

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	16 APRIL 2024
Report Title:	PROPOSALS FOR PROCUREMENT OF A REPLACEMENT SYSTEM FOR CAREDIRECTOR (WCCIS)
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES & WELLBEING / CHIEF OFFICER, FINANCE, HOUSING & CHANGE
Responsible Officer:	DEBBIE MORGAN GROUP MANAGER, BUSINESS STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE & IMPROVEMENT
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules
Executive Summary:	<p>The Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate, along with key teams in the Education and Family Support Directorate, currently use the CareDirector (WCCIS) system to record key core data and service related information in relation to people and families who access their services. As the CareDirector (WCCIS) system will become end of life by January 2026, it is important that a replacement system is procured at pace.</p> <p>A new national programme called “Connecting Care” has been established and Welsh Government have appointed Digital Health Care Wales (DHCW) to act on their behalf. National funding for the regions has been agreed by Welsh Government and is currently awaiting allocation by DCHW, who were required to produce and submit a National Business Case to Welsh Government by the end of March 2024.</p> <p>This report is being presented for Cabinet to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the procurement of a replacement system by another public body on behalf of the Council as a waiver under the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules; • Approve the Council entering into a Regional Agreement to work collaboratively to support the procurement and implementation of a replacement system;

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note that an update report will be brought back to Cabinet regarding the procurement process, the financial position and for approval to award a contract to the successful tenderer. |
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval from Cabinet:

- for a waiver under Contract Procedure Rule 3.2.12 for another public body to procure an alternative system to replace the social care system for CareDirector (WCCIS) on behalf of the Council;
- to enter into a Regional Agreement to work collaboratively with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) and Vale of Glamorgan Council (VoG) to support the procurement process and implementation of a replacement social care system for CareDirector (WCCIS)

1.2 Once a procurement option has been agreed, a further report will be presented to update Cabinet on the procurement strategy outlining the financial position.

2. Background

2.1 As of January 2026, the existing CareDirector system (WCCIS) will become end of life. It is therefore an essential requirement that all social care users and services are migrated from WCCIS to a new technology within stringent timescales. This will ensure that organisations will not be working on unsupported systems that pose a risk to citizens' safety and wellbeing.

2.2 The new National Programme will be known as Connecting Care. Welsh Government have appointed Digital Health Care Wales (DHCW) as the lead organisation for WCCIS and the new Connecting Care Programme on their behalf.

2.3 In October 2023, Channel 3 Consulting, in partnership with DHCW carried out an exercise to obtain the views of WCCIS stakeholders across Wales with regards to a draft architecture approach, proposed timelines and the associated procurement approach, along with seeking to understand the market capacity, capability and interest. In November 2023, a Request for Information (RFI) was published on Sell 2 Wales by Perago – a company commissioned on behalf of DHCW to undertake a market engagement exercise and to make recommendations on an approach (strategy) for procurement. This exercise has now concluded.

2.4 The recommended procurement approach is to adopt an assisted buying model using RM6259 the CCS VAS (Vertical Applications Solutions) Framework, and the Lead Authority will be using Lot 2 – Education, Community Health and Social Care Solutions. Several major social care IT technology providers (OLM: Eclipse, System C: Liquid Logic and Access Group: Mosaic) have been appointed to this framework.

- 2.5 The use of pre-existing frameworks saves time in the process of procurement and contract award, whilst ensuring that a robust process of evaluation has been carried out. The utilisation of a framework to support this complex procurement should offer the most cost-effective solution for engaging the market, whilst also allowing implementation timescales to be accelerated.
- 2.6 Engagement with front-line social care staff is essential in both the procurement readiness process and implementation; as such, product demonstrations were arranged by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) Regional Team to enable front-line social care staff an opportunity to view a range of products on the market.

Summary of Proposed Procurement Timelines:

Stage 1: Procurement readiness (January to April 2024)

Stage 2: Social Care Procurement (April to July 2024 inc)

Stage 3: Social Care Implementation (August 2024 to December 2025 inc) – staggered across CTM region

3. Current situation/ proposal

3.1 A National Procurement Group has been established with a view to creating a standardised procurement pack (procedures, guidelines, Terms and Conditions, baseline specification, mandatory national requirements) that can be utilised locally to provide the necessary support and a standardised approach to the procurement process. Membership of the Group comprises representatives from each region's appointed lead authority who will adhere to a key set of procurement principles:

- Centrally led
- Locally delivered
- Produced once, used many times
- Pooled expertise across regions

3.2 As the only user of WCCIS within their region, Vale of Glamorgan Council (VoG) expressed an interest in collaborating closely with the CTM region to procure a replacement system. It was agreed by the CTM Regional Implementation Board that there are clear benefits to CTM and the VoG working together to procure a new system e.g. sharing resources and joint documentation. It was also decided that, dependent on the outcome of the procurement stage, there is potential for joint working to continue throughout implementation and post implementation.

3.3 Following work completed by the National Procurement Group, DHCW, as lead of the Connecting Care Programme, has proposed 2 options for procurement:

3.4 Option 1 – Regional Approach

3.4.1 This option proposes that each of the 7 clusters undertake separate procurement exercises with the final contract being awarded at the end of August 2024.

3.4.2 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) will act as the lead authority, acting on behalf of themselves plus Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC), Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) and Vale of Glamorgan Council (VoG) with regards the regional approach to procurement. Details of the arrangement will be formally agreed by all the authorities.

