

No.

ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting held on 15th December, 2020.

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

Present: Councillor Ms. B.E. Brooks (Chairman); Councillor Ms. S. Sivagnanam (Vice-Chairman); Councillors V.J. Bailey, Mrs. P. Drake, V.P. Driscoll, G. John, M.J.G. Morgan, A.R. Robertson, L.O. Rowlands and S.T. Wiliam.

Also Present: Councillor L. Burnett (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration) and Councillor P. King (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport).

291 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Chairman read the following statement:

“May I remind everyone present that the meeting will be recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing.”

292 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 17th November, 2020 be approved as a correct record.

293 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations were received.

294 DEVELOPING A CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN (REF) –

Cabinet, on 2nd November, 2020 had referred to the report to the Scrutiny Committee for its views on how this work was being progressed.

The report provided an update on the work being undertaken to develop a Climate Change Action Plan as part of the response to the climate emergency declared by Council in July 2019. The Head of Policy and Business Transformation referred to activities undertaken to date and work planned to ensure that the Council had a well-informed and considered response involving partners, the public, staff and Members. The report outlined how the Climate Change Action Plan would be developed, including arrangements for engagement and consultation.

No.

The Committee was informed that progress had been made against a range of actions as detailed in the Annual Delivery Plan and the activities built on work already being taken forward by the Council to mitigate the effects of climate change and adapt to its impact.

Paragraph 2.6 in the report referred to examples of activities as follows:

- Improvements to street lighting;
- Work undertaken as part of the 21st Century Schools Programme;
- Promotion of Active Travel;
- The roll out of recycling arrangements;
- Improvements to the housing stock;
- Tree and wildflower planting to improve our green infrastructure;
- Supplementary Planning Policies.

To ensure that the Council had a robust Action Plan for tackling climate change it was important that the community and other stakeholders were involved in shaping the Plan and its implementation. Due to the restrictions in place around social distancing and the significant changes in how the Council worked, there needed to be a rethink to its approach.

It was proposed that despite the uncertainty over the coming months that work would continue to engage and consult on the subject of climate change. A key message the Council wanted to give staff and other stakeholders was that no idea was “too small” and no suggestion was “too ambitious” for consideration.

As part of the conversation the Council would also capture information and views gained through more specific projects, for example future consultation on the development of the Green Infrastructure Plan.

The Council’s Communications Team would also develop a programme of activity over the next 12 months to enable the public and community groups to continue to inform the work on climate change and shape the Council’s response. An outline timetable was contained within the report at paragraph 2.36.

Councillor A. Robertson commented on the level of Carbon Dioxide in the Earth’s atmosphere, which he stated was 0.04%. Of that, he stated that the contribution to Carbon Dioxide levels by humans was 0.0016%. The levels of Carbon Dioxide varied over hundreds and thousands of years, so Councillor Robertson challenged the impact of human activities, adding that Methane gas, heavy chemicals and plastics were more damaging to the environment. He stated that he was disappointed that more wasn’t being done to tackle these.

Councillor M. Morgan referred to consultation around Active Travel and stated that this seemed to mainly focus on commuters. For rural communities, he asked whether the Council also needed to look at people’s leisure activities particularly in relation to the Vale’s network of country lanes which should be a pleasant and safe place for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The congestion of cars therefore made it more difficult and dangerous for leisure users using country lanes. Councillor Morgan added that if the country lanes were made safer then more

No.

people may be attracted to alternative modes of transport. Councillor Morgan also asked for further consideration of public transport as this could reduce traffic on the roads.

Councillor R. Sivagnanam stated that the consultation should also focus on specific community groups. In reply to this, the Head of Policy and Business Transformation advised that linking to specific groups was something that would be progressed. The aim of the consultation was to allow “open ended responses”, so groups could feed in their views and comments. Responses would then be categorised into themes and analysed by the Strategy & Partnership Team. There would be further consultations on specific areas later on. Councillor Sivagnanam also commented on public transport and stated that until travel infrastructure improved there wouldn't be big enough changes. She added that the Action Plan was a good beginning, but more lobbying of Welsh Government for infrastructure improvements was needed.

Councillor G. John outlined that all Council departments needed to look at how they worked, for example, the Planning department needed to give more protection to trees. Councillor John added that all departments needed to consider how they worked to achieve the Council's environmental objectives.

Having fully considered the reference it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the views and comments of the Members of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee be referred to Cabinet, the views of Members being:

- Emphasis should also be placed on other pollutants harmful to the environment, rather than Carbon Dioxide.
- For Active Travel, there should be more focus on leisure users on country lanes by reducing traffic congestion and making the rural road network safer for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
- Improvements to public transport were needed to reduce traffic congestion.
- Welsh Government should be lobbied for more road/public transport infrastructure improvements.
- Vale of Glamorgan Council departments needed to look at their work practices in order to have greater regard to the Council's environmental objectives.

