional information the Committee wish to receive on their next item delegated to them by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other items in the overall FWP shown in Appendix B;
- (iii) Identify any additional items using the criteria form, for consideration on the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.

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Background documents

None

Date	Item	Members wished to make the following comments and conclusions:	Response/Comments
30/01/2019	Education Outcomes	<i>Members made the following recommendations</i>	Emailed 20 February 2019 Chased 5 March 2019 15 April 2019 Presented to CMB 14 March 2019
		Members requested that the report would benefit from additional narrative. It was recommended that next year's report comes back to Scrutiny in 12 months' time.	
		Members welcomed the input from staff from those schools present, and recommended that it would be useful for next time to have input from schools in the Red Category to understand their journey better, as well as other schools.	
		Members raised concern that large events organised by the WG, LA's and CSC should be synchronised to avoid diary clashes for head teachers. Members recommended writing to the WG, LA and CSC to ask them to consider allowing greater co-ordination and lead times to avoid clashes with other high profile events and exam periods.	N/A
		Members asked Cllr Smith if he could set out his long term vision for Education in BCBC and what this would look like.	Cllr Smith will be happy to provide a brief, high level, strategic statement, once he has consulted political colleagues and officers to ensure its compatibility with lower level statements that pervade our various policy documents.
		While it was acknowledged that schools have made use of informal networks, this is not captured in the report. It was therefore recommended that this data is included in future reports.	
		Members questioned what support CSC was giving to governing bodies in respect of managing their budgets?	

		<p>It was also noted by Members that training for governors seemed to have moved geographically and is often provided out of the Borough? Members require further clarification on this.</p>	
		<p>Members asked what the process looked like for those underperforming teachers involved within the capability route, how many had gone through this process in the last 12 months and are currently going through the process?</p>	
		<p>Members noted that due to budget constraints, some schools are likely to have a higher number of new qualified teachers. What pathway of support is given to these teachers from CSC?</p>	
		<p>While acknowledging the benefits of school-to-school working, members would like to be assured that the workload of staff at highly effective schools is not being negatively impacted by such arrangements.</p>	

Scrutiny Forward Work Programme

The following items were previously prioritised by the Subject OVS Committees and considered by Corporate at its last meeting where the top three items were scheduled in for the next round of meetings:

Date	Subject Committee	Item	Specific Information to request	Rationale for prioritisation	Proposed date	Suggested Invitees	Prioritised by Committees
Page 29 29-Apr-19	SOSC 1	MSEP	Panel report to committee to adopt recommendations			N/A	
29-Apr-19	SOSC 1	Review of Fostering Project Information only	Further project as part of the Remodelling Children's Social Services - Detail regarding the upskilling of three internal foster carers to provide intensive, therapeutic step down placements as part of Residential Remodelling project - Review of the foster carer marketing and recruitment strategy at a draft/early stage to allow members input into the process	COSC have proposed that this item be considered by a future SOSC 1 for continuity purposes	Corporate Director proposed October 2018 Prioritised by SOSC1 for February 2019	N/A	
29-Apr-19	SOSC 1	Corporate Landlord	Item proposed by Corporate Director. Report ready to go. To provide information on the Corporate Landlord model and the budget reduction proposals allocated to the implementation and roll out. Following presentation to members - awaiting for confirmation is item should still come to scrutiny.			Cllr Hywel Williams Mark Sheppard, Interim Chief Executive Zak Shell, Head Of Operations - Community Services Tim Washington, Temporary Head of Corporate Landlord Josh Dunn, Services Director, Peopletoo	
01-May-19	SOSC 1/2/3	Forward Work Programme Workshop	To discuss and propose additional items for future consideration on the Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes. Discussion be held around the possibility of engaging other staff representatives of the Authority in scrutiny meetings and discussions to gain a more in depth understanding of service provision.			N/A	
03-Jun-19	SOSC 1	Communications and Engagement	Is corporate communications meeting the needs of the various departments within the organisation to effectively communicate with residents - Cllr Watts has requested that points of view are collected from members of the public. Current data of engagement Are current KPIs an effective measurement in a fast changing digital world How do we engage with corporate communications with the digitally excluded - Cllr Stirman has requested that points of view are collected from older, less mobile and non digitally enabled members of the public. Media bias Welsh Language/Other Languages	SOSC 3 Prioritised this item - 18 March 2019		Mark Shephard, Interim Chief Executive Corporate Communications Representative Cllr Dhanisha Patel, Cabinet Member Future generations and Wellbeing Liam Ronan, Communications Manager Emma Blandon, Communications, Marketing and Engagement Manager Bob Phillips, Communications Officer Martin Morgans, Head of Performance and Partnership Services Liz Bradfield, Local Democracy Reporter Welsh Language Representatives Public Representatives	
05-Jun-19	SOSC 2	POST 16 ALN Review	To receive details on the findings of the review undertaken of post 16 for learners with Additional Learning Needs.		No time restrictions from Corporate Director	Lindsay Harvey, Interim Corporate Director - Education and Family Support; Cllr Charles Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration; Nicola Echanis, Head of Education and Early Help; Michelle Hatcher, Group Manager Inclusion and School Improvement; Andy Rothwell, CSC Senior Challenge Advisor;	
12-Jun-19	SOSC 3	Waste	Pre-Scrutiny - To receive report detailing the direction of travel for the Waste Contract - for comments and recommendations		Some time during 2019/20	Mark Shephard, Interim Chief Executive Cllr Richard Young, Cabinet Member – Communities; Cllr Hywel Williams, Deputy Leader; Zak Shell, Head of Operations - Community Services	

