

ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting held on 14th March, 2023.

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

The recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor S.D. Perkes (Chair); Councillor J. Aviet (Vice-Chair); Councillors C.E.A. Champion, P. Drake, V.P. Driscoll, A.M. Ernest, M.J. Hooper, C. Iannucci, I.A.N. Perry and S.T. Wiliam

Also present: Councillors L. Burnett (Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources), H.C. Hamilton, C. Stallard and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health).

828 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Chair 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.”

829 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor E. Penn.

830 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 14th February, 2023 be approved as a correct record subject to it being noted that Councillor C. Iannucci was present at the meeting.

831 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

832 REVENUE MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST JANUARY 2023 (DEH) –

The purpose of the report was to advise Members of the progress relating to revenue expenditure for the period 1st April, 2022 to 31st January, 2023.

The revenue position for 2022/23 had been challenging for the Council both operationally and financially due to the ongoing implications of the cost of living crisis, inflationary pressures and the ongoing impact of Covid 19. Emerging pressures during 2022/23 related to the additional pay award settlement, general inflation particularly in areas such as school transport and cost of living and staffing pressures. Inflationary and demand pressures were being experienced across services and would need to be carefully monitored during the financial year.

An additional budget allocation of £1.5m had been made to Schools in 2022/23 as a contribution to the additional costs of the 2022/23 pay award. That had been funded from additional Council Tax Income projected to be received in 2022/23 and therefore the Base Budget had been increased to reflect the projected income.

The table below set out the projected outturn position by Directorate

Directorate	Revised Budget 2022/23 £000's	Projected Outturn 2022/23 £000's	Transfer to/(from) reserves £000's	Favourable/ Adverse Variance £000's
Learning and Skills	122,578	129,623	(7,045)	0
Social Services	80,742	80,079	663	0
Environment and Housing	48,190	50,535	(1,445)	900
Corporate Resources	2,208	5,935	(3,267)	460
Place	4,088	5,278	(1,116)	74
Policy	33,764	32,330	0	(1,434)
Use of Reserves	(996)	(996)	0	0
Total	290,574	302,784	(12,210)	0

Currently, there was a balanced overall position after a projected drawdown of £12.210m from reserves. Additional pay pressures within some Directorates were being met from an underspend in the Policy Budget and some drawdown of service reserves. However the pressure in respect of school transport would need to be mitigated as year end was approached.

An efficiency target of £500k was set for the year and services were continuing to work towards achieving their targets. There were some issues remaining relating to unachieved savings targets from previous years. However most service areas were mitigating through vacant posts in 2022/23 and had been addressed for the 2023/24 budget. Adverse variances were being projected for some services this year and the use of reserves would be required to resolve these issues in the short term.

Councillor C. Champion queried the level of interest for the repayment of loans and the level of interest that the Council was receiving from its investments, commenting that the Council could be paying off its loans from the interest it

received. The Accountant advised that within the report, Table 8 provided more detail of the Council's reserves and Table 9 more detail of its borrowing. Table 10 outlined the level of the Council's investments. In terms of borrowing, the report indicated that new loans were borrowed at average rate of 3.07% and maturing debt was repaid at an average rate of 4.91%. The Accountant stated that further information regarding interest rate payments and interest received would be sent via email.

Councillor M. Hooper queried whether there was anything unexpected that may affect the projected final budget position. In reply, the Accountant stated that they were still calculating the position for the final month, but the expectation was that the budget position for 31st March would be close to that forecasted. There could be items of unexpected expenditure, however the service area did hold financial reserves to try to mitigate against this.

Councillor A. Ernest referred to the £50k income generated by the Civil Parking Enforcement Service, and he queried the total cost for that service. In response, the Accountant advised that the £50k represented a surplus. The total amount of projected revenue was in the region of £600k, against a total projected expenditure of £550k.

Councillor I. Perry commented on the budget allocated to repair road potholes. He stated that in some areas of his Ward, there was no road surface, just a patchwork of repaired potholes which created more potholes. This was therefore a recurring problem, and so he considered it was better and financially more efficient for the Council to take preventive measures and resurface roads as opposed to patching up potholes. The Committee was advised that the Council's Highway Resurfacing and Treatment Strategy would likely be presented in the future for consideration.

