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Bridgend County Borough Council



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Rhowch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich
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Gwasanaethau Gweithredol a Phartneriaethol / Operational and Partnership Services

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 /
643147

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Andrew Rees

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: Wednesday, 6 June 2018

Dear Councillor,

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3

A meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 will be held in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices Angel Street Bridgend CF31 4WB on **Tuesday, 12 June 2018 at 09:30.**

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 - 8
To receive for approval the minutes of the meeting of the 21 03 18.
4. Forward Work Programme 9 - 22
5. Nomination of Member to Scrutiny Panel 23 - 26
6. Corporate Parenting Champion nomination report 27 - 30
7. Highway Services Review 31 - 42
Invitees:

Cllr Richard Young – Cabinet Member Communities
Mark Shephard – Corporate Director Communities
Zak Shell – Head of Streetscene
Kevin Mulcahy – Group Manager, Highways
Andrew Hobbs – Group Manager Streetworks
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

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transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

Yours faithfully

P A Jolley

Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services

Councillors:

SE Baldwin
TH Beedle
N Clarke
P Davies
DG Howells
A Hussain

Councillors

DRW Lewis
JC Radcliffe
RMI Shaw
JC Spanswick
RME Stirman
G Thomas

Councillors

JH Tildesley MBE
E Venables
MC Voisey
DBF White

Agenda Item 3

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 - WEDNESDAY, 21 MARCH 2018

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 21 MARCH 2018 AT 09:30

Present

Councillor JC Spanswick – Chairperson

SE Baldwin
A Hussain
JE Williams

TH Beedle
RMI Shaw

N Clarke
G Thomas

DG Howells
E Venables

Apologies for Absence

P Davies, RM Granville, DRW Lewis and RME Stirman

Officers:

Sarah Daniel	Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Michael Pitman	Business & Administrative Apprentice
Andrew Rees	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees

Invitees:

Jennifer Ellis	Housing Strategy and Investment Manager, RCT Council
Jonathan Flower Andrew Jolley	Senior Strategy Officer Corporate Director Operational & Partnership Services
Martin Morgans	Head of Performance and Partnership Services
Jonathan Parsons Councillor Dhanisha Patel	Group Manager Development Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Future Generations
Helen Pembridge Councillor Hywel Williams Councillor Richard Young	Team Leader - Neighbourhood Services Deputy Leader Cabinet Member Communities

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest was made:

Councillor E Venables declared a prejudicial interest in agenda 5 – Empty Properties as she owns two empty properties. Councillor Venables withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.

31. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny 3 of 17 January and 12 February 2018 be approved as a true and accurate record.

32. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer reported on items which had been prioritised by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee which included the next item delegated to this

Committee to consider. She also presented a list of further potential items for comment and prioritisation and requested the Committee identify any further items for consideration using the pre-determined criteria form.

Conclusions

- (1) That the Committee approved the feedback from the previous meeting of this Committee and noted the list of responses including any still outstanding;
- (2) The Committee noted that it had been delegated an item on Emergency Housing for its next meeting;
- (3) Identified further detail required for other items in the overall FWP at Table B of Appendix B;
- (4) Considered the completed criteria forms at Appendix C and determined whether it wished to add these proposed items to the FWP.

33. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairperson accepted a presentation by Jennifer Ellis, Housing Strategy and Investment Manager, RCT Council on the approach taken by RCT Council to tackle empty properties as urgent in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules within the Constitution, in order that it be considered in conjunction with the report on Empty Properties.

34. EMPTY PROPERTIES

The Committee received from a presentation by Jennifer Ellis, Housing Strategy and Investment Manager of RCT Council on its approach in tackling empty properties. She stated that the approach in tackling empty properties was borne out of having 3,375 empty properties in 2014/15, which represented 2% of the stock, compared to the picture in BCBC where it has 2,800 empty properties, representing 2% of the stock. RCT Council had established a Scrutiny Working Group, which came up with a series of recommendations, amongst which was to identify funding opportunities, to have a targeted approach, awareness raising and advice and information.

The Housing Strategy and Investment Manager informed the Committee that high and demand areas were considered, recognising that a one size fits all approach was not appropriate, as there were stark differences between communities in the north and south of the Borough in terms of the demand for housing. A postal survey was sent to owners of properties which had been empty for 6 months in order to get a greater understanding of the condition of properties and the intentions of the owners.

She highlighted the Council's role, the resources and projects devoted to tackling empty properties and she also highlighted a case study which had seen the Old Town Hall in Aberdare brought back into use. RCT Council had approved 117 Empty Property Grants to date totaling £2.2m in 2018/19. The Housing Strategy and Investment Manager outlined the enforcement approaches taken by RCT Council. RCT Council planned to re-establish a Virtual Empty Properties Team; a new empty property strategy; increase scale; identify further funding sources and opportunities to work regionally and undertake further research to underpin new approaches.

The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services informed the Committee of the approach undertaken by BCBC which was being pulled together by the Head of Performance & Partnership Services. He also informed the Committee that the Council had approved a post of Empty Properties Officer and he sought a recommendation from the Committee as to how best to proceed with resourcing the post. He stated that excellent support continues to be received from Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) and

there is an option for SRS to fulfill this role due its expertise in dealing with derelict properties and with the service having cover arrangements in place, as opposed to employing one officer directly with no cover arrangements.

The Head of Performance & Partnership Services informed the Committee that a cross Directorate Working Group has been established, with its first priority to establish what the landscape is in terms of the scale of empty properties, compared to other local authorities in Wales and UK wide. He stated that there is currently significant activity in tackling empty properties; however Directorates had not previously operated cohesively in dealing with the problem. He also informed the Committee that there is significant best practice on how to tackle empty properties and SRS has significant information on its property data base. A questionnaire is being finalised to be sent to owners of empty properties.

The Committee questioned whether interviews had taken place to recruit to the post of Empty Properties Officer. The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services informed the Committee that the post had not been recruited to as he had to wait for the budget process to be finalised. He stated that an option would be using the expertise of the SRS in dealing with the problems associated with empty properties. The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations commented that the SRS would have resilience within its service for the Empty Properties Officer function. The Committee asked whether this would be an additional member of staff within the SRS. The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services informed the Committee that it was proposed that this Council would fund the post within the SRS and it would add to the resources within the SRS. The Committee questioned whether there was capacity within the SRS to cope with the empty properties work if BCBC adopted a similar approach to that adopted by RCT Council. The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services commented that he would expect to tackle empty properties on the basis of firstly making quick wins, which would then be offset by a reduction in performance as more difficult problems are tackled. He stated that a tougher aspect would be the use of enforcement and compulsory purchase powers. He informed the Committee that the SRS is experienced in dealing with empty properties and operates to a high level of performance.