TABLE B

Item	Description	Rationale for prioritisation	Proposed date	Suggested Invitees	
Page 30 CIW National Review into LAC Information only	The Committee requested that the outcome of the CIW investigation into Looked After Children be provided to Scrutiny for information when it becomes available.		Self assessment and action plan due at end of year. Outcome report should be ready for March.	N/A	
Review of Enforcement Vehicle	In February 2018 SOSC 3 requested to receive an update on the enforcement vehicle to enable Members to monitor performance 6-12 after implementation. Possibly an information report. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed feedback on the vehicles use; • Agreed route for vehicle along with timings; • How are the recordings reviewed? • Statistics in relation to letters sent and details of enforcement. <p><i>May incorporate with report to Committee on Health and Safety in Schools</i> <i>COSC agreed that the item titled 'Review of Enforcement Vehicle' needed to be more than just an information report but possibly too small for it to be an individual item. The Committee proposed that this be considered as part of another related topic. The scrutiny officer agreed to take the comments back and see possibly where it could fit in with another item;</i></p>	SOSC 3 Prioritised this item - 18 March 2019			
Remodelling Children's Residential Services Project	SOSC 1 requested that the item be followed up by Scrutiny in the future for monitoring purposes, incorporating evidence of outcomes. <i>A report is due to go to Corporate Parenting 6 March 2019. Do Members want to receive as information only or as a discussion item?</i>		Corporate Director proposed early 2019	Susan Cooper, Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing; Cllr Phil White, Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help;	
Home to School Transport	To provide assurances on rationalisation of Learner Transport as far as possible in order to make budget savings: Update on pilot that school transport team proposing to run in Spring and Summer terms 2017-2018 - to support the enforcement of bus passes on home to school transport contracts. As part of this pilot, the Authority is also investigating opportunities to track the use of our school bus services by individual pupils. Update on Recommendation from BREP: The Panel recommend the need for the Authority to adopt a Corporate approach in relation to Home to School Transport maximising the LA's minibuses such as those used for day centres. It is proposed that this be supported by slightly amending the opening and closing times of day centres so that the buses can be available for school transport. Other aspects that could be considered include the exploration of whether school staff could transport children and young people instead of hiring independent drivers. To test and scrutinise the current licensing and school transport regime to gain assurances that it provides adequate protection against the potential of putting children and vulnerable children at risk from those who are in a position of trust. Changes to the DBS status of their employees to be scrutinised to ensure that children are not being put at undue risk. To provide robust scrutiny and recommendations on how the current regime can be improved. To provide assurances to the public and maintain public confidence in the system of school transport Report to include Update on the current arrangements of how licensing and school transport operates within the County Borough since the change in 2015 to the Police National Policy for disclosing non-conviction information to the local authority. Information to include a report from South Wales Police on its approach to disclosing information it holds about licencees following arrests, charges and convictions. What is the current relationship between the local authority's licensing and school transport departments in relation to the disclosure of information from South Wales police? Is there sufficient oversight on behalf of the local authority and a risk of contractors withholding information which may prejudice the continuation of their contract? Further proposed that Communities be invited to add to report and attend meeting to update Committee on safe routes assessment to determine what work has been undertaken since funding was allocated to this over a year ago.		Receipt of the external review of transport report not due until June/July Scrutiny to consider home-to-school transport from July onwards.	Lindsay Harvey, Corporate Director - Education and Family Support; Cllr Phil White, Cabinet Member for Social Services & Early Help (To stand in for Cllr Smith); Cllr Richard Young, Cabinet Member Communities Nicola Echanis, Head of Education and Early Help. Mark Shephard, Interim Chief Executive; Zak Shell, Head Of Operations - Community Services; Robin Davies, Group Manager Business Strategy and Performance; Sue Cooper, Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing.	

