

## THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Special Hybrid Meeting held at 6.30 p.m. on 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2025.

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

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

Present: Councillor Elliot Penn (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, Marianne Cowpe, Pamela Drake, Anthony Ernest, Christopher Franks, Wendy Gilligan, Russell Godfrey, Emma Goodjohn, Stephen Haines, Howard Hamilton, Sally Hanks, William Hennessy, Nic Hodges, Mark Hooper, Catherine Iannucci, Gwyn John, Dr. Ian Johnson, Susan Lloyd-Selby, Belinda Loveluck-Edwards, Julie Lynch-Wilson, Kevin Mahoney, Naomi Marshallsea, Michael Morgan, Jayne Norman, Helen Payne, 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.

### 740 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”.

### 741 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillors Vince Driscoll, Robert Fisher and Ewan Goodjohn.

### 742 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Councillors J. Aviet, W. Hennessy, M. Wilkinson and J. Lynch-Wilson declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 3 in that they were Council tenants but that this did not equate to a prejudicial interest having regard to paragraph 19.3.3 (ii) (A) of the Council’s Code of Conduct. Councillor H. Payne declared an interest in Agenda Item 3 as an employee of Llamau with dispensation granted by the Standards Committee to speak and vote on general matters.

743 FINAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET PROPOSALS  
2025/26, RENT SETTING 2025/2026 AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT  
BUSINESS PLAN 2025/26 (REF) –

The Leader, in presenting the reference, advised that the report detailed the Final HRA account budget proposals for 2025/26 with the plan also incorporating a detailed financial forecast in the form of a 30 year financial model. The report, the Leader said, had been considered by the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2025 which had noted the report, she had also been present at the meeting together with a number of Cabinet Members. The Leader then subsequently moved the recommendations contained within the reference and which were seconded by Councillor Brooks.

The Chair of the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee informed Council that the matter had indeed been considered by the Committee with some questions being raised concerning whether the houses were to be built in the right place, affordability and what tenants would get out of it. Councillor Haines also said he had concerns as there was no evidence he could find in the plan of whether the buildings that were to be built would be in the correct areas and that the increase of rents together with the current cost of living crisis would have a detrimental impact on tenants.

Councillor Dr. Johnson enquired as to what steps had been taken with regard to addressing rent arrears and stated that in his view current tenants would be paying through the rent increases for future housing costs as a result of the proposals. He was also concerned about the rate of the rent increase, and noting the cap set by Welsh Government, stated that such an increase was above the inflation rate and he had yet to be persuaded by the arguments for the proposals which he considered to be weak.

Councillor Franks enquired as to the robustness of the proposals which he said in his view were not satisfactory, having regard to other decisions that had been made referencing the bus station with no buses and unwelcome car parking charges.

Councillor Perry, in noting the concerns of Members, said his community was desperately short of public open spaces with all the building development being proposed.

Councillor Carroll said that the Council should not only make decisions on budget and fees but also on the facts at the time and that the proposals today would impact the cost of living crisis further.

Councillor Payne commented that it was important that the Council built for the future as she saw people struggling every day to find accommodation.

Councillor Perkes, Cabinet Member for Public Sector Housing and Tenant Engagement, advised that a good discussion had taken place at the Scrutiny Committee where she had explained in detail the need for more Council housing in the Vale and she had also invited Members to see the retrofitting work that had been done to date and that that was planned for the future. With regard to finances, it was

important to note that the Council had other costs to consider, such as having to budget for maintenance costs for properties as well as providing support with money advice for tenants

Councillor Wilson, also a Cabinet Member, said that in his role he had been concerned about the cost of housing repairs and in referring to the 30 year plan said that ensuring buildings were safe was crucial but that this came at a cost. He said decarbonisation would also improve energy efficiency and tenants would be assisted to manage this. He had been impressed with the work on properties that had been undertaken to date with many tenants commenting to him that they were proud of the work the Council had done.

Councillor Hooper, although happy to support house building, was concerned that this would be at the expense of tenants and that he, like Councillor Dr. Johnson, would appreciate further discussions with the Administration with regard to the funding for the proposals.

Councillor Emma Goodjohn commented that in her experience the Vale Council was a very reasonable landlord to its tenants in comparison with housing association landlords.

The Leader, in response to the comments during the debate, said that the Housing business plan was a social business and it was important that building properties, retrofitting and insulation were included. The Leader also commented that some of the issues raised at the meeting could have also been considered at the Scrutiny Committee meeting rather than be left for Full Council to debate. In referring to the fragile private landlord sector where some landlords had decided to no longer be a landlord, a number of court cases were taking place which had resulted in the Council having to place families in bed and breakfast accommodation. The plan before Members, the Leader said, would assist in going forward with the Council having also been guided by the housing needs assessment.

