

No.

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Remote Meeting held on 5th December, 2022.

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

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

Present: Councillor Susan Lloyd Selby (Mayor); Councillors Anne Asbrey, Julie Aviet, Gareth Ball, Rhiannon Birch, Bronwen Brooks, Gillian Bruce, Ian Buckley, Lis Burnett, Samantha Campbell, George Carroll, Christine Cave, Charles Champion, Janice Charles, Millie Collins, Marianne Cowpe, Pamela Drake, Vincent Driscoll, Anthony Ernest, Robert Fisher, Christopher Franks, Wendy Gilligan, Russell Godfrey, Emma Goodjohn, Ewan Goodjohn, Stephen Haines, Howard Hamilton, Sally Hanks, William Hennessy, Nic Hodges, Mark Hooper, Catherine Iannucci, Gwyn John, Dr. Ian Johnson, Belinda Loveluck-Edwards, Julie Lynch-Wilson, Kevin Mahoney, Naomi Marshallsea, Michael Morgan, Jayne Norman, Helen Payne, Elliot Penn, Sandra Perkes, Ian Perry, Joanna Protheroe, Ruba Sivagnanam, Carys Stallard, Neil Thomas, Rhys Thomas, Steffan Wiliam, Margaret Wilkinson, Edward Williams, Mark Wilson and Nicholas Wood.

494 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Mayor read the following statement: “May I remind everyone present that the meeting will be live streamed as well as recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing”.

495 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

496 MINUTES –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 26th September, 2022 and the Special meeting held on 9th November, 2022 be approved as a correct record.

497 ANNOUNCEMENTS –

The Mayor indicated that she had attended a further 15 events since the last Council meeting and highlighted her pleasure of attending the Council’s Staff Awards and congratulated all those who had been nominated and the winners for the great work that they were doing on behalf of the Council. It had also been her privilege to mark Armistice Day and she also attended the Royal Gun salute, where the Council reaffirmed its commitment to the Armed Forces by re-signing the Armed Forces

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Covenant. She had also been delighted to attend the anniversary of Barry Roundtable, Santa Sleigh, 50 years of bringing the joy and excitement of Christmas to children in the town, as well as raising much needed funds for hundreds of local charities, groups and sports clubs. In concluding, she was please to confirm that the Mayor's Foundation had to date this Municipal year supported 21 charities and community groups.

498 USE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S EMERGENCY POWERS (CX) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Chief Executive's Emergency Powers be noted.

Reason for decision

Having regard to the Council's Constitution.

499 CARDIFF AND VALE OF GLAMORGAN MARKET STABILITY REPORT 2022 (REF) –

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health referred to the Cabinet reference in relation to the above matter which sought the Council's approval of the Market Stability Report (MSR) which Councils were required to prepare and publish to comply with Section 144B of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 (the 2014 Act). This was the first such report prepared for Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan and had been undertaken between October 2021 and July 2022.

He indicated that the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee had considered the MSR and had requested further information regarding the required mechanism for the annual report.

Referring to the Regional Commissioning Board, he highlighted that the Board would need to consider the MSR with partners and any requirements from Welsh Government in due course. As the Chair of the Regional Partnership Board, he acknowledged that this had been a key piece of work and thanked the Director and his staff for supporting the process. He emphasised that the key point to take from the report was the recognition of the needs within the Vale Glamorgan and how these challenges would be dealt with.

Councillor Dr. Johnson referred to the importance of the report as it set out the needs of residents in the county over the next five years and addressed related challenges to ensure that there was sufficient capacity to address known issues facing the Council and future trends. He alluded to the 40% increase in Children Looked After across Cardiff and the Vale in the past five years and similar issues relating to COVID-19 matters and how these challenges were going to be met over the coming years. He also highlighted specific aspects of the report and referred to his personal experience of working in children, young people's mental health services and the need to address the "missing middle" where children could not access support as their required need was below the statutory threshold.

No.

Referring to the Cabinet Member's reference to being the Chair of the Regional Partnership Board, Councillor Dr. Johnson enquired how Councillor Williams anticipated the report would be dealt with and acted upon as part of the Regional Commissioning Board / Regional Partnership Boards and to the process of how their actions would be scrutinised at a local level by the Council.

Councillor Williams referred to the challenges the report presented for the Council and the other agencies involved and this had been recognised, but until the MSR had been approved by all partners and the Council, it could not be progressed. He indicated that there was a plan within the Regional Partnership Board to progress the delivery of the MSR in a structured way which included workshops with partners to take it forward.

RESOLVED – T H A T the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Market Stability Report 2022 as considered by Cabinet on 6th October, 2022 (Minute No. C93 refers) be approved.

Reason for decision

To ensure that the Market Stability Report had been considered by all Members of the Council.

500 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-TERM REPORT (REF) –

The Leader outlined the report which had been prepared to comply with the CIPFA Code of Practice and which covered a range of matters as of 30th September, 2022. The Treasury Management Indicators had been based on the Capital Program approved at Cabinet on 3rd November, 2022 and included a reprofile of the City Deal scheme. These indicators also compared the original estimates approved at Council on 3rd March, 2022 with the revised estimates in 2022/23. The 2021 revised CIPFA Code of Practice required Local Authorities to adopt a new prudential indicator called the Liability Benchmark from 2023/24 and this had now been incorporated into the report. She referred to the investment portfolio section which set the Council's investment portfolio from 1st April to 30th September, 2022 with the Council continuing to have regard to security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest return on yield. In terms of debt rescheduling opportunities, these had been limited due to the current economic climate and therefore no debt rescheduling had been undertaken to date in the current financial year.

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the Treasury Management mid-year report for the period 1st April, 2022 to 30th September, 2022 be approved.

(2) T H A T the latest Treasury Management indicators be approved.

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Reason for decisions

(1) Having regard to the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice.

(2) In acknowledgement that the indicators were included in the Treasury Management Strategy.

501 THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COMMUNITY REVIEW (REF) –

The Leader referred to the original Cabinet report dated 30th April, 2018 which set out arrangements for conducting a community review in line with the requirements of the Local (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 for the Vale of Glamorgan to be commenced in June 2023 due to the timing of the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales principal area review for the Vale of Glamorgan and the need to avoid the risk of voter confusion during the elections to be held in 2021 and 2022.

She had brought the matter before Council to ensure that all Members were aware of the process and related timescales. The matter would be referred to the Community Liaison Committee and to all Town and Community Councils in the Vale Glamorgan.

Councillor Dr. Johnson welcomed the review as it was the first opportunity since 2009 to consider whether current arrangements reflected the communities that they were supposed to serve. He was sure that Town and Community Councils would be fully engaged in the process as would political parties. He also wanted to ensure that all constituents played a role in the consultation to make sure that the Community boundaries that were recommended were based on the size of the Town and Community Councils.

RESOLVED – T H A T the Vale of Glamorgan Community Review as considered by Cabinet on 17th November, 2022 (Minute No. C133 refers) be noted.

Reason for decision

In acknowledgement that the final recommendations relating to the Review were a matter for Council.

502 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME (REF) –

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations SI 2013/3029 (“the Prescribed Requirements Regulations”) and the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 SI 2014/66 be adopted.

(2) T H A T any amendments to Regulations made by the Welsh Government be reflected in the scheme.

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(3) T H A T the national scheme be adopted with the following discretions:-

- That the Extended Payments up to a maximum of 4 weeks be allowed to continue.
- That the War Widow and War Disablement pensions in assessing income for Council Tax Reduction continue to be disregarded.
- That Backdated Reductions continue to be allowed for a period up to 26 weeks.

Reason for decisions

(1-3) To enable the Council Tax Reduction Scheme to be approved and in place for implementation from 1st April, 2023.

503 DRAFT VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT 2021/22 (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C63, 8th September, 2022 (as set out in Section 15.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution) be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

504 AMENDED SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TRANSPORT POLICY (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C76, 29th September, 2022 (as set out in Section 15.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution) be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

505 PROPOSAL TO ADD ST RICHARD GWYN TO THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C77, 29th September, 2022 (as set out in Section 15.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution) be noted.