The Committee referred to the properties which had been empty for 6 to 24 months and considered that it needed a blended approach in targeting those properties to bring them back into use to avoid them falling into the next category of being empty for 2 years or more.

The Committee referred to the entitlement to a 3 month rate free period applicable to shops and offices and the 6 month rate free period applicable to factories and warehouses under Business Rates legislation after which a full charge is applicable and questioned the success rate in collecting business rates on those empty properties. The Head of Performance & Partnership Services informed the Committee that the activity to be undertaken by officers in tackling empty properties will address the non-payment of business rates on empty properties.

The Committee asked whether it would be possible for officers to look at reducing the level of business rates to encourage businesses to remain in town centres in order to avoid a pop up culture of businesses occupying premises. The Head of Performance & Partnership Services stated that an assessment would be made of the businesses who pay business rates and those who do not with Council Tax. The Senior Strategy Officer, Housing informed the Committee that shops which are empty are entitled to a 3 month rate free period and thereafter would become liable to be charged business rates.

The Committee referred to the 116 empty private commercial properties within Bridgend Town Council's area and commented that this was not sustainable and there was a need to tackle the cause of empty properties. The Committee questioned the numbers of properties which have been un-banded by the Valuation Office Agency. The Committee was aware that Pembrokeshire Council intended levying a 150% charge on a property which has been left empty and unfurnished. The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations commented that it would be good to gauge the views of the Committee on what charge to be levied. The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services informed the Committee that a further report could be considered by the Committee on progress being made in bringing empty properties back into use. The Head of Performance & Partnership Services informed the Committee that officers are in the process of establishing un-banded properties which would be the subject of a further report.

The Committee referred to the performance by other local authorities in bringing empty properties back into use. The Head of Performance & Partnership Services informed the Committee that authorities record their empty properties differently and he believed that this authority's performance would remain the same.

The Committee asked what approach is taken by RCT Council in relation to private landlords. The Housing Strategy and Investment Manager informed the Committee that landlords will purchase properties and subsequently find that there is too much work to make the property habitable and will then abandon the property. This was not the case with properties purchased on social housing estates.

The Committee commented that performance in bringing empty properties back into use was better in Bridgend compared to Cardiff. The Team Leader - Neighbourhood Services informed the Committee that Cardiff Council has appointed an Empty Properties Officer in 2017 with the aim of improving performance. She stated that the Vale of Glamorgan Council do not have an Empty Properties Officer and instead use the SRS.

The Committee questioned whether the allocation of £900,010 for Houses into Homes had been spent. The Senior Strategy Officer, Housing stated that this funding is recyclable and can be used again. The full allocation has been spent and approximately 50% of the funding had been repaid and was available to provide interest free secured loans to owners of empty properties.

The Committee questioned what BCBC could learn from RCT's approach to tackling empty properties. The Head of Performance & Partnership Services informed the Committee that an in-depth questionnaire to owners of empty properties would be devised and officers could attend property auctions. He stated that owners / developers carrying out works to empty properties could be notified of the availability of VAT discounts in information packs which are sent out.

The Committee questioned was it a fair reflection that only 2 Section 215 notices had been served under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in the past 2 years. The Group Manager Development stated that it was a true reflection; however there is limited scope for using such Notices, due to there being absentee land owners and land owners who may have limited funds to carry out works. He stated that the serving of Section 215 notices would be considered in the right circumstances.

The Committee questioned whether debt would be built up following work being carried out in default. The Team Leader - Neighbourhood Services stated that an enforced sale could take place where works are carried out in default. The Committee asked whether restrictions could be placed on owners to ensure that properties are brought back into

use to when properties are purchased through an enforced sale. The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services stated there was a need to ensure that people who buy empty properties are committed to bring them back into use. The enforcement powers at the disposal of the authority are not dedicated to solving the problem of empty properties.

The Committee requested clarification of the charge of £50 per hour during an enforced sale procedure. The Team Leader - Neighbourhood Services clarified that a great deal of work is undertaken as part of an enforced sale of a property and to a number of site visits necessary, the serving of notices and attending auctions. The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services stated that the authority was not permitted to make a profit and was confident that the hourly rate is correct.

The Committee questioned the reason why it was not possible to quantify the potential loss of council tax receipts due to empty properties and why the authority had not imposed a premium to the standard rate of council tax on long term empty properties. The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services stated that the issue needs to be treated corporately as Directorates had previously taken their own views on the treatment of empty properties.

The Committee asked whether there is scope to have Member representation on the Empty Properties Working Group. The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services advised that it is the role of officers to make policy and report to Members. The Head of Performance & Partnership Services commented that a priority of the Working Group would be to carry out a scoping exercise to identify and map where empty properties are located compared to where the areas of housing need are.

The Committee thanked the invitees for their attendance.

Conclusions

Members recommended that BCBC recruit their own dedicated Empty Properties Officer. Members understood that BCBC has major problems in the Borough with the number of properties being empty and stated it was essential that BCBC have their own dedicated officer to address the issues in the Borough. Members further recommended that once the Empty Properties Officer is appointed that they become a co-ordinator of the Empty Properties Working Group.

Members recommended that officers take a more blended approach to targeting empty properties and bringing them back into use to prevent properties falling into the longer term category of being empty for two years plus, which members believed would lead to them becoming more difficult and costly to bring back to use. Members further recommended that officers take a targeted approach as the representative from RCT described in relation to empty properties in high density areas.

Members recommended that officers are more proactive in their approach to bringing empty properties back into use and explore what tools and resources were readily available to them. Members used the example of officers in RCT attending property auctions in the area to share information with new owners on what support and grants were available to them to bring the properties back into use was an excellent one and one that BCBC should look to replicate.

Members were concerned about the high number of empty churches and chapels in the Borough and recommended that officers attempt to contact the owners to establish what their long term plans for the properties were and report back to Members.

Further Information requested

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 - WEDNESDAY, 21 MARCH 2018

Members asked to receive evidence on how successful other Local Authorities have been in bringing empty properties back into use where they have charged 100% upwards Council tax on properties after they have been empty for longer than 6 months. Members felt they would then be better informed to put a recommendation forward on how BCBC should proceed for charging Council Tax on empty properties and whether charging a higher rate of Council Tax encourages owners to bring the properties back into use.

Members asked to receive further information on the properties that have been un-banded by the Valuation Office Agency. To include reasons why the properties would not have been banded and how many of these are there within BCBC.

Members requested information on what the average loss of Council tax looks like in BCBC due to empty properties in the Borough. Members recommended using the average Band D property to be able to quantify the loss.

Members asked of the 1200 properties liable for the 50% charge on Council tax for empty properties, how much of this are BCBC successful in receiving.

