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Bridgend County Borough Council



Swyddfeydd Dinesig, Stryd yr Angel, Pen-y-bont, CF31 4WB / Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

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

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Dyddiad/Date: Wednesday, 13 November 2024

Dear Councillor,

CABINET

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held Hybrid in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB on **Tuesday, 19 November 2024 at 14:30.**

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for Absence
To receive apologies for absence from Members.
- 2 Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008.
- 3 Approval of Minutes 5 - 18
To receive for approval the Minutes of 22/10/2024
- 4 Middle Tier Review 19 - 38
- 5 Building On Strengths, Improving Lives - A Three- Year Plan For Sustainable Care And Support For Adults In Bridgend County Borough Council 39 - 104

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6	<u>Social Services Representations And Complaints Annual Report 2023/24</u>	105 - 138
7	<u>Update to the Council's Financial Procedure Rules</u>	139 - 194
8	<u>Treasury Management Half Year Report to September 2024</u>	195 - 218
9	<u>Capital Programme Quarter 2 Update 2024-25</u>	219 - 240
10	<u>Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Principles 2025-2028</u>	241 - 286
11	<u>Shared Regulatory Services - Amendment To The Joint Working Agreement And Scheme Of Delegation Of Functions</u>	287 - 292
12	<u>Cabinet, Council And Overview And Scrutiny Committees Forward Work Programmes</u>	293 - 310
13	<u>Parc Afon Ewenni Refurbishment of the Highways Depot at Waterton</u>	311 - 316
14	<u>Future Waste Service Options</u>	317 - 354
15	<u>Urgent Items</u>	
	To consider any items of business that by reason of special circumstances the chairperson is of the opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency in accordance with paragraph 2.4 (e) of the Cabinet Procedure Rules within the Constitution.	
16	<u>Exclusion of the Public</u>	
	The following items are not for publication as they contain exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 and Paragraph 21 of Part 5, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007.	
	If following the application of the public interest test Cabinet resolves pursuant to the Act to consider these items in private, the public will be excluded from the meeting during such consideration.	
17	<u>Approval of Exempt Minutes</u>	355 - 358
	To receive for approval the exempt minutes of 22/10/2024	
18	<u>Disposal Of Ravenscourt</u>	359 - 364
19	<u>Porthcawl Regeneration Programme update</u>	365 - 400

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 would like to view this meeting live, please contact cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk or tel. 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513 / 643159.

Yours faithfully

K Watson

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

Councillors:

E L P Caparros

P Davies

M J Evans

N Farr

J Gebbie

M Jones

JC Spanswick

HM Williams

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON TUESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2024 AT 14:30

Present

Councillor JC Spanswick – Chairperson

N Farr
M J Evans

HM Williams
M Jones

E L P Caparros

P Davies

Apologies for Absence

J Gebbie

Officers:

Alex Rawlin
Carys Lord
Claire Marchant
Janine Nightingale
Kelly Watson
Mark Shephard
Lindsay Harvey
Michael Pitman
Mark Lewis
Jason Bale

Corporate Policy & Performance Manager
Chief Officer - Finance, Housing & Change
Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing
Corporate Director - Communities
Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy
Chief Executive
Corporate Director - Education, Early Years & Young People
Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services
Group Manager - Integrated Working
Operational Manager (Enterprise and Specialist Services)

Declarations of Interest

Cllr Neelo Far declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 14

372. Approval of Minutes

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Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> That the minutes of the 24/09/2024 be approved as a true and accurate record.
Date Decision Made	22 October 2024

373. Local Air Quality Management Annual Progress Report 2024

Decision Made	<p>The Operational Manager – Shared Regulatory Services presented a report which provided Cabinet with an update on local air quality monitoring undertaken across Bridgend County Borough Council in 2023.</p> <p>He explained that the 2024 Annual Progress Report confirms that in 2023, three sites located on Park Street exceed the air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide as prescribed in the Air Quality (Wales) Regulations 2000 and the Air Quality (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2002. All other locations within Bridgend County Borough continue to meet the relevant air quality objectives.</p> <p>He advised however that in 2023 two of the sites recorded annual average figures of 43.3µg/m3.which was down by 19% and 22% since 2019. It has shown a steady trend downwards since 2019. Further details could be found in section 3 of the report.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member Finance & Performance explained that this service is one of the most important and overlooked one that’s provided.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment noted that the report references a ‘Commercial Road’ in Maesteg which is a typo as it should say ‘Commercial Street’.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. noted the results of air quality monitoring gathered in 2023 and agreed the finalisation of the 2024 Annual Progress Report (attached as Appendix 1) for submission as a final version to Welsh Government by 31st December 2024, and; 2. noted the progress made in developing the Air Quality Action Plan for Park Street.
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Date Decision Made	22 October 2024
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374. Disciplinary Policy

Decision Made	<p>The Group Manager Human Resources and Organizational Development presented a report which sought Cabinet approval of the revised Disciplinary Policy, attached as Appendix 1.</p> <p>He explained that following consultation with trade unions, it was agreed to amend the policy with the aim to provide consistency as well as updated tools and templates to ensure effective process. Further details on the changes were summarized at section 3 of the report, and in full at appendix 1.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services clarified that this policy did not relate to Elected Members, and just BCBC staff.</p> <p>The Group Manager Human Resources and Organizational Development confirmed this was the case, and that the Members Code of Conduct was dealt with Elected Members separately.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Cabinet approved the revised Disciplinary Policy.</p>
Date Decision Made	22 October 2024

375. Proposal To Extend The Term Of The Healthy Living Partnership With GLL / Halo Leisure

Decision Made	<p>The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing presented a report which sought approval from Cabinet to extend the term of the Healthy Living partnership agreement with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) / Halo Leisure Services Limited (Halo). She asked that Cabinet review the risks outlined in the report.</p> <p>She stated that the Council has procured a partner organisation who over the next 12-18 months will support the development of the next Active Bridgend strategy following the Wales Audit Office review and report published in 2020. This exercise will include leisure infrastructure alongside other broader opportunities that support community activity and wellbeing but will help the Council to identify its longer-</p>
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	<p>term strategy.</p> <p>She advised that in August 2023, the Council received a formal proposal from Halo regarding consideration of an extension to the Healthy Living Partnership term by a period of 5 years to 2032 and the rationale for such consideration.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing provided further information regarding the benefits of extension as well as the financial savings that will occur compared with those in 2012-13. There were however financial implications by continuing the partnership which were highlighted in section 8 of the report.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Resources asked in relation to 3.9 with regards to the modification of contract what the risk to the authority was if we were challenged. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing clarified that following the VEAT process would mitigate this risk as the Council. The Monitoring Officer elaborated on the VEAT process and where those regulations would benefit the Council over and above a full procurement process.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Cabinet agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To the proposed extension of the term of the Healthy Living partnership agreement with GLL/Halo based on identifiable cost efficiencies and avoidance of specified risks, 2. To delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal, and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy and Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change, to progress the proposed extension and to enter into a variation agreement with GLL/Halo and any further deeds and documents necessary to effect the extension
Date Decision Made	22 October 2024

376. Outcomes Of ESTYN Inspections Of Schools In Bridgend During Summer Term 2024

Decision Made	The Corporate Director – Education, Early Years And Young People presented a report which informed Cabinet of the outcomes of the Estyn inspection visits during summer term 2024 to Ffaldau Primary School and St Robert’s Roman Catholic Primary School.
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	<p>He explained that Ffaldau Primary School was inspected by Estyn in May 2024 and the report was published on 16 July 2024 and the strengths reported by the inspection were highlighted at section 3 of the report.</p> <p>He added that there were 2 recommendations provided to the school and these were as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve pupils’ ability to write at length across the curriculum and at a suitably challenging level. 2. Improve pupil attendance. <p>The Corporate Director – Education, Early Years And Young People explained that St Robert’s Roman Catholic Primary School was inspected by Estyn in May 2024 and the report was published on 23 July 2024.</p> <p>He added that there was 1 recommendation provided to this school and this was as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refine teaching to enable pupils to make decisions about how they learn and use their digital skills independently <p>The review meeting that of Nantymoel Primary School was also conducted following the inspection in January 2023 and there were 5 recommendations provided at section 3 of the report.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services thanked the Corporate Director and his team, the Schools Governing Bodies as well as the schools senior management team for receiving the inspections and improving the services provided at the schools which has shown the positive working in Bridgend.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Cabinet noted the content of this report.</p>
Date Decision Made	22 October 2024

377. Children Missing Education Policy

Decision Made	<p>The Corporate Director Education, Early Years and Young people presented a report which of a Children Missing Education Policy (CME) for 2024.</p> <p>He advised that a CME policy is essential and contributes to the well-being and educational rights of</p>
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	<p>children and young people. The local authority is required to comply with a variety of legislative frameworks that enables it to implement its legal duty to locate, assess, monitor and track children missing education. The new CME policy reflects legislative changes since 2016 when the policy was last updated.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing asked for clarification on what S2S was. The Group Manager Early Years and Young people explained that S2S was a UK wide portal. If a child became de-registered from a school in Bridgend and there is no new school identified then this information went on to this portal. If this child was then registered into another school anywhere in the UK then we would be made aware of this.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing asked who takes on the responsibility of a child who is consistently missing in education. The Group Manager Early Years and Young people confirmed that it was the Local Authorities responsibility that the child de-registered from.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Resources asked what the number of CMEs currently was. The Group Manager Early Years and Young people stated that as of today it was 30, however this number changes daily due to various reasons.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved the CME policy attached at Appendix 1</p>
Date Decision Made	22 October 2024

378. Disabled Facilities Grant Framework

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Office Finance, Housing and Change presented a report which sought approval from Cabinet to award a Framework and enter into a Framework Agreement with successful bidders detailed in this report to deliver works required and funded through Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs).</p> <p>Following approval from Cabinet in March 2022, work has been undertaken, alongside colleagues in the corporate procurement and legal teams to develop the necessary tender documents, including an Invitation to Tender and Framework Agreement Terms and Conditions. The costs were indicated at 3.3 of the report as well as the bidders for each lot of the work at 3.9 of the report.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing asked why the framework had taken this long to complete. The Chief Office Finance, Housing and Change stated that it had been a long process from when we first began dealing with DFG requests and the process had initially been set to</p>
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	<p>be reviewed in early 2020 but had been delayed significantly due to the issues of Covid.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing asked if work was approved on a private dwelling, do we put a charge on the property so that if it were sold we get money back. The Chief Office Finance, Housing and Change explained that if the house were to be sold within 10 years of the work being completed then we were able to obtain our money back for that.</p> <p>RESOLVED: that Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted the contents of this report; • Approved the award of a DFG Framework and authorises the Council to enter into a Framework Agreement with successful bidders detailed in this report to deliver works required from Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs).
Date Decision Made	22 October 2024

379. Minimum Revenue Position Policy

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Office Finance, Housing and Change presented a report which sought Cabinet approval to recommend to Council a revision to the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2024-25.</p> <p>She advised that Council approved the Annual MRP Policy 2024-25 as part of the Capital Strategy in February 2024. This report proposes changing the calculation of MRP identified in paragraph i. and ii. of the Policy. Section 3 of the report provided more detail.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Finance & Performance stated that external advice had been sought before bringing this policy before Cabinet and that the changes were in line with current guidance and they meet the standards set out by our regulators. He added that this method also took into consideration the time value of money which was important for forecasting and other indicators.</p> <p>RESOLVED: that Cabinet recommended that Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approved the revision of the MRP Policy 2024-25 for calculating MRP on capital expenditure
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	funded from supported and unsupported borrowing from a straight line basis to an annuity method and a revised Minimum Revenue Provision Statement is approved (Appendix A).
Date Decision Made	22 October 2024

380. Budget Monitoring 2024-25 - Quarter 2 Revenue Forecast

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Office Finance, Housing and Change presented a report which updated Cabinet on the Council's revenue financial position as at 30th September 2024.</p> <p>Table 1 in the report highlighted the Comparison of budget against projected outturn at 30th September 2024. The overall projected position at 30th September 2024 is a net over spend of £6.797 million comprising £8.801 million net over spend on directorates and a net under spend of £2.004 million on Council wide budgets. A detailed analysis of the more significant projected under and over spends is set out in section 3.3.</p> <p>The Leader stressed that there was a lot of work still to be done to reduce that overspend further. The Cabinet Member for Finance & Performance echoed this. While the position has improved there is still more to be done to bring the spend back in line with the budget.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Cabinet noted the projected year end revenue position for 2024-25.</p>
Date Decision Made	22 October 2024

381. Transforming Towns Empty Property Enforcement Fund

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Office Finance, Housing and Change presented a report which sought approval from Cabinet to accept loan funding from Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Empty Property Enforcement Fund and enter into multiple loan agreements with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council as the Authority responsible for the ongoing management of the Fund.</p> <p>Currently, Bridgend CBC has three active empty property projects which meet the criteria of the Welsh Government Empty Property Enforcement Fund. These projects were highlighted in section 3 of the report.</p>
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	<p>The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing welcomed this report and said that it was common to hear from the public that not enough was being done to tackle empty properties in Bridgend but this report shows some of the work that had been done.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services asked if there were any ways to improve the relationship with Town Councils to ensure collaborative working as they may often have better insight and ideas that are not in the scope of BCBC. The Chief Office Finance, Housing and Change explained that there was already a lot of collaborative working with Officers and the Town & Community Councils and that is particularly the case with SRS but agreed that they are likely to have a beneficial source of information for this fund and its uses.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agreed to enter into multiple loan agreements with Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC for the purpose of accessing loan funding under the Transforming Towns Empty Property Enforcement Fund. 2. Delegated authority to Head of Partnerships & Housing in consultation with the Chief Officer - Finance, Housing & Change and the Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Negotiate and arrange execution of any loan agreements with Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC as the responsible authority for managing the Transforming Towns Empty Property Enforcement Fund; and ○ To enter into any further agreements which are ancillary to the purpose.
Date Decision Made	22 October 2024

382. Tennis Facilities Management Agreement

Decision Made	<p>The Corporate Director Communities presented a report which updated Cabinet on progress made with regards to the development of new tennis facilities across the borough, in conjunction with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), and to secure a key decision regarding the appointment of an external operator for the management and maintenance of the courts.</p>
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	<p>She explained that the refurbishments had now been completed and were currently being maintained by the Green Spaces department, however due to the levels of work it was necessary to progress with the appointment of an external operator for a period of 15 years. Further details were at section 3 of the report.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Communities highlighted the figures for the projected operator income over a 15-year term for all four sites, which are set out at Appendix A, as well as the estimated costs of refurbishment of the courts at years 10-12 which were set out at Appendix B.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment was pleased to see that under section 5 of the report there was a long list of positive implications regarding the Wellbeing and Future Generations.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing asked who would cover the cost of repairs that occurred from vandalism. The Corporate Director Communities confirmed that this would also be considered under the maintenance and repairs.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approved the award of a concession contract in the form of an Operator Agreement to Tennis Wales Limited, based on the principles set out in this report; 2. Delegated authority to the Corporate Director – Communities to negotiate the final terms of an operator agreement in consultation with the Chief Officer Finance, Housing and Change and the Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy to enter into the Operator Agreement and any supplementary agreements and to grant any necessary consents required on behalf of the Council. 3. Noted that Tennis Wales Limited will be subject to a lease or licence agreement with the Council to reflect the site-specific requirements.
Date Decision Made	22 October 2024

**383. Allocations Under Town And Community Council Capital Grant Scheme,
Round 2 2024-25**

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Decision Made	<p>The Corporate Director Communities presented a report which sought Cabinet approval to allocate capital funding to Town and Community Councils to develop projects in line with the recommendations contained within this report from the second round of the Town and Community Council (T&CC) Capital Grant scheme for 2024-25.</p> <p>She explained that BCBC had £50,000 allocated for 2024-25 and subsequent years in the Council approved Capital Programme to support applications from T&CCs for capital projects. With the carry forward funds from 2023-24 the budget available for 2024-25 was £219,186.00.</p> <p>She added that Table 2 showed the 2024-25 T&CC Capital Grant round 2 applications, Table 3 showed the assessment by T&CC Funding Panel and Table 4 provided details on the 2024-25 T&CC Capital Grant round 2 proposed approvals.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment welcomed the report and stated that it was exactly what the Town and Community Councils needed. With the meeting this week and if Cabinet approve this report we are on our way to a more collaborative working. He asked that we need to look at the criteria of gaining this grant money as many T&CC's are not eligible.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Resources added that while BCBC were able to provide certain services at a larger scale, the T&CCs are the ones that can provide those day to day changes for the community.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Cabinet approved the allocation of capital funding within the existing Capital Programme of £61,171.26 under the T&CC Capital Grant scheme round 2, 2024-25 to develop projects in line with the specific applications detailed at Table 2 and 3.</p>
Date Decision Made	22 October 2024

384. Parc Afon Ewenni Refurbishment Of The Highways Depot At Waterton

Decision Made	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Cabinet deferred this item to a later date pending further details regarding the capital funding required.</p>
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Date Decision Made	22 October 2024
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385. Bridgend County Borough Council Invasive Species Policy

Decision Made	<p>The Corporate Director Communities presented a report which presented the draft Invasive Non-Native Species Policy to Cabinet for approval, and to request a decision from Cabinet in relation to the preferred way forward for the treatment of Japanese Knotweed on BCBC assets.</p> <p>She advised that BCBC Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) treatment on its land holdings but approaches and frequencies differ between service areas. Inconsistency of approach has the potential to increase the risk of legal challenge, therefore, to mitigate against the risk of legal challenge, a change in approach is proposed to increase consistency of approach and overall frequency of treatment. Further details were at section 3 of the report.</p> <p>The draft BCBC INNS policy, attached as Appendix 1, has been discussed and agreed upon by all members of BCBC INNS working group.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Finance & Performance asked if this policy related to ragwort. The Corporate Director Communities explained that this policy primarily focused on Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Rhododendron ponticum which were considered the most dangerous in BCBC. Cabinet Members agreed that ensuring the treatment and prevention of these species growing further across Bridgend was important and the policy allows for better consistency of approach.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted work undertaken by officers. 2. Approved the draft policy, attached as Appendix 1. 3. Considered the management options presented in section 3.6, and their financial implications presented in section 8.7, which were subject to a budget growth bid, it was agreed that a decision on the preferred management option will be taken as part of the budget process and determined by Council in February 2025.
Date Decision Made	22 October 2024

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386. Urgent Items

Decision Made	There were no urgent items
Date Decision Made	22 October 2024

387. Exclusion of the Public

Decision Made	<p>RESOLVED: The following item was not for publication as it contained exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 14 of Part 4 and Paragraph 21 of Part 5, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007.</p> <p>Following the application of the public interest test, Cabinet resolved pursuant to the Act to consider this item in private, with the public being excluded from the meeting during such consideration.</p>
Date Decision Made	22 October 2024

388. Porthcawl Grand Pavilion - Project Budget Update And Request For Approval To Go Out To Tender For Main Works Contract

Decision Made	This decision was exempt.
Date Decision Made	22 October 2024

To observe further debate that took place on the above items, please click this [link](#)

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

The meeting closed at 17:00

Agenda Item 4

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	19 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	MIDDLE TIER REVIEW
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Responsible Officer:	SUE ROBERTS GROUP MANAGER (SCHOOLS)
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no impact on the Council's policy framework or procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	This report contains information about the future direction for school improvement services in response to the conclusions of the Welsh Government's 'Middle Tier Review'.

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- provide Cabinet with an update in respect of the future direction for school improvement services in Wales (in response to the conclusions of the Welsh Government's 'Middle Tier Review');
- seek Cabinet approval to the development of a future operating model as broadly outlined in this report; and
- request that Cabinet receives and approves further reports detailing specific financial implications and final model (probably in spring 2025).

2. Background

2.1 The current 'National Model for Regional Working' was initially developed and agreed in autumn 2013. This model has been progressively implemented since April 2014.

2.2 Central South Consortium was formed as part of this National Model, with Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) one of the five constituent local authorities (the

others being Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cardiff Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) and Vale of Glamorgan Council).

2.3 Concerns about the delivery of school improvement services and, to a lesser extent, curriculum and professional learning support have been widespread in Wales for some time, with particular concerns that arrangements do not sit well with local authority statutory responsibilities for the performance of schools in their area. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results also highlight the need for improvements in school performance.

2.4 Reflecting concerns across the nation, Welsh Government commissioned a review of school improvement services (known as the 'Middle Tier Review'). In talking with school leaders, Professor Dylan Jones, who led the review heard some important and consistent messages from across Wales, including:

- School leaders said they felt overwhelmed by the amount of change in the system and felt that there was a lack of clarity about national reforms in some key areas like curriculum, progression and additional learning needs (ALN).
- School leaders expressed serious concerns about the value-added by the regional consortia in Wales. There was a lot of concern about a culture of being 'done to' rather than 'done with'. Concerns about the variability and lack of consistency in the quality of support from regional consortia was also often noted.
- School leaders saw many of the requests from the middle tier as being unnecessary, counter-productive and adding an unnecessary level of bureaucracy. They sought clarity about the roles and impact of all elements within the 'Middle Tier'.
- School leaders felt there was little or no support for some of the biggest challenges facing schools following the pandemic, such as attendance and behaviour.
- School leaders said they and their staff felt overwhelmed by the current professional learning offer and that they did not have the time to access much of it and when they did it was of variable quality.
- School leaders shared concerns about the value-added by national partners such as the National Academy of Educational Leadership (NAEL), as it is currently constituted, and the Education Workforce Council (EWC), and noted concerns about duplication in the professional learning offer across by the Middle Tier.

- School leaders noted a desire to see greater resources being distributed directly within a local context, and in a more-timely manner, to enable a more localised focus for collaboration.

2.5 In identifying areas that are working well, school leaders noted that school-to-school and cluster working were the most important elements of support. School leaders think this should be the foundation for the school improvement system in the future. Existing national and regional networks are helping connect schools together across Wales but are not available to, or accessed by, all schools currently. School leaders have a clear identification with their locality and there are strong relationships with their local authorities in many areas which were strengthened during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.6 The Welsh Government review concluded that school improvement services should develop so that:

- school leaders have an opportunity to lead on school improvement matters through a greater focus on local collaboration and partnership working between school leaders and their local authority;
- partnerships could develop between more than one local authority to support wider collaboration; and
- there is stronger national leadership with clearer national priorities for schools and a simplification of the national funding mechanisms with as much resource as possible going directly to schools or supporting groups of schools to work together.

2.7 On the back of the review, Welsh Government has provided guidance to local authorities and asked for proposals setting out plans for re-configuring school improvement services by November 2024.

2.8 Though not explicit, there is a presumption that local authorities will take more direct responsibility for school improvement in line with their statutory responsibilities but in so doing, develop an operating model which empowers/enables schools to take greater (collective) responsibility for their own improvement and that of other schools within their locality. Changes being proposed should not simply seek to localise the current regional operating model but develop a new one.

3. Current situation/proposal

3.1 In broad terms, the current Central South Consortium operating model has two core functions:

- to facilitate school improvement: improvement partners are deployed to provide support and challenge primarily around school self-evaluation and development planning; and

- to develop and deliver opportunities for professional learning including support for the new curriculum.

3.2 Central South Consortium has played an increasingly important role in recent years supporting schools to implement the requirements of Curriculum for Wales. This support is integrated into their professional learning function and is extensive, ranging from, distilling and disseminating Welsh Government guidance so that it is more digestible for schools through to helping schools to meet statutory requirements, for example to develop a ‘shared understanding of progression’ something that schools have been finding particularly challenging. A business support function enables all these activities as well as providing data and intelligence.

3.3 The table below summarises these functions and provides an approximation of the current resources allocated to each (covering all five local authorities), though this should be viewed with caution owing to an increasing number of vacancies which in most cases will not, on current plans, be replaced.

School improvement (around 24 full-time equivalent)	Curriculum and professional learning (around 36 full-time equivalent)	Other services (around 1.5 full-time equivalent)	On behalf of Welsh Government (around 2 full-time equivalent)
<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployment of improvement partners to every school providing support and challenge to headteachers • Enhanced monitoring for schools in need of additional support • Work alongside local authorities in facilitating 	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networks and facilitation of school-to-school working/cluster working to support curriculum development and implementation • Bespoke support for professional learning needs not met through 	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor learning • Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) 	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of professional pathways for higher level teaching assistants • National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) • Newly qualified teacher (NQT) induction • Siarter Iaith

<p>intervention or package of support for schools in an Estyn category</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting governing bodies with headteacher performance management and recruitment • Provision of information for local authorities to inform risk assessments and possible intervention in the case of schools causing concern 	<p>wider offer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and delivering and also sourcing and curating professional learning opportunities • Utilising lead practitioners and enhanced lead practitioners to provide professional support 		
<p>Business support across all functions including data analysis (around 24 full-time equivalent)</p>			

3.4 Central South Consortium has articulated the benefits from improvement and professional learning functions being carried out by the same organisation as themes emerging through self-evaluation can be reflected in the professional learning offer. This connectivity is important and, in any future approach, mechanisms to align and co-ordinate professional learning activity with the identified school improvement needs and priorities of schools and local authorities will need to be clear and strong.

3.5 The possible future operating model emerging from the review and articulated in Welsh Government guidance is based on:

- schools leading their own self-evaluation and improvement planning as an iterative process supported by the local authority and other schools;

- schools being part of vertical and horizontal collaborative improvement arrangements enabling leaders and teachers to engage with learning and leadership in other schools supporting a collective understanding of progression;
- local authorities, in partnership with school leaders, facilitating and supporting collaboration to tackle barriers to learning at the earliest possible stage; and
- local authorities working together and the national school improvement capacity to ensure system-wide evidence-based approaches to improvement.

- 3.6 While not advocating any particular delivery mechanism or geographical footprint, the review acknowledges the dislocation and discontent in some areas arising from the way in which the current regional model has separated local authority responsibilities from delivery.
- 3.7 Over the past few months, there has been engagement with headteachers and officers from each of the five authorities within Central South Consortium where they have been collectively considering future arrangements. Headteacher feedback from events and workshops has indicated support for greater school-to-school working and has emphasised the importance of school improvement being facilitated and supported by peers and those with recent and relevant leadership experience. Not surprisingly, while headteachers support the principle of school-to-school working and collaboration and see real opportunities in this, the financial backdrop and workload pressures are a cause of significant concern. Many, though not all headteachers, are uncomfortable with the idea that they may need to ‘judge’ the performance of their fellow schools, others judge that they are best placed to tell it straight.
- 3.8 Schools are keen to work together to support school improvement. They welcome the opportunity for peer reviews and joint self-evaluation as part of this and would welcome support and a light touch ‘infrastructure’ to facilitate collaborative working. Some see wider opportunities stemming from collaboration (for example, sharing administrative functions). Most schools want opportunities to work with schools that share common challenges while also working with schools that bring diversity of thought and approach.
- 3.9 Across the region, there are many examples of schools working together, for example, to support the development of the new curriculum or transition from primary to secondary school. There are also a number of examples where school leaders have seized the initiative and established partnerships between schools to support self-evaluation, improvement planning and professional learning and these potentially offer a model for future arrangements.

- 3.10 School-to-school working is not without its challenges and there are concerns about expectations on schools in a partnership if any of them were to be in an Estyn category or otherwise need considerable support. The experience of the Central South Wales Challenge also highlights the supporting infrastructure needed for effective school-to-school working. Some of the lessons learned include the importance of moral purpose, reciprocity, a shared focus, clarity about roles and responsibilities, including the need for formal processes such as a memorandum of understanding which set out non-negotiables/expectations of all partners. Enhancing school-to-school working will also require professional development for headteachers and others to develop system leadership capability.
- 3.11 The local authority's statutory duty is to promote high standards and fulfil the potential of all learners and a school improvement function needs to stretch the best as well as support those with the greatest challenges. It is perhaps not surprising that attention and energy is often focussed on schools in challenging contexts, but the PISA results tell us that even our highest performing pupils are well below international comparisons; at an all-Wales level, our highest performing pupils are significantly below those in England. An operating model that can deliver right across the spectrum of performance and challenge at all levels to seek improvement whatever the starting point is vital. This has been a key consideration in developing a new approach.
- 3.12 Based on the feedback from headteachers and a wider exploration of school-to-school working as a driver of improvement there is a consensus across the five local authorities in the Central South Consortium region to the core elements of a future operating model. The core elements are:
- School improvement should be underpinned by collective responsibility and be seen as a collective endeavour and this principle should underpin all future approaches.
 - Delivery of school improvement functions to be undertaken by individual local authorities.
 - 'Collaborative Learning Partnerships' to be developed in each local authority - this work is at an early stage and is still under development. It will be co-constructed with headteachers. The form and function of these 'Collaboratives' will depend on local context and existing mechanisms that facilitate collaboration.
 - Some collaborative learning partnerships may work across local authority boundaries where this is beneficial, for example where secondary schools and their partner primary schools work across local authority boundaries or in the case of Welsh-medium or special schools to ensure sufficient scale.

- The role of improvement partners will be revised to reflect the role/responsibilities of collaborative learning partnerships and to provide more explicit recognition of the role of local authorities and their statutory responsibilities.
- Improvement partners working with English-medium primary and secondary schools will be employed by local authorities and will have a reporting line/accountability to their respective Director of Education.
- Improvement partners working with Welsh-medium and special schools to work within a sub-regional footprint (that is, the Health Board footprints), recognising the specialist and scarce nature of this resource and recognising that to be able to form effective collaboratives it may be beneficial for Welsh-medium and special schools to form partnerships across local authority boundaries (as they do now), enabling greater depth and breadth of experience to draw from.
- All improvement partners to be part of a regional network to provide professional development and protect against 'insularity' while also enabling the brokering of school-to-school support across local authorities where this could be advantageous.
- Local authorities to develop governance arrangements to allow representatives from collaborative learning partnerships to come together and collectively discuss and reflect upon the progress being made by schools, bringing together local intelligence to identify local priorities, steer the regional professional learning and curriculum support offer and respond to and inform national priorities.
- Professional learning and curriculum support should continue to be organised and delivered as now across the five local authorities within the Central South Consortium regional footprint. As noted previously, the professional learning offer needs to be led by the priorities of schools and local authorities articulated through local governance arrangements. The delivery model and the scope and breadth of the offer should continue to evolve to support greater school-led delivery of professional learning opportunities, networking within the region and pan-Wales. Simplified and streamlined governance arrangements can be developed to reflect the change in scope and complexity of regional working.

3.13 A schematic overview of how this might operate is at **Appendix 1** with a more detailed, generic, possible operating model at **Appendix 2**. The differing size and

context of the local authorities within the Central South Consortium region means that there will be differences in detail, but the intention is that the core principles and approach should be common across the region. Local authority colleagues are using the generic model and **Appendix 2** to inform the development of bespoke local approaches which will reflect individual context.

3.14 Any change process brings with it risks and issues that will need to be managed. In the changes envisaged here there are four key risks to highlight:

Economies of scale

- One of the reasons for establishing regional arrangements for school improvement was the concern that the local authority footprint was not an efficient or effective scale for delivery of improvement services, particularly where this involves highly specialised, expert resources. Concerns have also been expressed that local authority delivered services could become insular and insufficiently ambitious for the performance of their schools. This risk is exacerbated by the performance information available for comparative purposes.
- This risk is mitigated by the retention of the curriculum and professional learning functions remaining regional, this means expert capacity in priority areas such as Welsh language, curriculum planning and progression, literacy, numeracy and digital competence will continue to be available to all schools across the region subject to financial considerations. In addition, the proposal stresses the importance of improvement partners having a strong regional network with opportunities for their professional development.
- Local authorities will also have the opportunity to establish their own benchmarking mechanisms using the breadth of information available to them to ensure there is pace and ambition in school improvement and outcomes for learners.

Capacity of schools

- Financial and time/workload pressures on headteachers and their senior leadership teams, could affect the willingness and capacity of school leaders to collaborate with others. This is a particular worry for smaller primary schools where it may be less straightforward to manage any calls on the headteachers' time. It is important to appreciate that headteachers already engage in school improvement activity as this is one of their core functions as school leaders. School-to-school working is intended to enhance and support this function and offer a new way of working rather than creating additional demands. Supporting other schools can be seen as drawing resources away from a school but it should be a reciprocal arrangement and experience suggests working with others supports the professional

development of school leaders, helping them to see opportunities for improvements in their own schools. Nonetheless, this is a risk that we should be alive to and improvement partners working with governors will need to be alert to any risks manifesting.

Transition, loss of skilled/experienced staff

- Any change process creates turbulence with the associated risk that staff leave, or current delivery is affected as focus and attention goes elsewhere. Central South Consortium has been through a prolonged period of uncertainty, and it will be important that following approval of the proposals here, there is engagement and consultation with Central South Consortium staff in order to develop detailed operating models setting out new roles and structures that will enable the appropriate human resources and legal processes. This will be led by RCTCBC as the host local authority.

Financial outlook

- The financial context for local authorities is challenging and regardless of the school improvement model adopted, financial savings will be needed in the financial year 2025- 2026 and beyond. Transitioning the approach, while reducing budgets brings with it additional complexity and uncertainty, but school improvement services cannot afford to continue as now. Development of the proposed model takes account of the financial context and allows flexibility to adapt to the resources available and the desire to maximise resources being allocated to schools.

3.15 Subject to agreement that the core elements set out in paragraph 3.12 above should underpin future arrangements detailed operating models will be developed in each local authority, to include:

- How roles and responsibilities will be split between collaborative learning partnerships and the improvement partners. Terms of reference/operating agreements for collaborative learning partnerships will need to be developed alongside the job descriptions for the future improvement partner role. Crucial in this will be proposals on how information on school/collaborative performance will flow to local authorities in order for officers to form a view on performance, and the means by which this is quality assured.
- The criteria that local authorities wish to see adhered to in the establishment of collaborative learning partnerships, for example their size and make up.
- How schools in need of additional interventions (whether as a result of Estyn judgments or based on the school/local authority's own assessment) will be supported.

3.16 Transition plans will also be needed for revised hosting arrangements for the functions that will remain on the current Central South Consortium footprint (that is, curriculum and professional learning) including timescales for implementation of the agreed revised model. Some areas of activity currently undertaken by Central South Consortium will in future be delivered by Welsh Government, this includes National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) and support for curriculum design, assessment and progression so this will also need to be reflected in the operational plan.

Next steps

3.17 Subject to Cabinet approval in respect of the direction of travel established in this report, we will need to:

- develop detailed, costed operating models, underpinned by the core elements outlined above;
- provide proposed structures and delivery arrangements, with clear plans for the transition phase for further scrutiny and in line with Welsh Government timelines;
- set out proposed partnership arrangements; and
- develop transition plans for revised hosting arrangements for the functions that may remain on the current Central South Consortium footprint (that is, curriculum planning and professional learning).

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 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, however a further Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken once proposals for future school improvement services are further developed

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment provides a comprehensive summary of the outcomes expected from the implementation of the service.

Long-term Supports the improvement of standards and outcomes in schools.

- Prevention** Development of collaborative working arrangements to secure school improvement, preventing standards from slipping, working with the local authority to monitor the school's progress.
- Integration** Supporting school improvement is key to ensuring that outcomes for schools are achieved thus helping to support a successful economy.
- Collaboration** The local authority works closely with schools, Estyn and other partners to deliver the well-being objectives related to school improvement and to provide appropriate support aligned with findings from evaluation.
- Involvement** This area of work involves all stakeholders in school improvement. Schools work closely with Improvement Partners to refine their improvement plans or post-inspection action plans and to identify strategic support from the local authority and elsewhere (as required) reflecting the diversity of stakeholders involved in aspects of school improvement.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change implications arising directly from this information report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising directly from this information report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 Service delivery costs for the new school improvement function will be dependent on the detailed operating models chosen, with proposals considering the current financial context, flexibility to adapt and the desire to maximise resources being allocated to schools to enable the vision of a self-improving system.
- 8.2 Funding for this will be secured from the current core contribution to Central South Consortium and elements of the Local Authority Education Grant with the total budget for BCBC currently in the region of £1.5m. Any future proposals could deliver some efficiencies, but these details will be reported to Cabinet at a later date when there is greater clarity about the models required, and potential staffing implications and requirements.
- 8.3 The financial implications associated with the termination of the legal agreement are as follows:
- The operation of the Central South Consortium is governed by the terms of a legal agreement dated 20 April 2015, entered between the constituent authorities that form the Central South Consortium.

- RCTCBC acts as the host authority and provides the relevant support services required by the Central South Consortium to operate the service.
- Each constituent authority makes an annual financial contribution in accordance with the terms of the financial protocol set out in the legal agreement. Contributions and apportionments (including liabilities/losses) are based on the respective proportion of the relevant IBAs of each constituent local authority for the relevant financial year.
- All Central South Consortium staff are employed by RCTCBC in its capacity as host local authority and on its terms and conditions. Notwithstanding RCTCBC being the employer in law all liabilities attached to the employment of staff within the Central South Consortium (including potential redundancy costs) shall be a cost to the Central South Consortium Joint Education Committee and apportioned in accordance with the financial contributions of the legal agreement.
- The terms of the legal agreement continue unless all parties unanimously agree to terminate, allowing for a reasonable period of time in order for RCTCBC (as host local authority) to wind down the Central South Consortium. On termination, the Central South Consortium Joint Education Committee shall agree the distribution of assets and liabilities on the basis of the financial contributions of the legal agreement.
- A constituent council can withdraw from the Central South Consortium but must notify each of the other parties by giving not less than two years notice in writing of its intention to withdraw, expiring on 31 March in any given year.
- It should be noted that each constituent local authority retains its statutory responsibilities in respect of its obligations to ensure school improvement.

8.4 The human resource (HR) implications associated with the termination are detailed below:

- Subject to any decision by Cabinet, once the detailed staffing arrangements are developed to support any new arrangement, a Management of Change document will be created. While early discussions have taken place with trade unions, more detailed consultation will take place in due course. This document will be shared and consulted upon with both the trade unions and Central South Consortium staff and will cover areas such as the Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Employment (TUPE), any matching or interview arrangements and retirement/redundancy matters.

- In addition, while RCTCBC is currently the host employer, a working group of HR staff from across the five local authorities will be established to help manage the transition to the new arrangements.

8.5 Redundancy costs for current Central South Consortium staff who do not secure a post in the new models will be shared between the constituent local authorities of Central South Consortium based on Indicator-Based Assessments (IBAs) as outlined in the current legal agreement dated 20 April 2015, entered between the constituent local authorities that form Central South Consortium. At present, it is important to note that the local authority has no identified budget to cover these costs.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Cabinet is recommended to agree:

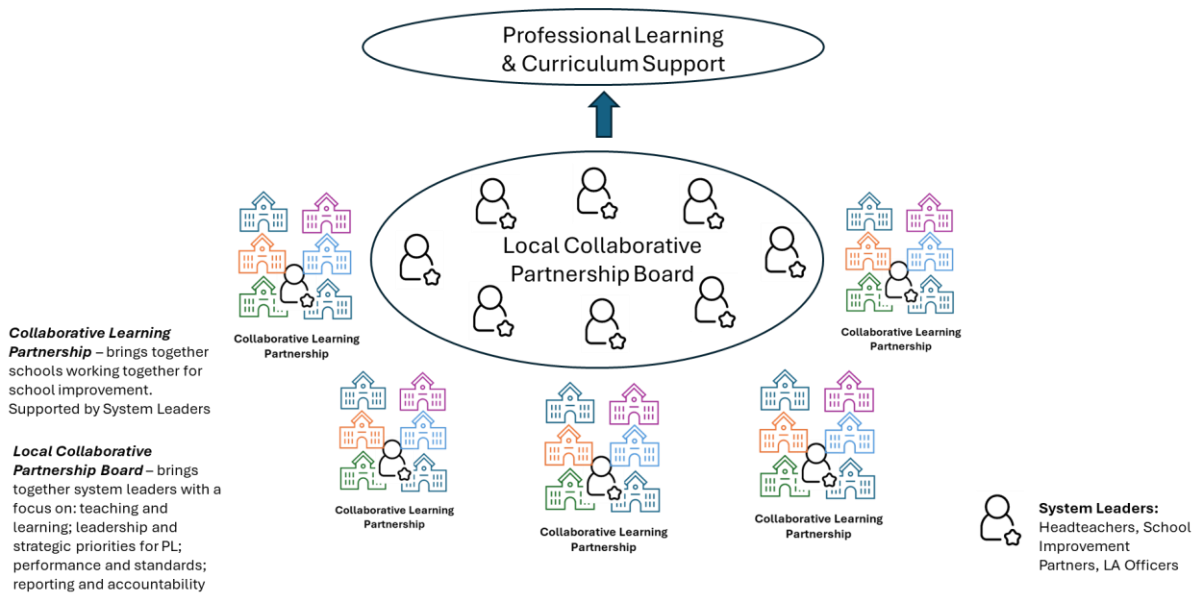
- the development of a future operating model as broadly outlined in this report; and
- to receive and approve further reports detailing specific financial implications and final model (probably in spring 2025).

Background documents:

None

Appendix 1

Overview of proposed school improvement model



Appendix 2

Generic operating model for development in each local authority

1. Make up of arrangements

Local Collaborative Partnership Areas (LCPAs) to be established by the local authority based on geography/community boundaries.

Within these LCPAs, schools form Collaborative Learning Partnerships (CLPs):

- typically 6 to 10 schools based on horizontal collaboration;
- self-select partners (though in practice there may be little choice of partner amongst secondary schools in particular);
- schools could propose a CLP as a mix of primary/secondary; and
- headteacher and deputy headteacher nominated by group as CLP Convenor (not remunerated – possible release of time).

A Local Collaborative Partnership Board (LCPB) to be established – provides strategic forum to discuss school improvement, priorities and professional learning priorities to steer and direct wider professional learning offer. LCPBs consist of:

- CLP convenors and deputies;
- local authority representatives; and
- the Principal Improvement Partner

Vertical collaboration facilitated by LCP and curriculum clusters maintained to ensure curriculum, transitions, progression is planned.

2. Role and responsibilities of CLP/LCP/Improvement Partner

Collaborative Learning Partnership	Improvement Partner*
<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assist colleagues by providing an external perspective, challenging and validating the school's own evaluation of standards.• Contribute to the effectiveness and impact of each school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes, provide constructive challenge and support in respect of the quality of self-evaluation and the school's improvement plan.	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support and challenge the working practices of a CLP to ensure they are operating as agreed in their terms of reference and an effective Improvement Partner function is in place.• Ensure that a CLP has considered and evaluated the three national priorities for literacy, numeracy and reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote improvement planning with a clear focus on literacy, numeracy and reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment. • Support the identification and promote opportunities for continuing professional development in line with school development priorities. • Collaborate on school background operations. • Establish shared improvement priorities for the CLP and contribute to the strategic development of Professional Learning provision <p>Behaviours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place the learners' interests above all others. • Being honest and open with each other. • Share expertise between each other. • Share information and data between each other. • Work towards ensuring a high level of mutual responsibility in terms of attainment standards. <p>Ways of working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteachers (lead) and deputy headteachers (assist) undertake the functions of the improvement partner except for performance management. • Within collaboration arrangements between pairs of schools, the headteachers of the two specific schools will not act as the main improvement partner for each other's schools. • Peer reviews and visits could involve different personnel depending on the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To draw upon their knowledge of effective and successful Collaborations and sign post effective/strong practice. • Identify and assist in brokering the professional research and learning that will enhance and support the impact of the identified school improvement priorities. • To contribute to the development of sector-led school-to-school support by identifying and signposting schools to the most effective practice; supporting and facilitating the development of school improvement groups and collaborative working between schools; contributing to the monitoring of the impact of sector-led school-to-school support on standards, quality and leadership. • Work with colleagues and governors to diagnose and record accurately school improvement needs of each school and ensure the local authority is regularly updated on improvement priorities and implementation of actions in response. • Additional reviews on request where external perspective helps <p>Behaviours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place the learners' interests above all others. • Being honest and open with each other. • Share expertise between each other. • Share information and data between each other. • Work towards ensuring a high level of mutual responsibility in terms of attainment standards.
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<p>agenda and specific requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed operating agreement/memorandum of understanding (MOU) to be developed by each CLP setting out how they are going to work together, roles and responsibilities. <p>Governance and reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a CLP leadership Board. • Nominate a CLP Convenor to rotate every two years. • Provide reports as required to the local authority and the CLP oversight group. • Provide a forum for joint governor meetings. 	<p>Ways of working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that local authorities are fully informed about the school improvement foci being undertaken by CLP and report on why these have been chosen and the progress being made based on first-hand evidence and discussions with a range of stakeholders. • To introduce, develop and embed a coaching strategy that secures a self-improving approach which successfully enables a Collaboration to develop and matures over time. • Robustly challenge a CLP if the first-hand evidence is not demonstrating measurable impact. • Provide advice and participate in the recruitment of schools' senior leaders. • Participate in headteacher performance management in accordance with agreed practices and procedures. • Inform the local authority immediately if there are any leadership challenges in the individual schools in the collaboration. • Working as part of a team, to share solutions, generate ideas and develop innovative approaches based on evidence that will improve consistency and quality in all aspects of the work of the CLP.
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* Using this term for ease

3. Managing schools causing concern (SCC)/in category/enhanced monitoring

In 'Category'/SCC

At the outset of establishment of CLPs, schools causing concern, in enhanced monitoring or in an Estyn category should be included. However, their role in the CLP, for example the headteacher acting as an Improvement Partner to other schools may need to be

reviewed to assess capacity to take on this function in addition to the pressures arising within their own school. Existing support arrangements would be maintained although reviewed (as they would be in any circumstance) in light of membership of CLP.

If schools go into a category or are considered to be a school causing concern an Improvement Partner will be given specific responsibility to work with the School to develop with the headteacher the support needed for turnaround.

It might be worth considering whether this 'improvement partner' is commissioned/contracted rather than from the standing team of improvement partners. In a number of cases currently, specialist/expert support is commissioned to support the headteacher rather than the improvement partner take on this role.

The responsibility for supporting a school in category or causing concern sits with the local authority although this does not preclude support being provided by the CLP and as now other schools within the region. A case-by-case approach will be needed.

Enhanced monitoring

CLPs should be responsible for managing schools that need enhanced monitoring/support as the CLP approach is predicated on support being provided with reference to need. The purpose of the CLP is first and foremost to 'diagnose', the subsequent needs identified as part of the 'treatment plan' can be sourced from schools anywhere in Wales and the improvement partner has a key role to play in supporting these wider networks.

CLPs will need to identify which schools are receiving 'enhanced support' though this may be obvious if the system is needs led as intended. Local authorities will receive information on the self-evaluation and improvement needs of schools to help inform their own risk assessment processes as part of the improvement partner function and potentially through the LCPB.

In addition, local authorities will receive an assessment on how well the CLP is functioning as a unit.

Governance/local authority links

LCPBs provide a mechanism for 'system' oversight, the emerging challenges and improvement themes which require a local authority-wide response or where a multi-agency approach may be beneficial, for example tackling challenging behaviour, emotional health and wellbeing issues or the need for different approaches to Post-16 provision, transitions or developing employability opportunities. These will also provide a means to 'escalate' issue to Welsh Government where a national level response might be needed.

These boards will also steer the professional learning offer provided by the new regional 'entity'.

Regional networking

Regional and national networking needs to be strengthened. While CLPs are the means by which schools undertake self-evaluation and identify development priorities (diagnosis), the treatment plan should draw on support from a much wider network of schools. Wider networking can also support self-evaluation, for example if a school wants to look in depth at a particular are of the curriculum it may make sense to invite a peer review from schools with acknowledged expertise in that aspect.

How will this networking be facilitated:

- Nationally this needs action from Welsh Government
- Regionally this could involve:
 - frequent network meetings of IPs to ensure they are sharing their experience of schools with notable practice that would benefit from wider dissemination;
 - the work of the Professional Learning/Curriculum Team will be re-focussed to use and exemplify school-based practice as the primary source of professional learning; and
 - regionally, this could involve re-visiting hub schools.

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	19 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	BUILDING ON STRENGTHS, IMPROVING LIVES - A THREE-YEAR PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE CARE AND SUPPORT FOR ADULTS IN BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	JACKIE DAVIES HEAD OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules
Executive Summary:	<p>This plan has been developed by the Bridgend County Borough Council Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate on behalf of the Council. It sets out our strategic objectives, priorities and plans to deliver sustainable and effective social care and wellbeing support for adults in the County Borough. We are clear about our direction of travel, and we have already made significant progress but there is much more to do. We now need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the improvements resulting from our new Adult Social Care Operating Model. • Deliver on our commitment to outcomes-focused strengths-based practice which will help us promote resilience and independence for the people we support. • Drive through further improvements in our front door response, hospital discharge, re-ablement and long-term support in the community to ensure that our services are most effective in promoting resilience and reducing unnecessary demand. • Secure greater cost-effectiveness through our transformation plans for learning disability, mental health, and long-term conditions services. • Ensure that our support for staff, community engagement, technology and partnerships are all geared towards cost-effective and sustainable social care in the longer term.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to approve a Three-Year Plan and Year 1 Action Plan for 2024/2025 for Sustainable Care and Support for Adults in Bridgend County Borough Council which sets out our strategic objectives, priorities and plans. The report was presented to Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 on 8 July 2024 and Cabinet and Corporate Management Board on 20 August 2024. Following these two meetings, formal engagement with partner agencies commenced on 28 August 2024.

2. Background

- 2.1 This plan has been developed by the Bridgend County Borough Council Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate on behalf of the Council. It sets out the strategic objectives, priorities and plans to deliver sustainable and effective social care and wellbeing support for adults in the County Borough.
- 2.2 The next three years are going to be very challenging for all local authorities and their partners across Wales. Resources are likely to be scarcer than ever before, so to deal with these challenges we need to take forward our commitment to deliver fundamental changes to the design and delivery of our services and to the way we work with people.
- 2.3 We will need to target our limited resources on those who most need them, encourage active citizenship, and make sure that the way we practice helps people to live as independently as possible, resilient and connected to friends, family and their community as much as possible.
- 2.4 We will not do this alone, so we will need to work closely with our colleagues across the Council, in the third sector, communities and with health services to be successful for the people of Bridgend County Borough Council.
- 2.5 As part of this process, we engaged with key partners across the region including Local Authorities, Police, Probation, Health Board where no formal responses were received.

3. Current situation/ proposal

- 3.1 We are clear about our direction of travel. We have already made significant progress but there is much more to do. We now need to:
 - Deliver the improvements resulting from our new Adult Social Care Operating Model.
 - Deliver on our commitment to outcomes-focused strengths-based practice which will help us promote resilience and independence for the people we support.
 - Drive through further improvements in our front door response, hospital discharge, re-ablement and long-term support in the community to ensure that our services are most effective in promoting resilience and reducing unnecessary demand.
 - Secure greater cost-effectiveness through our transformation plans for learning disability, mental health and long-term conditions services.
 - Ensure that our support for staff, community engagement, technology and partnerships are all geared towards cost-effective and sustainable social care in the longer term.

3.2 The three-year plan in **Appendix 1** identifies seven priority areas, these being:

1. Adult Social Care Operating Model
2. Adult Social Care Outcomes-Focused Strengths-Based Practice Model
3. Adult Social Care Transforming Services
4. Adult Social Care Learning Disability
5. Adult Community Mental Health
6. Adult with Lifelong Conditions or Complex Care Needs
7. Adult Social Care Supporting Priorities

3.3 The following sections provide details of the key objectives that will be delivered for each of the seven priority areas: -

Priority area	Key objectives
Adult Social Care Operating Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide services which increase the number and proportion of people who can live well at home or in the community. • Work with our partners to build seamless care and support services. • Help build well-resourced and responsive communities which ensure that people with care and support needs can live well at home. • Reduce the proportion of people in Bridgend who need long-term intensive care and support from the Council.
Adult Social Care Outcomes-Focused Strengths-Based Practice Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that all staff are working within a common 'Strengths and Outcomes' framework and the partners understand and support it. • To successfully develop and disseminate further clear guidance for managers and workers on key areas of practice including strength-based reflective practice and supervision. • To strengthen management oversight of practice through outcomes 'surgeries' providing real time quality assurance, ensuring a culture and practice of promoting independence and connection. • To successfully revise and implement the framework for quality assurance which evidences how effective our practice is. • To ensure better outcomes for people without the need for Council commissioned or provided care and support.

Priority area	Key objectives
Adult Social Care Transforming Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage demand through the front door of the Council by handling and resolving initial enquiries more effectively. • Work with partners to manage demand from acute hospitals by minimising poor discharges which result in unnecessary care provision and returns to hospital. • Increase the number and range of effective short-term interventions for people in the community through short term help to reduce or eliminate the need for longer-term solutions. • Promote asset-based community and voluntary preventative support to help people live well in thriving and supportive communities. • Redesign care and support for people with long term needs by helping people with long-term conditions gain opportunities for greater independence in the longer term.
Learning Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To systematically implement progression as a core model of practice – recognising and reflecting people’s strengths, capabilities, and aspirations for a good life in line with our recently launched new practice model. • To review needs and services in key internal and commissioned services for learning disability to ensure they are delivered cost effectively and drawing on latest evidence of impact. • To ensure that where there needs to be changes in delivery to focus more on employment and skills, (and less day-time activity) they are addressed by clear strategies and implementation plans. • To ensure that we work closely and effectively with key partners to deliver these service improvements. • To ensure that all reviews are conducted co-productively so that people with care and support needs are central to service development.
Adult Community Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review needs and services in key internal and commissioned services for mental health, to ensure they are delivered cost effectively and draw on latest evidence of impact. • Ensure that where there are gaps in provision or emerging needs, they are addressed by clear strategies and implementation plans. • Ensure that we work closely and effectively with key partners to deliver these service improvements. • Ensure that all reviews are conducted co-productively so that people with care and support needs are central to service development.

Priority area	Key objectives
<p>Adults with Lifelong Conditions or Complex Care Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with our colleagues in Housing to develop Housing with Care provision sufficient to meet future need and demand, and reprofile BCBC's accommodation-based services. • Implement the 're-ablement reset' programme in our internal services to reshape existing provision. • Remodel our internal domiciliary services to take a more outcome-focused and strengths-based approach and in line with the new operating model. • Explore delivery models and recommission locality-based domiciliary care services to meet quality and capacity demands. • Expand and diversify our Shared Lives (Adult Placement) Scheme. • Develop a business case for Core & Cluster Accommodation / Community Living Networks, Supported Living, and Specialist Supported Living (Closer to Home) provision to achieve a better balance with residential provision. • Work with partners to develop a new multi-disciplinary service to help people with disabilities or sensory loss to access support and adaptations to help them live at home. • Better match our emergency, short stay and respite provision to the needs of our local population and redesign our services so they meet these needs. • Expand the capacity and responsiveness of specialist care and support for people at home or in the community. • Help people to access a wide range of technology, aids and adaptations essential to helping people regain or maintain independence.
<p>Adult Social Care Supporting Priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a stable, supported, well-motivated workforce, good retention, and recruitment, leading to an optimal mix of skills and capabilities, with a reputation of being a safe, supportive, reflective organisation that professionals want to work for. • Work nationally, regionally and at a local level on the procurement of a replacement system for its current case management IT System (CareDirector (WCCIS)). • Deliver an ongoing comprehensive ongoing training and development programme to support consistent implementation of the model of practice to ensure it is embedded across the service and supported in supervision and peer support. • Ensure that learning from inspection and reviews is systematically embedded through learning, training and development and follow up quality assurance and review. • Deliver an ongoing management and leadership development programme to support all managers in adult social care to develop their skills in leading teams and services.

3.4 Priority 1: Adult Social Care Operating Model

The Adult Social Care Operating Model has been operational since 24th February 2024 and a formal evaluating process of the operating model has commenced in November 2024. The service has planned to assess its effectiveness against the original four objectives set for the project these being:

- Improved Customer Experience
- Improved Customer Journey
- Improved Staff Experience
- Improved Social Work Standards

3.5 Priority 2: Adult Social Care Outcomes-Focused Strengths-Based Practice Model

The service has introduced a number of mechanisms to achieve this priority area, however, one of the ways that ensures that all assessments are in line with practice model and achieves outcomes for people has been the introduction of the Outcomes Panel, which is chaired by the Head of Service/Deputy Head of Service and includes all senior managers in adult social care. The purpose of the panel is to respond to resource requests through ensuring quality assurance, financial scrutiny and adherence to the social work practice model; 'A strength-based model of practice-working to achieve outcomes.' The panel encourages shared decision-making and accountability whilst reinforcing consistency, sound and robust practice, rather than purely costs of the resource request or financial arrangements.

3.6 The panel started in December 2023, initially for only certain types of requests. It has been an evolving process and in quarter one of 2024/25, of the 259 cases discussed, 200 or 77% were agreed, 3 were partly agreed, 56 were not agreed and further work was required to ensure in line with practice model. For quarter two, of 300 cases discussed, 247 or 82% were agreed, 9 were partly agreed, 44 were not agreed.

3.7 Priority 3: Adult Social Care Transforming Services

One of the ways that the service has been working towards managing demand through the front door of the Council, the acute hospitals and increasing the number and range of effective short-term interventions for people in the community through short term help to reduce or eliminate the need for longer-term solutions, is the Support at Home remodelling programme across the whole of adult services. The program has determined that the service will move to a locality-based delivery model which will result in a review of the staffing structure as well as a mapping of the demand and capacity needed for the service going into 2025/2026. This work will form part of the preparation for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy which is not due to be approved until March 2025.

3.8 The new model aims to maximise re-ablement and short-term capacity to support hospital discharge and avoid hospital admission. The service has been working towards increasing those individuals who go through the short-term services to ensure we maximise independence before we commission long term care packages. In 2023/2024 38.6% of people had a short-term service prior to having a long-term package; the service has been working towards increasing this number to 80% of

people, and in August the figure had increased to 60% of people who had a short-term service prior to having a long-term package. To be able to achieve this target the service will no longer accept long term packages of care in the main to older people, so all future long-term packages would be commissioned via independent providers.

- 3.9 Priority 4: Learning Disability
Priority 5: Adult Community Mental Health
Priority 6: Adults with Lifelong conditions or complex care needs

A transformation plan for Learning Disabilities has been in place since November 2023 and saw the introduction of the Commissioning for Complex needs team and a program of work was developed. Its aim is to achieve cashable savings and financial recovery on the current costs of packages of care for both external providers and within our in house supported living provision. Initially this was in place just for Learning Disabilities but has now been extended to include Mental Health and other complex long-term conditions with high care costs.

- 3.10 This methodology will reduce the current overspend and seek to achieve cost avoidance in terms of brokerage services for current and future years. The brokerage service is a new process which ensures specialist placements across adult social care are strictly commissioned through a rigorous process which supports value for money, maximisation of market competition and scrutiny of requests.

- 3.11 The team has been in place since November 2023 and has initially been targeting high costs placements in both external residential provision and external supported living provision. Individuals who are residing within supported living or specialist placements will be reassessed in line with the Adult Social Care Practice Model and the Progression Model, the impact being that revised packages of care are commissioned in line with an individual's evidenced needs to ensure proportionality and a strength-based approach. In addition, for Learning Disabilities an outcome surgery process has been established to ensure all resource requests within the service area are scrutinised to ensure preventative options have been maximised and current resources are creatively delivered to meet individuals' personal outcomes.

- 3.12 Priority 7: Adult Social Care Supporting Priorities

This priority provides details of the infrastructure that is already in place in Bridgend for the Director of Social Services and Wellbeing to deliver and meet the statutory social care requirements in terms of the workforce, the IT for the case management system, the statutory training and development and the leadership and management programs and how we learn systematically from inspection and reviews and follow up quality assurance and review. These are the foundations for social care in Bridgend to be able to meet statutory requirements; there are no changes proposed to this area as a result of this strategy.

- 3.13 Attached in **Appendix 2** is the year 1 action plan for 2024/2025 which specifies the actions which will be taken in the first year of the plan to move forward with delivery, and the metrics which will be used to judge progress that underpins the delivery of the 'Building on Strengths' Improving Lives - A Three-Year Plan for Sustainable Care and Support for Adults in Bridgend'.

3.14 The metrics included in this document are those which specifically measure the inputs, outputs and outcomes which will indicate whether and how the plan is being successful. It includes some but not all metrics collected by the Directorate or returned to Welsh Government in, for example, the Welsh Government Performance and Improvement Framework for Social Services Measuring Activity and Performance Additional Guidance 2023-24.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 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. An initial EIA screening has been undertaken and it is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 A summary of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 assessment is listed below:

Involvement	Officers will further engage with and involve individuals and their families/carers as and when is appropriate in line with our strengths-based practice model and the new operating model .
Long term	The ‘Building on Strengths’ Improving Lives A Three-Year Plan for Sustainable Care and Support for Adults in Bridgend sets out to identify the long-term transformation plans for adult social care.
Prevention	In-keeping with the fundamental requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, there is a focus on preventative services within the three-year plan and targets our resources on those that most need them.
Integration	In keeping with the fundamental requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, there will be a focus on further enhancing integration with our key regional partners, such as Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board, Police, Probation, Secure Estate, Housing, other Council directorates, the third sector, communities, and other public sector bodies.
Collaboration	Both internal and external collaboration will be necessary in order to effectively implement the priority areas identified in the three-year plan which will involve key stakeholders and wider partners.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 Adult social care is part of the Council's corporate climate change programme and is also working as part of the Welsh Government Health and Care Climate Change Programme Board. Initiatives such as use of electric vehicles in community services and locality working are all intended to reduce the carbon footprint of social care as well as improve workforce retention and outcomes for individuals.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 This report outlines and proposes changes to the delivery of adult social care and reflects our requirements in delivering our statutory safeguarding accountabilities. Implementation of the plan will ensure effective safeguarding arrangements and support the wellbeing of adults for whom the Council has a statutory responsibility.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The Revenue Budget Outturn 2023-24 report considered by Cabinet in July 2024 detailed the ongoing financial pressures across the Authority during 2023/2024. The net budget for the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate for 2023-24 was £99.386 million and the actual outturn was £111.213 million following draw down of £5.660 million from earmarked reserves, resulting in an overspend of £11.827 million. The Adult Social Care budget over spend was £6.900 million which included £2.29 million for Learning Disabilities Home Care, £1.792 million for Homes for Older People and £1.078 million for Learning Disabilities Residential Care.
- 8.2 The Budget Monitoring 2024-25 – Quarter 2 Revenue Forecast report considered by Cabinet in October 2024 detailed the current projections which indicate a projected overspend of £4.456 million for the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate despite budget pressures of £8.330 million being awarded in February 2024 as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The Adult Social Care budget is projecting an overspend of £1.928 million mainly due to continuing pressures in learning disabilities driven by the complexity of need. It should be noted that included within these projections are a number of non-recurring grants including Social Care Workforce Grant (£1.542 million), Regional Integration Fund (£1.440 million) and Housing Support Grant (£2.159 million). These grants are all confirmed on an annual basis.
- 8.3 The Three-Year Plan for Sustainable Care and Support for Adults in Bridgend detailed in this report acknowledges that resources are going to be challenging and scarcer than previously experienced. It describes how the service seeks to address these challenges and our commitment to deliver fundamental changes to the design and delivery of our services. It is too early to predict or forecast the full financial impact over three years, and progress will be reported in line with the plan in **Appendix 2**, to the Cabinet and Corporate Management Board and the Social Services Improvement Board as appropriate and through the normal established budget management and reporting mechanisms.

8.4 In terms of financial implications as a direct result of the Three-Year Plan for Sustainable Care and Support for Adults, the following section will assess each priority area in turn.

8.5 Priority 1: Adult Social Care Operating Model

There are no forecasted financial implications as a direct result of the Three-Year Plan for Sustainable Care and Support for Adults for this priority area as it focuses on an improved Customer Experience, Customer Journey, Staff Experience and Social Work Standards.

8.6 Priority 2: Adult Social Care Outcomes-Focused Strengths-Based Practice Model.

As a result of the introduction of the Outcomes panel, we have recorded a cost avoidance of £621,447.99 and cost savings of £51,923.67, with the full year effect of these decisions being cost avoidance of £804,135.48 and full year cashable savings of £63,216.93.

8.7 As at quarter two 2024/25, based on the 82% of cases agreed there has been cost avoidance of £564,388.00 and cost savings of £41,472.51 with the full year effect of these decisions being cost avoidance of £857,259.99 and full year cashable savings of £71,734.60.

8.8 The early indications show an improving picture of those presented being in line with practice model and we anticipate that this pattern will continue with the aim being that due diligence on resource request will be completed prior to the panel. We are unable to predict an exact financial forecast of this specific activity due to fluctuating demand levels; however, all requests will form part of the ongoing robust budget monitoring that is well established in the Council.

8.9 Priority 3: Service Transformation

The new model aims to maximise re-ablement and short-term capacity to support hospital discharge and avoiding hospital admission. This should reduce the overall support at home spending levels as more people will have an opportunity for an enabling care support package; they will then determine if they need ongoing care and if assessed as needed to, will ensure it is proportionate to their needs. The ongoing financial implications of this priority will be part of the ongoing robust budget monitoring that is well established in the Council.

- 8.10 Priority 4: Learning Disability
Priority 5: Adult Community Mental Health
Priority 6: Adults with Lifelong conditions or complex care needs

The program is currently achieving a 10% reduction in current placement costs; all figures are based on the current spending areas and do not take account of any increases due to demographic changes. To date in 2024/2025 this project has achieved £867,204 cashable savings with the full year effect in 2025/206 of £1,129,523.

In addition, a Single Carer Project has been set up and is an occupational therapy led project which targets packages of care which are delivered through two carers

that are assessed to determine with different equipment, training and other methodologies if the package can be safely reduced to a single carer package.

- 8.11 More recently the service has a workstream focused on reassessment of individuals that are currently receiving a local authority commissioned service and are displaying Continuing Health Care (CHC) triggers. The role includes joint assessments, consultancy support and more recently joint training with Health colleagues has taken place. It is too early to predict the full financial impact of this area of development due to fluctuations in demand and needs of individuals however to date in 2024/2025 this project has achieved £260,546 cashable savings with the full year effect in 2025/206 of £394,763.
- 8.12 There was a projected overspend for 2024-25 for Adult Social Care of £1.928m at quarter 2. As part of the ongoing financial recovery plan the programme of works described aim to achieve cashable savings and financial recovery on the current costs of placements/ packages of care for both external providers and in house. The target set is £2.1 million for 2025/26 and is based on current spending areas but does not take account of any increases due to demographics or an increase in demand for the number of placements / packages of care or increases in complexity of individuals that may present as new to the service.
- 8.13 Priority 7: Effective support for our services.

These are the foundations for social care in Bridgend to be able to meet statutory requirements; there are no changes proposed to this area as a result of this strategy, therefore, there are no financial implications as a direct result of the Three-Year Plan for Sustainable Care and Support for Adults for this priority.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the Three-Year Plan (**Appendix 1**) and the Year 1 Action Plan for 2024/2025 (**Appendix 2**) for Sustainable Care and Support for Adults in Bridgend County Borough Council.

Background documents

None

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Building on Strengths, Improving Lives

A Three-Year Plan for Sustainable Care and Support for Adults in Bridgend

Executive Summary

This plan has been developed to set out our strategic objectives, priorities and plans to deliver sustainable and effective social care and wellbeing support for adults in the County Borough.

The next three years are going to be very challenging for all local authorities and their partners across Wales. Resources are likely to be scarcer than ever before. Our population is growing and ageing. People and families are still recovering from the impact of the covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. To deal with these challenges we will commit to deliver fundamental changes to the design and delivery of our services and to the way we work with people.

