

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
ON TUESDAY, 8 MARCH 2022 AT 14:30**

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

J Gebbie
D Patel

SE Baldwin

CE Smith

HM Williams

Apologies for Absence

None

Officers:

Carys Lord	Chief Officer - Finance, Performance & Change
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Andrew Rees	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Mark Galvin	Interim Democratic Services Manager
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Martin Morgans	Head of Performance and Partnership Services
Jamie Cullen	Operational Manager for Customer Services/CCSU
Steven Howell	Group Manager Placements & Provider Services
Ryan Jones	Strategic Housing Commissioning Manager
Philip O'Brien	Digital Transformation and Customer Services Manager
Jason Bale	Operational Manager (Enterprise and Specialist Services)
Alix Howells	Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager

803. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor HM Williams – agenda item 7 – Non-Domestic Rates: Discretionary Relief: Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief Scheme 2022-23 – Prejudicial interest and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of the item.

804. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet of 8 February 2022 be approved as a true and accurate record.

805. STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2020 - 2021

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager presented the report of the Chief Executive which updated Cabinet on the work completed within the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2020 – 2024 for the period 2020 – 2021.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager reported that the annual report enabled the Council to monitor and review progress against its strategic equality objectives; review its objectives and processes in light of any new legislation and other new developments; engage with relevant stakeholders around equality objectives, providing transparency; include relevant updates on equality impact assessments, procurement arrangements and training. It also set out the steps taken to identify and collect relevant information; any reasons for not collecting relevant information; where

appropriate, employment information, including information on training and pay. She highlighted the progress made by the Council in each of its six equality objectives and she highlighted the key points for noting from the annual report.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations commented on the interesting data emanating from the report and stated that the Council is a female friendly employer. The Leader was pleased the support given to the Welsh language with the Council's plans for establishing children's hubs through the medium of Welsh as well as all the streams which had been reflected in the report. He stated that it was important to note that the County Borough provides sanctuary for refugees and will continue to do so given the situation in Ukraine.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet noted the progress being made and approved the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2020-2021.

806. **LOCAL AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT - PARK STREET AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

The Operational Manager– Enterprise and Specialist Services reported on an update on the draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for the Park Street Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), following receipt of the initial transportation and air quality modelling results undertaken on a number of the measures initially identified in the draft AQAP.

He reported that the 2021 Annual Progress Report (APR) confirmed that in 2020 air quality continued to be a concern along Park Street coinciding with the geographical boundary of the Park Street, Bridgend AQMA Order. Monitoring undertaken in 2020 at monitoring sites OBC-110 & OBC-123, located on Park Street residential facades, still demonstrated annual average levels in exceedance of the annual average air quality objective. He stated that while Shared Regulatory Services and the Council had made good headway in developing the AQAP in accordance with Welsh Government's Policy Guidance, inevitably the impacts and associated difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic have meant that the timeline has had to be extended in consultation with Welsh Government. An AQAP Work Steering Group was established, comprising specialists across Bridgend County Borough Council, as well as from partner agencies to develop ideas and to ensure an effective AQAP and to collate ideas and suggestions, a list of mitigation measures was created.

He reported that detailed air quality and transportation modelling was commissioned on the mitigation options that would manage and improve traffic flows through the Park Street AQMA, to deliver air quality improvements in the shortest time possible, and in line with the ambitions of Welsh Government and the Council, to reduce levels to as low as reasonably practicable. He informed Cabinet of the options which had emerged and modelled, namely Do Minimum - Introduction of a right turn holding lane at the Junction of Park Street with Heol y Nant (measure 21); and Do Something (inclusive of the above); deny all access onto St Leonards Road (Measure 18); and optimise the Park Street/Angel Street/Tondu Road Junction (Measure 20).

He informed Cabinet that under the planning consent for the former Ysgol Bryn Castell site, there was a requirement to introduce a right turn holding lane at the Junction of Park Street with Heol y Nant. This had been modelled as the Do Minimum scenario in the modelling exercises, as this change had now been implemented. Modelling of the right turning lane demonstrated congestion reduction on Park Street from vehicles turning right onto Heol-y-nant. He stated that to fully assess the impacts on air quality, the dispersion model had identified 35 receptor points (R1 – R35 on the location plan) along Park Street and surrounding streets in addition to modelling concentrations at the existing monitoring locations on Park Street (designated by the OBC- prefix). These

locations allow an assessment of relevant exposure across a wider area to assess the impact of the interventions.

He reported that the Do Something scenario was forecasted to provide a significant improvement in terms of NO₂ concentrations, the draft AQAP will need to be amended to reflect the final validated outcomes of the modelling. He stated that the draft AQAP would be subject to public consultation after the May 2022 local government elections. Following completion of the public consultation the results of the consultation would be reviewed to enable the finalisation of the AQAP to be reported to Cabinet for approval in advance of the revised submission deadline to Welsh Government of 30 September 2022. He stated that the final AQAP will provide a full implementation timeline of the preferred measures.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations asked for more detail on the public consultation and what opportunities would be given to residents to engage in the consultation. She also asked what residents could do in the meantime to put forward their concerns. The Operational Manager– Enterprise and Specialist Services informed Cabinet that the consultation will take place post the elections over a period of 12 weeks. He stated that Shared Regulatory Services had previously held a public consultation event which was not well attended, but he would look at holding drop-in sessions for residents to participate in. The Leader welcomed the opportunity for residents of Parkside to engage in the consultation. The Cabinet Member Communities commented that it was imperative that residents are notified of the opportunity to take part in the consultation. He stated that traffic orders would need to be in place and asked whether sufficient funding was available for this. The Operational Manager– Enterprise and Specialist Services stated that Shared Regulatory Services had been in discussions with the Traffic Management Team on the traffic orders. The Corporate Director Communities commented on the importance of looking at the traffic orders at the earliest opportunity and conformed that the Operational Manager– Enterprise and Specialist Services had been working with the Traffic Management Team.

The Leader congratulated Helen Picton on her recent appointment to the position of Head of Shared Regulatory Services which she would take up on 1 April 2022.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the progress made in assessing key transportation interventions namely Measures 18 and 20 in the draft Air Quality Action Plan for Park Street; and
2. Noted that public consultation on the Draft AQAP will need to take place after the 2022 Local Government elections.
3. Noted that following completion of the public consultation, a final AQAP will be presented to Cabinet for approval prior to being submitted to Welsh Government by the 30th of September 2022.