Members requested to keep this item on the Forward Work Programme and revisit in 6 months' time to see how officers have progressed in bringing empty properties back into use in the Borough.

The meeting closed at 12:05

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3

12 JUNE 2018

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP 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 3 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 2018–2022 have been embodied in the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes. The Corporate Improvement Objectives were adopted by Council on 22 February 2018 and formally set out the improvement objectives that the Council will seek to implement between 2018 and 2022. 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 3 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) Consider the completed criteria forms attached at Appendix C and determine whether they wish to agree to add the proposed item to the FWP;
- (iv) Identify any additional items using the criteria form, for consideration on the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.

PA Jolley

Corporate Director - Operational and Partnership Services

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CF31 4WB

Background documents

None

Date of Meeting	Item	Members wished to make the following recommendations	Response/Comments
19-Apr-2018	Emergency Accommodation	<p>Members wished to thank all officers and external agencies in attendance at the meeting and for their comments and contributions to the report. The Committee recognised the excellent support service provided to people presenting themselves to the emergency accommodation provision and were encouraged by the partnership working in managing these provisions.</p>	
		<p>In relation to the options of a replacement facility in Brynmenyn, Members requested further information on each of the options before making a recommendation on their preferred option. They asked for officers to scope out further, all options presented to them and asked them to bring back to Scrutiny options on a replacement facility in the short, medium and longer term and to provide more detailed costings and timescales for each.</p>	<p>This is being taken forward currently and a fuller and more detailed option appraisal is being pursued. This detail will be reported back to Scrutiny to highlight the potential short, medium and long term options for consideration</p>
		<p>Members recommended that officers explore the opportunity to utilise surplus Local Authority owned buildings such as care homes that could be brought back into use.</p>	<p>This is being actively pursued as officers have linked in with Corporate Landlord and Adult Social Care colleagues to discuss the potential use of current and proposed surplus buildings to ascertain suitability. A meeting is scheduled for early June</p>

Members recommended that a permanent direct access floor space needs to be established for longer term use and officers should take an integrated approach in development of any new facility. Members recommended the permanent direct access floor space could be used as a hub for service users to access a range of support services and suggested that they explore the successful model of the Assia suite at the Authority's Civic Offices which is central in location, therefore easier to access a range of external support agencies with ease.

The current floorspace provision will continue to be provided on an indefinite basis. Pending usage and requirement, consideration may be given to seeking alternative provision if required.

The floorspace and town centre Hub (together with BCBC services) provides a holistic service for Homeless persons in Bridgend. This is constantly monitored and reviewed in line with need, suitability and requirement. Consideration of the Assia model and its successful components will be part of on-going review into the type provision to be established in the future

Members asked to receive the following further information	Response/Comments
<p>Members asked to receive information on the costs to house an individual at Ty Ogwr per annum</p>	<p>£214.43 per room per week for housing related support (Supporting People Programme). This equates to £30.63 per day.</p> <p>£361.50 rent and £8.27 service charge per room per week (normally funded via Housing Benefit). This equates to £52.82 per day.</p> <p>Therefore, the total cost per day is £83.45</p> <p>Based on these figures, if a client stayed at Ty Ogwr for a year the annual cost per person would be £30,459 per annum. Currently, the average length of stay is 40 days, which equates to £3,338 per person.</p>
<p>Members requested a site visit to the Kerrigan Project direct access floor space facility that is managed by Gwalia with a relevant BCBC officer so they are able to see what facilities are available and report back to the full Committee.</p>	<p>This has been agreed in principle and the projects welcome any proposed visit. Potentially suitable dates, times and numbers need to be sought and confirmed.</p>

Members asked for the approximate figures of street homelessness in Bridgend. Members understood that this fluctuates on a daily basis, but asked for approximate figures so they could understand the scale of the problem.

The last rough sleeper count was carried out between the hours of 10pm on 9th November and 5am on 10th November 2017. The count is a single night snapshot of the number of rough sleepers in the local authority area. The count identified 4 roughsleepers. 6 emergency beds were also occupied in the floor space project on the night of 9th November 2017.

An estimate of people sleeping rough is also undertaken once a year. 14 rough sleepers were identified during the period 16 - 29th October 2017.

As of week commencing 7th May 2018 the floor space project was occupied by an average of 8 persons each night with a high of 10 persons and a low of 6 persons.

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	Webcast
12 June 2018	SOSC3	Highways Services	To include information of efficiency savings and the impact of what the MTFS has on the service To include information on the external review by people 2			Mark Shepherd, Corporate Director Communities; Cllr Richard Young, Cabinet Member – Communities; Zak Shell, Head of Streetscene; Andrew Hobbs, Group Manager Streetworks		
4 July 2018	SOSC 1	School Standards	Requested from SOSC 1 meeting in February to receive a further report at a meeting in the near future, (to be agreed by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny), incorporating the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Categorisation information; • In relation to Post-16 data at 4.53 of the report, the Committee requested that they receive the baseline for each school to give a better indication of how each school has improved; • Information on Bridgend's ranking for Key Stage 4 based on the latest results; • Information on what targets were set at each stage in order to determine whether the performance was expected and possibly a cohort issue or whether any actuals differed significantly from the targets set; • Information that the Consortium has gathered through drilling down into each schools' performance to determine what challenges schools face; • Further detail of the performance of those with ALN attending the PRU or Heronsbridge School as Members felt this was not incorporated into the report to a great degree; • Information on the work that the Consortium is doing to identify the variation for each secondary school at Key Stage 4, and what is being done about it; • More information in relation to each schools performance – not necessarily more data but detail of the where, what and how in relation to good and poor performance for each school so that the Committee has an overall understanding of the current situation and priority schools in Bridgend; • What extent are schools responding to the changes recently introduced such as the removal of Btec etc, to ensure they are still meeting the needs of the pupils; • What work is being done to mitigate against future dips in performance resulting from any changes to curriculum or changes to performance measures; • Evidence of how the Consortium has made a direct impact on schools and school performance, what outcomes can they be measured on in relation to Bridgend to assure Members of value for money; • What is being done to mitigate against the impact of changes in teachers to ensure that this does not have a resulting impact on the performance of pupils; • Performance in relation to vocational qualifications and non-core subjects – where are there causes for concern and where there is excellent work taking place etc. 			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; Mandy Paish, CSC Senior Challenge Advisor; Mike Glavin, Managing Director CSC Representative from School Budget Forum		
12 July 2018	SOSC 2	Safeguarding	To include Safeguarding activity in both Children and Adult Services. To also cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Safeguarding Boards • Bridgend Corporate Safeguarding Policy • Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) • Deprivation of Liberty Standards (DOLS) • Domestic Abuse • Human Trafficking • Modern Slavery • How the Police assist the LA in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults and children. 	Members stressed that this subject must be considered by Scrutiny on their FWP as is a huge responsibility of the Authority and Scrutiny must ensure the work being undertaken to protect some of the most vulnerable people is effective and achieving outcomes.		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.	SOSC2 Jan 18	
23 July 2018 (provisional)	SOSC 3	TBC						