We will need to target our limited resources on those who most need them, encourage active citizenship and make sure that the way we practice helps people to live as independently as possible, resilient and connected to friends, family and their community as much as possible. We will not do this alone; we will need to work closely with our colleagues across the Council, in the third sector, communities and in the health services and other public sector bodies to be successful.

We are clear about our direction of travel. We have already made significant progress but there is much more to do. We now need to:

- Deliver the improvements resulting from our new adult social care operating model.
- Deliver on our commitment to outcomes-focused strengths-based practice which will help us promote resilience and independence for the people we support.
- Drive through further improvements in our front door response, hospital discharge, reablement and long-term support in the community to ensure that our services are most effective in promoting resilience and reducing unnecessary demand.
- Secure greater cost-effectiveness through our transformation plans for learning disability, mental health, and long-term conditions services.
- Ensure that our support for staff, community engagement, technology and partnerships are all geared towards cost-effective and sustainable social care in the longer term.

This plan outlines how we will take these priorities forward with focus and commitment. between 2024 and 2027.

Introduction

This plan has been developed by the Bridgend County Borough Council Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate on behalf of the Council. It sets out our strategic objectives, priorities and plans to deliver sustainable and effective social care and wellbeing support for adults in the County Borough in the period 2024 - 2027.

The plan covers how we will transform our services and practices to meet changing population needs and demand identified in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Population Needs Assessment, details of which are in our commissioning strategies. It sets the direction for the work we will do to ensure our services are sustainable, remain in line with national policy and best practice, and further embed a culture of continuous improvement in the way we work.

The plan shows how working in partnership with individuals, families and communities to promote people's independence, resilience, wellbeing, and safety will be at the heart of everything we do. This is what people want from us. It is both the most effective way of working and it is the most cost-effective way of delivering our services.

In Part 1 we describe the context for the plan. The next three years are going to be very challenging for all local authorities and their partners across Wales. Resources are likely to be scarcer than ever before. To deal with these challenges we need to take forward further fundamental changes to the design and delivery of our services and to the way we work with people. We will not do this alone; we will need to align our work closely with our colleagues across the Council, in the third sector, communities and in the health services and other public sector bodies to be successful.

In Part 2 we set out the progress that has been made to date. We are already implementing huge changes to our operating and practice models, but we recognise that in the next three years we will need to transform our services even further and faster if we are to respond successfully and sustainably to people's care and wellbeing needs in the future.

In Parts 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 we detail our priorities for this transformation, including our approach, priorities for specific population groups and what we will do to support these changes. Implementing these priorities will help us to be as cost-effective as possible, support more people to live independently and focus our work more on effective targeted prevention rather than intensive remedial support. This will include helping people access support, where needed, from friends, family and local community, encouraging local communities to engage more in local volunteering and community improvement. In doing so we will facilitate local capacity building, support people to live the lives they want to live and ensure we can meet the care and support needs of adults when, and only when, their own resources are not sufficient.

We are changing the way we work with people, targeting our limited resources on those who most need them, encouraging active citizenship and making sure that the way we practice helps people to be independent, resilient and connected to friends, family and their community where possible.

This plan is presented in draft form for consultation with the public, with people with care and support needs, families and carers and with professionals and partners prior to formal decision by the Council.

1 Context

Significant challenges are being faced by Bridgend County Borough Council (CBC) and its partners in supporting the health, wellbeing and care of our population and will continue in the next few years. Analysis shows future demand across the region is likely to continue to grow. The Cwm Taf Morgannwg population needs assessment¹ sets out that:

‘Over the next 10 years our population is predicted to rise to 463,809 (3%) and to 475,229 over the next 20 years (5%) we are expecting an increase in the number of people aged 65 years and over, with the most significant increase in those aged 85 years and over. This is going to have a considerable effect on individuals, their communities and the services that support them.’

For people with conditions such as dementia, for example, this is likely to generate significant increases in demand for care, and Bridgend County Borough Council is projected to have the highest increase in the number of people living with dementia in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region through to 2030:

Local Authority	2020	2025	2030	% increase 2020 - 2030
RCT	3,319	3,724	4,207	27%
Merthyr	813	931	1,063	31%
Bridgend	2,139	2,457	2,841	33%

Similar levels of projected increases are noted in the population assessment for people with learning difficulties and disabilities, neurodiversity, mental health challenges and sensory disabilities.

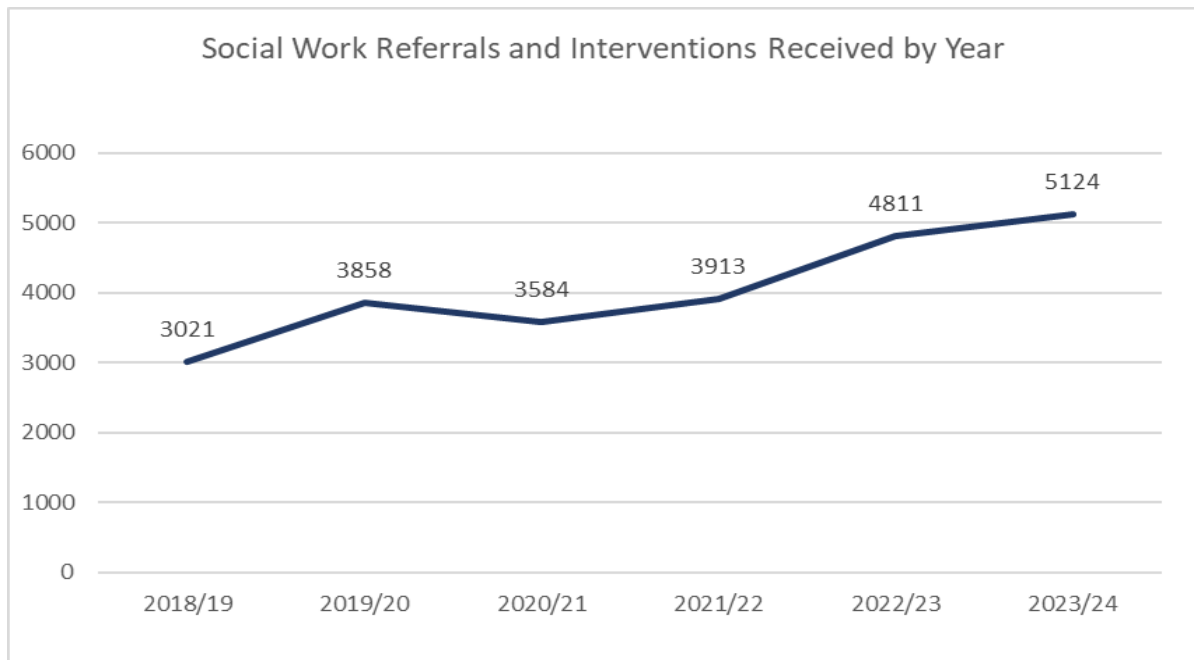
On the supply side, resources and staffing will also continue to be challenging. The Cwm Taf Morgannwg regional market stability report produced in 2023 summarised the situation as:

‘With the data suggesting there are going to be more people living with dementia, chronic conditions and co-morbidities, the services that support them will have to adapt to the changes in demand. The national shortage of staff to deliver key social care and health services is having a significant impact on the capacity to meet growing

¹ CTM Regional Partnership Board: Population Needs Assessment in Cwm Taf Morgannwg 2022-2027

*domiciliary and residential care, which has seen an increase in demand during the pandemic.*²

These factors have been influencing the number of people needing social care for some time, but this has been exacerbated in the last few years. As can be seen in the graph based on Council activity and performance data below, social work referrals and interventions have been increasing on average at a rate of around 13% per annum over the last 5 years.



Similarly, post-pandemic increases in demand for information, advice, assistance and support are evident across all population groups. For example, using internal Bridgend performance and activity tracking data we can see that adult social care contacts have increased since 2022/2021 and assessments have been increasing rapidly in the last two years:

	2020/21	2022/23	2023/24	Increase/Decrease
Number of contacts received by adult social services	4,361	6,044	5,782	-4.3%
Number of new assessments completed	1,389	1,815	1,850	1.9%

Adult safeguarding referrals have also increased recently, suggesting both greater awareness and greater need coming to the attention of the Council:

² CTM Regional Partnership Board: Market Stability Report June 2022.

- There were 634 adult safeguarding referrals received during 2023/24. This is a 130.5% increase when compared to 2018/19 where there were 275 safeguarding referrals.
- In response to these referrals there were 584 formal 'adult at risk' enquiries completed by the Council during 2023/24. This is a 123.8% increase when compared to 2018/19 where there were 261 such enquiries completed.

Demand is not just at the front door. In terms of supporting people with longer-term multiple care needs such as residential care funded by the Council, overall demand from all adults has increased by almost 20% from March 2021 to March 2024, with the number of older people (including mental health) needing this care increasing by more than 19.4% (86 people) in that time.

Year	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024
Drugs and alcohol	1	1	1	1
Physical disability	10	8	12	14
Older people mental health	136	151	170	193
Older people	232	253	246	262
Mental health	46	45	44	38
Learning disability	19	19	20	22
Total	444	477	493	530

This trend is not exclusive to Bridgend. Across Wales the number of people receiving support from their local authority with long-term home accommodation has increased by about 7.5% (from 12,264 to 13,183) between November 2022 and March 2024³.

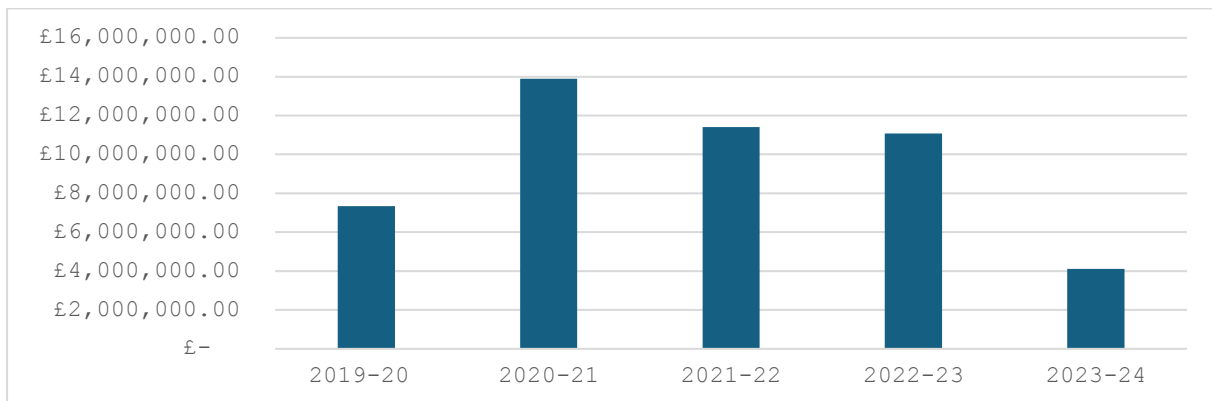
Another example of increasing demand has been in learning disability services, where in addition to residential care being used more often, intensive two-to-one and one-to-one support for individuals in the community has increased; for example, between April 2021 and February 2023 almost 60% of supported living packages have had to increase hours provided to meet increased assessed need, resulting in an overspend of on the original budget for 2023-24.

Similar experiences have been seen in other areas of adult social care including those for people with mental health problems and adults with physical and sensory disabilities. There does not appear to be one single cause of this additional demand, but rather a combination of changing expectations and demand on families and carers,

³ Welsh Government Social Care Statistics Report March 2024

as well as the ongoing impact of austerity, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the capacity of other services in the community to contribute to people’s health, wellbeing and support.

Overall, these demand increases have placed huge pressures on core adult social care budgets in the last few years, and they have been exacerbated by reductions in Welsh Government grants such as Housing Support Grant made available to meet housing support needs in adult services as homelessness has been prioritised, Social Care Pressures and Recovery Grants as the additional funding to support recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic has tailed off. Indeed, the total grants received by the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate from Welsh Government has reduced since 2020-21 as follows:



There have also been direct additional budget pressures because of:

- Increases in cost of contracts simply to maintain existing provision.
- The Real Living Wages pledge made by Welsh Government.
- Recommissioning to secure better quality domiciliary and supported living provision.
- A review of cost of care provision from local residential care providers.

The table below shows the impact of increased demand on adult social care from core spend between 2020/21 and 2023/24.

	2020/21 Actual Spend	2022/23 Actual Spend	2023/24 Revised budget Feb 2024	Increase in spend over 3 years
Adult Social Care Total	£44.985m	£58.148m	£65.949m	£20.964m (46%)

When compared to other local authorities, the spend on adult social care is around the Welsh average based on published data (StatsWales data below):

	Net spend on Social Services 2022/23 (£000s)	Population	Spend per head (£000s)	Compared to BCBC
Wales	2,610,791	3,169,586	0.824	+0.2%
RCT	228,623	241,873	0.945	+14%
Merthyr Tydfil	48,551	60,424	0.803	-2.3%
NPT	124,983	144,386	0.866	+5.3%
Bridgend	121,317	147,539	0.822	0%

Population need is continuing to drive additional demand and the Council as a whole recognises the challenges that adult social care is facing. In its Medium-Term Financial Strategy⁴ approved by Council in February 2024, it committed to an adult social care budget of just over £71m for 2024-25. This is an increase of 7.7% on the 2023-24 revised budget of just under £66m.

However, there are other big pressures on overall Council finances, and it is unlikely that there will be further significant increases in social care budgets over the lifetime of this plan. Indeed, the Council signalled further overall reductions in its Medium Term Financial Strategy:

'Due to the impact of current year and anticipated future pressures, the amount of budget reductions required for 2024-25 is substantial. Over the period of the MTFs the financial forecast for 2024-2028 is currently predicated on £44.9 million of budget reductions being met from Directorate and Corporate budgets...however the assumptions beneath them can change quickly and with an uncertain, but probably more challenging financial settlement likely going forward, this level of reductions could change.'

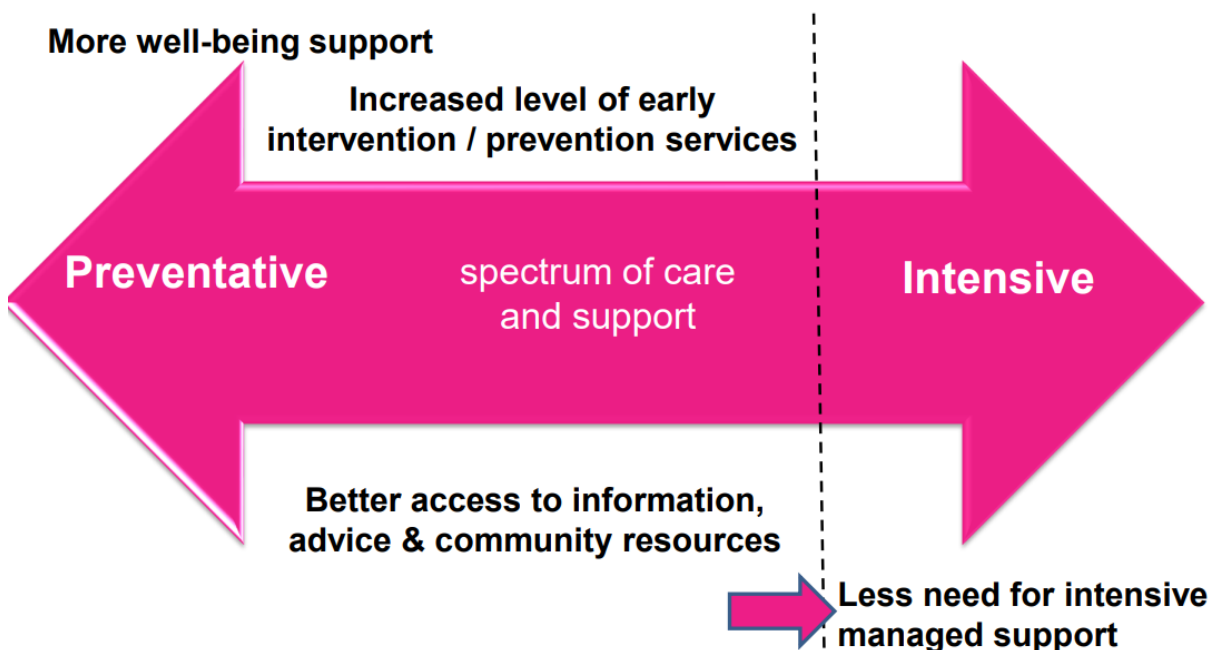
This plan therefore is based on our analysis that, while recognising the huge progress that has been made in adult social care already to reshape services and people's expectations, further transformation is needed to ensure that our services are financially sustainable and that with our partners and our local communities we are effective in meeting need and promoting wellbeing and independence in the future.

We need to work with people, with our local communities, our third and independent sector services and our health partners and other public sector bodies to enable people to help themselves with appropriate information, advice and assistance and preventative support. If we can minimise the number of people who need to be referred to us in the first place, work intensively with people who need care and support to help them live independently, and reduce the need for intensive and long-term

⁴ Bridgend CBC Medium Term Financial Strategy Appendix F February 2024

support, then we have the chance to limit demand, respond more effectively when people do need our services, and encourage a more resilient local population.

To achieve this, we need to make sure that the resources which are available to us are used in the most cost-effective and sustainable ways, and this will require further fundamental changes in how people with care and support needs are helped to live good lives, supported by their own resources and connected to their families, friends and communities, rather than by drawing people into an ongoing reliance on our services. This in turn will need us to engage with local communities in asset-based community development to build local supports which help to prevent people needing more formal care. This focus on prevention is summarised in the following diagram quoted from the Social Care Wales introduction to the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014:



If we do not manage to make this change, then it is clear from the trends to date, that demand will increasingly outstrip available resource and supply. This will put further pressure on our services and resources and may result in people waiting longer for vital care and support. Without progressive statutory services and local community and partner efforts geared to prevention, independence and enabling / reablement in the community, we will be caught in a cycle of increasing demand and inadequate provision.

We set out in the sections that follow the progress that we have already made, what will be different as a result of this plan, and how our sustainable social care wellbeing services will improve outcomes for people and make the best use of our resources.

2 Our progress so far

We are already in the middle of a period of transformation for adult social care in Bridgend. We have set out our way forward this year in two key developments:

- Our adult social care operating model introduces major changes to the way in which our services are organised and interact with each other and the public. We have set a clear direction of travel and are implementing that model.
- Our outcome-focused strengths-based practice model underpins the way in which all our staff are expected to work and respond to people's needs. We have set out our approach, and we are already using it to change practice across the service.

Both are informed by national policy and guidance including:

- The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (Welsh Government, 2015).
- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
- A Healthier Wales Plan (Welsh Government, 2018) and the national Transformation Programme (2018-21).
- Regional Integration Fund (Welsh Government 2022-27) commitment to national models of integrated practice for 2027.

The two models are already having an impact and they underpin all the improvement work we have been doing in Adult Services to date. There is much more to do, however, and we plan to use them to help drive forward our transformation further and faster to promote self-reliance and independence, reduce need for care and support, and encourage people across Bridgend to take a lead responsibility for their own wellbeing and health and for their local community.

2.1 Adult Social Care Operating Model

The operating model sets a blueprint for our services and how they interact with each other and our partners to ensure that we are effective in promoting independence, resilience and community-based care and support. These aspirations are consistent with national policy and legislation and help deliver our priorities to:

- Provide services which increase the number and proportion of people who can live well at home or in the community.
- Work with our partners to build seamless care and support services.
- Help build well-resourced and responsive communities which ensure that people with care and support needs can live well at home.
- Reduce the proportion of people in Bridgend who need long-term intensive care and support from the Council.

The operating model is creating the best possible conditions to allow our staff to work in an outcomes-focused, strengths-based way. It includes strategic actions to deliver the following:

- A three-tier operating model with clear delineation between early intervention and prevention, long-term generic and specialist social work teams.
- At the early intervention and prevention tier a multi-disciplinary team with Social Work Practitioners, Nurse, Occupational Therapists and good links with Local Community Connectors, the Carer's Wellbeing Service and the third sector.
- A focus on maximising community assets and using preventative approaches to avoid early entry to the higher, specialist tiers, and people being assessed and supported for no longer than 12 weeks.
- At the long-term integrated locality teams tier, work within primary care networks and cluster teams with a wider brief and stronger support ensuring they can access community and partner agency resources to support individuals.
- At the specialist tier new arrangements for social care mental health, older persons mental health, safeguarding, learning disability, commissioning for complex needs and substance misuse support.

The operating model will help us to take our programme of transformation forward further and faster and make even better use of our resources by:

- Helping people to make best use of their local support and resources.
- Reducing people's reliance on social care services.
- Promoting independence and family and community-based support.

2.2 Outcomes-Focused Strengths-Based Practice

To be successful in delivering a service which promotes independence and resilience, maximises the number of people who live well without care and support, and reduces the number of people relying on intensive and long-term social care, needs a shared approach and consistent practice across our workforce. We need all our staff to work in a strengths-based way, even where this might cause some short-term discomfort or challenges. To secure this, our new practice model was launched in April 2023. It is based on ten principles of practice:

- We will engage with individuals, build relationships in a spirit of collaboration and person-centred care.
- People are their own experts on their own lives. We will encourage the person to describe what matters to them in their own words or own way, thereby promoting choice and control.
- People may need help to do this. We will listen actively and check that we have understood.
- We will listen out for, affirm, and encourage people to use their own strengths and capabilities.
- Safeguarding – we will be alert to risks and support people to take steps to reduce or eliminate them.
- We will assist the person to clarify their own outcomes that emerge from collaborative, sensitive conversations.
- We will be open and honest about our own views about what we can do and are unable to do.

- We acknowledge that people’s carers, their families, their local community, and our professional colleagues can be valuable contributors in supporting a person to achieve their outcomes.
- We will support informal carers in the same way with their own outcomes, and as care partners where appropriate.
- We will respect cultural considerations, including language, and the Welsh language ‘Active Offer.’ We are committed to upholding and implementing the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion.

We have already laid the foundations in this area –we have worked hard to implement service-wide guidelines for staff and managers in areas such as supervision, quality assurance and direct work with adults. We plan to move forward with implementation at greater pace. Our key priorities are:

- To ensure that all staff are working within a common ‘Strengths and Outcomes’ framework and the partners understand and support it.
- To successfully develop and disseminate further clear guidance for managers and workers on key areas of practice including strength-based reflective practice and supervision.
- To strengthen management oversight of practice through outcomes ‘surgeries’ providing real time quality assurance, ensuring a culture and practice of promoting independence and connection, reducing dependency on commissioned services.
- To successfully revise and implement the framework for quality assurance which evidences how effective our practice is.
- To ensure better outcomes for people without the need for Council commissioned or provided care and support.

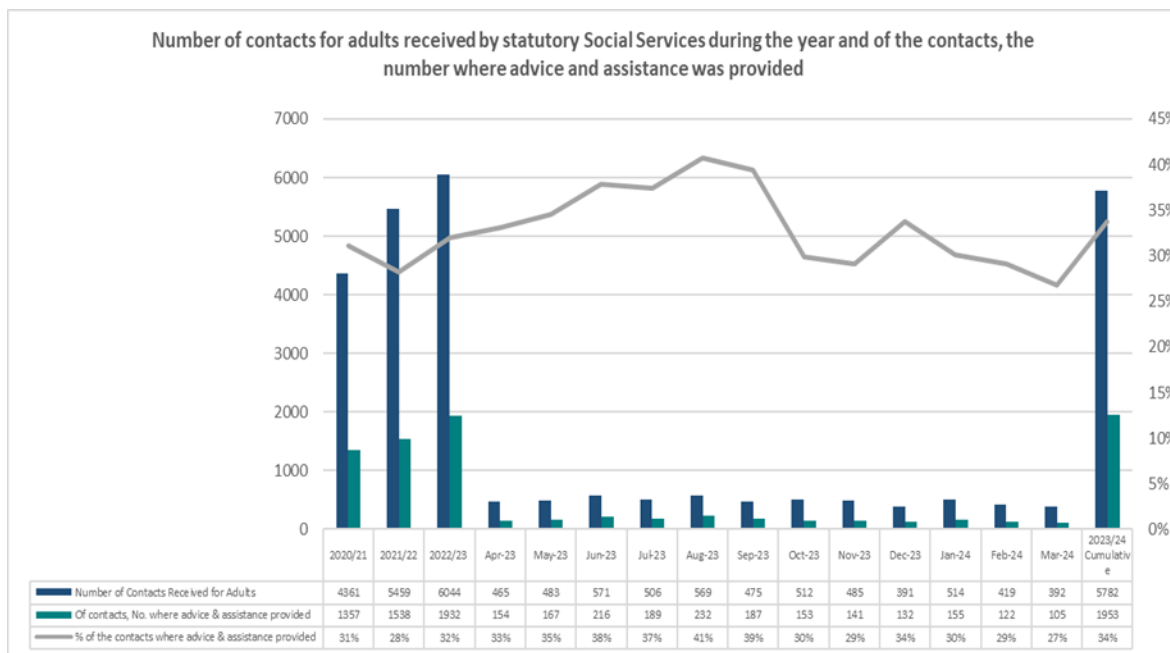
To achieve these, we will:

- Deliver an ongoing comprehensive ongoing training and development programme to support consistent implementation of the model of practice to ensure it is embedded across the service and supported in supervision and peer support.
- Ensure that learning from inspection and reviews is systematically embedded through learning, training and development and follow up quality assurance and review.
- Ensure the successful implementation of a quality assurance framework across the service.
- Ensure effective governance through our ‘outcomes surgeries’.
- Deliver an ongoing management and leadership development programme to support all managers in adult social care to develop their skills in leading teams and services.

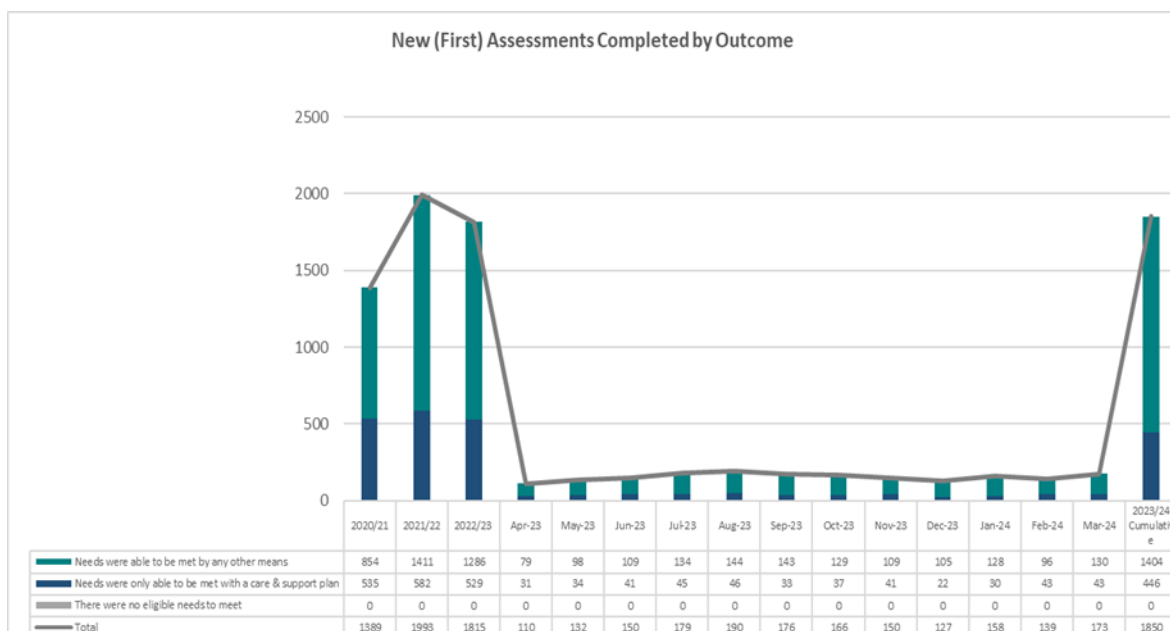
2.3 Impact to date

The work we have done on both practice and operating models has already had an impact. In the graph below covering 2023/24, based on internal performance data,

there has been a slight increase in the proportion of contacts proceeding to advice/assistance during 2023/24 when compared to 2022/23.



In terms of recent performance on the proportion of assessments which result in a care and support plan, the proportion has decreased from 29% in 2022/23 down to 24% during 2023/24, indicating that more assessments are leading to alternatives to formal plans.



These are good indications that practice is changing, and that Bridgend is working with people to find solutions to wellbeing challenges which do not always need formal social care assessments or care and support plans. There have been no indications (such as increase in complaints) that these solutions are any less satisfactory or that they

achieve less successful outcomes – but the Council will continue to pay close attention to feedback from people and professionals.

However, given the scale of the challenges facing the Council which we outlined in section 2 of this plan, it is clear that we need to move forward with further and faster transformation of services and of professional practice. We also need to strengthen engagement and involvement of individuals and get ever-improved feedback on how well we are supporting people to ensure their needs are met. The following sections describe what else, in addition to the implementation of practice and operating models, that we plan to deliver in 2024-27 to make this happen.

3 Our service transformation priorities

Our basic purpose as a Council responsible for adult social care is to exercise our legal and professional duty to help those who need care and support in Bridgend to have the best possible outcomes and experiences in their life. We remain committed to this, to the Directorate principles and standards (summarised in the appendix), and to the principles underlying the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014:

- Voice and control – putting the individual and their needs, at the centre of their care, and giving them a voice in (and control over) reaching the outcomes that help them achieve well-being.
- Prevention and early intervention – increasing effective preventative services within the community to reduce the number of adults who need intensive or substitute care.
- Well-being – supporting people to achieve their own well-being and measuring the success of care and support.
- Co-production – encouraging people to become more involved in the design and delivery of services.

The evidence base behind these principles, and the impact they can have when applied effectively, is clear. However, we can do much more as a Council to transform how we help people to minimise their dependence on formal care and support and encourage them to live as independently as possible, connected to their family, friends, and local communities. In particular, we think that evidence from Professor John Bolton at the Institute of Public Care following work with Local Government Association in England and Welsh Local Government Association and Welsh Government in Wales gives us a good starting point for key areas that we need to get right in the next stage of our transformation to enable us to manage demand effectively:

- Managing demand through the front door of the Council - handling and resolving initial enquiries more effectively.
- Managing demand from acute hospitals – supporting people to recover and regain skills and minimising poor discharges which result in unnecessary care and returns to hospital.
- Effective short-term interventions for people in the community – short term help that may reduce or eliminate the need for longer-term solutions.
- Redesigning care and support for people with long-term needs - helping people with long-term conditions gain opportunities for greater independence in the longer term.
- Investing in place-based local approaches, understanding the partners and assets within each local community and connecting people to that, to help people live well and build their local social capital.
- Developing the workforce to better support people – building skills in working with people to promote independence.
- Governance and management arrangements to sustain improvement – holding people to account for the delivery of their desired outcomes.

We have made progress in all these areas, but we recognise that we need to drive forward further and faster to build an approach that encourages more people to live as independently as possible within their local community, and only to rely on our services when they need help to regain independence or help to live as independently as possible in the longer term.

This is not simply about resources and local authority capacity; it is also about promoting people's voice and control, encouraging them to maintain their own wellbeing and promoting a healthy, fulfilling lifestyle for people even where they need care and support. Our approach continues to accord with national policy and guidance. For example, the recent Welsh Government Statement of Intent 'Building Capacity through Community Care' (2023)⁵ summarised the issues to be tackled as:

'There is currently a clear imbalance in our health and social care system. Specifically, there are missed opportunities for prevention and early intervention in the community, and people stranded in acute hospital and care home settings. This is leading to people being disadvantaged and 'what matters to them' not being achieved, including at the end of life.'

We have identified the following five key priorities based on evidence of what works in John Bolton's work which we will use to drive forward our transformation of adult services and enable us to address the challenges described above. If we are successful in delivering these priorities and in implementing our operating and practice models then we will have a very different service, more manageable demand and better outcomes for our population.

We will closely monitor our progress and adjust our priorities annually as needed. Our priorities are shared across Adult Social Care, and they apply to all our population groups and cohorts.

Bridgend 5 Adult Social Care Service Transformation Objectives

- Manage demand through the front door of the Council – to handle and resolve initial enquiries more effectively.
- Work with partners to manage demand from acute hospitals – supporting people to recover and regain skills and minimising poor discharges which result in unnecessary care and returns to hospital.
- Increase the number and range of effective short-term interventions for people in the community – short term help to reduce or eliminate the need for longer-term solutions.
- Promote asset-based community and targeted preventative support to help people live well in thriving and supportive communities.
- Work with partners to redesign care and support for people with long term needs - help people with long-term conditions to gain opportunities for greater independence in the longer term.

⁵ Welsh Govt: Building Capacity through Community Care – Further Faster Welsh Government Statement of Intent 2023

Each of the adult social care priorities is described below.

3.1 Manage demand on the front door of the Council.

There is more that we can do to ensure that there is an effective Council front door which finds solutions for people and their problems and that can demonstrate its impact in terms of diversions from formal care and support and delivering good outcomes. We need to challenge ourselves to make sure we are delivering these services in the most efficient and effective ways possible, and that wherever appropriate, the social care front door responsibly sign-posts elsewhere for help, particularly where needs are better met outside of social care. We have introduced our new operating model across adult social care to ensure that our front door response is as effective as possible in helping people to explore solutions other than social care wherever appropriate.

We will continue to increase the proportion of people being helped in a way that resolves the problems they have at the point of initial contact rather than needing a more in-depth assessment for adult social care.

We will further reduce the proportion of people who receive a social work assessment but who do not receive any services as a result. This cohort can be better helped prior to receiving a full assessment by getting the right information, advice and assistance to help them with solutions which rest within their own resources, their community, their family and friends, and who do not require a package of formal care. We will make sure that our resources are not “wasted” on undertaking disproportionate assessments when there are relatively straight forward solutions available on which front line staff should be able to advise.

3.2 Work with partners to manage demand from hospitals.

There is evidence from across England and Wales that adults leaving hospital can be ‘over-prescribed’ the level of care they require. A significant number of direct permanent admissions to residential care from acute hospital beds are avoidable if alternatives are available. There is also evidence that due to pressures on beds some people who have ongoing healthcare needs leave hospital without the right multi-disciplinary assessment of those needs.

The services offered to a person needing care and support at the point of discharge make a significant difference to their longer-term outcomes. For example, research has shown that too often older people placed in a standard residential care bed on a short-term basis will in fact remain in that bed for the long-term. Conversely for those with similar assessed needs placed in an intermediate care bed with a focus on helping people’s recovery, the majority will return home. We are developing our services to be more focused on recovery; for example, we already have a small number of community beds, known as ‘discharge to recover and assess’ beds (D2RA), in Bridgend but the numbers are not sufficient. There are not currently any community hospitals in Bridgend which means there is more pressure on other community services.

We are clear that people in Bridgend should not go directly into long-term residential care or be subject to long-term intensive care at home without first having had reablement support and the opportunity to regain maximum independence.

To help achieve this we will ensure that we are assessing more people leaving hospital at the right points and ensuring that their needs are not overstated or that they are assessed either too early or inappropriately. We will work with our health colleagues more effectively to deliver the best outcomes for people. Our prime aim will always be to help the person to return home and to live as independently as possible, and we will make sure that our arrangements with hospitals do not inadvertently undermine this aim. The recent development of D2RA within the region is designed to enable this to become operational across all three acute sites.

We will review our discharge arrangements and services to ensure they offer the most effective environment for speedy discharge to aid recovery for all adults. We are in the process of implementing and embedding national D2RA across the region, which is developing new pathways for people and using a trusted assessor model to support discharges.

We will also ensure there is timely, targeted, and effective use of reablement and rehabilitation that has a focus on enabling independence and self-management and avoiding the over-prescription of care. The remodelling of our in-house support at home service is seeking to ensure that at least 80% of people will have a short-term enabling/reablement intervention before any long-term care packages will be commissioned. We will ensure that health professionals managing medical conditions and delivering therapeutic help work closely with those offering reablement/rehabilitation to deliver the persons outcomes, and finally ensure that there are sufficient intermediate care type services available in the community to support discharge.

3.3 Increase short-term interventions in the community.

Most people come to social care when they are in some kind of crisis. We want to make sure that when this happens, we do not inadvertently create unnecessary long-term reliance. In some instances, the response must not be to assess the person when they are in their crisis but to find a way of helping them to address any immediate risks whilst options for the future are tried and explored.

The needs from the acute sector can dominate the overall demands on our social care services if this is not well managed. It is important that people who are referred through the community are given the same range of short-term support as those who may have been referred from hospital. We want effective enabling/reablement to be available as an approach to assisting anyone with social care needs, along with a wide range of aids and adaptations essential to helping people regain or maintain independence.

Before anyone is assessed for long-term support, there needs to be a period in which they can be assisted to help manage their long-term condition and retain or regain the independence they may have temporarily lost. We will ensure that for every person who identifies with a current (eligible) set of needs there is consideration of the short-term assistance that could be offered to assist them in regaining independence or to

better manage their condition. Our aim is that as described previously at least 80% of people will not have a long-term package of care unless they have had a short-term therapy led reablement support first.

3.4 Promote community-based prevention.

As a Directorate and as a wider Council we are working together with partners, including the third and independent sector, to support people to stay well at home and in their local community, and so avoid the need to visit our front door in the first place. Our community hubs, life centres and other community services make a huge contribution to the wellbeing of adults and older people across the County Borough.

We also know that many parts of the Council, as well as universal community services such as cultural and leisure, are very important in helping create positive, supportive, and sustainable communities in Bridgend. We invest significant amounts of taxpayers' money in these services through direct delivery and commissioning. We will continue to build on the good practice in place to support people via our cultural and leisure partners who have already in place support to targeted population groups such as support to carers and people with cognitive issues. We will make sure that these services are effective at helping adults with their health and wellbeing, and that their needs do not escalate to require social care. There are many people playing different important roles in their local communities, and we will work closely with our partners in each community. Our Local Community Coordinators will support the development of services and approaches that reflect what people need to stay well and connected.

Support for citizens goes much further than this though. We want to work with local communities to build more asset-based voluntary capacity to support people who need help, and we want to encourage more people to volunteer and contribute to the overall wellbeing of their local communities. As a Council we will work to ensure that in every community in Bridgend there is sufficient wellbeing and preventative groups and activities to support people with care and support needs to live well, and we will continue to work with our partners and the rest of the Council to review where these arrangements are working and where they need to be developed further.

3.5 Redesign care and support for people with long-term needs.

We want to ensure that every person within the formal social care system has a plan of care and support which helps to maximise their opportunities for living independently. We will build on the work we have progressed since the introduction of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 to focus further on what people can do for themselves, how their families, neighbours, friends and the wider community can assist them, and how any formal care will support and build on their strengths and capabilities rather than take agency or control away from the person. We will work with people to help them to use their own resources to meet their needs in areas such as transport, leisure and occupation.

This approach can have a big impact on the size and the type of care and support a person might require and can lend itself much more to personalised support through community connections and direct payments. Progression planning is an important

concept underpinning our work, emphasising as it does the potential for every person to live well and as independently as possible.

In all forms of care and support, whatever the plan, it is possible either to create an institutionalising experience that encourages dependency on care, or to create an environment that helps to promote people's independence. We are committed to the principles of "promoting independence," enabling connection and progression and to helping people to access a wide range of aids and adaptations essential to helping them regain or maintain independence. We will ensure that people are not unnecessarily reliant on care to live well. The way that the care is delivered has a huge influence on dependency, not just the health conditions or the needs of the person alone.

4 Priorities for particular population groups

In addition to the five key priorities and the operating and practice models which apply to all adult social care described above, there are three areas where we will focus on particular population cohorts to ensure that the particular issues facing them are addressed as part of our overall plan for 2024-27. They are:

- Learning disability transformation.
- Adult community mental health.
- Substance Misuse
- Adults with lifelong conditions or complex care needs.

For each area the Directorate has prepared a detailed plan with delivery priorities and outcome measures. Each plan has a governance framework and implementation programme and there is a body with responsibility for delivering the plan and reporting to the Cabinet and Corporate Management Board on progress.

4.1 Learning Disability

The evidence base which underpins care and support provision is improving all the time. Our services need to constantly improve, and they need to draw on this evolving evidence base to ensure they help secure the best possible outcomes. We are clear that our learning disability services need to progress significantly over the next 3 years, to promote more strengths-based support, encourage greater independence and help people build resilience. We have a clear plan for moving forward. Our key objectives in this area are:

- To systematically implement progression as a core model of practice, recognising and reflecting people's strengths, capabilities, and aspirations for a good life in line with our recently launched new practice model.
- To review needs and services in key internal and commissioned services for learning disability to ensure they are delivered cost effectively and drawing on latest evidence of impact.
- To ensure that where there needs to be changes in delivery to focus more on employment and skills (and less day-time activity), and they are addressed by clear strategies and implementation plans.
- To ensure that we work closely and effectively with key partners to deliver these service improvements.
- To ensure that all reviews are conducted co-productively so that people with care and support needs are central to service development.

The key vehicle for achieving these changes is our learning disability transformation programme which will:

- Reduce the level of overservicing and budget overspends that has emerged in recent years.
- Enable staff to use the Progression Approach and the Outcome Focused Strengths Based Practice Model in learning disability services more consistently.

- Develop local day employment opportunities to better meet the varying degrees of complexities of the local population. This relates to the modernisation of current day services and significantly strengthening community integration and supported employment pathways for people with learning disabilities.
- Review how we commission and provide services for people with a learning disability including the use of technology.
- Improve operational, monitoring, and planning systems and processes to support the delivery of care and support in line with the Progression Approach. This includes a brokerage for specialist, complex placements.

4.2 Adult Community Mental Health

The services which we run with our partners to meet the needs of adults with mental health challenges are developing all the time. We think there is more that we can do together to ensure that our practices and our services offer the most effective strengths-based support, promoting independence and resilience. We will be informed by national policy in this area including:

- The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (Welsh Government, 2015).
- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
- A Healthier Wales Plan (Welsh Government, 2018) and the national Transformation Programme (2018-21).
- Regional Integration Fund (Welsh Government 2022-27) commitment to promote national models of integrated practice for 2027.
- The Welsh Government 'Together for Mental Health' new strategy currently out for national consultation.

Overall, our objectives are to:

- Review needs and services in key internal and commissioned services for mental health, to ensure they are delivered cost effectively and draw on latest evidence of impact.
- Ensure that where there are gaps in provision or emerging needs they are addressed by clear strategies and implementation plans.
- Ensure that we work closely and effectively with key partners to deliver these service improvements.
- Ensure that all reviews are conducted co-productively so that people with care and support needs are central to service development.

To deliver this we will implement the Adult Community Mental Health Services Strategy which is focused on the following joint health and social care priorities, all of which will contribute to our capacity to intervene effectively early, help people build resilience and promote longer-term independence:

- Support people in crisis through a wellbeing retreat commissioned by the NHS and run by the third sector.
- Improve rehabilitation accommodation support pathways.

- Work with our Housing colleagues in the local authority to commission specialist mental health residential and supported living accommodation including local accommodation provision for those that need it.

Substance Misuse

Substance misuse services are delivered within four levels or tiers in Bridgend and form part of a regional driven service, these tiers being:

Tier 1 Prevention and early identification / intervention

Tier 2 Advice and Support Services

Tier 3 Specialist Treatment Services

Tier 4 Inpatient Detoxification and Residential Rehabilitation

Across the region Tier 1 and 2 services are provided by the independent sector who are commissioned via the regional team and tier 3 and tier 4 detoxification services are led by CTM Health Board in partnership with the local authorities. The governance of these services is overseen by a statutory partnership board known as the Area Planning Board supported by the regional substance misuse team. The priorities for 2024/2025 are to support a partnership response to the reduction of fatal and non-fatal drug poisonings, to continue to support the Service User Involvement agenda across CTM, work to improve the services in line with national direction for Tier 1 and 2 services.

4.3 Adults with Lifelong Conditions or Complex Care Needs

We are proud of our long record of working closely with our colleagues in health and voluntary services to build seamless responses to people with health, care and wellbeing needs. However, we are clear that our services for adults with lifelong conditions and complex care needs need to move forward significantly over the next few years, and that together we need to ensure that they are doing the most possible to promote strengths-based practice, greater independence and resilience. Our plans in this area will be held within an Adults with Lifelong Conditions or Complex Care Needs Commissioning Strategy and are informed by the national policy context in this area including:

- The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (Welsh Government, 2015).
- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
- A Healthier Wales Plan (Welsh Government, 2018) and the national Transformation Programme (2018-21).
- Regional Integration Fund (Welsh Government 2022-27) commitment to promote national models of integrated practice for 2027.

Our key objectives are:

- To develop local capacity in community, residential and nursing provision with partners to minimise the reliance on hospital provision.
- Work with the Health Board to create more community discharge to recover and assess beds in Bridgend CBC
- To extend the level of joint working across the health, voluntary and care sectors so that people with more complex and longer-term care needs experience seamless care and support.

The key strategic actions we will focus on will involve the delivery of our commissioning strategy and include the following:

- Work with our colleagues in Housing to develop Housing with Care provision sufficient to meet future need and demand, and reprofile BCBC's accommodation-based services (both internally and externally) to ensure the most appropriate and best levels of care can be achieved.
- Implement the 'reablement reset' programme in our internal services to reshape existing provision.
- Remodel our internal domiciliary services to take a more outcome-focused and strengths-based approach and in line with the new operating model.
- Explore the most appropriate delivery models and recommission locality-based domiciliary care services to meet quality and capacity demands.
- Expand and diversify our Shared Lives (Adult Placement) Scheme.
- Develop a business case for Core & Cluster Accommodation / Community Living Networks, Supported Living, and Specialist Supported Living (Closer to Home) provision to achieve a better balance with residential provision.
- Better match our emergency, short stay and respite provision to the needs of our local population and redesign our services so they meet these needs.
- Expand the capacity and responsiveness of specialist care and support for people at home or in the community.
- Optimise existing BCBC community resources and assets with local partners to offer a wider range of appropriate and accessible daytime or evening support, including weekends.
- Help people to access a wide range of technology, aids and adaptations essential to helping people regain or maintain independence.

5 Supporting Priorities

To help us deliver on the priorities above we will undertake support actions on public engagement, our people, work with partners and technology. They are:

5.1 Public engagement, participation and co-production

- All services and interventions to have customer feedback mechanisms to support continuous improvement.
- We will develop and implement an engagement and involvement framework so that people we work with have an opportunity to become meaningfully involved in all aspects of the work of adult social care in Bridgend.
- We will ensure that quality assurance (QA) of practice enables the quality and effectiveness of practice to be evaluated through the lens of the experience of the people who we work with.
- We will develop a participation charter so the experience of the people who use adult social care is understood and used to enhance our practice.

5.2 Our people

The effectiveness of our services relies fundamentally on our teams of skilled, well supported and appropriately motivated staff who are able to support people, often at the most challenging points in their lives. Recruitment and retention of staff in adult social care has never been easy, and since the pandemic it has become significantly more difficult. We are starting to see an improving picture of being able to recruit and retain to core staffing groups as we have had a comprehensive programme to address this. Our plan is to strengthen our core staff groups and for less reliance on agency staff in some areas. Our key objectives in this area are:

- To improve the experience of our workforce so they feel consistently well supported and valued.
- To get the right balance of skills and experience in our teams to achieve best outcomes for people.
- To retain and recruit a high standard of practitioner to our service.

We need our staff to continue to move forward with us as we build a new and more effective relationship with people who need care and support. There are a range of very particular skills and ways of working which we need to apply, for example:

- All staff understand the options in the community and to where people could be sign-posted and be able to see the outcomes of their work.
- Practitioners in the hospital and those working in the community are able to assess for the most appropriate intervention that will assist a person maximise their opportunities for independence post-discharge.
- Staff working in the post-hospital discharge services have the skills to assist people in reaching their maximum potential.
- Staff working in domiciliary care enabling/reabling services understand the ways in which they can help a person regain confidence and skills for daily living.

- Staff working in the community understand the various conditions that people might have and the best way to assist those people, both to live with their long-term conditions and reduce their need for longer term services, where appropriate.
- Staff in residential and nursing care understand the nature of the person's care and support needs and how these can be assisted.
- All staff understand how to manage risk in order to get the right balance between assisting people to gain independence and protecting people from harm.

Many of our colleagues lead the way in these areas and demonstrate through the quality of their work that they have people's long-term wellbeing at the forefront of their practice, but there is always more to do. Our operating model and practice model delivery plans set the direction for this ongoing shift in the way we work. More broadly we will work with colleagues in the Council and our partner agencies as follows:

- We will improve support and well-being for the workforce through systematically implementing the standards in a social care charter including best practice standards for caseloads, management support through supervision, flexible working practices and support dedicated time for research and reflection.
- We will ensure that the benefits of living and working in Bridgend are effectively promoted and success is celebrated so that the reputation of the Council as a good adult social care employer is enhanced.
- We will ensure timely and effective well-being support to our workforce including through line management, peer support and timely access to specialist support.
- We will continuously improve our recruitment processes, drawing on marketing expertise to enhance campaigns and ensure the most efficient selection processes.
- We will work with other local authorities in Wales to strategically manage the relationship with agency workforce.

5.3 Seamless Working with Partners

The huge progress towards seamless health, care and wellbeing services in the community have been noted in other priorities in this plan. We want to move further and faster on this in the next three years to build a care and support environment in which all our citizens will have confidence. This will require close co-operation between partners and the breaking down of traditional professional barriers, but we are clear it is worth doing, to enable us to offer comprehensive and cohesive community-based support to promote wellbeing and meet health and care needs throughout the County Borough. Without stronger community-based support from the voluntary and health services the ability of our more formal social and health care services to cope with future demand will be severely compromised. Support for this priority is evident in national policy such as:

- The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (Welsh Government, 2015).
- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
- A Healthier Wales Plan (Welsh Government, 2018)

Our key objectives in this area are:

- To work more effectively with partners at operational service and strategic levels to agree shared priorities for service improvement and implement them.
- To ensure there is a clear offer that partners make jointly for people in need of care or support in every local community in Bridgend, and that this is based on a 'Strengths and Outcomes' approach.
- To secure a joint plan that partners have agreed for a shared model of integrated or aligned care based on local network clusters / localities across Bridgend.
- Work with public health and partners to ensure our priorities are linked to the evidence-based population health data set.
- To have a strong and effective shared approach to adult safeguarding understood and implemented by agencies and practitioners across Bridgend.

The key strategic actions we will take include:

- We will work with partners to review the effectiveness of our current inter-agency arrangements and agree where and how they can be improved.
- We will agree a shared approach with partners to a future integrated service model for all practice clusters / localities across the County Borough, and we will agree an implementation and delivery plan for the model and work together to implement it.
- We will work with partners across the region to deepen integrated and aligned working through enhanced joint governance arrangements and, if appropriate, integrated leadership arrangements.

5.4 Technology-enabled care, intelligence and information systems

Bridgend is currently using the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) which is a key information system supporting effective practice. Work is underway both nationally and locally to replace this system and Bridgend needs to be able to utilise the system effectively and to appropriately share information with our partners, and we also need to continue to improve our capacity to analyse individual and population data to inform our plans and practices. Our key objectives in this area are:

- To ensure that the information that operational staff and managers are using is of the highest possible quality.
- That our information can be shared appropriately more often and more usefully with partners.

The key strategic actions we will undertake include:

- Work with partners regionally and nationally ensure that social care teams have an effective case management IT system which enables integrated working and supports strengths and outcomes-based practice and the safeguarding and protection of adults.
- Continue to enhance the use of business intelligence in social care teams, through live performance dashboards which support safe and effective practice and management oversight and decision making.

Bridgend is also a leading authority in Wales in the development and roll-out of telecare support and the development of digital systems to support people in their own homes. In addition to the wide range of aids and adaptations which are delivered via the Council and NHS and are essential to helping people regain or maintain independence, the Council will invest in the further development of digitally based services such as:

- Self-assessment
- Self-support
- Prompt systems
- Personal alarms
- Companion and contact services
- Care and repair support
- Fall detectors, intruder detectors.
- Health and wellbeing observation systems
- The digital infrastructure to makes sure that these services are equally accessible across all parts of the County Borough.

31st October 2024

Appendix 1– Summary of key objectives

Priority area	Key objectives
Adult Social Care Operating Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide services which increase the number and proportion of people who can cope well at home or in the community. • Work with our partners to build seamless care and support services. • Help build well-resourced and responsive communities which ensure that people with care and support needs can live well at home. • Reduce the proportion of people in Bridgend who need long-term intensive care and support from the Council.
Adult Social Care Outcomes-Focused Strengths-Based Practice Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that all staff are working within a common 'Strengths and Outcomes' framework and the partners understand and support it. • To successfully develop and disseminate further clear guidance for managers and workers on key areas of practice including strength-based reflective practice and supervision. • To strengthen management oversight of practice through outcomes 'surgeries' providing real time quality assurance, ensuring a culture and practice of promoting independence and connection. • To successfully revise and implement the framework for quality assurance which evidences how effective our practice is. • To ensure better outcomes for people without the need for Council commissioned or provided care and support.
Adult Social Care Transforming Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage demand through the front door of the Council by handling and resolving initial enquiries more effectively. • Work with partners to manage demand from acute hospitals by minimising poor discharges which result in unnecessary care provision and returns to hospital. • Increase the number and range of effective short-term interventions for people in the community through short term help to reduce or eliminate the need for longer-term solutions. • Promote asset-based community and voluntary preventative support to help people live well in thriving and supportive communities. • Redesign care and support for people with long term needs by helping people with long-term conditions gain opportunities for greater independence in the longer term.

Priority area	Key objectives
<p>Learning Disability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To systematically implement progression as a core model of practice – recognising and reflecting people’s strengths, capabilities, and aspirations for a good life in line with our recently launched new practice model. • To review needs and services in key internal and commissioned services for learning disability to ensure they are delivered cost effectively and drawing on latest evidence of impact. • To ensure that where there needs to be changes in delivery to focus more on employment and skills, (and less day-time activity) they are addressed by clear strategies and implementation plans. • To ensure that we work closely and effectively with key partners to deliver these service improvements. • To ensure that all reviews are conducted co-productively so that people with care and support needs are central to service development.
<p>Adult Community Mental Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review needs and services in key internal and commissioned services for mental health, to ensure they are delivered cost effectively and draw on latest evidence of impact. • Ensure that where there are gaps in provision or emerging needs they are addressed by clear strategies and implementation plans. • Ensure that we work closely and effectively with key partners to deliver these service improvements. • Ensure that all reviews are conducted co-productively so that people with care and support needs are central to service development.

Priority area	Key objectives
<p>Adults with Lifelong Conditions or Complex Care Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with our colleagues in Housing to develop Housing with Care provision sufficient to meet future need and demand, and reprofile BCBC’s accommodation-based services. • Implement the ‘reablement reset’ programme in our internal services to reshape existing provision. • Remodel our internal domiciliary services to take a more outcome-focused and strengths-based approach and in line with the new operating model. • Explore the most appropriate delivery models and recommission locality-based domiciliary care services to meet quality and capacity demands. • Expand and diversify our Shared Lives (Adult Placement) Scheme. • Develop a business case for Core & Cluster Accommodation / Community Living Networks, Supported Living, and Specialist Supported Living (Closer to Home) provision to achieve a better balance with residential provision. • Work with partners to develop a new multi-disciplinary service to help people with disabilities or sensory loss to access support and adaptations to help them live at home. • Better match our emergency, short stay and respite provision to the needs of our local population and redesign our services so they meet these needs. • Expand the capacity and responsiveness of specialist care and support for people at home or in the community. • Help people to access a wide range of technology, aids and adaptations essential to helping people regain or maintain independence.

Priority area	Key objectives
<p>Adult Social Care Supporting Priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a stable, supported, well-motivated workforce, good retention and recruitment, leading to an optimal mix of skills and capabilities, with a reputation of being a safe, supportive, reflective organisation that professionals want to work for. • Work nationally, regionally and at a local level on the procurement of a replacement system for its current case management IT System (CareDirector (WCCIS)). • Deliver an ongoing comprehensive ongoing training and development programme to support consistent implementation of the model of practice to ensure it is embedded across the service and supported in supervision and peer support. • Ensure that learning from inspection and reviews is systematically embedded through learning, training and development and follow up quality assurance and review. • Deliver an ongoing management and leadership development programme to support all managers in adult social care to develop their skills in leading teams and services

Appendix 2: Related Plans

The plan is located within a wider programme of development being undertaken by the Council in partnership with the people and communities of Bridgend, statutory and non-statutory partners which include:

- Progressing the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plans for 2024 onwards.
- The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board (RPB) Population Needs Assessment and Area Plan which set out an assessment of the needs of the populations of Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil and is also an assessment of the range of health, social care and wellbeing services needed to meet those needs.
- The priorities of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board (RSB) which provides strategic leadership for safeguarding children and adults at risk across the region.
- Contributing to the Council's medium-term financial strategy (MTFS).
- Legislation set out in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (2014), the Regulation and Inspection of Care Act (2016), the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) and other statute and guidance.

Appendix 3: Principles and Standards

Like colleagues across the Council, we are all committed to the following working principles:

- Promoting choice and control for the people we work with by actively listening, and acting on what people tell us matters to them.
- Treating people with respect for them, their culture, their characteristics and beliefs, and their language.
- Taking relationship-based approaches with people, helping them to have autonomy and reach their full potential.
- Being outcomes focused and strengths-based in understanding and acting upon what matters to the people we support.
- Working in a constructive and creative professional partnership with our colleagues.
- Respecting people's privacy and dignity.
- Safeguarding and protecting people whenever needed.
- Seeking greater equality and inclusion for people who need care and support.

We have high standards in adult social care and expect of ourselves and our colleagues that we:

- Be respectful of each other's work.
- Work as a team with colleagues in the Council and partner agencies, to secure the best possible outcomes for people in need of care and support.

- Listen and have open and honest styles of communication.
- Commit to reflection, understanding and acting on our learning.
- Work with others to improve systems, practice and process where this will improve outcomes for people.
- Be passionate and motivated about the work we do and the difference we make.
- Be mindful of our own and our colleague's wellbeing.
- Work equitably and fairly, creatively, and innovatively.
- Observe cultural considerations, including language.

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Appendix 2

Bridgend County Borough Council

Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate, Adults Social Care Service

Building on Strengths

A Three-Year Plan for Sustainable Care and Support for Adults in Bridgend

Action Plan – Year 1 – 2024-25

Introduction

This document covers the action plan and the metrics which underpin the delivery of the 'Building on Strengths' Plan for Sustainable Care and Support for Adults in Bridgend. It should be read as the appendix to that plan. The plan brings together all of the key planned improvements in adult social care in Bridgend and summarises their objectives and priorities.

This appendix specifies the actions which will be taken in the first year of the plan to move forward with delivery, and the metrics which will be used to judge progress. The metrics included in this document are those which specifically measure the inputs, outputs and outcomes which will indicate whether and how the plan is being successful. It includes some but not all metrics collected by the Directorate or returned to Welsh Government in for example, the Welsh Government Performance and Improvement Framework for Social Services Measuring Activity and Performance Additional Guidance 2023-24.

It is intended that the template below will be updated on a quarterly basis allowing the Directorate to note progress and identify areas which need attention. A 'RAYG' status will be attributed to each key action using the code below:

RAYG STATUS	
RED	Unsatisfactory
AMBER	Adequate
YELLOW	Good
GREEN	Excellent
GREY	Completed




Priority 1: Adult Social Care Operating Model

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide services which increase the number and proportion of people who can cope well at home or in the community.
- Work with our partners to build seamless care and support services.
- Help build well-resourced and responsive communities which ensure that people with care and support needs can live well at home.
- Reduce the proportion of people in Bridgend who need long-term intensive care and support from the Council.

YEAR 1: 2024-25

ACTION	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE	PROGRESS	RAYG
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Priority 1: Adult Social Care Operating Model				
Introduce and evaluate the impact of the three-tier operating model with clear delineation between early intervention and prevention, long-term generic and specialist social work teams (Dashboards).	By March 2025	Head of Adult Social Care	Fully implemented on 24 th February 2024 Fortnightly Adults Silver group meetings to monitor via newly developed dashboards Staff feedback via post implementation consultation and via monthly Continuous Improvement Group (CIG) . Evaluation plan being drawn up and ready for implementation in November 2024 Additional Deep Dives in pressure points in system agreed as required.	
At the early intervention and prevention tier introduce a multi-disciplinary team with Social Work Practitioners, Nurse, Occupational Therapist, and good links with Local Community Connectors (LCC) , the Carer's Wellbeing Service and the third sector (Tier 1).	By October 2024	Group Manager – Integrated Community Services: Community Resource	Currently undertaking a Deep Dive of the EIPH service to highlight areas for further development, of which the multi-disciplinary team offer will be explored. Links with the Local Community Coordinators (LCC) and other partners to be established.	
At the long-term integrated locality teams tier, work within primary care networks and cluster teams with a wider brief and stronger support ensuring they can access community and partner agency resources to support individuals (Tier 2).	By October 2024	Group Manager – Integrated Community Services: Community Networks	Plan devised and confirmed and implemented since May.    Integrated Network Action Plan 2024-2 Integrated Network Action Plan 2024-1 Integrated Network Action Plan 2024-2 Next phase is the duty compact to be completed by October.	

Priority 1: Adult Social Care Operating Model						
			Resetting offer for community activity with LCC and Day Care. Monitoring and tracking most frail adults coming into networks performance indicators to be established.			
At the specialist tier introduce and review new arrangements for social care mental health, safeguarding, learning disability, commissioning for complex needs and substance misuse support (Tier 3).	By October 2024		Evaluation plan being drawn up and ready for implementation in November. Additional Deep Dives in Safeguarding actioned in July with any approved actions implemented. Learning Disability deep dive underway Focussed Improvement plan for learning disability in place overseen via Adults Silver group			
		Social Work Lead				
		Group Manager – Learning Disability, Mental Health, Substance Misuse Service Manager Safeguarding and secure Estate				
Reference	Metric Description		Qtr 1 2024/25	Qtr 2 2024/25	Qtr 3 2024/25	2024/25 Actual
Outcome	SSWB57 - Percentage of enquiries to the Adult Social Care front door which result in information and advice only.		85.51%			

Priority 1: Adult Social Care Operating Model						
Outcome	AD/012 - The number of adults with a care and support plan.		2168			
Outcome	AD/020 – The number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk.		139			

Priority 2: Outcomes-Focused Strengths- Based Practice				
OBJECTIVES:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that all staff are working within a common ‘Strengths and Outcomes’ framework and the partners understand and support it. To successfully develop and disseminate further clear guidance for managers and workers on key areas of practice including strength-based reflective practice and supervision. To strengthen management oversight of practice through outcomes ‘surgeries’ providing real time quality assurance, ensuring a culture and practice of promoting independence and connection, reducing dependency on commissioned services. To successfully develop and implement a framework for quality assurance which evidences how effective our practice is. To ensure better outcomes for people without the need for Council commissioned or provided care and support 				
YEAR 1: 2024-25				
ACTION	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE	PROGRESS	RAYG
Deliver and review a comprehensive ongoing training and development programme to support consistent implementation of the model of practice to ensure it is embedded	By March 2025	Social Care Workforce Development Team	Externally sourced Continuing Health Care training delivered in September 2024.	

Priority 2: Outcomes-Focused Strengths- Based Practice							
across the service and supported in supervision and peer support.				Rolling out of mandatory 'Strengths Based, Outcome Focused, Training to both Managers and staff on an annual basis.			
Ensure that learning from all inspection and reviews is systematically embedded through learning, training and development and follow up quality assurance and review.		By March 2025	Social Work Lead Social Care Workforce Development Team	Evaluation of internal review of Adult Social Care Operating Model to be overseen by Social Work Lead Establish a program for the Continuous Improvement Group to embed the learning including all 7 minute briefings from the regional safeguarding team.			
A review and implement of Quality Assurance (QA) framework		By December 2024	Quality Assurance Officer	QA framework starting to be embedded across the service. Early review of QA framework has led to adjustments. Regular feedback from QA Officer via Group Manager meetings.			
Deliver and review an ongoing management and leadership development pathway and program to support all managers in adult social care to develop their skills in leading teams and services.		By October 2024	Social Care Workforce Development Team	Identify Team Managers in Adult Social Work who have not undertaken the Team Management Development Programme and ensure enrolment is confirmed on future programmes. Future plans to support Senior Practitioners and Consultant Social workers to undertake Team Management Development Programme.			
Reference	Metric Description			Qtr 1 2024/25	Qtr 2 2024/25	Qtr 3 2024/25	2024/25 Actual

Priority 2: Outcomes-Focused Strengths- Based Practice						
Outcome	No. of staff undertaking Strengths Based, Outcome Focused training			As at Oct 2024: Management roles: 29 Social work staff: 83		
Output	Effectiveness of outcome surgeries/panel promoting in line with the practice model promoting best practice.			Cost avoidance: £623,431 Cost saving: £226,367		
Outcome	AD/001 - The number of contacts for adults received by statutory Social Services during the year, and AD/002 - Of the contacts, the number where advice and assistance was provided (percentage where advice and assistance was provided).			1374 494		
Outcome	AD/016 -The number of care and support plans for adults that were due to be reviewed during the year, and AD/017 - Of those the Number completed within timescales (percentage reviewed in compliance).			1904 1421		
Outcome	Percentage of Individuals who went through a Short-Term Service prior to Commencing a Long-Term Domiciliary Care Package.			54%		

Priority 3: Service Transformation

OBJECTIVES:

- Manage demand through the front door of the Council – to handle and resolve initial enquiries more effectively.
- Work with partners to manage demand from acute hospitals – supporting people to recover and regain skills and minimising poor discharges which result in unnecessary care and returns to hospital.
- Increase the number and range of effective short-term interventions for people in the community – short term help to reduce or eliminate the need for longer-term solutions.
- Redesign care and support for people with long-term needs – help people with long-term conditions gain opportunities for greater independence in the longer term.

