

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
ON TUESDAY, 9 MARCH 2021 AT 14:30**

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

CE Smith
NA Burnett

HM Williams

D Patel

RE Young

Officers:

Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Gill Lewis	Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Michael Pitman	Democratic Services Officer – Committees

629. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

630. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the 09/02/2021 be approved as a true and accurate record

631. DOMESTIC ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME, CAERAU WARD 2012 AND 2013

The Chief Executive presented a report which updated Cabinet on the engagement that has taken place with relevant stakeholders involved in external wall insulation / internal wall insulation work, as part of domestic energy efficiency programmes in Caerau in 2012 and 2013.

He explained that Cabinet received a report in November 2020 which set out detail of historical domestic energy efficiency programmes that were promoted in the Caerau ward of the county borough in 2012 and 2013 which advised that following an independent survey commissioned by the Council, and carried out by NuVision Energy (Wales) Ltd, that all of the 32 properties in Caerau ward that were surveyed by Nuvision, had some evidence of defective work, some of it significant. It was noted that the Council had involvement in administering the funding for a relatively small percentage of the total number of homes where work was implemented. There was evidence of 104 properties having external or internal wall insulation in Caerau during that period. Only 25 of those properties had the work paid for by funding through the Arbed scheme administered by the Council. Further background was provided at section 3 of the report.

The Chief Executive explained that following this report, letters were sent to energy companies where, based on evidence from its investigations, the Council was aware they had been involved in CERT and CESP funded work in Caerau. He advised that a response had been received from each of the companies, however the responses received from all of the companies consistently advised that they had no direct involvement in promoting or procuring work in Caerau and as such assumed no liability. Further detail was at section 4 of the report.

The Chief Executive added that a meeting between BCBC officials, OFGEM and Welsh Government had taken place. The key points that emerged were; the CESP and CERT schemes were closed and signed off many years ago and so it would be difficult to now pursue the energy companies for any redress, particularly as OFGEM confirmed the indirect role they had played in the work. Following this, a number of actions had been agreed, these were detailed at 4.5 of the report.

The Chief Executive explained that further work was to be carried out before a final position and options can be presented to Cabinet with regard to this matter.

The Cabinet Member Communities stated that while the responses from the energy companies were not unexpected, he was disappointed with them, as well as not satisfied with Welsh Government's response, He added that he was pleased that Welsh Government were planning to approach UK Government on this matter as it is not just an issue relating to Bridgend, but potentially many other towns and cities across the UK.

The Cabinet Member Communities asked the Chief Executive who was liaising with OFGEM, was it Welsh Government or BCBC.

The Chief Executive explained that ourselves and Welsh Government were liaising with OFGEM. He added that Welsh Government were keen on resolving the issues, however no new Government energy schemes would cover the cost for removal of previous workmanship, only for retro fitting new energy saving measures, but he maintained that the best chance of redressing the issue in all of the homes affected was to work with all organisations involved in the historical schemes, with the potential for new government energy schemes such as ECO to be targeted as part of the solution.

The Leader asked for reassurance that liaising with OFGEM and Welsh Government and the UK Government is the best way forward. The Chief Executive confirmed that he believed that at this stage the collaborative approach attempting to resolve the issues of all residents who had been affected by this, regardless of how the work was funded and under which scheme the work fell, was the best approach to resolve it. He believed that gave the best chance for redress for all of the householders, otherwise there was a risk that no one would represent the position of the other householders where work was carried out with funding not administered by the Council. However, he gave the caveat that there may come a time that if it became obvious that a fully comprehensive solution for all of the affected properties was not going to be achieved or would take too long, the Council would need to consider the available options for only the properties where it administered the funding.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

noted the engagement that had taken place with Welsh Government, OFGEM and the energy suppliers since the previous Cabinet report in November 2020.

approved further ongoing liaison with relevant stakeholders involved in the wider external wall insulation/ internal wall insulation works in Caerau.

noted that a further report will be presented in due course to Cabinet outlining the outcome of the continued engagement and outlining any solutions that had been agreed.

