

No.

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

Minutes of a remote meeting held on 18th July, 2022.

The Committee agenda is available [here](#)

The Meeting recording is available [here](#)

Present: Councillor Susan Lloyd Selby (Mayor); Councillors Anne Asbrey, Julie Aviet, Gareth Ball, Rhiannon Birch, Bronwen Brooks, Gillian Bruce, Ian Buckley, Lis Burnett, Samantha Campbell, George Carroll, Christine Cave, Charles Champion, Janice Charles, Millie Collins, Pamela Drake, Vincent Driscoll, Anthony Ernest, Robert Fisher, Christopher Franks, Wendy Gilligan, Russell Godfrey, Emma Goodjohn, Ewan Goodjohn, Stephen Haines, Howard Hamilton, William Hennessy, Nic Hodges, Mark Hooper, Catherine Iannucci, Gwyn John, Dr. Ian Johnson, Julie Lynch-Wilson, Kevin Mahoney, Naomi Marshallsea, Michael Morgan, Jayne Norman, Helen Payne, Elliot Penn, Sandra Perkes, Ian Perry, Joanna Protheroe, Ruba Sivagnanam, Carys Stallard, Neil Thomas, Rhys Thomas, Steffan Wiliam, Margaret Wilkinson, Edward Williams, Mark Wilson and Nicholas Wood.

181 ANNOUNCEMENT –

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

182 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillors Marianne Cowpe, Sally Hanks and Belinda Loveluck-Edwards.

183 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations were received.

184 MINUTES –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 25th April, 2022 and the Annual Meeting minutes held on 23rd May, 2022 be approved as a correct record.

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185 ANNOUNCEMENTS –

- (i) The Mayor advised that since her election as Mayor, she had attended 17 events, there was also now a monthly Mayoral update on the Council's facebook page which provided a summary of the events undertaken.

The Mayor stated what a privilege it had been to mark the service of the armed forces with veterans on Falklands Memorial Day and Armed Forces day as well as with the seafarers on the Barry Sea Service Day.

It had been her particular pleasure to renew ties with delegates from Fécamp and Mouscron, the Council's twinned towns, and to celebrate Polish Heritage Day at the Senedd. The Mayor had also been delighted to support a number of events which highlighted the work being done by volunteers, supported by the Council, including the opening of the new activity room in Rhoose Community Library, the annual Scout and Guide fête and the opening of the refurbished tennis courts in Romilly Park, Barry.

Next month she was looking forward to supporting the Barry Island 10k run with a team of staff running in support of the Mayor's Foundation which was now open for funding applications to be submitted.

- (ii) The Leader took the opportunity to advise that on 14th February, 2022 the Welsh Government had announced a support package of £177m to assist households across Wales with the cost of living crisis. The Council had received an amount of £5,014,200 in order to administer payments under the main scheme. The final guidance had been received from Welsh Government on 23rd March, 2022.

The Council had identified approximately 32,850 households who would be eligible for the £150 cost of living payment and in just 6 weeks from receipt of the Welsh Government guidance, the Council had already paid almost 52% of households who were entitled to the payment. All eligible households had now received a letter advising them how to claim their cost of living payment and to date 28,435 (87%) have received the payment, meaning that a total of £4,265,250 has been distributed to help local residents.

Council staff had worked tirelessly to ensure that customers had been able to claim their cost of living payment and he urged those that had not responded to the letter to submit their application as soon as possible. Anyone who had not responded or had not received the initial letter, would receive a reminder at the end of the month advising them of the procedure to follow in order to claim the payment.

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186 TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NOTICE OF MOTION [SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS G.D.D. CARROLL, R.E. GODFREY AND R.R. THOMAS] –

The Vale of Glamorgan Council:

- Regrets that unlike other Councils in Wales, the Vale of Glamorgan Council is currently holding all Full Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings remotely and not in hybrid format;
- Recognises that in person meetings allow for more effective scrutiny and decision making than meetings that are held virtually;
- Calls for future Full Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings to be held in hybrid format, and for all necessary steps to be taken to allow for this to happen.

Councillor Carroll, referring to the Covid 19 pandemic which had brought many changes to the Council's working patterns, including Council meetings being held on a remote basis, which he considered had been beneficial, but now considered that there were many circumstances in which it would be preferable for Members to meet face to face for various reasons, including added scrutiny that face to face interaction would bring, the level of meetings would provide an overall improvement in decision-making. Referring to several Councils in Wales that had made progress towards delivering hybrid meetings, where Councillors had the opportunity of either sitting in the meeting in person or taking part virtually. He was personally aware that many members of the public and indeed some elected Members of the Council would take a more hard-line view in that all Members should return and sit in the Council Chamber, but he accepted Welsh Government legislation which meant that hybrid meetings were an option and this had to be available. Referring to his regret that meetings were still taking place virtually and to the problems that technical issues could bring, the fact that Members of the Council in his view could not see how Members were voting, including the inability of members of the public to be present in the public gallery during physical meetings. He considered it imperative that the Council moved towards hybrid meetings as soon as possible. He urged all Members to support the Motion.

Councillor Brooks (Deputy Leader of the Council) alluded to the Welsh Government's Interim Statutory Guidance and reminded Councillor Carroll that it stated that there was no requirement for each meeting to be held in the same location every time it met. She also referred to the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, which required participants to join a meeting by remote means to all formal meetings and it did not specify that all meetings would be held entirely face to face. Referring to the second point of the Motion, she wanted to bust the myth that in person meetings allowed for more effective scrutiny, decision-making than meetings held virtually. She considered that that very point had been disproven given that meetings of the Council were held virtually and that Members were able to participate and take part in meetings and listen to the debate. She also pointed to the fact that the number of questions submitted by the public for Council meetings had increased which she welcomed and considered that a barometer of the diversity of engagement. The public could attend meetings without the need to travel physically to the Civic Offices. Virtual

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meetings had provided greater access to the public by allowing them to observe the meetings and, where relevant, participate through the use of technology and there was no question that any person was being disadvantaged.

Referring to hybrid meetings, Councillor Brooks indicated that she personally welcomed such and reminded Councillor Carroll, as he well knew, the Council was working towards delivering hybrid meetings and he was wrong to say that the Council was the only Council not delivering such meetings as she was aware that there were also other Councils in Wales which were not in a position at this point in time to provide for hybrid meetings. She was also aware that there were a substantial number of Members who were yet to undertake training on the use of the hybrid solution and urged those Members who had yet undertaken the training to do so as soon as possible. She would not be supporting the Motion.

Councillor Birch indicated that the subject was very close to her heart as it allowed Members to participate in meetings from their homes. The ability to do so had meant that as the main carer for children, grandchildren and elderly family members, it was often a challenge to attend meetings in the previous traditional way. For people like herself who had to travel to attend face to face meetings previously, this meant additional time driving to and from meetings. She also found it interesting that the Motion had been brought up and supported predominantly by men who in society rarely had caring responsibilities or burdens that many women were expected to bare. She was not ruling out the fact that some men did this, but predominantly it was women who did so and reminded Members that if the Council was looking for a more diverse range of Councillors in the future, whether that be by age, gender or any other form of characteristic, it was important that meetings were as accessible as possible to as many people as possible.

Councillor Protheroe also disagreed with the Motion as she did not recognise that in person meetings would allow more effective scrutiny and better decision-making. The fact that all could be seen and heard at the meeting and debate the matters without the need to be in the same room was pertinent. She also reminded Members that there was a necessity and responsibility on each of them to lead by example and try to conduct Council meetings with the lowest impact on the environment by cutting carbon emissions. She alluded to the recent UN Secretary General's comments made at the Petersburg Climate Conference. On the hottest day of the year on record, it was important that all Members played their part in reducing greenhouse emissions to help reduce the magnitude of heat waves in the future and it was important that net zero was achieved as soon as possible.

Councillor Penn referred to personal family circumstances and considered that anything that assisted Members, including Lay Members and observers, to attend meetings, they should be endorsed. The use of virtual meetings had improved participation in his view allowing for older persons and those with mobility problems to participate.