There being no further comments or queries, the Committee

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the position with regard to the Authority's 2022/23 Revenue Budget be noted.
- (2) T H A T the arrangements to offset the projected overspends in 2022/23, as set out in the report, be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the content of the report to inform Committee of the projected revenue outturn for 2022/23.
- (2) To respond to emerging pay and price inflationary pressures in 2022/23.

833 CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST JANUARY 2023 (DEH) –

The Accountant presented the report which provided an update on the progress of the Capital Programme for the period 1st April, 2022 to 31st January, 2023. Details by scheme were shown in Appendix 1 attached to the report. Appendix 2 provided a summary of the position of the Capital Programme by Directorate from approval at Council on 7th March, 2022 to 31st January, 2023, including any changes requested within the report.

The report set out requested changes to the 2022/23 and future years' Capital Programme.

Capital schemes were facing continued challenges due to significant cost increases, which could necessitate scheme re-engineering or re-tendering, resulting in delays to projects. Project officers were also reporting long lead times on the delivery of materials and a shortage of skills in some areas.

The report noted the current approved programme of £88.2m but it was important to note that this was unlikely to be delivered and slippage was requested of £8m. Schemes would continue to be monitored closely as part of the regular monitoring arrangements with project managers and sponsors. Further slippage would be reported as part of the Capital Outturn report.

Councillor M. Hooper commented that the current overall spend as of 31st January, 2023 was £42.7m and the projected spend by the end of the financial year was £79.6m. He stated there seemed to be a significant amount of expenditure for the final two months of the year. In reply, the Accountant advised that a large part of the expenditure related to the Housing Revenue Account, and project officers had been asked to confirm the expected expenditure. Further to this query, the Director of Place commented that for his Directorate, the figures within the report were accurate and he stated that there was a rigorous process followed in terms of areas of slippage.

Following a query from Councillor C. Iannucci, it was agreed for an update on the work to install electronic displays at bus stops to be circulated via email.

Councillor A. Ernest queried plans for the former livestock market in Cowbridge. In reply, the Director of Place advised that a car park was now located on the site, and the capital programme was to renovate some areas and carry out maintenance work.

With regard to the layout of the report, it was suggested that only information relating to the specific remit of the Scrutiny Committee should be presented in future. In reply and with permission to speak, Councillor L. Burnett (Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources) advised that a new approach had been adopted to give each Scrutiny Committee a more overall understanding of the Council's budget position. It was also considered too time consuming and not cost effective to present individual reports for each of the five Scrutiny Committees.

Subsequently, it was

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the progress made on delivering the 2022/23 Capital Programme within the remit of the Committee be noted.
- (2) T H A T the use of Delegated Authority within the remit of the Committee, as set out in the report, be noted.
- (3) T H A T the use of Emergency Powers within the remit of the Committee, as detailed in the attached Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.
- (4) T H A T the changes to the 2022/23 and future Years' Capital Programme within the remit of the Committee, as set out in the report, be noted.

Reason for recommendations

- (1-4) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

834 ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN MONITORING REPORT: QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE 2022/23 AND PROGRESS AGAINST EXTERNAL REGULATORY RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT (DP) –

The Director of Place presented the report, the purpose of which was to present Quarter 3 (Q3) performance results for the period 1st April, 2022 to 31st December, 2022 in delivering the 2022/23 Annual Delivery Plan commitments as aligned to the Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives and to present progress to date in addressing existing recommendations and improvement proposals from external regulators.

Quarter 3 ADP Performance Monitoring

The performance report presented progress at Q3 (1st April, 2022 to 31st December, 2022) towards achieving the Annual Delivery Plan (2022/23) commitments as aligned to the Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives. All 4 Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives were attributed a Green performance status at Q3 to reflect the good progress made to date in meeting the Annual Delivery Plan commitments for 2022/23.

93% (353/380) of planned activities outlined in the Annual Delivery Plan had been attributed a Green performance reflecting the positive progress made during the quarter, 1% (3) of planned activities were attributed an Amber status and 6% (24) of planned activities were attributed a Red status. Of the 128 performance measures aligned to the Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives, data was reported for 33 measures where a performance status was applicable. 58% (19) measures were attributed a Green performance Status, 6% (2), Amber status and 36% (12),

Red status. A performance status was not applicable for 95 measures with 22 of these relating to measures establishing baseline performance for 2022/23, a further 67 relating to measures which were monitored annually and for 6 measures no update was provided.

