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Bridgend County Borough Council



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Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive's Directorate

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 / 643147 / 643694

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Democratic Services

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: Tuesday, 21 March 2023

Dear Councillor,

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

A meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 will be held Hybrid in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB / remotely via Microsoft Teams on **Monday, 27 March 2023 at 10:00.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
To receive apologies for absence from Members.
2. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008 (including whipping declarations)
3. Approval of Minutes 3 - 24
To receive for approval the minutes of a meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 of the 03 11 22 and 20 01 23
4. Support for Young Carers and Adult Carers 25 - 36

Invitees

Councillor Jane Gebbie - Deputy Leader of Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help

Councillor Rhys Goode - Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Future Generations

Claire Marchant - Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing

Jacqueline Davies - Head of Adult Social Care

Laura Kinsey - Head of Children's Social Care

Andrew Thomas - Group Manager – Prevention and Wellbeing

Martin Morgans - Head of Performance and Partnerships

Kathy Proudfoot - Carers Development Officer

Sophie Moore - Wellbeing Manager - Healthy Living

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Ryan Statton - Active Communities Manager, Halo Leisure
Ceri Evans - Director of Business Development and Partnerships, Awen
Gareth Howells - Chief Operating Officer, TuVida
Jenny Park - Director of Care and services, TuVida

5. Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Improvement Check Visit to Children's Social Care Services - 21 - 24 November 2022 37 - 86
Invitees

Councillor Jane Gebbie - Deputy Leader of Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help

Claire Marchant - Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing
Laura Kinsey - Head of Children's Social Care
Iain McMillan – Deputy Head of Children's Social Care
Raeanna Grainger – Group Manager, IAA & Safeguarding

Tracey Shepherd - Senior Manager - Local Authority Inspection Team - Care Inspectorate Wales

6. Conclusions/Recommendations

7. Forward Work Programme Update 87 - 104

8. Urgent Items

To consider any item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should by reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

Note: This will be a Hybrid meeting and Members and Officers will be attending in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Angel Street Bridgend / Remotely via Microsoft Teams. The meeting will be recorded for subsequent transmission via the Council's internet site which will be available as soon as practicable after the meeting. If you have any queries regarding this, please contact cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk or tel. 01656 643147 / 643148.

Yours faithfully

K Watson

Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy

Councillors:

S Aspey
F D Bletsoe
E L P Caparros
P Davies

Councillors

P Ford
D M Hughes
M Lewis
J Llewellyn-Hopkins

Councillors

RL Penhale-Thomas
A Wathan
AJ Williams
R Williams

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2
HELD REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2022 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor F D Bletsoe – Chairperson

E L P Caparros	P Davies	P Ford	D M Hughes
M Lewis	J Llewellyn-Hopkins	RL Penhale-Thomas	A Wathan
AJ Williams	R Williams		

Officers:

Lucy Beard	Scrutiny Officer
Meryl Lawrence	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Jessica Mclellan	Scrutiny Officer
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Zak Shell	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services
Delyth Webb	Group Manager - Strategic Regeneration

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Richard Williams declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 as a member of the Development Control Committee.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 dated 11 July 2022 be approved as a true and accurate record.

9. CARE INSPECTORATE WALES (CIW) PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT OF CHILDRENS SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 23 - 27 MAY 2022

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing presented the report the purpose of which was to present to the Committee the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Inspection of Children’s Social Care Services Report and to request that the Committee consider the report and comment on the associated Action Plan.

The Deputy Head of Children’s Social Care presented the detailed Action Plan and explained that it was set out into 4 sections as per CIW’s report. He highlighted the work being done to address each area for improvement in the plan and confirmed that whilst some actions had been completed, several of them were ongoing but that many areas identified for improvement had already been identified by the service themselves prior to the inspection and work already begun on them.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help (Deputy Leader) advised that when she was appointed as Cabinet Member for Social Services at the end of last year, she knew it was going to be a challenge and at times had been despondent regarding some of the challenges being faced. However, she was now more encouraged and could see more opportunities and spent her time as much as possible

with service users. She advised of recent conversations Foster Carers who had been delighted to inform her of the changes they could see being made within the practice.

She highlighted that completing implementation of the 'Signs of Safety' training would give management oversight in a better form. In addition, she raised the challenges faced by the not-for-profit agenda in the sufficiency of provision of placements for young people. Finally, she highlighted the pressure on the budgets for Social Services and the need to look for a more sustainable future and guidance and direction from Welsh Government. She warned that if the budget situation remained the same, then Social Services would not remain the same and that there was a need to have a conversation with communities where the impact would be felt.

A Member thanked Officers and the Deputy Leader for their honesty and transparency and asked whether the Corporate Director was content that the inspection report was a true and accurate reflection of the service provision in Bridgend.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that she was and highlighted that it reflected the self-evaluation they had presented to CIW and hoped that it also reflected the advice she had given to full Council when she presented the Director of Social Services Annual Report.

A Member referenced the high percentage of respondents to the people survey who felt they were 'rarely' or 'never' treated with dignity and respect, who felt they were 'rarely' or 'never' listened to, when asked how easy it was to make contact with social services, stated, 'not easy' or 'very difficult' and, when asked how useful the information, advice and assistance offered by social services was, responded either 'not useful at all' or 'not useful.' He noted the contrast to the staff survey whereby 93% of respondents stated they were supported to do their job and 71% stated their workload was manageable. He asked whether the figures were the normal standards and queried why the people survey seemed to report one thing and the staff survey another.

The Deputy Head of Children's Social Care confirmed that the response to the people survey was an area they would want to see improved. He confirmed that whilst the service was having a very challenging time, the responses to the staff survey appeared to reflect the level of support, resources and wellbeing support being put in corporately.

In response to a question on when performance management would be aligned to the performance indicators, he highlighted that this had been recognised in the self-evaluation and whilst it was still an area for development, he advised that it was in a much better position since May with information available on a day-to-day basis to the management team.

In response to a question whether the challenge of persistently high volumes of referrals, increased complexity of need and workforce challenges were typical of all local authorities in Wales or relative to Bridgend, the Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that Bridgend was in the top quartile in terms of the number of care experienced children and the number on the Child Protection Register. There had been a significant increase, even since the review period, of children open to the authority on a care and support basis, in the number of contacts through front door and the number of assessments undertaken in children's statutory services.

She highlighted the need to shift the balance of care and that CIW had picked up that the authority was missing opportunities to prevent escalation of need and that work needed to be done across the system to look at where resources were invested. Whilst acknowledging the need for resources when statutory intervention was necessary, she highlighted that where children and families were motivated to change, the need to have

targeted prevention services which might provide better outcomes than statutory services. The Institute of Public Care (IPC) were undertaking a piece of work looking at Early Help, Edge of Care, safeguarding and how to manage the needs of children and families in Bridgend, driven by data and evidence. However, the advice from IPC was that the demand at the current volume was likely to continue over at least a 2-year period and they had provided clear criteria as to what needs to be considered to reduce the level. Therefore whilst, some authorities across Wales were exhibiting similar features some had been successful in shifting the balance of care.

In relation to a question on whether the missed opportunities to thoroughly explore and mitigate risk and a lack of professional curiosity were due to issues of capacity, the Deputy Head of Children's Social Care clarified that CIW had been referring to the skillset they saw reflected in the files in terms of practice. He referred to the Action Plan and the suite of training options that had been collated; a lot of which were mandatory (for permanent and agency staff). He highlighted that professional curiosity was a real skill, to get beneath what is presented at face value and one which all social workers needed to have.

Later, a Member expressed concern that children may inadvertently drop off the radar due to a lack of professional curiosity or taking people at face value and queried whether there was an internal mechanism for junior staff to take back concerns to senior managers to ensure risks not explored could be probed further.

The Deputy Head of Children's Social Care confirmed that it was important to have support management oversight, supervision and informal supervision. He recognised that the opportunity to have across the desk conversations had gotten lost during the pandemic but that all safeguarding teams were now back in well staffed offices and that supervision training was crucial to ensure managers had the skills to provide that guidance. Whilst there had been significant challenges of vacancies at management levels, they had been able to appoint senior managers from other local authorities where the market supplement had assisted.

In response to a request for clarity on the meaning of inconsistent thresholds and standards, he advised that it referred to the level of intervention provided based on risk. The very significant increased contacts Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) received were reflected in a number of files CIW looked at and they noted the significant improvement from the inconsistency of thresholds and decision making from the critical incident in February and March. The number of managers put into that service had been tripled with additional capacity from senior social workers who make most decisions in terms of risk and ensure consistent thresholds.

A Member noted the delay in reports being written and asked whether calls to IAA were recorded so that the information contained in a call would be available immediately, if required.

The Deputy Head of Children's Social Care confirmed that calls were not recorded but highlighted that if any professional had a safeguarding concern, they should put a call in and that it was important that was recorded on the correct document. He confirmed that Education had their own safeguarding procedures and policies and whilst teachers can contact IAA for advice, if a professional calls for advice and wants the information recorded, they need to state that, so that there is dual responsibility.

To clarify a Member's query as to whether it would be the responsibility of the person reporting to submit a form after the call if they wanted their information to be recorded, he advised that it would depend on the nature of the discussion but that if it was to make a safeguarding referral that a professional wanted to put in, it should be followed up in

writing, but that professionals in IAA did record on the system conversations with other professionals.

The Member expressed concern that there could be a number of minor concerns reported by different individuals resulting in a safeguarding concern which IAA may not necessarily pick up. The Corporate Director agreed to produce a briefing note setting out the process for calls made to the IAA Service, to include detail as to how or if these are being recorded and the responsibility of schools when making safeguarding referrals.

The Member noted the percentage of responses to the people survey that did not find the advice given to be helpful and highlighted that if calls were recorded, that Managers could listen to the advice and if it were not helpful, it could raise a training issue. She stated that Headteachers received conflicting advice whereby some are advised that they did not need to fill out a form, whilst some did constitute a safeguarding referral, so it was vital that all calls were recorded in order to protect children.

The Deputy Head of Children's Social Care confirmed that there were internal processes within schools whereby they report their issues and concerns, albeit low level concerns. If those constituted a safeguarding concern and a safeguarding referral was made, that was recorded. However, he offered to look into individual cases offline with the Member.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing advised that they were trying to ensure a stronger interface with schools and that the Deputy Head of Children's Services would be meeting the Federation of Headteachers for Primary and Secondary schools. They were also looking to re-start regular meetings on a school cluster basis to explore examples and understand whether they were one-off matters or indicative of something more systemic. She also confirmed that Education had the safeguarding infrastructure which could be used to raise concerns.

The Deputy Leader advised that the IPC had highlighted that Bridgend has two front doors for safeguarding which was not good practice and was something the service were looking to address as part of their Action Plan.

In response to a query regarding the facilitation of supervised contact, the Corporate Director clarified that these were contact arrangements directed by the family courts for care experienced children with their parents and extended family, supervised by contact workers in a suitable venue and should be a positive experience for the child. She confirmed that they were seeing an increasing amount of contact being directed by the courts and that an initial review was being undertaken to consider short term measures to ensure capacity to facilitate contact in the best quality way before a deeper review in the New Year.

In response to a question as to what was being done to achieve consistent high-quality reports, the Deputy Head of Children's Services referred to training being provided to staff on report writing and the recording policy to support good quality, consistent records as well as supervision training for managers.

A Member asked what was included in the Action Plans that had been developed and implemented.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing advised that following the critical incident there were single agency reviews in a timely manner which was recognised by CIW and action plans followed integrated into the performance evaluation action plan and 3-year strategic plan, as well as a consolidated action plan from the findings of the audit regarding improving practice and policies, ensuring effective quality assurance systems and good management oversight.

A Member asked what the average caseload per social worker was, the highest number of cases with a social worker and whether, on an assessment level, caseloads were at a critical level, whereby identifying or mitigating risk was considered to be a serious issue.

In IAA, the Deputy Head of Children's Services said that case levels were 16 and the lowest he had ever known and within the managed service would be around 18 or 19. In the Locality teams the highest caseload was around 26 but would have some specific circumstances around it such a large sibling group. Within the West Locality team average caseloads were around 20, in the North around 23 and in the East around 24 or 25. He agreed to provide the highest caseload number by locality to the Committee after the meeting.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that caseloads in IAA were about right due to the significant additional resource in that part of the service. The caseloads in safeguarding localities were higher than ideal which would be around 15. Whilst work was ongoing to see if cases could safely be closed from care and support, the service had also worked hard to ensure that all cases were allocated at all times, even if this meant senior social workers or team managers holding a small number of cases for a short time. However, she also highlighted that the volume of work made it difficult to keep caseloads at a manageable level and hence the level of budget pressures and agency workers.

In relation to budget pressures, the Deputy Leader advised that IAA had an appropriate level of caseload due to the additional resource and agency staff put into the service at a significant cost to the Authority.

In response to a query on the level of caseloads to enable social workers to cope with pressures of the work and to identify and mitigate risk, the Deputy Head of Children's Services advised that the gold standard would be around 15 to 18 cases and maybe slightly higher in IAA, where there was a higher turnover of cases.

In response to a question on 'Back to Basics' training, the Deputy Head of Children's Services advised that the training had started to be delivered before the inspection, was mandatory for all and had been rolled out and delivered, but would continue to be part of induction training for all new staff.

With regard to whether there were individual training plans for each individual member of staff or generic training plans for roles, he confirmed that every social worker's training was a key part of their monthly supervisions and that their individual training plans were considered every year in their annual appraisal. In addition, there were team and service training plans which evolved and that there was a continuous review on the need for training. He acknowledged that the struggle faced by practitioners in prioritising training against the demand of urgent cases and highlighted the need for balance of competing pressures.

The Deputy Leader advised that social workers needed to complete a mandatory number of hours of Continued Professional Development in order to remain registered, and that practitioners had also been told to prioritise some mandatory training, particularly in relation to the introduction of the new model of practice.

CIW noted that there had been a 'significant adverse impact on the delivery of some children's services' and a Member queried whether there were other services as well as IAA which could be a cause for concern.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that it largely related to the critical incident in IAA but highlighted that cases would not go into IAA in isolation and might transfer to other parts of the service, although she advised that they try to operate as one service. She also highlighted an example of some of the circumstances regarding a critical incident being called in IAA.

In relation to a question on supervision records, she confirmed that it was an area that was regularly audited and that a supervision policy was being co-produced with supervisors and supervisees. The supervision records were produced by supervisors but she acknowledged that it had not always been as good as it should have and that it was an area where standards needed to be set.

A Member asked for information on what direct payments (DPs) were, how many had been applied for and how many had been paid.

The Deputy Head of Children's Services confirmed that DPs were a form of support provided to children and adults and in children's social care used to support families and disabled children following an assessment of whether their needs can be met by a DP. The DP is paid to a family who can employ a personal advisor to help them meet the identified support need. He confirmed that the number of DPs provided increased year on year, which created budget pressures and that there would be a review of DPs across the directorate this year. On 12 December, they would be engaging and launching a strategy and policy document and he hoped that the policy review would address the issues of families reporting having to jump through hoops to obtain a DP.

A Member asked what the plan was to reduce the 12-week waiting list for mental health support and expressed concern that some children with mental health concerns were also absent from school and the waiting list was also then impacting on their education.

The Deputy Head of Children's Social Care agreed that the waiting list was far too long for such an important service and was not provided by the social services directorate. However, he agreed to obtain information regarding the waiting list from the relevant senior officer.

In relation to how the waiting list had been allowed to reach 12 weeks, the Deputy Leader reiterated the significant issues in workforce across Wales and stated that it was something Welsh Government needed to consider in depth. She advised that the last social work training course in Cardiff was only half full and that Bridgend was recruiting its own social work students with more take up than ever before. She continued that where staff had been diverted from a service or there was a lack of staff, there would be a delay but that it had improved following the inspection.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing, responded to a query as to what the Directorate were doing to encourage people into a career in social care in Bridgend instead of other local authorities, acknowledging the need for more sensitive marketing and confirmed there was an earmarked reserve to fund a marketing post in the directorate. She referred to the need for people to feel well supported and for a competitive financial and non-financial offer. In addition, there was a need for colleagues to promote the opportunities in their networks.

In order to reassure the Committee about the process for recording episodes of missing children, the Deputy Head of Children's Services advised that in the case of a missing child, a safeguarding referral was placed on the child's file and there would be written records in response with management oversight and actions agreed.

In response to a question regarding meaningfully involving children and young people, he confirmed that it would be a key requirement of the Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer. Care experienced children and all children's views would be at the centre of the creation of the engagement and involvement framework. The voice of the child was also central to the Back to Basics training which should be reinforced by team managers in supervision.

The Deputy Leader advised that care experienced children had her contact details and there was an open-door policy to discuss any concerns they may have.

In response to a query on the return of rota visits, the Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing advised that the Directorate was actively looking into how they could be brought back effectively.

She also confirmed that the delivery of the Action Plan would impact on envelope of the budget in which they were working. There were significant overspends which was largely driven by workforce, reliance on agency staff and the placement situation. There was also some dedicated support funded by ear marked reserves due to the underspend position last year.

The Chairperson thanked the Deputy Leader, the Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing and the Deputy Head of Children's Social Care for their report and the information provided to the Committee.

RESOLVED: Following detailed consideration and discussions with Officers and Cabinet Members, the Committee made the following proposals:

1. That the Chair of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 liaise with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help to identify:
 - a) What Members can do to support the Council's promotion of recruitment into Bridgend Social Services; and
 - b) What support the Committee can provide to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help in her discussions with Welsh Local Government Association regarding employment terms and conditions and pay.

and the Committee requested:

2. A briefing note setting out the process of calls made to the Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Service to include detail as to how or if these are being recorded and the responsibility of schools when making safeguarding referrals.
3. Detail of Social Worker current caseloads including the highest caseload attributed to any one Social Worker.
4. How many Direct Payments have been applied for in the past 12 months and how many were made.

