

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 5TH SEPTEMBER, 2024

REFERENCE FROM HOMES AND SAFE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 10TH JULY, 2024

“198 WORK TO TACKLE POVERTY AND THE CURRENT COST OF LIVING
CRISIS (CX) –

The report, co-presented by the Director of Corporate Resources and the Operational Manager – Corporate Strategy and Insight, provided an update on work being undertaken across the Council and in partnership with others to tackle poverty and to respond to the cost-of-living crisis. The cost-of-living crisis was considered to be a critical challenge within the Council’s Annual Delivery Plan 2024-25. The report highlighted the work to tackle food insecurity by supporting projects that improved access to food, reduced loneliness and isolation through supporting the development of community spaces and provided financial support to individuals through a number of schemes. The report also provided details about the use of the cost-of-living reserve, which was established as part of the 2023-24 budget, demonstrating how the Council was matching the use of reserves with the Council’s core priorities as set out in the Financial Strategy and Annual Delivery Plan. Shared Prosperity funding was also supporting a number of projects that would be helping to target poverty and address the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis.

Following the presentation of the report, the Committee raised a number of comments and queries. Firstly, the Chair shared her own experiences in the past with food insecurity, cost-of-living pressures and the challenges of keeping a roof over her head. She was extremely pleased and encouraged to see the work that the Vale of Glamorgan Council and partners were doing in providing critical help and support with food security and other facets of people’s cost-of-living concerns.

Councillor Payne asked about the Welsh Benefits Charter, and whether the Council collected data on additional funding that was available for local residents who needed assistance, for example, the Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) and church related funding. It was explained that although some data was collected in relation to this, the Council did not have a complete overview of it and this was something that was being looked at in order to getting a better understanding of the funding situation. In addition, there was a lot of work being done in this area by both public and voluntary sectors, and in order to better ‘profile’ this kind of support, it was essential to bring all these streams together in order to better inform decision making for the Council, its teams (i.e. income, money advice, welfare, housing benefits, etc.) and other partners going forward.

Councillor Lloyd-Selby asked whether the data the Council collected provided sufficient detail on how easy it was for residents to access the benefits, entitlements and financial support that the Council administered locally. This would tie in with the

work currently being undertaken via the Welsh Benefits Charter and its national steering group. It was explained that currently the Council did not have that level of insight into accessibility to benefits, etc., by local residents, but that would be something that Council officers would look into expanding for both Council and non-Council provision and support. Although the information available did suggest that local residents found it easier to access benefits and entitlements where provision was closer to them, rather than based in a central location, and the positive impacts of having made this information more readily available to people online, offering support via schools, as well as the extensive work done concerning benefits and entitlements for older people via the Vale 50+ Strategy Forum in conjunction with Age Friendly Vale activities.

The Vice-Chair raised a number of comments and queries concerning funding / provision for additional support in the school summer holidays to those in receipt of free school meals (FSM), the funding for the network of Warm Spaces across the Vale, with Autumn and Winter approaching, and whether the data used as part of the report also helped the Council to look forward and help it prepare to address the cost-of-living challenges going forward. She also raised the good work undertaken by the Age Friendly Vale team in raising awareness of entitlements for older people and the importance of Councillors in engaging in this area as well. It was explained that the current report was looking at the past and present, but going forward the new Corporate Plan would be taking forward a longer-term view and focus on tackling poverty and deprivation, as well as the work being undertaken with Cwmpas and the development of a set of measures relating to cost-of-living / poverty, attached to the report. On Warm Spaces, the Council was looking to judiciously use and maximise the grant funding and other (discretionary) funding streams available and to tie this in with food insecurity, as well as tackling homelessness and other factors around deprivation for residents and Council tenants. Regarding additional support in the school summer holidays to those in receipt of FSM, information on free or affordable activities during Summer were provided via the Family Information Service and which were held in various venues such as libraries and sports / play facilities. Also, the work undertaken by Big Fresh and others within local schools over key parts of the holidays around activities and raising awareness of healthy eating were outlined.

Councillor Hanks pointed to the impressive work undertaken by Council staff, detailed in the report, to help local residents with food insecurity and tackling other areas of deprivation.

The Chair asked about funding for foodbanks. In response, it was explained that the Council had provided funding to the Vale Foodbank over the last two years, via the Council reserves. Various food insecurity related funding streams from Welsh Government had also been used to support the work of the Foodbank and other food insecurity projects within the Vale, rather than direct Council contributions being used. The Chair suggested a visit to the Vale Foodbank to see the work being undertaken to address food insecurity.

On Councillor Hennessy's query on how the Council communicated about the location and access to Warm Spaces and other forms of support to those residents who could not access the relevant website or do so digitally, it was explained that

information was also shared via local community groups, leaflets, press releases and via local printed free newspapers, as well as the main website, which was extensively used by residents.

The Chair and the Committee wished to thank the relevant officers involved in the report and those on the frontline areas of support for their efforts in tackling poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.

Subsequently, it was

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the work being undertaken with regards to tackling poverty and the cost of living crisis which was a critical challenge within the Council's Annual Delivery Plan 2024-25, be noted.

(2) T H A T the use of the cost of living reserve to support those in need be noted.

(3) T H A T the Committee visit the Vale Foodbank to see the work being undertaken to address food insecurity and related issues within the Vale of Glamorgan.

(4) T H A T, following consideration of the report by the Committee, the following comment be referred to Cabinet for their consideration, as well as that of the relevant Vale of Glamorgan Council officers:

- The Committee felt that it was important for the Vale of Glamorgan Council to review whether the data it collected provided sufficient detail on how easy it was for residents to access the benefits, entitlements and financial support that the Council administered locally. This would tie in with the work currently being undertaken to develop the Welsh Benefits Charter (as detailed in the report) and its aim of making it easier for people in Wales to claim Welsh Benefits they were entitled to.

Reasons for recommendations.

(1&2) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

(3) In order for Members of the Committee to be able to see the work being undertaken to tackle food insecurity and related issues within the Vale of Glamorgan.

(4) In order for Cabinet and the relevant Council officers to consider the comments made by the Committee as part of their consideration of the progress being made on the work to tackle poverty and the cost of living crisis.”

Attached as Appendix: Report to Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee:
10th July 2024

Meeting of:	Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, 10 July 2024
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Homes and Safe Communities
Report Title:	Work to Tackle Poverty and the Current Cost of Living Crisis
Purpose of Report:	To update on work being undertaken to tackle poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.
Report Owner:	Rob Thomas, Chief Executive
Responsible Officer:	Tom Bowring – Director of Corporate Resources
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Due to the corporate nature of this report, no specific Ward Member consultation has been undertaken.
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report provides an update on work being undertaken across the Council and working in partnership to tackle poverty, and to respond to the cost-of-living crisis. • This report illustrates the breadth of work undertaken to support people into employment, help families and young people through financial and wellbeing support including various sports opportunities as well as the developing work within schools to use them as community hubs. • This report highlights the work to tackle food insecurity by supporting projects that improve access to food, reduce loneliness and isolation through supporting the development of community spaces, and provide financial support to individuals through a number of schemes. • This report also provides details about the use of the cost-of-living reserve, which was established as part of the 2023-24 budget, demonstrating how the Council is matching the use of reserves with the Council’s core priorities as set out in the Financial Strategy and Annual Delivery Plan. Shared Prosperity funding is also supporting a number of projects that will be helping to target poverty and address the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis. 	

