

No.

HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote Meeting held on 7th February 2023.

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

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

Present: Councillor J.E. Charles (Chair); Councillor N.C. Thomas (Vice-Chair); Councillors G.M. Ball, C.A. Cave, 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), E. Goodjohn, W.A. Hennessy, G. John (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport, and Wellbeing) and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health).

678 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.”

679 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor A.M. Collins.

680 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 10th January 2023 be approved as a correct record subject to the typing error within paragraph one of minute 602 being noted. The paragraph reference numbers should state 1.1 and 1.2.

681 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Councillor S. Lloyd-Selby declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item No. 4 – Budget 2023/24 for Consultation and Further MTFP Update (Reference from Cabinet: 19th January 2023). Councillor Lloyd-Selby had multiple family members in receipt of Telecare support and one family member in receipt of a Care Package. Councillor Lloyd-Selby had a dispensation from Standards Committee to speak only on issues relating to Telecare and Care Package services at Vale of Glamorgan Council meetings. The Councillor remained in the meeting for the item.

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Councillor S. Lloyd-Selby declared a Prejudicial Interest in Agenda Item No. 5 – Vale of Glamorgan Council – Proposed Fees and Charges for 2023/2024 (Reference from Cabinet: 19th January 2023). Councillor Lloyd-Selby had multiple family members in receipt of Telecare support and one family member in receipt of a Care Package. Councillor Lloyd-Selby had a dispensation from Standards Committee to speak only on issues relating to Telecare and Care Package services at Vale of Glamorgan Council meetings. The Councillor withdrew from the meeting for the item.

682 BUDGET 2023/24 FOR CONSULTATION AND FURTHER MTFP UPDATE (REF) –

In support of the reference from Cabinet of 19th January, 2023, as contained within the agenda, the Operational Manager for Accountancy provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Vale of Glamorgan Settlement Position, Cost Pressures, Funding Gap, Savings Proposals and Reserves Proposals.

The Officer began by advising that the Vale of Glamorgan's Aggregate External Finance (AEF) would increase by 8.9% £16.6m which was a £10m improvement on the £6.5m 3.5% anticipated in the Financial Strategy in October. The overall Vale Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) increase was 6.4% and the increases for Schools Service and Social Services 5.1% and 7.0% respectively.

At an 8.9% AEF totaling £16.604m and a 4.9% increase in Council Tax equating to £4.284m, the total increased funding for the Council was £20.888m or 7.66%.

The Officer added that Council had worked as a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to further review and refine cost pressures across all Council Directorates resulting in overall cost pressures being reduced by £7.437m to £30.67m from £38.107m. However, the Council still faced significant pressures as follows:

- Pay and Energy pressures total £15m across the Council;
- Residential / Domiciliary care providers and inability to commission care requiring significant growth to address as well as commitment to meet Real Living Wage;
- Homelessness continued pressure also pressures around placement of Ukrainian refugees;
- Continued growth in demand for special school places at Ysgol Y Deri for which additional funding £1m was included also funding for support in Mainstream settings, resource bases, additional provision required as part of Centre for Learning and Wellbeing and pupils requiring Social and Emotional support;
- School Transport – very few providers and shortage of drivers, increased need, and inflationary pressures. £1m additional funding.

The Officer went on to apprise the Committee on all cost pressures specific to its remit, the pressures included a pressure related to Children Services external placements and residential care and domiciliary care providers. There were continuing and considerable pressure on the children's external placements budget

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given the complexities of the children currently being supported and the high-cost placements some of the children required to meet their needs.

The Officer later addressed this further on within the presentation when apprising the Committee on the Savings Proposals specific to the remit of the Committee and the investment to save in relation to closer to home residential care for Children and Young People Services.

In conclusion, the Officer advised that the Council's total Reserves, excluding Schools, was £114m and was projected to reduce to £83m by 31st March, 2023. The Council was proposing a revised approach to reserves which would mean fewer reserves but greater alignment to key risks of the Council. Reserves had been used historically to smooth the impact of homelessness and energy costs stepped down over two years. Looking forward, the reserves would also be used if required to support the step-in approach to Social Services cost pressures.

