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**Date: 23rd May 2018**

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the **Cabinet** will be held in the **Sirhowy Room, Penallta House, Tredomen, Ystrad Mynach** on **Wednesday, 30th May, 2018** at **2.00 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. Councillors and the public wishing to speak on any item can do so by making a request to the Chair. You are also welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, both these requests require a minimum notice period of 3 working days and a simultaneous translation will be provided if requested.

All Committee meetings are open to the Press and Public, observers and participants are asked to conduct themselves with respect and consideration for others. Please note that failure to do so will result in you being asked to leave the meeting and you may be escorted from the premises.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CHARRY'.

**Christina HARRY**  
INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## AGENDA

	Pages
1 To receive apologies for absence.	

A greener place Man gwyrddach



2 Declarations of Interest.

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on the agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

To approve and sign the following minutes: -

- 3 Cabinet held on the 16th May 2018. 1 - 6

To receive and consider the following reports on which executive decisions are required: -

- 4 Future Regeneration Projects - New Project Governance Arrangements. 7 - 12
- 5 Flat Accommodation at River Road, Pontllytyn and The Grove, Fochriw. 13 - 22
- 6 Foster Carer Fee Levels. 23 - 28
- 7 To receive and consider the following report(s) which in the opinion of the Proper Officer may be discussed when the meeting is not open to the public and first to consider whether the public interest requires that the meeting should be closed to the public for consideration of this item(s):- 29 - 30
- 8 Oakdale Business Park Plateau One - Potential Sale of Council Owned Land to Welsh Government. EXEMPT ITEM. 31 - 40

**Circulation:**

Councillors C.J. Cuss, N. George, C.J. Gordon, Mrs B. A. Jones, P.A. Marsden, S. Morgan, L. Phipps, D.V. Poole and Mrs E. Stenner,

And Appropriate Officers.



## CABINET

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 16TH MAY 2018 AT 2.00 P.M.

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#### PRESENT

Councillor D. Poole – Chair

#### Councillors:

C. Cuss (Social Care and Wellbeing), N. George (Neighbourhood Services), Mrs B.A. Jones (Finance, Performance and Governance), P. Marsden (Education and Achievement), S. Morgan (Economy, Infrastructure and Sustainability), L. Phipps (Homes and Places) and E. Stenner (Environment and Public Protection).

#### Together with:

C. Harry (Interim Chief Executive), M. S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director - Communities), M. Williams (Interim Head of Property Services), L. Donovan (Head of People Services), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), I. Evans (Contracts Manager – Procurement) and A. Dredge (Committee Services Officer).

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C. Gordon (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services) and D. Street (Corporate Director – Social Services and Housing).

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

#### 3. CABINET MINUTES - 25TH APRIL 2018

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 25th April 2018 were approved and signed as a correct record.

#### MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED

#### 4. PROPERTY REVIEW REPORT 2018

The report sought Cabinet's endorsement of the Property Review Report 2018. The report attempts to provide a succinct overview and record of what is a very large and diverse non domestic property portfolio. It presents some key metrics, highlights in period trends, summarises disposals and acquisitions and sets out some of the challenges that lay ahead. It

makes no recommendations. The report follows on from the State of the Estate Report issued in May 2016 but is based on a more structured format intended to ease updating and comparison with subsequent versions. It is proposed that the Property Review Report is updated and reissued annually.

Cabinet discussed the Statutory Compliance of inspections and testing of buildings, the majority of which are managed by the Property Services Team. It was explained that training has been provided to Building Manager's and a Building Manager's Handbook has been produced. This contains a compliance checklist as the Council now operates a zero tolerance approach. Members were advised that outstanding cases of statutory testing has improved significantly and these figures are monitored quarterly by the Corporate Management Team.

Clarification was sought in relation to the status of sale of the former Ty Darran Site in Risca and it was confirmed that a report will be brought shortly regarding the future use of this site and other Council buildings.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's Report, the Property Review Report 2018 be endorsed.

## **5. PROGRAMME FOR PROCUREMENT (STRATEGY) 2018 – 2023**

The report sought Cabinet's endorsement for the implementation of the Procurement (Strategy) 2018 – 2023.

Cabinet were advised that the Authority is committed to ensuring it achieves value for money from its third party procurement expenditure currently circa £170,000.000 per annum. The value of using Procurement is recognised and this supports wider cultural, social, economic and environmental objectives. This offers real long term benefits to the Community it serves and the people of Wales whilst balancing the issues of Value for Money. The Programme will ensure the Authority has a current direction of travel for Procurement which supports the Authority's Wellbeing Objectives and Corporate Plan, whilst maintaining flexibility. This will address the developing Procurement landscape following Brexit and the outcome of the Welsh Government's National Procurement Review.

It was explained that the Authority's last Procurement Strategy was in 2015. There has been a delay in setting out a vision for Procurement due to the development of the National Procurement Services and the uncertainty around Local Government Reform, Collaboration and Welsh Governments own Programme for Procurement. The Wales Audit Office Report "Public Procurement in Wales – October 2017" was critical of Local Authorities failure to maintain an active Procurement Strategy. The report also concluded that there was clear scope for improvements in Public Bodies' procurement arrangements. The proposed Programme for Procurement (Strategy) defines what is meant by Procurement and the current capability status following the latest Welsh Government Fitness Check in 2014. A 5 year timescale has been set for the delivery of the Programme, however the key strategic goals are far reaching and may well extend beyond 2023. The Authority signed up to the Code of Practice: Ethical Employment in Supply Chains in November 2017 ('CoP'). The Programme supports the principles set out within the CoP.

Cabinet thanked Officers for the excellent framework that has been developed in moving forward. Discussion took place regarding the Key Performance Indicators and it was explained that the Contracts Manager and Head of Procurement would monitor the progress of the Indicators and that they will also be included in the Annual Review that will be presented to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee. In terms of the Dynamic Purchasing

System (DPS) used it was confirmed that this is a useful process and an example was provided relating to the WHQS Scheme. It allows the Team to streamline processes and to visit and assist local businesses and suppliers that link in with Economic Development.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report: -

- (i) the Programme for Procurement (Strategy) 2018 – 2023, be endorsed;
- (ii) an annual progress update be received in relation to the Programme for Procurement (Strategy), Code of Practice and Ethical Employment in Supply Chains.

**6. NOTICE OF MOTION – THAT CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL INTRODUCE FREE FEMALE HYGIENE SUPPORT FOR ALL YOUNG FEMALES WITHIN OUR SCHOOL SETTING**

The report sought Cabinet's support in establishing a Task and Finish Working Group to consider introducing free female hygiene support for all young females within school settings. A Notice of Motion was received from Councillor E. Forehead, with the support of Councillor J. Pritchard, which meets the criteria set out in the Council's Constitution and, in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure.