No.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

506 CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST AUGUST 2022 (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C90, 6th October, 2022 (as set out in Section 15.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution) be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

507 DWR CYMRU WELSH WATER CONSULTATION ON THE DRAINAGE AND WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN (DWMP) (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C95, 6th October, 2022 (as set out in Section 15.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution) be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

508 FINAL DRAFT VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2021/22 (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C104, 20th October, 2022 (as set out in Section 15.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution) be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

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509 CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2022 (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C119, 3rd November, 2022 (as set out in Section 15.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution) be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

510 CONSULTATION OF PROPOSALS FOR PRIMARY LEGISLATION IN RELATION TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE, CONTINUING HEALTH CARE, MANDATORY REPORTING AND REGULATION AND INSPECTION (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C123, 3rd November, 2022 (as set out in Section 15.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution) be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

511 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C159, 1st December, 2022 (as set out in Section 15.14.2(ii) of the Council's Constitution) be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

512 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO SECTION 4.18 OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION –

The following responses to Member questions as contained within the agenda were presented:

(i) **Question from Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson**

What plans does the Vale Council have to support young people furthest from the job market following the closure of Inspire to Achieve (I2A) and Inspire to Work (I2W) at the end of this year because of the ending of EU funding for these programmes?

No.

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

Notwithstanding the significant budgetary challenges, we continue to focus and prioritise this key service so we can support our most vulnerable young people so that they are able to enter the job market.

Supplemental

Councillor Dr. Johnson referring to the Inspire to Achieve and Inspire to Work Programmes and to working in the past with Llamau on this project enquired if the Council would continue to work with Llamau in the future.

The Leader referred to the Youth Service which had pre-empted the loss of European Social Funding for the Inspire to Achieve and the Inspire to Work projects by reshaping its targeted service. This had resulted in closure of the Youth Engagement Programme which operated daily from YMCA Barry. The Programme delivered a one-day provision for students attending Derw Newydd to offer a BTEC Level 1 or 2 qualification and to deliver the Personal, Social and Health Education. There were a range of other initiatives that supported young people. In preparing the programme for the Shared Prosperity Fund she had had a productive meeting with Llamau who the Council worked successfully with, however, she had no details on any future proposals for working with them at the moment.

(ii) **Question from Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson**

What consideration has been given to the impact of flooding and climate change as part of the bid to redevelop St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School in Barry?

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places

I can assure all Members that full consideration has been given and continues to be given to the impact of climate change and flooding in relation to the St. Richard Gwyn redevelopment.

Supplemental

Councillor Dr. Johnson referring to the Cabinet Member's reply sought clarification as to what considerations had been made to alleviate the risk of flooding and how this would operate on the site.

The Deputy Leader indicated that as part of the initial redevelopment planning for the St. Richard Gwyn Catholic Comprehensive School, a flood alleviation exercise had been undertaken in consultation with Natural Resources Wales and the local Suitable Drainage Approval Body (SAB) Authority, to determine what would be achievable for the site to address the onsite flooding issue without detrimentally affecting the surrounding areas.

No.

The current proposal included a number of on-site basins and swales to disperse surface water from both the site as well part of Argae Lane through a network that would travel around the edges of the site.

To ensure compliance with SAB Regulations, and to address the on-site generated surface water, the current proposal included the construction of a green roof, which would ensure the majority of surface water generated by rainfall would be dealt with throughout the footprint of the building, as well as limiting the volume of water which would enter the mains system. Where possible, the external areas would be permeable with features including a 3G pitch, a Multi-Use Games Area and potentially the car parking areas, which would further reduce the volume of surface water entering the mains system.

The design for the redevelopment of the school site was in its early stages, but the main principal in addition to providing a sustainable, energy efficient building was to ensure surface water was dealt with onsite, limiting the volume of water entering the local water course, to mitigate any additional surface water to the existing surface water system.

(iii) **Question from Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson**

In the calendar year so far, how many penalty charge notices for traffic offences have been made as a result of (a) the Civil Parking Enforcement Camera Car and (b) on-foot Enforcement Officers, and what assessment has been made of the use and effectiveness of the Enforcement Camera Car in reducing dangerous parking since its introduction?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services

In the period from 1st January 2022 to 31st October 2022 6087 PCNs have been issued by enforcement officers on foot and 6347 PCNs by the camera car.

It is difficult to assess the success of the camera car in reducing dangerous parking but our officers have noted less offences in locations such as schools and pedestrian crossings following periods of enforcement.

Supplemental

Councillor Dr. Johnson asked the Cabinet Member to explain on the basis of the number of PCN's issued, how this information had been utilised to develop better understanding of where dangerous parking was taking place.

Referring to many operations that took place, the Cabinet Member highlighted one such example being Operation Frozen, established to examine why such a relatively large number of PCNs were being issued at the goods vehicle only loading bay at Windsor Road in Penarth Town centre. Over the course of five days, officers had a high-visibility presence at that loading bay and the Camera Enforcement Vehicle was re-routed so as to avoid the location. This was phase one of the operation. Other areas would be looked at where obvious concerns had been identified including,

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enforcement action elsewhere and operations to remind the public where to park safely and that drivers followed the rules.

(iv) **Question from Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson**

The weekly Holton Road market in Barry town centre closed in April, before the local elections. What plans does the Council have to secure the return of a regular town centre market which boosts footfall and trade for permanent shops, as well as market traders?

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places

As Councillor Dr. Johnson will be aware from his contact with economy team, the Council has appointed a new market operator that plans to run a monthly market of around 30 stalls on King Square, starting on 16 December.

Supplemental

Councillor Dr. Johnson, referring to remaining concerns held by the public in relation to the Holton Road area and to the work of the previous Administration successfully hosting a wider economic summit enquired if the Cabinet Member would repeat that exercise.

The Cabinet Member being happy to discuss the matter further with Councillor Dr. Johnson, invited him to email her on the subject.

(v) **Question from Councillor C.P. Franks**

We are aware of the financial challenges ahead driven in part by the Westminster incompetent management of the economy.

Will the Cabinet Member detail the latest position regarding the negotiations with Welsh Government concerning the financial settlement for Councils?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

I have had a significant number of meetings with Welsh Government Ministers on the budget challenges and pressures. I have also had several meetings with Welsh Government as part of the wider WLGA arrangement. I will continue to press for as good a settlement as possible given the current position as set out by the Chancellor in his Fiscal Statement.

Supplemental

Councillor Franks referring to the lateness of the likely government budget statement asked the Leader to indicate how schools could be expected to draft their budgets in these current circumstances.

No.

The Leader pointed out that this would be in the same way that had been outlined in the timetable for setting the budget which included the mechanism for coming forward with proposals, how that would be communicated to Members, how it would be discussed at Scrutiny Committees and how it would develop final budget proposals. There was also ongoing communication with schools.

(vi) **Question from Councillor C.P. Franks**

We are warned every day about the economic pressures confronting the Vale of Glamorgan Council. How effectively are you engaging with Welsh Government?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

I am continuing to press the case both for adequate funding in the context of current financial challenges and the value and importance of local government services, particularly for our most vulnerable residents. I would refer you to my previous answer in regard in regards of ongoing liaison and last week, I have had conversations with Jane Hutt, Vaughan Gethin and Eluned Morgan, Hannah Blythe and Jeremy Miles and this morning with Rebecca Evans and at every opportunity I press the Council's case.

Supplemental

Councillor Franks asked the Leader if Welsh Government had expressed any comment regarding the significant reserves held by the Council.

The Leader referred to her conversations not necessarily with Welsh Government but with other Council Leaders on the subject of the inability of some Councillors to understand the different purposes of reserves and how some reserves were earmarked. Some were restricted with only a small proportion only approximately 5% contained in the General Fund Reserve. Noting that Councillor Franks had been away for a while, she was sure that most Members understood the differentiation between those types of reserves. Alluding to the refresh of the Medium Term Financial Plan that was recently undertaken, there had been a discussion regarding reserves to see whether or not reprofiling them in line with the current risk register might mean that that there were some that could be usable. This would be part of the budget consideration in January.

(vii) **Question from Councillor C.P. Franks**

Welsh Government has indicated that support for Council services will increase by 3.5% next year. If Welsh Government fails to provide a reasonable grant what cuts do you intend to propose?

No.

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

Cabinet approved the Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan refresh on 6 October, which assumed this level of funding and identified an overall budget gap of £28m.

The report also set out the timetable, including key dependencies, for approving the 2023/24 budget. I suggest you refresh yourself with that report.

As for specific details, I suggest you wait for the draft settlement from Welsh Government on 13 December and the various reports that will follow, when you will get an opportunity to respond as part of the process. There would be full discussion in Scrutiny Committees.

Supplemental

Councillor Franks on his understanding that officers had been asked to prepare budgets to include significant cuts and asked if the Leader would provide a breakdown of these cuts.

The Leader reminded Councillor Franks that the Council was working to a timetable. She did not see any sense looking at scenarios or discussing the same as being constructive whilst the announcement from Welsh Government was awaited.

(viii) Question from Councillor C.P. Franks

This report says that Welsh Government allocates revenue to Councils to help alleviate poverty. What is the amount of funding involved and does it have to be applied for?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

Alleviating poverty is one of the key areas of focus for the Council and core funding provided by Welsh Government and raised through Council Tax is used for this purpose. Councillor Franks will be aware of the Council's Corporate Plan and Annual Delivery Plan commitments to tackling poverty.

In addition to the work the Council does utilising its core funding, the Council has received a wide range of grant streams in 2022/23:

- Cost of Living £150 to all of those in A to D Properties - £5,014,200
- Discretionary Cost of Living to cover those not eligible for the £150 scheme and experiencing hardship - £824,865
- Winter Fuel Payments £1,705,400 to date with £191,600 pending
- Direct Support Fund - £50,096
- Food Partnership Funding - £97,000
- Warm Bank Funding - £33,136.

No.

Welsh Government has awarded all of these grants, there has been no application process required from the Council to Welsh Government.

The distribution of the majority of the funding is determined through the grant guidance provided by Welsh Government. The Discretionary Cost of Living Scheme is a key exception and Cabinet agreed its scheme to allocate these funds on 9th June, 2022.

The Council has engaged with a wide range of organisations and community groups to invite bids for funding from the remaining schemes and allocating these funds is currently underway.

Supplemental

Councillor Franks enquired if the Council's well-being plan included a robust set of consistent outcome indicators and measures to increase the understanding of poverty locally?

The Leader confirmed that it did, however, she did not understand his question in terms of what he was referring to in relation to understanding poverty and how that linked to his original question. She requested that Councillor Franks write to her on this matter and she would provide him an answer.

(ix) **Question from Councillor C.P. Franks**

Regarding the alleviation of poverty what funding does the Vale have at its disposal and is it fully spent?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

I would refer you to my earlier answer and but in terms of it, it is fully spent. The Household Support Fund is fully spent. The Direct Food Support Fund, is currently not, we spent £29,920. The Cost of Living Discretionary Fund is fully spent. The Food Partnership Fund, we have an indicative amount of £97,000, but we are currently awaiting the terms and conditions on that. The Warm Banks Fund is £33,196 of which £11,671 has been spent and we are currently working through applications for support. That means that of the total of £166,039. that's excluding the indicative amount for the Food Partnership Fund, we have spent £124,338.

Supplemental

Councillor Franks referring to a number of budgets being fully spent asked the Leader what would happen for the rest of the financial year.

The Leader referred to her earlier reply however, she reminded Members that the Council, through its Corporate Plan and its Annual Delivery Plan, already had

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additional activities to tackle poverty and she would continue to work to address the issue as well as accessing additional grants which would be utilised effectively too.

(x) **Question from Councillor C.P. Franks**

Will you indicate how money is allocated regarding the alleviation of poverty?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

I refer Councillor Franks to my previous two answers.

(xi) **Question from Councillor C.P. Franks**

The report from the Auditor General says: Digital exclusion remains a major challenge and data shows that people in poverty can find it difficult to access online services. How does the Council address this concern?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

The Council ensures that access to Council services and information can be accessed in a variety of ways, not just digitally. For example, consultation exercises are promoted in non-digital formats and with non-digital completion mechanisms. Council services remain accessible by telephone and face-to-face.

The Council has an established digital inclusion network which provides training in the use of digital technology.

Councillor Franks may also be aware of the significant work undertaken during the pandemic to provide laptops and ensure internet access to pupils who did not have these at home to ensure continuity of learning during the pandemic. The Council also had free wifi in buildings, Makerspace in Penarth and hopefully soon in Barry and tablet loan and training with libraries.

It was not just poverty, but it was also digital literacy the Council was tackling.

(xii) **Question from Councillor C.P. Franks**

Given the huge financial pressures facing Vale schools will you indicate what addition financial support you will be recommending for schools this financial year?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

I and senior officers have met with the Schools Budget Forum and with all Headteachers last month.

No.

For 2022/23 financial year schools are having to manage the pressure of significantly higher than anticipated pay awards and utility costs, in exactly the same way other Council services are having to and at the end of the day schools were part of the Council.

They have been advised to carefully consider all discretionary spend and potentially look to reserves to manage the pressures. This mirrors the approach the Council is taking across the rest of its services.

Supplemental

Councillor Franks referred to most schools who had budgeted for 3% uplift for staff pay awards, but settlements had been 5 % and asked the Leader if she would confirm that schools would be supported to bridge the gap.

The Leader referred Councillor Franks to her earlier reply to his previous question in terms of the timetable for budget announcements. She drew his attention to the Council's budget itself being set on the assumption of a 3% pay increase and therefore the Council as a whole was facing the same difficulties. The Council would continue to talk to schools to work together to address the matter, but that could not happen until the settlement from Welsh Government was known.

(xiii) **Question from Councillor C.P. Franks**

You will be aware that grants from Welsh Government play an essential part in assisting pupils who required additional support. Do you have an indication that Welsh Government will maintain the level of such grants?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

As has been common practice, there has been no indication at this time. Typically the majority of grant schemes are not confirmed until the new year following the Settlement announcement in mid-December.

Supplemental

Councillor Franks, finding the lack of information provided by Welsh Government and the Leader disconcerting, enquired how schools were expected to manage.

The Leader reminded Councillor Franks that the Welsh Government could not be expected to make a statement on the budget when they did not get any indication of their likely budget until mid-November. Therefore, the Council was also not able to make any statement on its budget which was not likely to be known until 14th December, 2022. All that could be done was to plan for scenarios. She viewed Council Franks' criticism as highly irresponsible.

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(xiv) **Question from Councillor C.P. Franks**

Many schools fear a deficit budget next year. What will you be doing to protect schools from having to seek redundancies?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

As I have already indicated, I and Senior Officers met with the Schools Budget Forum and all headteachers last month and have advised them to plan for 10% reductions which is considered a worst case scenario in the absence of the detailed Welsh Government Settlement at this time.

The full impact of the Chancellor's Budget announcement on 17th November is not fully understood, but a better outcome for schools is anticipated and hopeful and officers are working through a number of scenarios which are being explored with Schools Governors.

(xv) **Question from Councillor G. Bruce**

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is seriously short of funding for the next financial year. Why then has there not been a request to the Welsh Government for further finance, when the Welsh Government has had to return £155million back to the Treasury because this money has not been allocated to Councils, Schools and the NHS in Wales?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

It was actually very opportune that I bumped into the Minister for Finance and Local Government this morning because I was able to double check the assertion that you made in your questions and this actually was the subject of a letter that was sent to Peredur Owen Griffiths, MS, the Chair of the Finance Committee earlier this year and it looked at the UK Government's refusal to allow a level of flexibility in respect to individual revenue and capital controls and where following a protracted exchange with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and H.M. Treasury officials, they have been denied that flexibility to offset capital overspend with some of the revenue underspend. I think it needs to be said that the underspending UK Government departments of £25 billion which represents almost 6% of the total provision available to them. The Department of Health and Social Care alone underspent by over 9%. A Barnett formula share of that would amount to over £1billion for Wales but the underspending in Wales which you raise actually only represented 1% of the available resources, which demonstrates a great deal of effectiveness in devolved governments managing their budgets.

The Council continues to lobby Welsh Government through a number of different channels for additional funding and this includes through the WLGA to ensure the additional resources above the committed 3.5% increase in the Aggregate External

No.

Finance in the Chancellor's budget announcement are directed to support adult social care and schools in particular.

(xvi) **Question from Councillor W.A. Hennessy**

Is there any data to explain the considerable increase in absences of 197 (1933 days lost) in July 2020 compared to that of 709 (4389 days lost) in July 2022”?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

Detailed absence statistics are presented to Cabinet and Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee on a six-monthly basis as part of the agreed performance arrangements. The most recent report being presented to Cabinet on 17th November, with reference onto Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 14th December, any Member is able to attend and speak if they wish.

Comparisons between July 2020 and July 2022 will indicate an increase as during the pandemic any covid related absences (for the first 10 days) would have been considered as self-isolation and not sickness absence in line with our agreed policies and that would explain the disparity.

