

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET 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 TUESDAY, 14 MARCH 2023 AT 14:30**

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

JC Spanswick  
HM Williams

N Farr  
JPD Blundell

W R Goode

J Gebbie

Officers:

Carys Lord	Chief Officer - Finance, Performance & Change
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services
Julie Ellams	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support

147. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

148. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet of 17/01/2023 and 07/02/2023 be approved as a true and accurate record.

149. RE-DEVELOPMENT OF COSY CORNER

The Corporate Director Communities presented a report seeking approval from Cabinet to modify the Cosy Corner construction works contract in accordance with rule 3.3.6 of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

The Corporate Director for Communities referred to correspondence received from Mr Mike Clarke, a former Councillor and a member of the dissolved Credu Charity which explained that Credu did not have a lease for the site, but they did have an agreement to lease with varying conditions attached. BCBC terminated this agreement when Credu went into administration and this was accurately reflected in the report in paragraph 3.1. The Corporate Director for Communities explained that the agreement to lease was the main narrative within the report, however, there was an omission in paragraph 4.2 which stated "lease relinquishment" and should read "agreement to lease relinquishment". BCBC did take back possession of the Cosy Corner site on the 5th of November 2020 when they were advised that Credu had gone into administration and this was set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report. The Cabinet report covered events following Credu going into administration, from the 5th of November onwards when BCBC had responsibility.

The Corporate Director for Communities explained the current position and that this was critical because of the need to ensure that they had practical completion of the building by the end of May 2023 as they had secured £1 million WFO grant monies against practical completion. She outlined the work that had been completed, the modification to the existing contract, delays due to time spent testing and clarifying the exact nature of

the contamination and much longer than expected delays receiving approvals from Welsh Water and associated design changes leaving BCBC liable for an additional 12 weeks contractor costs. In addition, the remediation strategy to deal with the contaminants stated that approximately 2000 tons of imported soil was needed to bring the site to formation level and replace materials on the site that were deemed unsuitable as a result of potential asbestos contamination. They modified the construction works contract to ensure that the completion of the building was prioritised to enable prospective tenants to access and fit out sooner, and to support those requirements of the funder to get it completed by the 31st of May.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration agreed that it was important to get the work done in time and she asked where the contaminated soil had come from. The Corporate Director for Communities replied that the first survey examined the site and found asbestos which was then removed. The cabins at the southern end of the site were then removed and they found more asbestos which was also removed. Because of the degree of asbestos found and the fact that it covered the majority of the site, they had to mitigate by removing 2000 tonnes of soil and bringing in fresh soil to ensure all legacy contaminants had been removed.

The Deputy Leader asked if the contractors that were on site prior to October 2020 had undertaken surveys and failed to carry out the work required. The Corporate Director for Communities replied that she believed that surveys had been undertaken which identified 2 areas where there was possible contamination. When the BCBC contractor came on site, they were instructed to do a more intrusive survey and found more contamination.

The Deputy Leader asked when the Sea Cadets cabin was installed on site. The Corporate Director for Communities replied that the survey work undertaken by Credu was back in 2016 and between 2016 and 2019, the cabin was located onto that site before the construction commenced by Credu on the site.

The Cabinet Member for Future Generations stated that he was thankful that the surveys had been undertaken and that they could be sure the site was safe. He asked for an explanation of in budget as opposed to over budget and within envelope. The Corporate Director for Communities explained that there was a capital allocation within the Capital Programme and that was called the envelope which was circa £3 million for Cosy Corner. The contract uplift was £2.8 million so there was still enough money to be able to afford the project. The envelope was to cover what they thought the project might cost plus contingencies and costs for feasibility and specialist advice.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, as Health and Safety Champion, supported the report which was a very exciting project for Porthcawl and it was important that residents had confidence that problems had been dealt with appropriately.

The Leader added that this was a flagship project in a prominent position. He was pleased to hear that there had been considerable interest in the 5 retail units creating new jobs. He asked the Corporate Director to confirm that building works were on track and that they would be ready to open within the timescales. She replied that they were on track to complete the building and fit out the units by 31 May.

The Leader personally thanked the Destination Management & Coastal Operations Team Leader, Sean Warrington for his hard work delivering this and other exciting developments and wished him well in his new position.