5. The current waiting list for children awaiting help from the Youth Emotional Mental Health Team.
10. **CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION: PORTHCAWL WATERFRONT REGENERATION: APPROPRIATION OF LAND AT GRIFFIN PARK AND SANDY BAY**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny presented the report the purpose of which was to enable the Committee to scrutinise the decision of Cabinet of 18 October 2022 in relation to the report on Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration: Appropriation of Land at Griffin Park and Sandy Bay.

She advised that, in accordance with Rule 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Rules in the Council's Constitution, five Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and two Scrutiny Chairs, had requested that an Executive decision made by Cabinet on the 18 October 2022 be Called-In.

She advised that the Committee was recommended to consider the Cabinet decision of 18 October 2022 relating to Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration: Appropriation of Land at Griffin Park and Sandy Bay and to determine whether it wished to:

- i) refer the decision back to Cabinet for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns; or
- ii) decide not to refer the matter back to the Cabinet.

The Chairperson invited the Members who had supported the Call In to speak on the reasons for the Call In.

Members stated the main reasons for the Call In included:

- Scrutiny should be seen as providing assurance to the public, to Cabinet and Officers that the Council was proceeding in the correct direction and should be seen as adding value and strengthening the public policy making process.
- The need for demonstrable evidence the local authority had implemented the 5 Ways of Working in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (The WCFG(W) 2015 Act), requiring public consultation to go beyond the statutory minimum.
- Members had received a significant number of representations from town councillors, members of the public and local organisations in Porthcawl objecting to the proposals who had raised concerns and valid questions regarding the regeneration plans. Members welcomed the opportunity of giving those people a voice, recognising the significant generational impact and irreversible change to the town that the development plans could have on Porthcawl.
- Concern was expressed that the public perception from the Cabinet meeting might have been that it had been a pre-determined decision given the high level of public concerns that did not appear to have been adequately discussed or addressed.
- That there needed to be demonstrable evidence that sufficient consideration had been given to the response to the public consultation which was overwhelmingly against the appropriation of land for the purposes outlined in the Cabinet report.

- The loss of open space for recreational purposes, changes to Griffin Park, concerns about proposed housing at Sandy Bay, lack of investment in tourism facilities, as well as the impact on wildlife and ecology, which were not sufficiently discussed during the Cabinet deliberations on this issue.
- Whether the appropriation of all of the land was necessary to enable the Porthcawl waterfront regeneration (which might open the floodgates for housing) and why the option of a reduction in the area of the land proposed for appropriation had not been considered.
- The dichotomy between the process of the appropriation of the land and the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) process required further exploration.
- Porthcawl is a jewel in the Borough's crown, and opportunities needed to be considered to regenerate it in a sympathetic manner which promotes tourism similarly to surrounding areas that benefit from tourism.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration:

- Thanked the Committee for the invitation but indicated that as most decisions had been taken prior to her becoming a Cabinet Member and advised that Officers would be better placed to provide the background information.
- Advised that the appropriation of the land was necessary for the implementation of the Local Development Plan (LDP) that had been agreed at the previous meeting of Council.
- Highlighted that following emails with concerns from residents, Cabinet asked Officers to facilitate a site-visit for them which allowed them to envision how much open space would be available. In addition, following the Place Making Strategy the number of proposed houses had been reduced and the area for open space had been enlarged.
- Confirmed that Cabinet had also done a walkabout with local Councillors for them to see how much open space there would be and how Griffin Park would be extended, and that there would be a further walkabout arranged for local stakeholders.
- Advised that the new all-weather tennis court would be in place before the removal of the existing tennis courts and that this would be done in consultation with Porthcawl Tennis Association.
- Confirmed that whilst no decision had been made about exactly what would be developed on the land, there would be commercial and leisure facilities that would enhance Porthcawl and that all stakeholders would be involved in any decisions made.
- In relation to whether the appropriation of the land was a separate issue to the CPO, whilst linked, confirmed that the appropriate legal advice had been sought and they were separate things.
- Felt that the 5 Ways of Working in the WCFG(W) 2015 Act had been met and highlighted the large need for housing and that 30% would be for social housing.

- In relation to whether sufficient consideration was given to the project by Cabinet, she highlighted that Sandy Bay had been earmarked for development since the Development Plan in 2004 so was not new.

The Corporate Director – Communities:

- Wished to make clear that the use of the land at Sandy Bay and Coney Beach had not been pre-determined but that the land had been appropriated, which was a legal mechanism to remove its current use (as a caravan park), for planning purposes with the intention to do extensive consultation as to what can be achieved in the area.
- Clarified that due consideration had been given to all comments made by public and referred to Appendix 5 to the Cabinet report which detailed the main concerns from the over 600 responses they had. Data Protection legislation prohibited the responses being published in full in the public domain, but she confirmed that Cabinet Members had received a document which detailed every objection received.
- Confirmed that the draft plan was to increase the size of Griffin Park from 4 acres to 8 acres and create a long linear park and link Griffin Park to the monster park. Importantly, once designated as formal open space, land can be afforded protection.
- Advised that one of the objections was the need to take a corner off one of the Bowling Greens at Griffin Park in order to gain access to the site which may affect the tennis courts but, she highlighted that it was a disused bowling green which the Council had committed to replace and in relation to the tennis courts, the Council had committed to providing brand-new all-weather courts.
- Another area of concern had been in relation to the Veterans Hub which, she advised, was not fit for use due to deterioration and the Council had committed to helping them find new premises and working with the community on facilities.
- With reference to the Placemaking Strategy, confirmed that Coney Beach and Sandy Bay had been in the LDP as a strategic site after it ceased trading in the early 2000s. It was put into the LDP, as a potential housing allocation, in 2004, in 2014 and now again and she confirmed it was proceeding to Welsh Government for examination in public.
- In relation to the WBFG(W) 2015 Act, she highlighted the evolving nature of Porthcawl as a seaside town for residents and visitors and people's right to have somewhere to live (including a need for affordable homes), to play, to have employment and to have education. They had looked at the plans in place and produced a Placemaking Strategy which had been consulted on with an exhibition in the Grand Pavilion and with 3 weeks of hoardings in Cosy Corner and adopted by the Cabinet in March.
- She confirmed the geographical extent of the Placemaking Strategy and advised that it had put together a strong vision for regeneration and at the

heart of it was open space, active travel, community spaces, taking traffic away from the sea front, bringing the town centre and seafront together, a new school in the area, new homes (a proportion being affordable) and leisure opportunities. However, the detail of those would be part of consultation as the appropriation itself was simply the planning legislation to allow consideration of its future use.

- Advised that the need to appropriate all of the land was due to having no definitive planning permissions or decisions on what areas would be used for open space, for the new school, for housing where the roads would be and leaving any part of the land out of the appropriation would be pre-determining what can be done with the site in the future.
- Confirmed that the 5 ways of working was absolutely imbedded in everything they did and that it was necessary to ensure a sustainable future for young people. She referred to sections 2 & 7 of the Cabinet Report where the 5 Ways of Working had been considered and the Human Rights Act considerations at paragraphs 4.41 to 4.47.
- She advised that it has been made clear from the Placemaking Strategy that CPOs would be necessary to appropriate and clean the title of some of the land which did not have names or titles. She clarified that appropriation was planning legislation whilst a CPO was property legislation.

The Leader of the Council reiterated that the Placemaking Strategy had been extensively consulted upon including the face-to-face engagement at the Grand Pavilion and had been approved by Members at Council. He advised that the Council had responded to much of the public consultation with the inclusion of more public open space and highlighted the planned expansion of Griffin Park and plans to maintain, enhance and protect the relic dunes and the active travel network which would provide a truly integrated development for visitors and local residents. He also referenced the comprehensive consultation report that Cabinet received and considered.

The Principal Regeneration Officer presented Appendix 3 of the Cabinet report and highlighted the areas of planned open space and other qualitative improvements.

The Chairperson invited the public speakers listed below to address the Committee for a maximum of three minutes, in turn, with their comments, objections and representations regarding the decision of Cabinet (made at its meeting on 18 October 2022).

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Organisation:</u>
1. Jamie Strong	A Voice for the Future of Porthcawl
2. Don Tickner	Porthcawl Civic Trust Society
3. Margaret Minhinnick	Sustainable Wales

The comments, objections and representations made by the public speakers included the following:

- Why the area of the land proposed for appropriation could not be reduced, why it needed to include the relic dunes, why the area of land proposed for

housing on Sandy Bay could not be reduced to create further protected recreational space, and why the extension of Griffin Park could not go to the desirable beach front at Sandy Bay.

- Noting that documentation referred to the appropriation enabling the land to be marketed to developers, whether there was any possibility of a public consultation on the development of the land or whether the use of the land had been pre-determined, highlighting that the LDP already referred to the number of houses that would be built on the land.
- Concern was expressed about the extent of the Council's attempts at public consultation with reference to the Office of Future Generations Commissioner and the WBFG 2015 Act which state, it was crucial when developing plans, that planning authorities engaged with people in their own communities to have a participatory process, which focussed on achieving sustainable places and sets out a requirement which went beyond the statutory minimum consultation set out in planning legislation.
- Further concerns regarding the lack of real consultation with the public over the planning of the food store at Salt Lake and Cosy Corner highlighting the limited opportunities to engage or comment and that any opportunities fell short of the requirements of the WBFG(W) 2015 Act.
- Concerns about the lack of evidence of a true understanding of the WBFG 2015 Act which requires public bodies to demonstrate how their decisions meet the social, environmental, cultural and economic well-being for their community and Wales.

It was not clear if the five ways of working, intrinsic to the planning system, especially involvement, had been interpreted in line with the legislation, as had it been the case there would have been more than a consultation process and that it was not clear how collaboration, integration, prevention and long term had been utilised for the well-being of future generations of Porthcawl and Wales.

- There was a need for a more cohesive approach for professionals to work in partnership with people who have lived experience to inform, to redefine shared visions and values and to share the responsibility to achieve mutual, sustainable solutions throughout and the WBFG 2015 Act provides a delivery framework for all Council staff and elected Members.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny confirmed that there had been no written representations or objections received.

In response to matters raised by the public speakers, the Corporate Director – Communities:

- Advised that the relic dunes were going to remain unchanged and would be protected and confirmed that it had been included in the appropriation as it had been part of the caravan park and had caravans on it.

- With regard to the owners' agreement, everything required planning permission and consultation.
Confirmed that the consultation on the appropriation went above the minimum requirements and, in relation to Cosy Corner, whilst Welsh Government grant funding required a building for employment use, the Council were also providing open space and community facilities.
- Agreed that consultation and co-production were hugely important but highlighted that this matter was appropriation and that it was the detailed plans that would come next and committed to work with them to deliver a co-produced plan for what the community wants.

The Chairperson invited any other Members who had supported the Call In to speak and then invited any other Members of the Committee to ask questions or comment.

A Member queried, with reference to facilities in neighbouring areas, why there was no reference to facilities in the reports, what the cost had been to produce the draft plans and what the cost would be to produce new ones after public involvement.

The Corporate Director reiterated that the appropriation was a legal planning mechanism to allow detailed plans to come forward in the future which were not available until public consultation, but advised that the ambition was to be premier waterfront town.

In response to whether the planned road through Griffin Park would change, advised that it was key to a road into the development site and that the identified entrance was the only option due to a residential community at the top end. However, the size, scale and direction of the road had not yet been designed. She also highlighted the commitment to deliver homes but with a balanced and sustainable community.

In response to a question regarding the placement and accessibility of the new tennis courts, the Leader advised they would work closely with the Lawn Tennis Association and the local club regarding detailed plan, but the plans were to relocate the courts within the expanded Griffin Park and highlighted the benefit of the new courts being an all-weather facility.

The Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy reminded Members that the scope of the Call In was the Cabinet decision on the appropriation only.

In response to a question regarding her vision for Porthcawl, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration advised that she had lots of potential ideas including a wet area and indoor leisure facilities for visitors and residents and was keen to work with residents.

The Corporate Director - Communities in relation to a question regarding the responses to the public consultation clarified that all comments had been given to Cabinet but that they needed anonymisation for the public report. She also highlighted that where there had been similar comments, they had been included in Appendix 5 of the Cabinet report under themes and headings.

In response to a question as to how beach front properties, which normally attract a premium would be protected as affordable homes, the Corporate Director - Communities advised that the detail was not available yet but highlighted that a certain percentage of affordable homes was critical to creating sustainable communities.

In response to a question regarding Porthcawl Town Council (PTC), she confirmed that they were involved in the Placemaking Strategy as a key consultee and stakeholder, and they would continue to be moving forward. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration responded that they were also planning another walk through the site with stakeholder representatives.

The Corporate Director – Communities in response to a query regarding the funding for facilities within the new Griffin Park, advised that Griffin Park had been community asset transferred (CAT) to PTC and that the revenue support and maintenance was critical. She was keen to use S106 agreements for commuted capital sums to look after some of the infrastructure highlighting the difficult budget position and that facilities needed to be sustainable. Discussions with PTC would continue as to Griffin Park's future.

In response to whether the proposed road through Griffin Park would affect the agreement with PTC, the Corporate Director - Communities advised that the corner which was proposed to be used for the road had been removed from the CAT and highlighted that old facilities could not be removed prior to the installation of new facilities.

The Leader assured that there would be partnership with PTC on the plans for Griffin Park.

A Member highlighted that there had been much discussion regarding Griffin Park but little regarding Sandy Bay apart from the reference to housing and queried whether there was already a vision or planned for the appropriated land.

The Corporate Director – Communities confirmed that there were high level and strategic plans and framework and advised that there were plans for 200 homes on Salt Lake and 900 on the appropriated land. However, she highlighted that the site would be much more than just that and although there was a very clear vision for the site, the detail could not be pre-determined due to the need for planning applications.

In response to a Member's query, the Corporate Director confirmed that there had been 600 representations received regarding the appropriation, over 1000 regarding the LDP and similar amount on the Placemaking Strategy; so a high percentage of residents and also highlighted the large number of people who went to the exhibition and had their questions answered there.

In relation to infrastructure, that was a key part of the provision and she advised that new homes would not be introduced into a community unless it was sustainable and had facilities around it.

The Leader also highlighted the plans to extend the English-Medium education provision and the provision of Welsh-Medium education and childcare as well as the wider infrastructure for Porthcawl.

In response to a query as to whether referring the decision on the appropriation back to Cabinet for reconsideration would frustrate and delay plans to proceed to public consultation, the Leader advised that if the decision was referred back it would add time to the process and that they did not want to delay plans for Porthcawl. However, he highlighted although key principles had already been agreed by Council in approving the LDP, there were choices to be made and that they would take on board all views expressed regarding the consultation including how to consult and engage with the community on the detail.

The Chairperson invited Members of the Committee, having regard to whether it was satisfied with the responses, whether it wished to:

- a) Refer the decision back to the Cabinet for reconsideration, setting out the reasons and rationale for the request;
- or
- b) Decide not to refer the matter back to the Cabinet.

RESOLVED: The Committee concluded that the Decision would not be referred back to Cabinet but made the following Recommendation to Cabinet:

a) That having regard to concerns expressed to Members by Porthcawl residents, views shared by public speakers and questions from Members, that Cabinet be requested that going forward for the next stages in the process that they involve Porthcawl Town Council, all stakeholders and the public in further consultation and engagement.

11. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Having considered the report the Forward Work Programme Update the Committee requested:

1. That the scope of the Integrated Working with Cwm Taf University Health Board report include a narrative regarding hospital discharge.
2. That when the report on IAA is scheduled that there also be invitees from Education.

There were no further items identified for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 4.3, and this could be revisited at the next meeting.

There were no requests to include specific information in the item for the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Committee approved the Forward Work Programme in Appendix A, subject to the incorporation of the above requests, noted that the Forward Work Programme and any updates from the Committee would be reported to the next meeting of COSC and noted the Recommendation Monitoring Action Sheet in Appendix B.

12. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

The meeting closed at Time Not Specified

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SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 - FRIDAY, 20 JANUARY 2023

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB / REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON FRIDAY, 20 JANUARY 2023 AT 13:30

Present

Councillor F D Bletsoe – Chairperson

S Aspey	E L P Caparros	P Davies	M Lewis
RL Penhale-Thomas	A Wathan	AJ Williams	R Williams

Apologies for Absence

P Ford, D M Hughes and J Llewellyn-Hopkins

Officers:

Meryl Lawrence	Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Jessica Mclellan	Scrutiny Officer
Chris Morris	Accountant
Mark Wilkinson	Group Manager - Learning Disability

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Richard Williams declared a personal interest in paragraph 4.1.7 of agenda item 3, as a former member of the staff for Bridgend County Borough Council – Public Protection.

3. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023-24 TO 2026-27

The Chief Officer - Finance, Performance and Change presented a summary of the report, the purpose of which was to present the Committee with the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27, which set out the spending priorities of the Council, key investment objectives and budget areas targeted for necessary savings. The strategy included a financial forecast for 2023-2027 and a detailed draft revenue budget for 2023-24.

The Chairperson thanked the Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change for her comprehensive summary and referred to the proposed draft Budget Pressures the Committee was considering, reminding Members to consider whether these were sufficient, adequate and robust.

Members discussed the following:

In response to a question regarding whether the reduction in providers of children's residential care was due to Welsh Government developing proposals to eliminate private profit, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help (Deputy Leader) advised that some for profit providers were trying leave the Welsh market resulting in the need to place children over the border but still for profit. She also advised that any complex care needs were at an additional cost.

