

CABINET

Minutes of a Hybrid meeting held on 11th January, 2024.

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

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

Present: Councillor L. Burnett (Chair); Councillors R.M. Birch, B.E. Brooks, G. John, S.D. Perkes, S. Sivagnanam, E. Williams and M.R. Wilson.

Also Present: Councillors I. Buckley, E.J. Goodjohn and E. Goodjohn.

C188 ANNOUNCEMENT –

The Leader welcomed all parties to the meeting of the Vale of Glamorgan Cabinet.

Members and Officers were reminded that the meeting was being livestreamed, recorded and would be uploaded to the Vale of Glamorgan Council's website as soon as practicable after the meeting.

She asked if all participants to ensure that if participating in person in the Chamber that their microphone not be activated and for remote attendees to 'mute' themselves when not speaking to avoid any background noise or feedback when other participants were speaking, and if a participant wished to speak if they could activate their respective request to speak function or use the 'raise hand' function if attending remotely.

Members were asked to ensure that all debate be raised verbally and not via the 'chat' function for the sake of the recording. The 'chat' function could be used to highlight any technical issues and/or to get the attention of the Chair or Democratic Services Officers.

C189 MINUTES –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 14th December, 2023 be approved as a correct record.

C190 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

C191 REFRESH OF MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024/25 TO 2028/29 (REF)

The reference from Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 13th December, 2023 was presented.

The Leader moved that the item be fully considered alongside Item 5 on the agenda which concerned the same matter, which was agreed.

Having considered the reference alongside Item 5 on the agenda, it was subsequently

RESOLVED – T H A T the item be fully considered alongside Item 5 on the agenda which concerned the same matter.

Reason for decision

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

C192 REFRESH OF MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024/25 TO 2028/29 (REF)

The reference from Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 13th December, 2023 was presented and was considered alongside Agenda Item 4.

The Leader was grateful to both Committees for their discussions and consideration of the relevant references. The Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee had recommended that that the Council should emphasise the need to ensure that public consultation clearly set out the financial challenges, which the Leader said would be carried out.

Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee referred to the importance of the Vale of Glamorgan Council to adequately fund and resource more sustainable sources of procurement in order meet its obligations under Project Zero, which was agreed.

Having considered the references, it was subsequently

RESOLVED – T H A T the comments from both the Environment and Regeneration and Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committees be noted and Recommendation (2) from the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee be agreed.

Reason for decision

Having regard to the contents of the references and discussions at the meetings.

C193 QUARTER 2 REVENUE MONITORING 2023/24 (REF)

The reference from Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 13th December, 2023 was presented.

There had been increasing demand for services for children and young people who had been adversely affected because of the pandemic and part of an increase in complex needs that needed to be addressed, such as anxiety and behavioural issues. Steps had been taken to mitigate the in-year inflationary pressures of School Transport and overspends in Highway Maintenance which would be further considered as part of final budget setting. The Committee also considered matters such as internal borrowing, reorganisation of Council office space and the challenging inflationary prices faced by the Council.

A number of areas were discussed and referred for Cabinet consideration, including the importance of anticipating demands, which the Leader said was considered when looking to match challenges and potential demands via issues flagged on the Risk Register with reserves. She said that the nature of the needs for Education and Social Services were very different and though the Council prioritised working for the most vulnerable within those services, the nature and need had to be prioritised and so equal focus was not always the best way forward. Future reporting and 'split' information on Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Welsh Language information and resources with regards to education were being discussed with Officers to see what was possible. Regarding the importance of monitoring the Capital Programme and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) effectively, much closer monitoring was brought in the previous year which resulted in less slippage on the Capital Programme, but the Leader would speak to colleagues in Finance to see if there were any areas that had not been fully addressed.

Councillor Wilson recognised the work of Officers in delivering projects despite external cost pressures and that Cabinet would continue to monitor the revenue position.

