

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CORPORATE RESOURCES & IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 APRIL 2015

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR RESOURCES

BRIDGEND CHANGE PROGRAMME: WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE BEST USE OF RESOURCES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with a briefing on the Bridgend Change Programme projects which relate to the Making Best Use of Resources Corporate Improvement priority.

2. CONNECTION TO CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN / OTHER PRIORITIES

- 2.1 Working together to make the best use of resources is one of the Council's six corporate improvement priorities.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Through the Bridgend Change Programme the Council has successfully delivered a number of projects that have helped us to reduce operating costs and to make significant improvements to the way that we work, whilst also protecting front line services. It will remain the framework for the next three years.
- 3.2 In December 2014 the Council agreed that a single director should assume overall corporate responsibility for the Bridgend Change Programme recognising the need to increase the pace and scale of the transformation required in the face of continuing austerity. As a result of rebalancing the Corporate Directors' portfolios, the Director of Education and Transformation was given this responsibility and has since been working with Corporate Management Board (CMB) to review and update the Change Programme and the projects contained therein.
- 3.3 Appendix 1 shows the projects currently being delivered within the Bridgend Change Programme. This report provides the committee with a briefing on projects that fall under Priority 6: Working Together to Make the Best Use of Resources.

4. CURRENT SITUATION / PROPOSAL

Finance system hosting

- 4.1 Work has commenced to bring the hosting of Bridgend's finance software back in-house. This project will deliver a £200,000 recurrent budget reduction in 2016-17(RES3), through leveraging existing team skills and hardware/infrastructure. The procurement waiver is in progress and the technical team is working on a risk analysis of moving the system from an Oracle to Microsoft platform.

Community Care Information Solution

- 4.2 This project relates to the joint procurement of an all Wales community care information system which will support the NHS and all twenty two Councils in Wales. Bridgend County Borough Council BCBC is leading the procurement and has been awarded a £6.5 million grant by the Welsh Government to fund the infrastructure costs (report to Cabinet on 31 March 2015 refers). The project has now moved into the implementation phase and a BCBC project implementation board is being established. As the contract manager, BCBC will also be represented on the national Community Care Information Solution CCIS Board. The benefits of the project include:

- Improved decision making;
- Improve coordination of information;
- Improve patient and service user safety through single referral;
- Complete system access from all possible working locations.
- Creation of a single citizen record for both health and social care.
- Increase confidence in the identity of the patient by using the NHS Number as the unique identifier

- 4.3 The new system will be in place in Bridgend by December 2015 in readiness for the withdrawal of support for the DRAIG system at the end of March 2016.

Sickness Absence

- 4.4 The Council is continuously looking for ways in which to reduce sickness absence across the organisation and officers have established a national project to review sickness absence arrangements across Wales with a view to learning from others and identifying areas for further improvement in this Authority. The project is being funded by the WLGA and is supported by HR Directors across Wales. A final report is scheduled to be produced by the summer and will include a comprehensive compendium of current policy practice and performance and identify evidence based best practice that leads to better performance in sickness absence management.
- 4.5 In addition to the national project, arrangements are being put in place to provide managers with enhanced information (such as absence triggers) required to assist them in managing sickness absence. Corporate oversight of

the absence review process has also been introduced to ensure that long term absences are proactively managed.

- 4.6 An increased focus is being placed on prevention and early intervention and officers are identifying (through the national project and reviewing other organisations, such as the NHS) initiatives that could be introduced to support the health and well-being of employees. Consideration is being given in particular to mental health, recognising that it is the most common cause of absence within the Council and across the population as a whole.
- 4.7 Further work is also being undertaken to support managers to fulfil their responsibilities in managing absence, including the development of face to face training which will:
- explore ways of managing both short and long term absence and how best to use available support
 - review effective return to work interviews
 - build managers' confidence in dealing with the range of sickness absence situations that can arise

Service Level Agreement with the Schools

- 4.8 The Authority currently provides schools with a wide range of support services including HR, payroll, finance, facilities' management, cleaning, building maintenance and ICT. Traditionally through service level agreements schools have made a contribution to the costs of these services from their delegated budget, but there is a shortfall between the cost to the Council of providing them and the amount which is currently being charged to schools.
- 4.9 A project has therefore been established to review the current arrangement with the aim of developing a fully costed catalogue of services that the Council can offer to individual schools. There are a number of elements to this project including:
- clarity on statutory responsibilities of the Council and schools;
 - development of arrangements which will ensure statutory responsibilities not serviced by the Council are met;
 - development of unit cost data for individual support services
 - recognise fairly the pressures on Council and schools' budgets
 - adoption of a phased approach, starting with the built environment service
- 4.10 The benefits of this project include giving schools much clearer information and choices about the specific level and quality of services available as well as the unit price (based on full cost recovery). For the Council, it would deliver budget reductions to support the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in 2016-17 and beyond either by removing the current subsidy or where schools choose to purchase services elsewhere through a corresponding service reduction.

Parc Afon Ewenni Programme

- 4.11 The Parc Afon Ewenni master-plan identifies the creation of 650 houses and this is reflected in the Local Development Plan (LDP). The site includes the Waterton and County Borough Supplies (CBS) depots as well as land owned by third parties. Despite discussions, it has not been possible to obtain a joint land owners agreement so the Council is now taking forward the disposal of its interests alone so that the LDP can be delivered and the Council can realise a significant capital receipt from the disposal of this site. The Parc Afon Ewenni Programme chaired by the Corporate Director Resources provides corporate oversight of a number of projects that are required to prepare the site for disposal, including the:
- a. Joint Vehicle Maintenance project against which a £75,000 recurrent budget reduction has been identified for 2015-16 (MTFS COM7 and report to Cabinet 3 February 2015 (item 8) refers)
 - b. Depot Rationalisation project, which involves relocating the Building Maintenance and Highways operations from Waterton and the Parks operation from Bryncethin depot (MTFS report to Council on 25 February 2015 (item 5) refers).
 - c. County Borough Supplies (CBS) relocation project, which involves seeking agreement from the Joint Committee to relocate the current operation to an alternative site.
- 4.12 The Programme is also responsible for the disposal of the Bryncethin depot when it becomes surplus to requirements and for the actions necessary to prepare the Parc Afon Ewenni site for disposal (including site investigations etc) following vacation by the fleet services, the Waterton depot and CBS. The programme is currently seeking to vacate the Parc Afon Ewenni site by March 2016, but this may be delayed to August 2016 dependent on the CBS relocation timetable.

Out of Hours Service Provision

- 4.13 Between April and December 2014, the Council spent approximately £320,000 on standby arrangements across a range of functions. The Corporate Director Resources has established a task and finish project board to investigate whether this spend can be reduced without impacting on citizens or our statutory obligations. The group will report by the end of the summer. Although not a distinct budget reduction proposal in the MTFS, this project is designed to facilitate savings that will either contribute to staff budget reductions already identified or lead to new proposals being identified. So far the project has established what out of hours provision currently exists and directorates have been tasked to review risk assessments, actual call out rates and options for reducing spend (which include removing the provision, making better use of the Customer and Community Support Unit (CCSU), contracting out and sharing the service with others).

Overtime

- 4.14 Between April and December 2014 the Council spent approximately £585,000 on overtime. Another task and finish project board has been established, chaired by the Corporate Director Resources, with the aim of reducing the Council's spend in this area. The methodology for the project is similar to that for out of hours and involves directorates developing action plans to reduce the need for overtime to be paid. Again although not a distinct budget reduction proposal in the MTFS, this project is designed to facilitate savings that will either contribute to staff budget reductions already identified or lead to new proposals being identified.

Enhanced Disposal Programme

- 4.15 The Council's Asset Management Plan was presented to the Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 October 2011 and included plans for the Enhanced Disposal Programme. The Programme is designed to support the Council's remodelling proposals and has increased the pace of our disposals with a view to delivering circa £25 million over the next three years. Capital receipts of circa £4.23 million have been generated in 2014-15 and there is a target to deliver £6 million in 2015-16, along with £400,000 recurrent running cost savings (MTFS RES21 refers).

Schools' Modernisation Programme

- 4.16 The Schools' Modernisation Programme currently runs up to 2018-19 and equates to £44.95 million funding for Band A school projects. 50% of the cost is to be funded by the Welsh Government and 50% from capital receipts arising from the sale of surplus school sites, Section 106 payments and funding by the Council's capital programme. The programme is monitored by the School Modernisation Programme Board. Extensive work has been undertaken ensuring that all projects comply with the Welsh Government Five Case Business Model, with recent projects carried out under the SEWSCAP framework utilizing external consultants and contractors. However the current design work will now be managed by the Architectural Services Department. The current position in respect of specific projects is as follows:

- Coety Primary School: construction of the replacement school at Parc Derwen underway and due to open November 2015.
- Relocation of Ysgol Bryn Castell, Pupil Referral Unit and YOTAS at the former Ogmere Comprehensive School (plus additional support services). The project is progressing well and due to be handed over to the Council in May 2015. The relocated Ysgol Bryn Castell will open for pupils in June 2015.
- Garw Valley South: Design has commenced on the replacement school for Betws Primary School and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwm Garw, which are to

be located on the site of the existing Betws Primary School, subject to consultation.