Recommendations

1. That Committee consider the work being undertaken with regards tackling poverty and the cost-of-living crisis which is a critical challenge within the Council's Annual Delivery Plan 2024-25.
2. That Committee notes the use of the cost-of-living reserve to support those in need.
3. That the Committee refers this report and any comments to Cabinet for their consideration.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure Committee is aware of the work being undertaken with regards to tackling poverty and the cost-of-living crisis which is a critical challenge within the Annual Delivery Plan 2024-25.
2. That Committee are aware of the use of the cost-of-living reserve to date.
3. To enable Cabinet to consider the comments of the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee as part of its consideration of progress of work to tackle poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council has identified the cost-of-living crisis as a critical challenge in this year's Annual Delivery Plan. In addition, the Council has set out how tackling poverty is a key driver for our work, reflected in the Public Services Board's Wellbeing Plan, the Council's Corporate Plan and as part of the Financial Strategy.
- 1.2 The Council identified three critical challenges in the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) 2023-24, the critical challenges are Organisational Resilience, Cost-of-Living Crisis, Climate and Nature Emergencies. These challenges have been carried forward to the ADP 2024-25.
- 1.3 In addition to quarterly performance monitoring, progress on Project Zero is reported twice a year to Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet, and there are regular reports on issues relating to organisational resilience including HR and OD issues, risk management, asset management and financial monitoring reports. As set out in a report on Strengthening Communities to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee in October 2023 and the [report on tackling poverty and the cost of living](#) in April 2024 progress on work related to the cost of living will be reported twice a year to this Committee and Cabinet. The progress reports will update Members on work relating to tackling poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.
- 1.4 A significant amount of work is taking place across the Council and in partnership to tackle poverty and alleviate the pressures felt by the current cost of living crisis. This report endeavours to provide an overview of this work, highlighting the different workstreams and organisations involved.

- 1.5 As part of the 2023/24 budget, the Council established a cost-of-living reserve of £854K to fund work to alleviate the pressures of the cost-of-living crisis. Details of how this funding is being utilised will be included in the twice-yearly progress reports.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

Impacts of deprivation and the cost-of-living crisis in the Vale

- 2.1 Our data tells us that there are issues of poverty across the Vale of Glamorgan and that the cost-of-living is continuing to cause hardship, with persisting issues of affordability with regards to food, energy and housing. Three Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the Vale of Glamorgan are identified through the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019 as being in the top-10% most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Wales. A further seven LSOAs are included in the 10-20% most deprived LSOAs in Wales. All ten LSOAs are in Barry. There is a consistent correlation between these areas and higher proportions of people on lower incomes, who are in receipt of Universal Credit and in receipt of unemployment support. There is a recognition that these groups have been identified as most vulnerable to the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis and experiences of deprivation.
- 2.2 Since March 2022, there has been a consistent month-on-month increase in the total number of people in receipt of Universal Credit. In March 2024, a total of 11,953 people were in receipt of Universal Credit in the Vale of Glamorgan, 7,237 of those in receipt of Universal Credit were Not in Employment, while 4,721 were In Employment, this represents 7.5% of total number of people in employment in the Vale of Glamorgan. The cost-of-living crisis has been associated with sharp increases in the rates of inflation, driven by growing food and energy prices. Following its peak of 11.1% in October 2022, Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) has slowed, and was 2% in May 2024, the lowest rate recorded in two years. Some households experience higher effective rates of inflation as they must allocate a higher proportion of their household income to cover essentials. On average, lower income households spend more of their income on these essentials. Between April 2023 and March 2024, the [Trussell Trust](#) recorded that they had distributed 8,662 food parcels in the Vale of Glamorgan. This is the highest number of parcels recorded by the charity in the Vale of Glamorgan and reflects record numbers distributed in Wales. The total number of parcels distributed in the Vale of Glamorgan has increased by 24% in the last year, an increase of 2,064 parcels, the highest increase across Local Authority areas in Wales and compares to an average increase of 1% in Wales as a whole.
- 2.3 In the recent Let's Talk about the Vale of Glamorgan Residents Survey a number of questions were included on the Council's Critical Challenge to address the Cost-of-living Crisis. This included asking residents whether 'In the past 6 months, have you or anyone in your household done any of the following to manage the cost-of-living' – The largest response to this question was 'Purposely not put the

heating on' with 62.8% of respondents selecting this, followed by 'None of the above', with 31.7% and 'Had smaller meals than usual', with 29.8%. It is of note that more respondents from deprived areas of the Vale of Glamorgan answered that they had 'smaller meals than usual' or 'purposefully not put the heating on', with 41.5% respondents from more deprived areas answering that they had had smaller meals and 72.7% of respondents from more deprived areas answering that they had purposely not put the heating on.

- 2.4** Respondents were also asked to rate their level of concern with the cost-of-living crisis. The largest proportion of respondents, 44.5% answered that they were 'very concerned'. A larger proportion of respondents, 55.8%, from more deprived areas of the Vale of Glamorgan answered that they were very concerned.
- 2.5** When asked whether the Council is doing enough to support residents during the cost-of-living crisis, the majority of respondents, 52.4% answered that they 'Didn't know what the Council is doing' and 36.9% answered 'No'.

Welsh Benefits Charter

- 2.6** The Welsh Benefits Charter outlines the aims for the Welsh Benefits system. Welsh Benefits include Free School Meals, Council Tax reduction scheme, Schools Essentials Grant, and Education Maintenance Allowance. At present, these benefits are separate from each other, and people must make different claims to access the support. The Charter aims to make it easier for people in Wales to claim Welsh Benefits they are entitled to. The Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip announced the creation of an external steering group, the group is tasked with developing an action plan to streamline Welsh Benefits. In the coming months, colleagues in Revenues and Benefits services will be kept informed on the steering group's work via regular updates that will be provided to the Welsh Revenues and Benefits Managers Group. [Welsh Benefits Charter | GOV.WALES](#) Further information on this work will be included in future reports.

Response to Audit Wales Reports – Cwmpas Programme of Engagement

- 2.7** A report to the [Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee in October 2023](#) set out the Council's approach to progressing recommendations made by Audit Wales to a number of national studies relating to tackling poverty and the Council's approach to working with the third sector.
- 2.8** The Council has engaged the Cwmpas consultancy team to undertake a programme of engagement on our behalf, which involved discussions internally and externally to understand more about our work with the third sector and social enterprises, and opportunities for future work. This work involved discussions with key officers within the Council, third sector partners and social enterprises in the Vale as well as Town and Community Councils and Elected Members.
- 2.9** The feedback received from this engagement will be used to shape the future direction of our work to respond to the recommendations within these reports and tackle poverty within the Vale. An interim report has been provided to the Council and work is underway to consider how this is taken forward as part of the Strengthening Communities theme of the Reshaping Programme.