632. BRIDGEND TOWN HEAT NETWORK PROJECT PHASE 1

The Corporate Director Communities presented a report which:

sought agreement from Cabinet to present a report to Council seeking approval to include a capital budget of £3.4m in the capital programme for the Bridgend Town Heat Network Project (Phase 1),

sought approval to establish a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for the development of the Bridgend Town Heat Network Project based on recommendations within the report on the form and structure of the SPV and how it will be governed and managed,

sought Council approval to provide a loan of £1.821m to the Special Purpose Vehicle to enable the project to progress. The £1.821m forms part of the £3.4m capital budget for the project, with the remaining balance of the funding being provided by a Heat Network Investment Programme (HNIP) grant (£1m), BCBC contribution from its Capital Programme (£0.5m), connection charges and share capital (£0.068m).

She explained that some of the other Councils that were progressing heat networks via this route were Barking and Dagenham, Bristol, Leeds, Durham, Maidstone, and in Wales, Cardiff and Bridgend. She added that the delivery of the Bridgend Town Heat Network Project is ultimately predicated on the capital cost for the project being affordable. This will be determined by the outcome of the current procurement exercise for a contractor to construct the scheme.

The Corporate Director Communities provided background surrounding the heat network project and the Councils aim for decarbonisation by 2030. Further background was at section 3 of the report.

The Corporate Director Communities explained that the proposed name for the SPV be called Bridgend Heat & Power Ltd, and stated that to establish an SPV each of the following factors must be considered:

The benefits and risks of establishing an SPV, notwithstanding the HNIP requirement.

- The form of entity to be established.
- The constitution of the SPV.
- The practical arrangements for governance, management and administration of the SPV.
- The contracts required between the Council and the SPV.

The Corporate Director Communities stated that the Council had the power to establish an SPV and details of this were at section 4.3 of the report. She added that there were a number of benefits associated with establishing an SPV, while also hosting potential risks. The risks and benefits of establishing an SPV were at section 4.4 of the report.

The Corporate Director Communities highlighted the following topics as per the report:

- Objects/aims of the SPV
- SPV Constitution
- Contracts with the SPV
- Administrative and Management Services
- SPV Governance and Oversight

The Corporate Director Communities outlined the financial implications and alluded to a small error in the figure at Table 1. The BCBC loan to SPV was £1,821,267, as was

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listed in Table 2. She advised that the total cost of the project was £3.389m, and details of the breakdown were in Table 1 and Table 2 of the report.

The Cabinet Member Communities welcomed the report and stated that the SPV was necessary to kickstart phase 1 of the project and enable future investment into the Bridgend Heat Network to be easier and streamlined. He added that the Council was looking to lead by example and understand the commitments under the 2030 decarbonisation agenda.

The Leader echoed the comments of the Cabinet Member and stated that this project was a long time in the making as it was a complex and innovative project and was proud to be the first Local authority in Wales to be undertaking this type of initiative. The Leader asked for confirmation that the funding that was secured from the UK Government was predicated on us creating an SPV, and if the project were to not go ahead, would impact the Councils progress in reducing the carbon footprint.

The Corporate Director Communities confirmed that the Heat Network Investment Programme (HNIP) was predicated on us setting up an SPV to deliver this network. The funding was one of a number of conditions for the grant and all Local authorities as previously mentioned had done the same. She stressed that the funding offered had to be used for this purpose, and if we were not to take advantage of it, the funding would go to another organisation that applied for it.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations welcomed the report saying that it was an interesting report with a great level of detail, including the risks and how the Council will mitigate these risks. She was pleased to see that an annual review of the costs was in place as its not uncommon for costs to build up or increase over time. She added that it was pleasing to see the terms of the loan being positive, and that past loans had often created a burden on future generations with heavy end interest placed on them.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Approved a report being presented to Council on 10th March 2021 to amend the Capital Programme 2021-2022 for the inclusion of this scheme in the Capital Programme, noting that there is already £500,000 included within the Capital Programme towards the scheme;
2. Subject to Council approval of the inclusion of this scheme in the Capital Programme and borrowing for the Bridgend Town DHN Project, Cabinet:
 - i. Recommended that Council provides a loan to the SPV on the terms set out in this report for the purposes of the Bridgend Town DHN Project and delegates authority to the Chief Executive to agree and approve the final terms of the Loan Agreement and arrange execution of the Loan Agreement on behalf of the Council subject to such powers being exercised in consultation with the Chief Officer - Legal, HR & Regulatory Services and the Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change.
 - ii. Approved the formation of a Special Purpose Vehicle as a Company Limited by shares as set out in this report (“the Company”);

