

No.

## HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 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. Ball, C.A. Cave, A.M. Collins, C.M. Cowpe, R. Fisher, E.J. Goodjohn,  
J. Lynch-Wilson, J.M. Norman, and C. Stallard.

Also present: Councillors C.P. Franks, G. John (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport,  
and Wellbeing) and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health).

### 176 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.”

### 177 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor I.R. Buckley.

### 178 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2023 be approved as a correct record.

### 179 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

### 180 CLOSURE OF ACCOUNTS (DSS) –

The Operational Manger for Accountancy presented the report, the purpose of which was to inform Committee of the provisional financial position of the Council for the 2022/23 financial year on completion of the accounts.

The Officer began their presentation by advising that the draft revenue accounts were completed as of 30<sup>th</sup> June and were now with external auditors, so the audit had commenced, and the auditors were working to a timeline over the summer of 2023 for completion in November.

No.

As had been reported throughout the previous and challenging year, there were a number of emergent pressures, for example the potential pressure around the additional pay award that was awarded, but this was in the main mitigated across the Council through vacant posts.

The Officer then apprised the Committee on historical pressures specific to the remit of the Committee as set out in paragraphs 2.19 to 2.23 for Social Services and 2.27 for Leisure Services of the report.

In particular the Officer referenced that the Social Services Budget had a favourable variance of £1,140k after transferring £1,509k into reserves. The outturn position in 2022/23 had been distorted by a one-off accounting adjustment of £4.164m to more accurately reflect the Council's collection of deferred income associated with care arrangements. After also allowing for additional cost of the pay award in 2022/23, an uplift given to Community Care Providers in February 2023 and some of the one-off funding received in Children's Services, the underlying position would have been closer to a net overspend of around £1m.

In conclusion the Officer advised that, in preparation for the 2023/24 budget, the Council indicated quite a significant amount of reallocation of reserves across the Council (as illustrated at paragraph 7.8 of the report) despite taking quite a significant sum out of the Social Services reserves to enable the Council to build up some of the energy and pay pressure pots. This meant a remaining balance of just over £10m within Social Services, which would be utilised to fund the Social Services budget programme and also to guard against some of that volatility that had previously been seen within Social Services budgets.

Following a comment from the Vice-Chair thanking Officers for compiling the report, the Committee subsequently

#### RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the report and the financial measures taken and proposed within be noted.
- (2) T H A T the allocation of overall Council surplus be noted.

#### Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the content of the report on the outturn and financial measures taken.
- (2) To inform Committee on the allocation of the 2022/23 surplus to support the delivery of schemes supporting key priorities identified by the Council.

181 CAPITAL CLOSURE OF ACCOUNTS 2022/23 (DSS) –

The report provided detail on the closing of the Capital Programme for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

Details by scheme, that were relevant to the remit of the Committee, 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 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, including any changes requested in the report. The slippage for the committee was £705k and Appendix 3 provided the detail of the slippage and resulting schemes.

The Operational Manager for Accountancy advised that finance officers had tried to demonstrate, via monitoring reports presented previously to the Committee through the course of the financial year, to highlight some of the achievements within the Capital Programme in year. To that effect, details on the Carys Close project was set out at paragraph 2.10 of the report. Carys Close was in the 2022/23 Capital Programme with a budget of £428k and final spend totalled £436k. It was an accessible bungalow with SMART technology to provide a home for two individuals to live as independently as possible, plus a self-contained annex for an individual to gain skills to assist with moving-on to independent living.

In terms of the adjusted approved schemes for Social Services, there was an adjusted budget of £1.1m with a spend of £767k and slippage of £331k. This was in relation to the Ty Dewi Sant Plant Room, IT Development, ICF Dementia Friendly Passenger Lifts and Lobby and ICF Sluice Room Upgrade schemes.

In relation to Leisure Services, there were also low levels of slippage, with the most notable scheme being the Belle Vue Pavilion in Penarth scheme of £160k, but the scheme had since been completed.

Following the Officer's presentation, the Vice-Chair noted the complicated report and highlighted that the spends across the Directorate within the Committee's remit were volatile and dependent on the demand placed upon services. This made finances difficult to predict and therefore they commended Finance officers on their work.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the year end capital position for financial year 2022/23 be noted.
- (2) T H A T the additional scheme budgets, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.
- (3) T H A T the summary position of the changes in the Capital Programme by directorate from approval at Council on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report, be noted.

No.

(4) T H A T the Emergency Powers approved in respect of the slippage, as set out in Appendix 3 of the report, be noted.

#### Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the content of the report on the year end capital position for the financial year 2022/23.

(2) To inform Committee of the additional schemes added to the Approved Programme for 2022/23.

(3) To inform Committee of the changes to the Approved Capital Programme set on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

(4) To advise Committee of the approved slippage in the Emergency Powers in the 2022/23 Capital Programme.

#### 182 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES 2022-2023 – CHALLENGE VERSION (DSS) –

The Director of Social Services presented the Challenge Version of their report which allowed Members and stakeholders an opportunity to comment and inform a future final draft which would be considered by Cabinet. The Committee was presented with the report as part of the formal consultation process and the Challenge Version of the report would also be shared with Council partners for consultation as well as made available on the Council's website.

It was an important report for the people of the Vale of Glamorgan, members of the Council and its partners, both statutory and in other sectors. It outlined the current context within which Social Services were operating and detailed proposed priorities for improvement. The report represented the views of the Director and other managers in Social Services, and was not Council policy at the current stage, but would be used to inform Council policies in the future with Cabinet agreement.

The Director added that the format of the report had been set out as an annual requirement by Welsh Government through regulation from 2017/18. The Directorate had brought the Director's Report into closer alignment with the Council's Corporate and Service Planning mechanisms to reduce duplication.

The Director then took the Committee through the Annual Report, as appended to the covering report, outlining the key performance highlights (pages 2-5) and subsequent proposed areas for improvement across the three service areas: Children and Young People Services, Adult Services, and Resource Management and Safeguarding Services (pages 6 and 7). The Director also summarised the comprehensive detail provided within the report in relation to how the Council shaped its services (pages 8-18) as well as provided a summary of the Compliments and Complaints received over the last year as well as subsequent lessons learnt (pages 19-22).

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The Director also drew Committee's attention to the information provided at the end of the report in relation to promoting the use of Welsh Language and Access to Services on pages 42 and 43 of the report.

In conclusion, the Director apprised the Committee on the 14 Priorities identified by the Directorate for 23/24, as set out on pages 45 and 46 of the Annual Report. They stated that the Directorate had made good progress and faced further challenges in the future however, they hoped that the Challenge Report clearly identified the future challenges that could be mitigated by achieving the 14 priority areas identified.

Following the Officer's presentation, the Chair thanked the Director for a very detailed and informative report and stated that the Committee was fully aware of the significant efforts the Directorate was making in order to tackle service area challenges.

Subsequent questions were then raised by the Committee. In response, the Director of Social Services alongside the Head of Children and Young People's Services as well as the Head of Resource Management and Safeguarding added the following points of advice.

- In relation to the Council's performance indicator on the number of home visits undertaken for children on the protection register, this was not at 100% and was also reflective of the situation nationally. The Directorate would rather that the percentage figure was higher than it currently was and, as a result was identified as an area for improvement in the Annual Report. Visits to children on the register were monitored through the Child Protection Conference process individually for each child or sibling group, as well as generally via a performance indicator, and it was expected that Conference Chairs would pick up on attendance in a timely manner. The figure was not at 100% but this was always subject to outside factors that could result in timescales being missed. A Child Protection Plan was operated as part of multi-agency group and the Council's key assurance was to collectively meet its responsibilities, sharing risks and identifying concerns to safeguard the children concerned. Officers acknowledged Councillor Cowpe's point that there was a difference between not having enough social work staff to undertake all visits on time and other factors such as making visits and not getting into the home. Officer's also acknowledged Councillor Cowpe's secondary point that through monitoring the performance indicator regularly, officers would be aware towards the end of each quarter, if the percentage was on track and showing positive progression and, if not, the practical reasons why not. The performance indicator was incredibly important to the Council, and it wished to improve upon it as much as possible taking in to account the variety of reasons why 100% may not be met. Development work was currently ongoing to review the Performance Management Framework to provide key practitioners and managers with more real time information to base against performance indicators.
- It was also acknowledged that, within the Annual Report, the majority of complaints received were in relation to Children and Young People Services. This was due to the statutory nature of the service and child protection elements and therefore the service was more likely to receive complaints.

