

No.

HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 7th December 2021.

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

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

Present: Councillor S.J. Griffiths (Chair); Councillors J. Aviet, J.E. Charles, T.H. Jarvie, R. Nugent-Finn and J.W. Thomas.

Also present: Councillors N. Moore (Leader), B.T. Gray (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health) G. John and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Legal, Regulatory and Planning Services).

622 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.”

The Chair also passed on the Committee’s sincere condolences to the Vice-Chair of the Committee, Councillor N.C. Thomas.

With the Chair’s permission, the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer reminded Committee Members of the Council’s ‘Cabinet Decision Call-In’ and ‘Request for Consideration at a Scrutiny Committee’ procedures and that further advice and guidance was available to Members for both procedures via the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Team.

623 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillors N.C. Thomas (Vice-Chair) and O. Griffiths.

624 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 9th November, 2021 be approved as a correct record.

625 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations were received.

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626 CARDIFF AND VALE ADVOCACY STRATEGY (REF) –

The Operational Manager for Locality within Adult Services, with support from the Advocacy Manager for the Dewis Centre for Independent Living, presented the reference from Cabinet of 8th November, 2021 that had been referred to Committee for information.

Through a series of PowerPoint slides entitled Cardiff and Vale Advocacy Strategy, Officers apprised the Committee on the following points:

- The definition of Advocacy,
- Relevant Welsh Government legislation,
- The aims of the Cardiff and Vale Advocacy Steering Group,
- The structure for Advocacy Services available in the region, and
- The process, collaboration and key principles for forming the Cardiff and Vale Advocacy Strategy.

In conclusion, Officers advised that collaborative work would continue to produce a commissioning model and service specifications that provided flexible and accessible advocacy for all as well as co-produce a communication strategy to raise awareness and widen the reach of advocacy in both the lead up and implementation of the new commissioning arrangements. A collaborative model for monitoring and reviewing advocacy services would also be developed in consultation with individuals using the advocacy service.

Following the Officers' presentation, Members praised the highly valuable and people-first service and recognised that the service was essential to reduce stress, strain and worry at a time when most needed.

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Cabinet reference, report and appended Cardiff and Vale Strategy for Adult Advocacy Services 2021-2026 be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report and relevant Strategy.

627 CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING MID-YEAR REPORT (REF) –

The biannual reference from Cabinet, of 22nd November, 2021, was presented by the Operational Manager for Safeguarding and Service Outcomes. The purpose of which was to provide assurances and an overview of the Council's corporate responsibility to ensure that there were effective arrangements in place for safeguarding children and adults who required specific Council services.

With no comment or questions, the Scrutiny Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Corporate Safeguarding Mid-term Report be noted.

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Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report.

628 DRAFT VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN 2022-23 (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 22nd November, 2021 was presented to Committee by the Director of Social Services who advised that the Cabinet report had been referred to Committee as part of the programme of consultation requesting any comments to be shared with the Head of Policy and Business Transformation, to inform revisions to the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP), as per the timetable for consultation set out in paragraph 2.15 of the Cabinet report.

The current ADP ended in March 2022 and therefore a new Plan needed to be approved and published setting out the Council's priorities for the next year. The Council's Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives and associated commitments for 2022/2023, as outlined in the draft ADP, would be reflected in Service Plans for 2022-2023. Work had commenced to develop the service plans which would be presented to the relevant Scrutiny Committees in the New Year together with proposed service improvement targets for 2022-23.

With no comment or questions, the Scrutiny Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Cabinet reference, report and appended Annual Delivery Plan 2022-2023 Consultation Draft be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report.

629 REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL, 2021 TO 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2021 AND REVISED BUDGET FOR 2021/22 (DSS) –

In presenting the report, the Operational Manager for Accountancy apprised the Committee on the following points:

- Appendix 1 to the report set out the amended budget for 2021/22 relating to the Committee, together with the necessary adjustments to be made. The adjustments reflected charges for the use of capital assets, changes to inter-service recharges and transfers and pensions adjustments to comply with accounting standards. They had no overall effect on the net budget of the Committee and were accounting adjustments largely outside the control of services so they did not alter the variance.
- In order to reflect more accurately the actual budget position of the Resource Management and Safeguarding Service, going forward the budget recharge to other parts of the service would not take place and the budget would now show the actual cost of the service.

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- It was anticipated that Social Services could require a potential unplanned transfer from reserves at year end of £1.101m. This was mostly due to an anticipated adverse variance of around £601k for the Children and Young People Services Budget. There still remained considerable pressure on the children's placements budget given the complexities of the children currently being supported and the high-cost placements some of the said children required to meet their needs. This was further impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the significantly higher demand for placements and the scarcity of options available.
- Welsh Government (WG) were providing additional funding via the Social Care Recovery Fund and proposals for its use had been submitted to WG. £947k had been allocated to Children's Services and this would therefore mitigate the pressures already detailed. As part of the September Hardship grant claim to WG, £139k was included which related to the additional costs for agency Social Workers as a result of the increased pressure due to COVID-19 for the period April to September 2021. This claim had been accepted by WG and would therefore also mitigate the position.

With no comment or questions, the Scrutiny Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the position with regard to the 2021/22 revenue and capital budgets be noted.

(2) T H A T the revised budget for 2021/22 be noted.

Reason for recommendations

(1&2) Having regard to the contents of the report related to the projected revenue outturn as well as the revised budget for 2021/22.

630 INITIAL REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2022/23 (DSS) –

The Operational Manager for Accountancy advised that the Council was required under statute to fix the level of Council Tax for 2022/23 by 11th March, 2022 and in order to do so, would have to agree a balanced revenue budget by that date.