Referring to balancing his child care responsibilities, the use of virtual meetings had meant that he could share those child care responsibilities, reminding

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Members that this was not the 1950s and fathers and mothers had equal responsibilities for child care. Turning his attention to the Motion, he doubted that there was any evidence to support its claim that face to face meetings improved scrutiny and decision-making and from his experience, the meetings that he had attended virtually, the debate had been thorough and in depth. Any improvements that allowed Members to attend meetings should be embraced.

Councillor Neil Thomas was surprised that the Conservative Group had submitted the Motion and reminded them that virtual meetings had been introduced as a measure in response to the pandemic and he was concerned that the Conservative Group appeared to be acting as if Covid had gone away. He was mindful of the recent data which indicated that 1 in 17 people in Wales was suffering from Covid and it was increasing worldwide. He did not see any reason to return to meetings in the old way or to ignore the personal safety of each other. He also saw the Motion as an attempt to distract attention away from the real issues faced by the Conservative Party at Westminster and Cardiff Bay. He indicated that he would not be supporting the Motion.

Councillor Sivagnanam, speaking against the Motion, was dismayed that Councillor Carroll was seeking to drag Elected Members back to prehistoric ages. Concurring with the comments previously made by Councillor Penn that the Conservative Group appeared to be claiming that presenteeism was more accountable and that the Council's scrutiny of decisions was better because Members were sat in the same room. She did not agree with this view given that over the years affected by the pandemic and the fact that meetings were able to take place virtually, it clearly was not the case. She echoed previous points made earlier in the debate regarding virtual meetings providing greater accessibility to Members to attend remotely and balance work / life commitments and also members of the public were afforded easier access to Council meetings. In addition, she reminded Members that the Council not so long ago had made its Diverse Council Declaration and one measure of this was removing barriers to people accessing local democracy and virtual meetings assisted in this. She also concurred with previous points made by Councillor Brooks in regard to the Council having a Multi-Locations Meeting Policy which provided for hybrid meetings of the Council, Cabinet and certain other Committee meetings. Taking this into account, she did not understand the purpose of the Motion given that the Council had already agreed to undertake hybrid meetings once Members had been trained.

Councillor Wilson also took a similar view to the previous speakers on the matter. In particular, he resented the inference of the Motion that Members were not carrying out their responsibilities and as a new member of the Cabinet, he had attended many meetings. He also referred to the fact that the current meeting format had not prevented engagement of Members, noting that there was a considerable list of Members waiting to contribute to the debate. He had no doubt that the Conservative Group were well aware of the ongoing work to deliver hybrid meetings and was disappointed that the Motion had been submitted.

Councillor Campbell, who supported the Motion, made reference to her own personal circumstances in that the pandemic had affected her mental health. She felt that virtual meetings created a barrier for her to effectively communicate and

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fulfil her elected role. As a newly elected Member she felt that attending remote meetings impacted negatively on her mental health.

Councillor Emma Goodjohn, referring to her own mental health issues, took a contrary view to that of Councillor Campbell in that she felt that virtual meetings made it easier for her to engage in meetings. Being also a newly elected Member she found that if she had to be in attendance physically in the meeting that she would find this challenging and less likely to contribute to the debate. She also concurred with the previous points made in regard to the increase in Covid rates, travelling to and from meetings and the ability to balance family and work commitments.

Councillor Perry indicated that he had been participating in remote meetings for more than 20 years. It was obvious to him that more engagement was now taking place since 2020 and the introduction of new technology. When compared to 20 years ago, this was now far advanced recalling from his experience that important decisions would have been taken by telephone meetings with different people, in different countries, with different backgrounds, working together to make effective decisions. He therefore did not see how meetings in person would improve decision-making. He was mindful that it was important that Members actually did their homework before attending meetings and that they read the reports that were going to be discussed. He was also mindful of the emergency message "Stay at home because of the heat" which was exactly what Members should be doing. He also acknowledged that Covid cases were also on the rise dramatically and therefore, it was important that Elected Members showed leadership given that there were still residents who were afraid to go out in public. He indicated that he would be voting against the Motion.

Councillor Payne indicated that she would be voting against the Motion and that she would have had difficulty attending the meeting in person that evening if it had been held face to face due to personal commitments. As an Elected Member with a number of responsibilities including being the current Mayor of Barry Town Council, she also had caring responsibilities for elderly family members and she was delighted that virtual meetings allowed her to accommodate these responsibilities and to also undertake her community role. She found that the Member training on the hybrid solution was very easy, she also felt that virtual meetings where Members were attending from home could actually add to the debate that would not perhaps normally do so if they were attending physically in the Council Chamber. It was her view that Members' wellbeing was always taken into consideration by officers.

Councillor Haines, referring to the Motion, was concerned that Members did not understand it. He reminded Members that the Motion referred to hybrid meetings and passing the Motion would not affect Members' rights to continue to meet online. His attention then turned to the points made in reference to barriers to people attending meetings and the point made in regard to disabled people and people trying to access meetings and wondered if Members had considered those members of the public who did not have access to the technology to view meetings and how they would be able to observe their Councillor in meetings. He also touched upon IT problems that he had suffered whilst attending meetings

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virtually which had meant that he had lost connection to a meeting and been unable to contribute. He requested Members reconsider their position and support the Motion.

Councillor Cave, concurring with the points made by Councillor Haines, in particular the apparent confusion over the purpose of the Motion, reminded Members that the Motion was calling for hybrid meetings and that was about individual Members' choice. She indicated that she had also experienced difficulties encountering IT problems which had affected her participation in a meeting the previous week. She indicated that she would be supporting the Motion.

Councillor Charles, thanking Councillor Haines and Councillor Cave for their contribution and for clarifying the purpose of the Motion, considered the issue to be one of a principle where Members had the choice of attending meetings virtually or face to face. She did feel that virtual meetings did not always demonstrate to the public democracy in action, for example a show of hands, and she indicated that she would be supporting the Motion.

Councillor Perkes, referring to the previous comments made by Councillors Haines, Cave and Charles, they appeared to be suggesting that meetings were not effective unless Members were physically present in a meeting room. The issue in contention was that the Motion implied that meetings held virtually were not effective in terms of scrutiny and decision-making. This was clearly not the case. She did not see how hybrid meetings changed the principal argument that meetings would be less effective. To suggest that Members attending meetings virtually were not fully engaged with meetings and making appropriate decisions was flawed. She concurred with the point raised by Councillor Sivagnanam in regard to presenteeism and she thought that this did smack of an old fashioned view and clearly technology had moved on and Members did not need to be present in one room to make effective decisions.

Councillor Champion was concerned with the sexist tone of some of the comments made earlier in the debate. He supported a move to hybrid meetings and indicated that he too had experienced difficulties with his ICT and connections to meetings. He hoped that hybrid meetings would commence soon and was concerned to hear that some Members had yet to complete the training to use the hybrid meeting solution and asked if Members could be reminded to do it.

Councillor Mahoney did not necessarily agree with all the comments made by previous speakers but reminded Members that the Motion was to ensure that hybrid meetings would take place as soon as possible and that Members had the choice to attend meetings virtually or in person, depending on the circumstances at the time. He did not see why the Council should be different to any other Council in providing for hybrid meetings and the only exception to that was if there was an increase in Covid infections. Referring to those Members who were nervous of speaking in public, this was unavoidable given that they were representing constituents in their ward. He was fully supportive of hybrid meetings and Members had the choice to participate dependant on their preference. He indicated that he would be supporting the Motion.

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Referring to living in a democratic society, Councillor Godfrey reiterated that the Motion was intended to provide freedom of choice. He too had brought up a young family with his wife who shared the child caring responsibilities at that time and his children were now in their 30s. He appreciated that child care arrangements could be challenging, but with the introduction of hybrid meetings this would support Members who had such responsibilities to attend meetings from home. Referring to the comments made regarding Members travelling to meetings, he thought that the public would be mortified to hear that this was being used as an excuse to attend in person meetings.

