

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 20th January, 2022.

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

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

Present: Councillor M.R. Wilson (Chair); Councillor P. Drake (Vice-Chair);
Councillors: G.D.D. Carroll, G.A. Cox, R. Crowley, V.P. Driscoll, G. John,
Dr. I.J. Johnson, S. Sivagnanam and J.W. Thomas.

Also present: Councillors L. Burnett (Cabinet Member for Education and
Regeneration), P.G. King (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and
Transport) and N. Moore (Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance
and Resources).

761 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer 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”.

762 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd December, 2021 be approved as a correct record.

763 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

764 Q2 SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORT 2021/22 (REF) –

In presenting the reference and the report, the Operational Manager for Employee Services referred to the sickness levels for short- and long-term sickness advising that these were 20% and 80% respectively. The main reasons for lost workdays included stress non work related and musculoskeletal. Councillor Carroll, in referring to the figures, queried the impact of the Omicron wave of COVID-19 on staffing levels, enquired as to whether statistics were available from other Local Authorities (LAs) that it could compare with and why the Managing Director and Resources Directorate targets had been exceeded. In response, the Operational Manager advised that like most organisations the Council was experiencing difficulties in managing the absences and self-isolation issues as a result of the pandemic, however support was being procured via agency provision. He agreed to look into

the request of comparable statistics with other LAs and would advise the Committee in due course. With regard to the figures in relation to the Managing Director and Resources Directorate he stated that as there were fewer full-time equivalents, fewer members of staff and a number of parttime staff within this Directorate this would have had an effect on the targets.

The Chair also queried as to the impact of long COVID on the Council and the impact on staff wellbeing. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development stated that long COVID to date, did not appear to have had a significant impact however, a number of wellbeing projects and initiatives had been established and were available for staff. Furthermore, a resilience webinar for staff was to be rolled out over the coming weeks which had been developed to assist staff and assess how they had been affected by the pandemic over the past two years and this could also be forwarded to Elected Members.

The Head of Service also advised that the Council had experienced staffing issues as a direct result of the Omicron variant in a number of areas for example, Environmental Services. However, the signs appeared to now show that this was stabilising.

Following consideration of the report it was

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the future Quarter 3 Sickness Absence Report include details of sickness absence comparisons with other Local Authorities.
- (2) T H A T the report be noted and Cabinet be advised of the discussions at the meeting.
- (3) T H A T the Committee's congratulations in respect of all the work undertaken during the pandemic be extended to the Head of Human Resources and all staff within the department.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.
- (2) In order for Cabinet's consideration.
- (3) To advise of the Committee's appreciation.

765 CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING MID-TERM REPORT (REF) –

The Operational Manager for Employee Services commenced by informing the Committee that the report provided a summary in respect of the activity that had been undertaken in relation to corporate arrangements for Safeguarding across the Council and to provide assurance in respect of the safeguarding activity that was taking place.

It was noted that Audit activity recommendations were reported to the Corporate Safeguarding Group and would be monitored to ensure consistent and effective implementation of the Corporate Safer Recruitment Policy.

In referring to the reference to background papers the Operational Manager advised that the most recent report since November 2020 would be recirculated to Members following the meeting.

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the report be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

766 REVENUE MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 30TH NOVEMBER 2021 (REF) –

The Interim Head of Finance / Section 151 Officer, in presenting the report, drew Members' attention to the impact of COVID-19 in respect of additional expenditure and also loss of income for the Council and to the various implications for the Service areas, in particular for Social Services which was reporting at paragraph 2.15 of the report an anticipated overspend of £1.118m.

Neighbourhood Services and Transport were currently projecting an adverse variance of £1.5m against the 2021/22 budget with Waste Management being under pressure due to increasing costs over the last few years. It was noted that to combat this upward trend in costs the recycling collection service had been changed to a source separated method of collection.

In referring to efficiency targets, Appendix 1 to the report detailed all savings targets for 2021/22 and although services were currently working on schemes to achieve the targets, it was anticipated there could be a £170k shortfall.

Following a query from Councillor Dr. Johnson regarding the possibility of any further grants being received from Welsh Government, the officer advised that it was possible the Council could receive additional grants before the year end. The Council had received some education grants, but these had been at a very low level.

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the position with regard to the Authority's 2021/22 Revenue Budget as contained within the report and the Cabinet reference be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the reference, report and discussions at the meeting.

