

HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote Meeting held on 7th March 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, 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 A. Asbrey, G. Bruce, I.R. Buckley, C.P. Franks, H.C. Hamilton, W.A. Hennessy, G. John (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport, and Wellbeing) and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health).

798 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.”

799 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T minutes of the meeting held on 7th February 2023 be approved as a correct record subject to the final paragraph of minute 683 being noted as ‘concerns’ rather than ‘queries’ raised by Councillor Cowpe.

800 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Councillor Lloyd-Selby declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No. 7 – Service Level Activities and Performance Targets to Deliver the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Annual Delivery Plan 2023/2024. 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.

801 SUPPORT FOR UNPAID CARERS IN THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN (DSS) –

The Operational Manager for Safeguarding and Service Outcomes presented the covering report, the purpose of which was to provide an overview of the current services and support available to unpaid carers in the Vale of Glamorgan as well as

present the hyperlinked (SWAY) Health and Social Care: Unpaid Carers Annual Report 2022/23.

The Officer advised that a diverse, flexible, and wide range of services and support were required to support unpaid carers given the incredible amount of invaluable unpaid care they provided to their communities especially during the current cost of living crisis and pandemic legacy. The Council's Social Care Directorate continued to develop its response to the Social Services and Wellbeing Act and manage its statutory responsibilities and local needs within its resources, making the most of collaborative arrangements and Government funding streams where appropriate.

The Officer then went on to apprise the Committee on key projects underway on a regional level for 2022/23, namely:

- Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Unpaid Carers Charter and delivery plan,
- Cardiff and Vale Carers Gateway,
- Young Carers Identity Card Scheme, and
- Young Carers in School Programme (YCISP).

Extensive details on all the key projects were set out in the SWAY report.

Following the Officer's presentation, Councillor Lloyd-Selby drew Members' attention to the section of the SWAY report relating to the £500 support payments for unpaid carers and noted that the Council received 1,949 applications for the payment. The Councillor went on to note that by the close of the scheme, 1,233 unpaid carers had received the £500 payment which by their calculation meant that around 37% of applicants were not eligible for the grant and therefore queried with officers why this was the case.

In response, the Operational Manager for Safeguarding and Service Outcomes advised that a number of the applications were in fact duplicate applications which factored into the final numbers presented within the report. Also, some carers who had made the application were not receiving the appropriate Carers Allowance Element as was mandatory for eligibility. Finally, a handful of applications were received from carers residing outside of the Vale of Glamorgan area and were therefore not eligible.

Councillor Lloyd-Selby then went on to refer to the work currently being undertaken by Welsh Government to establish a rational and integrated Welsh benefits system for all means-tested benefits for which Welsh Government were responsible and welcomed the efforts to support individuals with knowing their entitlement for benefit help as this was often confusing. The Councillor therefore posed the question if there was more the Council could be doing to make it easier for individuals to access their entitlement and suggested that this would be useful for the Council to consider corporately going forward.

The Vice-Chair of the Committee then stated that it was encouraging that progress was being made to support unpaid carers, as demonstrated within both the reports before the Committee, as unpaid carers did indeed relieve the Council's burden of care in many instances and therefore unpaid carers required the Council's support

more than ever. As a supplementary point, the Vice-Chair referred to the Young Carers Identity (ID) Card Scheme and noted that pupils of school age did not necessarily self-identify as a carer and therefore it could be difficult to raise awareness and identify individuals in the school setting. It was recognised that the benefits that a young person could receive as a result of owning an ID card was the primary incentive and it was also good to see within the report that the ID scheme was now available within primary schools as well as secondary.

