

No.

HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Hybrid Meeting held on 9th July, 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.M. Ball, I.R. Buckley, C.A. Cave, A.M. Collins, C.M. Cowpe, R.E. Godfrey, S. Lloyd-Selby, J. Lynch-Wilson, and J.M. Norman.

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).

185 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”.

186 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor C. Stallard.

187 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meetings held on 24th May and 11th June, 2024 be approved as a correct record.

188 DECLARATION OF INTEREST –

Councillor S. Lloyd-Selby declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 6 – Annual Report of the Director of Social Services: Challenge Version. The nature of the interest was personal as the Councillor had family members in receipt of Care Services. As this was a personal interest Councillor Lloyd-Selby remained in the meeting for the item.

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189 DEVELOPMENT OF THE CORPORATE PLAN 2025-2030, PANEL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE CALENDAR 2024/25 (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 6th June, 2024 as contained within the agenda, was presented by the Director of Social Services.

The Director presented a series of supporting PowerPoint slides to outline the approach to developing a new Vale of Glamorgan Council Corporate Plan for 2025-2030, arrangements and proposed scope for the Panel Performance Assessment and to present the Vale of Glamorgan Annual Performance Calendar for 2024/25. The report also outlined the key findings and learning from the review of last year's Annual Self-Assessment approach and made proposals to further enhance the process in readiness for the 2023/24 self-assessment.

The report presented the Vale of Glamorgan Annual Performance Calendar for 2024/25 which outlined the activities that would be subject to consideration by Members throughout the year. The report also outlined how the Council proposed to engage with elected Members in shaping the processes, key plans and reports aligned to the Annual Performance Calendar to enable the Council to meet the performance requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (LG&E) and contribute to the national goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFG).

The Director advised that the report set out the approach being taken to develop the new five-year Corporate Plan 2025-2030, which would be published in April 2025, as well as the scope and indicative timetable for undertaking the Council's Panel Performance Assessment (PPA) in Autumn 2024. Work on a new Corporate Plan would include the development of new Well-being Objectives and a more outcome focused approach.

Following the Director's presentation of the report, Councillor Cave made reference to the Director's comments in relation to engagement with Elected Members through the Members Champions Network and queried how engagement would differ for Elected Members who had a Champion role.

In response, the Operational Manager for Corporate Strategy and Insight, on behalf of the Director, advised that there were a range of Champion roles that were currently being undertaken by Elected Members, who would be invited to attend specific Champion engagement sessions, allowing the relevant Members to input from the point of view of their specific Champion remit. Specific Member Champion engagement sessions had not yet been arranged; however, all Elected Members had recently received an email inviting them to engagement sessions taking place in the near future. There was an online session for Elected Members and an in-person stakeholder drop-in session, allowing Elected Members the opportunity to raise comments to inform and shape the Council's Well-being Plan. Therefore, officers were hoping that the two sessions would be well attended by all Elected Members.

With no other comments or questions raised, the Committee subsequently

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RECOMMENDED – T H A T both the Cabinet report and reference on development of the Vale of Glamorgan Council Corporate Plan 2025-30, Panel Performance Assessment and Annual Performance Calendar 2024/25 be noted.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure the Council fully discharged its duties under both the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 to publish annual Well-being Objectives, keep performance under review and consult and report on performance through an annual self-assessment relating to the previous financial year.

190 AGE FRIENDLY VALE UPDATE (CX) –

The Operational Manager for Corporate strategy and Insight, with support from the Age Friendly Vale Officer and Policy Officer, introduced the report which advised that the Public Services Board (PSB) launched its first Well-being Plan on 22nd May, 2018. Its second Well-being Plan was launched at an event on 15th June, 2023. Since its launch partners had been working to progress the Well-being Objectives set out in the Plan and the actions aligned to those Objectives. Many of the Objectives and actions were aligned to the work undertaken to help make the Vale of Glamorgan more age friendly. In addition, becoming an Age Friendly Vale was one of the three key priority workstreams for the Plan.

The Age Friendly Vale Officer presented a series of supporting PowerPoint slides to demonstrate that becoming more age friendly was not only linked to the work of the PSB at a local level, but also formed part of the response to the national intentions supported by Welsh Government and the Older People's Commissioner for Wales to have every Local Authority area in Wales achieve Age Friendly Community and City Status, which was provided by the World Health Organisation.

Officers were pleased to report that, in October 2023, the PSB's application on behalf of the Vale of Glamorgan was approved and the Vale of Glamorgan became the fourth Local Authority area in Wales to achieve Age Friendly Status. Following successfully achieving the status, the PSB was now required to develop an Age Friendly Action Plan, outlining how partners would work together, side by side with the community to make the Vale an even better place to grow older. The Officer added that the draft Plan being developed would cover the period 2025 – 2028 to align with the PSB's Well-being Plan and would encompass a range of actions to guide progress on a wide range of domains (linked to the World Health Organisation's 8 Age Friendly Domains) to build a better place for people to age well.

The work of the PSB was reported to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee and said Committee had requested the work of the PSB also be reported to other Committees whose remits aligned to elements of its work to broaden the understanding of the PSB's work amongst a wider range of Elected Members.