The Council's provisional settlement had not yet been announced by Welsh Government and was expected this year on 21st December, 2021 with the final settlement due to be published on 1st March, 2022. Even though this crucial information had not yet been received, the budget setting and consultation process had to commence in order to meet statutory deadlines.

The Officer drew Members' attention to the table of shortfalls in funding, at paragraph 2.8 of the report, that were substantially higher than had been identified in previous years. They advised that due to the considerable uncertainty and the financial pressures on government, the financial plan had been based on three different scenarios with regards to funding from Welsh Government for the coming

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three financial years – a cash neutral settlement, a 1% reduction each year for the period of the Plan and a 1% increase each year. The Officer added that it could be the case that grant funding was provided going forward targeting specific service areas or initiatives. As the Council had seen positive settlements in the past year that in part reflected the increasing population of the County, a fourth scenario had been included that considered a scenario where the settlement for 2022/23 was at the same level as the 2021/22 settlement (4.42%).

Appendix 1 to the report set out the cost pressures within the remit of the Committee to the total of £10.5m. For context, the Officer added that the total amount of cost pressures across the whole of the Council was £22.5m.

With the Committee's permission, Councillor John then addressed the Committee from the point of view of personal experience to stress the importance of ensuring financial support for domiciliary care and carer recruitment going forward. Councillor J.W. Thomas respectfully acknowledged Councillor John's comments however, noted that the list of cost pressures before Committee was a list of 'needs' rather than 'wants' and therefore it was an impossible task to choose between. Therefore, the Council needed to support every cost pressure to the best of its ability, and he moved that a recommendation as such be passed to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee as per the Officer's recommendation in the covering report. This was subsequently seconded by Councillor Charles.

Councillor Gray then provided his reassurances on his continued efforts to stress the need for central funding to help focus financial support on social care with Welsh Government and acknowledged that care struggles for families across the Vale of Glamorgan were not just solely impacted by the availability of funding. The Cabinet had no desire to hold on to reserves however, it also recognised that the use of reserves was not the long-term solution.

In conclusion, the Leader of the Council stated that the difficult financial position was a reality check for the Council and that there was no way for the Council to fund vital services going forward without a future increase in Council Tax rates. In recent years, Revenue for social care had dropped by 15% but the demand on social care services had increased.

With no further comment or questions, the Scrutiny Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the Initial Revenue Budget Proposals for 2022/23 be noted.
- (2) T H A T a recommendation be passed to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee that all Cost Pressures, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be financially supported.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the report.

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(2) In order that, as the lead Scrutiny Committee, the Corporate Performance and Resources Committee is aware of the Committee's view that all cost pressure bids, as set out in the report, are of equal and vital importance and therefore must be supported to the best of the Council's ability going forward.

631 INITIAL CAPITAL REVENUE PROPOSALS 2022/23 TO 2026/27 (DSS) –

The Operational Manager for Accountancy referred to her earlier comments regarding the Council's unconfirmed provisional settlement as presented in the previous agenda item and therefore confirmed that Capital bids were currently unable to be approved.

Appendix 1 to the report set out previously approved Capital bids for the Committee and Appendix 2 set out the Capital bids for 2022/23 to the total of £3m; with the majority of net costs falling under Leisure Services rather than Social Services.

Following the Officer's presentation, Councillor Gray advised that other capital funds could become available during the course of the next financial year however, it was impossible to predict the extent or availability of these in the current budget planning process. The Council would continue to enhance the social care portfolio where it could and would take every opportunity to acquire funds to be used on the current list of bids.

With no further comment or questions, Councillor J.W. Thomas moved that a recommendation be passed to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee that all proposed Capital Bids for 2022/23, as set out in the report, as well as the already established schemes in Appendix 1 to the report, were of equal and vital importance and therefore must be supported to the best of the Council's ability going forward. This would be in line with the earlier recommendation raised regarding revenue cost pressures and was subsequently seconded by the Chair.

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the Initial Capital Programme Proposals for 2022/23 to 2026/27 be noted.

(2) T H A T a recommendation be passed to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee that all Capital Bids for 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be financially supported.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the contents of the report.

(2) In order that, as the lead Scrutiny Committee, the Corporate Performance and Resources Committee is aware of the Committee's view that all proposed Capital Bids for 2022/23, as set out in the report (as well as the already established schemes in Appendix 1 to the report) are of equal and vital importance and therefore

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must be supported to the best of the Council's ability going forward.

632 ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN MONITORING REPORT: QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE 2021/22 (DSS) –

The performance report presented the Council's progress at Quarter 2 (1st April to 30th September, 2021) towards achieving its Annual Delivery Plan (2021/22) commitments as aligned to its Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives.

The Director of Social Services advised that the Council had made positive progress in delivering its in-year commitments in relation to its Annual Delivery Plan (2021/22) and this performance had contributed to an overall Green status for the Plan at Quarter 2 (Q2).

The Director also drew Members' attention to page 38 (Appendix B, Page 6) of the papers which provided an update on Covid-19 recovery efforts and was pleased to report obvious and positive progress.

With no comment or questions, the Scrutiny Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the performance results and progress towards achieving the Annual Delivery Plan 2021/22 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 underperformance and to tackle the key challenges identified within the remit of the Committee be noted.

(3) T H A T the progress being made through the Council's recovery strategy and Directorate Recovery plans in response to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the contents of the report regarding the progress being made towards achieving the Council's commitments in the Annual Delivery Plan 2021/22 aimed at making a positive difference to the lives of Vale of Glamorgan citizens.

(2) Having regard to the contents of the report to ensure the Council is effectively assessing its performance in line with the requirement to meet its performance requirements as outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and reflects the requirement of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in that the Council maximises its contribution to achieving the well-being goals for Wales.

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(3) Having regard to the contents of the report regarding the recovery issues impacting on the work of the Council within the remit of the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee.