

Meeting of the Social Services, Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6 November 2025

Responses to Recommendations / Additional Information Requested

	Recommendations / Information Requested:	Response:	Accepted / Partially Accepted / Not Accepted:
<b>Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report 2024-25</b>			
<b>Recommendations</b>			
1	Members referred to a planning application proposing an expansion to HMP Parc Prison and expressed their concerns regarding the increased pressures this could place on Social Services including the provision of additional social care and supportive arrangements on release including the provision of housing and the possible impact on the safeguarding of inmates. The Committee therefore <b>recommended</b> that the Corporate Director consider responding to the consultation highlighting the additional pressures this could place on the Service.	Following enquiry, the consultation period on the planning application had concluded. However, a comment has been made by the Corporate Director which the Development Control Committee will be made aware of in reaching their decision on the application.	Partially accepted
2	The Committee acknowledged the improvements made at HMP Parc Prison to reduce rates of suicide and self-harm and improve relationships between the prison and the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate and <b>recommended</b> that correspondence be sent to the Governor of the prison recognising the work and seeking clarification on how the prison proposes to continue to maintain and ensure safeguarding of all prisoners should the	Letter sent and response shared with Members of the Committee.	Accepted.

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	<p>proposed expansion to the prison be approved and to invite them to attend and speak at a meeting of the Committee regarding safeguarding.</p>		
<p>3</p>	<p>The Committee expressed concern regarding the significant corporate risk posed by the timescales involved around Digital System Replacement and recognising that the implications are Council-wide, <b>recommended</b> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the budgetary requirements to deliver the transformation within the tight timescale be quantified and that consideration be given to additional resources being allocated to achieve the transition;</li> <li>b. consideration be given to a dedicated ICT Lead Officer being allocated to the replacement project;</li> <li>c. Members receive an urgent written progress update regarding the transition; and</li> <li>d. that correspondence be sent to Lindsey Phillips regarding the Welsh Local Government Association's Digital in Social Care Framework which was launched in October 2025 and Bridgend's place within it.</li> </ul>	<p>Confidential response shared with the Committee</p>	

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4	<p>Members expressed concern that home-educated learners may not have adequate contact with the Local Authority and the Committee were advised that the level is set by National Guidance. The Committee <b>recommended</b> that legal advice be sought as to whether the Guidance can be tailored to have increased contact with the learners and ensure they are appropriately safeguarded.</p> <p>The Committee further <b>recommended</b> to refer the matter to Education and Youth Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider adding the matter to their Forward Work Programme to monitor the situation.</p>	<p>Welsh Government guidance indicates that local authorities should normally maintain contact through periodical checks unless there are specific concerns that would justify more frequent engagement.</p> <p>The local authority does not have automatic powers to carry out routine inspections of electively home-educated children or insist on regular visits.</p> <p>Under the Education Act 1996 parents who elect home education have the primary duty to ensure that their child receives sufficient education unless the local authority determines that the child is not receiving it and can then secure a school attendance order.</p> <p>If there are safeguarding concerns, then they can be referred in the usual way with social services.</p> <p>Scrutiny has made the referral to EYS OSC on 9 Feb 2026 who recommended that an all Member Briefing be provided in the first instance following which consideration be given to whether to add the item to their Forward Work Programme.</p>	Partially accepted
<b>Additional Information Requested</b>			
5	<p>The Committee expressed concern regarding the perceived delay in utilising the £1m non-recurring budget approved by Cabinet to support schools in reducing permanent exclusions and</p>	<p>The local authority has introduced a £1 million change programme to strengthen the care, support and guidance framework, which aligns clearly with the vision for inclusive practice, early intervention</p>	Accepted

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	<p><b>requested</b> an update regarding the use of the funding, when it will be utilised and the proposal being developed in partnership with schools including when it will be considered for decision.</p>	<p>and professional understanding that supports learner engagement.</p> <p>Developed with schools and partners, the programme aims to improve practice, pathways and consistency across services as the work continues to embed.</p> <p>Unforeseen circumstances led to a delayed implementation, but this provided additional opportunities for consultation with stakeholders and enabled a more coherent cross directorate approach.</p> <p>However, Since September 2025, we have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• supported 10 successful ‘managed moves’;</li><li>• seen permanent exclusions in the primary school sector fall from 6 to 0;</li><li>• provided comprehensive, targeted support to three identified schools;</li><li>• through tailored professional development sessions, embedded more consistent safeguarding-led decision making, and trauma-informed and restorative practice across schools;</li><li>• secured clearer and more timely pathways for schools to access timely support;</li></ul>	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strengthened oversight of exclusion decisions (which has helped lead to a reduction in permanent exclusions being overturned at Appeal Panel stage from 4 to 0);</li> <li>secured additional EOTAS provision (which has led to an increase in permanent exclusions being rescinded due to the availability of alternative package being offered from 2 to 7);</li> <li>improved multi-agency information exchange (through 'Care, Support and Guidance' meetings linked to Team Around the Child and Team around the Family); and</li> <li>developed a simplified single point of entry pathway to streamline referrals.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Community Hubs Strategy</b></p>			
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>			
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p>Members were advised that key stakeholders in each community would be consulted on the proposed Strategy and their views sought to shape how the Hubs look in their particular area and the Committee <b>recommended</b> that an all-Member workshop be arranged to allow Councillors to also feed into the Strategy and that local Members are specifically</p>	<p>An all-Member workshop will be arranged as part of the next phase of engagement to ensure Councillors can directly contribute to the development of the Strategy. In addition, local Members will be consulted on any proposed Hub models within their Wards.</p>	

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	consulted regarding proposed Hubs within their respective Wards.		
<b>7</b>	The Committee discussed the lack of alignment between education and the Strategy and <b>recommended</b> that consideration be given to the possibility of utilising some of the school estate as potential Hubs and that this aspect be included in the Strategy.	We acknowledge the Committee's recommendation to strengthen alignment with education. As the Strategy develops, we will explore opportunities to utilise elements of the school estate where appropriate and feasible, ensuring this consideration is reflected in the Strategy. Further discussions with Education colleagues will be incorporated into the engagement and planning process.	
<b>Additional Information Requested</b>			
<b>8</b>	The Committee discussed priority areas within Bridgend and <b>requested</b> a copy of the Regional Partnership Board Strategy which identified the seven priority areas for Bridgend County Borough based on level of need and current service provision.	 Integrated Health and Care Hubs in CTM - 5	Accepted.
<b>Forward Work Programme Update</b>			
<b>9</b>	The Committee requested that the following items be added to their Forward Work Programme:  a. External Review of Strength Based Outcome Focused Practice Model being embedded into Adult Social Care; and	To be actioned by Scrutiny, Chair of Committee and Corporate Director in Work Planning Meetings	Accepted.

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	b. Further Report regarding the Community Hubs Strategy (at the appropriate time early in 2026)		
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