

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 16TH DECEMBER, 2019

REFERENCE FROM CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 24TH OCTOBER, 2019

“417 REVENUE MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST AUGUST
2019 (MD) –

In considering the report it was noted that some services were anticipating adverse variances by year end and would not achieve their savings target in the full year. The Learning and Skills Directorate, had been requested to look at ways of mitigating a projected overspend of £538k, with this being after a planned draw down from reserves of £136k. Schools' budgets were expected to balance but there was an adverse variance on the Strategy, Culture Community Learning and Resources services of £32k. For Additional Learning Needs and Wellbeing, a net adverse variance of £568k was projected. The key emerging challenge for schools in this area was the increasing number of children and young people who were displaying very complex social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

The major concern for Social Services in relation to Children and Young People Services was the continuing pressure on the children's placements budget given the complexities of the children currently being supported and the high cost placements some of the children required to meet their needs. Work however continued to ensure that children we placed in the most appropriate and cost effective placements, however in the context of the complexity of need and the national challenges in identifying placements, it was projected that the budget could overspend by around £1.5m in the year.

For Adult Services the pressure on the Community Care Packages budget had been reassessed with a projected net overspend at year end of around £700k. The service continued to be affected by the pressures of continued demographic growth, an increase in the cost of service provision and the Community Care Packages budget would have to achieve further savings in the year.

For Environment and Housing, within the Waste Collection Service it was anticipated that there would be an adverse variance of around £650k as there was still pressure on employee and transport budgets due to downtime involved in travelling to Cardiff to dispose of waste.

The Neighbourhood Services and Transport Service was projecting an adverse variance of £1.520m with plans for saving £932k for 2019/20 already being underway. Due to the popularity of the Barry Island resort there was currently a pressure of around £100k on the staffing budget with additional resources having to be utilised to maintain the expected cleanliness standards of the beach and

promenade. Although efforts had been made over previous years to turn a high percentage of street lighting to LED, there had been significant increases to the cost of energy, with a projected adverse variance against the street lighting energy budget.

Under the Directorate of Managing Director and Resources, although the forecast for Countryside, Economic Development and Tourism and Events Functions showed a balanced budget at year end, there remained concern over the long-established income targets for car parking charges and commercial opportunities within the Countryside Division, as these historic savings targets would be difficult to achieve if charges were not implemented.

The Section 151 Officer advised that all Directorates were working hard to bring their budgets in line in order to balance their budgets, however the Council may have to draw down on its reserves.

In recognising that the issues affecting Social Services were also a national picture, Members suggested that Welsh Government be lobbied by the WLGA and that Cabinet hold discussions with the WLGA in this regard. A Member queried whether, having regard to the cost of out of county placements, some could be brought back into the boundary and schooled at Ysgol y Deri, however the Head of Service stated that many of the complex needs of the out of county placements were higher than what Ysgol y Deri could provide.

Having regard to the savings targets not yet met, in referring to traffic management issues, the Section 151 Officer advised that she would forward the details to all Members for their information.

In recognising the amount of reserves that the Council currently had, Councillor J.W. Thomas, former Leader of the Council, stated that he had in previous years been criticised for increasing the size of the reserves, but considered that to have been a good strategy now when the Council was considering drawing down on its reserves.

The Chairman of the Committee queried what discussions were currently ongoing with health colleagues, in particular having regard to demographics and in relation to children with complex needs. The Section 151 Officer confirmed that ongoing discussions were held with the Health Service with the Council ensuring that the Health Service picked up their share of any costs.

In considering the issues surrounding waste collection, the Chairman also asked whether further efforts could be made with shop owners and companies in order to discuss with manufacturers the production of the amount of plastic in the first instance.

It was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the position with regard to the 2019/20 revenue budget be noted.

(2) T H A T Cabinet be requested to discuss with the WLGA further lobbying of Welsh Government regarding funding for Local Authorities.

(3) T H A T discussions take place with retailers and manufacturers regarding the amount of plastic produced and options for reduction.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the contents within the report.

(2&3) Having regard to discussions at the meeting.”

Attached as Appendix – Report to Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee: 24th October, 2019