

HOMES AND SAFE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Decision Notice – Hybrid Meeting, 6th December, 2023.

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

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

Present: Councillor A.M. Collins (Chair); Councillors J. Aviet, G. Ball, S. Campbell, S.J. Haines, S.M. Hanks, W.A. Hennessy, S. Lloyd-Selby and H.M. Payne.

Also present: C. Ireland (Citizens Advice Cardiff and Vale Representative), G. Doyle, D. Dutch and V. John (Representatives from Tenant Working Group / Panel); Councillors G. John (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Wellbeing), Dr. I.J. Johnson, S.D. Perkes (Cabinet Member for Public Sector Housing and Tenant Engagement) and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health).

AGENDA ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillors B. Loveluck-Edwards (Vice-Chair) and M.J.G. Morgan; and H. Smith (Representative from Tenant Working Group / Panel).

AGENDA ITEM 2. MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 11th October, 2023 be approved as a correct record.

AGENDA ITEM 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Councillor W.A. Hennessy declared an interest in Agenda Item 4 – Initial Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Revised Budget 2023/24 and Proposals 2024/25. The nature of his interest was that he was a Vale of Glamorgan Council tenant. This was a personal interest only and not prejudicial as per paragraph 19.3.3(b)(ii)(A) of the Council's Constitution. Therefore, Councillor Hennessy remained in the meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor J. Aviet declared an interest in Agenda Item 4 – Initial Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Revised Budget 2023/24 and Proposals 2024/25. The nature of her interest was that she was a Vale of Glamorgan Council tenant. This was a personal interest only and not prejudicial as per paragraph 19.3.3(b)(ii)(A) of the Council's Constitution. Therefore, Councillor Aviet remained in the meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor S.J. Haines declared an interest in Agenda Item 7 – Capital Monitoring for the period 1st April to 30th September, 2023. The nature of his interest was that he was a Committee Member of the Paul Lewis Community Centre, St Athan. This was a personal interest only and not prejudicial under 19.3 of the Council's Constitution. Therefore, Councillor Haines remained in the meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor H.M. Payne declared an interest in Agenda Item 10 – Consultation – White Paper Ending Homelessness in Wales. However, she had dispensation to speak only at Vale of Glamorgan Council meetings when matters regarding housing and homelessness were discussed relating to finance and property given the Councillor's role for Llamau (paragraphs (c), (d), (f) and (h) of the relevant regulations). Therefore, Councillor Payne remained in the meeting during consideration of this item.

**AGENDA ITEM 4. INITIAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)
BUDGET REVISED BUDGET 2023/24 AND PROPOSALS 2024/25 (REF) –**

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the revised 2023/24 budget and initial proposals for 2024/25 be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the reference, report and discussions at the meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM 5. REFRESH OF MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN
2023/24 TO 2028/29 (REF) –**

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Refresh of Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2028/29 be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the reference, report and discussions at the meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM 6. CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING SUMMARY REPORT
(REF) –**

RECOMMENDED – T H A T both the reference and appended Cabinet report on the activity that had been undertaken in relation to Corporate arrangements for Safeguarding across the Council be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the reference and report to provide assurance

around safeguarding activity taking place across the Council as well as to ensure that there was a wide-reaching level of Member oversight.

AGENDA ITEM 7. CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2023 (DEH) –

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the progress made on delivering the 2023/24 Capital Programme within the remit of the Committee in the attached Appendix 1 to the report be noted.
- (2) T H A T the use of Emergency Powers within the remit of the Committee, as detailed in the attached Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.
- (3) T H A T the changes to the 2023/24 and future years' Capital Programme within the remit of the Committee, summarised in paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4 and detailed within the body of the report from paragraph 2.12 onwards, be noted.

Reason for recommendations

(1-3) Having regard to the content of the report to advise Committee of the progress on the Capital Programme, the use of Emergency Powers and changes to the Capital Programme.

AGENDA ITEM 8. QUARTER 2 REVENUE MONITORING 2023/24 (DEH) –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the position with regard to the Authority's 2023/24 Revenue Budget be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 9. ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN MONITORING REPORT: QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE 2023/24 (DEH) –

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the Quarter 2 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 under-performance and to tackle the key challenges identified within the remit of the Committee, be noted.

Reason for recommendations

(1&2) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 10. CONSULTATION – WHITE PAPER ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN WALES (DEH) –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the following comments of the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee be included in the Council's response to the consultation:

- While the aspirations of the proposals in the White Paper were admirable, there were clear concerns on how the Vale of Glamorgan Council would be able to resource and manage these.
- The potential challenges and difficulties in pursuing the proposal of always providing supported housing for under-25s under the Council's current resources and access to appropriate accommodation, which would also require significant investment.
- There was a potential conflict in the White Paper concerning proposals around Personal Housing Plans (PHPs) and individuals' housing options and choices.
- Regarding the statutory duty placed on Local Authorities to draw up a PHP setting out steps to be taken to secure accommodation along with a duty to review PHPs every 8 weeks or more when there were changes of circumstances, it was felt that this could place undue pressure on Council staff in the Housing Solutions Team due to current homelessness numbers. It was suggested that the duty to review should start at a higher time span, i.e. 12 weeks and then work towards an 8-week review.
- It was felt that persons with certain disabilities and care needs would be adversely affected by the proposed abolition of the priority need and intentionality test, as this would unduly impact their specific needs and affect their ability to be near local support networks, as well as the proposals ignoring the extra barriers such persons faced.
- It was important that the Welsh Government had a baseline understanding of the current situation and pressures faced by the Vale of Glamorgan Council and other Welsh Local Authorities around housing and homelessness, as well as the need to define the related timescales to implement the White Paper proposals.
- To stress to Welsh Government that although these proposals were aspirational, should they become legislation, these would place additional statutory duties and pressures on the Council and its resources, although some measures were already being undertaken by the Council.
- That the Council's response to the consultation on the White Paper be shared with the Committee, and that it receives any subsequent updates.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure the views of the Committee were considered as part of the Council's response to the White Paper consultation.