Councillor Morgan disagreed with the Motion in that it was clear that the Council was already moving towards delivering such meetings and referred to the Council's Multi-Locations Meeting Policy that was agreed at the Council meeting held in April earlier in the year. He did not agree that face to face in person meetings would be any more beneficial to meetings and discussions that had already taken place, held virtually by the Council for some time. Referring to his disability having little natural hearing, he found that virtual meetings had provided a much improved experience allowing him to engage in debates with the assistance of additional technology. He wondered why the matter was being debated given the acknowledgement of the existence of the agreed Council Policy when there were more serious issues to be dealt with by the Council. He reminded Members that officers had been working hard to get the membership of the Council inducted following the recent Local Government elections, their ICT provided and training undertaken. He considered that some of the comments previously made had been unfair, including the implied criticism contained in the Motion.

Councillor Dr. Johnson thanked Councillor Morgan for his comments and for being the first Member to get to the substance of the Motion. He considered that both the Conservative and Labour Groups were being disingenuous given the fact that the Council had a Policy in place which had been approved in April. He was aware that this was now being implemented by officers within the Democratic Services and ICT teams. He was also aware that the first Cabinet hybrid meeting would take place later in the week. It was also clear that there were some Members attending the Council meeting that evening that were present in the Council Chamber and therefore the Motion was further disingenuous.

He took the view that the Motion was not adding anything new and could have been better dealt with by asking a question as to the timescale of delivering hybrid meetings. He also found it bizarre that the Labour Group were complaining about the Motion when the principle of hybrid meetings had already been established. He did however acknowledge that it was only Councillor Perkes who had identified that the second point of the Motion was potentially flawed. He was concerned that the Labour Group was going to vote against the Motion which could be construed as voting against the previously approved Policy. He suggested that if the Labour Group were opposed to the second point of the Motion, it would be sensible that they moved an amendment. He saw no point in voting against the Motion as to do so, it would be voting against what was already being implemented.

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Councillor R. Thomas touched upon some of the previous points made by his Group colleagues in that the issue was about choice to meet in person or to meet virtually. He also thanked Councillor Campbell for her comments. From his personal perspective and as a young newly elected Member he wanted to meet people in person and this was important to him. Alluding to the many other Councils in Wales which had already implemented hybrid meetings, many of which were Labour controlled Councils, he wondered why the Council was the only one of two which had yet to do so. He wished to see the Council brought into line with the rest of Wales and why the Labour Members were opposed to what the Welsh Labour party were already doing across Wales.

The Leader, referring to the interesting debate which highlighted that Members felt passionately about the ability to attend meetings virtually, did not agree with the general intention of the Motion as it contained incorrect information. It was wrong to suggest that the Council was not in a similar position to other Councils in Wales. In regard to the second point of the Motion, she also disagreed that in person meetings made for more effective scrutiny and better decision-making than those meetings held virtually. Referring to analytics from the Council's website in relation to unique views of Council meetings, it was clear that there was far better engagement with the public than compared to the traditional approach with members of the public being present and observing meetings in person in the public gallery. It was evident that virtual meetings had assisted greater public participation. She reminded Councillor Carroll that when the Council's Policy was discussed in relation to multi-location meetings at the Council meeting in April, that he did not speak against it or indeed oppose it. She felt that it was right to correct the record as the Council was moving forward in delivering hybrid meetings which Councillor Carroll knew well. She had no doubt that the policy on multi-location meetings would increase diversity of engagement and support greater diversity in local democracy in the future. She was proud of the fact that her Group was very diverse in nature which was not the case across all the political Groups of the Council. In concluding, the Leader considered that the Motion was unnecessary as it was something that was already being undertaken.

Councillor Carroll, in summing up, thanked all Members for their contributions to the debate and suggested that the Motion had been misunderstood. He reiterated the point made by Councillor R. Thomas relating to the position of other Councils across Wales with the Motion's intention to bring the Council into line with arrangements that were already taking place across the country. If anything, he hoped that the Motion and discussions would move the issue on by having hybrid meetings in place. He reiterated that the Motion was not calling for all meetings to be conducted fully in person, acknowledging the legislation prevented this. He accepted the point raised by Councillor Dr. Johnson that the Motion could be amended as opposed to it being voted against. He urged all Members to support the Motion.

On the Motion being put to a vote, the Motion was lost.

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187 USE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S EMERGENCY POWERS (CX) -

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Chief Executive's Emergency Powers be noted.

Reason for decision

Having regard to the Council's Constitution.

188 DRAFT MULTI-LOCATION MEETINGS POLICY (REF) -

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C922, 25th April, 2022 (as set out in Section 15.14 of the Council's Constitution) be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

189 DRAFT MODEL CONSTITUTION GUIDE (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C926, 25th April, 2022 (as set out in Section 15.14 of the Council's Constitution) be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

190 TEMPORARY HIGHWAY TRADING LICENCES (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C26, 23rd June, 2022 (as set out in Section 15.14 of the Council's Constitution) be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

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191 THE LEVELLING UP FUND (ROUND 2) AND UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (REF) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure (Cabinet Minute No. C28, 23rd June, 2022 (as set out in Section 15.14 of the Council's Constitution) be noted.

Reason for decision

The reporting of the use of the Urgent Decision Procedure is a requirement of the Council's Constitution.

192 QUESTIONS PURUSANT TO SECTION 4.18 OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION –

The following responses to Member questions as contained within the agenda were presented:

(i) **Question from Councillor M.J.G. Morgan**

Background:

On 16th June, 2020 the Managing Director, using emergency powers, gave authority for the Vale Council to enter into a Service Level Agreement in respect of Transport for Wales' Fflecsi Service.

Transport for Wales' new Fflecsi service provides demand responsive bus services to key workers who use public transport to get to and from work and ensure vulnerable citizens can access shopping and medication.

Fflecsi allows citizens to order a bus pick up in real time at a place of their choosing and set the destination. Bus routes are tailored in real time, based on demand from citizens. This ensures that key workers will be able to travel to work at a time that matches their shift patterns and maximises efficient use of bus resources.

The service will fill the gap left by commercial bus operations which have reduced in scale and capacity. Citizens can book their bus pick up via a mobile app and it is anticipated that up to 70% of citizens will use this method.

Question:

Could you please provide and update on when the Fflecsi service is likely to be introduced in the Vale of Glamorgan?

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places

This use of the Chief Executive's Emergency powers in this case was related to COVID and required to fund call centre staff to assist with Fflecsi bookings for Welsh Government. For clarity, the process was used to allow our Customer

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Relations team to enter into a contractual arrangement with Transport for Wales, for the provision of call centre services, to allow residents from the areas of Wales where the Fflecsi service operated, who were unable to use the mobile app, to use the telephone to book a bus. The call handling posts were funded by Transport for Wales through the contract. Our Customer Relations team was able to create the call centre service quickly due to the use of the Welsh Government funded Connecting Wales technology platform.

In terms of this service operating in the Vale of Glamorgan in the future, our officers did meet with Transport for Wales to discuss the Scheme back in June 2020. Officers considered the financially supported Service B3 (Garden Suburb – Barry Town Centre – Cadoxton), for the ‘Uber’ style app.

The proposal was to enable the whole of Barry to be served, including areas currently not served or with limited service provision, by this revised service, which would become flexible and on-demand, further enabling on-board social distancing to be better managed.

However, we needed the bus operator to buy into this proposal as there were additional costs to pay for the use of the software etc. (i.e. £100 per vehicle per week / maximum cost £10.5k approximately if 2 vehicles needed to be set up). At the time and with the COVID situation it was not considered to be financially viable.

It should be noted that we also already offer our own dial-a-ride service, Greenlinks, while not app based it works in the same way but via telephone calls.

