

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 15 January 2026
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Live Well Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Action to Prevent and Tackle Poverty
Purpose of Report:	To update on work being undertaken to tackle poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.
Report Owner:	Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources
Responsible Officer:	Director of Corporate Resources
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Due to the corporate nature of this report, no specific Ward Member consultation has been undertaken.
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report provides an update on work being undertaken across the Council and in partnership to tackle poverty, and to respond to the cost-of-living crisis in the period April 2025 – September 2025 • This report illustrates the breadth of work undertaken to support people into employment, help families and young people with financial and wellbeing support including various sports opportunities as well as the developing work within schools to use them as community hubs. • This report highlights the work to tackle food insecurity by supporting projects that improve access to food, reduce loneliness and isolation through supporting the development of community spaces, and providing financial support to individuals through a number of schemes. • This report also provides details about the use of the cost-of-living reserve, which was established as part of the 2023-24 budget. Shared Prosperity Funding is also supporting a number of projects that will be helping to target poverty and address the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis. 	

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet consider the work being undertaken with regards to tackling poverty and the cost-of-living crisis as part of the delivery of Vale 2030.
2. That Cabinet approve the proposals for progressing a response to the latest data released as part of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation and receive a further report on this and the Council's overall work to tackle poverty and the cost-of-living crisis in six months.
3. That Cabinet notes the use of the cost-of-living reserve to support those in need.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure Cabinet is aware of the work being undertaken with regards to tackling poverty and the cost-of-living crisis which has been identified as a key challenge in Vale 2030.
2. To enable Cabinet to consider progress in addressing this area of work as a priority in Vale 2030 and to ensure the Council actively progresses work within our most deprived communities.
3. To ensure that Cabinet is aware of the use of the cost-of-living reserve to date.

1. Background

- 1.0 The importance of tackling and preventing poverty is a key element of the Council's new Corporate Plan, Vale 2030. In the Plan there are a number of commitments across all five objectives which collectively provide a framework for work on poverty. The Public Services Board's (PSB) Well-being Plan also includes, as one of its priority workstreams, 'to work with our more deprived communities' and an objective 'to be a more equitable and connected Vale'.
- 1.1 A significant amount of work is taking place across the Council, and in partnership to tackle poverty and alleviate the pressures felt by the current cost of living crisis. This report provides an overview of this work, highlighting the different workstreams and organisations involved in work from April to September 2025. This report also sets out performance against an agreed set of indicators for 2025-26. The report builds on reports previously presented to Members as part of the reporting against the Annual Delivery Plan 2024/25 and the critical challenge of tackling poverty.
- 1.2 As part of the 2023/24 budget, the Council established a cost-of-living reserve of £854K to fund work to alleviate the pressures of the cost-of-living crisis. Details of how this funding is utilised is included in the report.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