807. FRAUD STRATEGY AND FRAMEWORK 2022/23 TO 2024/25

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change sought approval of the Fraud Strategy and Framework 2022/23 to 2024/25 and for Cabinet to note the current Fraud Risk Register.

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change reported that the Strategy and Risk Register had been updated following consideration by the Governance and Audit Committee. She stated that the Fraud Strategy and Framework 2022/23 to 2024/25 outlined the aims and objectives of the Strategy, identified fraud risks and includes the

measures the Council will take to further improve the Council's resilience to fraud, bribery, and corruption. She informed Cabinet that the Council maintains a suite of strategies and policies to support the effective management of the prevention, detection, investigation of fraud, corruption, and bribery (Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Anti-Money Laundering Policy and Anti-Tax Evasion Policy) and this document provided an extension to the Council's existing policies.

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change informed Cabinet that the Fraud Risk Register listed 20 potential fraud risks that had been identified throughout the Council and it outlined the consequences of each risk and how each risk was being addressed with key actions being identified. She stated that the Fraud Risk Register would be monitored by the Corporate Management Board on a quarterly basis and any significant risks identified would be escalated to the Corporate Risk Register and reported to the Governance and Audit Committee where necessary.

The Deputy Leader in commending the Fraud Strategy and Framework stated that instances of fraud were extremely rare and past exercises in acting against those not using Blue Badges as intended had been successful and he thanked the Fraud Team for the way in which they carry out their work.

The Cabinet Member Communities sought clarification as to whether any fraud cases had been brought against Councillors. The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change informed Cabinet that no cases had been brought to the attention of officers.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved the Fraud Strategy and Framework 2022/23 to 2024/25 and noted the latest Fraud Risk Register.

808. **NON-DOMESTIC RATES: DISCRETIONARY RELIEF: RETAIL, LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY RATES RELIEF SCHEME 2022-23**

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change sought approval to adopt the Welsh Government's Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief Scheme 2022-23.

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change reported that the Welsh Government had announced a temporary extension of the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief Scheme for 2022-23 to support eligible occupied properties by offering a discount of 50% on non-domestic rates bills for such properties within the retail, leisure and hospitality sector and will apply to all eligible businesses, subject to a cap on the amount each business can claim across Wales. She stated that the total amount of relief available is £110,000 across all properties occupied by the same business. The Scheme will be administered by the Council as a 'reimbursing local authority' that uses discretionary relief powers. She informed Cabinet that the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief Scheme for 2022-23 will run alongside the Small Business Rates Relief Scheme.

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change reported that the Council can elect to adopt the Scheme but does not have discretion over any elements of the Scheme. She stated that if the Scheme is adopted, application forms will be made available on Bridgend County Borough Council's website for all qualifying ratepayers to apply. The Chief Executive has delegated power to award relief to all qualifying businesses in accordance with the Non-domestic Rates Relief Scheme that may be eligible following receipt of the information requested by Welsh Government.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations welcomed the support being made available to an industry which has suffered during the pandemic and asked for clarification on the rules around the grant funding and how many businesses might be

eligible for the relief. The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change stated that this scheme will run in parallel with the Small Business Rates Relief Scheme and over 840 businesses were eligible and could benefit.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet adopted the Non-Domestic Rates Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief Scheme for 2022-23 as detailed within Appendix A of the report.

809. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS (DFGS) FRAMEWORK

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change sought authority to go out to tender for a Framework to appoint contractors to deliver works required under Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs).

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change reported that Cabinet at its meeting on 19 January 2021, approved a new pilot model of service delivery for DFGs to be implemented, with the service being brought in-house. As part of this new model, a Framework was to be established to appoint contractors to provide works required under DFGs.

She reported that pre-market engagement with interested contractors had taken place, where contractors had the opportunity to attend one-to-one discussions and joint workshops. Following the workshops, the information gathered was being used to progress the tender documentation to reflect the findings of those discussions. Work was on-going to finalise the tender documentation and on completion, a procurement process would be commenced in accordance with the Council's Corporate Procurement Rules as soon as possible. She stated that the framework would be for a duration of 4 years totalling £7,800,000, with each call-off contract being no more than £36,000 in value. She stated that a further report would be presented to Cabinet following the conclusion of the tender process to seek permission to award the Tender.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations commended the progress made which would improve the timeliness to deliver DFGs and at the same time championing local businesses. She thanked the Employability Team for their role in promoting the engagement opportunities with local trades. The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change informed Cabinet that engagement had been carried out with possible future contractors to assist them in working with the Council and which had assisted in the development of the framework.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help was pleased to see progress being made with the framework which will help with adaptations being made to their homes, allowing for people to be discharged earlier from hospital.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:-

1. Approved the procurement of a Disabled Facilities Grants Framework of contractors to deliver works.
2. Delegated authority to the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change to tender for the Framework of contractors to deliver works under Disabled Facilities Grants in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy; and
3. Noted that a further report shall be presented to Cabinet following the conclusion of the procurement of the Framework for a decision on whether to award the

Framework and seek approval to enter into the Framework Agreement with successful bidders.

810. **DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT MEANS TESTING**

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change reported on Welsh Government guidance on the proposed removal of means testing on medium and small Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) and, if supported, sought approval for an interim amendment of the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal and Disabled Adaptations Policy.

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change informed Cabinet that it was currently a requirement that all adult mandatory DFG's (children's cases are exempt) undertake a means test to determine whether a contribution is required towards the works, with the maximum grant available set at £36,000 by the Welsh Government. She stated that the Welsh Government had indicated the intention to remove the requirement for a means test from small and medium DFG's, as it had estimated that they make up the vast majority of cases. Councils would save annual administration costs if the means test was removed and to meet the costs of removing the means test, enhanced Enable Grant funding would be made available to each local authority.

