

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING**

**18 OCTOBER 2017**

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING**  
**CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME**

**1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To provide the Committee with an update of the work undertaken since Cabinet granted approval to implement a new model for specialist 52-week provision for children and young people with complex needs, and to note the Statement of Purpose that has been developed for the new provision (provided in **Appendix A**), which was originally approved by Cabinet in July 2017.

**2.0 Connection to Corporate Plan**

2.1 This report links to the following improvement priorities in the Corporate Plan:

- Helping people to be more self-reliant;
- Smarter use of resources.

Plus the following background document:

- Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

**3.0 Background**

3.1 At present, there is no specialist 52-week provision available in-county for children and young people with complex needs. Therefore, when the needs, complexities and challenges of a young person escalate, and a 52-week accommodation service is required, the only option currently available is an Out-Of-County placement. Placing young children outside the county is not ideal for the child or their family, as they have to move from their local area, and these placements are expensive.

3.2 There is clearly a demand for specialist 52-week provision for children with disabilities locally, averaging circa 3 placements per year over the last 10 years, and it has been identified that they could have been placed and educated in-county, if there was specialist 52-week provision available in Bridgend.

3.3 Mapping and profiling recently undertaken also shows that there are a number of children and young people currently receiving other forms of care, whose needs and complexities are increasing to such a degree that 52-week specialist provision may be needed in the near future.

3.4 In July 2015, a report was presented to Cabinet, to inform them of the work being undertaken as part of the Children with Disabilities Transformation programme. Cabinet noted the progress that had been made to date, and approved a

consultation exercise with staff and stakeholders, to inform the options for delivery of in-county accommodation in the future.

- 3.5 Officers have spoken with families of children with disabilities about developing a 52 week provision within the County Borough of Bridgend and they have been very positive about this. Families have spoken about their upset and difficulties when their child has had to go outside of the Borough to have the necessary support.
- 3.6 A number of workshops and discussions have also taken place with local providers, in respect of scoping options and opportunities to work together to facilitate providing specialist 52-week provision, in-county. Findings from these multi-partner events helped inform the development of potential models for specialist 52-week provision in moving forward.
- 3.7 In November 2015, a report was presented to Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to update the Committee on the work being undertaken as part of the Children with Disabilities Transformation programme. The Committee requested that they receive a report on the developed options, so that Members can provide views on the options being considered and proposed new model.
- 3.8 In light of the costs associated with proceeding with the proposed new model at Heronsbridge School, a business case (which included an appraisal of those options identified above) was developed to help inform the financial viability of proceeding with this option, which was consulted-upon with:
  - School Modernisation Board
  - Heronsbridge School Board of Governors
  - Stronger Communities Connecting Services Board
- 3.9 Following endorsement of the proposal for specialist 52-week provision from the above boards, a capital bid of £286k was submitted to ensure funding is available to undertake the required works at identified Heronsbridge School properties, which was approved by Council in March 2016.
- 3.10 A report was presented to Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2016, asking the Committee to provide views on the proposed new model for specialist 52-week provision for children and young people with complex needs.
- 3.11 In response to acquiring this funding in 2016/17, a project board and project team were established, and project plans had been developed, which were in place to be implemented from October 2016, if officers were given approval by Cabinet to commence with the new model.
- 3.12 In November 2016, a report was presented to Cabinet who approved the implementation of the proposed new models for specialist 52-week provision for children and young people with complex needs, which is to refurbish and utilise the Caretaker's Lodge at Heronsbridge School, in order to provide specialist 52-week provision in-county – with BCBC delivering and staffing the service.