- iii. Approved the use of 'Bridgend Heat & Power Ltd' as the name of the Company;
- iv. Approved the appointment of the Corporate Director - Communities, Head of Operations Community Services and Head of Partnership Services as Directors of the Company for the purpose of representing the interests of the Council;
- v. Delegated authority to the Chief Officer - Legal, HR & Regulatory Services to enter into the following and any other related agreements to enable the Company to be established:
 - Articles of Association
 - Shareholder Agreement
 - Management Services Agreement
- vi. Approved the implementation of the governance and oversight measures set out in the report;

Approved entering into a Management Services Agreement with the Company at a fixed annual / monthly fee, which is funded by the Company and delegated authority to the Chief Executive and the Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, to finalise the management fee and agree the terms of the Management Services Agreement in consultation with the Chief Officer - Legal, HR & Regulatory Services.

633. COSY CORNER TOURISM ATTRACTOR DESTINATION FUNDING

The Corporate Director Communities presented a report update Cabinet on the progress of securing funding through the Tourism Attractor Destination Programme to take forward a project on Cosy Corner, Porthcawl and sought authority to commence the process of appointing architects to further develop the project detail.

She explained that in October 2020 (BCBC) were informed that Credu Charity Ltd had filed notice of intention to appoint administrators and had been informed by Welsh Government of the withdrawal of funding for what was known as The Maritime Centre project, funded through the Visit Wales Tourism Attractor Destination Programme (TAD). As a result of this BCBC terminated the agreement for the lease relating to the Maritime Centre at the Cosy Corner site. Further background was at section 3 of the report.

The Corporate Director Communities stated that In December 2020 Cabinet authorised the Corporate Director, Communities, to develop and submit a proposal to access possible resources for improvements to Cosy Corner through the TAD programme. Cabinet also agreed to receive a further report relating to the detail of any funding offer if successful and, should it be required, recommend to Council an update to the Capital programme. An agreed proposal was submitted to Visit Wales and the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) in January 2021 based on the principles outlined in section 3.3 and the potential outcomes outlined in section 3.4.

The Corporate Director Communities explained that In February 2021 BCBC received confirmation from Welsh Government that WEFO had completed the assessment of six of the nine criteria for assessment of operations /projects and requested that further information be supplied in order to complete the remaining assessment stages, which were cross cutting themes, delivery and financial and compliance. She added that

WEFO and Welsh Government requested confirmation of match funding and confirmation of State Aid cover.

The Corporate Director Communities stated that in order to provide the final information required, it was proposed to undertake a procurement exercise to appoint architects and required consultancy support to progress the scheme from the outline options appraisal to RIBA stage 3. A further report would be provided to Cabinet should it be agreed.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration welcomed the report and stated that the plans were rational and it was pleasing to see at an iconic site in Porthcawl whereby it was inviting for all age groups to enjoy.

The Cabinet Member Communities echoed these comments and was excited for the report as it meant the council could move forward with the development on that site and benefit the residents and visitors of Porthcawl.

The Deputy Leader welcomed the report and said that Cosy Corner was a very important site in Porthcawl. He asked if there were opportunity for the wider public to get involved in any design work for the site.