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 31</p> <p>Safeguarding</p>	<p>To include: Safeguarding activity in both Children and Adult Services; Safeguarding arrangements in Cwm Taf.</p> <p>To include information on Child & Adult Practice Reviews - details of reviews over last 12 months - what recommendations have come out of them, how have they been responded to, how have they helped inform future work to help safeguard children & adults.</p> <p><i>Possibly invite SOSC 1 to attend also.</i></p>		<p>Should receive an annual update. Last received in July 2018.</p>	<p>Susan Cooper Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing; Cllr Phil White, Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help; Jacqueline Davies, Head of Adult Social Care; Laura Kinsey, Head of Children's Social Care; Elizabeth Walton James, Group Manager Safeguarding and Quality Assurance; Terri Warrilow, Adult Safeguarding and Quality Manager; Representation from Police; Representation from Health.</p>	
<p>Member and School Engagement Panel - Annual Report</p>	<p>Annual Update to - SOSC 1 on the work of the Member and School Engagement Panel</p>			<p>Spring term 2019 - Plasnewydd Primary School; Summer term 2019 - Ogmores Vale Primary School; Autumn term 2019 - Tynyrheol Primary School.</p>	
<p>Strategic Review of Health & Safety Responsibilities</p>	<p>In light of the recent Crown Court Case where the Authority pleaded guilty to serious breaches of Health & Safety legislation after the death of a young pupil at Maesteg Comprehensive. Practice, Policy and review of reported "near misses".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How many near misses have been reported? - How did we respond? - What lessons have been learnt? <p>With reference to a recommendation made by BREP 2018 - The Panel request that an assessment of School Crossing Patrol and possible alternatives is included in this report</p> <p>Scrutiny Chairs have agreed to carry out an 'Information Gathering' exercise, interviewing representatives from schools, governors from schools and parents to present alongside the Officer report. Item to include information gathered from Scrutiny Chairs Research Group</p>	<p>Lindsay Harvey, Interim Corporate Director - Education and Family Support; Cllr Charles Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration; Health and Safety rep</p>	<p>Wait it after scrutiny research group completed</p>		
<p>Local Authority Estyn Report</p>			<p>Timings TBC - when go to Cabinet and then to Scrutiny</p>	<p>Lindsay Harvey, Interim Corporate Director - Education and Family Support; Cllr Charles Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration; Nicola Echanis, Head of Education and Early Help; Andy Rothwell, CSC Senior Challenge Advisor; Managing Director CSC</p>	
<p>Post 16 Education - Consultation</p>	<p>Report scheduled to go to Cabinet in April 2019 incorporating comments from Scrutiny. This is a further report to receive hard options now going forward for Post-16 Education. Incorporate Penybont model- for discussion</p>		<p>Timings TBC with SIG - when go to Cabinet and Scrutiny etc around Oct 2019 approx</p>	<p>Lindsay Harvey, Interim Corporate Director - Education and Family Support; Cllr Charles Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration; Nicola Echanis, Head of Education and Early Help; Andy Rothwell, CSC Senior Challenge Advisor; Managing Director CSC</p>	
<p>Education Outcomes</p>	<p>See Feedback from 30 January 2019</p>		<p>Feb-20</p>	<p>Lindsay Harvey, Interim Corporate Director - Education and Family Support; Cllr Charles Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration; Nicola Echanis, Head of Education and Early Help; Andy Rothwell, CSC Senior Challenge Advisor; Managing Director CSC Representative from School Budget Forum Headteacher Representation</p>	

<p>New Curriculum Changes</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 30</p>	<p>Report on changes to new curriculum and how this is impacting on schools</p> <p>need to determine purpose of report - whether this needs scrutinising or presentation to Members outside of Committee</p>		<p>TBC - 2020</p>	<p>Lindsay Harvey, Interim Corporate Director - Education and Family Support; Cllr Charles Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration; Nicola Echanis, Head of Education and Early Help; Andy Rothwell, CSC Senior Challenge Advisor; Managing Director CSC</p> <p>Headteacher representation</p>	
<p>Spas Provision Playing Field Charging Strategy</p>	<p>Pre-decision item as part of consultation over strategy.</p>		<p>Consider after the outcome of the consultation exercise due to finish mid-July</p>	<p>Mark Shephard, Interim Chief Executive Cllr Richard Young, Cabinet Member – Communities; Zak Shell, Head of Operations - Community Services; Kevin Mulcahy, Group Manager - Highways & Green Spaces; Philip Beaman, Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager; Guy Smith, Community Asset Transfer Officer.</p>	
<p>Youth Offending Service restructure</p>	<p>Proposed by Corporate Director. The Youth offending service is moving out of the Western Bay and full consultation is currently underway with staff on a new restructure and working with new partners.</p>		<p>Consider during July?</p>	<p>Lindsay Harvey, Interim Corporate Director - Education and Family Support; Cllr Charles Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration;</p>	

The following items for briefing sessions or pre-Council briefing

Item	Specific Information to request				
<p>Social Services Commissioning Strategy</p>	<p>To include information on what work has taken place following the Social Services and Wellbeing Act population assessment. To also cover the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Annual Plan Bridgend Social Services Commissioning Strategy 				
<p>Cwm Taf Regional Working</p>	<p>Update on situation and way forward with Regional Working with Cwm Taf? How will we undertake Regional working?</p>				
<p>Residential Remodelling - Extra Care Housing</p>	<p>Site visit to current Extra Care Housing and then to new site once work has begun</p>				
<p>Changes to Education Outcomes</p>	<p>Update on how education outcomes are now being reported based on new WG legislation</p>				

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

29 APRIL 2019

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

REMODELLING FOSTERING SERVICES PROJECT

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 Following the Corporate Parenting Committee on 10 January, 2019 (see Minutes attached as an Appendix to the report), this report will inform the Committee of the work that has been undertaken as part of the Remodelling Fostering Services project, and the resulting changes to Fostering Services.

2.0 Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priority/priorities:-

- Supporting a successful economy – taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
- Helping people to be more self-reliant – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.