In response, the Operational Manager for Safeguarding and Service Outcomes advised that the ID Card Scheme was a Welsh Government funded scheme and initially the work was focused on establishing the administration of the scheme and identifying individuals who were eligible (unpaid carers). However, despite the funding from Welsh Government now being withdrawn, the Council had taken the decision to continue with the scheme but extend the aims of the scheme to improve the accessibility and benefits available to unpaid carers. The focus of the scheme going forward, especially over the next 12 months, would be adding value to the benefits available from owning an ID card as well as identifying eligible individuals. In relation to the schools setting, each school, primary and secondary, had a Young Carer Champion role resident within the school. The Council had recently extended the ID Card identification process to primary schools, and this was reflected within the numbers within the report showing less for primary than secondary schools.

The Vice-Chair then enquired after the levels of engagement of young carers within the leisure centres across the Vale of Glamorgan. In response, the Officer advised that incentives were already in place in terms of gym use and free swimming was already available to all young people across the Vale of Glamorgan. However, the Council was looking to increase the leisure offer available through the Young Carers ID Card Scheme. As a supplementary point, the Vice-Chair offered the Committee's help and support going forward with promoting the scheme.

In conclusion, Councillor Lloyd-Selby raised a blanket point in relation to the Council being able to demonstrate how it was meeting all of its obligations. In support, the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health advised that the Young Carers ID Card Scheme was both a regional and national scheme and was high on the Council's agenda. Therefore, they would be happy to provide a further update to the Committee prior to the next Annual Report being received by the Committee in 12 months' time.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T both the covering and appended Annual (SWAY) Report on Support for Unpaid Carers and work undertaken to support unpaid carers in the Vale of Glamorgan be noted.
- (2) T H A T the duties of the Council and its partners in regard to delivering services for Unpaid Carers within the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 be noted.

(3) T H A T the methods the Council and its partners are taking to meet the Ministerial Priorities for Unpaid Carers and the regional work of the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Unpaid Carers Board be noted.

(4) T H A T a further Annual Report on support for Unpaid Carers in the Vale of Glamorgan be received by the Committee in March 2024.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to both the covering and appended SWAY report to ensure that Members continue to exercise effective oversight of the important function undertaken by the Social Services Directorate.

(2) That Scrutiny Members are aware of the duties outlined within legislation.

(3) That Scrutiny Members are informed of the Ministerial Priorities set for carers and the regional work taking place for unpaid carers and facilitates support from the lead Member for Carers.

(4) To ensure that Members continue to exercise effective oversight of the important function on an annual basis.

802 REVENUE MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST JANUARY 2023 (DSS) –

The Operational Manager for Accountancy advised that the Council's overall revenue position for 2022/23 remained challenging both operationally and financially due to the ongoing implications of the Cost-of-Living Crisis, inflationary pressures, and the ongoing impact of Covid 19.

In relation to the financial remit of the Committee, the Officer advised that it was currently anticipated that Social Services would outturn with a breakeven position after an unplanned transfer of £1.325m into reserves and a planned transfer of £662k from reserves. The previous revenue budget monitoring report received by the Committee highlighted that in 2022/23 Adult Services would recognise £2m of income as a one-off sum due to a change in the treatment of the income.

The outturn for Adult Services and Resource Management and Safeguarding reflected pressures associated with the additional pay award in 2022/23, the community care budget and pressures in Residential Homes.

Adverse variances in Children's Services related to legal costs being incurred as a result of complex Court cases that required Counsel's involvement, financial support for Special Guardianship and Residence Orders and overspends against the External Placement budget. This had been offset by favourable variances in the foster payments budget and additional grant income being received from the Regional Integration Fund towards External Placements.

For Leisure Services, an approximate £650k overspend was due to additional payments that had been made in 2022/23 to the Council's leisure centre partner, Legacy Leisure, whilst they recovered from the impact of Covid 19. This support had ceased from 31st December, 2022, and it was expected that £650k would be drawn down from the Neighbourhood Services and Transport Reserve. In addition, the Chair noted the change in overspend for the matter increasing from £500k to £650k since the last report received by the Committee.

With no comments or questions from Members, the Committee subsequently

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 contents of the report to inform Members of the projected revenue outturn for 2022/23.
- (2) To respond to emerging pay and price inflationary pressures in 2022/23.