The Corporate Director Communities stated that it was something that was envisaged. She explained that securing the money from WEFO and Welsh government was the next stage which should be in the next few months. Following this, she hoped to provide the early designs for the development around the summer time. She added that a condition of the grant was to include the following:

- A building with employment use
- Space for the sea cadets
- Accessible toilet facilities and changing places

The Corporate Director Communities explained that once these had been implemented, input from the public would be greatly welcomed as this site was for the community, in the heart of Porthcawl, so input from the public was important.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet: -

1. Authorised the Corporate Director - Communities to proceed at risk with the development of the remaining information required by WEFO and Welsh Government presented in section 4.4 of the report and to utilise the currently agreed direct match funding of £384,615 to do so in order to secure a potential £1m grant; and,
2. Agreed to receive a further report once WEFO and Welsh Government have completed assessment of all nine criteria stages for accessing potential funding before progressing further.

634. APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNORS

The Corporate Director Education and Family Support presented a report which sought approval from Cabinet for the appointment of local authority governors to the school governing bodies listed at paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2.

He provided details of eight schools in which applicants for applied for a local authority governor position and stated that all 8 applicants were unchallenged for the positions. These were listed in table 1 of the report.

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The Corporate Director Education and Family Support stated that there was competition for 1 vacancy, which was Bryntirion Comprehensive School, and it was recommended that MR Graham Clifford was appointed for the reasons in 4.2 of the report.

He also alluded to the additional vacancies, of which there were still 25 to be filled in 18 schools. The details of these were at Appendix A of the report.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration thanked all the applicants for coming forward and it was pleasing to see so many returning governors. He added that Mr Stephen Sloan, who previously applied as a governor for Bryntirion Comprehensive School as was mentioned above had now been appointed to Llangewydd Junior School. He asked that the list of vacancies be circulated as wide as possible to draw as many applications as possible.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved the appointment of LA Governors as outlined in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 of the report.

635. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY 2022-2023

The Corporate Director Education and Family Support presented a report which sought Cabinet approval of the School Admissions Policy 2022-2023.

He explained that the Bridgend Admissions Forum agreed a draft School Admissions Policy for 2022- 2023, as per the requirements under the Code, the consultation period for this took place from 19 January 2021 to 19 February 2021.

The Corporate Director Education and Family Support explained that 4.3 of the report detailed the representations received as part of the consultation and the actions that were taken in response.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration welcomed the report and asked if there were any major changes implemented in this years School Admissions Policy compared with previous years. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support confirmed that there were no major changes.

The Leader asked if any Members had been in contact with regards to the School Admissions Policy. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support did not have the information to hand but could provide that information to Cabinet at a later date if they wished.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved the School Admissions Policy 2022- 2023.

636. CARE HOME SERVICES - FUNDING AND CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing presented a report which provided feedback received from care home providers in respect of the viability of establishing an openly procured flexible framework of care home providers, as approved by Cabinet in March 2020. It also sought approval to continue the waiver under Contract Procedure Rule 3.2.3, from the requirement to competitively tender the provision of residential and nursing care home services, based on this feedback received and the risks set out in the report. It also sought approval to enter into new contracts with existing residential and nursing care providers, and enter into contracts with any new providers identified by the Local Authority, for a contract period of up to six years.