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change reported that the level of increased demand which may occur if means testing was removed was unpredictable, and it was evident that the costs of implementation are likely to exceed the Enable Grant uplift of £89,973. She stated that to remain within the current annual budget could mean that cases get programmed over financial years to manage demand, potentially building up a significant waiting list. She stated that the financial and operational impact of this decision was not clearly understood, and it was proposed that Cabinet agree to an interim arrangement for the removal of means testing for small and medium grants from 1 April 2022 and the financial and operational implications of this change are monitored during the new financial year.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations stated that the removal of means testing was good news, as delays often occur in adaptations being carried out when residents are discharged from hospital. The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help commented on the importance in keeping residents at home where they are most happy. The Cabinet Member Communities stated that the removal of means testing was a positive step forward and he was pleased the recommendations of Welsh Government were being implemented.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:-

1. Approved the removal of a means test for small and medium DFG's and that financial and operational implications are reviewed during the new financial year with a further report presented to Cabinet on the conclusion of the review.
2. Approved the amendment of the Private Sector Housing Renewal and Disabled Adaptations Policy on an interim basis to take effect from 1 April 2022 until the conclusion of the review.
3. Agreed the baseline Enable Grant of £180,000 remains ringfenced for very small works and current arrangements continue for the immediate future.

811. **HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMME STRATEGY AND HOUSING SUPPORT GRANT SPEND PLAN**

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change reported on the development of a Housing Support Programme Strategy and sought endorsement of the Housing Support Grant (HSG) Spend Plan for 2022-23.

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change reported that following the announcement of the Welsh Government's draft budget on 20 December 2021, the Minister for Climate Change agreed indicative HSG allocations for three years from 2022-23, the Council's indicative allocation for 2022-23 being £7,833,509.33, which was the same as the allocation in 2021-22. She stated that the allocation of £7,833,509.33 does represent an increase of £1,878,966.49 (32%) from the allocation in 2020-21. The increase in HSG funding was due to additional £40m being allocated to the total HSG budget by Welsh Government, which is intended to deliver the transformational change required to achieve the goal of ending homelessness in Wales.

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change also reported that the draft HSG Spend Plan has been submitted to the Welsh Government, which sets out projects funded through the plan to support the Homelessness Strategy 2018-22 and the priorities in the HSG Delivery Plan. Officers are in the process of developing a Housing Support Programme (HSP) Strategy to replace the Homelessness Strategy 2018-22 and as part of this, a Homelessness Review has been undertaken and developed with a range of stakeholders. She stated that the draft HSP Strategy would be presented to Cabinet, prior to public consultation. The Spend Plan committed to increased resources for projects which support the Authority in tackling homelessness. She stated that increased resources to increase the availability of temporary accommodation and vital support to those accommodated in temporary accommodation was key to supporting the Authority in meeting the demand on services and to ensure those who are homeless are supported to ensure their experience is as rare, brief, and non-recurrent as possible.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations asked what the percentage of the schemes is listed in the Housing Support Grant Spend Plan that are delivered by the third sector. The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change commented that 75% of the schemes will be delivered by the third sector through the development of arrangements with the Council's partners.

The Cabinet Member Communities asked for clarification of costs where the number of units is zero. The Strategic Housing Commissioning Manager explained that this was attributed to where the Welsh Government gives overarching support through contract monitoring and support provided by officers, and where there is no direct provision from those posts and without which, those projects could not be implemented.

The Leader acknowledged the additional support provided by the Welsh Government as Bridgend had experienced an increase of 61% in homelessness applications between 2016 and 2021 and 197 households in temporary accommodation.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:-

1. Noted the content of the report;
2. Endorsed the Housing Support Grant Spend Plan for 2022-23.

812. **UPDATE ON REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT SCHEMES**

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change reported on an update on the Council's refugee relocation schemes, specifically the Syrian refugee resettlement

scheme and the Afghanistan refugee resettlement scheme. She also sought approval to resettle a further three refugee families under either the UK resettlement scheme, the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme or the Afghan relocations and assistance policy.

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change informed Cabinet it had initially approved the resettlement of six families and then a further five families. To support the Syrian refugee resettlement schemes, a procurement exercise was undertaken to appoint a dedicated support provider for the service. A separate procurement exercise was undertaken to appoint a dedicated housing management service for the privately rented properties utilised to accommodate the families. The Council had claimed a Home Office Refugee Resettlement Grant for each refugee relocated. Funding for education was also available in the first year of support, with the amount dependent upon the age of the child.

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change also informed Cabinet that the Council had committed to resettling three families through the Afghanistan Refugee Resettlement Scheme, with funding being in place for a period of three years, with funding tapering off each year. Funding for education was also available in the first year of support, with the amount dependent on the age of the child.

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change reported that the Council had successfully met its pledge of resettling 11 Syrian refugee families and that the families were at different points in their resettlement journey. Dedicated resettlement support to these families was relatively minimal, with the focus at this stage on ensuring the long-term immigration status of the families was resolved, given that the families had been initially relocated on the basis of being granted leave to remain for five years only.

The Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change also reported that the Council had successfully met its initial pledge of resettling 3 Afghan families, with the families being resettled in various parts of the County Borough. She stated that the UK government aimed to resettle around 5000 people in the first year of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme and up to 20,000 over the coming years. She stated that local authorities would be asked to consider increasing any existing pledges made, to support this commitment. She outlined a proposal to approve the resettlement of the further three families under either the UK resettlement scheme, the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme or the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy. Flexibility was needed to accept a family from any of the three resettlement schemes, to ensure resettlement of the highest presenting need, as identified by the Home Office. She stated that the recommendation to resettle a further three families had been determined by taking into account capacity within the Taff Housing contract for the provision of support.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations thanked all who had been involved in the resettlement schemes and she stated that it would be an oversight if she did not mention the crisis in Ukraine and that Wales and the County Borough wished to create a sanctuary for the Ukrainian people. She proposed an amendment that the Council participate in the Ukraine resettlement scheme and delegate authority to the Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change and Cabinet Member to take part in the scheme without delay.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help was pleased see the success of the resettlement scheme, however she expressed concern at the risk of trafficking and exploitation of women who could be travelling alone. She thanked all staff, the health service, and schools for helping families resettle in the County Borough. The Leader thanked the schools for the excellent work undertaken in supporting refugees who had resettled in the County. The Deputy Leader added his support and he believed that

every effort should be made to support the resettlement schemes. The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration stated that the schools would do all they could to support refugees.