YEAR 1: 2024-25

ACTION	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE	PROGRESS	RAYG
Develop and implement a plan to improve how we manage demand through the front door of the Council by handling and resolving initial enquiries more effectively.	By October 2025	Group Manager – Integrated Community Services: Community Resource	Currently undertaking a deep dive in the Early Intervention and prevention hub to identify further areas of improvement and development including working alongside the Corporate Front Door	
Develop and implement a plan to improve how we work with our partners to manage demand from acute hospitals more effectively – supporting people to recover and regain skills and minimising poor discharges which result in	By October 2025	Group Manager – Integrated Community Services: Community Resource	Plan to implement an integrated team at the front door of the hospital and develop community capacity to deal with Discharge to Assess	

Priority 3: Service Transformation				
unnecessary care and returns to hospital.				
Develop and implement a plan to increase effectiveness of short-term interventions for people in the community – and thus increase the impact of short-term help to reduce or eliminate the need for longer-term solutions.	By March 2025	Group Manager – Integrated Community Services: Community Resource	<p>The recent implementation of the Remodelling of Home Care project</p> <p>Maintaining social care staff knowledge and practice of enabling techniques to ensure the individuals can maximise their independence.</p> <p>Ensuring the holistic assessment within the short-term services, identifies all areas in to ensure the individuals achievement of</p> <p>Ensuring ongoing care is commissioned with an Outcomes focussed approach.</p>	
Work with partners to agree and implement a plan to redesign care and support for people with long-term needs - help people with long-term conditions to gain opportunities for greater independence in the longer term.	By March 2025	Group Manager – Integrated Community Services: Community Networks/ Group Manager Learning Disability/ Mental Health and Substance Misuse	<p>This is being actioned via the following projects and plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accommodation Strategy - Day service remodelling - Commissioning plan – Day Opportunities for Older people and Learning Disabilities - Remodelling of home care 	

Priority 3: Service Transformation						
Reference	Metric Description		Qtr 1 2024/25	Qtr 2 2024/25	Qtr 3 2024/25	2024/25 Actual
Output	SSWB57 - Percentage of enquiries to the Adult Social Care front door which result in information and advice only.		85.51%			
Output	SSWB75 - Number of people delayed in their transfer of care on the 'discharge to recover and assess' pathways.		124			
Output	How many adults are in receipt of domiciliary care (snapshot - WG Checkpoint Return).		826			
Output	How many hours of domiciliary care are currently being provided/commissioned each week (snapshot - WG Checkpoint Return).		9688.75			
Output	How many adults are currently waiting for domiciliary care (snapshot - WG Checkpoint Return).		11			
Output	How many adults are receiving reablement (snapshot - WG Checkpoint Return).		99			
Output	How many adults are waiting for reablement (snapshot - WG Checkpoint Return).		10			
Outcome	How many adults are receiving support from your local authority with long-term care home accommodation (snapshot - WG Checkpoint Return).		520			
Outcome	How many people are currently waiting for long-term care home accommodation (snapshot - WG Checkpoint Return).		16			

Priority 3: Service Transformation						
Outcome	The % of people who have approached the Council for help who go onto receive a full social care assessment.		35%			
Outcome	The % of people who have received a full Assessment who then go on to receive a package of care.		14.5%			
Outcome	AD/010 - The total number of packages of reablement completed during the year, and AD/011 - Outcome of Reablement (percentage of those that go on to have a long-term package of care).		106			
Outcome	Percentage of Individuals who went through a short-term service prior to commencing a long-term Domiciliary care package.		54%			
Outcome	The proportion of people receiving longer term care whose care needs have decreased from their initial assessment/latest review.		TBC			

Priority 4: Learning Disability

OBJECTIVES:

- To systematically implement progression as a core model of practice – recognising and reflecting people’s strengths, capabilities and aspirations for a good life in line with our recently launched new practice model.
- To review needs and services in key internal and commissioned services for learning disability to ensure they are delivered cost effectively and drawing on latest evidence of impact.
- To ensure that where there needs to be changes in delivery to focus more on employment and skills, (and less day-time activity) they are addressed by clear strategies and implementation plans.
- To ensure that we work closely and effectively with key partners to deliver these service improvements.
- To ensure that all reviews are conducted co-productively so that people with care and support needs are central to service development.

YEAR 1: 2024-25

ACTION		TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE	PROGRESS			RAYG
Implement and review the impact of the learning disability transformation programme.		By March 2025	Lead Social Worker	Implementation of Learning Disabilities transformation plan where all with all workstreams under this programme fully operational December 2023. Financial tracking against the workstreams within the programme is reported to the Social Services Improvement Board. All workstreams are currently on target to achieve their set financial efficiencies			
Reference	Metric Description			Qtr 1 2024/25	Qtr 2 2024/25	Qtr 3 2024/25	2024/25 Actual

Priority 4: Learning Disability						
Output	Spend against budget in LD services.		7.64% overspend as at quarter 2			
Outcome	The proportion of adults with learning disabilities and care and support needs who are supported to gain employment and/or training	To be developed				

Priority 5: Mental health				
OBJECTIVES:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review needs and services in key internal and commissioned services for mental health, to ensure they are delivered cost effectively and drawing on latest evidence of impact. Ensure that where there are gaps in provision or emerging needs they are addressed by clear strategies and implementation plans. Ensure that we work closely and effectively with key partners to deliver these service improvements. Ensure that all reviews are conducted co-productively so that people with care and support needs are central to service development. 				
YEAR 1: 2024-25				
ACTION	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE	PROGRESS	RAYG
Work with partners to implement and review the impact of the Adult Community Mental Health Services Strategy.	By March 2025	Group Manager Learning Disability/ Mental Health	Outcome to be amended as superseded by elsh Government draft Mental Health and Wellbeing strategy, consulted on and due to be launched in December 2024)	

Priority 5: Mental health							
		and Substance Misuse					
Work with our Housing colleagues to implement and review a plan to commission specialist mental health residential and supported living accommodation including local accommodation provision for those that need it.	By March 2026	Group Manager Learning Disability/ Mental Health and Substance Misuse	The commissioning plan for Adults with lifelong conditions has identified priority areas for development which are being taken forward as part of the Housing With Care Project Board				
Reference	Metric Description			Qtr 1 2024/25	Qtr 2 2024/25	Qtr 3 2024/25	2024/25 Actual
Outcome	Number of people supported effectively by community services (ARC) to retain and/or gain employment.			TBC			
Outcome	Number of people supported effectively through supported living accommodation.			34	32		
Outcome	The proportion of adults with mental health problems living in the community who are supported to live independently and well in their local community.			228	228		

Priority 6: Life-Long Conditions and Complex Care

OBJECTIVES:

- To develop local capacity in community, residential and nursing provision with partners to minimise the reliance on hospital provision.
- Work with the Health Board to create more community discharge to recover and assess beds in Bridgend CBC
- To extend the level of joint working across the health, voluntary and care sectors so that people with more complex and longer-term care needs experience seamless care and support.

YEAR 1: 2024-25

ACTION	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE	PROGRESS	RAYG
Work with our colleagues in Housing to develop Housing with Care options to meet future need and demand, and reprofile BCBC's accommodation-based services (both internally and externally).	By March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Manager for Commissioning and Contracting 	Accommodation Mapping workstream is underway and due to report in January 2025	
Remodel internal Support at Home services and prepare options paper on the commissioning of locality-based domiciliary care services to meet quality and capacity demands.	By March 2025	Group Manager Direct Care	<p>The service model has been in development and operation since 1st September, with a review period in 3 months time.</p> <p>The next phase is relating to Occupational Therapy flexibility to work across our Network areas in short term services.</p> <p>Continuation of embedding the model and refining flow. refining of flow.</p>	

Priority 6: Life-Long Conditions and Complex Care				
Develop and implement a plan to expand and diversify our Shared Lives (Adult Placement) Scheme.	By March 2025	Group Manager Learning Disability/ Mental Health and Substance Misuse	An options appraisal has been completed, with discussions ongoing with other local authority and health boards where the options are continuing to be evaluated.	
Maximise the use of technology and equipment to support people to maintain independence. Develop and implement plans to expand the capacity and responsiveness of specialist care and support for people at home or in the community, optimise existing community resources and assets with local partners and help people to access a wide range of aids and adaptations.	By March 2025	Group Manager – Integrated Community Services: Community Resource	<p>The successful switch over of Telecare equipment from Analogue to digital has given the service a better place to explore ways in which technology can be utilised in the individual's care pathway</p> <p>The service is currently piloting several Technology Enabled Care devices that aim to improve an individual's independence in areas such as medication compliance, skills training, prompting, and people living with conditions such as dementia or who experience frequent falls.</p> <p>Plans are being developed for implementation of expanding the capacity and responsiveness of specialist care and support for individuals to optimise existing community resources and assets with local partners for access to a wide range of aids and adaptations for individuals.</p> <p>The Department is continuing to work collaboratively within the region to inform development of integrated services within the community, including new approaches to hospital admission, avoidance and discharge</p>	

Priority 6: Life-Long Conditions and Complex Care						
Reference	Metric Description		Qtr 1 2024/2025	Qtr 2 2024/2025	Qtr 3 2024/2025	Qtr 4 2024/2025
Output	Number of community-based discharge to assess and recover beds.		6			
Outcomes	Number of people with long-term conditions supported in the community and own home.		1805	1761		
Outcomes	Number of people with long-term conditions who have a positive experience of multi-disciplinary support in the community.	To be developed				
Outcome	Number of adults who live in suitable supported living accommodation in their local community (Extra Care).		77	80		
Outcome	Number of adults living at home who have the adaptations to help them live independently.	To be developed				
Output	The number of adults who live in a Shared Lives (Adult Placement) Scheme.		@Sept 2024 Long Term: 18 Short Term: 7			
Output	The number of people who are effectively supported by domiciliary care.		753	746		
Output	The number of people who access support from a multi-disciplinary disability and sensory-loss service.		17	16		

Priority 7: Effective Support for our services

OBJECTIVES:

- All services and interventions to have customer feedback mechanisms to support continuous improvement.
- To improve the experience of our workforce so they feel consistently well supported and valued.
- To get the right balance of skills and experience in our teams to achieve best outcomes for people.
- To retain and recruit a high standard of practitioner to our service.
- To work more effectively with partners at operational service and strategic levels to agree shared priorities for service improvement and implement them.
- To ensure there is a clear offer that partners make jointly for people in need of care or support in every local community in Bridgend, and that this is based on a 'Strengths and Outcomes' approach.
- To ensure that the information that operational staff and managers are using is of the highest possible quality.
- That our information can be shared appropriately more often and more usefully with partners.

YEAR 1: 2024-25

ACTION	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE	PROGRESS	RAYG
Implement our plans to improve the experience of our workforce so they feel consistently well supported and valued, get the right balance of skills and experience in our teams and to retain and recruit a high standard of practitioner to our service.	By October 2024	Lead Social Worker	A framework for a work force development plan to be devised by the Social Work Lead by December 2024	

Priority 7: Effective Support for our services						
Agree and implement shared plans for a future integrated service model for practice clusters / localities and deepen aligned working through enhanced joint governance and leadership arrangements.	By March 2025	Corporate Director	Joint Partnership Board meeting regularly.			
Reference	Metric Description		Qtr 1 2024/2025	Qtr 2 2024/2025	Qtr 3 2024/2025	2024/2025 Actual
Output	The proportion of services which have effective customer feedback mechanisms to support continuous improvement.	To be confirmed				
Output	The number of consultations undertaken to design future models and policies.	To be confirmed				
Input	The extent to which QA arrangements are effective and ensure peoples perspectives are heard.	To be developed				
Output	The proportion of social work staff on agency contracts.		18 agency staff			

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Agenda Item 6

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	19 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	SOCIAL SERVICES REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR - SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	SARAH TRIPP, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	<p>The Social Services Representations and Complaints Annual Report for 2023/24 provides a review of the effectiveness of the social services complaint's procedure and a summary of statistical information relating to the complaints and representations dealt with during the reporting period.</p> <p>The report includes -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• numbers of complaints and representations received and resolved at each stage;• adherence to timescales;• the nature of the complaints and representations, and;• a summary of the lessons learned and actions taken by the Authority in relation to the complaints and representations it received. <p>The report also provides a cross-section of feedback across the Directorate in the form of comments and compliments.</p>

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet the 2023/24 Annual Report on Social Services Representations and Complaints for approval. The Annual Report is attached as Appendix 1.

2. Background

2.1 Members will be aware that there is a requirement for local authorities to have in place procedures for considering any representations or complaints made in relation to the discharge of their Social Services functions. This Annual Report relates to Social Services representations and complaints received that have been handled in accordance with the Welsh Government Complaint Guidelines “*A Guide to Handling Complaints and Representations by Local Authority Social Services*” which came into effect on 1st August 2014. The guidance supports the implementation of the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014. The Regulations outline a two-stage process in line with the Health services Complaints Procedure.

2.2 The key elements of the Social Services Representations and Complaints Procedure are:

- To respond to Stage 1 complaints within 15 working days of the date of resolution (10 working days permitted to meet/discuss with the complainant to achieve a resolution).
- To complete Stage 2 independent complaint investigations within 25 working days.
- To work collaboratively with colleagues within the Directorate and in other Directorates of the Authority, the NHS and liaise with external bodies such as the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and Care Inspectorate Wales to provide a ‘seamless’ complaints service.
- To monitor performance of complaints handling, learning from complaints and using this learning to improve services for everyone who uses them.

Where complainants have exhausted the complaints procedure, the complainant has the right to refer their concern for consideration by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

2.3 Members will note from the Annual Report a strong emphasis is placed not just upon complaints, but also on the comments and compliments providing a balanced view. Services across the Directorate are keen to learn from the information gathered and use this to inform service improvements as well as future service developments.

2.4 The Annual Report also contains management information relating to complaints addressed in accordance with the Authority’s Corporate Complaints Procedure, together with information relating to the majority of complaints being addressed and resolved informally (prior to reaching Stage 1 of the complaints procedure). This important and significant work ensures concerns are resolved efficiently, with an agreed resolution whilst preventing complainants from being subjected to the formal complaints procedure unnecessarily.

- 2.5 Statistical information relating to the processing of Member Referrals is provided in the Annual Report. The Representations and Complaints Procedure does not preclude the right of an individual to approach their local Councillor, Assembly Member or Member of Parliament who all undertake an important role in handling concerns and queries that individual constituents may have. Member Referrals can range from comments and queries to complaints.
- 2.6 The Annual Report also includes information arising from a cross-section of feedback generated from user/carer engagement exercises undertaken by a range of service areas.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The 2023/24 Annual Report contains statistical information in relation to the representations and complaints received during the year for both Adult Social Care and Children’s Social Care.
- 3.2 The number of representations (complaints, comments and compliments) received during the reporting period is broken down as follows:

41	Statutory Complaints
141	Concerns resolved outside of the complaints procedure
362	Compliments / Comments

This is a slight decrease in the overall number of complaints received over the last year: 182 in 2023/24 compared to 191 in 2022/23 and 74 in 2021/22. The report shows a significant increase in the number of compliments received compared to the previous reporting periods; 362 compliments received in 2023/24 compared to 257 received in 2022/23 and 170 in 2021/22, an increase of 53% over the 3 year period. Complaints staff continue to encourage all staff across the Directorate to record and log all compliments received.

- 3.3 An analysis of performance demonstrates that the Directorate continues to achieve an early resolution for the vast majority of complainants. The number of complaints resolved by this approach in 2023/24 was 141 (77%). In comparison to previous years, this was 142 in 2022/23 (74%) and 54 in 2021/22 (74%), demonstrating an improvement in performance. This evidences the continued focus on swift and effective complaints handling via a local, citizen centred, approach.
- 3.4 During 2023/24, 16 complaints were received by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales; 14 related to Children’s Social Care and 2 to Adult Social Care with no cases proceeding to investigation. This is an increase from 10 in 2022/23 and 13 in 2021/22.
- 3.5 During 2023/24, 1 complaint was addressed by the Corporate Complaints procedure. This related to a data breach in Children’s Social Care.

- 3.6 During 2023/24, a total of 41 complaints were addressed in accordance with the Statutory Social Services Complaints Procedure; equating to 23% of all complaints received. 33 were dealt with at Stage 1, and 8 progressed through to Stage 2. Stage 2 is the formal investigation stage requiring the appointment of an Independent Investigator. Information provided within the report suggests that there is a higher level of complexity in cases that proceed through the formal Stage 2 process.
- 3.7 The report highlights how the Directorate implements lessons learned from complaints within service areas. Examples in this reporting period include: reviewing systems and processes to record, report and analyse complaints data and the learning outcomes from complaints, as well as developing refresher training for staff on the complaints process.
- 3.8 The number of Member Referrals received for both Adult and Children's Social Care during the reporting period was 135; 94 of which were in relation to Adult Social Care and 41 in relation to Children's Social Care. This is a decrease of 36% from the 211 members referrals received in 2022/23.
- 3.9 As noted in in paragraph 3.6 the report highlights a wide range of feedback from people who use social care services which is used to inform service development. The Annual Report details various examples of responses and feedback received for a range of services across the Directorate.
- 3.10 Independent advocacy support services across Children's and Adult Social Care continues to be a priority, and the Annual Report provides details of advocacy activity across both service areas, together with a summary of comments and outcomes achieved.
- 3.11 The majority of the work carried out within the Social Services Representations and Complaints Procedure is undertaken in consultation with Legal services, and there is a strong working relationship between the social services complaints staff and the council's legal department.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 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.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

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

Involvement	The report provides a comprehensive overview of the feedback and concerns expressed by people who use social services during the reporting period 2023/24. It offers valuable insights into the perspectives and experiences of individuals accessing social services.
Long term	There will be a positive long-term impact from this report by transparently addressing representations and complaints. The report lays a foundation for continuous improvement in service delivery. It also promotes accountability and highlights areas for refinement, fostering a culture of long-term responsiveness and accountability.
Prevention	The report supports the council's objective to help people and communities to be more healthy and resilient. Our community engagement encourages self-sufficiency and collaborative solutions, reducing the need for extensive reliance on resources.
Integration	This report is integrated across the Directorate in both Adults and Children's Social Care as set out above and is required under the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014.
Collaboration	The guidance that underpins this report has an emphasis on achieving service user satisfaction. Staff across the Directorate have worked collaboratively with the people of the county borough to 'put things right' and secure positive outcomes for individuals and families wherever practicably possible.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change implications as a result of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 All staff have a duty under BCBC Safeguarding Policy to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk of abuse or neglect and to ensure that effective practices are in place throughout the Council and its commissioned services. The complaints department support safeguarding activity by ensuring that any complaints containing safeguarding concerns are referred to the relevant safeguarding teams in a timely manner.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the Annual Report on Social Services Representations and Complaints for 2023/24 (attached as Appendix 1).

Background documents

None

**SOCIAL SERVICES
REPRESENTATIONS AND
COMPLAINTS**



**ANNUAL REPORT
2023 / 2024**

November 2024

**SOCIAL SERVICES
REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS 2023/24**

CONTENTS

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2. Summary of the Complaints Procedure
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10. Equalities

1. INTRODUCTION

This report covers the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 and relates to representations and complaints received by the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate regarding services and support provided by Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care.

Local Authority Social Services are required to maintain a procedure for considering complaints and representations (comments and compliments). Any member of the public, including a child who has received or was entitled to receive a service from Social Services may make a complaint. The purpose of this report is to provide a review and statistical analysis of the complaints, comments and compliments received by Social Services during the reporting period.

This is the ninth Annual Report relating to representations and complaints received by the Directorate which have been handled in accordance with the Welsh Government Complaint Guidelines "A Guide to Handling Complaints and Representations by Local Authority Social Services" which came into effect on 1st August 2014. The guidance supports the implementation of the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014. The Regulations introduced a two-stage process which replaced the previous three stages and also brings the process for Social Services into line with the NHS Complaints Procedure.

2. SUMMARY OF THE STATUTORY COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

"A guide to handling complaints and representations by Local Authority Social Services" (Welsh Government).

Stage 1 – Local Resolution: An emphasis is placed upon swift resolution of the majority of complaints. An offer to discuss the complaint with the complainant must be made to attempt to resolve matters. This discussion must take place within 10 working days of the date of acknowledgement of the complaint. Where this approach leads to mutually acceptable resolution, the Local Authority must write to the complainant with details of the terms of the resolution within 5 working days of the date on which the complaint or representation was resolved.

Stage 2 – Formal Investigation: Appointment of an Independent Investigator is made and for complaints relating to Children's services an Independent Person must also be appointed to oversee the investigation process. Collaborative arrangements have been established (on a reciprocal basis) with neighbouring Local Authorities to share details of Independent Investigating Officers and Independent Persons able to undertake investigations.

The investigation must be completed, and a full written response issued to the complainant within 25 working days. Where this is not possible, the Authority must write to the complainant to explain the reason for the delay and ensure the response is issued as soon as possible and no later than 6 months from the date of receipt of the complaint.

3. THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES

Where complainants have exhausted the complaints procedure, the complainant has the right to refer their concern for consideration by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales provides an external independent service for the purpose of considering complaints made by members of the public in relation to all Local Authority services, including Social Services. The Public Services Ombudsman also has jurisdiction to examine and determine complaints of injustice as a result of maladministration on the part of the Local Authority.

The Ombudsman will normally require complainants to have sought redress, in the first instance, via the Local Authority's complaints procedure prior to accepting and investigating a complaint of maladministration on the part of the Local Authority.

During 2023/2024, 16 complaints were received by the Public Services Ombudsman's Office, 14 of which related to Children's Social Care, 2 in respect of Adult Social Care. None were progressed to investigation.

4. MEMBER REFERRALS

The Representations and Complaints Procedure does not preclude the right of an individual to approach their Local Councillor, Assembly Member or Member of Parliament. They undertake an important role in handling concerns and queries that individual constituents may have. Collectively, these are called Member Referrals and can range from comments and queries to complaints.

If an Elected Member considers it to be inappropriate to deal with a concern, the matter can be referred for consideration under the Complaints Procedure. With effect from 2017, only those referrals received from Elected Members have been recorded by Democratic Services. Cabinet Members may liaise with Assembly Members and Members of Parliament to complete referrals but this data is no longer recorded.

During 2023/2024, Member referrals were received as follows:-

Table 1

2023/2024	Number of Referrals
Adult Social Care	94
Children's Social Care	41
Total	135

5. ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK

In addition to receiving comments and compliments from service users and their relatives/carers, the Directorate also issues a range of feedback questionnaires from across service areas. A cross-section of the feedback during 2023/2024 is set out below:

Adult Social Care

The **Telecare** survey is forwarded to all people who have accessed a Local Authority Domiciliary Care Service and have an active Care and Support Plan.

Between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024, **778** surveys were distributed, of which, **267** responses were received. This is a **34%** response rate, which is a slight decrease from the response rate of 36% in the previous year.

General comments provided include:

I really appreciate all your help in a kind and friendly manner.
Installer was knowledgeable and easy for my Mum to understand.
The Care & Repair workman was excellent and explained it very well.
The engineer was neat with his work, and he took his time to explain everything about the device to me. It would help if people knew more about Care & Repair. I only knew through friends, the help you provide.
The installer provided exemplary service; punctual and quick, yet thorough and accurate (and patient).

Bridgend Resource Centre provides care and support services to individuals with learning disabilities, complex health/behavioural needs and adults living with advanced dementia. The aims of the service are:

- the development and maintenance of skills for the person;
- to support the social aspect of friendships and relationships; and
- to provide a respite service for families and carers.

These core aims are also the ethos for our community hubs where an emphasis is placed on an active citizenship within the local community.

Bridgend Resource Centre has a therapeutic and sensory approach. The activities individuals are involved in are person centred and aim to promote the potential of each person. This will take into consideration their cognitive and physical wellbeing promoting, as high a level of independence as possible, for as long as possible. The centre has a sensory room, hydrotherapy pool, Touch Trust room, sensory garden and base/activity rooms designed to enhance the care experiences of those who attend.

There is a specialist team working as one for High Support and Self-Directed Support (SDS). SDS has a dedicated on-site Health Team in respect of an Occupational Therapy, Community Psychiatric Nurses and Dietician/Speech and Language Therapist. The collaborative approach works extremely well in the SDS, and as outreach workers to the community hubs and homes for assessments if required.

Comments include:

Having the support from day service has made the difference between living and existing.
A new week and another day in day centre. He's absolutely loving it and looks forward to going each time. He went to Tesco's shopping last week pushing his own basket and loves music sessions.
I just wanted to compliment you as the pathway is looking great and I appreciate the way you have maintained it. Your grounds also are well kept.
Knowing that my husband is safe and cared for at the day centre means everything to me. These few hours when he is there gives me the strength to cope and continue caring for him at home. The staff are wonderful, they sing from the same hymn books as myself when it comes to my husband's wellbeing and [it's] a huge benefit to myself knowing how well he is looked after.

The **Hospital Social Work Team** have a crucial role in providing support and assistance to adults and their families following admission to hospital. The team work collaboratively with health professionals to undertake assessments to facilitate smooth, safe and timely transitions from hospital to home or alternative care settings. They support people on their hospital journey during times of crisis to successfully navigate the complexities of healthcare processes, and connect them with essential community resources. The team play a pivotal role in enhancing the overall wellbeing of individuals by promoting a person centred, strengths-based approach.

Comments provided include:

Can I please extend my thanks to you and your team for the professional way that you have treated this case.
I would like to express my thoughts on the team and my time at the POW (Princess of Wales Hospital). The team have been greatly supportive and one of the best supportive teams I have worked with. I have been treated with fairness and feel my experience and professionalism has been always respected with no prejudice. It has been a positive experience with no regrets in working under BCBC [Bridgend County Borough Council]. I have been given plenty of opportunities to express myself, support others in the team and able to complete training that has been required.
The social worker who assisted our transition from hospital to home was excellent. She explained the process, took care of all our worries + concerns and was very understanding of our needs. She updated us regularly with any progress as we awaited a full package of care.

Children's Social Care

The **East Locality Safeguarding Hub** work with children from pre-birth to 18 years of age. The team manage Care and Support, Child Protection, Public Law Outline and Court cases. The team work closely with children and families and partner agencies to facilitate plans in an attempt to facilitate positive change for families. The team analyse and manage risk to ensure children remain at home where it is safe for them to do so.

Comments include:

Thank you all.....you have protected and saved my daughters! I will be eternally grateful.
I just want to say thank you ever so much for your support and kindness. I really appreciate you. Me and B have been so lucky to have you in our lives guiding us through how to live correctly. I will never forget you. Take care x
C has been amazing and her support has been 'phenomenal'. They did not feel that they would be in such a good position – on the brink of reunification - without her support and help and they wanted to express their gratitude and thanks to her.
I wanted to take this opportunity to express that despite how difficult this case has been, you have managed it very well, with sensitivity and understanding. The needs of the children has always been your priority and this on times has meant some difficult discussions with the family. However, you have always advocated for the children with a compassionate, respectful and professional approach whilst being mindful and sensitive to mum's health needs. You have always ensured that necessary information has been communicated to me in a timely manner and that any changes to the plan has always been discussed in a professional forum. This has meant no need for chasing from my end, which I am very grateful for! Occasionally there are differing opinions between Social Services and other agencies - although this is not always a bad thing, it has been apparent that as the statutory/lead agency you value and respect the views of the other professionals involved, and ensure that their knowledge of the family informs any decisions made. This understanding of professional roles will only ever increase positive working relationships. Thank You's are not said enough particularly in professions like ours, so, 'Thank you' for your hard work and commitment and professionalism with this case. I for one have certainly appreciated it!

The Placements and General Fostering team provide foster care placements for children and young people who are looked after by Bridgend County Borough Council. The team provides emergency, short term and long-term foster care placements, as well as operating specialist schemes such as transitional Foster Carers, parent and child and short breaks.

Comments include:

Just to let you know how proud we all are for the amazing job D and E do for our looked after children. In their care F who was rescued from his mother some 5 years ago has made such amazing progress from almost being classed as disabled to now excellent in his growth and development and he is 3 years over and above his chronological age for reading and comprehension from the amazing help and support provided by D and E

despite the challenges mother has posed over the years and continue to do so. He has achieved 400 mts swimming badge and purple belt in Karate
Just wanted to let you know that the feedback from the G's on you as their social worker was fab! They said that you were really supportive and always asked how they were and what they needed to support them! They said they couldn't fault you!!
I could not stop her from telling me how wonderful, helpful, and supportive H is. This now is the second Supervising Social Worker I will have worked with and what ever you as a manager are doing is having great benefits for our / Social workers/carers who in turn give a great service to our children. Please pass this to your manager too as I have no idea who they are. Thank you to you and your team for all their hard work.
The feedback from the foster carers was that J is an outstanding Fostering Social Worker, she is supportive but challenging and not afraid to have the difficult conversation, her practice is outstanding. What insightful and caring foster carers. J has supported them to create a wonderful home for K and I saw the outcomes today of their care. As an IRO it was a pleasure to conduct this review.

The **Care Experienced Childrens Team** undertake direct work to achieve positive outcomes for children/young people who are looked after by the Local Authority. The team create and review outcome-based care plans that address the needs identified in assessments. Social workers within the team work with individuals, families, carer groups and communities to help them make informed decisions, enabling them to clarify and express their needs and contribute to service planning. The team work alongside agencies and professionals to address the needs of children and their families, including preparing and participating in decision making forums.

Comments include:

The judge thanked her for her thorough and detailed report. The child was subject to private proceedings the judge stated that he didn't think things would have come to the same positive conclusion if it wasn't for the hard work and dedication of the social worker as well as her working style.
Just wanted to make everyone aware of the quality of work that reunification had recently completed with a child L is working with who's at home with parents under PWP. Since the work has been completed L feels there's been a noticeable change in M's presentation; he's more chatty and more engaging and open in speaking to social workers. L feels reunification have supported him to understand that it's safe to speak to professionals and they're there to support. M has spoken extremely positively of the relationships he's built up with the reunification workers.
Just wanted to thank-you again for all your hard work on this case, I know you've provided huge support to N and have gone 'over and above'.
P so kind and generous, Illuminated with a bright source of light and imagination. Cautious of the people around her magical mind, Obtaining the trust and respectability of the ones around her. Loud enough with her enjoyment of singing the sound of Christmas songs, Affectionate and authentic through the whole of time.

Providers

Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) commissions a 'Hub & Spoke' service model for advocacy which includes:

- Bridgend Voice & Choice (BVC) Advocacy Contact Hub: PromoCymru;
- Specialist Learning Disability Provider (statutory and non-statutory): People First Bridgend, and;
- Specialist Communications/Accessible Support Provider: Mental Health Matters Wales

Performance Data

The BVC Advocacy Hub received an average of 50 connected contacts per quarter, which was down from an average of 60 per quarter in the previous year. 50% of contacts came from the general public, and there was a proportionate reduction in contacts from professionals and practitioners.

Referrals and contacts to the BVC Hub were triaged and referred to the most appropriate support service. This approach ensures that only those eligible for statutory Independent Professional Advocacy (IPA) are then referred through to that service, and non-statutory or other services which may be more appropriate are contacted to ensure the best service is accessed.

Of the 207 contacts received by the Hub, 42 were referred to statutory IPA services during the year.

Where IPA was not applicable, and/or other forms of advocacy (support) or other advice/intervention were required, service users were signposted to the following services:

- Older People's Commissioner for Wales
- Early Intervention and Prevention Hub formerly known as Bridgend Common Access Point
- Pobl Floating Support
- Social Services
- Disability Advice Project
- Housing Options (Generic)
- Assia Domestic Abuse Service
- LawWorks Cymru, Napac
- Citizens Advice
- Qualia Law CIC
- Family Lives
- Y Bont, National Autistic society
- The Autism Directory
- Tros Gynnal Plant

As the statutory IPA providers also receive direct referrals in addition to those triaged via the Hub, there was a total of 125 new referrals for statutory IPA made during the year, with the two providers collectively supporting 279 individuals across the four quarters.

Parental Rights and Child Protection issues were again some of the largest reasons for contacts, alongside mental health and family relationship issues. This reflects the largest proportion of IPA case work held by Mental Health Matters Wales in their statutory IPA service data. The levels and complexity of a large proportion of the case work has increased to support Child Protection cases, where often both parents need an advocate. The providers operate a waiting list to access adult IPA support.

Children’s Social Care – Statutory Independent Professional Advocacy (IPA)

Provider

Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) is an established and long-standing advocacy provider in the Bridgend area, under a regional contract for Cwm Taf Morgannwg, contract led by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

Active Offers & Issue-based Advocacy (IBA)

During the year, 145 young people accessed the Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) service, presenting with 172 issues. The figures identify a notable decrease in young people accessing IBA when compared to the previous year where 224 presented with 275 issues. 76 young people accessed the service for the first time, compared to 123 in the previous year. The decrease is likely to be due to the reduction in child protection conferences and the improvements in social services that has resulted in less young people dependent on advocacy for support. However, we recognise that the uptake of the active offer and IBA needs to improve; therefore, TGP have recently delivered a number of presentations in regard to the active offer to ensure the teams have a good understanding of our responsibilities in promoting this. Team managers are encouraged to actively promote advocacy within their teams, and Independent Reviewing Officers are reminded to reinforce the offer made by social workers at each review.

6. STATISTICAL INFORMATION 2023/2024

Number of Representations Received and Timescales

Table 2

Total Number of Complaints and Representations Received
--

Statutory Complaints Procedure – 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024		
Complaints	Adult Social Care	Children’s Social Care
Informal (resolved outside of the formal complaints procedure)	34	107
Stage 1	10	23
Stage 2	3	5
Total Complaints	<u>182</u>	
Compliments	Adult Social Care	Children’s Social Care
	223	139
Total Compliments	<u>362</u>	

A total of 191 complaints were received in the previous period 2022/23. The table above shows a slight **decrease in complaints** received during this reporting period – a decrease of **4.7%** compared to the previous year.

A total of 257 compliments were received in the previous period 2022/23. The table above shows a significant **increase in compliments** received during this reporting period – an increase of **41%** compared to the previous year.

Timescales

92% of Stage 1 complaints were acknowledged by the complaints department within 2 working days during this reporting period.

At Stage 1, the complainant should be contacted within 10 working days of the date of acknowledgement by the person looking into the complaint. This is usually the relevant manager responsible for the service area the complaint is regarding. When the complaint has been resolved, a written response is provided on behalf of the Local Authority within the following 5 working days of the discussion or meeting. **47%** of Stage 1 complaints were resolved and response provided within 15 working days of the start date.

At Stage 2, the guidelines state that an investigation must be completed and a full written response issued to the complainant within 25 working days of the start date. Disappointingly, **no** Stage 2 complaints investigations were completed and the report issued within 25 working days of start date.

A factor contributing to the delay in completing complaint investigations within the prescribed timescale is due to the marked increase in the complexity of the complaints. There has been a marked increase in highly detailed complaints, with one particular complaint exceeding 100 pages, and many others also encompassed complex issues. 46% of complaints covered multiple issues compared to 27% in the previous year. While we strive to adhere to the timescales set out in our complaints policy, the complexity of each situation often necessitates a more thorough approach to ensure meaningful and positive outcomes for complainants.

This increase in complexity requires extensive time to thoroughly review and address each concern. Additionally, 9.5% of complaints involved multiple teams within the Local Authority (compared to 6.5% the previous year), necessitating coordination among various service managers, which further complicated and prolonged the investigation process.

The sharp rise in the number of complaints received in the 2022/23 reporting period (an increase of 158% from the previous year) continues to place a strain on the Council's limited resources. Although there has been a slight decrease of 5% in complaints this reporting period, the overall volume remains high compared to previous years.

At Stage 2, the complexity and seriousness of the complaints has resulted in investigations exceeding the 25-working day timeframe. The severity and intricacy of the issues demand thorough and detailed investigations, which has necessitated the need to extend the duration of the process to ensure all aspects are thoroughly considered. Compounding the issue is the ongoing national shortage in Independent Investigating Officers (IIO) and Independent Persons (IP). As the pool of IIO and IP resources is accessed by other Local Authorities in Wales, investigators are often working on multiple complaints across the nation, leading to extended timelines for completing each investigation.

Improvements are required in timeliness and the service is committed to implementing measures to address this. One approach to expedite internal processes is to review and streamline the sign-off process, especially where complaints involve multiple teams, which has been identified as a cause for delays. This will ensure more efficient communication and resolution.

The directorate has stabilised the social work workforce, significantly reducing reliance on agency staff, which will enhance continuity and efficiency in handling complaints. To further mitigate delays, the Compliments, Complaints and Resolution Manager is actively liaising with counterparts in neighbouring authorities to share details of new Independent Investigators, on a reciprocal basis. We are also considering ways to recruit the services of Independent Complaints Investigators to expand the available pool, thus reducing the burden on existing investigators. The Compliments, Complaints and Resolution Manager is currently in discussions with neighbouring Local Authorities to consider a joint approach to attract interest in the IIO and IP roles.

Overall Analysis

Early Resolution of Complaints

In line with the Welsh Government Guidance "A guide to handling complaints and representations by Local Authority social services" Bridgend County Borough Council, wherever possible, focuses on early resolution of complaints, with **77%** of complaints resolved informally during this reporting period (pre the complaints procedure). This is an

increase from the 74% of complaints resolved informally in 2022/23. The high percentage overall continues to reflect the Directorate’s commitment to achieving early resolution for complainants.

Some of the feedback comments received in relation to staff working within the Social Services Complaints Department are as follows:

Thank you R. I was very frustrated this morning. You are a good listener and for the first time today I didn't feel dismissed.
Thank you for the explanation offered which is very helpful and clear.
S is really nice and understanding.
Hi, thank you T that clarifies things for me. I appreciate your time in responding to my email and concerns.

Complaint Outcomes (Statutory)

In-line with Welsh Government guidance on “A guide to handling complaints and representations by local authority social services” complaints resolved at Stage 1 are only closed by mutual consent, with all parties confirming that a resolution has been agreed. The three most common themes during this reporting period were:

- Staff conduct (**22%**)
- Lack of support (**20%**)
- Lack of communication (**16%**)

Further information on themes can be found on Page 18 and 19 of this report.

Stage 2 complaints are investigated by an Independent Investigating Officer (IIO) independent from the Council. Complaints relating to Children’s Social Care must also be overseen by an Independent Person (IP).

The outcome of Stage 2 complaints resolved within the reporting year are as follows:

Table 3.

Complaint Outcomes (St. 2 – Statutory Complaints Procedure)			
Outcome	Adult Social Care	Children’s Social Care	Total
Not Upheld	2	1	3
Partially Upheld	1	1	2
Upheld	0	3	3
Total	3	5	8

The following complaints were upheld following independent investigation:

Childrens Social Care

- 1. Complaint regarding a failure to communicate effectively internally and with complainants regarding a Professional Concerns referral under Part 5 of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.**
- 2. Complaint regarding a failure to conduct the appropriate assessment of a mother's capacity to care for complainant's grandchild prior, or since, child's return to her mother in January 2022. There was also a failure to conduct the necessary drug and alcohol tests prior to placement with Mother, as instructed within the Care Order. Paternal Grandfather also complained that the contact arrangements set out in the Court approved care plan were not adhered to in relation to contact with maternal grandparents.**
- 3. Complaint regarding a child who was not appropriately supported in terms of their physical and emotional health, including their specific needs related to their ASD diagnosis.**
- 4. Complaint regarding a delay and breach in the assessment timescales within core groups, visits, and delays receiving documentation such as the child protection minutes and the child protection plan.**
- 5. Complaint that although the Local Authority requested the relevant forms to change child's name, the forms were sent directly to child's mother.**

Adult Social Care

- 6. Complaint regarding an elderly lady being placed in a care home at a time when she lacked capacity and no-one else had authority to make arrangements on her behalf. Notwithstanding this, the Council deducted £500 as a fee for making the arrangement, which is only permitted when a person whose means exceed the financial limits requests.**

Corporate Complaints Procedure

There are instances whereby aspects of a complaint do not fall within the remit of the Social Services Statutory Complaints Procedure and in these instances, the Authority's Corporate Complaints Procedure is utilised. 1 complaint was received by the Local Authorities' Corporate Complaints team and was deemed appropriate to be addressed in accordance with the Corporate Complaints Procedure during 2023/24. This complaint was relating to a data breach in Childrens Social Services and was 'Upheld'. The Council Annual Complaints

Report reports on this complaint, alongside others received in accordance with the Corporate Complaints Policy.

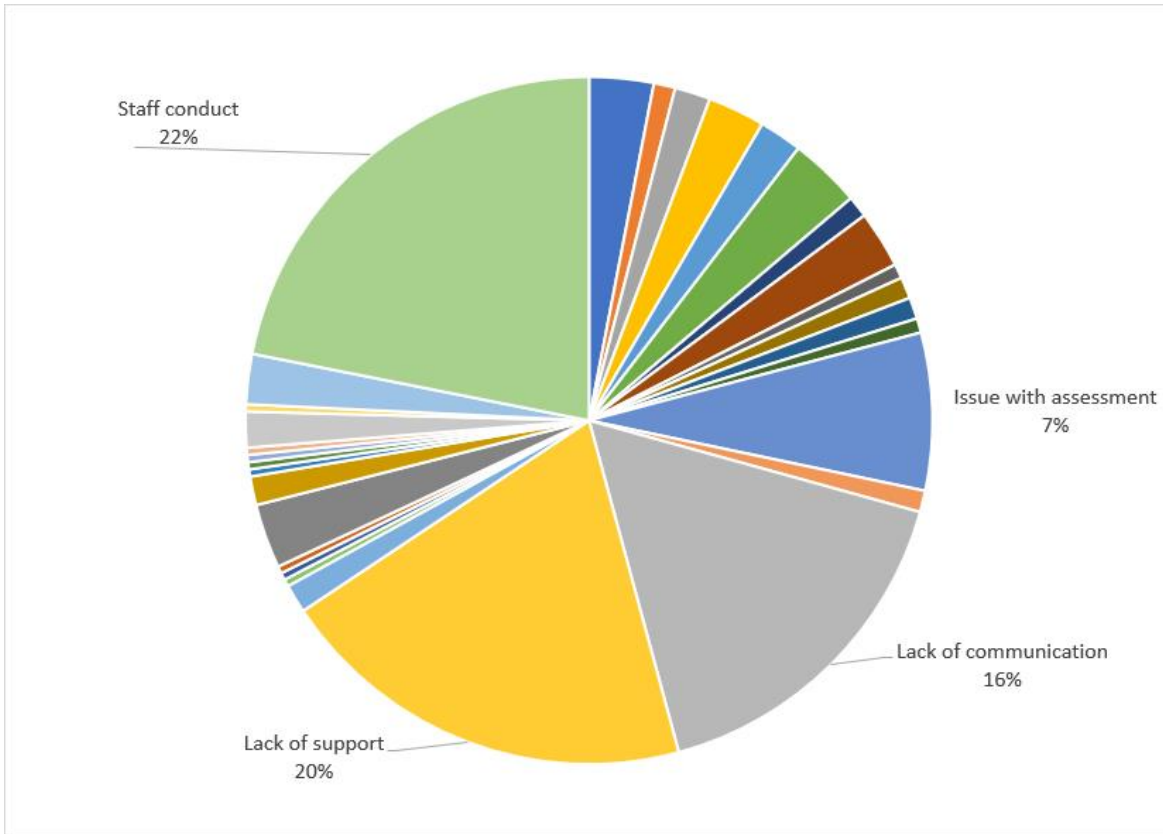
Complaint Themes

The nature of all complaints received to the directorate varied, and included:

Table 4.

Themes of complaints received 2023/24	Percentage %
Staff conduct	22
Lack of support	20
Lack of communication	16
Issue with assessment	7
Delays	3
Data inaccuracies	3
Child/Adult Protection Process/Outcome	3
Contact arrangements	3
Policies / Procedures not followed	3
Safeguarding concerns	2
Case management decisions	2
Court outcome	2
Request for a change of social worker	2
Quality of service	1
Data Breach	1
Historic concerns	1
Call times	1
Frequent changes of social worker	1
Court Order not followed	1
Failure to act in a way the complainant believes Council should have	1
Issue with financial assessment	1
Meeting minutes not provided	1

Figure 1.



Complaints regarding staff conduct

As you will see from table 4, the largest proportion of complaints received this period related to issues with the conduct of staff members (**22%**). Complaints pertaining to the conduct of staff members are handled by the appropriate line manager in accordance with the Council’s internal HR policies. These policies are designed to ensure that appropriate action is taken, when necessary. The relevant line manager who handles the complaint must take the concerns seriously, and thoroughly evaluate every concern raised relating to the conduct of their staff. The complaints department hold a record of staff names to support the identification of any reoccurring concerns and are able to highlight this to the appropriate managers. In compliance with legal confidentiality obligations inherent in each employee’s contract of employment and the Data Protection Act (2018), the Council must not disclose the results of any investigations to a complainant.

Complainants may also be advised that they are entitled to raise a concern directly with the regulatory body, Social Care Wales or Social Work England, and will be provided with details of how to also raise a concern separately with them, should they wish to do so.

Complaints regarding a lack of support

During this reporting period, **20%** of all Social Services complaints centred around a perceived lack of support in various areas critical to our responsibilities under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. In Children’s Social Care, this broad theme included advice and assistance with managing relationships and contact arrangements, financial support, support with obtaining personal documents, support to Foster Carers in maintaining their roles and referrals to partner agencies that provide specialist support. In

Adult Social Care, complaints relating to a lack of support have included issues such as inadequate support identified through assessments or reassessments, vital support required for carers / need for a carers assessment, respite support issues and occupational therapy assessments required to inform referrals to Housing.

Complaints relating to a lack of support have highlighted to services the urgent need for families who may be experiencing a crisis. These complaints emphasised the need for a responsive and coordinated approach to ensure vulnerable individuals and families receive the support they require. The complaints procedure and focus on the early resolution on complaints (wherever possible), has supported the Council's responsiveness in these situations.

Complaints regarding safeguarding concerns

During this reporting period, **7** complaints highlighted safeguarding concerns for consideration under Wales Safeguarding Procedures; **2** of which related to Children's Social Care and **5** of which related to Adult Social Care.

In Children's Social Care, one complaint led to a Section 47 investigation. The second complaint in Children's Social Care resulted in Social Services arranging for the father to appropriately safeguard the child from their mother due to the concerns raised in the form of a complaint.

In Adult Social Care four out of the five complaints were in relation to services commissioned by the Council. All four complaints were referred to the service provider for resolution under their own complaint's procedure. All five complaints were referred to the Council's Safeguarding Team for consideration under Wales Safeguarding Procedures. One case was already subject to a police investigation, while the others did not meet the threshold for significant harm following the necessary enquiries.

All four complaints relating to commissioned services were reviewed by the Social Services Compliments, Complaints and Resolution Manager, the Safeguarding Manager and the Contract Monitoring Manager, in which any necessary next steps were considered, such as placing the provider on the 'Risk Register' for closer monitoring.

7. HOW COMPLAINTS WERE RESOLVED and LESSONS LEARNED

A variety of methods were used to resolve complaints, including:

- Liaison by the complaints officers with the appropriate managers to identify and agree a swift and informal resolution.
- Meetings between the appropriate managers and complainants to support honest and open communication, as well as being able to gain a better understanding of complainants concerns and their desired outcomes.
- Positive working relationships with Social Services Complaints Departments in other Local Authorities across Wales, to share best practices and ensure consistency in the handling of complaints. This also ensures complainants receive fair and equitable

treatment. On occasion and for particularly complex cases, we can collaboratively problem-solve on a reciprocal basis (whilst always maintaining confidentiality).

- Providing complainants with clear explanation of the reason(s) for decisions (verbal and/or written), where appropriate.
- Being open and honest by providing apologies to complainants, where appropriate.
- Identifying where services should be changed and improved, and recording following up on corrective actions.
- Offering a reassessment, where appropriate.
- Signposting complainants to advocacy services such as Llais, TGP Cymru and Bridgend Voice and Choice.
- Referring complaints to Stage 2 of the Social Services Complaints Procedure to provide an independent consideration of the complaint.
- Liaison with the Councils Quality Assurance Officer to discuss any recurring issues and trends in complaints, allowing a greater focus on areas where service quality can be improved. The Quality Assurance Officer will also consider where identified learning outcomes align with broader service improvement plans.

A summary of key lessons learned during 2023/24 were as follows:

Table 5

Team	Lessons Learned/Actions Implemented
Business Support	<p>Minute Taking</p> <p>Business support capacity was increased, improving processes like minute-taking. Improved processes ensure timely distribution of ICPC/RCPC minutes to all parties, supported by expanded business support.</p>
	<p>Filing Family Court judgements</p> <p>The Group Manager of Business Support distributed a practice note to all relevant staff to confirm where all documents should be saved, to ensure continuity.</p>
CDT	<p>Children's Disability Team</p> <p>Improved communication between teams will ensure appropriate case assignment for children with specialised needs, such as ASD.</p>
	<p>Panel Assessments</p> <p>Collaborative assessments between the safeguarding and disability teams were introduced to ensure decisions include all relevant expertise.</p>
CECT	<p>Court Order Name Changes</p> <p>Social workers were advised to promptly notify the General Register Office (GRO) of court-ordered name changes and complete forms within 6 weeks. Staff are now aware of GRO procedures for future cases.</p>
	<p>PWP Assessments</p> <p>The missing PWP assessment was rectified with a new assessment. A tracker system was introduced for monitoring PWP cases.</p>
	<p>Review of contact arrangements</p> <p>Following a recommendation in one particular case, a review of current contact arrangements was undertaken with maternal grandparents to ensure that the Local Authority is satisfied that it is a safe and nurturing environment for the child.</p>

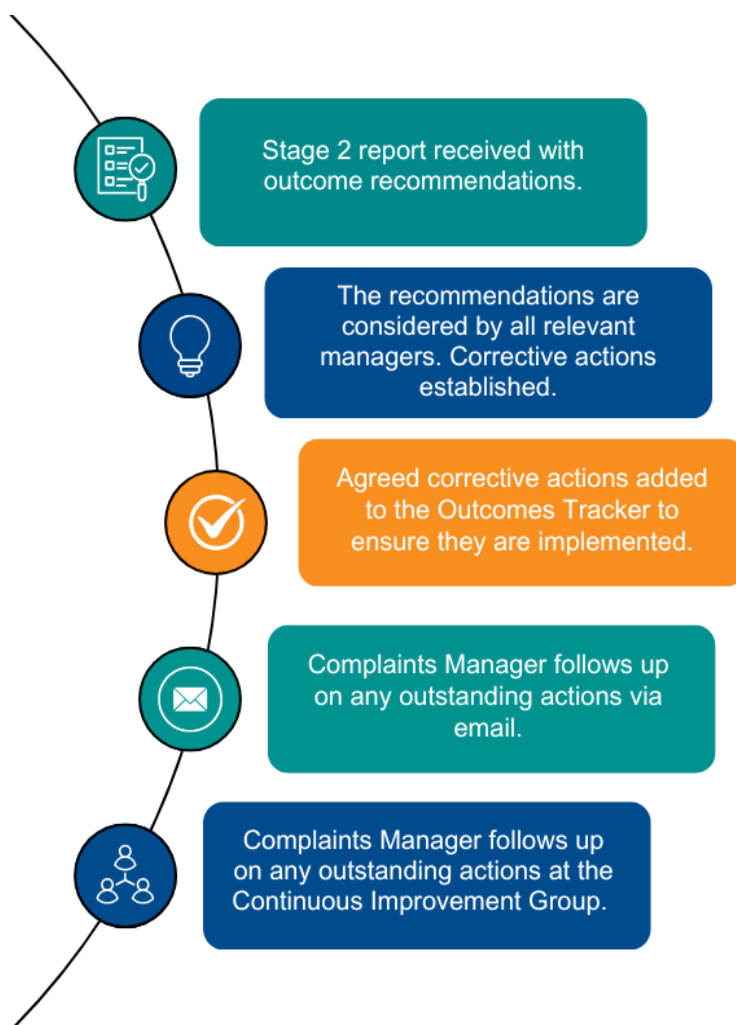
	<p>Internal Communication Communication protocols were reviewed during a comprehensive learning event, and strategies were introduced to prevent future failings in inter-team communication.</p>
Childrens Services	<p>Learning from Complaints An IIO recommended the Local Authority organise a learning event for all staff as a way of coming together and improving practice, so that workers can be supported to make improvements and reflect over the errors that were made during this particular investigation. Although we did not agree to hold an event, monthly complaint reviews and various training initiatives were implemented to share lessons across the service.</p>
	<p>Case Allocation Enhanced management oversight ensures proper matching of case complexity with social worker experience. Peer supervision and mentoring programs for managers were introduced.</p>
	<p>Record Keeping Training was enhanced to emphasise clear and readable record-keeping. The Council's Recording Policy has been reinforced with all safeguarding staff.</p>
	<p>ASD Training Comprehensive ASD training, addressing both male and female presentations, was implemented. Projects involving clinical psychology now provide additional support to staff.</p>
	<p>Adoption & Trauma Training Trauma-informed training covering adoption and early years trauma is now mandatory for all social work staff.</p>
	<p>Child Protection Thresholds Efforts are underway to ensure proper understanding of child protection thresholds, focusing on cases of significant harm.</p>
	<p>Updated Practice Guidance New workers must schedule protected time to read all key documents within the child's file. This has been written into our practice guidance as the standard we expect from our staff.</p>
	<p>Record-Keeping Standards A mandatory induction framework for new staff highlights the importance of clear record-keeping. An IIO recommended that record-keeping training be provided to staff. In response, we've implemented a Recording Policy and provide regular training on record-keeping standards. This is also extended to Foster Carers, as they play a key role in safeguarding.</p>
Directorate	<p>Agency Staff Standards for agency staff were reviewed, ensuring equal accountability with permanent staff.</p>
East Locality Hub	<p>Timescale Monitoring We reviewed performance monitoring of child protection timelines and improved compliance. Apologies were given for delays in the case in question.</p>
	<p>Child Protection Training Refresher training and reflective practice workshops were introduced to improve</p>

	<p>staff's knowledge and work environment. The "Signs of Safety" framework was implemented to aid consistency in child protection.</p> <p>Domestic Violence Training Mandatory training on domestic violence, including parental alienation and coercive control, was reinforced. Training needs are addressed in supervision and appraisals.</p>
Financial Assessments Team	<p>Reimbursement of Charges We reimbursed a £500 charge made in error and issued an apology to complainants.</p> <p>Clarifying Information for Self-Funders We reviewed the information provided to self-funders to ensure clear communication of the Individual Care Contract rationale. This will ensure transparency from the outset of the process.</p> <p>Payment Clarity for Self-Funders We reviewed the payment process information provided to self-funders to ensure clarity regarding payments to the Care Home.</p>
IAA	<p>Timescale Monitoring We reviewed performance monitoring of child protection timelines and improved compliance. Apologies were given for delays in the case in question.</p> <p>Domestic Violence Training Mandatory training on domestic violence, including parental alienation and coercive control, was reinforced. Training needs are addressed in supervision and appraisals.</p>
Integrated Cluster Network Team - East	<p>Referral to Mental Health Services Although the complaint in question was not upheld, the IIO suggested a re-referral to Mental Health Services may better meet the complainant's needs. A reassessment was completed to determine the appropriate level of post-operative support and whether alternative services, like Mental Health, were necessary.</p>
IRO	<p>Attendees to Child Protection Conferences Expectations around family attendance and social worker roles at conferences were clarified. Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) received a reminder to assess family participation carefully.</p> <p>Document Accessibility We implemented measures to ensure IROs and social workers have access to all relevant documents, including court judgements, at case reviews. If the documents haven't been received by the first LAC review, the IRO will follow up with our legal team. Senior managers now have a monthly interface with legal, giving opportunity to follow up on any relevant legal documents in a timely manner.</p> <p>Update to LAC QA IRO Monitoring Report We updated the LAC QA IRO Monitoring Report to ask the question: "<i>Have Foster Carers been provided with all the necessary paperwork?</i>" in line with regulations.</p>
LADO	<p>Reflective Practice: Safeguards We implemented measures to ensure that the safeguards implemented in a Professional Concerns meeting are relevant and in line with the risk assessment</p>

	<p>pertaining to the specific professional concern raised. The LADO will ensure that safeguards are articulated and recorded during strategy meetings.</p> <p>Internal Communication Communication protocols were reviewed during a comprehensive learning event, and strategies were introduced to prevent future failings in inter-team communication.</p>
Childrens Locality Hubs	<p>Record Keeping Training was enhanced to emphasise clear and readable record-keeping. The Council's Recording Policy has been reinforced with all safeguarding staff.</p>
Fostering	<p>Professional Concerns Documentation We implemented measures to ensure that appropriate action is taken and relevant paperwork is provided to Foster Carers in accordance with the timescales set out in regulations. We have ensured that practitioners are aware of the documentation expected.</p> <p>Guidance for Foster Carers The fostering service have reviewed paperwork and are developing and implementing guidance on drug and alcohol misuse in young people. Mandatory first aid training provides opportunity for foster carers to improve their understanding this area in more detail.</p> <p>Foster Carer Training Foster carers now receive mandatory training on drug and alcohol misuse, and a handbook with guidance is being updated. We follow up during reviews if Foster Carers do not engage with training sessions as needed.</p> <p>Complaint Communication Workshops are considered to improve communication between teams and foster carers where necessary. Safeguards in Professional Concerns meetings are now clearly recorded in foster carer supervision notes.</p> <p>Foster Carer Supervision records Any safeguards recommended to be implemented are clearly recorded in Foster Carer Supervision records, to include dates when safeguards implemented and when lifted. These are also reflected within Foster Carer Supervision notes.</p> <p>Internal Communication Communication protocols were reviewed during a comprehensive learning event, and strategies were introduced to prevent future failings in inter-team communication.</p> <p>Supporting Foster Carers An IIO suggested reviewing policies to better support Foster Carers through challenging processes like Professional Concerns procedures. Our safeguarding protocol outlines available support, and the Fostering team provide assistance during these difficult situations.</p> <p>Mandatory Training for Foster Carers The IIO recommended mandatory training on Professional Concerns processes and support. We provide regular training and offer Foster Carers access to resources, including support during allegations through Fostering Network membership. We hold consultation events to update Foster Carers, and the complainants who missed this event were individually briefed by their Supervising Social Worker.</p>

Senior Management Childrens Services.	Record of actions Key meetings are documented to ensure clarity and accountability in decision-making. Although Senior Managers do not routinely input into case records, we will implement measures to document key meetings to ensure transparency and accountability.
Social Services Complaints	Minute Taking An IIO recommended that the complaints team consider minuting or recording all meetings with complainants. We recognised the need to respect individual preferences and circumstance as not all complainants benefit from formal minuted meetings. Minute-taking services are offered on a case-by-case basis.

In order to ensure that the directorate learns from complaints, and improvements are embedded effectively, the complaints department record, analyse and report on the learning from complaints. Improvements are monitored using an 'Outcomes Tracker' spreadsheet, which is reviewed periodically by the Complaints Manager to ensure that all outcomes and agreed actions have been completed. While some actions are straightforward and can be implemented quickly, others may require a period of work, time and commitment from the service to embed. The Complaints Manager also follows up on any outstanding actions during the 'Continuous Improvement Group' meetings in both adult and children's services. This group, attend by team managers and senior managers within the service, ensures that all areas of improvements are being addressed. The flowchart to the right demonstrates the process we follow from the recommendations being made, to ensuring they are completed.



Welsh Language Standards

There have been no complaints received during this reporting period that have been communicated via the medium of Welsh.

To ensure compliance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards all complaints publicity material, including leaflets and the complaints website have been translated and are readily available in Welsh and English.

Compliments

Compliments are regarded as important information which can be used to identify and learn from good practice. All compliments are therefore recorded centrally, and details provided in management reports. As shown in Table 2 (page 13), **362** compliments were received during 2023/24 compared to 257 the previous year, a welcome **increase of 41%**. Please see a cross selection of the compliments received for 2023/24 in the table below:

Table 6.

Compliments - Adult Social Care:
We are all thrilled that you've taken over Mums case, especially Mum. You've already added so much value to mums everyday, From the bottom of our hearts, thanks you so much You really are worth your weight in gold V, and we appreciate all of your help.
I am writing on behalf of my Uncle, my Aunt, and wider family members to let you know how much we have valued W's involvement while my Uncle was in hospital. She provided helpful information and advice and additionally, perhaps most importantly, ensured that the views and wishes of my Uncle and Aunt were fully understood and incorporated within the care planning process. I would be grateful if you could pass on our thanks and best wishes to W.
I would like to say thank you for going out of your way and carrying out an assessment with Mum. The information you have passed to the social worker has finally ensured that Mum has received the nursing assessment that was required, we can now look at respite for Mum in suitable places, thank you again.
Dear X, I write to express my gratitude for the support you have shown Y and the staff supporting her through her operation, Z has fed back to me that your advice, support, and visual contact have been very much appreciated, I know Z and her team have found your input invaluable. I have copied A in to pass our thanks on, and compliment her staff for fantastic work.
B has been absolutely amazing, I do not know where I would be without her support. She is the only person who has gotten through to me to help myself, I have a far better quality of life with B's support, I have finally accessed health appointments, tackled my financial issues and I actually feel very much supported. I know B is always there to support and I am able to approach her with queries. B has been a life line to me.
FYI, I have just left C, he gave great feedback and would like the opportunity to attend another day at the centre if it came up! He finds it 'brilliant fun' with lots of good humour and good quiz's. He enjoys the food and being picked up and dropped off. Also stated 'it's the best thing since sliced bread!' Spoke to X who feels like C a different person and more confident in himself.

Mr D was very complimentary of you and said you have been a great support to E and her family. Very well done in difficult circumstances.

I hope you can get a message to F at Bridgeway ASAP. Would you also pass on our thanks to her and all the girls in her team. They have all done a fantastic job keeping Mum safe in her own home for as long as was possible. Also, a big thanks to you and your team (especially G who worked extra hard to make sure the blister packs worked). Best wishes to H and her new baby (when he/she arrives) and a thank you to I who offered good advice to help Mum with her diet. Mum was very positive with the girls from Foxtroy during her assessment and it was clear from her responses that she is looking forward to the move.

I would like to drop a line just as a thank you to your department for your help with a recent placement for my Mum. I would like to give credit to Social Worker J, she has shown nothing but understanding and empathy with my Mum and my own struggles as it has not been an easy decision to give up a home but hopefully the right decision has been made. J has been supportive and always communicated with me through the process, I don't think Mum would have been admitted to hospital when we were so desperate if she had not challenged the GP this should probably have happened months ago. J has taken all of the family into her assessment for a very positive outcome for my Mum. I think it's so important to ensure that good work is appreciated as there is always so much negativity in services at the moment.

Compliments - Childrens Social Care:

K being newly allocated has managed to gain quick oversight of all relevant information, develop a chronology, and present an excellent report for the conference today. In addition, there were challenging discussion that took place today, I felt this was managed by K professionally with good direction for resolution.

L has been absolutely amazing in not just going off what is written on paper. She has gotten to know us as a family beforehand and gotten everyone into actually helping us rather than being ignored. During our core groups L always gives me time to speak and makes sure nobody interrupts or stops me from my views and even encourages when I stand up for myself and what I think in core group about my children. L has always laid out clearly what help she can push for and even had her manager explain if we are unable to get something for one of my children. L has always been very easy to get hold of and nothing is ever too much or out of her way even when busy L will make time to talk to me or get back to me on something as right now my family is dealing with a lot. L is always a listening ear and always levels with us. She is never making us feel like we aren't listened to or lying. Other professionals around us haven't done this! L has never once made us feel like we are less than or a problem family just because of what is written down. Being a social worker it's important to be professional but also still act like a human. We have had social workers who look down on us and never give us the chance of proving we're not what is written. L has never come to our home telling us what to do it's only ever been suggestions and actual help. Very open and honest, if L has an issue or concern, she will directly come to us and talk about it.

I just remembered that I was going to email you about M. I just wanted to say how amazing I thought she was when we went to carry out a joint assessment together. The work she did with the young person was so good, they really opened up to her and she gathered really important information that without her input she might not have gained otherwise.

<p>She was also excellent with the parents, really empathic, able to challenge appropriately and really knowledgeable. I really think M is a star social worker, someone to aspire to be like in practice and someone I would want to come to my door if I ever needed a social worker in future. She is brilliant.</p>
<p>I would just like to write to you to praise up your lovely worker N who has worked with me and O covering P! I'm very sad that she's leaving me and even asked if I could stay with her. She has been an absolute diamond and helped me with so much! The understanding she has shown to my situation has meant so much as rarely do people understand to that level without actually having a child with a disability. People are so quick to complain that I just wanted to email to praise N and let you know what a valuable member you have on your team. I honestly cannot praise her enough she is honestly one of the best disability workers I have ever worked with and it was an absolute pleasure to work with her and I hope she receives the recognition she deserves I will very much miss working with her! Thank you.</p>
<p>Just wanted to let you know that the feedback from the Q on you as their social worker was fab! They said that you were really supportive and always asked how they were and what they needed to support them! They said they couldn't fault you!!</p>
<p>I just wanted to pass on some positive comments in relation to R, that were shared in conference this morning. Conference was in relation to S. Mother, T stated that she feels that R has been a breath of fresh air, they have an open relationship, where T feels that she can be honest about her situation, without being judged. She feels that R is also very open with her about concerns. T also stated that she has found R to be really supportive.</p>
<p>I just wanted to message to say thank you, thank you for supporting and believing in us. Thank you for not judging us and learning about us. Thank you for being that social worker who makes a difference, you'll be one of the ones we remember for ever. There are not many social workers like you around, you do not go unnoticed and you are so appreciated.</p>
<p>I want to see U every week - I listen to her and I am safe. She won't take any messing and she tells me all the rules to keep myself safe. I know then what I can do and I can be safe.</p>

8. ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023/2024

- In July 2023, we reviewed our data collection system to ensure we address identified learning outcomes, and track where services have been changed and improved as result of complaints. This system has allowed the Complaints Manager to actively track outcomes. The Complaints Manager also actively participates in Continuous Improvement Groups in Adult and Childrens services.
- From August 2023 onwards, all complainants have been offered advocacy support from "Llais Cwm Taf Morgannwg", in line with the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020. We have also updated the information on our website to ensure complainants are aware of the support available. We have actively engaged with Llais managers and advocates, which has enabled us to strengthen our working relationships and collaboratively support complainants.

- From October 2023 onwards, the Complaints Manager has fostered a strong working relationship with the newly appointed Quality Assurance Officer. This has supported the learning from complaints. This open communication has allowed the Quality Assurance Officer to consider if any issues in services can align with broader service improvement plans, and the Complaints Manager has gained insight on improvements which can in turn led to more effective resolutions for complainants. This collaborative approach has increased accountability, ensuring the relevant departments address any identified recurring issues.
- Between November 2023 – February 2024 the Social Services Complaints Department underwent a Regional Internal Audit. It was pleasing to note that the audit gave a **Reasonable Assurance audit opinion**, which established a sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. There was only one ‘Medium Priority’ improvement identified, and four at ‘Low Priority’. All identified improvements have since been addressed to the satisfaction of the auditor.
- In March and April 2024 we reviewed and improved the system used to log and track complaints; which now provides more detailed information on complaint timescales, which will allow for greater oversight and will help report on timeliness in further detail.
- Throughout the reporting period there has been a continued focus on achieving positive outcomes for complainants in a year with a high overall number of complaints received. Managers have continued to work hard to resolve as many complaints as possible either informally or at Stage 1 of the complaints process; supporting the directorate’s commitment to achieving the early resolution for complainants. This resulted in only a small percentage of all complaints received progressing to Stage 2 of the Statutory Social Service Complaints process – **4.4%**.

10. OBJECTIVES FOR 2024/25

- As timeliness is a clear area of improvement, an objective for the year ahead is to enhance resolution efficiency by streamlining the signing-off process for formal complaints. This is especially pertinent for complaints involving multiple issues and/or teams, as these have been identified as a causes for delays. By streamlining internal processing we will ensure timely follow-up with complainants.
- In order to increase accessibility and inclusivity, an objective for the year ahead is to develop our complaints information in formats accessible for young people, individuals with learning difficulties, and for those with hearing or visual impairments.
- Roll out training on the Social Services Complaints Procedure on a wider level to management across the Directorate. The recently updated training materials will provide managers with the necessary skills and knowledge to handle issues effectively and efficiently, improving timeliness, reducing the number of complaints that progress to Stage 2 unnecessarily and improve the complainants experience and the quality of

service delivery. The training will also be available as a 'refresher' for those already familiar with the complaints process.

- Local Authorities across South Wales continue to experience difficulties in appointing suitably experienced Independent Investigating Officers in a timely way. Due to the rise in the number of complaints being considered at Stage 2 of the Social Services Complaints Process across Wales, Independent Investigating Officers are often at capacity and availability is limited. This year the complaints department will continue to further develop our pool of investigators. As we have good working relationships with our counterparts in neighbouring Local Authorities, we are able to share information on good quality Investigating Officers on a reciprocal basis. We are also considering a joint advertising approach to attract interest in the IIO and IP roles.

11. EQUALITIES

A screening for equality impact has been carried out in relation to the representation and complaints procedure. There is no negative impact on the protected equality characteristics.