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The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing highlighted the importance of the funding and contractual arrangements as care homes provide accommodation, care and support for the most vulnerable people of Bridgend.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing stated that there were 19 care homes in the Bridgend area which provided 780 beds to their residents of which approximately 50% were funded by BCBC. She added that the last year had been extremely challenging for the care home sector.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing outlined the risks/issues associated with attempting to establish an openly procured flexible framework, which needed to be considered against the risks of not carrying out a procurement exercise, these were detailed in the table at 4.10.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing outlined the care home price schedule for 2021/2022 and compared the costs of other local authorities in Wales. The details of these comparisons were at 4.19 of the report. She stated that a cost pressure analysis had been undertaken in January 2021 in order to determine an uplift amount that existing rates would be increased by, which considered financial pressures for care homes linked to legislative changes (such as National Living Wages (NLW) increases) and other inflationary factors. These calculations had determined a 1.62% increase linked to this cost pressures analysis. She added that in addition to this, as part of the MTFS, there would be a further £250k of grant funding made available for staff/workforce cost pressures. Further details were at 4.2 of the report.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help welcomed the report and echoed the point made about the extreme pressure that care homes had been under. She explained the importance of ensuring the care homes are well supported and that the staff there had the support they needed and with the changes that were to come post Covid-19, it was important to attract new providers into the market. The Cabinet Member was pleased to see the £250k grant funding be made available to provide additional support.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Noted the feedback received from care home providers in respect of the viability of establishing an openly procured flexible framework of care home providers;
- Gave approval to continue the waiver under Contract Procedure Rule 3.2.3, from the requirement to competitively tender the provision of residential and nursing care home services;
- Gave approval to enter into new contracts with existing residential and nursing care providers, and enter into contracts with any new providers identified by the Local Authority, for a contract period of up to six years with an initial term of 3 years and option to extend for a further 3 years;
- Noted the fee-setting approach undertaken for the care home sector in 2021/22.

637. NATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing presented a report which sought approval to sign the revised National Adoption Service In Wales partnership agreement.

She outlined the background surrounding National Adoption Service for Wales (NAS) which was established in 2014 in response to service user and Government recommendations for improving services. She explained that in 2018 the Governance Board and Advisory Group for NAS determined that coherence and ability to improve needed to be strengthened in order to enhance the achievement of strategic objectives and priorities for adoption services across Wales. The WLGA and ADSS-C commissioned The Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University (IPC) to undertake a review of the existing arrangements. IPC engaged in various ways with a wide range of NAS organisations and stakeholders including Advisory Group and Governance Board workshops, the Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales Children, Young People and Education Committee which concluded with three potential ways forward, including a new partnership agreement. These were listed at 3.2 of the report,

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing outlined the current situation and summarised the elements of the revised agreement as set out in 4.1 of the report. She added that a key change that was referred to by Western Bay Adoption Service within the new Partnership Agreement was the development of Regional Joint Committees. These were made up of lead Cabinet Members across a region who met twice a year to agree plans and resource recommendations via the Regional Management Board (RMB). A briefing paper was to be presented to the next Management Board in April 2021 to consider how the region would address this particular element of the agreement. Further details on the change were at 4.2.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help welcome the report and the work that had been put in to improving the prospects of our looked after children (LAC). She added that she looked forward to sitting on the new regional joint committee as it was important to have an overarching view of what was happening with regards to LAC and an aim to reduce the number of LAC and children coming into the system in the first place.

The Leader echoed the points made by the Cabinet Member and stated that adoption support was very important and was one of the reasons that a regional and national adoption services were developed was to improve the level of support post adoption to parents as well as children. HE added that many of the children who had been adopted had some adverse childhood experiences so it was important to provide them with as much support as the adoptive parents.

The Leader asked for confirmation that support had continued to be offered particularly during the pandemic and how the regional and national services had responded to the challenges faced.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing explained that despite the pandemic and pressures that came with it, the performance and outcomes for children supported through national and regional services had been really positive. The number of placement orders granted this year had increased slightly. She added that despite lockdown restrictions, the service was able to achieve a match of children with prospective adoptive families similar to previous years which was positive given the challenges of face-to-face working. She added that we had seen more children through the regional adoption service staying and remaining within the region of Bridgend which was important for support. She added that regular adoption support groups had been developed this year and a therapeutic parenting group had also been established.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Noted the contents of the report;

- Delegated authority to the Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing to agree the 5 terms and execute the Partnership Agreement in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal, HR and Regulatory Services.

638. **PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENT FOR DEMENTIA TRAINING**

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing presented a report which sought approval to enter into a partnership agreement with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB) with the objective of collaboration to support the health and social care workforce through joint learning and development activity in order to improve the lives of people affected by dementia, which will require a suspension of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs).