The Leader stated that the Welsh Local Government Association had met with Welsh government ministers in the last week to support the people of the Ukraine. The Welsh Local Government Association on behalf of all the Leaders of the local authorities in Wales had called on the UK government to grant visas to allow people from the Ukraine to enter the UK. The Cabinet Member Communities recognised the support of the people of the County Borough and expressed his thanks to Councillor David White and to Heidi Bennett of the Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations who had organised the vigil in the town centre of Bridgend, attended by over 200 people and raising over £1,200 for the people of Ukraine. The Leader stated that Bridgend had stood in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and commented that these had been the darkest days on the continent of Europe since World War Two. He informed Cabinet that he would provide updates to all Members on the support the Council would provide, and the leader of the opposition had pledged his support. He stated that Councillor Ross Penhale Thomas was supporting the organisation of a vigil in Maesteg and that the people of Ukraine need the help and support of the county Borough of Bridgend.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the contents of this report;
2. Approved participation in the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme;
3. Approved the resettlement of a further three refugee families with flexibility to resettle families under either the UK Resettlement Scheme, the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme or the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy depending on the highest presenting need for resettlement at the time.
4. Approved participation in the Ukraine citizen Resettlement Scheme and that delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change in consultation with the Leader and appropriate Cabinet Member(s) to ensure that when the UK Government allows refugees from the Ukraine into the UK that the Council fully participate in the support of refugees without delay.

813. **PORTHCAWL WATERFRONT REGENERATION: PLACEMAKING STRATEGY AND PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Corporate Director Communities reported on an update on the Porthcawl Waterfront Placemaking Strategy and on the outcomes of the public consultation completed and sought approval of the draft placemaking strategy document. She also reported on an update on the Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration Programme and sought endorsement on the next steps required to bring forward individual projects that form part of the Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration Programme.

The Corporate Director Communities reported that the placemaking strategy provided a framework for future phases of development and would be used to inform the next steps taken in the programme. Significant progress had already been made in relation to several key projects that represent the first phases of the regeneration and intended to act as a catalyst for future phases. Work was also ongoing in relation to bringing forward other Council led investment and regeneration within Porthcawl. One such project being the refurbishment and enhancement of the Grand Pavilion. Works to complete the improvements to the existing Eastern Promenade and Western Breakwater sea defences continue to progress on site. While planning consent for a multi-purpose

development consisting of a play area, public community space, commercial units, harbourmaster office and toilet / changing facilities has been granted at Cosy Corner, which would be progressed to tender the construction of the project.

The Corporate Director Communities also reported that Aldi Stores Limited had been appointed as the successful bidder for the development of a new food retail store on the North western portion of Salt Lake Car park. Construction was due to commence on site this summer with a view to the store opening in the summer of 2023. Detailed design work had been completed on the proposed Metrolink bus terminus to be located on the eastern side of the Portway, enhancing linkages to Pyle and facilitating improved public transport. The Porthcawl Compulsory Purchase Order was submitted to Planning and Environment Decisions Wales and confirmation was awaited as to the procedure the order will follow.

The Corporate Director Communities reported on the emerging themes and opportunities arising from the consultation stage on the placemaking strategy. The consultation included a two-day public exhibition, attended by more than 1000 members of the public. She stated that the consultation reflected the continued levels of public interest in the future of the Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration Area. Officers had investigated the potential for amendments, in response to the consultation to ensure the nature and scale of the development identified within the draft placemaking strategy, responded to the concerns and aspirations of the public.

The Corporate Director Communities delivered a presentation to Cabinet on the Placemaking Strategy, illustrating the site layout. Key revisions had been made in response to the consultation, namely a 200 metre long and 70-metre-wide linear park; enlarged Dock Street extension, and a third reduction in residential development land on Salt Lake. She highlighted future development areas, namely, the identification of up to 1100 homes at Salt Lake central, Salt Lake north, Sandy Bay West and Sandy Bay east.

The Corporate Director Communities highlighted the recommended next steps, namely:

- Approval of the draft Placemaking strategy;
- Business case for the delivery of development across Salt Lake sites;
- Options appraisal on delivering a leisure development on Salt Lake South;
- Feasibility study for a multi-Storey car park on the existing Hillsboro Car Park site;
- Further public consultation on the potential design of public realm and community spaces;
- Development brief for residential led development on the area of Salt Lake North;
- Development brief for the residential led mixed use of Sandy West and Sandy Bay East and;
- Progress the advertisement of the appropriation of land at Sandy Bay.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration thanked the Regeneration team and local members who he had met last week to discuss the Placemaking Strategy and to the public who participated in the consultation. He stated that the before and after maps had demonstrated that feedback had been taken into consideration, namely the reduction in numbers of housing on Salt Lake. He stated that where housing would be delivered there would also be permeability and boulevards. He informed Cabinet that the Eastern Promenade will be greener, wider, and pedestrianised, while the Metrolink will create transport linkages to and from Porthcawl. There would also be provision for car parking and the creation of squares and piazzas. He stated that there would also be an opportunity for a hotel with potential for conferencing, which would tie in with the redevelopment of the Grand Pavilion.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations stated that the regeneration proposals were exciting and would attract visitors to Porthcawl from further afield and she thanked officers for making amendments to the Placemaking Strategy as a result of the consultation. She asked for details on the time scales and deliverability of the regeneration proposals. The Corporate Director Communities informed Cabinet that work on the Aldi store and Metrolink would commence later this year. She highlighted the importance of undertaking works to Dock Street and the sea front park and infrastructure work to allow development to take place. She stated that an owners agreement was in place for the Coney Beach site, which would then be sold for redevelopment. The Corporate Director Communities informed Cabinet that momentum will be seen as the sea park and Dock Street proposals are laid out. Capital receipts from the Aldi store and leisure development would go towards infrastructure. She stated that she would come back to Cabinet on the detail of timescales. The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations commented on the importance of the boulevard being progressed so that the public can access it. The Corporate Director Communities informed Cabinet that a start on the Cosy Corner proposals would be made later in the summer to avoid a detrimental impact during the summer.