3.0 Background

3.1 As part of the Remodelling Children's Social Care Programme, Children's Services have undertaken a wide-reaching review of residential services, and the fostering service was identified as an area where further service development and potential efficiencies could be made.

3.2 It is anticipated that reviewing fostering services will not only benefit the population of Looked after Children through increased placement choice, improved placement matching and more local placements, but it will also achieve cost avoidance and cost savings, which will help the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate meet the requirements of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

3.3 Reporting to the 'Remodelling Children's Social Care Programme', a project team was convened during 2016/17, whose role was to oversee the development of a range of options which would deliver against these service improvements and help achieve the MTFS savings requirements. The proposals made and initiatives implemented are shown below.

4.0 Current Situation/Proposal

Staff and service structures

- 4.1 Currently the fostering team is led by a team manager and three senior social workers. One of the senior social workers works within the residential hub and is assigned to the placements team. This role is primarily responsible for assessing and supervising specialist carers such as parent and child and transition carers (which fall under the remit of the residential remodelling). The other two senior social workers, within the fostering team, share supervisory responsibility for the fostering social workers, and placement support workers. There are eight full time social workers, five part time social workers and two full time placement support workers. Fostering social workers hold a caseload of both general carers and relative carers, (although each social workers caseloads are weighted towards one or the other) and are responsible for assessments of carers and support and supervision of placements.
- 4.2 The Fostering Team is now separated into two distinct areas; one with responsibility for relative carers and one with responsibility for general foster carers. This will enable the specialisms to further develop and also recognises the distinct differences between relative and general fostering support and training needs.
- 4.3 When recruiting new social workers in the future, job descriptions will be kept generic i.e. to cover relative and general carers, in order to ensure resilience across each service area, as necessary.

Liaison Carers

- 4.4 We currently have five Liaison Carers, who are active foster carers with a significant amount of fostering experience and have the capacity to offer one to one mentoring to a small group of carers. They attend the Skills to Foster training' programme which is available for applicants considering a career in fostering and they also arrange a monthly informal support group meeting for approved foster carers.
- 4.5 As part of the work of this project, meetings have been held with the current Liaison Carers to scope their current role and to work with them to understand how they could be more effective in the future and how their role can be developed to be more proactive in providing increased support in:
- The recruitment of new carers
 - Carers going through the complaints/allegation process
 - Carers with complex placements
 - New carers within the service
 - Training and advice on the career development of carers
 - Monthly workshop/support groups with fostering social workers and Development Officer.
- 4.6 The existing five liaison carer roles will be maintained, with one being dedicated to relative carers and the other four to general carers. When the numbers of general carers further increases, an additional general liaison carer role will be considered.

Training

- 4.7 A pre-assessment course (Skills to Foster) is currently offered to new applicants going through the three day assessment process. Within the first 12 months following approval, foster carers are expected to attend a series of one or two day training

courses, offered in-house, identified as 'essential core training'. Currently both relative and general carers are involved in the 'skills to foster' training but post approval the general foster carers follow a 'mandatory' programme of training, whilst relative carers are provided with the opportunity to attend training but their learning needs are more usually met on a one to one basis, with their fostering link social worker.

- 4.8 In line with fostering regulations and good practice guidelines, all newly approved foster carers are reviewed within 12 months. During their second year they are offered a series of training such as child development, which is organised by Social Care Workforce Development Programme (SCWDP) and often involves the external commissioning of training in specialist areas.
- 4.9 General foster carers are offered a chance to attend Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) or equivalent training and this is linked to their payments. Following enrolment on such training they move up from Level 1 to level 2. This is not available to relative carers as they receive allowances only.
- 4.10 A review of both relative and general foster carers has been undertaken as part of this project. A number of short and long term proposals have been made with regards to improving the quality of training for foster carers. These are detailed below.
- 4.11 In the short term, the Skills to Foster course will be reshaped to align with the directorate-wide training programme that is being implemented as part of the remodelling Looked After Children's Residential, Placements and Support Services project, ensuring consistency and a common therapeutic approach across all services.
- 4.12 In the longer term, it is proposed that consideration be given to strengthening Bridgend's in-house training for foster carers, through the development and delivery of in-house courses that help foster carers to better support children and young people. This may include:
- Fostering Foundation Course (5 days- consisting of core training)
 - Child Development Course (8 days - Brain Based, Attachment, Resilience and Trauma model)
 - All Wales induction framework for Health and social care (this will be introduced 2019)
 - Playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy (PACE) Course
 - Development and introduction of Specific courses for relative carers
- 4.13 Stronger links will be made between the Social Care Development Workforce Programme team and the newly appointed Development Officer in the Fostering Team. This will enhance the development and production of a new training skills programme to better equip foster carers for the future.

Payments and fees

- 4.14 There are currently three levels within the payment and fee structure for carers. Foster carer payments consist of two elements: part one is an age based allowance for each child placed; part two is a fee which is based on the level of competence (skill) of the carer and the completion of core training. Immediately post approval,

both relative and general carers are placed on level one which is payment of allowance only.

