

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD IN REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 14 DECEMBER 2021 AT 14:30

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

J Gebbie  
D Patel

SE Baldwin

CE Smith

HM Williams

Apologies for Absence

Officers:

Carys Lord	Chief Officer - Finance, Performance & Change
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Gill Lewis	Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services
Julie Ellams	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Andrew Rees	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Jackie Davies	Head of Adult Social Care
Joseph Cassinelli	Principal Planning Officer - Strategic Transportation
Nicola Fedyszyn	
David Holland	Head of Shared Regulatory Services

750. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Claire Marchant, Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 17 - Re-Commissioning Regulated Care and Support at Home as family members are in receipt of support at home from the providers listed in the report and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.

751. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet of 16 November 2021 be approved as a true and accurate record.

752. OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION 'SHAPING BRIDGEND'S FUTURE'

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change reported on the outcome of the 'Shaping Bridgend's Future' 2021 budget consultation which asked citizens to help to determine a longer-term vision for the county borough. Its intention was to understand what the public felt had worked well, and where the Council needs to continue to make changes or improvements as it recovered from the Covid-19 pandemic, to ensure that it delivered effective and efficient services that are right for communities over the next 5 to 10 years.

She informed Cabinet that public consultation took place over an 8-week period from 20 September 2021 to 14 November 2021, where respondents were asked to share their views on a range of areas including:

- Performance over the past 12 months;
- Support for Business, Tourism and the economy;

- Wellbeing;
- Customer face-to-face access;
- Digitalisation;
- Investment in services:
- Fees and charges;
- Council Tax levels;
- The Future.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change informed Cabinet that this year had seen a decrease of 39% interactions to the consultation and a decrease of 48% on survey completions compared to the previous year. She stated that the consultation and engagement team attended 17 online and face to face meetings during the live period resulting in 275 face to face interactions with people in online events, which represented an increase of 37% on last year. She outlined the headline figures and themes in relation to areas the respondents were asked to share their views on.

The Deputy Leader stated that it was disappointing to note the level of responses to the consultation this year, compared to the previous year, but nevertheless thanked those who had taken the time to respond and that their comments on the Council's services would be considered. The Cabinet Member Communities stated that officers should not necessarily be disappointed with the level of responses received as all residents would have had more pressing matters to attend to in the last year due to the pandemic. The Leader stated that Cabinet would reflect on the comments raised during the consultation and he thanked the consultation and engagement team for undertaking the consultation.

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet noted the outcome of the consultation with interested parties as detailed in the consultation report.

753. **STRATEGIC TRANSPORT SCHEMES**

The Corporate Director Communities reported on an overview of the Council's current and potential future strategic transport projects and sought priorities for schemes to go forward for any future phases of the South East Wales Metro programme or any other funding or delivery mechanism.

She informed Cabinet that the projects identified will also form the basis of Bridgend strategic transport priorities in discussions with Welsh Government (WG), Transport for Wales (TFW) and Network Rail (NR) and facilitate further public transport use and active travel infrastructure through improved, convenience and usability. The schemes would also contribute to reducing the carbon footprint, encouraging a modal shift to sustainable travel and by reducing vehicular congestion, providing greater access to public transport, traffic reduction and associated environmental benefits. It would also allow rail service frequency enhancements, particularly along the Maesteg to Cardiff route, which had been identified as a key transport corridor. The schemes will also provide an opportunity for future localised regeneration schemes around the project areas with associated economic and social benefits.

The Corporate Director Communities reported that the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) through its Metro programme together with the Welsh Government (WG) provide the principal funding mechanism for large strategic transport projects within the region. Current projects include the Porthcawl Metrolink bus facility as well as feasibility and design work on the replacement Penprysg Road/Active Travel Bridge and removal of the level crossing in Pencoed. Active travel schemes also rely primarily on WG funding (managed by Transport for Wales), with that programme prioritised separately. Other transport infrastructure projects (including active travel and highway improvements) may

be funded by developer contributions (through Section 106 planning agreements), by other grant funding initiatives and on occasions support from within the Authority.