As it currently stands it is not proposed to introduce the Fflecsi scheme into the Vale at this time due to:

- Reduced demand for bus services;
- The need to have bus patronage back to pre-COVID levels on regular service buses;
- Supported local bus costs rising;
- Operator revenue is low compared to pre-COVID;
- The ongoing Transport for Wales / Welsh Government work that is taking place looking at the South East Wales bus network and;
- Welsh Government’s white paper on reforming bus services (potent franchising).

Officers will however keep this matter under review and should the situation change I will advise Members accordingly.

Supplemental

Councillor Morgan indicated that he had not been aware of the Fflecsi bus initiative until he had seen a bus in Newport and enquired if the Cabinet Member would be prepared to embark on a review of public services in rural areas of the County, but he would also write to the Cabinet Member on the matter.

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The Cabinet Member indicated that she would be happy to further discuss or meet Councillor Morgan, but emphasised the existence of the Council's Greenlinks bus service which provided a similar community transport which operated in rural parts of the Vale and the service was not dissimilar to the Fflecsi service. She asked all Members to promote and raise awareness of the service within their respective communities.

(ii) **Question from Councillor M.J.G. Morgan**

Background:

At a meeting of the Cabinet on 28th February 2022 consideration was given to a reference from the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee concerning a suggested Rural Roads Policy in the Vale.

IT WAS RESOLVED – THAT the comments of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and subsequent comments from Councillor Morgan be noted and considered further by the next Administration as part of an authority-wide traffic management and road safety policy that linked with both the 20mph default speed limit and plans for greater active travel opportunities .

Question:

Can you please confirm that the current Cabinet has brought forward this resolution and that the proposed authority-wide traffic management and road safety policy will now be addressed as a matter of priority?

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places

Welsh Government announced on 12th June, 2022, a decision to introduce a default speed limit of 20mph in Wales. At this current time our officers are working hard to plan and deliver this project in time for the current introduction date of September 2023. This means there are limited resources to undertake any further large scale traffic policy work, but in addition it would be inappropriate to undertake this work prior to the implementation of the ongoing 20mph default project, as this involves the review of various guidance associated with the setting of speed limits which would be an essential part of any such policy.

There is a detailed plan of Active Travel proposals for the Vale of Glamorgan and this can be found on the Council's website which she would encourage people to look at. The work to develop an authority-wide traffic management and road safety policy will commence following the implementation of the 20mph default speed limit.

If there are any specific issues – whether these are around a specific issue or locality that Councillor Morgan has concerns about, I would be more than happy to explore those matters further through discussion with all Members as well if they asked.

No.

Supplemental

Councillor Morgan, referring to his disappointment that nothing had been progressed, sought a meeting with the Cabinet Member to discuss the matter further.

The Cabinet Member indicated that she was happy to do so.

(iii) Question from Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson

How many people are currently waiting for social services support, and what is the Council doing to reduce that number?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health

People approach Social Services for a variety of reasons. The question is very broad and so I have endeavoured to give some broad details firstly for Adults and then secondly for Children and Young People. If there is anything specific that Councillor Dr. Johnson has concerns about, I can maybe deal with that as a supplementary or through further discussion.

Adult Assessment:

In Adult Services there are currently 99 people in the community waiting for a Social Services assessment. There are an additional 6 people waiting in hospital for an assessment by a Social Worker

There are no urgent cases waiting assessment, but there are 24 awaiting allocation and 75 cases awaiting input from an Occupational Therapist (these are lower priority) the standard we seek to achieve is for assessment to be made within 12 weeks.

Adults Waiting for a Service:

There are 5 people waiting for a care home placement (3 permanent, 1 temp, 1 respite).

There are 120 people waiting for domiciliary care however, just over 20 of those are temporarily receiving that care from the Vale Community Resource Service which specialises in providing reablement and rehabilitation.

For Children and Young People

The picture here is different and the detail I will provide relates to the numbers waiting to be assessed. This is the position as at the 11/7/22:

- 10 children (in 9 families) awaiting assessment by the Child Health and Disability Team. It is expected a number of these children will be allocated for assessment within a week.

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- 39 children (in 28 families) awaiting assessment by the Intake Team.

The list of children waiting is kept under regular review and allocated according to need.

Supplemental

Thanking the Cabinet Member for his response, Councillor Dr. Johnson sought clarification in respect of the market fragility and service capacity, noting that these were high on the Council's risk register and enquired if staffing issues were affecting the Council's ability to deliver support.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that there were seven individuals waiting assessment and confirmed that in regard to Adult Services there were less than 100 people waiting for care at home and this was where the Authority was finding it particularly difficult to meet those individuals' needs. As a result the service was conducting risk assessments for those individuals to ensure that they were prioritised. Domiciliary care was particularly difficult to resource in rural areas as a result specific initiatives were in place to develop additional capacity in the Western Vale. The supply and demand of domiciliary care was carefully monitored and over the previous three months a growing number of packages had been put in place each month. In April, this was 108 packages and in June 136. There was however a gap in capacity and Social Services had put several measures in place to mitigate the situation. He agreed to forward details of these measures to Councillor Dr. Johnson and Members of the Council.

(iv) Question from Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson

How many Council houses have been built by the Vale of Glamorgan Council in the last decade?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Public Sector Housing and Tenant Engagement

Given the housing crisis in this country, let alone in the Vale of Glamorgan, the straightforward answer is – not enough!

But, the good news is that the Council re-commenced its house building programme in September 2017, and since this date Council has completed 76 properties in the following areas:

- Francis Road, Barry – 3 no. units
- Llys Llechwedd Jenner, Barry – 28 no. units
- Clos Holm View, Barry Phase 1 – 11 no. units
- Court Road, Barry – 11 no. units
- Lon y Felin Wynt, Hayes Road, Barry – 23 no. units

67 properties are currently under construction and these are:

No.

- St Cyres Road, Penarth – 14 no. units
- Hayeswood Road, Barry – 53 no. units

We are 'in contract' for 32 properties and awaiting construction start dates at:

- Coldbrook Road East, Barry – 20 no. units
- Colcot Clinic, Barry – 12 no. units

Awaiting Planning Decision, but due to start on site 2022/23, on a further 49 properties at the following locations:

- Clos Holm View, Barry (Phase 2) – 31 no. units
- Maes y Ffynnon, Bonvilston – 8 no. units
- Olive Lodge, Barry (acquisition pending) – 10 no. units

In addition we currently have 346 units for schemes at Feasibility and Pre-development stage from 2023.

Supplemental

Councillor Dr. Johnson, being pleased to hear that the projects were under delivery, enquired of the Cabinet Member as to what consideration she had given in the context of the number of units quoted in her response, the impact of inflation and supply chain issues affecting the construction industry would have on the delivery of the programme over the coming years.

The Cabinet Member acknowledged that there had been difficulties with costings of materials and prices from contractors and the Council was working hard to mitigate these pressures and she indicated that she would provide Councillor Dr. Johnson with a written reply.

(v) Question from Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson

What is the current situation regarding the Model Farm development?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Regulatory Services

Planning permission was quashed in October 2021 when the Court Order by HHJ Jarman QC confirmed the application for permission for judicial review was granted. The planning application is now back with the Council for determination. A new public consultation regarding the planning application was undertaken earlier in the year and additional viability information has also been presented by the applicant which the public could comment on. This information is currently being considered by relevant experts on behalf of the Council.

The application remains under assessment and will be reported back to Planning Committee for consideration once this process (including the assessment of the viability information) is complete. However, it should be noted that the application

No.

is also currently subject to a holding direction from Welsh Government and once the Planning Committee considers the application, it will have to be passed back to Welsh Government for an actual decision.

The application will not be on the agenda for next Planning Committee on 27th July and is likely to come back for consideration in the Autumn.

Supplemental

Councillor Dr. Johnson sought clarification on the process and decision-making in terms of who would make the final decision regarding the granting of planning permission.

Referring to the holding direction received from Welsh Government the Cabinet Member confirmed that the matter would come back to the Council's Planning Committee in the near future to consider officers' recommendations. Once the Planning Committee had considered the matter the application would be passed back to Welsh Government for the final decision.

(vi) **Question from Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson**

What is the timetable for a new-build Welsh medium school in Cowbridge?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language

Thank you for your question. The new build Welsh Medium School in Cowbridge proposal will need to be subject to a statutory consultation process. This is provisionally planned for September 2022 and a final determination on the education proposal likely in March 2023. This consultation is required to determine what form of Welsh Medium primary school would be most appropriate based on the statutory considerations outlined in the School Organisation Code.

It is anticipated that the funding for the project will form part of the extended Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B programme. This will depend on Welsh Government approval to extend the programme. Projects within the Band B programme must be approved before 2024 and completed by 2026.

Based on the current estimated timeframe it is expected that the relevant business case, planning and SAB approvals would be in place by September 2023 to allow construction to begin. The new school would be anticipated to open in January 2025 subject to no delays in achieving the relevant approvals.

The Council's draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan covering the years 2022 to 2032 requires the new school to be delivered by 2027. Under the current programme the Council aims to deliver the new school by 2025. However, this is subject to the necessary funding being in place and the outcome of the relevant stages of the decision making process.

No.

Supplemental

Councillor Dr. Johnson enquired if any lessons had been learned from the Barry Waterfront development.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that there had been and she would be happy to discuss these with Councillor Dr. Johnson further.

(vii) Question from Councillor M.J. Hooper

Given the upcoming changes at Westminster, and especially cognisant of Boris Johnson's personal agenda, have the Council identified any new risks to the levelling up funding bid, and what are they doing to mitigate said risks?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

The scope of the Levelling Up Round 2 remains unchanged and changes within Westminster have not impacted on bid development. The Portal for submission of bids had opened and the Council bid would be submitted shortly. The Council has identified this as a risk in terms of delivery timescales for capital works should the bid be approved. It is hoped that the end dates for delivery or the appraisal window will be amended by UK Government to mitigate against this delay at the start of the process.

Supplemental

Councillor Hooper, referring to the current Prime Minister leadership contest and to the pledges relating to taxation made by the candidates which economic commentators believed could result in implications for future levelling up funding and shared prosperity funding, asked the Leader if she would consider a review of the risks.

Referring to scenario planning by the Project Team, the Leader indicated that they were well ahead in terms of working out the potential implications, but until clarity was achieved within the Conservative party, it was a case of waiting and seeing and then act accordingly.

(viii) Question from Councillor C.A. Cave

Could the Cabinet Member please explain the criteria for cutting highway verges?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services

There are set criteria for the various designated areas of the Highways Verge network and the detail of this is as follows:

No.

There are 150km of carriageway designated as *Strategic Routes* within the adopted highway, these are cut during May, July and September throughout the growing season to an average width of 3 metres.

There are 655km of carriageway designated as *Non-Strategic Routes* within the adopted highway, these are cut on one occasion at an average width of 1.2 metres after the 3rd Monday in July to aid users of the carriageway but also to aid / assist the ecological interest of these verges.

There are several recognised *Vision Splays* within the highway network that require cutting at the beginning of the growing season to ensure appropriate vision at these junctions, this would usually take place in May, however within our contract we also have the ability to call upon a second vision splay cut if verge growth requires it.

Supplemental

Councillor Cave sought an explanation from the Cabinet Member as to why contractors were being allowed to choose when and where they would cut grass verges. She had particular concern that vehicle vision splays were not being appropriately managed.

The Cabinet Member indicated that he was not aware of any particular issues in regard to the maintenance of highway verges but gave an assurance that he would investigate the matter.

(ix) Question from Councillor C.A. Cave

Will the Cabinet Member please give his support to a Rural Roads Policy?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places

Thank you for your question and I would advise that I am aware that this matter has already been responded to and addressed via Council questions by the previous Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport. I would concur with his statements and position stated at that time, however, for the avoidance of doubt I would clarify as below for new Members.

The Council's local road network comprises a mixture of road classes and unclassified roads within the rural Vale incorporating country lanes. It is the case with a significant number of both urban and rural roads throughout the Vale that these were not designed or constructed to accommodate the current mix and volume of traffic, pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian users. However, all roads including rural roads and country lanes, must carry a certain composition of traffic to serve the needs of the local population both from a business, work and leisure perspective and motorists who use these roads should do so with appropriate care and consideration for others. It is also accepted that there is a general increase in the use of all roads for various purposes, but this is Vale wide and affects all classes of road both rural and urban.

No.

Where specific safety or conflict issues arise along rural roads or country lanes this is already investigated and managed based on specific investigation and evidence obtained in the same way as urban roads to ensure the Council comply with its statutory duty to manage its overall highway network in accordance with the appropriate legislation. There are no requirements for the Council to manage country lanes or rural roads separately or in a different manner to its other local road network and there is no evidence that country lanes are generally unsafe, albeit there is a recognition of a slightly different mix of traffic and infrastructure conditions in managing various elements and classes of road within the Vale's local road network. Where issues on any country roads are brought to the Council's attention then these will be fully investigated based on the evidence and risk approach in the same way that all other roads are assessed and managed.

As a consequence, and based on the above position, I do not consider that there is a need to have a separate Rural Roads Policy as safety and traffic conditions are already considered specific to each circumstance and section of road based on investigation and evidence whether this is a rural country lane or busy urban road. In summary, the Council's highways teams review and considers specific concerns on its rural network in the same manner as any other road within the Vale's local highway network and this is considered adequate, reasonable and a proportionate way to deal with safety issues which may be raised or occur at any time.

Finally, and as referenced in one of my previous responses, at a meeting of the Cabinet on 28th February 2022 consideration was given to a reference from the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee concerning a suggested Rural Roads Policy in the Vale. Cabinet at the time resolved to note the comments of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and subsequent comments from Councillor Morgan and considered further by the next Administration as part of an authority-wide traffic management and road safety policy that linked with both the 20mph default speed limit which she supported.

I agree with the previous Cabinet Member's position on this matter and as I have stated, work to develop an authority-wide traffic management and road safety policy will commence following the implementation of the 20mph default speed limit.

Supplemental

Thanking Councillor Morgan for his support and campaigning for such a policy, Councillor Cave asked the Cabinet Member if she would accept an invitation to visit her ward to look at issues that had not been addressed by her Cabinet predecessor.

The Cabinet Member indicated that she would be happy to visit Councillor Cave's ward.

No.

(x) **Question from Councillor G.D.D. Carroll**

What action is the Council taking in response to the impacts of inflation on the Authority's budgets?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

The inflationary pressures are impacting on all of the Council's finances both revenue and capital.

For revenue the Council has been largely protected on rising utility costs having purchased its gas and electric in advance but is seeing pressure coming through on changes to standing charges. Negotiations are ongoing on the 2022/23 pay award and it is looking likely that the 3% set aside will be insufficient. Services are managing their budgets tightly to ensure the Council's finances are as robust as possible. Regular sessions are held to discuss budget pressures across all Directorates. You will also be aware that regular revenue (and capital) monitoring reports are brought before Cabinet (and all Scrutiny Committees) so that the budgets can be monitored and where necessary, action taken to address emerging issues.

Pressures are also coming through in Capital and again the finance team are working with service managers to understand the impact of rising prices at a scheme level. As part of this work we are ascertaining progress on schemes, whether work is under way, contracts agreed or work still out to tender. Managers are having to value engineer schemes to keep to agreed cost envelopes. In particular cases, such as with key projects that are funded via Welsh Government (21stC schools being a key example), discussions are held to establish whether inflationary pressures can be factored into any awards.

Finally, all be aware that the Council does hold specific reserves (both revenue and capital) which are available to be used as a consequence of cost pressures, including inflationary increases.

Supplemental

Councillor Carroll enquired if the Leader anticipated a draw down from reserves and what this amount would be.

The Leader pointed out to Councillor Carroll that this had been set out in recent reports to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee and the Governance and Audit Committee. Those reports referred to reserves that could be used and would be used if deemed necessary and it was just as well the Council had these.

No.