The Corporate Director for Social Services and Wellbeing (Corporate Director) advised that due to some providers choosing to exit the market, it resulted in those remaining

having more children and young people. There was increasing difficulty in finding placements and a need for more bespoke placements as well as a number of children requiring support outside of regulated settings which brought a cost premium. Whilst the Directorate was developing an in-house provision, it remained reliant on independent outside providers at present. She highlighted the increased complexity of needs of children and young people post pandemic and the economy experiencing significant issues in terms of workforce were impacting on costs.

In response to a question regarding any plans for remodelling in social services, the Corporate Director advised that there was a significant transformation programme including transformation of strength-based practice in adults and children's social care based on enabling and promoting independence. She highlighted the importance of preventative services offered by Awen and Halo which provide good value and focus on the most vulnerable as well as the remodelling in care and support at home services, in-house and commissioned care at home services, learning disabilities and mental health.

The Deputy Leader advised that the Regional Partnership Board, which is responsible for community delivery, had transformation on its agenda.

In response to a question regarding the public consultation on the proposed 6% increase in Council tax, the Deputy Leader advised that residents' views would be discussed, debated and considered.

She advised the Committee that Health and Social Care workers needed to be valued, recognising the aging population causing increased demand on services and that their pay and terms and conditions needed to reflect such. She also highlighted the Welsh Government Directive regarding a National Care System which would mean all staff would have the same terms and conditions, resulting in decreased competition between authorities.

In response to a query as to what were the cost pressures arising from the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and whether they were fully funded, the Corporate Director advised that this was funded on a formula which reflected the numbers and vulnerabilities in the population, but highlighted the increasing demand and needs of the population. She also highlighted a significant pressure arising due to a statutory responsibility on the Authority which hosted secure estate, such as HMP Parc, and whilst initial funding for that had been forthcoming from Welsh Government, the initial ringfenced allocation no longer covered the pressure arising due to changing needs of the population.

The Deputy Leader advised in response to a question about the long-term implications and costs following the pandemic, that demand on services had increased exponentially in Social Services, Education, Third Sector and Voluntary Organisations.

The Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Future Generations highlighted the shortfall in the number of people taking up the offers from Halo and Awen and that there were costs associated with not having as large a membership or participation as with those services previously.

In response to a question regarding the budget pressure figures for future years, the Corporate Director advised that the figures for 2023-24 represented recurring pressures, but the reason for why most of the future year figures were not included was due to the unknown inflationary uplift and pressures.

The Chief Officer - Finance, Performance and Change clarified that if the budget pressures were approved, they would go into the base budget for the service. Therefore, any increases due to pay or inflation would automatically be picked up.

In relation to the £758,000 pressure on the Learning Disabilities budget, the Group Manager – Learning Disability, Mental Health & Substance Misuse advised that it related to the contracts held with 4 organisations to provide support to people to live in their own homes. He advised one of the intentions of the Learning Disabilities Service Delivery Plan was to give people wider choice and range of activities to engage in. The service development was accelerated when day services were scaled down during the pandemic and people decided, post pandemic, they would prefer to engage in activities at home. He also highlighted the aging population and increase in complexity of need for people with learning disabilities as well as the increase in wages and providers' increased rates impacting on costs.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing advised that post pandemic, more older people were accessing day services so the budget could not be shifted from that to support the Learning Disabilities budget. However, an external expert organisation was producing a piece of work to look at a sustainable operating model for Day Services and Learning Disabilities and the finances required to resource it.

In response to a question regarding what was being done to try and reduce the number of children in residential placements out of county and the cost and whether it was possible to staff to capacity, the Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing advised there were up to 20 independent residential placements, but advised that some children were in independent foster agency placements or with extended family out of area. In order to reduce the number, she highlighted the need for supported foster carers to be available in a timely way and the co-location of the assessment unit and the foster team utilising the therapeutic model to work intensively with children to step them down from residential placements to foster carers.

The Deputy Leader assured the Committee that a child is placed in the most appropriate placement for them, where they would thrive irrespective of cost. She advised that the increase of children in residential placements was due to the increase in the number of care experienced children and the reliance on services to provide for them.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing advised that the proportion of care experienced children in residential placements was relatively low, when benchmarked against the care experienced populations of other authorities.

In response to concern expressed about the impact of proposed savings to the schools budget and any increased demand that could have on social services, the Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing advised that the Schools Safeguarding Forum had been re-established providing regular interface meetings between colleagues. She advised that a significant number of referrals were made by schools and the service worked with schools to support de-escalation where possible. There was also a piece of work being done with Safeguarding and Education and Family Support regarding targeting preventative services to manage the risks outside of statutory services, where possible.

The Deputy Leader advised that highlighted the benefit of having Social Work Support Officers and allowing Social Workers to keep caseloads down and get work done quicker. She advised that the 2% efficiency savings in schools' budgets would not have a direct impact on the work within social services.

In response to a question regarding the increased pressure in the direct payments budget, the Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing advised that it was due to an increase in need and highlighted that post-pandemic, direct payments were a very cost-effective way in supporting the pressures within families and enabling them to secure their own support, bringing social care into the workforce.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing, in response to a query regarding the sufficiency of the £2m pressure in adult social care, acknowledged that whatever is invested in the pressures in Social Services impacts on other parts of the Authority, but that she had a statutory duty to advise on the resource required for social care. Whilst the pressure would alleviate the budget pressure, it did not meet the current level of overspend and she highlighted a number of areas which would be supported through the pressure including workforce and care home costs and occupancy.

A Member expressed concern regarding how long other Directorates would be able to continue to find budget reduction proposals to support the pressures in social services and whether social services would be facing cuts.

The Deputy Leader advised that it would be at least 2-3 years before any benefit was seen, highlighting the cuts to grant funding and the unsustainable cuts to social services over many years.

The Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Future Generations advised that it was likely that the consequences of pandemic would likely be felt across the public sector for decades to come and some flexibility and understanding was necessary to allow individual local authorities to deal with the impact in the best way for them. However, he also recognised the support from Welsh Government, highlighting the recent uplift in housing and homelessness funding.

The Deputy Leader advised that she would continue to make representations to Welsh and UK Government until all public services were fairly funded.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny reminded Members that before Invitees were invited to leave the meeting, that it was the Committee's opportunity to ensure they had all the information they required regarding the budget pressures and to ensure they were satisfied that they were necessary, robustly calculated and sufficient.

In response to a question submitted by a Member regarding whether any options for budget reductions from discretionary services had been considered by the Directorate and the reasons why they had been rejected, the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Future Generations highlighted that culture and leisure was within his portfolio and that there had been discussions regarding library closures and the potential to look at closure of some Halo venues. However, on balance the Cabinet felt that the saving that would have been achieved was minimal and would have too great an impact on isolated and vulnerable residents and their access to necessary support.

The Deputy Leader advised that when the pressures on staff were so extreme, she was not prepared for any reductions in Social Services acknowledging the significant cost and resource required for the managed team but without which, social services would be under specific scrutiny from Care Inspectorate Wales or Welsh Government. She highlighted the introduction of the position of the Deputy Head of Children's Social Care due to the significant pressures at managerial level and that if caseloads continued to rise to an unmanageable level, there would need to be a further introduction of agency staff to mitigate against risk.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing advised that Adult Services had worked hard to move away from a deficit-based model and promote what people could access in their local community. However, post-pandemic, there had been an increase in emotional and physical health and wellbeing challenges resulting in increased need for statutory services, which happened at the same time as the increased cost of provision and workforce challenges. She also highlighted the impact on statutory services if discretionary services were reduced.

In response to a question submitted by a Member as to what the Directorate was doing to decrease reliance on costly agency staff and to incentivise people to join the workforce as permanent members of staff, the Deputy Leader acknowledged that it would be preferable to be able to have no agency staff in the workforce, however she highlighted that the last social work training course in Cardiff was only half full and advised that Welsh Government needed to support and deliver a national care service to look at the terms and conditions of all staff in order to resolve the issues of recruitment. She highlighted that health and social care staff were not appropriately valued and wanted the same support for them as WG had recently just provided to nurses. She continued that there was an ongoing campaign to recruit, including international recruitment drives, videos on social media, adverts in newspapers and the 12 Days of Christmas which promoted presents for carers.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing advised that it was important to promote both the financial and the non-financial aspect of working for Bridgend. She reiterated the need to look at the terms and conditions but within Bridgend on the financial side, they had utilised market supplements in some teams and re-evaluated job roles. On the non-financial side, she acknowledged the need for manageable caseloads, support workers for staff, good management oversight, supervision, training, and marketing. She encouraged Members to continue sharing the videos on social media which demonstrated the positive experience of working for Bridgend.

Whilst in the short term, the service was looking at international recruitment, in the medium term, there was a need to grow their own social workers. However, this required seconding people on to the social work course which meant that the Children's Social Services' reliance on agency staff would continue for at least a year. In Adult Social Care, she highlighted the support and assistance available to give them the best experience and tools for their jobs and advised that Workforce was a top priority for the Directorate.

The Chairperson advised that Members of the Committee who wanted to ask questions had all spoken, so as there were no further questions for the invitees, thanked them for their attendance and they left the meeting.

RESOLVED:

Following consideration of the report and appendices, the Committee made the following Recommendations for consolidation and inclusion in the report to Cabinet on the draft MTFS, including the proposed budget pressures and budget reduction proposals within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee, as part of the budget consultation process:

1. The Committee recognised the physical and emotional demand on social care workers and recommended that Cabinet review the wages for social care workers, in light of external pressures and consider how to ensure that these staff feel appropriately supported and valued.

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 - FRIDAY, 20 JANUARY 2023

The Committee noted that the majority of the budget pressures were within the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate and, following detailed consideration and discussions with Officers and Cabinet Members, the Committee were content that they are sufficient and necessary.

4. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

27 MARCH 2023

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

A REPORT ON SUPPORT FOR YOUNG CARERS AND ADULT CARERS

1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to:

- Inform the Committee of the requirements of the Carers Charter in Wales and the related areas of focus that can support unpaid carers to maintain their well-being.
- Describe the work that is taking place within Bridgend County Borough to support unpaid carers to enable the Committee to consider how well the Council, and partners, support young carers and adult carers.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:-

- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
- **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

3.1 The Charter for Unpaid Carers sets out the rights of unpaid carers, both adult carers and young carers, under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

- 3.2 The Charter aims to raise the awareness of the rights of carers amongst both carers themselves and professionals involved in the design and delivery of services and support for carers in exercising their rights.
- 3.3 The Charter for Unpaid Carers is aligned to the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014) including:
- Giving people voice and control in their own lives.
 - Increasing preventative support services in the community to help people as early as possible.
 - Promoting the well-being of people with care and support needs and also carers.
 - Encouraging people to become more involved in the design and delivery of services.
- 3.4 The legislation embeds a number of new rights for unpaid carers, including:
- The right to well-being.
 - The right to have information, advice and assistance.
 - The right to an assessment.
 - The right for carers to have their voice heard and have control over decisions about your support.
 - The right to advocacy.
- 3.5 The Charter for Unpaid Carers aligns also to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, particularly the aim of embedding a preventative approach, a more joined up approach to service design and delivery and consideration of the longer-term impacts of actions.
- 3.6 The Charter describes how the principles might look in practice including involving unpaid carers in co-producing approaches that impact on them. A focus on community based preventative support and recognising that carers should be supported to look after their health and well-being is identified. The importance of offering appropriate information, advice and assistance is seen as a vital first step in a preventative approach and connecting people to support via carers' services or health partners. The need for advocacy is also important.
- 3.7 The Charter highlights the statutory duty for local authorities to offer and undertake a carer's needs assessment to identify the support that might be needed to enable an unpaid carer to continue in their caring role should they wish to do so. Direct Payments are identified as one approach that can help to improve choice, control and independence for people in this context.
- 3.8 The impact of health crises which result in hospitalisation and subsequent hospital discharge is identified as a stressful and uncertain time for unpaid carers and the need for additional support. The promotion of a carer's assessment should be highlighted at each opportunity to provide the unpaid carer with supportive arrangements where required.

- 3.9 The opportunities to support unpaid carers to access differing forms of education, learning and training is also a focus of the Charter and for education and employment to be a consideration within a carer's assessment.
- 3.10 Financial security is also an identified concern for many unpaid carers and the need for improved access to specific financial and benefits advice for carers is identified.
- 3.11 The Council has supported the development of a regional statement of intent alongside Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, and Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil Councils. A definition of an unpaid carer has also been developed as shown below:

“A carer is someone who cares and supports someone who wouldn't be able to manage without their help. Unpaid carers who look after family, friends or neighbours are not the same as paid care workers or staff employed by Health, Social Services, voluntary or private agencies.”

- 3.12 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg statement of intent supports delivery against four national priorities for carers:

- Supporting a life alongside caring.
- Identifying and valuing unpaid carers.
- Providing information, advice and assistance.
- Supporting unpaid carers in education and the workplace.

- 3.13 The vision for carers in Cwm Taf Morgannwg states:

“Carers of all ages in Cwm Taf Morgannwg will be recognised and valued as being fundamental to supportive and resilient families and communities. They will not have to care alone and will be able to access information, advice and support to help meet their needs, empowering them to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, balancing their caring role and their life outside caring”.

- 3.14 There is a stated aim across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region to embed good practice in relation to:

- The legal rights of a carer.
- The rights to a carers' needs assessment.
- The benefits and financial help available.
- Learning new skills to help in the caring role.
- Balancing employment and caring.
- Planning for emergencies.

- 3.15 The statement of intent for carers is accompanied by 5 aims:

Aim 1 – Identifying carers of all ages and recognising their contributions.

Aim 2 – Providing up to date, relevant and timely information, advice and assistance to carers of all ages.

Aim 3 - Providing support, services and training to meet the needs of carers of all ages.

Aim 4 – Giving carers of all ages a voice with more choice and control over their lives.

Aim 5 – Working together to make the most of our resources for the benefit of carers of all ages.

4 Current situation/proposal

4.1 Adult Social Care

4.1.1 The focus has been on pre-emptive early intervention supporting carers' well-being and ensuring that there is accessible advice, information and assistance within our communities for carers. In the 2011 Census, there were 18,000 people who identified as unpaid carers in Bridgend County Borough. It is likely, even at that time, that the actual figure would have been higher; this is because people often do not identify themselves as carers, but as family members.

4.1.2 A carer's needs assessment, provides an opportunity to have a 'what matters' conversation with a social work member of staff and an opportunity to discuss and explore, for example:

- What support and help might assist the carer to look after the person that they are caring for.
- To focus on how much of their time is spent caring.
- To consider how their caring role affects their life and well-being.
- Explore their feelings and choice about caring.
- To provide advice and information about financial support.
- To consider whether the carer wishes to work, access training or undertake further education.

This is not an exhaustive list, it will very much depend on what is 'important' to the carer at that time, however assessment does provide an opportunity to identify what support would be required to maintain the carer's own well-being.

4.1.3 In 2021/22 there were 362 contacts made directly to adult social care services on behalf of carers; the majority of referrals came from carers themselves, social workers and third sector organisations. Of these, 31% of carers were provided with advice and assistance. 140 referrals resulted in a full carer needs assessment being completed, with 18% of carers receiving a plan of support specifically to meet their well-being outcomes.

4.1.4 At the end of February 2023, there has been a 37% increase in the number of people having a full carer's needs assessment when compared to the previous year; however the numbers of people whose needs have been met by a plan of support has reduced. The challenge in securing care and support will have impacted on the ability to directly

deliver support to people and their carers and there has been an increased reliance on universal and community support carers.

4.1.5 Focusing on carers has been a priority for adult services through the Continuous Improvement Group. This group comprises team managers and senior social work practitioners in Adult Social Care. A task and finish group has been developed to ensure there are consistent approaches to offering and recording carers' assessments, as well as providing information advice and assistance to carers within the County Borough.

4.2 Young Carers

4.2.1 There have been 77 young carers assessments conducted since April 2022. There were 27 instances where no additional support was needed or wanted, 50 carers assessments resulted in additional support.

4.2.2 The coordination of support for young carers is based within the Safeguarding and Family Support Service within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The service is able to connect young carers into a range of internal and external support. A range of partners who have signposted to the young carers service have included Action for Children, Barnardo's, BCBC Early Help and the Young Carers in Schools project.

4.2.3 A specific support programme for young carers is being operated by Whitehead Ross and being funded via Welsh Government grant funding. This programme supports referrals via the Young Carers Coordinator following a carer's assessment with a short-term intervention programme.

4.2.4 The interventions can include activities such as well-being, arts and activities and also one to one support sessions. A maximum of 18 young carers are supported over eight-week periods providing a break from caring, lifestyle support and well-being interventions. On completion of the programmes, any residual needs are reviewed and connections to broader opportunities explored.

4.2.5 Since 2020, the Prevention and Wellbeing Service based within the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate has supported a number of programmes and activities for young carers. This has included the launch of the National Young Carers card that has been supported by Welsh Government, developing a young carer-led network and also supporting community-based engagement opportunities:

- 170 young carers have taken part in a series of young carers "You are valued" days to support friendship groups. This has been developed working in partnership with local schools and have included activities and events identified as important by young carers including outdoor opportunities and have enabled young carers to build friendships and connections to other young carers. Building on this approach there have been 11 awareness raising events to increase the range of partners supporting young carers and to enhance understanding of needs.
- Young adult carers are supporting the development of the Young Carers Network which has attracted 70 participants. Young carers have been involved in the

development of advocacy resources and creating promotional campaigns. Young carer ambassador roles are developing.