Cabinet were advised that it is widely accepted that some women and girls in Wales cannot afford to buy essential feminine hygiene products when they need them. In March 2018, the Authority accepted a one off discretionary grant payment from Welsh Government of £41,657 to be spent in relation to the investment in the improvement of toilet facilities and feminine hygiene hardware in schools. In addition, Welsh Government has made available revenue grant funding of £13,206 for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years. This funding must be used to provide feminine hygiene products to those women and girls most in need in the Authority.

It was explained that on the most recent pupil data, there are currently 4,774 girls in Secondary Schools (Years 7 to 11). On this data alone it is estimated that the cost to provide feminine hygiene products for all would be in the region of £100k. This is based on a monthly cost of £2 per pupil. It is crucial that all pupils (including boys) have appropriate equal access to a high quality Personal Social Education (PSE) curriculum that is delivered well and consistently across schools and other educational settings.

In the latest research on 'Period Poverty', it is acknowledged that this inequality impacts upon attendance rates of up to 2%, as there is evidence that girls have been unable to stay in school when they cannot access products or adequately dispose of products. Members discussed paragraph 4.8. of the Officer's report in detail. This provides a list of actions to be considered in the of absence of a comprehensive audit of how equipped schools and education settings are to distribute and dispose of sanitary products and as such it is difficult to assess the need for additional resources.

Cabinet supported the recommendation to establish a Task and Finish Working Group and to include a further recommendation that the Terms of Reference to be agreed by the Group be brought back for Cabinet's endorsement. Emphasis was placed on the urgency for establishing the Working Group and it was confirmed that the first formal Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 17th May 2018 where an end date would be agreed. The Group consists of Officers, Members and Stake Holders that include Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

RESOLVED that subject to an additional recommendation in paragraph 10.1. in the Officer's report to include, the Terms of Reference to be agreed by the Task and Finish Working Group be brought for Cabinet's endorsement and for the reasons contained in the Officers report: -

- (i) the Notice of Motion be supported and a Task and Finish Working Group be established;
- (ii) the Terms of Reference to be agreed by the Task and Finish Working Group be brought for Cabinet's endorsement.

## **7. SCHOOL'S WORKFORCE FLEXIBILITIES POLICIES**

The report sought Cabinet approval for the Education - Human Resources (HR) Team to Consult Schools on the Council's Voluntary Severance Scheme and the School Specific Strategy that supports the redirection of funds earmarked for redundancy payments back into Caerphilly Schools, Workforce Flexibility Strategies.

Cabinet were advised that School closure, amalgamation, and internal reorganisation of a school's staffing structure relating to budget, including reductions in grant funding, and falling rolls can all lead to a redundancy consultation. For all of these reasons there has been a defined need in the Council to support some schools to reduce the costs of their staffing structures. This year, a number of Caerphilly Schools have been affected by the funding formula linked to sixth form and smaller pupil numbers. Also, the Pupil Deprivation Grant funding levels that rely solely on Free School Meal (FSM) numbers. A drop in FSM numbers in Schools has a significant impact on the overall funding allocation for that school. It was noted that Cwmcarn High School will also officially close on the 10th October 2018.

It was explained that prior to declaring a redundancy situation in any capacity, Schools actively work with the Council's HR and Finance Teams to take all reasonable steps to avoid redundancies and Schools have largely had to rely on the Council's Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Scheme to support this aim. The Council's VER Scheme is a popular scheme but as Pension Regulations change and the costs associated with a VER scheme increase in line with the statutory state pension ages of staff (i.e. 65 – 68 years of age), the costs associated with pension release on a voluntary basis can become prohibitive, circa £100K+. The Council's VER and Redundancy Schemes are the only Workforce Strategies that have been recommended to Schools thus far and Schools rely heavily on the VER Scheme to avoid declaring a redundancy situation.

The Workforce Strategies will give Schools considerably more freedom to attract applicants from all age ranges who wish to exit their employments. With the introduction of these Strategies, the Schools and the Council will continue to work collaboratively to provide crossmatch opportunities that will benefit Caerphilly Schools to retain teachers and support staff who can deliver the curriculum in the best interest of the pupils' education.

Cabinet were pleased to note that this process is intended to avoid compulsory redundancies wherever possible, and to have a positive impact on the schools affected by retaining Teachers and Support Staff who wish to remain in the profession and who can deliver the curriculum in the best interest of the schools. In doing so, the Council will be investing funding for the continued improvement of education wherever possible rather than making a financial payment to support employees to leave the Council's employment.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report: -

- (i) the scope of Schools' Workforce Flexibilities Strategies be widened by using the funding arrangements outlined in Section 7 of the Officer's Report, to include the Council's Voluntary Severance Scheme and the recommended School Specific Strategy as detailed in paragraph 4.7, be agreed;
- (ii) the Human Resources (HR) Education Team be authorised to consult with Head Teachers and recommend these Strategies to Schools.

The meeting closed at 2.47 pm.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 30th May 2018.

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CHAIR

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## REPORT TO CABINET – 30<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2018

**SUBJECT: FUTURE REGENERATION PROJECTS – NEW PROJECT GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR (COMMUNITIES)**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to introduce a new Governance structure for the development of Regeneration Projects.
- 1.2 To agree the proposed membership of the Regeneration Project Board and its Terms of Reference.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The advent of the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) and the endorsement by the Council on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018 of the Joint Working Agreement Business Plan, presents significant opportunities for Caerphilly County Borough Council to lever in funding for regeneration projects.
- 2.2 In addition to the CCR opportunities there are a number of other Welsh Government regeneration initiatives such as the Valleys Task Force and Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme which may lead to significant capital funds being made available for local projects in the future.
- 2.3 In order to take advantage of funding that may become available it is necessary to develop a number of “shelf ready” projects which have been effectively planned and developed to a stage where they are ready to progress to an implementation stage.
- 2.4 At present the Authority does not have projects in a “shelf ready” position where delivery could be progressed. In this regard the key issues that need to be addressed include:-
  - The need for clear strategic direction on projects and identification of key projects to be progressed.
  - The lack of capacity in internal teams (Procurement, legal, property, engineering consultancy) that would be required to assist in project development.
  - The need for clear project management arrangements to be put in place.
  - The need for cross party member agreement in relation to projects to be developed.
- 2.5 This report therefore recommends a new governance structure (in the form of a cross party, regeneration board) in accordance with project management principles.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. It requires public bodies to think more about the long term, working with people and communities, looking to prevent problems and take a more joined up approach. This will create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals and the contents of this report which will hopefully contribute to significant levels of community regeneration and infrastructure development potentially links into all seven wellbeing goals.
- 3.2 A Foundation for Success is the Draft Regeneration Strategy for Caerphilly County Borough which sets out the strategic priorities for the regeneration and enhancement of Caerphilly County Borough which identifies four strategic themes on which regeneration efforts should be focussed namely: Supporting People; Supporting Business; Supporting Quality of Life and Connecting People and Places.