Impacts of deprivation and the cost-of-living crisis in the Vale of Glamorgan

- 2.1** Our data tells us that there are issues of poverty across the Vale of Glamorgan and that the cost-of-living is continuing to cause hardship, with persisting issues of affordability with regards to food, energy and housing. In 2019, there were 3 Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the Vale of Glamorgan ranked in the top 10% most deprived areas in Wales. In November 2025, Welsh Government released the latest Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. That report shows that in 2025, 7 LSOAs are ranked in the top- 10%. (8% of all LSOAs in the Vale of Glamorgan). All 7 LSOAs are located in Barry. All but 2 LSOAs have been ranked in the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in Wales in previous iterations of Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD).
- 2.2** A further four LSOAs are included in the 10-20% most deprived LSOAs in Wales. There is a consistent correlation between these areas and higher proportions of people on lower incomes, who are in receipt of Universal Credit and in receipt of unemployment support. There is a recognition that these groups have been identified as most vulnerable to the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis and experiences of deprivation.
- 2.3** The Council is currently analysing the Index and preparing to brief Members in January 2026. The analysis is considering each of the LSOAs to understand the very local circumstances, identify work already underway by the Council and partners and to develop an approach to responding to the latest data. To assist in this, the Strategic Leadership Team, Strategic Insight Board and Public Service Board (PSB) have all discussed the headline data and Officers are now developing the further response.
- 2.4** Since March 2022, there has been a consistent month-on-month increase in the total number of people in receipt of Universal Credit. While this is reflective of the UK government's strategy to move recipients from legacy benefits to Universal Credit, it also reflects a consistent growth in recipients. In September 2025, a total of 15,033 people were in receipt of Universal Credit in the Vale of Glamorgan, 10,240 of those in receipt of Universal Credit were not in employment, while 4,780 were in employment. This represents 7.9% of the total number of people in employment in the Vale of Glamorgan. The cost-of-living crisis has been associated with sharp increases in the rates of inflation, driven by growing food and energy prices. Following its peak of 11.1% in October 2022, Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) slowed, and was 3.6% in October 2025. While the overall CPI rate stood at 3.6%, the 12 month CPI rate for Food and non-alcoholic beverages stood at 4.9% reflecting a steady increase since March 2025. Some households experience higher effective rates of inflation as they must allocate a higher proportion of their household income to cover essentials.
- 2.5** In May 2025, the Trussell Trust published their end-of-year statistics for the number of emergency food parcels distributed by food banks in the Trussell Trust Community. In the Vale of Glamorgan during this period (1st April 2024 to 30th March 2025) 8,139 emergency food parcels were distributed, with 5,193 to adults and 2,946 to children. This figure represents a 6.4% fall in the year from the highest number distributed in a year of 8,662 in 2023/24. This fall is representative of the 9% fall in the number of parcels distributed across Wales in 2024/25. The [Trussell Trust's End of Year report for Wales](#) highlights reports from food banks that those in receipt of support are experiencing deepening and prolonged levels of hardship; stuck in a cycle of financial difficulty, and living in increasingly challenging situations which are putting immense pressure on people's mental health.

Vale 2030

- 2.6** Vale 2030, the Council's Corporate Plan has an increased emphasis on tackling poverty and inequalities in the Vale of Glamorgan. The Plan has identified three key challenges, Poverty, the Climate and Nature Emergencies and Inequalities. As part of our work to deliver all the Objectives in this Plan we have included more actions that will seek to prevent and tackle poverty. Section 5 brings together these actions that cut across all of the Wellbeing Objectives to provide a holistic view of the Council's work. The actions aim to provide support across housing, employment, access to services and advice, food, families, social activities and transport.
- 2.7** This report has been structured to reflect the actions outlined within Vale 2030.
- 2.8** Vale 2030 commits to increasing the supply of good quality, accessible and affordable housing, and to prevent homelessness and provide housing options. It aims to develop and improve links between schools, colleges, universities and business to ensure people have the right skills to access current and future employment opportunities. The Council will transform our services and how we work to better meet the needs of the community and to make the best use of our resources, including using digital technology more innovatively. There is a strong focus on supporting children and families living in poverty and helping to increase their income, access food and housing and escape poverty through wraparound support and advice services.
- 2.9** These commitments have been taken forward into actions for 2025/26 in the five Directorate Plans.

Key Activities

- 2.10** The following paragraphs detail a range of activities that are being taken forward as part of the Council's activities to tackle poverty and respond to the cost-of-living crisis. This report covers the period April 2025 – September 2025 highlighting the recent progress and outcomes of the work identified.

Welsh Benefits Charter

- 2.11** The Welsh Benefits Charter outlines the aims for the Welsh Benefits system. Welsh Benefits include Free School Meals, Council Tax reduction scheme, Schools Essentials Grant, and Education Maintenance Allowance. At present, these benefits are separate from each other, and people must make different claims to access the support. The Charter aims to make it easier for people in Wales to claim Welsh Benefits they are entitled to.
- 2.12** As an Authority we have already combined some processes to make these more customer-focused and been working closely with other Local Authorities in Wales and are sharing good practice. There is user research being carried out to understand if there is anything that can be created which could make the customer claim experience

easier and the coordinating team are looking to work with several Local Authorities to test if this would work.

Real Living Wage Accreditation

- 2.13** The Council is now an accredited Real Living Wage Employer. This means that all Council staff will earn at least £13.45 per hour, going beyond the legal minimum of £12.21. This voluntary commitment reflects our belief that everyone deserves a fair wage and a decent standard of living. Only 5 out of 22 Welsh Councils have achieved this accreditation so far. The implementation plan for the Real Living Wage accreditation commits the Council to working with suppliers to ensure that they also pay this rate to staff and the initial application confirmed that many already do so (either as an accredited member, or by the rates paid to their staff).

