

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**7<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024**

**RESIDENTIAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY: A PROGRESS REPORT**

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH  
THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR G CAPLE**

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Corporate Parenting Board members with updated information about progress with the Residential Transformations Strategy.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Consider the information contained within the report.

**3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To provide the Corporate Parent Board with information and assurance about progress with the Residential Transformation Strategy.

**4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 In February 2023, Cabinet approved Children's Services Residential Transformation Strategy, the link to those documents can be found here: [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 28/02/2023 11:30 \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#). On 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023, 16<sup>th</sup> March and 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023 briefing sessions were made available to all Councillors with a recording of that for those who could not make it.

- 4.2 Phase 1 of that strategy has been implemented and evaluated. From the outset the requirement to develop at pace, at scale, and with the target of high quality, keeping outcomes for young people and their families at the heart of what we do was well understood. The degree of organisational and transformational change involved with the development of this number of homes should not be underestimated. Change of this scale needs to take account of the investment of time required to prepare settings and teams that can provide the quality of

care that is required. The pace of development has been unprecedented.

Phase 1 – What worked	Phase 1 – Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued to provide high quality care for children in our existing 4 children’s homes (capacity for 13 children) and short breaks home</li> <li>• Signed off a Purchase Protocol alongside colleagues in estates,</li> <li>• Opened Willowford House ( 3 young people therapeutic approach)</li> <li>• Registered Ystrad Fechan as a children’s home ( 3 young people same day / assessment)</li> <li>• Recruited and trained staff</li> <li>• Purchased Catref Melys ( 4 young people therapeutic approach)</li> <li>• Purchased Meadow View and Ty Ni</li> <li>• Agreed purchase of a further solo provision</li> <li>• Responded to CIW enforcement process</li> <li>• Managed considerable demand and risks of children in OWR</li> <li>• Responded to Government’s request for meetings given the policy imperative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dearth of suitable settings and locations</li> <li>• Recruiting staff with sufficient experience and qualifications</li> <li>• Training large numbers of staff whilst providing the service</li> <li>• The need to look after children with different and greater needs</li> <li>• The pace of disruption in the provider sector has led to an increase in placement breakdowns and a need to develop Operating Without Registration arrangements</li> <li>• Lack of availability of contractors at short notice to carry out refurbishments works to achieve RISCA compliance</li> <li>• Lack of sufficiency and supply of skilled temporary workers</li> <li>• Considerable costs that exceeded budget</li> </ul>

### 4.3 Workforce

Many appointed staff are new to their rewarding yet demanding roles in residential care with little or in some cases no experience or relevant qualifications. Whilst this provides good potential for rapid knowledge and practice transfer, it is also a challenge. Acquisition of knowledge and skills can be achieved by instruction but is consolidated through experience, observation of experienced staff, supervision, support, and regular training inputs through the first year. This requires time and considerable logistical planning. There is a particular challenge in relation to attracting senior staff.

### 4.4 Phase 1 - What have we learned?

Overall we have learned that the rate of development in Year 1 cannot not be safely sustained into Year 2, especially given that good outcomes for children remains our priority objective. The work is resource intensive and high cost in every way. In the year ahead, given the impact of budget restrictions, children’s services will be asked to give account for the cost involved in this transition. Refurbishment and staffing of newly acquired settings must take place alongside developing, upskilling and supporting the new staff teams. This consolidation period is accepted as necessary and will allow focus to be on deepening the resilience and skill base of new provision. Despite

development, we have not been able to avoid or reduce OWR. Costs considerably exceed the grant that has been made available.

#### **4.5 Performance Results**

The performance results for Phase 1 demonstrated that:

- There has been an increase in LA provided capacity of 11 beds with a further property yet to be developed
- There has been an overall increase in demand for Residential Care from 64 placements and 8% of the overall CLA population at 31.3.22 to 73 placements which is 11 %. This is in part inflated by insufficient supply of foster care placements
- There has been a 14% decrease in the commissioning of for profit residential care placements from 51 or 80% at 31.3.22 to 48 or 66% at 31.12.23
- There has been a 16% increase in the number of children who need residential care living in homes in RCT changing from 18 children or 28% of the cohort at 31.3.22 to 32 children or 44% of the cohort as at 31.12.23

**4.6 Phase 2 action plan 2024- 2025** will focus on the following workstream priorities:

- (i) **Achieving registration** for each new setting
- (ii) **Workforce** : Recruitment, Training and Supporting Staff
- (iii) **Young Peoples' Well-Being** : Residential Review and best interests of individuals, planning for 31.3.27
- (iv) **Accelerating Developments**: Foster Wales, Our 16 + and Commissioning Strategies
- (v) **Governance** : Updating risk register, reducing OWR, and controlling costs

#### **5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 A full impact assessment accompanies the residential transformation strategy.

#### **6. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT**

6.1 Young people and stake holder views were included in the overall development of the strategy.

#### **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

7.1 The costs are considerable and increasing, they are monitored on a weekly basis.

7.2 The expenditure being incurred is necessary to satisfy our duties to looked after children and young people as set out in part 6 of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA).

7.3 There are specific duties placed upon the Council's Statutory Finance Officer with regard to lawfulness of expenditure. In this instance the over-riding purpose of the expenditure is to satisfy our legal obligations under the SSWBA and to not do so would have a far greater detrimental impact on the Council and those young persons under our care. The costs for these settings are met within Children's Services budget. Due to reliance on agency staff, and the staffing levels required, costs are significant.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

8.1 The Councils' duties to looked after children and young people are included in part 6 of the Social Services Well-Being Act (Wales) (SSWBA) 2014. The duties include at s.75 of SSWBA a duty to arrange sufficient accommodation.

8.2 This report also refers to duties to ensure that accommodation is registered and inspected in line with RISCA and the CIW process for addressing non-compliance.

## **9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

9.1 This report supports the Council's corporate priorities, Working With Our Communities.

9.2 The business covered in this report contributes to the following 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

## **10. CONCLUSION**

10.1 Achieving good outcomes for young people is always the priority.

10.2 Good progress has been made during phase 1 of the Residential Transformation Strategy, and the Phase 2 plan builds on the learning from Phase 1.

- 10.2 Achieving full transition to a 100% not for profit will take much longer than the legislative timescale allows for. Children's Services will work alongside Government officials should best interest exemptions be required in line with the decision about the legislative timeline.
- 10.4 Children's Services will supply future update reports to Corporate Parenting Board.



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

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