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Following the Officer's presentation of the report, Councillor Cave endorsed the objectives stated by the officer to ensure that older persons were well informed, provided with opportunities to stay active and healthy as well as have their voices heard. Under that context, Councillor Cave subsequently asked officers what engagement activities were taking place in rural wards such as their own, Llandow, where it was difficult to reach older persons given that the ward did not have a local library or public transport facilities and instead relied on the Greenlinks transport service which was difficult to access due to difficulties in recruiting volunteer drivers.

In response, the Policy Officer confirmed that funding had been obtained to produce and deliver informative leaflets on Age Friendly Vale which included both a QR code and a telephone number in the hope of reaching older residents more widely. The information in the leaflet would advise residents that the survey was available in both hard copy and digitally. The service was continually looking for new methods of engagement and consultation to raise the profile of the service and a leaflet distribution exercise would be taking place over the next couple of months.

Following the Officer's response, Councillor Cave requested an independent follow up with the officers to discuss how elderly residents in the Llandow ward were being contacted in order to ascertain how residents were accessing leaflets as well as their ability to engage with the included QR codes.

The Chair subsequently echoed Councillor Cave's concerns over levels of digital literacy, and this being a possible barrier to engagement, and therefore requested that further consideration be given around non digital methods of contact to reach those residents who were less able to access information online and that a subsequent report be submitted to the Committee to demonstrate the number of enquiries received via the Council's Contact Centre, following the leaflet distribution exercise, in comparison to contact made using the included QR Code.

Councillor Godfrey then noted that there was a lot of older persons' support available however, it often took significant effort in order to find the information and suggested that an A-Z directory of older persons' services would be useful for Councillors and Town and Community Councils' Clerks to help them with responding to residents' queries and echoed the point raised by both Councillors Cave and the Chair that not all older persons would consider themselves as ICT literate.

In response, the Policy Officer acknowledged the usefulness of a directory when dealing with resident queries and advised that directories already existed in the form of Dewis Cymru and the Glamorgan Voluntary Service (GVS) Directory of Services for Older People in the Vale and Cardiff. The Officer subsequently offered to share both directories with Members of the Committee following the meeting.

In conclusion, the Chair requested that the future report, as previously requested, on the work of the Age Friendly Vale, also include details on the methods of outreach taking place across all ward areas of the Vale of Glamorgan.

With no further comments or questions raised, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the work to develop an Age Friendly Vale and the progress partners are making in developing the new Age Friendly Vale Action Plan be noted.

(2) T H A T the following comments of the Committee be shared with the Public Services Board via the Director of Corporate Resources:

- Consideration be given to alternative methods of outreach in areas of the Vale of Glamorgan that do not have a local library facility or public transport links.
- Consideration be given around non digital methods of contact to reach those residents who are less able to access information online, and
- Consideration be given to the dissemination of information such as an A-Z Services Directory amongst Elected Members and Town and Community Council Clerks to support with responding to ward queries.

(3) T H A T the Committee receives a further report on the work of Age Friendly Vale, following the current Age Friendly promotion / consultation exercise, that includes:

- a) the number of enquiries received via the Council's Contact Centre, following the leaflet distribution exercise, in comparison to contact made using the included QR Code; and
- b) the methods of outreach taking place across all ward areas of the Vale of Glamorgan.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the contents of the report to consider the work to develop an Age Friendly Vale and opportunities to engage with the development of the new Age Friendly Vale Action Plan.

(2) To ensure that the Committee's comments are fed back to the Public Services Board.

(3) To enable Members to be updated on the work of Age Friendly Vale at an appropriate time.

191 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES –
CHALLENGE VERSION (DSS) –

The challenge version of the Director's Report, presented by the Director themselves, 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.

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The Director then took the Committee through the Annual Report, as appended to the covering report, outlining the key performance highlights (pages 3-7) and subsequent challenges across the three service areas: Children and Young People Services, Adult Services, and Resource Management and Safeguarding Services (pages 8 and 9). The Director also summarised the comprehensive detail provided within the report in relation to how the Council shaped its services (pages 10-20) as well as provided a summary of the Compliments and Complaints received over the last year as well as subsequent lessons learnt (pages 20-25).

In conclusion, the Director apprised the Committee on the 14 Priorities identified by the Directorate for 2023/24, as set out on pages 26 to 39 of the Annual Report, which demonstrated that the Directorate had made good progress, despite what had been a difficult year. The Directorate faced further challenges in the future however, it was hoped that the Challenge Report clearly identified the future challenges that could be mitigated by achieving the 14 priority areas identified.

Following the Director's presentation of the report, the Chair began debate by offering the Committee's sincere thanks to the now disbanded Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) Team for all that they had undertaken and achieved during a very difficult time at the height of the national pandemic as well as the recovery period and commended the Director on highlighting the achievements of the Directorate in an extremely difficult financial climate. The work of the Directorate was excellent, and the Committee commended all members of staff for their hard work. The Chair's comments were subsequently echoed by all Members of the Committee.