Reason for Recommendation

In order to feed through the views of the Members of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee as part of the consultation process.

295 DRAFT VALE OF GLAMORGAN ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN
(IMPROVEMENT PLAN PART 1) 2021-22 (REF) –

Cabinet, on 30th November, 2020 had referred the report to all Scrutiny Committees for consideration.

No.

The Head of Policy and Business Transformation presented the report which set out how the draft Annual Delivery Plan had been developed, the proposed consultation and the timetable for the Plan.

The Annual Delivery Plan was the Improvement Plan (Part 1) for 2021-22 and was aligned to the Council's four Well-being Objectives. The Plan detailed the activities that would be undertaken in 2021-22 to deliver these objectives within the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic and the Council's Recovery Strategy.

Councillor P. Drake queried whether during the COVID-19 pandemic members of the public could contact the One-Stop Shop via phone as opposed to in-person. In reply, the Head of Policy and Business Transformation confirmed that this was a commitment by the Housing department.

Having considered the reference, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Draft Annual Delivery Plan 2021-22 be endorsed.

Reason for recommendation

Following consideration of the Draft Annual Delivery Plan 2021-22.

296 ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN MONITORING REPORT: QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE 2020/21 (DEH) –

The purpose of the report was to present quarter 2 performance results for the period 1st April 2020 to 30th September 2020 in delivering the Annual Delivery Plan commitments as aligned to the Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives.

The performance report presented progress at quarter 2 (1st April to 30th September 2020) towards achieving the Annual Delivery Plan (2020/21) commitments as aligned to the Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives.

Despite the ongoing challenges of responding to the global COVID-19 pandemic, positive progress had been made in delivering in-year commitments in relation to the Annual Delivery Plan (2020/21). This performance had contributed to an overall AMBER status for the Plan at quarter 2 (Q2).

All four Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives were attributed an Amber performance status at Q2 to reflect the progress made to date. This was positive given the unprecedented challenges we continued to face.

66% (152 out of 231) of planned activities outlined in the Annual Delivery Plan had been attributed a Green performance reflecting the positive progress made during the quarter, under challenging circumstances. 25% (58) of planned activities were attributed a Red status

No.

Of the 58 actions attributed a Red performance status during the quarter, 90% (52) were directly as a result of service reprioritisation measures undertaken in response to the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In relation to those areas, where appropriate, work was now recommencing as part of recovery plans and strategy going forward. Progress in relation to Coronavirus recovery was being reported to Members in the presentation accompanying the performance report and would focus on highlighting issues pertinent to the Committee's remit. The Coronavirus recovery update would form part of quarterly performance reporting going forward to ensure Members maintained an oversight of the recovery issues impacting on the work of their respective Committees. From this perspective, Members were requested to note the progress to date in relation to Coronavirus recovery.

Of the 64 quarterly performance measures aligned to the Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives, data was reported for 33 measures where a performance status was applicable. 64% (21) measures were attributed a Green performance Status, 15% (5) an Amber status and 21% (7) a Red status. Data was unavailable for 9 quarterly measures due to reprioritisation measures undertaken in response to the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. A performance status was not applicable for 121 measures including a number of annual indicators (104) and those establishing baseline performance for the year (8).

In relation to the 6 measures attributed a Red performance status during the quarter, the impact of COVID-19 had contributed to missing target.

In relation to the planned activities within the remit of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, 71% (36 out of 51) were attributed a Green performance status, 14% (7) Amber status and 16% (8) Red status. Of the 8 attributed a Red performance status, the impact of COVID-19 was identified as a contributory factor in the reported slippage. Of the 9 quarterly measures reported, 4 were attributed a Green performance status, 3 Amber status and the remaining 2, CPM/100 (% Council street lights that are LED) and CPM/111 (reported fly tipping incidents which lead to enforcement activity) Red status. Of the 2 measures attributed a Red status, the impact of COVID-19 was identified as a contributory factor in missing target in the case of 1 measure, CPM/100 (% Council street lights that are LED).

The report sought elected Members' consideration of Q2 performance results and the proposed remedial actions to address areas of identified underperformance. Upon consideration, the Scrutiny Committee was recommended to refer their views and any recommendations to Cabinet for their consideration.

Councillor L. Rowlands referred to COVID-19 signs being removed from Holton Road in Barry. The Head of Regeneration and Planning stated that he would ask colleagues to look into this matter.

Councillor S.T. Wiliam praised the re-wilding work being carried out at Porthkerry Park and the Scrutiny Committee agreed to receive a progress report on this project, which would include all Council parks as well the countryside parks.

No.

