

No.

ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 11th October, 2022.

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

The Meeting recording is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor S.D. Perkes (Chair); Councillor J. Aviet (Vice-Chair); Councillors C.E.A. Champion, P. Drake, V.P. Driscoll, A.M. Ernest, M.J. Hooper, C. Iannucci, I.A.N. Perry and S.T. Wiliam.

Also present: Councillors L. Burnett (Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources), B. Brooks (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places), C.P. Franks and M.R. Wilson (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services).

342 ANNOUNCEMENT –

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

343 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor I. Buckley.

344 MINUTES –

Councillor M. Hooper commented on a reply given under minute number 154 about temporary highway licenses. The reply given at the meeting related to whether there was any difference in the responses from the public to Barry Island as opposed to the Esplanade in Penarth. It was noted that after the meeting and via email, Councillor Hooper had been informed that there had only been 1 complaint in reference to Barry Island, where there had been petitions and many more complaints regarding Penarth. Although the minute accurately recorded what was said at the meeting, Councillor Hooper considered it important for a more factual statement to be put in the public record.

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 12th July, 2022 be approved as a correct record.

345 DECLARATION OF INTEREST –

Councillor J. Aviet declared an interest in respect of Agenda Item 5 – Strong Communities Grant Fund. The nature of the interest was that Councillor Aviet’s daughter was a member of the Billboard Theatrical Group. Due to the nature of the report, Councillor Aviet remained in the meeting during consideration of the Agenda Item.

346 CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL – OVERVIEW BY THE DIRECTOR OF PLACE –

The Director of Place provided an overview presentation on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. The presentation covered the following areas:

- What was Cardiff Capital Region
- What was the City Deal
- City Deal Targets
- Priority Sectors and Investment Portfolios
- Portfolio Coverage Map
- Portfolio Investment Overview –Roadmap as at 31st March 2022
- Investment Programme Financial Overviews –To date and planned for 2022/23
- Governance Map
- Governance Functions
- Useful Links
- Calendar for 2022.

In discussing the presentation, Members of the Committee made the following points, with responses provided by the Director of Place:

Query/Comment by Member	Response
What did the City Deal program mean for ordinary people	The Vale would be able to receive a share of £734million in investment, with a number of projects being funded in the Vale. These included an aim to have a half hourly train service from Bridgend through to Cardiff, the transport interchange at Barry Docks and £40million for electric vehicle charging points. One of the biggest projects was the purchase of the Aberthaw power station site which would be developed into an energy and business park. Therefore, the level of investment was particularly important for businesses operating in the Vale.

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<p>Was there a possibility of the needs of the Vale of Glamorgan receiving less consideration than the other areas of the City Deal.</p>	<p>The City Deal had tried not to be too territorial in terms of how money was invested, so there were benefits for the wider region, and the considerable investment into Aberthaw indicated the balanced approach taken.</p>
<p>Was the airfield at Llandow being considered as a place for investment.</p>	<p>Yes, there had been discussions with the numerous landowners about opportunities through the Site Premises Fund – nothing had come through as yet, but discussions were ongoing.</p>
<p>There was too much focus on profit and not enough attention given to climate change and environmental considerations particularly in relation to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.</p>	<p>The City Deal had a number of documents referring to the Act, which were accessible to Councillors and members of the public. These highlighted that the environment and future of the population were at the heart of what the City Deal wanted to achieve. There was an aim for the City Deal to be an “ethical investor” which was again illustrated through the investment at Aberthaw. Investment in transport was focused on climate change and a reduction in traffic on the roads to reduce emissions.</p>
<p>Were the City Deal actively seeking solar firms to build solar farms in the Vale of Glamorgan.</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>At the initial creation of the City Deal, local authorities had called for greater autonomy and devolution for the setting of business rates, income and the ability to levy an infrastructure supplement, and an option for local authorities to use alternative financial solutions. There was also a call for the removal of grant conditions that Welsh Government level to allow pooling of resources. Had any of these been progressed.</p>	<p>It was fair to say that these had yet to be achieved despite representations to Welsh Government. There had been some movement, but discussions were still ongoing. A more detailed update would be sought from the City Deal’s Chief Executive.</p>
<p>Where was the City Deal in relation to the outcomes and benefits and the relationship between the leverage of the amount of public money being invested in comparison to the private investment.</p>	<p>There had been two gateway reviews undertaken by auditors, and it had been identified that investment was on track to meet expectations. It had always been recognised that it would take some years to attract more private sector investment which would increase the leverage coming through. More information would be sought directly from the City Deal and relayed back to Members.</p>