Following the Officer's presentation and subsequent questions from the Committee, the Operational Manager for Accountancy alongside the Director for Social Services and the Head of Children and Young People Services added the following points of advice:

- In relation to Savings Proposals, as set out in paragraphs 2.44 – 2.49 of the Cabinet report, the proposals were set against investing in alternative provision models as well as generating income from current service delivery models.
- The Council was working towards introducing local residential provision for children and young people in July 2023 which would have a significant impact on savings it was able to make, and it was hoped that the subsequent savings would help to offset previous spending in this area over a period of time.
- The introduction of a social worker to support unaccompanied asylum children was because of a statutory Home Office scheme placed upon the Council. At the time of the meeting, the Council supported a number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children through the mandated scheme. The associated tasks were complex, requiring an increased specialism and capacity. Although the Council had benefitted from the expertise that had developed in Cardiff, the demands upon all Authorities meant the Vale required its own dedicated resource.

With no further comments or questions from the Committee, Members requested that the comments of Committee as stated in the recommendation below be passed to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee prior to final proposals being considered by Cabinet on 27th February, 2023.

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T both the Cabinet reference and appended Cabinet report in relation to the 2023/24 Budget for Consultation and Further Medium-Term Financial Plan Update be noted.

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(2) T H A T the following comments of the Committee be forwarded to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee:

- As a result of continued diligence shown by Council Officers, Committee are already well versed in the significant pressures faced by the Social Services sector.
- Members of the Committee commend the proposed budget as presented which is a detailed proposal around investing in vital areas of Social Care provision despite the enormous financial pressures that the Council is facing.
- The Committee welcomes all proposals for investment as presented within the report.
- The pressures that are clearly evidenced within the Social Services sector are increasing and statutory. Therefore, the Council has a statutory obligation to fund said pressures and to ensure that services operate as effectively as possible.
- The Committee thank Finance Officers for a comprehensible report and useful supporting presentation.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the contents of both the Cabinet reference and report to ensure that funding and savings assumptions are validated and that savings proposals are realistic and deliverable and do not have any unintended impacts.

(2) To ensure that the comments of the Committee are considered by Corporate Performance and Resources as the lead Scrutiny Committee, with any recommendations being referred back to Cabinet on 27th February, 2023.

683 VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL – PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2023/2024 (REF) –

The Operational Manager for Accountancy presented the reference from Cabinet of 19th January, 2023.

They advised that the Consolidated Fees and Charges Cabinet report included fees across Neighbourhood Services, Resources, Place, Learning and Skills and Social Services. The majority of the proposed fees and charges reflected an increase of between 5% and 11% which had been rounded in some cases to the nearest 5p or 10p. Some fees and charges had increased higher than the aforementioned percentage; remained the same; or decreased to reflect the take up of services and the cost of delivery and rationale for doing so was outlined in the body of the report.

The Officer went on to apprise Members of the increased fees and charges specifically in relation to Leisure and Social Services as follows:

- **Sports: Football and Rugby; and Cricket (without attendant);** mostly proposed to increase by between 5% to 5.5% which was lower than the

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current rate of CPI due to the rising cost of maintenance of the premises and to further the work with regard single use sports pitches.

- **Jenner Park**; increased by 11% to reflect the rate of inflation. Charges for floodlighting had had to increase by between 35% and 100% to reflect the large increases in electricity costs that would be experienced in 2023/24.
- **Day Services**; uplifted by the amalgamated estimated inflation assumption of 11%.
- **Telecare Services**; proposed to be of similar price to the current services, ranging between £1.30 to £7.80 per week. The proposed fees would cover the estimated costs of the new services as well as providing extra income that could then be used towards the further development of the services and contribute to the full cost recovery aim. It was proposed that the installation of the services for new and existing customers was provided free of charge to encourage the uptake by residents.

