

No.

HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a hybrid meeting held on 5th March, 2024.

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, I. Buckley, C.A. Cave, A.M. Collins, M. Cowpe, R. Fisher, E.J. Goodjohn, J. Lynch-Wilson, J.M. Norman and C. Stallard.

Also present: 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).

866 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”.

867 MINUTES –

At the appropriate point in proceedings, Councillor Cave raised the following comments in relation to the previous minutes:

- The previous minutes were not a verbatim account of what took place and Councillor Cave’s concerns related to Page 7,
- There had been media interest in the previous meeting of the Committee with six media quotes as a result,
- Councillor Cave raised three points during the previous meeting but the third point in relation to how the Social Services Directorate proposed to innovate going forward, given the particularly difficult financial climate, was missing,
- Councillor Cave had taken the previous meeting debate recording to the Council’s Monitoring Officer for scrutiny following two separate accusations made during the meeting by the Leader of the Council in relation to Councillor Cave’s comments at the meeting being inflammatory. Councillor Cave was of the opinion that the subsequent response received from the Monitoring Officer was unsatisfactory and that their own comments were not inflammatory,
- The Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee was not a fan club and members of the Committee had to bring scrutiny and oversight to its meetings, which Councillor Cave believed they were doing,
- Councillor Cave hoped that any members of the public who had witnessed the comments made by themselves during the meeting would not consider their comments inflammatory.

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The Chair subsequently asked Councillor Cave to confirm any proposed amendments to the minutes, to which Councillor Cave highlighted a single amendment in relation to the third point they raised during debate on how the Social Services Directorate proposed to innovate going forward, given the particularly difficult financial climate, to support Member understanding, that was missing from the minutes.

Both the amendment and minutes as presented were subsequently moved and seconded and passed without dissent by the Committee.

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 6th February, 2024 be approved as a correct record, subject to it being noted that Councillor Cave raised a third point during debate on Agenda Item 7 – Support for Unpaid Carers in the Vale of Glamorgan, on how the Social Services Directorate proposed to innovate going forward given the particularly difficult financial climate to support member understanding.

868 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

869 LEISURE CENTRE WORKING GROUP VISIT: PENARTH LEISURE CENTRE: 19TH FEBRUARY, 2024 –

The Chair advised that the Leisure Centre Working Group visit took place as scheduled and thanked the Members of the Group that were in attendance for their time. The Chair also thanked Legacy Leisure staff and Vale of Glamorgan officers for facilitating the visit, as it was a beneficial opportunity to meet the service users, who provided really positive feedback on the social as well as health benefits that they were experiencing by attending the centre.

The Chair's comments were echoed by both the Vice-Chair and Councillor Stallard, who also added that it was good to see the benefits for service users because of the use of Council funds to subsidise exercise classes being offered at the Centre.

On the Chair's invitation, the Operational Manager for Neighbourhood Services, Healthy Living and Performance also took the opportunity to thank Members of the Committee for attending the visit and was pleased that said Members had the opportunity to witness the variety of services being provided under the national exercise scheme. It was hoped that the visit illustrated the difference that the Council could make to the lives of service users, especially those aged 80 and above who benefitted from having the opportunity to socialise with friends and venture out of their home. The scheme was in place across all of the Vale of Glamorgan Leisure Centres and officers were scheduled to bring a report on the benefits of the national exercise scheme to Committee in the future.

Councillor Cowpe then took the opportunity to advise that they themselves had been a participant on the exercise referral scheme and that the staff supporting

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the scheme had been excellent and the service as a whole was really well received.

In conclusion, the Chair advised that Members were also provided with a tour and further information in relation to the ongoing roof repairs at the Leisure Centre and were very pleased with the progress to date.

RECOMMENDED – T H A T both Vale Officers and Legacy Leisure Staff be thanked for arranging and accommodating the Working Group Visit.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to discussion held at the meeting.

870 QUARTER 3 REVENUE MONITORING 2023/24 (DSS) –

The report was presented by the Operational Manager for Accountancy to advise Committee of the Quarter 3 Revenue Monitoring position for 2023/24. Tabled information within the report set out the Original Budget and Revised Budget for approval by Directorate.

The Operational Manager advised that the revenue position for 2023/24 continued to reflect challenging demand and inflationary pressures, with increasing demand in respect of Children's and Adults Social Care and significant increases in the cost of placements and care packages. Support for Additional Learning Needs also continued to be an area of significant pressure within Learning and Skills. The Council was also experiencing continued inflationary pressures in respect of School Transport. Across services inflationary pressures were also being experienced in respect of pay, most notably where market forces were being utilised and for the funding gap between provision for the 2023/24 pay award and the flat rate pay award for 2023/24.

The Council had identified a number of steps to be taken in year to help mitigate this emerging overspend and safeguard reserves, this included tighter controls on expenditure and recruitment and a review of the Capital Programme. The Corporate Resources Directorate had identified a potential underspend of £285k to be offset against emerging overspends and there was a projected underspend of £1m against Council Tax income due to the projected collection of arrears, new properties, changes in allowances and premiums on empty homes.