(xvii) **Question from Councillor G. Bruce**

How much is it costing for each window to be refurbished at Rhoose Primary School on windows that are in very poor condition?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language

The cost per window is currently quoted between £1400 and £1900, with individual costs varying on the requirements of each window. It is anticipated, however, that the final costs will be lower, as a number of windows have been able to be repaired in-situ.

Supplemental

Councillor Bruce asked if it would be more prudent to replace each window as a quicker and more effective and durable option.

The current window works at Rhws Primary were budgeted at £24,560. It is likely however that the outturn will be closer to £20,000, as the original quote provided for taking the windows out, however for many of them the refurbishment has been able to be carried out in-situ.

This replacement is part of a phased programme of work for Rhws. A higher specification for the painting on this phase of works was included as it was felt that the previous phases of refurbishment were looking 'tired'. In terms of comparing the

No.

price for this phase of work, the costs are very similar when allowance is made for the areas of higher specification and the increase in building prices.

(xviii) **Question from Councillor R.R. Thomas**

What support does the Council give to residents with Motor Neurone Disease (MND) who require home adaptations?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health

The Disability Facilities Grant offered by the Council helps towards the cost of adapting the homes of owner occupiers, landlords and private tenants, providing there is a disabled person living there as their main residence. The Council offers the same service to all residents of the Vale with a disability that require housing adaptations of this nature. Subject to Occupational Therapy assessment, some individuals with specific conditions are given a high priority status. This speeds up the referral and application process.

Supplemental

Councillor Thomas enquired what the Council could do to ensure that those suffering with motor neurone disease did not have to spend huge sums of money, particularly if they are unable to work, on home adaptations so they can live with dignity.

The Cabinet Member was unable to comment on specific cases, but he was aware of process and assessment. Unless an individual has applied for an assessment and a referral made the Council was unable to assist. Referring to the case referred to by Councillor Thomas, the Cabinet Member indicated that if the individual had already done so, he asked Councillor Thomas to let him know and he would follow it up. The Occupational Therapy (OT) Team within Social Services receive referrals and Adult Social Services were very much aware of the need for an urgent and timely response to people diagnosed with MND and would assess accordingly.

(xix) **Question from Councillor R.R. Thomas**

Will the Cabinet Member provide an update on the costs associated with the Ysgol Y Deri expansion?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language

The current overall cost of the project is £21.944m, with the Council's contribution equating to £5.058m based on the current intervention rate. Progression of the scheme is subject to approval by Welsh Government.

No.

Supplemental

Councillor Thomas alluding to the sharp increase in costs associated with this project, enquired what was the justification in the significant cost increase associated with the project.

The costs associated with the Ysgol Y Deri Expansion have increased since the project was first consulted on in November 2020. The original anticipated cost was £11m, this was increased to £12.1m to account for the Welsh Government announcement that all new schools needed to be net zero carbon in operation. Since the initial increase in the cost of the scheme, the Council has submitted a full planning application and has produced a detailed design based upon the relevant site surveys. The creation of the detailed design for the proposed building has resulted in increased costs for the project associated with construction. Furthermore, the construction sector has been significantly impacted by global events in the past years including the pandemic and the war in Ukraine which has dramatically inflated the cost of construction materials. The increased inflation and the re-design of the project has seen the cost rise for the project to £21.944m.

Welsh Government are currently considering the Full Business Case for the project based on the new cost and a decision is expected in early January from the Minister for Education and Welsh Language. The intervention rate for the scheme is 75% Welsh Government funded and 25% Council funded with Welsh Government funding 100% of the net zero carbon measures associated with the project. This equates to the Council funding £5.058m for the scheme. The additional Council funding to cover the increased costs has been sourced from within the existing programme through re-arranging intervention rates on other schemes and amending the scope of the programme.

(xx) **Question from Councillor G.D.D. Carroll**

What progress is being made on delivering the Authority's 2022/23 Capital Programme?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

There have been regular reports throughout the year on the delivery of the Council's Capital Programme which have been referred onto the Scrutiny function – we reported in July, October and November and the next report will come forward in January.

Supplemental

Councillor Carroll referring to the reported slippage in the delivery of projects and to the funding unlikely to be spent by the end of the financial year, enquired as to how many capital projects the Leader expected to be delayed.

No.

The Leader, alluding to officer's time being given to the budget setting process and indicated that an update on the capital programme would be considered in January and that would provide a more complete picture.

(xxi) **Question from Councillor G.D.D. Carroll**

Will the Leader please provide an update on the Council's Warm Spaces scheme?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

Thank you for the question, Councillor Carroll and I am pleased to offer an update.

The Council's warm spaces scheme is called a Warm Welcome or Croeso Cynnes and details are prominently shown on the Council's website as part of providing information and support on a range of cost of living issues. This information is being widely shared by the Council and partners in a range of formats.

A Warm Welcome is part of our work to support residents during the cost-of-living crisis and much as I wish, I really wish that was not necessary. This is a network of community spaces that offer a warm and inviting place to come together this winter at no cost and it was brought home to me the other day when I came across a 91 year old lady that was disorientated on a bus at 6.30 p.m. who had gone shopping in Barry to stay warm because she had been locked out of her house. She went home in the dark and did not know where she was. So it is so essential.

There are currently 26 such facilities offering a warm welcome, comprising both Council and non-Council venues. Council Officers are continuing to work with community groups and others to identify, support and promote further opportunities for a warm welcome this winter.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the community groups and Council teams who have once again stepped up to help these vulnerable people, however bleak it is that we are having to do so in the UK in 2022. A report to Cabinet will follow in the next few weeks with further information.

Supplemental

Councillor Carroll acknowledging the importance of the scheme enquired of the 26 spaces currently listed on the Council website, he noted several were only currently available for a few hours each. He asked what action was being taken to increase the hours and make those spaces available for longer periods.

The Leader indicated that this was just the start and originally 20 spaces had been identified, now it was 26. She would continue to talk to anybody that was able to work with the Council. The Council would also be developing its own services and planning work had started well before the Council actually had the terms and conditions of the grant from Welsh Government. Staff had responded immediately. There would be a report to Cabinet shortly with further information.

No.

(xxii) **Question from Councillor G.D.D. Carroll**

Will the Council carry out improvement works to increase the weight limit on Leckwith Bridge?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services

I can assure you that the Council is managing and monitoring the situation in an appropriate manner to ensure the safety of all users. As such, I can confirm the Council has been undertaking a monitoring regime of the critical elements on a scheduled basis and will shortly be commissioning a Principal Inspection and assessment of the structure by specialist consultants. This work will take place in the new calendar year and it is anticipated that reports will be available in Spring 2022. At that stage any recommendations or necessary actions in relation to the weight limit or any other element of the Structure will be considered in more detail.

Supplemental

Councillor Carroll referred to the solar farm proposal which had recently received planning permission and to the existing weight limit which would mean that all current traffic and construction traffic would have to travel through Llandough and given these implications asked if the Cabinet Member would ensure that upgrading the bridge was treated as a priority.

The Cabinet Member referred to Leckwith Bridge and viaduct having a current weight limit of 7.5 tonnes which had been imposed to safeguard the condition of the structure following recommendations in a previous structural inspection and assessments by consultants many years ago to manage this weight limit as effectively as possible. The Council was liaising with the police on enforcement of the weight limit over the bridge structure which they had sole power to deal with and have recently identified necessary improvements to the signage and this work was ongoing.

(xxiii) **Question from Councillor G.D.D. Carroll**

What action is being taken to combat dog fouling across the Vale of Glamorgan?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services

Dog fouling is an activity that the Council Enforcement Officers can enforce under the Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). This PSPO came in to force in March 2021 and lasts until March 2024. Those found not to be picking up, after a dog over which they have control, are in breach of the PSPO and are therefore committing a criminal offence.

The current PSPO is location-specific, rather than referring to any land to which the public have access. Consequently, at this time while we can only issue fixed penalty

No.

notices in those areas listed in the PSPO schedule, my Enforcement Team regularly undertake patrols of those areas where the PSPO is not in force on an education basis.

Supplemental

Councillor Carroll understood that a Vale wide PSPO was currently under consideration and asked the Cabinet Member to provide an update on when this would come into force to ensure that enforcement action could be taken in all areas, including Lewis Road in Llandough, which had become a hotspot in recent weeks.