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 There have recently been 2 developments in terms of the Authority's involvement with the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR)/City Deal. These include the agreement by Council on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018 of the joint business plan and the Cabinet decision of 11<sup>th</sup> April 2018 to earmark £300,000 of community directorate reserves as a project development fund to facilitate the development of regeneration projects to a "shelf ready state".
- 4.2 At the Council meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> March there was some debate over the role of members in relation to oversight of projects to be developed.
- 4.3 It is therefore proposed to set up a "Regeneration Project Board" comprising the Interim Corporate Director (Communities), relevant Cabinet members (Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Infrastructure & Sustainability and Cabinet Member for Environmental & Public Protection), additional members on a politically balanced basis and key Heads of Service and/or service managers dependent on the agenda. Nominations for the Board have been requested from all political parties.
- 4.4 In accordance with project management principles, it is anticipated that the Regeneration Project Board will act as the Board to provide strategic direction and set tasks which will be completed by a group of key service officers (the "Project Team") in accordance with any timescales set by the Board.
- 4.5 The Regeneration Project Board would also provide reports to Cabinet and/or the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee as appropriate.
- 4.6 Draft Terms of Reference for the proposed Regeneration Project Board are attached as Appendix 1.

### **5. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

- 5.1 This report potentially contributes to all seven wellbeing goals as set out in the Links to Strategy section above. These include:-
- A globally responsible Wales
  - A prosperous Wales
  - A resilient Wales
  - A healthier Wales
  - A more equal Wales
  - A Wales of cohesive communities
  - A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no potential equalities implications associated with this report for any specific groups or individuals therefore a full Equalities Impact Assessment has not been carried out.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 As stated above, an initial project development fund of £300,000 has been approved by Cabinet and will allow a project team of officers to develop projects ready for implementation once funding becomes available.
- 7.2 The suggested governance arrangements will allow key member input and facilitates the use of the project development fund in accordance with Project management principles.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

- 9.1 This report reflects the views of the listed Consultees.

## **10 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agrees the new governance structure and associated Terms of Reference for the Regeneration Project Board as set out in section 4 and Appendix 1 to this report.

## **11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 11.1 To enable the Authority to develop a suitable suite of regeneration projects that are ready for implementation in order that any externally sourced funds can be efficiently and effectively utilised.
- 11.2 To allow members to have an affective level of input into the development of strategic Regeneration Projects.

## **12. STATUTORY POWER**

- 12.1 Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Mark. S. Williams Interim Corporate Director (Communities)  
WILLIMS@CAERPHILLY.GOV.UK

Consultees: Steve Harris, Interim Head of Corporate Finance  
Rhian Kyte, Head of Planning and Regeneration  
Councillor Sean Morgan, Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure,  
Sustainability & Wellbeing of Future Generations  
Councillor Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member for Environment & Public Protection

Lisa Lane, Interim Monitoring Officer  
Marcus Lloyd Head of Infrastructure

Background Papers:

- 1) Report to Special Council 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018 – Approval of Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Working Agreement Business Plan
- 2) Report to Cabinet 11<sup>th</sup> April 2018 – Future Regeneration Projects – Use of directorate reserve for Project Development Funding

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **REGENERATION PROJECT BOARD**

#### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

##### **PURPOSE**

1. To consider the Central Government and Regional priorities for Regeneration, the likely impacts and opportunities for Caerphilly County Borough and to consider potential projects that could be developed for the County Borough in accordance with these priorities.
2. To provide clear strategic direction in relation to the Regeneration Project Team (officers) in relation to specific regeneration projects to enable the Authority to react to calls for expressions of interest in short timescales.
3. To agree the range of projects to be developed by the project team of officers in order to take advantage of regeneration investment opportunities.
4. To critically evaluate individual projects in accordance with the evaluation criteria set by external or collaborative external bodies such as Welsh Government (WG), Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Joint Cabinet etc.
5. To provide periodic updates on project development to the Authority's Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.
6. To agree mechanisms for the submission of expressions of interest (EOI's) for project funding streams 7.
7. To recommend the formal submission of projects to the Authority's Cabinet so that submission to external funding bodies can be made and/or Authority budgets can be committed accordingly.

##### **MEMBERSHIP**

1. The Regeneration Project Board will include a politically balanced membership of:-
  - Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure, Sustainability & Wellbeing of Future Generations Champion
  - Cabinet Member for Environment & Public Protection
  - Labour Ward Member
  - Independent Ward Member
  - Plaid Cymru Ward Member
2. A number of key officers will attend all board meetings including:-
  - Corporate Director (Communities)
  - Head of Regeneration & Planning
  - Head of Infrastructure
  - Head of Corporate Finance

3. Additional attendees may be invited to attend the board meetings in accordance with agenda requirements.

#### **4. CHAIR/VICE CHAIR**

The Chair and Vice Chair will be selected from those County Borough Councillors sitting on the Board

#### **POWERS**

The Regeneration Project Board has recommendatory powers only. Regeneration projects and activities should be integrated with other programmes and initiatives to ensure a holistic approach. This is particularly relevant to any investment programme which should be developed and managed in such a way that it brings wider regeneration benefits to communities and supports the creation of local and wider regional job opportunities.

#### **FREQUENCY**

It is anticipated that the Regeneration Project Board will meet every 6-8 weeks to reflect the Council's cycle of meetings. However, there may be additional meetings if circumstances dictate this. Additional or ad hoc meetings may be convened with the agreement of the Chair and Vice-Chair to deal with urgent matters.

Meetings will normally be held in Penallta House. However, alternative locations around the County Borough may be used where relevant to the agenda and/or specific projects.



## CABINET – 30TH MAY 2018

**SUBJECT**      **FLAT ACCOMMODATION AT RIVER ROAD, PONTLOTTYN AND THE GROVE, FOCHRIW**

**REPORT BY:**    **CORPORATE DIRECTOR – SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING**

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- 1.1      The attached report, which was presented to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 17th May 2018 and considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 29th May 2018, prior to its referral to Cabinet.
  
- 1.2      The views expressed at the meeting and the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee will be reported verbally to Cabinet.

The Author:      R. Barrett, Committee Services Officer  
Ext. 4245

Appendices:  
Appendix 1      Covering Report to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee – 29th May 2018  
Appendix 2      Flat Accommodation at River Road, Pontlottyn And The Grove, Fochriw Report



## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 29TH MAY 2018**

**SUBJECT: FLAT ACCOMMODATION AT RIVER ROAD, PONTLOTTYN AND THE GROVE, FOCHRIW**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR – SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING**

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- 1.1 The attached report, which was presented to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 17th May 2018, sought the views of Members on proposals to demolish the block of flats known as 1 to 9, River Road, Pontlottyn and to take 3 to 6, The Grove, Fochriw, out of the Housing stock with a view to demolition of the block in future years. It was noted that following consideration by the Task Group, the report would be presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee as an item for discussion, prior to its referral to Cabinet for a decision on the recommendations contained therein.
- 1.2 Officers explained that issues associated with lack of demand are being experienced by all partner landlords with housing stock in the Upper Rhymney Valley. Whilst there is unmet need for single person accommodation throughout the county borough, demand for two and three bed flats in the Upper Rhymney Valley is low with waiting lists regularly exhausted.
- 1.3 Members were advised that 1 to 9 River Road comprises a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bed flats, and 1 to 6, The Grove comprises two active shop units at ground floor, trading as a single business, with two 2 bed flats located on each of the upper floors. Both blocks have been affected by high levels of antisocial behaviour, crime and substance misuse. In addition, the flats are very hard to let due to their location and property mix, in recent years have largely been home to transient households, and are not conducive to community cohesion. Both blocks are currently vacant and have been secured, and surveys have identified that significant investment is required due to the external and internal fabric and boundaries in order to bring them up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.
- 1.4 The report therefore recommended the demolition of both blocks, but that in recognition of the presence of a successful business operating out of The Grove, the demolition of that block be deferred until such time as the current lease expires or other arrangements transpire. It was noted that consultation had been carried out with the local and neighbouring ward Members and police, who had actively supported the proposal.
- 1.5 Discussion took place regarding the general store operating from The Grove and Members expressed the need to protect its occupants and maintain local amenities and services in the village. Officers confirmed that the leaseholders are supportive of the proposals, and it was noted that there are approximately 22 years left to run on the lease. It was explained that the Council recognises the value of the store to the community and are seeking to provide alternative accommodation for the occupants, although there are limitations to what funding can be obtained for commercial premises. Officers also provided clarification on the Council's ownership of Flat 1, River Road.



- 1.6 Members of the Task Group expressed their support for the proposals but suggested that the Housing Revenue Account should not be used to meet the costs of providing a replacement shop facility. Officers confirmed that they are looking at alternative funding sources in this regard, but the store did support the local community which was predominantly council owned properties and that the income received from the commercial lease was retained within the HRA. A Member also suggested that it would be useful for a map/photograph of the relevant area to be incorporated into any similar reports in the future.
- 1.7 Following consideration of the report, the Caerphilly Homes Task Group unanimously recommended to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee (and thereafter Cabinet) that for the reasons contained therein:-
- (i) the block known as 1 to 9 River Road be demolished;
  - (ii) the principle to proceed with demolition be agreed in respect of 1 to 6, The Grove, Fochriw, but that the demolition be deferred until the current lease of 1 and 2, The Grove expires, a suitable alternative premises is identified for the business currently operating out of the block or the ongoing liability incurred by the Council in maintaining the mothballed building is no longer considered financially viable.
- 1.8 The Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the recommendations.

Author: R. Barrett, Committee Services Officer, Ext. 4245

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 17th May 2018 - Agenda Item 4



## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 15TH MAY 2018

**SUBJECT: FLAT ACCOMMODATION AT RIVER ROAD, PONTLOTTYN & THE GROVE, FOCHRIW**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks the views of members on proposals to demolish the block of flats known as 1 to 9, River Road, Pontlottyn and to take 3 to 6, The Grove, Fochriw, out of the Housing stock with a view to demolition of the block in future years, prior to the report being presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for information and thereafter to Cabinet for a decision.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Issues associated with lack of demand are being experienced by all partner landlords with housing stock in the Upper Rhymney Valley. Whilst there is unmet need for single person accommodation throughout the County Borough, demand for two and three bed flats in the Upper Rhymney Valley is low with waiting lists regularly exhausted.
- 2.2 The block of Council owned flats known as 1 to 9 River Road comprises a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bed flats. The block known as 1 to 6, The Grove comprises two active shop units at ground floor, trading as a single business, with two 2 bed flats located on each of the upper floors.
- 2.3 Both blocks have been affected by high levels of antisocial behaviour, crime and substance misuse. In addition, the flats are very hard to let due to their location and property mix and in recent years have largely been home to transient households. All flats in both blocks are currently vacant and the blocks have been secured.
- 2.4 Surveys of the blocks have identified disrepair to the external and internal fabric and boundaries, and significant investment is necessary to bring them up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.
- 2.5 The report recommends that both blocks be demolished, however, in recognition of the presence of a successful business operating out of The Grove, it is recommended that the demolition of that block be deferred until such time as the current lease expires, alternative funding becomes available, a suitable alternative premises is identified for the business, or the ongoing liability incurred by the Council in maintaining the structure and exterior of the building whilst the flats are 'mothballed' is no longer considered financially viable.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 **Improving Lives and Communities; Homes in Wales** (WG 2010) sets out the national context on improving homes and communities.

- 3.2 The **Caerphilly Delivers -Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017** has a priority to “improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the County Borough” and ensure people are supported to live in their own homes and communities in safety.
- 3.3 The **Community Strategy: Living Environment Objective 1:** Encourage the development and maintenance of high quality, well designed and efficient, sustainable homes and environments which can meet all needs.
- 3.4 Caerphilly County Borough Council **2013/17 Corporate Priorities** include: CP7 - Invest in our Council homes and their communities to transform lives.
- 3.5 Caerphilly County Borough Council’s **Well-being Objectives in 2017/18** include: WBO5 – Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities.
- 3.6 The **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015** is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. It requires public bodies to think more about the long-term, working with people and communities, looking to prevent problems and take a more joined up approach. This will create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. The content of this report links to the following Act well-being goals:
- A prosperous Wales.
  - A resilient Wales.
  - A healthier Wales.
  - A more equal Wales.
  - A Wales of cohesive communities.
  - A globally responsible Wales.