Following the Officer's report, the Vice-Chair thanked Finance Officers for their efforts to produce a clear report and noted that it was good to see that many of the proposed prices were staying lower than inflation.

In response to Councillor Cowpe's queries in relation to Hygiene Caddies and Outdoor Trading Paces, the Officer confirmed that the matters sat within the remit of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee which was meeting on 14th February, 2023.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T both the Cabinet reference and appended Cabinet report in relation to Vale of Glamorgan Proposed Fees and Charges for 2023/2024 be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of both the Cabinet reference and report on the proposed changes in service charges for functions managed by the Council for the financial year 2023/24.

684 DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME PROPOSALS 2023/24 TO 2027/28 (REF) –

In support of the reference from Cabinet of 19th January, 2023, as contained within the agenda, the Operational Manager for Accountancy provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Council's Capital Strategy / Provisional Settlement, five-year Capital Programme, Capital Programme funding and Capital Programme new schemes for 2023/24.

On 14th December, 2022, the Welsh Government (WG) announced the provisional 2023/24 General Capital Funding (GCF) settlement for 2023/24. The amount awarded to the Council was £6.997m, being made up of £3.545m grant and £3.452m of supported borrowing. This was an increase of £1.168m from the 2022/23 general capital funding of £5.829m (2021/22 General Capital Funding was £6.867m). WG

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had also been advised that £20m capital across Wales in each year was being provided to enable Authorities to respond to the joint priority of decarbonisation. The Council was awaiting further information from WG in relation to this to understand what it meant for the Council going forward.

The Officer advised that, as the provisional capital settlement from WG had now been received, it was proposed that new schemes were now included in the Capital Programme for 2023/24. All Council schemes were detailed in the appendix to the report but, within the remit of the Committee, these were namely £250k for Social Services invest to save schemes and £230k for drainage repairs and underpinning works to Cartref Porthceri Residential Home.

With no questions from the Committee, Members requested that the comments of Committee as stated in the recommendation below be passed to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee prior to final proposals being considered by Cabinet on 27th February, 2023.

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T both the Cabinet reference and appended Cabinet report in relation to the Draft Capital Programme Proposals 2023/24 to 2027/28 be noted.

(2) T H A T the following comments of the Committee be forwarded to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee:

- As a result of continued diligence shown by Council Officers, Committee are well aware of the significant costs incurred as a result of the requirement to place children and young people out of area.
- The report is phrased as ‘investment-to-save’ and as such the Committee commends the report as presented which includes details on investing in community-based specialist accommodation provision despite the enormous financial pressures that the Council is facing.
- The Committee welcomes the report which demonstrates the Council’s approach of putting the needs of children and vulnerable adults before the requirement to save money.
- As a Council and Committee, we look to offer the best protection we can offer to vulnerable individuals within the Vale of Glamorgan considering the financial constrictions placed upon the Council.
- The Committee thank Finance Officers for a comprehensible report and useful supporting presentation.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the contents of both the Cabinet reference and report to consider the draft proposals in respect of the final capital budget for the financial year 2023/24 to 2027/28.

(2) To ensure that the comments of the Committee are considered by Corporate Performance and Resources as the lead Scrutiny Committee, in order that Cabinet be informed of the comments of all Scrutiny Committees before making a proposal

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on the Capital Programme.

685 REVENUE MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 30TH NOVEMBER 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 and Cost of Living Crisis.

Emerging pressures during 2022/23 related to energy standing charges, the recent 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.

It was currently anticipated that the service would outturn with a £1.3m underspend which reflected a surplus of £1.8m in Adult Services offsetting adverse variances in Resource Management and Safeguarding and Children and Young People Services. This position reflected a one-off accounting adjustment in the way social care deferred income was shown in the accounts in 2022/23 to reflect the recommendations of Audit Wales, under this amended approach income would be recognised in the accounts at the point it was incurred rather than when it was able to be collected. Following this adjustment there was currently projected to be a net transfer into reserves at year end which was estimated to be in the region of £1.3m but may increase if additional grant was allocated to the service.