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Were there significant challenges to the Investment Program as a result of rising inflation and material costs.	There had not been any indication that the Investment Program was under threat, but clarity would be sought with the City Deal and reported back to Members.
Had the possibility of creating free ports in the Cardiff region been considered.	There had been discussions with the port operator, but it had made the decision to concentrate its efforts on Port Talbot as it was the only deep-water port in the area. There were also ongoing discussions with the City Deal and Welsh Government around Cardiff Airport.
What was the Scrutiny process for the City Deal	There was a Joint Scrutiny Committee that was due to have its first meeting since the local government elections towards the end of October. Councillor Perkes, as Chair of the Vale's Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee was the Council's representative.
Were there possibilities of improving the train infrastructure for the Penarth area.	Information would be sought from Transport colleagues and relayed back to Members.

Subsequently it was

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the contents of the presentation be noted.

Reasons for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the presentation and discussions at the meeting.

347 STRONG COMMUNITIES GRANT FUND (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 9th June, 2022 as contained within the agenda was presented by the Operational Manager – Regeneration and Planning.

It was reported that since the Strong Communities Grant fund was launched in 2017, grants totaling £1,154,672.95 had been awarded to 120 projects across the Vale of Glamorgan. The Council's long-term commitment was to continue the support with a new five year allocation of £837,533 until April 2025 which coincided with the start of a period of unprecedented change for people living and working in the Vale. In response to the outbreak of the pandemic, communities across the county stepped up to the challenges presented, by rapidly developing innovative and effective projects which supported some of the Vale's most vulnerable residents.

Councillor C. Champion queried whether the Creative Rural Communities Team would be relocating from Cowbridge to Barry. In reply, the Operational Manager

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advised that the Council would maintain an office at Old Hall Cowbridge. The intention was that Officers would be out working in and with communities, particularly in relation to community mapping. The Operational Manager extended an invitation to members for the team to come out and talk to them about priorities within their communities.

In replying to a point of clarification relating to the role of the Waterloo Foundation, the Operational Manager confirmed that they had in the past provided funding towards some Strong Communities Grant Fund initiatives.

The Committee

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the contents of the report and resolutions of Cabinet made on 9th June, 2022 be noted.

Reasons for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

348 VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE CALENDAR 2022/23 (REF) –

The Director of Corporate Resources present the reference from Cabinet of 7th July, 2022 as contained within the agenda.

The report presented the Vale of Glamorgan's Annual Performance Calendar for 2022/23 which outlined the key plans and reports that would be subject to consideration by Members throughout the year. The report also outlined how the Council proposed to engage with the new cohort of elected Members in shaping the processes, key plans and reports aligned to the Annual Performance Calendar to enable the Council to meet the new performance requirements of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (LG&E) and contribute to the national goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFG).

Appendix A proposed an approach to engaging with Members on the Council's Performance Management Framework through the Annual Performance Calendar of activities to develop their skills and knowledge and strengthen their involvement in shaping and refining the key plans, reports and processes that will support them in their key role of assessing whether the Council was achieving its Well-being Objectives, delivering value for money and improving the wellbeing of its citizens. The outputs of the engagement work would also be used by officers to shape the development including format, content and presentation of Council plans, reports and data insights to better support Members in their roles. This had been informed by feedback previously received from elected Members, notably around the production and scrutiny of service plans.

Having considered the report, it was

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RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Vale of Glamorgan Annual Performance Calendar 2022/23 and the proposed approach to engaging with Members in-year to shape and refine the Annual Performance Calendar and associated processes, plans and reports to enable the Council to meet the new performance requirements be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

349 PROJECT ZERO UPDATE REPORT (REF) –

The reference from Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee of 13th July, 2022 as contained within the agenda was presented. It was considered in conjunction with Agenda Item 7 as they were both related to the same subject matter.

The report detailed a wide range of activity being undertaken to ensure the Council continued to deliver against commitments in the Climate Change Challenge Plan and to take forward Project Zero. Progress included work around use and promotion of electric vehicles, active travel, energy and the Green Infrastructure Plan. In addition, work is progressing to improve our data and communications.