Table B

The following items were deemed important for future prioritisation:

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Item	Specific Information to request	Rationale for prioritisation	Proposed date	Suggested Invitees		Webcast
ALN Reform	<p>When the Act has been further progressed, report to include consideration of the following points:</p> <p>a) How the Authority and Schools are engaging with parents over the changes to the Act?</p> <p>b) What the finalised process is for assessments and who is responsible for leading with them?</p> <p>c) What involvement/responsibilities do Educational Psychologists have under the Act?</p> <p>d) Has the Act led to an increase in tribunals and what impact has this had? This is set against the context of the recent announcement by the Lifelong Learning Minister that instead of saving £4.8m over four years the Act could potentially cost £8.2m due to an expected increase in the number of cases of dispute resolution.</p> <p>e) Given that the Act focuses on the involvement of young people and their parents, what support is available for those involved in court disputes?</p> <p>f) Outcomes from the Supported Internship programme.</p> <p>g) Support for those with ALN into employment.</p> <p>h) Staffing - Protection and support for staff, ALNCO support, workloads and capacity.</p> <p>i) Pupil-teacher ratios and class sizes and impact of Act on capacity of teachers to support pupils with ALN</p> <p>j) How is the implementation of the Act being monitored; what quality assurance frameworks are there and what accountability for local authorities, consortiums and schools?</p>	Needs revisiting to monitor implementation of the Bill and if needs are being met as well as impact on future budgets -	COSC agreed with comments from Officers and will await further timing advice (March 2018)	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 Third Sector Representatives		SOSC 2 highlighted this item as suitable for webcasting.
Advocacy	<p>Advocacy for Children and Adults:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcome from the Advocacy Pilot Scheme • The current system • Social Services & Wellbeing Act • Regional Children Services advocacy • Adult Services – Golden Thread Project 		Corporate Director proposed September 2018	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; Richard Thomas, Strategic Planning and Commissioning Officer.		
Annual Recommendations/feedback Update to each SOSC	Update on all feedback that required follow up and recommendations - Cabinet and Officer ones <i>(COSC Receive report - SOSCs for info)</i>		Proposed for March 2018 to inform next years FWP planning	None		
Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Inspection of Children's Services.	The Committee requested that they receive an information report detailing the progress of the plan and update Members whether or not the actions have addressed the issues raised by the Inspectorate.		Going to Corporate Parenting on 24 Jan - Scrutiny Officers to pick up and send to Committee			
Review of Fostering Project	<p>Further project as part of the Remodelling Children's Social Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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	Susan Cooper, Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing; Cllr Phil White, Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help; Laura Kinsey, Head of Children's Social Care; Pete Tyson, Group Manager – Commissioning; Lauren North, Commissioning and Contract Management Officer; Natalie Silcox, Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services.		
Community Services	<p>Rec from BREP</p> <p>The Committee recommend that Scrutiny consider a future item on what other Local Authorities are doing to respond to the gap in provision in Community Services.</p> <p>What grant funding has been reduced and how has this had an impact?</p> <p><i>(Officers proposed at fwp planning meeting to maybe use this as a bit of a researc item in scrutiny where represnetatives are asked form other LAs to determine what they do as this info isnt currently held by our Communities Directorate)</i></p>				SOSC2 Feb 18	
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.		Corporate Director proposed early 2019			

CIW investigation into LAC	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.			
CAMHS	<p>With reference to the responses received in relation to Child Adolescent Mental Health Services Members on 12 December 2018, Members note that most of the replies feature an element of work in progress and have asked to retain the item on the FWP for future review. To receive an update on current provision and further advise on current situation in relation to comments and conclusions made on 12 December 2018.</p> <p>Update on work being undertaken throughout Wales looking at causes of mental health: 'Working Together for Mental Health'.</p> <p>To include an update on how we are getting on moving into Cwm Taf.</p>		Corporate Director proposed early 2019			
Empty Properties	SOSC 3 requested that this item continue on FWP - reasons and purpose to be confirmed					
Home to School Transport	<p>To provide assurances on rationalisation of Learner Transport as far as possible in order to make budget savings:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p> <p>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?</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>To provide assurances on rationalisation of Learner Transport as far as possible in order to make budget savings. 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 ought to be scrutinised by an Overview & Scrutiny Committee at the earliest opportunity 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</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. Mark Shepherd, Corporate Director Communities;		
Plastic Free County Borough	<p>Following on from the notice of motion in which it proposed the authority to go plastic free and to encourage all organisations and individuals to follow as much as possible. Council Members wished to be informed of how Officers intend to work towards the following:</p> <p>If and when a review our own organisation will take place and plans to replace single use plastic items, encouraging the replacement of single use plastic items such as plastic straws, plastic coffee cups with biodegradable items in the workplace.</p> <p>When will BCBC contact County Borough businesses to encourage them to replace single use plastic items, reduce unnecessary packaging and apply principles of sustainability within their everyday businesses.</p> <p>How we plan to promote 'Plastic free Bridgend' through social media and other appropriate marketing and communications methods. How do we support community initiatives to 'Keep Bridgend Tidy', including our beaches, parks and streets, and promote alternatives to throwing away materials, in keeping with principles of the circular economy and waste hierarchy.</p> <p>How we are working with Welsh Government Ministers on the measures, including guidance and legislation, can be introduced to reduce plastic waste across Wales, in keeping with the principles previously outlined.</p> <p>Include stats on what single use items BCBC currently uses and any plans for a replacement of these items.</p>	To work towards bridgend becoming a plastic free town. For the Committee to be informed of proposals in working towards this.				

Parks and Playing Fields	To be updated by MS		Corporate Director proposed Nov 2018	Mark Shephard, Corporate Director - Communities; Cllr Richard Young, Cabinet Member - Communities;		
Direct Payment Scheme	Details on the revised policy including how the legislation has affected it. How Direct Payments are delivered. What support has been provided to service users since the launch of the new scheme. How was the scheme launched to service users.	Corporate Director has proposed this as a potential item	Corporate Director proposed November			
Member and School Engagement Panel - Annual Report	Annual Update to - SOSC 1 on the work of the Member and School Engagement Panel					

The following items for briefing sessions or pre-Council briefing

Item	Specific Information to request
Social Services Commissioning Strategy	To include information on what work has taken place following the Social Services and Wellbeing Act population assessment. To also cover the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Annual Plan Bridgend Social Services Commissioning Strategy
Cwm Taf Regional Working	Update on situation and way forward with Regional Working with Cwm Taf? How will we undertake Regional working?
Residential Remodelling - Extra Care Housing	Site visit to current Extra Care Housing and then to new site once work has begun
Children's Social Services	Briefing for SOSC 1 on Child Practice Reviews - details of latest CPRs over last 12-18 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.

