

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 25 April 2024
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Healthy Living and Social Care
Report Title:	Social Care Records System
Purpose of Report:	To seek approval from Cabinet to enter into an agreement with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MCTCBC), Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) and Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) regarding the procurement of a replacement social care system for CareDirector (WCCIS) that will become end of life by January 2026.
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member, Social Care and Health.
Responsible Officer:	Director of Social Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Operational Manager, Legal Services; Operational Manager, Finance.
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report is to provide Cabinet with information regards the Social Care records system. Currently we are contracted to CareDirector (more commonly known as WCCIS (The Welsh Customer Care Information System)). • The report outlines the current situation with regards the system and when the contract ends and outlines the timescales for decisions that will be required in future months with a view to procuring a new system. 	

Recommendations

- 1.** That approval be granted to the Council entering into an agreement with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Bridgend County Borough Council regarding the procurement of a replacement social care system.
- 2.** That delegated authority be given to the Director of Social Services and procurement lead in the Vale of Glamorgan to negotiate and agree the final terms of the agreement with the other Councils and enter and arrange execution of that agreement.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 1.** To ensure that the Council is able to procure a system through a collaborative arrangement.
- 2.** To allow the Director of Social Services to make timely negotiations to the final terms of the contract agreement.

1. Background

- 1.1** As of January 2026, the existing CareDirector system (WCCIS) will become end of life. It is therefore an essential requirement that all social care users and services are migrated from WCCIS to new technology within stringent timescales. This will ensure that organisations will not be working on unsupported systems that pose a risk to citizen's safety and wellbeing.
- 1.2** Unsupported software has a high propensity for malware and ransomware attacks with the relevant significant reputational and financial risks to the organisation. The use of an unsupported system would almost certainly prevent us achieving our Public Service Network (PSN) certification and would significantly disrupt service delivery across the Council.
- 1.3** The new National Programme will be known as the Connecting Care Programme (CCP). Welsh Government have appointed Digital Health Care Wales (DHCW) as the lead organisation for WCCIS and the new Connecting Care Programme on their behalf.
- 1.4** A PIN (Prior Information Notice) was published in October 2023 to obtain views on the draft architecture approach, proposed timelines and associated procurement approach, along with seeking to understand the market capacity, capability and interest. In November 2023, an RFI (Request for Information) went out on Sell 2 Wales from Perago - a company commissioned on behalf of Digital Health Care Wales (DHCW) to undertake a market engagement exercise and make recommendation on an approach (strategy) for procurement. This exercise has now concluded.
- 1.5** The recommended procurement approach is to adopt an assisted buying model using the RM6529 Health and Social Care Framework. The major social care

players (OLM: Eclipse, System C: Liquid Logic and Access Group: Mosaic) are aligned with the framework.

- 1.6 The use of pre-existing frameworks saves time in the process of procurement and contract award, whilst ensuring that a robust process of evaluation has been carried out. Utilisation of frameworks to support this complex procurement offer the most cost-effective solution for engaging the market, whilst also allowing implementation timescales to be accelerated.
- 1.7 One of the key recommendations stressed by Perago was the benefit of regional or area collaboration on procurement and appointment of a lead organisation.
- 1.8 Engagement with front-line social care staff is essential in both the procurement readiness process and implementation; as such, product demonstrations were arranged by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) Regional Team to enable front-line social care staff with an opportunity to view a range of products on the market.

Summary of Timelines:

Stage 1: Procurement Readiness (January to April 2024)

Stage 2: Social Care Procurement (April to July 2024 inc.)

Stage 3: Social Care Implementation (August 2024 to December 2025 inc.) - staggered across CTM region.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 A National Procurement Group has been established with a view to creating a standardised procurement pack (procedures, guidelines, Terms and Conditions, baseline specification, mandatory national requirements) that can be utilised locally to provide the necessary support and a standardised approach to the procurement process. Membership of the Group comprises representatives from each region's appointed lead authority who will adhere to a key set of procurement principles:
 - Centrally led
 - Locally delivered
 - Produced once, used many times
 - Pool expertise across regions
- 2.2 The Vale of Glamorgan Council expressed an interest in collaborating closely with the CTM region. Given the Vale of Glamorgan's status as part of a smaller region (Cardiff and the Vale) and the only Local Authority within that area who are on WCCIS and have a need to procure a replacement system. It was agreed by the CTM Regional Implementation Board that there are clear benefits to CTM and the Vale working together to procure a new system e.g. sharing resources and joint documentation. It was also decided that dependent on the outcome of the

procurement stage, there is potential that joint working may continue throughout implementation and post implementation. Break clauses have been agreed for these key project stages.

- 2.3 It was discussed and agreed at the Regional Implementation Board that a collective approach to procurement across CTM and Vale of Glamorgan would be implemented and there was a drive to move forward as an early adopter as swiftly as possible. A discussion ensued to determine a lead authority for procurement, and it was collectively agreed that RCTCBC will assume this roll. Given the extremely tight timescales there are significant benefits to being an early adopter.
- 2.4 A Memorandum of Understanding will be prepared by RCTCBC setting out details of the agreement.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1 A new social care system is expected to be able to support the activity of the directorate into the future. This procurement process will be conducted in collaboration with partner authorities.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1 There are no Climate Change and Nature Implications as a direct result of this report.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

National

- 5.1 Funding of £2.67m has been allocated by Welsh Government from the Digital Priorities Investment Fund for 2024/ 2025 and currently awaiting allocation to regions by DHCW. This funding will be used for business as usual i.e. for CTM this will enable the existing level of support to organisations via the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Team who are hosted by RCTCBC.
- 5.2 DHCW are required to produce and submit a National Business Case to Welsh Government by the end of March 2024, setting out additional funding that will be required in order to support the progress of the Connecting Care Programme work at pace. There is no further funding allocation agreed currently to cover the costs of the programme. DHCW have been advised that there will be additional funding, however, how much and when it will be allocated has not been confirmed. Once the outcome of the national business case is known, there should be greater clarity with regard to funding.

Regional

- 5.3 As the procurement process has not yet commenced, costs associated with the replacement of the existing WCCIS system (including implementation costs) and ongoing charges are not currently known.
- 5.4 It is customary for a charge to be made by RCTCBC for undertaking procurement on behalf of other partner organisations. Details are yet to be determined.
- 5.5 There continues to be significant uncertainty in relation to the level of funding that will be provided from Welsh Government. A business case has been prepared by DHCW and the decisions made by Welsh Government will impact on the level of funding that is provided direct to Local Authorities. No decision has currently been made by Welsh Government. However, even if some funding is provided to support implementation it is likely that the Council will need to identify resources for the majority of the implementation costs.

Employment

- 5.6 There are no employment implications as a direct result of this report. However, during the implementation phase of the project staff will need to be recruited into specific roles either at a regional or local basis.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.7 The impact is expected to be neutral in terms of equalities.

6. Background Papers

None.