The Leader Stated that at the heart of the proposals is the investment in the Sea Front Park and the extension of Griffin Park which was the largest investment made by the Council in Porthcawl. He was delighted to see a commitment to net zero carbon with the Metrolink and the residential development to be built and the proposals for the parks will bring about biodiversity. He thanked the Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration for his leadership on the regeneration proposals and for championing the proposals. He also thanked the regeneration team for their part in bringing forward the regeneration proposals. He could not wait to see the development taking place on site and stated that the redevelopment proposals were ambitious but realistic.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the progress that has been made with respect to various projects that form part of the wider Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration Area (PWRA) programme.
2. Approved the draft placemaking strategy and authorise the Corporate Director - Communities to (subject to such amendments as the Council's Corporate Director-Communities may authorise) publish a final copy of the placemaking strategy, for the purposes of establishing a coherent framework to guide the delivery of future development within the PWRA.
3. Acknowledged that the following steps will now be undertaken to further progress the delivery of key projects within the PWRA:
 - Prepare business cases for delivery of development on Salt Lake central residential site, Hillsboro Car Park and Salt Lake South Leisure Site.
 - Complete an options appraisal to determine the optimum route to deliver a commercially deliverable leisure development on the Salt Lake South Leisure Site.
 - Commission a feasibility study to explore potential capacity and design options for a Multi Storey Car Park on the existing Hillsboro Car Park site.

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- Engage in further public consultation on the potential design and use of new and extended areas of public realm and community space identified within the placemaking strategy.
 - Prepare a development brief for the delivery of residential led development on the area of Salt Lake north that lies immediately to the east of the food retail site.
 - Prepare a development brief for the delivery of residential led mixed-use development across Sandy West and Sandy Bay East in line with the principles outlined within the draft placemaking strategy.
 - Progress the advertisement of the appropriation of land at Sandy Bay in line with the previous authorisation provided by Cabinet on 20 July 2021.
4. That the Corporate Director - Communities will report back to Cabinet to provide updates and seek any further authorisations required in order to progress development within the PWRA.

814. PORTHCAWL HARBOUR BYELAWS

The Corporate Director Communities reported on an update on the process to revise the byelaws that are currently effective at Porthcawl Harbour, to reflect the current operations and activities that take place, and the consultation on the proposed new byelaws, under the provisions of the Local Government Byelaws (Wales) Act 2012. She also sought approval of the proposed new byelaws and requested that, subject to Cabinet approval, they be presented to Council for adoption.

The Corporate Director Communities reported that she was authorised by Cabinet at its meeting in December 2020 to undertake a consultation on the proposed draft byelaws. Consultation took place between 23 August 2021 – 14 November 2021, via the Council's website and following the consultation, the proposed byelaws were reviewed by the Harbour Board.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration in commending the proposed byelaws stated that they would discourage people from entering the water away from the lifeboat and shipping operations. He stated that a possibility existed of developing a platform where swimmers could enter the sea directly into deep water, which would be the first such facility along this coastline. The Cabinet Member Communities stated that the proposed byelaws would mitigate against people being hit by boats entering and exiting the marina. The Leader commented that the safety of the harbour to its users is paramount due to there being an increase in water sports.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Noted a consultation process, under the provisions of the Local Government Byelaws (Wales) Act 2012, has been undertaken and the consultation report is set out in Appendix 2 of the report;
2. Approved the proposed byelaws as set out in Appendix 3, and;
3. Agreed that the proposed byelaws, as set out in Appendix 3, be presented to Council for adoption.

815. BRIDGEND 2030 - NET ZERO CARBON STRATEGY

The Corporate Director Communities reported on an update on work to develop the Bridgend 2030 – Net Zero Carbon Strategy and requested approval to carry out a formal public consultation on the draft Bridgend 2030 – Net Zero Carbon Strategy.

She reported that the Welsh Government declared a Climate Emergency in April 2019 and committed to achieving a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. Local authorities in Wales had been set a net-zero target which must be met by 2030 and in pursuance of this target, the Council had commissioned the Carbon Trust to guide on the route to Net Zero.

She informed Cabinet that the draft Bridgend 2030 – Net Zero Carbon Strategy has been developed following an in-depth review of data and extensive engagement with internal and external stakeholders. She stated that this Strategy would not be the only driver for net zero and it would also be a part of the Council's Corporate Plan, whilst policies, strategies and ongoing plans will all need to reflect the commitment to net zero. Formal public consultation on the draft Bridgend 2030 – Net Zero Carbon Strategy would be carried out over 12 weeks and following which, it was likely that it would require amendment as a result of comments received through the consultation.

The Corporate Director Communities highlighted the percentage of the Council's emissions are in which area of Scope, which had been defined by the Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting Guide. She stated that it would not be practical or possible for the Council to stop all carbon emissions entirely from its operations, but it must strive to reduce its emission as far as possible before using offsetting measures as the final step to Net Zero. The Corporate Director Communities highlighted the proposed strategic commitments that were set out in the draft Bridgend – Net Zero carbon Strategy, together with a series of proposed initiatives in relation to the themed areas.

The Corporate Director Communities reported that governance and engagement are essential to successfully deliver the Programme and the Board will oversee and track progress to Net Zero Carbon by 2030. The Programme Board will be chaired by the Cabinet Member for Communities and led by the Corporate Director Communities.

The Corporate Director Communities also reported that Bridgend had been selected by the Japanese Consortium Marubeni, a global specialist in renewables and hydrogen projects, as their chosen location to develop a New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organisation (NEDO) Investment Project. She stated that this would provide a significant opportunity for the Council to look to possibly decarbonise its corporate fleet and to look further at Hydrogen Energy applications. It could also provide potential benefits for other Local Authorities in the region, and to public sector partners such as the South Wales Police and Welsh Ambulance Service. She informed Cabinet that to move the development of the possible investment project forward, the Council needed to work alongside the Marubeni Corporation to both design and develop the project, which would also outline the precise components of the project, whether it be power or heat.

The Cabinet Member Communities stated that this is an essential as a corporate strategy and he was pleased to see how Directorates had bought into it. He thanked his predecessor in his role, Councillor Richard Young for being an advocate of the strategy and for his pioneering work. He stated that the Marubeni Corporation are innovators in the field, and it puts the Council at centre stage. The Leader stated that this was another strategy where the Council will deliver and where the Council has already commenced a programme of tree planting throughout the County Borough.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the progress to develop a Bridgend 2030 – Net Zero Carbon Strategy;
2. Gave approval to carry out a formal public consultation on the draft Bridgend 2030 – Net Zero Carbon Strategy, set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
3. Noted that a further report shall be received following the end of the consultation period to consider formally adopting the Bridgend 2030 – Net Zero Carbon Strategy, and;
4. Delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Communities, in consultation with the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change and Chief Officer - Legal, HR and Regulatory Services, to work with the Marubeni Corporation to design and develop the Hydrogen Demonstrator Project, to commission specialist legal advice utilising resources that will be made available from the Communities Directorate Earmarked Reserve (EMR) 2020-21 for implementing Bridgend 2030 Decarbonisation Strategy at an initial anticipated value of £30,000, from the Communities Directorate budget as required and to reports back to Cabinet on the full project proposal.