- 4.17 Ongoing feasibility work is continuing in respect of the remaining band A projects and the Corporate Director Education and Transformation has established a schools task group to set the strategic direction for future schools delivery and work streams are reporting on schools buildings, catchment areas, pupil data and school models; to determine the direction of travel.
- 4.18 There are forty primary schools, nine secondary schools and two special schools in the county borough and they are responsible for managing school buildings using their devolved budgets, as well as ensuring statutory building compliance with such matters as fire safety. However, there is a £36 million maintenance backlog and the Council is responsible for the strategic maintenance and management of the school estate. Against that background and in close alignment with the Schools SLA project described above, we have also established a Safe, Dry, Warm Project to develop clear protocols in respect of:
- Keeping school buildings safe, dry and warm;
 - Ensuring clear accountability of both the Council and schools;
 - Developing clear guidance on compliance, repairs and maintenance responsibilities and procedures, Equalities Act 2010 (DDA) Strategy, FRA Strategy;
 - Establishing a robust compliance monitoring system;
 - Developing a prioritised works programme; and
 - Developing and documenting communication channels

Strong Communities – Connecting Services

- 4.19 'Strong Communities – Connecting Services' is a partnership Board hosted by Bridgend Council with the aim of working with key partners (eg ABMU, South Wales Police, Bridgend College) to maximise the potential to deliver effective integrated services within communities with a particular focus on assets. It is a long standing programme which periodically undertakes area reviews from which detailed neighbourhood reports and action plans are developed. The Board meets bimonthly and challenges directorates within the Council as well as our partners on the sustainability of property needs and opportunities to share with other service providers and release assets. Discussions are currently underway with Western Bay colleagues regarding their possible inclusion in the programme.
- 4.20 Since its establishment the SCCS Programme has facilitated the delivery of:
- The release of 90 assets;
 - £6.6 million capital receipts;
 - The release of these assets has resulted in property running cost savings of £950,000pa, of which £435,000 pa relates to rental paid on leased properties; and
 - Maintenance backlog reduction from released assets of £8.4 million.

5. EFFECT UPON POLICY FRAMEWORK & PROCEDURE RULES

5.1 There is no effect upon policy framework or procedure rules in this report.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 There are no negative equality implications in respect of this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report which is for information only.

8. RECOMMENDATION

8.1 The Committee receives and considers the information provided in this report.

Ness Young, Corporate Director – Resources

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IP1: Working together to develop the local economy	IP2: Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement	IP3: Working with children and families to tackle problems early	IP4: Working together to help vulnerable people to stay independent	IP5: Working together to tackle health issues and encourage healthy lifestyles	IP6: Working together to make the best use of our resources	Cross cutting
MIREC <small>COM7</small>	Review of nursery education policy <small>CH2</small>	Rebalancing LAC population <small>CH22</small>	Assessment framework for social work <small>JAC3</small>	Halo Revision <small>HL3</small>	Finance system migration <small>RR20</small>	Devolution of services to third sector and Town and Community Councils <small>CA1</small>
Anaerobic Digestion Procurement	Learner transport contracts and review of policy <small>CH</small>	Children's residential unit transformation <small>CH22</small>	Learning Disabilities <small>JAC3</small>	Health and wellbeing initiatives	CCIS	Maximising the use of Space and Technology (inc channel shift) <small>RR21, CA2</small>
Cultural Trust <small>COM7</small>	Review of school music service	CWD Transformation Programme <small>JAC17</small>	Learning Disabilities Supported living model redesign		Sickness Absence	Development of social enterprise delivery vehicle
Vibrant and viable places	Review of school counselling service <small>CH26</small>	YOB collaboration <small>CH2</small>	Recommission independent sector <small>JAC1</small>		Schools SLAs	Business support review
Waste collection procurement	Review of surplus spaces in schools <small>CH14</small>		Residential Extra Care <small>JAC14</small>		Parc Afon Ewenni	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs
Porthcawl regeneration programme	Remodel education psychology service <small>CH20</small>				Out of Hours	Procurement and commissioning
Llynfi Sites Reclamation	Out of county budgets <small>CH1</small>				Overtime	Regulatory services collaboration <small>LR21</small>
Highways Review <small>COM9</small>	Rationalise special education needs transport <small>CH</small>				Disposal Programme	
Pavilions Disposal	School route efficiencies <small>CH8</small>				Schools Modernisation	
Rationalisation of public toilets <small>COM6</small>					Strong communities connecting services	