## 4. THE REPORT

### River Road Flats

- 4.1 River Road is located within the Pontlottyn ward. The block of flats known as 1 to 9 River Road is a traditional brick built block comprising three floors, each containing one 1 bed, one 2 bed and one 3 bed flat. It is the only block in the Council’s stock with this configuration. The block is fully owned by the Authority.
- 4.2 Flat 1 had previously been sold in June 2000 under the Right to Buy, and later sold on several times by subsequent owners and in July 2017 it was put up for auction in poor condition. In light of officer and local residents’ concerns about the block’s detrimental impact on the local community and future viability for residential use it was determined that it would be appropriate for the Authority to try to regain full ownership and control of the block by purchasing the flat. It was subsequently bought by the Council for £17,000 at auction.
- 4.3 In recent years there have been instances of antisocial behaviour, crime and substance misuse in the vicinity of this block which has contributed to the flats becoming difficult to let. This block of flats has been very hard to let due to its location and property mix and is reported by local residents to be regarded locally as a ‘no go’ zone.
- 4.4 The mix of accommodation in this block is not conducive to sustainable and cohesive communities and results in households with very different lifestyles and priorities sharing a living environment. The stigma associated with these flats has led to potential tenants refusing offers of accommodation despite the accommodation lending itself to families, couples and single people who may have been affected by welfare reform. In the last five years the average void period for this block has been 155 days compared with 25 days for a neighbouring block in Broad Street. In recent months the number of let flats reduced to four, with one of those being investigated for non-occupation.

- 4.5 In addition there are wider issues of low demand being experienced by all partner landlords with stock in the Upper Rhymney Valley. Whilst there is unmet need for single person accommodation throughout the County Borough, demand for two and three bed flats in the Upper Rhymney Valley, including Pontlottyn, is low. Traditionally flats have always been lower demand than houses as they are not considered by all to be suitable family accommodation, particularly flats above ground floor. As a result, families willing to move into low demand flats tend to stay only a short time, as a stepping stone into a house, particularly if subjected to antisocial behaviour.
- 4.6 Between January 2016 and November 2017 the Police and the Tenancy Enforcement Section received 19 reports of anti-social behaviour related to River Road and 7 crime related reports, including criminal damage, theft, burglary and vehicle related crime. Despite a multi-agency approach to offending, the provision of security doors and the strict enforcement of tenancy conditions, Police officers were still required to regularly patrol the area as many of the flats remained unoccupied and the location was being used by youths to congregate. A decision was therefore taken in late 2017 to relocate the few remaining tenants of the block to alternative accommodation in order to secure the building and reduce the likelihood of incidents of crime and antisocial behaviour in the locality.
- 4.7 Surveys of the block have identified disrepair to the external fabric and boundaries and a significant investment is necessary to bring it up to the WHQS. Whilst a small number of the flats have benefitted from some investment most of them require significant internal repairs and improvements to meet the WHQS. This work will be required to be fully completed if the flats are to remain as part of the Council's stock, despite significant concerns about future demand and associated housing management implications of letting the flats.
- 4.8 Initial consideration has been given to redesigning the interior layout of the block to facilitate a better household mix and/or an alternative use but costs are considered prohibitive and options are limited, particularly in an area where demand is low for all property types.
- 4.9 If demolished a significant open space would be created that could be considered for sale or for a use that would enhance the quality of the local environment and complement improvements being made to other Council owned stock within the community. Local residents have already enquired as to the possibility providing additional car parking for the Boys and Girls Club situated directly opposite the block, thereby improving a local community facility and this would be given consideration if approval were to be given to proceed with demolition.
- 4.10 In November 2017 the local ward Member presented a petition at Council, signed by 341 local residents. They believed that the Authority may have been considering alternative uses for the block known as 1 to 9, River Road, and called for it to be demolished, highlighting the negative impact the block was having on the community. The petition contained allegations of anti-social behaviour, drug dealing and drug use within the flats, and associated concerns for child safety. The petition was accompanied by many letters and comments from local residents, detailing their personal experiences of the flats, fears and concerns and highlighted residents' perception that since many of the tenants had been moved out of the block the situation had improved.
- 4.11 Following a review of available information and discussions with Police and the local Ward Member, together with consideration of the expenditure required to bring this block up to the WHQS, officers have concluded that Members should give consideration to the demolition of this block of flats.

### **The Grove**

- 4.12 The Grove, Fochriw is a three storey block located within the Darran Valley ward. It comprises two shop units at ground floor with two 2 bed flats located on each of the upper floors. The block has a central internal stairway providing access to the flats via the front of the building between the two shop units. Two neighbouring three storey blocks of flats were

previously demolished by Rhymney Valley District Council due to problems with anti-social behaviour and low demand but this block was retained, due in part, to the presence of the shops.

- 4.13 The two shop units known as 1 and 2, The Grove are currently let on a single 25 year lease, running from 2015, to a local company who operate a thriving general store and Post Office out of the premises. This is the only such enterprise within the village, located centrally, and officers recognise that the shop is an important local amenity, supporting sustainability of the community.
- 4.14 In addition to these flats the Council have 12 two bed bungalows, 34 two bed and 104 three bed houses in Fochriw. As highlighted in paragraph 4.5 there is very little demand in the Upper Rhymney Valley, including Fochriw, for first or second floor two bed flats, from couples or families, with waiting lists for two bed houses in the area also regularly exhausted. The location of the flats at The Grove is a traditional and natural congregation point within the village and they have previously been a repeated focus of anti-social and nuisance behaviour, thereby impacting on both tenants and the wider community.
- 4.15 In the last five years of letting the 4 flats had 16 different tenants with 10 ending their tenancies within a year highlighting the ongoing transient nature of these tenancies. Due to the anti-social behaviour, together with lack of demand and the need for significant investment prior to them being re-let, the flats have now effectively been 'mothballed', having been void and secured since April 2015, to prevent illegal access and discourage anti-social behaviour in the area.
- 4.16 If it were to be re-let the block now requires significant investment in order to achieve WHQS, which is likely to include renewal of the roof and external render and removal of the chimney stacks. The interior of the flats themselves are now in poor condition having had no WHQS investment to date, low rates of repair reporting and having been void for a considerable period of time.
- 4.17 The local ward Member and leaseholders of the shop are supportive of the flats remaining mothballed and have indicated that there has been a significant reduction in antisocial behaviour experienced in the vicinity of the block since the flats have been secured, which has had a positive impact on the ground floor business. The leaseholders have also demonstrated a willingness to consider relocation if required, to facilitate refurbishment or demolition of the block were the Council able to provide suitable alternative premises within the local community, but to date no such suitable alternative has been identified.
- 4.18 The potential feasibility of retaining the ground floor of the building for the shop business, whilst removing the structure of the upper floors and associated ongoing liability has been considered. Whilst it has been established that it would be technically possible to demolish the upper two floors whilst retaining the shops it is not considered a cost viable option at present. The demolition would need to be slow and measured and the shops below would need to shut for the duration for safety reasons. It is recognised that it may be cheaper option to demolish the block in its entirety and build a new shop if a funding opportunity arises in the future and it is hoped that opportunities may present themselves for this latter option, perhaps as part of a wider regeneration initiative.
- 4.19 Officers consider that demolition of the whole block would be an appropriate course of action but recognise the importance of supporting, as far as possible, the successful business currently trading out of the premises to the benefit of the local community. It is therefore, requested that Members consider approving the principle of demolition of the block but that the flats remain mothballed for the time being and that this decision to demolish not be implemented at least until the current commercial lease expires, a suitable alternative premises is identified for the business, or the ongoing liability incurred by the Council in maintaining the structure and exterior of the building whilst the flats are mothballed is no longer considered financially viable. During this interim period officers would also continue to actively investigate funding opportunities that may become available to the Authority in relation to the block and/or the shop business that would enable the business to remain in the community whilst allowing for demolition of all or part of the block.