In relation to the planned activities within the remit of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, 96% (104 out of 108) were attributed a Green performance status, and 4% (4) was attributed a Red status. Of the 6 measures reported, 83% (5) were attributed a Green performance status and 1% (17) were attributed an Amber status.

This quarter the performance exceptions had been revised to reflect the changes requested by Elected Members following a workshop in July 2022 on performance monitoring of the Annual Delivery Plan. For ease of reference, performance exceptions aligned to the Scrutiny Committee's remit now highlighted the current status of red performing actions identified in the previous quarter to show direction of travel, that was whether proposed remedial actions had been undertaken to progress these actions.

The report sought Elected Members' consideration of Q3 performance results and the proposed remedial actions to address areas of identified underperformance. Upon consideration, the Scrutiny Committee was recommended to refer their views and any recommendations to Cabinet for their consideration.

Strategic Insight Board (SIB) Insight Tracker: Progress against External Regulatory Recommendations and Proposals for Improvement

The report also outlined progress at January 2023 (Q3) against all existing external regulatory recommendations and proposals for improvement. In line with corporate performance management arrangements, consideration was given by relevant Council services to the findings contained within both local and national reports as they were published, and actions had been incorporated within the Council's SIB Insight Tracker throughout the year as appropriate. These actions were monitored by the Strategic Insight Board and reported to Scrutiny Committees, Cabinet and the Governance and Audit Committee as work to address them progressed. Progress was also monitored by Audit Wales colleagues throughout the year as part of the Annual Regulatory Plan.

At Q3, positive progress had been made in responding to regulatory improvement areas. Overall, there were currently 46 on-going actions in the Insight Tracker. 35 had been attributed a Green performance (RAG) status, 4 an Amber status and 7 a Red status. Of the 24 actions relating to local regulatory recommendations, 17 had been attributed a Green RAG status, 4 actions an Amber status and the remaining 3 actions have been attributed a Red status.

Actions attributed a Red status related to the review of Third Sector Partnership Working, which fell within the remit of the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

There were currently 22 actions in the Insight Tracker relating to national regulatory recommendations of which 18 had been attributed a Green RAG status and the remaining 4 actions, Red status. Actions attributed a Red performance status related to the reviews of Third Sector Funding and Local Government Services to Rural Areas (focusing on aspects Community Asset Transfers), which fell within the remit of the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

In addition to the 24 local actions, a further 17 actions relating to local regulatory work were now considered completed and embedded as business-as-usual practices within the relevant service areas. There were no completed actions relevant to the Committee.

In addition to the 22 national actions, a further 16 actions relating to national regulatory studies were now considered completed and were embedded as business-as-usual practices within the relevant service areas. The completed actions relevant to the Committee related to the Effectiveness of Local Planning Authorities in Wales review (4 actions).

Members were being asked to review the progress made to date in addressing the recommendations and improvement proposals made by external regulators. Upon review, Members were asked to recommend to the Governance and Audit Committee and thereafter to Cabinet, the removal of completed actions from the Insight Tracker as relevant to the remit of the Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor P. Drake asked if the Committee could receive an update on coastal erosion. It was agreed that this would be considered as part of the Committee's work programme for 2023/24.

Councillor C. Champion suggested that future reports should contain comparative data on a quarterly basis. The Director of Place agreed to take this up with the Director of Corporate Resources.

The Chair outlined her thanks and appreciation to all Directorate staff for all of their hard work.

It was

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the performance results and progress towards achieving the Annual Delivery Plan 2022/23 commitments, as aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan Wellbeing Objectives within the remit of the Committee, be noted.
- (2) T H A T the remedial actions to be taken to address areas of under-performance and to tackle the key challenges identified within the remit of the Committee be noted.
- (3) T H A T the progress made to date in addressing the recommendations and improvement proposals made by the Council's external regulators be endorsed,

and it be recommended to the Governance and Audit Committee and thereafter to Cabinet that the following completed actions from the Insight Tracker, as relevant to the remit of the Committee, be removed:

- Effectiveness of Local Planning Authorities in Wales review (4 actions).