803 CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST JANUARY 2023 (DSS) –

The report 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 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 Operational Manager for Accountancy advised that 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 corporate wide 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 and further slippage would be reported as part of the Capital Outturn report.

Within the remit of the Committee there were four requests under the slippage section of the report. The first was under the Social Services slippage section to carry forward £12k for the Cartref Porthceri External Repairs – Phase 2 scheme into

the 2023/24 Capital Programme. There were also three requests in relation to Leisure Services to carry forward part or all of the scheme's budget into the 2023/24 Capital Programme, £35k for St Athan – Outdoor Fitness Equipment, £60k for the Grange Community Hub scheme and £90k for the Cwrt Y Vil MUGA scheme.

The Officer also added that two Delegated Authorities had been approved that were within the remit of the Scrutiny Committee. The first requested to vire £23k of the Social Services Asset Renewal Contingency budget to the Rondell House Day Service Electrical Upgrade scheme as a result of a more extensive electrical upgrade being necessary and the second to include The Grange Park Community Hub scheme with a budget of £71k within the 2022/23 Capital Programme for bulb and tree planting and the installation of outdoor fitness equipment.

Following the Officer's presentation of the report, the Vice-Chair enquired whether the two new residential provisions currently being built within the Vale of Glamorgan area for children and young people in care were part of the financial information presented. In response, the Head of Children and Young People Services confirmed that the new provisions were factored into the current financial budgeting situation and that both provisions were due for launch in July 2023.

In response, the Vice-Chair then enquired if the Committee would have the opportunity to visit the new provisions prior to their launch. The Officer confirmed that arrangements would be made to provide the Committee with the opportunity to visit the provisions prior to them being occupied.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

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.

Reason for recommendations

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

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

The report presented the planned service activities (as outlined in Service Plans) and associated performance targets within the remit of the Scrutiny 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 its four Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives.

The Director of Social Services advised that 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 Council's Annual Delivery Plan commitments for the period 2023/24. These were set out in Appendices A and B to the report.

Following the Officer's presentation, Councillor Lloyd-Selby echoed their point raised during an earlier agenda item in relation to the Council being able to demonstrate how it was meeting all of its obligations. The Councillor then referred to Appendix A, Well-being Objective 1, 'Work with and for our communities, 'ADP1: Adopt a new digital strategy, improve how we communicate and develop more responsive online services, including improvements for housing services and the customer contact centre and enhancements to the website" and queried if consideration would be given within this process for user testing especially for unpaid carers, elderly and individuals who identified as having a disability.

In response, the Director for Social Services advised that it was their assumption that user testing would be undertaken, and they would indeed welcome this going forward. They also advised that the Director of Corporate Resources, in preparation for the meeting, had advised that they were happy to take any questions following the meeting as appropriate.

Councillor Lloyd-Selby then referred to Appendix B of the report and in particular to the performance indicator PAM/028 which referred to the percentage of assessments completed for children within statutory timescales and noted that the current target for 2022/23 was 85% however was reduced to 80% for 2023/24. In recognising the pressures that the service had faced over the last year, the Councillor asked officers how confident they could be to achieve the 80% target.

The Director of Social Services advised that whenever officers set targets, they looked at previous performance and also comparisons with national data as well as other neighbouring Authorities so that the Council was realistic and had a strong path to improvement. In addition, the Head of Children and Young People Services advised that officers had also asked themselves the same question when undertaking target setting and it was a difficult question to answer because the Council did not want to set unrealistic targets. However, on the same hand, it did not wish to lower the importance or emphasis placed on the assessment process which was a key function for the Service.

Councillor Lloyd-Selby then referred to performance indicator CPM/63 within the proposed deletions or 2023/24 at Appendix B of the report which referred to the number of sports clubs which offer either inclusive or specific disability opportunities and that an officer was no longer within post to support the indicator. As a Council the aim was to always have opportunities available for all individuals and therefore the Councillor asked if there was any further information available on this point going forward.