Key Activities

2.10 The following paragraphs detail a range of activities that are being taken forward as part of the Council's activities to tackle poverty and respond to the cost-of-living crisis. These are reflected in the Council's ADP 2023/24 and 2024/25 and more detail about many of these activities and their impact is provided in Appendix A. Appendix B also details relevant performance measures within the Council's Performance Management Framework for 2024-25 which assists in monitoring progress against this critical challenge and these measures will be included in the quarterly performance reports for the ADP.

Support with Employment

2.11 The Communities for Work+ (CFW+) scheme continues to provide specialist employment advisory and intensive mentoring to support people into employment. Support has included outreach events to connect people with employers and provide employment advice, Job Clubs, and training courses to enable people to obtain work-related qualifications.

2.12 The CELT+ programme has been designed to provide full wrap around support for individuals within the Vale of Glamorgan, having provided work placements through QuickStart, and provision through the POD which offers a variety of support on housing, benefits and health and well-being. Other elements of the CELT+ programme include intensive support for individuals living in rural Vale.

Support for Families and Young People (Inc. Work with Schools)

2.13 The Vale Youth Service undertakes significant work to support families and young people through various projects and schemes. These aim to deliver targeted support to different demographics. For instance, those with additional learning needs, as well as help to develop young people's skills in order to set them up for future employment. Financial support has also been an important part of support for young people with several schemes aiming to alleviate financial burdens of activities such as sports, uniformed groups, and Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

2.14 Work with schools has progressed with significant support for families and young people. Our schools continue to be at the forefront of work being undertaken in response to the difficulties that many people are experiencing. Seven primary schools on the Vale now run a Big Bocs Bwyd and some other schools support food and advice projects that are ensuring children and their families have the knowledge, skills and experiences with food to meet their needs and thrive, linking in with partners such as Citizens Advice, CELT+, FFAL and others.

2.15 The Pencoedre Cluster: A Thriving Community Project is a piece of work being undertaken within the Pencoedre Learning Community and showcases an increasing focus on meeting the family in familiar spaces with schools being identified as effective community hubs.

2.16 The Vale of Glamorgan Council has also provided support to families through the School Essentials Grant and Free School Meals. The School Essentials Grant is available to assist families on a low income to buy school uniform, sports kit, uniform for

enrichment activities, school bags, and stationery. There are currently 3,491 pupils in receipt of Free School Meals and 3,252 School Essential Grants have been awarded.

- 2.17** There has been a focused effort to provide period dignity products to young people across the Vale at no cost. Between November 2023 and March 2024, 19 primary schools and 6 Secondary Schools have received funding or products as a result of the period dignity grant. In addition, 31 community-based organisations such as leisure centres, libraries, hubs, and food banks have received period dignity products.

Sports and Physical Activity Support

- 2.18** The Healthy Living Team has provided support to families to access no cost/low-cost play/sports at a time when many are impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. They have supported family engagement and promoted positive health and wellbeing, through providing localised opportunities directly in children's/families communities and creating a sense of belonging. Support has included taking away the barrier of travel and enabling children to participate in a safe, supported environment, utilising the Vale's natural environment, and developing leadership skills amongst young people.
- 2.19** All sports and play projects are subject to external funding, the majority of which is secured on an annual basis, so projects can only be planned and committed to on a year-by-year basis.
- 2.20** Whilst some universal provision is developed by the Healthy Living team, the majority of actions focus on tackling inequality, using insight and research to identify the appropriate areas and demographic groups to target. Those affected by poverty/socio economic factors is one of the key areas targeted.

Housing Support and Council Tax Reduction

- 2.21** The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact households' ability to access and sustain tenancies in the Vale. Private sector rents have risen, by around 12% in the last year and average rents are now nearly double the local housing allowance (this is the maximum amount of benefit paid towards housing costs). At the time of writing, there are currently no homes available to rent privately at the local housing allowance rate in the Vale of Glamorgan. Newly published data from the ONS on private rental prices by Local Authority estimates the average price of private rent in the Vale of Glamorgan in April 2024 to be £850 a month.
- 2.22** The Housing team continue to support Council tenants through financial advice aimed at income maximisation and assisting with grant/loan applications.
- 2.23** As of June 2024, there are 9,069 live claims for Council Tax Reduction totalling a spend of £12,349,749.30 for the whole 2024/25 financial year. This compares to 9,046 claims in the previous (2023/24) financial year totalling a spend of £11,542,440.90. Although the numbers helped have increased by 23 the Council Tax liabilities have increased for everyone, reflecting the increase in the amount credited.
- 2.24** The Vale of Glamorgan Council is working in partnership with Cardiff Capital Region and the energy company E.ON to support households in poorly insulated homes through the Energy Company Obligation 4 (ECO4) scheme, making those households more energy efficient and helping lessen the impact of rising energy bills. As of May

2024, 13 applications have been approved. Information on the Scheme in the Vale of Glamorgan is published on the Home Energy Efficiency webpage [Home Energy Efficiency \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/home-energy-efficiency)

Public Services Board (PSB) Project – Work to tackle inequities in deprived communities’ project

- 2.25** As part of this project a Senior Community Development Officer was recruited for a two-year post and is based in the Council’s Community Development Team. The officer has been in post since August 2023 and is working with the 3 areas of the Vale that were listed as being in the top 10 most deprived in Wales according to the 2019 WIMD report: Gibbonsdown 2, Buttrills 2 and Court 3. A comprehensive engagement plan has been created and a steering group made up of representatives of the PSB has been established.
- 2.26** The Officer has recently gathered lived experiences and insight by attending community, creative, sporting, and cultural events to engage those seldom heard voices and identify opportunities for community development.

Tackling Food Insecurity

- 2.27** The Council continues to be involved with and supportive of projects that improve access to food including the Vale Foodbank, Big Bocs Bwyd and similar school-based projects, food pantries such as the GVS Foodshare at CF61 in Llantwit Major and the Penarth Food Pod run by the Council’s Housing Team.
- 2.28** Funding provided from the Council’s Cost of Living 2023/24 grant in early 2024 supported the continuation of several local food support organisations, including the establishment on the new ‘pay as you feel’ food pantry at Gladstone Primary School, called Glad2share. The pantry opened in March 2024 and currently serves between 20 – 25 people each week by providing access to a range of food, toiletries, cleaning supplies and pet food for local residents alongside a friendly atmosphere in the coffee shop and new outdoor seating area.

Tackling Loneliness and Isolation

- 2.29** The Age Friendly Vale team have continued to work with the Vale 50+ Strategy Forum, colleagues across the Council and partners to deliver a range of activities and events integrating social elements to directly target loneliness and isolation. This activity aligns to the Age Friendly Vale Charter’s eight commitments, specifically that ‘people have a sense of purpose, feel respected and are actively engaged in their communities’. In addition to bringing together older people for the purpose of connecting and socialising, activities provided accessible opportunities to get active outdoors and in nature, learn about new topics and access information and support on ageing well.
- 2.30** In 2022-23 the Council developed their Warm Welcome Scheme in response to the rising cost of living, that supported a network of Warm Spaces across the Vale. These spaces provide a free to access location often providing activities, information, and advice as well as a chance to socialise. A dedicated Council webpage was developed to provide residents with an interactive map and directory of warm spaces. During the period December 2023- May 2024, there were 700 page views. A number of these

warm spaces have continued but there has been no specific funding for warm spaces since 2022-23.