- 4.15 After 12 months, following a successful review and the completion of core training, general carers are able to rise to level 2 and receive fostering fees commensurate to this status. General foster carers are able to progress further to level 3 and a further increase in fee following completion of prescribed training courses.
- 4.16 It is proposed that, in order to be competitive with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs), the Authority needs to pay fees to general carers at an earlier stage in their fostering career. The recommendation is that they receive a fee post approval, with the expectation they complete the core training programme within their first year.
- 4.17 In terms of upskilling foster carers and as part of the fee eligibility process the criteria for receiving higher fees (level 2-3) will also include attendance at support groups.
- 4.18 This will be implemented as soon as possible in order to attract new carers, and that current carers are provided with a two year transitional period to align themselves with the new fee requirements before the changes are fully implemented.
- 4.19 Work has been undertaken to benchmark Bridgend's fees and allowances by comparison with neighbouring authorities. The work undertaken with the fee element paid to carers, is reasonably competitive with only a 3-6% variation when cross referenced with regional local authorities to include Neath Port Talbot, Swansea and Independent providers including TACT and Action For Children. The review has also focussed on the allowance element paid by local authorities and Independent Fostering Agencies and it is these allowances that require a full review.
- 4.20 In addition to the fee that foster carers receive for a child they are also awarded an allowance which is related to the living expenses for that child. On the advice of the National Fostering Framework, Bridgend Council consolidated an amount for birthdays and 'special events' into the main allowance. During the recent engagement events with foster carers they expressed disappointment with this as they preferred to receive a 'lump sum' at the time of the birthday/event. The National Fostering Framework is now reviewing, again, all payments and allowances and Bridgend will make sure that we can contribute to this review and process.

Bonuses

- 4.21 It is proposed that carers are offered a £250 bonus when they refer a friend to be a foster carer for Bridgend. This bonus will be paid when that new carer is approved and they receive their first placement. This should encourage more of our carers to recommend people that they know.

Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs)

- 4.22 Bridgend has 279 children living within a fostering placement. This number comprises of 58 children placed with IFA Providers, 156 with in-house carers and 65 placed with Relative (kinship) carers. This indicates that BCBC has a reliance on IFAs to provide 16% of fostering placements. During this project we have analysed Bridgend's use of IFA placements to gain a better understanding of gaps in our in-house provision. As a result of this review, a number of changes have been made as described below:

- A new process to review IFA placements that have been in place less than 16 weeks has been implemented, with a view to transferring as many of these placements as possible in-house. Reviews of these placements are carried out by the Placements Team Manager, who is able to link with Safeguarding teams to discuss individual care and support plans and thereby prioritise those children who are in a position to move back into a local authority placement.
- A long-term marketing campaign led by the new Development Officer (see below) will be implemented, aimed at maximising the number of in-house foster carers, as opposed to using more costly IFA carers.

Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs)

- 4.23 Following the introduction of the new Special Guardianship Orders regulations and 'Code of Practice guidelines' by Welsh Government in July 2018, Bridgend's Special Guardianship Policy has been reviewed.
- 4.24 It was identified following the release of this guidance that the remit for Special Guardianship Orders would be better placed within the Fostering Team. Therefore two members of social work staff who are responsible for promoting and assessing potential Special Guardianship Order applicants are now situated within this team.
- 4.25 Following the transfer of these staff members to the Fostering Team, a plan is in place to undertake a full review of how Bridgend promotes and encourages applications from foster carers to apply for SGO's and the processes and procedures that underpin this. The aim of this work will be to transfer placements to SGOs as early as possible and to reduce the use of relatives as foster carers.

Recruitment of carers

- 4.26 A business case has been successfully approved for the recruitment of a Development Officer and additional assessing social work capacity for the Fostering Team. The appointments of these posts are underway.
- 4.27 The Development Officer will be directly involved in a number of activities that will enable the proposals above to be effectively and efficiently implemented, key tasks for the Officer will include:
- Gathering further information on what IFAs provide in relation to payments & training
 - Developing and increasing frequency and breadth of campaigns
 - Working with the Liaison Carers to get them more involved in recruitment
 - Consulting with the designated member of the communications team to create an innovative marketing campaign to attract new foster carers
 - Focusing on recruitment for other campaigns such as Transitional Carers and Parent and Child, to ensure they are a success
 - Working closely with the training team and fostering team to ensure the development/delivery of the new in-house programmes
 - Developing in-house support groups and workshops

- Reducing demand on the Senior Social Workers to enable them to undertake their day-to-day duties as the service grows
- Reviewing government guidance and changes in regulation and supporting the service to translate this into policies and procedures
- Undertaking competitor analysis of other local authorities
- Researching best practice and innovations across the UK and wider
- Reviewing Bridgend's benefits packages for new carers to ensure they are effective and are encouraging people to come to Bridgend.
- Launching the targeted 'supported lodgings' recruitment campaign

Targets

4.28 The service have set the following targets to be met as a result of implementing the above changes:

- 7 in-house foster carers to be recruited in 2019/20, 8 to be recruited in 2020/21, and 9 to be recruited in 2021/22
- A reduction of 5% of IFA placements

5.0 Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

5.1 There is no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules. Any future services requiring commissioning as a result of this proposal will be undertaken in-line with Contract Procedure Rules requirements.

