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## HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2020.

The Committee agenda is available [here](#)

Present: Councillor Mrs. J.E. Charles (Chairman); Councillor N. Thomas (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Ms. J. Aviet, O. Griffiths, S.J. Griffiths, T.H. Jarvie, R. Nugent-Finn and J.W. Thomas.

Also present: Councillors B.T. Gray (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health) and N. Moore (Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources).

### 242 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020 be approved as a correct record.

### 243 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations were received.

### 244 VALE, VALLEYS AND CARDIFF REGIONAL ADOPTION COLLABORATIVE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20 (DSS) –

The Regional Adoption Manager presented the report, the purpose of which was to provide Committee with the Annual Report and Review of the Collaborative.

Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) was one of five regional Collaboratives which formed part of the National Adoption Service (NAS) and provided an adoption service on behalf of the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Cardiff Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council. The Vale of Glamorgan hosted the Collaborative.

The report provided information in respect of the governance of the regional arrangement, staff changes and areas of service development as well as the performance of the region in terms of the placement of children for adoption, the recruitment and assessment of adopters and the provision of adoption support services.

The Officer appraised the Committee on the additional Welsh Government funding awarded during the period to improve adoption support services across Wales, the impact of the investment upon the regional service in terms of recruitment of a number of additional posts to meet key priorities, and data relating to key

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performance measures in respect of children, adopter recruitment, adoption support and the Adoption Panel as set out in the report appendices.

Following the report presentation and subsequent questions raised by Committee Members, the Regional Adoption Manager and Head of Children Services advised the following:

- The number of children referred for adoption had decreased in the last reporting year however, for the current year, referrals had increased over the course of the second quarter. The number of referrals for adoption support had increased in the second quarter of this calendar year which could be attributed to children returning to school following the original national lockdown. The number of child placements had also increased during Quarter 2 with no placement disruptions;
- The Vale of Glamorgan Council did not currently have an Adoption Ambassador however, this was a function already facilitated by the NAS and adopters from the Collaborative regularly engage with the media to promote adoption services and events such as National Adoption Week;
- The most common age range for adoption was between 2 and 5 years old; and
- There were two adoption placement breakdowns over the course of the last reporting year.

#### RECOMMENDED -

- (1) T H A T the report and the work of the Collaborative undertaken to date be noted.
- (2) T H A T Committee continues to receive annual reports in line with the requirements of the Legal Agreement that underpins the Collaborative.

#### Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To enable Committee to exercise scrutiny of this key statutory function.
- (2) To ensure that Committee maintains scrutiny of the regional service on a regular basis.

#### 245 DAY SERVICES RESPONSE TO THE CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC (REF) –

Cabinet, on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020 had referred the report to the Committee for consideration following its approval that gradual reopening of day services commence from 18th November 2020.

The Director for Social Services highlighted that the Day Services Recovery Plan enabled the gradual and safe reopening of Day Services, taking into account social restrictions and Welsh Government guidance in response to the ongoing national pandemic.

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RECOMMENDED - T H A T the Reference, relevant Cabinet Report and Appendices be noted.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure that Members have the opportunity to consider the changes made to the provision of Day Services in the context of COVID-19.

246 ANNUAL CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2019/20 (REF) –

Cabinet, on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 had referred the report to the Committee for consideration following its approval that Cabinet continue to receive six monthly reports on work carried out to improve Corporate Safeguarding arrangements and the effectiveness of relevant Policies.

The Director of Social Services highlighted that the report was hugely important to the work of the Social Services Directorate as a whole and demonstrated a good number of positive corporate approaches for putting effective arrangements in place to safeguard children and adults who required specific Council services.

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Reference, relevant Cabinet Report and Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report be noted.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure that Committee is aware of recent developments in corporate arrangements for safeguarding.

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

Cabinet, on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 had referred the report to the Committee for consideration following its approval that the consultation approach and timetable for the Annual Delivery Plan be approved.