Cost of Living Support Webpages

- 2.31** The cost-of-living support webpages on the Council's website signpost to a variety of support. These webpages are updated regularly with the most recent overhaul of the webpages taking place in October 2023, which added a breadth of new support primarily identified through a mapping exercise during a cost-of-living workshop with colleagues. [Cost of Living Support \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)
- 2.32** During the period December 2023 - May 2024, the cost-of-living webpages have received 7,857 views by 4,323 people.

Volunteer Rewards - Value in the Vale

- 2.33** Value in the Vale (VIV) is the continuation of the previous Timebanking scheme which was initially only open to Council Housing tenants. External grant funding was secured to support the expansion of volunteering among the seldom heard from and broadening the access to people beyond Council Housing tenants.
- 2.34** From October 2022 to May 2024, VIV secured £15,098 in volunteer rewards through partnerships with local businesses and organisations that reward volunteers for their time and has provided support during the rising cost of living. This is an increase of £6,633 since October 2023. Rewards include free coffees and food at warm spaces and local cafes, toiletries, car parking, car wash, and wellbeing activities for families. Volunteers have also been given the opportunity to gift their rewards to others who may be more in need.
- 2.35** Additionally, the volunteer scheme has provided the opportunity for experience and training which has helped people back into work. The Value in the Vale dedicated website highlights volunteer stories that demonstrates the positive impact the scheme has had on their lives.

[Volunteer Rewards | Value in the Vale](#)

Funding Overview

Shared Prosperity Funding

- 2.36** Shared Prosperity funding is supporting a number of projects that will also be helping to target poverty and address the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis. Just under £4million has already been committed to Communities and Place projects across the Vale of Glamorgan. This funding has been allocated to support projects that provide a range of services for young people such as leisure activities including bike hire, skate parks and improved green spaces as well as more strategic projects such as the Public Services Board's Tackling Deprivation and Poverty programme supporting our communities most in need which is detailed earlier in this report.
- 2.37** Funding has also been made available through the SPF programme via our partners GVS who have set up a grant scheme for community organisations seeking small grants to support their communities with small scale cost of living initiatives.
- 2.38** Additional funding has been allocated to the People and Skills theme and many projects supported here will also support the cost-of-living agenda through a new hub

in Barry to advise people about skills and employment opportunities and linking with other service providers to support people with a range of cost-of-living advice and services.

Cost of Living Reserve

2.39 As part of ensuring an effective response to the cost-of-living challenge detailed in the ADP 2023-24, a cost-of-living reserve has been established. The total reserve as of April 2023 was £854,000 and the table below sets out how the funding has been and will be utilised.

Year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Opening Balance	854	325.5	100.5
Funding Agreed			
Budget Contribution Free School Meals (FSM)	-200	-100	0
Additional Contribution Citizens Advice	-30	-30	0
Additional support in the school summer holidays to those in receipt of FSM	-220	0	0
Support for community projects	-25	-25	0
Food Bank Contribution	-3.5	-20	0
Discretionary Housing Payment	-50	-50	0
Closing Balance	325.5	100.5	100.5

2.40 The Budget Contribution for Free School Meals (FSM) was agreed as part of the budget report in March 2023 to counteract the loss of transitional protection from December 2024. A contribution towards the school's budget of £200k was agreed for 2023-24 and a further £100k in 2024-25 to offset the increased cost of free school meals.

2.41 Funding has been awarded from this reserve to Citizens Advice in recognition of the increase in the volume and complexity of the work that is being handled for Vale residents. A contribution of £30k was agreed for 2023-24 in addition to their annual grant of £157,335 from the Council.

2.42 Additional support in the school summer holidays 2023 to those in receipt of FSM was provided to support families with the cost of food during the school holidays following the decision by Welsh Government to no longer fund this. A contribution of £220k was made.

2.43 An additional £3,500 was provided in 2023/24 from the reserve to the Vale Food Bank (in addition to the grant funding provided via Welsh Government) and a commitment to maintain this level of funding to £20k in 2024/25 recognising the increase in food bank usage in the Vale of Glamorgan.

2.44 In 23/24 officers administered £25k to community projects, supporting various organisations to assist people with the rising cost of living. The funding was focused on supporting organisations that address an urgent need such as food insecurity

projects (providing funding to purchase foodstuffs, breakfast/lunch clubs), uniform for schoolchildren and warm spaces. In total 75 applications were received with 31 applications awarded funding, these ranged from £100-£2,500. Through making links with officers across the Council and with external partners, extensive signposting to other forms of support and funding was undertaken when communicating outcomes to applicants. Work has commenced to run the scheme again in the Autumn of 2024.

- 2.45** In addition, £50k was allocated to Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) in 23/24 and 24/25 to help to manage the impacts of an increasing rent in the private rental sector causing more shortfalls. There has been an increase in the number of people who could not afford to pay the difference between the Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing Costs awards and the actual rent being charged. For the 2023/24 financial year £250,034 was paid out of the DHP, having received 625 applications of which 337 awards were made. For the 2024/25 financial year, £194,041 has been received in total for the DHP budget, with £23,000 added from the Vale Council and a further £50,000 from the Cost of living (COL) fund. The £17,000 not spent for last year's COL fund has also rolled over into this year. As of June 2024, £35,894.85 has been spent and a further £28,448.86 committed with 101 applications processed of which 71 awards made. Over the coming months the team will work with Housing/Homeless and the Housing Associations to look at cases who are facing eviction unless arrears are cleared to try and prevent them being evicted.
- 2.46** Work will take place in the Autumn of 2024 to consider approaches to utilising the balance of the reserve in 2025/26.

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

- 3.1** The activities outlined in this report will assist the Council in contributing to the national Well-being Goals and the Council's own Well-being Objectives as detailed in the Corporate Plan 2020-25. The cost-of-living crisis is a critical challenge in the Council's ADP 2023/24 and 2024/25. The work being undertaken also embeds the five ways of working through involvement and collaboration to develop ways forward, to ensure a longer term thinking and more sustainable approach to how we work and with a more integrated programme of activity. In terms of prevention as the work develops officers will be keen to explore the opportunities for a more preventative approach and how the knowledge and experience of other sectors can assist, particularly with work around cost of living and climate change.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** There are opportunities to make close links between work on cost of living and also work on climate change, for example on reducing energy use and work around food security. We also know that those living in our most deprived communities are often

most impacted by the effects of climate change. We will continue to align activities where possible through the Council and the PSB.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1 The Corporate Plan 2020-25 and the associated Annual Delivery Plans are key tenets of the Council's Financial Strategy.
- 5.2 This report outlines a range of different funding streams contributing to the Council's response to the cost-of-living crisis and work to tackle poverty, including an overview of the use of the cost-of-living reserve established in April 2023.

Employment

- 5.3 There are no employment implications as a direct result of this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.4 There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report, however the work detailed in this report aligns with the Council's socio-economic duty and contributes to work to address economic inequity.
- 5.5 Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as required on particular schemes.