Potential items proposed for the Forward Work Programme - questions to consider	
Proposed Item	Supporting People Grant
Is this item within the remit of the Committee?	Yes
Is it a Corporate Priority?	Yes
Is it a public interest item?	Yes
What are the questions that need answering?	The effectiveness of the grant support provided across a variety of sectors within BCBC, and to ensure that the grant is being targeted at the services most in need.
Then:	
What is the expected outcome from receiving the item?	Improved outcomes in line with the agreed objectives of the grant.
What can be achieved?	Improved support for those in need of emergency housing and support
What impact can Members have on this area?	Members can provide their views as to where they see this grant funding being most effectively used in accordance with the specific aims of the grant.
What information should be reported to the Committee? I.e. data, case studies, examples of outcomes, challenges etc.	Full breakdown of the various services currently supported through this grant within BCBC (inc. the various financial detail) along with how this may have changed over recent years. The number of individuals supported through the grant and in what way. How are decisions made about where to spend the grant and how much in specific areas?
How should information be presented at the meeting? I.e. PowerPoint/Prezi presentation, audio/visual formats, photos, graphics, charts, maps etc.	Charts, power point, etc.

Who should be invited to contribute to achieve a representative picture? I.e. front line staff, users, carers, young people, representatives from partner organisations, business representatives etc.	Staff from Wellbeing directorate and those responsible for Housing and any other staff / directorates involved in the direct spend or allocation of the grant.
Is the item particularly suitable for webcasting?	No

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3

12 JUNE 2018

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

NOMINATION TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to request the Committee to nominate one Member to sit on the Public Service Board Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priorities.

- 2.1 The key improvement objectives identified in the Corporate Plan 2018–2022 have been embodied in the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes. The Corporate Improvement Objectives adopted by Council on 22 February 2018 and formally set out the improvement objectives that the Council will seek to implement between 2018 and 2022. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees engage in review and development of plans, policy or strategies that support the Corporate Themes.

3. Background.

- 3.1 From 1 April 2016, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 introduced statutory Public Services Boards (PSB) across each local authority area in Wales. PSBs work together to improve the social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being of the board's area. The Act specified that one Committee take an overview of the overall effectiveness of the Board which this Authority determined to carry out via a PSB Overview and Scrutiny Panel which is now proposed to sit under the remit of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.2 The purpose of the Panel is to review and scrutinise the efficiency and effectiveness of the PSB and its decisions as well as the governance arrangements surrounding it. The Panel will hold up to two meetings a year and will make reports or recommendations to the Board regarding its functions, with the aim of enhancing its impact. These recommendations are to be presented to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval prior to submission to the Board.

- 3.3 A copy of any report or recommendation made to the Public Service Board must be sent to the Welsh Ministers, the Commissioner and the Auditor General for Wales.
- 3.4 The membership of the PSB Panel is determined annually and incorporates three Members from the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, one Member from each of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees and counterpart representatives that sit on the Public Service Board.

4. Current Situation / proposal.

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to nominate one Member to sit on the Public Service Board Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

- 5.1 The work of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the 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. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.1 There are no equalities impacts arising from 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 establishment of the PSB Panel will assist in the long term planning of the business of the Council by the continuation of effective relationships with other organisations to improve wellbeing in Bridgend County now and in the future.
- Prevention - The PSB Overview and Scrutiny Panel will monitor the Public Service Board's objectives and priorities within the Wellbeing Plan which address underlying causes of problems and prevent them getting worse or happening in the future.
- Integration - The report supports all the wellbeing objectives.
- Collaboration - The PSB Panel supports partnership working with other organisations both locally and regionally.

- Involvement - The PSB Panel will maintain a relationship with other Organisations through effective partnership working and act as a critical friend to ensure the PSB are involving citizens of Bridgend when making decisions that affect them.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to nominate one Member to sit on the Public Service Board Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

Andrew Jolley,
Corporate Director – Operational & Partnership Services

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Background Documents

None

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3

12 JUNE 2018

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

CORPORATE PARENTING CHAMPION NOMINATION REPORT

1. Purpose of the Report.

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request the Committee to nominate one Member as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee as an invitee to meetings of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives.

- 2.1 The key improvement objectives identified in the Corporate Plan 2018-2022 have been embodied in the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes. The Corporate Improvement Objectives were adopted by Council on 22 February 2018 and formally set out the improvement objectives that the Council will seek to implement between 2018 and 2022. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees engage in review and development of plans, policy or strategies that support the Corporate Themes.

3. Background

- 3.1 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.¹
- 3.2 In order to further develop and enhance the Council's corporate parenting role with its partners, a Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee comprising all Members of Cabinet was established by Cabinet on 4 November 2008.
- 3.3 The inaugural meeting of the Cabinet Committee was held on 27 November 2008 where it was agreed that the Cabinet Committee will meet bi-monthly. The terms of reference for the Cabinet Committee are:
- to ensure that looked after children are seen as a priority by the whole of the Authority and by the Children and Young People's Partnership;

¹ Welsh Assembly Government and Welsh Local Government Association 'If this were my child... A councillor's guide to being a good corporate parent to children in care and care leavers', June 2009

- to seek the views of children and young people in shaping and influencing the parenting they receive;
- to ensure that appropriate policies, opportunities and procedures are in place;
- to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Authority in its role as corporate parent against Welsh Government guidance.

3.4 At its inaugural meeting, the Cabinet Committee requested that a Corporate Parenting “Champion” be nominated from each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to become permanent invitees to the Cabinet Committee.

4. Current Situation / Proposal.

4.1 The Committee is requested to nominate one Member as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee as an invitee at meetings of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee.

4.2 The role of the Corporate Parenting Champion is to represent their Overview and Scrutiny Committee, partaking in discussions with Cabinet over items relating to children in care and care leavers.

4.3 It is also suggested that in this role each Champion considers how all services within the remit of Scrutiny affect children in care and care leavers and encourage their own Committee to bear their Corporate Parenting role in mind when participating in Scrutiny.