Councillor G. John requested an update on progress relating to the flood risk management scheme at Llanmaes, and he agreed for an update to be provided via email.

There being no further queries or comments, the Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the performance results and progress towards achieving the Annual Delivery Plan 2020/21 commitments as aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives within the remit of the Scrutiny Committee be noted.

(2) T H A T the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee receives a report on the rewilding work being undertaken by the Council.

Reasons for recommendation

(1) To ensure the Council clearly demonstrates the progress being made towards achieving its commitments in the Annual Delivery Plan 2020/21 aimed at making a positive difference to the lives of Vale of Glamorgan citizens.

(2) To allow the Scrutiny Committee to consider Council rewilding projects.

297 REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2020 (DEH) –

The purpose of the report was to advise Committee of the progress relating to revenue and capital expenditure for the period 1st April to 30th September 2020.

The revenue position for 2020/21 was challenging with additional pressure for the service both operationally and financially as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic. This had impacted both as a result of incurring additional expenditure but also from a loss of income. Funding had been provided by Welsh Government to cover some of the issues.

An efficiency target for the year had been set at £83k.

The capital budget had been set at £22.401m this financial year.

Councillor G. John queried spending associated with the Llanmaes flood risk management scheme. In reply, the Principal Accountant confirmed that so far, there had been a nil spend from the budget of £61k for 2020/21. The Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport agreed to provide an update on this project.

Councillor S.T. Wiliam asked for clarification regarding recycling costs/savings. In reply, the Principal Accountant advised that the amount of money received by Council from source separated recycling was dependent on the material. So, for example, the Council paid more money for metals than it did for paper or plastics.

No.

At present, the Council received around £100 per ton for co-mingled materials, so based on 13 to 14k tons collected per year, the Council could potentially save £1.3m to £1.4m from what it had paid in previous years. Against this, was the extra costs to collect the recycling, which meant more vehicles and staff, but it was hoped that within a year the Council could potentially see a benefit to the budget. In relation to this query, Councillor P. King (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport), with permission to speak, issued a word of caution as with more local authorities copying how the Vale operated and collected waste, then it was likely that the price per ton would drop.

Councillor Robertson queried whether there were any potential safety concerns for the Vale following the explosion at the water treatment facility in Bristol. The Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport stated that this would be looked into and reported back to Members.

Councillor Robertson also queried whether there were any costs for the Council from the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccination. The Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport stated that she would check with colleagues and respond via email.

RECOMMENDED -

- (1) T H A T the position with regard to the 2020/21 revenue and capital budgets be noted.
- (2) T H A T the revised budget for 2020/21 be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) That Members are aware of the projected revenue outturn for 2020/21.
- (2) That Members are aware of the revised budget for 2020/21.

298 INITIAL REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2021/22 (DEH) –

The purpose of the report was to submit for consultation the initial revenue budget proposals for 2021/22.

The Council was required under statute to fix the level of Council Tax for 2021/22 by 11th March 2021 and in order to do so, would have to agree a balanced revenue budget by that date.

The Council's provisional settlement had not yet been announced by Welsh Government and was expected this year on 22nd December 2020 with the final settlement being due on 2nd March 2021. Even though this crucial information had not been received, the budget setting and consultation process had to commence in order to meet statutory deadlines.

No.

There was a consensus among the Scrutiny Committee, that it was difficult to scrutinise or provide comment on the proposed budget as the final settlement from Welsh Government was unknown. The Committee was concerned with the lateness of proposals from Welsh Government and was of the view that it would be better if the proposals were presented in January.

Having considered the report, it was

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee considers the concerns of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee regarding the lateness of the budget settlement from Welsh Government which makes it difficult for the Scrutiny Committee to make a view without knowing the final budget position, so it would be better if this was considered in January.

Reason for recommendation

To advise the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee of the concerns regarding the lateness of the final budget settlement and the view that it would be better if the budget proposals were considered in January after the final settlement was received from Welsh Government.

299 INITIAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME PROPOSALS 2021/22 TO 2025/26 (DEH) –

The purpose of the report was to submit the Initial Capital Programme Proposals for 2021/22 to 2025/26 to Scrutiny Committees for consultation.

Councillor G. John expressed the same concerns as raised for the Revenue Proposals regarding the lateness of the final budget settlement from Welsh Government. Councillor John also outlined concern regarding the condition of part of the road network particularly in relation to potholes and called for support for the capital bid around road resurfacing. The recommendation around road resurfacing was endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee.

Subsequently it was

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee pass on to Cabinet the Committee's recommendation that capital bid NST1 - Carriageway resurfacing/Surface treatments, should be funded and progressed as a priority.

Reason for recommendation

In order to priorities road resurfacing and due to public concern regarding the condition of some parts of the road network and pot holes.