- The Young Carers Network has been engaging with primary and secondary schools, Bridgend Carers Centre, Whitehead-Ross Education and Consulting Ltd Bridgend Inclusive Network Group, Bridgend College and the Council. There will be opportunities to expand this approach going forward and with the support of young carers.
- The Network has to date helped to distribute 280 young carers' identity cards and the Council has been developing partnership working with 8 local businesses to add value to the card. Prior to the Welsh Government launch of a National young carers card scheme, Bridgend had historically operated a similar scheme although young carers identified the need to improve awareness and benefits available.

4.3 Bridgend Carers Wellbeing Service

4.3.1 Since 2019, the Council has commissioned the Carers Wellbeing Service delivered by the Care Collective (formerly Carers Trust South East Wales) to support unpaid carers to maintain their well-being and have a life beyond caring. In addition, the service has aimed to provide practical support within communities and to share information and advice. This has supported four posts whose purpose has been to support unpaid carers who have been actively supporting people in communities.

4.3.2 By the end of March 2022, the service had supported 4,750 beneficiaries with non-statutory support. This approach has been successful in helping to identify those who previously might not have identified as unpaid carers with 37% previously not known to services.

4.3.3 This partnership approach conducted 990 'what matters' conversations and was able to share information and connect people to community support in the majority of instances. This lower level support has helped to reduce demand where appropriate but has also been able to escalate the need for a carers assessment where circumstances have suggested this would be required.

4.3.4 For much of this period, services and support have needed to be delivered flexibly and creatively through the pandemic and in line with national restrictions. The information that unpaid carers have been sharing indicates that the pandemic has been a particularly challenging period.

4.3.5 From April 2023, the Council has commissioned a new carer's well-being service. A requirement of the new well-being service provider is that they will work with the Council to collaborate with other services, building on existing provision, to enhance the delivery of support for carers. The provider will work with carers who are undertaking their caring role without the support of statutory organisations, as well as those who are caring for people who receive care and support from the Council.

4.4 Halo

4.4.1 Through the Healthy Living Partnership and use of Social Care Recovery investment,

Halo Leisure has supported unpaid carers. The Carers Wellbeing and Respite programme has worked with unpaid carers and community partners to create a six-week intervention programme focused on improving wellbeing, knowledge and confidence.

4.4.2 Information sessions have been integrated into programmes recognising the value of information and advice and reducing the need for escalation in many cases. These information sharing approaches have involved BAVO, Care and Repair, Alzheimer's and Carers Trust.

4.4.3 There have been some very positive results recorded from the approach developed including 80% of carers reporting increased physical activity, 100% were confident to manage their nutrition, 100% felt able to manage their wellbeing and 87% felt more knowledgeable about their rights and entitlements:

"I have met some lovely people.... all unpaid carers themselves, who understand what I am going through and felt great support from speaking to them".(Participant-carer wellbeing programme)

4.4.4 The Feel Good for Life programme has been supporting people with a cognitive impairment or dementia and their unpaid carers and Halo have more recently secured 5 years of National Lottery investment to sustain and expand opportunities. 100 unpaid carers are regularly supported in addition to those who are cared for. The programme is operated in partnership with Awen and including physical and creative activity.

4.4.5 Digital approaches have been successfully developed including loan equipment and training with weekly streamed opportunities to help carers to remain connected. This became particularly important during the pandemic but remote access to activities and social connections has continued. The Feel Good for Life programme will have engaged with Digital Communities Wales to help carers develop digital skills and confidence to use the devices that Halo have made available. The programme won a UK Active award for its innovative approach:

"You have no idea how much this session means to us and the effort you put into it. It gives us something to look forward to every week". (Participant-Feel Good for Life)

4.4.6 Beyond this, carers have been supported via free access to leisure opportunities when accompanying the cared for person and cost-effective access arrangements to transition into broader opportunities. Young carers have also been supported with a range of low cost and no-cost leisure opportunities.

4.5 Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

4.5.1 Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board has a lead officer in place to support unpaid carers with partners. This post-holder can connect unpaid carers known to Health services into Social Services and Wellbeing, into the Bridgend Carers Wellbeing Service or broader third sector and commissioned programmes.

- 4.5.2 The role coordinates the development and distribution of A-Z guides for unpaid carers also including hospital discharge guides. This recognises the importance of advice and information at what is recognised as potentially being a challenging time for unpaid carers in relation to admission and discharge.
- 4.5.3 There are also leaflets produced to be distributed via GP surgeries encouraging all unpaid carers to register with their GP to maximise the support that is available.
- 4.5.4 This role also has an important role in having a weekly presence at the Princess of Wales Hospital supporting staff and visitors and raising awareness of what unpaid carers can access.
- 4.5.5 The role coordinates a “carers champion network” across the region including third sector representation, with regular meetings to discuss areas of good practice and challenges being faced. The Council has its own Lead Officer for Carers who would engage in this Network.
- 4.5.6 Via the Welsh Government’s carers’ funding allocation to Regional Programme Boards, there are also two commissioned support services that are of regional benefit to carers across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board area.
- 4.5.7 The Cab4Carers project is managed by Citizen’s Advice Bureau (CAB) Merthyr Tydfil with a specific focus on unpaid carers and areas including benefits, debt, housing and employment, supported by a CAB4Carers advisor. The Health Board is developing the presence of this service further for the Princess of Wales Hospital.
- 4.5.8 There is also commissioned support via Marie Curie Cymru to develop a new volunteer-led helper service and to support carers to take a break. If successful there may be opportunities to consider scaling up such a volunteer led approach.

4.6 Awen

- 4.6.1 Through the Council’s cultural partnership with Awen, it has also been possible to co-produce activities and opportunities that support unpaid carers of all ages:
- The Hynt scheme is a national programme providing free access for people requiring a carer to attend a visit or performance and 265 tickets have been issued since restrictions have eased. There are opportunities to raise further awareness of the Hynt scheme amongst unpaid carers.
 - Awen have supported a carers’ respite project including parent carers, siblings and families with over 320 beneficiaries and including outdoor opportunities and family refreshments. This has involved a co-production approach with other third sector organisations and a joint development of new approaches.
 - Relaxed cinema screenings have been offered supporting carers and cared for with 135 carers supported in an accessible setting and sensory theatre opportunities have also been progressed. This recognises that whilst integrated opportunities are important wherever possible there can be a need for more a bespoke provision also.

- The Doorbell Dances programmes have also seen home based visits to unpaid carers in Porthcawl, Bryntirion, Caerau, Maesteg, Pencoed and other locations. This involves entertainment being delivered to the doorstep of identified carers who have faced challenges and Awen report how well these have been received.
- The Voices of Experience programme has worked alongside unpaid carers to capture their stories and to promote the value of unpaid carers during Carers Week. This assists in connecting unpaid carers to creative and cultural activity and the creation of advocacy resources also.
- Beyond core library service provision, the 'books on wheels' scheme has supported the more vulnerable with home delivery of resources including books, DVDs and audiobooks. This allows those who are more housebound or facing restrictions due to caring responsibilities to receive resources at home and for them to be regularly updated.
- Over the past year Awen have operated an iPad loan scheme which has helped unpaid carers to keep in touch with family, arrange home deliveries or read, in addition to the ICT access readily available in library settings.
- Libraries are rebuilding a vibrant programme of group activities including Knit and Natter, Bore Coffi, craft afternoons and supporting the Feel Good for Life programme.
- E-resources are available twenty-four hours a day and include books, audio, magazines plus family history resources. The trend towards an increased demand for digital resources began during the pandemic and has continued. More people are aware of what resources are available in this manner.
- Awen also support the Reading Well national book recommendation scheme providing information and advice, advice for relatives and carers, and the related resources are endorsed by Health professionals.
- More recently, Awen have offered the Warm Welcome scheme in libraries and cultural venues providing activities and warm space availability as support to combat the cost of living crisis for the more vulnerable.

4.7 Wales Co-Operative Centre/ Cwmpas

- 4.7.1 The Council has, since 2020, been working collaboratively with the Wales Co-operative Centre (now known as Cwmpas) on a "Connecting Carers" programme that has intended to identify common interests and needs amongst unpaid carers and to develop more collaborative approaches.
- 4.7.2 This work has involved developing a collaborative network with partners who could support the development of more carer-friendly communities. The focus has included people living with cognitive impairment, parent carers of children living with disabilities and older adults.
- 4.7.3 The partners involved have included third sector organisations, Adult Learning, Awen, Halo, Health and have explored how carer wellbeing can be supported.

- 4.7.4 Digital approaches have been taken forward in community centres and third sector venues with an aim of building skills and confidence and streaming of group wellbeing activities. Six venues have been equipped to date.
- 4.7.5 Early activities have included streaming of exercise programmes as part of the Super Agers programme and mental wellbeing and anxiety management. This approach has the potential for unpaid carers to attend an activity closer to home and also to remain engaged with activities if they are facing challenges such as time or transport.
- 4.7.6 The next phase of development will work with unpaid carers on developing additional resources that are deemed important to unpaid carers and to work with partners to develop group opportunities and streamed activities.

4.8 BAVO

- 4.8.1 Since the development of a partnership approach between the Council and BAVO, the Building Resilient Communities approach has secured investment that has supported unpaid carers and other vulnerable individuals within communities. During the pandemic in particular over 5000 people were supported within the third sector and local communities as opposed to receiving a service.
- 4.8.2 There is now a role within BAVO that connects directly to the Council's Common Access Point and can ensure that the third sector and community opportunities are well placed to support unpaid carers. This can include support for statutory services to reduce their demand or to escalate concerns that are identified in a community setting.
- 4.8.3 Supported by the Regional Investment Fund, there is a county-wide network of community navigators in place that can support both carer and cared for closer to home and at the earliest opportunity. This forms part of a cross-sector preventative approach to de-escalating needs of more formal support. The funding currently focuses on older adults, learning disabilities and carers but may be expanded going forward.
- 4.8.4 The Council also employs Local Community Co-ordinators (LCCs) in the North of the County Borough to support people with more complexity and as an interface with social care services also. These roles are professionally qualified and able to operate as an interface between statutory services and alternative models of support. There is a plan to complete whole county coverage of LCCs in the near future.
- 4.8.5 BAVO have also helped to facilitate a carer-friendly network of community partners who can collaborate, share learning and insight, and help co-create the supportive opportunities carers need. This has enabled a number of new projects and approaches that are potentially able to be scaled up to be trialled.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

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

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions.. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report

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

7.1 The wellbeing goals identified within the Act have been considered in the preparation of this report.

- **Long Term:** Unpaid carers can be anticipated to have a long-term place in how the needs of vulnerable individuals can be sustainably met in community settings.
- **Prevention:** Supporting the resilience and wellbeing of unpaid carers will be integral to the ability to provide required support and prevent needs escalating.
- **Integration:** The need for a cohesive cross-sector approach is identified in the inherent interface between Health, social care and third sector to appropriately support unpaid carers.
- **Collaboration:** There is a particular need to co-produce and design services, support and opportunities with partners and stakeholders who can offer learning and insight.
- **Involvement:** The need to ensure that unpaid carers have voice, choice and involvement in things that can impact on their wellbeing is required in approach.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There is a clear focus on investing in preventative approaches that can de-escalate the need for statutory services by using community-based and preventative approaches and potential cost avoidance or demand management.

8.2 The Bridgend Carer Wellbeing Service has a contract in place for 2023-2025 funded by the Adult Social Care core budget with the potential to extend it by an additional two years. This is valued at £119k per annum.

8.3 A number of the programmes and interventions identified are supported by external investment and their potential for longer term sustainability will need to be reviewed.

8.4 The use of Direct Payments based approaches in line with a new Direct Payment strategy as a more flexible approach to meeting needs may present some opportunities.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- Note the requirements of the Carers Charter in Wales and the related areas of focus that can support unpaid carers to maintain their wellbeing.
- Note the work that is taking place within Bridgend to support unpaid carers and scrutinise how well the Council, and partners, support young carers and adult carers.

Claire Marchant

CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

March 2023

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Background documents: None

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

27 MARCH 2023

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

CARE INSPECTORATE WALES (CIW) IMPROVEMENT CHECK VISIT TO CHILDRENS SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 21 - 24 NOVEMBER 2022

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to the Committee the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) report of their improvement check visit to Bridgend County Borough Council Children's Services during November 2022, and to request that the Committee considers the report and comments on the associated updated Action Plan.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

- **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

3.1 CIW carried out a first improvement check of Children's Services in Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) in November 2022, this visit followed a Performance Evaluation Inspection (PEI) during May 2022. The improvement check focused on the progress made in the following areas identified for improvement during the Performance Evaluation Inspection in May 2022:

- **People – voice and control**

Areas of improvement identified from PEI - May 2022	Progress identified from improvement check - November 2022
Seeking, hearing (including the use of direct work) and recording the voice of the child	Significant improvements made and must be sustained

People consistently feel listened to and treated with dignity and respect	Some improvements made; further action is required
Workforce recruitment and retention	Some improvements made; further action is required
Management oversight	Significant improvements made and must be sustained
Staff support, supervision, and training	Some improvements made; further action is required

- **Prevention**

Areas of improvement identified from PEI - May 2022	Progress identified from improvement check - November 2022
Provision of information, advice, and assistance (IAA). People receive the right support at the right time	Some improvements made; further action is required

- **Well-being**

Areas of improvement identified from PEI - May 2022	Progress identified from improvement check - November 2022
Compliance with statutory responsibilities	Some improvements made; further action is required
Arrangements for supervised contact between children and their families	Some improvements made further action is needed
Identification and response to child exploitation	Some improvements made further action is required

- **Partnership and Integration**

Areas of improvement identified from PEI - May 2022	Progress identified from improvement check - November 2022
Thresholds for early help and statutory services	Some improvements made further action is required
Learning from reviews and audits	Some improvements made further action is required

3.2 The scope of the inspection included:

- Evaluation of the experience of people following the PEI undertaken in May 2022.
- Evaluation of the experience and outcomes people achieve through their contact with social services.
- Consideration of evidence of improvement made following the PEI undertaken in May 2022, and plans for service development and improvement.

- 3.3 The date of the improvement check was 21-24 November 2022, and the inspection team consisted of a lead inspector and four inspectors.
- 3.4 The inspection team reviewed the experiences of people's journey through care and support through review and tracking of their social care record. The team reviewed 25 cases, with more detailed case tracking of 6 of these cases. This included interviewing the allocated case worker and their manager, other professionals involved, and where possible having conversations with the person in receipt of social care services, their family or carers.
- 3.5 The Inspection team :
- Spoke with 46 Authority employees (including some agency staff) from across various departments
 - Spoke with 3 people using services
 - Spoke with a partner organisation and a care provider
 - Spoke with the Chief Executive of BCBC
 - Spoke with BCBC Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help
 - Spoke with the Chair of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board
 - Requested and reviewed supporting documentation provided by the Authority
 - Observed the Improving Outcomes for Children Board
 - Observed two BCBC Overview and Scrutiny Committees
 - Listened to a presentation delivered by the Authority's Senior Management Team, which focused on the Authority's improvement journey following the PEI and the current position of the Authority's Children's Services.
- 3.6 CIW confirmed that a report of the findings would be published on their website and provided to the Minister for Health and Social Services..

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The CIW Improvement check letter/report is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 4.2 CIW recognise that recruitment and retention has been and continues to be a significant issue in Bridgend Childrens Social Care, with a loss in experienced staff and reliance on high levels of agency and newly qualified social workers. CIW recognise that the workforce position remains fragile, and this remains a significant risk to the Authority achieving and sustaining improvements.

The Authority continues to experience high level of contacts and demand for children's social care services with increased complexity in needs, which the service is responding to within the context of increasing financial pressures.

CIW confirmed that the Authority must continue to assure itself of the priority status, pace, quality, delivery, and impact of its improvement activity.

4.3 Summary of findings

A summary of the main findings of the improvement check in the four main areas including strengths and areas for improvement can be found below:

People – Strengths

- Action has been taken to ensure the voice of the child is consistently sought and listened to
- Some assessments clearly articulated the complex family circumstances of some children, whilst maintaining the uniqueness of individual children
- The Authority continues to regard the rights of children with evidence of the active offer of independent advocacy
- There is improved engagement and involvement of care experienced children
- The offer of a carers assessment at the point of contact is made and recorded
- A review of direct payments has taken place with further engagement with individuals
- Workforce continues to be a priority for the Authority
- A leadership and management programme has been commissioned
- Staff continue to manage increasing volumes of work and increased complexity of need
- Staff feel supported by managers
- There has been some reduction in caseloads
- Staff have received 'Back to Basics' Training
- There are increased opportunities for staff to reflect and embed learning
- The 'Newly Qualified Social Worker - Supporting your First Three Year's in Practice' programme has been re-launched

4.4 People – Areas for Improvement

- The Authority must continue to work towards ensuring a sufficient and sustainable workforce, to consistently meet statutory responsibilities
- The Authority should continue to monitor the quality of social care records ensuring recording is strengthened, and a consistent approach taken.
- The Authority must ensure people consistently feel listened to and are treated with dignity and respect

4.5 Prevention - Strengths

- Quality assurance arrangements have been strengthened
- Additional resources into the IAA service have impacted positively
- The Authority and its partners respond promptly to meet the needs of children particularly where acute need and risk is identified
- A good range of early help and edge of care services are available
- An independent review of Childrens Services has been commissioned

4.6 Prevention – Areas for Improvement

- The Authority must continue to closely monitor the position of Children's Social Services and early help services and identify and take action to mitigate risks to achieving and sustaining improvement and compliance with statutory responsibilities

- The Authority should ensure systems are in place to provide all staff, with up to date information regarding availability and accessibility of early help services
- The Authority must ensure children are not placed in unregistered services and must continue to identify suitable, registered placements

4.7 **Partnerships and Integration - Strengths**

- Collaborative partnership working at operational and strategic levels
- Agencies working effectively together through child protection processes

4.8 **Partnerships and Integration – Areas for Improvement**

- The Authority must prioritise work to ensure children and families access the right support at the right time, with smooth access and transition between early help and statutory services

4.9 **Wellbeing – Strengths**

- The IAA service is more has stable, contacts/referrals are screened within 24 hours, with improved management oversight
- Child protection conferences, and reviews of care experienced children, are held in statutory compliance
- Practitioner assessments show wider understanding of family context and focus on risk
- The Authority and partner agencies identify immediate learning from critical events and child practice reviews
- Evidence of young people, parents and carers being involved in safeguarding processes

4.10 **Wellbeing - Areas for Improvement**

- The Authority must maintain focus on ensuring compliance with all its statutory responsibilities
- The Authority must progress work as a matter of urgency to implement and embed consistent practice regarding responses to child exploitation
- The Authority must continue to closely monitor contact arrangements

Recommendations and Next Steps

- 4.11 During the PEI in May 2022 CIW identified a number of areas requiring improvement where they had significant concerns. At the improvement check in November 2022, CIW found that improvements had been made but further actions are needed, so it remains that the Authority's Childrens Services require improvement.
- 4.12 To ensure timely action to sustainably improve the areas for improvement, Cabinet approved a 3 year strategic plan for Children's Services in February 2022. The implementation of the priorities in the plan continues to be overseen by an Improving Outcomes for Children Board chaired by the Chief Executive and advised by an

Independent Advisor. There is also a Member's Advisory Panel as part of the governance comprising of Group Leaders.

