

VOLUNTARY SECTOR JOINT LIAISON COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote Meeting held on 23rd January 2023.

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

The Meeting recording is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor R.M. Birch (Chair), Councillor S.C. Lloyd-Selby (Vice-Chair); Councillors G. Bruce, I. Buckley, A.M. Collins and J.M. Norman.

Representative of the Voluntary Sector: Councillor C. Hawkins (from Town and Community Councils).

Also Present: Councillors G. John, I.J. Johnson, H.M. Payne and M.R Wilson.

634 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Principal 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.”

635 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillor C. Iannucci and L. Newton (Cardiff and Vale Action for Mental Health).

636 APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY VICE-CHAIR FROM THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR –

In the absence of representatives from the Voluntary Sector being present, this item was suggested to be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

AGREED – T H A T the appointment be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

Reason for decision

In the absence of Voluntary Sector representatives at the meeting.

637 MINUTES –

AGREED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 7th February 2022 be approved as a correct record

638 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Councillor S.C. Lloyd-Selby declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 – Cost of Living Support for Warm Spaces and Other Means of Support, being a Trustee of the Foodbank in Barry, but advised that this did not equate to a prejudicial interest as the report before Committee provided an overall update on the work the Council had undertaken to date.

639 COST OF LIVING SUPPORT FOR FOOD, WARM SPACES AND OTHER MEANS OF SUPPORT (CX) –

The Director of Corporate Resources commenced by advising the Committee that the report outlined that Welsh Government had previously put two schemes in place to provide support for those impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. The mandatory scheme made £150 available to all Band A to D Council taxpayers and those in receipt of Council Tax Reduction. The discretionary scheme had targeted those who had potentially fallen through the gaps of the mandatory scheme and those most impacted by the crisis. To date, 36,305 households had been supported through the cost-of-living scheme.

The report stated that food insecurity had been increasing both nationally and locally as documented in the Community Impact Assessments September 2020 and March 2021 highlighting the impacts of COVID-19 and the Public Services Board's recent Well-being Assessment.

It was expected that food insecurity would be further exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis. The impact of the cost-of-living crisis had been reported anecdotally with a reduction in the food donations local food support organisations were receiving and increases in the number of people using their services.

Several funding streams had been made available to the Local Authority to support those most in need of accessing food and tackling food poverty. Recently Welsh Government via the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) had provided additional funding to tackle food insecurity and to provide warm spaces over the winter period, the warm spaces were being promoted in the Vale under the title of "A Warm Welcome".

Audit Wales had recently published a report 'Time for Change – Poverty in Wales' which included a number of key findings and recommendations for consideration.

The Director of Corporate Resources having regard to paragraph 1.7 of the report, advised that the Big Box Bwyds Project had created nearly 1200 food and essential hygiene support parcels. He drew attention to the Cost-of-Living webinar that had been arranged and having regard to the key findings of the Audit Wales report drew further attention to the three critical challenges e.g., cost of living, Project Zero and organisational resilience. In recognising the multi-agency approach the initiative was

undertaking the Chair stated that she was pleased to see everyone pulling together in the various situations identified within the report.

In referring to the cost-of-living crisis, Councillor Lloyd-Selby stated that it was important for feedback to be provided having regard to the work the organisations were undertaking which could also detail the impact / difference that had been made to communities which the Council could measure against.

In response the Director advised that having regard to some of the grants, Welsh Government had asked for information as to how the grants had been used for warm spaces, how many people were accessing the support and for any available qualitative case studies to be provided. He also referred to the pop-up advice and foodbank initiative undertaken by Hafod recognising there were definitely some experiences that could be presented as a result of that work.

In response to a query regarding the number of warm spaces that were registered in the Vale, the Director advised that there were currently 33 warm spaces, but further work was being undertaken with partners in order to increase this figure.

AGREED –

- (1) T H A T the report and Appendix A be noted.
- (2) T H A T a further update on the work undertaken be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting
- (2) To update and apprise Committee on work being undertaken.

640 PROJECT ZERO UPDATE REPORT (CX) –

The Director of Corporate Resources in presenting the report advised that Appendix A provided an update on the work undertaken to date in respect of the Council's project. The Appendix detailed a wide range of activities being undertaken to ensure the Council continued to deliver against commitments in the Climate Change Challenge Plan and to take forward Project Zero. Progress included work around communications, electric vehicles, a new Green Infrastructure Plan, waste management and schools together with some of the key data regarding the Council's carbon emissions as reported to Welsh Government in October 2022.

The report also provided Members with an update regarding the finances associated with Project Zero and the approach the Board was taking with regards to the allocation of funds and updates on the approach to programme management and progress reporting for Project Zero.

Project Zero was the Council's response to the climate emergency.

The Director of Corporate Resources reaffirmed that the Council's draft budget consultation had a planned use of reserves to assist with the in-depth study of county-wide emissions by different sectors which would be reported to Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet later in the year. It was also recognised that the Third Sector was part of the Public Services Board and would be involved in the delivery of the Public Services Board Wellbeing Plan.

Councillor Lloyd-Selby commented that it was important to balance the issues and noted that phase 3 was about trying to understand where the emissions would be coming from within the different sectors. Echoing the Councillors comments the Director advised that it would be important to support Vale of Glamorgan businesses, understand the wider impact of purchasing and the environmental impact. It was also important for the Council to recognise the extent to which other organisations can make a contribution and to not put expectations on them that they may be unable to achieve as well as being mindful that different organisations may be at different places to meet such challenges.

In conclusion, the Chair commented on the amount of work being undertaken stating that it was very gratifying to see the project being pushed forward in the way it was.

Having considered the report, it was subsequently

AGREED – T H A T the progress detailed in the report in relation to the challenges within the Climate Change Challenge Plan be noted.

Reason for decision

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