

HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

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

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

Present: Councillor J.E. Charles (Chair), Councillor N.C. Thomas (Vice-Chair); Councillors G.M. Ball, C.A. Cave, A.M. Collins, C.M. Cowpe, R. Fisher, S. Lloyd-Selby, J. Lynch-Wilson, J.M. Norman, H.M. Payne and C. Stallard.

Also present: Councillors L. Burnett (Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources), G. John (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Wellbeing) and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health).

105 ANNOUNCEMENT –

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

106 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 7th June, 2022 be approved as a correct record.

107 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Councillor H.M. Payne	Agenda Item No. 7 – Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2021-22 – Challenge Version	Personal Interest – Councillor Payne, in her professional capacity outside of the Council, managed services for Newlands Tenancy Support Services, and advised if there were discussions on the subject during the meeting she would vacate the room.
Councillor J. Lynch-Wilson	Agenda Item No.6 - Capital Monitoring for the Period 1st April to 31st May 2022.	Personal Interest – Councillor Lynch-Wilson, in her professional capacity outside of the Council,

		was employed in a private care home within the Vale of Glamorgan area and advised she would be mindful of any possible interest throughout the course of the meeting.
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108 ANNUAL CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING REPORT: 2021/22 (REF) –

The Operational Manager for Safeguarding & Service Outcomes presented the biannual reference from Cabinet raised at the 9th June, 2022 Cabinet Meeting.

The Council had a corporate responsibility to ensure that there were effective arrangements in place for safeguarding children and adults who required specific Council services. Therefore, the Annual Report for 2021/22 provided an overview of the Corporate Safeguarding activities that had taken place across the Local Authority since the mid-year report was presented to the Committee.

Following the Officer's presentation, and subsequent questions from the Committee, Officers further advised:

- In relation to adults who had been assessed as requiring care but not yet in receipt, the following safeguarding steps were undertaken:
 - A risk rating assigned to the individual during the initial assessment and the safeguarding team notified if necessary,
 - Regular contact maintained with the individual to monitor circumstances and ensure that contact details were kept up to date,
 - Formal 'Wellbeing-Checks' undertaken with the individual, and
 - Weekly meetings held amongst staff to ensure the sharing of information regarding caseloads.
- The Adult Safeguarding Team had received 816 Safeguarding reports between April 2021 – March 2022 and each case had been assigned an outcome that was internally recorded. The figure of 816 related to the number of individual adults at risk and it was acknowledged that a more in-depth statistical breakdown on the overarching figure could be included in future versions of the report to give a clearer understanding of the current context for the service.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the content of the Cabinet reference and appended Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report 2021/22 to Cabinet be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the covering and appended report on work that had been undertaken to improve corporate arrangements for safeguarding and protecting

children and adults.

109 REVENUE MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST MAY 2022 (DSS) –

The Operational Manager for Accountancy advised that the revenue position for 2022/23 would continue to be challenging for the Council both operationally and financially due to the ongoing implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Emerging pressures during 2022/23 related to energy standing charges, general inflation particularly in areas such as school transport and cost of living and staffing pressures were being experienced across services and would need to be carefully monitored during the financial year.

In relation to finances within the remit of the Committee, adverse variances were being projected for Social Services of £220k and Leisure Services £500k in 2022/23 and it was proposed that these be offset by contributions from reserves.

In the context of the gap between the cost pressures awarded to Social Services and the severity of the cost pressures highlighted by the service and the need to create ongoing capacity to respond to an increased level of need, it was proposed that the remaining pressures be funded through a budget programme that utilised the balances accumulated in the Social Services Reserves. A virement reflecting the planned use of Social Services reserves in 2022/23 was set out in paragraph 2.16 of the report.

With no comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the position with regard to the Authority's 2022/23 Revenue Budget, within the remit of the Committee, be noted.
- (2) T H A T the virements required in the Social Services Directorate be noted.

Reason for recommendations

(1&2) Having regard to the content of the report and the projected revenue outturn for 2022/23 and to re-align the budgets.

110 CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST MAY 2022 (DSS) –

The report provided an update on the progress of the Capital Programme for the period 1st April to 31st May, 2022. Details by scheme were set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

The Operational Manager for Accountancy advised that the report set out any requested changes to the 2022/23 and future years' Capital Programme.

With no comments or questions from the Committee, the Vice-Chair thanked officers for producing much clearer and thorough versions of both finance reports on the agenda and the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the progress made on delivering the 2022/23 Capital Programme for the schemes in the remit of the Committee be noted.
- (2) T H A T the use of Delegated Authority in relation to projects set out at Recommendation (2) of the report be noted.
- (3) T H A T the use of Emergency Powers as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be noted.
- (4) T H A T the changes to the 2022/23 and future years' Capital Programme as set out at Recommendation (4) of the report be noted.

Reason for recommendations

(1-4) Having regard to the content of the report on Capital Programme progress, the use of Delegated Authority, the use of Emergency Powers and changes to the Capital Programme.