Support with Housing

- 2.14** The Council has committed to increase the supply of good quality, accessible and affordable housing. During 2025, 61 units have been completed in Barry across three sites with a further 36 units across the Vale of Glamorgan starting or due to start during 2025/26. Section 106 affordable housing contributions continue to be used to increase the numbers of affordable homes in areas of need in the Vale of Glamorgan. This will enable the Council to address affordable housing need, through allocation of sites for residential developments, where there will be a policy requirement for affordable housing delivery.
- 2.15** The Housing Solutions team continue to deliver tailored advice and assistance to households at risk of homelessness. Prevention remains key and staff work with private landlords and other families to try and reduce the risk of homelessness. All clients have a personalised housing plan which is reviewed periodically in order to resolve housing difficulties. High levels of homeless presentations continue to put pressure on the service.
- 2.16** The Council provides a range of support through the Supporting People programme including the Housing Support Grant which funds tenancy support services for over 4,000 people in the Vale of Glamorgan annually with the aim of preventing homelessness, promoting independent living skills, and supporting people to maintain their accommodation and wellbeing. This figure includes over 800 people provided with immediate housing advice and drop-in support, 135 people who receive ongoing support with their mental health and wellbeing and 240 people receiving ongoing support with generic homelessness. The Housing Support Grant also provides 105 spaces of temporary supported accommodation for vulnerable people experiencing homelessness. All service users are supported with independent living skills with the aim to either move-on into independent living or to maintain their existing accommodation. The Housing Support Grant also provides an emergency alarms subsidy for vulnerable older people who are at risk of slips trips and falls.

- 2.17** A new draft Homelessness and Housing Allocations Bill is currently going through the Welsh Government consultation process and is scheduled to receive royal assent in May. This will place increased responsibilities on Councils in terms of providing assistance. The impact of this has been identified as a cost pressure in the annual budget setting process.

Support with Employment

- 2.18** The Council is developing links between schools, colleges, universities and business to ensure people have the right skills to access current and future employment opportunities. Ahead of a skills partnership being established and a strategy completed, Shared Prosperity funding has been secured to carry out an Economy, Employment and Skills analysis using existing datasets, research and engagement with key industries and stakeholders. This will determine the current, short-medium and anticipated future workforce requirements. The analysis will also identify skills gaps, supply chain capacity and capability needed to support the Vale of Glamorgan's key industries. This work has now been commissioned and is underway with an anticipated completion date of February 2026.
- 2.19** Communities for Work Plus provides specialist employment advisory and intensive mentoring to support people into employment. There has been continued success across the organised training sessions, with strong attendance and positive engagement throughout. During quarter 2, 91 participants were engaged on the programme and 42 people supported into employment. Performance during this quarter was positive, with the team continuing to overachieve against engagements and job entries. Sessions have included confidence building and essential skills, along with regular health and safety, first aid, and fire safety training delivered by Adult Community Learning. A new teaching assistant training package was also launched in partnership with Adult Learning Wales, which includes autism awareness, becoming a classroom assistant, and will conclude with paediatric first aid. Attendance for all sessions increased this quarter, with fewer individuals dropping out mid-course and a noticeable rise in individuals wanting to progress to higher levels. The teaching assistant course has created clear pathways into work, with participants set to access employment or placement opportunities through links with local teaching agencies and the Employer Liaison Officer.
- 2.20** We continue to develop and promote alternative employment pathways to support the recruitment of local young people into the Council. In addition to expanding our apprenticeship offer, the Council's Organisational Development and Learning Team have established a strategic partnership with iTec to provide meaningful placements for young people from the Vale of Glamorgan. These placements are designed to enhance employability and provide valuable experience within the Authority. We are also maintaining active engagement with Careers Wales and local schools to raise awareness of career opportunities within the Council and to inspire future talent from our communities. As part of our commitment to inclusive employment, we are actively supporting opportunities for children looked after. This includes a current placement

within the Digital Team, with further options being explored to expand this support and provide additional opportunities within the same area.