(xi) **Question from Councillor G.D.D. Carroll**

Will the Cabinet Member please provide an update on action the Council is taking to improve highway infrastructure on Llandough Hill?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services

Thank you for your question, however, it is unclear exactly what information you are looking for regarding the highway infrastructure on Llandough. I can confirm that Llandough Hill is recorded as adopted highway and the Council as local highway authority has a duty to maintain it at public expense under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980. I am unaware of any other infrastructure on Llandough Hill that you may be referring to. Perhaps if you could elaborate, I would be happy to respond further.

Supplemental

Councillor Carroll asked the Cabinet Member if he would support the resurfacing of the road.

The Council's three year plan which provided a method whereby individual roads were identified and prioritised for resurfacing through consideration of several specific criteria, which included but was not limited to road classification, ongoing maintenance costs, customer complaints and third party claims. The process enabled the Council to implement an annual programme of resurfacing works on a priority basis so as to manage its highway asset in the most cost effective and beneficial manner subject to the funding available annually for such works. The three year plan had recently been updated and was presented to Cabinet on 7th July, 2022 and the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 12th July, 2022. The agendas and minutes of these meetings were available, as he pointed out to Councillor Carroll, via the Council's website.

That Cabinet report identified that Llandough Hill was identified as scoring 195 points on the three year Resurfacing Plan and it was anticipated, based on current funding available in the current financial year, that resurfacing works would be undertaken to roads scoring a total of 210 points or above. Therefore it was unlikely that the road would be resurfaced in the current financial year, although the position would be reviewed again in 2023.

(xii) **Question from Councillor R.R. Thomas**

Will the Leader confirm how many potholes have been reported to the Council within the town of Penarth in the last 12 months?

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

I am informed that 126 carriageway defects have been reported to the Council from July 2021 to June 2022. All of these reported defects have been inspected

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to ensure they meet the intervention criteria set by the Council. The criteria is available on the Council's website and the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee had also discussed this recently.

In addition, the Council's Highway Inspectors have raised some 242 actionable carriageway defects in Penarth from July 2021 to June 2022. Some of these defects will be in the 126 reported defects identified above.

Whilst we regularly inspect all our highways, as has been detailed, defects will appear in between these inspections. We therefore encourage all residents to use the 'report it' feature on our website if they are concerned about a pothole, or alternatively to telephone our contact centre with this information.

Supplemental

Councillor R. Thomas, referring to the Council's report which only identified one road which required resurfacing which he was disappointed with, asked the Leader why residents of Penarth were low on the Council's priority list and invited her to visit the ward with him to walk and speak to residents on the issue.

The Leader indicated that she regularly walked and cycled around the Plymouth ward for a number of reasons and that at a recent visit to the ward she only identified three potholes which had already been assessed for repair and since that time the work had been undertaken. She reminded Councillor Thomas that she regularly reported potholes for repair and recounted from emails she had retained for her records that she had reported a number of defects to road across Penarth in 2017 and 2018. In 2019 she had reported 132 defects and one road where she had reported potholes had since been resurfaced. In 2020 she had reported 5 defects and in 2021 she had reported a further 47 defects across various locations in Penarth. She also pointed out to Councillor Thomas that she also took the time to report street bins that required emptying, street lights that were not working and graffiti. She was not only a voice for the community in the Council but an effective Councillor. She also reminded Councillor Thomas of the reporting feature on the Council's website and suggested that he walked his ward and reported any potholes which she had no doubt would be repaired if they met the Council's repairs criteria.

(xiii) **Question from Councillor G. Bruce**

Why has the Council not taken action to ensure adequate school transport provision is put in place for pupils travelling from Rhoose Primary to Cowbridge Comprehensive following catchment area changes to protect the education continuity of pupils attending Cowbridge?

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places

Free home to school transport is provided to secondary aged pupils who live three or more miles from their catchment school.

No.

Transport is provided for any pupil who qualifies either on distance grounds or because they do not have an available walking route to school, if they attend their catchment area school.

This is and has been the Authority's position and is part of the school and college transport policy which can be found on the Council's website.

Pupils moving up from Rhoose Primary to Cowbridge Comprehensive in September 2022 will be allocated free school transport, as long as they live in catchment. Parents are able to apply to any school they wish, but as outlined in the Policy if it is non-catchment parents/carers will be responsible for transport provision.

The change of catchment for Cowbridge Comprehensive, that included Rhoose moving into catchment was, as other changes in school catchments have been, a phased approach.

The change came in for Year 7 in September 2021 and will be for both Year 7 and Year 8 in September 2022.

The Council does not change the catchment for all year groups at the same time. If that was to happen, in this particular case, then all pupils who attended Llantwit Major Comprehensive and live in Rhoose would all be out of catchment and not qualify for free school transport. That would affect close to 230 pupils who live in the Rhoose area and who knowingly choose to attend at that time their catchment school, Llantwit Comprehensive.

The Council has fulfilled its statutory duty and continues to provide transport for pupil who attend their catchment school.

I am aware of issues raised with regards costs for the private bus that runs from Rhoose to Cowbridge Comprehensive which is in part due to a lack of pupils not needing to purchase seats on this bus as they now travel for free on a Council contracted school bus. However, I will refer to another private bus that ran from the Ely area of Cardiff to Cowbridge Comprehensive that another operator decided to cancel at the beginning of this year. This was not due to lack of passengers, it was a decision made by the operator for business reasons. The Council has no control over the running of private services and as such operators can make decisions on fares, whether or not they run a service or the route the bus may take without consultation

(xiv) **Question from Councillor C.P. Franks**

Will the Cabinet Member indicate the additional tax burden falling on the Vale of Glamorgan Council in respect of the proposed increase in National Insurance contributions imposed by the UK Government?

No.

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

The direct impact of the NI increase in 2022/23 was calculated as part of the Budget proposals to be £1.034m – this figure includes all schools.

In terms of the indirect impact on for instance social care providers – we haven't been able to put a figure on this as we do not have sufficient detail on our suppliers pay and the increases to Social Care Providers for 2022/23 would reflect the RLW increase and other inflationary impacts such as energy costs.

Supplemental

Councillor Franks sought an assurance from the Leader that all front line services would be protected in the face of increased National Insurance contributions.

The Leader referred to the fact that the increase had been budgeted for as part of the Council's budget setting process and alluded to approximately £1m of additional costs that had been accounted for. The budget setting process for the previous financial year identified £24m shortfall and that the Council had received a good budget settlement from the Welsh Government. However, she did not know what the settlement would be for the future financial year, but it was unlikely that it would be at the same level. Alluding to the forthcoming budget setting process that the Council would be undertaking, this would need to take account of a number of additional financial challenges and she specifically referred to energy prices and inflationary pressures. She would do all that was humanly possible to protect services starting with the most vulnerable.

(xv) Question from Councillor C.P. Franks

The Cabinet Member will be aware of increasing concerns in Dinas Powys regarding road safety. Will you indicate what measures are being implemented to make our streets safer?

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places

Thank you for your question, however, I note that you do not provide any specific details relating to your road safety concerns and it is therefore difficult for me to respond specifically.

The Council receives numerous concerns regarding a variety of aspects relating to road safety throughout the Vale and investigates those concerns as appropriate and as far as reasonably practicable given the current resource available and its current powers and responsibilities.

I would firstly clarify that the Council as local highway authority has a statutory duty under Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 to undertake studies into road traffic collisions, and to take steps both to reduce and prevent them as far as reasonably practicable and appropriate. To carry out this duty, the Council

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reviews collision data provided by the Welsh Government on a six monthly basis relating to injury collisions which have occurred within the Vale's local highway network and considers the evidence and potential contributory factors associated with those collisions. Where necessary based on this analysis and the potential cause of any collision, the Council will consider schemes to improve road safety subject to available funding. This includes Dinas Powys, however, I am unaware of any serious injury collision within the village which require any specific and immediate consideration at this time.

There is quite often some confusion over responsibilities with regard to highway safety matters and speed related issues.