There have been no complaints in relation to equality impacts received during the reporting period in relation to the Social Services Representations and Complaints Procedure.

**Report prepared for Claire Marchant
Statutory Director of Social Services
By the Compliments and Complaints Resolution Manager**

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Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	19 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	UPDATE TO THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER FINANCE, HOUSING AND CHANGE
Responsible Officer:	DEBORAH EXTON DEPUTY HEAD OF FINANCE
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The Financial Procedure Rules form a key component of the Council's Constitution. They provide the framework for managing the Council's financial affairs. The procedures identify the financial responsibilities of the Full Council, the Cabinet and Officers.
Executive Summary:	The Council's Financial Procedure Rules have not been updated in full since 2021, during which time new financial processes, procedures, and new legislation and guidance have come into effect, changing the way in which the Council operates. The updated Procedure Rules take these into account to ensure the Council's financial affairs are managed effectively and at minimum risk. The revised Financial Procedure Rules will be included within the Constitution once approved.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Cabinet for an updated version of the Council's Financial Procedure Rules (FPRs).

2. Background

- 2.1 The management of the Council's financial affairs are conducted in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules set out in Section 17 of the Council's Constitution. The FPRs have not been revised since 2021, during which time new financial processes and procedures, and new legislation and guidance, have come into effect, changing the way in which the Council operates.

3. Current situation/ proposal

- 3.1 The Financial Procedure Rules have been reviewed by officers, including those from

finance, procurement, legal and internal audit and a number of changes made to bring them up to date to reflect changes such as:

- clarification and updated wording in a number of areas to reflect current practice;
- updates to officer titles and lines of responsibility;
- clarification of process in respect of budget overspends;
- new section on Business Cash Cards;
- clarification of process for payments in advance.

3.2 The proposed amendments to the Financial Procedure Rules are shown via tracked changes at **Appendix 1**, and a clean version of the Financial Procedure Rules is attached at **Appendix 2**. A report shall be taken to Council to amend the Constitution to incorporate the revisions to the Financial Procedure Rules.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 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.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from changes to the Financial Procedure Rules as they are being proposed to reflect current practice.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- approve the amendments to the Financial Procedure Rules outlined in **Appendix 1**;
- note that a separate report will be presented to Council to incorporate the revised Financial Procedure Rules into the Constitution, as attached at **Appendix 2**.

Background documents

None

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FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

Introduction

What are Financial Procedure Rules?

Financial Procedure **Rules** provide the framework for managing the Council's financial affairs. They are supported by more detailed specific guidance and procedure notes in a range of areas. The procedures identify the financial responsibilities of the Full Council, the Cabinet and Officers.

Why are they important?

- (a) To conduct its business effectively, the Council needs to ensure that sound financial management arrangements are in place and that they are strictly adhered to in practice. Part of this process is the establishment of Financial Procedures **Rules** which set out the financial responsibilities of the Council. These procedures **rules** have been devised as a control to help the Council manage its financial matters properly in compliance with all necessary requirements.
- (b) Good, sound financial management is a key element of the Council's Corporate Governance framework which helps to ensure that the Council is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.
- (c) Good financial management secures value for money, controls spending, ensures due probity of transactions and allows decisions to be informed by accurate accounting information.
- (d) Good financial management requires secure and reliable records and systems to process transactions and information and substantiate the effective use of public money.
- (e) Financial Procedure **Rules** should not be seen in isolation, but rather as part of the overall regulatory framework of the Council as set out in this Constitution.

Who do Financial Procedure **Rules apply to?**

- (f) Financial Procedure **Rules** apply to every Member and Officer of the Council and anyone acting on its behalf. –Members and Officers have a general responsibility for taking reasonable action to provide for the security and use of the resources and assets under their control, and for ensuring that the use of such resources and assets is legal, is consistent with Council policies and priorities, is properly authorised, provides value for money and achieves best value.
- (g) Separate financial procedure **rules** have been incorporated into the Council's Financial Scheme for Schools and relate to those matters where decisions have been delegated to school governing bodies.

- (h) These Financial Procedure ~~Rules~~ shall apply in relation to any partnership for which the Council is the accountable body, unless the Council expressly agrees otherwise.
- (i) Failure to observe Financial Procedures ~~Rules~~ may result in action under the Council's disciplinary procedures.

Who is responsible for ensuring that they are applied?

- (j) Chief Officers and Heads of Service are ultimately responsible to the Council for ensuring that Financial Procedure ~~Rules~~ are applied and observed by ~~their~~his/her staff and contractors providing services on the Council's behalf and for reporting to the Chief Finance Officer any known or suspected breaches of the procedures.
- (k) The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for maintaining a continuous review of the Financial Procedures ~~Rules~~ and submitting any additions or changes necessary to ~~the~~ Council for approval. The Chief Finance Officer is also responsible for reporting, where appropriate, breaches of the Financial Procedures to ~~the~~ Council and/or to ~~the~~ Cabinet Members.
- (l) The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for issuing advice and guidance to underpin the Financial Procedures ~~Rules~~ which Members, Chief Officers and others acting on behalf of the Council are required to follow.
- (m) Where any Chief Officer considers that complying with Financial Procedures ~~Rules~~ in a particular situation might conflict with the achievement of value for money or the principles of Best Value or the best interests of the Council, ~~they~~he/she shall raise the issue with the Chief Finance Officer who will, if ~~they~~he/she considers necessary and appropriate, seek formal approval from the Council for a specific waiver of the procedures, or an amendment to the procedures themselves.

Section A - Financial Control

1. General

1.1 For the purposes of these Rules:

- (a) "the Chief Executive Officer" means the officer designated by the Council as Head of Paid Service under Section 4 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989.
- (b) "the Chief Finance Officer" means the officer designated by the Council as the officer responsible for the administration of its financial affairs under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- (c) "Chief Officer" means any of the following:
 - The Chief Executive Officer;
 - The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing;
 - The Corporate Director – Education, ~~Early Years and Young People and Family Support~~;
 - The Corporate Director - Communities;
 - Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, Human Resources and Corporate Policy.
 - Chief Officer – Finance, ~~Performance-Housing~~ and Change.

- (d) “the Monitoring Officer” means the officer designated as such by the Council under Section 5 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989.
- (e) “the Cabinet” means the Executive established under Part II of the Local Government Act 2000.
- (f) “Cabinet Member” means the Leader and any of the members of the Cabinet.
- (g) “Budget Head” means the budget for a particular service/services.

~~(h) — Words importing the singular number only shall include the plural and vice versa, words importing the masculine gender include the feminine and vice versa.~~

- 1.2 A Chief Officer may nominate any suitably qualified officer in their Directorate to undertake any of the duties placed upon him or exercise any power granted to him by these Rules.
- 1.3 Each Chief Officer shall consult with the Chief Finance Officer on any matter which is liable to materially affect the finances of the Council before any commitment is incurred and before reporting thereon to the Cabinet or the Council.
- 1.4 (a) Chief Officers shall be responsible for bringing these Financial Procedure Rules to the attention of staff and for ensuring the observance of these Rules throughout their respective Directorates;
- (b) Staff who fail to observe these Rules may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 1.5 Each Chief Officer shall be responsible for the accountability of staff, and the security, custody and control of all other resources including plant, buildings, materials, cash and stores appertaining to their individual Directorates in accordance with the procedures agreed with the Chief Finance Officer.
- 1.6 Each Chief Officer shall have a duty to endeavour to maximise the value for money obtained in running the activities within their purview.
- 1.7 Each Chief Officer shall have a duty to consult the Chief Finance Officer if they/he/she have/s reason to believe that any matter within their purview may result in:
 - (a) The Council incurring expenditure in excess of its approved budget;
 - (b) The Council incurring expenditure for which it has no statutory power to incur;
 - (c) The Council failing to comply with the financially related provisions of any relevant European and UK legislation;
 - (d) The Council failing to comply with the financially related provisions of any code of practice adopted by the Council.
- 1.8 Whenever any matter arises which involves or is thought to involve irregularities concerning cash, stores or other property of the Council or held on trust by the Council, the Chief Officer concerned shall notify the Chief Finance Officer who shall take such steps as they/he considers necessary by way of investigation and report.

- 1.9 Each Chief Officer shall have a duty to inform the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer if ~~they~~he suspects that the Council or its officers are exceeding the Council's statutory powers.
- 1.10 No Chief Officer may recommend to the Council or the Cabinet that expenditure be incurred or any other action taken on the assumption that sufficient statutory power is provided by either Sections 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, without prior approval of the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer.
- 1.11 The Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Monitoring Officer shall be authorised to vary from time to time any amount included in the Rules, but any alteration shall be reported to the next meeting of Council.
- 1.12 Separate Financial ~~Rules~~regulations shall be issued by the Chief Finance Officer for use by the Council's schools, drawing on, and supplementing this document, as appropriate.

2. Accounting Systems

- 2.1 All accounting procedures and accounting records of the Council and its Officers shall be subject to the approval of the Chief Finance Officer.
- 2.2 All accounts and accounting records of the Council shall be compiled by, or under the direction of, the Chief Finance Officer.
- 2.3 The following principles shall be observed in the allocation of accounting duties:
- (a) The duties of providing information regarding sums due to or from the Council and of calculating, checking and recording these sums, shall be separated as completely as possible from the duty of collecting or disbursing them;
 - (b) Officers charged with the duty of examining and checking the accounts of cash transactions shall not themselves be engaged in any of these transactions.
- 2.4 A Chief Officer shall be responsible for the financial management and audit of any private fund entrusted to him as part of their duties and will apply regulations to such funds as stipulated by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 2.5 Notwithstanding the duties of a Chief Officer in Rule 2.4, the Chief Finance Officer shall have the right to audit any private fund at any time.
- 2.6 For the purposes of these Rules "private fund" shall mean any fund in the management of which a Chief Officer of the Council is concerned and which may affect any person or property for which the Council has a responsibility, notwithstanding that contributions towards such fund shall have been made by another party other than the Council.

3. Budgeting and budgetary control

3.1 Council's Budget

- 3.1.1 The Budget shall be approved by the Council in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules (Section 16);

- 3.1.2 In referring the Cabinet's Budget Proposals to Council the proper officer will forward to the Council a report of the Chief Finance Officer incorporating the recommendations of the Cabinet and detailing for approval of the Council:
- (a) a probable out-turn for the current year;
 - (b) a revenue budget for the forthcoming year detailing the Budget Heads over which that budget is allocated to specific services and service programme areas;
 - (c) a forward indication of the medium term financial strategy which will comprise the revenue budget for the first year and indicative budgets for the subsequent three years and a capital budget for the forthcoming year incorporating a capital programme of at least three years, but no more than ten years;
 - (d) an assessment of any major financial risks which may impact on the budget;
 - (e) an analysis of reserves and balances and movements over the forthcoming financial year;
 - (f) the proposed increase in fees and charges for the forthcoming year;
 - (g) a recommendation of the level of Council Tax to be levied for the forthcoming year.
- 3.1.3 The detailed form of the Budget will be determined by the Chief Finance Officer within the general direction of the Council and Cabinet after consultation with Chief Officers.

3.2 Amendments to the agreed budget (virements and technical adjustments)

- 3.2.1 Each Chief Officer shall have the authority to incur expenditure on any activity under their control up to the amounts specified in respect of that activity in the revenue or capital budgets approved by the Council for the financial year, unless directed otherwise by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 3.2.2 Each Chief Officer, subject to the agreement of the Chief Finance Officer, may approve virements between specific revenue Budget Heads, as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which do not amend any individual Budget Head by more than £100,000 from that approved by the Council. The relevant Chief Officer and Chief Finance Officer must jointly report to Cabinet on any virements which amend individual Budget Heads by more than £100,000.
- 3.2.3 Cabinet may, following a report of the appropriate Chief Officer in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, approve virements between individual revenue Budget Heads which do not amend any individual budget head by more than £500,000 from that approved by the Council.
- 3.2.4 All approved virements over £100,000 must be reported to the Council for information as soon as reasonably practicable after their approval.
- 3.2.5 Any variations to the capital programme, other than those permitted under paragraphs ~~3.4.7~~ and ~~3.4.9~~, shall require the approval of the Council following a report of the Chief Finance Officer after taking into consideration the recommendations of the Cabinet.

- 3.2.6 All proposals for revenue and capital budget virements that exceed the above limits will need to be approved by the Council on receipt of a report of the appropriate Chief Officer in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer following consideration by the Cabinet. Virement proposals must also be approved by the Council if they:
- a) imply a change in a plan, policy or strategy which would be contrary to the existing policy framework;
 - b) have a major operational impact on existing service provision;
 - c) are contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the Budget;
 - d) imply any additional revenue commitment in future years.
- 3.2.7 There are also technical adjustments to budgets as a result of the Council adhering to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. These could include, but are not limited to, the reallocation of ~~budgets and spend for central support services~~ centrally held pay and price budgets to other areas within the Council or the allocation of capital charges across the Council, and necessary year end accounting adjustments in line with accepted accounting practices. These are not subject to the authorisation limits of budget virements and the Chief Finance Officer or nominated representative can authorise these.

3.3 Budgetary control

- 3.3.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall provide each Chief Officer with regular information relating to income and expenditure under each approved budget head and any other relevant information available. Each Chief Officer shall be responsible for ensuring control of expenditure and income against the approved budget (attention is drawn to Rule 6.1).
- 3.3.2 A Chief Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member responsible for the function in respect of which the service is provided will be expected to manage their services within the approved cash limited budget and to provide the Chief Finance Officer with such information as is required to facilitate and monitor budgetary control. A Chief Officer or Cabinet Member may not incur expenditure or forego income if this will result in the approved budget being exceeded. Where a Directorate does overspend, the provisions of para 3.3.5 will take effect.
- 3.3.3 A Chief Officer may delegate responsibility for management of budgets within their control to other senior officers within their Directorate. Such delegation shall be within defined parameters and shall be recorded in writing as determined by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 3.3.4 At year end, consideration will be given to the overall financial position of the Council including the final outturn, ~~any accrued net Council Tax~~ income, the Council's reserve levels and any new pressures or risks that need to be provided for. At that time, and dependent on that financial position, in line with the Council's Reserves and Balances Protocol, a Chief Officer will be invited to submit earmarked reserve requests to meet any specific unfunded one-off expenditure that they expect to arise in the following financial year and these will be considered by the Chief Finance Officer in the context of the Directorate outturn position as well as that of the Council as a whole. Chief Officers will be notified of successful earmarked reserves.

- 3.3.5 Any directorate over-spending against budget may be carried forward at the discretion of the Chief Finance Officer, either against the specific directorate or Council wide budgets. In no circumstances should this provision be seen as giving a Chief Officer power to overspend against approved budgets. Any such overspend will be treated as a breach of the Financial Procedure Rules and the respective Chief Officer held accountable. No Chief Officer or Cabinet Member may budget for a deficit. Where a net Council-wide overspending occurs this ~~will be a first call on the following year's budget, unless the Chief Finance Officer gives approval to meet this from usable reserves~~ will need to be met from existing usable reserves, including draw down from the Council Fund.
- 3.3.6 Urgent expenditure not included in any budget approval may only be incurred with the approval of the Chief Finance Officer.
- 3.3.7 The cash limited budget for a Chief Officer only relates to the “controllable” elements of their budget and excludes, amongst other things:
- Central capital charges
 - Central support service charges
 - Centrally controlled office accommodation budgets
 - Joint Committee precepts and levies

3.4 Capital programme

- 3.4.1 As part of the budget process the Chief Finance Officer or appropriate Cabinet Member will annually present to the Council a capital programme which shall include:
- (a) those capital expenditure items proposed to commence during the next three years as a minimum;
 - (b) an estimate of the capital costs of those schemes together with the associated proposed funding.
- 3.4.2 Schemes for which external funding has been approved (specific grants and section 106 funding) will be added to the capital programme once the funding has been accepted, and included in the next capital programme report to Council.
- 3.4.3 A Chief Officer, in conjunction with the Chief Finance Officer, before submitting a scheme for inclusion in the capital programme, shall satisfy himself that the scheme is in line with the Council's Capital Strategy, and that:
- (a) land purchases, design planning consents and relevant studies are sufficiently advanced to ensure that the proposed year of start of a scheme is feasible;
 - (b) the level of expenditure envisaged is realistic, following a full feasibility assessment, and taking into account the Chief Finance Officer's forecast of capital resources available and the ability of each ~~service~~ directorate to meet the consequential costs resulting from prudential borrowing, if applicable, and any on-going maintenance costs;
 - (c) each scheme in the programme has been fully appraised to ensure it is the most economic method of satisfying an identified need.
- 3.4.4 The Capital Programme upon approval by the Council shall:

- (a) confer authorisation upon the Chief Officer concerned to take steps to enable design work to be completed and land to be acquired in due time;
 - (b) form the basis of the annual capital estimates.
- 3.4.5 The inclusion of any item in the approved capital estimates shall not confer authority to incur any expenditure (except on design work and land acquisition) until:
- (a) all necessary statutory approvals have been obtained;
 - (b) any external funding contribution to the project has been secured; and
 - (c) a tender or quotation has been received and accepted in accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules, which does not exceed that part of the total cost included in the capital estimate in respect of the main contract work for the project by more than 10% or £100,000, whichever is lower.
- 3.4.6 If the tender or quotation exceeds the criteria in 3.4.5(c) above, its acceptance will be subject to the approval of the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member(s) responsible for the function in respect of which the decision is required, to a diversion of money from other approved schemes within the appropriate Chief Officer's control sufficient to meet any additional costs s. to be borne within the first year.
- 3.4.7 Chief Officers shall monitor both the progress of schemes and the totality of capital expenditure with the aim of avoiding under or overspending against the approved capital estimates. Should such a situation appear likely, a Chief Officer in conjunction with the Chief Finance Officer shall recommend to the Council the remedial action necessary to mitigate the overspend, which could include to accelerating or delaying/retard existing schemes within the approved capital programme, or the allocation/provision of additional, uncommitted, capital funding, -or a revenue contribution to capital, where funds allow.-
- 3.4.8 Remedial action which necessitates the retardation-delaying or deletion of a scheme within the capital the first year of the programme shall be subject to the prior approval of the Council based on a joint report of the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Officer.
- 3.4.9 The Chief Finance Officer shall give Chief Officers information relating to actual payments made for each scheme in such detail and at such time as arranged between them in order that they may carry out their responsibilities under paragraph 3.4.7.
- 3.4.10 The capital programme includes an annual allocation for capital minor works. Allocation of this funding to individual schemes is the responsibility of the Corporate Landlord Group (or its successor) section and approval on individual schemes will not be sought from Council insofar as the overall funding allocated to schemes does not exceed the funding agreed by Council in the capital programme for that financial year.
- 3.4.11 Any additional capital expenditure from within the capital programme for new or existing schemes which, for reasons of urgency, cannot await the next meeting of Council, may only be incurred with the approval of the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, subject to a maximum value of £100,000, under the Scheme of Delegation of Functions, Scheme B1 paragraph 2.2.
- 3.4.12 Urgent expenditure over £100,000 or not included in any budget approval, or delegated power, which needs to be agreed prior to the next meeting of Council, may only be

incurred with the approval of the Chief Finance Officer. Any such decision requires approval by either the Chief Executive Officer or Solicitor to the Council under the Scheme of Delegation of Functions, Scheme B1 paragraph 2.1.

3.4.13 The Chief Finance Officer shall report quarterly to Cabinet and Council with an update on the Capital Programme.

3.5 Capital Strategy

- 3.5.1 The Chief Finance Officer will be responsible for preparing a Capital Strategy for submission to Council for approval prior to the start of each financial year. The Strategy must demonstrate that capital expenditure and investment decisions are in line with service objectives and properly take account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability.
- 3.5.2 The Capital Strategy will need to comply with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)'s Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. It will incorporate the Prudential Indicators that will need to be approved by Council.
- 3.5.3 The Chief Finance Officer shall report quarterly to Cabinet and Council with an update on the Capital Strategy and the Prudential Indicators.

4. Internal audit

- 4.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall have a duty to maintain an effective internal audit of the Council's operations in order to review, evaluate and test the adequacy of the Council's systems of internal control as contributions to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.
- 4.2 The Chief Finance Officer shall have the responsibility to review, appraise and report to Council, the Governance and Audit Committee, Cabinet, Cabinet Member, or Chief Officer as appropriate upon:
 - 4.2.1 The soundness, adequacy and application of financial and other related operations of the Council.
 - 4.2.2 The extent of compliance with, and financial effect of, established policies, plans and procedures.
 - 4.2.3 The extent to which the Council's assets and interests are accounted for and safeguarded from losses of all kinds arising from:
 - (a) fraud and other offences;
 - (b) waste, extravagance, poor value for money or other cause.
 - 4.2.4 The suitability and reliability of financial and other related management data developed within the Council.
- 4.3 The Chief Finance Officer or an authorised representative of the Chief Finance Officer shall have the authority to require any officer to:

- 4.3.1 Provide access to any Council premises or land under their control. Where sites are in the possession of a contractor or subject to any tenancy or licence to occupy, such entry will be governed by the conditions of the contract or other legal agreement.
- 4.3.2 Produce any records, documents and correspondence in their possession.
- 4.3.3 Provide explanations of matters arising from an audit.
- 4.3.4 Produce and account for any cash, stores or other Council property under their control.
- 4.4 The Chief Finance Officer shall have the authority to request the immediate suspension from duty of any officers who:
 - (a) they have reasonable grounds to suspect of misappropriation of Council funds or other property;
 - (b) they believe present a threat of further misappropriation or hindering of any investigation.
- 4.5 Notwithstanding the duty of the Chief Finance Officer for the control and direction of Internal Audit, it shall be the duty of the Chief Internal Auditor to report direct to the Chief Executive Officer and to the Cabinet Member for Resources on any matter in which the Chief Finance Officer appears to be personally involved.
- 5. Contracts of building, construction or engineering work**
- 5.1 Contracts for the execution of capital works shall only be entered into for those schemes which are included in the approved Capital Programme.
- 5.2 Each Chief Officer will maintain contract registers showing for each contract under their control which has a value greater than £50,000:
 - (a) the contract sum;
 - (b) the value of any extras or variations to the contract;
 - (c) the amounts and dates of any instalments made;
 - (d) the amount of any retentions held or bonds taken under any contract;
 - (e) the balance outstanding to the Contractor.
- 5.3 Payments to contractors on account of contracts shall be made only on a certificate issued by the responsible officer.
- 5.4 When authorising any extra or variation to a contract the appropriate Chief Officer shall:
 - (a) estimate the cost of the variation;
 - (b) issue written instructions to the Contractor to carry out the work, except in cases of urgency where a Chief Officer may issue verbal instructions but shall confirm them in writing as soon as possible, but in any case within 7 days; and

(c) ensure that such variation is in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

5.5 The Chief Finance Officer may, at their discretion, decide to audit the final account of a contract, before certifying the final payment.

5.6 Claims from contractors in respect of matters not clearly within the terms of any existing contract shall be referred to the Solicitor to the Council for consideration of the Council's legal liability and, where necessary, to the Chief Finance Officer for financial consideration before a settlement is reached.

5.7 Each Chief Officer shall, as soon as practical, report to Cabinet the total of extras or variations to any contract which exceeds 10% of the original contract sum, or £100,000 whichever is the greater.

5.8 If the final account of any contract has not been agreed within eighteen months of the completion of works, then the Chief Officer controlling that contract shall report to the Cabinet on the outstanding items. Any report under this regulation shall include a comparison of the final or likely cost with the original contract sum together with reasons for any differences.

6. Orders for work, goods and services

6.1 Each Chief Officer has a duty to issue official orders for all works and services to be carried out, and all goods supplied, within their Directorate with the exception of:

(a) public utilities;

(b) periodical payments;

(c) petty cash purchases;

(d) purchases made using Purchasing Cards;

(e) works, goods and services subject to formal written contracts, or excepted from this requirement by the Chief Finance Officer.

(f) Framework contracts.

Before issuing official orders, Officers authorising them must be satisfied that there is provision in the estimates and that the Contract Procedure Rules have been complied with.

6.2 Each official order shall be in a form prescribed and approved by the Chief Finance Officer and shall include:

(a) a description of the works, goods and services ordered;

(b) the name and address of the supplier;

(c) an estimate of the cost;

(d) the financial code to which the cost is to be charged;

(e) name of the authorising officer.

- 6.3 Verbal orders may only be placed in exceptional circumstances the details of which must be confirmed by e-mail or other appropriate means on the same day and confirmed by written official order within 3 working days.
- 6.4 Electronic orders will be treated in the same way as other official orders. Changes to on-line authorising officers shall be notified to the Chief Finance Officer immediately.

7. Leasing

- 7.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall be responsible for making leasing arrangements for the use of buildings, plant, vehicles and equipment. No officer other than the Chief Finance Officer may enter into any type of leasing arrangements ~~unless agreed in writing or delegated by the Chief Finance Officer.~~
- 7.2 Due to complex capital accounting requirements regarding expenditure in relation to leases, all leases, hire, rental, hire purchase agreements, deferred purchase agreements and other arrangements where the use of an asset is being acquired without the ownership of it must be referred to the Chief Finance Officer in advance of entering any agreement.
- 7.3 Provision within revenue estimates to cover the annual costs of leasing should be made only following consultation with the Chief Finance Officer.

8. Grant Funding and Third Party Funding

- 8.1 It is essential that proper management of external funding or grants received, or funding awarded by the Council, is undertaken in order to safeguard the financial position of the Council and also to maximise the benefits to service delivery from the receipt of these additional funds.
- 8.2 The Council has a Grants Financial Management Policy which all Chief Officers and their staff must adhere to in order to ensure the proper management of grant funding and other internal and external funds. Failure to comply could result in funding being withheld by the funding body or recovered at a later date. Any failure to comply with the Grants Financial Management Policy, which results in funding being reduced to the Council, may be reported to the Governance and Audit Committee, and any shortfall in the funding borne by the responsible directorate.

Section B - Expenditure and Income

9. Payment of accounts

- 9.1 Excluding payments in the form of petty cash from imprest accounts, the preferred method of payment of money due from the Council shall be by automated transfers from the Council's bank accounts overseen by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 9.2 The Chief Finance Officer shall be the authorised signatory of any joint bank account opened in the name of the Council and any other party and will be responsible for the payment of any cheques from that joint bank account.
- 9.3 Each Chief Officer is responsible for examining, verifying and authorising invoices and any other payment vouchers or accounts arising from sources in their Directorate including the use of purchasing cards. Authorised officers can discharge this responsibility on behalf of the Chief

Officer. Each Chief Officer will supply the names and specimen signatures for authorised officers together with authorisation limits to the Business Support Manager~~Chief Finance Officer~~ and will need to confirm the list on an annual basis. Any changes to authorisation limits should be notified to the Business Support Manager promptly.

Payments in advance

9.4 All payments for goods and services must be paid in arrears on presentation of an invoice or appropriate document to support the payment. The Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with a Cabinet Member, can give approval for payment in advance of goods or services in exceptional circumstances and on request from a Chief Officer. Approval must be given in writing via email to the appropriate officer, with the relevant Cabinet Member copied in, for audit purposes. There are a small number of exceptions where some payments are permitted to be paid in advance without prior approval. These include:

- Travel, such as rail tickets which are paid via a purchasing card
- Subscriptions, which are usually paid at the start, or in advance of, the subscription period
- Licences – such as software licences
- Necessary expenditure incurred in the normal course of business not exceeding £1,000. Note, the total value of the purchase needs to be considered rather than a monthly or recurring amount.

~~The Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with a Cabinet Member, can give approval for payment in advance of goods or services in exceptional circumstances and on request from a Chief Officer. Approval must be given in writing via email to the appropriate officer, with the relevant Cabinet Member copied in, for audit purposes.~~

9.5 Before authorising an account, the authorising officer shall be satisfied that:

- (a) the work, goods or services to which the account relates have been received, carried out, examined and approved;
- (b) the invoice satisfies VAT and Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) regulations and that prices, extensions, calculations, trade discounts, other allowances and credits are correct;
- (c) the relevant expenditure has been properly incurred and is within the relevant estimate provision;
- (d) the financial code to which the expenditure is to be charged is correct and sufficient budget is available;
- (e) the account or invoice indicates the official order number relating to the goods or services provided, or if there is no such order the reason for the omission unless it relates to services not subject to orders such as care contracts;
- (f) appropriate entries have been made in inventories, stores records or stock books as required;

- (g) the account has not been previously passed for payment and is a proper liability of the Council;
- (h) in the case of accounts for the supply of public utility services and other periodic payments, relevant expenditure, and where appropriate, units of energy consumed, have been entered in records approved by the Chief Finance Officer.

9.6 ~~Accounts should be authorised via EDRM online, or other agreed means. Any accounts not authorised via EDRM should be manually authorised and passed to Business Support for processing, or in the case of feeder files passed to the Chief Finance Officer for processing. Accounts authorised manually should be passed for payment to the Chief Finance Officer, unless alternative arrangements have been specifically agreed with the Chief Finance Officer.~~ All payments should be processed within 30 days.

9.7 Where payments are electronically uploaded into the financial system via a feeder file, appropriate controls, including standardising of files and validity checks, are put in place to ensure their integrity. For any new feeder files, Internal Audit will be asked to review and give assurance on the process for authorisation before use.

9.8 For the Council to reclaim VAT on individual payments, the Council is required under VAT Regulations to obtain the supplier's VAT registration number and invoice to be addressed to Bridgend County Borough Council.

9.9 The Chief Finance Officer shall set down procedures for the retention of financial documentation. Such documentation must not be disposed of without the specific approval of the Chief Finance Officer. All invoices shall be retained for at least 6 years plus the current financial year. In the case of invoices relating to grant claims, these must be kept until after the grant claim has been audited even if this exceeds 6 years. It is the responsibility of the Chief Officer of the grant to ensure the correct retention period is maintained. The same retention periods apply to electronic copies of all original invoices.

9.10 Changes to on-line authorising officers shall be notified to the ~~Chief Finance Officer~~Business Support Manager immediately.

9.11 Each Chief Officer shall, no later than a date specified at the financial year end, notify the Chief Finance Officer of any outstanding expenditure relating to the previous financial year to be accrued in the Statement of Accounts.

10. Imprest accounts

10.1 Where appropriate, the Chief Finance Officer shall provide imprest accounts for such officers of the Council as may need them for the purpose of defraying petty cash and other expenses. Such accounts shall be maintained in accordance with the notes of guidance issued to imprest holders by the Chief Finance Officer.

10.2 Where ~~petty cash is required~~appropriate, the Chief Finance Officer shall open an account with the Council's bankers for use by the imprest holder, who shall not deliberately cause the account to be overdrawn. Any prolonged overdrawn balance on an imprest holder's bank account shall be reported to the Chief Finance Officer. It will also prevent the use of any business ATM cash card as they cannot be used on an overdrawn account. Where an officer holds a cheque book or business ATM cash card in respect of any account ~~they~~he must ensure that it is securely stored and all cancelled cheques are crossed and retained with the counterfoils of the original cheque book. Receipts for withdrawals must be retained.

- 10.3 Any officer responsible for an imprest account shall be personally responsible for making good any deficiencies in that account.
- 10.4 No income received on behalf of the Council may be paid into an imprest account but must be dealt with in accordance with paragraph 15.3.
- 10.5 Except as otherwise agreed between the Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Officer concerned, payments out of the accounts shall be limited to petty disbursements and shall not include sums due to any tradesman with whom the Council has an account for the supply of goods and services, or who can establish an account, nor any account for goods exceeding in value a sum to be agreed from time to time by the Chief Finance Officer, nor travelling expenses other than those of a casual nature e.g. bus fares.
- 10.6 An officer responsible for an imprest shall on a regular basis as specified by the Chief Finance Officer, or at any other time if so requested, provide a certified statement as to the state of the account.
- 10.7 Whenever an officer who is an imprest holder leaves the employment of the Council, or ceases to be entitled to hold an imprest advance, the officer shall account to the Chief Finance Officer for the amount advanced to him.

11. Purchasing Cards

- 11.1 Where appropriate, a purchasing card will be issued to support the current Purchase to Pay invoice process and should not be considered as a replacement mechanism to bypass the formal requisition and approval process. Expenditure shall be made in accordance with the purchasing card guidelines.
- 11.2 Each card has an individual monthly expenditure limit, individual transaction limit and restricted category types for expenditure. The cardholder will be making financial commitments on behalf of the Council and will be responsible for obtaining value for money in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules and Corporate Contracts.
- 11.3 Except, as otherwise agreed with the Chief Finance Officer, payments by purchasing card shall be limited to approved disbursements and shall not include sums due to any tradesman ~~with whom the Council has an account.~~ Where appropriate, whose invoices should be paid via the Financial System. Travelling expenses, such as train fares, can be pre-booked and paid with the purchasing card, however, the purchasing card cannot be used to reimburse travelling expenses nor subsistence expenses other than those of a casual nature.
- 11.4 The cardholder is responsible for updating the Barclaycard Spend Management system with costing, VAT and narrative details of the expenditure in a timely manner and in accordance with the purchasing card guidelines.
- 11.5 Whenever a member of staff who is a purchasing card holder leaves the employment of the Council, or ceases to be entitled to hold a purchasing card, the member of staff must return the purchasing card immediately on cessation of entitlement to the Corporate Procurement Manager for cancellation. Any replacement member of staff who requires a purchasing card must apply for a new card via the Corporate Procurement Manager.
- 11.6 Any person holding a purchasing card shall be personally responsible to notify the Corporate Procurement Manager of any unauthorised / unrecognised spend made on the card. The cardholder shall be personally responsible for making good any unauthorised spend that they incur on the card.

- 11.7 Where appropriate, the Chief Finance Officer shall provide a purchasing card enabled for cash withdrawal to give services access to cash for the purpose of defraying petty expenditure. Such cards shall be maintained in accordance with the notes of guidance to card holders issued by the Corporate Procurement Manager. There is an administration charge for cash withdrawals. Detailed records of monies withdrawn, spending of this money, including VAT amount and costing information, must be kept and be available for examination on request.
- 11.8 Except as otherwise agreed with the Chief Finance Officer, payments out of the cash withdrawn from the bank by purchasing card shall be limited to petty disbursements and shall not include sums due to any tradesman with whom the authority has an account, nor travelling expenses, nor subsistence expenses, ~~other than those of a casual nature.~~
- 11.9 A person responsible for the cash balance held shall, if so requested, give to the Chief Finance Officer certification as to the state of the funds.
- 11.10 Whenever a member of staff who is a cash balance administrator leaves the employment of the authority, or ceases to be entitled to administer the cash balance, the member of staff shall repay to the Chief Finance Officer the unexpended cash balance of the withdrawn amount, or shall transfer monies, records and vouchers relating to the account to the new cash administrator. When a purchasing card holder leaves, the card in their name must be returned to the Corporate Procurement Manager for cancellation and a new card applied for via the Corporate Procurement Manager unless the new cash administrator is not to be allocated a purchasing card.
- 11.11 Any person holding a cash balance obtained by a purchasing card cash withdrawal shall be personally responsible for making good any deficiencies in that account.

12. CashDebitBusiness Cash Cards

- 12.1 Where appropriate, a business cashdebit card will be issued to support services which have a requirement for petty cash, to facilitate the withdrawal of cash from ATM's.
- 12.2 Each card is allocated to an individual named officer of the Council against a specific account, who is responsible for the safeguarding of the card and its appropriate use. Each card has an individual withdrawal and daily withdrawal limit and must be used only for the withdrawal of cash for the purposes of petty cash use for that service or other agreed purposes such as private funds.
- 12.3 Cash withdrawn from petty cash accounts must not be used for the purposes of paying sums due to tradesmen. Such invoices should be paid via the Financial System.
- 12.4 Where the card is related to a petty cash account, the cardholder is responsible for updating the petty cash system to record that cash has been withdrawn and must account for all cash withdrawals made.
- 12.5 Whenever a member of staff who holds a business cashdebit card leaves the employment of the Council, or ceases to be entitled to a debit card, they member of staff must return the debit card immediately to the Chief Finance Officer and for the card to be cancelled. The Cardholder is personally responsible for any shortfalls between the cash withdrawn and cash held in the petty cash records.

12.13. Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) – Tax Deduction

132.1 For certain types of construction work, the Council is obliged by HMRC's Construction Industry Scheme to deduct tax at source from sub-contractor payments, at the appropriate rate, from the invoiced amount. Those CIS sub-contractors paid under deduction must have the labour/material split shown on the invoice and entered into the Financial System. Further guidance can be obtained from the Purchase Ledger Team in Finance.

143. Salaries, wages and Members' allowances

134.1 The payment of all salaries, wages, allowances, expenses or other emoluments to all employees or members shall be made by, or under arrangements approved and controlled by, the ~~Chief Finance Officer~~ Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development.

143.2 Each Chief Officer shall notify the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development ~~Chief Finance Officer~~ as soon as possible and in the prescribed form, of all matters affecting the payment of such emoluments and in particular:

- (a) appointments, resignations, dismissals, suspensions, secondments, and transfers;
- (b) absences from duty for sickness or other reason, apart from approved leave with pay;
- (c) changes in remuneration, other than normal increments and pay awards;
- (d) information necessary to maintain records of service for superannuation, income tax, national insurance etc.;
- (e) any failure to comply with Council or statutory regulations.

134.3 Appointments of all employees shall be made in accordance with the regulations of the Council and the approved establishment, gradings and rates of pay.

134.4 All time records and other pay documents shall be in a form prescribed or approved by the ~~Chief Finance Officer~~ Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development ~~Head of Human Resources~~ and shall be certified by or on behalf of the Chief Officer. The names of the officers authorised to certify such records shall be sent to the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development ~~Chief Finance Officer~~ by each Chief Officer together with specimen signatures and shall be amended on the occasion of any change. Changes to on-line authorising officers shall be notified to the Chief Finance Officer immediately.

134.5 No payments to staff may be made other than through the normal payroll system without the specific approval of the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development ~~Chief Finance Officer~~. ~~In particular, casual staff must be recorded on the payroll.~~

4314.6 Where an Officer is hiring or engaging a staff member who is not on the Council payroll there is a legal requirement to determine whether it is the responsibility of the Council to deduct tax and national insurance at source, in accordance with the requirements of the Social Security Contributions (Intermediaries) Regulations 2000, as amended (IR35).

1415. Officers fees, travelling and subsistence allowances

4415.1 All claims for payment of fees, car allowances, subsistence allowances and travelling expenses shall be submitted, duly certified, in a format approved by the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development ~~Chief Finance Officer~~, to the appropriate Chief Officer in accordance with the timetable set down by the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development ~~Chief Finance Officer~~. A record of all officers

authorised to approve such records shall be sent to the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development~~Chief Finance Officer~~ together with specimen signatures and shall be amended on the occasion of any change. This applies to both manual and electronic expenses systems.

4415.2 The certification by, or on behalf of, the Chief Officer shall be taken to mean that the certifying officer is satisfied that the journeys were authorised, the expenses properly and necessarily incurred, the vehicle used had appropriate insurance cover, the necessary receipts of expenditure retained and that the fees and allowances are properly payable by the Council.

4415.3 Claims submitted more than three months after the expenses were incurred must be accompanied by a letter of explanation for the delay and shall be paid only with the express approval of the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development~~Chief Finance Officer~~ who shall refer the matter to Cabinet if necessary.

4415.4 All claims for payment of incidental expenses such as removal, lodging and disturbance allowances and training course fees etc. shall be made on the appropriate form and shall be in accordance with the appropriate scheme approved by the Council.

4516. Banking arrangements and cheques

4516.1 All arrangements with the Council's bankers shall be made by or under arrangements approved by the Chief Finance Officer, who shall be authorised to operate such bank accounts as considered necessary.

4516.2 All cheques shall be ordered only on the authority of the Chief Finance Officer who shall make proper arrangements for their safe custody, including cheque books issued automatically by the bank.

4516.3 Any such bank account opened in respect of monies held on behalf of the Council shall be arranged in consultation with or under the direction of the Chief Finance Officer. The Chief Finance Officer shall maintain a list of authorised signatories, along with specimen signatures, for all such accounts. Any change in signatory shall be reported to the Chief Finance Officer immediately.

4516.4 No Standing Orders or Direct Debits from the Council's bank accounts shall be set up unless arranged in consultation with or under the direction of the Chief Finance Officer. The Chief Finance Officer shall maintain a list of all officers authorised to set up Direct Debits and Standing Orders.

4516.5 The Chief Finance Officer shall be authorised to:

- (a) nominate officers empowered to authorise payment out of these bank accounts;
- (b) negotiate charges with the Council's bankers.

4516.6 The Chief Finance Officer will be responsible for ensuring that there are adequate controls in place to ensure that all payment methods, whether physical or electronic, have appropriate authorisations, approvals and signatures as necessary.

4516.7 The Chief Finance Officer shall ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to facilitate the monthly reconciliation of the Council's Bank Accounts.

4617. Income

4617.1 Each Chief Officer will be responsible for the prompt and accurate billing, collection and banking of all income due to the Council in connection with the Directorate's activities, except where in the interests of efficiency or security it is agreed with the Chief Finance Officer that all or part of the duties should be discharged by some other Chief Officer.

4617.2 Except as agreed between the Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Officer concerned, all receipt books and other such items shall be ordered and supplied to Directorates by the Chief Finance Officer, who shall be satisfied as to the arrangements for their control.

4617.3 In carrying out this function, each Chief Officer shall ensure that any officer of the staff engaged in the collection of money:

- (a) maintains a record of receipts and bankings in a form approved by the Chief Finance Officer;
- (b) pays without delay any money collected either:
 - i) to the approved officer;
 - ii) to a security firm employed by the Chief Finance Officer for this purpose; or
 - iii) to one of the Council's main bank accounts or via outlets of the— nominated collector(s) as agreed by the Council.
- (c) makes no deduction from monies collected, except with the specific and exceptional approval of the Chief Finance Officer;
- (d) ensures income is correctly coded onto the financial system nominated by the Chief Finance Officer and satisfies VAT regulations;
- (e) makes good any shortfalls in cash collected and identifies any surpluses;
- (f) in the case of cheques received, enters on any paying-in slips details with the cheque or provides supporting evidence and a reference to the related debt.

4617.4 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of the money held on behalf of the Council.

4617.5 Outstanding debts which are found to be irrecoverable may be written off by the Chief Finance Officer, except where it is considered that there are matters of principle or policy which should be referred to the Cabinet.

4617.6 Any officer holding a cash float shall be personally responsible for making good any deficiencies in that account.

4617.7 Where an officer takes cash for works, goods or services that is either:

- i. in excess of the level stipulated within the Council's Anti-Money Laundering Policy; or
- ii. where there is anything suspicious regarding, but not limited to, multiple use of high denomination notes, multiple and frequent disaggregation of payment of a higher value outstanding debt;

then the officer must report it immediately to the Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO) in accordance with ~~the~~that Policy.

4718. Fees and Charges

4718.1 The Council has a Fees and Charging Policy to support the Medium Term Financial Strategy. It is intended to provide a consistent and co-ordinated approach to charging across the Council, setting out the key principles for charging and for reviewing charges and must be adhered to by all Chief Officers and their staff.

4718.2 When setting charges, there is recognition that where possible, the full cost of the service should be recovered. However, there is also a recognition that in some instances, there will be a conscious decision not to fully charge or a statutory charge or limit set, and the remaining cost will be met by the Council Tax payer.

4718.3 In line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy, a review of fees and charges should be undertaken at least annually as a minimum and any new or increased charges must receive approval from Cabinet or delegated authority under the Scheme of Delegation, Scheme A paragraph 1.6. Where a proposal is made not to increase charges in a financial year, approval must be sought from the appropriate Chief Officer and Chief Finance Officer.

198. Value Added Tax

198.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall establish appropriate systems of control for the proper accounting of Value Added Tax (VAT) inputs and outputs. –The Chief Finance Officer will produce and distribute a VAT guidance document to all Directorates and schools to enable officers to comply with HMRC VAT regulations.

Section C - Security and Assets

4920. Security

4920.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall have overall responsibility to the Council for security of Council property.

4920.2 Each Chief Officer shall be responsible for maintaining proper security at all times for all buildings, stocks, stores, furniture, equipment, cash, title deeds, securities, etc. under their custody.

4920.3 Maximum limits for cash holdings shall be agreed with the Chief Finance Officer.

4920.4 Every transfer of official money from one member of staff to another will be evidenced in the records of the Directorate concerned by the signature of the receiving officer.

4920.5 Keys to safes and similar receptacles for the safeguarding of money or other valuables are to be carried on the person of those responsible; the loss of any such keys must be reported to the Chief Finance Officer.

2021. Data Protection

2021.1 The Council's Data Protection Officer shall be responsible for undertaking the tasks set out in Section 71 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and Article 39 of the UK GDPR.

2021.2 Each officer shall be responsible for maintaining proper security, privacy and compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR in respect of information personal data held.

~~2021~~.3 Each Chief Officer shall have a duty to notify the Data Protection Officer of any computer system in their Directorate which holds personal data.

~~2021~~.4 Each Chief Officer shall have a duty to ensure the safekeeping and prevention of improper use of any ~~information~~ personal data held in the Directorate, regardless of the media on which it is held.

~~2021~~.5 The Chief Finance Officer, or an authorised representative of the Chief Finance Officer, shall have access to all computer systems and records and may require and receive such explanations as are necessary, for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

~~2021~~.6 The security of financial systems, e.g. use of passwords, shall be maintained by adhering to instructions issued by the Chief Finance Officer and in line with the ICT Code of Conduct.

~~2122~~. Stocks and stores

~~2122~~.1 Each Chief Officer shall be responsible for the custody of the stocks and stores in the Directorate and shall have a duty to:

- (a) ensure that stocks are adequate but not excessive for the purpose envisaged;
- (b) maintain accurate and up to date records of such stocks and stores and ensure that a stocktake is undertaken at year end and the certificate is submitted to Finance;
- (c) provide the Chief Finance Officer with such information as ~~they~~ he requires in relation to stores for accounting, costing and financial records.

~~2122~~.2 A Chief Officer shall arrange for periodical test examinations of stocks by persons other than storekeepers and shall ensure that all stocks are checked at least once in every year. Any surpluses or deficiencies revealed by such periodical test examinations shall be reported to the Chief Finance Officer and, after consultation with the Chief Officer, the Chief Finance Officer will decide what action to take.

~~2122~~.3 Losses due to theft of stocks shall be reported to the Chief Finance Officer as soon as possible and, where found to be irrecoverable, shall be written off.

~~2122~~.4 In all other instances write offs need the consent of the Chief Finance Officer following the submission of a report by the Chief Officer outlining the reasons for write off.

~~2223~~. Investments, borrowings and trust funds

~~2223~~.1 The Council has adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)'s Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services.

~~2223~~.2 The Chief Finance Officer will be responsible for preparing and presenting an annual Treasury Management Strategy to the Governance and Audit Committee prior to submission to Council for approval in advance of the start of each financial year. The Strategy must include a Borrowing Strategy, Investment Strategy and set the Council's Treasury Management Indicators for the forthcoming financial year.

~~2223~~.3 All investment and borrowing transactions shall be undertaken in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy with due regard to the requirements of CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services.

2223.4 All investments of money under its control shall be made in the name of the Council. Any borrowing activity must have regard to CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and the Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services.

2223.5 The Chief Finance Officer shall report quarterly to the Cabinet, summarising borrowing and investment activity, monitoring against the approved Treasury Management and other appropriate indicators, and indicating compliance with any statutory or Council approved guidelines together with a half yearly and an annual report to Council.

2223.6 The Chief Finance Officer, or an agent nominated by the Chief Finance Officer, will be the Council's Registrar of loan instruments and shall maintain records of all borrowing of money by the Council.

2223.7 The Chief Finance Officer will have a duty to ensure a proper, efficient and effective mix of borrowing and investments.

2223.8 The Governance and Audit Committee is responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the Treasury Management policies and practices. The Committee will review the Half Year and Annual Report on Treasury Management as well as the Treasury Management Strategy. The Committee will make any recommendations for improvements on treasury management to the Chief Finance Officer and raise any concerns that the Council is exceeding its legal powers with the Monitoring Officer.

2324. Inventories

2324.1 Each Chief Officer shall be responsible for the plant, vehicles, machinery, equipment, tools, furniture and other non-consumable property in the Directorate and shall have a duty to:

- (a) maintain an up to date inventory of such goods;
- (b) carry out an annual physical check on goods listed in the inventory;
- (c) as far as is practicable see that such goods are marked as Council property;
- (d) ensure that such goods are not removed or used except in accordance with the ordinary course of the Council's business.

2324.2 Every transfer of items contained in the inventory from one establishment to another shall be evidenced in the records of the establishment concerned by the signature of the receiving officer.

2425. Insurances

2425.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall have a duty to:

- (a) ~~affect-effect~~ adequate insurance cover in accordance with the Council's Insurance Strategy contained in the Risk Management Policy. The Chief Finance Officer~~He~~ will arrange insurance for losses which would have a significant impact on budgets and the provision of services, where it must be bought by law and where the insurance provides additional benefits which enable an activity to take place;

- (b) promptly claim any insurance loss the Council has suffered and liaise with the Council's Insurers to settle any claim brought by another party, if it is assessed that the Council has a legal liability to do so;
- (c) ensure that sums insured and limits of indemnity are regularly reviewed;
- (d) maintain comprehensive records of insurance including policy documents and understand what coverage they provide;
- (e) employ the services of a professional insurance broking company who can provide expert advice;
- (f) only transfer risks to Insurance Companies which are financially strong;
- (g) comply with the "duty of fair presentation" contained in the Insurance Act 2015. The Council must disclose to its Insurers all information, facts and circumstances which are, or ought to be, known to it, which are material to the risk. A material circumstance is one which would influence the judgement of a prudent Underwriter in considering whether to provide insurance and, if so, on what basis and cost.

2425.2 A Chief Officer will have a duty to:

- (a) promptly notify the Chief Finance Officer of any new risks, insurable assets or liabilities which are required to be insured under the Insurance Strategy.;
- (b) promptly notify the Chief Finance Officer in writing of any loss, liability, damage or any event likely to lead to a claim and where appropriate inform the Police;
- (c) promptly provide any information required by the Chief Finance Officer or the Council's Insurers to progress a claim;
- (d) assist the Chief Finance Officer to comply with the "duty of fair presentation contained in the Insurance Act 2015 by disclosing all relevant information.

2425.3 The Chief Finance Officer shall review ~~of~~ all insurances at least annually, in consultation with other Chief Officers as appropriate.

2425.4 No indemnity shall be given in the name of the Council without the prior approval of the Chief Finance Officer.

2526. Prevention of Theft, Fraud and Corruption

2526.1 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for advising on effective systems of internal control to prevent fraud and corruption.

2526.2 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for developing, maintaining and implementing an Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy. If a Chief Officer suspects any irregularities concerning cash, stores or other property of the Council or held on trust by the Council, they will notify the Chief Finance Officer who will take such steps as considered necessary by way of investigation and report.

2526.3 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for developing, maintaining and implementing an Anti-Money Laundering Policy. The key message of this Policy is to make staff aware of their responsibilities and if they suspect that money laundering activity may be taking place or proposed, they must disclose those suspicions to the Council's Money Laundering Reporting Officer who is the Chief Finance Officer.

2526.4 The Council employs a corporate Senior Fraud Investigator, so should any fraud or irregularity be identified, whilst it would still be reported to the 'Chief Finance Officer' initially, certain matters may be referred to the Senior Fraud Investigator for investigation where appropriate.

2526.5 The Chief Finance Officer is also responsible for developing, maintaining and implementing the Anti-Tax Evasion Policy. The policy addresses the prevention of tax evasion and will provide a coherent and consistent approach for all employees and any person who performs services for and on behalf of Bridgend County Borough Council.

2526.6 ——— All Chief Officers are responsible for ensuring compliance with the Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy, Anti-Money Laundering Policy and the Anti-Tax Evasion Policy and with systems of internal control.

2627. Estates

2627.1 The Chief Executive Officer shall maintain a register and appropriate records detailing all properties owned by the Council including:

- (a) purpose for which held;
- (b) location, extent, and plan reference;
- (c) particulars of nature of interest held;
- (d) purchase details;
- (e) rents payable;
- (f) particulars of tenancies granted.

2627.2 The Chief Finance Officer will maintain an asset register of all Council assets.

2627.3 Where land and/or buildings are found to be surplus to requirements the responsible Chief Officer shall, as soon as possible, submit a report to the appropriate Cabinet Member for appropriate action in accordance with the Schemes of Delegation.

2728. Asset Disposal

2728.1 Directors are responsible for ensuring that all property assets which are surplus to requirements are referred to the Corporate Landlord section, who will determine the appropriate action to be taken in conjunction with Directorates. In accordance with the Council's disposal strategy the following shall be considered:

- restrictions relating to the ownership of the asset;
- opportunities for using the asset elsewhere in the Council;
- market opportunities;
- appropriate use of tendering procedures for disposal;
- fairness in the disposal process;
- asset security;
- the costs of disposal in relation to the expected income.

2728.2 All assets, including assets declared surplus where disposal is proposed must be notified to the Chief Finance Officer for approval and appropriate action in accordance with the Council's disposal strategy and Scheme of Delegation of Functions.

2728.3 All assets, whether land, property, buildings, vehicles, plant or equipment, must be notified to the Capital Accountant to ensure their disposal is accurately recorded on the Council's Fixed Asset Register in a timely manner, and as soon after disposal as possible.

2829. Protection of private property

2829.1 The Chief Officer shall in any known case where steps are necessary to prevent or mitigate loss of or damage to moveable property, prepare in a form agreed with the Chief Finance Officer, an itemised inventory in each case prepared in the presence of two officers.

2829.2 All valuables such as jewellery, watches and other small articles of a similar nature and documents of title deposited with the Council for safe custody shall be recorded in a form agreed by the Chief Finance Officer.

2829.3 All monies deposited with the Council for safekeeping shall be dealt with in accordance with guidelines agreed by the Chief Officer and the Chief Finance Officer.

2829.4 Where a Chief Officer is required as part of their duties to hold in trust any property, valuables or cash belonging to a third party ~~they~~he should do so in accordance with guidelines agreed with the Chief Finance Officer.

2930. Risk Management

2930.1 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for preparing the Council's Risk Management Strategy and its promotion throughout the Council and for advising of strategic, financial and operational risks.

2930.2 Chief Officers shall be responsible for the identification, classification and control of all risks falling within their areas of responsibility. The risks identified shall be incorporated into a Departmental Risk Register, and any risks that exceed the Council's risk threshold shall be notified to the Chief Finance Officer for incorporation into the Corporate Risk Assessment Register, which shall be subject to periodic review by the Governance and Audit Committee at no more than annual intervals.

2930.3 ———Chief Officers shall take responsibility for risk management within their areas of responsibility, having regard to advice from the Chief Finance Officer and other specialist Officers (e.g. crime prevention, fire prevention, health and safety), and shall undertake regular reviews of risk within their own Directorates.

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FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES**Introduction****What are Financial Procedure Rules?**

Financial Procedure Rules provide the framework for managing the Council's financial affairs. They are supported by more detailed specific guidance and procedure notes in a range of areas. The procedures identify the financial responsibilities of the Full Council, the Cabinet and Officers.

Why are they important?

- (a) To conduct its business effectively, the Council needs to ensure that sound financial management arrangements are in place and that they are strictly adhered to in practice. Part of this process is the establishment of Financial Procedure Rules which set out the financial responsibilities of the Council. These procedure rules have been devised as a control to help the Council manage its financial matters properly in compliance with all necessary requirements.
- (b) Good, sound financial management is a key element of the Council's Corporate Governance framework which helps to ensure that the Council is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.
- (c) Good financial management secures value for money, controls spending, ensures due probity of transactions and allows decisions to be informed by accurate accounting information.
- (d) Good financial management requires secure and reliable records and systems to process transactions and information and substantiate the effective use of public money.
- (e) Financial Procedure Rules should not be seen in isolation, but rather as part of the overall regulatory framework of the Council as set out in this Constitution.

Who do Financial Procedure Rules apply to?

- (f) Financial Procedure Rules apply to every Member and Officer of the Council and anyone acting on its behalf. Members and Officers have a general responsibility for taking reasonable action to provide for the security and use of the resources and assets under their control, and for ensuring that the use of such resources and assets is legal, is consistent with Council policies and priorities, is properly authorised, provides value for money and achieves best value.
- (g) Separate financial procedure rules have been incorporated into the Council's Financial Scheme for Schools and relate to those matters where decisions have been delegated to school governing bodies.

- (h) These Financial Procedure Rules shall apply in relation to any partnership for which the Council is the accountable body, unless the Council expressly agrees otherwise.
- (i) Failure to observe Financial Procedure Rules may result in action under the Council's disciplinary procedures.

Who is responsible for ensuring that they are applied?

- (j) Chief Officers and Heads of Service are ultimately responsible to the Council for ensuring that Financial Procedure Rules are applied and observed by their staff and contractors providing services on the Council's behalf and for reporting to the Chief Finance Officer any known or suspected breaches of the procedures.
- (k) The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for maintaining a continuous review of the Financial Procedure Rules and submitting any additions or changes necessary to Council for approval. The Chief Finance Officer is also responsible for reporting, where appropriate, breaches of the Financial Procedures to Council and/or to Cabinet Members.
- (l) The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for issuing advice and guidance to underpin the Financial Procedure Rules which Members, Chief Officers and others acting on behalf of the Council are required to follow.
- (m) Where any Chief Officer considers that complying with Financial Procedure Rules in a particular situation might conflict with the achievement of value for money or the principles of Best Value or the best interests of the Council, they shall raise the issue with the Chief Finance Officer who will, if they consider necessary and appropriate, seek formal approval from the Council for a specific waiver of the procedures, or an amendment to the procedures themselves.

Section A - Financial Control

1. General

1.1 For the purposes of these Rules:

- (a) "the Chief Executive Officer" means the officer designated by the Council as Head of Paid Service under Section 4 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989.
- (b) "the Chief Finance Officer" means the officer designated by the Council as the officer responsible for the administration of its financial affairs under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- (c) "Chief Officer" means any of the following:
 - The Chief Executive Officer;
 - The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing;
 - The Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People;
 - The Corporate Director - Communities;
 - Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, Human Resources and Corporate Policy.
 - Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change.

- (d) "the Monitoring Officer" means the officer designated as such by the Council under Section 5 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989.
 - (e) "the Cabinet" means the Executive established under Part II of the Local Government Act 2000.
 - (f) "Cabinet Member" means the Leader and any of the members of the Cabinet.
 - (g) "Budget Head" means the budget for a particular service/services.
- 1.2 A Chief Officer may nominate any suitably qualified officer in their Directorate to undertake any of the duties placed upon him or exercise any power granted to him by these Rules.
- 1.3 Each Chief Officer shall consult with the Chief Finance Officer on any matter which is liable to materially affect the finances of the Council before any commitment is incurred and before reporting thereon to the Cabinet or the Council.
- 1.4 (a) Chief Officers shall be responsible for bringing these Financial Procedure Rules to the attention of staff and for ensuring the observance of these Rules throughout their respective Directorates;
- (b) Staff who fail to observe these Rules may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 1.5 Each Chief Officer shall be responsible for the accountability of staff, and the security, custody and control of all other resources including plant, buildings, materials, cash and stores appertaining to their individual Directorates in accordance with the procedures agreed with the Chief Finance Officer.
- 1.6 Each Chief Officer shall have a duty to endeavour to maximise the value for money obtained in running the activities within their purview.
- 1.7 Each Chief Officer shall have a duty to consult the Chief Finance Officer if they have reason to believe that any matter within their purview may result in:
- (a) The Council incurring expenditure in excess of its approved budget;
 - (b) The Council incurring expenditure for which it has no statutory power to incur;
 - (c) The Council failing to comply with the financially related provisions of any relevant European and UK legislation;
 - (d) The Council failing to comply with the financially related provisions of any code of practice adopted by the Council.
- 1.8 Whenever any matter arises which involves or is thought to involve irregularities concerning cash, stores or other property of the Council or held on trust by the Council, the Chief Officer concerned shall notify the Chief Finance Officer who shall take such steps as they consider necessary by way of investigation and report.
- 1.9 Each Chief Officer shall have a duty to inform the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer if they suspect that the Council or its officers are exceeding the Council's statutory powers.

- 1.10 No Chief Officer may recommend to the Council or the Cabinet that expenditure be incurred or any other action taken on the assumption that sufficient statutory power is provided by either Sections 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, without prior approval of the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer.
- 1.11 The Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Monitoring Officer shall be authorised to vary from time to time any amount included in the Rules, but any alteration shall be reported to the next meeting of Council.
- 1.12 Separate Financial Rules shall be issued by the Chief Finance Officer for use by the Council's schools, drawing on, and supplementing this document, as appropriate.

2. Accounting Systems

- 2.1 All accounting procedures and accounting records of the Council and its Officers shall be subject to the approval of the Chief Finance Officer.
- 2.2 All accounts and accounting records of the Council shall be compiled by, or under the direction of, the Chief Finance Officer.
- 2.3 The following principles shall be observed in the allocation of accounting duties:
 - (a) The duties of providing information regarding sums due to or from the Council and of calculating, checking and recording these sums, shall be separated as completely as possible from the duty of collecting or disbursing them;
 - (b) Officers charged with the duty of examining and checking the accounts of cash transactions shall not themselves be engaged in any of these transactions.
- 2.4 A Chief Officer shall be responsible for the financial management and audit of any private fund entrusted to him as part of their duties and will apply regulations to such funds as stipulated by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 2.5 Notwithstanding the duties of a Chief Officer in Rule 2.4, the Chief Finance Officer shall have the right to audit any private fund at any time.
- 2.6 For the purposes of these Rules "private fund" shall mean any fund in the management of which a Chief Officer of the Council is concerned and which may affect any person or property for which the Council has a responsibility, notwithstanding that contributions towards such fund shall have been made by another party other than the Council.

3. Budgeting and budgetary control

3.1 Council's Budget

- 3.1.1 The Budget shall be approved by the Council in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules (Section 16);
- 3.1.2 In referring the Cabinet's Budget Proposals to Council the proper officer will forward to the Council a report of the Chief Finance Officer incorporating the recommendations of the Cabinet and detailing for approval of the Council:
 - (a) a probable out-turn for the current year;

- (b) a revenue budget for the forthcoming year detailing the Budget Heads over which that budget is allocated to specific services and service programme areas;
- (c) a forward indication of the medium term financial strategy which will comprise the revenue budget for the first year and indicative budgets for the subsequent three years and a capital budget for the forthcoming year incorporating a capital programme of at least three years, but no more than ten years;
- (d) an assessment of any major financial risks which may impact on the budget;
- (e) an analysis of reserves and balances and movements over the forthcoming financial year;
- (f) the proposed increase in fees and charges for the forthcoming year;
- (g) a recommendation of the level of Council Tax to be levied for the forthcoming year.

3.1.3 The detailed form of the Budget will be determined by the Chief Finance Officer within the general direction of the Council and Cabinet after consultation with Chief Officers.

3.2 Amendments to the agreed budget (virements and technical adjustments)

- 3.2.1. Each Chief Officer shall have the authority to incur expenditure on any activity under their control up to the amounts specified in respect of that activity in the revenue or capital budgets approved by the Council for the financial year, unless directed otherwise by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 3.2.2 Each Chief Officer, subject to the agreement of the Chief Finance Officer, may approve virements between specific revenue Budget Heads, as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which do not amend any individual Budget Head by more than £100,000 from that approved by the Council. The relevant Chief Officer and Chief Finance Officer must jointly report to Cabinet on any virements which amend individual Budget Heads by more than £100,000.
- 3.2.3 Cabinet may, following a report of the appropriate Chief Officer in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, approve virements between individual revenue Budget Heads which do not amend any individual budget head by more than £500,000 from that approved by the Council.
- 3.2.4 All approved virements over £100,000 must be reported to the Council for information as soon as reasonably practicable after their approval.
- 3.2.5 Any variations to the capital programme, other than those permitted under paragraph 3.4.6, shall require the approval of the Council following a report of the Chief Finance Officer after taking into consideration the recommendations of the Cabinet.
- 3.2.6 All proposals for revenue and capital budget virements that exceed the above limits will need to be approved by the Council on receipt of a report of the appropriate Chief Officer in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer following consideration by the Cabinet. Virement proposals must also be approved by the Council if they:

- a) imply a change in a plan, policy or strategy which would be contrary to the existing policy framework;
- b) have a major operational impact on existing service provision;
- c) are contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the Budget;
- d) imply any additional revenue commitment in future years.

3.2.7 There are also technical adjustments to budgets as a result of the Council adhering to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. These could include, but are not limited to, the reallocation of centrally held pay and price budgets to other areas within the Council or the allocation of capital charges across the Council, and necessary year end accounting adjustments in line with accepted accounting practices. These are not subject to the authorisation limits of budget virements and the Chief Finance Officer or nominated representative can authorise these.

3.3 Budgetary control

- 3.3.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall provide each Chief Officer with regular information relating to income and expenditure under each approved budget head and any other relevant information available. Each Chief Officer shall be responsible for ensuring control of expenditure and income against the approved budget (attention is drawn to Rule 6.1).
- 3.3.2 A Chief Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member responsible for the function in respect of which the service is provided will be expected to manage their services within the approved cash limited budget and to provide the Chief Finance Officer with such information as is required to facilitate and monitor budgetary control. A Chief Officer or Cabinet Member may not incur expenditure or forego income if this will result in the approved budget being exceeded. Where a Directorate does overspend, the provisions of para 3.3.5 will take effect.
- 3.3.3 A Chief Officer may delegate responsibility for management of budgets within their control to other senior officers within their Directorate. Such delegation shall be within defined parameters and shall be recorded in writing as determined by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 3.3.4 At year end, consideration will be given to the overall financial position of the Council including the final outturn, net council tax income, the Council's reserve levels and any new pressures or risks that need to be provided for. At that time, and dependent on that financial position, in line with the Council's Reserves and Balances Protocol, a Chief Officer will be invited to submit earmarked reserve requests to meet any specific unfunded one-off expenditure that they expect to arise in the following financial year and these will be considered by the Chief Finance Officer in the context of the Directorate outturn position as well as that of the Council as a whole. Chief Officers will be notified of successful earmarked reserves.
- 3.3.5 Any directorate over-spending against budget may be carried forward at the discretion of the Chief Finance Officer, either against the specific directorate or Council wide budgets. In no circumstances should this provision be seen as giving a Chief Officer power to overspend against approved budgets. Any such overspend will be treated as a breach of the Financial Procedure Rules and the respective Chief Officer held accountable. No Chief Officer or Cabinet Member may budget for a deficit. Where a

net Council-wide overspend occurs this will need to be met from existing usable reserves, including draw down from the Council Fund.

- 3.3.6 Urgent expenditure not included in any budget approval may only be incurred with the approval of the Chief Finance Officer.
- 3.3.7 The cash limited budget for a Chief Officer only relates to the “controllable” elements of their budget and excludes, amongst other things:
- Central capital charges
 - Central support service charges
 - Centrally controlled office accommodation budgets
 - Joint Committee precepts and levies

3.4 Capital programme

- 3.4.1 As part of the budget process the Chief Finance Officer or appropriate Cabinet Member will annually present to the Council a capital programme which shall include:
- (a) those capital expenditure items proposed to commence during the next three years as a minimum;
 - (b) an estimate of the capital costs of those schemes together with the associated proposed funding.
- 3.4.2 Schemes for which external funding has been approved (specific grants and section 106 funding) will be added to the capital programme once the funding has been accepted, and included in the next capital programme report to Council.
- 3.4.3 A Chief Officer, in conjunction with the Chief Finance Officer, before submitting a scheme for inclusion in the capital programme, shall satisfy himself that the scheme is in line with the Council’s Capital Strategy, and that:
- (a) land purchases, design planning consents and relevant studies are sufficiently advanced to ensure that the proposed year of start of a scheme is feasible;
 - (b) the level of expenditure envisaged is realistic, following a full feasibility assessment, and taking into account the Chief Finance Officer’s forecast of capital resources available and the ability of each directorate to meet the consequential costs resulting from prudential borrowing, if applicable, and any on-going maintenance costs;
 - (c) each scheme in the programme has been fully appraised to ensure it is the most economic method of satisfying an identified need.
- 3.4.4 The Capital Programme upon approval by the Council shall:
- (a) confer authorisation upon the Chief Officer concerned to take steps to enable design work to be completed and land to be acquired in due time;
 - (b) form the basis of the annual capital estimates.