The Social Services revised budget was set at £85.260m for 2023/24 at Q2 Monitoring. A virement of £200k was requested to reflect the increased energy costs associated with Council run care homes. A further virement of £105k was also requested to reallocate funding for supplier uplifts between Children and Young People's Services and Adult Services. The Budget assumed £600k efficiencies which were currently on track to be achieved in year. The budget position was detailed in Appendix A of the report.

The projected outturn for Social Services in 2023/24 was an adverse variance of £7.606m which would need to be mitigated by additional savings identified in year

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or the unplanned use of reserves. Details of this were also presented to the Committee in Appendix A of the report.

Through a series of PowerPoint slides, the Officer apprised the Committee on the key pressures for the Social Services Directorate as follows:

- Rising cost associated with placements for Children and Young People.
- Additional legal costs associated with increased complexity and incidence of care proceedings.
- Increase in care hours required for adults which could in part be explained by a return to care following Covid and also Demographic pressures as well as an increase in complexity care giving rise to more double handed care arrangements.
- The service was also reporting an increase in residential and nursing placements, an increase in direct care placements and respite.

Therefore, the likely use of reserves included the following:

- £2m use of reserves to reflect increased take up of commissioned hours at a more rapid pace than the budget has allowed for, the base budget would be corrected as part of the planning for 2024/25.
- £1.363m use of reserves for Children's Services to support additional costs associated with Market forces payments, adoption allowances and legal costs.
- £257k for Resource Management and Safeguarding as part of the Social Services budget programme.
- £379k for Adult Services as part of the Social Services budget programme.
- Additional use of reserves to offset the additional costs of placements and care hours was likely to be required to reflect the increased need £2.435m.
- Additional use of reserves to offset additional costs of Children's placements and legal costs £2.617m.

Following the Officer's presentation, the Vice-Chair thanked finance officers for the detailed report and welcomed the £3m of funds going back into reserves due to it difficult to predict, with accuracy, changes in future demand for the services provided by the Directorate as a result of their very nature. Therefore, reserves acted as a much needed cushion.

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the position with regard to the Authority's 2023/24 Revenue Budget be noted.

(2) T H A T the Budget Virements for 2023/24, as presented in the report, be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the content of the report to inform Committee of the projected revenue outturn for 2023/24.

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(2) To update the revised budget for a proposed virement for increased energy costs in Council Buildings and to correct the allocation of funding between Adult Services and Children and Young People Services.

871 CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST DECEMBER 2023 (DSS) –

The purpose of the report was to advise Committee of the progress on the 2023/24 Capital Programme for the period 1st April, 2023 to 31st December, 2023 within the Committee's remit. Details by scheme were shown in Appendix 1 to the report.

Appendix 2 to the report provided a summary of the position of the Capital Programme by Directorate from approval at Council on 6th March, 2023 through to 31st December, 2023, including any changes requested within the report. The report set out any requested changes to the 2023/24 and future years' Capital Programme.

The report noted the current approved programme of £103.677m, but it was important to note that this was unlikely to be delivered and slippage was requested of £7.692m with a forecast Outturn of £96.763m. Schemes would be closely monitored over the coming months and officers would continue to work with project managers and sponsors to ensure value for money and that all possible funding opportunities were identified and were fully explored.

The Operational Manager for Accountancy drew Members' attention to paragraphs 2.3 through to 2.8 of the report, as specified within the recommendations for the report, that summarised the delegated authority and slippage requests under the remit of the Committee.

With no comments or questions raised, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the progress made on delivering the 2023/24 Capital Programme, within the remit of the Committee and attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.
- (2) T H A T the use of Delegated Authority within the remit of the Committee, as summarised in paragraph 2.8 and detailed in paragraph 2.63 of 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 of the report, be noted.
- (4) T H A T the changes to the 2023/24 Capital Programme and future years Capital Programme within the remit of the Committee, as summarised in paragraphs 2.3 to 2.7 and detailed in paragraphs 2.16 to 2.19 of the report, be noted.

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Reason for recommendations

(1–4) Having regard to the content 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.

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

The Operational Manager for Safeguarding and Service Outcomes presented the report, the purpose of which was to update Committee on the development of support for unpaid carers since the last annual update was received.

The report provided an overview of the developments in service provision and support available to unpaid carers in the Vale of Glamorgan, as highlighted in the Unpaid Carers Annual Report 2023 that was hyperlinked within the covering report at recommendation one.