In conclusion the Leader advised that the Council wished to provide good quality low carbon homes for life, for tenants, should they want them, and it was a sustainable business plan to be taken forward.

Following the debate a Recorded Vote took place on the report recommendations.

<b>Members</b>	<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
Anne Asbrey		√	
Julie Aviet	√		
Gareth Ball	√		
Rhiannon Birch	√		
Bronwen Brooks	√		

Gillian Bruce		√	
Ian Buckley	√		
Lis Burnett	√		
Samantha Campbell		√	
George Carroll		√	
Christine Cave		√	
Charles Champion	Left before vote		
Janice Charles		√	
Millie Collins		√	
Marianne Cowpe		√	
Pamela Drake	√		
Anthony Ernest		√	
Christopher Franks		√	
Wendy Gilligan	√		
Russell Godfrey		√	
Emma Goodjohn	√		
Stephen Haines		√	
Howard Hamilton	√		
Sally Hanks	√		
William Hennessy		√	
Nic Hodges		√	
Mark Hooper		√	
Catherine Iannucci-Williams	√		
Gwyn John	√		
Dr. Ian Johnson		√	

Susan Lloyd-Selby	√		
Belinda Loveluck-Edwards	√		
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	√		
Eddie Williams	√		
Mark Wilson	√		
Nicholas Wood		√	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1</b>

The motion being carried and having been put to a Recorded vote it was subsequently

## RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the final Housing Revenue Account budget proposals for 2025/26 as set out below be approved:

	Original 2024/25	Change	Final Proposed Budget 2025/26
			<b>£000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Supervision & Management – General	4,695	214	4,909
Supervision & Management – Special	1,949	13	1,962
Repairs & Maintenance	5,000	920	5,920
Capital Financing Costs	5,792	1,097	6,889
Rent, Rates, Taxes & Other Charges	270	28	298
Increase in Provision for Bad Debts	1,027	(336)	691
Capital Expenditure from Revenue Account (CERA)	8,197	(1,218)	6,979
	<b>26,930</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>27,648</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Dwelling Rents	(25,793)	(365)	(26,158)
Non Dwelling Rents	(186)	(13)	(199)
Interest	(45)	(170)	(215)
Charges For Services and Facilities	(684)	(133)	(817)
Contribution towards expenditure	(94)	(1)	(95)
Grant Income	(205)	0	(205)
	<b>(27,007)</b>	<b>(682)</b>	<b>(27,689)</b>
<b>(Surplus) / deficit for the year</b>	<b>(77)</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>(41)</b>
<b>Working Balance Brought Forward as at 1st April 2025</b>	<b>(3,524)</b>	<b>(667)</b>	<b>(4,191)</b>
<b>Working Balance Carried Forward as at 31st March 2026</b>	<b>(4,191)</b>	<b>(41)</b>	<b>(4,232)</b>

(2) T H A T an average rent increase of 2.7%, as set out in the Cabinet report of 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2025 be approved.

(3) T H A T the increase suggested for other services as set out in the table below and in the Cabinet report of 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2025 be approved:

	2024/25 Actual Charges	2025/26 Proposed Charges	
<b>50 Week Basis</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	
Grounds Maintenance	1.47	1.51	per week
Cleaning of communal areas	2.75	3.00	per week
Lighting of communal areas	2.51	3.60	per week
Laundry Facilities	0.62	0.41	per week

Window Cleaning	0.18	0.18	per week
Lift Maintenance	1.33	1.25	per week
Door Entry	0.71	0.80	per week
Intercom	0.95	1.29	per week
CCTV	0.00	1.43	per week
Sewerage Treatment Plants	455.25	467.54	per annum
Cesspools	439.00	451.00	per annum

(4) T H A T all changes to rents and service charges be approved and implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2025, with the first week of April being a non-chargeable rent week and that increase notices be sent to tenants two months in advance of the new charges coming into effect as required by the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016.

(5) T H A T the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2025/54 attached at Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report of 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2025 be approved.

#### Reasons for decisions

(1) To facilitate budget monitoring and to demonstrate a balanced budget with a drawdown from HRA reserves to bring the reserve back into balance with the Housing Business Plan 2025/26.

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

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

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

(5) To obtain Cabinet approval for the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2025/55 (draft) prior to referral to Full Council.