6. Background Papers

[Cost of Living Support \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) Cabinet Report December 2022

[Cost of Living Reserve Report \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) Cabinet 18th October 2023

[Strengthening Communities and Tackling Poverty \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee 18th October 2023

[Work to Tackle Poverty and COL Crisis \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) - Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee 24th April 2024

Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

Appendix A – Detailed Project Information

Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

Support with Employment

Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Communities for Work+ (CFW+)	Communities for Work Plus provides specialist employment advisory and intensive mentoring to support people into employment.	Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the beginning of the year, two events were held, a local recruitment event which was held at Barry Job Centre Plus. Approximately 100 individuals attended, with a range of employers in attendance such as Vale Facilities Department, Vale Day Service and Connect Education. This event generated several new referrals for the programme. The second event was a joint event with Cardiff Into Work Services. Approximately 1200 visitors, and approximately 200 of these were from the Vale of Glamorgan. This event held around 60 stall holders, ranging from employers, service providers, training providers, FE institutions as well as Universities. The introduction of a new 25-49 Job Club in January at Barry JCP following the success of the Youth Job Club and 50+ Job Club. It has provided a positive stream of referrals each week. Outreach in St Athan has been amended to increase footfall and provide the community with further support. The weekly outreach has now moved to a Wednesday alongside the new Vale Food Hub. More individuals are now attending the outreach location. It has also provided an opportunity for CFW+ to work closer with other organisations such as the St Athan clothes bank and Purple Shoots. Members of the community can now receive full support with a multitude of needs when they attend the outreach location. There has been an increased focus on securing training for participants. This has worked very well not only with external partners but working alongside Adult Community Learning. Figures show that the work-related qualifications have increased by 41% from December 2023 to March 2024 (Q3 to Q4), which have led to a 15% increase in job entries, especially those over 25 years old. Partnership working continues to be a key focus in the delivery of CFW+ within the Vale. It has ensured excellent wrap around support for participants, but also provided the opportunity for staff to share good practice and to gain 	CFW+ is an existing programme of work established in 2016, however, there have been several new projects within the programme. Namely, two engagement events, 25-49 Job Club, and amendments to outreach in St. Athan.

Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

			<p>further knowledge on services available. The benefits of the partnership working within the Vale can be seen in the increased referrals from other sources into the programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration continues to be positive between, CELT+, Careers Wales/Working Wales, with regular contact and collaborating on events. Strong relationships with Adult Community Learning continued with ACL providing much of the community learning for CFW+. Continued working with external partners such as Barry Training Services and About Training has also been important, offering courses in CSCS and Construction as well as SIA and security training. • The weekly youth job club remains highly beneficial and shows increasing engagement week by week. Participants find these job clubs valuable as they offer comprehensive support facilitated by CFW+, in collaboration with CELT+ and JCP. These sessions have notably contributed to heightened engagement levels among 16-24 year-olds and supported the Young People's Guarantee. Participants benefit from direct interactions with local employers, training providers, and intensive employability support from mentors. • There has been a significant boost in engagement and job entries with the 25+ age group, with a notable 34% increase in engagements and a 70% increase in job entries compared to the previous quarter. This increase in activity is due to the new 25-49 Job Club at Barry JCP. • A recent participant survey was sent to previous and existing participants of CFW+. 92% of respondents stated they were either, satisfied, very satisfied, or extremely satisfied by the level of service on the programme, with 90% stating they were happy with the level of communication received by CFW+ staff. 92% of respondents stated that they would recommend the programme to family or friends for support, with the programme receiving an overall rating of 4.27 out 5. 	
CELT+	The CELT+ programme has been designed to provide full wrap around support for		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFW+ supported CELT+ with their second round of QuickStart. There are 9 placements in progress, with 6 likely to extend into longer fixed-term contracts. • The POD which opened in November 2023 provides the opportunity for individuals to drop in for a variety of support, such as housing, benefits and 	CELT+ established in June 2023, however, the POD opened in November 2023.

Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

	individuals within the Vale of Glamorgan.		<p>health and well-being. It is now an area that also provides a variety of training opportunities, for all participants, ranging from employability skills to digital skills. POD advisors assess individuals and refer directly to CFW+ for employment support if they are eligible for the programme. This is something that happens instantly with the presence of CFW+ mentors within the POD. The POD also has individuals from other service providers such as Careers Wales and POBL, allowing the space to offer great collaborative working among teams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other elements of the CELT+ programme include intensive support for individuals living in rural Vale, these individuals are then referred directly into triage for a mentor to continue the support into employment. Supported Employment Mentors also work with individuals with complex additional needs, these individuals may need intensive support into employment and the Supported Employment Mentors have the resources and experience to ensure this is a smooth transition. CFW+ can gain knowledge and information from these mentors to support with any participant they feel fit into this category.	
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Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

Support for Families and Young People (inc. Work with Schools)				
Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Vale Youth Service -Joint pilot with Vale People First (VPF)	To deliver a targeted disability/inclusive youth provision for those with additional learning needs.	Youth Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pilot ran for two evenings a week with 30 individual young people being supported to attend the club on Wednesday and Friday evenings (15 per evening). The club has enabled young people to build new friendship groups whilst engaging in a free youth provision, with appropriately trained staff to meet their needs. All members of the group have also completed nationally recognised qualifications via an Agored Cymru Unit accreditation that contributes to their own skills development Hwb Club members have benefitted from 48 youth club sessions during this pilot phase, resulting in a total of 720 contacts being made 	New
Vale Youth Service – joint pilot project with Bro Radio delivered from the YMCA based in Barry.	To identify the demand and develop young people’s skills in preparing to present Radio Broadcasting.	Youth Service - £1,500 was allocated to this work which supported studio hire, refreshments, and staffing costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This project has aimed to develop skills regardless of socio-economic factors, however, it has been run from the YMCA within the Pencoedtre Cluster which is an area of known deprivation. This was evidenced and monitored through the Entry 3 Agored Cymru Unit Preparing to Present Radio Broadcasting. 12 sessions have been delivered to 10 young people who are all on track to complete the unit. 91 contacts were made with young people during this time. The project has supported young people in developing their skills and confidence whilst finding a voice to bring to their local community through local broadcasts. 	New

Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people created 6 hours' worth of programmes which were aired on Good Friday and Easter Monday and a further 6 hours of content on May bank holiday. Young people have conducted Radio interviews with the Her Voice Wales project to celebrate and raise awareness of the work that they do on the Bro Radio Channel. The project work has been regularly celebrated through our social media channels and on the Bro Radio channel. • Parents have provided positive feedback on their young person's involvement in the project of which the service has funded the continuation of this project into 2024/25. 	
Vale Youth Service partnership project with Dojo Training Ltd	To purchase equipment for an inclusive community hub for martial arts called 'A Warrior's Haven' in Barry town centre that also provides a warm and safe space for community members with a particular focus on supporting young people with emotional health and wellbeing needs as well as those feeling socially isolated	Youth Service - £5850 to Dojo Training Ltd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dojo Training Ltd has stated that the grant has enabled them to reach a wider audience of young individuals, providing them with valuable opportunities for personal development, wellbeing, and skill-building using a shop premises in the centre of Barry town. With this financial backing they have been able to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for their participants, fostering growth, resilience, and community engagement among the youth they serve. • As part of the funding, they have delivered 2 Martial Arts courses for young people referred to the Youth Service for those struggling with school attendance or not attending school due to behaviour and/or wellbeing concerns. During the 8-week programme 11 young people completed the Take Part in Fitness and Exercise E3 Agored Cymru qualification. • The young people that attended reported although they were initially anxious to start, they gelled well as a group, made friends, overcome challenges, learnt new skills, and improved their confidence and self-esteem. They appreciated the support from youth service and Dojo staff and felt supported to pass the programme and achieve the qualification. Some young people with additional learning needs and who struggle in school were supported by staff, parents, and their school to attend every session and complete the necessary tasks involved. Delivered Tai Chi and self-defence taster sessions to all our youth provisions. 	New

Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

Youth Service providing support to uniformed groups.	To provide financial support for young people who are part of local uniformed groups, including Scout groups, Explorer Scout Units, Guides and Rangers.	Youth Service - £15,080	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support has been put in place to support with costs related to membership that helps ensure young people are able to continue engaging in these activities, equating to around 40 sessions throughout the year. It was aimed at those who couldn't afford the membership and parents themselves identified if they required support and financial assistance with the membership. Thus, allowing parents to then purchase kit, uniform or other items needed. • In total 224 young people have benefitted from this support, with a contribution of £45 per person being made, which came to £10,080. In addition to this, £5,000 was provided across the groups involved to contribute towards the cost of resources and for two groups to put towards the cost of international expeditions during the summer. • Members will have benefitted from 40 sessions during the year, resulting in a total of 8,960 contacts being made. 	New
Youth Service provision of DofE Bronze and Silver	To provide financial support to young people undertaking DoFE	Youth Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Youth Service currently deliver weekly DofE Bronze and Silver to 37 young people within Barry. Through this provision, there have been financial barriers identified that have been supported through the work of the Service. Alongside working with DofE Wales to explore barrier funding for those most in need, the Service has reduced everyone's participant fee by £35 to support and ensure accessibility for all to this accredited programme, all young people are on route to achieve their DofE awards across the year. • Additional funding has been applied for to further support with walking boots, tents, and additional resources which the young people may not have access to 	New element to the Pencoedre Cluster
Sharing the Youth Service area of the YMCA Hub in Barry	Allow groups (local partners) to lower their running costs by providing free usage to this area.	Youth Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides more effective usage of this resource as well as ensuring that young people are not adversely affected by increased activity charges due to having to pay for provision overheads 	Existing

Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

<p>Pencoedtre Cluster: A Thriving Community Project</p>	<p>To tackle the inequalities and inequities across our most deprived communities through a Community Focused Schools and Local Authority Partnership approach</p>	<p>Schools, Youth Service, Community Focussed Schools budget.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving family confidence - reducing impact on schools, improving attendance. Pre-Flying Start (children 0-2 years) – new programme developed in conjunction with Schools. Flying Start, School Readiness Programme (2-3 years) developed in conjunction with Schools (and at school's request) – improving toilet training, sleep and dummies. Improving family confidence and reducing anxiety around transition from Flying Start to Nursery, through a parental visit scheme. Improved the consistency of Flying Start to School reporting systems. Play equipment available for loan from Barry library (Feb 2024) following parental feedback. Play Cubes relocated from Colcot to Pencoedtre HS following parental feedback. • Improving family confidence around healthy meals. 'Nutrition in Little Ones' programme running in Pencoedtre Community, 7 families attending (Cadoxton Comm Centre) because of relationships developed between Flying Start, Schools and Health Dietetics. • Increasing access to immunisation programmes. 3 schools in PLC targeted with information and attendance by Nurses at the school cafes. Onsite vaccinations taking place. Take up increased. GP Boards being engaged to extend programme into schools. • Improving family efficacy regarding accessing support for their wellbeing. Families First Advice Team met with all PLC Family Engagers to understand roles, build relationships, and agree next steps. Quicker response and more targeted support being provided for key families. Increasing capacity for family support across PLC. Increasing trust with families. • Improving the life chances of PLC families. Decision taken to create a Real Skillz project within PLC. Pupils from Pencoedtre HS aged 14+ will access vocational skills through onsite skills-based education leading to Building Constructions skills certification. Cross team working across Schools, Youth Services, Work, Education, Housing. Project could be extended to support LAC Homes with additional investment. Project start Sept 2024. Improved influencing across the community for family benefit: shared the PLC projects with PSB to help 	<p>Existing</p>
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Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

			<p>improve understanding. Resulted in better partnership with Police and relationships with PCSOs in schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improving family efficacy regarding accessing support for their wellbeing. A "Parenting Padlet" containing 29 'how to' videos planned for June (filming starts end of May) by FFAL.	
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HEALTHY LIVING TEAM (SPORTS & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DEVELOPMENT, PLAY DEVELOPMENT, EXERCISE REFERRAL)

Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Active Young People school programme	Free activities delivered through Active Young People school programme targeted at tackling inequalities.	Sport Wales funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21,397 participations in over 1103 sessions (this does not include stats for whole school challenges for spring term). Projects included: 2 different courses held for schools to develop inclusive opportunities in response to lower participation by disabled children in School Sport Survey. 21 schools (primary and secondary) supported to develop free afterschool projects including targeted girls provision, increasing opportunities for disabled young people, targeting Foundation phase where otherwise more limited opportunities; 81% of primary schools engaged in free Daily Mile, Foundations and/or virtual cross country – whole school projects; 7 primary multi-sports events responding to improving school-club links, promoting opportunities and targeting least active with positive opportunities - 1352 children impacted through engagement of 50% of all Vale primary schools. Events supported by voluntary Young Ambassadors reducing the need to have more paid staff. Working with autism bases to support autistic children to participate. 	Existing programme of work containing some new projects.
Supporting families resettling in the Vale	To support physical activity and active play with Afghan and Ukrainian refugees being resettled into the Western Vale.	Sport Wales funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Cricket Wales Diversity Officer to develop opportunities and also organisation employed by UK Gov to fund activities; As a result of building relationships with Resettlement Officers, start of early work to set up equipment loan scheme / link to sports and play team to develop informal opportunities at resettlement site in Western Vale. Aim to support access to no cost/low-cost activity. 	New
Energise YOUTH scheme.	To increase the number of young people (11-18 years)	Sport Wales funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeting the least active 11–18-year-olds with wellbeing issues, in partnership with Youth Service and community organisations. Completed pilot, 49 young people registered on scheme, supported by youth mentors. Evidence indicates a positive impact for many, although there was 	Existing programme of

Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

Healthy Living Team and Youth Service. Project.	regularly participating in physical activity through a referral style scheme.		<p>also a drop off for some young people highlighting the vulnerabilities they are facing. Funding identified via Social Services & Sport Wales to continue project into 2024/2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most referrals have been accessing health and fitness sessions in their local gym. There have been sessions carried out at local table tennis clubs, karate club and tennis facilities. The young people have been able to access equipment and resources to enable them to feel confident attending the gym in the correct clothing with suitable footwear and equipment for their chosen activity. • The general feedback from young people has been positive, young people have accessed gym memberships freely, with the initial sessions supported by their youth workers then independently throughout their weeks. The young people who have maintained their attendance and dedication to their health and wellbeing have also asked for further support and/or passes to continue attending. This resulted in at least 520 contacts to promote active lifestyle, health and fitness and general wellbeing. 	work with new additions.
Free sports activities/events delivered during school holidays	To provide free sports activities/events during school holidays to help those affected by cost-of-living crisis.	Sport Wales funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of targeting least active / those not part of community clubs / girls / areas of deprivation / inclusion etc. Wide range of activities include informal activities such as skateboarding and basketball that could be undertaken on an ongoing basis by residents without the need to join clubs (if cost of attendance at clubs is a barrier). Some activities delivered in partnership with Youth Service. Links made to community clubs. 	Existing
Free Sports equipment	Enable families to loan equipment for free.	Sport Wales funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free sports equipment loans bags provided to food hubs and Barry library to enable families to loan equipment for free. Additional libraries expressed an interest in joining the programme. Continued attendance at St Lukes Food Hub and Llantwit Foodshare project to promote activity opportunities and loan equipment bags. 	Existing

Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

Pre-school	Pre-school support	Sport Wales funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked with Move More Eat Well programme to support free training of childminders via event incorporating food and activity to encourage physical activity within settings; Delivery of 10 free active pre-school sessions 5 free pre-school gymnastics sessions delivered in partnership with YMCA Barry/Silverstars attracting 31 participants. 	Existing and new
No cost outdoor play opportunity	To support families to access no cost outdoor play opportunities in 'free to access' settings	Sport Wales funding Sport Wales & Youth Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase of 2 mud kitchens for Cosmeston & Porthkerry Country Parks. 2 free Youth Fest community events delivered in partnership with Youth Services accruing 46 participations 	New
Play Friendly Schools project	Free play activities within schools	Public Health Wales Prevention Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding secured in Feb/March 2024 to support purchase of resources for future Play Friendly Schools project (free play activities within schools) and development of Prescription for Play pads (creation of worksheets highlighting free play activities families can undertake together within their homes and communities – hard copies to be distributed at events and virtual copies uploaded to the Council website for free download 	New

Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

Housing Support				
Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Housing support	To provide housing and additional housing support through the Money Advice Team.	Council Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing private rents have meant more households joining the Council's Housing waiting list, which has risen to over 6,500 people. Council housing rent arrears remain high with over 1,200 Council housing tenants in arrears and average debts rising to £646 (£562 last year). This does represent a decrease of 400 tenants in arrears in the last 6 months from 1,600, however, a key issue is the migration of people onto Universal Credit from legacy benefits which due to timing issues distorts the data and has shown some accounts in arrears when they are in fact up to date. As such this decrease does not represent an improvement in the picture and those in genuine arrears remain high. The Housing Income team continue to work closely with tenants to provide support and advice and the specialist Money Advisors within the team manage a growing caseload, offering budgeting advice, help with claiming benefits and income maximisation. The team also assist with grant and loan applications, as well as ensuring people are on the lowest tariffs for utilities. From September 2023 to March 2024, the Money Advice Team helped tenants maximise their income through various measures resulting in £58,575.18 being saved by tenants. In the same period 168 fuel vouchers were issued from the Money Advice Team via the Fuel Bank Foundation with a total value of £6,897 which is an average of £41.05 per person to assist with their energy costs. The Money Advice Team have processed 69 white goods applications and have several cases of PIP applications awaiting outcomes. 	Existing
The Energy Company Obligation 4 (ECO4)	To support households in poorly insulated homes, making those households more energy efficient and helping lessen the	UK Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to raise awareness of the ECO4 Flex scheme through social media, in person events, Town and Community Councils and other routes. As of May 2024, the Council has received 15 ECO4 Flex applications via E.ON. These are mainly delivered by 3rd party installers working with E.ON. 13 applications have been approved and the relevant notifications and been submitted to OFGEM. 	Existing

Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

	impact of rising energy bills.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In addition to ECO4 FLex, the council is working together with E.ON to boost standard eligibility eco funding across all schemes and also working with NEST and the Energy Savings Trust to offer relevant assistance.	
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Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

PSB Project – Work to tackle inequities in deprived communities’ project				
Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Public Services Board (PSB) work to tackle inequities in deprived communities project	To reduce the inequity between our most and least deprived communities’ partners are working together in a new approach to understand the inequities in outcomes for those living in 3 LSOAs in Gibbonsdown, Court and Buttrills, and to use this insight to develop and deliver services in different ways.	Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project was successfully awarded £100k of Shared Prosperity funding split over 2023/24 and 2024/25 to undertake this work. • Insight from this project has led to support with a number of community funding bids. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gibby Greenfingers – a local community growing organisations that has been supported to develop a funding application for a volunteer manager - Oakfield School Beacon community hub – this project helped to secure SPF funding for their Beacon hub project and introduced colleagues to Long Terms Towns consultants to shape future work in the area - Pencoedtre High School – opportunities to maximise impact have been found between connecting local needs with funding opportunities provided by other PSB partners. This includes connections made between a local high school and Food Vale which resulted in the school getting funding for food tech classes. - Youth service mobile youth bus – the local Youth Service Team have been supported with insight gathered through this project to shape a funding application and suggest locations within the project area to address local need. • This project has strengthened connections between partners and organisations across multiple sectors to enhance shared learning, local knowledge, and connections. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting the establishment of the GVS/NRW 3rd sector engagement network – this aims to increase information, peer to peer support, and reduce duplication. - C&VUHB Amplifying Prevention programme – insight gathered directly from this project’s engagement work has helped shape the immunisation engagement and catch up plans for target areas within the Vale. 	Existing

Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Intelligence gathered from this project has supported the Pencoedtre Cluster project, by sharing local experiences and insight common experiences and needs have been identified across the two projects, allowing for opportunities for collaboration to be identified, knowledge to be shared and duplication of effort avoided by harnessing different methods of engagement and relationships.• As of May 2024, the project has engaged with 190 members of the community and 27 leaders of community groups (not including council led services).	
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Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

Food Insecurity				
Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Food Vale Partnership	To support access to healthy food through activities such as cooking courses	Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding to further develop Food Vale has been utilised in part to provide grant funding to 9 local organisations, including several schools. The partnership has also continued to lead work to better understand resident's experiences of food access and have recently carried out a local survey to capture people's lives experiences of accessing food, including experiences of food insecurity across the Vale of Glamorgan. Over 400 people have completed the survey which will be analysed alongside existing data from sources such as the Council's Let's Talk survey to further develop our understanding of food access and shape recommendations for future work. Work has continued to explore opportunities to maximise impact through Welsh Government funding streams. As per Welsh Government advice, discussions are underway with Food Vale, the Vale of Glamorgan's sustainable food partnership to identify the best way forward for 2024/25 financial year funding linked to Welsh Government's Direct Food Support grant and the Food Partnership Development grant. This financial year sees both revenue and capital funding available. 	Existing
Rural food insecurity (inc. Llantwit Food Project)	Exploring methods to better understand and tackle food access and food insecurity in more rural locations.	National lottery People and Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several rural food support services have continued to provide a much-needed service through the two food pantries managed by GVS in Llantwit Major and St Athan, and the Wick Food Hub which established in December 2023, provides free food to residents including locally grown seasonal produce on a biweekly basis alongside a friendly warm space providing an opportunity for residents to connect over free refreshments. The space offers the opportunity for residents of all ages to come together helping to tackle challenges 	Existing programme of work, with new additions.

Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

		<p>community fund</p> <p>Welsh Government – Food Partnership Grant</p>	<p>of social isolation, food insecurity, and access to food in the rural location. Lessons learnt are being shared between the rural projects to maximise future impact and shape future phases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since its launch in January GVS' St Athan Pantry, has seen customers continue to grow with approx. 20 – 25 households being supported at its biweekly sessions, these figures are anticipated to steadily increase. The impact of this action and wider Project elements will be captured through an upcoming survey to monitor impact and identify areas for improvement. • Other elements include the More Than Food Hub which welcomes organisations to provides free advice and support on the third Thursday of every month in Llantwit Major. Whilst the hub had been paused for a short period since the last report due to building works in the venue, over 30 people were supported across the two most recent sessions directly through the work of partners at the advice and support element of the hub. Support was provided on a range of topics including homelessness, rent arrears, childcare, support for families with additional learning needs, mental health and free physical activities. 	
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Where project is stated as 'New', this relates to the period December 2023-May 2024

Tackling Loneliness and Isolation				
Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Age Friendly	To deliver a range of activities and events integrating social elements to directly target loneliness and isolation.	Welsh Government - Age Friendly Communities grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Age Friendly Vale team have continued to work with the Vale 50+ Strategy Forum, colleagues across the Council and partners. The Forum's 'Have Your Say' information and social events held at Barry YMCA and Llantwit Major RFC Clubhouse provided opportunities for older people to access befriending support directly from partners such as Age Connects and Age Cymru in a social setting. Across the two events more than 25 services have attended to share information, advice, and support directly to older residents. The 'Forum Pop Up' event at Barry Island Beach Hut also provided an occasion for new and long-standing Forum members to connect and share a cup of tea by the seaside. The Age Friendly Team have worked with Value in the Vale colleagues and Cardiff City Council to deliver two informative talks on the 'Built Heritage and Natural History of Flat Holm Island' at Belle Vue Community Café, Penarth. This collaboration also delivered the 'RSPB Big Bird Watch' across the Council's five sheltered housing schemes in the Vale, bringing together housing residents in a communal space to share companionship and learn about interesting topics. All events have been delivered free of charge offering free warm drinks and light refreshments recognising the cost-of-living crisis and possible financial barriers to accessing social activities and have provided safe spaces for socialisation and connection. Age Friendly funding of £927 has been utilised to support 'Cycling Without Age -Barry Island' to secure hire of an annual beach hut at Barry Island (until April 2025). The hut will be used to store a mobility aid and pilot a brand-new initiative in the Vale of Glamorgan. Cycling Without Age are a global, not-for-profit organisation that aim to allow people of all ages and abilities to enjoy cycling, nature and friendly conversation by providing free rides in volunteer driven electric bikes called trishaws. The Barry Island chapter will provide an opportunity for older people and people with limited ability to participate in a trishaw bicycle ride whilst experiencing the seaside. The design of the trishaw encourages social interaction among riders (of which there can be two at a time) and with the volunteer driver. Social interaction with the driver is often intergenerational, creating new and unique social opportunities for both older riders and younger drivers. Meetings have taken place with officers in social services to discuss the offer of free rides to older people in local care homes and day centres over the summer. 	Existing

Appendix B

Council Measures Relating to Cost of Living/Poverty				
Ref	Measure	Annual/ Quarterly	Service	2023-24 Q4 Data
Council Support				
New 2024	Percentage of residents agreeing that the council is doing enough to support residents through the cost of living crisis.	A	SAG Data from Let's Talk Survey 2023 COL	
Education and Training				
CPM/023	Percentage of Young people leaving year 13 who are not in education, employment or training.	A	Standards & Provision	3.6%
CPM/024	Percentage of Year 11 leavers known not to be in education, training or employment (NEET).	A	Standards & Provision	1.2%
CPM/037	Percentage of Young people leaving Year 12 who are not in education, employment or training.	A	Standards & Provision	0.6%
CPM/043 (Amended)	Percentage of adults on community learning courses achieving nationally recognised awards/qualifications.	A	Strategy Community Learning & Resources (Replaces previous wording of - Percentage success rate on accredited courses for priority learners.)	95%

Appendix B

Advice				
New 2024	Numbers accessing the Money Advice Team for support.	A	Housing & Building Services	
Housing				
CPM/046	Number of tenancies maintained six months after receiving Money Advice.	A	Housing & Building Services	290
New 2024	Percentage of tenants in rent arrears	A	Housing & Building Services	
PAM/036	Number of additional affordable housing units delivered during the year per 10,000 households.	A	Housing & Building Services	Q3 = 9.6
CPM/096	Percentage of all households where a positive prevention action succeeded in preventing/relieving homelessness.	A	Housing & Building Services	31.4%
PAM/012	Percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless.	A	Housing & Building Services	60.7%
CPM/189	Number of all households in temporary accommodation, by type of accommodation: - Private sector accommodation - Public sector accommodation - Hostels and women's refuges - Bed and breakfast	Q	Housing & Building Services	767

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	- Homeless at home			
CPM/190	Number of households in temporary accommodation which are families with children.	Q	Housing & Building Services	112
CPM/139	The average number of SAP rating for the Council's housing stock.	A	Housing & Building Services	
CPM/199	The number of private rented properties where energy efficiency has been improved through direct action from Shared Regulatory Services.	A	Shared Regulatory Services	44
Business/Economy and Employment				
CPM/053	Average vacancy rate in the Vale's main town centres.	A	Sustainable Development	
CPM/133	Number of local businesses advised in relation to funding, business planning and new start-ups.	A	Regeneration	615
CPM/135	Number of community led organisations that are financially supported.	A	Regeneration	24
CPM/144	Number of businesses financially supported	A	Regeneration	74
CPM/154	Number of jobs created and safeguarded through the Councils SPF programme	A	Regeneration	36
CPM/165	Percentage of C4W+ people engaged against target	A	ALN & Wellbeing	100% (actual figure exceeded target)

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Health				
New 2024	Percentage of residents describing their physical health as being fairly or very good.	A	Neighbourhood Services & Transport SAG will provide data from Let's talk survey 2023	
New 2024	Percentage of residents describing their mental health as being fairly or very good.	A	SAG will provide data from Let's talk survey 2023	
Arts and Culture				
CPM/069	Percentage of people attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage activities at least 3 times a year.	A	Strategy Community Learning & Resources National Survey of Wales. SAG provides data.	
Transport				
CPM/068	Percentage of adults 60+ who have a concessionary bus pass.	A	Neighbourhood Services & Transport	72.56%
New 2024	Percentage of residents who use the following public or active travel options in the Vale of Glamorgan: a) Public transport b) Walking routes	A	Neighbourhood Services & Transport SAG will provide data from Let's talk survey 2023	

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	c) Cycling routes			
	f) Community transport			