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet authorised the modification of the Cosy Corner construction works contract to include additional works and services by the contractor which had and continued to be necessary since the initial

procurement to a value of no greater than £265,790 and increase the contract value to a value of £2,804,394 in accordance with rules 3.3.6 of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

150. WELL-MANAGED HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE, A CODE OF PRACTICE 2016 -UK ROADS LIAISON GROUP AND THE COUNTY SURVEYORS SOCIETY WALES (CSSW) RISK BASED APPROACH TO HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT

The Corporate Director for Communities presented a report to obtain Cabinet approval for a revised safety inspection regime based on the recommendations of the UK Roads Liaison Group update of its Code of Practice, and an all Wales review and standardisation by County Surveyors' Society Wales (CSSW) to align with an all Wales approach to Highway Maintenance.

The Corporate Director for Communities outlined the highway asset which BCBC, as Highway Authority, had a duty to maintain. Regular inspections were carried out to ensure, as far as reasonably practical, that the highway asset was safe for use. In order to facilitate a nationally consistent response CSSW reviewed the Code of Practice and published a risk based methodology for authorities to follow which aligned with the practices set out in the code. Officers assessed the CSSW Risk Based Approach methodology and associated assessment tools and undertook a risk-based review of current BCBC highway asset hierarchy, inspection and repair regimes.

The Corporate Director for Communities outlined the differences between the existing hierarchy, inspection and repair regimes and the risk-based approach, identifying where changes could be implemented to align with the CSSW methodology. She explained the defect intervention levels as shown in appendix A to the report and explained that whilst the revised code would have implications for additional inspections, it was considered that the current staffing structure would be able to manage the increase in frequencies and it was not envisaged that the revised frequencies and intervention criteria would have an increase demand on the levels of repair works required on footways and carriageways over current resources, however this would be monitored.

The Cabinet Member for Communities referred to the 799km of carriageway within the Borough and welcomed the standardising of the inspection regime across Wales. He thought there was an anomaly with the new category CH5 where inspections were reactive compared to little used rural footways which were inspected annually. The Corporate Director for Communities replied that this was a valid point and they would inspect both annually.

The Deputy Leader asked what action would be taken if work undertaken by contractors was not of an adoptable standard. The Corporate Director for Communities replied that following completion of the work there would be an inspection to sign off the work. There had been occasions where the work was not to the standard required and the contractor would be asked to redo the work. There was also a defects liability period whereby if there were any defects within the first 3 months, they could ask the contractor to fix the issues. This work would be corrected at no extra cost to the authority.

The Cabinet Member for Education asked how average daily flow was calculated. The Corporate Director for Communities replied that they used a wire across the road connected to a box chained to a street light.

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet approved implementation of the new safety inspection frequencies and defect intervention criteria.

151. **PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER - DOG CONTROL CONSULTATION**

The Corporate Director for Communities presented a report seeking Cabinet approval to consult with the Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner and other relevant bodies in relation to the creation of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) relating to Dog Control in Bridgend County and for Cabinet to note that the outcome of the consultation would be reported to Cabinet in due course.

The Corporate Director for Communities provided the background to the proposal and explained that the previous PSPO in Bridgend County Borough relating to the control of alcohol, restriction of access to public space and dog control expired on 18 June 2022. Before the Council could make, extend or vary a PSPO there was a procedure set down by statute that a Local Authority must carry out the necessary consultation, the necessary publication and the necessary notification. The specific consultees and details of the online survey were outlined in the report. The statutory consultation would commence in early April 2023 and continue for 12 weeks.

The Cabinet Member for Communities asked if the outcome of the consultation could be reported back to Cabinet as soon as possible so that it could take effect from the latter part of the summer. He asked what the fixed penalty notice was and asked that the amount be made clear in the consultation. The Corporate Director for Communities replied that dogs were prohibited on some beaches in the summer months and the fixed penalty notice that could be issued would be for £100.

The Deputy Leader asked if residents could send in video footage for officers to issue fixed penalty notices. The Corporate Director for Communities replied that she had to seek legal advice on this. There had been incidents where evidence had been sent in and they had to clearly define the individuals involved to allow them to take action and it depended on how clear the video evidence was.