She informed Cabinet that it was essential that the Council agrees a list of schemes that may be submitted as part of any current or future transport funding bids as well as identifying recognised projects that could be promoted when seeking developer contributions through Section 106 agreements. She outlined the following proposed and existing schemes:

- Active Travel Programme
- Brackla Halt Railway Station
- Bridgend Railway Station enhancement
- Ewenny Road (Maesteg) Interchange
- Ford Branch Line
- Garw and Ogmore Valleys Rapid Bus Infrastructure
- Junction 36 (M4)
- Penprysg Road Bridge
- Porthcawl Metrolink
- Porthcawl to Pyle/Bridgend Bus Priority enhancements
- Pyle Railway Station Relocation and Park and Ride

The Cabinet Member Communities in commending the strategic transport schemes was pleased to see the work in partnership with the Cardiff Capital Region and the Welsh Government through the Metro programme on the Porthcawl Metrolink, currently well advanced and the Penprysg Road Bridge. The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration stated that all the schemes are to be applauded and are imaginative and optimistic and represent a modal shift from the motor car to public transport and active travel. The Leader was pleased to see many of the projects being close to delivery with a planning application received for the Porthcawl Metrolink. He was also pleased to see projects being dovetailed with each other, the development of brownfield sites and railway station improvements representing a modal shift to public transport and active travel, with all schemes being regenerations projects and not solely transport projects. The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations was pleased to note that the schemes have something for all parts of the County and is a positive improvement.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations questioned the timescales for delivery of the projects. The Corporate Director Communities informed Cabinet that there would be a variety of projects. The sum of £3m had been spent on Active Travel routes. The Bridgend Railway Station is part of the Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan and is being progressed with landowners. She stated that improvements to Junction 36 of the M4 and bus and rail infrastructure links would take place over the next 5 years. Longer term projects would be the Ford Branch Line and the relocation of Pyle Railway Station and Park and Ride.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration underlined the critical importance of the Cardiff Capital Region, without which progress could not be made to the Porthcawl Metrolink and Penprysg Road Bridge.

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet approved the strategic transport projects as identified above to be included as part of any future Cardiff Capital Region Metro programme or other funding mechanism as well as the basis for discussion with other outside transport bodies on national and regional strategic transport priorities.

754. **ACTIVE TRAVEL NETWORK MAP**

The Corporate Director Communities sought approval to submit the revised active travel network map (ATNM) to Welsh Government by the prescribed deadline of 31 December 2021.

The Corporate Director Communities reported that the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 required local authorities in Wales to produce existing and future route maps of walking and cycling networks and to deliver year on year active travel improvements along the mapped routes and their related facilities. Active travel is a term used to describe walking and cycling as a means of transport to a destination and not solely for leisure. She highlighted the complexity of developing active travel routes due to health and safety requirements and land ownership issues to be overcome. She stated that the current version of the ATNM was approved in 2017 and the revised ATNM is to be submitted by 31 December 2021, which had been developed through a rigorous process of data gathering, consultation, and evaluation. She outlined the 3 stages to the public consultation for the ATNM. To date, £3m of routes had been implemented in the County, with the Welsh Government committing the sum of £70m throughout Wales to develop Active Travel routes. Officers were currently analysing all statutory consultation feedback and making final amendments to the ATNM.

The Cabinet Member Communities in commending the ATNM was pleased to note that the complexity of delivering active travel routes had been highlighted by the Corporate Director Communities. He was pleased that the Welsh Government had shown its intent by committing £70m for the development of active travel routes throughout Wales. He thanked the team for its work in developing the ATNM and for overcoming the challenges in developing the Cowbridge Road active route, currently being delivered. The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration was pleased to see the ambition behind the ATNM but that its delivery could be constrained by financial modelling with missing links in some routes. The Leader was pleased to note that the Welsh Government had doubled the amount made available for the development of active travel routes, however timescales for the delivery of active routes are compressed and it would be preferable if multi-year funding was made available.

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

1. Noted the information contained within the report.
2. Delegated authority to the Corporate Director – Communities to submit the final version of the ATNM and associated documentation to WG for approval.

755. **ENFORCEMENT POLICY FOR THE ISSUING OF FIXED PENALTY NOTICES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL OFFENCES CHANGES**

The Corporate Director Communities sought approval of proposed amendments to the Council's Enforcement Policy for the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices.