816. **BRIDGEND TOWN HEAT NETWORK PROJECT**

The Corporate Director Communities reported on an update on the development of the Bridgend Town Heat Network Project and sought delegated authority to award the contract for the construction and operation of the heat network subject to the approval of the revised project Financial Model by the Council's Section 151 Officer.

The Corporate Director Communities reported that Cabinet at its meeting in April 2018, approved the Outline Business Case for the project and to the submission of an application to UK Government through its Heat Network Investment Programme (HNIP). The application was approved in December 2019 for £1,000,000 capital investment towards the construction of the heat network and £241,000 for pre-construction activities. Cabinet was advised on an update on the project in January 2021 covering elements such as the procurement of a Design Build Operate Maintain contractor under the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 and applications for the necessary permits (Environmental Permit due to the gas CHP engine falling under the Medium Plant Combustion Directive) and permissions (planning permission for the location of a thermal store at the rear of the Bridgend Life Centre).

The Corporate Director Communities informed Cabinet of the progress made on the Environmental Permit; Planning Permission and the Design Build Operate Maintain Contractor Procurement. She stated that all the bids received for the main construction contract were outside the project's expenditure budgets, due to the impact of Covid-19 and the cost of raw materials and labour. She stated that extensive dialogue was carried out with all the bidders over the following months to understand where savings could be made to re-align the costs of the project within the project budget, whilst ensuring deliverables remained the same, final bids were received at the end of January 2022. The bids were assessed as compliant from a procurement process perspective and officers and the consultant team evaluated the bids from a quality and cost perspective. Following the evaluation of the bids, an updated financial model is being produced by the consultant team for the project containing the actual bid prices, to be approved by the Section 151 Officer. She stated that a further report would be presented to Cabinet to award the Design Build Operate Maintain (DBOM) contract, however as this was the last meeting of Cabinet prior to the local government elections

in May 2022, there was insufficient time to evaluate the bids received, update the financial model, and present the financial model to the finance department for approval by the Section 151 Officer. In addition, a decision to award the contract cannot wait until after the local government elections because the tender prices submitted by bidders would not remain valid for that length of time. It was proposed that delegated authority be given to officers to award the DBOM contract and enter and arrange execution of that contract on behalf of the Council subject to the Section 151 Officer approving the updated financial model (which would be updated following the evaluation of the bids) and determine that the scheme is financially viable.

The Cabinet Member Communities in commending the proposal stated that the project was innovative and at the cutting edge and that the emergency services as well as Bridgend College were interested in connecting to the Heat Network.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the update on the development of the Bridgend Town DHN Project.
2. Subject to the determination by the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change that the Bridgend Town DHN Project is financially viable, delegated authority to the Corporate Director – Communities in consultation with the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change and the Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy to award the contract for the design build operation and maintenance of the Bridgend Town DHN Project and subject to no challenge being received during the standstill period, enters into and arrange execution of that contract on behalf of the Council with the successful bidder.

817. **BRIDGEND COUNTY ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

The Corporate Director Communities reported on an update on work to develop a new Economic Strategy and sought approval of the Economic Strategy. She also sought approval of the terms of reference for the new Bridgend County Economic Partnership Board and for the proposed use of the Economic Futures Fund.

The Corporate Director Communities reported that Cabinet at its meeting in June 2020 approved the creation of an Economic Taskforce, chaired by the Leader and is in response to economic uncertainties and challenges arising from the coronavirus pandemic. Officers were mandated by the Taskforce in partnership with key stakeholders, to develop an economic plan for the future of the County Borough to include action to help businesses adapt to the changing economic landscape and improve resilience, as well as support for residents to develop new skills, training, and employment opportunities.

The Corporate Director Communities reported that the proposed Economic Strategy which had been developed following in-depth data review and engagement with stakeholders, would be the basis of dialogue on prioritised actions with Welsh and UK Governments, the Cardiff Capital Region, a range of funding sources, investors, and developers. It would support the Council's ongoing ambitions to play a full and active role supporting the local economy.

The Corporate Director Communities informed Cabinet that the Economic Strategy Data Report includes a comprehensive review of existing research, evidence, and published datasets as a core part of the basis on which the Economic Strategy is based and is aligned with the replacement Local Development Plan. She stated that it was proposed to develop a new governance model to support the delivery of the Economic Strategy,

including the development of a Bridgend County Economic Partnership Board as an evolution from the current Economic Task Force.

The Corporate Director Communities reported that the proposed Economic Strategy set out a long-term strategic vision that clearly articulated Bridgend's growth ambitions for the economy of the County Borough. It also set out a clear plan of action, strengthening linkages into all sectors of the economy and will all relevant stakeholders within the short, medium, and long term.

The Corporate Director Communities informed Cabinet that it was proposed that she in consultation with the Corporate Director – Education and Family Support, Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy and Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change submit proposals to secure resources for programmes, projects and activities from funders at the UK, Welsh and regional level, such as, but not exclusively to the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) and the forthcoming United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and if successful, would support delivery of actions contained within the Economic Strategy. The Corporate Director Communities also informed Cabinet that subject to approval of the Economic Strategy, a sum of £1.197m (inclusive of the current allocation of £200k) would be allocated towards the delivery of an enhanced Innovation Fund via the internal panel mechanism previously agreed by Cabinet. Spend from the capital programme will be subject to approval by Council and monitored through the capital programme.

The Cabinet Member Communities commented on the importance of having in place high-level strategy and thanked the Corporate Director Communities and Team for drafting the Strategy. The Leader added his support to the Strategy which had been developed with partners and businesses and with a focus on small and medium businesses. He was particularly pleased that £2m had been identified to invest in micro and small businesses.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the progress to develop an Economic Strategy;
2. Approved and adopted the Economic Strategy, set out in Appendix 1 of the report;
3. Noted the Economic Strategy Data Report, set out in, as the evidence base for the Economic Strategy;
4. Approved the terms of reference for the Bridgend County Economic Partnership Board, set out in Appendix 3, and;
5. Approved the proposed use of the Economic Futures Fund, as set out in section 8.5 of the report.

