

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	24 SEPTEMBER 2024
Report Title:	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 purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on the progress to procure a case management system for social care and safeguarding in Bridgend and to seek approval from Cabinet to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing and the Chief Officer, Finance, Housing and Change to approve the tender and award contract to the most economically advantageous tender.</p> <p>A report was presented to Cabinet on 16th April 2024 to outline options and seek approval to commence procurement of a replacement system for CareDirector (WCCIS), the current case management system used by social services, safeguarding and family support in Bridgend. The system is used to record key core data and service-related information in relation to people and families who contact services in relation to safeguarding, assessment of needs, care and supporting planning and service provision. The failure to secure and implement a fit for purpose replacement system within the requisite timescales represents a significant risk to the Council, reflected on the corporate risk register as we would be unable to safeguard and support individuals at risk of harm and to effectively support individuals with care and support needs.</p>

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- Provide Cabinet with an update on the procurement of a replacement social care system for CareDirector (WCCIS).
- Inform Cabinet of the risks of failing to award a contract in line with procurement timescales.
- Seek approval from Cabinet to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing in consultation with the Chief Officer, Finance, Housing and Change and the Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services to accept the most economically advantageous tender received and to enter into a contract and any supplemental deeds and documents with the successful bidder.

2. Background

- 2.1 On the 16th April 2024, a report was presented to Cabinet to seek approval for the Social Services and Wellbeing directorate to enter into a regional agreement to work collaboratively with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) and the Vale of Glamorgan Council (VoG) to support the procurement process of a replacement social care system for CareDirector (WCCIS).
- 2.2 As noted in the April Cabinet Report, the current the CareDirector system (WCCIS) becomes end of life as of January 2026. The report was presented to ensure that all social care users and services are migrated to new technology and will not be working on unsupported systems that pose a risk to people's safety and wellbeing.
- 2.3 A national programmed approach was established which proposed 2 options for procurement, a national or a regional approach, which would be evaluated to see which achieved best value. These alternatives were reflected in the April Cabinet report.
- 2.4 The Cabinet report of the 16th April 2024 also noted that a report would be brought back to Cabinet to update on the procurement process, the financial position and for approval to award a contract to the successful tenderer.
- 2.5 Whilst the directorate is in a position to update on the procurement process and request award to tender, they are not yet in a position to update on the implementation costs.

3. Current situation/ proposal

- 3.1 Following evaluation of the alternative options, the 18 local authorities who are procuring a new system agreed to work together in a national programme, but to procure through 6 clusters, ranging in size from 1 to 6 local authorities per cluster. BCBC is part of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) cluster.
- 3.2 This is a cluster approach with Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC acting as lead local authority. Aligned procurement is progressing in 5 other clusters. The CTM cluster

came with an offer for other organisations to join and a North Wales cluster of 6 local authorities accepted this offer.

- 3.3 The 10 local authorities which constitute this collaborative procurement arrangement are noted in Table 1.

Table 1

Cluster 1 (Cwm Taf Morgannwg)	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
	Bridgend County Borough Council
	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Cluster 2 (North Wales)	Conwy County Borough Council
	Ise of Anglesey County Council
	Gwynedd Council
	Wrexham County Borough Council
	Flintshire County Council
	Denbighshire County Council

- 3.4 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) cluster submitted an expression of interest (EOI) to the market. Following the EOI, the procurement process has progressed at pace and the indicative procurement timetable is noted in Table 2.

Table 2

Activity	Completed by Date
Tender Submission Deadline	13:00 26 th August 2024
Responses distributed to Clusters	30 th August 2024
Cluster Evaluations	13 th September 2024
Collaborative Evaluation Meeting (both Clusters)	16 th – 18 th September 2024
Suppliers notified if Demonstrations required	19 th September 2024
Potential Clarification Demonstrations	w/c 23 rd September 2024
Evaluation re-scores (if needed)	4 th October 2024
Final Collaboration Meeting (both Clusters)	9 th October 2024
Final evaluation scores and comments submitted	11 th October 2024
Tender reports written	18 th October 2024
Tender reports approved by each LA SRO	23 rd October 2024
Preferred Suppliers advised	24 th October 2024
Voluntary 10-day standstill period completed	4 th November 2024
Contract Award	5 th November 2024
Formalisation of Contract completed	15 th November 2024
Mobilisation Period Begins	16 th November 2024

- 3.5 During the mobilisation period there are likely to be costs associated with both systems that the Council will need to incur, however as the tender has yet to be completed the costs associated with the new system are not yet known.
- 3.6 The benefits of the 2 clusters procuring a system in partnership and in line with the timetable are that it:

- gives a greater share of the market enabling partners to combine purchasing power and negotiate better terms and prices with suppliers;
- increases purchasing power, enabling partners to share risk thus reducing the likelihood of disruption and delays;
- enables partners to build and strengthen relationships by sharing knowledge and resources;
- provides a procurement timeline that fits with the current system end-of-life date.