Reasons for recommendations

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

(3) To ensure the Council implements its regulatory recommendations and improvement proposals and responds appropriately to the recommendations and proposals for improvement identified through the Audit Wales' programme of local and national Local Government Studies.

835 SERVICE LEVEL ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE TARGETS TO DELIVER THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN 2023/2024 (DP) –

The report sought Members' endorsement of the priority actions as reflected in Service Plans and proposed service performance targets for the period 2023/2024 that would deliver the Council's Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) within the remit of the Committee.

The report presented the planned service activities (as outlined in Service Plans) and associated performance targets within the remit of the Committee. These set out the specific areas of focus associated with the delivery of the Council's Annual Delivery Plan for 2023/2024 as aligned to the four Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives.

Progressing the Annual Delivery Plan would help meet statutory obligations under the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Both pieces of legislation placed specific duties on the Council in relation to reviewing and setting objectives, keeping performance under review and reporting on performance, with a focus on improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Vale citizens.

In line with statutory duties the relevance of the Well-being Objectives were continually reviewed. As a result, going forward into 2023/2024, the Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives and the associated commitments outlined in the Annual Delivery Plan 2023/2024 (contained in the background papers to this report) was assured as relevant in delivering improved outcomes for Vale of Glamorgan citizens and contributed to the national Well-being Goals.

All Scrutiny Committees considered a draft Annual Delivery Plan in December 2022 and their views alongside that of other key stakeholders had informed the final Plan, endorsed by Cabinet on 16th February, 2023 and referred on to Full Council on 6th March, 2023 for final approval.

The commitments in the Annual Delivery Plan 2023/24 were reflected in 15 Service Plans which were provided, for information in the background papers to the report. These plans showed how individual service areas would contribute to achievement and overall delivery of the four Well-being Objectives and how resources would be deployed to do so.

Scrutiny Committee Members were asked to review the contributions from services (through planned activities and proposed performance measures and associated targets) as relevant to the Committee's remit that would support achievement of the Annual Delivery Plan commitments for the period 2023/24. These were set out in Appendix A and B attached to the report.

Upon review, Members were asked to recommend to Cabinet the planned activities (as outlined in Service Plans) and associated service performance targets as relevant to the Committee's remit as the primary means against which performance for the Annual Delivery Plan 2023/24 would be monitored, measured and reported quarterly. These were set out in Appendix A and B attached to the report.

The Chair queried regeneration plans for town centres and ways to encourage people to shop locally. In reply, the Director of Place referred to the development of Place Plans for the four major town areas of the Vale of Glamorgan. Those being, Barry, Penarth, Llantwit Major and Cowbridge. Place Plans was a concept originally from Welsh Government, which had been adapted by the Council into Place Making Plans. The Plans would allow the Council to bid for Welsh Government funding for projects that were deemed suitable, and they also allowed the Council to plan more holistically around what was needed to help town centres grow. For example, by improving the connectivity between Holton Road and the Waterfront to other areas of Barry such as High Street. Moving forward for next year, one of the first actions for the Council would be to carry out a public consultation on the Barry Place Making Plan to gather the views of businesses, communities, other groups and the third sector to ensure that the Council plans were joined up to their agendas and objectives. Work would also commence on the three other town centres in the Vale.

Having considered the report, it was

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the planned service activities for 2023/24, as contained in the Service Plans and as they relate to the remit of the Committee (attached at Appendix A to the report), be noted and endorsed.
- (2) T H A T the proposed measures and service performance targets for 2023/2024, relating to the remit of the Committee (attached at Appendix B to the report), be noted and endorsed.

Reason for recommendations

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

836 3RD QUARTER SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION TRACKING AND
UPDATED WORK PROGRAMME SCHEDULE 2022/2023 (DCR) –

The report advised Members of progress in relation to the Scrutiny Committee's historical recommendations and the updated Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2022/23.

The 2022-23 Uncompleted Recommendation Tracking was attached at Appendix A to the report, 2019-20 Uncompleted Recommendation Tracking was attached at Appendix B, and the Updated Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2022/23 was attached at Appendix C.

Having considered the contents of the report, it was

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the status of the actions listed in Appendices A and B to the report be agreed.

(2) T H A T the Committee's updated Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2022/23 attached at Appendix C to the report be approved and uploaded to the Council's website.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) To maintain effective tracking of the Committee's recommendations.

(2) For public information.

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