Access to services, advice and support

- 2.21** Work has progressed on AI and Automation for the Council's Contact OneVale contact centre to improve how people can access services and information. In Q3, we will go live with a replacement Council Tax advice line and the Vale Compass advice line which provides support for families. We are currently undertaking a review of high-volume communications to ensure that messaging is consistent, easy to read and sets expectations clearly.
- 2.22** We continue to make progress in developing more accessible and joined up health and social care services that prioritise early interventions. Progress has been made developing the Well-being Matters service and strengthening GP Cluster Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs), with a focus on integration, multi-skilling, and digital enablement to improve service coordination and responsiveness. A single contact number for all Well-being Matters services has been developed. Training and shadowing to enable staff to work across different areas of the service is underway. Progress has been slower over the summer due to staffing pressures, but health staff have begun shadowing C1V call handlers and the Telecare team. The co-location of health staff, Council call handlers, and Adult Services continues to create valuable opportunities for shared learning. This has led to more integrated responses for citizens and reduced the need for call hand-off. These developments support the strategic aim to deliver integrated, person-centred care through multi-skilled teams and improved digital infrastructure, ensuring residents receive timely and coordinated support.
- 2.23** A pilot for outbound wellbeing calls is being developed in partnership with the Central Vale GP Cluster. The service will target 'priority patients' identified by GPs and is scheduled to launch in the winter. Additionally, a single contact number for all Well-being Matters services has been developed with training and shadowing to enable staff to work across different areas of the service underway.
- 2.24** A new staff team have been recruited to provide resettlement support to Afghan nationals accommodated in the Vale of Glamorgan. These staff are delivering support around a range of issues, including access to health care, money management, education and housing. The new team members work alongside existing staff, supporting Ukrainian people who arrived in the UK via Government schemes. The provision of support is funded by UK Government support tariffs.
- 2.25** Work has progressed to update the cost-of-living support pages on the Council's website. This has included new content being added around grants and benefits, and a review of how information is presented to make it more accessible. A public focus group is being arranged to obtain resident feedback on the pages. Work continues to promote financial entitlements including pension credits to older residents, information is regularly shared via social media and the Vale 50+ Forum's monthly

ebulletin to raise awareness and encourage take up. Next quarter will see partners including Citizens Advice, Age Connects and the Older People's Commissioner Office having stalls at the Vale 50+ Forum's Annual General Meeting to promote entitlements and support in person. As part of the cost-of-living webpages updates the Age Friendly Vale webpage will soon be updated to help promote a wider variety of entitlements available to older people.

- 2.26** Discussions have taken place with Citizens Advice to explore opportunities for further joint working and to develop a better understanding of the services they offer and the demand. This has identified opportunities in how residents are referred between the two organisations and opportunities for enhancing how Council Tax, benefits and housing services work with Citizens Advice. A pilot of joint advice sessions between the Council Tax and Benefits teams and Citizens Advice have started. Internally officers have been looking at some of the current models of working and are mapping the current outreach services operated by the Council (alone and in partnership) to understand how we are currently meeting a range of different peoples' needs. This is also being considered as part of the PSB's Your Place project in Barry. Discussions have also taken place with the Vale Food Bank to understand how their support services from food bank sites could feature within the Council's wider work to support people.
- 2.27** The Council also processes claims for Council Tax Reduction and as of November 2025, there are 8,893 live claims for Council Tax Reduction totalling a spend of £12,873,898 for the current 2025/26 financial year. There are 3,413 pension age claims and 5,480 working age claims.

Your Place

- 2.28** The PSB Your Place Project in Gibbonsdown 2, Court 3, and Buttrills 2 LSOAs has progressed into the next phase, and a number of action plans have been developed. The Employment Action Plan is focusing on after schools' programme, simplifying entry level recruitments and POD services. A pilot is launching in Whitmore High Schools to engage families in joint learning with their families. The Health Action Plan includes a focus on support groups, access to services, communication and networking and the development of a local health event focusing on addressing obesity, smoking, mental health, and immunisation, amongst other health related services. Further work being undertaken through this project relates to improving knowledge about services, community safety and the physical environment e.g. linking to the Barry Big Clean.
- 2.29** In November 2025 as a result of the release of new WIMD data, the PSB approved the proposal to include the additional four areas in the top 10% most deprived in Wales within the scope of this project. Colleagues are currently considering the best approach to taking this work forward, making connections with other activity underway described in this report.

Transport

- 2.30** The Council is committed to increasing opportunities for active travel and promoting the need for quality and timely local public transport services. Despite significant cost increases, the Council continues to work with operators to provide and maintain local bus services as best as possible throughout the Vale of Glamorgan and beyond; the majority of which are now supported by the Council using its own supported local bus service budget and Welsh Government funding (i.e. Bus Services Support Grant and Bus Network Funding).
- 2.31** The Council continues to partially fund the Concessionary Travel Scheme that provides free travel on local bus services, as well as discounted rail travel on the Valley lines for residents aged 60+ or who have certain disabilities. This is promoted on the Transport pages on the Council's website along with the Welsh Government funded My Travel Pass for young persons aged 16-21 to receive reduced travel costs. Posters at bus stops and leaflets are also displayed and made available as and when supplied by Welsh Government/Transport for Wales (TfW).
- 2.32** The Council continues to deliver bus stop improvements as funding becomes available. This year, 11 bus stops are being upgraded using Welsh Government 'Local Transport Fund' grant and Section 106 funds in the Gibbonsdown, Cadoxton areas of Barry and on Lavernock Road, Penarth. These upgrades will include new electronic real time information displays, further expanding on the Council's existing estate of displays throughout the Vale of Glamorgan.

<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/transportation/Active-Travel-and-Safe-Routes-in-Communities-Projects.aspx>

Tackling Food Insecurity

- 2.33** The Vale Food Strategy has been launched during this period following sign off from the Food Vale Steering Group. The Vale Food Strategy is a partnership plan that will provide a strong framework connecting partners through a shared vision across the food landscape, linking to work on topics including climate change, healthy eating, local food production and access, and food security.
- 2.34** Work to maximise the impact of various Welsh Government food related funding streams is ongoing in connection with Food Vale with a specific focus on ensuring the use of funding is joined up. Work has progressed in partnership with Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS) to run 3 community grant funding streams to support food related activities across the Vale of Glamorgan to help tackle food insecurity and improve access to healthy affordable food. GVS, on behalf of Food Vale, led on administering the Food, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Grant across the Vale of Glamorgan, a total of £14,000 was awarded for projects including community cooking classes around culturally appropriate foods, intergenerational cooking activities and more. GVS also led a small grants scheme using the Welsh Government 2025/26

Emergency Food Aid grant funding featuring a combined application form with Warm Spaces. Across revenue and capital funding, £50,000 was awarded to organisations.

- 2.35** The Food Vale Project Officer has continued to host the Vale Food Insecurity Working Group – with a combined total of 20 participants from food support projects across the county.

Warm Spaces – Welsh Government Funding

- 2.36** The Welsh Government Warm Hubs grant funding for 2025-26 has been distributed through several avenues including a GVS led community small grants scheme, with GVS also receiving funding to support Warm Space provision at their venues. Within the GVS led small grants scheme is the Welsh Government 2025/26 Emergency Food Aid grant funding featuring a combined application form with Warm Spaces. There were 31 applications received and in total £85,000 was awarded to organisations through this scheme (£35,000 warm space) with successful applications being awarded varying amounts from £400 to £6,000.
- 2.37** A Panel with representatives from GVS and the Council met to assess applications. A mix of organisations have been supported including community groups, charities, churches, schools and Council initiatives. Projects included coffee mornings offering a warm, welcoming space free of charge, with some spaces offering more extensive activities, and advice services. Many locations also offered snacks and a more substantive meal, with opening times varying throughout the day.
- 2.38** Warm spaces funding has also been utilised to support the Councils and Community Libraries to continue offering free refreshments while also enhancing the offer available to residents through free activities and events including authors, storytellers, crafts and play sessions. Funding has been used to purchase equipment that help to remove the barriers to entry for service users and build upon the libraries as hubs offer for those who need them.
- 2.39** The POD at Golau Caredig has also received funding to provide refreshments and snacks to those attending the existing employability space and foodbank creating a safe, friendly environment open to all. In addition to refreshments the POD work with local partners to provide advice around benefits, employment, housing, and more giving individuals and families the opportunity to access a range of support services in one visit. To encourage creativity and engagement, the funding is also being used to offer simple, enjoyable activities such as wreath making and other crafts. During the winter months, warm packs are also on offer for people to take home which include blankets, warm socks and more.