4.4 Scrutiny Champions can greatly support the Committee 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.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

5.1 The work of the Subject Scrutiny Committee relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the 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 impacts arising from 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 establishment of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee demonstrates the Authorities long term commitment to improving and strengthening their role as Corporate Parents to care leavers and Looked After Children.
- Prevention – The Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee are preventative in their nature and ensure that appropriate policies, opportunities and procedures are in place for all care leavers and Looked After Children
- Integration – This report supports all the well-being objectives
- Collaboration – All members are Corporate Parents and this report supports collaborative working with Cabinet and Members of Scrutiny and emphasises the role of Corporate Parents for all Elected Members.
- Involvement – Corporate Parent Champions provide practical support and guidance to children in care and care leavers to ensure they achieve their well-being goals

8. Financial Implications.

8.1 None.

9. Recommendation.

The Committee is asked to nominate one Member of the Committee as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee at meetings of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee

P A Jolley,
Corporate Director – Operational and Partnership Services

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Background Documents

Bridgend County Borough Council Constitution

Part II of the Local Government Act 2000: Executive Arrangements

Report of the Corporate Director – Children to Cabinet, 4 November 2008: Establishment of a Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee

Report of the Corporate Director – Children to the Inaugural Meeting of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee, 27 November 2008

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3

12 JUNE 2018

HIGHWAY SERVICES REVIEW

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise scrutiny members on the impact of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) on Highway Services.

2. Connection to corporate improvement objectives/other corporate priorities

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

- 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 has had to introduce measures to implement budget reductions across different service areas to react to year-on-year reductions in Welsh Government funding.
- 3.2 Since 2010 this has meant efficiency savings in the highways services budget in the order of £4 million. Amongst these savings have been measures that have seen a reduction in staff whilst trying to maintain an appropriate level of service.
- 3.3 The impact of the reductions to both staff and service levels varies subject to the viewpoint of the recipient of the service who may be either internal or external to the authority.
- 3.4 Whilst the majority of services specified are a statutory provision the exact level of service or standard is not specified within the statute and are based around sector guidance as to service delivery. Highway Services consists of seven sections namely:

- Fleet Services
- Network Management Drainage and Coastal
- Traffic and Transportation,
- Engineering Design and Project Management
- Rights of Way
- Direct Labour Organisation (DLO), Street lighting and Highways Maintenance
- Engineering Services

3.5 In order for members to consider the efficiency of the maintenance of the highway network it needs to consider the value and the form of the asset. According to returns for the Whole of Government accounts the reported gross replacement cost of the BCBC highway asset in 2015/16 was in the order of £1,000,000,000 (1Billion pounds excluding land valuation) and as such is probably the largest of the council assets which all sectors of the community use for all matters influencing their lives. In order to inform this valuation the following asset types have been considered.

- 799km of carriageway
- 883km of footway
- 24,853 road gullies & associated drainage lines/chambers
- 101 road bridges
- 102 footbridges
- 155 retaining walls
- 103 culverts
- 13 subways
- 20,000 street lights
- 419km of street lighting cabling
- 46 light controlled junctions
- 283 bus shelters
- 4.2km pedestrian barriers
- 15.6km safety fences
- 35 cattle grids
- 260 seats

3.6 The foregoing are a few main examples of specific highway assets however, as there are many others including grit bins, bins, street signs, bollards, verges, hedge rows, trees, ditches, gates, marker posts, carriageway markings, weather stations, traffic signs and carriageway markings

3.7 Additional assets that fall within the remit of Highway Services consist of Porthcawl Light house and Coastline Sea defenses including the Western breakwater.

- 3.8 Current revenue budgets for maintaining highway and coastal assets is approximately £4M per annum. This equates to 0.4 % of the highway gross replacement cost excluding the additional items identified.

Base budget circa : £5.8 M
LGBI* repayments circa £0.6M
Street Lighting energy costs circa £0.9M

Balance of revenue budget circa £4.3M

*LBGI- Local Government Borrowing Initiative – relates to repayment of capital spend on previous highways and street lighting schemes.

- 3.9 As reductions in budgets and staffing have taken place the Highways services section have sought measures to minimise the impact on front line services by predominantly considering back office functions and assessing technological innovations to enable the service to do things differently.
- 3.10 Examples of doing things differently have seen investment in both LED street lighting and part-night street lighting switchgear which has seen a reduction in the council's energy usage whilst for the most part keeping the lights on. In February 2018 the council were successful in obtaining SALIX interest free funding to enable replacement of street lighting to new energy efficient LED units over the next two years and to use the recouped energy savings to repay the SALIX funding. (SALIX, is a not-for-profit organisation funded by Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Department for Education, the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government and Higher Education Funding Council for England, Salix provides 100% interest-free capital for the public sector to reduce their energy costs by enabling the installation of modern, energy efficient technologies and replacing dated, inefficient technologies)
- 3.11 The street lighting team have improved productivity by the use of handheld devices that link directly to the 'back office' and entries not only advise that a job is completed but also enable access to site plans so that defective items can be located and dealt with more quickly. This had previously been undertaken using paper records. This streamlining eliminates duplication of work and also leads to a quicker response time.
- 3.12 Similar equipment is used by the Highway & Streetworks inspectors when undertaking their duties and the systems are able to generate automatic

- responses via the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system for simple customer requests such as potholes. These devices log inspections and can be used to generate works requests when downloaded. Inspection of assets results in the commissioning of any appropriate emergency or planned maintenance /repair works either through the in-house direct labour teams or through external contractors. The type of external commissions may include substantial resurfacing works or bridge repairs whilst in-house DLO responses may include emergency 'pothole' repairs, highway drainage, vegetation removal, gritting and flooding incidents.
- 3.13 The Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) manages street lighting assets as well as providing staff resources to deliver emergency and planned responses to the network management service as well as other sections and departments within the council.
- 3.14 As financial savings have impacted on service areas of the council, there has been a growing reliance on the highways out of hour's teams to respond to incidents and make situations safe such as in parks or Council buildings/property.
- 3.15 In delivering highways maintenance, excluding street lighting, the DLO service employ's a limited team of 37 staff who undertake a variety of tasks to meet the maintenance needs of the councils (1 Billion pound gross replacement cost) highway assets. The DLO teams include Drainage, Surfacing, Hazarding, Out of Hours Response, Winter Maintenance and Barrier Repair. Staff are trained and skilled not only to repair the multitude of specialist surfacing materials in our towns and villages but also CADW standard repairs to structures and maintenance of historic highway structures. The workforce contains skilled drivers who not only drive HGV's to carry out winter maintenance but also lead teams in the repair of drainage, highways and sea defenses. Other team members maintain the circa 25,000 road gullies, highway verges and provide emergency response to traffic collisions, potholes, stray animals, spillages, fallen trees, securing buildings, and winter maintenance. As such, this small team is experienced and diverse in carrying out duties that would otherwise require individual specialist contracts outside of the authority.
- 3.16 In driving efficiency winter gritting vehicles are equipped with computerised control that does not discharge material when stationary and machines are tracked which provides information on when and where routes have been treated, how much salt has been used and the speed of the vehicles to ensure the effective gritting of the routes (Appendix A). Assessment of the routes resulted in a reduction in the number of teams from four to three in

2016/17 which deliver the typical needs of winter maintenance within the borough.