818. FOSTERING ALLOWANCES POLICY

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing reported on a proposed Fostering Allowances Policy and sought approval of the policy and delegated authority to the Head of Children's Social Care to implement the new policy.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed Cabinet that in Wales, the National Fostering Framework has been undertaking work to develop greater consistency in the use of Kinship care for children who are looked after and harmonisation of policies across Wales in relation to the payment of fees and

allowances to Foster Carers. She stated that the Council had been awaiting the outcome of this work prior to making any changes to the fees and allowances paid to all Foster Carers.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing reported that the Council's foster carers receive a basic allowance for looking after a child, which is paid at the level recommended by the Welsh Government. The recommendations for payments are based on an estimation of the actual costs of looking after a child. In addition, fees are paid to foster carers who are assessed to provide care to a range of children and are not applicable to those who are approved for specific children. This Fee is paid to General Foster Carers but not to Connected Persons Foster Carers. The fee element is split into two levels, with Level 2 – paid to foster carers post approval and Level 3 - paid to foster carers once they have had their 1st Annual Review and have completed the Qualification Credit Framework (QCF) training requirement.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing reported that the National Fostering Framework had recognised that changes need to be made to Foster Carer Allowances in respect of fees (which will become an Additional Allowance) which are paid to Foster Carers whether they are General Foster Carers or Connected Persons Foster Carers and a new Eligibility Criteria had been established. She stated that the Bridgend Fostering Service had drafted its Fostering Allowances Policy, setting out all the allowances that approved Foster Carers are entitled to claim and the Eligibility that a Foster Carer needs to meet to be entitled to the "Additional Allowance" (Formerly Fee). The new policy will be equally applicable to all BCBC Foster Carers i.e., Connected Persons Foster Carers will also be entitled to an Additional Allowance, if they are assessed as meeting the Eligibility Criteria.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing highlighted the financial implications of implementing the policy, which would result in a small increase in the budget for fostering with all unrelated Foster Carers moving from a Level 2 "Fee" to the age-appropriate Enhanced Allowance. There was also potentially a more significant impact which is dependent on the number of Connected Persons Foster Carer who express a wish to be assessed against the new Eligibility Criteria and are assessed as meeting the criteria. A budget pressure of £191,000 for 2022-23 had been approved by Council as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-23 to 2025- 26, to meet the anticipated increase to 'Connected Persons' Fostering Fees.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help stated that it had been evident during the pandemic of the challenges faced by foster carers and the need to value foster carers as they look after children who have had the most difficult of starts to life. She appealed to residents to come forward as foster carers to help children grow in a family environment.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved the Fostering Allowances Policy and delegated authority to the Head of Children's Social Care to implement the new policy.

819. **NATIONAL COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR WELSH (LOCAL AUTHORITY) ADOPTION AND FOSTERING SERVICES NATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE FOR WALES AND FOSTER WALES – ENHANCING GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND ENABLING**

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing reported that the National Adoption Service (NAS) has been in existence since 2014, enabling significant change and improvement in adoption services across Wales. She stated that its structure and governance through national, regional, and local arrangements were agreed by all

councils at that time and a review in 2018 led to proposals to streamline governance and improve accountability. Creating a Combined Governance Board (bringing together the Advisory Group and Governance Board required by the legislation) and a new Partnership Agreement to replace the original functional model have been implemented.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing reported that for the arrangements to be put on a formal footing that a National Joint Committee be established and with an agreement underpinning for its extension to include Foster Wales. She stated that the National Joint Committee will, on behalf of the 22 Welsh Local Authorities, exercise their powers for the provision of the collaborative arrangements for the National Adoption Service for Wales (NAS) and for Foster Wales (FW), comprising Council Members and meeting twice yearly. A Joint Committee Legal Agreement to be signed by all 22 local authorities has been drafted by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) lawyers, which also contains a formal Scheme of Delegation and provision for the formal agreement with the host local authority for national functions. She stated that funding for the governance arrangements and central / national leadership and enabling, is provided from the WLGA via a top slice of the Rate Support Grant plus grant funding from the Welsh Government, there was no expectation that individual councils will incur additional costs in relation to these functions.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Approved the Council entering into the Joint Committee Arrangement;
2. Delegated authority to the Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing in consultation with the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change and the Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy to agree the final terms of and enter into the Joint Committee Agreement for the National Adoption Service as the legal document that formally establishes the Joint Committee with delegated functions;
3. Approved the Cabinet Member - Social Services and Early Help sitting as the Council's representative on the Joint Committee;
4. Approved Cardiff Council acting as host authority for the arrangement and delegates authority to the Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing in consultation with the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change and the Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy to agree the final terms of and enter into the hosting agreement;
5. Delegated authority to the Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing in consultation with the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change and the Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy to agree the terms of and enter into any ancillary documents which the Council is required to enter into as a result of this arrangement;
6. Noted that a report will be presented to Council to amend the Council's Constitution as necessary to facilitate the operation of the Joint Committee Agreement for the National Adoption Service.

820. **EXTENDING THE TERM OF THE CURRENT SECTION 33 AGREEMENT FOR ADULTS AND OLDER PEOPLE SERVICES**

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing sought approval for the extension of the current Section 33 Agreement for Adults and Older People Services which covered partnership arrangements with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

for Intermediate Care Services through the integrated community resource team, enabling sufficient planning time to progress a number of service and strategic developments across the region and in the locality.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing reported that following the transition to Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board from the former Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board, a formal partnership agreement took effect for Adults and Older People Services from 1 April 2019, ending on 31 March 2022. She informed Cabinet that the integrated services in Bridgend embarked on a programme of change as part of the bid for Welsh Government's transformation funding in 2019, which built upon a suite of intermediate care services. It also looked to extend this wider multi-disciplinary team (MDT) approach within the integrated cluster networks with primary care, community service and social care, to build more resilient communities.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing stated that Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board clarified their intention to continue with and progress further with integration and the Bridgend Integrated Locality Group and Social Care embarked on a piece of work in Summer 2021, however the focus of health and social care services, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, had meant this work had not been able to progress as originally anticipated. Discussions are ongoing on the next steps in terms of service development and the regional approach to integration and due to the delays identified at the Joint Partnership Board, it was recommended that the current Section 33 agreement be extended for 2 years to 31 March 2024.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help stated that the Welsh Government is discussing a national care service and was pleased to see steps being taken towards that measure. The Leader also commented on the need for a focus on integration nationally.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Approved the extension of the current Section 33 agreement for the Adults and Older People Services with Cwm Taff Morgannwg University Health Board Board for a further two years to 31st March 2024 to support the strategic planning of the future service model.
- Delegated authority to the Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Chief Officer - Finance, Performance & Change and the Chief Officer, Legal Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy, to negotiate and enter into a variation agreement to the Section 33 agreement for Adults and Older People Services with Cwm Taff Morgannwg University Health Board to effect the above extension.

821. FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCE SERVICE

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support sought approval to suspend the Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) to enter a contract with TGP Cymru for 6 months to deliver the Family Group Conference service.

He informed Cabinet that the Family Group Conference service is an approach to working with children and families which enables parents, carers and wider family support networks manage the risks related to the care of their children. The approach has been identified by the Welsh Government as an essential area of practice for local authorities to use, to prevent children becoming looked after or to return children home to their families. He also informed Cabinet that the Council has been working in partnership with the sole provider of this service in the region, TGP Cymru and that the

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existing contract ends on 31 March 2022, with no option to extend. He stated that there had been an increase in referrals from 27 in 2020 to 100 in 2021 and that the relationships built by TGP Cymru had been positive, with positive outcomes for families engaged with TGP Cymru.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Suspended the relevant parts of the Council's CPRs in respect of the requirements relating to the procurement of the contract for the provisions of the FGC Service; and
- Delegated authority to the Group Manager (Family Support) in consultation with the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change and Section 151 Officer and Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy to enter into a contract for the provision of the FGC service with TGP Cymru from 1 April 2022 until 30 September 2022.

822. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY 2023-2024

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support sought approval of the Schools Admissions Policy 2023-2024.

He reported that the local authority is required to annually publish an admissions policy and guidance on the admission arrangements for its schools and the Bridgend Admissions Forum has agreed a draft School Admissions Policy for 2023- 2024, as per the requirements under the Code. He stated that consultation has subsequently taken place on the 2023-2024 policy, including the published admission numbers for the schools, and no representations were received in response to the consultation.

The Leader asked whether any Members had made any representations on the policy. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support confirmed that no representations were received from Members on the policy. The Leader also asked whether support for children of refugee families and unaccompanied children was included within the policy. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support informed Cabinet that the policy is very much an inclusive policy, which will accommodate all learners.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved the School Admissions Policy 2023-2024.

823. SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME - HERONSBRIDGE SPECIAL SCHOOL

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support sought approval to commence a statutory consultation process to make regulated alterations to Heronsbridge Special School, by increasing the number of pupils for whom the school makes provision to 300, and for its relocation from its current location to Island Farm, Bridgend. He informed Cabinet that the proposed new school would open from the beginning of the autumn term 2025 (i.e., September 2025).

He reported that Cabinet at its meeting in December 2020 gave approval to a new-build for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Severe Learning Difficulties and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties plus residential provision, replacing the existing Heronsbridge Special School and the Pencoed College sites for the development of a privately owned site at Island Farm. Council in December 2020 gave approval to include funding in the capital programme to deal with payments associated with securing the land. He informed Cabinet that in March 2021, Ministerial approval was received in respect of the Strategic Outline Business Case for a replacement 300-place

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Heronbridge Special School, plus residential provision and a feasibility study was progressed to consider the development of the school on privately owned land at Island Farm.

He also informed Cabinet of the significant issues regarding the size of teaching and non-teaching spaces, storage and circulation space is extremely poor, and given the needs of the learners, this causes issues in managing safe movement around the school. He stated that the overall condition of the school is poor, exhibiting major defects and/or not operating as intended, with a backlog of maintenance costs, assessed in October 2020 at £1,248,200.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support reported that the outline business case for the school received Ministerial approval in November 2021 and he highlighted the qualitative benefits of an enlarged Heronbridge Special School which would be designed on guidelines for special schools. He stated that a site fit feasibility study had been commissioned which demonstrated that the school can be developed on the site, although some ecology mitigation would be required. He informed Cabinet that the Corporate Landlord Department is in the process of acquiring the Island Farm site for the proposed school, however, should the proposal to relocate the school to that site not proceed, there would be limited financial risk based upon the likely future onward sales value. He stated that the number of existing pupils on roll is 236 and to increase the number of pupils to make provision to 300, the School Organisation Code requires that a consultation exercise with the school governing body, staff, parents, pupils and interested parties is undertaken, which is the first step in the statutory process.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support informed Cabinet of the financial implications of the proposal, in that £25m had been allocated within the capital budget, however contractor inflation and the impact of Covid-19 and Brexit may have an impact on scheme costs.

The Cabinet Education and Regeneration in commending the proposal stated that it was the ambition to provide a new school for Heronbridge, which would be widely recognised as the best special school with the best facilities in Wales. A further ambition could be to have a training facility to train teachers and teaching assistants for special schools. He stressed the importance of retaining the façade of the current school, which would result in a brownfield site with development potential near the town centre. The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help thanked the officers in developing an immense piece of work for consultation and stressed the importance of future proofing the school and to have a 21st century school given the rise in the number of pupils with additional learning needs and ASD.

The Leader stated that the school had been applauded for its excellent work and for the support the school has, however it does not have the best facilities. He stated that it was an ambition to develop the best special school facilities in Wales and he looked forward to people taking part in the consultation, for which he knew the governing body is excited by the proposals. He also stated that he was especially proud that an item on the school modernisation programme is the last public item on the agenda as Leader of the Council in this term.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approved the commencement of a statutory consultation process to make the following regulated alterations to Heronbridge Special School:

- to increase the number of pupils for whom the school makes provision to 300; and

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- to relocate the school from its current location at Ewenny Road, Bridgend to Island Farm, Bridgend. The proposed new school would open from the beginning of the autumn term 2025 (i.e., September 2025).

824. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

825. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED:

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

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

826. **PARC AFON EWENNI**