Fuel Poverty – Eco 4 Flex Scheme

- 2.40** ECO funding pays for energy efficiency measures such as heating improvements and insulation to be installed, thereby helping to reduce the cost of heating the home and create carbon savings. If the household has a combined income below £31,000 or

someone in the home has a qualifying medical condition, they would be eligible for the scheme.

- 2.41** 79 applications have been approved from April - September 2025. The scheme was due to close in March 2026 but will most likely be extended till the end of the calendar year. Those not eligible for the scheme, have been signposted to Warm Wales/Nest where relevant.

Children and Families

- 2.42** The Council continues to expand the Flying Start childcare offer for two-year-olds and their families across the county, with a targeted focus on areas of deprivation. This work supports equitable access to early years provision and aligns with our wider strategic goals for child development and family support. New geographical areas have been identified and agreed using LSOA data, ensuring the expansion is focused on communities with the greatest need. Families have been identified using PARIS data via the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board. A needs-led outreach policy has been developed with clear criteria to support families living outside of the targeted areas, ensuring inclusive access to childcare support
- 2.43** The Council is progressing the development of an Integrated Front Door model—Vale Family Compass, as described above—to streamline access to Early Help and Statutory Children’s Services. This approach aims to improve triage, coordination, and communication, ensuring families receive timely and appropriate support.
- 2.44** Also progressing is the development of the Interventions Hub, a centralised support service designed to provide flexible accommodation and a single point of access for children and young people with complex needs. This initiative is a key part of our strategy to deliver responsive, coordinated, and needs-led support across services
- 2.45** The Council has also provided support to families through the School Essentials Grant and Free School Meals. The School Essentials Grant is available to assist families on a low income to buy school uniform, sports kit, uniform for enrichment activities, school bags, and stationery. There are currently 3,302 pupils in receipt of Free School Meals and 2,827 School Essential Grants a total of £374,775 have been awarded.
- 2.46** There has been a focused effort to provide period dignity products to young people across the Vale at no cost. Between April and September 2025, 30 schools have received funding or products and 38 community-based organisations. A home delivery service is established with increasing numbers of young people registering.

Social Activities

- 2.47** The Council is committed to ensuring there are affordable and accessible ways for people to participate in leisure, play, sport, cultural and heritage activities. A range of activities have taken place to achieve this with a particular focus on providing young people opportunities and safe spaces for sport and play. The team are on track to

deliver actions in the Vale Sport and Physical Activity plan which focuses resources on those who need the most support.

- 2.48** There has been a continued targeted approach to Active Young People participation with all free to access provision. There have been developments across Vale secondary schools, with a focus on Pencoedtre/Whitmore and their cluster primary schools. Providing a range of free afterschool clubs taking away the barrier of cost of entrance and travel to local sports clubs if cost is a barrier. School-club links have been developed with local clubs to meet latent demand and increase awareness of local clubs impacting at least 256 young people.
- 2.49** Over 750 primary age children will benefit from a Basketball programme delivered to 11 primary schools. The team have worked with the local clubs over the past few years to develop more exit route opportunities including increased age groups and new outreach sessions e.g. in Penarth.
- 2.50** The 'Hooked' boxing project, a partnership with Welsh Boxing has showcased the impact of boxing activity (pad work and fitness element) on health and wellbeing. The Vale of Glamorgan was identified as a pilot area for the project due to the successful engagement and impact of Young Ambassadors (YA). YAs were trained in the summer term by Welsh Boxing and have subsequently started delivering weekly sessions to cluster primary schools.
- 2.51** The Council continues to support the Nutrition For Your Little Ones (NYLO) project (University Health Board dieticians) providing family engagement physical activity session at end of each block of family nutrition sessions in targeted areas.
- 2.52** Informal free activities have taken place including Leisure Centre Youth Take Overs and Informal football Kicks a project working with Cardiff City Football Club in the Community to deliver 'Kicks' sessions targeting young people in Barry (linked to areas with social economic challenges). There has also been free holiday provision, 56 sport specific and multisport sessions delivered impacting at least 460 participations.
- 2.53** Library Loan Bags containing different sports equipment are offered at Vale of Glamorgan libraries and food pods to facilitate young people, children and families to access equipment to utilise local facilities. The bags are loaned in the same way as library books.
- 2.54** The 60+ Golden Pass project has provided 231 residents with a Golden Pass since April. There have been 38 community led partners registered to the scheme and continued engagement with social prescribers. Initial stages of the Golden Volunteers pilot project are underway to identify, train and support volunteers over the age of 60 to encourage participants and support with activity delivery. 4 volunteers currently involved in the pilot.
- 2.55** The delivery of free Summer Programme of Play included: outdoor Play Rangers, open access playscheme, Playful Library family sessions, and Family Play sessions. There