The Corporate Director Communities reported that the Council's Enforcement Policy for the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices for environmental offences requires amendment to incorporate offences in accordance with the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Refuse and Disposal (Amendment) Act 1978, which will increase enforcement responsibility. She stated that in relation to fly-tipping, a Fixed Penalty Notice can be offered to discharge liability to conviction of the offence, by payment of a fixed penalty ranging between £150 and £400. The Council's charge in relation to this offence is a fixed penalty of £200 (with £120 being accepted as an early payment penalty). However, surrounding local authorities have now commenced administering the fixed penalty at £400 (with £200 being accepted as an early payment penalty). She informed Cabinet that to deter any offender from distinguishing between borough boundaries when committing such an offence, it was recommended that this Council incorporate a similar level of penalty.

The Corporate Director Communities reported that the addition of legislation regarding commercial waste offences has been included and to deal with waste issues in town centre areas, it was recommended that this is included in the policy to allow Officers to deal with businesses who are not complying with their waste responsibilities and to enable the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices where appropriate.

The Corporate Director Communities also reported that vehicle offences had been incorporated into the policy, to include the ability to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for the abandonment of a vehicle, and where vehicles are parked on the road to be sold, causing a nuisance to residents in an area. She stated that this was aimed at situations where traders are selling more than two vehicles from their properties in residential areas causing issues for residents. It was also proposed within the policy to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for traders who repair vehicles on the roadside.

The Deputy Leader in commending the amendments to the Enforcement Policy stated that it would bring the authority into line with surrounding local authorities to deter those from distinguishing between boundaries when considering fly-tipping. He stated that whilst educating the public would be the priority, having the ability to issue Fixed Penalty Notices was an important option. The Corporate Director Communities considered that it was important for the authority to have at its disposal the ability to Issue Fixed Penalty Notices, the income from which would be reinvested into the service.

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet approved the revised Enforcement Policy for the Issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices for Environmental Offences.

756. **PRIVATELY OWNED ADVERTISING BUS SHELTERS**

The Corporate Director Communities sought approval to enter into a deed of variation to vary the terms of an existing agreement in relation to the erection and maintenance of bus shelters and grant of advertisement rights on bus shelters.

The Corporate Director Communities reported that Clear Channel UK Ltd which provides 25 shelters which they cleanse and maintain have approached the authority to request a variation to the terms of the agreement, to meet current advertising requirements. To vary the Agreement, the Council is required to enter into a deed of variation with Clear Channel UK Ltd.

The Cabinet Member Communities asked whether older bus shelters would be replaced in order that they have digital signage to meet current advertising requirements. The Corporate Director Communities stated that she would come back with further detail on the replacement programme for bus shelters.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help asked whether the digital signage displaying the advertising on bus shelters would be carbon neutral. The Corporate Director Communities stated that this would be looked at to ensure the advertising was photo voltaic.

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet subject to the terms of the Deed of Variation being agreed as set out in Section 4 of the report:

- Approved entering into the Deed of Variation to vary the Bus Shelter Agreement between the Council and Clear Channel UK Ltd;
- delegated authority to the Corporate Director – Communities to negotiate and agree the final terms of the deed of variation and to arrange execution of the Deed of Variation on behalf of the Council subject to such delegated authority being exercised in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services and HR & Corporate Policy and the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change.

757. **SOCIAL SERVICES REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21**

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing reported on the 2020/21 Annual Report on social services representations and complaints as required by Welsh Government guidance.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed Cabinet of the requirement for local authorities to have in place procedures for considering any representations or complaints made in relation to the discharge of their Social Services functions. She highlighted the key elements of the Social Services Representations and Complaints Procedure and where complainants have exhausted the complaints procedure, they have the right to refer their concern for consideration by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed Cabinet that the Annual Report places a strong emphasis not just upon complaints, but also on the comments and compliments received from service users to give a balanced view. She stated that services are keen to learn from the information gathered and use this to inform future service developments and any service improvements. It also contained statistics relating to complaints addressed in accordance with the Authority's Corporate Complaints Procedure, with the majority of complaints addressed and resolved informally (prior to reaching Stage 1 of the complaints procedure). This ensured that concerns are resolved quickly and prevents complainants from being subjected to using the formal complaints procedure unnecessarily. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing highlighted examples within the Annual Report where the families of service users had provided very positive feedback and compliments to staff in Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care for going above and beyond in a year which had been blighted by Covid-19 and considerable restrictions in place. Higher volumes of complaints could have been anticipated, however staff had adapted to new ways of working