111 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES 2021-2022 – CHALLENGE VERSION (DSS) –

The Challenge Version of the Director's report (a Microsoft SWAY report hyperlinked within the covering report) allowed Members and stakeholders an opportunity to comment and inform a future final draft which would be considered by Cabinet in September 2022. The report reflected on progress over the last financial year and linked to objectives in the Corporate Plan which reflected the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

As part of statutory duties, the Director of Social Services advised that they were required by the Welsh Government to produce an annual report on the effectiveness of social care services in the Vale of Glamorgan and on the Council's plans for improvement. This gave the Director an opportunity to provide people in the Vale with a rounded picture of social services – based on evidence drawn from a wide range of sources such as what users and carers say, key performance indicators, and measurements of progress against the overall goals of the Council.

The report was written for a wide range of people, including service users and carers but also Elected Members, the Council's own staff, and the range of partners and providers who helped the Council to deliver its services. It was also used by Care

Inspectorate Wales (CIW) as evidence and to guide their inspection programme in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Director added that, in planning how the Council delivered services over the coming years, the Council had put in place a Service Plan to cover the period up until 2023 which provided an overview of the Directorate's improvement work.

The past year had been the most challenging Social Services had ever experienced. The pandemic put the Council's social care services under enormous pressure which significantly challenged how it delivered its services and in particular fulfilled its statutory roles and functions. As the Council emerged from the situation the legacy of lock downs, the pandemic and Brexit had resulted in significantly increased demand and serious staffing challenges.

Although the Council anticipated that the challenges would remain for potentially years to come, it was evolving and adapting its response to the rapidly changing and uncertain landscape. The Council's approach had been defined by its ability to quickly galvanise its workforce to work in new ways. None of which could have been achieved without the dedication and resilience of its staff.

In conclusion, the Director advised that, as part of the challenge process, the report was presented to Scrutiny Committee to provide Elected Members with an opportunity to contribute their views. This was regarded as a key milestone in finalising the report because of the crucial role which the Committee had in providing consistent oversight and monitoring of social services.

Cllr Lynch-Wilson began discussion on the item by commending officers on the fantastic Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) delivery service operated through-out the pandemic which was crucial in helping families to visit relatives in a care home setting; in particular the Visitation Pod which was inspired and a great success.

Members congratulated officers on an accessible and helpful report that included powerful case studies to illustrate the vital work being undertaken across the directorate and raised the following suggestions:

- It was difficult to judge from the statistics provided within the challenge report if the performance of services had progressed or not. It would be helpful for the reader to have access to comparative data such as previous annual statistics or Welsh Government performance measures to identify service pressures and successes,
- The report required the reader to have a certain level of understanding on the various service areas and their objectives so, it would be beneficial to the lay reader to have an explanation for context,
- Various acronyms were used on a regular basis by Council Officers and it was necessary for Members to also educate themselves on these to accurately understand reports provided to the Committee. Therefore, a beginners guide to Social Services Acronyms would be useful for members to receive a copy of in the future as well as ensure that any acronyms used within the challenge report were fully explained.

The Director sincerely thanked members for their input and in response to the suggestions raised advised that:

- Social Services performance measures had been amended and required time to become consistently reliable, some performance measures would be picked up in the performance monitoring report later on the agenda for members information. There had previously been national issues with WICCIS which had affected the accuracy of reporting performance however, this situation had since improved. It was acknowledged that elected members may require local performance measures in relation to the Vale of Glamorgan. Previous versions of the challenge report had included direct annual statistics to aid comparison, these were deemed to make the report cumbersome and therefore it was acknowledged that the current version of the report was different and may require some of this to be included.
- An additional explanation of each service area in the 'How We Shape Our Services' section to enhance contextual knowledge for the reader would be added.
- The report would be checked for the use of acronyms and full explanations added where necessary.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the improvement priorities for Social Services, as set out in the Director's Annual Report for 2021-2022 – Challenge Version, be noted.

(2) T H A T the following proposals be incorporated into the challenge version of the report:

- Increased access to comparative annual statistics and/or Welsh Government performance measures to more accurately identify pressures and/or progress made,
- Additional explanation of each service area in the 'How We Shape Our Services' section to enhance contextual knowledge for the reader; and
- Ensure that all acronyms used are fully explained for the reader.

Reason for recommendations

(1-3) Having regard to the content of the report and discussion at the meeting to contribute to the challenge process for the Director's Annual Report 2021-2022.

112 ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN MONITORING REPORT: QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE 2021/22 (DSS) –

The performance report, as presented by the Director of Social Services, set out the Council's progress at quarter 4 (Q4) (1st April, 2021 to 31st March, 2022) towards achieving its Annual Delivery Plan (2021/22) commitments as aligned to its Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives.

All 4 Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives were attributed a Green performance status at Q4 to reflect the good progress made to date. This was positive given the ongoing challenges arising from the pandemic.

Appendix A to the report outlined the Council's performance against its Annual Delivery Plan commitments for 2021/22 as aligned to the remit of the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee.

With no comments or questions, the 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 under-performance 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) To ensure the Council clearly demonstrated the progress being made towards achieving its commitments in the Annual Delivery Plan 2021/22 aimed at making a positive difference to the lives of Vale of Glamorgan citizens.

(2) To ensure the Council was 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 reflecting the requirement of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that it maximised its contribution to achieving the well-being goals for Wales.

(3) To ensure Members maintained an oversight of the recovery issues impacting on the work of the Council and their respective Scrutiny Committees.