- 4.13 The Action Plan has been updated to reflect the areas where improvement has been made, and where the additional recommendations made by CIW in the Improvement check can be found. The updated Action Plan can be found at **Appendix 2**. The progress to implement the outstanding and additional areas for improvement and corresponding actions will continue to be overseen by the Improving Outcomes for Children Board and reported to the Member Advisory Panel and Scrutiny Committee. CIW have indicated they will continue to closely monitor the Authority's performance and progress in achieving the improvements required.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

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

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. The inspection team included a Welsh speaking inspector, enabling CIW to make the active offer of conducting parts of the inspection process in Welsh. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

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

- 7.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with five ways of working to guide how the Authority should work to deliver wellbeing outcomes for people. The following is a summary to show how the five ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been considered in this report:

- Long Term – Social Services is demand led and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) focusses on sustainable prevention and well-being outcomes for the future. There is a requirement to meet the needs of people in the longer term and, because of rising demographics and increasing complexity, the remodelling and transformation of services continues to be a priority.
- Prevention – one of the four themes within the CIW inspection is Prevention. CIW have identified areas of strength for Prevention in their report. The areas for improvement are also included, and actions for improvement have been addressed within the updated Action Plan at **Appendix 2**.
- Integration – one of the four themes within the CIW inspection is Partnerships and Integration. CIW have identified areas of strength for Integration and Partnerships in their report. The areas for improvement are also included, and actions for improvement have been addressed within the updated Action Plan

at **Appendix 2**. The SSWBA requires local authorities to work with partners, particularly the NHS and the Police, to ensure care and support for people and support for carers is provided. The report refers to work with statutory partners.

- Collaboration – The collaborative approaches described in the report, are managed and monitored through various strategic and collaborative boards across Directorates and with partners, including the Childrens' Social Care Improving the Outcomes for Children Strategic Board.
- Involvement – the key stakeholders are the people who use social care. There is considerable engagement including surveys, stakeholder meetings, feedback forms and the complaints process. The provision of accessible information and advice helps to ensure that the voice of adults, children and young people is heard.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from this inspection report, there are a number of significant pressures that the Directorate has identified, particularly in the areas of workforce and service provision (placements) in children's social care which have been considered as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee considers the CIW report on the improvement check of Bridgend's Children's Social Care Services and comments on the associated updated Action Plan.

Claire Marchant
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March 2023

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Background documents: None

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Ein cyf / Our ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 22/12/2022

Dear Director,

Improvement Check visit to Bridgend County Borough Council Children's Service

This letter summarises the findings of Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) improvement check of Bridgend County Borough Council ('BCBC' / 'the local authority') Children's Service on 21–24 November 2022. This was the first improvement check following the performance evaluation inspection (PEI) of BCBC Children's Service in May 2022.

Introduction

We carry out inspection activity in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014; key lines of enquiry; and the quality standards in the *Code of Practice in relation to the performance and improvement of social services in Wales*. This helps us determine the effectiveness of local authorities in supporting, measuring, and sustaining improvements for people and in services.

The Improvement Check focussed on the progress made in the following areas identified for improvements during our last PEI in May 2022:

Principle	Areas of improvement identified from PEI - May 2022	Progress identified from improvement check - November 2022
People	Seeking, hearing (including the use of direct work) and recording the voice of the child	Significant improvements made and must be sustained
People	People consistently feel listened to and treated with dignity and respect	Some improvements made; further action is required

People	Workforce recruitment and retention	Some improvements made; further action is required
People	Management oversight	Significant improvements made and must be sustained
People	Staff support, supervision, and training	Some improvements made; further action is required
Prevention	Provision of information, advice, and assistance (IAA). People receive the right support at the right time	Some improvements made; further action is required
Partnerships	Thresholds for early help and statutory services	Some improvements made; further action is required
Partnerships	Learning from reviews and audits	Some improvements made; further action is required
Well-being	Compliance with statutory responsibilities	Some improvements made; further action is required
Well-being	Arrangements for supervised contact between children and their families	Some improvements made; further action is required
Well-being	Identification and response to child exploitation	Some improvements made; further action is required

1. Summary of findings

- 1.1. During our PEI in May 2022, we identified BCBC, like many local authorities across Wales, had experienced challenges in the provision of social care. Many of the pressures experienced by the local authority's children's services reflected recovery from the Covid pandemic including high levels of demand and increased complexity of people's needs. Critical deficits in the number of social workers, because of recruitment and retention issues, along with staff absences and a highly competitive market, had resulted in the loss of experienced staff and a reliance on newly qualified and agency social workers. Whilst the local authority continues to take significant action to address the challenges of recruitment and retention, this remains a significant pressure. High numbers of agency staff are being used to fill gaps in teams, including some management posts. The workforce position remains fragile. The local authority is aware of the fundamental importance of having a stable and sufficient workforce to ensure there is sufficient capacity and capability to drive forward and sustain improvements.
- 1.2. The local authority is experiencing rising numbers of children who are subject to child protection registration, care experienced children,¹ and children receiving care and support. There continues to be an increase in the numbers of contacts/referrals received and a high level of demand for services coupled

¹ A child or young person who is either looked after or who has previously been looked after by a local authority under legislation.

with increased complexity in the needs of children and families, which BCBC is responding to within the context of increasing financial pressures. Leaders have a good line of sight on the current situation in children's services. The Chief Executive of BCBC continues to chair the Improving Outcomes for Children Board, which was set up in March 2022. The Board has made a positive impact through improved oversight of children's services and early help services, ensuring there is sufficient information about, and scrutiny of, performance.

- 1.3. Leaders and senior managers are committed to making improvements to support children's well-being. There continues to be a strong focus and a considerable amount of work underway to secure and monitor improvements in children's services. Improved systems have been implemented to monitor compliance and areas of risk and potential risk. The local authority has commissioned external expertise to support with identifying how well services are working, and how services can be improved or refined to maximise their impact and outcomes for children and families. The local authority continues to commission a programme of independent quality assurance to provide on-going assessment of the strengths and areas for development in children's services and to inform practice development.
- 1.4. On 24 November 2022, the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board published the Child Practice Review in relation to the tragic death of Logan Mwangi. The Board and the agencies involved with Logan and his family during his short life, have accepted in full the findings of the Child Practice Review. The Safeguarding Board and the local authority have stated they will implement the review recommendations. We will monitor the local authority's progress regarding implementation of recommendations through our ongoing performance review activity.
- 1.5. The local authority has strengthened managerial oversight and quality assurance, resulting in some positive developments in practice. Significant improvement plans have been formulated and new posts in children's services have been introduced to assist in driving plans forward. Implementation and embedding of improvement plans continue to be work in progress. However, the fragility of the workforce position remains a significant risk to the local authority achieving and sustaining improvements. **The local authority must continue to assure itself of the priority status, pace, quality, delivery, and impact of its improvement activity.**

Key findings and evidence

Key findings and some examples of evidence are presented below in line with the four principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

2. People

Strengths:

- 2.1. Action has been taken to ensure the voice of the child is consistently sought and listened to, and consideration is given to the lived experience of the child. We saw the use of pen pictures which included the child's history, and use of tools to help to facilitate the child's views and wishes and to aid

communication to improve understanding and safety for children. The increased focus on promoting the voice of the child was evident in our discussions with staff, as was the increased management oversight in relation to children's social care records.

- 2.2. There were examples of assessments that clearly articulated the context of the complex and challenging family circumstances of some children, with a focus on understanding the uniqueness of individual children. We also saw examples of direct work undertaken with children to help understand the child's lived experience, the presenting risks and to assist in identifying issues/concerns.
- 2.3. Overall, the local authority continues to give regard to the rights of children to be offered independent professional advocacy. We saw examples of children being provided with the active offer of advocacy. Given the increase in the number of care experienced children, the local authority is working with the independent advocacy provider to ensure the active offer of advocacy is consistently provided.
- 2.4. The newly appointed corporate parenting and participation officer is promoting improved engagement and involvement of care experienced children and young people. Several consultation and engagement activities have taken place with care experienced children including consultation on what makes a 'good parent,' what it is like to be 'in care' or a 'care leaver,' and what are the important issues for care experienced children.
- 2.5. Following the PEI action has been taken to ensure that the meaningful offer of a carers assessment at the point of contact is made and recorded.
- 2.6. The local authority has undertaken a review of its direct payment scheme. A face-to-face engagement event with those individuals/carers in receipt of direct payments is due to be held in December 2022. Work is in progress to explore innovative and creative solutions, including the use of direct payments and family help services as part of care and support arrangements.
- 2.7. Recruitment, retention, and workforce well-being continue to be priority areas for the local authority. Significant action has been taken to address the recruitment and retention issues for example enhanced marketing campaigns, international recruitment, 'Grow our own Social Work Programme,' and implementation of market supplements.
- 2.8. A bespoke management and leadership programme has been commissioned to support managers/leaders to develop their skills including the development of team culture and practice, performance management, quality assurance and coaching and mentoring. These skills are important in driving forward improvement plans and supporting staff particularly during times of workforce pressures, increased workforce anxiety and significant change.
- 2.9. Staff continue to work tirelessly to manage an increasing volume of work coupled with the increasing complexity of need. Staff are working in an environment of significant change due to the implementation of improvement plans, with increased management oversight and scrutiny. Staff spoke of the positive impact of the changes being implemented, including improved quality

assurance and oversight. Staff also told us about opportunities for reflective practice and introduction of peer supervision.

- 2.10. Staff we spoke with felt supported by managers and confirmed they felt confident to raise with their managers any concerns they may have. We saw there had been several management changes within the care experienced children's team, which had impacted on the level and consistency of management support provided. The recent appointment of a permanent team manager aims to provide management stability, consistency, and support.
- 2.11. There has been a reduction of some caseloads. Workloads were generally described as busy but manageable. Implementation of the Social Work Support Officer Model (from December 2022) should increase capacity for practitioners to concentrate on practice and free them up from some administrative functions.
- 2.12. Most staff we spoke with confirmed they had received Back to Basics training, which introduced the concept of Signs of Safety.² The aim of this training is to build a strong foundation to further develop, enhance, and reflect on social work practice within the safeguarding arena. **The local authority should evaluate the impact of this training, including the impact on outcomes for children and families and buy-in from staff.**
- 2.13. We saw increased opportunities for staff to reflect and embed learning. Training on professional curiosity is now mandatory, a training programme is in place. We saw some examples of how professional curiosity was appropriately applied in practice. Staff spoke of how access to on-line training/development resources were beneficial for their professional development. **This is improved practice and should continue.**
- 2.14. The local authority has reviewed and re-launched the Newly Qualified Social Worker 'Supporting your First Three Years in Practice' framework, to ensure that all newly qualified social workers are supported through transition from graduate to newly qualified social worker. Fourteen newly qualified social workers (including agency workers) commenced the programme in October 2022, which requires them to complete a mandatory training pathway and an additional development programme. It is important staff have the capacity to undertake training and maximise development opportunities.

Areas for improvement:

- 2.15. **The local authority must continue to work towards ensuring a sufficient and sustainable workforce, with the capacity and capability to consistently meet statutory responsibilities.**
- 2.16. Whilst there has clearly been a significant focus on promoting the voice of the child, the quality of recording in relation to capturing children's voices remains

² Signs of Safety approach is a relationship-grounded, safety-organised approach to child protection practice, created by researching what works for professionals and families in building meaningful safety for vulnerable and at-risk children. The approach expands the investigation of risk to encompass family and individual strengths, periods of safety and good care that can be built upon to stabilise and strengthen a child's and family's situation. The approach is designed to be used from commencement through to case closure in order to assist professionals at all stages of the child protection process.

variable. Work is on-going in relation to the quality of recording, including the forthcoming launch of the recording policy for social workers and managers, which is planned for December 2022. **The local authority should continue to monitor the quality of social care records ensuring recording in relation to siblings, ethnicity, language, religion is strengthened, and a consistent approach taken.**

- 2.17. Some teams have experienced turnover of staff and or changes of management. We saw staff turnover had adversely impacted on consistency of workers for some children and families, presenting challenges regarding relationship building. Whilst social care records indicated respectful working with families, we received mixed feedback from a small number of people regarding how well they felt they were listened to and treated with dignity and respect. **The local authority must ensure people consistently feel listened to and treated with dignity and respect.**

3. Prevention

Strengths:

- 3.1. Quality assurance arrangements have been strengthened to provide leaders with a better understanding of performance including compliance with statutory requirements, gaps/pressures in service provision and quality of intervention.
- 3.2. It was evident the resources put into the IAA service this year, including additional staffing and management oversight, has positively impacted on the timeliness of screening contacts/referrals, and has provided staff with opportunities to improve practice. We could see how the improvements were beginning to positively impact on outcomes for some children and families.
- 3.3. The local authority is experiencing a significant increase in contacts/referrals, for example there was a 32% increase in the number of contacts/referrals received during the period April to August 2022, compared with the same period in 2021. Most of the contacts/referrals received are from partner agencies (health, police, education). This has resulted in an increase in the number of Section 47 enquiries³ undertaken, safeguarding strategy discussions held, and assessments and care and support plans completed. The impact of the increased demand has been felt across children's social services and early help services.
- 3.4. We saw examples of the local authority and partners responding promptly and effectively to meet the needs of children, especially where acute need and risk was identified. For example, the local authority, police, and other relevant agencies were able to convene strategy meetings at short notice. The subsequent planning was focused and based on good exchange of information across agencies. This resulted in assistance being offered to parents which was appropriate and proportionate to presenting need and risk. We saw examples of the local authority working with care providers to support

³ Section 47(1) of the Children Act 1989 contains duties which require a local authority to make, or cause to be made, such enquiries as it considers necessary to enable it to decide whether it should take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

them in responding to children's needs and areas of risk. **This is positive practice and should continue.**

- 3.5. There is a good range of early help and edge of care services available to support children and families. Work is in progress to look at best practice across BCBC early help, children's social services and edge of care services with the aim of preventing children's needs escalating and requiring protection.
- 3.6. The local authority has commissioned an independent review of children's services to evaluate its operating models. Early help services and edge of care services will be included in this review and any subsequent action planning as a result.

Areas for improvement:

- 3.7. There is unmet demand for services to support children and young people's emotional well-being. At the time of the improvement check there were 76 young people on the waiting list for the Youth Emotional Wellbeing Team (this is a reduction from April 2022 when there were 119 children on the waiting list for this service). We were informed all children referred had been screened and were being offered alternative support (such as school-based counselling, well-being workers that form part of a wider offer), where appropriate. As it is the responsibility of health boards and local authorities to support people's mental health and well-being, it is important they work together to identify and address unmet needs in relation to mental health and emotional well-being. **The local authority must continue to closely monitor the position of children's social services and early help services to ensure any indicators of risks to achieving and sustaining improvement and compliance with statutory responsibilities, and pressure/ gaps in service provision are quickly identified and the required action is taken.**
- 3.8. Action has been taken to increase staff awareness of early help services; however, some staff were unclear about availability and accessibility of some early help services. **The local authority should ensure systems are in place to provide all staff, with up to date information regarding availability and accessibility of early help services and records relating to intervention of early help services.**
- 3.9. In common with other local authorities, BCBC is experiencing pressure in relation to sufficiency of appropriate residential placements for care experienced children. There are a small number of children who are currently placed in services providing care and support that are not registered as required by law. The local authority has a development plan in place to increase the sufficiency of residential provision for care experienced children. Work is also in progress with national and regional partners through the National Fostering Framework to increase the numbers of foster carers in Bridgend County, including carers who have additional skills and experience in caring for children who would otherwise require residential care, or are moving on from such provision. **The local authority must ensure children are not placed in unregistered services and must continue its efforts to identify suitable, registered placements.**

4. Partnership

Strengths:

- 4.1. We saw collaborative partnership working at operational and strategic levels. This is critical to ensure improvements are delivered and sustained, and the well-being of children and families is consistently promoted and protected, and the local authority has a professional support network from which it can draw expertise, knowledge, support, and constructive challenge. A Bridgend Children's Summit was recently held with all key partners at Chief Executive level to agree the vision and priorities for integrated working for children and families in Bridgend County. **This is positive practice and should continue.**
- 4.2. Opportunities for agencies to work effectively together through child protection processes were embraced by partners. We saw examples of partners exchanging information which enabled a good understanding of both presenting risk and family context relevant to circumstances. The local authority and partner agencies are reviewing the information sharing platforms. Overall, social care records and feedback from staff demonstrated generally good information exchange, and a mutual understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities. Arrangements are in place for partners to constructively challenge and share/escalate concerns. The fortnightly Joint Operational Group meeting provides regular opportunity for constructive challenge and continuous improvement between partners. **This is improved practice and should continue.**

Areas for improvement:

- 4.3. Work is underway with both internal and external partners to ensure clarity and consistency of thresholds for access to early help and statutory services. **The local authority must prioritise this work to ensure children and families access the right support at the right time and ensure smooth access to services, and where required smooth transition between early help / preventative and statutory services.** Given the increase in demand for support/services the provision of timely early help is likely to alleviate the level of demand on statutory services.