## **5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

5.1 This report contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act in that it is:

- Long Term – supports the sustainability of cohesive communities for tenants and residents.
- Prevention – recognises and addresses the impact of low demand properties and anti-social behaviour on the wider community.
- Integration – provides for balanced and sustainable communities where people want to live.
- Collaboration – Joined up working arrangements within the organisation and with outside agencies to provide sustainable, stable and cohesive communities in pursuit of shared objectives.
- Involvement – Engaging with tenants, residents and local stakeholders in determining the most appropriate course of action.

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 An EIA screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and supplementary guidance. No potential for unlawful discrimination and/or low level or minor negative impact has been identified, therefore a full EIA has not been carried out.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The anticipated cost of internal and external repairs and improvements to achieve WHQS at 1 to 9, River Road has been calculated at £150,000. This would be off-set by the demolition and clearance of the site which is broadly estimated at £100,000 inclusive of fees. There would therefore be a potential net saving of £50,000 however consideration will need to be given to possible future uses of the site. Landscaping of the site footprint has been estimated at £35,000.

7.2 The anticipated cost of internal and external repairs and improvements to achieve WHQS at 3 to 6, The Grove has been calculated at £135,000. This would be off-set by the demolition and clearance of the site which is broadly estimated at £50,000, inclusive of fees. There would therefore be a net saving of £85,000 however consideration will need to be given to possible future uses of the site.

7.3 The ongoing voids in River Road and The Grove have resulted in an ongoing loss of rental income. Anticipated rental loss for 2018/19 is £32,879 for River Road and £16,435 for the Grove. The reduction of thirteen flats would result in a minor adjustment to the housing stock which will have minimal impact in respect of rental income in view of the previous history of the areas.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Due to the specialist nature of the demolition work at River Road and The Grove an appropriate contractor would need to be appointed.

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

9.1 The proposal to demolish the block of flats known as 1 to 9 River Road has been discussed with and actively supported by the local ward Member and Police. There are currently no tenants in the block with whom to consult, however, as mentioned previously, a petition has recently been received, signed by 341 local residents, calling for the demolition of the block.

- 9.2 Initial discussions have been held with the leaseholder of the shops and will continue at the relevant time should the property be demolished or refurbished.
- 9.3 Comments received from the Consultees listed below have been incorporated into this report.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 CHTG are asked to provide their views on the recommendations as set out below which will be provided to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for information and presented to Cabinet together with the recommendations below:
- 10.1.1 That the block known as 1 to 9 River Road be demolished.
- 10.1.2 That the principle to proceed with demolition be agreed in respect of 1 to 6, The Grove, Fochriw, but that the demolition be deferred until the current lease of 1 and 2, The Grove expires, a suitable alternative premises is identified for the business currently operating out of the block or the ongoing liability incurred by the Council in maintaining the mothballed building is no longer considered financially viable.

## **11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 11.1 Demolition is recommended due to a recognition of the ongoing lack of demand for such accommodation in the Upper Rhymney Valley, the level of investment required in order to achieve WHQS in these low demand blocks prior to them being re-let, and the significant impact of crime and antisocial behaviour associated with the letting and management of these blocks which is detrimental to the local communities.

## **12. STATUTORY POWER**

- 12.1 Housing Act 1985.

Author: Fiona Wilkins, Public Sector Housing Manager  
(Email: [wilkife@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:wilkife@caerphilly.gov.uk), Tel: 01443 811407)

Consultees: Christina Harrhy, Interim Chief Executive,  
David Street, Director of Social Services and Housing  
Councillor Lisa Phipps, Cabinet Member for Homes and Places  
Councillor Gaynor Oliver, Local Ward Member, Pontlottyn  
Councillor David Hardacre, Local Ward Member, Darran Valley  
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer  
Rachel Thornett, Tenancy Enforcement Manager  
Sandra Isaacs, Rents Manager  
Debbie Bishop, Area Housing Manager  
Mandy Betts, Tenant and Community Involvement Manager  
Paul Smythe, Housing Repair Operations Manager  
Richard Crane, Senior Solicitor  
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer, Equalities and Welsh Language  
Lesley Allen, Principal Accountant  
Natalie Kenny, Community Safety  
Lisa Lane Interim Monitoring Officer