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed Cabinet that the 2020/21 report contained statistical information in relation to the representations and complaints received during the year for both Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care. She stated that majority of the work carried out within the Social Services Representations and Complaints Procedure was undertaken in consultation with either the Monitoring Officer and/or Legal Services and there is a strong working relationship between the social services complaints staff and the legal services staff team.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help thanked the whole Social Services team for the exceptional work it had undertaken in the last year to support the most vulnerable residents.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations asked what happens when a complaint is received and what does the service do to respond to a complaint. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed Cabinet that it was important to meet with the complainant and to resolve the matter at an early stage and equally important to support staff and to ensure staff are trained and empowered. It was also important to resolve the complaint at an early stage to avoid the matter being referred to the Ombudsman. The Leader commented on the importance of an early resolution to complaints as otherwise, it rarely led to satisfaction. He also commented on the importance of residents being engaged in the complaints process. He stated that the process is a reminder that the Council is there to provide support at the most important time in peoples' lives.

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet approved the Annual Report on social services representations and complaints procedures for 2020/21.

758. **ADDITIONAL ONE-OFF PAYMENT TO BRIDGEND FOSTER AND ADULT PLACEMENT CARERS**

The Group Manager, Placements and Provider Services reported on a proposal to make one-off payment to Bridgend Foster Carers and Adult Placement Carers in recognition of the hard work they had undertaken throughout the Covid Pandemic.

He reported that lockdown had resulted in schools being closed and children and young people remaining at home throughout the day, with very limited opportunity to socialise with peers and their lives being disrupted. Care experienced children had the additional impact of not being able to meet with their family for face-to-face contact and during this period foster carers facilitated contact with these children via the phone or using Facetime, often taking on this role for the first time with little preparation, training or easy access to support. He stated that foster carers and supported lodgings hosts demonstrated high levels of resilience, offering the highest standards of care to the children who they were looking after, many of whom displayed challenging behaviours linked to their experiences of trauma. He informed Cabinet that another impact of the pandemic was the effect on adults with a learning disability living with adult placement families. This group of people were no longer able to engage in their normal day time activities, because of restrictions in the operation of day services, or to have face to face contact with their friends and relatives.

He reported that two payments had been made to the social care workforce, as part of a national initiative funded by Welsh Government, to recognise and reward the hard work and commitment of staff who had provided essential care to the most vulnerable of citizens during the Covid-19 pandemic. Foster carers, supported lodgings hosts, and adult placement families were not rewarded in this way despite their commitment to and playing such a significant role in safeguarding vulnerable children, young people and adults with a learning disability who they look after during a period of exceptional difficulty

The Group Manager, Placements and Provider Services reported that there is a shortage of people who can provide foster care and supported lodgings placements to children and young people who cannot live at home with their birth families. He stated that the Council does not have sufficient numbers of in-house foster carers and supported lodgings hosts and therefore, alongside the recruitment of new carers and it was essential that it demonstrates to the current carers how valuable and highly thought of they are in order to retain them. A similar position in relation to the recruitment of adult placement families which has proved to be problematic, although there are a small number of families who are being assessed to come onto the scheme. Another impact of the pandemic was the effect on adults with a learning disability living with adult placement families, no longer being able to engage in their normal day time activities.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help in commenting the proposal to make the one-off payment to foster carers and adult placement carers thanked them for their endeavours, which she and the Leader had witnessed at first hand at a recent foster carers event. The Leader stated that foster carers and adult placement carers would have experienced an increase in the cost of living and fuel bills and it was important to recognise the fundamental role they discharge.

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet approved the proposal to make a one-off payment to all approved foster carers, supported lodgings hosts and adult placement families as set out within the report.

759. **PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN) - ESTABLISHING A LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE (LRC) FOR PUPILS WITH MODERATE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES (MLD) AT YSGOL CYNWYD SANT**

The Corporate Director Education and Family Support sought approval to consult formally with the parents, staff and governing body of Ysgol Cynwyd Sant and other interested parties on the proposal to establish a Learning Resource Centre 'LRC' for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties ('MLD') at Ysgol Cynwyd Sant.