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing explained that BCBC entered into a partnership with Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABMUHB) Region over 10 years ago to support the development and delivery of dementia care training and support to the social care sector. During the transition period of re-alignment from ABMUHB to CTMUHB in 2019-20, BCBC entered into a temporary contractual agreement with CTMUHB agreed via the Scheme of Delegation. She added that converting the temporary arrangement into a formal arrangement gives security in terms of cost and quality and maintain consistency in delivering skills based training to health and social care staff.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing explained that the proposed arrangement ensured that collaborative working arrangements were effective, co-ordinated and comprehensive to encourage closer cooperation, liaison and information exchange between the parties. The arrangement would be delivered on a not for profit basis. Further information was at section 4 of the report.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing stated that upon Cabinet's approval, it was intended that the Council enter into a partnership agreement with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board for the provision of dementia training from 1 st April 2021 for a term of 3 years with the option to extend up to a further 6 months.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help welcome the report and stated that it was a good service that should continue and the assurance from officers that it was working well was positive to hear.

The Leader added that the service had evolved a great deal since the start of the pandemic and was now delivering the training virtually where possible. While we wanted to see a return to face to face learning when it was safe to do so, it was important to retain some of the virtual aspect of it as it was a more convenient and effective way with engaging with many people.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Approved entering into the partnership agreement with CTMUHB in order to bring about the positive benefits for those living with dementia as set out in the report, and suspends the relevant parts of the Council's CPRs in respect of the requirements relating to the procurement of the dementia training and development provision which CTMUHB shall fulfil;
- Delegated authority to the Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing, to approve the final terms of the partnership agreement with CTMUHB on behalf of the Council and to arrange execution of the agreement on behalf of the Council,

subject to such delegated authority being exercised in consultation with the Chief Officer - Legal, HR and Regulatory Services and Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change.

639. REGIONAL FRONT DOOR FOR FOSTERING RECRUITMENT - CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing presented a report which:

- Requested approval to align fostering recruitment across Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil through the creation of a Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) Regional 'front door' to potential foster carers
- Sought authorisation to delegate authority to the Head of Children's Social Care to represent Bridgend County Borough Council on the Regional Strategic Group, which will provide governance for, and make decisions in relation to, the implementation of the regional fostering service functions set out in the report.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing provided background on the pressures that local authorities under Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board faced and continue to face each year with regards to recruiting and maintaining foster carers. She explained that each year, many carers leave for a variety of reasons. Insufficient numbers of Local Authority foster carers and meant an increase in use of Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) carers which often meant additional costs to BCBC. She added that there were currently 127 foster carers in Bridgend.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing stated that there was a current vacancy within BCBC for a full time development officer with responsibility for some recruitment and marketing activity, including the development of a recruitment strategy.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing explained that a partnership between Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCTCBC) and Merthyr Tydfil (MTCBC) was established in early 2019, whereby an operation for a Regional Front Door system was established for the recruitment of foster carers. The performance was indicated at section 3 of the report and evidenced a successful increase in recruiting foster carers since 2019. She added that by further investing in the area of marketing and recruitment and bringing these front door functions together, on a collaborative basis (and providing dedicated staff to the role of recruitment and marketing), this would replicate good practice in independent agencies, improve the responsiveness towards enquiries, completing initial visit pre assessment screening within an appropriate time and the number of applicants reaching assessment. It was anticipated that this would result in an increase in the number of approved foster carers.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing outlined a range of options that were considered by the regional strategic group which were set out in section 4 of the report. The exact arrangements were to be set out in the collaborative agreement and outline the financial implications as indicated at section 8 of the report.