The Leader asked about the definition of public space and in particular the status of parks and playing fields transferred via the CAT process and those managed by the authority and if this would apply to nature reserves and common land. The Corporate Director for Communities replied that this would apply to any publicly accessible space where someone could go with their animal and therefore it would apply to these spaces.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration asked if this would apply to land that had been subject to a CAT transfer that was locked in the evening. The Corporate Director for Communities replied that it would apply during the day when it was open.

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet gave approval to commence a public consultation on the proposal to create a Public Space Protection Order as outlined in paragraph 4.3 of this report and Cabinet noted that the outcome of the consultation would be reported to Cabinet in due course.

152. **TENNIS COURT IMPROVEMENTS AND COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER FUND CHANGE OF USE**

The Corporate Director for Communities presented a report seeking approval from Cabinet to extend the scope of the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Fund to include the development and refurbishment of assets / facilities currently or formerly maintained by the Parks Department that could not readily be subject to a CAT due to issues such as land title, where a minimum of 25% external match-funding had been secured. Approval was also sought to allocate £50,000 from the CAT Fund to enable three tennis courts at Maesteg Welfare Park to be refurbished in partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) at a total cost of £201,282; to allocate up to £151,065.09 (current cost

£137,331.90 + 10% contingency) from the CAT Fund to enable two new tennis courts to be developed at Griffin Park, in partnership with the LTA with a match-funding contribution of £53,476.00 being secured and to allocate £3,900.00 from the CAT Fund to enable two tennis courts at Heol-y-Cyw Playing Fields to be refurbished in partnership with the LTA at a total cost of £59,868.06.

The Corporate Director for Communities explained that the LTA Park Refurbishment Programme would refurbish park courts across the UK having received £21.9 million of funding directly from UK Government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) and an additional £8.4 million from the LTA Tennis Foundation to deliver the programme by March 2024. The LTA assessed tennis facilities falling under the responsibility of Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and determined that there were 4 viable sites that should be resurfaced based upon their own condition surveys and an assessment of demand. She outlined how match-funding would support the LTA Park Refurbishment Programme Investment and that 3 of the 4 refurbishments would be undertaken at the end of March 2023 and the 4<sup>th</sup> at Griffin Park would be delayed until September 2023.

The Cabinet Member for Communities added that this was an investment of over half a million pounds in tennis facilities in Bridgend. He was disappointed that a County Borough Member from Maesteg had criticised the investment in Maesteg Welfare Park. The Griffin Park scheme was more expensive because it was for new courts and not refurbishment. As a guide, a family pass currently cost £39 per annum and free usage and coaching would be available. This was a great investment and some of the courts would be in place before Wimbledon.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration said that this was an exciting opportunity, and it was good to see so much money being invested in Bridgend. The Corporate Director for Communities explained that funding for Griffin Park would be used to replace the courts in a different location and they would be brand-new all-weather courts.

The Cabinet Member for Future Generation added that this was really positive, especially for the 3 areas north of the M4. He was hopeful that residents could be encouraged to take up the sport. It was reassuring to see the level of commitment from a major sports organisation with 1% of the entire fund being spent in the Borough. He asked what work was being done to ensure these developments were working in partnership with Halo and Community Councils. The Corporate Director for Communities replied that it was incredibly important to work alongside the existing leisure provision to enhance the offer.

The Leader thanked the officers and noted that it was a remarkable achievement to secure this level of investment.

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet:

- Approved the scope of the CAT Fund be extended to include the development and refurbishment of assets / facilities currently or formerly maintained by the Parks Department that could not readily be subject to a CAT due to issues such as land title, where a minimum of 25% external match-funding has been secured;
- Approved the allocation of £50,000 under the CAT Fund to enable three tennis courts at Maesteg Welfare Park to be refurbished in partnership with the LTA at a total cost of £201,282, subject to Cabinet approving the extension of the scope of the CAT Fund;

- Approved the allocation of up to a maximum of £151,065.09 (current cost £137,331.90 + 10% contingency) under the CAT Fund to enable two new replacement tennis courts to be developed at Griffin Park with the LTA providing match-funding of £53,476.00 to the total cost of the project currently estimated to be £190,807.90, subject to the outcomes of community engagement and planning permission, and Cabinet approving the extension of the scope of the CAT Fund;
- Approved the allocation of £3,900 under the CAT Fund to enable two tennis courts at Heol-y-Cyw Playing Fields to be refurbished in partnership with the LTA at a total cost of £59,868.06, subject to Cabinet approving the extension of the scope of the CAT Fund.