were 64 sessions delivered with 535 children registered, 1164 participations across 19 different venues. Funding was received from Wick Community Council (£676) and United Welsh Housing (£676) to support delivery of play opportunities in Wick and Dinas Powys. The remainder of costs were paid for through Welsh Government Playworks funding.

Libraries

- 2.56** The Vale of Glamorgan Library Service makes a direct and measurable contribution to Vale 2030's commitment to tackling poverty by ensuring all children and families can access free, inclusive and high-quality learning, cultural and digital opportunities regardless of income or background. Our weekly and seasonal programmes support children from their earliest years through childhood, including Baby Rhyme Times, story times, family craft, STEM and coding clubs, author events and wellbeing sessions. These activities build early literacy, confidence, creativity and social connection—key protective factors against the long-term effects of child poverty.
- 2.57** Libraries also remove financial barriers to participation by providing free access to books, digital resources, public Wi-Fi, computers, printing and online learning platforms, alongside targeted digital support for children and families experiencing digital exclusion. Welsh-language activities, accessible formats, Books on Prescription and inclusive provision for neurodivergent users ensure equitable access for priority groups identified within the poverty agenda. The service has also received warm spaces funding allowing for an extension to the provision of free refreshments and activities at many of the libraries and cultural venues across the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 2.58** Through 73,185 attendances at events in 2024–25 and all nine libraries delivering inclusive activities for users, libraries continue to act as universal, trusted community spaces that directly support Vale 2030 priorities around access to services, social participation, early intervention and giving every child the best start in life.

Funding Overview

Shared Prosperity Funding

- 2.59** Shared Prosperity Funding (SPF) is supporting a number of projects that will also be helping to target poverty and address the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis. Examples of projects being supported through SPF include The Vale of Glamorgan Public Services Board's Your Place (Tackling Deprivation) Programme which supported eight local events and activities, resulting in improved engagement with 160 participants. The Ty Iolo Bike Club delivered one local event and one volunteering opportunity, engaging 57 people and creating one new volunteer role. Through Community Growing, 40 events were supported alongside one grant to an organisation and 27 volunteering opportunities, leading to 318 engagements and 28 new volunteer roles.
- 2.60** The Make My Money Work initiative helped 46 people access basic skills courses, with 38 achieving basic skills as a result. Six small businesses received start-up bursary

grants and officer support. Greenlinks Community Transport facilitated 2,920 journeys and nine volunteering opportunities, generating 140 memberships and two new volunteer roles.

- 2.61** The GVS Third Sector Small Grants Scheme awarded grants to 25 recipients, while Caru Cymru supported 1,068 litter-picking events and created 58 volunteering opportunities. Finally, the Strong Communities Grant Fund accepted 17 recipients or small businesses for support.
- 2.62** The Pride in Place (formerly Plan for Neighbourhoods) programme has had a refocus by the UK Government in Q2. A recruitment process for the Partnership and subgroups took place, with events and meetings planned. Work is also underway to make connections with other towns in Wales and the wider UK that have also received funding via the programme. Barry Making Waves projects have continued to involve collaboration with other public sector bodies, investors/developers, businesses and third sector. The Partnership Agreement with Lovell Partnerships creates an opportunity to deliver at pace.