The Leader welcomed the report and stated that it was pleasing to see the level of collaborative working between BCBC and our partners. The importance of receiving enquiries and having the ability to quickly provide responses was paramount. He explained that there were other providers out there but we wanted to promote our in-house provision for fostering and this system would allow us to further provide a more effective service. He added that we had recently put on virtual events to promote the fostering particularly among the LGBTQ+ community and had seen significant success on this. He added that who ever wanted to foster, if they could provide a loving home for

children then we wanted to hear from you, no matter the sexuality, relationship, personal circumstances etc.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Approved entering into a regional collaboration with RCTCBC and MTCBC for the creation of a Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Front Door for Fostering Recruitment which will align fostering recruitment across Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil.
- Delegated authority to the Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing in consultation with the Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, and Chief Officer- Legal, HR and Regulatory Services, to agree and approve the terms of the regional collaboration agreement and pooled fund agreement and to arrange execution of the regional collaboration agreement and pooled fund agreement on behalf of the Council.
- Delegated authority to the Head of Children’s Social Care to represent and make decisions for Bridgend County Borough Council on the Strategic Board.
- Delegated authority to the Group Manager, Placements and Provider Services and Team Manager, Bridgend Fostering to represent and make decisions for Bridgend County Borough Council on the Operational Board

640. CARE AND SUPPORT AT HM PRISON & YOUTH OFFENDERS' INSTITUTION PARC

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing presented a report which sought authority to waive the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules (CPRS) in accordance with CPR 3.2.3 in respect of the provision of a Care and Support Service at HM Prison and Youth Offenders’ Institution Parc (HMP & YOI Parc).

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing provided background surrounding the new set of responsibilities for Local Authorities which was approved by Cabinet in July 2016. She explained that from 2016, local authorities had been responsible for addressing and meeting the care and support needs of all adults and young people in the secure estate not just upon discharge but while they were in custody. She added that in July 2016 Cabinet report sought approval to enter into a pilot arrangement with G4S Health Services (UK) Limited, and sought authorisation to waive the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules under 3.2.3 from the requirement to seek competitive tenders for the provision of care and support within HMP & YOI Parc on the basis that there was technically only one potential provider of the care and support services for the reasons set out in that report. This was approved and a pilot arrangement/contract was entered into with G4S Health Services. Further background was at section 3 of the report.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing explained that the pilot arrangement was successful, but had now expired. It was requested that Cabinet approve a new contract with G4S Health Services (UK) Ltd from 1 st April 2021 for a period of 2 years with the option to extend up to 2 years. The approximate cost of a 4 year period would be £420k. She added that there was not an exact cost as care hours fluctuate and we were anticipating to see a need for increase in care hours going forward due to the population getting older and the need for care being greater. Further information was at section 4 of the report.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Wellbeing welcomed the report and stated that while we did not have a lot of choice in who to partner with, it had been established that there was a strong working relationship with G4S and Parc Prison. We were

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continually monitoring their work and they had been compliant with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and the service provided was as good as it could be. The Leader echoed this and stated that it was a specialist service that was being delivered and was assured that the service was of high quality. The Leader asked what the cost arrangements were around the service.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing explained that the unit cost for the service was good value for money in terms of comparable of what we paid across the domiciliary care sector. She added that this would be continually monitored throughout the 2 years of the arrangements.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Approved a waiver of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules under Rule 3.2.3 from the relevant parts of the Contract Procedure Rules for the procurement of the provision of care and support within HMP and YOI Parc, on the basis that there is technically only one organisation which can deliver this service.
- Delegated authority to the Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing, to approve the final terms of the contract with G4S Health Services (UK) Ltd on behalf of the Council and to arrange execution of the contract on behalf of the Council, subject to such delegated authority being exercised in consultation with the Chief Officer - Legal, HR and Regulatory Services and Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change.

641. **NON DOMESTIC RATES: DISCRETIONARY RELIEF: ENHANCED HOSPITALITY AND LEISURE RATES RELIEF SCHEME 2020-21**

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented a report which asked Cabinet to adopt the Welsh Government's Enhanced Hospitality and Leisure Rates Relief Scheme for 2020-21.

She explained that Welsh Government recently announced on 24 February 2021 that an Enhanced Hospitality and Leisure Rates Relief Scheme was available for the current financial year, 2020-21, to support eligible occupied businesses within the hospitality and leisure sector in Wales with a rateable value over £500,000. The Scheme set out the various categories of hospitality and leisure premises that would benefit from relief. These were detailed in Appendix A with further background at section 3 of the report.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change stated that the Council could adopt the scheme, but could not modify it. She added that if adopted, any eligible business would be written to and on receipt of the information required, relief of rates of 100% would be awarded.