Although, the Council sets speed limits, the primary responsibility for speed enforcement rests with the Police and the Council has no powers to deal with speeding offences. For this reason, we recommend that contacting South Wales Police should always be the first line of approach taken by members of the public who are concerned about speeding issues in their local area. Alternatively, residents can make a request for speed camera enforcement direct with GoSafe, the Wales Casualty Reduction Partnership, whose primary function is to make Welsh roads safer by reducing road casualties. However, the Council, Police and GoSafe will generally recommend residents consider the setting up of a community speed watch scheme which has proven to be helpful in deterring speeding in local areas throughout Wales and of which there are many examples throughout the Vale. Details can be found on the GoSafe website.

In exceptional circumstances, where there is a significant history of personal injury collisions, and where police and/or GoSafe action has failed to reduce speeding offences and improve road safety, the Council will consider introducing further measures to assist with speed enforcement such as traffic calming. Such measures are expensive to introduce and where further measures are considered necessary then those schemes compete for limited Welsh Government grant funding, where in most, if not all cases, the most severe locations are awarded funding. The Council has currently accumulated a significant number of schemes that are awaiting future funding.

Finally, you will also be aware of the Welsh Government proposal for 20mph speeding limits in Wales following the issue of advice on 12th July, 2022 by the Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport. The Senedd also voted on and approved the proposal to reduce the default speed limit from 30mph to 20 mph on restricted roads and residential streets on 12th July, 2022. Council officers are currently working through the requirements of the legislation to understand the implications within the Vale and which roads will be impacted after having successfully taken part in one of eight Welsh Government pilots for the 20mph default speed in St. Brides Major. The default speed limit is due to be implemented in September 2023 and this measure would hopefully address ongoing road safety concerns relating to speed not only in Dinas Powys but throughout the Vale where the limit is to be implemented. I anticipate that the Council will be able to provide further details on the implications for individual areas in Autumn 2022.

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Supplemental

Referring to the necessary investment, policing, enforcement and the lack of safety schemes including the provision of a camera safe scheme in Dinas Powys which volunteers were happy to support if provided the equipment, Councillor Franks asked the Cabinet Member what she was going to do about it.

The Cabinet Member referred to her initial response and reminded Councillor Franks that these measures would help address the issues he raised. The Council was taking serious steps to address road safety and reminded Councillor Franks that the Police also had an important role to play in the issue.

(vxi) **Question from Councillor C.P. Franks**

In the event of serious flooding of residential and commercial properties what plans exist to safe guard vulnerable people?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services

The Council's Civil Protection Unit (CPU) operate a 24/7 365 duty officer system to respond to emergencies. The CPU works with other service areas to respond and if necessary will open an emergency control room, usually based at the Alps in Wenvoe. In the event of a flooding emergency, officers will contact the Social Services Emergency Duty Team to ascertain if there are any known vulnerable residents within the area, but it should be noted these would only be if they are social services clients.

Welsh Government are working on a system called **JIGSO** which is a web service that allows the user to be able to search a specific area of a map and identify the properties within which are vulnerable citizens who may require assistance during an emergency such as flooding/snowfall or perhaps an area being affected by smoke. For example, the user can draw a circle/polygon around an area and within a matter of minutes, be able to identify which households require assistance. This will allow vulnerable citizens to receive priority assistance to prepare for an emerging incident, receive additional support as a result of an event e.g. water bottles, or evacuate if required.

In the case of Storm Bella in 2020, to obtain data on which properties required assistance took some time, with JIGSO this information can be obtained in a couple of minutes. The maps can also be changed i.e. a black and white map just showing outlines or perhaps a satellite map (similar to Google Earth but in more detail) can be selected.

The system, which is unique to the UK, now means that data is now available within minutes detailing the most vulnerable citizens in our communities so they can be supported when an incident occurs.

In addition the CPU has produced a new Community Flood Plan and Extreme Weather Guidance, that explains how to prepare a Community Flood Plan. This

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plan can be completed by households and as a community or flood group. This can help communities develop local level plans that will assist local communities and groups to identify and prepare plans for any vulnerable residents within their local community who may need extra assistance, guidance can be found on the Council's website where you will also find further information and guidance, for residents and businesses, on what to do before, during and after a flooding event.

Supplemental

Referring to the recent flooding events in Dinas Powys Councillor Franks asked the Cabinet Member if he would reconsider the level of support from the Council in future to vulnerable residents.

Disagreeing with Councillor Franks' assessment of the support provided by the Council during the recent flooding events having seen related reports, it was his view officers had worked hard to support affected residents.

(xvii) **Question from Councillor J.E. Charles**

Will the Cabinet Member please outline the Council's waste recycling targets and confirm if these are being met.

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services

The last measured recycling and the minimum Local Authority recovery (recycling, preparation for re-use and composting) target was 64% (2019 / 2020).

The Council had to achieve a recycling rate of 64% within this target year and thereafter up until 2023 / 2024. During the target year of 2019 / 2020, the Council recorded a recycling rate of 70.3% exceeding the statutory target.

The next measured target will be 70% by 2024 / 2025. At present, the Council continues to exceed the statutory targets and it is currently the second highest performing Council in Wales and on target to achieve and exceed the 2024 / 2025 target.

Supplemental

Referring to the current emergencies, Councillor Charles enquired if the Council would make more savings from increasing recycling and reuse rates.

The Cabinet Member indicated that the Council had plans to do this and referred to the new waste transfer station at Cowbridge with a further facility to be provided at the Atlantic Trading Estate, Barry.

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(xviii) **Question from Councillor C.E.A. Champion**

Will the Cabinet Member consider increasing the number of separated recycling waste bins in the public spaces across the Vale?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services

There are no immediate plans to provide separated recycling bins for town and rural litter as previous trials affected recycling quality and increased contamination levels due to poor compliance by users with the various separate recycling compartments.

However, when the Council's new recycling plant opens next year there will be greater service flexibility for further trials and hopefully improved compliance due to there being a greater awareness now amongst residents and visitors of the need to effectively recycle all waste. We will therefore plan to undertake further work in this area during 2023.

Supplemental

Councillor Champion enquired why the Council did not have separated recycle bins when other Councils did.

In response the Cabinet Member referred Councillor Champion to his original reply for the reasons.

193 PUBLIC QUESTIONS –

The following questions were submitted and replied to as shown, in accordance with the protocol agreed by Council on 5th May, 2010.

(i) **Question from Mrs. Sian Woodfield**

Why is sewage being dumped into the sea in Watchtower Bay? The Council have and continue to receive extra revenue from housebuilders and new residents via poll tax. Surely the sewage treatment plants should have been upgraded to cope with the new housing developments. What plans do the Council have to remedy this totally unacceptable situation? This is not only unhygienic but there is a large group of open water swimmers and other paddle / water sports people who regularly use our beautiful bay for recreation and promoting good mental health.

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services

Thank you Mrs. Woodfield for your question. The Council has no jurisdiction regarding the operation of sewage treatment plants / sewage pumping stations within the vicinity of Watchtower Bay. The responsibility for this lies with Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW), and their operations are regulated by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), via under Environmental Permits which prescribe specific limits on certain environmental discharges. There will be occasions where

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unplanned discharges from combined sewer outfalls can occur and such discharges are investigated by NRW and, depending on the reasons for the breach, enforcement action can follow. A recent occurrence in May is being actively investigated and we have been informed that said spillage was a result of a power supply issue at one of DCWW's sewage pumping stations.

The Council understands that DCWW is actively assessing future investment into upgrading the Barry Town Sewage Pumping Station to ensure future spillages are prevented, thus assisting in the improvement of water quality at Watchtower Bay.

Regardless of the fact that the responsibility for operation of pumping stations does not lie with the Council, we are also very concerned at the impact of discharges in an area that is regularly and increasingly used for bathing. As a consequence, officers from the Council's Shared Regulatory Services, are working with local water user groups to gather appropriate information/ evidence in order that an application can be made to Welsh Government to consider the designation of Watchtower Bay as a bathing water beach. Should this application be successful this would ensure that ongoing water quality monitoring is undertaken by NRW during the bathing water season.