- 3.17 One issue in relation to winter maintenance is climate change which means that the service needs to be reactive to winters that are forecast to be wetter. Increased rainfall means that the service needs to consider its maintenance regime and improvement of drainage and flood protection. Whilst there is not a specific duty to provide sandbags the council does supply these free of charge to residents and irrespective of the flooding a significant quantity are stored and replenished at the councils Waterton depot for deployment when required.
- 3.18 In assessing performance the Council's highway department has recently rejoined the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE). This enables comparison with similar authorities across the UK in various elements of service delivery. Within Wales BCBC has been grouped with Swansea City and County (SCC) and Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC). Some examples of the comparisons from 2015 are given in Appendix B.
- 3.19 In considering performance the benchmarking is of use in assessing how BCBC are delivering a service in comparison to similar authorities, such as the cost to clean gullies or response times to attending to category '1 Defects' ie that is a defect that represents an imminent hazard to highway users, comparable to other local authorities within the same family grouping.
- 3.20 The assessments do not currently have a comparator for cost of pothole repairs however it is estimated that for a basic pothole repair of a 1m2 40mm deep it costs the DLO in the region of £26 to attend as a comparison to procure a similar repair through the south east wales framework which would be approximately £50.
- 3.21 In order to seek further efficiencies a review of the service area identified certain improvements for consideration. These included

- Staffing restructures
- Energy savings through LED technology
- Review of service provision
 - Bus services
 - Gulley cleansing
 - Street works

- 3.22 These recommendations have been considered against service need and deliverability. Based on this review restructures and cost saving measures have been implemented and contributed to MTFs savings. Of the areas identified for consideration some have already been realised for implantation with a successful application for £2.5 million to fund upgrading of street lighting to energy efficient LED units with repayment made from the cost of energy saved. Additionally a report has recently been presented to cabinet on reductions in subsidised bus services. Other initiatives will be considered but the impact of any changes needs to be carefully considered.
- 3.23 Included within the review was the consideration of collaboration/ regional working which may have a potential for shared savings with other authorities. This in part is already taking place within the wider highway services with a shared provision of civil parking enforcement with the Vale of Glamorgan Council and the shared Fleet maintenance facility Ty Thomas with South Wales Police.
- 3.24 Additionally there may be further opportunities presented by the City Deal project in areas such as transportation which officers will consider with other local authority partners where this provides efficiencies and benefits for its constituents.
- 3.25 It must be highlighted that an impact of the MTFs savings has been a reduction in staff from both the supporting back office and some front line service delivery. These reductions place added pressure on remaining staff who still have to deliver the same workload and manage increasing demands from new legislative frameworks such as Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), as well as maintain compliance historical legislative requirements such as those of the Health and Safety at Work Act etc 1974.
- 3.26 What this has meant in practice is that staffing numbers have reduced with individual teams being reduced between 20 and 50 percent with reduction in plant and vehicles where applicable. The impact on services is that whilst functions are still being delivered the response times for non priority areas have increased and the ability to deliver anything outside of the core activities has diminished.
- 3.27 With the loss of professional members of staff, any work outside core activities now requires the contracting in of services which has implications on workload in the commissioning, monitoring and quality checking of any outsourced work.

- 3.28 This also manifests itself in longer operational response times to address non priority issues such as cutting back of vegetation or responding to requests for service.
- 3.29 In January 2018 Welsh Government announced a £30 million highways refurbishment capital grant, which local authorities could use to displace any item of their own current capital programme in the current year (2017-18) so long as an equivalent amount is then used for highways refurbishment works in 2018-19. The grant for Bridgend was £1,204,380 and was used to replace the Council's use of capital receipts on a number of schemes taking place in 2017-18, thus releasing that funding to be spent on additional highways works in 2018-19. In addition Council approved additional capital funding of £5 million for investment in carriageway resurfacing and renewal of footways as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018-19 to 2021-22, bringing the total new investment in highways and footways, to £6.204 million over the next 3 years, including £500,000 for school highways works.

4.0 Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 Future financial savings present a significant challenge for both the Communities Directorate as well as the Highways service. The Highways service will have to continue to consider those services that are not a statutory provision and the realistic level of service for those services that are statutory.

Such considerations would extend to areas that have previously been highlighted for consideration such as

- School crossing patrol service
- Council subsidised bus services
- Shopmobility services
- Service Level for highway maintenance
- Structures and staffing

- 4.2 The move towards regional working may have opportunities to combine skills and resources with other neighbouring authorities but this will still have a financial implication on the authority along with any ongoing costs associated with enabling such a collaboration.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 None for the purposes of this report

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 No specific EIA has been undertaken at this stage

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

7.1 None for the purposes of this report

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The total historical and future planned MTFs savings for the Highways section are shown below (Table Values in £'000s):

Service Area	<u>11-</u> 12	<u>12-</u> 13	<u>13-</u> 14	<u>14-</u> 15	<u>15-</u> 16	<u>16-</u> 17	<u>17-</u> 18	<u>18-</u> 19	<u>19-</u> 20	<u>Total</u> <u>Savings</u>
Highways Network	157	0	250	90	98	200	195	50	50	1,090
Street lighting	50	90	0	125	0	150	0	110	0	525
Highways DLO	48	56	40	52	203	157	0	0	50	606
Rights of Way	20	0	0	27	42	0	21	0	0	110
Fleet Services	7	0	0	10	75	0	0	0	0	92
Transportation (inc Car Parks)	277	345	0	110	445	15	100	188	40	1,520
Engineering Services	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	74	0	102
TOTAL	559	491	290	442	863	522	316	422	140	4,045