**153. RESULT OF TENDER OF ANNUAL INSURANCE POLICIES**

The Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change presented a report informing Cabinet of the result of the retender exercise for all the Council's Insurance policies, other than the medical malpractice and Harbour insurance policies which were placed with specialist insurers and were not due for tender at this time. Approval was also sought from Cabinet to authorise Marsh UK Limited, as the Council's appointed Insurance Broker, to accept cover for the policies, on behalf of the Council.

The Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change explained that in October 2022, Cabinet approved the commencement of a tender process for all annual insurance policies due to commence on the 31st of March this year, and this process had now been completed. The received tenders had been evaluated in line with the tender specifications. The specifications asked tenderers to consider two long term agreement options, the 1st for a three-year period and the 2nd for a three-year period with an option to extend for a further two years. These new arrangements would result in an annual saving of £116,000. It was stressed that the reduced cost would not result in a reduction in the level of the insurance cover that the Council would have going forward.

The Cabinet Member for Resources stated that he was pleasantly surprised to find that there was a reduced premium for a similar level of cover and thanked the Insurance and Risk Officer for her hard work.

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet approved the acceptance of the quotations in paragraph 4.4 with a three year Long Term Agreement, and an option to extend for a further two years, placed through Marsh UK Limited as the Council's appointed Insurance Broker.

**154. NON-DOMESTIC RATES: DISCRETIONARY RELIEF: RETAIL, LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY RATES RELIEF SCHEME 2023-24**

The Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change presented a report seeking approval from Cabinet to adopt the Welsh Government's Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief Scheme 2023-24. She explained that Welsh Government had announced the temporary extension of the Rates Relief Scheme for 2023-2024, which would support eligible occupied properties by offering a discount of 75% on their non-domestic rates bills for properties which fell within the retail, leisure and hospitality sector. The scheme would apply to all eligible businesses, however, the relief would be capped subject to a cap on the amount each business could claim across Wales. Details regarding the premises that were eligible for this scheme were shown in Appendix A to the report.

The Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change explained that it was estimated that there would be in the region of 940 eligible businesses across the borough that could potentially benefit from having to pay only 25% of their non-domestic rates under this new scheme during the coming year. No business would automatically receive this relief, so they would advertise the relief via the website and social media platforms and if Cabinet agreed the adoption of the scheme, the updated forms would be put on the Council's website so that businesses could apply from the 1st of April. She added that the Town Centre Manager would also be bringing this scheme to the attention of businesses in Bridgend.

The Cabinet Member for Resources thanked Welsh Government for supporting the leisure and hospitality industry and he encouraged Members to mention the scheme when visiting local pubs and restaurants.

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet adopted the Welsh Government's Non-Domestic Rates Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief Scheme for 2023-24 as detailed within Appendix A of the report.

155. **TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESSNESS**

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change presented a report seeking approval from Cabinet to suspend the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) in order to secure temporary accommodation for homelessness cases, to meet the Council's statutory housing duty.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change provided the background to the issue including that in October 2022, a new category of priority needs came into force and under this category, a person who was homeless was to be provided with temporary accommodation. These changes significantly increased the demand for temporary accommodation. In March 2020 there were 83 households in temporary accommodation, whereas by the middle of February 2023 those numbers had increased to 253 households. To meet this increased requirement, the Council was using a range of different settings as outlined in the report. The providers tended to be small businesses or individual entities, which had resulted in the long term procurement of this service being quite challenging. To enable the continuation of the current arrangements, a further service level agreement for 12 months was proposed with existing accommodation providers. A new Homelessness Strategy, Housing Prospectus and a Rapid Rehousing Transitional Plan would be presented to Cabinet shortly, which would outline proposals to reduce the level of temporary accommodation used and would look to expand on the existing accommodation and housing related support projects and also to work with private landlords to provide additional accommodation where possible, and also to work in partnership with other statutory and the third sector organisations to ensure that housing related support for households was maintained and expanded where needs identified a gap in provision.