The Cabinet Member indicated that he would be happy to go to any area, including Lewis Road. He reminded Councillor Carroll and other Members of the annual operation called Operation Snoopy, which began in 2021 and will start again on 8th December, 2022. This operation specifically targeted those locations for which intelligence had been received on regular offending and is enforced using a mixture of uniformed and plain-clothed enforcement officers. Those found to be in breach of the PSPO would be issued with an on the spot £100 fixed penalty notice. In other areas, it would be for enforcement officers to educate and encourage people to comply.

(xxiv) **Question from Councillor C.A. Cave**

In 2018 the Council reported that the current recycling centre in Llandow is: "outdated, not user friendly, has limited capacity and ongoing issues with the access road". Access is virtually impossible in a normal family car.

Could the Cabinet Member responsible for Neighbourhood Services tell us why nothing has changed?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services

There is an ongoing search for land to enable the relocation of the existing Household Waste Recycling Centre at Llandow. Unfortunately at this time there are no viable land options available for purchase or lease, that meet the requirements of the Environmental Permitting and Planning Regulations, despite Officers pursuing a number of options over the past 3 years.

In the new year, the Council's Estates Section will be asked to renew the search for an alternative site, and in the interim the service intends to extend the agreement on the existing site for a further 2 years.

Supplemental

Councillor Cave was surprised by the Cabinet Member's response given that there had been no progress made over the previous 4 years to deliver an accessible recycling centre in the western Vale. She asked the Cabinet Member what he was going to do differently so that there was not another 5 years of Labour Cabinet failing in this regard.

No.

The Cabinet Member alluded to his comments made in his earlier reply and reiterated that the Council was endeavouring to look for alternative sites, which were proving difficult to identify. Therefore, the Council would continue to use the existing site.

(xxv) **Question from Councillor S.J. Haines**

What is the current demand from residents in need, for Council housing in the Vale and how has this need been defined?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Public Sector Housing and Tenant Engagement

There are 5,445 households currently registered on the Council's common housing waiting list, Homes 4 U. The Council's Homes 4 U scheme was point based and banded those on the waiting list based on their need into categories Gold Plus, Gold, Silver and Bronze. Housing officers would make assessments to determine need which was based on a number of factors including those in temporary accommodation, homelessness following landlord eviction, homelessness due to mortgage difficulties and child poverty.

Supplemental

Councillor Haines asked if those needs were passed onto officers working on the LDP, planning officers and onto the Planning Committee to aid them in making their decisions.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that this was indeed the case.

(xxvi) **Question from Councillor S.J. Haines**

When will the second element of the feasibility study for St. Athan train station be conducted?

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places

There are currently no plans to undertake feasibility studies of the need for a new train station in St. Athan.

Supplemental

Councillor Haines alluded to the fact that this would be the second tranche of the feasibility study that would not be conducted and enquired if the Cabinet Member had any public transport plans to offset the increase in traffic due to Bro Tathan developments and the Aberthaw energy site.

No.

The Cabinet Member was unable to confirm. She indicated that she would be happy to meet with the Member and the other local Ward Member to discuss the matter. If Councillor Haines considered this would be of use, she asked him to contact her by email to arrange a meeting.

(xxvii) **Question from Councillor S.J. Haines**

What action is the Authority taking to tackle damp and mould in its Council housing stock?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services

The Council has procedures in place to investigate and resolve damp and mould in its Council properties. All damp and mould concerns raised by tenants result in an inspection in the first instance and works initiated in line with an appropriate response; this can range from tenant advice, treatment of the mould, installation, or replacement of extraction equipment, to engagement of specialists for advice and more specialist works.

Supplemental

Councillor Haines, referring to his supplementary question being raised by a resident who had concerns, enquired if there was no correlation between the recent increase in mould at the resident's property and the cladding installed at the property in St. Athan.

The Cabinet Member indicated that he would ask officers to investigate and he would reply in writing.

(xxviii) **Question from Councillor N.J. Wood**

Will the Leader please confirm the total cost to date of the rollout of the Oracle Cloud ICT service?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

The current cost to date to the roll out is as described in the revenue monitoring report and 29th September Cabinet report approximately £3.9m.

Supplemental

Councillor Wood, referring to the significant overspend, enquired if the Leader had any plans to conduct a review on completion of the project to identify lessons that could be learnt to inform future IT projects.

No.

The Leader confirmed that a report had already been requested by Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee on lessons learned, which would be presented in due course.

(xxix) **Question from Councillor M.J. Hooper**

At Full Council on the 26th September 2022, I asked a question regarding the Council's proposed solution(s) to force the consortium of developers (and their agents) on the Waterfront in Barry to fulfil their obligations with regard to road and pavement infrastructure such that they can be adopted by the Council and the provision of public open spaces as detailed in the planning permission.

Can an update be provided?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

I am aware Councillor Hooper has been in contact with the Planning Enforcement Team regarding the provision of open space in the development and that he was provided with an update on 21st November regarding the ongoing enforcement case relating to the incomplete public open space areas at Barry Waterfront.

As advised at that time, the Council has been pursuing taking legal action against the Consortium, to ensure they focus their attention on implementing the incomplete areas of open space. The Council had taken legal action previously and it had to choose when to do it. However, Counsel has advised that the dispute resolution clause in the legal agreement should be exhausted, before taking formal legal action. There has been no further update in the intervening two weeks since you last had an update.

The Council's legal team are still liaising with Counsel, to establish the best way to try and resolve the dispute, in accordance with the resolution clause.

(xxx) **Question from Councillor M.J. Hooper**

At the Regional Cabinet Meeting for the Cardiff City Region on the 28th November a paper was tabled outlining CCR's proposed engagement in MIPIM 2023. This event is considered (by its organisers) to be the world's leading property conference. It is held over 4 days in Cannes, France in Spring 2023.

Could the Leader explain how, in the midst of a cost of living crisis, it is appropriate for CCR to be in attendance?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

Clearly, in instances such as this a balance needs to be struck between promoting the region and the need to be prudent when spending public money. There should

No.

be clear objectives set for activity and I can assure Councillor Hooper that this was debated recently when the region's attendance at MIPIM was discussed during the Capital Region Cabinet.

We need to promote the region internationally to ensure investment in good quality jobs for the benefit of our residents and communities. The region's attendance at MIPIN is vital in promoting the economic opportunities that exist across the Vale and the wider region. We do need to promote our region internationally to ensure investment in good quality jobs for the benefit of our residents and communities. The region's attendance at MIPIN is vital in promoting the economic opportunities that exist across the Vale and the wider region, however, that said we will not be attending either at officer or Member level.

Supplemental

Councillor Hooper enquired if that meant that the Council would not be sending officers.

The Leader confirmed that the Council will not be attending.

(xxxix) **Question from Councillor M.J. Hooper**

Community Wealth Building (CWB) is increasingly being adopted by Councils across the U.K. as an antidote to extractive corporate practices. The 'Preston Model' is considered the exemplar, where public institutions and other public infrastructure owners are combining their economic muscle for the longer-term benefit of local residents, thereby trying to avoid wealth extraction from under their feet.

What is the Council's position on developing a Community Wealth Building approach to economic development?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Performance

Community Wealth Building is one model but as an English city council its remit differs from ours. For example, I understand that they do not have responsibility for either education or social care which account for three quarters of our budget.

Since 2012 the Council has adopted a proactive approach to developing the local economy and communities. We call it Whole Town Regeneration which is holistic and sustainable, and means people and place are the foundation of work that spans Cabinet portfolios. It includes housing and education as much as economic development and planning.

We work with partners to develop and deliver schemes and use procurement with regard to large projects to deliver award winning community benefits outcomes. But we want to do much more, a revised Procurement Policy and Strategy is coming to Cabinet early in the new year.

No.

(xxxii) **Question from Councillor M.J. Hooper**

The U.K. Government established the 'Kickstart' scheme to help 16-24 year olds, in receipt of Universal Credit, to get a six-month, paid, work placement. The costs of the scheme were fully funded and each job created resulted in a one-off payment of £1,500 to the employer. The scheme was a part of the U.K. Government Covid-19 response.

The jobs had to be new jobs and over 25 hours per week. The funding covered the costs of the national minimum wage and associated employer costs. The guidance from U.K. Government states:

“For each job you must help the young person become more employable. This could include:

- looking for long-term work, including career advice and setting goals
- support with curriculum vitae (CV) and interview preparations
- developing their skills in the workplace.”

The scheme has now closed.

Could the Leader please confirm:

- How many kickstart placements were created by the Council?
- How many of those placements were taken up?
- Of those roles that have come to the end of the six months, how many of these placement holders have found a role a) in the Vale of Glamorgan, or b) elsewhere?
- Is the Council providing any post-scheme, follow-up support to these individuals, and if so what is it?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

- How many kickstart placements were created by the Council?
 - 97 vacancies created
- How many of those placements were taken up?
 - 59 positions filled
- Of those roles that have come to the end of the six months, how many of these placement holders have found a role...
 - In the Vale of Glamorgan:
 - We have 5 still employed by Vale, 3 as apprentices, but some others have since stayed but employed through agency contracts, this is difficult to track and monitor.

No.

- Elsewhere?
 - We haven't been able to keep data from those that have left and the roles they have moved to.
- Is the Council providing any post-scheme, follow-up support to these individuals, and if so what is it?
 - Whilst still employed by the Council, as either establishment staff or agency, they will have support and development available to all staff.
 - We unfortunately don't have the resource to be able to provide extended support to individuals that have left our employment, but we would highlight the excellent work of the Adult Learning team who provided support.

(xxxiii) **Question from Councillor M.J. Hooper**

On Friday 25th November, at Newport Crown Court, former Vale Councillor, and Cabinet Member, Tony Hampton was found guilty of 12 counts of indecent assault. He has been remanded in custody with sentencing due on the 19th December 2022.

Serving as a Councillor is a position of trust in a community. When a Councillor is chosen by their peers to hold higher office, that trust is unweighted by their support.

Mr. Hampton served as a Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning and was also the Council's choice for the WJEC Board (a Board he also chaired for some time). His peers arguably enhanced his reputation as someone to be trusted.

The various Saville enquiries showed us that predatory sexual offenders are oftentimes protected by institutions and those who work in said institutions. The Dame Janet Smith report for the BBC was particularly enlightening. It found evidence that the culture of the institution stopped earlier reporting of the individual due to their enhanced position of power, and apparent invulnerability. This was despite there being multiple instances where individuals were aware, or had concerns about their behaviour.

Can this Council provide assurance that this institution, specifically via officers (those who remain in post and those who may have left) and via Councillors (again those who may still be in post, and those who aren't), did not knowingly protect Hampton, or, as crucially, knowingly ignore concerns about his suitability for the offices he served? Furthermore, can the Council be sure that the positions Hampton was promoted to, did not put others at risk of his predatory behaviour?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

I am extremely disappointed at this question. Even as a new Member, Councillor Hooper should be aware of how candidates are selected to stand and how political appointments are made. I am not the Leader of the Conservative Group and never have been. Perhaps the question should be best directed to the Leader of that

No.

Group or former Leaders of that Group, given that it is they that would have established their own Cabinets, memberships of any Committees and outside representation.

That said, if anyone has any specific concerns around the issues you raise, they can do so by contacting me, the Chief Executive or the Council's Monitoring Officer.

Supplemental

Councillor Hooper, acknowledging the sensitive nature of the matter, referred to the outcome of the Saville Inquiry and asked if the Council, as an institution, protected former Councillor Hampton and asked the Leader if she was prepared to undertake an Inquiry.

The Leader viewed the question as a difficult one for a woman to answer particularly when on two previous occasions she had reported inappropriate behaviour by men. Both occasions she had reported it confidentially, however, she was subsequently castigated in the local media. She felt passionately about such cases. She reminded Councillor Hooper in this country all were presumed innocent until proven guilty.

She was aware that as soon as charges were made, the then Leader of the Council suspended Councillor Hampton from the Vale of Glamorgan Conservative Group. She was not aware of any allegations being made before that, but reminded Members that if they ever come across any suggestions of wrongdoing that under the Code of Conduct, it was their responsibility to report that.

The Monitoring Officer of the Council wrote formally to the Ombudsman on the matter and the Council issued a press statement in the name of the Monitoring Officer. The then Leader referred the matter to the Conservative Party and advised his entire Group and also informed other Group Leaders of the position and action taken. The Clerk of Barry Town Council was also advised.

Referring to one of the processes that she wished to bring in for a long time and had since successfully introduced shortly before the last elections was for all Councillors to have DBS checks carried out and that any Councillor in any position of seniority to have an enhanced DBS check. To her knowledge, all but 6 Councillors had either completed or were in the final stages of completing DBS checks. She hoped that the remaining 6 would undertake the process very quickly.

She invited Councillor Hooper to write to the Monitoring Officer laying out in detail his reasons for why he considered an Inquiry was necessary. As she understood it, none of the cases were linked to the Council. Whilst she welcomed everybody being brought to book for wrongdoing, she did not think that there was anything to be gained for this Council or for the victims of ex Councillor Hampton by holding an Inquiry.

No.

(xxxiv) **Question from Councillor I.A.N. Perry**

The Vale Council has a statutory duty to make Council documents accessible. As a Community Councillor, I have attended various workshops at the Civic Offices where I've raised the accessibility of documents and followed this up by email.

The very basics of making a document accessible are not being done at the Vale Council. For example, the Self-Assessment document is missing a document title, alternative descriptions, bounding boxes, metadata, etc. Other documents, including the Project 0 Challenge Plan, have the same accessibility failings.

I have raised the accessibility of documents at several workshops and followed up in an email in 2021.

When will the Vale Council make effort to make all PDF documents fully accessible?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has had in place Plain Language and Style Guidance for many years. This guidance is available for staff to refer to on StaffNet. The guidance covers:

- Plain Language and Style Guide
- Plain Language on the Website
- Plain Language Dictionary
- Guide to Punctuation
- Style Guide
- Grammar Guide
- Avoid Latin
- Avoiding Saying the Same Thing Twice
- Easy to See Publications
- Words that Often Cause Confusion.

This guidance can be used in all types of documents.

Earlier this year we communicated information about creating Accessible documents (valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) to those staff who create web content. This information has been promoted to our network of CMS editors via the monthly web editor bulletin that is sent to staff.

The Communications Team are now reviewing documents that come through to be approved for publication as part of ensuring more consistency and accessibility.

I would like to thank Councillor Perry for raising this important issue and I can assure you that priority is being given in this area, particularly for significant corporate documents.

No.

Supplemental

Councillor Perry asked the Leader if she would look again at PDF accessibility and provide training to officers who publish documents for the public to read and that they are fully accessible for screen readers.

The Leader indicated that she would ask officers from the Council's Communications Team to get in touch with him to discuss the matter.

(xxxv) Question from Councillor I.A.N. Perry

It is estimated that in Wales there are about 27,000 empty dwellings with 7,498 households in temporary accommodation. How many much-needed dwellings does the Vale of Glamorgan Council own that have been unoccupied for at least 1-month, 3-months; 6-months; 3-years and when did the Council owned dwelling that's been vacant longest last have a tenant occupying it?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Public Sector Housing and Tenant Engagement

Empty properties vacant for at least 1 month: 9
At least three months: 1
At least 6 months: 11
At least 3 years: 4

Longest vacant property has been empty since 19th April 2015.

Supplemental

Referring to the number of properties being vacant for longer than six months, Councillor Perry asked if that this was due to financial restraints impacting on maintenance budgets.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the long term vacant properties were empty for a range of reasons the majority of which require extensive costly structural repairs and technical appraisal. Some projects were delayed due to the impacts of the pandemic and a smaller number had previously been subject to viability appraisal. The majority have required retendering because of those delays and due to the issues of rising costs and contractors unable to hold prices. This will result in us having to retender and evaluate the works and the budget available. Given the current housing crisis a small number of properties that may have been subject to potential disposal because of cost constraints have now been redesigned to increase the amount of available housing. The one property requires significant work.

(xxxvi) Question from Councillor I.A.N. Perry

Given the housing shortage, what will be done to ensure maximum occupancy of Council owned properties in 2023 and onwards?

No.

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Public Sector Housing and Tenant Engagement

The current average turnaround time for standard voids is 22 calendar days which is quicker than most comparable social landlords in Wales. In terms of occupancy the current number of voids total 25 which equates to an occupancy rate of 99.4%.

The Council has no difficulty to let dwellings and endeavours to return properties for letting at the earliest opportunity.

Supplemental

Councillor Perry enquired as to what proportion were moving to other Vale of Glamorgan Council owned properties?

The Cabinet Member, not having this information to hand indicated that she would provide a written reply to Councillor Perry.