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## CABINET – 30TH MAY 2018

**SUBJECT: FOSTER CARER FEE LEVELS**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING**

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- 1.1 The attached report, which was considered by the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on 1st May 2018, asked Members to support the implementation of a revised fee structure for Caerphilly foster carers, which will bring the Council in line with other local authorities in South Wales and will assist Children's Services to recruit additional foster carers. It was noted that the report also sought a referral to Cabinet on the recommendations contained therein.
- 1.2 Members were reminded of the service pressures faced across Children's Services with the increased complexity of difficulties being presented by families, the significant increase of over 100 Looked After Children, the relentless demands of increased court proceedings and the resultant budget overspend. These pressures have been compounded by the availability of sufficient in-house foster care placements. Given the increase in looked after children, Children's Services have to commission foster care placements from independent fostering agencies (IFAs), which adds to the cost pressures placed on the Authority. In addition, and despite continuous recruitment activity, Caerphilly has experienced a net loss in the total number of available placements over the last few years and the age profile of existing carers suggests that more will be retiring over coming years.
- 1.3 It has also become apparent that a number of potential applicants are choosing to apply to other Councils or the IFAs based on the remuneration packages offered, and therefore a need for Caerphilly Council to offer more competitive placement allowances has been identified. Officers outlined the current payment structure, with it noted that the fee comprises of either a mainstream or career allowance, together with a child allowance. These fees were last reviewed in 2004 and place mainstream carers at a disadvantage compared to career carers and those carers in other local authorities.
- 1.4 It was therefore proposed to streamline the fee structure in line with the age bandings for the National Minimum Allowance (NMA) set annually by Welsh Government, and which will equalise payments to mainstream and career carers. Further details of the proposed structure were set out in the report. The report also proposed an annual fee increase in line with the Council's agreed pay award percentage, and that a Birthday Allowance of £100 and a Christmas Allowance of £200 be implemented. Members were also asked to note that two weeks annual leave allowance will be payable across the board for all carers. As it has been recognised that a number of existing career carers will be at risk of detriment with the implementation of the new fees due to the ages of the children currently in placement, the report proposed that existing fee levels for those carers are protected for the duration of the current placement or until the transition through to a higher age band (whichever comes first).
- 1.5 The Scrutiny Committee were advised that consultation has been carried out with Caerphilly's Foster Care Forum, with mainstream carers supportive of the level of equality that will be set via the standardised fees. There has been some apprehension amongst career carers but they are satisfied with the level of fee protection offered. Both parties appreciate the recognition of their efforts arising from the annual leave allowance and annual fee increase.

- 1.6 Discussion took place on whether career carers might opt to foster less challenging cases due to the removal of the enhanced fee. Officers explained that this will be a choice for each individual and expressed the need to introduce an equitable level of payment in view of the demands and pressures being faced by the service. A Member queried whether it was a realistic expectation for the additional costs to be met through the Children's Services budget from 2019 onwards and Officers explained that in addition to the savings that would be made through the use of IFAs, additional savings would be made in other areas of this budget if necessary in order to meet the demands of this essential service area. Officers also responded to queries regarding the current level of recruitment for foster carers, and agreed to circulate further information to the Scrutiny Committee regarding the number of carers in training. Discussion also took place regarding out of county and reciprocal fostering arrangements between local authorities, and it was emphasised that the Authority consider all relevant factors in order to provide the most stable placement for children in care.
- 1.7 Following consideration of the report, the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee unanimously recommended to Cabinet that for the reasons contained therein:-
- (i) the revised fee structure as detailed in the report be implemented;
  - (ii) Birthday and Christmas Allowances be reintroduced;
  - (iii) fee payment protection for those career carers with younger aged children in placement be applied;
  - (iv) the use of service reserves to fund the proposals for the remainder of 2018/19 be approved;
  - (v) the level of savings achieved as a result of placements returning to Caerphilly carers be monitored throughout 2018/19 and be used to fund the recurring impact of the revised fee structure from April 2019 onwards.
- 1.8 Cabinet are asked to consider the recommendations and to note that if the revised fee structure is approved, arrangements will be made to implement the payments with immediate effect from 1st June 2018.

Author: R. Barrett, Committee Services Officer, Ext. 4245

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report to Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on 1st May 2018 - Agenda Item 10



## HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 1ST MAY 2018

**SUBJECT: FOSTER CARER FEE LEVELS**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Scrutiny Committee support to implement a revised fee structure for Caerphilly foster carers which will bring the Council in line with other Local Authorities in South Wales and will assist Children's Services to recruit additional foster carers.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Scrutiny Committee are already aware of the service pressures faced across Children's Services with the increased complexity of difficulties being presented by families, the significant increase of over 100 Looked After Children, the relentless demands of increased court proceedings and the resultant budget overspend. These pressures have been compounded by the availability of sufficient in-house foster care placements.
- 2.2 The Children's Services Commissioning Strategy clearly expects children and young people to be placed with in-house foster carers in the first instance. The average in-house foster placement costs £16k per annum. Given the significant increase in LAC numbers, all in-house provision is full. As a result, Children's Services have to commission foster care placements from Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's). The average cost of an IFA placement is £35-45k per annum.
- 2.3 Despite continuous recruitment activity, Caerphilly has experienced a net loss in the total number of available placements over the last few years and the age profile of existing carers suggests that several more will be retiring over coming years. The reduction in numbers of carers has, in part, been impacted by an improved quality assurance approach to reviewing the standards of care being provided which has resulted in several carers being de-registered.
- 2.4 Scrutiny Committee are aware of Cabinet's agreement to fund a radio advertising campaign which has generated increased enquiries leading to an increase in assessments. However, the Fostering Team are aware that a number of potential applicants are choosing to apply to other Councils or the IFA's based on the remuneration packages offered.
- 2.5 This report identifies that Caerphilly's mainstream foster carer fee level is now one of the lowest in South Wales and this is inevitably impacting on our ability to recruit the additional foster carers that are required to meet demand.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Social Services & Well Being (Wales) Act 2014.
- 3.2 Children's Services Commissioning Strategy 2015-2020.

- 3.3 Statutory Foster Care Regulations.
- 3.4 Well-Being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

#### 4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Foster carers financial remuneration consists of two elements which are paid weekly:
  1. An allowance in respect of each child in line with the National Minimum Allowance (NMA) set annually by Welsh Government. The NMA varies based on age bands; 0-4, 5-10, 11-15 and 16+ years.
  2. A professional fee reflecting the skills, training and experience of the foster carer. Currently, there are two fee levels in Caerphilly; a mainstream carer fee is £68 and a career carer fee is £176. All other Local Authorities have a single fee level for all foster carers at a similar level to Caerphilly’s career carer rate.
- 4.2 Caerphilly has 38 mainstream carers and 38 career carers. As stated above, the NMA is set annually by Welsh Government and increases annually. The fee levels are agreed by the Local Authority and the current fees were set in 2004 with no increases made since that time.
- 4.3 The NMA levels for 2018/19 are as follows:

Age band:	National Minimum Allowance:
0 – 4	£175
5 – 10	£159
11 – 15	£159
16 +	£199

- 4.4 Children and young people in the 11 to 15 age band are the most difficult to place. Using this age group, the following table identifies the current remuneration rates across neighbouring Local Authorities together with the average IFA cost:

Local Authority:	Fee:	Child allowance:	Total placement cost:
Caerphilly	Mainstream: £68.41 Career: £176.73	£159	£227.41 £335.73
Blaenau Gwent	£175	£159	£334
Torfaen	£103.75	£168.50	£272.25
Monmouthshire	£75	£174	£249
Newport	£150	£159	£309
Merthyr	£160	£159	£319
Rhondda Cynon Taff	£165.50	£159	£324.50
Cardiff	£175.83	£159	£334.83
Average IFA			£770

In addition, with the exception of Caerphilly, all the Local Authorities make additional Birthday and Christmas payments ranging from £100 to £300.