No.

Complaints received in relation to Adult Services were more likely to relate to seeking help and/or requesting a service and therefore delays around these matters. Officers noted that complaints were important in providing a voice to those in receipt of Council services and were used positively to inform learning where this was required.

- In terms of staff sickness, sickness absences in relation to Covid-19 remained an issue for the Council, especially in relation to face-to-face services such as Social Services, however it was being experienced in waves. Isolation times in relation to Covid-19 had also been reduced meaning that related sickness was easier to manage than previously. The highest category of staff sickness was actually related to home stress, and it was unclear whether this was linked to the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic or other issues. However, most long-term sickness stories for staff were often related to very tragic circumstances. It was interesting to note that work related stress had been more manageable in recent years however several years ago this would have been the highest criteria.
- In response to the Vice-Chair's concern in relation to children looked after who had had three or more home placements within a year, the Head of Children and Young People Services advised that movement between placements was sometimes unavoidable and limiting the number of placements moves had been a priority for the Council. The Council had done well in recent years in relation to placement move despite the increasingly challenging context. In addition, the Vice-Chair expanded on his point and stated his appreciation for the fact that emergency placements were often required before a child was able to be placed in its final long term placement home.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T both the covering report and the content of the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2022-2023 – Challenge Version be noted.
- (2) T H A T the improvement priorities for Social Services, as set out in the Director's Annual Report for 2022-2023 – Challenge Version, be noted.
- (3) T H A T the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2022-2023 – Challenge Version, as presented, be endorsed.

Reason for recommendations

(1-3) Having regard to both the covering and appended report to provide Elected Members with an opportunity to contribute to the challenge process for the Director's Annual Report 2022-2023.

No.

## 183 ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN MONITORING REPORT: QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE 2022/23 (DSS) –

The performance report presented the Council's progress at Quarter 4 (Q4) (1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023) towards achieving its Annual Delivery Plan (2022/23) 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 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, 95% (106 out of 112) were attributed a Green performance status and the final 5% (6) were attributed a Red status. Of the 10 measures reported, 80% (8) were attributed a Green performance status, 10% (1) an Amber status and 10% (1) were attributed Red status.

For ease of reference, performance exceptions aligned to the Scrutiny Committee's remit highlighted the current status of Red performing actions identified in previous quarters to show direction of travel at end of year. This would enable Members to quickly gauge whether proposed remedial actions had been undertaken in year to progress these actions. This approach of reporting exceptions reflected the changes requested by Elected Members on performance monitoring of the Annual Delivery Plan.

In presenting the report, the Director of Social Services advised that there were actions identified within the report that were not yet completed due to service challenges and quarterly reporting timescales however, points that were still relevant would be reviewed and carried forward into the next performance monitoring report.

In response, the Chair stated that the report clearly demonstrated the progress being made towards achieving commitments. The Vice-Chair echoed the Chair's comments and commended officers on an excellent report which clearly identified weaknesses and the remedial steps in place to support.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

### RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the Quarter 4 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 underperformance and to tackle the key challenges identified within the remit of the Committee, be noted.

No.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the content of the report to ensure the Council clearly demonstrated 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 was 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 that it maximised its contribution to achieving the wellbeing goals for Wales.