Having considered the reference, it was subsequently

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T anticipating potential demands on and increased costs in key services provided by the Council, as well as other potential challenges or risks would be addressed when setting the budget and reserves.
- (2) T H A T Committee's views concerning the need for an equal focus on Education as well as Social Services be noted.
- (3) T H A T discussions would take place with Officers to see if future reporting could breakdown and 'split' information on Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Welsh Language information and resources with regards to education within the data held.

(4) T H A T discussions would take place with Officers to see if any additional monitoring could be undertaken regarding monitoring the Capital Programme and Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Reasons for decisions

(1-4) Having regard to the contents of the reference and discussions at the meeting.

C194 ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN MONITORING REPORT: QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE 2023/24 (REF)

The reference from Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 13th December, 2023 was presented.

The Leader moved that the item be fully considered alongside Item 10 on the agenda which concerned the same matter, which was agreed.

Having considered the reference alongside Item 10 on the agenda, it was subsequently

RESOLVED – T H A T the item be fully considered alongside Item 10 on the agenda which concerned the same matter.

Reason for decision

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

C195 CABINET QUARTERLY WORK PROGRAMMES – OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2023 AND JANUARY TO MARCH 2024 (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – ALL) –

The Leader presented the report, the purpose of which was to involve, engage and consult Members of the progress to date in respect of Cabinet Quarterly Work Programmes for the period October to December 2023 and to confirm the Quarterly Work Programme for January to March 2024.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the updates to the Cabinet Quarterly Work Programme for October to December 2023 attached at Appendix 1 be agreed.

(2) T H A T the Cabinet Quarterly Work Programme January to March 2024 attached at Appendix 2 be endorsed.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) To monitor progress.
- (2) To approve the Work Programme for January to March 2024.

C196 FINAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET PROPOSALS 2024/25, RENT SETTING 2024/2025 AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2024/25 (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES) –

The Leader presented the report, the purpose of which was to set the HRA budget for the financial year 2024/25, set the rents and service charges for the forthcoming rent year beginning on 1st April 2024 and present the 30 Year Housing Business Plan starting financial year 2024/25.

The Leader referred to a required amendment to references within the report and Recommendation (5) that referred to Appendix 1 and should have referred to Appendix A. Recommendation (5) also referred to the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2024/54 which should have read Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2024/25.

The HRA was a stand-alone account and was separate from the rest of the Council's finances. Previously a number of Councils had transferred their stock to Housing Associations but tenants within the Vale of Glamorgan voted to remain within Council control.

The matter had been discussed at the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting that took place on 10th January, 2024 where there had been an in depth discussion but not adequate time to produce a written reference, however Cabinet Members had been present at the meeting where Committee recommended to Cabinet that the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2024/25 (draft) attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

Scrutiny Committee had discussed how the HRA budget was managed. The Leader clarified that the HRA was not run for profit and the Council wanted to be ambitious and sought to build more Council houses for the benefit of residents of the Vale of Glamorgan, upgrade existing stock so residents lived in efficient and well maintained properties and were as environmentally sustainable and low energy as possible.

Welsh Government set the Policy for Social Housing Rents. Council rents were around 30% lower than private rents for comparable properties and were markedly below the levels charged by Registered Social Landlords in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Leader referred to the support given by the Income Team that provided budgeting advice, claiming benefits, income maximisation and securing grants

whose work in the previous year had led to tenants receiving an additional household income of £250,000.

Scrutiny Committee also discussed levels of homelessness and evictions and the Leader referred to paragraph 1.8 of the report and the pledges to assist tenants in financial hardship, in order to mitigate the negative impacts of the cost of living crisis.

The report was being referred to the Full Council on meeting on 15th January, 2024 for final consideration.

Councillor Wilson said that the HRA also looked at the management of buildings also that the Council were able to deliver speedy and effective repairs. A self-sustaining HRA was vital in supporting that service. The cost of living crisis affected the Council as well as tenants and there was a difficult balance to achieve.

Councillor Perkes said she had visited some of the properties that were due to come online at the Bendricks earlier in the day and highlighted the quality and standard of the homes that the Council were providing for future tenants which were energy efficient, had space for individuals and were future-proofed as much as possible. She also referred to the work concerning retro-fitting energy efficient measures in existing Council properties alongside ongoing maintenance to homes via the HRA.