(ii) **Question from Ms. Sue White**

The Welsh Government states that If you are intending to lay or replace a hard surface to the front of your house you must use permeable or porous materials; alternatively surface water run-off from an impermeable hard surface, such as concrete, must be directed to a permeable or porous surface to the front of your home. You can replace or repair a small area, up to 5 square metres, of existing hard-surfacing without using permeable or porous materials – for example to repair pot holes in a driveway, or replace paving slabs in an existing patio. Please can you describe how this ruling is being publicised in the Vale in the Glamorgan? Can you please also state if this ruling is applied in the consideration of new planning applications and whether it is being enforced? The replacement of gardens with hard surfaces is recognised as a contributory factor in the increase of surface water run off which is increasing the demands on the sewage system leading to the discharge of sewage onto Barry beaches at times of heavy rainfall. This matter is of serious concern to the growing number of people using local beaches. Representatives of groups including cold water swimmers and paddle boarders have formed a campaign group called Sea Users Against Sewage to press for action on the issue.

Reply From the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Regulatory Services

The requirement to use permeable materials or direct runoff to a permeable area is found in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, this requirement must be met in order for a new hard surface to be 'permitted development' (a development not requiring planning permission). Where a new hard surface forms part of a larger development which requires

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planning permission, in many cases the Council will impose a condition to require the new area of hard surface to accord with these criteria.

However, each development must be assessed on its merits and having regard to the specifics of each case. For this reason, the Council cannot take a blanket approach that any non-compliant examples will automatically be subject to enforcement action and the expediency of doing so must be considered for each individual case.

Where there are planning conditions which require permeable surfaces, if a breach of this condition is reported, the matter will be investigated by the Council's Planning Enforcement team and formal enforcement action may follow if the matter is not rectified.

(iii) **Question from Mrs. Lynfa Davies**

What is being done to address the so called "need" to release effluent into our rivers and bathing beaches? Is anything being addressed with regards to water treatment on new housing estates? Which will inevitably impact upon our already stretched treatment plants... It's unbelievable that in this day and age we (the powers that be) are still flooding our waterways coastlines with raw sewage... especially with the increase of year round swimming, surfing and other water sports.

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services

Thanks you Mrs. Davies for your question. Natural Resources Wales is responsible for regulating water quality and the permitting of DCWW storm overflows from the foul sewer network.

New housing developments in Wales are required to comply with statutory standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) with a discharge hierarchy favouring the re-use, infiltration or discharge of surface water to local watercourses before disposal to the DCWW foul (or combined) sewerage network would be considered. The SuDS standards require separate surface water and foul drainage networks on site, and only if all possible alternatives were exhausted would the disposal of surface water into a combined sewer be accepted.

Any surface water storm flows into the DCWW combined network would be controlled to a flow agreed by DCWW, with additional surface water storage on site to hold water temporarily. This scenario is most likely to occur on smaller infill developments in urbanised areas served by older combined sewer networks conveying both sewerage and rainwater.

The SuDS standards also require the treatment of surface water run-off depending on the proposed use of development to protect receiving waterbodies. New development has the potential to place increased pressure on DCWW's existing network and developments connecting additional foul flows are consulted upon and conditioned through the planning process whilst surface water connections

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are consulted on and controlled through the SuDS approval process. DCWW are currently developing a Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan which will consider the key challenges of population growth, urban creep and climate change on their network.

(iv) **Question from Mr. Tim McKinney**

Respectfully, might we see the Tuesdays' Barry Kings Square open air market return? We in the community found it to be a great asset.

Reply from the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources

The Council was disappointed to hear that the weekly market operator had chosen to close the weekly market but understands the reasoning behind the decision as this has been a challenging economic period for town centres. A new invitation to tender will commence in July which plans to widen the scope of opportunities in and around King Square for any operator.

(v) **Question from Mrs. Andrea Lane**

What is being done to the requirements of fitting the dropped kerbs and re-assess the dropped kerbs?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services

Dropped kerbs are essentially footways that have been lowered to the level of the carriageway or road and there are essentially two types; those for pedestrians, wheelchairs and pushchairs which are often installed using tactile surfaces; and those installed outside private driveways allowing access for motor vehicles across the public footway.

The Council installs dropped kerbs on footways in specific locations to provide better access for pedestrians and wheel chair users to provide greater accessibility to shops, medical facilities and general amenities. If anyone is suffering footway access issues they can request a dropped kerb by contacting the Council either online or via our Contact Centre.

(vi) **Question from Dr. Alexander Barrett**

At the last Council meeting it was noted that South Point Primary School currently has 60% surplus primary places. Over the next five years this is expected to fall to 14% surplus provided there is increased demand for 98 places resulting from 354 newly constructed houses to the north east of the railway line in Rhoose. However, the developer has submitted alternative plans for only 256 new houses to the north east of the railway line, of which 10 are expected to be single bedroom and unlikely to generate demand for primary school places. In light of

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this, what does the Council estimate the level of surplus places for this new school will be in five years?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language

The Council has received a planning application for the final phase of the housing allocation known as Land north of the Railway Line, Rhoose. This application is currently in the process of being validated by the Council's planning department and has not yet been published publicly on the Council's Planning Register. However, I am able to clarify that the application has been submitted for 262 dwellings of which 10 are proposed to be 1-bedroom units.

Excluding the 10 1-bed dwellings, the pupil yield calculation would result in an increase in demand in the area of an estimated 70 places for primary age children compared to 98 places for a 354 dwelling development as previously anticipated. Based on the pupil yield using the recently submitted application dwelling numbers, this would result in a predicted future surplus of 27% at South Point Primary School over a five-year period compared to 14% for the larger development. However, as noted this application has only recently been submitted and the density of the development may change as no determination on the proposal has been made at this time.

Following the completion of the current housing development and the positive impact that a new school building brings to an area, we would expect to see an increase in school admissions year on year, over and above those generated by further housing development. We have already seen an increase in children transferring to the school since it became operational on its new site.

(vii) **Question from Dr. Alexander Barrett**

How does the Council explain the fact that the housing development to the north west of the railway line in Rhoose has generated less demand for English medium primary places than was used to justify the closure of Llancarfan Primary School? Is it time to review the Council's modelling assumptions to prevent the generation of excessive surplus places from new school developments in future?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language

Although a planning application has recently been received for 262 dwellings on the remaining housing allocation known as Land north of the Railway Line, no decision has been made by the Local Planning Authority on whether to approve the application. The Council's planning officers will need to assess whether the proposal is appropriate against national and local planning policy particularly in terms of the proposed density for the site as the proposal is currently providing less than expected under Policy MG2 Housing Allocations and Policy MD6 Housing Densities. The Council will need to consider whether there are appropriate reasons for why fewer dwellings are being pursued. Therefore, it is too early to confirm that the housing allocation will deliver less primary school places than anticipated.

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Additionally, the Council needs to make decisions based upon the best available information at the time. Regarding the decision to move Llancarfan Primary School, the proposed development was predicted to deliver 700 houses. This was based on information submitted by the developer when the site was allocated in the Local Development Plan. Consequently, the number of dwellings allocated was considered to be a robust figure and was subsequently used in the Council's calculations.

The pupil yield factor from housing developments in the Vale of Glamorgan is comparable to the methodology employed by other local authorities and is dependent upon the demography of the Council area. The Council's methodology for calculating pupil yield from housing developments and pupil projections is consistent and the Council is satisfied that it reflects current conditions for school place planning purposes. For example, the Council's projection of the pupil yield from the current housing development was 131 compared to a pupil yield to date of 116. The last residential units under Phase 1 of the development were completed in 2022, as a result, the full cohort of children is not yet fully reflected in school admissions.

It is worth noting that the formula used to calculate pupil places arising from housing developments was based on census data from 2011, as this was the most up to date information at the time of the assessment. However, early data from the 2021 census has now been published. The Council will be using the new statistical information from the 2021 census to update its Planning Obligation formula for education provision.