

## **CABINET**

Minutes of a Hybrid meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2024.

The Committee agenda is available [here](#).

The Meeting recording is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor L. Burnett (Chair); Councillors R.M. Birch, B.E. Brooks, G. John, S. Sivagnanam, E. Williams and M.R. Wilson.

Also Present: Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson

### **C203 ANNOUNCEMENT –**

The Leader welcomed all parties to the meeting of the Vale of Glamorgan Cabinet.

Members and Officers were reminded that the meeting was being livestreamed, recorded and would be uploaded to the Vale of Glamorgan Council's website as soon as practicable after the meeting.

She asked if all participants to ensure that if participating in person in the Chamber that their microphone not be activated and for remote attendees to 'mute' themselves when not speaking to avoid any background noise or feedback when other participants were speaking, and if a participant wished to speak if they could activate their respective request to speak function or use the 'raise hand' function if attending remotely.

Members were asked to ensure that all debate be raised verbally and not via the 'chat' function for the sake of the recording. The 'chat' function could be used to highlight any technical issues and/or to get the attention of the Chair or Democratic Services Officers.

### **C204 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

This was received from Councillor S.D. Perkes.

### **C205 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –**

No declarations of interest were received.

**C206 INITIAL BUDGET 2024/25 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024/25 TO 2028/29 PROPOSALS FOR CONSULTATION (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – ALL) –**

The Leader presented the report, the purpose of which was to put forward the Council's budget proposals for consultation with residents, other stakeholders and the Council's Scrutiny Committees.

Paragraph 1.2 listed the underlying principles which were unchanged and underpinned the budget proposals described in the report. Focus remained on supporting social care and education to support the most vulnerable residents in the Vale of Glamorgan. Fees and Charges would continue to be subsidised where matters aligned with corporate objectives but in terms of non-statutory services, full cost recovery would be sought. It was important that there was collective responsibility to managing the finances, and that those finances be accessible and transparent.

Despite the overall challenging economic conditions there had been significant wage growth which was a challenge for a large employer. Although Welsh Government had given more to Local Government than was received, it was still a real terms reduction in expenditure compared to inflation.

The Table on Page 6 of the report described the net expenditure for 2023/24 which showed that almost three quarters of the Council's budget was spent on Schools and Social Care, therefore any proposed cost savings when discussing the budget had to come from the remaining twenty five percent if education and social care were to be protected.

The Table on Paragraph 2.24 of the report listed the Tactical and Transformational Themes, many of which looked to address smarter ways of delivery to best effect for residents of the Vale of Glamorgan Council, including better and more effective use of Council properties and its workforce. Paragraph 2.29 of the report referred to the potential reduction of £0.470M to support non-commercial bus routes which was considered unacceptable as vital services for residents of the Vale of Glamorgan, and had an impact on the proposed level of Council Tax being consulted on with retention of the support provided on non-commercial routes contributing to 0.5% of the proposed 6.7% increase and the Leader looked forward to the debate on that matter with Scrutiny Committees.

Table 2.62 of the report illustrated the Summary of Reserves over the next 5 years, showing that they were projected to reduce by £14m over that period, going down £8m over the current year.

The timetable and key dates for the consultation and decisions concerning the budget were set out in paragraph 2.70 of the report with final determination at Full Council on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2024 and it was hoped that in the intervening period that people would take the opportunity to have full input into the report.

Councillor Brooks emphasised the importance of funding for supported bus services that supported many residents in the Vale of Glamorgan. The Council faced some

difficult budgetary choices when looking to maintain services after ten years of savings through austerity and the decision was taken to propose that £470k would be put forward by the Council along with associated Welsh Government support to maintain those vital services. The proposed ring-fenced half a percent rise to Council Tax would ensure the continuation and the Councils commitment to those supported bus services. Officers continued to work to secure the necessary funding to keep bus services operating across the Vale of Glamorgan. The Leader expressed her thanks to the Transport Team as negotiations continued with Welsh Government.