The Cabinet Member for Future Generations explained that they had discussed the housing crisis at length and it was getting more difficult to find accommodation and acknowledged that the systems in place did not meet his expectations but were a product of very difficult circumstances. This report represented a sticking plaster however they were looking for a longer term solution including a procurement framework to work more effectively with owners of holiday homes and Airbnbs. He thanked officers for their hard work and reassured Cabinet that they were looking for longer term solutions and different ways to mitigate the crisis.

The Deputy Leader said she was more reassured having listened to the Cabinet Member. She had concerns regarding the social value of the spend particularly in relation to private landlords. They had to monitor RSLs closely as they were there to deliver. She asked for reassurance about challenge available in relation to RSLs. The Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change replied that they worked closely with RSLs and private landlords across Bridgend and that the need had developed significantly in last 3 years.

The Leader added that context was everything and they all supported the WG approach but were unable to create additional accommodation overnight. It was sobering to see the number of people in temporary accommodation. He thanked the team for their commitment to secure accommodation for people with nowhere else to go.

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet:

- Suspended the relevant parts of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules with regards to the requirement to tender for a contract and delegated to the Group Manager – Housing to enter into Service Level Agreements with accommodation providers for a period of 'up to' 12 months, in order to continue the provision of additional temporary accommodation, as necessary to meet BCBC's statutory duties.
- Delegated authority to the Group Manager - Housing to approve the final terms of the Service Level Agreements on behalf of the Council and to arrange execution of the agreements on behalf of the Council.

156. **ESTYN INSPECTION OUTCOMES FOR AFON Y FELIN PRIMARY SCHOOL, PIL PRIMARY SCHOOL, CORNELI PRIMARY SCHOOL AND BRYNMENYN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The Corporate Director for Education and Family Support presented a report informing Cabinet of the outcomes of the recent Estyn inspection visits to Afon y Felin Primary School, Pîl Primary School, Corneli Primary School and Brynmenyn Primary School. He explained that during the summer and autumn term 2022, Estyn visited 4 primary schools in Bridgend and judged all four schools as not requiring any follow up. He also reported that Connelly Primary School was asked to produce an effective practice case study on its work in relation to how the school supported the development of pupils understanding of financial awareness, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

The Cabinet Member for Education thanked teachers, students, parents, carers and governors for their hard work and he highlighted some of the comments in the Estyn reports.

The Leader congratulated all the schools involved and he thanked the commitment of teachers, staff and pupils and the dedicated group of staff supporting all those schools. The case study around the Credit Union would be shared in a press release.

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet noted the content of this report.

157. **ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS TRANSFORMATION GRANT**

The Corporate Director for Education and Family Support presented a report seeking approval from Cabinet for Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) to enter into an agreement with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), Cardiff Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Vale of Glamorgan Council regarding the Additional Learning Needs Transformation Grant 2021-2022. He



explained that the purpose of the ALN Grant was to support local authorities to develop and promote innovative, multi-agency and cross-sector working practices to support learners with additional learning needs (ALN) and in the management of the implementation of the ALNET Act.

The Corporate Director for Education and Family Support explained that the application for the ALN Grant was successful and an award of funding for up to £943,845 was made to RCTCBC as lead local authority which would be allocated to each council in accordance with the ALN Implementation Plan.

The amount available to local authorities, schools, further education providers and Health was £818,845 as there was a retained element of £125k for the employment of the regional ALN Transformation Lead and associated costs and administration and finance support. The allocation of grant spend for local authorities was £248,925 of which BCBC expected to receive £41,779.

The Cabinet Member for Education explained that as in the report, this was a Welsh Government Grant and they would receive about 17% which was roughly in line with the footprint on the Consortium. This would help many students in the County Borough with additional learning needs.

The Deputy Leader asked if the contract was for one year and if it was on the same footprint as the Central Services Consortium. The Corporate Director for Education and Family Support replied that that was correct.

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet:

- approved the Council entering into the agreement with RCTCBC, Cardiff Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Vale of Glamorgan Council regarding the Additional Learning Needs Transformation Grant 2021- 2022; and
- delegated authority to the Corporate Director Education and Family Support to negotiate and agree the final terms of the agreement with the other Councils and enter and arrange execution of that agreement, subject to such Page 91 delegated authority being exercised in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy.