767 CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 30TH NOVEMBER 2021 (REF) –

The report provided an update on the progress of the Capital Programme and the details of the schemes were shown at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Interim Head of Service drew attention to the Housing Improvement Programme, advising that while schemes would be delivered some may not be completed in the current financial year. A report on the next Housing Business Plan was scheduled to be reported to Cabinet in February 2022.

Councillor Dr. Johnson took the opportunity to thank the officer for providing as much detail as possible within the report relating to the Council's current position which had been requested previously by the Committee. Councillor Dr. Johnson however asked for further information in respect of the Tackling Poverty Holton Road Grant Programme and the Barry Island Eastern Shelter Roof Project, which the officer agreed to arrange to be forwarded to Members following the meeting.

With regard to increasing capital costs, it was noted that there were multiple factors including product shortages that could affect Capital works and that it was a Wales wide issue, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the progress made on the 2021/22 Capital Programme as contained within the report and the Cabinet reference be noted.

(2) T H A T the Committee's appreciation in respect of all the work undertaken be extended to the Interim Head of Finance/ Section 151 officer and all staff within the department.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the contents of the report, the reference and discussions at the meeting.

(2) To advise of the Committee's appreciation.

768 AUDIT WALES: THIRD SECTOR PARTNERSHIP WORKING – VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL (MD) –

Mr. Ian Phillips, officer from Audit Wales, commenced by advising that the Review had focused on examining whether the Council's arrangements with the Third Sector were effectively supporting the Council to achieve its strategic recovery priorities. It had been a relatively high-level review and overall, the report findings concluded that the Council's arrangements supported its current way of working with the Third Sector, but now could be strengthened to maximise opportunities to enhance the relationship to support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities.

The report identified four Proposals for Improvement:

P1 – The Council should reconsider the checklist set out in Appendix 1 of the Audit Wales report, in particular the following sections:

- Vision
- Corporate strategy
- Compact
- Understanding engagement with the Third Sector
- Designing services
- Training
- Performance review.

P2 – As part of the review of the compact, the Council should reflect how it wanted to work with the Third Sector to help deliver its strategic recovery priorities, how it could build on the positive work during the pandemic and consider how it could strengthen its application of the sustainable development principle.

P3 – The Council should consider the level of resources and investment required to achieve a more collaborative way of working with the Third Sector and reflect this in its Medium-Term Financial Plan.

P4 – The Council should consider what actions it could take to help the Third Sector adjust to a more collaborative way of working.

During the discussion in respect of the report, the Chair commented that the role of the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee, in his view, should be strengthened and that in particular the GVS Annual Report should be presented to the Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis for its consideration. Councillor Dr. Johnson echoed these comments, stating that there appeared to be limited business being considered by the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee and that it was important for the Scrutiny Committee to have a full appreciation of the work of GVS. Committee recognised that the Third Sector had also been under pressure and that capacity had been an issue and it that it was important for GVS, other organisations / representatives of the Third Sector and the Council to work more collaboratively and objectively together.

Councillor L. Burnett, Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration, with permission to speak, commented that social enterprise was something that the Council had grasped with examples of this being the Big Fresh Company and the Pavilion at Penarth Pier. Arts Central were also looking to utilise the Third Sector principles.

Councillor Sivagnanam welcomed the opportunity to consider further ways that could be established to consult and engage with organisations and communities of the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Head of Business Transformation and Policy drew attention to the Council's response as set out in the report, advising that reference to the Third Sector related to all aspects of the Third Sector, the larger organisations and smaller community

groups and the importance of a shared understanding and respect. He further stated that the proposals would also entail progression of this area of work and in particular what the relationships would need to look like. There would also be opportunities for the Committee to have an influence on the work. Work had also commenced with GVS to review the Compact between GVS and the Vale of Glamorgan Council. Councillor Dr. Johnson commented on the importance of understanding the statutory functions required, with it being acknowledged that the Task and Finish Group referred to in the report would no doubt cover such aspects.

The Chair referred to the need to be careful about the meaning and definition of the term voluntary sector in view of the number of organisations that this terminology could encompass.

The representative from Audit Wales in conclusion stated that he was reassured to hear the comments of the Committee as one of the intentions of the report had been to allow for the opportunity for such discussions to take place. It was important that the process was not overly bureaucratic, and he acknowledged that it was a long-term issue with conversations needing to be had with GVS although again recognising that other bodies that did not sit under GVS would also have to be involved.