Councillor Wilson emphasised that the Council had received 3.1% from Welsh Government, however the UK Government only sent Welsh Government a 2.1% increase. The budgetary process was long and difficult and took months of negotiation. Table 1.12 of the report showed that Waste and Recycling only made up 3% of the total budget for 2023/24, with Highways making up only 2%, however all aspects of the budget had to be addressed to address savings potential whilst protecting education and social services. Councillor Wilson also thanked Officers in his Portfolio and across the Council for their work as part of the budget negotiations as it had not been an easy task.

Councillor John agreed that the budget proposals had been a huge challenge this year and had not faced a challenge like it in his 25 years of being a Councillor. He gave credit to the Finance Team, and all concerned, who had been part of budget discussions for 6 months to arrive at the proposals. He was pleased that supported bus services would be protected as they were a vital link for residents in the rural Vale of Glamorgan. He emphasised that the coming year would be difficult, and that the Council would be there to help. The financial situation affected the whole of Wales and some Councils were looking at much higher proposed Council Tax increases, but it would be interesting to see the responses to the consultation.

The Leader agreed that she looked forward to seeing the results of the consultation and the discussions to come in order to achieve a balanced budget as was the Council's legal requirement.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the Council's updated financial position as set out in the report be noted.

(2) T H A T the revised funding and spend assumptions, along with the draft saving proposals be approved and the report and appendices referred to Scrutiny Committees for their consideration and debate, with all Committee views being referred for scrutiny at the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee and for a composite response to be developed and referred back to a Special Cabinet on 29<sup>th</sup> February, 2024.

(3) T H A T the savings proposals as described in the body of the report and appendix be approved to be published for consultation with Vale of Glamorgan residents and other groups impacted by the Council's budget as described in the body of the report.

(4) T H A T the underlying level of financial pressures not included in the proposals, most notably fully funding pay awards and meeting the demands of providers in their annual uplifts be noted.

(5) T H A T the use of the urgency procedure as set out at section 15.14 of the Council's constitution be agreed to refer the report to as described in Resolution (2) for consideration as soon as possible.

#### Reasons for decisions

(1) It was important for Cabinet to be regularly appraised of the Council's medium term financial position.

(2) Scrutiny was an essential part of the budget setting process and it was important that the funding and savings assumptions were validated and the savings proposals were realistic and deliverable and would not have any unintended impacts.

(3) To ensure the savings proposals were consulted upon widely.

(4) To ensure Cabinet was aware that work was in place to manage and mitigate those pressures but do nevertheless represent significant financial risk.

(5) To ensure that the Initial Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2028/29 Proposals for Consultation report could be presented to a Special Cabinet on 29th February, 2024 for consideration and approval.

#### **C207 DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME PROPOSALS 2024/25 TO 2028/29 (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – ALL) –**

The Leader presented the report, the purpose of which was to gain approval for the Draft Capital Programme Proposals for 2024/25 to 2028/29 so that they may be submitted to Scrutiny Committees for consultation, prior to the final Capital Proposals being presented to Members in February 2024.

The Leader said it was vital to balance what the Council wanted to achieve in terms of capital as if there were to be borrowing costs of £709k a year, that would mean an extra 1% on Council Tax every year to pay for those costs.

Scrutiny would be asked to review the draft capital programme and make any comments to Cabinet by 29th February, 2024, with a community consultation ending in mid-February, the final settlement announced from Welsh Government in late February/early March and the final proposals would be considered by Council at a

meeting to be held on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2024 to enable the Council Tax to be set by 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2024.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the draft Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2028/29 be submitted for consultation with all of the Scrutiny Committees.
- (2) T H A T any recommendations of Scrutiny Committees are passed to Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee as the lead Scrutiny Committee in order for their views to be forwarded to Cabinet.
- (3) T H A T subject to recommendations 1 and 2 the increase in budget and reprofiling of Band B Iolo Morgannwg as set out in Table 12 of the report be approved.
- (4) T H A T subject to recommendations 1 and 2 the reprofiling of the Housing Improvement Programme in line with the Housing Business Plan as set out in Table 16 of the report be approved.
- (5) T H A T the use of the urgency procedure as set out at section 15.14 of the Council's constitution be agreed to refer the report to as described in Resolution (2) for consideration as soon as possible.