Councillor Godfrey then highlighted that the 192 complaints received by the Directorate, as stated in the report, would appear high, however, in comparison the number of interventions over the entire year, would be considered a very small percentage and therefore asked how many of the 192 complaints had reached resolution. In response, the Director advised that if a complaint was resolved at the time of being received then the complaint would be considered an enquiry rather than a complaint. If the complaint moved to Stage 1 of the complaint's procedure, then the complaint was reviewed and responded to by the relevant Team Manager. Very few complaints were escalated to Stage 2 and most enquiries required explanations rather than subsequent actions to be put in place. If a complainant had been provided with a response, and no subsequent reply was received, then the Directorate would assume that the complainant was satisfied.

Councillor Lynch-Wilson then commended the Director on an honest report, that was not complacent, and looking to improve going forward. The Councillor also acknowledged the difficulties for the Directorate in relation to staff retention and hoped that a wider solution could be found in the future.

Councillor Lloyd-Selby also commended the Director on the priorities included within the report, which were considered to be the right ones at the current time and noted that progress in achieving the priorities was dependent on internal performance. The Councillor went on to ask for further clarity on how identified challenges for the future with the report would be addressed. For example, the practicalities of mitigating concerns around accessible communication in the Children and Young People Service.

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As a secondary query, Councillor Lloyd-Selby also raised the suggestion of adding comparative data for the Vale of Glamorgan in comparison to other Local Authorities to the report content, which was difficult for Members to find independently. For example, specifics in relation to the remaining number of adults waiting on domiciliary care and the reasons why.

In response, the Director advised that they were always mindful of the amount of information added to the report and agreed with Councillor Lloyd-Selby that comparison data was often difficult to find and noted that comparison data via Stats Wales Data was often unavailable in real time due to the latest data being out of date at the time of looking. The Director thanked Councillor Lloyd-Selby for her useful feedback and advised that this would inform the final draft of the report.

The Vice-Chair then noted that the data within the report fluctuated between raw data and percentages and therefore suggested it would be useful to have more consistency in the way that the data was presented throughout the report. For example, the 192 complaints received by the Directorate may appear high but, in comparison to the number of interventions over the entire year, would be a very small percentage.

In response to a query raised by Councillor Cowpe as to whether the number of out of area child placements had risen or not, the Director advised that the current figure would be shared with the Councillor following the meeting. The Vice-Chair also added that the information was provided regularly to the Corporate Parenting Panel for which the papers were available to all Councillors on the Council's internal Committee Hub.

With no further comments or questions raised, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the contents of the report, and in particular the improvement priorities for Social Services as set out in the Director's Annual Report for 2023-2024 – Challenge Version, be endorsed.

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

- Further clarity on how identified challenges for the future will be addressed. For example, the practicalities of mitigating concerns around accessible communication in the Children and Young People Service.
- Adding comparative data for the Vale of Glamorgan in comparison to other Local Authorities, which is difficult for members to find independently. For example, specifics in relation to the remaining number of adults waiting on domiciliary care and the reasons why.

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- More consistency in the way that data is provided throughout the report which fluctuates between raw data and percentages. For example, the 192 complaints received by the Directorate may appear high but, in comparison to the number of interventions over the entire year, would be a very small percentage.

Reason for recommendations

(1&2) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussion held at the meeting, to contribute to the challenge process for the Director's Annual Report 2023-24, prior to a final draft being presented to Cabinet for consideration.

192 ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN MONITORING REPORT: END OF YEAR QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE (DSS) –

The performance report presented the Council's progress at Quarter 4 (Q4) (1st April, 2023 to 31st March, 2024) towards achieving its Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) (2023/24) commitments as aligned to its Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives.

Three of the four Council Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives were attributed a Green performance status at Q4, and one Well-being Objective was attributed an Amber performance status (Well-being Objective 1). This reflected the good progress made to date in meeting its ADP commitments for 2023/24.

In relation to the planned activities within the remit of the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee, 92.6% (112 out of 121) were attributed a Green performance status and the final 7.4% (9) were attributed a Red status. Of the 34 measures reported where a Red, Amber, Green performance status was applicable, 76.5% (26) were attributed a Green performance status, 5.9% (2) were attributed an Amber status and 17.6% (6) were attributed Red status.

For ease of reference, performance exceptions aligned to the Scrutiny Committee's remit highlight the current status of Red performing actions identified in previous quarters to show direction of travel at end of year. This enabled 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 ADP.

Following the Director's presentation of the report, the Chair noted that, in relation to the six performance measures that were attributed a Red status, these were attributed on the fact that the measure had not yet been fully reached however was expected to be the case.

In addition, the Director advised that the way the Directorate set its actions meant that the Directorate aimed to complete said actions within a performance monitoring year however, sometimes actions would roll over into the next performance year and therefore would change from a Green to a Red status. Therefore, the Director agreed with the Chair that there would be items that would be completed over the course of the municipal year and offered reassurance that good progress had been

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made on all Red status actions and that the Committee would be provided with further performance monitoring updates.

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the Q4 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 that it maximises its contribution to achieving the well-being goals for Wales.