- 3.4.5 The inclusion of any item in the approved capital estimates shall not confer authority to incur any expenditure (except on design work and land acquisition) until:
- (a) all necessary statutory approvals have been obtained;
 - (b) any external funding contribution to the project has been secured; and
 - (c) a tender or quotation has been received and accepted in accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules, which does not exceed that part of the total cost included in the capital estimate in respect of the main contract work for the project by more than 10% or £100,000, whichever is lower.
- 3.4.6 If the tender or quotation exceeds the criteria in 3.4.5(c) above, its acceptance will be subject to the approval of the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member(s) responsible for the function in respect of which the decision is required, to a diversion of money from other approved schemes within the appropriate Chief Officer's control sufficient to meet any additional costs.
- 3.4.7 Chief Officers shall monitor both the progress of schemes and the totality of capital expenditure with the aim of avoiding under or overspending against the approved capital estimates. Should such a situation appear likely, a Chief Officer in conjunction with the Chief Finance Officer shall recommend to the Council the remedial action necessary to mitigate the overspend, which could include accelerating or delaying existing schemes within the approved capital programme, the allocation of additional, uncommitted, capital funding, or a revenue contribution to capital, where funds allow.
- 3.4.8 Remedial action which necessitates the delaying or deletion of a scheme within the capital programme shall be subject to the prior approval of the Council based on a joint report of the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Officer.
- 3.4.9 The Chief Finance Officer shall give Chief Officers information relating to actual payments made for each scheme in such detail and at such time as arranged between them in order that they may carry out their responsibilities under paragraph 3.4.7.
- 3.4.10 The capital programme includes an annual allocation for capital minor works. Allocation of this funding to individual schemes is the responsibility of the Corporate Landlord section and approval on individual schemes will not be sought from Council insofar as the overall funding allocated to schemes does not exceed the funding agreed by Council in the capital programme for that financial year.
- 3.4.11 Any additional capital expenditure from within the capital programme for new or existing schemes which, for reasons of urgency, cannot await the next meeting of Council, may only be incurred with the approval of the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, subject to a maximum value of £100,000, under the Scheme of Delegation of Functions, Scheme B1 paragraph 2.2.
- 3.4.12 Urgent expenditure over £100,000 or not included in any budget approval or delegated power, which needs to be agreed prior to the next meeting of Council, may only be incurred with the approval of the Chief Finance Officer. Any such decision requires approval by either the Chief Executive Officer or Solicitor to the Council under the Scheme of Delegation of Functions, Scheme B1 paragraph 2.1.
- 3.4.13 The Chief Finance Officer shall report quarterly to Cabinet and Council with an update on the Capital Programme.

3.5 Capital Strategy

- 3.5.1 The Chief Finance Officer will be responsible for preparing a Capital Strategy for submission to Council for approval prior to the start of each financial year. The Strategy must demonstrate that capital expenditure and investment decisions are in line with service objectives and properly take account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability.
- 3.5.2 The Capital Strategy will need to comply with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)'s Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. It will incorporate the Prudential Indicators that will need to be approved by Council.
- 3.5.3 The Chief Finance Officer shall report quarterly to Cabinet and Council with an update on the Capital Strategy and the Prudential Indicators.

4. Internal audit

- 4.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall have a duty to maintain an effective internal audit of the Council's operations in order to review, evaluate and test the adequacy of the Council's systems of internal control as contributions to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.
- 4.2 The Chief Finance Officer shall have the responsibility to review, appraise and report to Council, the Governance and Audit Committee, Cabinet, Cabinet Member, or Chief Officer as appropriate upon:
 - 4.2.1 The soundness, adequacy and application of financial and other related operations of the Council.
 - 4.2.2 The extent of compliance with, and financial effect of, established policies, plans and procedures.
 - 4.2.3 The extent to which the Council's assets and interests are accounted for and safeguarded from losses of all kinds arising from:
 - (a) fraud and other offences;
 - (b) waste, extravagance, poor value for money or other cause.
 - 4.2.4 The suitability and reliability of financial and other related management data developed within the Council.
- 4.3 The Chief Finance Officer or an authorised representative of the Chief Finance Officer shall have the authority to require any officer to:
 - 4.3.1 Provide access to any Council premises or land under their control. Where sites are in the possession of a contractor or subject to any tenancy or licence to occupy, such entry will be governed by the conditions of the contract or other legal agreement.
 - 4.3.2 Produce any records, documents and correspondence in their possession.
 - 4.3.3 Provide explanations of matters arising from an audit.

- 4.3.4 Produce and account for any cash, stores or other Council property under their control.
- 4.4 The Chief Finance Officer shall have the authority to request the immediate suspension from duty of any officers who:
- (a) they have reasonable grounds to suspect of misappropriation of Council funds or other property;
 - (b) they believe present a threat of further misappropriation or hindering of any investigation.
- 4.5 Notwithstanding the duty of the Chief Finance Officer for the control and direction of Internal Audit, it shall be the duty of the Chief Internal Auditor to report direct to the Chief Executive Officer and to the Cabinet Member for Resources on any matter in which the Chief Finance Officer appears to be personally involved.
- 5. Contracts of building, construction or engineering work**
- 5.1 Contracts for the execution of capital works shall only be entered into for those schemes which are included in the approved Capital Programme.
- 5.2 Each Chief Officer will maintain contract registers showing for each contract under their control which has a value greater than £50,000:
- (a) the contract sum;
 - (b) the value of any extras or variations to the contract;
 - (c) the amounts and dates of any instalments made;
 - (d) the amount of any retentions held or bonds taken under any contract;
 - (e) the balance outstanding to the Contractor.
- 5.3 Payments to contractors on account of contracts shall be made only on a certificate issued by the responsible officer.
- 5.4 When authorising any extra or variation to a contract the appropriate Chief Officer shall:
- (a) estimate the cost of the variation;
 - (b) issue written instructions to the Contractor to carry out the work, except in cases of urgency where a Chief Officer may issue verbal instructions but shall confirm them in writing as soon as possible, but in any case within 7 days; and
 - (c) ensure that such variation is in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 5.5 The Chief Finance Officer may, at their discretion, decide to audit the final account of a contract, before certifying the final payment.
- 5.6 Claims from contractors in respect of matters not clearly within the terms of any existing contract shall be referred to the Solicitor to the Council for consideration of the Council's legal

liability and, where necessary, to the Chief Finance Officer for financial consideration before a settlement is reached.

- 5.7 Each Chief Officer shall, as soon as practical, report to Cabinet the total of extras or variations to any contract which exceeds 10% of the original contract sum, or £100,000 whichever is the greater.
- 5.8 If the final account of any contract has not been agreed within eighteen months of the completion of works, then the Chief Officer controlling that contract shall report to the Cabinet on the outstanding items. Any report under this regulation shall include a comparison of the final or likely cost with the original contract sum together with reasons for any differences.

6. Orders for work, goods and services

- 6.1 Each Chief Officer has a duty to issue official orders for all works and services to be carried out, and all goods supplied, within their Directorate with the exception of:
- (a) public utilities;
 - (b) periodical payments;
 - (c) petty cash purchases;
 - (d) purchases made using Purchasing Cards;
 - (e) works, goods and services subject to formal written contracts, or excepted from this requirement by the Chief Finance Officer.
 - (f) Framework contracts.

Before issuing official orders, Officers authorising them must be satisfied that there is provision in the estimates and that the Contract Procedure Rules have been complied with.

- 6.2 Each official order shall be in a form prescribed and approved by the Chief Finance Officer and shall include:
- (a) a description of the works, goods and services ordered;
 - (b) the name and address of the supplier;
 - (c) an estimate of the cost;
 - (d) the financial code to which the cost is to be charged;
 - (e) name of the authorising officer.
- 6.3 Verbal orders may only be placed in exceptional circumstances the details of which must be confirmed by e-mail or other appropriate means on the same day and confirmed by written official order within 3 working days.
- 6.4 Electronic orders will be treated in the same way as other official orders. Changes to on-line authorising officers shall be notified to the Chief Finance Officer immediately.

7. Leasing

- 7.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall be responsible for making leasing arrangements for the use of buildings, plant, vehicles and equipment. No officer other than the Chief Finance Officer may enter into any type of leasing arrangements.
- 7.2 Due to complex capital accounting requirements regarding expenditure in relation to leases, all leases, hire, rental, hire purchase agreements, deferred purchase agreements and other arrangements where the use of an asset is being acquired without the ownership of it must be referred to the Chief Finance Officer in advance of entering any agreement.
- 7.3 Provision within revenue estimates to cover the annual costs of leasing should be made only following consultation with the Chief Finance Officer.

8. Grant Funding and Third Party Funding

- 8.1 It is essential that proper management of external funding or grants received, or funding awarded by the Council, is undertaken in order to safeguard the financial position of the Council and also to maximise the benefits to service delivery from the receipt of these additional funds.
- 8.2 The Council has a Grants Financial Management Policy which all Chief Officers and their staff must adhere to in order to ensure the proper management of grant funding and other internal and external funds. Failure to comply could result in funding being withheld by the funding body or recovered at a later date. Any failure to comply with the Grants Financial Management Policy, which results in funding being reduced to the Council, may be reported to the Governance and Audit Committee, and any shortfall in the funding borne by the responsible directorate.

Section B - Expenditure and Income

9. Payment of accounts

- 9.1 Excluding payments in the form of petty cash from imprest accounts, the preferred method of payment of money due from the Council shall be by automated transfers from the Council's bank accounts overseen by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 9.2 The Chief Finance Officer shall be the authorised signatory of any joint bank account opened in the name of the Council and any other party and will be responsible for the payment of any cheques from that joint bank account.
- 9.3 Each Chief Officer is responsible for examining, verifying and authorising invoices and any other payment vouchers or accounts arising from sources in their Directorate including the use of purchasing cards. Authorised officers can discharge this responsibility on behalf of the Chief Officer. Each Chief Officer will supply the names and specimen signatures for authorised officers together with authorisation limits to the Business Support Manager and will need to confirm the list on an annual basis. Any changes to authorisation limits should be notified to the Business Support Manager promptly.

Payments in advance

- 9.4 All payments for goods and services must be paid in arrears on presentation of an invoice or appropriate document to support the payment. The Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with

a Cabinet Member, can give approval for payment in advance of goods or services in exceptional circumstances and on request from a Chief Officer. Approval must be given in writing via email to the appropriate officer, with the relevant Cabinet Member copied in, for audit purposes. There are a small number of exceptions where some payments are permitted to be paid in advance without prior approval. These include:

- Travel, such as rail tickets which are paid via a purchasing card
- Subscriptions, which are usually paid at the start, or in advance of, the subscription period
- Licences – such as software licences
- Necessary expenditure incurred in the normal course of business not exceeding £1,000. Note, the total value of the purchase needs to be considered rather than a monthly or recurring amount.

9.5 Before authorising an account, the authorising officer shall be satisfied that:

- (a) the work, goods or services to which the account relates have been received, carried out, examined and approved;
- (b) the invoice satisfies VAT and Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) regulations and that prices, extensions, calculations, trade discounts, other allowances and credits are correct;
- (c) the relevant expenditure has been properly incurred and is within the relevant estimate provision;
- (d) the financial code to which the expenditure is to be charged is correct and sufficient budget is available;
- (e) the account or invoice indicates the official order number relating to the goods or services provided, or if there is no such order the reason for the omission unless it relates to services not subject to orders such as care contracts;
- (f) appropriate entries have been made in inventories, stores records or stock books as required;
- (g) the account has not been previously passed for payment and is a proper liability of the Council;
- (h) in the case of accounts for the supply of public utility services and other periodic payments, relevant expenditure, and where appropriate, units of energy consumed, have been entered in records approved by the Chief Finance Officer.

9.6 Accounts should be authorised via EDRM online, or other agreed means. Any accounts not authorised via EDRM should be manually authorised and passed to Business Support for processing, or in the case of feeder files passed to the Chief Finance Officer for processing. All payments should be processed within 30 days.

9.7 Where payments are electronically uploaded into the financial system via a feeder file, appropriate controls, including standardising of files and validity checks, are put in place to

ensure their integrity. For any new feeder files, Internal Audit will be asked to review and give assurance on the process for authorisation before use.

- 9.8 For the Council to reclaim VAT on individual payments, the Council is required under VAT Regulations to obtain the supplier's VAT registration number and invoice to be addressed to Bridgend County Borough Council.
- 9.9 The Chief Finance Officer shall set down procedures for the retention of financial documentation. Such documentation must not be disposed of without the specific approval of the Chief Finance Officer. All invoices shall be retained for at least 6 years plus the current financial year. In the case of invoices relating to grant claims, these must be kept until after the grant claim has been audited even if this exceeds 6 years. It is the responsibility of the Chief Officer of the grant to ensure the correct retention period is maintained. The same retention periods apply to electronic copies of all original invoices.
- 9.10 Changes to on-line authorising officers shall be notified to the Business Support Manager immediately.
- 9.11 Each Chief Officer shall, no later than a date specified at the financial year end, notify the Chief Finance Officer of any outstanding expenditure relating to the previous financial year to be accrued in the Statement of Accounts.

10. Imprest accounts

- 10.1 Where appropriate, the Chief Finance Officer shall provide imprest accounts for such officers of the Council as may need them for the purpose of defraying petty cash and other expenses. Such accounts shall be maintained in accordance with the notes of guidance issued to imprest holders by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 10.2 Where petty cash is required, the Chief Finance Officer shall open an account with the Council's bankers for use by the imprest holder, who shall not deliberately cause the account to be overdrawn. Any prolonged overdrawn balance on an imprest holder's bank account shall be reported to the Chief Finance Officer. It will also prevent the use of any business ATM cash card as they cannot be used on an overdrawn account. Where an officer holds a cheque book or business ATM cash card in respect of any account they must ensure that it is securely stored and all cancelled cheques are crossed and retained with the counterfoils of the original cheque book. Receipts for withdrawals must be retained.
- 10.3 Any officer responsible for an imprest account shall be personally responsible for making good any deficiencies in that account.
- 10.4 No income received on behalf of the Council may be paid into an imprest account but must be dealt with in accordance with paragraph 15.3.
- 10.5 Except as otherwise agreed between the Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Officer concerned, payments out of the accounts shall be limited to petty disbursements and shall not include sums due to any tradesman with whom the Council has an account for the supply of goods and services, or who can establish an account, nor any account for goods exceeding in value a sum to be agreed from time to time by the Chief Finance Officer, nor travelling expenses other than those of a casual nature e.g. bus fares.
- 10.6 An officer responsible for an imprest shall on a regular basis as specified by the Chief Finance Officer, or at any other time if so requested, provide a certified statement as to the state of the account.

10.7 Whenever an officer who is an imprest holder leaves the employment of the Council, or ceases to be entitled to hold an imprest advance, the officer shall account to the Chief Finance Officer for the amount advanced to him.

11. Purchasing Cards

11.1 Where appropriate, a purchasing card will be issued to support the current Purchase to Pay invoice process and should not be considered as a replacement mechanism to bypass the formal requisition and approval process. Expenditure shall be made in accordance with the purchasing card guidelines.

11.2 Each card has an individual monthly expenditure limit, individual transaction limit and restricted category types for expenditure. The cardholder will be making financial commitments on behalf of the Council and will be responsible for obtaining value for money in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules and Corporate Contracts.

11.3 Except, as otherwise agreed with the Chief Finance Officer, payments by purchasing card shall be limited to approved disbursements and shall not include sums due to any tradesman whose invoices should be paid via the Financial System. Travelling expenses, such as train fares, can be pre-booked and paid with the purchasing card, however, the purchasing card cannot be used to reimburse travelling expenses nor subsistence expenses other than those of a casual nature.

11.4 The cardholder is responsible for updating the Barclaycard Spend Management system with costing, VAT and narrative details of the expenditure in a timely manner and in accordance with the purchasing card guidelines.

11.5 Whenever a member of staff who is a purchasing card holder leaves the employment of the Council, or ceases to be entitled to hold a purchasing card, the member of staff must return the purchasing card immediately on cessation of entitlement to the Corporate Procurement Manager for cancellation. Any replacement member of staff who requires a purchasing card must apply for a new card via the Corporate Procurement Manager.

11.6 Any person holding a purchasing card shall be personally responsible to notify the Corporate Procurement Manager of any unauthorised / unrecognised spend made on the card. The cardholder shall be personally responsible for making good any unauthorised spend that they incur on the card.

11.7 Where appropriate, the Chief Finance Officer shall provide a purchasing card enabled for cash withdrawal to give services access to cash for the purpose of defraying petty expenditure. Such cards shall be maintained in accordance with the notes of guidance to card holders issued by the Corporate Procurement Manager. There is an administration charge for cash withdrawals. Detailed records of monies withdrawn, spending of this money, including VAT amount and costing information, must be kept and be available for examination on request.

11.8 Except as otherwise agreed with the Chief Finance Officer, payments out of the cash withdrawn from the bank by purchasing card shall be limited to petty disbursements and shall not include sums due to any tradesman with whom the authority has an account, nor travelling or subsistence expenses.

11.9 A person responsible for the cash balance held shall, if so requested, give to the Chief Finance Officer certification as to the state of the funds.

11.10 Whenever a member of staff who is a cash balance administrator leaves the employment of the authority, or ceases to be entitled to administer the cash balance, the member of staff shall repay to the Chief Finance Officer the unexpended cash balance of the withdrawn amount, or shall transfer monies, records and vouchers relating to the account to the new cash administrator. When a purchasing card holder leaves, the card in their name must be returned to the Corporate Procurement Manager for cancellation and a new card applied for via the Corporate Procurement Manager unless the new cash administrator is not to be allocated a purchasing card.

11.11 Any person holding a cash balance obtained by a purchasing card cash withdrawal shall be personally responsible for making good any deficiencies in that account.

12. Business Cash Cards

12.1 Where appropriate a business cash card will be issued to support services which have a requirement for petty cash, to facilitate the withdrawal of cash from ATMs.

12.2 Each card is allocated to an individual named officer of the Council against a specific account, who is responsible for the safeguarding of the card and its appropriate use. Each card has an individual withdrawal and daily withdrawal limit and must be used only for the withdrawal of cash for the purposes of petty cash use for that service or other agreed purposes such as private funds.

12.3 Cash withdrawn from petty cash accounts must not be used for the purposes of paying sums due to tradesmen. Such invoices should be paid via the Financial System.

12.4 Where the card is related to a petty cash account, the cardholder is responsible for updating the petty cash system to record that cash has been withdrawn and must account for all cash withdrawals made.

12.5 Whenever a member of staff who holds a business cash card leaves the employment of the Council, or ceases to be entitled to a card, they must return the debit card immediately to the Chief Finance Officer for the card to be cancelled. The Cardholder is personally responsible for any shortfalls between the cash withdrawn and cash held in the petty cash records.

13. Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) – Tax Deduction

13.1 For certain types of construction work, the Council is obliged by HMRC's Construction Industry Scheme to deduct tax at source from sub-contractor payments, at the appropriate rate, from the invoiced amount. Those CIS sub-contractors paid under deduction must have the labour/material split shown on the invoice and entered into the Financial System. Further guidance can be obtained from the Purchase Ledger Team in Finance.

14. Salaries, wages and Members' allowances

14.1 The payment of all salaries, wages, allowances, expenses or other emoluments to all employees or members shall be made by, or under arrangements approved and controlled by, the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development.

14.2 Each Chief Officer shall notify the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development as soon as possible and in the prescribed form, of all matters affecting the payment of such emoluments and in particular:

- (a) appointments, resignations, dismissals, suspensions, secondments, and transfers;

- (b) absences from duty for sickness or other reason, apart from approved leave with pay;
 - (c) changes in remuneration, other than normal increments and pay awards;
 - (d) information necessary to maintain records of service for superannuation, income tax, national insurance etc.;
 - (e) any failure to comply with Council or statutory regulations.
- 14.3 Appointments of all employees shall be made in accordance with the regulations of the Council and the approved establishment, gradings and rates of pay.
- 14.4 All time records and other pay documents shall be in a form prescribed or approved by the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development and shall be certified by or on behalf of the Chief Officer. The names of the officers authorised to certify such records shall be sent to the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development by each Chief Officer together with specimen signatures and shall be amended on the occasion of any change. Changes to on-line authorising officers shall be notified to the Chief Finance Officer immediately.
- 14.5 No payments to staff may be made other than through the normal payroll system without the specific approval of the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development.
- 14.6 Where an Officer is hiring or engaging a staff member who is not on the Council payroll there is a legal requirement to determine whether it is the responsibility of the Council to deduct tax and national insurance at source, in accordance with the requirements of the Social Security Contributions (Intermediaries) Regulations 2000, as amended (IR35).

15. Officers fees, travelling and subsistence allowances

- 15.1 All claims for payment of fees, car allowances, subsistence allowances and travelling expenses shall be submitted, duly certified, in a format approved by the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development, to the appropriate Chief Officer in accordance with the timetable set down by the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development. A record of all officers authorised to approve such records shall be sent to the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development together with specimen signatures and shall be amended on the occasion of any change. This applies to both manual and electronic expenses systems.
- 15.2 The certification by, or on behalf of, the Chief Officer shall be taken to mean that the certifying officer is satisfied that the journeys were authorised, the expenses properly and necessarily incurred, the vehicle used had appropriate insurance cover, the necessary receipts of expenditure retained and that the fees and allowances are properly payable by the Council.
- 15.3 Claims submitted more than three months after the expenses were incurred must be accompanied by a letter of explanation for the delay and shall be paid only with the express approval of the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development who shall refer the matter to Cabinet if necessary.
- 15.4 All claims for payment of incidental expenses such as removal, lodging and disturbance allowances and training course fees etc. shall be made on the appropriate form and shall be in accordance with the appropriate scheme approved by the Council.

16. Banking arrangements and cheques

- 16.1 All arrangements with the Council's bankers shall be made by or under arrangements approved by the Chief Finance Officer, who shall be authorised to operate such bank accounts as considered necessary.
- 16.2 All cheques shall be ordered only on the authority of the Chief Finance Officer who shall make proper arrangements for their safe custody, including cheque books issued automatically by the bank.
- 16.3 Any such bank account opened in respect of monies held on behalf of the Council shall be arranged in consultation with or under the direction of the Chief Finance Officer. The Chief Finance Officer shall maintain a list of authorised signatories, along with specimen signatures, for all such accounts. Any change in signatory shall be reported to the Chief Finance Officer immediately.
- 16.4 No Standing Orders or Direct Debits from the Council's bank accounts shall be set up unless arranged in consultation with or under the direction of the Chief Finance Officer. The Chief Finance Officer shall maintain a list of all officers authorised to set up Direct Debits and Standing Orders.
- 16.5 The Chief Finance Officer shall be authorised to:
- (a) nominate officers empowered to authorise payment out of these bank accounts;
 - (b) negotiate charges with the Council's bankers.
- 16.6 The Chief Finance Officer will be responsible for ensuring that there are adequate controls in place to ensure that all payment methods, whether physical or electronic, have appropriate authorisations, approvals and signatures as necessary.
- 16.7 The Chief Finance Officer shall ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to facilitate the monthly reconciliation of the Council's Bank Accounts.

17. Income

- 17.1 Each Chief Officer will be responsible for the prompt and accurate billing, collection and banking of all income due to the Council in connection with the Directorate's activities, except where in the interests of efficiency or security it is agreed with the Chief Finance Officer that all or part of the duties should be discharged by some other Chief Officer.
- 17.2 Except as agreed between the Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Officer concerned, all receipt books and other such items shall be ordered and supplied to Directorates by the Chief Finance Officer, who shall be satisfied as to the arrangements for their control.
- 17.3 In carrying out this function, each Chief Officer shall ensure that any officer of the staff engaged in the collection of money:
- (a) maintains a record of receipts and bankings in a form approved by the Chief Finance Officer;
 - (b) pays without delay any money collected either:
 - i) to the approved officer;
 - ii) to a security firm employed by the Chief Finance Officer for this purpose; or

- iii) to one of the Council's main bank accounts or via outlets of the nominated collector(s) as agreed by the Council.
 - (c) makes no deduction from monies collected, except with the specific and exceptional approval of the Chief Finance Officer;
 - (d) ensures income is correctly coded onto the financial system nominated by the Chief Finance Officer and satisfies VAT regulations;
 - (e) makes good any shortfalls in cash collected and identifies any surpluses;
 - (f) in the case of cheques received, enters on any paying-in slips details with the cheque or provides supporting evidence and a reference to the related debt.
- 17.4 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of the money held on behalf of the Council.
- 17.5 Outstanding debts which are found to be irrecoverable may be written off by the Chief Finance Officer, except where it is considered that there are matters of principle or policy which should be referred to the Cabinet.
- 17.6 Any officer holding a cash float shall be personally responsible for making good any deficiencies in that account.
- 17.7 Where an officer takes cash for works, goods or services that is either:
- i. in excess of the level stipulated within the Council's Anti-Money Laundering Policy; or
 - ii. where there is anything suspicious regarding, but not limited to, multiple use of high denomination notes, multiple and frequent disaggregation of payment of a higher value outstanding debt;

then the officer must report it immediately to the Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO) in accordance with that Policy.

18. Fees and Charges

- 18.1 The Council has a Fees and Charging Policy to support the Medium Term Financial Strategy. It is intended to provide a consistent and co-ordinated approach to charging across the Council, setting out the key principles for charging and for reviewing charges and must be adhered to by all Chief Officers and their staff.
- 18.2 When setting charges, there is recognition that where possible, the full cost of the service should be recovered. However, there is also a recognition that in some instances, there will be a conscious decision not to fully charge or a statutory charge or limit set, and the remaining cost will be met by the Council Tax payer.
- 18.3 In line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy, a review of fees and charges should be undertaken at least annually as a minimum and any new or increased charges must receive approval from Cabinet or delegated authority under the Scheme of Delegation, Scheme A paragraph 1.6. Where a proposal is made not to increase charges in a financial year, approval must be sought from the appropriate Chief Officer and Chief Finance Officer.

19. Value Added Tax

- 19.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall establish appropriate systems of control for the proper accounting of Value Added Tax (VAT) inputs and outputs. The Chief Finance Officer will produce and distribute a VAT guidance document to all Directorates and schools to enable officers to comply with HMRC VAT regulations.

Section C - Security and Assets

20. Security

- 20.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall have overall responsibility to the Council for security of Council property.
- 20.2 Each Chief Officer shall be responsible for maintaining proper security at all times for all buildings, stocks, stores, furniture, equipment, cash, title deeds, securities, etc. under their custody.
- 20.3 Maximum limits for cash holdings shall be agreed with the Chief Finance Officer.
- 20.4 Every transfer of official money from one member of staff to another will be evidenced in the records of the Directorate concerned by the signature of the receiving officer.
- 20.5 Keys to safes and similar receptacles for the safeguarding of money or other valuables are to be carried on the person of those responsible; the loss of any such keys must be reported to the Chief Finance Officer.

21. Data Protection

- 21.1 The Council's Data Protection Officer shall be responsible for undertaking the tasks set out in Section 71 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and Article 39 of the UK GDPR.
- 21.2 Each officer shall be responsible for maintaining proper security, privacy and compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR in respect of personal data held.
- 21.3 Each Chief Officer shall have a duty to notify the Data Protection Officer of any computer system in their Directorate which holds personal data.
- 21.4 Each Chief Officer shall have a duty to ensure the safekeeping and prevention of improper use of any personal data held in the Directorate, regardless of the media on which it is held.
- 21.5 The Chief Finance Officer, or an authorised representative of the Chief Finance Officer, shall have access to all computer systems and records and may require and receive such explanations as are necessary, for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- 21.6 The security of financial systems, e.g. use of passwords, shall be maintained by adhering to instructions issued by the Chief Finance Officer and in line with the ICT Code of Conduct.

22. Stocks and stores

- 22.1 Each Chief Officer shall be responsible for the custody of the stocks and stores in the Directorate and shall have a duty to:

- (a) ensure that stocks are adequate but not excessive for the purpose envisaged;
 - (b) maintain accurate and up to date records of such stocks and stores and ensure that a stocktake is undertaken at year end and the certificate is submitted to Finance;
 - (c) provide the Chief Finance Officer with such information as they require in relation to stores for accounting, costing and financial records.
- 22.2 A Chief Officer shall arrange for periodical test examinations of stocks by persons other than storekeepers and shall ensure that all stocks are checked at least once in every year. Any surpluses or deficiencies revealed by such periodical test examinations shall be reported to the Chief Finance Officer and, after consultation with the Chief Officer, the Chief Finance Officer will decide what action to take.
- 22.3 Losses due to theft of stocks shall be reported to the Chief Finance Officer as soon as possible and, where found to be irrecoverable, shall be written off.
- 22.4 In all other instances write offs need the consent of the Chief Finance Officer following the submission of a report by the Chief Officer outlining the reasons for write off.
- 23. Investments, borrowings and trust funds**
- 23.1 The Council has adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)'s Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services.
- 23.2 The Chief Finance Officer will be responsible for preparing and presenting an annual Treasury Management Strategy to the Governance and Audit Committee prior to submission to Council for approval in advance of the start of each financial year. The Strategy must include a Borrowing Strategy, Investment Strategy and set the Council's Treasury Management Indicators for the forthcoming financial year.
- 23.3 All investment and borrowing transactions shall be undertaken in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy with due regard to the requirements of CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services.
- 23.4 All investments of money under its control shall be made in the name of the Council. Any borrowing activity must have regard to CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and the Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services.
- 23.5 The Chief Finance Officer shall report quarterly to the Cabinet, summarising borrowing and investment activity, monitoring against the approved Treasury Management and other appropriate indicators, and indicating compliance with any statutory or Council approved guidelines together with a half yearly and an annual report to Council.
- 23.6 The Chief Finance Officer, or an agent nominated by the Chief Finance Officer, will be the Council's Registrar of loan instruments and shall maintain records of all borrowing of money by the Council.
- 23.7 The Chief Finance Officer will have a duty to ensure a proper, efficient and effective mix of borrowing and investments.
- 23.8 The Governance and Audit Committee is responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the Treasury Management policies and practices. The Committee will review the Half Year and

Annual Report on Treasury Management as well as the Treasury Management Strategy. The Committee will make any recommendations for improvements on treasury management to the Chief Finance Officer and raise any concerns that the Council is exceeding its legal powers with the Monitoring Officer.

24. Inventories

- 24.1 Each Chief Officer shall be responsible for the plant, vehicles, machinery, equipment, tools, furniture and other non-consumable property in the Directorate and shall have a duty to:
- (a) maintain an up to date inventory of such goods;
 - (b) carry out an annual physical check on goods listed in the inventory;
 - (c) as far as is practicable see that such goods are marked as Council property;
 - (d) ensure that such goods are not removed or used except in accordance with the ordinary course of the Council's business.
- 24.2 Every transfer of items contained in the inventory from one establishment to another shall be evidenced in the records of the establishment concerned by the signature of the receiving officer.

25. Insurances

- 25.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall have a duty to:
- (a) effect adequate insurance cover in accordance with the Council's Insurance Strategy contained in the Risk Management Policy. The Chief Finance Officer will arrange insurance for losses which would have a significant impact on budgets and the provision of services, where it must be bought by law and where the insurance provides additional benefits which enable an activity to take place;
 - (b) promptly claim any insurance loss the Council has suffered and liaise with the Council's Insurers to settle any claim brought by another party, if it is assessed that the Council has a legal liability to do so;
 - (c) ensure that sums insured and limits of indemnity are regularly reviewed;
 - (d) maintain comprehensive records of insurance including policy documents and understand what coverage they provide;
 - (e) employ the services of a professional insurance broking company who can provide expert advice;
 - (f) only transfer risks to Insurance Companies which are financially strong;
 - (g) comply with the "duty of fair presentation" contained in the Insurance Act 2015. The Council must disclose to its Insurers all information, facts and circumstances which are, or ought to be, known to it, which are material to the risk. A material circumstance is one which would influence the judgement of a prudent Underwriter in considering whether to provide insurance and, if so, on what basis and cost.
- 25.2 A Chief Officer will have a duty to:

- (a) promptly notify the Chief Finance Officer of any new risks, insurable assets or liabilities which are required to be insured under the Insurance Strategy.;
- (b) promptly notify the Chief Finance Officer in writing of any loss, liability, damage or any event likely to lead to a claim and where appropriate inform the Police;
- (c) promptly provide any information required by the Chief Finance Officer or the Council's Insurers to progress a claim;
- (d) assist the Chief Finance Officer to comply with the "duty of fair presentation contained in the Insurance Act 2015 by disclosing all relevant information.

25.3 The Chief Finance Officer shall review all insurances at least annually, in consultation with other Chief Officers as appropriate.

25.4 No indemnity shall be given in the name of the Council without the prior approval of the Chief Finance Officer.

26. Prevention of Theft, Fraud and Corruption

26.1 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for advising on effective systems of internal control to prevent fraud and corruption.

26.2 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for developing, maintaining and implementing an Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy. If a Chief Officer suspects any irregularities concerning cash, stores or other property of the Council or held on trust by the Council, they will notify the Chief Finance Officer who will take such steps as considered necessary by way of investigation and report.

26.3 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for developing, maintaining and implementing an Anti-Money Laundering Policy. The key message of this Policy is to make staff aware of their responsibilities and if they suspect that money laundering activity may be taking place or proposed, they must disclose those suspicions to the Council's Money Laundering Reporting Officer who is the Chief Finance Officer.

26.4 The Council employs a corporate Senior Fraud Investigator, so should any fraud or irregularity be identified, whilst it would still be reported to the 'Chief Finance Officer' initially, certain matters may be referred to the Senior Fraud Investigator for investigation where appropriate.

26.5 The Chief Finance Officer is also responsible for developing, maintaining and implementing the Anti-Tax Evasion Policy. The policy addresses the prevention of tax evasion and will provide a coherent and consistent approach for all employees and any person who performs services for and on behalf of Bridgend County Borough Council.

26.6 All Chief Officers are responsible for ensuring compliance with the Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy, Anti-Money Laundering Policy and the Anti-Tax Evasion Policy and with systems of internal control.

27. Estates

27.1 The Chief Executive Officer shall maintain a register and appropriate records detailing all properties owned by the Council including:

- (a) purpose for which held;

- (b) location, extent, and plan reference;
- (c) particulars of nature of interest held;
- (d) purchase details;
- (e) rents payable;
- (f) particulars of tenancies granted.

27.2 The Chief Finance Officer will maintain an asset register of all Council assets.

27.3 Where land and/or buildings are found to be surplus to requirements the responsible Chief Officer shall, as soon as possible, submit a report to the appropriate Cabinet Member for appropriate action in accordance with the Schemes of Delegation.

28. Asset Disposal

28.1 Directors are responsible for ensuring that all property assets which are surplus to requirements are referred to the Corporate Landlord section, who will determine the appropriate action to be taken in conjunction with Directorates. In accordance with the Council's disposal strategy the following shall be considered:

- restrictions relating to the ownership of the asset;
- opportunities for using the asset elsewhere in the Council;
- market opportunities;
- appropriate use of tendering procedures for disposal;
- fairness in the disposal process;
- asset security;
- the costs of disposal in relation to the expected income.

28.2 All assets, including assets declared surplus where disposal is proposed must be notified to the Chief Finance Officer for approval and appropriate action in accordance with the Council's disposal strategy and Scheme of Delegation of Functions.

28.3 All assets, whether land, property, buildings, vehicles, plant or equipment, must be notified to the Capital Accountant to ensure their disposal is accurately recorded on the Council's Fixed Asset Register in a timely manner, and as soon after disposal as possible.

29. Protection of private property

29.1 The Chief Officer shall in any known case where steps are necessary to prevent or mitigate loss of or damage to moveable property, prepare in a form agreed with the Chief Finance Officer, an itemised inventory in each case prepared in the presence of two officers.

29.2 All valuables such as jewellery, watches and other small articles of a similar nature and documents of title deposited with the Council for safe custody shall be recorded in a form agreed by the Chief Finance Officer.

29.3 All monies deposited with the Council for safekeeping shall be dealt with in accordance with guidelines agreed by the Chief Officer and the Chief Finance Officer.

29.4 Where a Chief Officer is required as part of their duties to hold in trust any property, valuables or cash belonging to a third party they should do so in accordance with guidelines agreed with the Chief Finance Officer.

30. Risk Management

30.1 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for preparing the Council's Risk Management Strategy and its promotion throughout the Council and for advising of strategic, financial and operational risks.

30.2 Chief Officers shall be responsible for the identification, classification and control of all risks falling within their areas of responsibility. The risks identified shall be incorporated into a Departmental Risk Register, and any risks that exceed the Council's risk threshold shall be notified to the Chief Finance Officer for incorporation into the Corporate Risk Assessment, which shall be subject to periodic review by the Governance and Audit Committee at no more than annual intervals.

30.3 Chief Officers shall take responsibility for risk management within their areas of responsibility, having regard to advice from the Chief Finance Officer and other specialist Officers (e.g. crime prevention, fire prevention, health and safety), and shall undertake regular reviews of risk within their own Directorates.

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Agenda Item 8

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	19 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	TREASURY MANAGEMENT HALF YEAR REPORT TO SEPTEMBER 2024
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, HOUSING AND CHANGE
Responsible Officer:	NIGEL SMITH, GROUP MANAGER – CHIEF ACCOUNTANT
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	Paragraph 22.5 of the Financial Procedure Rules require the Chief Finance Officer to report quarterly to Cabinet, summarising borrowing and investment activity and indicating compliance with any statutory or Council approved guidelines together with a half yearly and an annual report to Council.
Executive Summary:	<p>The report provides an update of Treasury Management activity for the half year period 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024.</p> <p>As at 30 September 2024 the Council had £99.58 million of long term debt, £15.32 million of other long term liabilities and an overall net debt position of £69.90 million.</p> <p>The average interest rate for debt was 4.69% (excluding Salix borrowing which is interest free) and for investments it was 5.09%.</p> <p>The Council has a manageable maturity structure of borrowing, with its current debt repayable at various points over the next 30 years.</p> <p>The Council has complied with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy’s Treasury Management Code and Welsh Government Investment Guidance.</p>

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Report on the Treasury Management Indicators for the period to September 2024.
- Comply with the requirement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy’s (CIPFA’s) ‘Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice’ (the CIPFA Code).

2. Background

- 2.1 Treasury Management is the management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Council is exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Council's prudent financial management.
- 2.2 Treasury risk management at the Council is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 edition (the CIPFA Code), which requires the Council to approve a Treasury Management Strategy before the start of each financial year, and, as a minimum, a semi-annual and annual treasury outturn report. The CIPFA Code also requires the Council to set a number of Treasury Management Indicators, which are forward looking parameters, and enable the Council to measure and manage its exposure to treasury management risks, and these are included throughout this report. Welsh Government (WG) guidance issued in November 2019 on Local Authority Investment's requires the Council to approve an Investment Strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the Welsh Government Guidance.
- 2.3 The CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (2021 edition) (Prudential Code) includes a requirement for Local Authorities to provide a Capital Strategy, which is a summary document approved by full Council covering capital expenditure and financing, treasury management and non-treasury investments. The definition of investments in the Prudential Code covers all the financial assets of the Council as well as other non-financial assets which the authority holds primarily for financial return. The Council's Capital Strategy 2024-25 complied with CIPFA's requirement and included the Prudential Indicators along with the details regarding the Council's non-treasury investments. The Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy should be read in conjunction with each other as they are interlinked, as borrowing and investments are directly impacted upon by capital plans, and both were approved together by Council on 28 February 2024.
- 2.4 The Council's treasury management advisors are Arlingclose. The current services provided to the Council include:
- advice and guidance on relevant policies, strategies and reports
 - advice on investment decisions
 - notification of credit ratings and changes
 - other information on credit quality
 - advice on debt management decisions
 - accounting advice
 - reports on treasury performance
 - forecasts of interest rates
 - training courses

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 External Context – Economic Background

- 3.1.1 Inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rose by 1.7% in the 12 months to September 2024, however this was the first time since April 2021 that the rate has fallen below the UK Government's target of 2%. The largest downward contribution in the monthly change for the CPI annual rate was driven by transport, with the largest contributions from air fares and motor fuels. Conversely, the largest increase came from food and non-alcoholic beverages. Of significance for the next period is the rise in the retail energy price cap, which will impact CPI in October 2024.
- 3.1.2 With headline inflation lower, the Bank of England (BoE) cut Bank Rate from 5.25% to 5.00% at the August Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting. The decision was finely balanced, voted by a 5-4 majority with four members preferring to hold at 5.25%. At the September MPC meeting, committee members voted 8-1 for no change at 5.00%. The meeting minutes suggested sticky inflation remaining a concern among policymakers. Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that Bank Rate would steadily fall from the 5.25% peak, with the first cut in August being followed by a series of further cuts, with November 2024 the likely next one, taking Bank Rate down to around 3% by the end of 2025. However, Arlingclose may revise their forecast following the recent budget announcement by the new Chancellor.
- 3.1.3 The financial markets continued to mostly improve over the period, but the ongoing trend of bond yield volatility remained. The general upward trend in yields in the early part of the period was reversed in the later part, and yields ended the half-year close to where they started.

3.2 Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) Lending Facility Advice

- 3.2.1 As the Council may need to borrow to support its capital programme, it continues to follow the PWLB requirement for borrowing to not invest in assets primarily for yield, or financial return, as this would prevent the Council from accessing funding from the PWLB except to refinance existing loans or externalise internal borrowing. Acceptable use of PWLB borrowing includes service delivery, housing, regeneration, preventative action, refinancing and treasury management.
- 3.2.2 The Council's treasury management activities are undertaken in line with CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance and CIPFA's Treasury Management Code. To comply with the Prudential Code authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return. The Prudential Code also states it is not prudent for local authorities to make investment or spending decisions that will increase the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the authority. Existing commercial investments are not required to be sold, however, authorities with existing commercial investments who expect to need to borrow should review the options for exiting these investments. The Council has complied with the full requirements of both codes during the period to 30 September 2024.

3.3 Treasury Management update for period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024

3.3.1 The Council has complied with its legislative and regulatory requirements during the period 1 April to September 2024-25. The Treasury Management Strategy 2024-25 was approved by Council on 28 February 2024.

3.3.2 A summary of the treasury management activities is shown in the Treasury Management Half Year Report to 30 September 2024 at **Appendix A**. The Council's external debt and investment position on 30 September 2024 is shown in Table 1 below, and more detail is provided within the appendix. As with the previous year, no long-term borrowing has been taken out in 2024-25 so far and no debt rescheduling has been undertaken as there has been no opportunity to make significant savings. However, should the opportunity arise to reschedule any loans at a preferential rate, this would be done.

Generally, the Council has experienced favourable cash flows which have continued to provide surplus funds for investment and the balance on investments held on 30 September 2024 was £45.00 million, with an average interest rate of 5.09%. The total balance of investments has reduced slightly compared to those at the end of last financial year, 31 March 2024, when the balance held was £50.00 million, at an average interest rate of 5.02%. The short-term borrowing taken out for cashflow purposes at the end of the previous year has been fully repaid.

Table 1: Council's external debt and investment position as of 30 September 2024

Investments for Treasury Purposes	Principal as at 31/03/2024 £m	Principal as at 30/9/2024 £m	Average Rate 30/9/2024 %
External Long-Term Borrowing			
Public Works Loan Board	77.62	77.62	4.70
Lender's Option Borrower's Option	19.25	19.25	4.65
Salix Loans (interest Free)	2.74	2.71	NIL
Short Term Borrowing	5.00	NIL	NIL
Total External Long-Term Borrowing	104.61	99.58	4.69*
Other Long-Term Liabilities			
Private Finance Initiative**	12.97	12.47	
IFRS 16 Leases	NIL	2.85	
Total Other Long-Term Liabilities	12.97	15.32	
Total Gross Debt	117.58	114.90	
Investments for treasury management purposes			
Local Authorities	44.00	20.00	5.65
Money Market Funds (instant access)	NIL	18.50	5.00
Banks	6.00	6.50	3.63
Total Treasury Investments	50.00	45.00	5.09
Net Debt	67.58	69.90	

* Excluding Salix loans which are interest free

** (PFI) arrangement for the provision of a Secondary School in Maesteg 9.50 years remaining term

- 3.3.3 The £19.25 million in Table 1 above relates to Lender's Option Borrower's Option (LOBO) loans which have a maturity date of 2054 though these may be rescheduled in advance of this maturity date with the lender having the ability to recall the debt at 2 intervals in the year, July and January. However, this is currently unlikely in the current interest climate and the option was not exercised on 22 July 2024.
- 3.3.4 The Total Other Long Term Liabilities figure of £15.32 million at 30 September 2024 includes £12.47 million for the Council's Private Finance initiative (PFI) arrangement for the provision of a Secondary School in Maesteg. The Other Long-Term Liabilities reflect leases required to be recognised under International Financial Reporting Standard 16 – Leases (IFRS 16), which is a new requirement for the recognition of assets that are leased, which previously would have not been recognised as assets on the balance sheet but charged as an expense through income and expenditure. The new accounting standard requires that for any leases not previously identified as assets, that a right of use asset is recognised on the balance sheet and an equal lease liability also recognised.
- 3.3.5 Both the CIPFA Code and Welsh Government Guidance require the Council to invest its funds prudently and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return. Investment decisions are made by reference to the lowest published long-term credit rating from Fitch, Moody's or Standard and Poor's to ensure that this lies within the Councils' agreed minimum credit rating.
- 3.3.6 The Council defines high credit quality as organisations and securities having a credit rating of A- (A3 for Moody's) or higher and the Council does not invest in any organisation below this level. Schedule A shows the equivalence table for credit ratings for Fitch, Moody's, and Standard and Poor's and explains the different investment grades.
- 3.3.7 There are no long-term investment (original duration of 12 months or more) outstanding as at 30 September 2024. All investments at 30 September 2024 are short term deposits including instant access and fixed term deposits.
- 3.3.8 The Treasury Management Code requires the Council to set and report on a number of Treasury Management Indicators. The indicators either summarise the expected activity or introduce limits upon the activity. Details of the estimates for 2024-25 set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy compared to the actual at 30 September 2024 are shown in **Appendix A** and these show that the Council operated within the approved limits throughout the period.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 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. This is an information report; therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives because of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 The Climate Change implications were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the environment because of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 The Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting implications were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon Safeguarding and Corporate parenting because of this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The financial implications are reflected within the report and attached **Appendix A**.

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- Note the treasury management activities for 2024-25 for the half year period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024.
- Note the Treasury Management Indicators for the half year ending 30 September 2024 against those approved in the Treasury Management Strategy 2024-25.

Background documents

None



Treasury Management Half Year Report to 30 September 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Treasury Management is the management of the Council's cash flows on a day-to-day basis and is carried out in accordance with legislation and Codes of Practice.
- The Treasury Management Strategy was approved by Council on 28 February 2024.
- Inflation, measured by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI), rose by 1.7% in the 12 months to September 2024, but reduced from 2.2% in August.
- The Bank of England base rate was reduced to 5% in August 2024 from the previous 5.25%.
- No new long-term debt was taken out during the period, and no debt was rescheduled during the period. Interest rates on long term-debt remain unchanged at an average of 4.69%.
- Total external borrowing at 30 September 2024 was £99.58 million, a reduction of £5.03 million due to repayment of a short-term loan in May 2024 of £5 million, and £0.03 million scheduled repayments of Salix loans.
- Total investments as at 30 September 2024 were £45 million, a reduction of £5m from 1 April 2024.
- Average interest rates on investments as at 30 September 2024 was 5.09%, a slight increase from 31 March 2024 of 5.02%.
- The Council's investments are split across a number of counterparties, including local authorities, money market funds and banks.
- Investments are made on the basis of security, liquidity and, only then, return, commensurate with the security and liquidity of the investment.
- Due to the current level of reserves, the Council is able to use short-term resources to fund capital expenditure in lieu of external borrowing. However, this is only a short-term position and, whilst the liability benchmark (Chart 1) suggests that the Council may not need new borrowing in the current financial year, it is likely that potentially up to £30 million of new borrowing will be required during 2025-26, and a further £6m in 2026-27.
- The Council may use short-term borrowing (less than 12 months) to manage day-to-day operational cash flow. The Council did not have any such borrowing as at 30 September 2024.
- Council approved a change to the method of setting aside resources to repay debt, known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), on 23 October 2024. The impact of this change has been reflected within this report as it affects the Capital Financing Requirement.
- The Council has operated within the approved limits set out in the Treasury Management Strategy 2024-25.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Treasury management activities are the *'management of the organisation's borrowing, investments and cash flows, including its banking, money market and capital market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with those activities, and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.'* (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (2021) (CIPFA TM Code).

The definition of 'Investments' includes:

- Treasury Management investments (held for the prudent management of financial affairs), and
- non-Treasury Investments, undertaken as part of a Capital Strategy either in the course of provision of services, or made for commercial reasons purely to make a financial gain. These are managed outside of normal treasury management activity.

The Council carries out its treasury management function in accordance with the CIPFA TM Code and the legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to both the CIPFA TM Code and Welsh Government Guidance.

The Council has an integrated Treasury Management Strategy where borrowing and investments are managed in accordance with best professional practice, which is assessed either from internal expertise or consultation with our external advisers. The Council will look to borrow money if needed to either meet short term cash flow needs or to fund capital schemes approved within the capital programme. Therefore, any actual loans taken are not generally associated with particular items of expenditure or assets.

The Council delegates responsibility for the implementation and regular monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices to Cabinet, and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions to the Section 151 Officer. The Governance and Audit Committee are responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the Treasury Management Strategy and policies and regular reports will be presented to the Committee for their consideration.

2.0 ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 1.7% in the 12 months to September 2024, down from 2.2% in August 2024. On a monthly basis, CPI was unchanged in September 2024, down from a rise of 0.5% in September 2023.

The CPI rate fell below target for the first time since April 2021 in a surprisingly soft set of inflation figures. Following on from the wage growth data released 15 October 2024, policymakers will be pleased to see declines in both the core and services rates, suggesting underlying inflationary pressures are ebbing. However, they will remain cautious; volatile items such as air fares and fuel prices were the primary drivers of

the drop, food price disinflation reversed, and price pressures continue to run fairly hot in some areas. With the rise in the retail energy price cap showing up in the October data (released next month), the views of our advisors (Arlingclose) are that they believe one more rate cut this year (in November) remains the most likely outcome.

With headline inflation lower, the Bank of England cut Bank Rate from 5.25% to 5.00% at the August Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting. The decision was finely balanced, voted by a 5-4 majority with four members preferring to hold at 5.25%. At the September MPC meeting, committee members voted 8-1 for no change at 5.00%, with the lone dissenter preferring Bank Rate to be cut again to 4.75%. Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that Bank Rate would steadily fall with November 2024 the likely next reduction, with further reductions taking Bank Rate down to around 3% by the end of 2025.

Sentiment in financial markets continued to mostly improve over the period, but the ongoing trend of bond yield volatility remained. The general upward trend in yields in the early part of the period was reversed in the later part, and yields ended the half-year not too far from where they started. However, the volatility in response to economic, financial and geopolitical issues meant it was a bumpy ride for bond investors during that time.

Arlingclose have maintained its advised recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on all banks on its counterparty list at 100 days.

3.0 EXTERNAL DEBT AND INVESTMENT POSITION

The Council's external debt and investments at 30 September 2024 are set out in Table 1 below. The Council held £99.58 million of Long Term Borrowing comprising:

- Public Works Loan Board (PWLB - UK government) at fixed rates and duration
- Lender's Option Borrower's Option (LOBO) which may be rescheduled ahead of their maturity of 22 July 2054 (no call was made in July 2024)
- £2.71million of Salix interest-free loans

The Council borrowed £5 million for short term cash flow purposes in March 2024, which was repaid in May 2024.

At 30 September 2024 the Council had £45.00 million of investments for treasury management purposes and £4.99 million of investments for commercial purposes.

Table 1: Council’s external debt and investment position as of 30 September 2024

Investments for Treasury Purposes	Principal as at 31/03/2024 £m	Principal as at 30/09/2024 £m	Average Rate 30/09/2024 %
External Long Term Borrowing			
Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)	77.62	77.62	4.70
Lenders Option Borrowers Option (LOBO)	19.25	19.25	4.65
Salix Loans (Interest Free)	2.74	2.71	NIL
Short Term Borrowing	5.00	NIL	NIL
Total External Borrowing	104.61	99.58	4.69*
Other Long Term Liabilities			
Private Finance Initiative**	12.97	12.47	
IFRS 16 Leases	NIL	2.85	
Total Other Long Term Liabilities	12.97	15.32	
Total Gross Debt	117.58	114.90	
Investments for treasury management purposes			
Local Authorities	44.00	20.00	5.65
Money Market Funds (instant access)	NIL	18.50	5.00
Banks	6.00	6.50	3.63
Total Treasury Investments	50.00	45.00	5.09
Net Debt	67.58	69.90	

Investments for Commercial Purposes	Fair Value as at 31/03/2024 £m	Anticipated return 31/3/2025 £m
Investments	4.990	0.459

* Excluding Salix loans which are interest free and Short Term borrowing

** (PFI) arrangement for the provision of a Secondary School in Maesteg 9.50 years remaining term

The current profile of repayment of the Council’s long-term debt is set out in the Liability Benchmark chart below. The table assumes that the Public Works Loan Board and Lender’s Option Borrower’s Option loans will be repayable on their maturity date. However, although shown as maturing in 2054 the £19.25 million of Lender’s Option Borrower’s Option loans can be called at 2 intervals in the year July and January however it is currently unlikely in the current interest climate. The option was not exercised on 22 July 2024.

PWLB lending criteria requires that the Council does not invest purely for financial return if it wishes to access any new PWLB borrowing. The CIPFA TM Code sets out that it is not prudent for local authorities to invest for financial return.

All borrowing by the Council is as a single pool of debt rather than having loans specific to individual schemes. Where a Council finances capital expenditure by debt, it must put aside revenue to repay that debt in later years, known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). Council approved a change to the MRP Policy at its meeting of 23 October 2024, to move from a straight line method of calculation of MRP to an annuity method. As a result of this change the forecast MRP for 2024-25 is £3.838 million, which includes supported and unsupported borrowing, the PFI for Maesteg School and for leases which previously have not been recognised as liabilities, but which are now required to be under International Financial Reporting Standard 16 (IFRS16). This is a reduction from the amount forecast at the start of the year, which was £7.321 million. The annuity method of calculating MRP will result in lower MRP charges in earlier years and higher charges in later years. However, when considering the total cost of MRP plus interest charges, the annuity method provides a more even cost each year. It is also considered more prudent as it takes into account the time value of money, so reflects the impact of having £100 now as being more valuable than £100 in one years' time.

Liability benchmark

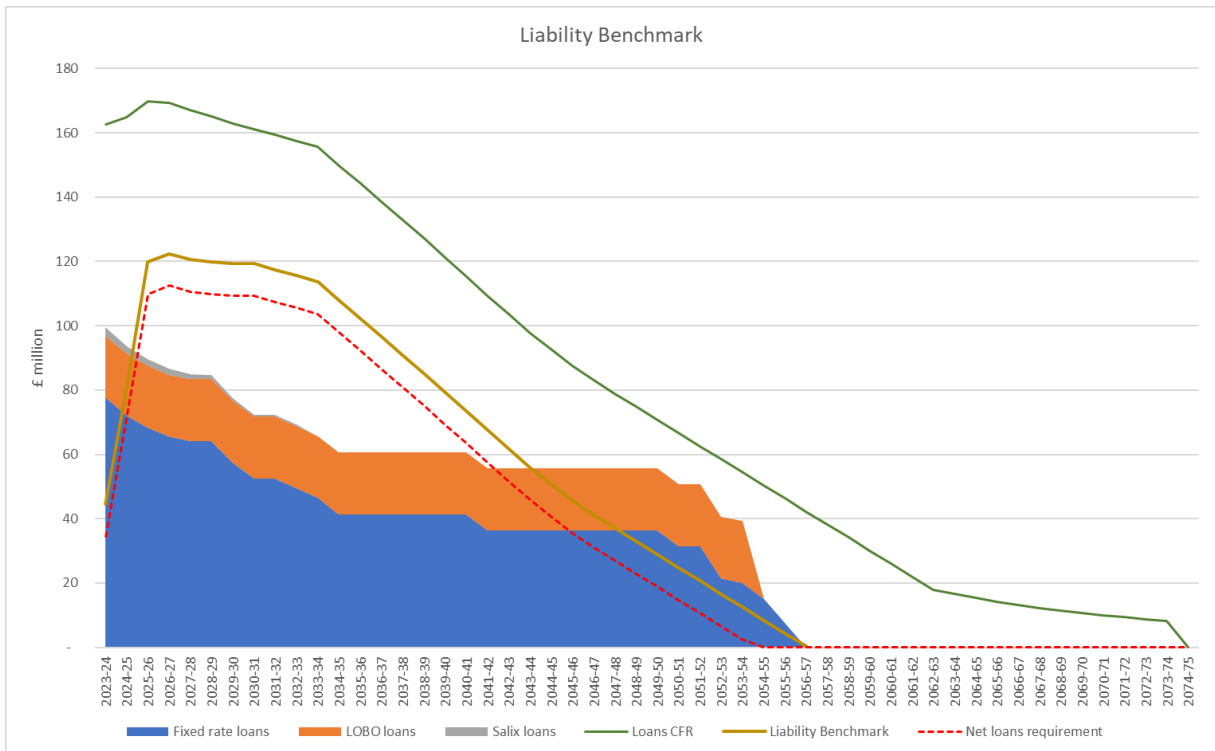
The liability benchmark is a tool which helps to assess the lowest level of borrowing the Council needs, taking into account available cash resources to fund capital expenditure in the short term. A minimum level of investments is factored into the calculation, set at £10 million, which are held as reasonably liquid to ensure the Council has available cash resources to meet day-to-day cash flow requirements. Forecast borrowing needs are based on capital expenditure estimates and available useable reserves. The underlying need to borrow to fund capital expenditure (known as the Capital Financing Requirement or CFR) is the amount of capital expenditure which is not funded via grants, capital receipts or contributions from revenue and earmarked reserves.

Table 2 below shows the Capital Financing Requirement and the calculation of the liability benchmark. It is important to note that the graph is based on the current approved capital programme and the borrowing associated therewith. Any new schemes which require debt financing will increase the CFR and loans requirement.

Table 2: Liability benchmark

	31 March 2024 actual £m	31 March 2025 estimate (TMS) £m	31 March 2025 forecast £m	31 March 2026 forecast £m	31 March 2027 forecast £m
Capital Financing Requirement	175.72	183.22	182.00	185.77	183.91
Less: Other debt liabilities	(12.97)	(15.12)	(15.12)	(13.90)	(12.58)
Loans Capital Financing Requirement	162.75	168.10	166.88	171.88	171.33
Less: Balance Sheet Resources	(128.35)	(58.52)	(93.50)	(60.01)	(56.75)
Plus: Liquidity allowance	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Liability Benchmark	44.40	119.58	83.39	121.86	124.58

The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its **current** capital plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level to manage day-to-day cash flow.



It is forecast that the Council may need to borrow long term in 2025-26 although this is based on a number of assumptions including the forecast capital programme expenditure and the level and use of reserves.

The Section 151 Officer will monitor and update the liability benchmark assumptions on an on-going basis and report any significant changes within the treasury management monitoring reports to Cabinet, the Governance and Audit Committee and Council as appropriate. This could be as a result of changes in the level of usable reserves at year end, slippage within the Capital Programme or changes within the working capital assumptions which may affect the Council’s need to take new long-term borrowing.

4.0 BORROWING

As at 30 September 2024 the Council held £99.58 million of Long-Term Borrowing, £96.87 million of which is fixed long term loans as part of its strategy for funding previous years' capital programmes.

Based on current forecasts the anticipated need to borrow during 2025-26 is £30 million with further borrowing of £6 million in 2026-27. The gap between the shaded area and the brown line in the Liability Benchmark (Chart 1) above is the forecast need to borrow.

The Council has previously raised the majority of its long-term borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). This was the source of funding the last time the Council took long-term borrowing of £5 million in March 2012. The Council will however consider long term loans from other sources including banks, pension funds and other local authorities if appropriate. The Council will also investigate the possibility of issuing bonds and similar instruments, in order to lower interest costs and reduce over-reliance on one source of funding in line with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code.

The Council has loans from PWLB maturing within the next 3 financial years that it will need to repay. Whilst at present it is anticipated that the Council will have resources to repay the loans maturing at the end of 2024-25, it will be dependent on the level of cash resources available at that time. The value of the loans due to be repaid over the next 3 years is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Value of PWLB maturing debt

	2024-25 £ million	2025-26 £ million	2026-27 £ million
Value of maturing debt	5.580	3.709	2.790

The £5.58 million for 2024-25 is due for repayment on 31 March 2025. As noted above the Council may need to borrow during 2025-26 which would replace maturing loans.

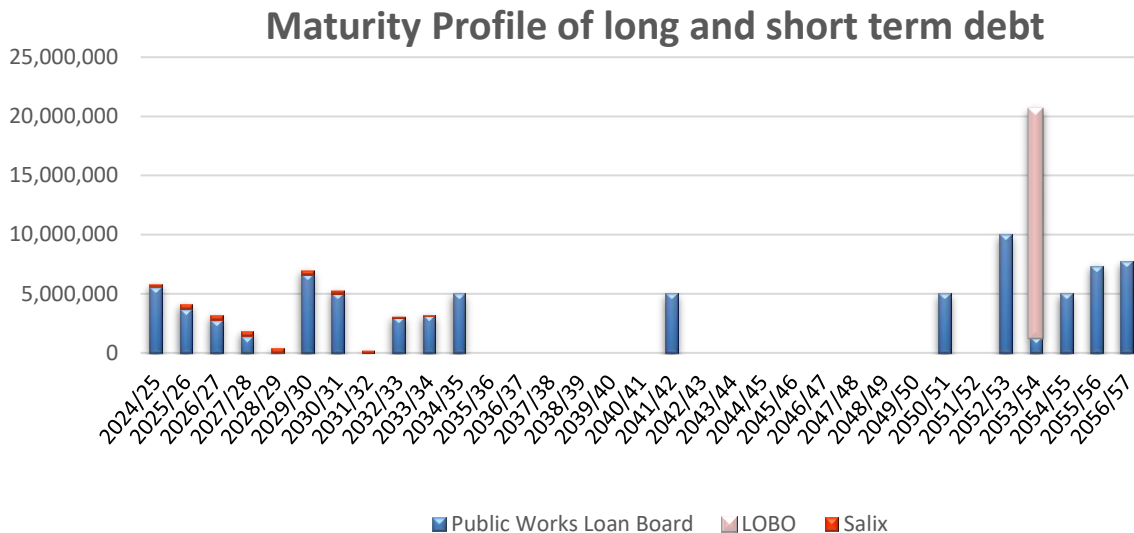
Maturity structure of borrowing

The maturity structure of borrowing indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to refinancing risk with respect to the maturity of the Council's external borrowing. The limits are set to avoid having large amounts of debt maturing in a short space of time. and is the amount of projected borrowing maturing in each period as a percentage of total projected borrowing. Where the maturity date of borrowing is unknown, as in the case of LOBO loans, the maturity should normally be determined by reference to the earliest date at which the lender can require repayment. The £19.25 million of LOBO loans has therefore been included in the 'Under 12 months' category. This table also reflects the PWLB repayable in 2024-25.

Table 4: Maturity Structure of Borrowing 2024-25

Maturity structure of borrowing	Upper limit	lower limit	£ million	As at 30 Sept 2024
Under 12 months	50%	0%	28.02	28.13%
12 months and within 24 months	25%	0%	1.31	1.32%
24 months and within 5 years	25%	0%	5.36	5.38%
5 years and within 10 years	40%	0%	23.51	23.61%
10 years and within 20 years	50%	0%	5.00	5.02%
20 years and above	60%	25%	36.38	36.54%

As can be seen from the table above the maturity structure remains within the limits approved as part of the Treasury Management Strategy 2024-25. The following chart provides the maturity profile of the Council's long term debt.



All the LOBO loans are subject to the lender having the right to change the rate of interest payable during the financial year at either of two trigger points - January and July, with the Council having the right to refuse the change, triggering early repayment and the need to re-finance. This is a manageable risk should repayment be needed during the current financial year as the Council has sufficient funds available in the short term, but would, however, need to consider taking out new debt to replace these loans during the financial year. It is considered unlikely that these loans will be called at the January 2025 call date.

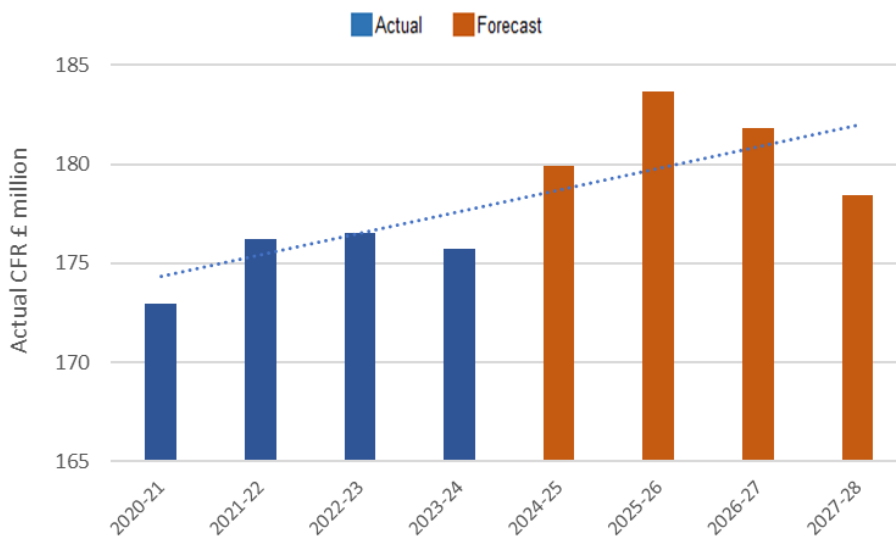
Table 5: LOBO loans

Commencement date	Loan value £m	Potential repayment date	Option frequency	Full term maturity
22 January 2004	4.00	22 Jan 2025	6 months	22 January 2054
22 January 2004	5.00	22 Jan 2025	6 months	22 January 2054
22 January 2004	10.25	22 Jan 2025	6 months	22 January 2054

In accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy, the Council is internally borrowing, which is when it uses temporary cash balances it holds in the short term instead of undertaking external borrowing. The current year’s estimated level of internal borrowing is £71.05 million. This is shown by the Council’s Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) net of its external level of debt including other long term debt liabilities. The Council’s forecast CFR as at 31 March 2025 is £179.88 million, external borrowing forecast at 31 March 2025 is £93.71 million and other long term debt liabilities forecast to be £15.12 million, which is primarily the PFI Maesteg School scheme plus the lease commitments of right of use assets. These leases have been reflected in the half year report to recognise the impact of International Financial Reporting Standard 16 (IFRS16) which requires that right of use assets and the equivalent lease liabilities are recognised on the balance sheet as from 1 April 2024.