3.7 It is important to note that the 2 clusters have different weightings for the procurement questions and therefore may not award a contract to the same supplier. Hence the collaborative arrangement is for procurement and not implementation.

3.8 As noted in the procurement timetable (Table 2), tender reports, which will identify the most economically advantageous tender received are scheduled to be approved by each local authorities' Senior Reporting Officers (SROs) on 23rd October 2024, with preferred suppliers being informed the following day on 24th October 2024. As noted in section 2.5 of this report, the Council is not yet in a position to provide a comprehensive financial update as the tender is still in progress. It is, however, important that delegated powers to approve the tender and award the contract are authorised in line with the procurement timetable to minimise the significant risk of being unable to award the contract in a timely way in order to mitigate the significant safeguarding risks to the Council of failing to secure and implement the new system in the requisite timescales. Any additional costs will have to be met from within current budgets or via the consideration of a cost pressure bid through the budget setting process for 2025-26.

3.9 Officers have been advised that our CTM regional partners have the appropriate authority in place to award a future contract to the most economically advantageous bidder. If Cabinet is not minded to approve the requested delegated authority, given the narrow timescales involved, there is a risk that the Council:

- will not be in a position to award a contract at the same time as regional partners;
- may have to withdraw from the regional cluster thus losing the benefits associated with a greater market share and purchasing power;
- will not be in a position to award a contract to the most economically advantageous supplier, following a regulated procurement process. In those circumstances, the Council would have to commence a new procurement process in accordance with the new Procurement Act which comes into force on the 28th October 2024.

3.10 There is also a risk that other local authorities and clusters across Wales may award a contract earlier which could result in the Council having to procure from a smaller pool of providers and/or receiving no bids or bids that do not meet the Council's requirements. Decreased competition may also inflate tender pricing.

3.11 In addition, there are significant risks that the Council will be unable to safeguard children and adults at risk from harm if it does not secure and implement a fit for purpose safeguarding and case management system within the requisite timescale.

3.12 Failure to approve tender at the same time as our regional partners could also impact on future regional developments as, with a different system the Council would not be able to achieve best value by taking advantage of shared resources, regional

documentation and reporting. Most importantly, the Council might not be able to easily share key safeguarding information.

- 3.13 By delaying the approval of the tender the main risk is that the Council will not have an effective, support case management system in place after January 2026, which would mean a fundamental failure of safeguarding, child and adult protection, in Bridgend.

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 the Council has a fully supported social care system to enable the monitoring of key activity to develop and target services accordingly.
- **Integration:** Procuring a system on a regional basis, provides further opportunity to implement an integrated system with regional partners. This would be dependent on Council's preferred supplier.
- **Collaboration:** The Council are working collaboratively with the Cwm Taf regional authorities, the VoG and the North Wales cluster to procure a replacement system for CareDirector (WCCIS).
- **Involvement:** The Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing continues to be a member of the Regional Implementation Board and the local WCCIS Replacement Group which continues to meet with members of the Regional Team on a monthly basis. Key leads have been identified from Children and Family Services, Adult Social Care, Business Support, Education, Early Years & Young People, ICT and the Information and Performance Team who met on a regular basis and are already implementing key actions to prepare for migration to a future system.

6. Climate Change Implications

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

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 The safeguarding and corporate implications of this report are significant. The failure to implement a replacement system is noted as a high-level risk on the Council's Corporate risk register.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 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.
- 7.4 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 will have highly significant safeguarding implications and would represent a major failing by the Council in respect of a significant statutory duty.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The Welsh Government are reviewing the level of financial support that would be available to regions to support the transition to a new system and, to date, the Council is still awaiting confirmation of this support from Welsh Government. 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.
- 8.2 Whilst the recurring costs of a replacement system will not be known until the tender process has been completed, the 2023-24 costs for the current CareDirector (WCCIS) system were £84k, funded from the ICT software budget.
- 8.3 Whilst the procurement process has not yet concluded and the Council is still awaiting confirmation of financial support, at the time of writing this report the associated costs for replacement of the existing CareDirector (WCCIS) remain unknown. Costs will also be dependent on the term of the new contract. Any additional costs will have to be met from within current budgets or via the consideration of a cost pressure bid through the budget setting process for 2025-26.

9. Recommendation(s)

- 9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- Note the update on the procurement of a replacement social care system for CareDirector (WCCIS);
 - Notes the risks of failing to award a contract in line with procurement timescales;
 - Delegates authority to the Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing in consultation with the Chief Officer, Finance, Housing and Change and the Chief

Officer Legal and Regulatory Services to accept the most economically advantageous tender received and to enter into a contract and any supplemental deeds and documents with the successful bidder.

Background documents

'Proposals for Procurement of a Replacement System for Caredirector (WCCIS)', Cabinet Report, April 2024