6.0 Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 As proposals progress and officers are in a better position to know which service users and staff could be affected by the proposed model, an EIA screening (and a full EIA if necessary) will be undertaken, to assess the potential impact on service users and staff.

7.0 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Implications

7.1 The implementation of the duties and responsibilities under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (SSWBA) 2014, in turn, supports the promotion of two of the seven goals of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 within the County Borough of Bridgend. By promoting an environment that maximises people's physical and mental well-being and by supporting children, young people, adults and their carers and families to fulfil their potential no matter what their circumstances, the wellbeing goals of a healthier and more equal Bridgend and Wales are supported.

8.0 Financial Implications

Staff and service structures

8.1 No changes to staff structures identified as a result of implementing these proposals. The additional development officer post and assessing social worker post will be funded from the change fund earmarked reserve for two years. Following this period, a decision will be made on whether the posts are still required and appropriate funding identified.

8.2 Any additional training costs incurred will be funded through core budgets and SCWDWP grant where applicable.

Liaison Carers

8.3 For every additional 20 general carers recruited, one additional Liaison Carer post will be created at a cost of £4,680 per annum. However, it is envisaged that these costs will be offset by the use of the new general carers that have been recruited as opposed to utilising IFA placements.

Payments and fees

8.4 Any changes proposed would result in no immediate financial effect on the authority as additional financial output would only be relevant when new carers are recruited. The cost of this per placement would still be significantly less than the Authority would need to pay an IFA for the same placement, resulting in cost-avoidance overall.

8.5 Bonuses

Details	Cost
Cost per referral	£250
Note: Average weekly cost of an IFA placement is around £735 Maximum weekly cost of an in-house placement is £413.98 Difference = at least £321.02 Bonus cost made back within one week of placing in-house as opposed to an IFA	

Targets

8.6 If all the above targets are met, this will result in the following cash savings over three year period:

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	
Cost avoidance	£25,040	£50,079	£75,119	
Cost avoidance from previous years – carried over	£0	£25,040	£75,119	
Total	£25,040	£75,119	£150,238	Total cash savings: £250,397

9.0 Recommendation

9.1 The Committee is requested to note the information contained in the report and the attached Appendix.

Susan Cooper

Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing
 April 2019

10.0 Contact Officers

Laura Kinsey – Head of Children’s Social Care
 01656 642314

Laura.kinsey@bridgend.gov.uk

11.0 Background documents
None

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING HELD IN CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON THURSDAY, 10 JANUARY 2019 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor PJ White – Chairperson

HJ David	DK Edwards	J Gebbie	T Giffard
CA Green	RM James	D Patel	CE Smith
CA Webster	DBF White	HM Williams	RE Young

Apologies for Absence

MC Clarke and N Clarke

Officers:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Val Jones	Regional Adoption Manager
Andrew Rees	Senior Democratic Services Officer – Committees

184. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor DBF White declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 5 – Monitoring the Performance and Progress of the Western Bay Regional Adoption Service as he is employed by Swansea Council which is part of Western Bay and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of the item. Councillor DBF White declared a personal interest in agenda item 6 – Care Inspectorate Wales – Inspection of Western Bay Adoption Service – Action Plan and remained in the meeting to hear the presentation.

185. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting of 17 October 2018 be approved as a true and accurate record.

186. REMODELLING FOSTERING SERVICES PROJECT

The Head of Children’s Social Care reported on the work which has been undertaken as part of the Remodelling Foster Services project and the resulting changes to Fostering Services.

She informed the Committee that a wide-reaching review of residential services has been undertaken, with fostering services identified where further service development and potential efficiencies could be made. She outlined the proposals made, the initiatives which had been implemented together with the main changes and proposals following the review.

The Head of Children’s Social Care reported that the Fostering Team has been separated into two distinct areas; one with responsibility for relative carers and one with responsibility for general foster carers. She informed the Committee that the existing five liaison carer roles will be maintained, with one being dedicated to relative carers and the other four to general carers. In respect of training, in the short term, the Skills to Foster course will be reshaped to align with the Directorate wide training programme. In the longer term, it was proposed to strengthen in-house training for foster carers, through the development and delivery of in-house courses.

The Head of Children's Social Care informed the Committee that for payments and fees to be competitive with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs), the authority needs to pay fees to general carers at an earlier stage in their fostering career. Foster carers would receive a fee, post approval, with the expectation they complete the core training programme within their first year. In terms of upskilling of foster carers and as part of the fee eligibility process the criteria for receiving higher fees will also include attendance at support groups. In respect of bonuses, carers would be offered a £250 bonus when they refer a friend to be a foster carer for Bridgend, which is paid when that new person is approved and they receive their first placement.

The Head of Children's Social Care informed the Committee that a new process to review IFA placements which have been in place less than 16 weeks has been implemented, with a view to transferring as many of these placements as possible in-house. She stated that a long-term marketing campaign will be implemented, aimed at maximising the number of in-house foster carers. She informed the Committee that two members of social work staff who are responsible for promoting and assessing potential Special Guardianship Order applicants are now situated within the Fostering Team. The Head of Children's Social Care informed the Committee of the appointment of a Development Officer and additional assessing social work capacity for the Fostering Team is underway.