It was noted that there had been a recommendation for a presentation on the Local Nature Partnership to be provided to the Scrutiny Committee, this was scheduled for the December meeting.

The Chair, Councillor S. Perkes, queried when would the Asset and Decarbonisation policy be presented to Cabinet, and would it be reported to this Scrutiny Committee. In reply, the Director of Corporate Resources advised that this would be contained within the Council's Core Asset Management Plan that was due to go to Cabinet in December. The Plan would then be referred onto both this Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Subsequently, it was

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the comments of the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee be noted.

(2) T H A T the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee receives a presentation on the Local Nature Partnership when the next update report is presented in December.

Reason for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the content of the report and discussions at the meeting.

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(2) In response to the request by the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

350 PROJECT ZERO UPDATE REPORT (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 21st July, 2022 as contained within the agenda was presented and considered alongside Agenda Item 7 as the matters were related.

Having considered the reference, the Committee

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the progress detailed in the report in relation to a number of the challenges within the Climate Change Challenge Plan be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

351 DRAFT VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT 2021/22 (REF) –

The Director of Place, presented the reference from Cabinet of 8th September, 2022 as contained within the agenda.

It was reported, that overall, based on the review of last year's performance, it was believed that on balance the Annual Delivery Plan commitments for 2021/22 had been met, in what continued to be a challenging year for the Council. The conclusion would be reviewed to reflect the findings from consultation work with citizens, partners, Council staff and other key statutory consultees following conclusion of engagement activities at the end of September.

Councillor J. Aviet, offered her congratulations and thanks to staff for some amazing achievements during difficult circumstances.

Councillor S. Wiliam queried the status of the Levelling up bid as outlined on Page 9 of the Appendix. In reply, the Director stated that the narrative within the report needed to be revised as there were two separate bids funded by the U.K. Government. The first was the levelling up bid which was a competitive bidding process which the Council had successfully submitted a bid. The bid had not been successfully awarded yet and a decision was pending. In addition, there was the Shared Prosperity Fund, from which, the Council had received an amount just over £12million.

There be no further queries or comments, the Committee

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Cabinet reference and appended Draft Vale of Glamorgan Council Annual Self-Assessment report be noted.

No.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the content of the report to assess the progress made by the Council in meeting its Annual Delivery Plan commitments for 2021/22 as aligned to the Corporate Plan Wellbeing Objectives as per section 114 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

352 VALE OF GLAMORGAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011-2026:
ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2021/2022 (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 6th October, 2022 was presented by the Director of Place.

The report related to the fourth Local Development Plan (LDP) Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) which assessed the performance of the policies in achieving the integrated Plan objectives which incorporated sustainable development and Strategic Environmental Assessment having regard to the Monitoring Framework set out in the LDP and agreed by the Inspector as part of the LDP Examination and consequently adopted by the Council on 28th June, 2017.

The format of the AMR followed the suggested format set out in the latest Development Plans Manual Edition 3 (March 2020). It included both core and local monitoring indicators and a 'traffic light' rating system was used as a visual aid to monitor the effectiveness of the Plan's policies and to provide a quick overview of policy performance.

The report set out the key policy achievements to date and confirmed that most of the relevant monitoring targets had been met. It highlighted the indicators where further research / investigation was required. Overall, the AMR showed that good progress had been made in implementing the majority of the Plan's policies and that the LDP strategy remained sound. Accordingly, it was recommended that the AMR be submitted to the Welsh Government by 31st October, 2022 and published on the Council's website in accordance with LDP Regulation 37. In addition, the AMR acknowledged that the Council had commenced work on a Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP), in accordance with LDP Regulation 41

Councillor M. Hooper referred to plans for Nell's Point in Barry. In reply, the Director stated that when the LDP was initially written, there were plans relating to the site of the fun fair and proposals relating to that site being used for leisure and entertainment. These were superseded as part of the site was purchased by the current owner and plans for a hotel unfortunately fell through. Work relating to the remaining part of the site were being considered through the City Deal. On a wider perspective both Nell's Point and Barry Island in general, would be taken forward in the same way that there was a master plan for Barry.

The Chair, Councillor S. Perkes, queried retail outlets and the occupancy rates. In reply, the Director advised that that some new Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) had been introduced as an interim measure due to Covid and that had given the Council flexibility about building use in town centers. The new SPGs and the

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added flexibility had been successful as the occupancy rate across the Vale was higher than the Welsh average.