In referring to the hyperlinked Annual Report, the Officer apprised the Committee on how the Council was meeting the four Welsh Government priorities for Unpaid Carers of 'Identifying and valuing Unpaid Carers', 'Providing information, advice and assistance', 'Supporting life alongside caring', and 'Supporting Unpaid Carers in education and the workplace' through the following initiatives:

- Cardiff and the Vale Carers Gateway – a centralised helpline, email enquiry line and face to face support via drop-in sessions in community locations, so unpaid carers were able to receive information and advice closer to home;
- Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Unpaid Carers Charter – officially launched in March 2023 pledging the commitment of partners across the region, including NHS, Local Authorities, voluntary and third sector organisations, to support unpaid carers;
- The Regional Young Carer Task Group – reformed as a sub-group of the Regional Unpaid Carers Board was currently collating the activities undertaken by partners, separately and collaboratively, to map these against the aspirations of the Young Carers Charter (a child and young person friendly version of the Unpaid Carers Charter);
- Unpaid Carers Breaks – 'Amser' was part of the Short Breaks Scheme for unpaid carers and aimed to enable 30,000 carers to take a break from caring by 2025;
- Young Carers ID (YCID) Card – designed to develop confidence, leadership skills and a voice for the young carer community;
- Cardiff and Vale Carer Assembly Event (November 2023) – for Unpaid Carers to meet the local organisations who provided services and support, opportunity to share experiences, and build a support network with other carers;
- Carers Services and Development Team – implemented at the start of 2024 following a revised staffing structure;
- A new post created to support parent and young carers, based with the Family Advice Line service; and

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- Case Studies and Feedback from Unpaid Carers.

Following the Officer's presentation, the Chair noted that efforts had come a long way to support unpaid carers and therefore the officers involved were to be commended. The Vice-Chair echoed the Chair's comments and added that unpaid carers were a vital support to the services provided by the Social Services Directorate and therefore they were pleased to see significant progress and the amount of work taking place, especially the support relating to young carers.

Councillor Cave then enquired how Elected Members of the Committee could support officers further with the efforts already being made going forward. In response, the Operational Manager for Safeguarding and Service Outcomes advised that the demand for unpaid carer services far exceeded what the Council was in a position to provide. Therefore, how the Council bridged the gap between demand and delivery was the key consideration and would likely be mitigated through the success of the various initiatives and schemes being provided. Therefore, support from Elected Members in relation to the various initiatives and schemes supporting unpaid carers would be welcomed.

In conclusion, the Chair noted that Elected Members were often involved in many different initiatives and contact circles and therefore all Members were encouraged to pass on the information as contained within the Annual Update Report.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the Annual Report for Unpaid Carers and the work undertaken to recognise and support unpaid carers in the Vale of Glamorgan, as hyperlinked within the report, be noted.
- (2) T H A T the duties of the Council and its partners regarding delivering services for Unpaid Carers, within the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, be noted.
- (3) T H A T how the Council and its partners are meeting 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 Committee continues to receive a report on support for Unpaid Carers in the Vale of Glamorgan on an annual basis.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the content of the report to ensure that Members continue to exercise effective oversight of the important function, undertaken by the Social Services Directorate, on an annual basis.
- (2) That Scrutiny Members maintain awareness of the duties outlined within legislation.
- (3) That Scrutiny Members are aware of the Ministerial Priorities set for Unpaid Carers and the regional work undertaken to meet them.

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- (4) To facilitate support from the Cabinet Member for Unpaid Carers.

873 SERVICE PLANS AND TARGET SETTING TO DELIVER THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN 2024/25 (DSS) –

The report was presented by the Director of Social Services, the purpose of which was to seek Members' endorsement of the priority actions as reflected in Service Plans and proposed service performance targets for the period 2024/2025 that would deliver the Council's Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) within the remit of the Committee.

The Director advised that the report presented the planned service activities (as outlined in Service Plans) and associated performance targets within the remit of the Committee. These were the Committee's specific areas of focus associated with the delivery of the Council's Annual Delivery Plan for 2024/2025 as aligned to the four Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives (attached at Appendices A and B to the report).

All Scrutiny Committees considered a draft Annual Delivery Plan in December 2023 and their views, alongside that of other key stakeholders, had informed the final Plan, to be endorsed by Cabinet on 22nd February, 2024 and referred on to Full Council on 6th March, 2024 for final approval.

With no comments or questions raised, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the planned service activities for 2024/25, relating to the remit of the Committee and set out in Appendix A to the report, be endorsed.

(2) T H A T the proposed measures and service performance targets for 2024/2025, relating to the remit of the Committee and set out in Appendix B to the report, be endorsed.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the content of the report to ensure that the planned activities 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 2024/2025.

(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 2024/2025.

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874 ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN MONITORING REPORT: QUARTER 3
PERFORMANCE 2023/24 (DSS) –

The purpose of the report was to present Quarter 3 (Q3) performance results for the period 1st April, 2023 to 31st December, 2023 in delivering the 2023/24 Annual Delivery Plan commitments as aligned to the Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives.

The Director of Social Services referred to the presentation appended at Appendix A to the report which provided a summary of progress against the Annual Delivery Plan commitments for 2023/24, as aligned to the remit of the Committee, and noted the positive achievements that had been made over the last year.

With no comments or questions raised, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the Quarter 3 performance results and progress towards achieving the Annual Delivery Plan 2023/24 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.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the content of the report to ensure the Council clearly demonstrates the progress being made towards achieving its commitments in the Annual Delivery Plan 2023/24 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 in that it maximises its contribution to achieving the well-being goals for Wales.