158. **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT BETWEEN HM PRISON AND PROBATION SERVICE (HMPPS) AND BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HELD AT HM PRISON PARC YOUNG OFFENDERS INSTITUTION (YOI)**

The Corporate Director for Education and Family Support presented a report seeking approval of a service level agreement to support young people held at HM Prison Parc Young Offenders Institution (HMPYOI) and to fulfil the statutory responsibilities of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004. He outlined the background and explained that the proposal was to provide a dedicated senior social work practitioner from Bridgend Youth Justice Service to work as part of the Youth Custody Service within HM Parc Prison, Bridgend with children subject to remand/custodial sentences in the HMPYOI. This officer would work with the safeguarding team and resettlement practitioners to deliver on a number of positive outcomes for both children and young people and the establishment within which their duties were discharged.

The Corporate Director for Education and Family Support explained that the financial implications were outlined in the service level agreement and would be reviewed on an

annual basis and all costs would be recovered from the Youth Custody Service. There would be no cost to the Council from this arrangement.

The Deputy Leader asked what caseload this practitioner would be holding? The Corporate Director for Education and Family Support replied that there were currently around 60 young people in Parc and the vast majority were not Bridgend children but they still had responsibility as Parc Prison sat within the county borough. He added that this was a very important role for BCBC within the Bridgend Youth Justice Service.

The Cabinet Member for Education explained that the aim of this was to ensure that Parc Prison was complying with safeguarding duties and that young people could get the services that they required while staying in Parc Prison.

The Leader requested a report back on the delivery and impact of the service level agreement.

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet:

- delegated authority to the Corporate Director Education and Family Support to negotiate and enter into the service level agreement; and
- approved any extension or amendment to the service level agreement and to enter into any further deeds and documents which were ancillary to the service level agreement.
- agreed to receive a report back on the delivery and impact of the service level agreement.

159. **FOSTERING FRIENDLY EMPLOYER POLICY**

The Chief Officer Legal, Regulatory, HR and Corporate Policy presented a report seeking approval of a new Fostering Friendly Employer Policy. The Fostering Network in Wales had been calling for employers to become more foster friendly to address some of the national challenges around fostering. The aim of this policy was to offer Council employees the opportunity to work flexibly where this was compatible with the demands of their job, to support employees who were already registered foster carers and to encourage other employees to consider becoming foster careers going forward. Approval of this policy would support the Council's application to be recognised as a "Fostering Friendly Employer" and, if approved, they would be submitting that application.

The Deputy Leader supported the policy and added that the vitally important role that foster carers undertook was not always appreciated and could offer stability and nurture to some of the most vulnerable children and young people giving them better life chances. They needed to ensure that officers felt supported in one of the most challenging but rewarding roles that they could undertake.

The Cabinet Member for Future Generations explained that he wished to be associated with these comments as he was someone that had personally benefited from foster care. The massive difference it made to individual's lives was important and as an employer it was vital to be as supportive as possible.

The Leader added that this was an opportunity to help bust a myth around fostering that it was not possible to work and foster. That was not the case and many foster carers combined that role very effectively. This would also allow the opportunity to work flexibly where that was compatible with the demands of the role, based on a discussion between a worker and their line manager.

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet:

- Approved the Fostering Friendly Employer Policy
- Supported the Council becoming a recognised Fostering Friendly employer

160. **CABINET, COUNCIL AND OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMMES**

The Chief Officer Legal, Regulatory and Human Resources presented a report seeking Cabinet approval for items to be included on the Cabinet Forward Work Programme for the period 1 March 2023 to 30 June 2023 and for Cabinet to note the Council and Overview and Scrutiny Committees' Forward Work Programmes for the same period. Following consideration by Cabinet, the programs would be published on the Council's website.

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet

- Approved the Cabinet Forward Work Programme for the period 1 March 2023 to 30 June 2023 at Appendix 1;
- Noted the Council and Overview and Scrutiny Committees' Forward Work Programmes for the same period, as shown at Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 of the report, respectively.

161. **URGENT ITEMS**

None

162. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

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

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

163. **APPROVAL OF EXEMPT MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet of 07/02/2023 be approved as a true and accurate record.

The meeting closed at 16:30