He reported that local authorities across the United Kingdom are experiencing a rise in the demand for services for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) and the cost to support this often exceeding budget. This has put pressure on all local authorities to meet and resource these needs, exacerbated by the additional pressures that have been caused by COVID-19. He stated that the Council has taken a proactive approach by commissioning an additional learning needs strategic planning provision review in 2020. One of the areas identified for provision to open is at key stage 2 in a Welsh-medium primary school for children with MLD.

He informed Cabinet that pupils would have access to individual, small-group and whole class experiences, as appropriate and their progress closely monitored, and individual plans regularly reviewed. Other mainstream pupils at Ysgol Cynwyd Sant would also benefit from this proposal as it sought to widen the specialist learning facilities within the school and provide expertise and advice to all staff.

He also informed Cabinet of the financial implications of the proposal and that a budget pressure of £60k was approved for the provision of a MLD class to cater for key stage 2 children accessing education through the medium of Welsh as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2021-22.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration in commending the proposal to go out to consultation thanked the leadership of the school for being open to the proposal, which would fill a gap in provision. The Leader stated that learners would benefit not only from being part of mainstream education but having specialist support at the school.

The Leader asked whether MLD support is provided at other Welsh medium schools in the County. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support informed Cabinet that MLD support is provided through the medium of Welsh, where required.

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet agreed:

- to consult formally on the proposal to establish an LRC for pupils with MLD at Ysgol Cynwyd Sant; and
- for the outcome of the consultation to be reported back to Cabinet.

760. **PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS (ALN) - ESTABLISHING A LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE (LRC) FOR PUPILS WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS (ASD) AT TREMAINS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The Corporate Director Education and Family Support sought approval to consult formally with the parents, staff and governing body of Tremains Primary School and other interested parties on the proposal to establish a Learning Resource Centre ('LRC') for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders ('ASD') at Tremains Primary School.

He reported that local authorities across the United Kingdom are experiencing a rise in the demand for services for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) and the cost to support this often exceeding budget. This has put pressure on all local authorities to meet and resource these needs, exacerbated by the additional pressures that have been caused by COVID-19. He stated that the Council has taken a



proactive approach by commissioning an additional learning needs strategic planning provision review in 2020. One of the areas identified for additional provision is at key stage 2 for children with ASD and there is an identified need to open an additional LRC for children with ASD.

He informed Cabinet that pupils would have access to individual, small-group and whole class experiences, as appropriate and their progress closely monitored, and individual plans regularly reviewed. Other mainstream pupils at Tremains Primary School would also benefit from this proposal as it sought to widen the specialist learning facilities within the school and provide expertise and advice to all staff.

He also informed Cabinet of the financial implications of the proposal and that a budget pressure of £82k was approved for an additional primary school ASD LRC/class to cater for key stage 2 children as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2021-22.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration in commending the proposal to go out to consultation stated that it would provide additional capacity to that currently provided at Llangewydd Junior and Pencoed Primary Schools as both LRCs are full. He stated that demand continues across the County and there is a gap in such provision, particularly in Bridgend. He also stated that Tremains Primary School is a centre of excellence and should the proposal go ahead, the school will be very successful in delivering this new provision.

The Corporate Director Education and Family Support informed Cabinet that all schools in the County are inclusive and that this provision will deliver additional provision to that which exists at Llangewydd Junior and Pencoed Primary Schools. He stated that Tremains Primary School is centrally located and part of the Brynteg Comprehensive cluster.

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet agreed:

- to consult formally on the proposal to establish an LRC for pupils with ASD at Tremains Primary School; and

for the outcome of the consultation to be reported back to Cabinet.

761. **GAMBLING ACT 2005 STATEMENT OF LICENSING PRINCIPLES 2022-2025**

The Head of Shared Regulatory Services sought endorsement to the publication of the Council's Statement of Licensing Principles for the next triennial period 2022 to 2025, and to forward to Council for approval and publication in accordance with the regulations.

He reported that the Council, as a licensing authority, must publish, on a three-year basis, a Statement of Licensing Principles governing the policy, regulation and decision-making process relating to gambling premises. Formal consultation had been undertaken prior to the publication of the new statement. He stated that responses had been made to the consultation and recommendations had been made for revisions to the Statement of Licensing Policy, the approval of which is a Council function. He informed Cabinet that the review had considered the unprecedented impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on businesses which provide gambling facilities.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations in commending the revised Statement of Principles was pleased to note the reduction in gambling premises, but a consequence of this had led to an increase in online gambling. The Leader stated that the consequence of online gambling is that it is unregulated and can be addictive and this had been recognised by the Chief Medical Officer as a health concern.