Cost of Living Reserve

- 2.63** As part of ensuring an effective response to the cost-of-living challenge, a cost-of-living reserve was established in 2023/24. The total reserve as of April 2023 was £854,000 and the table below sets out how the funding has been committed to date. The current balance on this reserve following commitments is £54,000.

Year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Opening Balance	854	370.5	104
Funding Utilised			
Budget Contribution Free School Meals (FSM)	-200	-200	0
Additional Contribution Citizens Advice	0	-30	-30
Additional support in the school summer holidays to those in receipt of FSM	-221	0	0
Support for community projects	-25	-16.5	0
Food Bank Contribution	-3.5	-20	-20
Discretionary Housing Payment	-34	0	0
Closing Balance	370.5	104	54

- 2.64** Funding has been awarded to Citizens Advice in recognition of the increase in the volume and complexity of the work that is being handled for Vale of Glamorgan residents. A contribution of £30k was agreed for 2024-25 and 2025-26 in addition to their annual grant of £157,335 from the Council. Discussions are taking place between the team at Citizens Advice and a number of officers from across the Council to explore

further opportunities for joint working. A contribution to the Vale Foodbank of £20k was made during this financial year in line with the funding also awarded in 2024-25.

- 2.65** The Council's work to tackle poverty and respond to the rising cost-of-living demonstrates a comprehensive, collaborative approach aligned with Vale 2030 and our Well-being Objectives. Through targeted actions across housing, employment, food security, family support, and community engagement, we are addressing both immediate needs and longer-term challenges. Progress has been made in expanding affordable housing, supporting people into work, improving access to advice and services, and delivering initiatives that reduce isolation and promote well-being. The strategic use of funding streams, including the cost-of-living reserve and grant funding, has enabled impactful projects that strengthen resilience within our communities. Moving forward, the Council will continue to embed prevention, integration, and sustainability into its work, ensuring that efforts to tackle poverty remain central to delivering a fairer, more connected Vale of Glamorgan for all residents.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** The activities outlined in this report will assist the Council in contributing to the national Well-being Goals and the Council's own Well-being Objectives as detailed in Vale 2030. The work being undertaken also embeds the five ways of working through involvement and collaboration to develop ways forward, to ensure a longer term thinking and more sustainable approach to how we work and with a more integrated programme of activity. In terms of prevention as the work develops officers will be keen to explore the opportunities for a more preventative approach and how the knowledge and experience of other sectors can assist, particularly with work around cost of living and climate change.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** There are opportunities to make close links between work on cost of living and also work on climate change, for example on reducing energy use and work around food security. We also know that those living in our most deprived communities are often most impacted by the effects of climate change. We will continue to align activities where possible through the Council and the PSB.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** Vale 2030 is a key tenet of the Council's Financial Strategy.
- 5.2** This report outlines a range of different funding streams contributing to the Council's response to the cost-of-living crisis and work to tackle poverty, including an overview of the use of the cost-of-living reserve established in April 2023.

Employment

5.3 There are no employment implications as a direct result of this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.4** There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report, however the activities outlined support compliance with several statutory duties and frameworks, including the Council's socio-economic duty requiring public bodies to consider how their decisions can help reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.
- 5.5** The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 embedding the five ways of working, long-term preventions, integration, collaboration and involvement into service delivery and decision-making.
- 5.6** The Equality Act 2010 in ensuring that actions do not disproportionately impact individuals with protected characteristics and that opportunities to advance equality are maximised.
- 5.7** Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as required for individual schemes.
- 5.8** The Council will also ensure that all procurement and partnership arrangements comply with relevant legislation.
- 5.9** This approach aligns with the Council's socio-economic duty and contributes to addressing economic inequality, while ensuring that legal and equalities considerations remain central to the delivery of Vale 2030 objectives.

6. Background Papers

[Cost of Living Support \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) Cabinet Report December 2022

[Cost of Living Reserve Report \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) Cabinet 18th October 2023

[Strengthening Communities and Tackling Poverty \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee 18th October 2023

[Reshaping Programme: Strengthening Communities - A Response to Audit Wales Reports on Tackling Poverty and Third Sector Working](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) – Cabinet 19th September 2024

[Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) – Live Well Committee 8th July 2025

[Vale 2030](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) – The Vale of Glamorgan Corporate Plan 2025-2030.