5. Well-being

Strengths:

- 5.1. Actions taken by the local authority, in relation to its IAA service, has assisted to stabilise this service to ensure contacts/referrals are now consistently screened within 24 hours, with improved management oversight. The ability and capacity to respond to immediate safeguarding needs and crisis is a positive improvement for the local authority and partner agencies, with prompt and timely responses consistently evident.
- 5.2. We found initial child protection conferences, child protection reviews and reviews of care experienced children are being held in accordance with statutory timescales, as are reviews for care experienced children and reviews of support or financial support for children with Special Guardianship

Orders. We also found timely and appropriate action had been taken in relation to episodes of children going missing.⁴

- 5.3. There are some good examples of practitioner assessments, which demonstrate both a wider understanding of family context and a focus on risk. We saw use of genograms, chronologies and historical information being used to inform decision making and assessments. We noted an improvement in the quality of workload supervision records, which generally detailed action to be taken and follow up of actions. Several internal and independent audits have taken place to inform managers line of sight on practice and to identify improvements and good practice.
- 5.4. The local authority and partners identify any immediate learning from critical events and child practice reviews. For example, following a recent child practice review staff in the case management teams and the independent chairs of child protection conferences and reviews were reminded of the statutory duty to inform any person who holds parental responsibility for a child, of child protection concerns.
- 5.5. We saw evidence of young people and parents and carers being involved in the safeguarding process. For example, we saw how an interpreter had been used to communicate with a parent, in their first language, ensuring the parent could understand the safeguarding concerns of the local authority. The local authority has committed to developing a parent's charter to understand better, and act on, parents experience of working with children's social services. **This is improved practice and should continue.**

Areas for improvement

- 5.6. Performance indicators in relation to timeliness of meeting statutory requirements in some areas (as detailed above) were generally good. **The local authority must maintain focus and scrutiny on ensuring compliance with all its statutory responsibilities.**
- 5.7. Whilst work in relation to child exploitation has commenced on both a local and regional level, the local authority is at an early stage of change management in respect of implementing and embedding consistent practice regarding identifying and responding to child exploitation. **The local authority must progress this work as a matter of urgency.** The recent appointment of a lead role regarding child exploitation may assist in driving this work forward.
- 5.8. Arranging contact between children and members of their families continues to present challenges for some staff in relation to workload management. The social care records we reviewed did not evidence direct impact of this on children and families. **This is an area that the local authority should continue to closely monitor.**

⁴ The All Wales Practice Guide – *Safeguarding children who go missing from home or care*, defines a child as missing when their whereabouts cannot be established, they will be considered as missing until located and their wellbeing or otherwise confirmed.

6. Next steps

- 6.1. During our PEI in May 2022, we identified a number of areas requiring improvements and where we had significant concerns. At this improvement check we found improvements have been made, however further actions are needed to ensure the well-being of children and families is consistently promoted and protected. It remains that the local authority's children's services require improvement.
- 6.2. We will continue to closely monitor through our ongoing performance review activities the progress made by the local authority in securing the improvements required. We recommend the local authority maximise opportunities to share and learn from positive practice.
- 6.3. This inspection letter will be published to our website. The local authority will be expected to present the letter to elected members and subject it to public scrutiny through a formal and open committee meeting at the earliest opportunity.

7. Methodology

- 7.1. Most inspection evidence was gathered by reviewing the experiences of people through reading and tracking of their social care records. We reviewed 25 social care records and of these we tracked 6. Tracking a person's social care record includes where possible, having conversations with the person in receipt of social care services, their family or carers, key worker, the key worker's manager, and other professionals involved.

We also:

- Spoke with 46 local authority employees (including some agency staff) from across various local authority departments
- Spoke with 3 people using services
- Spoke with a partner organisation and a care provider
- Spoke with the Chief Executive of BCBC
- Spoke with BCBC Lead Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help
- Spoke with the Chair of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board
- Requested and reviewed supporting documentation provided by the local authority
- Observed the Improving Outcomes for Children Board
- Observed two BCBC Scrutiny Committees
- Listened to a presentation delivered by the local authority senior management team, which focused on the local authority's improvement journey following the PEI and the current position of the authority's children's service

8. Welsh Language

- 8.1. The inspection team included a Welsh speaking inspector, enabling CIW to make the active offer of conducting parts of the inspection process in Welsh.

9. Acknowledgements

9.1. CIW would like to thank everyone who gave their time and contributed to this inspection.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lou Bushell-Bauers', written in a cursive style.

Lou Bushell-Bauers
Head of Local Authority Inspection
Care Inspectorate Wales

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Children's Social Care
May 2022 – Care Inspectorate Wales - Performance Evaluation Inspection
November 2022 – Care Inspectorate Wales – Improvement Check
ACTION PLAN

PRINCIPLE 1 PEOPLE (Pe)							
REF	AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS/UPDATES/ACTIONS	CROSS REFERENCE	BRAG
Pe1	Opportunities for children's views to be consistently sought and appropriately recorded need to be strengthened	Develop an engagement and involvement framework so children and young people have an opportunity to become meaningfully involved in all aspects of the work of Children's Social Care in Bridgend.	Dep HoS/GM Case Management and Transition/Corporate Parenting Officer	March 23	Number of consultation and engagement activities, events and focus groups have taken place with care experienced children and care leavers including what makes a good parent, what it is like to be 'in care' or 'a care leaver', and identifying the most important issues for care experienced children, young people and care leavers when being supported by statutory agencies and partners. The outcome of the engagement is informing the priorities of the Bridgend Corporate Parenting Board	3 Year Plan (V1)	

		<p>Finalise and launch recording guidance for social workers and managers</p>	<p>Principal Officer Training</p>	<p>Dec 22</p>	<p>Young People Interview Panels are supporting recruitment</p> <p>Our young people volunteering to be Young Ambassadors with Voices from Care to discuss the future of the Care System in Wales at the Senedd with Ministers and the Children Commissioner for Wales</p> <p>Commissioned a new Specialist Participation Service contracted to run a Care Experienced Forum and a Care Leavers Forum that will both meet monthly from November 22</p> <p>The Directorate recording guidance has been reviewed. The review of this guidance contributes to embedding, in practice, a focus on identifying and supporting 'what matters' to individuals, their carers, children and families utilising their strengths, and hearing and capturing their voices in recording our involvement with them, in shaping their care and support arrangements. The guidance was produced in consultation with staff from across social work and direct care services. Guidance and accompanying documents is</p>		
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Page 59		Audit implementation and impact of recording guidance for social workers	HoS/Principal Officer Training	March 23	available on the intranet. Training on recording skills is available for direct care, social work and foster carers. Audit activity will take place 3 months after launch.		
Pe 2	Limited Evidence of Direct Work	Practice guidance to be reviewed to ensure it reflects the need for practitioners when undertaking assessments to focus on the quality of the child's lived experiences.	HoS/Principal Officer Training	Dec 22	Practice guidance has been reviewed. There is guidance on listening to and recording the voice of the child, and tools for practitioners to use when undertaking direct work with children and young people available on the children's social care web pages. This area will be strengthened further by the development of 'lived experience of the child' practice guidance.	3 Year Plan (V2) Review/Audit Plan Review D Rec 5	
Pe 3	Inconsistent use of chronologies and genograms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reminder to teams regarding genogram and chronology software and report Provide refresher training to teams on the software and report Review chronology format and underpinning guidance 	OP Bus Manager Op Bus Manager/GM Locality hubs	April 22 April/May 22 May 22 Continuous	Completed	Review/Audit Plan Audit B Rec 1	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver ongoing programme of training to all new staff • Monitor use of chronologies through supervision and audit 	<p>Op Bus Manager/GM Locality hubs</p> <p>OP Manager/PO Training</p> <p>OP Manager/PO Training</p>	<p>Continuous</p>			
<p>Pe 4</p>	<p>Strengthen business support for practitioners</p>	<p>Review the Business support to practitioners to create the Social Work Support Officer Model and significantly increase capacity for practitioners to concentrate on practice rather than administrative functions</p>	<p>GM Bus Support/Bus Change Prog Manager</p>	<p>April/May 2023</p>	<p>New SWSO implemented 1st December 2022</p> <p>Training plan completed February 2023</p> <p>Implementation and completion of MoU with Team Managers March 2023</p> <p>Proposed changes to the fostering service business support team -consultation complete Feb 2023 and then advertisement of posts</p> <p>Full implementation and transfer of roles April/May 2023</p>	<p>Workforce Project Plan</p>	

<p>Pe 5</p>	<p>Variable evidence of management oversight/Quality of supervision</p>	<p>Supervision policy and accompanying appendices to be reviewed Draft supervision policy to be consulted on and finalised</p> <p>Directorate Framework Supervision Policy to be re-launched</p> <p>Supervision training to be arranged</p> <p>Commission a bespoke leadership and management development programme to support all managers to develop their skills in leading, the development of team culture and practice, coaching and mentoring</p> <p>Implement evidence-based mechanisms to ensure that reflective</p>	<p>PO Training</p> <p>PO Training</p> <p>PO Training</p> <p>Director/PO Training</p> <p>Director/HoS/</p>	<p>Dec 22</p> <p>Dec 22</p> <p>Dec 22</p> <p>Dec 22</p>	<p>Review completed and revised policy has received cabinet approval</p> <p>An external provider has been commissioned who will deliver a programme of training for supervisors and supervisees from Jan 23 onwards</p> <p>Programme is underway and bi-annual audit of supervision will take place to monitor implementation/effectiveness</p> <p>Training programme commenced Jan – May 2023 Training on facilitating action learning sets is available and teams are encouraged to use action learning sets to share and reflect on practice.</p> <p>Our QA Framework promotes a learning culture that values critical reflection and access to</p>	<p>Review / Audit Plan Audit C Rec 1</p>	
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		<p>practice is embedded including communities of practice and action learning sets</p> <p>Focus on wellbeing through implementing a tiered approach to ensure timely and effective trauma informed support to workforce, including through effective line management support, peer support, and timely access to specialist support where needed</p>	<p>PO Training</p> <p>Director/HoS/P O Training</p>	<p>March 23</p> <p>March 23</p>	<p>both formal and informal learning and development opportunities that will enhance quality champion evidence-based practice and place an emphasis on development and improvement.</p> <p>Our revised supervision policy outlines the core functions of supervision including the requirement to support and attend to staff wellbeing. It also describes how peer support can be facilitated through group supervisions sessions. General and specialist wellbeing support continues to be available for all staff and managers and our approaches are under continuous review to ensure the offer is the best possible</p>		
<p>Pe 6</p>	<p>Practice model – implementation of Signs of Safety</p>	<p>Relaunch and set out a detailed implementation plan encompassing for a model of strength-based practice which will have at its core a deep understanding of the dangers and harms to children and effective safety planning to address issues and strongly mitigate risks:</p>			<p>Back to basics training is being delivered to teams to introduce the concept of Signs of Safety in readiness for formal implementation of the full model.</p>	<p>Review/Audit Plan Review D Rec 3</p>	

Page 63		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Officer to be appointed to lead on the project Implementation plan to be finalised 	HoS HoS	Dec 22 Dec 22	Principal Officer appointed commenced Jan 23 Implementation plan for first phase has been agreed with an appointed signs of safety consultant facilitating sessions with the leadership team to prepare for a service launch in March 23		
Pe7	Review of direct payments scheme	Explore innovative and creative solutions including the use of direct payments and family help services as part of care and support arrangements in children's services teams.	Dep HoS/GM Commissioning	May 23	Draft policy and strategy document has been engaged on with staff and key stakeholders. A face-to-face engagement event with those individuals/carers in receipt of Direct Payments was held on 2/3/23. The feedback from the event will now be reviewed by the project group to ensure that it is reflected in the draft strategy and policy. The Direct Payment Policy will be considered by Cabinet in May 2023	3 Year Plan S7	
Pe8	Consistent offer of a carers assessment	Undertake engagement exercise with carers to explore why carers do not feel that the offer of a carers	Dep HoS/GM Case	March 23	Following conclusion of the Direct Payments engagement, further		

Page 64		assessment has consistently been made within Bridgend, and address any barriers to participation	Management, Transition/ Carers Development Officer		engagement with carers will take place before the end of the financial year with a view to co-producing a carers strategy. As an interim measure the manager of the Disabled children team has reviewed paperwork to ensure that the meaningful offer of a carers assessment at the point of contact is captured and recorded within our systems		
November 2022 – Improvement Check							
Pe9	Continue to work towards ensuring a sufficient and sustainable workforce, with the capacity and capability to consistently meet statutory responsibilities	Workforce strategy to be closely monitored and co-ordinated through the local authority planning group Workstreams the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic commissioning of agency staff • Agency to permanent conversions • Re-grading of existing posts • Market supplements • Grow our own/traineeships and secondments/social care apprenticeships • Workforce charters • Enhanced marketing/approaches to recruitment 	Director and Workforce Board	Continuous	Fortnightly workforce planning meetings take place to closely monitor the workstreams and their impact. The challenges continue with ongoing reliance on agency staff (and their turnover). Some of the positive impacts will not be achieved until the medium/long terms eg 'grow our own', full team of international recruits etc..		

Page 65		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International recruitment 					
	Pe10	Continue to monitor the quality of social care records ensuring recording in relation to siblings, ethnicity, language, religion is strengthened, and a consistent approach taken	Audit tools to be reviewed to ensure these factors are captured and monitored	PO Training	April 2023	No update currently	
	Pe11	Ensure people consistently feel listened to and treated with dignity and respect	In addition to the engagement and involvement framework for children and young people (Pe1) a Parents Charter to also be developed	HoS	Sept 2023	Discussions are underway regarding a regional charter being developed with input from a third sector advocacy provider	
PRINCIPLE 2 – PREVENTION (Pr)							
Ref	AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS/UPDATES/ACTIONS	CROSS REFERENCE	BRAG
Pr 1	Opportunities to prevent escalation of need continues to be a challenge for the local authority given the persistently high volume of referrals together with the	<p>A Workforce Plan has been developed for Children's Social Care (CSC) areas of development includes:</p> <p>Review of skill mix in CSC to develop workforce plan</p> <p>Develop a revised business case for the Bridgend 'Grow our own Social Work Programme'</p>	Director/ Workforce Board	March 23	<p>Growing our own Social Work Programme - 4 staff have been seconded on the BSc Social Work Cardiff Met/Bridgend college programme commenced academic year 2022/23.</p> <p>4 social work trainees have been recruited and have commenced the BSc social</p>		

Page 66	complexity of needs of children and families, and workforce challenges				work programme (as above). Trainees are super- numery staff, each trainee has an individual programme of learning and development alongside their academic study and practice learning placements they will gain practical experience across Adults and Childrens teams	3 Year Plan (W2)	
		International recruitment	Director/ Workforce Board	March 23	Further funding has been agreed for 8 trainee/secondees in the 23/24 academic year. A project group has been set up to oversee international recruitment and to date 8 social workers have been offered posts with prospective start dates in January 2023.	3 Year Plan (W3)	
		Social Work Charter	Director/ Workforce Board	March 23	The social work charter is in draft, and workshops have taken place with practitioners and managers to finalise a draft for launch on world social work day 2023.		
Undertake a review of integrated family support service and family group conferencing, arrangements within Bridgend with a view to determining if this whole family	Head of Children's Social Care/ Head of Education & Family	June 2023	Our improvement partner will undertake a whole system Childrens services review The project will involve considering services currently delivered in the education,	3 Year Plan (P7)			

		<p>approach can be expanded for working with more families</p>	<p>Support/GM Family Support</p>		<p>social care and wellbeing, communities, finance and performance directorates</p> <p>In addition the following areas have been progressed:-</p> <p>Edge of Care / IFSS</p> <p>Increase of posts to support increased demand and prevent escalation.</p> <p>Further work has been undertaken to understand specific needs within BCBC, including emotional regulation and tolerance programmes for parents, and Family Connections which focuses on conflict resolution skills for whole families</p> <p>A case tracker has been developed within edge of care services / IFSS to monitor timescales and reduce drift. This is used as a supervision tool</p> <p>Commissioning further staff to be trained in ‘train the trainer’ evidence-based parenting programmes so numerous groups can run simultaneously to offer support to parents.</p> <p>Family Group Conferencing</p> <p>Since October 2022 the LA has committed to funding FGC’s for</p>		
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		Develop an updated commissioning strategy for family support services and interventions to ensure the optimal range of commissioned and Council provided services to meet the needs and interventions set out in care and support and child protection plans	GM Commissioning/ Contract Monitoring Officer	June 2023	<p>all families who are open to statutory services for at least 3 months</p> <p>The development of a conflict resolution programme for families who have gone through the FGC process and will require a whole family approach plan to be embedded for the longer term.</p> <p>The terms of reference for the children and young people area planning groups have been finalised and meetings have been set up A priority focus of the planning group is family support services and intervention</p> <p>A BCBC Strategic Commissioning Plan, is currently being drafted this will be presented to Scrutiny in May 2023, prior to wider engagement and finalisation. This plan covers both Early Help and regulated Children's Services</p>	3 Year Plan (S1)	
Pr2	Missed opportunities to thoroughly explore and mitigate risk and a lack of	Raise awareness of the need for practitioners to exercise professional curiosity in their practice, applying critical evaluation to any information				Review /Audit Plan Audit B Rec 2	