- 4.5 Recent consultation undertaken with Caerphilly foster carers in response to the National Fostering Framework highlighted that although carers felt very satisfied with the support they received from the Fostering Team, mainstream foster carers felt that their fee levels did not reflect the level of commitment they are required to provide and as a result they felt undervalued. Many carers stated that they had to consider seeking alternative employment which would limit their availability to accept placements.

- 4.6 Having reviewed the remuneration packages across the region, in an attempt to address the varying allowance and fee levels and the inequity between the current mainstream and career carers, the following fee structure is proposed:

<b>Age band:</b>	<b>Allowance:</b>	<b>Single Fee:</b>	<b>Total:</b>
0 – 4	£175	£125	£300
5 – 10	£159	£161	£320
11 – 15	£159	£181	£340
16+	£199	£181	£380

- 4.7 Implementation of the proposed fee structure will place Caerphilly in a strong position to compete within the region. In order to maintain this position it is proposed that the fees increase annually in line with the Council's agreed pay award percentage. In addition, it is proposed that a Birthday Allowance of £100 and a Christmas Allowance of £200 is implemented.
- 4.8 On the basis that the new fee structure is linked to the NMA age bands, a number of existing Career Carers will be at risk of detriment with the implementation of the new fees due to the ages of the children currently in placement. As a result, it is proposed that existing fee levels for those carers are protected for the duration of the current placement or until the transition through to a higher age band whichever comes first.
- 4.9 Consultation has included Caerphilly's Foster Carer Forum and the final proposals will be presented to Foster Carers on 18<sup>th</sup> April. Given the reporting timescales it is not possible to include feedback in this report but a verbal update will be provided to Scrutiny Committee.

## **5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

- 5.1 Social Services contribute to the Well-being Goals and the 5 ways of working in the context of strategy and vision, preventing problems occurring or getting worse and collaborating to meet agreed objectives specifically:
- Corporate planning
  - Risk management
  - Workforce planning
  - Performance management
  - Financial planning.

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Council's EIA process does not need to be applied in this matter.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are significant financial implications involved in addressing the remuneration challenges.
- 7.2 The costs of implementing the revised fee structure are:

Fees:	£175,305
Protection for existing Career Carers:	£ 53,666
Total:	£228,971

- 7.3 Reintroduction of the Birthday Allowance at £100 and Christmas Allowance at £200 for children in mainstream foster care (129) and Kinship foster care (78) will cost £62,100.

- 7.4 Therefore, the total full year cost of implementing both the revised fees and additional allowances is £291,071.
- 7.5 Part year implementation effective from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018 will cost £242,559 or from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018 will cost £218,295.
- 7.6 It is proposed that for 2018/19, Service reserves are utilised to fund the proposal. However, from 2019 onwards, the costs will need to be met through savings within the Children's Services budget.
- 7.7 The total annual cost could be offset by savings if a minimum of 8 children currently placed in the independent sector were able to be returned to Caerphilly carers.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no HR implications resulting from this report.

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

- 9.1 The report reflects the views of the consultees.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 Scrutiny Committee are requested to note the content of this report and support the following:
- i) Implementation of the revised fee structure as detailed in this report;
  - ii) Re-introduction of Birthday and Christmas Allowances;
  - iii) Fee payment protection for those Career Carers with younger aged children in placement and;
  - iv) The use of Service reserves to fund the proposals for the remainder of 2018/19.
  - v) The level of savings achieved as a result of placements returning to Caerphilly carers will be monitored throughout 2018/19 and will be used to fund the recurring impact of the revised fee structure from April 2019 onwards.

## **11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 11.1 To ensure Scrutiny Committee is fully aware of the foster care recruitment pressures and the need to address the fee structures and allowances in order attract additional carers to meet the service demands.

## **12. STATUTORY POWER**

- 12.1 Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014.

Author: Gareth Jenkins, Assistant Director – Children's Services  
Consultees: Cllr Carl Cuss, Cabinet Member  
Dave Street, Corporate Director – Social Services  
Mike Jones, Interim Financial Services Manager – Social Services  
Social Services Senior Management Team  
Corporate Management Team  
Children's Services Divisional Management Team  
Caerphilly Foster Carer Forum

# Agenda Item 7



**CABINET – 30<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2018**

**PUBLIC INTEREST TEST – EXEMPTION FROM DISCLOSURE OF DOCUMENTS  
PARAGRAPH 14 SCHEDULE 12A LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**SUBJECT: OAKDALE BUSINESS PARK PLATEAU ONE – POTENTIAL SALE OF  
COUNCIL OWNED LAND TO WELSH GOVERNMENT**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER**

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I have considered grounds for exemption of information contained in the report referred to above and make the following recommendations to the Proper Officer:-

**EXEMPTIONS APPLYING TO THE REPORT:**

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) to any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority in the course of negotiations for contracts for the acquisition of or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services (paragraph 14).

**FACTORS IN FAVOUR OF DISCLOSURE:**

There is a public interest in the way in which the Council enters into contractual arrangements and manages its financial affairs.

**PREJUDICE WHICH WOULD RESULT IF THE INFORMATION WERE DISCLOSED:**

The report contains detailed information about the current negotiations regarding the potential sale of Council owned land to Welsh Government, who have not yet obtained ministerial approval to the proposal. As such revealing this information at this stage has the potential to prejudice the successful outcome of the project and the Council's longer term proposals.

**MY VIEW ON THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST IS AS FOLLOWS:**

That paragraph 14 should apply. I am mindful of the need to ensure the transparency and accountability of public authorities for decisions taken. However disclosure of the information contained in the report at this stage could potentially prejudice the successful outcome of the project and the Council's longer term proposals.

The information is not affected by any other statutory provision which requires the information to be publicly registered.

On that basis I feel that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. Members are asked to consider these factors when determining the public interest test, which they must decide when considering excluding the public from this part of the meeting.

**RECOMMENDED DECISION ON EXEMPTION FROM DISCLOSURE:**

On the basis set out above I feel that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the

public interest in disclosing the information, and that the report should be exempt.

Signed: *Kirsty Jane* Dated: 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2018

Post: **Interim Monitoring Officer**

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I accept/~~do not~~ the recommendation made above.

Signed: *Harry*  
**Proper Officer**

Date: 23/5/18



# Agenda Item 8

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