Within Leisure Services an adverse variance of approximately £500k was being incurred from additional payments that were still being made to the Council's leisure centre partner while they recovered from the impact of Covid 19. This support was due to cease from 31st December, 2022 and would be funded by a transfer from the Neighbourhood Services Reserve.

Following the Officer's presentation, Councillor Payne referred to the Officer's statement on unplanned use of reserves in relation to HGV Drivers and queried the impact of this on the Council's Project Zero. In response, the Operational Manager for Accountancy advised that there was no direct correlation with the Council's Project Zero at the current time.

In conclusion, the Vice-Chair thanked Finance Officers for the enormous amount of work that had been undertaken resulting in a clear and helpful report put before the Committee.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the position with regard to the Authority's 2022/23 Revenue Budget

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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.

(3) T H A T the amended Revenue Budget for 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.

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.

(3) To adjust the amended Revenue Budget for 2022/23 for movements between Directorates.

686 CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 30TH NOVEMBER 2022 (DSS) –

The Operational Manager for Accountancy advised that the report provided an update on the progress of the Capital Programme for the period 1st April to 30th November, 2022 and that details by scheme were shown in Appendix 1.

Appendix 2 provided a summary of the position of the Capital Programme by Directorate from approval at Council on 7th March to 30th November, 2022, including any changes requested within the report.

The Officer added that Capital schemes were facing 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 £90.413m but this was unlikely to be delivered in full and slippage was requested of £2.369m. Schemes would continue to be monitored closely as part of the regular monitoring arrangements with project managers and sponsors and further slippage would be reported in future reports.

Following the Officer's presentation, the Vice-Chair thanked Finance Officers for their clear and helpful report and noted that the vast majority of the expected slippage was in relation to other Council Directorates and therefore under the remit of other Scrutiny Committees.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

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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 Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.
- (4) T H A T the changes to the 2022/23 and future Year's' Capital Programme within the remit of the Committee, as set out in the report, be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the content of the report to advise Committee of the progress on the Capital Programme.
- (2) To advise Committee of the use of Delegated Authority.
- (3) To advise Committee of the use of Emergency Powers.
- (4) To advise Committee of changes to the Capital Programme.

687 3RD QUARTER SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION TRACKING AND UPDATED WORK PROGRAMME SCHEDULE 2022/2023 (CX) –

The Chair presented the report, the purpose of which was to advise Members of progress in relation to the Scrutiny Committee's historical recommendations and the updated Forward Work Programme (FWP) Schedule for 2022/23.

The Committee was requested to agree the recommendation actions listed in Appendices A and B to the report as well as approve the Committee's updated FWP for uploading to the public website as included at Appendix C.

In relation to the Committee's FWP and the single query raised by Councillor Lloyd-Selby, the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer advised that the 'Other matters' pending inclusion on pages 27 and 28 related to two direct reports and four historical presentations received by NHS colleagues.

The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer would continue to invite NHS colleagues to present at future meetings of the Committee subject to their availability which had been limited since the impacts of the national pandemic. The Officer also reminded Committee of the pending Cabinet report in relation to the Penarth Wellbeing-Hub, as confirmed by officers at the previous Committee meeting, which directly related to one of the pending presentations.

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In conclusion, the Director for Social Services confirmed that one of the pending reports in relation to the Carers Strategy had now been scheduled for the March Committee meeting and therefore suggested that the entry was no longer required on page 27.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

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 updated Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2022/23, attached at Appendix C, be approved, and uploaded to the Council's website subject to the following item being removed from page 27:

- Social Services Report – Carers Strategy (Support for Carers in the Vale of Glamorgan).

Reasons for recommendations

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

(2) For public information and to reflect that the Social Services report on the Carers Strategy was now scheduled for the March 2023 Committee meeting.