#### Reasons for decisions

- (1) In order to consult Members on the Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2028/29.
- (2) In order that Cabinet be informed of the comments of Scrutiny Committees before making a proposal on the Capital Programme.
- (3) To reflect the work programme for the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.
- (4) To reflect the Housing Business Plan.
- (5) To ensure that the Draft Capital Programme Proposals 2024/25 to 2028/29 report could be presented to a Special Cabinet on 29th February, 2024 for consideration and approval.

**C208            RESHAPING - A FUTURE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME FOR THE COUNCIL (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES) –**

The Leader presented the report, the purpose of which was to seek Cabinet approval for the next phase of the Council's transformational change programme, Reshaping. The Council had been dealing with challenging budgets since 2010 and launched the original Reshaping programme in 2015. The establishment of five community libraries had been a success and had delivered for the community with peripatetic support from the Council and Council staff had worked in new ways to deliver services and been able to save Penarth Pier Pavilion and created sustainability regarding the new Bellevue Community Centre. Working in partnerships had allowed the Council to mitigate to some extent the £59m in savings from 2010/11 to 2021 through austerity.

Councillor Wilson was delighted that the report would be shared with many stakeholders as per Recommendation (3) of the report as it was important to hear from all those partners and the community who work with the Council to deliver services and reshape them for the benefit of the community.

The Leader referred to the Target Operating Model as described in Paragraph 2.2 of the report which would ask what type of organisation the Council wanted to be in terms of processes, people, structure, and governance and would link to the Corporate Plan. Strengthening Communities referred to how the Council could strengthen and enable communities to support themselves, as so many had done during the pandemic. Digital Innovation would look at how to free up resources for those who required additional help and the gathering of data would enable decisions to be taken on what was happening in the community. An area of focus within Economic Resilience of communities would be via the Council's response to the UK Government's Levelling Up and Transforming Towns Funding and what impact that would have for the Vale of Glamorgan once funding was made available.

Councillor Brooks said that Reshaping had been new to all Councils and had slowly evolved and changed over the years, with community hubs such as the community libraries and the Warm Welcome Scheme developing and becoming an integral part of each community. Many of those schemes dealt with issues such as social isolation which was important post-pandemic as it impacted on people's health and finances and those schemes were there to offer support.

Councillor John said there were several Reshaping schemes coming through the system, but it was important to remember that it was not always possible where issues such as public access to land existed for total control to be given over to a community interest but that the Council would work in partnership where possible.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

## RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the content of the report be noted.
- (2) T H A T the proposals for developing the next phase of the Council's transformational change programme, Reshaping, as set out in the report be approved.
- (3) T H A T the report be referred to Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee, Joint Consultative Forum, Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee, Community Liaison Committee, the Public Services Board, the Regional Partnership Board, the Council's diversity networks and the Equalities Consultative Forum for their consideration and that any views are shared with the Chief Executive and reported to Cabinet in due course.
- (4) T H A T Cabinet receives further updates on the Reshaping Programme as it develops in parallel with the Council's work on the new Corporate Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) To apprise Cabinet of the work underway to transform the Council.
- (2) To enable the Reshaping programme to be developed further.
- (3) To seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders in the development of the programme.
- (4) To enable Cabinet to receive further updates in due course and that the work on the transformational change programme be delivered in parallel with the development of the new Corporate Plan and supported the effective delivery of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

**C209 UPDATE REPORT: RECYCLING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICE CHANGES 2023/24 (NBS) (SCRUTINY – ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION) –**

The Cabinet Member presented the report, the purpose of which was to seek approval to set the green waste subscription services charges for 2024/25 and to report on the performance of service changes introduced, July 2023.