The Committee

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the fourth Local Development Plan (LDP) Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) be accepted for submission to the Welsh Government by 31st October, 2022 and for publication on the Council's website.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

353 REVENUE CLOSURE OF ACCOUNTS 2021/22 (DEH) –

The accounts had been completed, and the report informed Scrutiny Committee of the provisional financial position of the Council for the 2021/22 financial year.

The year end revenue position was an adverse variance of £13k after net transfers to reserves of £18.151m, made up of £642k transferred into the Council Fund, £18.818m transferred into specific reserves from revenue, £118k drawn down from the Insurance Fund and £1.191m drawdown from reserves to fund the Capital Programme. The Council Fund now stood at £12.510m as at 31st March, 2022.

The Accountant advised that for the budgets within the remit of the Scrutiny Committee, there was a favourable variance of £21k, but this was after transferring funding from Council reserves. Appendix 3 provided a full break down of the use of Council reserves.

A revenue savings target of £146k had been set for 2021/22 for this Committee and there was a shortfall of £75k against this target in the year, the delivery of these savings would continue to be monitored during 2022/23.

Councillor M. Hooper made reference to efficiency savings, and those transferred to the new financial year. He commented that the savings needed to be deliverable and there was some concern around the level of detail provided.

The Chair queried whether changes to service delivery and demand would be reflected with the savings targets. In reply, the Accountant confirmed that in some cases there may be proposals to make savings in alternative budget areas or through the use of reserves.

It was

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the report and the financial measures taken and proposed be noted.

No.

(2) T H A T the Final amended 2021/22 budget as shown in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

Reason for recommendations

(1&2) Having regard to the contents of the report and amended budget for 2021/22 which reflects an increase in Revenue Support Grant awarded by Welsh Government during 2021/22.

354 CAPITAL CLOSURE OF ACCOUNTS 2021/22 (DEH) –

The accounts had been completed, and the report informed Committee of the provisional financial position of the Council's Capital Programme for the 2021/22 financial year.

The total capital expenditure during the year was £66.411m which required funding of £1.191m to be drawdown from reserves.

The overall position on the revised 2021/22 Capital Programme was a variance of £13.410m against a planned programme of £79.821m. There was slippage of £11.496m against planned programmes of work during the year and this had been brought forward into the 2022/23 Capital Programme with approval via the Chief Executive's Emergency Powers. The overall outturn for the areas under the remit of the Scrutiny Committee was a variance of £2.628m against a planned programme of £18.007m. The statement at Appendix 1 detailed the outturn by scheme. The slippage for the Committee was £1.745m and was detailed in Appendix 2.

Councillor M. Hooper commented that it was interesting to see the amount of times that inflationary pressures were described in the narrative for some of the schemes contained in the report. He added that as it was well known that inflation had increased since the accounts had been closed, and he asked whether there were sufficient budgets this year to be able to complete current projects. In response, the Accountant advised that the progress was monitored on a monthly basis, during this process and also the budget setting process for future years. Directorates would be required to flag up any schemes with emerging cost pressures to either build in some contingency or scale back the scheme.

With permission to speak, the Council Leader, Councillor L. Burnett, commented that the Council was delivering the program as best it could. There were challenges as a result of rising inflation, for example, when a piece of work had been tendered and all the legal checks carried out, some contractors had come back stating that they no longer could complete the work within the set budget. Therefore, the Council had to go back out to tender, scale back or re-engineer the scheme.

The Leader added that the agenda of the previous Cabinet meeting contained the Council's draft capital strategy. This was a new approach in order to highlight a lot of the issues that the Council was facing. It was recognised that going forward, the Council would have to be flexible. It was also recognised that the Council would

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have to carry out more monitoring of its capital budget, probably on a week-by-week basis and it was important for that to be reported back to Members.

Councillor Hooper raised the point that it was also important to keep the general public well informed too. In reply, the Council Leader agreed totally, and so it was important to talk to the public about the funding gaps and Council priorities.

Subsequently, the Committee

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the year-end capital position for financial year 2021/22 be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report and the year-end capital position for financial year 2021/22.