(xxxvii) **Question from Councillor I.A.N. Perry**

Tackling road noise and improving soundscapes contributes to achieving all seven of the well-being goals specified in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Road noise impacts the wellbeing and health of people and wildlife. Many studies have found a clear correlation between the level of road noise exposed to at home and serious illnesses as well as children's development – particularly of their memory and attentiveness.

In 2012, the Welsh Government identified specific roads in Barry, the A48 through Bonvilston and St Nicholas and the A4050 by Wenvoe as Priority Areas for action to reduce road noise. In 2017, Cardiff Road in Dinas Powys was added to the list.

There is disappointment that the health and well-being of residents in relation to Road Noise does not appear to be considered when the Vale of Glamorgan Council is making highways related decisions, including resurfacing, the setting of speed limits and road building - and developments that increase traffic volumes.

Residents have witnessed a decade of inaction when priority action was needed. Will residents see change in 2023 and their health and well-being put at the heart of decision-making?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health

I am aware that your concerns over noise in relation to St Nicholas and Bonvilston have been considered and addressed in previous correspondence with Council Officers. I recognise the public health concerns relating to traffic and road noise nationally. I can confirm that I am aware of the Welsh Government Noise and Soundscape Action Plan (2018-2023) and whilst this document does have a legal status and the Council has due regard for the specific requirements and

No.

responsibilities within the document, it is the case that there is no explicit legal requirement on Local Authorities to take action to reduce road noise.

However, the document does make it clear that public bodies should consider noise as a factor in well-being. As such I would re-assure you that any highways resurfacing works which are deemed necessary and programmed via the Council's Highway Resurfacing three year plan will consider the use of appropriate material specification in order to minimise the potential impact of road noise on local communities.

Supplemental

Councillor Perry requested that when officers were drawing up future highway resurfacing plans that it took account and considered all road noise so that it did not adversely impact on the wellbeing of Vale residents.

The Cabinet Member suggested that Councillor Perry had already made a judgement that current plans had not already taken such matters into consideration. Officers did consider matters such as legislative changes prior to any works undertaken and he was sure that officers would have regard to any specific issues and look into these.

(xxxviii) Question from Councillor I.A.N. Perry

The Active Travel Act requires new road schemes (including road improvement schemes) to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at design stage. Local Authorities must continuously improve facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

The £26m straightening and flattening of Five Mile Lane apparently destroyed Whitton Lodge Roman Villa and failed to deliver infrastructure for Active Travel to Welsh Government standards. There was no opportunity for public scrutiny, as apparently the final drawings were not signed off until the day before the road opened – which is when I was finally sent them.

The Active Travel route between Walterston and Dyffryn (Walterston and Culverhouse Cross) was unlawfully severed. This was raised by several residents in the consultation for the new Active Travel Map. Nobody wants to accept responsibility for this action. Despite the erection of fences, the planting of hedges and the digging of ditches, people on foot, bicycle and horseback continue to take the direct route – and a resident has taken it upon themselves to sweep the isolated piece of road so that it is safe for the feet of horses.

Will the Vale Council now admit responsibility, and take action to reinstate the direct east-west route for people walking, cycling and horse riding?

No.

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places

Improvement works undertaken along the Five Mile Lane were subject to a Public Inquiry. At the Public Inquiry it was confirmed that whilst the route provided cycle infrastructure it was not required at that time to be an Active Travel route.

The lanes between Dyffryn and Waterston were not included on the Vale of Glamorgan's Integrated Network Map 2017 and are currently not identified as active travel routes on the Active Travel Network Map approved by Welsh Government in August 2022, therefore active travel funding cannot be used to make any improvements to this section.

(xxxix) Question from Councillor I.A.N. Perry

The £26m A4226 upgrade was signed off without the required Active Travel infrastructure along its length in 2019. St Nicholas with Bonvilston Community Council was disappointed that the request to protect the substandard shared footway at the northern end from errant vehicles was refused.

The benefits of providing segregated and protected Active Travel infrastructure between Weycock Cross and Sycamore Cross include enabling families with young children to choose to cycle to the Amelia Trust Farm for their day out from Barry and elsewhere in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Will the Vale of Glamorgan comply with its duties under the Active Travel and return to the Welsh Government to demand the money needed to complete a safe, comfortable, fully segregated and protected Active Travel link between Sycamore Cross and Weycock Cross to Welsh Government Design Standards?

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places

As mentioned in my response to your last question, works undertaken along the Five Mile Lane were subject to a Public Inquiry. At the Public Inquiry it was confirmed that whilst the route provided cycle infrastructure it was not required at that time to be an Active Travel route.

The A4226 (Five Mile Lane) and lanes between Dyffryn and Waterston were not included on the Vale of Glamorgan's Integrated Network Map 2017. A small section of the A4226, from Weycock Cross to the Hawking Centre, is on the current Active Travel Network Map approved by Welsh Government in August 2022. The 2019 work on the A4226 has included the provision of a shared use footway/cycleway from Weycock Cross to just past the Hawking Centre and this has passed a recent audit and therefore no improvements will be made to this section at this time.

Supplemental

Councillor Perry asked the Cabinet Member if the works undertaken in 2019 had been a missed opportunity to do further improvements to those that had been undertaken.

No.

The Cabinet Member referred Councillor Perry to her original response. The works in 2019 provided for a shared use footway/cycleway. A recent audit undertaken did not identify that any additional works were required. As a driver using the road on a regular basis, it was clear to her that section was used by the public.

(xl) **Question from Councillor I.A.N. Perry**

Every year residents are dismayed to discover that Public Rights of Way have been unlawfully ploughed/cropped. The Highway Authority has a statutory duty to ensure all public rights of way are always free from obstruction.

Many farmers and landowners ensure that the footpaths that cross their land are always free from obstruction and well maintained and their efforts are greatly appreciated.

Will the Vale Council ensure that in 2023 all farmers are aware of the legal status of footpaths and make prompt enforcement action, when necessary, so that people can enjoy access to the countryside?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Regulatory Services

The PROW team have procedures in place to enforce any infringement and the team take a proactive approach to not only acting on reports received but keep a report on previous infringements and carry out follow up site visits to ensure compliance.

Supplemental

Councillor Perry referring to the issue being recurring with it not being resolved asked the Cabinet Member how it could be made better.

The Cabinet Member suggested that if Councillor Perry had any evidence to support his assertion, that he should get in touch with her and she in turn would raise it with officers.

(xli) **Question from Councillor I.A.N. Perry**

In July 2021, the Vale Council declared both a Climate Emergency and a Nature Emergency. Recent planning decisions will see tiny/small forests that provide valuable wildlife habitat at Maes y Ffynnon, Bonvilston, and off Myrtle Close, Penarth, cleared. 375 trees will be lost at the site in Penarth – birds, and other creatures are not concerned about what grade humans have awarded trees. Since the land off Myrtle Close was taken out of agricultural production, Nature has rewilded it.

We are clearing valuable trees and undergrowth as if there is no Nature Emergency, whilst planting trees and allowing wildflowers to develop at the roadside attempting

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reverse the decline in biodiversity that we are responsible for. Though well intentioned, there is a link between bee bricks that council is intending to include in new buildings, and the spread of bee diseases.

Building new homes to tackle our housing problem appears to be given immense weight in decision-making at the Vale Council, rather than making better use of the buildings we have.

We need nations with acute housing problems far greater than our own to protect their undeveloped spaces, their rainforest, their wildlife habitat. Some examples of housing shortages in the countries we are insisting end the clearing of rainforest are:

- Peru – 2m homes
- Brazil – 7m homes
- Congo – 4m homes
- Indonesia – 7.6m homes
- Columbia – 3.8 million households, nearly 30% of all families in Colombia, do not have adequate homes (according to Columbian Ministry of Housing estimates from 2013), and 662,146 families are homeless, or 5% of the population.

In the event of the Emergency, shouldn't we be prioritising the retention of wildlife habitat, even over housing development and looking to make better use of existing buildings and only develop sites that are not being managed by Nature?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Regulatory Services

As Councillor Perry will be aware as a sitting member of Planning Committee, the climate and nature emergencies are key considerations when planning applications are assessed, and these must be balanced with all other material considerations including housing need.

In the case of the application at Myrtle Close, over 400 replacement trees are to be planted, and there are further planning conditions relating to ecological enhancements.

(xlii) Question from Councillor I.A.N. Perry

A controversial new school building is to be wedged onto the former Village Field of St Nicholas. The site is beautifully fronted by a native hedge and two mature field maple trees. It is the intention of the Vale Council, despite TPOs and Conservation Area protection, to remove both trees and the hedge to provide a paved area for parents not arriving by car to wait off the road for their children each afternoon.