The chart below shows the trend in the CFR based on **current** capital commitments within the capital programme reported at quarter 2 – 2024-25. The CFR is anticipated to increase in the current year assuming capital expenditure is incurred as currently anticipated. Due to the increase in forecast capital expenditure and borrowing in the quarter 2 capital programme, Whilst the CFR is expected to further increase in 2025-26 before reducing from 2026-27. This is on the assumption that there will be no new schemes in future which require debt financing. If new schemes are added which require debt finance, the CFR will continue to increase.

Capital Financing Requirement Trend



5.0 TREASURY INVESTMENTS

The Council holds treasury investments as a result of temporary cash balances arising from its day-to-day activities. The management of the day-to-day cash requirements of the Council is undertaken in-house with advice from Arlingclose, the Council's Treasury Management advisors. This may involve temporary borrowing to meet cash-flow needs or temporary lending of surplus funds. Investment balances can fluctuate daily and arise as a result of a range of circumstances, including timing differences of revenue and capital cash flows, reserves and other balances held for future use.

Investments are made in institutions approved by the Council as part of its Treasury Management Strategy and in accordance with investment guidelines issued by the Welsh Government. As part of the Markets and Financial Instruments Directive II (MIFID II), the Council elected for 'professional' status, which covers national and regional governments and public bodies. The categories of investments the Council can invest in can be changed with any proposed changes being presented to Council for approval.

Treasury investments are made primarily on the basis of ensuring security of the funds invested, whilst managing liquidity, and only then considering a commensurate return on the investment. As at 30 September 2024 the Council held £45.00 million of investments, with a weighted average return of 5.13% (£50.35 million at 5.19% as at 30 June 2024).

Table 6 below shows the investment profile as of 30 September 2024.

Table 6: Investments by counterparty type

Investment Category	Balance 1 April 2024	Investments made in period	Investments repaid in period	Balance 30 Sept 2024	Weighted interest rate 1 April 2024 to 30 Sept 2024
	£m	£m	£m	£m	%
Government DMO	0.00	172.50	(172.50)	0.00	5.02
Local Authorities	44.00	0.00	(24.00)	20.00	5.32
Money Market Funds	NIL	81.85	(63.35)	18.50	5.15
Banks (instant access/notice accounts)	6.00	22.75	(22.25)	6.50	4.05
TOTAL	50.00	277.10	(282.10)	45.00	5.13

The following should be noted:

- During the period to 30 September 2024 all investments made were in line with the approved counterparties within the Treasury Management Strategy.
- Investments are diversified over a number of organisations across different sectors, demonstrating a diversified investment portfolio.

- All investments are in sterling and are rated A- and above as per the approved criteria or with a public body.
- The weighted average rates are for all investments made during 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024.

The overall interest receivable from treasury investments for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 was £2.31 million. Although interest rates appear to have reached their peak, the returns on new investments may vary as there will be a time lag on the overall average rates for existing investments until historic investments mature and monies are reinvested. The Council will continue to take a cautious approach to investing to ensure as its primary concern the security of any investments made. The risk of default for investments held is considered negligible.

All investments longer than 364 days will be made with a cautious approach to cash flow requirements and advice from the Council’s Treasury Management advisors will be sought as necessary. All investments as at 30 September 2024 were short term of less than one year duration.

Table 7: Sums invested for periods longer than a year

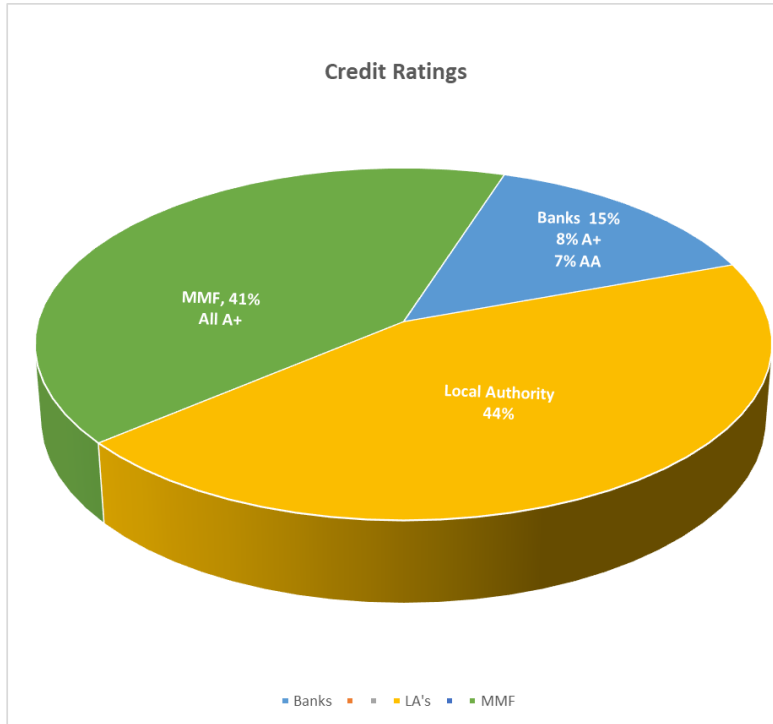
Price risk indicator	TMS 2024-25 £m	Actual £m	Full term maturity
Limit on principal invested beyond financial year end	15	NIL	NIL

The below table details the Council’s investments by counterparty and maturity profile.

Table 8: Investments by maturity

Counterparty Category	Instant Access £m	Deposits maturing within 1 month £m	Deposits maturing within 2-3 months £m	Deposits maturing within 4-12 months £m	TOTAL £m
Local Authorities		10.00		10.00	20.00
Money Market Funds	18.50				18.50
Banks	6.50				6.50
Total	25.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	45.00

The pie chart below summarises the distribution of the Council’s investments by credit ratings. Most local authorities do not have credit ratings but are considered secure investment counterparties. Although the Council did not have deposits with the Government DMO at 30 September 2024 it did use them during the period. These are the UK government and rated AA.



6.0 INTEREST RATE EXPOSURES

The Council is exposed to interest rate movements on its borrowings and investments. Movements in interest rates have a complex impact on the Council, depending on how variable and fixed interest rates move across differing financial instrument periods. Short term and variable rate loans expose the Council to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the Treasury Management indicator below.

The following Table is based on investments at 30 September 2024.

Table 9: Interest Rate Exposure

Interest rate risk indicator	£ million
One year revenue impact of a 1% rise in interest rates	(0.132)
One year revenue impact of a 1% fall in interest rates	0.324

It is important to note that this is an indicator, not a limit. It is calculated at a point in time on the assumption that maturing loans and investments would be replaced at rates 1% higher or lower than they are currently, and that the treasury investment and borrowing portfolios remain unchanged over the next 12 months, which in practice is not the case. The figure for the 1% fall in interest rates indicator is not the same figure as the 1% increase (but reversed) as the borrowing relates to variable LOBO loans where it is assumed that the lender would only exercise their option if there was an increase in interest rates. All other borrowing does not have a rate reset in the next year and is with the PWLB at fixed rates.

A comparison of interest expenditure and income due for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 is shown below.

Table 10: Interest

	01 April – 30 September 2024 £ million
Interest expenditure payable on long term borrowing	2.262
Interest income received in period	(2.310)
Net interest cost	0.048

7.0 NON-TREASURY INVESTMENTS

The Council recognises that investment in other financial assets and property primarily for financial return, taken for non-treasury management purposes, requires careful investment management. Such activities include investments in subsidiaries and investments in property. A schedule of the Council's existing non-treasury investments (currently limited to owned property) is set out in Table 11 below. PWLB guidance requires that local authorities should review their investment portfolio if they wish to secure PWLB borrowing but does not require the local authority to sell existing investment assets. This category covers non-financial assets held primarily or partially to generate a profit, primarily investment property. These assets are valued on an annual basis to reflect market conditions and the current value at the time they are valued, otherwise known as Fair Value, which provides security of their value and continued benefit to the Council.

Table 11: Non-treasury investments

Non-treasury investments	£ million
Bridgend Science Park - Units 1 & 2	3.170
Waterton Cross Land	0.560
Brynmenyn Industrial Estate Plot 53	0.675
Village Farm Plots 32,119 & 120	0.385
Tyrewise Bridgend	0.200
Total at Fair Value	4.990
Anticipated annual return 2024-25	0.459

The Council considers that the scale of its investment properties is proportionate to the resources of the Council as the investment represents less than 1% of its total long-term assets.

In accordance with Welsh Government Investment Guidance these are to be classified as non-treasury investments.

Schedule A – Credit Rating Equivalence Table

Credit Rating Equivalence Table

	Description	Fitch		Moody's		Standard & Poor's	
		Long	Short	Long	Short	Long	Short
INVESTMENT GRADE	Extremely strong	AAA		Aaa		AAA	
	Very strong	AA+	F1+	Aa1	P-1	AA+	A-1+
		AA		Aa2		AA	
		AA-		Aa3		AA-	
	Strong	A+	F1	A1	P-2	A+	A-1
		A		A2		A	
		A-		A3		A-	
	Adequate	BBB+	F2	Baa1	P-3	BBB+	A-2
		BBB		Baa2		BBB	
BBB-		Baa3		BBB-			
SPECULATIVE GRADE	Speculative	B	Ba1	Not Prime (NP)	BB+	B	
			BB		Ba2		BB
			BB-		Ba3		BB-
	Very speculative	B+	B1		B+		
		B	B2		B		
		B-	B3		B-		
	Vulnerable	C	Caa1		C	CCC+	C
			CCC			CCC	
			CCC-			CCC-	
CC			CC				
	C			C			
Defaulting	D	D	C		D	D	

Schedule B – Arlingclose Economic & Interest Rate Forecast – September 2024

	Current	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27
Official Bank Rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Central Case	5.00	4.75	4.25	3.75	3.25	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Downside risk	0.00	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50
3-month money market rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Central Case	4.95	4.80	4.30	3.80	3.30	3.05	3.10	3.10	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15
Downside risk	0.00	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50
5yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.75	0.85	0.95	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Central Case	3.75	3.60	3.50	3.45	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.45	3.50	3.55	3.55	3.55
Downside risk	0.00	-0.45	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65
10yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.75	0.85	0.95	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Central Case	3.91	3.90	3.80	3.75	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.75	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80
Downside risk	0.00	-0.45	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65
20yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.75	0.85	0.95	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Central Case	4.40	4.35	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.25	4.30	4.35	4.35	4.35
Downside risk	0.00	-0.45	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65
50yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.75	0.85	0.95	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Central Case	4.01	4.00	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.85	3.90	3.95	3.95	3.95
Downside risk	0.00	-0.45	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65	-0.65

As expected, the MPC held the Bank Rate at 5.0% in September. While the “no change” majority of eight to one was unexpectedly strong, the minutes suggested some policymakers believed a gradual approach to loosening policy was warranted given the persistence of services inflation, rather than no loosening at all.

This is in line with Arlingclose, our external advisors’ long-held view that Bank Rate will initially reduce gradually before a more rapid decline in 2025 as services inflation eases.

CPI inflation remained just above the 2% target in August, the Bank expects this to rise to 2.5% by the end of the year as prior falls in energy prices drop out of the annual comparison and reveal the prevailing persistence of domestic inflationary pressures. Private sector wage growth has eased back but remains elevated and services inflation remains high at 5.6%. However, both will continue to decline over time.

UK GDP growth has been relatively strong in H1 2024, although this partly reflects are bound from the H2 2023 technical recession. Underlying growth is weaker, but risks around domestic demand lie to the upside due to recovering consumer demand (although the announcement of higher taxes in the upcoming Budget could damage confidence). Stronger economic activity amid a continued tight, albeit easing, labour market could leave wage growth and inflation persistently higher.

Official ONS Labour market data continues to be unreliable but wider indicators suggest the market is loosening as labour demand cools. Anecdotal evidence has suggested lower private sector pay growth for some time, and we expect a weaker labour market situation to hasten that outcome.

Arlingclose expects that the continuation of restrictive monetary policy and the appreciation in sterling will bear down on activity and will require more substantial loosening in 2025 to boost activity and inflation.

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Agenda Item 9

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	19 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	CAPITAL PROGRAMME QUARTER 2 UPDATE 2024-25
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, HOUSING AND CHANGE
Responsible Officer:	HUW POWELL CAPITAL ACCOUNTANT
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	Paragraph 3.5.3 of the Financial Procedure Rules requires that the Chief Finance Officer shall report quarterly to Cabinet and Council with an update on the Capital Strategy and the Prudential Indicators. This report fulfils that requirement. There is no impact on the policy framework or procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The report provides an update on the quarter 2 spend and projected spend for 2024-25 as at 30 September 2024, the revised capital programme for 2024-25 to 2033-34 and the projected Prudential and Other Indicators for 2024-25.• Appendix A shows the budgets, spend to date and projected year end spend as at 30 September 2024 for the individual schemes in 2024-25.• Appendix B shows the revised capital programme for 2024-25 to 2033-34.• Appendix C provides details of the actual Prudential and Other Indicators for 2023-24 and projected for 2024-25.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Comply with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) 'The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities' (2021 edition) requirement to report performance against all forward looking indicators on a quarterly basis.
- Provide an update to Cabinet on the capital programme position for 2024-25 as at 30 September 2024 (**Appendix A**).

- Seek agreement from Cabinet to present a report to Council for approval of a revised capital programme for 2024-25 to 2033-34 (**Appendix B**).
- Ask Cabinet to note the actual Prudential and Other Indicators for 2023-24 and actual for 2024-25 (**Appendix C**).

2. Background

- 2.1 The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Wales) Regulations 2003 as amended, contain detailed provisions for the capital finance and accounting controls, including the rules on the use of capital receipts and what is to be treated as capital expenditure. They modify accounting practice in various ways to prevent adverse impacts on authorities' revenue resources.
- 2.2 As well as the legislation, the Council manages its Treasury Management and Capital activities in accordance with the following associated guidance: -
- CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice
 - CIPFA's The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities
 - Welsh Government (WG) revised Guidance on Local Authority Investments
- 2.3 The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities requires Local Authorities to have in place a Capital Strategy which demonstrates that the Authority takes capital expenditure and investment decisions in line with service objectives and properly takes account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability, and affordability. To demonstrate that the Council has fulfilled these objectives, the Prudential Code sets out a number of Indicators that must be set and monitored each year. The Council's Capital Strategy 2024-25, incorporating the Prudential Indicators for 2024-25, was approved by Council on 28 February 2024.
- 2.4 On 28 February 2024 Council approved a capital budget of £110.537 million for 2024-25 as part of a capital programme covering the period 2024-25 to 2033-34. The programme was last updated and approved by Council on 24 July 2024, with a revised budget of £82.082 million.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 Capital Programme Quarter 2 Update 2024-25

- 3.1.1 This section of the report provides Members with an update on the Council's capital programme for 2024-25 since the budget was last approved by Council and incorporates any new schemes and grant approvals. The revised programme for 2024-25 currently totals £66.058 million, of which £34.698 million is met from Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) resources, including capital receipts, revenue contributions from earmarked reserves and borrowing, with the remaining £31.360 million coming from external resources, including Welsh Government General Capital Grant. Table 1 below shows the capital programme for each Directorate from the July 2024 approved Council position to Quarter 2:

Table 1 – Capital Programme per Directorate 2024-25

Directorate	Approved Council July 2024	New Approvals/ (Reductions)	Virements	Slippage (to)/from future years	Revised Budget 2024-25
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Education & Family Support	17,646	1,149	100	-	18,895
Social Services and Wellbeing	839	-	-	-	839
Communities	57,085	(4,343)	(100)	(13,143)	39,499
Chief Executive's	5,517	(187)	-	500	5,830
Council Wide	995	-	-	-	995
Total	82,082	(3,381)	-	(12,643)	66,058

3.1.2 Table 2 below summarises the current funding assumptions for the capital programme for 2024-25. The capital resources are managed to ensure that maximum financial benefit for the Council is achieved. This may include the realignment of funding to maximise government grants.

Table 2 – Capital Programme 2024-25 Resources

CAPITAL RESOURCES	£'000
<i>BCBC Resources:</i>	
Capital Receipts	13,820
Earmarked Reserves	12,783
Unsupported Borrowing	3,422
Supported Borrowing	3,937
Other Loans	160
Revenue Contribution	576
Total BCBC Resources	34,698
<i>External Resources:</i>	
S106	3,153
Grants	28,207
Total External Resources	31,360
TOTAL RESOURCES	66,058

- 3.1.3 **Appendix A** provides details of the individual schemes within the capital programme, showing the budget available in 2024-25 compared to the projected year end spend at 30 September 2024. There are currently no projected under or over spends on any of the schemes at year end.
- 3.1.4 However, a number of schemes have been identified as requiring slippage of budget to future years (2025-26 and beyond).

Cardiff City Capital Region City Deal (£1.190 million)

As a result of a Cardiff Capital Region (now renamed South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC)) reprofile of the capital contributions required for the City Deal, the Council is not anticipating a requirement to make a capital contribution in the current year.

Bridgend Heat Scheme (£3.265 million)

Options are still being considered for the implementation of a heat network in Bridgend and therefore the scheme is being slipped into 2025-26.

Porthcawl Grand Pavilion (£8.688 million)

The initial main works tender return date was 3 September 2024, but no affordable tender was received therefore the contract could not be awarded. A value engineering exercise has taken place to reduce the scheme where possible and the scheme will go back out to tender in November 2024. As a result of this delay, £8.688 million is being slipped into 2025-26.

In addition to the above schemes, one scheme has been identified as requiring budget to be brought forward from 2025-26 to 2024-25:

Disabled Facilities Grants (£0.500 million)

Following Cabinet approval on 22 October 2024, the Council will enter into a Framework Agreement to deliver works required through Disabled Facilities Grants. The budget in 2024-25 has been fully committed, therefore £0.500 million is being brought forward from 2025-26 which will allow contractors to be appointed to new projects using the framework.

- 3.1.5 There are a number of amendments to the capital programme for 2024-25, such as new and amended schemes, since the capital programme was last approved, including:

Schools Capital Maintenance Grant (£1.095 million)

Welsh Government has awarded the Council £1.095 million from the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme Repairs and Maintenance Grant. The funding will support capital maintenance work and will assist in reducing revenue costs by improving energy efficiency and performance of the school buildings.

Ysgol Gymraeg (YG) Bro Ogwr Mobile Classrooms (£0.223 million)

On 15 August 2022, Welsh Government confirmed the award of grant funding of £0.270 million in respect of mobile classroom provision at YG Bro Ogwr. Following a nil return to the original tender process, contractors confirmed that due to the volatility of construction costs the funding available was insufficient to provide the required classrooms. Following discussions with Welsh Government, an additional £0.223 million has been awarded to allow the scheme to proceed.

Road Signs 20mph Default Speed (£0.193 million)

An additional £0.193 million has been awarded by Welsh Government to support the implementation of the 20mph default speed limit on restricted roads across the County Borough, bringing the total amount of grant funding available in 2024-25 to £0.521 million.

Replacement of Street Lighting Columns (£0.045 million)

£0.045 million of a Highways S106 contribution from Barratts Homes has been added to the budget, to fund works in the Bryntirion area.

Grass Cutting Equipment (£0.340 million)

On 25 September 2024 Council approved a virement of £0.340 million from the Raven's Court capital programme budget to a new urban and rural grass cutting scheme to fund the cost of equipment for the service when it is brought in-house. This was to enable orders to be placed in time for delivery of the equipment in readiness for when it is needed in March 2025.

In addition to the above schemes, two schemes have been removed from the capital programme. These are shown as negative approvals:

Education S106 Schemes (£0.169 million)

The Education S106 contributions received for Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr Replacement, Pencoed Primary Classroom Extension and Coety Primary Extension have now been included in the funding for these schemes, meaning that all Education S106 contributions are now committed within the capital programme. Therefore, the Education S106 scheme (row 20) has been removed from the capital programme.

Leasing Scheme Wales (£0.187 million)

After reviewing the planned expenditure the Leasing Scheme Wales project has been deemed to be revenue in nature and therefore the budget has been removed from the capital programme. The scheme is fully funded by a Welsh Government grant.

3.2 Capital Programme Board

- 3.2.1 The capital programme board has met on a number of occasions to review the existing capital programme, consider the resources available to the Council for capital works, and to appraise new and emerging pressures for capital funding.

In addition to the two schemes being removed, as outlined in paragraph 3.1.5, following the capital programme review a number of capital budgets, most of which are residual budgets from schemes that have ended or are no longer progressing, are proposed to be unwound. These are shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3 - Capital Budgets to be Unwound

Scheme	Amount £'000	Reason for Unwinding
Road Safety - Heol Mostyn	168	scheme complete
Penprysg Road Bridge	13	scheme not progressing
AHP Waste	4	scheme complete
Fire Suppression Tondu Depot	17	scheme complete
Capital Asset Management Fund	773	scheme not progressing

Raven's Court	106	scheme not progressing
Waterton Depot	3,500	£3.5m land sale not possible
Total	4,581	

3.2.2 In addition, there are a number of annual fixed capital allocations in the capital programme, which have also been reviewed, and the capital programme board recommended that these are reduced in the capital programme as follows from 2025-26, to free up funding for other schemes:

Table 4 – Annual Fixed Allocation Amendments

Scheme	Current Allocation £'000	Amended Allocation £'000	Reason for Amendment
Corporate Capital Fund	200	0	Very little spent in previous years. Other funding sources available, such as ICT Fund.
2030 Decarbonisation	400	150	Decarbonisation elements are being built into scheme specific budgets, rather than as standalone schemes. There are also a wide range of external grant funding options available.

3.2.3 The capital programme board has considered bids for additional funding from directorates and is proposing total new investment of £19.520 million, to be funded as set out in Table 5 below. The majority of these schemes are already in the capital programme but, for reasons detailed below, the funding is either not sufficient to progress the scheme or needs enhancing to undertake additional works.

Table 5 – Proposed Additional Funding

Scheme	Additional BCBC Funding £'000			
	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	Total
Heronbridge Replacement	6,182	-	-	6,182
Mynydd Cynffig Replacement	1,700	-	-	1,700
Y G Bro Ogwr Replacement	808	-	-	808
Coety Primary School Extension	330	-	-	330
Community Childrens Play Areas	1,000	-	-	1,000
Community Asset Transfers	500	-	-	500
Highways Refurbishment	1,000	-	-	1,000
Waste Vehicles	3,000	3,000	2,000	8,000
Total	14,520	3,000	2,000	19,520
Funded by				
Unwinding of Existing Capital Budgets (Table 3)	4,581	-	-	4,581
Amendment of Annual Fixed Allocations (Table 4)	450	450	450	1,350
Unallocated Capital Budget	-	1,203	1,434	2,637
Uncommitted Capital Receipts	2,000	-	-	2,000
Unwound Earmarked Reserves	5,022	-	-	5,022
Additional Borrowing	2,467	1,347	116	3,930
Total	14,520	3,000	2,000	19,520

More detail on the specific schemes is detailed below.

Heronbridge Replacement (£6.182 million)

In 2021 Welsh Government approved the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the Heronbridge replacement scheme, in which the Council committed to funding £7.884 million of the overall £34.504 million cost. However, since that time the construction industry has seen costs escalate due to COVID-19, the war in the Ukraine, costs of incorporating decarbonisation measures and energy price increases, which has resulted in the projected cost of the scheme significantly increasing to £59.985 million. A revised OBC detailing the increased budget has recently been approved by the Cabinet Secretary for Education, and the scheme can progress to the Full Business Case (FBC) stage once the additional Council funding of £6.182 million is approved. Once the FBC is submitted, Welsh Government should approve the additional grant match funding of £19.299 million to ensure there is sufficient funding overall to meet the estimated scheme costs. This will be added to the capital programme once approved.

Mynydd Cynffig Replacement (£1.700 million)

Welsh Government approved the OBC for the Mynydd Cynffig Replacement scheme in 2021 and, due to the same reasons outlined above, the costs have increased from £12.838 million to £17.508 million. A revised OBC detailing the increased budget has recently been approved by the Cabinet Secretary for Education, and the scheme can progress to the Full Business Case (FBC) stage once the additional Council funding of £1.700 million is approved. Once the FBC is submitted, Welsh Government should approve the additional grant match funding of £2.970 million to ensure there is sufficient funding overall to meet the estimated scheme costs. This will be added to the capital programme once approved.

YG Bro Ogwr Replacement (£0.808 million)

Welsh Government approved the OBC for YG Bro Ogwr in 2021 and, due to the reasons outlined above, the costs have increased from £15.135 million to £17.787 million. A revised OBC detailing the increased budget has recently been approved by the Cabinet Secretary for Education, and the scheme can progress to the Full Business Case (FBC) stage once the additional Council funding of £0.808 million is approved. Once the FBC is submitted, Welsh Government should approve the additional grant match funding of £1.844 million to ensure there is sufficient funding overall to meet the estimated scheme costs. This will be added to the capital programme once approved.

Coety Primary School Extension (£0.330 million)

In June 2022, Council approved a budget of £1.650 million to construct a four-classroom extension at Coety Primary, to address the increased demand for places at the school. However, since that time construction costs have significantly increased, and technical officers have now estimated that an additional £0.330 million is required to deliver the scheme.

Community Children's Play Areas (£1.000 million)

A refurbishment programme is underway of dated Children's Play Area Facilities throughout the county borough, based on need identified via an annual externally commissioned inspection. An additional £1.000 million has been added to the budget to allow the next phase of the refurbishments to proceed.

Community Asset Transfers (£0.500 million)

The Community Asset Transfer (CAT) fund provides capital funding to allow the transfer of assets from the Council to community groups and also funds improvements post-transfer as and when self-management agreements are finalised. £0.500 million has been added to the budget, allowing additional transfers to be agreed and also reducing revenue costs associated with the maintenance of these assets.

Highways Refurbishment (£1.000 million)

Without adequate capital funding, the network will deteriorate at an ever-increasing rate and ultimately cost more to repair by patching and pothole filling, rather than current timely resurfacing interventions. A failure to adequately invest may increase the likelihood of claims or prosecutions against the authority.

Waste Vehicles (£8.000 million)

As reported to Council in July 2024, the existing fleet of waste vehicles is experiencing reliability issues which is having a significant detrimental impact to service delivery. The purchase of 4 recycling vehicles was approved by Council in July 2024, and they are due for delivery in May 2025, but the remaining vehicles will need to be replaced over the next three years to ensure service delivery is not negatively impacted. Therefore, £8.000 million has been added to the programme over the next 3 years to replace the waste vehicle fleet.

3.2.4 A revised Capital Programme is included as **Appendix B**.

3.3 Prudential and Other Indicators 2024-25 Monitoring

3.3.1 The Capital Strategy is intended to give an overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future sustainability. To this end a number of prudential indicators were included in the Capital Strategy which was approved by Council on 28 February 2024. In line with the requirements of the Prudential Code, the Chief Finance Officer is required to establish procedures to monitor both performance against all forward-looking prudential indicators and the requirement specified.

3.3.2 In February 2024, Council approved the Capital Strategy for 2024-25, which included the Prudential Indicators for 2024-25.

3.3.3 **Appendix C** details the actual indicators for 2023-24, the estimated indicators for 2024-25 set out in the Council's Capital Strategy and the projected indicators for 2024-25 based on the revised Capital Programme. These show that the Council is operating in line with the approved indicators.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 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.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with five ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The well-being objectives are designed to complement each other and are part of an integrated way of working to improve well-being for the people of Bridgend. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of the well-being goals or objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 These are reflected within the report where relevant to specific schemes.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The costs of the increased borrowing shown in Table 5 will be minimised and will be dependent on when the need to borrow arises, the rates at the time of borrowing and how long the borrowing is for. The costs will be funded from available headroom within the capital financing revenue budget.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- notes the Council's Capital Programme 2024-25 Quarter 2 update to 30 September 2024 (**Appendix A**).
 - agrees that the revised Capital Programme (**Appendix B**) be submitted to Council for approval.
 - notes the actual Prudential and Other Indicators for 2023-24 and projected for 2024-25 (**Appendix C**).

Background documents

None

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Bridgend County Borough Council

CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT

QUARTER 2 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

APPENDIX A

	Budget 24-25 (Council Jul 24)	New Approvals and Adjustments	Virement	Slippage (to)/from Future Years	Revised Budget 2024-25	Total Expenditure to Date	Projected Spend	Over / (Under) Spend	Impact on BCBC Resources
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000

Education & Family Support

1	HIGHWAYS SCHEMES BAND B SCHOOL	100			100	13	100	-	
2	HERONSBRIDGE REPLACEMENT	1,338			1,338	-	1,338	-	
3	MYNYDD CYNFFIG REPLACEMENT	287			287	155	287	-	
4	Y G BRO OGWR REPLACEMENT	411			411	150	411	-	
5	BRIDGEND WEST MIM	-			-	-	-	-	
6	YSGOL GYFYN GYMRAEG LLANGYNWYD	97			97	-	97	-	
7	LAND PURCHASE BAND B SCHOOLS	-			-	-	-	-	
8	GARW VALLEY SOUTH PRIMARY PROVISION	61			61	-	61	-	
9	PENCOED PRIMARY SCHOOL BAND A	51			51	-	51	-	
10	PENCOED PRIMARY SCHOOL HIGHWAYS WORKS	56			56	-	56	-	
11	ABERCERDIN PRIMARY HUB	277			277	-	277	-	
12	BRYNTEG COMPREHENSIVE ALL WEATHER PITCH	38			38	-	38	-	
13	CHILDRENS DIRECTORATE MINOR WORKS	362		100	462	1	462	-	
14	SCHOOLS TRAFFIC SAFETY	56			56	6	56	-	
15	SCHOOL MODERNISATION	336			336	1	336	-	
16	PENCOED PRIMARY CLASSROOM EXTENSION	862			862	14	862	-	
17	COETY PRIMARY SCHOOL EXTENSION	1,638			1,638	10	1,638	-	
18	BRYNTIRION COMPREHENSIVE SIX CLASSROOMS	1,660			1,660	4	1,660	-	
19	BRYNTIRION COMP HIGHWAYS	134			134	-	134	-	
20	EDUCATION S106 SCHEMES	169	(169)		-	-	-	-	
21	SCHOOLS CAPITAL MAINTENANCE GRANT	2,429	1,095		3,524	288	3,524	-	
22	WELSH MEDIUM GRANT - BRIDGEND	550			550	-	550	-	
23	WELSH MEDIUM GRANT - OGMORE	-			-	(19)	-	-	
24	WELSH MEDIUM GRANT - PORTHCAWL	550			550	-	550	-	
25	WELSH MEDIUM - HIGHWAYS	-			-	-	-	-	
26	FREE SCHOOL MEALS	1,444			1,444	534	1,444	-	
27	COMMUNITY FOCUSED SCHOOLS	2,328			2,328	487	2,328	-	
28	ALN CAPITAL GRANT	1,229			1,229	162	1,229	-	
29	YSGOL GYMRAEG BRO OGWR MOBILE CLASSROOMS	214	223		437	-	437	-	
30	PORTHCAWL WELSH MEDIUM SEEDLING SCHOOL	370			370	24	370	-	
31	FLYING START EXTENSION - NANTYMOEL PRIMARY	563			563	15	563	-	
32	FLYING START HIGHWAYS	36			36	-	36	-	
	TOTAL Education & Family Support	17,646	1,149	100	-	18,895	1,845	18,895	-

Social Services and Wellbeing

33	BRYN Y CAE - UPGRADE HFE'S	40			40	-	40	-	
34	TY CWM OGWR	23			23	-	23	-	

	Budget 24-25 (Council Jul 24)	New Approvals and Adjustments	Virement	Slippage (to)/from Future Years	Revised Budget 2024-25	Total Expenditure to Date	Projected Spend	Over / (Under) Spend	Impact on BCBC Resources
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
35 WELLBEING MINOR WORKS	212				212	40	212	-	
36 BAKERS WAY MINOR WORKS	10				10	-	10	-	
37 CHILDRENS RESIDENTIAL HUB	74				74	1	74	-	
39 BREAKAWAY	98				98	22	98	-	
40 COMMUNITY CENTRES	167				167	12	167	-	
41 BRYNGARW HOUSE	8				8	-	8	-	
42 YSGOL BRYN CASTELL HARD COURT	99				99	-	99	-	
43 OGMORE VALLEY LIFE CENTRE	108				108	-	108	-	
TOTAL Social Services & Wellbeing	839	-	-	-	839	75	839	-	-

Communities

Street Scene

44 COMMUNITY PLAY AREAS	2,851				2,851	1,171	2,851	-	
45 PARKS/PAVILIONS/OTHER COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFERS	936				936	228	936	-	
46 ABERFIELDS PLAYFIELDS	11				11	-	11	-	
47 CITY DEAL	1,190			(1,190)	-	-	-	-	
48 COYCHURCH CREM WORKS	75				75	18	75	-	
49 REMEDIAL MEASURES - CAR PARKS	135				135	-	135	-	
50 CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT CAR	20				20	11	20	-	
51 20 MPH DEFAULT SPEED	328	193			521	14	521	-	
52 ROAD SAFETY SCHEMES	6				6	(5)	6	-	
53 PENCOED TECH PARK ACT TRAVEL	-				-	(41)	-	-	
54 HIGHWAYS STRUCTURAL WORKS	494				494	321	494	-	
55 CARRIAGEWAY CAPITAL WORKS	250				250	189	250	-	
56 CARRIAGEWAY & FOOTWAYS RENEWAL	-				-	(9)	-	-	
57 HEOL MOSTYN JUNCTION	168	(168)			-	-	-	-	
58 PROW CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT STRUCTURES	65				65	15	65	-	
59 HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE GRANT	1,000				1,000	848	1,000	-	
60 REPLACEMENT OF STREET LIGHTING	400	45			445	112	445	-	
61 RIVER BRIDGE PROTECTION MEASURES	22				22	-	22	-	
62 COMMUNITIES MINOR WORKS	562		200		762	9	762	-	
63 ULEV TRANSFORMATION FUND 2	23				23	16	23	-	
64 FLEET TRANSITION-ULEV	155				155	70	155	-	
65 NET ZERO CARBON FLEET	147				147	-	147	-	
66 PORTHCAWL BUS STATION CCRMETRO	948				948	698	948	-	
67 PENPRYSG ROAD BRIDGE	13	(13)			-	-	-	-	
68 RESIDENTS PARKING BRIDGEND TOWN CENTRE	109				109	-	109	-	
69 FLEET VEHICLES	1,881		(17)		1,864	136	1,864	-	
70 AHP WASTE	4	(4)			-	-	-	-	
71 CORNELLY CEMETERY EXTENSION	190		(185)		5	5	5	-	
72 PORTHCAWL CEMETERY EXTENSION	164		(129)		35	35	35	-	
73 CEMETERIES			314		314	-	314	-	
74 S106 HIGHWAYS SMALL SCHEMES	39				39	2	39	-	
75 ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS	380				380	-	380	-	

	Budget 24-25 (Council Jul 24)	New Approvals and Adjustments	Virement	Slippage (to)/from Future Years	Revised Budget 2024-25	Total Expenditure to Date	Projected Spend	Over / (Under) Spend	Impact on BCBC Resources
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
76 TONDU WASTE DEPOT UPGRADE FIRE	17	(17)			-	-	-	-	
77 PUFFIN CROSSING KENFIG HILL	6				6	(2)	6	-	
78 YNNSAWDRE TO BRYNCETHIN ATR	-				-	(19)	-	-	
79 COAL TIP SAFETY	457				457	-	457	-	
80 TRAFFIC SIGNAL REPLACEMENT	290				290	-	290	-	
81 GRASS CUTTING EQUIPMENT			340		340		340		
82 WASTE VEHICLES					-	-	-	-	
TOTAL Streetscene	13,336	36	523	-1,190	12,705	3,822	12,705	0	0

Regeneration & Development

83 EU CONVERGANCE SRF BUDGET	436				436	39	436	-	
84 COSY CORNER (PRIF)	-				-	(73)	-	-	
85 PORTHCAWL REGENERATION PROJECT	2,616				2,616	9	2,616	-	
86 ECONOMIC STIMULUS GRANT	417				417	-	417	-	
87 COASTAL RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM	210				210	20	210	-	
88 EWENNY ROAD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE	3,493				3,493	8	3,493	-	
89 ARBED PHASE 1 CESP	1,804				1,804	51	1,804	-	
90 BRIDGEND HEAT SCHEME	3,265			(3,265)	-	-	-	-	
91 MAESTEG TOWN HALL CULTURAL HUB	1,547				1,547	1,061	1,547	-	
92 TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FUND	219				219	24	219	-	
93 PORTHCAWL TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE	124				124	5	124	-	
94 COMM PROP ENHANCEMENT FUND	134				134	-	134	-	
95 URBAN CENTRE PROPERTY ENHANCE	1,075				1,075	79	1,075	-	
96 2030 DECARBONISATION	425		290		715	35	715	-	
97 SHARED PROSPERITY FRAMEWORK	5,221		(290)		4,931	339	4,931	-	
98 LOCAL PLACES FOR NATURE	110				110	-	110	-	
99 PORTHCAWL GRAND PAVILION	10,363			(8,688)	1,675	508	1,675	-	
100 LOW CARBON HEAT GRANT	1,089				1,089	-	1,089	-	
TOTAL Regeneration & Development	32,548	-	-	-	11,953	20,595	2,105	20,595	-

Corporate Landlord

101 CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT FUND	773	(773)			-	-	-	-	
102 RAVENS COURT	446	(106)	(340)		-	-	-	-	
103 DDA WORKS	206				206	2	206	-	
104 MINOR WORKS	2,032		(431)		1,601	-	1,601	-	
105 FIRE PRECAUTIONS MINOR WORKS	77		100		177	42	177	-	
106 BRYNCETHIN DEPOT FACILITIES	517				517	118	517	-	
107 WATERTON UPGRADE	7,074	(3,500)	17		3,591	-	3,591	-	
108 EVERGREEN HALL	29		31		60	60	60	-	
109 INVESTING IN COMMUNITIES	47				47	-	47	-	
TOTAL Corporate Landlord	11,201	(4,379)	(623)	-	6,199	222	6,199	-	-

TOTAL Communities

TOTAL Communities	57,085	(4,343)	(100)	(13,143)	39,499	6,149	39,499	-	-
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	Budget 24-25 (Council Jul 24)	New Approvals and Adjustments	Virement	Slippage (to)/from Future Years	Revised Budget 2024-25	Total Expenditure to Date	Projected Spend	Over / (Under) Spend	Impact on BCBC Resources
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000

Chief Executive

110	MANDATORY DFG RELATED EXPEND	1,447			500	1,947	1,209	1,947	-	
111	DISCRETIONARY HOUSING GRANTS	200				200	92	200	-	
112	HOUSING RENEWAL AREA	73				73	(12)	73	-	
113	ENABLE GRANT	270				270	62	270	-	
114	HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING	530				530	-	530	-	
115	HEALTH & WELLBEING VILLAGE	480				480	-	480	-	
116	AFFORDABLE HOUSING	1,066				1,066	263	1,066	-	
117	LEASING SCHEME WALES	187	(187)			-	-	-	-	
TOTAL Housing/Homelessness		4,253	(187)	-	500	4,566	1,614	4,566	-	-

118	ICT INFRA SUPPORT	795				795	18	795	-	
119	DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION	102				102	-	102	-	
120	CCTV SYSTEMS REPLACEMENT	38				38	-	38	-	
121	ICT DATA CENTRE REPLACEMENT	238				238	92	238	-	
122	HWB SCHOOLS IT	91				91	12	91	-	
TOTAL ICT		1,264	-	-	-	1,264	122	1,264	-	-

TOTAL Chief Executive		5,517	(187)	-	500	5,830	1,736	5,830	-	-
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Council Wide Capital Budgets

123	CORPORATE CAPITAL FUND	773				773	-	773	-	
124	UNALLOCATED	222				222	-	222	-	
		995	-	-	-	995	-	995	-	-

GRAND TOTAL		82,082	(3,381)	-	(12,643)	66,058	9,805	66,058	-	-
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PRUDENTIAL AND OTHER INDICATORS 2023-24 and 2024-25

The Prudential Indicators are required to be set and approved by Council in accordance with CIPFA’s Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

Table 1 shows the 2023-24 actual capital expenditure, the capital programme approved by Council on 28 February 2024 and the projected capital expenditure for the current financial year which has incorporated slippage of schemes from 2023-24 together with any new grants and contributions or changes in the profile of funding for 2024-25.

Table 1: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Expenditure

	2023-24 Actual £m	2024-25 Estimate (Council Feb 24) £m	2024-25 Projection £m
Council Fund services	31.813	110.537	66.058
Right of Use Assets	0.00	3.149	2.850
TOTAL	31.813	113.686	68.908

All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council’s own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (the ‘net financing requirement’ - borrowing, leasing and Private Finance Initiative). The planned financing of the expenditure has been projected as follows:

Table 2: Capital financing

	2023-24 Actual £m	2024-25 Estimate (Council Feb 24) £m	2024-25 Projection £m
External sources	18.677	62.595	31.360
Own resources	7.420	36.289	27.179
Net Financing Requirement	5.716	14.802	10.369
TOTAL	31.813	113.686	68.908

The net financing requirement is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). As well as MRP, the Council makes additional voluntary revenue contributions to pay off Prudential or Unsupported Borrowing. The total of these are shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Replacement of debt finance

	2023-24 Actual £m	2024-25 Estimate (Council Feb 24) £m	2024-25 Projection £m
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	3.298	3.385	1.076
Additional Voluntary Revenue Provision (VRP)	2.273	2.788	1.861
Total MRP & VRP	5.571	6.173	2.937
Other MRP on Long term Liabilities	0.929	1.148	1.148
Total Own Resources	6.500	7.321	4.085

The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces by the MRP amount within the year. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Council's actual CFR is as follows based on the movement on capital expenditure during the year:

Table 4: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement

	2023-24 Actual £m	2024-25 Estimate – Capital Strategy £m	2024-25 Projection £m
Capital Financing Requirement			
Opening CFR excluding PFI & other liabilities	162.600	170.246	162.745
Opening PFI CFR	13.903	12.974	12.974
Total opening CFR	176.503	183.220	175.719
Movement in CFR excluding PFI & other liabilities	0.145	5.333	4.283
Movement in PFI and other long term leases CFR	(0.929)	2.148	2.001
Total movement in CFR	(0.784)	7.481	6.284
Closing CFR	175.719	190.701	182.003
Movement in CFR represented by:			
Net financing need for year (Table 2 above)	5.716	14.802	10.369
Minimum and voluntary revenue provisions	(5.571)	(6.173)	(2.937)
MRP on PFI and other long term leases (Table 3)	(0.929)	(1.148)	(1.148)
Total movement	(0.784)	7.481	6.284

The capital borrowing need (Capital Financing Requirement) has not been fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. This is known as Internal Borrowing. Projected levels of the Council's total outstanding debt, which comprises of borrowing, PFI and Other Long Term Liabilities, are shown below compared with the Capital Financing Requirement:

Table 5: Prudential Indicator: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement

	2023-24	2024-25	2024-25
	Actual	Estimate	Projection
	£m	(Council Feb 24)	£m
	£m	£m	£m
Debt (incl. PFI & leases)	117.682	118.049	108.883
Capital Financing Requirement	175.719	190.701	182.003

Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short-term. As can be seen, the Council expects to comply with this in the medium term.

The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower "operational boundary" is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

Table 6: Prudential Indicators: Authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt in £m

	2023-24	2024-25	2024-25
	Actual	Estimate	Projection
	£m	(Council Feb 24)	£m
	£m	£m	£m
Authorised limit – borrowing	170.000	170.000	170.000
Authorised limit – other long term liabilities	30.000	25.000	25.000
Authorised Limit Total	200.00	195.000	195.000
Operational boundary – borrowing	130.000	120.000	120.000
Operational boundary – other long term liabilities	25.000	20.000	20.000
Operational Boundary Limit Total	155.000	140.000	140.000
Total Borrowing and Long Term Liabilities	117.682	118.049	108.883

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue, offset by any investment income receivable. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants

Table 7: Prudential Indicator: Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream

	2023-24 Actual £m	2024-25 Estimate (Council Feb 24) £m	2024-25 Projection £m
Capital Financing Central	5.658	7.519	5.153
Other Financing costs	4.220	4.735	3.808
TOTAL FINANCING COSTS	9.878	12.255	8.961
Proportion of net revenue stream	2.89%	3.58%	2.47%

This shows that in 2024-25, it was forecast that 3.58% of the Council's net revenue income will be spent on paying back the costs of capital expenditure. The current projection is anticipating it will be 2.47%.

The net revenue stream is calculated as the income from Welsh Government Revenue Settlement Grant plus Council Tax and NNDR, less Police and Community Council precepts.

The table below shows the Prudential Indicator of estimates of net income from commercial and service investments to net revenue stream.

Table 8: Prudential Indicator: Net Income from Commercial and Service Investments to Net Revenue Stream

	2023-24 Actual £m	2024-25 Estimate £m	2024-25 Projection £m
Net Revenue Budget	343.841	360.671	363.009
Income from Commercial Investments	0.459	0.459	0.459
% Ratio	0.13%	0.13%	0.13%

The income receivable from the commercial property portfolio is not deemed to be a financial resilience risk in terms of being 'disproportionate' to the Council's overall income.

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	19 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	GAMBLING ACT 2005 STATEMENT OF LICENSING PRINCIPLES 2025-2028
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY
Responsible Officer:	KIRSTY EVANS LICENSING TEAM MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The report content has no direct effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	A review of the Statement of Licensing Principles in respect of the Gambling Act 2005. No policy changes are proposed for the next triennial period.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Cabinet to endorse the publication of the Council’s Statement of Licensing Principles for the next triennial period 2025 to 2028, and to forward the policy to Council for final approval and publication in accordance with the regulations.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Gambling Commission is the unified regulator for gambling in Great Britain and it is responsible for granting operating and personal licences for commercial gambling operators. However, the responsibility for licensing land-based premises, as well as functions in relation to issuing permits and regulations, rests with local authorities. The Gambling Commission issues statutory Guidance on the manner in which local authorities are to exercise their functions under the Gambling Act 2005 (‘The Act’).
- 2.2 The Council, as a licensing authority, must publish on a three-year basis a Statement of Licensing Principles, governing the policy, regulation and decision-making process relating to gambling premises. The approval of the Statement of Licensing Principles is a Council function.
- 2.3 The Council, as a licensing authority, carries out a number of regulatory functions including to:

- Licence premises for gambling activities (betting shops, bingo, adult gaming centres).
- Grant permits for gaming and gaming machines in clubs and miners' welfare institutes.
- Regulate gaming and gaming machines in alcohol-licensed premises.
- Grant permits to family entertainment centres (FECs) for the use of certain lower stake gaming machines.
- Consider occasional use notices for betting at tracks.
- Register small societies' lotteries.

2.4 The Act sets out three licensing objectives which are central to regulating gambling. These are:

- Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder, or being used to support crime.
- Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way.
- Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

2.5 The authority cannot take into account other considerations such as moral or ethical objections to gambling. In addition, the Council has no powers to regulate remote or online gambling and cannot therefore adopt policy guidelines in respect of online gambling via the internet, telephone or television.

2.6 The Council's primary obligation under Section 153 (1) of the Gambling Act 2005 is to permit the use of premises for gambling insofar as it thinks that to do so is:

- In accordance with relevant codes of practice issued by the Gambling Commission;
- In accordance with guidance issued by the Commission;
- Reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives subject to a) and b) above; and
- In accordance with the Licensing Authority Statement of Policy subject to a) to c) above:

The Guidance also emphasises that in seeking to encourage consistency across licensing areas, the Commission does not seek to fetter the discretion that authorities have under the Act to make decisions which reflect local circumstances.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 In April 2023 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published its gambling white paper which included proposals for modernising regulation of the land-based sector.
- 3.2 Following a public consultation with a range of stake holders on 16 May 2024 the Government published its conclusions and proposals that will impact the sector throughout Great Britain.
- 3.3 The proposed changes are as follows:
- **Casinos:** Providing consistency between different types of casino premises:
 - i. allowing 1968 Act (converted) casinos to increase their total gaming machine entitlement, proportionate to their size and non-gambling area. Increasing the maximum number of Category B gaming machines permitted from 20 to 80 if they meet the size requirements of Small 2005 Act casino premises.
 - ii. Implementation of a maximum gaming machine to table ratio of 5:1 for 1968 Act Casinos and Small 2005 Act Casinos.
 - iii. Permitting all casino premises to provide betting services, which was previously restricted to 2005 Act casino premises.
 - **Gaming Machines in Adult Gaming Centre arcades and Bingo halls:** Allowing a 2:1 ratio of Category B to Category C and D gaming machines where devices are of a comparable size.
 - **Cashless payments on gaming machines:** removing the prohibition on the direct use of debit card payments on gaming machines, subject to the introduction of appropriate player protection measures to be applied through the Gambling Commission's Gaming Machine Technical Standards.
 - **Introduction of a legal age limit of 18 for low stake 'cash-out' style Category D slot-style gaming machines. The changes will mandate the voluntary age restriction already applied by BACTA members.**
 - **Raising the current fee cap that Licensing Authorities may charge for premises licences in England and Wales by 15%:** The purpose being to enable authorities to undertake more enforcement and engagement activities with licensed premises. Fees for premises in Scotland are subject to devolved powers and are a consideration for the Scottish Government.
- 3.4 These changes will be introduced through 6 statutory instruments (regulations) which will be laid before Parliament.
- 3.5. It has not been confirmed when these legislative changes will be made however it is likely they will be introduced over the next couple of years.
- 3.6 Since the last local review, the Council has received no evidence of new trends or concerns in the land-based market that it regulated. The Government white paper highlights that the steady industry growth and shift to online gambling has seen

neither a market increased in overall gambling participation, nor an increase in population gambling rates.

3.7 That being the case, it is proposed that the Council move to renew its Statement of Licensing Principles with no changes in policy for the next triennial period; 2025 to 2028. It is foreseen that a full detailed review can be carried out once any changes have been introduced. If changes are introduced during the three-year period, the policy can be reviewed earlier if necessary. This approach was set out in a consultation document and a copy of the draft Statement of Licensing Principles is attached at Appendix A; updates to the preface and statistics are detailed in red.

3.8 The Consultation was published on the Council's website between 26 July 2024 and 23 August 2024 and notice was given to:

- Responsible Authorities including police, safeguarding and community safety
- Trade representatives
- Problem Gambling Organisations
- BCBC Members
- Town and Community Councils

3.9 A response was received from GamCare which is an independent charity providing information, advice and support for anyone affected by gambling harms. They also operate the National Gambling Helpline.

In their response they detail that they support Bridgend County Borough Council's position in Statement of Licensing Principles and suggest that the Council may look to gather statistics from the National Gambling Helpline which they operate to assist in developing a local profile. Their full response is attached to this report at **Appendix B**.

A request was subsequently made for any such statistics which could support our policy, but no response was received from GamCare.

3.10 No other consultation responses were received.

3.11 In conclusion, as the Council has received no evidence of new trends or concerns within the land-based market it regulates, it is proposed that the policy be renewed with no policy changes; the updated preface to explain this approach and statistics are detailed in red in the draft Statement of Licensing Principles **Appendix A**.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from the report.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Cabinet is recommended to endorse the proposed Statement of Licensing Principles as attached at Appendix A, and to subsequently forward it to Council for final approval and publication in accordance with the regulations.

Background documents

None.

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GAMBLING ACT 2005: BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL



STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

2025-2028

This document is also available in Welsh
Other formats available on request.

Version

Date comes into effect: XX/XX/XXXX

PREFACE

Gambling and betting are regulated by the Gambling Commission, whose duties include the licensing of operators and individuals involved in providing gambling and betting facilities. Bridgend County Borough Council, in its role as a licensing authority has a duty under the Act, to licence premises where gambling takes place and to licence certain other activities, including the registration of small society lotteries.

This document sets out how the licensing authority intends to approach this task. It should be noted that this policy statement will not override the right of any person to make an application, to make representations about an application, or to apply for a review of a licence. Every matter will be considered on its merits and according to the statutory requirements of the Gambling Act 2005.

The Gambling Act 2005 sets out how gambling in Great Britain is regulated. It came fully into force in September 2007, and covers arcades, betting, bingo, casinos, gaming machines, society lotteries, and remote gambling (including online gambling). However, the Council, as the licensing authority, is only responsible for the administration and enforcement of gambling premises and has no jurisdiction over online forms of bingo, betting or other online games or platforms. The 2005 Act also created and set the functions and objectives of the Gambling Commission as the principal regulator in the United Kingdom.

The Council must review its Statement of Principles in respect of gambling at least every three years. Since the last review the main legislative change has been to cut the maximum stake on B2 gaming machines in betting shops from £100 to £2.

In April 2023 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published its gambling white paper which included proposals for modernising regulation of the land-based sector.

Following a public consultation with a range of stake holders, on 16 May 2024 the Government published its conclusions and proposals that will impact the sector throughout Great Britain.

These changes will be introduced through 6 statutory instruments (regulations) which will be laid before Parliament.

Since the last local review, the Council has received no evidence of new trends or concerns in the land-based market it regulated. The Government white paper highlights that the steady industry growth and shift to online gambling has seen neither a market increased in overall gambling participation, nor an increase in population gambling rates.

That being the case, there are no changes in policy for the Statement of Licensing Principles for 2025 to 2028. A full detailed review of the policy will be carried out once these legislative changes have been introduced.

CONTACT DETAILS

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licensing@bridgend.gov.uk

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Website: www.bridgend.gov.uk

The licensing authority has made every effort to ensure accuracy of this document and any typographic errors should be drawn to our attention. Any information contained within is not intended to be a substitute for independent legal advice. Should you have any comments or feedback once this Statement is published please send them to the above address.

Other websites of interest:

www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk

www.gamcare.org.uk

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1.0 INTRODUCTORY SECTION

1.1 The Licensing Objectives

A fundamental principle of this Statement is that in carrying out its functions the Bridgend County Borough Council licensing authority (“the licensing authority”) will perform its functions in accordance with the three licensing objectives set out in the Gambling Act 2005 (“the Act”).

- Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime.
- Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way; and
- Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

This licensing authority will aim to permit the use of premises for gambling so far as it is satisfied that the application is:

- a. in accordance with any relevant code of practice issued by the Gambling Commission under Section 24 of the Act;
- b. in accordance with any relevant Guidance issued by the Gambling Commission under Section 25 of the Act (referred to within this document as “the Guidance”);
- c. reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives subject to a. and b. above ; and
- d. in accordance with the authority’s Statement of Licensing Policy published under Section 349 of the Act subject to a. to c. above.

- 1.2 This Statement will not override the right of any person to make an application, make representations about an application or apply for a review of a licence, as each will be considered on its own merits and according to the statutory requirements of the Gambling Act 2005.

Summary of matters dealt with in this Statement

The regulatory functions for which the licensing authority is responsible are:

- Licensing of premises for gambling activities
- Consideration of notices given for the temporary use of premises for gambling
- Granting of permits for gaming and gaming machines in clubs and miners’ welfare institutes
- Granting of permits to family entertainment centres (FEC) for the use of certain lower stake gaming machines
- Granting of permits for prize gaming
- Consideration of occasional use notices for betting at tracks

- Registration of small societies' lotteries.
- Premises Licence Reviews
- Information provision to the Gambling Commission
- Maintenance of statutory registers

1.3 This Statement relates to all those licensable premises, notices, permits and registrations identified as falling within the provisions of the Act, which include:-

- Casinos;
- Bingo Premises;
- Betting Premises;
- Tracks;
- Adult Gaming Centres;
- Family Entertainment Centres (FEC's);
- Unlicensed FEC gaming machine permits
- Club Gaming and Club Machine Permits;
- Prize Gaming and Prize Gaming Permits;
- Temporary and Occasional Use Notices;
- Registration of small society lotteries;
- Notifications from alcohol licensed premises for the use of two or less gaming machines;
- Provisional Statements.

It should be noted that local licensing authorities are not involved in licensing remote gambling, and this activity is regulated by the Gambling Commission through Operator Licences.

1.4 Geographical area under which the Bridgend County Borough Council licensing authority will exercise functions under the Gambling Act 2005

With its Bristol Channel coastline and mix of urban and rural communities, the County Borough lies at the geographical heart of South Wales and has a population of about 147,539*. Its land area of 28,500 hectares stretches 20km from east to west and occupies the Llynfi, Garw and Ogmere valleys. The largest town is Bridgend (pop: 58380****), followed by Maesteg (pop: 20,612 **) and the seaside resort of Porthcawl (pop: 15,813***).

* https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/admin/wales/W06000013__bridgend/

**<http://www.maestegcouncil.org/about-maesteg/>

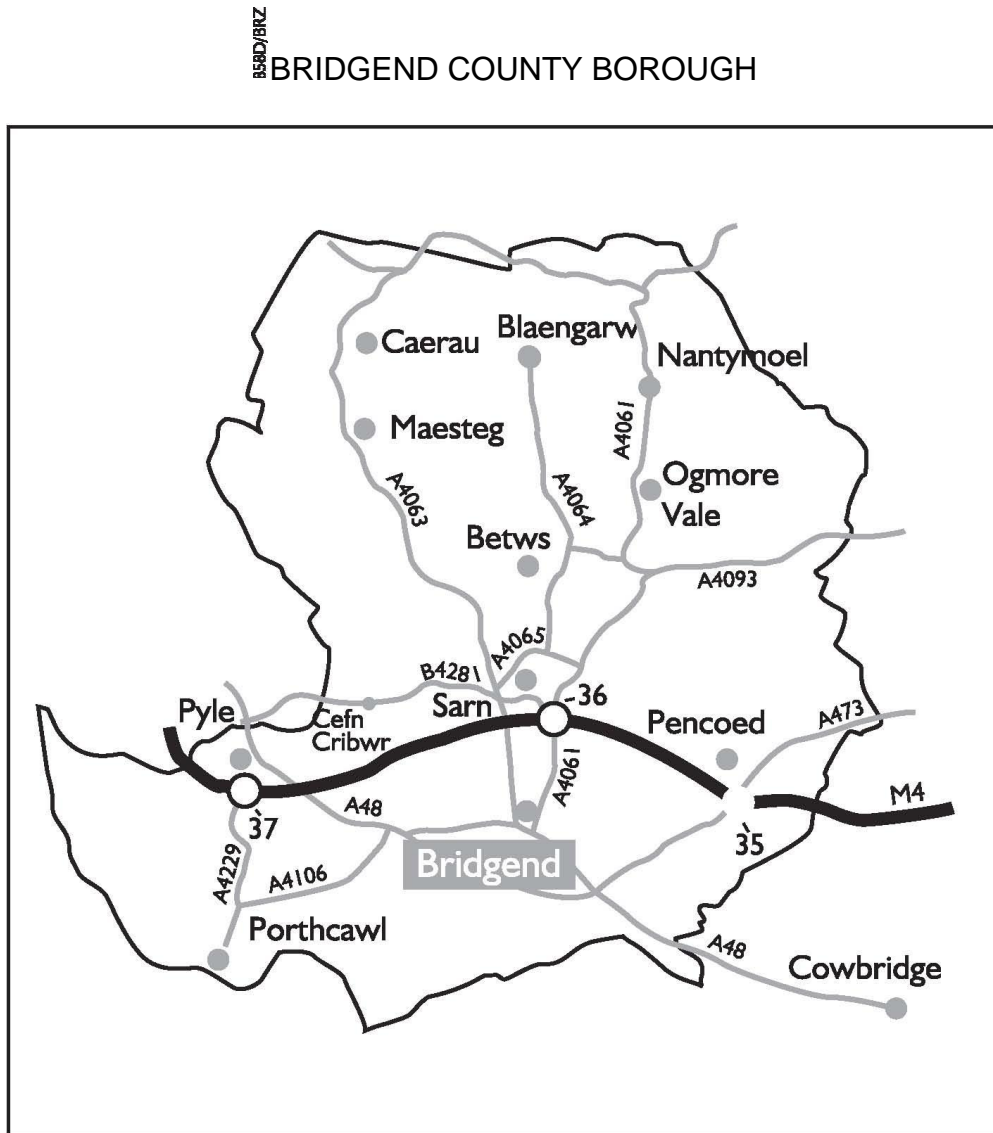
***<http://citypopulation.info>

****<http://citypopulation.info>

The Council's corporate and strategic themes will vary during the course of the validity of this Statement. Details of the current corporate themes and strategies can be accessed here:

<https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/my-council/council-priorities-and-performance/>

The geographical area to which this policy applies is:



BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB.
TEL: 01656 643643 FAX: 01656 668126

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The authority has undertaken a local analysis of the gambling profile of Bridgend County Borough Council.

Premises/Permit Type	Number of premises 2018	Number of premises 2021	Number of premises 2024	Comments
Betting	17	12	10	18+
Bingo	2	2	2	18+
Adult Gaming Centre	6	6	3	18+
Family Entertainment Centre	4	3	2	Mixed access with 18+ segregated area
Registered Members Club	26	18	23	
Licensed Premises	9	2	10	Licensed premises with more than 2 machines
Licensed Premises	83	66	71	Automatic entitlement for two machines
Family Entertainment centre (permit)	12	5	7	Typically, Seaside venues –all age access Porthcawl is a seaside location and a number of the arcades referred to are located in this area. All ages can access these venues
Total Number of premises where gambling available	159	114	128	

There were 68 local groups and societies registered to conduct lotteries for fundraising purposes, which has increased to 86.

The authority does not maintain statistics on the impact of gambling on the locality. Attention is drawn however, to the Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer for Wales which has highlighted the call for further research on the impact of gambling on health. Whilst there is no specific detail or policy impact on the 2024 consultation, stakeholders should be aware of this local development in Wales. The report is available at:

<http://gov.wales/docs/phhs/publications/cmo-report2017en.pdf>

Following the statutory consultation, there are no significant trends emerging to warrant any significant policy changes for the period 2025-2028.

1.6 Designation of the body competent to advise on protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling (Section 157)

The licensing authority will consider the following principles when designating the body competent to advise on protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling:

- The need for the body to be responsible for an area covering the whole of the licensing authority's area,
- The need for the body to be answerable to democratically elected persons, rather than any particular vested interest group.

Having regard to the Commission's Guidance, the authority designates the Bridgend Children's Directorate, Safeguarding and Family Support as the most appropriate body to carry out this function.

1.7 How the Council will determine who qualifies as an Interested Party

Interested Parties can make representations to the licensing authority about licensing applications, or apply for a review of an existing licence. An interested party is someone who:

- Lives sufficiently close to the premises and is likely to be affected by the authorised activities or
- Has business interests that might be affected by the authorised activities or
- Represents persons in either category above

When exercising the powers under section 158 of the Act to determine whether a person is an interested party in relation to a premises licence, or an application for a premises licence, the licensing authority will follow the Guidance to Licensing Authorities issued by the Gambling Commission (hereafter referred to in this document as "the Guidance" and comprising all subsequent amendments). It will consider whether a person is an interested party

with regard to a particular premises on a case by case basis, judging each on its merits and no rigid rule will be applied in the decision making process.

The principles which may be applied in each case are:

- The size and nature of the premises
- The distance of the premises from the person making the representations
- The potential impact of the premises (number of customers, routes likely to be taken by those visiting the establishment)
- The circumstances of the person(s) making the representations. (These are not the personal circumstances of the complainant but the interests of the complainant which may be relevant to the distance from the premises).

In determining whether a person has a business interest that could be affected, the licensing authority may take into account, amongst other things,

- The size of the premises
- The “catchment area” of the premises (how far people travel to visit the premises)
- Whether the person making the representation has business interests in this “catchment area” that might be affected

The authority considers that the following groups come within the category of those who could represent persons living close to the premises, or have business interests that may be affected by it as:

- Trade associations
- Residents’ and Tenants’ associations
- Charities
- Faith Groups
- Medical Practices
- School Head or Governor
- Community Group

The licensing authority will consider persons who are democratically elected as interested parties for example Councillors, AM’s and MP’s or Town, Community or Parish Councillors.

Other than these however, this authority will generally require written evidence that a person/body (e.g. an advocate / relative) ‘represents’ someone who either lives sufficiently close to the premises to be likely to be affected by the authorised activities and/or has business interests that might be affected by the authorised activities.

If individuals wish to approach Councillors to ask them to represent their views, care should be taken that the Councillors are not part of the Licensing Committee dealing with the licence application. If there are any doubts then the party should contact Licensing and Registration Section for information.

All parties are reminded that representations must relate to the licensing objectives. If an interested party has difficulty in making representations, they should contact the Licensing Section for advice.

Due consideration will be given to all relevant representations unless they are considered to be frivolous, vexatious or repetitious. The principles which will be applied in the decision making process are likely to be:

- Who is making the representation and whether there is a history of making representations that are not relevant
- Whether the representation relates to the licensing objectives
- Whether the representation is specific to the premises that are subject to the application

Any such decision will be made objectively and not on the basis of any political judgement. Where a representation is rejected a written statement of reasons will be issued.

In the absence of any regulations or statutory provision representations should ideally:

- Indicate the name and address of the person or organisation making the representation
- Indicate the premises to which the representation relates
- Indicate the proximity of the premise to the person making the representation
- Set out the reasons for making the representation
- Advise the licensing authority if any special assistance is required in submitting or making the representation in writing or orally
- Electronic submission of representations is deemed to be equal to written submission

1.8 Representations

Persons making representations should be aware that full disclosure of representations will be made available to applicants and published as part of Council reports to allow for transparency and negotiation between parties. In the event of a hearing, all representations will form part of a public report unless the person making the representations can satisfy the Council that there is a compelling reason not to do so.

Interested parties and responsible authorities are reminded that the Act does not include the prevention of public nuisance as a licensing objective. This is dealt with under separate legislation. The only representations that are likely to be relevant are those that relate to the licensing objectives, or which raise

issues set out in this policy, the Guidance or Gambling Commission Codes of practice.

1.9 Responsible Authorities

The responsible authorities for this licensing authority are:

<p>Licensing Department Community Safety Partnership Bridgend Police Station Brackla Street Bridgend CF31 1BZ</p> <p>Phone: 01656 679507</p> <p>Adran Twydded Partneriaeth Diogelwch yn y Gymuned Gorsdaf Heddlu Pen-y-bont Stryd Bracla Pen-y-bont CF31 1BZ</p> <p>Ffôn: 01656 679507</p>	<p>Shared Regulatory Services Bridgend County Borough Council Civic Offices Angel Street Bridgend CF31 4WB</p> <p>https://www.srs.wales/en/Contact-Us.aspx</p> <p>Phone: 0300 123 6696</p> <p>Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr Y Swyddfeydd Dinesig Stryd yr Angel Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr. CF31 4WB</p> <p>https://www.srs.wales/cy/Contact-Us.aspx</p> <p>Ffôn: 0300 123 6696</p>
<p>Licensing Bridgend County Borough Council Civic Offices Angel Street Bridgend CF31 4WB</p> <p>Phone: 01656 643643</p> <p>Trwyddedu Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr Y Swyddfeydd Dinesig Stryd yr Angel Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr. CF31 4WB</p>	<p>Development Group Communities Directorate Bridgend County Borough Council Civic Offices, Angel Street Bridgend CF31 4WB</p> <p>Phone: 01656 643643</p> <p>Y Grwp Datblygu Y Gyfarwyddiaeth Gymunedau Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr Y Swyddfeydd Dinesig,</p>

<p>Ffôn: 01656 643643</p> <p>licensing@bridgend.gov.uk</p>	<p>Stryd yr Angel Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr CF31 4WB</p> <p>Ffôn: 01656 643643</p> <p>planning@bridgend.gov.uk</p>
<p>Bridgend County Borough Council Children's Directorate Safeguarding and Family Support Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend CF31 4WB</p>	<p>Health and Safety Executive Government Buildings Phase 1 Ty Glas Llanishen Cardiff, CF14 5SH</p> <p>Health and Safety Executive Government Buildings Rhan 1, Adeiladau'r Llywodraeth, Tŷ Glas, Llanishen, Caerdydd CF14 5SH</p>
<p>South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Forest View Business Park Llantrisant CF72 8LX</p> <p>Phone:01443 232000</p> <p>Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub De Cymru Parc Busnes Fforest View Llantrisant CF72 8LX</p>	<p>The Gambling Commission Victoria Square House Victoria Square BIRMINGHAM B2 4BP</p>

Ffôn: 01443 232000	
<p>H. M. Revenue & Customs Ty Nant 180 High Street SWANSEA SA1 5AP</p> <p>Her Majesty's Commissioners of Customs and Excise, Government Buildings Ty Glas Llanishen Cardiff. CF14 5FP 029 2032 5003</p>	

Please note that the addresses of these bodies may change from time to time and you are advised to contact the Licensing Section before submitting an application.

1.10 Information Exchange and Responsible Authorities

In fulfilling its functions and obligations under the Act the Council will exchange relevant information with other regulatory bodies or responsible authorities and will establish separate protocols with these bodies where applicable. In exchanging such information, the Council will comply with the requirements of data protection, freedom of information, existing Council policies and any Guidance issued by the Gambling Commission. Section 29 of the Act places an obligation on the authority to comply with the Gambling Commission's information requests and the Gambling Commission's website sets out the information exchange protocols in place.

1.11 Regulation and Instituting Criminal Proceedings

In exercising the functions under Part 15 of the Act with respect to the inspection of premises and the powers under section 346 of the Act to institute criminal proceedings in respect of the offences specified in that section, the licensing authority will ensure compliance with the terms of premises licences and other permissions which it authorises.

The main enforcement and compliance role for this authority will be in respect of premises and other permissions for which it has responsibility. The Gambling Commission will be the enforcement body for operating and personal licences and concerns about manufacture, supply or repair of gaming machines will be notified to the Gambling Commission.

The principles for regulation will be informed by the Gambling Commission's Guidance and will endeavour to be in accordance with the principles of better regulation.

The principles to be followed are that regulators and regulation should be:

- Proportionate, appropriate to the risk posed, accountable, consistent and transparent.

This licensing authority will adopt a risk-based inspection programme of premises; the following criteria are to be used in determining the level of risk in respect of premises.

Use of licensed premises for the sale and distribution of drugs and the laundering of the proceeds of drugs crimes;

Use of licensed premises for the sale and distribution of illegal firearms;

Use of licensed premises for prostitution or the sale of unlawful pornography;

Use of licensed premises as a base for organised criminal activity;

Use of licensed premises for the organisation of racist, homophobic or sexual abuse or attacks;

Use of licensed premises for the sale of smuggled tobacco or goods;

The use of licensed premises for the sale of stolen goods.

Where children and/or vulnerable persons are put at risk.

The licensing authority will investigate complaints against licensed premises in relation to matters relating to the licensing objectives for which it has responsibility. In the first instance, complainants are encouraged to raise the complaint directly with the licensee or business concerned to seek a local resolution.

Where any party has made valid representations about licensed premises, or a valid application for a licence to be reviewed, the licensing authority is minded to support conciliation meetings to address and clarify the issues of concern. This process will not override the right of any party to ask that the licensing authority consider their valid objections, or for any licence holder or applicant to decline to participate in a conciliation meeting.

The authority recognises that certain operators have a number of premises within its area. In order to ensure that any compliance issues are recognised and resolved at the earliest opportunity, the authority requests that operators provide a single named point of contact who should be a senior individual within the organisation, and whom the authority will endeavour to contact first should any compliance issues arise.

The Council will take account of the guidance issued by the Gambling Commission and any subsequent amendments, in respect of making test purchases at gambling premises and will also have regard to its own policies and procedures regarding the use of underage test purchasers.

.12 Integration with existing legislation and local and national strategies

The licensing authority will follow the Guidance issued by the Gambling Commission when determining applications and will not take into account irrelevant matters, i.e. those not related to gambling objectives. In the unlikely event that the licensing authority perceives a conflict between a provision of a Gambling Commission code of practice or the statutory guidance issued by the Commission, and the authority's policy statement, the Gambling Commission's codes and Guidance will take precedence.

The licensing authority will have regard to the Guidance in respect of the relationship between planning permission, building regulations and the granting of premises licences

1.13 The Statement of Licensing Principles will be reviewed in accordance with the provisions of the Act and will serve as a basis for determining licence applications.

1.14 Following consideration of the consultation responses, the Statement was approved at a meeting of Council held on **XX/XX/XXXX** and comes into effect on **XX/XX/XXXX**. A copy is available at www.bridgend.gov.uk.

A copy is also available free of charge from the Licensing Section and in other formats on request.

1.15 A list of persons whom the authority has consulted in preparing the statement.

The Council consulted with the following bodies before adopting the Statement:

The Chief Constable: South Wales Police
The Chief Fire Officer: South Wales Fire & Rescue Service
Council Safeguarding and Partnership leads
Town and Community Councils
Local Health Board
Community Safety Partnership members
H. M. Revenue & Customs
Association of British Bookmakers (ABB)
BACTA

British Assoc. of Leisure Parks, Piers & Attractions Ltd.

GAMCARE

The Gambling Commission

Recovery for all

Bingo Association

Sample of existing licensees

Licensee representatives who have previously expressed a wish to be notified of consultations

1.16 Casinos

This licensing authority has not passed a 'no casino' resolution under Section 166 of the Gambling Act 2005, but is aware that it has the power to do so. Should this licensing authority decide in the future to pass such a resolution, it will update this policy statement with details of that resolution. Any such decision will be made by the full Council. Should the Council pass such a resolution, this licensing authority will consider applications in line with the guidance issued by the Gambling Commission.

1.17 Declaration

In producing the final Statement, the licensing authority has had regard to the licensing objectives of the Gambling Act 2005, the guidance issued by the Gambling Commission, and responses from those consulted on the Statement. The authority has also had regard to its responsibilities under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998 (Articles 1, 6, 8 and 10), and legislation to eliminate unlawful discrimination and inequality.

The Council recognizes its diverse responsibilities under equality legislation and will monitor impact of these statutory duties through its various corporate equality schemes and impact assessments. The Statement of Licensing Principles is not intended to duplicate existing legislation and regulatory regimes which already place obligations on employees and operators of gambling establishments.

When discharging its functions, the licensing authority will have regard to the different considerations between the objectives set out in the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005. When deciding whether or not to grant a licence, the licensing authority will not have regard to the expected demand or need for gambling premises that are the subject of the application.

The Guidance to Local Authorities issued by the Gambling Commission may be revised from time to time and references to criteria etc. set out in this statement are to be construed as referring to the current edition of the Guidance.

2.0 CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS

2.1 Nothing in this Statement will:

Undermine the rights of any person to apply under the Act for a variety of permissions and have the application considered on its individual merits, or

Override the right of any person to make representations on any application or seek a review of a licence or permit where they are permitted to do so under the Act, or

Preclude each case being decided on its merits taking into account the measures proposed by an applicant to address the gambling licensing objectives.

2.2 The licensing authority's primary obligation under section 153(1) of the Act is to permit the use of premises in so far as it thinks that to do so is:

- a. in accordance with relevant codes of practice issued by the Commission
- b. in accordance with guidance issued by the Commission
- c. reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives (subject to (a) and (b) above),
and
- d. in accordance with the Licensing Authority Statement of Policy published by the authority (subject to (a) to (c) above).

2.3 Definition of Premises

2.3.1 In considering applications and undertaking its regulatory role the licensing authority will apply the principles and tests set out in the Guidance in respect of the following matters:

- The definition of a "premises" in the Statutory Guidance
- Multi-purpose sites and multiple licences for a building
- Division of premises and access between premises

Full details are contained in the current Guidance and the licensing authority will have regard to any future revisions of these definitions. The authority will therefore consider these and other relevant factors in making its decision, depending on all the circumstances of the case.

2.3.2 This authority will have regard to the Commission's Guidance in respect of the relationship between planning permission, building regulations and granting of a premises licence.

2.3.3 The licensing authority will be mindful that operators can apply for a premises licence in respect of premises which have still to be constructed or altered and will determine any such application on its merits. The authority will

adopt the process of assessment advocated by the Commission in its Guidance. It will also consider imposing an effective date of commencement of the licence or a condition stating when a licence will come into effect, as the case may be, to ensure that premises are constructed in accordance with plans. The authority will consider a physical inspection as an appropriate means of ensuring compliance with any condition imposed.

2.4 Location of premises

2.4.1 This licensing authority will follow the Commission's guidance that demand issues cannot be considered with regard to the location of premises but that considerations in terms of the licensing objectives can. This authority will pay particular attention to the protection of children and vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling as well as issues of crime and disorder.

2.4.2 When determining applications or reviews the authority will determine each application on its merits and if an applicant can show how risks to the licensing objectives can be mitigated, the licensing authority will take this into account in its decision making.

2.4.3 The licensing authority will give sympathetic consideration to the re-siting of premises within the same locality subject to any representations which highlight a likely negative impact on the licensing objectives.

2.4.4 The licensing authority recommends applicants to consider adopting the British Amusement Catering Trade Association's (BACTA) voluntary codes of practice relating to social responsibility, good practice, training initiatives and age of entry control policies.

2.4.5 The licensing authority recommends that applicants consider BACTA and GamCare codes of policy regarding site self-exclusion to support those persons who have difficulty controlling their gambling.

2.5 Vessels and vehicles

2.5.1 The Act permits premises licences to be granted for passenger vessels. Separate application forms are prescribed for vessels under the Premises Licences and Provisional Statements Regulations. This authority adopts the definition of vessels and vehicles set out in the Act and the criteria set out in the Guidance when considering structures which are an extension of the land, including a pier or a bridge which are to be considered as premises under the Act and all other matters relating to vessels and the waters over which it has jurisdiction to act.

2.5.2 The Act allows pleasure boats to apply for premises licences and the Guidance set out by the Gambling Commission in this and all other matters relating to vessels.

2.6 Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder, or being used to support crime

2.6.1 The licensing authority will pay due regard to the proposed location of gambling premises in terms of this licensing objective and to the distinctions between serious crime, disorder and nuisance. The licensing authority will only grant a licence application if it is satisfied that crime prevention has been adequately addressed.

2.6.2 Thus, where an area has known high levels of organised crime this authority will consider carefully whether gambling premises are suitable to be located there and whether conditions may be appropriate such as the provision of door supervisors. The licensing authority will not address issues of nuisance which can be addressed by other relevant legislation or general nuisance issues e.g. parking or anti-social behaviour.

2.6.3 Applicants are encouraged to discuss the crime prevention procedures in their premises with the South Wales Police before making a formal application.

2.6.4 In considering licence applications, the licensing authority will particularly take into account the following:

- The design and layout of the premises;
- The training given to staff in crime prevention measures appropriate to those premises;
- Physical security features installed in the premises. This may include matters such as the position of cash registers or the standard of CCTV that is installed;
- Where premises are subject to age-restrictions, the procedures in place to conduct age verification checks;
- The likelihood of any violence, public order or policing problem if the licence is granted.

This list is not exhaustive and applicants may propose other measures which will address this licensing objective. Applicants for a premises licence will first need to obtain an operating licence issued by the Gambling Commission. As a result the licensing authority will not be primarily concerned with the suitability of an applicant, but where those concerns do arise, the licensing authority will bring these to the attention of the Gambling Commission.

2.7 Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way

2.7.1 The Gambling Commission does not generally not expect licensing authorities to become concerned with ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way; this will be addressed via operating and personal licences save with regard to tracks, which is explained in more detail below. The authority will, as required, advise the Commission if there is evidence that this objective is not being met.

2.8 Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling

2.8.1 This authority will have regard to the intention of the Gambling Act that, with limited exceptions, children and young persons should not be permitted to gamble and should be prevented from entering those gambling premises which are adult-only environments. The objective refers to children from being harmed or exploited by gambling. This means preventing them from taking part in gambling and for there to be restrictions on advertising so that gambling products are not aimed at children or advertised in such a way that makes them particularly attractive to children, (excepting Category D gaming machines).

The LCCP Codes prescribe how operators must prevent children from using age restricted gaming or gambling activities particularly where gaming machines are licensed. The authority will take all conditions and codes into account when considering applications or undertaking compliance and enforcement activities

2.8.2 Having due regard to the measures set out in the application, and to any relevant representations, the licensing authority may therefore consider whether specific measures are required at particular premises, with regard to this licensing objective. Appropriate measures may include supervision of entrances/machines, segregation of areas, training, and siting of ATM's (cash machines).

2.8.4 As regards the term "vulnerable persons" it is noted that the Gambling Commission does not seeking to offer a definition but sets out for regulatory purposes a number of vulnerable groups to may not be able to make informed or balanced decisions about gambling. This licensing authority will consider whether any special considerations apply to this licensing objective on a case by case basis balanced against the objective to aim to permit the use of premises for gambling.

2.9 Considerations relating conditions to be attached to Premises Licences

2.9.1 The licensing authority acknowledges that mandatory conditions are set by the Secretary of State with the intention that no further regulation in relation to that matter is required. Therefore it is considered extremely unlikely that the authority will need to impose individual conditions imposing a more restrictive regime in relation to matters that have already been dealt with by mandatory conditions. The licensing authority will only consider imposing conditions where there is evidence of regulatory concerns of an exceptional nature and any additional licence conditions will be evidence based and relate to the licensing objectives.

2.9.2 In addition to any default conditions that may be prescribed by regulation, any conditions attached to licences by the licensing authority will be proportionate and will be:

- relevant to the need to make the proposed building suitable as a gambling facility;
- directly related to the premises and the type of licence applied for;

- fairly and reasonably related to the scale and type of premises; and,
- reasonable in all other respects.

2.9.3 This licensing authority will also expect the licence applicant to offer his/her own suggestions as to the way in which the licensing objectives can be met effectively.

2.9.4 This licensing authority take particular care in assessing applications for multiple premises licences for a building in accordance with the Gambling Commission's Guidance.

2.10 Door Supervisors

2.10.1 Where the authority exercises its discretion to impose a premises licence condition to require entrances to the premises to be controlled by a door supervisor, that person is required to be licensed under the Private Security Industries Act 2001 (PSIA). Each case will be judged on its merits within the overarching Guidance relating to imposing conditions above any Mandatory Conditions.

3.0 PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE CONSIDERATION OF SPECIFIC CLASSES OF PREMISES OR PERMIT

3.1 In addition to the general principles to be applied when considering applications, the following issues may be considered in appropriate circumstances in respect of the following specific classes of permit or premises.

The Licence Conditions and Code of Practice (LCCP) issued by the Gambling Commission places further onus on premises to complete a risk assessment based on the Social Responsibility code. The authority will have regard to this code when considering applications. Operators may access this information via the Gambling Commission website at www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk

Risk Assessments

The Gambling Commission and social responsibility code within the LCCP requires gambling operators to assess the local risks to the licensing objectives posed by the provision of gambling facilities at each of their premises, and to have policies, procedures and control measures to mitigate those risks. These local risk assessments are specific to the potential harm that gambling may have on one or more of the licensing objectives. They should be specific to the premises, the local area and the community and the licensing authority therefore expects the applicant to have a good understanding of the area in which they either operate, or intend to operate.

It is a mandatory requirement that risk assessments are carried out:

- When there are significant changes in local circumstances

- When there are significant changes at a licensee's premises that may affect their mitigation of local risks
- When applying for the grant or variation of a premises licence

This is not an exhaustive or prescriptive list, but matters that risk assessment may include are:

- The area in which the premises is located/to be located
- Staff training in intervention when a customer shows signs of excessive gambling
- Location and coverage of CCTV cameras and how the system is operated and monitored
- The layout of the premises to allow staff to have an unobstructed view of persons using the premises
- Staff numbers including the supervisory and monitoring arrangements when staff are absent from the licensed area by reason of dealing with customers
- Arrangements for monitoring and dealing with underage persons and vulnerable persons, which may include dedicated trained personnel, leaflets, posters etc.
- Information held by the licensee regarding self-exclusions and incidences of underage gambling
- Arrangements for localized exchange of information regarding self-exclusions and gaming trends
- Setting, including proximity to schools, youth centres, leisure centres, other gambling outlets, refreshment and entertainment type facilities, parks and playgrounds
- Known problems in the area involving young persons such as problems arising from anti-social behavior
- The risk assessment should include an assessment of the impact of any promotional material likely to encourage the use of the premises by children who are not allowed to access the premises.
- The licensing authority considers it best practice for a copy of the local risk assessment to be retained on the premises.

Appropriate Licence Environment

Where gambling facilities are provided at premises as a supplementary activity to the main purpose of the premises e.g. at motorway service areas and shopping malls, the authority will expect the gambling area to be clearly defined to ensure that customers are fully aware that they are making a choice to enter into the gambling premises, and that the premises is adequately supervised at all times.

3.2 Adult Gaming Centres

This licensing authority will specifically have regard to the need to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm or being exploited by gambling and will expect the applicant to satisfy the authority that there will be sufficient measures to ensure that under 18 year olds do not have access to the

premises. This licensing authority will expect applicants to offer their own measures to meet the licensing objectives, however appropriate measures may cover issues such as:

- Proof of age schemes
- CCTV
- Supervision of entrances / machine areas
- Physical separation of areas
- The display of sources of help for persons with a gambling problem in prominent areas, and in more discreet areas to afford anonymity.
- Self-barring and self-exclusion schemes
- Gaming odds to be clearly displayed on machines
- ATM or other cash machines to be separate from gaming machines

This list is not mandatory, nor exhaustive, and is merely indicative of example measures.

3.3 (Licensed) Family Entertainment Centres

This licensing authority will specifically have regard to the need to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm or being exploited by gambling and will expect the applicant to satisfy the authority, for example, that there will be sufficient measures to ensure that under 18 year olds do not have access to the adult only gaming machine areas.

This licensing authority will expect applicants to offer their own measures to comply with the licensing objectives and mandatory conditions; however appropriate measures may cover issues such as:

- CCTV
- Supervision of entrances / machine areas
- Physical separation of areas
- Location of entry
- Notices / signage
- Specific opening hours
- Self-barring and self-exclusion schemes
- Provision of information leaflets / helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare
- Measures / training for staff on how to deal with suspected truant school children on the premises.
- Gaming odds to be clearly displayed on machines
- ATM or other cash machines to be separate from gaming machines

This list is not mandatory, nor exhaustive, and is merely indicative of example measures.

3.4 Bingo premises

Bingo is not given a statutory definition in the Act and the licensing authority will have regard to the commonly understood terms of cash bingo and prize bingo laid down in the Guidance.

This licensing authority will have regard to the Gambling Commission's Guidance and Mandatory Conditions relating to the admission of children to premises licensed for bingo.

3.5 Betting premises

Children and young persons will not be able to enter premises with a betting premises licence although special rules will apply to tracks. The licensing authority intends to follow the Commission's Guidance in respect of off course betting and premises licences.

3.6 Tracks

3.6.1 This licensing authority adopts the Guidance set out by the Gambling Commission in terms of definitions of tracks and the grant of premises licences. It will especially consider the impact upon the third licensing objective (i.e. the protection of children and vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling).

3.6.2 This authority will therefore expect the premises licence applicant to demonstrate suitable measures to ensure that children do not have access to adult only gaming facilities.

3.6.3 This licensing authority will expect applicants to offer their own measures to meet the licensing objectives; however appropriate measures may cover issues such as:

- Proof of age schemes
- CCTV
- Supervision of entrances / machine areas
- Physical separation of areas
- Location of entry
- Notices / signage
- Specific opening hours
- Self-barring and self-exclusion schemes
- Provision of information leaflets / helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare
- Gaming odds to be clearly displayed on machines
- ATM or other cash machines to be separate from gaming machines

This list is not mandatory, nor exhaustive, and is merely indicative of example measures.

3.6.4 Plans should make clear what is being sought for authorization under the track betting premises licence and what, if any, other areas are to be subject to a separate application for a different type of premises licence. Plans need not

be to a particular scale but should be sufficiently detailed to comply with regulations and enable the licensing authority to make an informed judgement about whether the premises are fit for gambling. The authority will have regard to the specific Guidance issued in respect tracks including defining the outer perimeter of a track and the location of betting areas

3.7 Travelling Fairs

3.7.1 The licensing authority adopts the Commission's Guidance on this matter.

3.8 Conditions and avoiding duplication with other legislation

3.8.1 A range of general legislation governing health and safety, disability and race discrimination, employment law and fire safety is already imposed on the owners of gambling premises. The licensing authority will strive not to duplicate existing regulatory regimes.

3.9 Consideration of Provisional Statements

3.9.1 Section 204 of the Act provides for a person to make an application to the licensing authority for a provisional statement in respect of premises that he or she:

- expects to be constructed
- expects to be altered
- expects to acquire a right to occupy.

The Guidance states that a licence to use premises for gambling should only be issued in relation to a premises that the licensing authority can be satisfied are going to be ready to be used for gambling in the reasonably near future. If the construction of the premises is not yet complete or if they need alteration, or if the applicant does not yet have a right to occupy them, then an application for a provisional statement should be submitted.

The authority will follow the Gambling Commission guidance in respect of the two stage process for determining an application.

3.9.2 Applicants for premises licences must fulfil certain criteria. They must hold or have applied for an operating licence from the Commission (except in the case of a track), and they must have the right to occupy the premises in respect of which their premises licence application is made. However, these restrictions do not apply in relation to an application for a provisional statement. The licensing authority will not speculate on or otherwise take into account the likelihood of an operating licence being granted in its consideration of the application for a provisional statement.

3.9.3 The authority may refuse the premises licence (or grant it on terms different to those attached to the provisional statement) only by reference to matters:

- which could not have been raised by way of representations at the provisional licence stage,
- which, in the authority's opinion, reflect a change in the operator's circumstances,
- where the premises has not been constructed in accordance with the plan and information submitted with the provisional statement application.

3.9.4 This must be a substantial change to the plan and licensing authorities will discuss any concerns they have with the applicant before making a decision.

3.9.5 The licensing authority will not have regard to whether or not a proposal by the applicant is likely to be permitted in accordance with planning or building law.

3.9.6 In terms of representations about premises licence applications, following the grant of a provisional statement, no further representations from relevant authorities or interested parties will be taken into account unless they concern matters which could not have been addressed at the provisional statement stage, or they reflect a change in the applicant's circumstances

4.0 Reviews

4.1 A premises licence may be reviewed by the licensing authority of its own volition or following the receipt of an application for a review. Reviews will be normally be delegated to a Licensing Sub-Committee for determination.

4.2 Consideration of applications for review will be made on the basis of whether the request for the review is relevant to the matters listed below (subject to proviso that each case will be dealt with on merit). Due regard will be given as to whether the request is frivolous, vexatious or repetitious. Representations which may trigger the review process will involve serious crime and may therefore include:

- Use of licensed premises for the sale and distribution of drugs and the laundering of the proceeds of drugs crimes;
- Use of licensed premises for the sale and distribution of illegal firearms;
- Use of licensed premises for prostitution or the sale of unlawful pornography;
- Use of licensed premises as a base for organised criminal activity;
- Use of licensed premises for the organisation of racist, homophobic or sexual abuse or attacks;
- Use of licensed premises for the sale of smuggled tobacco or goods;
- The use of licensed premises for the sale of stolen goods;
- Children and/or vulnerable persons are being put at risk.

4.3 In addition, due consideration will be given to the following;

- the grounds are irrelevant;
- the grounds will not cause the Licensing Authority to revoke or suspend a licence or to remove, amend or attach conditions on the Premises Licence;
- the grounds are substantially the same as the grounds cited in a previous application relating to the same premises; or
- the grounds are substantially the same as representations made at the time the application for a Premises Licence was considered.

5.0 PERMITS / TEMPORARY & OCCASIONAL USE NOTICES

5.1 Unlicensed Family Entertainment Centre gaming machine permits

5.1.1 The licensing authority does not intend to publish a separate statement of principles for considering applicant suitability for applications for FEC permits under paragraph 7 of Schedule 10 to the Act and, for ease of reference, includes this as part of this policy document.

5.1.2 Application for a permit can only be made by a person who occupies or plans to occupy the premises to be used as an unlicensed FEC and, if the applicant is an individual, he or she must be aged 18 or over. Applications for a permit cannot be made if a premises licence is in effect for the same premises.

5.1.3 Where a premises does not hold a premises licence but wishes to provide gaming machines, it may apply to the licensing authority for this permit. It should be noted that the applicant must show that the premises will be wholly or mainly used for making gaming machines available for use (Section 238 of the Gambling Act 2005).

5.1.4 The licensing authority adopts the Gambling Commission's Guidance for local authorities in respect of these permits, giving particular weight to child protection issues.

5.1.5 An application for a permit is likely to be granted only if the licensing authority is satisfied that the premises will be used as an unlicensed FEC and the applicant can demonstrate:

- a full understanding of the maximum stakes and prizes of the gambling that is permissible in unlicensed FECs;
- that he or she has no relevant convictions (those that are set out in Schedule 7 of the Act); and
- that staff are trained to have a full understanding of the maximum stakes and prizes;

5.1.6 The licensing authority will have regard to membership of any trade association which has included training and guidance to operators.

5.1.7 This licensing authority will expect the applicant to show that there are policies and procedures in place to protect children from harm. Harm in this context is not limited to harm from gambling but includes wider child protection considerations.

- The efficiency of such policies and procedures will each be considered on their merits, however, they may include:
- staff training as regards suspected truant school children on the premises;
- measures and or training covering how staff would deal with unsupervised very young children being on the premises, or children causing perceived problems on / around the premises.
- It should be noted that a licensing authority cannot attach conditions to this type of permit.

5.2 (Alcohol) Licensed premises gaming machine permits

5.2.1 The licensing authority will adopt the Gambling Commission statutory guidance in relation to notifications and permits in alcohol licensed premises. There is provision in the Act for premises licensed to sell alcohol for consumption on the premises, to an automatic entitlement to have 2 gaming machines, of categories C and/or D. The premises merely needs to notify the licensing authority of their intention to make gaming machines available for use.

The licensing authority will consider making an Order under Section 284 of the Act if it is satisfied that:

- provision of the machines is not reasonably consistent with the pursuit of the licensing objectives;
- gaming has taken place on the premises that breaches a condition of section 282 of the Gambling Act.
- the premises are mainly used for gaming; or
- an offence under the Gambling Act has been committed on the premises.

5.2.2 If a premises wishes to have more than two machines, then it needs to apply for a permit and the licensing authority will consider that application based upon the licensing objectives, any guidance issued by the Gambling Commission, and such matters as they think relevant. This licensing authority considers that “such matters” will be decided on a case by case basis but generally there will be regard to:

- the need to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm or being exploited by gambling
- whether the applicant can satisfy the authority that there will be sufficient measures to ensure that under 18 year olds do not have access to the adult only gaming machines.

Measures which will satisfy the authority that there will be no access may include:

- the adult machines being in sight of the bar, or in the sight of staff who will monitor that the machines are not being used by those under 18
- Appropriate notices and signage

5.2.3 As regards the protection of vulnerable persons applicants may wish to consider the provision of information leaflets / helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare.

5.2.4 It is recognised that some alcohol licensed premises may apply for a premises licence for their non-alcohol licensed areas. Any such application would most likely need to be applied for, and dealt with as an Adult Gaming Centre premises licence.

5.2.5 It should be noted that the licensing authority may decide to grant the application with a smaller number of machines and/or a different category of machines than that applied for.

5.2.6 It should also be noted that the holder of a permit must comply with any Code of Practice issued by the Gambling Commission about the location and operation of the machine.

5.3 Prize Gaming Permits

5.3.1 The licensing authority does not intend to publish a separate statement of principles for considering applicant suitability for applications for prize gaming permits under paragraph 8 of Schedule 14 to the Act and, for ease of reference, includes this as part of this policy document.

5.3.2 This licensing authority will expect that, when making an application for a prize gaming permit, the applicant should set out the types of gaming that he or she is intending to offer and be able to demonstrate:

- that they understand the limits of stakes and prizes that are set out in Regulations and
- that the gaming offered is within the law.
- Clear policies are available which outline the steps to be taken to protect children from harm

5.3.3 In making its decision on an application for this permit the licensing authority may have regard to the licensing objectives, the Gambling Commission guidance and relevant representations from the South Wales Police. This will include representations about the suitability of an applicant in terms of relevant convictions, the location of the premises in relation to disorder and child protection issues.

5.3.4 It should be noted that there are conditions in the Gambling Act 2005 with which the permit holder must comply, but that the licensing authority cannot attach conditions. The conditions in the Act are:

- the limits on participation fees, as set out in regulations, must be complied with;
- all chances to participate in the gaming must be allocated on the premises on which the gaming is taking place and on one day; the game must be played and completed on the day the chances are allocated; and the result of the game must be made public in the premises on the day that it is played;
- the prize for which the game is played must not exceed the amount set out in regulations (if a money prize), or the prescribed value (if non-monetary prize); and
- participation in the gaming must not entitle the player to take part in any other gambling.

5.4 Club Gaming and Club Machines Permits

5.4.1 The licensing authority will have regard to and follow the Commission's Guidance in respect of the grant of Club Gaming and Club Machines Permits

5.4.2 There is also a 'fast-track' procedure available under the Act for premises which hold a Club Premises Certificate under the Licensing Act 2003 (Schedule 12 paragraph 10). The licensing authority will follow the Gambling Commission's Guidance that the grounds on which an application under the process may be refused are:

- that the club is established primarily for gaming, other than gaming prescribed under schedule 12;
- that in addition to the prescribed gaming, the applicant provides facilities for other gaming; or
- that a club gaming permit or club machine permit issued to the applicant in the last ten years has been cancelled.

5.5 Temporary Use Notices

5.5.1 Part 9 of the Act sets out the position in relation to temporary use notices. These allow the use of premises for gambling where there is no premises

licence but where a gambling operator wishes to use the premises temporarily for providing facilities for gambling.

5.5.2 The licensing authority will have regard to the Guidance regarding the examples of premises that might be suitable for a temporary use notice which include hotels, conference centres and sporting venues.

5.5.3 The meaning of 'premises' in Part 8 of the Act will be a question of fact in the particular circumstances of each notice that is given. The licensing authority will examine, amongst other things, the ownership/occupation and control of the premises and will follow the criteria set out in the Guidance when assessing applications where it appears that the effect of notices would be to permit regular gambling in a place that could be described as one set of premises.

5.5.4 When considering whether to give notice of objection, the licensing authority will have regard to the licensing objectives and if they consider that the gambling should not take place, or only with modifications, they will give a notice of objection to the person who gave the temporary use notice.

5.5.5 The principles that the authority will apply in issuing a counter-notice will be the same as those in determining premises licence applications. In particular, the licensing authority is aware of the Guidance that it should aim to permit the provision of facilities for gambling under a temporary use notice subject to its view as to whether to do so accords with a Commission code, the Guidance, or its Statement of Policy and is reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives.

5.5.6 The licensing authority will have particular regard to whether the effect of Temporary Use Notices is to permit regular gambling in a place that could be described as one set of premises. Factors such as ownership, occupation and control of the premises will be considered when deciding whether to object to a Temporary Use Notice.

5.6 Occasional Use Notices

5.6.1 Section 39 of the Act provides that where there is betting on a track on eight days or less in a calendar year, betting may be permitted by an occasional use notice without the need for a full premises licence. The licensing authority is mindful that the meaning of 'track' in the Act covers not just horse racecourses or dog tracks, but also any other premises on any part of which a race or other sporting event takes place, or is intended to take place (section 353(1)). This means that land which has a number of uses, one of which fulfils the definition of track, can qualify for the occasional use notice provisions (for example agricultural land upon which a point-to-point meeting takes place). Land used temporarily as a track can qualify, provided races or sporting events take place or will take place there. The track need not be a permanent fixture.

5.6.2 The licensing authority has very little discretion as regards these notices aside from ensuring that the statutory limit of 8 days in a calendar year is not exceeded. This licensing authority will though consider the definition of a 'track' and whether the applicant is permitted to avail him/herself of the notice.

5.7 Small Society Lotteries

5.7.1 Applicants for registration are reminded that it is inherent in the definitions that a society must have been established for one of the permitted purposes, and that the proceeds of any lottery must be devoted to those purposes. It is not permissible to establish a society whose sole purpose is to facilitate lotteries – it must have some other purpose. The authority will apply the following tests:

- society status – the society in question must be 'non-commercial'
- lottery size – the total value of tickets to be put on sale per single lottery must be £20,000 or less, or the aggregate value of tickets to be put on sale for all their lotteries in a calendar year must not exceed £250,000. If the operator plans to exceed either of these values then they may need to be licensed with the Commission to operate large lotteries instead.

5.7.2 The authority recommends applicants and prospective applicants obtain the Commission's advisory documents relating to lotteries which are available on the Commission's website.

5.7.3 Applications for small society lottery registrations must be in the form prescribed by the Secretary of State and be accompanied by both the required registration fee and all necessary documents required by the licensing authority to assess the application accordingly.

5.7.4 The authority may ask new applicants for a copy of their terms and conditions or their constitution to establish that they are a non-commercial society. It may also require applicants to provide a declaration, stating that they represent a bona-fide non-commercial society.

5.7.5 The authority will delegate the registration of small societies to licensing officers, subject to its specific process of delegations.

5.7.6 The authority proposes to set out the following grounds for licensing for refusing a small society lottery registration application:

- An operating licence held by the applicant for registration has been revoked or
- an application for an operating licence made by the applicant for registration has been refused, within the past five years, or
- The society in question cannot be deemed non-commercial. Each case will be determined on its merits but an applicant may be required applicants to provide a statement with their application form declaring that they represented a bona-fide non-commercial society, and identifying how the purpose of the society

could be established. In some circumstances further supporting information will be sought.

- A person who will or may be connected with the promotion of the lottery has been convicted of a relevant offence. The licensing authority may require an applicant to provide an additional statement declaring that they have no relevant convictions that would prevent them from running lotteries.
- Information provided in or with the application for registration is found to be false or misleading.

5.7.7 The licensing authority will only refuse an application for registration after the society has had the opportunity to make representations. These will normally be considered at a formal hearing. The licensing authority will inform the society of the reasons why it is minded to refuse registration and provide it with at least an outline of the evidence on which it has reached that preliminary conclusion in order to enable representations to be made. Representations and objections that may result after such a decision will be handled in the same way that the authority would handle representations relating to other licensing matters. A copy of these procedures will be provided with the initial correspondence.

5.7.8 The licensing authority may determine to revoke the registration of a society if it thinks that they would have had to, or would be entitled to, refuse an application for registration if it were being made at that time.

5.7.9 Revocations will not take place unless the society has been given an opportunity to make representations at a hearing or via correspondence. In preparation for this, the authority will inform the society of the reasons why it is minded to revoke the registration and provide them with the terms of the evidence on which it has reached that preliminary conclusion.

6.0 DECISION MAKING AND DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS

6.1 Appreciating the need to provide a speedy, efficient and cost-effective service to all parties involved in the licensing process, the Licensing Committee may delegate certain decisions and functions and has established Sub-Committees to deal with them. Functions which are purely administrative in nature and non-contentious applications will be delegated to Council Officers.

6.2 A Licensing Sub-Committee of three Councillors will sit to hear applications where representations have been received from interested parties and responsible authorities. Ward Councillors will not sit on a panel involving an application within their ward.

6.3 Where a Councillor who is a member of the Licensing Committee is making or has made representations regarding a licence on behalf of an interested party, in the interests of good governance they will disqualify themselves from any involvement in the decision-making process.

- 6.4 The Licensing Committee will also sit to determine general licensing matters that have been delegated to it by the full Council that are not associated with the Gambling Act 2005.
- 6.5 The Licensing Sub-Committee will also refer to the Licensing Committee any matter it is unable to deal with because of the number of its members who are unable to take part in the consideration or discussion of any matter or vote on any question with respect to it.
- 6.6 The Licensing Committee will refer to the full Council any matter it is unable to deal with because of the number of its members who are unable to take part in the consideration or discussion of any matter or vote on any question with respect to it.
- 6.7 Every determination of a licensing decision by the Licensing Committee or Sub-Committee shall be accompanied with clear, cogent reasons for the decision. The decision and the reasons for that decision will be sent to the applicant and those who have made relevant representations as soon as practicable.
- 6.8 Nothing in this Statement will override the right of an applicant, responsible authority or interested party to appeal against the decision of a Licensing Sub-Committee.
- 6.9 Decisions as to whether representations are irrelevant, frivolous or vexatious will be made by Council officers, who will make the decisions on whether representations or applications for licence reviews should be referred to the Licensing Sub-Committee. Where representations are rejected, the person making that representation will be given written reasons as to why that is the case.
- 6.10 This form of delegation is without prejudice to Officers referring an application to a Sub-Committee, or a Sub-Committee to Committee, or Committee to Council, if considered appropriate in the circumstances of any particular case.

Matter	Council	Sub-Committee	OFFICERS
Three year licensing policy	X		
Policy not to permit casinos	X		
Fee Setting - when appropriate			X
Application for premises licences		Where representations have been received and not withdrawn	Where no representations received/ representations have been withdrawn
Application for a variation to a licence		Where representations have been received and not withdrawn	Where no representations received/

			representations have been withdrawn
Application for a transfer of a licence		Where representations have been received from the Commission	Where no representations received from the Commission
Application for a provisional statement		Where representations have been received and not withdrawn	Where no representations received/ representations have been withdrawn
Review of a premises licence		X	
Application for club gaming /club machine permits		Where representations have been received and not withdrawn	Where no representations received/ representations have been withdrawn
Cancellation of club gaming/ club machine permits		X	
Applications for other permits			X
Cancellation of licensed premises gaming machine permits			X
Consideration of temporary use notice			X
Decision to give a counter notice to a temporary use notice		X	
Determination as to whether a person is an Interested Party			X
Determination as to whether representations are relevant			X
Determination as whether a representation if frivolous, vexatious or repetitive			X

The above delegations relate to the overarching principles of delegation for policy issues and applications for premises licences. Other delegations may be added from time to time and will be available at www.bridgend.gov.uk in accordance with the Council's constitution and Scheme of Delegation to officers and the Commission's Guidance.

7.0 RIGHTS OF APPEAL AND JUDICIAL REVIEW

- 7.1 The avenues of appeal against decisions by a licensing authority are set out in sections 206 to 209 of the Gambling Act 2005.
- 7.2 The licensing authority will give clear and comprehensive reasons for a rejection of an application. The reasons will address the extent to which the decision has been made with regard to the Licensing Authority's Statement of Policy and the Commission's Guidance.
- 7.3 An appeal has to be commenced by the giving of a notice of appeal by the appellant to the Cardiff and the Vale Magistrates Court within a period of 21 days, beginning with the day on which the appellant is notified by the licensing authority of the decision being appealed.
- 7.4 Any party to a decision may apply for judicial review if they believe that the decision taken by the licensing authority is:
- illegal – that is beyond the powers available to the licensing authority
 - subject to procedural impropriety or unfairness – which is a failure in the process of reaching the decision, such as not observing the 'rules of natural justice'
 - irrational – where a decision is so unreasonable that no sensible person could have reached it (in effect 'perverse' or 'Wednesbury' unreasonable).

Sources used to prepare the Statement of Principles included:

The Gambling Commission Guidance available at www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk

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GamCare’s response to Bridgend County Borough Council – Consultation on the revision of statement of principles under the Gambling Act 2005

About GamCare:

GamCare is an independent charity and the leading provider of information, advice, and support for anyone affected by gambling harms. We operate the National Gambling Helpline, provide structured support for anyone harmed by gambling, and create awareness about safer gambling and treatments. For 26 years, our confidential, non-judgemental services, have supported more than half a million people to get their lives back on track.

We hold data locally and nationally through our National Gambling Helpline. We also work closely with those who have lived experience in shaping and delivering our services and programmes, ensuring that all our work is coproduced with our lived experience community at its heart.

GamCare’s comments on the revision of the statement of principles:

- We welcome the position Bridgend County Borough Council is taking to go beyond the mandatory and default conditions of the Gambling Act 2005 in its statement of principles.
- Local authorities can play a greater role in reducing gambling harm, particularly for those of our clients who experience harm in land-based gambling venues, due to council’s licensing responsibilities.
- It is vital that Bridgend County Borough Council develops a local picture of the level of gambling harms, in order to best target resources and tailor service provision. This could be achieved by gathering data from the National Gambling Helpline, as well as those already providing services in the area.
- Building on the proactive approach the council is already taking, we would like to see Bridgend County Borough Council commit in its statement of principles **to a public health approach to gambling**.
- This commitment should include training frontline and primary care staff to recognise the signs of gambling harm and develop referral pathways to the National Gambling Helpline or local treatment providers. GamCare has worked with Haringey Council to implement a similar system, that has received widespread support.
- In the absence of Cumulative Impact Assessments as a method by which the “aim to permit” approach can be challenged, Bridgend County Borough Council should pursue a [Local Area Profile](#) approach that specifically analyses gambling risk, and use this data as a basis from which to scrutinise and possibly oppose a licensing application.
- The changes to Bridgend County Borough Council’s statement of principles should be viewed in the context of the Gambling Act Review and subsequent process of white paper consultations, so take account of the rapidly changing regulatory environment.



*If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail, please contact Pollyanna Hopkins,
Senior External Affairs Officer: pollyanna.hopkins@gamcare.org.uk*

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	19 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	SHARED REGULATORY SERVICES – AMENDMENT TO THE JOINT WORKING AGREEMENT AND SCHEME OF DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HUMAN RESOURCES AND CORPORATE POLICY
Responsible Officer:	HELEN PICTON HEAD OF SHARED REGULATORY SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The revised Scheme of Delegation of Functions will be published on the Council’s website.
Executive Summary:	The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a change to the Joint Working Agreement between the partner councils for the provision of Regulatory Services and to seek amendments to the Scheme of Delegation of Functions.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for an amendment to the Joint Working Agreement (JWA) between the partner Councils for the provision of Regulatory Services and an amendment to the Council’s Scheme of Delegation of Functions following the implementation of the ‘Special Procedures’ regime under the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017.

2. Background

2.1 In April 2015, Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC), Cardiff Council, and the Vale of Glamorgan Council signed a JWA for the provision of regulatory services across the three Council areas. The document created the Shared Regulatory Service (SRS) and the Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee.

2.2 Any changes to the JWA are subject to Clause 26 of the Agreement which states:

‘This Agreement cannot be varied without the approval and prior written consent of all Participants. Where the Participants agree to make changes to this Agreement, a Deed of Variation shall be entered into between the Participants and appended to this Agreement’

- 2.3 The JWA has been subject to amendments previously, this being in 2017 and 2020 when a number of changes in operating practices, together with some administrative changes and legislative changes, were necessary. On those occasions, a report setting out the amendments were presented to Cabinet on 28 March 2017 and 20 October 2020.
- 2.4 The Partner Councils concurred that any future legislation enacted within Public Protection which sat outside the scope of Schedule 1 of the JWA, such as the then Public Health Wales Bill, would require determination by each Partner whether to assign to the SRS along with consideration of any financial implications.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 Welsh Government is expected to implement its long awaited 'Special Procedures' regime at the end of November 2024, under the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017. Part 4 of the Act relating to Special Procedures creates a mandatory licensing scheme for practitioners and businesses carrying out special procedures in Wales. Once implemented, Part 4 will require practitioners carrying out tattooing, piercing, acupuncture and electrolysis in the course of a business, to be licensed by the local authority. In addition, the premises used for these procedures must be approved. It will be an offence for a practitioner to carry out any of these special procedures without a licence, or to perform any procedure from premises or vehicles that are not approved.
- 3.2 The role of SRS in the operation of the Special Procedures regime will be two fold, i.e.
- administration of the licensing schemes for both practitioners and premises, and
 - enforcement of the law through inspection and other means, to ensure that practitioners and premises meet the necessary standards for special procedures to be carried out safely.
- 3.3 Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the SRS JWA sets out the functions delegated to the Shared Service. Amendment of Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the JWA with the addition of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017, will therefore enable the necessary powers to be delegated through the Joint Committee and Head of Shared Regulatory Services to relevant officers. This will enable them to have the necessary powers (including powers of entry) to conduct Special Procedures inspections and take appropriate enforcement action where this is required.
- 3.4 A number of other public protection functions are contained in the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017, but are yet to be implemented by Welsh Government, for example

the creation of a Tobacco Retail Register and additional tobacco control enforcement measures. The proposed addition of the 2017 Act to the JWA will therefore serve the dual purpose of ensuring that the necessary pathway for officer delegations is in place ready for implementation of these additional enforcement tools.

- 3.5 Paragraph 21 of Schedule 3 to the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017, aligns a range of specified functions (associated with administration of the Special Procedures licensing regime) to the Licensing Committee established under section 6 of the Licensing Act 2003. A report will therefore be presented to Council on 20 November 2024 proposing amendments to the Constitution in relation to the Licensing Act 2003 Committee.
- 3.6 The Act is however silent on the delegation of certain other ‘Special Procedures’ functions. The question of whether a function is an Executive function (i.e Cabinet) or a Council function of the Licensing Committee is determined by either the legislation itself or by the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Functions and Responsibilities) (Wales) Regulations 2007. In this instance, the 2017 Act specifically delegates certain functions to the Licensing Committee whilst being silent on other functions. This means that by virtue of Section 13 of the Local Government Act 2000, where the Act is silent, some functions, by default become the responsibility of the Executive. However, in order to deal efficiently with applications and enforcement, it is proposed that amendments are made to the Council’s Scheme of Delegation of Functions to delegate these functions to officers to establish the pathway for the administration of the licensing regime. It is therefore proposed that the Scheme of Delegation of Functions be amended to insert a new paragraph [3.45] at Scheme B2 and allocate the following functions to the Monitoring Officer:

3.45	<p>Under the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • designate an individual performing a special procedure to be licensed - issue a Special Procedures Licence where all the applicable licensing criteria is met • issue an Approval Certificate for a premises or vehicle • renew an Approval Certificate for a premises or vehicle • refuse an Approval Certificate for a premises or vehicle • take reasonable steps for bringing a Voluntary Termination Notice to the attention of appropriate persons • issue a Stop Notice • issue a Remedial Action Notice in respect of a Special Procedures Licence • issue a Remedial Action Notice in respect of an Approved Premises Certificate • issue a Completion Certificate in respect of a Special Procedure Licence or an Approved Premises Certificate • carry out enforcement action and consultation in respect in intimate piercing 7 • issue a Warning Notice under Schedule 3 paragraph 15(3).
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Subject to Cabinet approving the amendment to the Scheme of Delegation of Functions, the Monitoring Officer's Register of Sub-delegations will be further amended to sub-delegate these functions to the Head of Shared Regulatory Services and the Licensing Team.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 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.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 This report assists in the achievement of the corporate well-being objectives, in particular:

- **A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable** – the work of the Shared Service seeks to protect the vulnerable in our communities through for example swift action being against rogue traders and doorstep criminals, ensuring safe taxi provision and preventing the supply of age restricted goods to the under 18s.
- **A County Borough with fair work, skilled, high quality jobs and thriving towns** – the work of the Shared Service seeks to ensure a fair and safe market place where legitimate businesses are supported and action is taken against rogue traders and others who undermine the local economy.
- **A County Borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency** – the Shared Service enforces a range of environmental legislation covering areas of work such as air quality, private water supplies, animal health and welfare, and minimum energy efficiency standards.
- **A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives** – the work of the Shared Service seeks to improve health and wellbeing by ensuring the safety of food and other consumer goods and services, through enforcing health and safety requirements in the workplace, and through the provision of safe housing. In addition, work to tackle rogue traders and doorstep criminals as well as loan sharks can contribute positively to the mental health of residents.

5.2 The SRS Business Plan 2024-25 illustrates how the Council's regulatory function contributes to the national Well-being Goals through the delivery of the well-being objectives. The SRS operates in accordance with the five ways of working which are also reflected in the content of the Plan. There is a strong emphasis on collaboration

as the SRS recognises the need to work with partners to deliver services and improve local well-being.

- 5.3 The Business Plan reflects the importance of prevention and this has been a strong theme in SRS activities to date, but also recognises that many issues are longer term matters, e.g. deprivation, climate change, an ageing population and physical and mental well-being. The involvement of partners and stakeholders in the development and delivery of the SRS functions is critical to its success as is the need to work in a more integrated way, recognising the connections across Council services and with other partners.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The Special Procedure Licences (Wales) Regulations 2024 permit local authorities to review the level of the fees:

- one year after the Regulations come into force (November 2025), and
- at subsequent intervals of no more than one year.

- 8.2 The first set of Special Procedures licence fees has been agreed by local authorities in Wales, and it will be a case of each adopting, rather than setting, these fees. Fees have been determined on a cost recovery basis taking into consideration the increase in workload and as specified by Welsh Government, will be standardised across Wales. The initial estimated income for BCBC (based on current estimated numbers of premises and practitioners) is £29,706 per year but there is a great deal of uncertainty at the current time as the number of practitioners is unknown. There may be premises and practitioners who do not wish to proceed and therefore the actual income may be lower than this estimate.

- 8.3 As Welsh Government is making no additional funding available to local authorities for implementation, the cost of administering and enforcing the new licensing regime will have to be covered by the licence fees which constitute new, rather than legacy, income. All activities will be carried out within existing work programmes with no direct financial implications. The special procedures regime will bring in new income, to help offset the cost of implementation and enforcement. Premises and practitioners will have a transition period in which to apply from 29th of November 2024 and so the initial income is likely to be received across 2 financial years. The cycle of renewal and therefore income receipt will begin again at the 3-year expiration of each approval certificate or licence.

9. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to :

- 9.1 Approve the proposed changes to the Joint Working Agreement between the three Councils for the provision of Regulatory Services;
- 9.2 Delegate authority to the Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, Human Resources and Corporate Policy to agree the terms of the Deed of Variation to the JWA and to arrange execution of the Deed of Variation on behalf of the Council;
- 9.3 Approve the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation of Functions as set out in paragraph 3.6;
- 9.4 Note that a report will be presented to Council on 20 November 2024 seeking amendments to the Constitution in relation to the Licensing Act 2003 Committee.

Background documents

None

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	19 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	CABINET, COUNCIL AND OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES FORWARD WORK PROGRAMMES
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY
Responsible Officer:	MARK GALVIN – SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER - COMMITTEES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	The report is required in order to outline the planned programme of items proposed to be considered at Cabinet, Council and Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings in the coming months. The publishing of this report will benefit the public in terms of them being made aware of such key items of business in advance.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for items to be included on the Cabinet Forward Work Programme for the period 1 November 2024 to 28 February 2025 and for Cabinet to note the Council and Overview and Scrutiny Committees' Forward Work Programmes for the same period.

2. Background

- 2.1 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Forward Work Programme will be prepared by the Monitoring Officer to cover a period of four months except when ordinary elections of councillors occur.
- 2.2 The Forward Work Programme will contain matters which the Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Committees and full Council are likely to consider. It will contain information on:
- (a) the timetable for considering the Budget and any plans, policies or strategies forming part of the Policy Framework and requiring Council approval, and which body is to consider them;
 - (b) the timetable for considering any plans, policies or strategies which are the responsibility of the Cabinet;

is known.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 The proposed Forward Work Programmes for the above period are appended to the report, as follows:

- Cabinet - **Appendix 1**
- Council - **Appendix 2**
- Overview and Scrutiny Committees - **Appendix 3**

3.2 Following consideration by Cabinet, the Forward Work Programmes will be published on the Council's website.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 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.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- Approve the Cabinet Forward Work Programme for the period 1 November 2024 to 28 February 2025 at **Appendix 1**;
- Note 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.

Background documents

None.

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CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME - 1 NOVEMBER 2024 TO 28 FEBRUARY 2025

Date	Title of Report	Contact Officer
19 Nov 24	Middle Tier Review	Lindsay Harvey Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young people Tel: 01656 642612 Email: Lindsay.harvey@bridgend.gov.uk
19 Nov 24	Disposal of Ravenscourt	Janine Nightingale Corporate Director Communities Tel: 01656 643241 Email: Janine.nightingale@bridgend.gov.uk
19 Nov 24	Porthcawl Regeneration Programme update	Janine Nightingale Corporate Director Communities Tel: 01656 643241 Email: Janine.nightingale@bridgend.gov.uk
19 Nov 24	Parc Afon Ewenni Refurbishment of the Highways Depot at Waterton	Janine Nightingale Corporate Director Communities Tel: 01656 643241

Date	Title of Report	Contact Officer
		Email: Janine.nightingale@bridgend.gov.uk
19 Nov 24	Future Waste Service Options	Janine Nightingale Corporate Director Communities Tel: 01656 643241 Email: Janine.nightingale@bridgend.gov.uk
19 Nov 24	Building On Strengths, Improving Lives - A Three-Year Plan For Sustainable Care And Support For Adults In Bridgend County Borough Council	Claire Marchant Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing Tel: 01656 643241 Email: Claire.Marchant@bridgend.gov.uk
19 Nov 24	Social Services Representations And Complaints Annual Report 2023/24	Claire Marchant Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing Tel: 01656 643241 Email: Claire.Marchant@bridgend.gov.uk
19 Nov 24	Treasury Management Half Year Report to September 2024	Carys Lord Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643302 Email:

Date	Title of Report	Contact Officer
		Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk
19 Nov 24	Update to the Council's Financial Procedure Rules	Carys Lord Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643302 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk
19 Nov 24	Capital Programme Quarter 2 Update 2024-2025	Carys Lord Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643302 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk
19 Nov 24	Cabinet, Council and Overview and Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes	Kelly Watson Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy Tel: 01656 643248 Email: kelly.watson@bridgend.gov.uk
19 Nov 24	Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Principles 2025-2028	Kelly Watson Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy Tel: 01656 643248 Email: kelly.watson@bridgend.gov.uk

Date	Title of Report	Contact Officer
19 Nov 24	Shared Regulatory Services - Amendment To The Joint Working Agreement And Scheme Of Delegation Of Functions	<p>Kelly Watson Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy Tel: 01656 643248 Email: kelly.watson@bridgend.gov.uk</p>
10 Dec 24	RIPA Policy	<p>Kelly Watson Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy Tel: 01656 643248 Email: kelly.watson@bridgend.gov.uk</p>
10 Dec 24	Strategic Transport Projects	<p>Janine Nightingale Corporate Director Communities Tel: 01656 643241 Email: Janine.nightingale@bridgend.gov.uk</p>
10 Dec 24	Proposal to consult on changes to the Nursery Education Policy	<p>Lindsay Harvey Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young people Tel: 01656 642612 Email: Lindsay.harvey@bridgend.gov.uk</p>

Date	Title of Report	Contact Officer
10 Dec 24	Co-ordinated School Admission arrangements 2027-2028	Lindsay Harvey Corporate Director – Education and Family Support Tel: 01656 642612 Email: Lindsay.harvey@bridgend.gov.uk
10 Dec 24	Compulsory Purchase of a Long Term Problematic Empty Property	Carys Lord Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643302 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk
14 Jan 25	Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-29	Carys Lord Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643302 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk
14 Jan 25	Budget Monitoring 2024-25 – Quarter 3 Revenue Forecast	Carys Lord Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643302 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk

Date	Title of Report	Contact Officer
14 Jan 25	Review of the Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate's Strategic Plan 2023-2026	Lindsay Harvey Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young people Tel: 01656 642612 Email: Lindsay.harvey@bridgend.gov.uk
4 Feb 25	Schools Admissions Policy 2026-2027	Lindsay Harvey Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young people Tel: 01656 642612 Email: Lindsay.harvey@bridgend.gov.uk
4 Feb 25	Capital Programme update – Quarter 3 2024-2025	Carys Lord Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643302 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk

COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 1 NOVEMBER 2024 TO 28 FEBRUARY 2025

Date	Title of Report	Contact Officer
20 Nov 24	Treasury Management Half-Year Report – 2024-2025	Carys Lord Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643302 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk
20 Nov 24	Capital Programme Quarter 2 update 2024-25	Carys Lord Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643302 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk
20 Nov 24	Council Tax Base 2025-26	Carys Lord Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643302 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk
20 Nov 24	Gambling Act 2005 – Statement of Licensing Principles 2025-2028	Kelly Watson Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy

Date	Title of Report	Contact Officer
		Tel: 01656 643248 Email: Kelly.Watson@bridgend.gov.uk
20 Nov 24	Amendments to the Constitution	Kelly Watson Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy Tel: 01656 643248 Email: Kelly.Watson@bridgend.gov.uk
20 Nov 24	Presentation to Council by Halo	Mark Shephard Chief Executive Tel: 01656 643380 Email: Mark.Shephard@bridgend.gov.uk
15 Jan 25	Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025-2026	Carys Lord Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643302 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk
15 Jan 25	Audited Statement of Accounts 2023-24	Carys Lord Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643302 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk

Date	Title of Report	Contact Officer
15 Jan 25	Future Waste Service Post 2026	Janine Nightingale Corporate Director Communities Tel: 01656 643241 Email: Janine.nightingale@bridgend.gov.uk
5 Feb 25	Capital Programme Update Quarter 3 – 2024-2025	Carys Lord Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643302 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk

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APPENDIX 3**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 1 NOVEMBER 2024 TO 28 FEBRUARY 2025**

Date	Title of Report	Scrutiny Committee	Contact Officer
14 Nov 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrated Substance Misuse Service in Bridgend - Corporate Safeguarding Annual Report 2023-24 	<p style="text-align: center;">Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2</p>	<p>Claire Marchant Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing Tel: 01656 643248 Email: Claire.Marchant@bridgend.gov.uk</p>
18 Nov 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil Attendance 	<p style="text-align: center;">Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1</p>	<p>Lindsay Harvey Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People Tel: 01656 642612 Email: Lindsay.Harvey@bridgend.gov.uk</p>
2 Dec 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homelessness and Housing 	<p style="text-align: center;">Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3</p>	<p>Carys Lord Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643249 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk</p>

16 Dec 24	- Quarter 2 Performance Report 2024-25	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Kelly Watson Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy Tel: 01656 643248 Email: Kelly.Watson@bridgend.gov.uk
15 Jan 25	- Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-29 and Budget Proposals	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Carys Lord Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643249 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk
16 Jan 25	- Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-29 and Budget Proposals - Draft Terms of Reference for School Improvement Research Evaluation Panel (TBC)	Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1	Carys Lord Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643249 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk Lindsay Harvey

			Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People Tel: 01656 642612 Email: Lindsay.Harvey@bridgend.gov.uk
17 Jan 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-29 and Budget Proposals - Assisted Transport Policy Consultation (TBC) 	Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2	Carys Lord Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643249 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk Claire Marchant Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing Tel: 01656 643248 Email: Claire.Marchant@bridgend.gov.uk
20 Jan 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-29 and Budget Proposals 	Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3	Carys Lord Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643249 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk

28 Jan 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scrutiny Recommendations on Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-29 and Draft Budget Consultation Process - Capital Strategy 2025-26 onwards - Budget Monitoring 2024-25 – Quarter 3 Revenue Forecast 	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Carys Lord Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643249 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk
17 Feb 25	<p>TBD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maesteg Town Hall Review Or - Valleys to Coast 	Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3	<p>Janine Nightingale Corporate Director Communities Tel: 01656 643241 Email: Janine.Nightingale@bridgend.gov.uk</p> <p>Carys Lord Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change Tel: 01656 643249 Email: Carys.Lord@bridgend.gov.uk</p>

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	19 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	PARC AFON EWENNI REFURBISHMENT OF THE HIGHWAYS DEPOT AT WATERTON
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES
Responsible Officer:	KEVIN MULCAHY GROUP MANAGER HIGHWAYS AND GREEN SPACES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	The Highways Depot at Waterton remains in poor condition. Exploration of affordable alternative locations has not identified any which would be deliverable within current capital budget allocations. Accordingly, it is proposed to refurbish/maintain the existing depot on the existing footprint within the available capital budget on a prioritised basis.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Cabinet on the original proposal to reconstruct, and latterly relocate, the Highways Depot at Waterton. Work undertaken recently, and a recent review of capital funding available, has resulted in an updated proposal to maintain/refurbish the existing footprint within the remaining available capital budget on a prioritised basis.

2. Background

- 2.1 A report was presented to Cabinet in November 2016 which identified a strategy of continuing to operate a reduced footprint Depot at Waterton for the next 4/5 years. This provided the best value for money given the circumstances at the time. The strategy was to find a balance between operating a viable depot and maximising the land allocated for disposal. Five key/core operational facilities within the depot were identified:-

- The continued operation & location of the salt barn for winter maintenance.

- The continued operation & location of the de-watering facility
- The continued operation & location of the vehicle wash down ramp
- The continued operation & location of the refueling facility
- The continued operation of a materials reprocessing facility.

2.2 In November 2018, Cabinet approved a further report proposing to develop a permanent reconstructed Highways Depot at Waterton on a reduced footprint to allow the Parc Afon Ewenni (PAE) regeneration site proposal to progress and future proof future depot requirements for the Council as part of the overall depot rationalisation process.

2.3 The estimated cost to establish the reduced footprint depot at that time was in the region of £8.144 million, predicated in part upon a land receipt of £3.5 million. This proposed depot layout provides for:-

- the smallest operationally acceptable footprint
- a permanent, modern depot compliant with the appropriate standards
- maximum land available for disposal

2.4 In November 2021 a revised position was being considered for the overall Parc Afon Ewenni re-development as it was proving both very complex and challenging. It required multiple landowners / occupiers to move forward in a synchronised manner. The assessment suggested that a new Highways Depot at Brynmenyn Industrial Estate be developed alongside a rationalisation at the existing Bryncethin Depot. This would then have enabled the existing site at Waterton to become vacated and to form part of the Parc Afon Ewenni Strategic Housing Allocation within the Local Development Plan. This site could then have been taken forward in partnership with landowners and South Wales Police for a housing development with a new school.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 Since 2021 the proposal to relocate the Highways Depot to Brynmenyn Industrial Estate and subsequently provide a housing development and a new school at Parc Afon Ewenni have not progressed for a number of reasons. A significant factor has been the introduction by Welsh Government of Technical Advice Note 15 (TAN15) on development, flooding and coastal erosion. This designated the site at Parc Afon Ewenni in a flood zone and, despite a flood consequence challenge, its designation as a strategic housing site in the Local Development Plan was removed. As such the inability to be able to fully develop the site would mean that the anticipated capital receipt of £3.5 million would not be forthcoming to assist with the funding of an alternative or reduced footprint site. Additionally, in November 2023 council approved a virement of £1,173,530 from the Waterton Depot scheme to the Maesteg Town Hall project, leaving a remaining budget of £6,970,470. There have been other amendments to the budget during 2024-25, including the transfer of funding towards the cost of new waste vehicles, approved by Council, leaving a current budget of £7.091 million (of which £3.591 million is secured funding).

3.2 It is now apparent that:

- The relocation of the Highways Depot to a site/location elsewhere is no longer an affordable option.

- A revised/reduced layout of the depot at Waterton would not be able to be fully realised within the remaining capital funding.
- The estimated capital budget agreed by Cabinet/Council in 2018 for the construction of a revised Depot at Waterton on a reduced footprint, or indeed an alternative location, could not be achieved within the available funding envelope as a result of delays, partly caused through Covid-19 and recent significant inflationary increases.
- Requisite refurbishment works will need to be made on a prioritised basis within the existing footprint.

3.3 High priority key assets for maintenance/refurbishment are:

- Salt Barn
- Strategic stock refuelling facility
- Site Drainage - including washdown and de-watering facility
- Welfare facilities/Highways Stores
- Traffic Management, vehicular & pedestrian routes through the depot
- Licensed Waste Area.

3.4 The highest priority assets for maintenance/refurbishment are:

1. **Reroofing the Salt Barn & providing secure gates.**
2. **Replace the existing vehicle wash facility.**
3. **Renew the bulk fuel storage tanks, fuel delivery cabinets & pumps.**
4. **Reroof Highways building & electrical stores, rewire, renew windows and refurbish welfare facilities.**
5. **Drainage Phase 1 Associated with Highways building, refuelling facility, & salt barn area.**

3.5 Whilst it is considered that the secured capital budget should address these items, this would be subject to completion of design work, establishing robust estimates, and commencement of a formal tender process to procure the works. There remain other assets for maintenance/refurbishment for which additional capital will be required in due course. Other assets requiring remediation not included in the initial tranche include.

6. **Compliant on site drainage**, including pumping chambers & interceptors.
7. **Compliant Gulley waste de-watering facility.**
8. **Compliant licensed Waste Management area.** Hard standings, flood management measures, stillages and segregation of waste streams
9. **Maintenance of Roadways, site lighting and Pedestrian routes.**
10. **Compliant material storage bunkers and housings.**

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 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. This is an information report; therefore, it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment Template has been completed and a summary of the implications from the assessment relating to the five ways of working is outlined below in respect of the proposal:

- **Long-term**

The structure of the Highways Depot is no longer fit for purpose. In order to avoid associated reputational damage and to continue to provide & operate a Highways service it is necessary to maintain the existing depot.

- **Prevention**

Failure to maintain the depot & associated facilities will introduce risks to users and others.

- **Integration**

To maintain the depot on its existing footprint provides the Authority with a facility that has the capability of being able to support the requirements of a highway authority in discharging its duties in regard of maintenance of the public highway.

- **Collaboration**

The proposal seeks to maintain the depot, which is no longer fit for purpose, these works would consider the needs for future service delivery .

- **Involvement**

The project will engage with users of the facility in the prioritisation of refurbishment activities.

5.2 The impact on the Council's 7 Wellbeing Objectives has been considered and the report is relevant to Objective 5 'A county Borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency' as the highways depot is at the centre of responding to climate changes, whether through winter ice, storms and flooding or maintaining or upgrading infrastructure to meet changes.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct implications on climate change in relation to the maintenance of the Highways Depot.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct safeguarding and corporate parenting implications as a result of the content provided within this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The available capital budget for the construction of a new depot on a reduced footprint at Waterton is currently £7,091,000, as follows:

	£000
Initial Budget approved by Council - November 2018	8,144
Virement to Maesteg Town Hall (MTH) – November 2023	-1,174
Part reversal of virement following receipt of grant funding for MTH – July 2024	+250
Virement of funding to waste vehicles – July 2024	-146
Transfer of funding back to Waterton following Council decision on funding of livery for waste vehicles	+17
Revised Capital Budget	7,091

This is funded as follows:

	£000
BCBC secured capital funding	3,591
Unsecured / unlikely capital receipt	3,500
Total funding	7,091

- 8.2 £3.5 million of the capital budget is predicated on anticipated land sales. However, due to flood risk maps recently updated by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), as a result of the introduction of TAN15, third party development land at the depot site within PAE, is no longer considered as available.
- 8.3 In the absence of the land sale the full capital funding of £7.091 million may not be realisable, and would require Council to agree to underwriting any shortfall in capital receipts with its own funding. Given the Council's current lack of capital funding it is proposed that those prioritised items identified within section 3.4 are addressed utilising the £3.591 million of BCBC funding with those items identified within section 3.5 of the report being subject to future capital bids which would allow the £3.5 million of unsecured capital to be unwound at this time.