Facilitating the conversation was considered by all to be healthy although recognising that a lot of work would need to be undertaken to achieve the aims proposed.

The Chair was keen that the Committee's comments be passed onto the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee and that GVS be requested to present their Annual Report and a presentation to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee as soon as possible, with it subsequently being

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the key findings arising from Audit Wales' review of the Council's partnership working with the Third Sector (Appendix A to the report) and the Council's response to the review and Audit Wales' proposals for improvement as set out in the report be noted.

(2) T H A T the comments of the Committee as discussed at the meeting be communicated to the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee meeting on 7th February.

(3) T H A T the Glamorgan Voluntary Services Annual report that is presented to the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee be also reported on an Annual basis to this Committee and that arrangements be made for this Committee to receive the current report together with a presentation prior to May 2022.

(4) T H A T, the report, including the comments as discussed at the meeting, be referred to the Governance and Audit Committee and thereon to Cabinet for consideration and endorsement of the proposed actions to address the proposals for improvement.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.
- (2) To advise the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee of the views of this Committee.
- (3) For Committee's consideration.
- (4) To ensure the Council responds appropriately and implements areas of improvement as identified by Audit Wales.

769 VALE OF GLAMORGAN PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD – DRAFT WELLBEING ASSESSMENT (MD) –

The report advised that the Well-being Assessment was a statutory duty placed on Public Services Boards (PSBs) by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 with the Wellbeing Assessment being presented to Committee as part of the consultation process forming the second assessment undertaken.

A Powerpoint presentation was provided to Committee to accompany the report. Members were informed that the Wellbeing Assessment needed to consider the state of economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being in an area and provide an analysis of the state of well-being for both the area as a whole and for distinct community areas. The Council had been working with PSB partners in the production of the Assessment which it was hoped would be a useful resource for organisations and the Council in the Vale. A “Lets Talk” campaign had been undertaken to obtain views and comments about life in the Vale of Glamorgan and a good response had been received with 83% either being fairly or very satisfied with the Vale of Glamorgan as a place to live. In addition to the survey, the findings of a range of engagement and consultation exercises undertaken by the Council, PSB partners and others, for example the Children's Commissioner, had informed the Wellbeing Assessment.

In addition to the consultation sources, the Wellbeing Assessment had also drawn on a range of national and local data, research and evidence and an analysis of the information had been set out in a suite of reports (available on the Council's website) which together formed the Wellbeing Assessment and told the story of the experiences of wellbeing in the Vale of Glamorgan. The Wellbeing Assessment was an ongoing process and as further evidence was received going forward this information would be included and the findings of the Assessment would provide a framework for PSB partners to develop the Wellbeing Plan. It was further noted that the Wellbeing Assessment had to be published prior to the local government elections in May 2022 and consultation needed to be undertaken with a number of statutory consultees, which included the designated Scrutiny Committee for the PSB.

The Committee was requested to consider a number of questions for example, does the Assessment contain all necessary information, did the Committee agree with the

key issues, does it reflect experiences and what should the PSB focus on in the future? Councillor J.W. Thomas commented on the importance of utilising all the data to allow the Council to make informed decisions. Councillor Dr. Johnson was keen to understand the learning from the first phase of the work and the work of the PSB over recent years. In recognising the enormity of the task, Councillor Sivagnanam suggested that concentrating on particular areas at a time would probably be more manageable as well as recognising that the Council was one of a number of partners in the process. It was also important, she further stated, to consider how success would be measured. The Chair concurred with the suggestion of concentrating on particular themes / areas and also the need to involve more and more stakeholders whilst recognising the significant amount of the work that was required.

The Strategy and Partnership Manager commented that there was collective work that was required but that each organisation also needed to look at its own contribution. The Head of Service stated that the issues around responsibility, accountability and demonstrating progress would be taken forward.

In conclusion the Chair took the opportunity to thank the officers for a very illuminating presentation with it subsequently being

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the draft Wellbeing Assessment be noted and the Public Services Board advised of the Committee's views, as discussed at the meeting, as part of the formal consultation process.
- (2) T H A T the PowerPoint presentation provided at the meeting, together with the link to the report, be circulated to all Members of the Committee and the Council for information.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.
- (2) For Members' information.