

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
19 FEBRUARY 2025

REFERENCE FROM LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 03
FEBRUARY 2025

INITIAL BUDGET 2025/26 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2025/26 TO
2029/30 PROPOSALS FOR CONSULTATION (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 16th January, 2025 was presented by the Operational Manager – Accountancy.

The Chair, Councillor R. Thomas, stated that the funding formula for schools was a concern, and he asked how discussions were held with Welsh Government and whether there were any local authorities working together, to change the formula. In response, the Operational Manager advised that there was a distinct sub-group that worked with Welsh Government about reviewing any potential change. There were also a number of outside groups, such as the Treasures Group of which the Council's Section 151 Officer was a member, the Association of Directors of Social Services and the Association of Directors of Education. There was also several finance and service level groups. All would make representation on funding to Welsh Government. In terms of local authorities lobbying Welsh Government, the formula impacted differently and was dependent on demographic pressures. So, whilst there are certain authorities that were perhaps more motivated to lobby Welsh Government, some were more minded to keep the status quo.

The Chair also asked whether there had been any assessment of the potential number of redundancies within schools and what plans were there to minimise them. The Operational Manager clarified that there had yet to be an assessment, with the current focus being the impact of the formula on the budget proposals. The final settlement from Welsh Government would be required before an assessment could be undertaken. There had been some redundancies at a school level and a loss of some temporary staff. The Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources added there were two strands of work to assist schools. One was the around a reduction in the use of agency staff, and the other related to temporary contracts.

In terms of budget proposals for Additional Learning Needs, the Director of Learning Skills clarified that proposals related to the need to manage acute demand and then to look at ways to increase capacity. The first area of demand was around increasing resource bases within primary schools as a way of alleviating issues and challenges for children as they became older. There was also a focus on supporting the

emotional needs for children in secondary schools at an earlier age before they might require more specialist and expensive and potentially out of county support.

Councillor N. Marshallsea commented that the Council should feel proud that the Vale of Glamorgan continued to fund local services and schools. In addition, Councillor Payne commented that there were very good facilities across the Vale of Glamorgan, and the quality of provision provided could sometimes be forgotten.

Councillor N. Hodges commented that the budget proposals would be going out for public consultation, and he wondered how much Cabinet would take on board comments made by the public, given the level interest into recent proposals around car parking charges. Councillor Hodges queried the use of the Risk and Smoothing reserve. The Operational Manager advised that the reserve had been introduced during quarter 2 in conjunction with a new process whereby all requests to use reserves would now go through the Council's Strategic Leadership Team. The use of the Risk and Smoothing reserve had been earmarked for areas such as the energy crisis and pay pressures.

Subsequently, the Committee

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the contents of the report and the updated financial position for the Council as set out in the report be noted.

(2) T H A t the comments of the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee be referred to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.

Reasons for recommendations

(1&2) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.