In response, the Director of Social Services advised that in preparation for the meeting he had liaised with the Director of Environment and Housing who had advised that from April 2023 there would be regional officers in place to action the area of work and that it was important to note that it was sometimes difficult to receive information from clubs in order to update the Council's data.

On the same matter, the Vice-Chair queried whether officers were content that as a Council it was fully capturing the need that was identified for persons with a disability and whether getting the sports clubs to look at their accessibility policies was being undertaken.

To provide reassurance, the Head of Adult Services advised that the Directorate employed support planners and support workers who regularly mapped services on offer within the Vale of Glamorgan area. They then shared amongst their teams and with the individuals the Council supported as necessary and therefore links were made between the services available and the individuals likely to take them up.

In conclusion, Councillor Cowpe then highlighted the success of the Vale Exercise Referral Scheme which was still active and was great for all individuals no matter their range of ability and they were pleased to see that the scheme was successful in the Vale of Glamorgan area.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the planned service activities for 2023/24 as they relate to the remit of the Committee (Appendix A) 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 (Appendix B), be noted, and endorsed.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the report to ensure that the planned activities (as outlined in Service Plans) aligned to the Committee's remit are accurate, up to date and relevant and become the main document through which performance against the Corporate Plan's Annual Delivery Plan is monitored and measured during 2023/2024.

(2) To ensure the Council's Corporate Plan Performance Measurement Framework identifies a relevant set of performance measures and targets against which the Annual Delivery Plan can be monitored and measured during 2023/2024.

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

The Director for Social Services presented the performance report, the purpose of which was to present the Council's progress at Quarter 3 (Q3) (1st April to 30th December, 2022) towards achieving its Annual Delivery Plan (2022/23) commitments as aligned to its Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives. The report also outlined the Council's progress at January 2023 (Q3) against all its existing external regulatory recommendations and proposals for improvement.

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 Council's Annual Delivery Plan commitments for 2022/23.

In relation to the planned activities within the remit of the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee, 97% (111 out of 114) were attributed a Green performance status, and 1% (1) were attributed an Amber status and the final 2% (2) a Red status. Of the 5 measures reported, 60% (3) were attributed a Green performance status and 40% (2) were attributed Red status.

At Q3, positive progress had been made in responding to the Council's regulatory improvement areas. Overall, there were currently 46 ongoing actions in the Insight Tracker. 35 had been attributed a Green performance (RAG) status, 4 an Amber status and 7 a Red status.

The report also set out how 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, which was whether proposed remedial actions had been undertaken to progress these actions.

In summary of the report, the Director drew Members' attention to Slides 3 and 5 of Appendix A which set out achievements to date and future areas of focus and improvement across both Social and Leisure Services.

Following the Director's presentation, Councillor Cave referred to page 26 of Appendix C within the report and in particular the Dementia Friendly Communities Project and the consultation that had taken place between November 2022 and January 2023 and asked after an update regarding the outcomes of the consultation.

In response, the Head of Adult Services advised that she understood that the project was an area of work led by the Regional Partnership Board and therefore feedback

received as a result of the consultation had gone directly to the Board. The Head of Service then offered to liaise with the Regional Partnership Board Lead following the meeting to feedback when the results of the consultation could be presented to the Committee. In conclusion, the Officer added that the results of the consultation would also be included in the Regional Partnership Board Annual Report that was presented to Committee on an annual basis.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

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 noted.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the report to ensure that the Council clearly demonstrates the progress being made towards achieving its commitments in the Annual Delivery Plan 2022/23 aimed at making a positive difference to the lives of Vale of Glamorgan citizens.
- (2) 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 & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and reflecting the requirement of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 so that it maximises its contribution to achieving the well-being goals for Wales.
- (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's programme of local and national Local Government Studies.