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet: -

- i. Notes the change of approach for delivery of the Highway Depot arising from changes to available capital budget alongside environmental and inflationary factors.
- ii. Delegate Authority to the Corporate Director of Communities in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy and the Chief Officer, Finance, Housing and Change to finalise the urgent works to the salt barn and other identified facilities, to procure and undertake the necessary works using the capital funding that is available for the Project as outlined in Paragraph 8.3 of the report.

Background documents

None

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	19 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	FUTURE WASTE SERVICE OPTIONS
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES
Responsible Officer:	ZAK SHELL HEAD OF OPERATIONS – COMMUNITY SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no impact on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	<p>This report and appendix, considers the future provision of waste services, post the current Plan B Management Solutions contract. The report provides an update following the 16th April 2024 Cabinet Decision to further explore LATCO and in-house options for waste services, and not to pursue re-procurement as an option. This report provides feedback from the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 meeting of 30 September 2024, and also shares the findings of a second commissioned report by Eunomia Research and Consulting Ltd. The report recommends that Cabinet now proceed to make a decision to provide future waste services by either; proceeding to a) Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo) or b) bringing the service In-House.</p> <p>The report also recommends entering into discussions with Plan B Management Solutions to extend the current contract, as a contingency, to ensure sufficient timescales for the transition.</p>

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to

1. Share the findings of a second commissioned report from Eunomia Research & Consulting Ltd (Eunomia) on future recycling and waste options from April 2026, following the two-year contract with Plan B Management Solutions (Plan B) which ends on 31st March 2026.

2. Request that Cabinet make a decision on the model for future service delivery, that is to progress with the creation of a wholly owned Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo) to deliver waste and recycling services for the County Borough or to bring the service in-house.
3. Request permission to enter discussions with Plan B to extend the current contract in compliance with Public Procurement Regulations, as a contingency position, to ensure enough time to set up and mobilise a LATCo or bring the service in house to deliver the service from this date.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council has outsourced its recycling and waste contract to a commercial contractor since 2003. The contract has been usually renewed every 7 years and the Council has had three contractors fulfil that service. The current outsourced waste contract was awarded to Plan B Environmental Solutions in April 2024. This contract will end at the end of March 2026. It was awarded for two years to give the Council the opportunity to explore the use of ULEV waste vehicles, including electric powered and understand more about the future Welsh Government Waste Targets. To date there has not been any announcement from Welsh Government on recycling targets but the Council has just been announced as the highest performing waste recycling service in Wales for 2023/24, with over 73% of our waste now recycled. So, it is likely that any increase in targets would not have a detrimental impact on our service performance. The work on the use of ULEV waste vehicles is continuing and Officers are looking at options that are available for replacing the current vehicles as part of the agreed waste fleet replacement rolling programme.
- 2.2 In order to ensure continuity of service post 2026 when the Plan B contract ends, decisions are required on how the Council will provide the waste service in the future.
- 2.3 Members will recall a Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 (SOSC 3) meeting of 19th March 2024 where Eunomia presented an initial report on the advantages and disadvantages of three waste service delivery methods:-
 - Bring the waste services in-house
 - Transfer the waste collection into a Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo)
 - Re-procurement of a waste services contract
- 2.4 At that meeting SOSC 3 recommended that the LATCo model be explored further with the Authority looking at how it could be developed and grown over future years, to help provide a part-solution to the long term issue of annual budgetary constraints by generating profit.

- 2.5 Scrutiny members also discussed the findings with regards to the qualitative assessment and the in-house position. The assessment carried out by Eunomia had identified the market conditions to be favorable at the time of writing with a low probability of high risk in both operational and implementation and no difference in quality of service, however there was a financial risk based on the higher pension contributions that would be applicable should the service be brought in house, however there was also an opportunity to control, shape and develop that service. On that basis the Committee recommended that bringing the waste collection service in-house should also be explored in further detail.
- 2.6 The SOC3 Committee recommended that a report be submitted to Cabinet, including a case study of best practice where these types of operations had been proven and were operating successfully, to demonstrate how they could potentially also work for Bridgend County Borough Council.
- 2.7 The Cabinet met on 16th April 2024 and a report was presented to share the findings of the Eunomia report and SOSC3 recommendations on the preferred option for delivering the future waste services post 2026. From the detailed qualitative and financial analysis, it was recommended by Eunomia, that the Council considers either the re-procurement or LATCo options going forward, with the re-procurement option appearing to be the most favorable should the timeline for a future procurement be feasible and practicable. Cabinet did not resolve to accept the re-procurement option and instead agreed that further work be undertaken on the LATCo and in-House models as had been recommended by SOSC3.
- 2.8 In response to the request, officers commissioned Eunomia to provide a second report with additional information as requested by the SOSC 3 and Cabinet and this is attached as **Appendix A**.
- 2.9 Officers attended SOSC3 on 30th September to share the findings of the second Eunomia Report with the Committee.
- 2.10 SOSC3 concluded that:

Following consideration of the report on the options for delivering Waste Service post 2026 Members felt that the Council was in a different financial position than when they made previous decisions and more investigation was still needed to provide further information on the LATCo and in-house options, in particular more detail on the following including the impact and associated risks:

- Staff recruitment;
- Profit and loss to be expected;
- Pay scales – protection of employees;
- Commercial Waste and the Competitive market;
- The IT system and the advantages and disadvantages of one system in place;
- The control, challenge and flexibility of the options.

Members expressed that more time was required to explore with local authorities closer to home that had followed one of these options, whether successfully or unsuccessfully, particularly the LATCo option, as either option would be a big change for the Authority and a fully informed decision would be required.

2.11 SOSC3 also recommended:

“that there be a year’s extension to the current contract with Plan B, to allow more time for work to be done to really understand the LATCo and In-House options, the extent of risk and the full impact on resources”

3. Current situation/ proposal

- 3.1 Eunomia was commissioned by the Council to undertake a further detailed assessment of the remaining two options of LATCo and in-house commissioning options for future waste collection service delivery. The second report, included as **Appendix A**, examines for the LATCo option the governance, structure and democratic processes along with experiences from where these have been implemented elsewhere. The report also explores the implications and structural arrangements that will be needed for an in-house service.
- 3.2 Members, having previously had sight of the report and a detailed presentation from Eunomia, and will be familiar with the content of the report.
- 3.3 Officers note the feedback from SOSC3, and recommendations made. However it is felt that all necessary information has been provided to make a meaningful decision on the options discussed in the previous and latest Eunomia reports and in subsequent meetings. Any additional information would be increasingly speculative in nature. The second Eunomia commission has now ended and the necessary timelines to move this situation on to ensure a waste service is in place for April 2026 mean that any further delay in making a decision, regarding the future service delivery, would represent a critical risk to the authority. It is imperative that a decision is now made on the way forward for the waste service.
- 3.4 Officers also note the feedback from SOSC3 regarding a year’s extension of the existing contract with Plan B. For clarity however, there is no contractual obligation within the current arrangement to enter into an extension although this could be agreed between the Parties. Given there is no guarantee of an extension being agreed
- 3.5 We are now at least six months behind the original timeline to ensure a service is established by April 2026. Therefore, the risks associated with a further deferred decision as suggested at SOSC3, would unfortunately outweigh the risks associated with choosing either option and to do so would potentially leave the authority with no waste service arrangements in place from April 2026
- 3.6 Taking account of all the information above, the options for consideration at this stage are as follows:

- Option A – proceed to establish a LATCo

Or

- Option B – Bring the service in house.

3.7 The Cabinet have had an opportunity to discuss these two options and their detailed merits, risks and costs with Eunomia and Officers. All of this information is included for information in Appendix A to this report.

3.8 Due to the tight timescales to implement and mobilise either option, officers strongly recommend negotiating an extension to the Plan B Management Solutions contract as a contingency, in parallel with moving to the new model. This could be used to provide continuity of service if required and would allow time to ensure a smooth delivery of change.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 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 because of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives, as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no Climate Change Implications from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 **Appendix A**, explores financial advantages and disadvantages of the various methods of waste service provision. The indicative annual and mobilisation costs for each option are detailed in the Eunomia report and a summary of this is shown in Table 1 below.

	Re-procurement	In-house	LATCo
Total Annual Costs	£9.03m	£9.37m	£9.02m
Mobilisation Costs	£0.53m	£0.77m	£0.97m
Total Costs over 14 years	£127.47m	£132.00m	£127.20m
Qualitative Risk Assessment	66.0%	58.0%	56.0%

Table 1: Modelled Costs for Each Option (Re-procurement greyed out as no longer in consideration)

- 8.2 The Cabinet, at its meeting on the 16th April 2024, did not accept the option of a reprocurement of a new waste service. therefore the financial information in this report does not cover that option.
- 8.3 The figures in table 1 above (from Eunomia Report) are modelled using a sickness figure of 6% across all options. However, based on the Council's current sickness levels across the Local authority, 11% is more reflective of current In-house figures. It should be noted that using this figure for the in-house option would result in increased total annual costs of £9.62m and total cost over 14 years of £135.38m for the in-house option only. This then makes the in-house option some £8.18m more expensive than the LATCo model based over a 14-year operating period and also because of the cost of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The same LGPS figure could be applied to the LATCo model should the Cabinet wish to offer that to all employees under this option. Again, the assumptions on cost can only be based on sensible modelling but both the in-house and LATCo options significantly increase the risks of increased sickness levels and any industrial relations issues directly to the Council, whereas they currently lie in an outsourced model with the contractor. Full financial information is included in the report at Appendix A.
- 8.4 The Council's challenging financial position means that overall affordability of each option should be a crucial factor in determining the preferred option and way forward. An earmarked reserve of circa £300k currently exists to provide legal and technical support to re procure the waste contract. Any additional one-off funding to bring the service in-house or to form a LATCo would need to be identified, on a one-off basis at a time when there is significant pressure on all Council funding. This one-off funding ranges from approx 750K to bring the service inhouse to just over £1m to establish a LATCo. Furthermore, any additional annual costs to provide the waste contract would need to be the subject of a budget growth bid for the 2026-27 financial year onwards.

- 8.5 The 2024-25 budget for the recycling and waste services contract is £8.130 million. Excluding any indexation increases, the total budget available over 14 years would be £113.820 million. It should also be noted that the Cabinet agreed in April, to move to purchasing fleet on a rolling programme. This will be over a 7-year cycle and will now be included in the Capital Programme for approval by Council.
- 8.6 Of particular note is the most recent annual waste finance all Wales summary provided by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) for 2022/23 has identified that Bridgend County Council is the most cost-effective local authority collection in Wales of all 22 local authorities. Bridgend County Borough Council has also just been announced as the highest performing waste recycling service in Wales for 2023/24 with over 73% of our waste now recycled.

9. Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Note the contents of this report and Appendix A which includes a more detailed analysis of how the LATCo and in house models could operate.
2. Approve that the future waste service is delivered via either:
 - Option A - wholly Bridgend County Borough Council owned LATCo model

Or

 - Option B - in house service delivery
3. Delegate authority to Corporate Director – Communities, in consultation with the Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy and the Chief Officer, Finance, Housing & Change, to commence work immediately to enter into discussions with Plan B to extend the current contract in compliance with Public Procurement Regulations to allow enough time as a contingency, should it be required, for smooth implementation and mobilisation of the future service model.

Background documents

None

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LATCo and In-house Advice

Brief Report

Prepared July 2024



Report For

Bridgend County Borough Council

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Acknowledgements

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1.0 Introduction

Eunomia Research and Consulting (Eunomia) were previously commissioned by Bridgend County Borough Council (Bridgend CBC) to undertake a Commissioning Options assessment prior to the termination of their existing waste contract with Plan B. This assessment considered three possible commissioning options:

- Re-procurement of the waste contract with an external supplier;
- Bringing the waste service into a Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo); and
- Bringing the waste services in-house (akin to the street cleansing service which is already delivered by Bridgend CBC).

This work was completed in March 2024, with the Eunomia reviewing identifying that re-procurement was the most favourable option from a qualitative perspective (though this was with the caveat that the timeline for re-procurement posed a substantial risk), and that the LATCo option would be the cheapest (see section 4 for further details). However, Eunomia understands that due to political drivers, members have ruled re-procurement out as one of the ways forward for the Council. The Council are therefore seeking additional advice from Eunomia on the LATCo and in-house options and the impact these options would have on the service.

This report outlines Eunomia's findings and recommendations and is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides a summary of the previous commissioning options analysis findings;
- Section 3 provides a high-level summary of the two alternative options (LATCo and in-house) that are being considered further;
- Section 4 provides a review of existing LATCos operating models and their experiences;
- Section 5 outlines a suggested approach for the set-up of a Bridgend CBC LATCo, including governance structure and commercial waste collections opportunities. A mobilisation timeline is also provided; and
- Section 6.0 outlines a suggested approach to bringing the waste and recycling services in-house, including service structure and the impact on Council responsibilities. A mobilisation timeline is also provided.

2.0 Summary of Previous Work

The previous project, the report for which can be found in Appendix A.1.0, looked at the costs for the baseline and each of the respective commissioning options. The results are presented in the Table 2-1. The Re-procurement costs have been greyed out in both Table 2-1 and Table 2-2, as Bridgend CBC have decided that Re-procurement will not be taken forward as an option.

Table 2-1 Modelled Annual Costs for Each Option

Cost Centre	Baseline 22/23	Re-procurement	In-house	LATCo
Margin and Overheads	£1.25m	£1.79m	£1.26m	£1.58m
Other Costs	£1.32m	£1.43m	£1.52m	£1.52m
Material Sales & Waste Disposal	-£0.65m	-£0.78m	-£0.78m	-£0.78m
Vehicles and Equipment	£1.98m	£2.55m	£2.65m	£2.65m
Frontline Staff	£3.29m	£4.04m	£4.72m	£4.04m
Total	£7.19m	£9.03m	£9.37m	£9.02m

It is worth noting that indexation has been applied to the future options to account for a start date in 2026/27, hence why all options have significantly higher costs than the Baseline which reflects 2022/23 costs.

The most expensive option is the in-house option (£9.37m), with the cheapest being the LATCo (£9.02m), and re-procurement only slightly more expensive than the LATCo (£9.03m).

The costs associated with transitioning to, and mobilising, each of the options, which are all one-off costs, were also modelled and can be seen in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2 Costs Associated with Transition and Mobilisation for the Three Future Options

Item	Re-Procurement	In-house	LATCo
Legal Support	£140,000	£10,000	£100,000
LATCo Set Up	£0	£0	£55,000
Procurement Technical Support	£100,000	£0	£15,000
Compliance	£0	£19,800	£19,800
Mandatory Training	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000
Digital	£50,000	£330,000	£330,000
Depot	£77,500	£77,500	£77,500
Contingency	£58,125	£68,595	£92,595
Resource Costs – Workforce onboarding	£0	£60,000	£60,000
Resource Costs - Other	£84,167	£179,167	£201,667
Total	£529,792	£765,062	£971,562

The costs associated with transitioning into a LATCo are the highest at £0.97m. In this option a new entity is being created which will require a significant amount of legal support and will incur other LATCo set-up costs such as development of a business plan and branding. Both the in-house and LATCo options include mobilisation elements such as terms and conditions legal support, compliance work and purchase of applications. Those options also require a high level of resources ahead of the start of the new service delivery to support the transition, including resources for the onboarding of the workforce.

A qualitative assessment was also completed as part of the commissioning options, and the results are in Table 2-3.

Table 2-3 Summary of Qualitative Commissioning Options Assessment

Criteria	Weighting	Option A – In-house	Option B – LATCo	Option C – Re-procurement
Capacity and Capability	10.0%	6.0%	4.0%	10.0%
Financial and Commercial Risk	20.0%	4.0%	8.0%	16.0%
Market Conditions	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%	4.0%
Operational Risk	15.0%	6.0%	6.0%	12.0%

Implementation Risk	15.0%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%
Control and Ability to Change	20.0%	20.0%	16.0%	12.0%
Service Quality	10.0%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%
Total Score		58.0%	56.0%	66.0%
Rank		2	3	1

The commissioning option which received the highest score was that of the re-procurement route, with both the LATCo and in-house option receiving very similar scores, that of 56% and 58% respectively. It was noted that even though the re-procurement received the highest score, the timeline for re-procurement posed a significant threat to that approach.

Ultimately, following the work above, Bridgend CBC decided to progress with the LATCo and in-house options for further consideration.

3.0 LATCo and In-house Overview

This section highlights what a LATCo is, as well as benefits and reasonings behind choosing a LATCo or an in-house service. Whilst there are similarities between the two, there are distinct differences between the two operating models.

3.1 LATCo

Over recent years, LATCos have become a more popular vehicle for providing local authority services. A LATCo is an independent legal entity which is wholly owned and ultimately controlled by one or more shareholding local authorities. The principal benefits of adopting this option include the ability to:

- Operate in a more culturally distinct way than many in-house services are able to do, perhaps including being more commercially driven and structured. This includes undertaking commercial work outside of the authority boundary.
- Deliver services more flexibly.
- Offer workers membership of a lower-cost pension scheme, as opposed to the LGPS.

The legal framework under which LATCos can be established was primarily based on case law, but this has changed with the introduction of the Public Contract Regulations 2015, with updates included in the Procurement Act 2023 (which achieved royal assent in October 2023). This legislation clarifies the legal aspects of creating and managing a LATCo and provides important guidance on how to comply with the requirements of the law. Table 3-1 provides a summary of LATCo financial results in 2021/22 and 2022/23, illustrating that some LATCos make a significant profit, some make a small profit while others make a significant loss. By operating the waste service via a LATCo, Bridgend CBC would also have much greater visibility over the service costs, as a LATCo must be operated where the parent council holds a similar level of control over it as they would an internal department.

Table 3-1 LATCos Financial Results

Name	Services	21/22 Financial Results	22/23 Financial Results
CWM Environmental	Waste Treatment, Transfer Station and HWRC	£1.1m loss (fire at the MRF caused £665k damage)	Unknown
Liverpool Street Scene Services	Waste collections, street cleansing, grounds maintenance, highways services	£1.4m loss	£1.6m loss

Cumbria Waste Management	Waste disposal and recycling services	£3.7m loss	£2.8m profit
Cheshire West Recycling	Refuse, recycling, and garden waste collections	£526k profit	£207k profit
Norse Environmental Waste Services (NEWS)	Waste collections for several LAs	£573k profit (£1.4m loss in 20/21)	£184k profit

3.2 In-house

There are currently 185 authorities who run their waste collection service in-house. An in-house service may be seen as beneficial due to the level of flexibility and control over the services, for example having collection crews support on contamination campaigns without the need to agree additional costs, which they would likely need to do in a LATCo. Additionally, there would not be a need for contractual negotiations when implementing changes, such as would still be required if the services were delivered via a LATCo, however discussions would be needed with unions.

Another key element is that in an in-house option there are no requirements to make a profit on the in-house service, whereas with a LATCo operation, a profit can be made so long as the proceeds are distributed back to the parent council.

As with the LATCo option, operating the waste service via an in-house operation also provides much greater oversight of the service's costs as it will be operated as a distinct council department.

4.0 Review of existing LATCos

Historically LATCo's have been set up either in response to a poorly performing or problematic contract or because their contractor is exiting the business. Bristol Waste Company (BWC), North Somerset Environment Company (NSEC) Cheshire West Recycling Ltd were all set up due to early contractor exits. Lampton 360 and Ubico however were initially formed to replace poorly performing contracts when they came to the contract end.

This section of the report provides thoughts on a number of key considerations, including learnings and experiences from other LATCos.

4.1 Risk

The perceived level of risk related to transferring services into a LATCo from an outsourced contract can vary starkly based upon how the current contract is performing. For example, the perceived level of risk when moving from a well performing outsourced contract to a LATCo is likely to be significantly greater than when moving from an already poorly performing outsourced contract.

Due to the increase in risk for the Council when transitioning to a LATCo, there should be Senior executives and directors overseeing the process, and having visibility of all stages. LATCo transitions must be seen as high corporate priorities and there needs to be a high degree of ownership from the Council. Such risk also exists with the brining of services in-house, and so a similar level of senior oversight should be given too.

A key risk to all LATCos during mobilisation is IT. The handover from outsourced provider to the LATCo often takes place overnight and there is a limited amount of work that can be done before the transition. For example, councils cannot re-network or patch anything prior to the contractor leaving the depot. Council IT teams who have undertaken such work often struggle to deal with the level of complexity needed to take over a service and this would need careful consideration from Bridgend CBC should they elect to move to a LATCo. An additional complexity when mobilising a LATCO is that there are often multiple T&C's due to previous TUPE processes and council pay roll systems are often not set up to deal with this adequately. Another point to note is that council computers block a lot of software that might be needed to run the service. Bridgend CBC must ensure they have approved all software needed to run the service before mobilisation.

Overall, the level of risk experienced by moving services either in-house or into a LATCo (from an outsourced operation) is not that different as identified during Eunomia's previous work (see section 2.0). The risks identified above would also be applicable for a move to an in-house operation. The areas which vary the most between the two commissioning options are the governance arrangements and commercial elements of the services.

4.2 Value

Value is hard to judge when moving from an outsourced contract to a LATCo. Prior to the formation of Greener Ealing (London Borough of Ealing's LATCo), the contract was delivered by Amey, and it is our understanding that Amey was losing a significant amount of money each year. When the services were moved to a LATCo the budget needed to be significantly increased from what they were previously paying Amey, as Amey had been making a loss on the contract in order to run the service. In the first year that Lampton 360 ran Hounslow's waste service they went over budget because there was a political decision to increase the pension and pay to the London Living Wage. Additionally, Redbridge Civic Services (RCS – London Borough of Redbridge's LATCo) went over budget from their second year of operating the service due to a contract which did not account for annual

indexation. This meant that their original budget was kept the same, effectively resulting in RCS's budget being cut, which then did not account for inflationary cost increases experienced by the company.

In summary, it is difficult to compare value in an outsourced contract compared to a LATCo because when a council decides to move to a LATCo, there is often a decision to offer enhancements at the same time, such as providing a Real Living Wage or other policies, which will naturally have an impact on costs. Additionally, authorities are often working with an underfunded baseline based upon their outsourced contract, as was the case in Ealing.

4.3 Transition and mobilisation

In the case of North Somerset, the transition from an outsourced contract to a LATCo (NSEC) worked very well, however it is hard to pinpoint what exactly helped with this, though they did receive external support to help with this transition which may have helped. Biffa, who was the outsourced contractor, was under extreme financial pressure and were trying to deliver the service as cost effectively as possible. When NSEC took over the service, their focus shifted away from delivering a commercially successful service to delivering the service for the benefit of residents. Due to the nature of a LATCo (being wholly owned by the parent council), the company is more accountable to the members and so it is vital that the first few months are successful from a delivery perspective to provide members with confidence in the LATCo and to ensure buy in. With regards to NSEC, as they had a successful mobilisation and start to the services, they gained trust with the members and the council.

With regards to the management of a LATCo, it is important to ensure a happy medium is reached between the LATCo and parent council, where the LATCo has scope to manage the services as a distinct separate legal entity, whilst still being answerable to the parent council.

At Eunomia we have provided support for the transition away from an outsourced contractor and the subsequent mobilisation of the relevant LATCo for a number of authorities, this includes North Somerset's NSEC, RCS and Greener Ealing. The best indicator of a successful mobilisation we have found is how quickly our support is no longer needed. From our experience, Eunomia recommends against external contractors or consultants providing support in the transition and mobilisation phase and then being placed into continued management roles.

4.4 Scope of services

When setting up a LATCo, the relevant council must first consider which services would be in scope to be managed by the newly created LATCo. With the example of North Somerset, NSEC first assessed all relevant services to see if any of them could also be brought into the LATCo in addition to the waste services. Since NSEC's creation, they have subsequently expanded the services in scope to include operation of the waste transfer station and delivery of the council's highways function. Ubico and Lampton 360 both followed a similar process, whereby they brought services into the LATCo in stages.

Material sales is a service that is outsourced in a number of councils and is often done by a contractor in an outsourced arrangement. This service is often brought into the LATCo when they transition. NSEC undertake all of the materials management in North Somerset and made £0.5 million per annum more than Biffa had made when they did their material sales. Additionally, Bristol Waste Company manage their own material sales and consistently achieve better prices than the Lets Recycle Material Sales Index. This has worked in both LATCos because they have empowered the right people to make the right commercial decisions.

Hounslow brought their housing and maintenance staff into the Lampton 360 LATCo, as with many LATCo's Hounslow have a parent company (Lampton 360) and the services act as subsidiaries to the parent company. This prevents any doubling of overheads. Lampton 360 was established by London Borough of Hounslow in 2012, Recycle 360 was then launched as a subsidiary for the waste and recycling service, and then in 2018 Lampton Greenspace 360 commenced to provide the parks and open space maintenance service.

There are a number of other services that can be brought into a LATCo. It is Eunomia's recommendation that a LATCo is started as a single service and then other services are assessed and brought in as and when it makes commercial sense.

4.5 People

The success of a LATCo is ultimately down to staff and who and how they are recruited.

In order to successfully run a LATCo, there are certain senior roles which are required, such as a Managing Director, Operations Director and possibly a Financial Director. Managing Directors typically come from a more commercial background than from a local authority background. The Managing Director, will need to know how to run a service from a commercial perspective, and as such they will need to have an understanding of corporation tax (amongst other vital and strategic elements). The MD will nonetheless need to have an understanding of the services, though Eunomia always recommends that they should be supported by an Operations Director so that they have the space to focus on the commercial management of the company. This mix of both operational and commercial experience can make finding suitable candidates difficult, and as such they often command significant salaries. As an example, NSEC's Managing Director had previously run LATCos. They also benefited from having support of an Operations Director who understood what was needed for the service to run effectively from an operational perspective.

Beyond the senior staff required to steer and manage the LATCo, there is a need to have a dedicated team to oversee and deliver the transition and mobilisation work. The mobilisation team, and those required beyond this period will likely be different and the roles in each period will require different skill sets and knowledge.

For Bridgend CBC, if there are cultural changes required, it does not ultimately matter if the move is to an in-house or LATCo operation, as making such cultural changes will take time, and there will not be an overnight change in the services. This is due to the majority of staff responsible for delivering the service will not change and will TUPE over in the transition. Often issues with the service are not visible from the start and therefore it will take time to identify and then rectify them.

5.0 Suggested Approach to Setting up a LATCo

5.1 LATCo Governance and Democratic Considerations

This section sets out the core principles of a LATCo and includes suggestions on how a LATCo could be structured for Bridgend CBC, based on discussions with the Council's internal stakeholders and Eunomia's recommendations. Should the Council decide to opt for the creation of a LATCo, Eunomia strongly recommends that Bridgend CBC seek legal advice to implement any governance structure.

5.1.1 LATCo Principles

The core principles of a LATCo are laid out in the Procurement Act 2023¹, retaining the following concepts from the Public Contracts Regulations 2015²:

- No person other than the authority can exert a decisive influence on the activities;
- More than 80 per cent of the activities carried out by the person are carried out for or on behalf of:
 - the contracting authority, or
 - another person that is, or other persons that are, controlled by the authority;
- The contracting authority is represented on the person's board, or equivalent decision-making body; and
- The person does not carry out any activities that are contrary to the interests of the contracting authority.

The waste service is a core service and would account for at least 80% of the activities of a waste LATCo for Bridgend CBC. Trade waste can be seen as a somewhat grey area depending upon whether the contract for trade waste sits with the LATCo or the Council. However, as local authorities have a statutory obligation to provide trade waste services on behalf of businesses if requested, this service can arguably be considered as an activity carried out for the contracting authorities. It would be advisable to seek legal advice regarding the 80% threshold should the Council decide to progress with the set-up of a LATCo.

5.1.2 Governance Structure and Responsibilities

The governance structure would be composed of three entities:

- Shareholder Committee;
- Company Board; and
- Company Management Team.

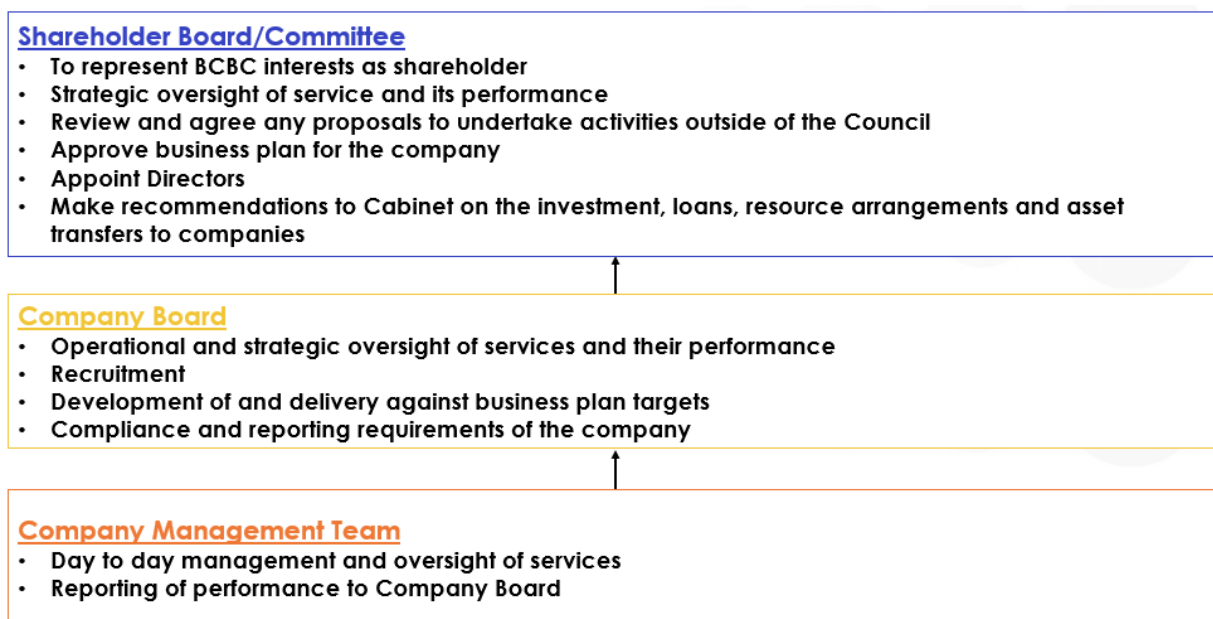
Figure 5-1 details the responsibilities of each entity. Clearly defining roles for each entity is important. The Company Board should be responsible for the commercial decisions of the

¹ UK Government, Procurement Act 2023, Available at: [Procurement Act 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

² UK Government, Public Contracts Regulations 2015, Available at: [The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

LATCo, whilst the Shareholder Committee represents the political aspirations of the Council, with the Company Management Team providing daily management of the LATCo.

Figure 5-1: Governance Responsibilities



The Council has ultimate ownership of the LATCo and as such is financially liable for the LATCo's costs – even in cases of overspend against a set budget. The Council also has a responsibility to exercise the same degree of control over the LATCo as they do over their own departments. Should the LATCo require additional funding, the Council would be required to provide this. With regards to financial decision making, the level at which certain decisions are made will likely depend upon the governance arrangements that are put in place when the LATCo is set up. These financial thresholds may follow similar threshold for council departments, for example, Bridgend CBC's Constitution sets out that each Chief Officer, with approval of the Chief Finance Officer, may make amendments to budgets of up to £100,000 and that any costs exceeding £100,000 must be reported to Cabinet for approval.

The LATCO's shareholders can drive political decisions, such as pay levels, by asking the Company Board to price for the desired change, for example accounting for an increase in pay or the pension scheme employer contribution rate. In which case, the Company Board will price for the increased costs and the Shareholder Committee will decide if they want to go forward with the change. In this example, should the decision to award a pay increase not be seen as the most astute commercial decision by the Company Board, the Shareholder Committee can still nonetheless dictate that the pay uplift be awarded as ultimately the Council will have to fund the resulting cost increase. It is worth noting that this decision-making structure does place an increase in responsibility and pressure on those individuals sitting on the Shareholder Committee. A LATCo is often set up to improve the work culture and working conditions; however, those decisions come with a cost which is often significant (e.g. amendments to pay or terms and conditions (T&Cs)).

The Company Board is ultimately responsible for recruitment into the LATCo, with the exception of the Managing Director who is appointed by the Shareholder Board. The order of recruitment when setting up a LATCo is typically to first recruit the Managing Director, with the newly appointed Managing Director then leading the rest of the recruitment. Any recruitment should be skills based, and often the Managing Director is recruited externally as there are no internal candidates with the right set of skills.

5.1.3 Democratic Process

Figure 5-2 details how the interactions between the LATCo and the Council could work and how this fit within the democratic process. Eunomia would recommend having a reporting mechanism in place between the LATCo Shareholder Committee and Bridgend CBC' Scrutiny and Cabinet bodies, as it is likely that these entities will want to be informed of the direction of travel and of any issues with the operation and management of the LATCo.

Figure 5-2: Interaction with Bridgend CBC/Democratic Process

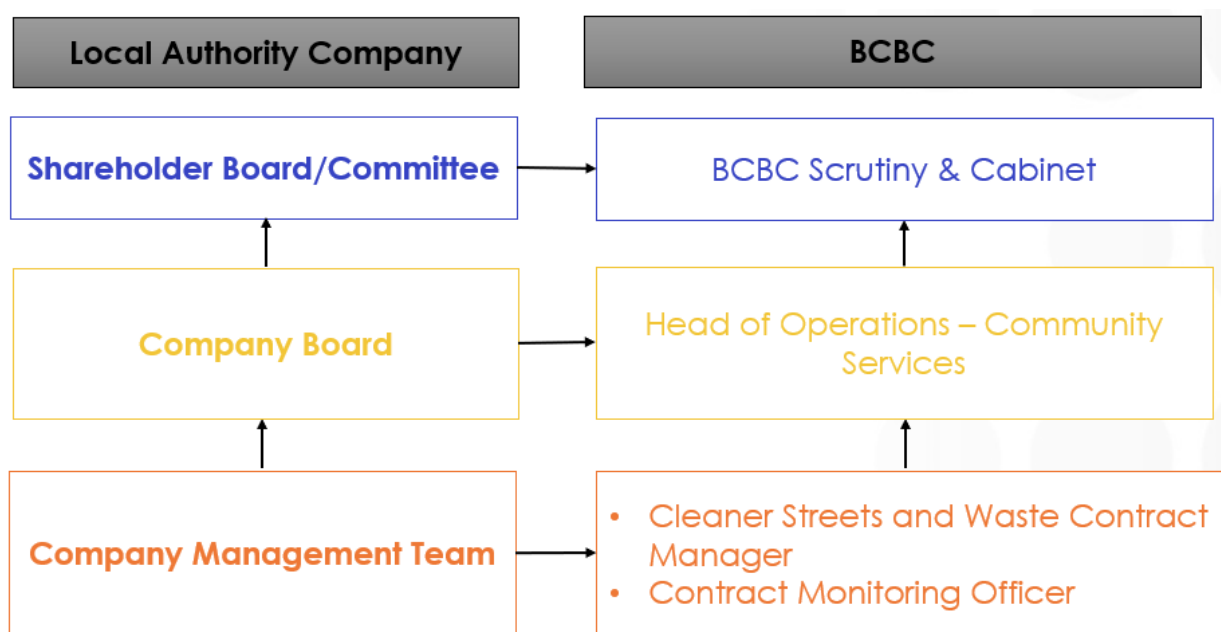
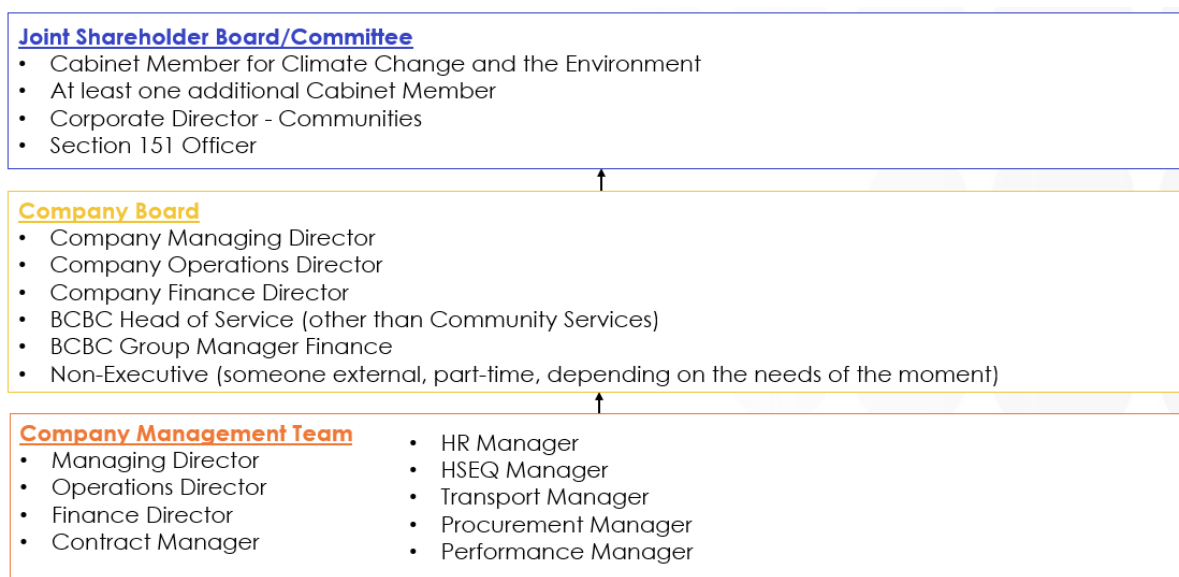


Figure 5-3 shows what the representation at each level of governance could be within a future LATCo. Those are Eunomia's suggestions following discussions with Bridgend CBC officers rather than formal recommendations, and the Council may want to amend the structure depending on what would work best for them. For example, within the Shareholder Board, the Corporate Director could be replaced by the Chief Executives, and then as a result within the Company Board, the Head of Service could be replaced by the Corporate Director. Whilst these are merely suggestions, Eunomia would recommend Bridgend CBC consider the following elements in particular:

- Not having elected members in the Company Board to avoid any conflict of interest;
- Not having any role included within both the Shareholder Board and the Company Board to avoid any conflict of interest; and
- Having the Managing Director and Operations Director roles as two separate positions rather than one. The Managing Director would be focusing on running the business whilst the Operations Director would be focusing on running the operational side/services. These roles are difficult to recruit, and recruiting the right people will play an important part in the success of the LATCo.

Figure 5-3: Representation at Each Level of Governance



5.2 Management Structure

This section details the changes to Bridgend CBC's waste management structure when transitioning to a LATCo, as well as the LATCo management structure.

Typically, there would be minimal impact on the Council's client function (in terms of headcount) when moving to a LATCo model, at least in the short to medium term whilst the LATCo is embedded. The impacts are likely to be:

- Job descriptions may change slightly; and
- Some Council officers may be TUPE transferred into the LATCo, depending on where the Council draw lines of responsibility. For example, a decision will have to be made regarding where functions such as customer services sit.

Figure 5-4 shows the current management structure for Bridgend CBC's waste and street cleansing services. If transitioning to a LATCo to deliver waste and recycling collections, this structure is likely to stay the same with simply the LATCo replacing the waste contractor, as shown in Figure 5-5.

Figure 5-4: Current Bridgend CBC's Waste & Street Cleansing Management Structure

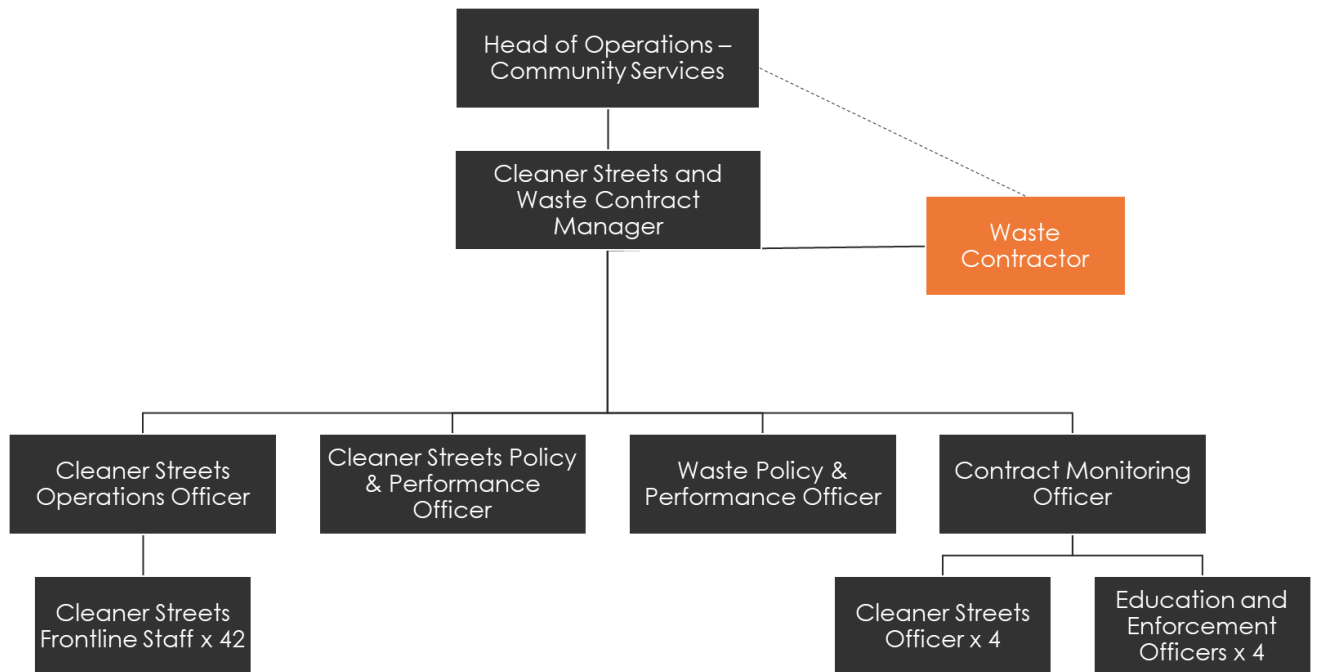


Figure 5-5: LATCo – Bridgend CBC's Waste & Street Cleansing Management Structure

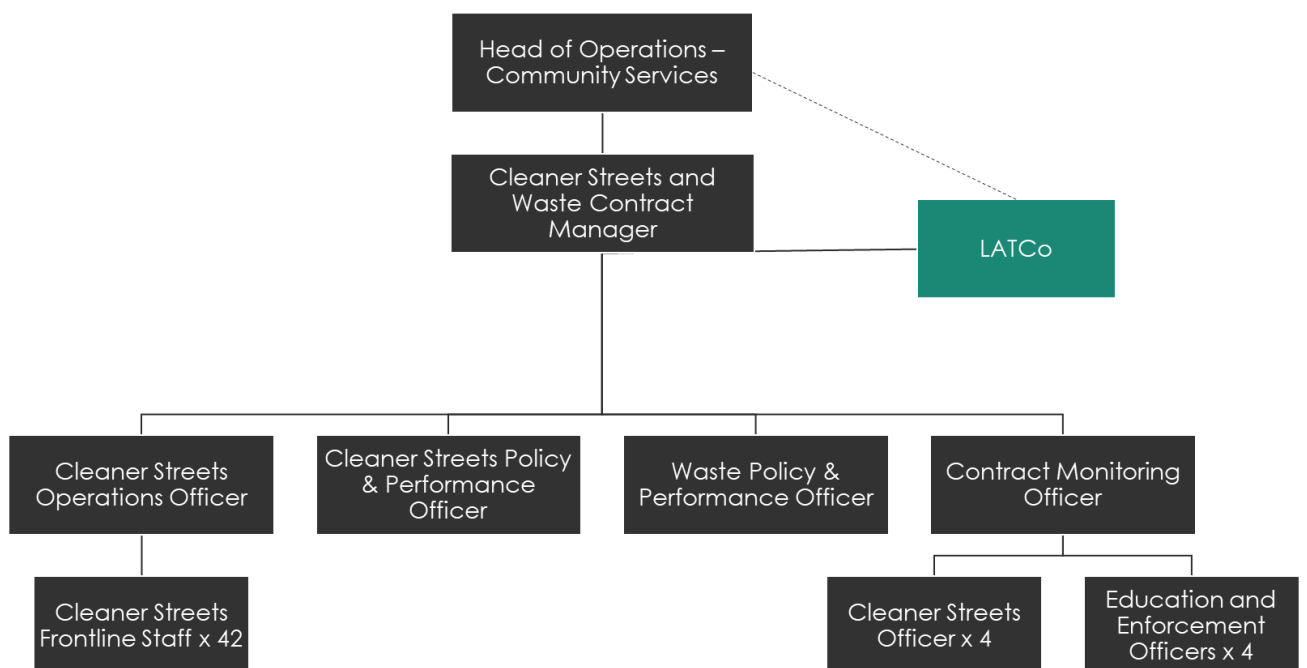
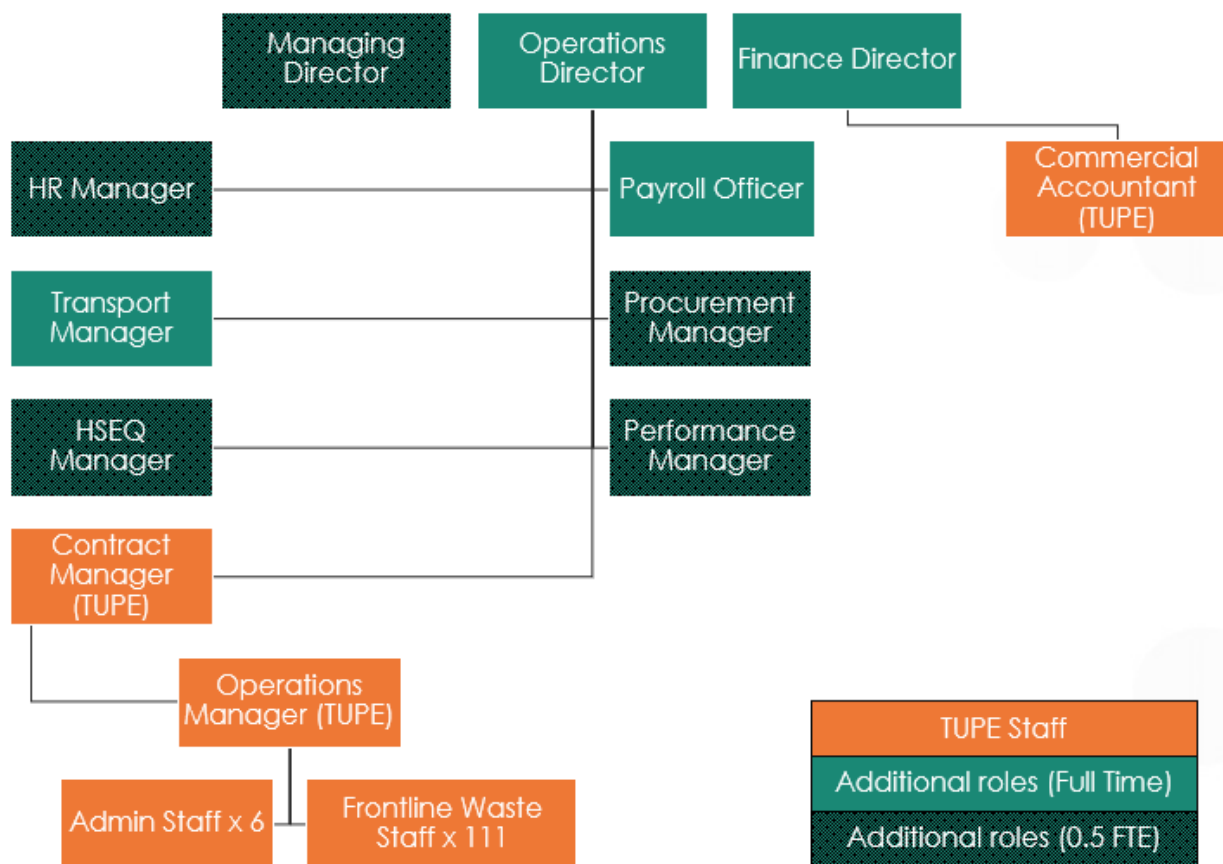


Figure 5-6 lays out our suggested management structure for the LATCo. Roles in orange are roles which would TUPE over from the current waste contract and roles in turquoise (full time) and dark blue (part time) are additional roles which would need to be recruited. The Contract Manager appearing in this figure would be the current Business Manager transferring over from Plan B. There are also opportunities for upskilling current roles, for

example the current waste contract Commercial Accountant could be upskilled to become the LATCo Finance Director, and a Financial Assistant could be hired to then support this role.

Figure 5-6: LATCo Management Structure



5.3 Services and Roles a LATCo Will Need to Purchase or Recruit

A LATCo will generally use different ways of procuring services:

- Some services or roles may be delivered or employed directly by the LATCo;
- Some services may be purchased via the Council; and
- Some services may be contracted directly from other entities (e.g. another council, LATCo, private company).

Figure 5-7 outlines Eumonia's suggestion for the purchasing of services and recruitment of relevant roles by a future Bridgend CBC LATCo. Services in turquoise are services that are likely to be purchased from the Council, services in orange are services that may be possible to purchase from the Council depending on the Council's preferences and resources, those in yellow are roles which would be recruited directly within the LATCo and services in dark blue are services that are likely to be contracted externally by the LATCo.

Figure 5-7: Services a LATCo Will Need to Purchase

<p>Support Services and Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT: Networking • IT: Hardware and user desk support • IT: Works Order system • IT: Financial management system suitable for company • IT: Transport management system • IT: Workshop management system • IT: Fuel Tank System • Insurer and Broker • Health, Safety Environment and Quality Management support and system • Legal support • Company Secretary (could be performed by MD) • Procurement • Facilities management: Pest Control, Cleaning, Maintenance etc. • Auditor • Vehicle Maintenance 	<p>People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration (TUPE) • Human Resources • Payroll • H&S Competent Person • CoTC Holder (TUPE) • Transport Manager (TUPE) • HR Management System • Pensions Company and possibly broker • Benefits providers (e.g. health insurance) • Drug and Alcohol testing provider • Training providers (including specialist for Driver CPC) • Driving licence check service
<p>Purchased Council Services Possibly Purchased Council Services</p>	<p>Contracted directly by LATCo Recruited within LATCo</p>
	<p>Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance Management • Accountancy • Finance Administration

We would recommend keeping the current IT system used by the waste contractor (ECHO), as bringing in a new system would represent a significant risk (extensive training time, no super users available to help with the deployment, etc.). It may be possible for the contractor to novate its contract with ECHO to the Council which may save time in terms of data uploads and system set up.

It is generally beneficial for the LATCo to purchase services from the shareholding authority rather than from external entities such as another LATCo, as external entities will add a margin on any services provided. However, Bridgend CBC have advised that due to budget restraints, resources have been cut in many of their internal teams, such as legal, HR, payroll and finance. As such, so those teams have no capacity to take on any additional work. This would lead to the LATCo having to procure services from another entity or to hire additional roles to fulfil those functions. The only services that Bridgend CBC would be able to sell to the LATCo would be facilities management, auditing and possibly vehicle maintenance. In terms of a procurement route for those services, the LATCo can purchase services from the Council through direct award as it represents a buy back from its shareholder.

It is worth noting that both the CoTC holder and transport manager roles are covered within the current waste contract staff list and would TUPE over to the LATCo, thus requiring no recruitment.

Finally, as there are four staff members on the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) within the current waste contract, the LATCo would need to achieve admitted body status.

5.4 Combining Multiple Services into a LATCo

Bridgend CBC was interested in understanding possibilities and opportunities of combining multiple services into a LATCo.

The main service Bridgend CBC is interested in combining under the LATCo, along with the waste and recycling services, is their corporate landlord service, which consists of the management, maintenance and surveying of the Council's assets, such as schools. It also includes a project team in charge of building new Council establishments. The Council is

facing recruitment challenges for this service due to the roles requiring highly qualified professionals such as structural engineers, however the Council's salaries are not attractive enough for those positions in order to attract suitable candidates. Transitioning this service into the LATCo would allow the Council to offer more attractive salaries which is likely to help with recruitment, though other barriers such as national shortages would still be an issue.

It is important to note that generally the main advantage of combining multiple services into a single LATCo is the reduction in overheads. This could be partly the case if landlord services are included in the LATCo, as Managing Director and Finance Director roles may be able to absorb this additional service. Additionally, payroll could be shared as well. However, as waste and recycling services and corporate landlord services are not of the same nature, efficiencies are limited in terms of operational roles.

Typically, LATCos start by transferring similar services such as street cleansing or grounds maintenance as it is easier to share management and supervision and, to some extent, pool staff. One challenge to be aware of if Bridgend CBC wanted to bring street cleansing into the LATCo, is that staff will transfer into the LATCo under different T&Cs (i.e., from the Council for street cleansing and from Plan B for waste and recycling collections) which is likely to create disparities in T&Cs across the LATCo for similar positions (for example pay rates and pension schemes).

With the above opportunities and challenges in mind, Eunomia's recommendation, should the Council opt for the LATCo option, would be to transfer the waste and recycling collections service into the LATCo first, to then learn from this transition and the mistakes made, and then extend the LATCo to other services at a later date.

5.5 Commercial Services Opportunities

Bridgend CBC wish to explore if the commercial waste customer base, and resulting profit, could be grown in order to cover the costs of a pension scheme which has a similar employer contribution rate to the LGPS. From the modelling undertaken in the previous report, the additional cost of the LGPS under an in-house model was c. £660k per annum (as such if Bridgend CBC opted to implement a LATCo which had an equivalent pension contribution rate, the value would be the same).

According to Plan B, the current contractor, Kier were making around £30,000 a month from the commercial waste service. In April and May 2024, the income was £27,440 and £27,200 respectively. The disposal costs per month are around £15,000 and on top of this, there are then operational costs (such as staff and vehicle costs), which would be likely to leave very little profit from the commercial service. Bridgend CBC would need to significantly increase its customer base in order to cover a higher employer pension contribution rate which matches that of the LGPS in an in-house operating model. It is worth noting that Bridgend CBC are locked into a disposal contract until 2030 (at £189/t) which impacts how much profit Bridgend CBC can make in this time. Following the termination of this disposal contract, Bridgend CBC may have greater flexibility to operate a more lucrative commercial waste service, should they be able to procure a cheaper disposal contract.

Increasing the commercial customer base can be an aspiration for Bridgend CBC, however it is very dependent on the market (which is known to be competitive and dominated by large organisations such as Biffa) and may not be possible. Bridgend CBC may struggle to increase the customer base when they currently have high disposal costs, as such disposal costs then need to be factored into fees and charges for customers, which may reduce how competitive Bridgend CBC can be with the other commercial providers.

Additionally, whilst growing the commercial waste customer base would be beneficial for Bridgend CBC, there would potentially be space concerns at the depot. Eunomia has been made aware that the Tondu depot is close to capacity, and if the commercial customer

base were to increase, the depot may not be able to accept the additional waste and recycling collected. The Council might then have to expand the current depot or find an additional depot, which would have a financial impact on the Council.

As such, Eunomia would not recommend the Council rely on growing their commercial waste customer base in order to bring in more income, and we recommend that the Council assumes there will be very little increase in year 1 and 2 of a LATCo.

Apart from commercial waste collections, there are other commercial services that a Bridgend CBC LATCo could aim at developing to generate additional income:

- HGV driver training;
- Material sales;
- Event waste management, along with event cleansing if street cleansing was also brought into the LATCo;
- Private MOTs (already offered by Bridgend CBC currently); and
- Commercial waste processing at Bridgend CBC transfer station, though space may be challenging.

5.6 Mobilisation Timelines

Figure 5-8 provides a high-level summary of the different steps and associated timelines needed to transition the waste and recycling services into a LATCo from the current outsourced arrangement.

In addition to the additional permanent resources mapped in section 6.1, there will also be a need for transitional resources:

- A Managing Director, Finance Director and Operational Director to help set up the LATCo and recruit staff into the LATCo. We would recommend appointing a Managing Director and Finance Director at least 6 months before the start of the new services, and the Operations Director at least 3 months before.
- A Senior Project Manager and a Project Administrator to plan and manage the transition from start to finish (about 1.5 years). These roles may be temporary recruitments or an allocation of existing Bridgend CBC resources depending on the Council's team's capacity;
- Additional HR and legal support for the onboarding of the workforce. We would recommend hiring a HR Manager and HR Advisor for 12 months before the start of the new service, and procuring external legal support that can be drawn in as and when needed; and
- H&S support to develop the relevant management processes ahead of the start of the new services. We would recommend hiring a H&S Manager for 6 months before the start of the new services.

The transitional roles may be filled by the same person as the person who ultimately fills the permanent role needed for the LATCo, for example for the Managing Director and HR Manager. Equally, they could also be filled by different persons, for example it may be that an interim Managing Director is hired to set up the LATCo initially, and a different Managing Director is then hired permanently to manage the LATCo.

6.0 Suggested Approach to Setting up an In-house Service

6.1 Management Structure

This section details the changes to Bridgend CBC's cleaner streets and waste management structure should the waste and recycling collections service be brought in-house from the current outsourced arrangements.

Figure 6-1 lays out our suggested approach to the set-up of the management structure for in-house waste and recycling collections services. Roles in black are current in-house Bridgend CBC roles, roles in orange are roles which would TUPE over from the current waste contract and roles in turquoise (full time) and dark blue (part time) are additional roles which would need to be recruited.

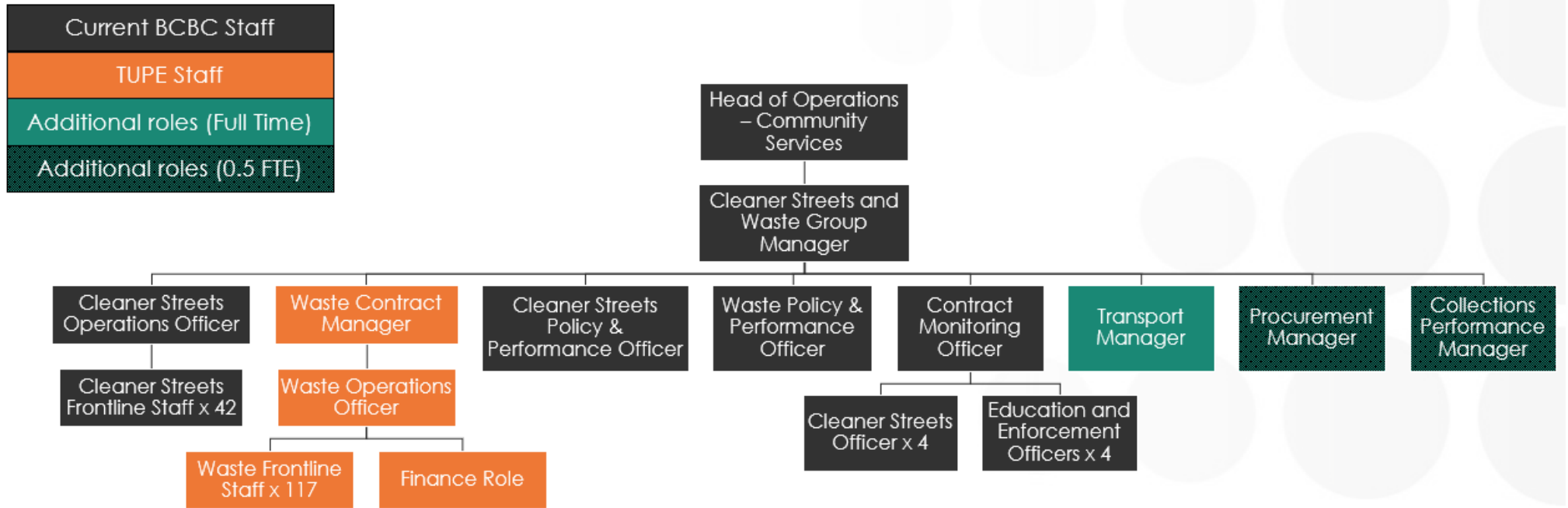
The current Cleaner Streets and Waste Contract Manager would evolve to become the Cleaner Streets and Waste Group Manager. The Waste Contract Manager appearing in the management structure below would be the current Plan B Business Manager transferring over to the in-house operation. In addition to the Transport Manager, Procurement Manager and Collections Performance Manager being added in to the cleaner streets and waste team management structure, additional roles would also need to be recruited within the respective Bridgend CBC teams:

- HR role;
- Payroll role; and
- Health, Safety, Environment and Quality (HSEQ) role.

The Commercial Accountant role included in the current waste contract would need to evolve to be integrated within the in-house structure, and is highlighted as a generic Finance Role within Figure 6-1. Indeed, there will be a need for someone within the waste team to prepare finance reports to feed into the overarching Bridgend CBC financial team. It is important to note that if the current Commercial Accountant role spends more than 50% of their time on duties covered by services that would be transferred to Bridgend CBC, which is likely to be the case, then they would be entitled to TUPE over should Bridgend CBC bring the service in-house. Should the Council determine that they do not need that post anymore then Bridgend CBC could make it redundant, however the Council would not be able to replace them with someone doing a similar role. We would strongly advise the Council to seek legal advice on this matter.

Finally, the Contract Monitoring Officer role would also evolve to be more delivery focused compared to the current role which is focused on monitoring the external contractor.

Figure 6-1: In-house – Bridgend CBC Management Structure



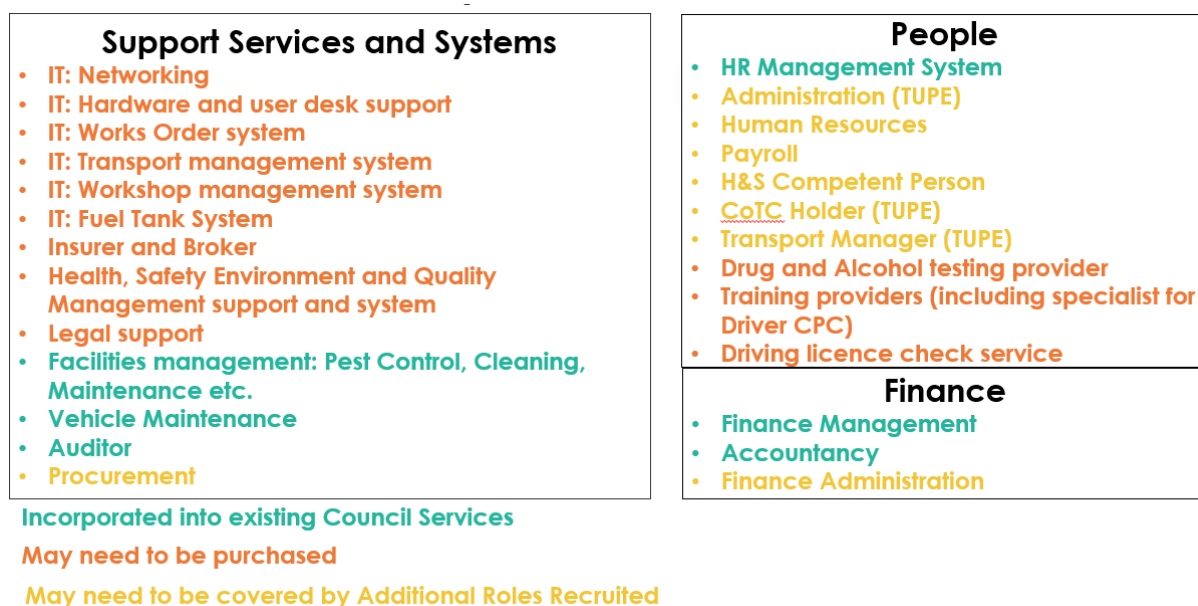
6.2 Services the Council May Need to Purchase

Similarly to a LATCo, for an in-house service the Council will generally use different ways of procuring and delivering services:

- Some services may be incorporated into existing Council Services;
- Some services may need to be covered by the recruitment of additional roles within the Council; and
- Some services may be contracted from other entities (e.g. another council, LATCo, company).

Figure 6-2 outlines Eunomia's suggestion for the purchasing of services and recruitment of relevant roles by Bridgend CBC should the waste service be brought in-house. Services in turquoise are services that can be incorporated into existing Council services, services in yellow may need to be covered by additional recruitment and services in orange are likely to be purchased from external entities.

Figure 6-2: In-house – Services BCBC May Need to Purchase



We would recommend keeping the current IT system used by the waste contractor (ECHO), as bringing a new system would represent a significant risk (extensive training time, no super users available to help with the deployment, etc.).

It is worth noting that both the CoTC holder and transport manager roles are covered within the current waste contract staff list and would TUPE over to the Council, thus requiring no recruitment.

6.3 Compliance and Legal Responsibilities

There are additional considerations in terms of compliance and legal responsibilities that are important to highlight should Bridgend CBC decide to bring waste and recycling collections in-house.

Certificate of Technical Competence (CoTC). Every waste management and recycling facility must have an accredited professional working on site for at least 20% of the time. There are several CoTC holders on the current contract, which suggests that this would not be an issue for Bridgend CBC as this staff would transfer over to the in-house service. However, this is something to have in mind as should the relevant staff decide to leave the Contract the Council would need to replace them immediately.

Environmental Permit. The current contractor holds all environmental permits for the three CRCs and the waste depot. Bridgend CBC will need to novate those permits across, which can be a long process and need to be actioned as early as possible in the process of bringing the services in-house.

O licence. The Council will need to hold a valid O licence at all times. Indeed, Uttlesford DC recently let their O licence lapse and had to cease waste collections until the licence extension was in place, which shows how big an operational, and reputational, risk this item is. The transport manager will need to hold a Transport Manager Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC). Bridgend CBC already holds an O licence and will need to add the waste transport manager onto it. To do this, the Council must submit an application to the traffic commissioner. For the application to be approved by the traffic commissioner, they will check whether:

- The person is qualified to be a transport manager;
- They will be working enough hours to manage the vehicles in the fleet;
- Their knowledge is up to date; and
- They have any criminal convictions or have been given any penalties for breaking UK or EU laws.

According to the .gov website, it usually takes seven weeks for an application to be approved but can take longer. If the traffic commissioner has questions about the transport manager's eligibility, they will write to Bridgend CBC for further information or clarification.

Insurance. The Council will need to secure motor insurance. Bridgend CBC will likely need to upgrade their current insurances to cover larger vehicles coming across from the waste contract.

Health & Safety. The Council will become legally responsible for the health and safety of staff. Bridgend CBC will need to ensure risk assessments and safe working practices are in place (Plan B may provide existing ones for review). The Council will need to recruit a HSEQ role with specialist training to cover the additional requirements of the waste and recycling collections services, who will join Bridgend CBC wider H&S team.

Commercial Services. An in-house organisation cannot make money officially from a service such as commercial waste collections, but any profit would be classed as surplus instead. The service cannot be run as a loss. Any surplus would instead be rolled back into the service.

6.4 Mobilisation Timelines

Figure 6-3 provides a high-level summary of the different steps and associated timelines needed to bring the waste and recycling services in-house.

In addition to the additional permanent resources mapped in section 6.1, there will also be a need for transitional resources, including:

- A Senior Project Manager and a Project Administrator to plan and manage the transition from start to finish (about 1.5 years). These roles may be temporary recruitments or an allocation of existing Bridgend CBC resources depending on the Council's teams capacity;
- Additional HR and legal support for the onboarding of the workforce. Eunomia would recommend hiring a HR Manager and HR Advisor for 12 months before the start of the new service, and procuring external legal support that can be drawn in as and when needed; and
- Additional H&S and Finance support to develop the relevant management processes ahead of the start of the new services. We would recommend hiring a H&S Manager and Finance Manager for 6 months before the start of the new services.

Appendix

A.1.0 Commissioning Options Report

[A.1.0 Commissioning Options Report](#)

[A.2.0 Commissioning Options Evaluation Model](#)

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