The Deputy Leader welcomed the report and was grateful for the support from Welsh Government to eligible businesses.

The Leader thanked the finance team who worked hard day and night to get the grants paid to businesses, which had been in the 1000's. The small team had gone above and beyond and dealt with the pressures that had come with it including time frames, additional work on top of their core work etc.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change thanked the Leader for the comments and explained that every grant issued had different terms and conditions attached to it, so it was ensuring the correct procedure was followed in as timely manner as possible. She added that it had been over £40 million in total, and ensuring the

correct procedures were followed ensured that only eligible businesses received it, without risking paying out incorrectly.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet adopted the Non Domestic Rates Enhanced Hospitality and Leisure Rates Relief Scheme for 2020-21 as detailed within Appendix A of the report.

642. LOCAL LAND CHARGES NATIONAL PROGRAMME

The Chief Officer - Legal, HR and Regulatory Services presented a report which was to apprise Cabinet of the Local Land Charges National Programme and seek authority to enter into a Collaborative Agreement with HM Land Registry.

She explained that every local authority was required to hold a local land charges register that recorded obligations affecting properties within their administrative area.

The Chief Officer - Legal, HR and Regulatory Services explained that in 2015, HM Land Registry (HMLR) was given the authority under the Infrastructure Act 2015 to create a single, national, digital register of Local Land Charges (LLC) across England and Wales with the aim to become a trusted source of LLC information which would benefit the home buying process by making it easier to access, faster and cheaper. Further background to this and the benefits of the register were listed at section 3 of the report. The Chief Officer - Legal, HR and Regulatory Services explained that BCBC had been scheduled to migrate its LLC records in 2022/23 with a delivery plan being implemented by HMLR to ensure a smooth transition. By entering in into a Collaborative Agreement and formalising the delivery plan now HMLR can finalise preparatory work that reflected the Authority's needs, capability and readiness to migrate.

The Chief Officer - Legal, HR and Regulatory Services stated that Officers had assessed the models offered by HMLR and had concluded that the most suitable models to choose from were HMLR Supplier or HMLR Delivered as indicated in section 4.3 of the report. She advised that the next steps were to establish a working group within the authority comprising of officers from Land Charges, Legal, Finance, ICT and Planning to lead the migration and ensure that the Authority fulfilled its responsibilities to agreed timescales and feed back to all stakeholders including HMLR. She added that there were no costs to the authority for migrating as it was being fully funded by HMLR.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations welcomed the report and thanked the Officers from the different departments who had come forward to carry out the work. She added that this system was a positive step forward for people wishing to buy properties and it allowed for consistency between the different local authorities. She asked for elaboration on the service available for digitally excluded people.

The Chief Officer - Legal, HR and Regulatory Services explained that the service would primarily be run through the gov.uk service, which the majority of residents were likely already set up for due to a number of services provided through there. However, there was plans for a processing team to carry out queries for people who were digitally excluded and carry out the searches on their behalf. She added that upon completion of the service, communication with the public would establish further specific needs and if needed, look at options that would help make the service more accessible to them.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Delegated authority to the Chief Officer – Legal, HR and Regulatory Services to agree the terms of the 8 Collaborative Agreement with HMLR and any ancillary

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agreements and to arrange execution of such agreements on behalf of the Council;

2. Noted that further reports will be presented to Cabinet on the LLC National Programme.

643. URGENT ITEMS

None

644. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

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

Following the application of the public interest test it was resolved that pursuant to the Act referred to above, to consider the following item in private, with the public excluded from the meeting, as it was considered that in all circumstances relating to the item, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, because the information is commercially sensitive and it relates to the business and financial affairs of the Council and the proposed vendors.

645. APPROVAL OF EXEMPT MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the exempt minutes of the 09/02/2021 be approved as a true and accurate record