The Leader said that the development that Councillor Perkes had referred to had failed as the contractor had gone into administration, and had been taken over by the Council and delivered it with minimal financial impact to sub-contractors, many of whom were local business and that despite the disruption the scheme would be back on target for final completion by the original deadline.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein and noting the amendment from Appendix 1 to Appendix A within the report and Recommendation (5)

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T Cabinet recommend to Full Council that the final Housing Revenue Account budget proposals for 2024/25 set out below be approved:

	Original 2023/24	Change	2024/25 Final Proposed Budget £000
Expenditure			
Supervision & Management – General	4,366	329	4,695
Supervision & Management – Special	1,604	345	1,949
Repairs & Maintenance	4,681	319	5,000

Capital Financing Costs	5,327	465	5,792
Rent, Rates, Taxes & Other Charges	221	49	270
Increase in Provision for Bad Debts	948	79	1,027
Capital Expenditure from Revenue Account (CERA)	17,187	(8,990)	8,197
	34,334	(7,404)	26,930
Income			
Dwelling Rents	(22,453)	(3,340)	(25,793)
Non Dwelling Rents	(173)	(13)	(186)
Interest	(156)	111	(45)
Charges For Services and Facilities	(601)	(83)	(684)
Contribution towards expenditure	(74)	(20)	(94)
Grant Income	(205)	0	(205)
	(23,662)	(3,345)	(27,007)
(Surplus)/ deficit for the year	10,672	(10,749)	(77)
Working Balance Brought Forward as at 1st April 2024	(11,621)	10,672	(949)
Working Balance Carried Forward as at 31st March 2025	(949)	(77)	(1,026)

(2) T H A T Cabinet recommends to Full Council to approve an average rent increase of 6.7%, as set out in paragraphs 2.17.

(3) T H A T Cabinet recommends to Full Council to approve the increase suggested for other services as set out in the table below and in paragraphs 2.18 to 2.25.

50 Week Basis	2023/24 Actual Charges	2024/25 Proposed Charges	
	£	£	
Grounds Maintenance	1.47	1.49	per week
Cleaning of communal areas	2.75	2.92	per week
Lighting of communal areas	1.85	2.51	per week
Laundry Facilities	0.41	0.62	per week
Window Cleaning	0.16	0.18	per week
Lift Maintenance	0.99	1.33	per week
Door Entry	0.50	0.71	per week
Intercom	0.94	0.95	per week
CCTV	0.95	0.0	per week -Nil one year only
Sewerage Treatment Plants	426.66	455.25	per annum
Cesspools	411.50	439.00	per annum

(4) T H A T Cabinet recommends to Full Council to approve all changes to rents and service charges be implemented from 1st April, 2024, with the first week of April being a non-chargeable rent week and that increase notices be sent to tenants two

months in advance of the new charges coming into effect as required by the Rented Homes Wales Act.

(5) T H A T the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2024/25 (draft) attached at Appendix A to the report be approved.

(6) T H A T use of the urgent decision procedure as set out in Section 15.14 of the Council's Constitution be approved in order for Final Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Proposals 2024/25, Rent Setting and Housing Business Plan to be referred to Full Council on 15th January, 2024.

Reasons for decisions

(1) To facilitate budget monitoring and to demonstrate a balanced budget with a drawdown from HRA reserves to bring the reserve back into balance with the Housing Business Plan 2024/25.

(2) In order that new rent levels were set within the specified Welsh Government guidelines and to meet the tenant notification deadline as required by statute.

(3) That charges were approved and to meet the tenant notification deadline as required by statute.

(4) In order that charges were approved, new rent levels were set within the specified Welsh Government guidelines and to meet the tenant notification deadline as required by statute.

(5) To obtain Cabinet approval for the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2023/53 (draft) prior to referral to Council.