The Chairperson welcomed Rebecca Walsh and Clive Richards to the meeting to hear their views and experiences as foster carers.

Mr Richards informed the Committee of his involvement in the remodelling project with the Interim Group Manager Placements which had been well put together. He stated that there is a need to implement changes and commented that there are very committed foster carers in Bridgend.

Ms Walsh informed the Committee of the changes which have occurred over recent years which had resulted in foster carers returning from Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) to Bridgend. Ms Walsh commented on the need for foster carers to work together with the authority in order to make things better for children and to save on out of county placements.

The Cabinet Member Communities thanked the foster carers for their comments and also the work of officers and the input of foster carers for turning the service around as part of the remodelling project ensuring that the majority of carers are in-house.

The Committee requested detail on the number of children in foster placements and the figures of foster placements over the past 3 years. The Head of Children's Social Care informed the Committee there are 279 children in Bridgend living within a fostering placement, 58 children are placed with IFA providers, 156 children are with in-house carers and 65 placed with Relative (kinship) carers. She stated that it was encouraging that the numbers of fostering placements are going in the right direction with fewer children being in IFA placements, in that 70 children were in IFA placements in the previous year.

The Committee questioned the foster carers what improvements had been put in place from their perspective. Ms Walsh informed the Committee that training has improved as there are many different aspects needed to equip foster carers. She stated that foster carers are able to have telephone contact with the Department and are able to source training and have access to a pool of resources available to them. The improvements made to training are due to the efforts of the Team of officers and foster carers. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that foster

carers are seen as part of a bigger team and the service is able to respond more flexibly to need and be proactive rather than being reactive. She stated that these were exciting times and there was a need to keep the momentum going. She commented on the success of the recent Christmas party which had been attended by over 100 people, which she and the Cabinet Member also had the privilege to attend. She also commented on the importance of training to foster carers in order to build up their skills and their families.

The Interim Group Manager Placements informed the Committee that it had been possible to use as a resource the extended families of foster carers. Foster carers are given a clearer voice and the Team and foster carers have worked hard to ensure foster caring is family based and that carers are part of the wider team.

The Committee thanked the foster carers for their dedication in making the lives of children better. The Committee questioned there had been an increase in children being fostered with complex needs. Ms Walsh commented there had been an increase in children in foster care with complex needs and there was support within the team by giving foster carers skills to keep the placements in-house. Mr Richards commented that the fostering landscape had changed with the advent of social media and relatives of foster children presenting challenges. He stated that uppermost is that children need to have stability and routine and not having to move around foster carers.

The Committee questioned whether schools are playing a supporting role in fostering. Mr Richards informed the Committee that schools are now more proactive and identify needs straight away, especially in the primary school sector.

The Committee questioned whether problems are encountered with other local authorities who place children within this county. The Head of Children's Social Care informed the Committee that this authority works well with placing authorities and there are robust arrangements in place and no issues had been brought to her attention.

The Committee questioned the timescale for the review of the fee structure being completed. The Head of Children's Social Care informed the Committee that the review is in its third phase. She stated that fees vary and there is an opportunity to influence IFAs by removing the element of competition. The review of the fee structure should be complete by the Spring. The Head of Children's Social Care also informed the Committee that each case is considered individually and a cautious approach is undertaken. She stated there were no plans to move children where it was not in the best interests to do so.

Ms Walsh informed the Committee that the establishment of an accessible hub should be considered where foster carers, social workers and families can meet as some visits have been taking place in the public areas of Civic Offices. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that many contact visits take place in the Civic Offices and alternatives are being considered due to the lack of parking and it not being child-friendly. She stated there was a need for a solution to be looked at as a priority with partners and that areas in the Civic Offices where contact visits take place are used which can be seen by the public must cease immediately. The Committee commented on the need for it to be informed of safe venues to hold contact visits with families.

The Committee commented that foster carers had been lost to IFAs and there was a need for an element of work on the review of fees. The Head of Children's Social Care informed the Committee that there is a basic fee which is paid to carers and further allowances based on holidays, birthdays and the age of the child being fostered. Foster carers were being incentivised to go IFAs, but there was now recognition that training

and support is better in-house. The Committee commented on the need for a nationally adopted fee structure.

The Chairperson commented that the in-house service is more inclusive and that the welfare of children and not money is uppermost. He thanked the foster carers for the valuable contributions they had made to the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the information contained in the report.

187. **MONITORING THE PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS OF THE WESTERN BAY REGIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE**

The Regional Adoption Manager reported on the performance and progress of the Western Bay Regional Adoption Service (WBAS), including the Annual Report on Regional PI Performance 2017/18.

The Regional Adoption Manager reported that the WBAS is integrated into the National Adoption Service (NAS) as one of the five identified regional collaboratives. She outlined the management and oversight arrangements for the National Service which consists of a Governance Board; an Advisory Group and the Director of Operations and Central Team.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that following the Health Board boundary change, it was likely that Bridgend would be required to form part of the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff regional collaborative, although it had been agreed that Bridgend would remain as part of the Western Bay collaborative, with the transition to a new region not taking place before April 2020 at the earliest.