Is there a reasonable reason why a waiting area cannot be provided within the existing boundary of the school, where other parents will wait with their cars, preserving the existing green frontage within the St Nicholas Conservation Area?

No.

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Regulatory Services

Being aware that Councillor Perry was present at the Planning Committee when this was discussed, he would be fully aware of this decision which sought to balance the competing material considerations as set out in the proposals for the new school and the associated planning committee report. I am happy that the scheme that was submitted and approved balanced all the relevant competing demands and will provide much needed new accommodation for the children who will attend the new school in St. Nicholas. In relation to the removal of the hedge row, it will be replaced with a mature hedgerow along the front of the school site facing towards the school lane to ensure that the visual amenity of the area is maintained. The trees being removed are being replaced throughout the site. In total four trees are being removed and 19 new trees will be planted throughout the school site which significantly exceeds the normal 2 to 1 replacement ratio. I am happy that the scheme that was submitted and approved balanced all the relevant competing demands and will provide much needed new accommodation for the children who will be attending the new school at St. Nicholas and who attend there now.

Supplemental

Councillor Perry alluding to the 20m long footway enquired what was its benefit.

The Cabinet Member indicated that the area of footway had been provided to allow parents to congregate to drop off and collect their children attending the school.

(xlili) **Question from Councillor I.A.N. Perry**

The layout of the proposed drop-off/pick up loop and parking area at St Nicholas CIW School uses space inefficiently. An alternative arrangement was suggested at the consultation stage that preserved the current green frontage and increased the amount of greenery at the front of the school, within the Conservation Area – the proposal was ignored. Given the need to reduce our use of materials and impermeable surfaces and minimising our environmental footprint, why wasn't minimising the impermeable paved area for cars prioritised?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Regulatory Services

I would refer Councillor Perry to my previous answer and reiterate that as a Member of the Planning Committee, when this matter was discussed, Councillor Perry will be fully aware that again, this decision sought to balance the competing material considerations as set out in the proposals for the new school and the associated Planning Committee report. The alternative proposal was not ignored and a comprehensive response was given as part of the pre application consultation. The car park proposed by local residents would have resulted in reduced staff parking on site and would have required additional land to be purchased to allow additional circulation area. Consequently, the revised design was not considered to be an appropriate amendment. I have to say I am happy that the scheme submitted

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balanced all the relevant competing demands and provided the new accommodation for the school at St. Nicholas.

(xliv) **Question from Councillor I.A.N. Perry**

Residents of Bonvilston have enjoyed the Village Green at the back of Maes y Ffynnon for 70 years. This is a much loved and used public space. On approaching the Vale Council to own the Village Green, St Nicholas with Bonvilston Community Council were told that the Vale Council does not undertake Community Asset Transfers, so the Community Council could not acquire the land in this way, but if the land was surplus to requirements, it would be off-loaded, and the Community Council would be able to purchase and protect it for future generations. The Community Council confirmed a desire to purchase the land from the Vale Council in writing.

There was surprise to read in the Final Report for 8 dwellings to replace much of the green space:

The 'do nothing' approach is not especially desirable. Evidence shows that the land is not needed as public open space, and if it were left undeveloped it might become unsightly over time, particularly the area where the garages used to be. Furthermore, vacant land would not have the same positive social and economic effects as the development proposal.

Residents have evidenced that the Village Green is used and Bonvilston has an under provision of Public Open Space that will not be resolved by ongoing development. The Village Green is not "vacant land". St Nicholas with Bonvilston owns and maintains the Village Green at St Nicholas; and maintains it to a higher standard than the areas that are maintained by the Vale Council.

Good reason for refusal of development for the Village Green was given when the planning application was refused in 2021 – the development is unneighbourly.

Would the Vale Council like to apologise to St Nicholas with Bonvilston Community Council for suggesting that should the Community Council own and manage the Village Green at Bonvilston, "*it might become unsightly over time*"?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Regulatory Services

Can I start by stating that the Vale of Glamorgan Council has nothing to apologise for, particularly when it is delivering much needed affordable housing in our rural villages. In addition, as Councillor Perry is fully aware, the claim of a village green on the land in question failed after the relevant public inquiry and was not relevant to the consideration of this planning application.

Supplemental

Councillor Perry asked if the Cabinet Member could attend the Community Council to explain why she believes this.

No.

The Cabinet Member was happy to accept any invitation that Councillor Perry would like to send her from the Community Council.

(xlv) **Question from Councillor I.A.N. Perry**

Trees across Europe and north American have struggled in the heat and drought of recent summers. Russia provides 20% of the world's timber. Ukraine's significant timber forests have been damaged by uncontrolled wildfires, some caused by the conflict itself, and huge amounts of timber will be needed to rebuild Ukraine once Putin's attacks end.

We need to fairly share our planet's scarce resources.

Will the Vale Council seek to reduce its use of timber, perhaps planting hedges rather than building timber fences?

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places

The Council will always strive to use the most appropriate materials for construction and fencing or enclosures when dealing with its own properties. This could be either through the use of sustainably sourced timber (FSC certified) or using hedging or other suitable materials.

(xlvi) **Question from Councillor C.E.A. Champion**

Could the Cabinet Member responsible give an update on the proposed Local Development Plan in relation to the Town Centre Framework and engagement with communities?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Regulatory Services

A Delivery Agreement containing the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) 2021 to 2036 timetable and Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) was approved by Welsh Government in May 2022.

The CIS sets out how and when various stakeholders and communities will be involved in the RLDP process. The Council is currently at the Pre-Deposit stage and the Preferred Strategy is due to be published for consultation in April / May 2023. In addition, as part of the review, the Council is currently seeking to appoint consultants to undertake a retail capacity study which will inform the emerging RLDP in due course.

The Town Centres Framework (TCF) was prepared by consultants and adopted by the Council in 2014 (minute no. C2221 refers). The aim of the TCF was to guide the future of the four town centres in the Vale of Glamorgan. This framework is now largely time expired and will be superseded by the preparation of the Barry Place

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Plan and we are due to carry our consultations with the community in the new year. The Council's intention is that Place based Plans will be developed for all the Vale Town centres in due course and that the development of these plans will involve direct engagement with communities.

Supplemental

Councillor Champion enquired if officers were aware that the Federation of Small Business had produced earlier in March a vision for Welsh towns.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that she was aware and confident that the relevant officers were also too.

513 PUBLIC QUESTIONS –

The following question was submitted and replied to as shown, in accordance with the protocol agreed by Council on 5th May, 2010.

(i) **Question from Mr. L. Mack**

Several hundred people within Bro Morgannwg serve as school governors and collectively travel thousands of miles by car on an annual basis to attend their governing board and various sub-committee meetings. With reference to its previously declared Climate and Nature emergencies and the Project Zero Challenge Plan, could the Council outline what steps it will take to encourage school governing boards to reduce their collective CO₂ emissions as well car exhaust and tyre particulate pollution by holding as many of these meetings as possible online.

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places

Thank you for your question.

New schools that are part of the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme are supported by Travel Plans to promote active travel to schools for pupils, parents and staff, including governors. A Travel Plan promotes other sustainable modes of transport where active travel is not achievable such as available public transport. A Travel Plan also promotes car sharing to reduce the number of private vehicles being used. Existing schools are encouraged to adopt a School Travel Plan in collaboration with the Council's Active Travel Officer to promote active travel in the Vale of Glamorgan and reduce private car usage.

All schools in the Vale of Glamorgan have access to IT facilities which can be used to hold governor meetings online. However, it is a matter for individual Governing Bodies to determine how they wish to conduct their meetings. The Council does however promote the use of online meetings where appropriate to reduce the need for private car travel.

Given the relevance of your question to the wider climate change agenda, it is also worth referencing the fact that all schools in the Vale of Glamorgan have been

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provided with bespoke and localised information on how to reduce energy consumption, and mechanisms to assist in changing behaviours to improve energy usage in school environments. Furthermore, the Council is promoting additional tree planting on school sites along with producing biodiverse habitat areas through wildflower planting both of which contribute to creating carbon sink areas within school sites. Schools included within Sustainable Communities for Learning programme are now developed to the net zero carbon in operation standard and the Council is working towards a whole life net zero carbon model. This includes extensive new planting as part of new school developments. All of which contribute to addressing the climate emergency in the Vale of Glamorgan.