(6) To allow the report to be referred to Full Council on 15th January, 2024 in order to comply with the Renting Homes Wales Act and meet the requirement of the Housing Business plan submission for 31st March, 2024.

C197 ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN MONITORING REPORT: QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE 2023/24 (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – ALL) –

The Leader presented the report along with the reference from Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee listed under Item 7 on the agenda, the purpose of which was to present quarter 2 performance results for the period 1st April, 2023 to 30th September, 2023 in delivering the Council's 2023/24 Annual Delivery Plan commitments as aligned to Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives.

The report was produced in a different layout and revised to reflect some of the challenges that were being faced. A presentation was given to Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee which was attached at Appendix A. All Scrutiny Committees had seen the report and noted the Recommendations, with additional comments noted in the reference from Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee asked Cabinet to note the importance of the Vale of Glamorgan Council working with stakeholders, other public and private bodies and partners, including the Public Service Board (PSB) in working towards Project Zero and their collective net zero agreements. The Leader reminded Members that a report was brought to Cabinet twice a year that concerned the collaboration work that took place between the Council and stakeholder partners.

The Committee also asked that specific areas of PSB activity were presented for scrutiny by relevant Scrutiny Committees during the year. The Leader said that she would discuss that matter with Officers for clarity on what specific areas of PSB activity were presented for scrutiny, was mindful of not creating another Committee for PSB members to attend and would look to see if there was information that could be shared with other Scrutiny Committees where overlaps existed.

As such, Cabinet noted the comments and accepted the recommendations from Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Williams had attended the Scrutiny meeting and took part in the discussion and the importance of the PSB was recognised as was the collaboration between the different partners. Concern had been raised about the Council scrutinising PSB reports as they had their own governance arrangements in place, and it was agreed that it would be looked into by Officers. The Leader proposed that the matter be added to the discussion at the next internal meeting of Cabinet Members and Scrutiny Chairs to explore effective governance and would discuss with the relevant Director.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the comments from Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee be noted and the recommendations accepted.
- (2) T H A T the performance results and progress towards achieving the Annual Delivery Plan 2023/24 commitments as aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives be endorsed.
- (3) T H A T the views and recommendations of Scrutiny Committees in relation to Q2 performance and approve identified remedial actions as the basis to address areas of underperformance and to tackle the key challenges identified.

Reason for decision

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the reference and discussions at the meeting.

(2) To ensure the Council clearly demonstrated 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.

(3) To ensure the Council was effectively assessing its performance in line with the requirement to meet performance requirements as outlined in the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and reflecting the requirement of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that it maximised the contribution to achieving the well-being goals for Wales.

C198 RETENDERING OF INSURANCE 2023/24 (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES) –

The Leader presented the Part I report, with the Part II report later on the meeting agenda, the purpose of which was to advise Cabinet that the Council's insurance policies would need to be retendered during 2023/24 due to the expiry of the existing long term agreements and to outline and agree the process that would be followed in carrying out the tenders and contract award.

The Leader referred to paragraph 1.1 of the report which listed the Council's external policies where risks were larger and could not be maintained in-house. Tendering would look at a range of alternative models and outcomes, using a variety of different excesses, as well as reviewing the Council's claim history and appetite for risk.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the position regarding the Council's insurance arrangements and the tender process to be followed be noted.

(2) T H A T authority to determine and generally deal with all aspects of the procurement process and ancillary matters up to and including the awarding of the contract for a period of (three, five or seven) years be delegated to the Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources.

(3) T H A T the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to agree the terms of and execute contracts with the successful providers.

(4) T H A T the direct award of the leasehold insurance be agreed.

Reasons for decisions

(1) To keep Cabinet informed and apprised of insurance issues.

- (2) To enable the Head of Finance/s151 Officer to evaluate the different proposals and determine the outcome of the process.
- (3) To have an appropriate contract in place for the supply of insurance cover.
- (4) To ensure sufficient leasehold insurance was in place in a limited market.