The Regional Adoption Manager reported on the key achievements for the year, with the number of children placed showing a slight increase on the previous year. More children were placed with Western Bay adopters than in inter agency placements during the year. She stated there had been an improvement in the number of children who had Life Story Materials provided to adopters. The average time taken to approve adopters from inquiry stage to Agency Decision Making decision had decreased from 9.7 months to 8.2 months compared to the national benchmark of 8 months. Investment had been made in developing the WBAS website making it more interactive, user friendly and including the active offer. A members' page was also being developed and there are child friendly pages to encourage children to access the site. She informed the Committee that development and implementation of the Transition/Moving on model to assist in improving the preparation of children for adoption and in the provision of Life Story material has continued to be rolled out with training to staff across the region.

The Regional Adoption Manager informed the Committee that work was taking place to improve website access and to develop a revised All Wales marketing and recruitment strategy.

The Committee questioned whether the adoption service gets the same level of publicity as the fostering service. The Regional Adoption Manager informed the Committee that there is a great deal of activity concentrated on raising the profile and awareness of adoption. The Head of Children's Social Care informed the Committee that the fostering service is more locality based, while adoption is a more national and regional service.

The Committee referred to the further development work planned for the IT system to feed into the reporting system and commented that data capture would be more complex. The Regional Adoption Manager informed the Committee that work is ongoing with Neath Port Talbot Council's ICT Department on data capture work. She stated that

data capture is resource intensive with the need to work across the region's 3 local authorities, moving the ICT systems within the adoption service on to the WCCIS system was being considered as the current system can be cumbersome.

The Committee asked which marketing campaign has been successful and why. The Regional Adoption Manager did not believe that any of the marketing which had been run had been more successful than others. She stated that the service is working with the NAS on developing newer ways of working.

The Committee requested an explanation of what Birth Record Counselling involved. The Regional Adoption Manager explained that these are requests received from adults who were adopted seeking historical information on their adoption.

The Committee congratulated the service on its success in placing groups of siblings together. The Regional Adoption Manager informed the Committee that the interests of children had been promoted in order to attract potential adopters.

The Committee requested clarification on the difference between Western Bay and Inter-agency adopters. The Regional Adoption Manager explained that Western Bay adopters are adopters who are approved by the region, while Inter-agency adopters are those that are approved by other local authorities or other agencies. Adopters can access details of children for adoption through an interactive site online known as Link Maker. Not all children are on this site, but there are proposed changes in the arrangements for the Adoption Register Wales, which would be hosted by Linkmaker and all Welsh children will be registered on this system

The Committee was pleased to see the work being done on life journeys and placed on record its thanks to the service as adoptions are more difficult to achieve during times of austerity.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that with the impending change in health board boundary, work is ongoing on the transfer of services to Cwm Taf. She stated that the adoption service is not ready for transfer as Cwm Taf is part of a larger adoption region comprising five local authorities. There are a number of considerations requiring transitioning and it would take longer to transfer the adoption service to the new region.

RESOLVED: (1) That the Committee considered and noted the performance and progress of the Regional Adoption Service;

(2) That consideration be given to future adoption marketing campaigns and how elected members can play a part in promoting those campaigns.

188. **CARE INSPECTORATE WALES - INSPECTION OF WESTERN BAY ADOPTION SERVICE - ACTION PLAN**

The Committee received a presentation from the Regional Adoption Manager on an overview of the Inspection findings and recommendations relating to the Care Inspectorate Wales inspection of the Western Bay Adoption Service.

The Regional Adoption Manager informed the Committee that an action plan was developed in response to the recommendations made by the CIW, which is being monitored by the Regional Adoption Management Board. She provided updates against each recommendation which demonstrated the progress achieved since the publication of the Inspection report.

The Committee commended the good work and practice of the region which had been recognised by the CIW, but expressed concern with the transition of the service next year to the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff region and whether sufficient resources had been devoted to transfer ICT systems due to the boundary change. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that it had been agreed that a longer time is required prior to the transfer of the adoption service to the new region with a transition year in place and scoping work is being undertaken. If there is a requirement for more than a year to transition, a case will be put together for an extension. A sum of money is set aside to transition the service. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing also informed the Committee that 1.5 officers had been allocated to the project and there is a need to scope whether there are sufficient resources available. The Head of Children's Social Care informed the Committee of the many work streams within the WCCIS system, which would make it easier to move ICT systems across. The Committee questioned whether there is an opportunity to do one transition to the WCCIS system. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing commented that it could be feasible as both RCT and Merthyr Tydfil Councils use WCCIS.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the Committee noted the CIW report on the inspection of the Western Bay Adoption Service, the associated Action Plan and the CIW report on the Review of the national Adoption Arrangements;
 - (2) That the Committee conveyed it's thanks to the Regional Adoption Service on the outcome of the inspection and requested a report to the Committee so that it can be reassured that all the recommendations in the Action Plan are being addressed.

189. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 11:40