## 4.0 Current Situation

- 4.1 Following approval to develop the new specialist 52-week provision at Heronsbridge School, the project team initiated the project plans in order to take this piece of work forward. Members of the project team include representatives from: Built Environment, Children's Services, Education, Property Services, Finance, Human Resources and Project Management, who provide regular progress and monitoring updates at Children with Disabilities Programme Board.
- 4.2 Children and young people attending Heronsbridge School were asked to provide suggestions for the name of the home, who proposed the name 'Harwood House', which is the surname of the current caretaker at the school – and is in-keeping with how the other buildings at the school are named.
- 4.3 A number of separate workstreams have also been established, with the key areas of focus being:
- Procurement and Construction
  - Placements/transition planning
  - Registration (including staffing structure and rota)
- 4.4 **Procurement and Construction** – working alongside colleagues in Procurement and Built Environment, officers undertook a tender exercise in order to carry out the required refurbishment and building works at the Caretaker's Lodge in Heronsbridge School – with the successful bidder commencing work on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, and the works being successfully completed in September 2017.
- 4.5 **Placements/transition planning** – working alongside colleagues in the Disabled Children's Team, profiling has been undertaken in order to identify those most appropriate for placement within the new provision, and plans are being put into place in order to make the required transitional arrangements from existing provision in readiness for September 2017.
- 4.6 **Registration** – in consultation with members of the project team, and also members of the Children and Disabilities Programme Board, officers are undertaking an application process to register the new provision with CSSIW, a fundamental part of which is the Statement of Purpose (attached as **Appendix A**), which was presented for approval from Cabinet in July 2017.
- 4.7 A summary of the key points contained within the Statement of Purpose is shown below:
- Harwood House will provide a high quality residential Looked After Children service for up to three children/young people with complex needs, which includes children with a learning disability, aged from eight to eighteen years; and who are also enrolled in Heronsbridge School.
  - The service will enable children with complex needs who are unable to reside with their families to continue to attend their specialist school and remain resident local to their school and family.
  - Harwood House is a detached 2 floor listed building in the grounds of Heronsbridge school. The building is being extensively refurbished with a fit for

purpose extension, scheduled to open in Autumn 2017. It offers safety and security within a comfortable and pleasant home-like environment.

- Harwood House is managed by the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate of Bridgend County Borough Council.

4.8 The registration process with CSSIW commenced in June 2017, and it is scheduled that the registration process will be completed by September/October 2017, when it is planned for the first cohort of individuals to be placed within the provision.

4.9 As part of the Children with Disabilities Programme, the project to develop the new specialist 52-week provision at Heronsbridge School has been undertaken alongside the remodelling work carried out at Bakers Way, the overnight short break provision for children with disabilities. This has allowed officers to share management and administrative duties and roles between both provisions, and also allow those affected by the changes at Bakers Way to apply for the roles within the new provision – which has resulted in reduced costs and lessened the adverse impact on staff.

4.10 Due to the time constraints around CSSIW registration, and there not being a meeting of Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting within the required timescales, in July 2017 Cabinet approved the Statement of Purpose for the new 52-week provision for children and young people with complex needs, who noted that an information report will be presented to Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting in October 2017, detailing the information contained in the report to Cabinet, and the decision made by Cabinet in respect of approving the Statement of Purpose for the new 52-week provision for children and young people with complex needs.

4.11 In-line with BCBC's Constitution, it is the role of Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting to approve individual Statements of Purpose for the service areas of Fostering, Adoption and Children's Homes. As such, additional approval of the Statement of Purpose that has been developed for the new provision (**Appendix A**) is being requested, which was originally approved by Cabinet in July 2017.

## **5.0 Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules**

5.1 There is no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules.

## **6.0 Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 An EIA screening has been completed in consultation with the Equalities Officer, the conclusion being that a Full EIA will need to be undertaken within 3 years of this initial EIA Screening. This will give officers an opportunity to implement and embed the new model of care, before a full assessment is completed; identifying how effective it has been, who has been affected, and if there are any EIA implications as a result of implementing the new models of care.

## **7.0 Financial Implications**

7.1 It has been forecast that the savings from the planned reduction in existing high-cost out-of-county placements will be over and above the cost of running the new service, and the new service should enable a reduction in the dependence on high-

cost placements in future years. However, it should be noted that there remains a significant pressure on out of county budgets at this moment in time.

7.2 In the longer-term, an option that could also be considered is the potential for income generation from neighbouring local authorities, as there is limited specialist 52-week provision for children and young people with complex needs across the South Wales region.

## **8.0 Recommendation**

8.1 Cabinet Committee – Corporate Parenting is requested to:

- Note the information contained in this report, which had also been presented to Cabinet in July; and
- Note that Cabinet approved the Statement of Purpose for the new 52-week provision for children and young people with complex needs in July 2017 – as provided in **Appendix A**.

### **Susan Cooper**

Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing  
12 October 2017

## **9.0 Contact Officers**

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## **10.0 Background documents**

None