355 REVENUE MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST AUGUST, 2022 (DEH) –

The report advised Committee of the progress relating to revenue expenditure for the period 1st April to 31st August, 2022.

The revenue position for 2022/23 would continue to be challenging for the Council both operationally and financially due to the ongoing implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis. A general Covid response reserve of £1.249m had been established during 2021/22 to help meet some of these pressures in 2022/23.

Emerging pressures during 2022/23 related to energy standing charges, the recent pay award proposal, general inflation particularly in areas such as school transport and cost of living and staffing pressures. Inflationary and demand pressures were being experienced across services and would need to be carefully monitored during the financial year.

Currently, there was a balanced overall position with the pressures being met from an underspend in the Policy Budget and some drawdown of service reserves.

An efficiency target of £500k had been set for the year and services were currently working towards achieving their targets. There were some issues remaining relating to unachieved savings targets from previous years.

Adverse variances were being projected for some services this year and the use of reserves would be required to resolve these issues in the short term.

Councillor J. Aviet queried whether fly tipping and also damage to Housing was having any significant impact on the Council's budget. In reply, the Accountant advised that it would depend on who owned the land. So, if it was the Housing Department then the costs to clear would come under that budget. The Accountant

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also explained that the Council was trying to increase enforcement to reduce the incidence of fly-tipping, however it was often difficult to identify those responsible.

Subsequently, the Committee

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the position with regard to the Authority's 2022/23 Revenue Budget be noted.

(2) T H A T the arrangements to offset the emerging overspends in 2022/23, as set out in the report, be noted.

Reason for recommendations

(1&2) Having regard to the content of the report and the projected revenue outturn for 2022/23 as well as emerging pay and price inflationary pressures in 2022/23.

356 ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN MONITORING REPORT: QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE 2022/23 (CX) –

The performance report presented the Council's progress at Quarter 1 (Q1) (1st April 2022 to 30th June, 2022) towards achieving its Annual Delivery Plan (2022/23) commitments as aligned to its Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives.

All 4 Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives were attributed a Green performance status at Q1 to reflect the good progress made to date in meeting the Council's Annual Delivery Plan commitments for 2022/23.

94% (341 out of 362) of planned activities outlined in the Council's Annual Delivery Plan had been attributed a Green performance reflecting the positive progress made during the quarter, 1% (2) of planned activities were attributed an Amber status and 5% (19) of planned activities were attributed a Red status.

Of the 128 performance measures aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives, data was reported for 32 measures where a performance status was applicable. 56% (18) measures were attributed a Green performance Status, 13% (4) Amber status and 31% (10) Red status. A performance status was not applicable for 96 measures, 22 of these related to those measures establishing baseline performance for 2022/23, 67 of those measures were monitored annually and 7 of the measures no update was provided.

In relation to the planned activities within the remit of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, 98% (106 out of 108) were attributed a Green performance status, 1 (1%) was attributed an Amber status and 1% (1) was attributed a Red status. Of the 7 measures reported, 71% (5) were attributed a Green performance status and 29% (2) were attributed an Amber status.

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The report sought Elected Members' consideration of Q1 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 J. Aviet commented on the importance of awareness around recycling and being green. She also commented on the reluctance on some people to recycle, and she stated that further education was needed. In reply, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport stated that the Council had Waste Wardens out and about helping people to learn about recycling and to show people where materials go. This was in addition to instructional videos and resources, and there was a scheme to assist people who were really struggling who could be given an additional purple bag. So, there was a lot of advice and assistance available.

Councillor C. Champion commented on the difficulties around encouraging teenagers and school 6th formers not to drive to school, particularly those living in rural areas. In reply, the Head of Service advised if the parents had chosen a catchment school, the Council would provide free transport. This was in line with legislation which outlined that free transport must be provided within two miles for primary and three miles for comprehensive. It was recognised that within the Barry area for example, some people were not obviously entitled to free transport so that would lead to traffic congestion problems. Ultimately the choice was down to individual parents, but the Council did encourage schools to produce travel plans in order to look at alternative forms.

There being no further comments, the Committee

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the performance results and progress towards achieving the Annual Delivery Plan 2022/23 commitments, as aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan Wellbeing Objectives within the remit of the Committee, be noted.
- (2) T H A T the remedial actions to be taken to address areas of underperformance and to tackle the key challenges identified within the remit of the Committee be noted.

Reason for recommendations

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