Discussion took place regarding the green waste service which had been introduced which represented comparable full year savings of £473,904 which nearly met the £500k target and was notable as the year had seen challenges such as the cost of living crisis and issues with driver availability.

Councillor Wilson encouraged residents who were looking to sign up to the scheme again for 2024/25 to do so as soon as possible in order to take full advantage of the

service from March to November 2024 and November 2024 to March 2025. It was proposed that the charges remained at the same level for 2024/25 as the previous year, but the cost reflected the service over the year.

In 2022/23 the Authority's recycling performance had dropped from 70.2% to 67.8%, however for 2023/24 that rate was up to 70.25% and Councillor Wilson thanked the residents of the Vale of Glamorgan for using the green waste service. Councillor Wilson reminded Cabinet colleagues that the green waste service was a non-statutory service but was provided for the convenience for the residents of the Vale of Glamorgan.

The report also referred changes in collections for flats where many collections were still fortnightly and there was a proposed change to three-weekly along-side other collections for consistency. Councillor Wilson referred to the availability and use of quad bags for flats which would help residents with limited space to recycle more and were free to collect from libraries or apply for them online. He also encouraged residents to be aware of what could be recycled and encouraged people to clean and recycle as much as possible.

Some of the new developments for recycling included the kerbside collection of batteries, including the potential to recycle vapes later in the year. Table 3 of the report showed that 30 tonnes of material over the last year would now be recycled in future. Councillor Wilson also drew residents' attention to initiatives such as the Barry Reuse Shop and the HWRC at Llandow which were important resources. Road surface improvements were also progressing at Llandow to make the facility more accessible, and Officers were progressing with work on a lease for that site.

Councillor Wilson also referred to paragraphs 2.47 to 2.65 which detailed some of the Welsh Government initiatives that would work to encourage the public and businesses to be more aware and recycle more where possible. He encouraged businesses who may want advice to meet statutory regulations to contact Shared Regulatory Services.

Councillor John said that the green waste service offered excellent value for money and saved residents of the Vale of Glamorgan time and offered a convenient service.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the current waste service performance since the implementation of the July 2023 service changes be noted.

(2) T H A T the annual subscription charge of £36.00 for up to 8-bags and £54.00 for an unlimited quantity, for 2024/25 on a frequency of once per fortnight between March and November and on a ring and request service on a first come first serve basis, between December and February for subscribers of the service be approved.



- (3) T H A T introducing 3-weekly black bag collections for flats and apartments from March 2024 be approved in principle.
- (4) T H A T the update on new and pending, waste legislative changes be noted.
- (5) T H A T the infrastructure update be noted.
- (6) T H A T the urgency procedure set out at Section 15.14 of the Council's Constitution be used in respect of Resolution (2).
- (7) T H A T the report be referred to Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee for its consideration, with any views and recommendations referred to Cabinet for consideration.
- (8) T H A T Resolution (3) be considered as approved should no views to the contrary be expressed by Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

#### Reasons for decisions

- (1) In order to inform of the performance outcome of the service changes.
- (2) To ensure that waste services were provided within budget, that service efficiencies and budget challenges were met and that the charges for 2024-25 were set to best encourage, at least, the same take up of the service as was the case in 2023/24.
- (3) To ensure residual waste services remain in budget and additional recycling was captured, to contribute towards Statutory Recycling Targets.
- (4) To inform Cabinet of pending legislative changes.
- (5) To inform Cabinet of infrastructure progress.
- (6) To allow the green waste subscriptions for 2024/25 to be taken from January 2024, thence allowing the maximum time period for payments to be taken before the service starts in March 2024.
- (7) To provide the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to consider the details of the Report.
- (8) To enable the service area to prepare to make the necessary service changes as promptly as possible.