	<p>professional curiosity</p>	<p>they receive and keeping an open mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back to Basics Training to be arranged • Mandatory Professional curiosity training to be arranged • Signs of Safety Training to be arranged • Review QA evidence of training 	<p>PO Training</p> <p>PO Training</p> <p>PO Training</p> <p>PO Training</p>	<p>March 23</p> <p>March 23</p> <p>March 23</p> <p>March 23</p>	<p>Ongoing programme of Back-to-Basics Training is in place with dates scheduled through to March 2023. Back to Basics Training is mandatory.</p> <p>8 Professional curiosity training courses have taken place this year with two further courses scheduled for Nov and Dec 22.</p> <p>Signs of Safety training to commence from Jan 23.</p> <p>Training activity is evaluated initially at engagement with and reaction to an individual event. How learning has been transferred by an individual into their role and how new skills and knowledge have been used are less tangible and harder to measure. Discussion within supervision and performance data are mechanisms used to gauge the wider impact of learning</p>		
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Page 70					on the individual and the organisation		
Pr 3	Placement sufficiency and support	<p>Complete the establishment of the children's assessment hub at Brynmenyn, reviewing the model to ensure the right multiagency therapeutic input including access to psychological assessments where required.</p> <p>Working with regional partners ensure there is sufficient quantity and quality of flexible provision for children who's needs cannot be met in standard residential or fostering provision.</p> <p>Develop a commissioning strategy for the provision of accommodation, care and support services for children with disabilities, working closely with education and health partners to ensure integrated models for short and long-term care provision</p>	<p>HoS/GM Placement and Provider Services</p> <p>HoS/GM Placement and Provider Services</p> <p>Dep HoS/GM Placement & Provider Services/ GM Commissioning/ Contract Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>March 23</p> <p>March 23</p> <p>March 23</p>	<p>Prior to opening, a root and branch review of the existing service delivery model will be completed to ensure the operating model in the new home is fit for purpose.</p> <p>Radical reform funding from WG has also been granted for us to commission a MYST for fostering and residential care</p> <p>The regional children's programme board has established an accommodation workstream which is driving the development and bids for associated funding for specialist provision.</p> <p>The terms of reference for the children and young people area planning groups have been finalised and meetings have been set up. A priority focus of the planning group will be support services for children with disabilities and accommodation options for children and young people</p>	<p>3 Year Plan (S2)</p> <p>S3)</p> <p>(S4)</p> <p>(S5)</p>	

		<p>Develop a commissioning strategy with key partners to meet the accommodation, care and support needs of care experienced children and young people and care leavers</p> <p>Work with national and regional partners through the National Fostering Framework to increase the numbers of Bridgend foster families, including carers who have additional skills and experience in caring for children who would otherwise require residential care, or are transitioning from such provision. The work to increase the numbers of Bridgend foster carers should consider the most effective recruitment and retention strategies as well as the range of support for foster carers from the Council.</p>	<p>Dep HoS/GM Case Man & Transition/GM Placement & Provider Services/GM Commissioning/ Contract Monitoring Officer</p> <p>HoS/GM Placements and Provider Services</p>	<p>March 23</p> <p>March 23</p>	<p>See above</p> <p>There are several targeted recruitment activities for the year utilising online marketing combined with showcasing events that promote both retention and recruitment. These include, recognition awards, 3 days of scheduled events within the community to include visits to schools, leaflet drops and speaking with local businesses. Attendance at school summer fetes and delivering presentations to teaching staff.</p> <p>There has been success with online marketing - 6.9K views of the Christmas recruitment video.</p> <p>A range of other promotions including local advertising, linking with local radio and</p>	<p>(S6)</p>	
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		<p>Await outcome of MYST bid to Welsh Government</p>	<p>HoS/GM Placements and Provider Services</p>	<p>Continuous</p>	<p>other targeted promotional aids are planned</p> <p>We currently have 8 prospective carers being assessed and we have been approached by kinship carers, in accordance with our new financial policy – to be assessed under Form F with a view to providing respite placement</p> <p>See above</p>		
<p>Pr 4</p>	<p>Accessibility of information, advice and assistance</p>	<p>Undertake a review of the MASH /IAA team structure, duties and responsibilities and consideration of the resources required to strengthen these arrangements to ensure that the safest decisions are being made in response to concerns shared with the department and that staff are working in an environment which enables them to be the best practitioners they can be:</p>	<p>Dep HoS/GM Safeguarding</p>	<p>March 23</p>	<p>Draft review document produced for consideration</p>	<p>Review/Audit Plan</p> <p>Audit A Rec 1</p>	

Page 73		<p>Review operating model and resource implications</p> <p>Implement IAA focussed improvement plan</p>	<p>Dep HoS/GM Safeguarding</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>and presented to CMB. Final report to be produced on options and resource implications by Dec 22. IPC are progressing with this review, their draft report due February 2023 IAA focused improvement plan is in place and is updated 6 weekly and reviewed regularly in silver meetings Workforce project being progressed by CSC workforce project</p> <p>IAA focused plan implemented and continues to be reviewed 6 weekly and shared in silver</p>		
Pr 5	<p>Strengthening of Quality Assurance (QA) framework and alignment of performance and quality assurance systems</p>	<p>Commission a programme of independent detailed Quality Assurance to provide a thorough assessment of the strengths and areas for development in Bridgend Children's Social Care services to inform the practice development programme, and the Council, and partnership quality assurance programmes</p>	<p>HoS/PO Training</p>	<p>Dec 22</p> <p>Jan 23</p>	<p>Further independent audits have been carried out in relation to case management and supervision and findings/recommendations reported to the Improvement Board</p> <p>Review completed</p>	<p>3 Year Plan (P4)</p>	

		<p>Directorate QA framework to be reviewed</p> <p>Draft QA framework to be consulted on and finalised</p> <p>Directorate QA Framework to be relaunched</p>	<p>PO Training</p> <p>PO Training</p> <p>Director</p>	<p>Dec 22</p> <p>March 23</p>	<p>Q and A activity will be reported to the Directorate performance meeting chaired by the statutory Director</p> <p>Internal audit and review of the framework and its impact will be carried out 12 months after implementation Team based facilitated briefing sessions have been rolled out across the Directorate. An implementation group has been established. Teams are testing out the new audit tools within WCCIS. A formal launch of the framework will take place in March 23. A Quality assurance officer post is being recruited to in order to coordinate this work</p>	<p>Review/Audit Plan</p> <p>Audit A Rec 2</p>	
November 2022 – Improvement Check							
Pr6	Continue to closely monitor the position of children’s social services and early help services to	Bronze Silver and Gold meetings will continue to take place to ensure situational awareness and the required corrective actions are implemented in a timely way	Director/HoS/D eputy HoS	June 2023	Bronze silver and gold meetings are taking place as indicated where comprehensive		

Page 75	ensure any indicators of risks to achieving and sustaining improvement and compliance with statutory responsibilities, and pressure/ gaps in service provision are quickly identified and the required action is taken				data/dashboards are presented by every part of the service. In addition, monitoring and analysis of cross directorate activity and performance is monitored by the shared dataset that is presented at every EH and SG Board meeting		
Pr7	The local authority should ensure systems are in place to provide all staff, with up-to-date information regarding availability and accessibility of early help services and records relating to intervention of early help services		GM Early Help		The Early Help web pages on the BCBC website were updated in august 2022 to improve awareness of services available to support children and families. These pages are regularly reviewed to add new services or resources that may assist children, families, and professionals		
Pr8	Ensure children are not placed in unregistered services and must continue its efforts to identify suitable,	Children's commissioning strategy to be finalised which will include placement/sufficiency	GM Commissioning	Continuous	Children are only placed unregistered services in exceptional circumstances and when this does happen the arrangements are closely monitored and reported to CIW for consideration by their enforcement panel.		

Page 76	registered placements				<p>The process of developing a BCBC Strategic Commissioning Plan, which will be drafted by end of March and taken into Scrutiny in May 2023, prior to wider engagement and finalisation. This plan covers both Early Help and regulated Children's Services</p> <p>A key element of the plan will be the updating of the Placement Sufficiency Strategy – which will be a standalone document with the key findings included in the above strategic plan</p>		
PRINCIPLE 3 – PARTNERSHIP AND INTEGRATION (Pi)							
Ref	AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS/UPDATES/ACTIONS	CROSS REFERENCE	BRAG
Pi1	Inconsistent thresholds and standards of practice	<p>Back to basics training to be arranged with the intention of building a strong foundation on which we can further develop, enhance, and reflect on social work practice within the safeguarding arena</p> <p>In addition to the back to basics training an overarching training programme will include the following:</p>	PO Training	March 23	A programme of core and specialist training is ongoing covering Back to Basics and subject specific courses as listed above.	<p>Audit Plan/Review</p> <p>Review D Rec 1</p> <p>3 Year Plan (P5)</p> <p>(Pe6)</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciative enquiry • Analysis of risk • Professional curiosity • Working with uncooperative and hostile families • Disguised compliance • Relationship based practice/collaborative communications (focus on safety) • Facilitating strategy and core group meetings • Practice of helping children and young people – promoting participation in assessment and planning • Child Protection case conferences • Working with challenge and recognising the impact of high stress on our responses • Neglect • Coercive control • Understanding children and young people’s experiences of living in an environment where there is domestic abuse • Domestic violence (ref VAWDASV) <p>Develop a series of practice development plans, where appropriate with partners, for key service areas. The practice development plans will include priorities for policy</p>	<p>HoS/Dep HoS/PO Training</p>	<p>March 23</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Practice development plans completed and are reviewed in silver meetings on a weekly basis</p>		
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Page 78		development, decision making processes, training and development					
Pi 2	The local authority will need to ensure its communication strategy is sufficiently robust to effectively communicate to staff and partners the vision for children's services and the many developments taking place/planned to take place	Work through Regional Safeguarding Board structures to ensure most effective partnership arrangements, and ownership of improvements required within Bridgend Social Care services	Director/HoS	Continuous	Partnership working has been strengthened through the Regional Safeguarding Board Executive Steering Group and the Bridgend Joint Operational Group. A follow up summit is being held to explore a vision and priorities for integrated working for children and families in Bridgend. There is strong accountability and oversight exercised through the CTM Regional Safeguarding Board, its Executive Steering Group and its sub-groups.	3 Year Plan (B1)	
Pi 3	Share learning from audits and reviews with staff and partners	Ensure that learning from Child Practice Reviews and other in-depth analysis is systematically embedded through learning, training and development and follow up quality assurance and review This will be undertaken through the work of the Regional Safeguarding Board subgroups and development of	GM Safeguarding &IAA/ Principal Officer Training	Continuous	Learning from Child Practice Reviews is incorporated into relevant training courses. Bespoke briefing sessions for staff to take place in relation to the Bridgend Child Practice Reviews when reviews the reviews are completed, and reports Published.	3 Year Plan (P6)	

		the operational ways of working within Bridgend Children's Social Care			Three practice learning events in relation to Child T took place in dec 2022. Further dates for learning events from any reviews/audits will take place upon their completion.		
November 2022 – Improvement Check							
Pi4	Ensure clarity and consistency of thresholds for access to early help and statutory services. The local authority must prioritise this work to ensure children and families access the right support at the right time and ensure smooth access to services, and where required smooth transition between early help / preventative and statutory services	Our improvement partner will undertake a whole system children's services review	Director/Head of Service	June 2023	The project will involve considering services currently delivered in the education, social care and wellbeing, communities, finance, and performance directorates, and it will address key questions in the following areas: Whether front door arrangements and pathways protocols and systems can be more effective in delivering outreach, assessment, referral, signposting, and support for families. This will include whether there should continue to be multiple front doors for children, families, and professionals for IAA Whether and how more effective joint working across Directorates can be achieved at each levels of the continuum of need above.		

					<p>Whether more can be done to deliver and co-ordinate services in locality hubs and clusters to better support schools and other universal services</p> <p>Whether Council resources are best targeted and will meet future demand</p> <p>Whether commissioning and joint work with partners can be improved</p>		
PRINCIPLE 4 – WELLBEING (W)							
Ref	AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS/UPDATES/ACTIONS	CROSS REFERENCE	BRAG
W1	Further work is required to improve the timeliness of meeting statutory responsibilities	Enhance the use of business intelligence within children's social care teams through live performance dashboards which promote safe and effective practice, management oversight and decision making	GM Business Support	March 2023	A performance management framework has been implemented across the Directorate which provides management oversight of key performance management data. The Children's Social Care monthly performance management report includes key national metrics as well as local operational information, such as assessments and reviews. The report follows a child / young person's pathway. To further strengthen these	3 Year Plan (B4)	

					<p>arrangements the dashboard presented to silver meeting has been further developed and provides management oversight of key performance information on a weekly basis. Operational service area dashboards continue to be developed to provide management oversight at weekly bronze meetings. Next steps are to prioritise the list of statutory requirements and work with the WCCIS team to build on the suite of data/performance reports to enhance automated reporting and streamline data validation arrangements</p> <p>Performance management mechanisms have been improved and routine meetings in place with the Director to review progress against plans</p>		
W2	Facilitation of supervised contact	A review of the current supervised contact arrangements to be undertaken to ensure that it meets the needs of those who require this provision	GM Case Management & Transition/GM Locality Hubs/Contract Monitoring Officer	March 23	<p>A review will be undertaken by our improvement partner as part of their work to review the operating model, this review will be completed by March 23.</p> <p>In the interim the group manager is monitoring the demands placed on staff to</p>		

Page 82					undertake supervision of contact and deploying resource to support the teams		
W3	Consistent high quality written records	<p>Review of the recording policy, and the chronology functionality within WCCIS to ensure every child has an up-to-date version on their record</p> <p>Foster carer recording guidance and associated training to be reviewed</p> <p>Audit implementation and impact of recording guidance for social care staff</p>	<p>Policy Officer</p> <p>GM Placements and Provider Services</p> <p>Policy Officer</p>	<p>March 23</p> <p>March 23</p> <p>Continuous</p>	<p>The guidance on the use of chronologies has been included in the revised recording policy.</p> <p>Fostering Policy and procedures have been reviewed and updated, the PO will work with the Policy Officer to progress approval of the policy framework. Working groups have been set up and SCDWP officers will facilitate a review of foster carer training.</p> <p>Policy Officer appointed and has commenced a review of policies /guidance across Childrens Social Care</p>	<p>Audit/Review Plan</p> <p>Review D Rec 5 (Pe1)</p> <p>Audit/Review Plan</p> <p>Review D Rec 5</p>	
W4	CSE and CCE – strengthen interventions and mapping	Regional Safeguarding Board Exploitation Steering Group to be set up	Director/HoS	Dec 22	The regional steering group is established, and the Group Manager for Development and Improvement is engaged in this area of work.	See W7 below	

Page 83		Interim local tool, together with practice guidance notes has been developed	GM Locality Hubs/GM Safeguarding and IAA		<p>A referral pathway for identifying and assessing exploitation has been developed – this includes a MASH screening tool and an exploitation assessment these are in use. Testing of these processes for inclusion on WCCIS is underway</p> <p>A direct intervention working tool to support social work teams in intervention with children who are being exploited or at risk of being exploited has been presented to teams The use of this tool is included in the exploitation training</p>		
W5	First year of practice – ensure competence and confidence of staff and provide consistent supervision and oversight	Review and re-launch the newly qualified social worker ‘Supporting your first three years in practice’ framework, to ensure that all newly qualified social workers are supported through transition from graduate to newly qualified social worker	HoS/Principal Officer Training	Dec 23	<p>The programme has been reviewed and revised. 14 NQSW’s (including agency workers) commenced the programme in October 22. All NQSW’s are required to complete a mandatory training pathway and an additional development programme. This includes reflective learning on areas relevant to social workers in both Adult and Childrens Social Care</p> <p>NQSW’s will have:</p>	<p>3 Year Plan (W6)</p> <p>(W7)</p> <p>(W8)</p> <p>(W9)</p>	

Page 84					Support from a mentor based within their team	Audit/Review Plan	
					Reflective professional supervision by a qualified social worker. Weekly for the first four weeks then every 4 weeks for the remainder of their first year in practice.	Review D Rec 2	
November 2022 – Improvement Check							
W6	Performance indicators in relation to timeliness of meeting statutory requirements - maintain focus and scrutiny on ensuring compliance with all its statutory responsibilities	Performance framework and associated monitoring mechanisms to be embedded across the Directorate	Director/GM Business	Continuous	A Performance framework is in place and ensures that monitoring takes place through the regular meetings with the Director and Heads of Service and scrutiny by the Improvement Board		
W7	Implement and embed consistent practice regarding identifying and responding to child exploitation, progress work as a matter of urgency	Regional exploitation strategy to be finalised and implemented Local referral pathways and practice toolkits to be consistently implemented across all teams	GM Practice improvement	Dec 22 June 2023	Regional exploitation strategy has been signed off A referral pathway for identifying and assessing exploitation has been developed – this includes a MASH screening tool and an exploitation assessment these are in use. Testing of these processes for inclusion on WCCIS is underway	(see W4 above)	

		<p>Exploitation prevention panel to be established</p> <p>Workforce</p> <p>Ensure on-going training and support from lead practitioners</p>		<p>June 2023</p> <p>June 2023</p> <p>June 2023</p>	<p>A direct intervention working tool to support social work teams in intervention with children who are being exploited or at risk of being exploited has been presented to teams The use of this tool is included in the exploitation training</p> <p>The concept of the Exploitation Prevention Panel has been presented to partners; further work is ongoing to develop the Terms of Reference for the Panel which will meet monthly, The first Panel meeting is scheduled for May 2023</p> <p>2 senior practitioner posts have been appointed in March 2023 one to be based in the IAA and one in the localities. These officers will be responsible for screening. A Social work support officer role is being developed for advert to support the exploitation lead and 2 senior practitioners in this area of work</p> <p>Training – all teams have been trained in the use of the screening and assessment documents, a presentation to all teams on the BCBC exploitation strategy was completed in Nov 22</p>		
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					A further half day training on exploitation and direct intervention will be supported by SCDWP and delivered to the Youth Justice team, as well as Education and Family Support colleagues together with Social Care staff to ensure that there is a common understanding of how services manage exploitation		
W8	Closely monitor contact arrangements for children and their families	Conclude the review of existing arrangements and underpinning resources Implement recommendations of the review	GM Case management and transition	June 2023	Short term – a report went to CMB in November 2022, the recommendations in this report were implemented and alleviated some of the short-term pressure. Long term- This is part of the review by IPC currently awaiting final report.		