**C199 ANNUAL EQUALITY MONITORING REPORT 2022-23 (CEERS)
(SCRUTINY – LEARNING AND CULTURE) –**

The Cabinet Member presented the report, the purpose of which was to seek approval of the Annual Equality Monitoring Report (attached at Appendix A to the report). The Monitoring Report demonstrated the work being undertaken and that the Vale of Glamorgan Council was committed to equality within the Vale of Glamorgan through all its services and policies.

Councillor Sivagnanam referred to the ten objectives listed in paragraph 2.2 of the report and examples for each of those objectives listed within the Strategic Equality Objectives within Appendix A, as well as information regarding the Public Participation Strategy.

Once the final version of the report was agreed by Scrutiny and Cabinet, the Annual Equality Monitoring Report would be translated into Welsh for bi-lingual versions to be made available.

The Leader said that individual characteristics needed to be understood so as the Council could understand how best to serve those relevant needs.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2022-2023 as described in the body of the report and at Appendix A be approved.
- (2) T H A T the report be referred to Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee and that any comments be referred back to Cabinet for consideration and inclusion in the final version of the Annual Equality Monitoring Report.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) To allow the Council to meet its reporting duty under the specific duties for Wales and continue to make progress towards meeting the public sector equality duty whilst ensuring the Council's equality work was available for scrutiny by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and others.

(2) To enable the Scrutiny Committee to consider the report and to enable publication by 31st March, 2023 to meet the Council's statutory duties.

C200 REVIEW OF VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL STRATEGIC EQUALITY OBJECTIVES FOR PERIOD 2024-25 (CEERS) (SCRUTINY – LEARNING AND CULTURE) –

The Cabinet Member presented the report, the purpose of which was to seek Cabinet endorsement of the proposals for reviewing Strategic Equality Objectives for the period 2024-25.

Strong data had been made available both from Welsh Government and the Vale of Glamorgan Council's 'Let's Talk about Life in the Vale' survey and would form part of the review of the Council's equality objectives.

The Leader said that having the Annual Equality Monitoring Report aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan would be welcomed and provide greater context to plans and strategies across the Vale of Glamorgan.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the proposals for the review of equality objectives (contained in Appendix A) ahead of wider stakeholder engagement as outlined in the report and equality impact assessment (Appendix B) be approved.

(2) T H A T the report and appendices be referred to Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee for their consideration as part of the proposed consultation process as outlined in the body of the report.

Reasons for decisions

(1) To ensure the Council had reviewed and agreed strategic equality objectives which reflected the work being undertaken across the Council to improve equality and fairness in the Vale of Glamorgan.

(2) To enable:-

- timely and meaningful consultation on the proposed review of the strategic equality objectives for the period 2024-25, including consideration by the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee.
- time for the consultation process to run and for the findings of the same to be fully considered and scrutinised prior to the agreeing and publishing of the strategic equality objectives for 2024 – 2025 by 31st March, 2024.

C201 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC –

RESOLVED – T H A T under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 4 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Act, the relevant paragraphs of the Schedule being referred to in brackets after the minute heading.

C202 RETENDERING OF INSURANCE 2023/24 (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES) (EXEMPT INFORMATION – PARAGRAPH 4) –

The Leader presented the report, the purpose of which was to advise Cabinet that the Council's insurance policies would need to be retendered during 2023/24 due to the expiry of the existing long term agreements and to outline and agree the process that would be followed in carrying out the tenders and contract award.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the position regarding the Council's insurance arrangements and the tender process to be followed be noted.
- (2) T H A T authority to determine and generally deal with all aspects of the procurement process and ancillary matters up to and including the awarding of the contract for a period of (three, five or seven) years to be delegated to the Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources.
- (3) T H A T the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to agree the terms of and execute contracts with the successful providers.
- (4) T H A T the direct award of the leasehold insurance be agreed.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) To keep Cabinet informed and apprised of insurance issues.
- (2) To enable the Head of Finance/s151 Officer to evaluate the different proposals and determine the outcome of the process.
- (3) To have an appropriate contract in place for the supply of insurance cover.
- (4) To ensure sufficient leasehold insurance was in place in a limited market.