3.4.3 The risks and benefits associated with this option 1 are:

Risks:

- The market is unable to respond to the number of requests in a short period of time, increasing the chance of a “no bid” situation.
- Regional groups are unable to agree readiness for Invitation to Tender (ITT) which will impact the timetable for future ITT issue.
- Regional groups are unable to establish evaluation panels before further competition issue.
- Some procurement activity will be undertaken across the summer period.

Benefits:

- The procurement option(s) and managed schedules are designed to spread the load amongst available resources (buyer & supplier) and to accommodate controlled slippage where a regional group is struggling with resources.
- The collaborative effort aligns with the market feedback obtained through the market engagement exercise.
- The procurement option(s) and schedules are designed to improve procurement timelines to fit with the strategic implementation plan and current system end-of-life date.
- The procurement options will eliminate the possibility of system outage and the need for an interim paper-based solution.

3.5 **Option 2 – National Approach**

3.5.1 The second option proposes that all 7 clusters enter into one national joint competition, administered by one of the local authorities. This option would only require one procurement exercise to be completed with a national evaluation panel being agreed by all clusters as well as regional evaluation panels. It is anticipated that the contract will be awarded early July 2024.

3.5.2 The risks and benefits associated with option 2 are:

Risks:

- The regional requirements are not agreed in the same timeframe.
- Regional groups are unable to evaluate responses concurrently.
- Not all authorities have the necessary approval to proceed to market at the same time.

Benefits:

- Reduced impact on market capacity, therefore reducing the risk of a “no bid” situation.
- Improved procurement timeline, avoiding procurement across the summer period.
- If successful, suppliers are able to focus resources on planning to implement as opposed to preparing another bid.
- Regional groups can prepare for market readiness together aligned with the proposed windows of activity.
- Single working groups can focus and complete agreed tasks together.
- Bids can be evaluated and awarded regionally to multiple suppliers.

3.6 Due to the benefits noted above, Option 2, the National Approach, is the preferred option for Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC). Each local authority must inform DCHW of their preferred option by no later than 12th April 2024. If the National Approach does not go ahead, Bridgend will go forward with the Regional Approach with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) as the lead authority.

3.7 Following receipt of the responses, DCHW will meet with the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru to agree the way forward.

3.8 The Council’s Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) advise that a waiver from the requirement for the Council to go out to tender is required:

“Where goods, services and works are procured by another public body on behalf of the Council” CPR 3.2.12

Approval must be obtained from Cabinet, if the value of the contract is over £100,000 (CPR 3.2(a)). If a Regional Approach is adopted, this will be led by RCTCBC. At this point in time, it is not clear which local authority will take the lead if a National Approach is adopted.

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

4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

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

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

- **Long Term / Prevention:** Social Services is demand led and, in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, is focused on sustainable prevention and well-being outcomes for the future. In order to continue to meet the needs of people longer term it is important that the Council has a fully supported social care information system to enable the monitoring of key activity to develop and target services accordingly.

- **Integration:** The Council and regional partners will work with DHCW to ensure that the procurement and implementation of a new system is achieved by January 2026.
- **Collaboration:** The Council will work collaboratively with the Cwm Taf regional authorities, the VoG and DCHW to procure a replacement system for CareDirector (WCCIS),
- **Involvement:** The Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing is a member of the Regional Implementation Board and has established a local WCCIS Replacement Group. The local group has identified key leads from Children's and Adult Services. Business Support, Family Support, ICT and members of the regional team.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications associated with this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 As the current CareDirector (WCCIS) system comes to end of life by January 2026, failure to procure and implement a replacement system by this date will have serious implications on safeguarding arrangements to support vulnerable children, young people and adults.

7.2 It is absolutely imperative that the Council has a robust electronic case management system in place to ensure it can effectively monitor and record service delivery to ensure the right services are delivered at the right time to prevent risk.

7.3 Failure to replace the current CareDirector (WCCIS) system by January 2026 will result in the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate having to revert to manual systems which as noted above, will have highly significant safeguarding implications.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Welsh Government are currently reviewing the opportunity to provide funding for 2024-25 to support the transition to the new system and, once confirmed, the funding will be allocated by DCHW on a regional basis. For Bridgend County Borough Council this will be the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.

8.2 Whilst the costs of a replacement system will not be known until the completion of the procurement exercise, the 2023-24 costs for the current CareDirector (WCCIS) system were £84k, funded from the ICT software budget.

8.3 DHCW are working with Welsh Government to determine financial support for the transition, however the level of funding is still to be confirmed. If funding is available this will be used to support the costs of additional resources identified by each region to support the implementation of the new system.

8.4 The procurement process has not yet commenced, therefore costs associated with the replacement of the existing WCCIS system (including implementation costs) and ongoing charges are currently unknown. Costs will also be dependent on the term of

the new contract, which has yet to be decided. Where costs exceed the current budget then additional funding will be sought via a future budget pressure bid through the Medium Term Financial Strategy process.

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- approves a waiver under Contract Procedure Rule 3.2.12 for another local authority to procure a replacement to the CareDirector system (WCCIS) on behalf of the Council;
- delegates authority to the Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy and Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change, to negotiate and agree final terms and to arrange execution of a Regional Agreement with RCTCBC (or another authority if required under Option 2 above) on behalf of the Council, to support the procurement process and implementation of any new system.
- notes that an update report will be brought back to update Cabinet regarding the procurement process, the financial position and for approval to award a contract to the successful tenderer.

Background documents

None