9. RECOMMENDATION

9.1 That the content of the report is noted.

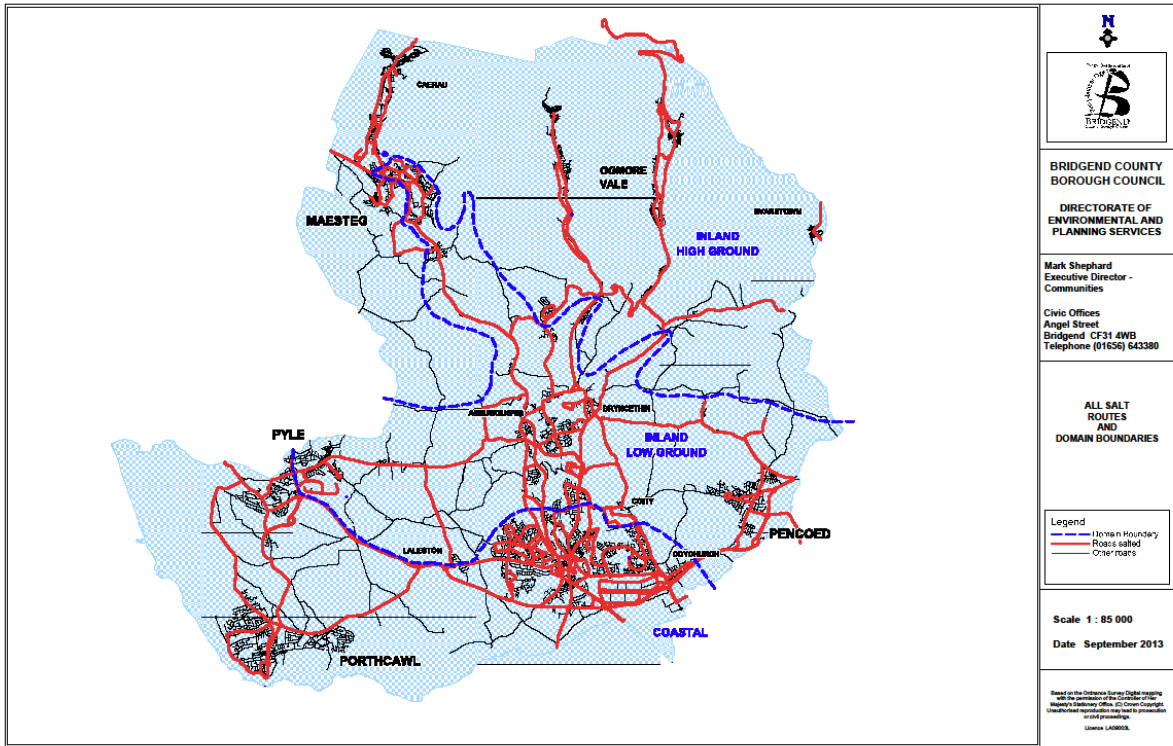
Contact Officer: Kevin Mulcahy,
Group Manager – Highway Services

Telephone: (01656) 642535

E-mail: Kevin.Mulcahy@bridgend.gov.uk

Background documents: None

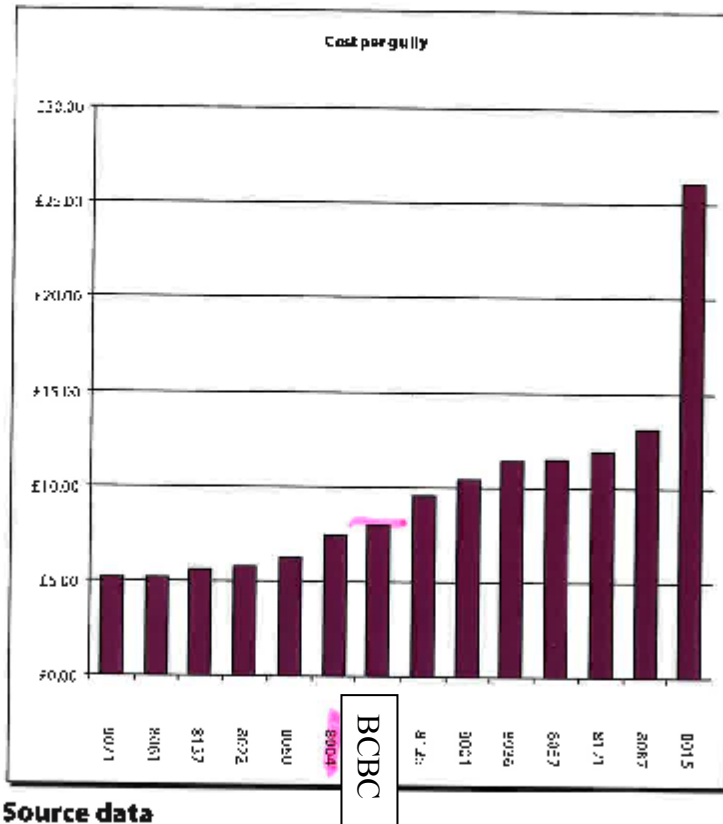
Appendix A



PI 32 Service cost per gully

Family group H2

	Gullies emptied	Total cost	Cost per gully
Average			19.84
Lowest			£5.23
Highest			£26.14
Lowest in range	4,975	£47,738	
Highest in range	80,600	£741,207	



Source data

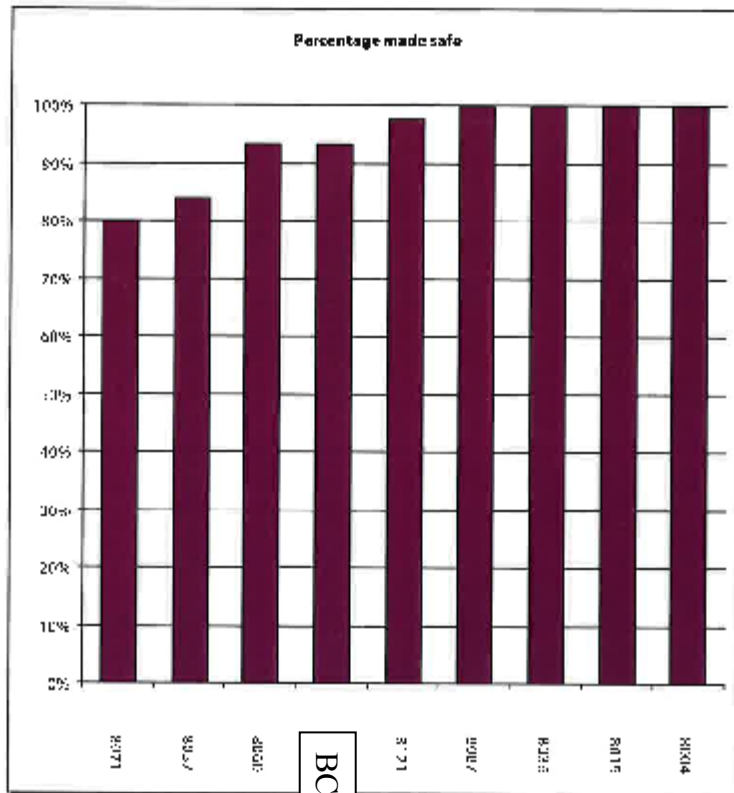
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Acceptable parameters: >£3 and <£35

PI 45a Percentage of category 1 defects made safe within response time

Family group H2

	Number of category 1 defects	Incidents made safe	Percentage made safe
Average			94.25%
Lowest			80.00%
Highest			100.00%
Lowest in range	5	4	
Highest in range	844	644	



Source data

[FCAT1TT] / [FCAT1D]

Acceptable parameters: >10% and <=100%; category one defects separated from footway