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

27 MARCH 2023

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER - LEGAL & REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) Present the Committee with the Forward Work Programme (**Appendix A**) for consideration and approval;
- b) Request any specific information the Committee identifies to be included in the items for the next two meetings, including invitees they wish to attend;
- c) Request the Committee to identify whether there are presently any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 4.3;
- d) Present the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet (**Appendix B**) to track responses to the Committee's recommendations made at the previous meetings;
- e) Advise that the Committee's updated Forward Work Programme and Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet will be reported to the next meeting of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC).

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
- **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently

as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council's Constitution requires Overview and Scrutiny Committees to each propose items for the Forward Work Programme having regard to the Council's Corporate Priorities and Risk Management framework.
- 3.2 The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the additional role of having oversight and coordination of the Forward Work Programmes for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees to develop and implement an effective overall Forward Work Programme for Scrutiny.

Best Practice / Guidance

- 3.3 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's (CfGS) Good Scrutiny Guide recognises the importance of the Forward Work Programme. In order to 'lead and own the process', it states that Councillors should have ownership of their Committee's work programme, and be involved in developing, monitoring and evaluating it. The Good Scrutiny Guide also states that, in order to make an impact, the scrutiny workload should be coordinated and integrated into corporate processes, to ensure that it contributes to the delivery of corporate objectives, and that work can be undertaken in a timely and well-planned manner.
- 3.4 Forward Work Programmes need to be manageable to maximise the effective use of the limited time and resources of Scrutiny Committees. It is not possible to include every topic proposed. Successful scrutiny is about looking at the right topic in the right way and Members need to be selective, while also being able to demonstrate clear arguments for including or excluding topics.
- 3.5 The CfGS guide to effective work programming 'A Cunning Plan?' makes the following reference to the importance of good work programming:

'Effective work programming is the bedrock of an effective scrutiny function. Done well it can help lay the foundations for targeted, incisive and timely work on issues of local importance, where scrutiny can add value. Done badly, scrutiny can end up wasting time and resources on issues where the impact of any work done is likely to be minimal.'

Forward Work Programme

- 3.6 Following the approval of the schedule of Scrutiny Committee meeting dates at the Annual Meeting of Council on 18th May 2022, the scheduling of standing statutory reports to Scrutiny Committees upon: the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Performance, the Corporate Plan, Budget Monitoring, etc. were mapped to the appropriate timed COSC meeting dates into a draft Forward Work Programme.
- 3.7 The draft Forward Work Programme for each Scrutiny Committee has been prepared using a number of different sources, including:

- Corporate Risk Assessment;
- Directorate Business Plans;
- Previous Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme report topics / Minutes;
- Committee / Member proposed topics;
- Policy Framework;
- Cabinet Work Programme;
- Discussions with Corporate Directors;
- Performance Team regarding the timing of performance information.

3.8 There are items where there is a statutory duty for Policy Framework documents to be considered by Scrutiny, e.g. the MTFS including draft budget proposals scheduled for consideration in January 2023, following which the COSC will coordinate the conclusions and recommendations from each of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees in a report on the overall strategic overview of Cabinet’s draft Budget proposals to the meeting of Cabinet in February 2023.

3.9 An effective FWP identifies the issues that the Committee wishes to focus on during the year and provides a clear plan. However, at each meeting the Committee will have an opportunity to review this as the Forward Work Programme Update will be a standing item on the Agenda, detailing which items are scheduled for future meetings and be requested to clarify any information to be included in reports and the list of invitees. The FWP will remain flexible and will be reported to each COSC meeting with feedback from each SOSC FWP and any updated information gathered from FWP meetings with Scrutiny Chairs and Corporate Directors.

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 The Committee approved its Forward Work Programme at its previous meeting.

4.2 The Committee’s Forward Work Programme will also be reported to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for coordination and oversight of the overall FWP.

Identification of Further Items

4.3 The Committee is 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 maximise the impact scrutiny can have on a topic and the outcomes for people. Criteria which can help the Committee come to a decision on whether to include a referred topic, are set out below:

Recommended Criteria for Selecting Scrutiny Topics:

PUBLIC INTEREST: The concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny;

ABILITY TO CHANGE: Priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence, and add value to;

PERFORMANCE:	Priority should be given to the areas in which the Council is not performing well;
EXTENT:	Priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or large parts of the County Borough; or a large number of the Authority's service users or its population;
REPLICATION:	Work programmes must take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort.

Reasons to Reject Scrutiny Topics:

- The issue is already being addressed / being examined elsewhere and change is imminent.
- The topic would be better addressed elsewhere (and can be referred there).
- Scrutiny involvement would have limited / no impact upon outcomes.
- The topic may be sub-judice or prejudicial.
- The topic is too broad to make a review realistic and needs refining / scoping.
- New legislation or guidance relating to the topic is expected within the next year.
- The topic area is currently subject to inspection or has recently undergone substantial change / reconfiguration.

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 Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee and particularly any decisions or changes which they should be aware of as Corporate Parents.
- 4.7 The Forward Work Programme for this Committee is attached as **Appendix A**.
- 4.8 The Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet to track responses to the Committee's recommendations at the previous meeting is attached as **Appendix B**.

5. Effect upon policy framework and 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.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

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

- 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 and Elected Members.
- Involvement - Advanced publication of the Forward Work Programme ensures that 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 directly associated with this report.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Consider and approve the Forward Work Programme attached as **Appendix A**;
- b) Identify any specific information the Committee wishes to be included in the items for the next two meetings, including invitees they wish to attend;

- c) Identify any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 4.3 of this report;
- d) Note the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet to track responses to the Committee's recommendations made at the previous meetings, attached as **Appendix B**;
- e) Note that the Forward Work Programme, Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet and any updates from the Committee will be reported to the next meeting of COSC.

Kelly Watson
Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy
21 March 2023

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Background documents: None.

**Draft Outline Forward Work Programme
Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2:**

APPENDIX A

<u>Date of Meeting:</u>	<u>Report Topics:</u>
Mon 11 July 9.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate Parenting Champion Nomination report; - Nomination to the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel report; - Draft Outline Forward Work Programme.
Thurs 15 September 10am	Meeting postponed for national period of mourning
Thurs 3 November 10am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Performance Evaluation Report Of Childrens Social Care Services 23 - 27 May 2022 - Call In of Cabinet Decision: Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration: Appropriation of Land at Griffin Park and Sandy Bay
Thurs 8 December 10am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual Report – Safeguarding of Children and Adults - Summary of Adult Services Inspection Reports
Friday 20 January 1.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27 and Budget Proposals
Thurs 16 February 10am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adult Social Care Pressure Areas - The Development of Learning Disability Services
Mon 27 March 10am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support for Young Carers and Adult Carers - Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Improvement Check Visit to Children's Social Care Services - 21 - 24 November 2022
To be scheduled as part of 2023/24 AFWP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early Intervention to Reduce Care Experienced Children and Key Pressures including Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA), Early Help and Edge of Care - Prevention and Wellbeing, Leisure (Halo) and Cultural Trusts (Awen) and Further Integration with BAVO. - Support for Young Carers and Adult Carers - Adult Mental Health - Transition - The outcome of the external expert review into learning disability services - Post 18 Housing and Financial Support for Care Experienced Children (Post Basic Income Pilot)

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Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2

RECOMMENDATIONS MONITORING ACTION SHEET

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
11 July 2022	Corporate Parenting Champion Nomination	Councillor Alan Wathan was nominated to represent Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 as an invitee to meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.	Scrutiny / Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy	ACTIONED – Membership of Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee updated and formally reported to Cabinet 19 July 2022.
11 July 2022	Nomination to the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel	Councillor Paula Ford was nominated to sit on the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel.	Scrutiny	ACTIONED – Membership of Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel updated and initial Briefing session arrangements underway.
11 July 2022	Forward Work Programme Update	The Chairperson proposed that a glossary of acronyms would assist Members.	Scrutiny	ACTIONED - response and information circulated to Members.

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
3 November 2022	Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Performance Evaluation Report Of Childrens Social Care Services 23 - 27 May 2022	<p>The Committee proposed That the Chair of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 liaise with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help to identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) What Members can do to support the Council's promotion of recruitment into Bridgend Social Services; and b) What support the Committee can provide to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help in her discussions with Welsh Local Government Association regarding employment terms and conditions and pay. 	Scrutiny / Chair of SOSC 2	Awaiting Response from Engagement between Deputy Leader and Chair of SOSC 2.
3 November 2022	Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Performance Evaluation Report Of Childrens Social	The Committee requested a briefing note setting out the process of calls made to the Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Service to	Scrutiny / Corporate Director -Social Services and Wellbeing	ACTIONED - response and information circulated to Members on 8 February 2023.

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
	Care Services 23 - 27 May 2022	include detail as to how or if these are being recorded and the responsibility of schools when making safeguarding referrals.		
3 November 2022	Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Performance Evaluation Report Of Childrens Social Care Services 23 - 27 May 2022	The Committee requested Detail of Social Worker current caseloads including the highest caseload attributed to any one Social Worker.	Scrutiny / Corporate Director -Social Services and Wellbeing	ACTIONED - response and information circulated to Members on 8 February 2023.
3 November 2022	Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Performance Evaluation Report Of Childrens Social Care Services 23 - 27 May 2022	The Committee requested how many Direct Payments have been applied for in the past 12 months and how many were made	Scrutiny / Corporate Director -Social Services and Wellbeing	Recommendations circulated requesting response - to be provided. Chased.
3 November 2022	Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Performance Evaluation Report Of Childrens Social Care Services 23 - 27 May 2022	The Committee requested the current waiting list for children awaiting help from the Youth Emotional Mental Health Team.	Scrutiny / Corporate Director -Social Services and Wellbeing	ACTIONED - response and information circulated to Members on 8 February 2023.

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
3 November 2022	Call in of Cabinet Decision: Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration: Appropriation of Land at Griffin Park and Sandy Bay	<p>The Committee concluded that the Decision would not be referred back to Cabinet but made the following Recommendation to Cabinet:</p> <p>a) That having regard to concerns expressed to Members by Porthcawl residents, views shared by public speakers and questions from Members, that Cabinet be requested that going forward for the next stages in the process that they involve Porthcawl Town Council, all stakeholders and the public in further consultation and engagement.</p>	Scrutiny/Chair of Committee	ACTIONED - Recommendation formally reported to Cabinet 17 January 2023 for consideration and response to be provided to SOSC 2.
8 December 2022	Update on the Care Inspectorate Wales Inspections of Bridgend County Borough Council's Regulated Services in Adult Social Care for 2022	The Committee requested that priority be given to rolling out Member Development Training in the New Year and work to pair up Members be expedited to allow Rota visits to children and adult residential provisions to recommence as soon as possible.	Scrutiny / Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing / Head of Adult Social Care	Recommendations circulated requesting response - to be provided. Chased.
8 December 2022	Annual Report – Safeguarding of Children and Adults	The Committee welcomed the up-to-date information presented in the Annual Report – Safeguarding of Children and	Scrutiny / Corporate Director of Social	Recommendations circulated requesting response - to be provided. Chased.

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
		Adults and indicated their preference that future presentations of this report similarly cover the period October to September rather than April to March (financial year)	Services and Wellbeing	
8 December 2022	Annual Report – Safeguarding of Children and Adults	The Committee requested a list of Warm Hubs where Members can refer those in need.	Scrutiny / Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing	ACTIONED - response and information circulated to Members on 22 December 2022.
8 December 2022	Annual Report – Safeguarding of Children and Adults	The Committee requested whether the weather stations positioned around the County could be used to deploy other services, particularly including services to assist the homeless.	Scrutiny / Chief Officer for Finance, Performance and Change	ACTIONED - response and information circulated to Members on 10 February 2023.
8 December 2022	Annual Report – Safeguarding of Children and Adults	The Committee requested An update on the rollout of the Welsh Government funding to support Warm Hubs.	Scrutiny / Chief Officer for Finance, Performance and Change	ACTIONED - response and information circulated to Members on 10 February 2023.
8 December 2022	Annual Report – Safeguarding of Children and Adults	The Committee requested, In relation to the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards: a. How many standard referrals were received and how many were authorised;	Scrutiny / Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing	ACTIONED - response and information circulated to Members on 8 February 2023.

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
		b. How many urgent referrals were received and how many were authorised: c. How many referrals were withdrawn and the reasons why.		
8 December 2022	Annual Report – Safeguarding of Children and Adults	The Committee requested a link to the website setting out the purpose of the Regional Safeguarding Board and its policies and procedures.	Scrutiny / Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing	ACTIONED - response and information circulated to Members on 8 February 2023.
8 December 2022	Annual Report – Safeguarding of Children and Adults	The Committee requested confirmation that a reminder of how to report safeguarding concerns has been circulated to staff and Members.	Scrutiny / Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing	Recommendations circulated requesting response - to be provided. Chased.
20 January 2023	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27	The Committee recognised the physical and emotional demand on social care workers and recommended that Cabinet review the wages for social care workers, in light of external pressures and consider how to ensure that these staff feel appropriately supported and valued.	Scrutiny / Chair of COSC	ACTIONED - Recommendation formally reported to Cabinet 7 February 2023 for consideration and response to be provided to COSC.
20 January 2023	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27	The Committee noted that the majority of the budget pressures were within the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate and,	Scrutiny / Chair of COSC	ACTIONED - Recommendation formally reported to Cabinet 7 February 2023 for consideration

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
		following detailed consideration and discussions with Officers and Cabinet Members, the Committee were content that they are sufficient and necessary.		and response to be provided to COSC.
16 February 2023	Adult Social Care Pressures	The Committee recommended that consideration be given to whether there is adequate promotion/awareness of the benefits available to support care staff with their fuel or other travel expenses incurred during their shifts and the recent funding obtained to support staff who wish to take driving lessons.	Scrutiny / Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing	Recommendations circulated requesting response - to be provided.
16 February 2023	Adult Social Care Pressures	Having heard that exit interviews routinely take place in Children's Social Care, the Committee recommended that consideration be given to how this can also take place in Adult Social Care, as soon as possible, in order to capture the data and reasons why staff and social workers in particular, are leaving the local authority.	Scrutiny / Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing	Recommendations circulated requesting response - to be provided.
16 February 2023	Adult Social Care Pressures	Having heard that the Health Board had been recruiting staff into domiciliary care under the more favourable NHS Terms and	Scrutiny / Corporate Director of Social	Recommendations circulated requesting response - to be provided.

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
		Conditions, and those staff then worked for the local authority under a Section 33 arrangement, the Committee recommended that consideration be given to how there could be a rebalancing of staff terms and conditions in order that being employed directly by the Local Authority is equitable	Services and Wellbeing	
16 February 2023	Adult Social Care Pressures	The Committee requested a copy of the response to the Cabinet's letter to the Welsh Government Minister regarding the cost and funding arrangements for care staff in Parc Prison, when received.	Scrutiny / Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing	ACTIONED - response and information circulated to Members on 21 March 2023.
16 February 2023	Adult Social Care Pressures	The Committee requested the number of occasions a BLACK level/Business Continuity Stage has been called in the Princess of Wales Hospital in the last 3, 6 and 12 months.	Scrutiny / Deputy Director of Planning and Partnerships - Cwm Taf Morgannwg	ACTIONED - response and information circulated to Members on 17 March 2023.
16 February 2023	Development of Learning Disabilities Services	The Committee recommended that consideration be given to how staff lateness and short notice of staff sickness can be managed to avoid delaying or postponing a day out that Service Users described as having a	Scrutiny / Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing	Recommendations circulated requesting response - to be provided.

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
		disruptive and unsettling impact upon them.		
16 February 2023	The Development of Learning Disability Services	The Committee expressed concern about the impact that the WG Policy modal shift from use of cars to public transport could have, by disenfranchising people with learning disabilities and neurodiverse conditions, who can face fear and distress when accessing and using public transport, and recommended that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing write to the Welsh Government to highlight this as a potential area of concern	Scrutiny / Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing	Recommendations circulated requesting response - to be provided.

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