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet endorsed that the Statement of Licensing Principles, incorporating amendments highlighted within Appendix A together with the additional amendment in 4.6 of the report, is forwarded to Council for approval and publication in accordance with the regulations.

762. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

763. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as they contain exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 and Paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Following the application of the public interest test it was resolved that pursuant to the Act referred to above, to consider the following items in private, with the public excluded from the meeting, as it was considered that in all circumstances relating to the items, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

764. **APPROVAL OF EXEMPT MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the exempt minutes of the meeting of Cabinet of 16 November 2021 be approved as a true and accurate record.

765. **RE-COMMISSIONING REGULATED CARE AND SUPPORT AT HOME**

The Head of Adult Social Care reported on the outcome of the procurement exercise undertaken to establish a framework of commissioned regulated care at home providers; and sought approval to award Framework Agreements to the successful bidders.

The Head of Adult Social Care stated that Cabinet had previously approved the procurement of a Regulated Care at Home Services Framework of commissioned specialist providers, and that it would receive a further report following the conclusion of the procurement of that Framework. She informed Cabinet that a tender process had commenced to appoint service providers onto a framework for the delivery of high quality and sustainable supported care at home services across the County Borough. The framework agreement would be for an initial period of 2 years, with an option to extend for up to a further 24 months and will enable the Council to commission individual packages of care using a call-off process. She stated that the assessment criteria set out in the framework tender was based on 80% quality (made up of 60% method statement and 20% interview) and 20% price. The Council received responses from 20 bidders, of which 19 bidders passed the selection questionnaire and written quality assessment, with one bidder being disqualified as they did not meet the Council's pre-qualifying criteria. The 19 bidders were subsequently invited to interview to test their commitment and ability to provide a high-quality service, with one provider dropping out prior to interview.

The Head of Adult Social Care also reported that all bidders had submitted a pricing schedule (hourly cost) within a defined range, as required, and linked to the National Living Wage and Real Living Wage. Providers would be awarded packages in line with the call-off procedure. She stated that care workers' rates of pay are a key aspect to help recruit and retain into the sector, and to help with this in the homecare sector, a key initiative implemented via the Welsh Government Recovery Grant funding in 2021-22 is paying Independent Domiciliary Care (IDC) providers an additional £1/hr for hours of care delivered, which must be used for recruitment and retention purposes, moving onwards/paying/exceeding the Real Living Wage (RLW). She stated that all providers except for one are paying the Real Living Wage, whilst the one provider not paying it has committed to doing so when new tendered rates come into force in April 2022.

The Head of Adult Social Care reported on the financial implications which will have a potential cost pressure, the proposed changes on delivering and paying for care at home services will meet the requirements of the Welsh Government Social Care Workforce Grant. She stated that the grant is not part of the budget set by the Council and that investing the grant in the way proposed may result in significant cost pressures in other areas as there are underlying pressures in social services, including residential and supporting living services.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help in commending the recommissioning proposals stated that this was much need as the rates of pay in care are low compared to other sectors and there was a need to have everyone in post to support the sector.

The Leader asked whether all providers would pay travel time to care workers. The Head of Adult Social Care stated that the payment of travel time had been factored in and providers will pay at National Living Wage rates as there is a need to ensure people stay within the sector. The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help stated there was a need to ensure parity of pay between health and local government and a need to ensure providers are compliant with the latest legislation.

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet:

- Noted the content of the report;
- Approved the award of and appointment to the Framework Agreement for the provision of Regulated Care at Home Services for the period 1st April 2022 to the 31st March 2024 (with an option to extend for a further period of up to 24 months), to the bidders listed in Appendix 1, subject to no challenge being received during the standstill period;
- delegated authority to the Head of Adult Social Care to enter into and to arrange execution of the Framework Agreement on behalf of the Council with the bidders listed in Appendix 1, subject to no challenge being received during the standstill period and subject to such delegated authority being exercised in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate

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Policy and the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change; and

- Noted that following the successful award of the Framework Agreement, any packages of care shall be awarded in line with the call-off procedure.

The meeting closed at 16:37