The Democratic Services Officer drew Members attention to a typing error on paragraph 2.10, page 6 of the Cabinet report and advised that Cabinet approved a Coronavirus Recovery Strategy in September 2020 not September 2021 as stated.

RECOMMENDED - T H A T the Reference, relevant Cabinet Report and Draft Annual Delivery Plan be noted.

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Reason for recommendation

To ensure that all Scrutiny Committees have the opportunity to consider the draft Annual Delivery Plan and provide feedback as part of the programme of consultation.

248 ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN MONITORING REPORT: QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE 2020/21 (DSS) –

The Director of Social Services presented the report the purpose of which was to present Quarter 2 (Q2) performance results for the period 1st April to 30th September 2020 in delivering the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) 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 the in-year commitments in relation to the ADP. The performance had contributed to an overall AMBER status for the Plan at Q2.

In relation to the planned activities within the remit of the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee, 67% (32 out of 48) were attributed a Green performance status, 1 Amber status and 31% (15) Red status. Of the 15 attributed a Red performance status, the impact of COVID-19 was identified as a contributory factor in the reported slippage for 14 actions. Of the 3 quarterly measures reported, 1 was attributed a Green performance status and the remaining 2, PAM/017 (Visits to sports and leisure facilities) and PAM/015 (average days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant) were attributed Red status. In relation to the 2 measures attributed a Red status, the impact of COVID-19 had contributed to missing target.

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 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.

(3) T H A T the progress being made through the Council's Recovery Strategy and Directorate Recovery plans in response to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic be noted.

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Reasons for recommendations

- (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 ensure the Council is effectively assessing its performance in line with the requirement to secure continuous improvement outlined in the Local Government Measure (Wales) 2009 and reflecting the requirement of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that it maximises its contribution to achieving the well-being goals for Wales.
- (3) To ensure Members maintain an oversight of the recovery issues impacting on the work of the Council and their respective Scrutiny Committee.

249 REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL TO 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020 (DSS) –

The Operational Manager for Accountancy presented the report, the purpose of which was to advise Committee of the progress relating to revenue and capital expenditure for the period 1st April to 30th September 2020 and drew members attention to Appendix 1 of the report that demonstrated a revised budget without a change in variances.

The Officer advised that 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.

With regards to the Adult Services Budget, as part of the Council's commitment to acknowledge and support the work Council staff were undertaking in the care sector during the COVID-19 pandemic, a temporary pay increase of 10% had been provided. There had also been a similar payment totalling around £500k to staff working for external domiciliary providers and residential and nursing home providers. Welsh Government was not prepared to fund this additional payment to the Council or external provider's staff via the Hardship grant as it was a local decision and therefore the costs had to be financed by the Council.

£1m was due to the pressures on the Community Care Packages budget which was extremely volatile and therefore difficult to predict. Work was ongoing to review the position, particularly in light of the current national pandemic.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the position regarding the 2020/21 revenue and capital budgets be noted.

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(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.

250 INITIAL REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2021/22 (DSS) –

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 11<sup>th</sup> 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 on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 (usually being October) with the final settlement being due on 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

The Operational Manager for Accountancy added that due to the considerable uncertainty and the financial pressures on government, the Council's financial planning had been based on three different scenarios with regards to funding from Welsh Government for the coming three financial years - a cash neutral settlement, a 1% reduction each year and a 1% increase each year.

The scenarios that had been modelled relating to Council Tax were a 4.9% increase each year, which was the same level as in 2020/21 and increasing the level to the Welsh average which would be 8.4% in 2021/22 and an increase thereafter of 4.6% to maintain the average, assuming the same increase as the Welsh average for 2020/21. The shortfalls for each of the scenarios were set out in paragraph 2.7 of the report.

An updated list of cost pressures relating to the remit of the Committee was attached at Appendix 1 to the report and demonstrated a £3.6m demand for 2021/22.

Following the report presentation and subsequent questions raised by members, the Cabinet Member for Social Care & Health and the Director of Social Services advised the following:

- With regards to cost pressures, these took in to account demographic changes. Previously received grants may no longer be available and reserves have needed to be utilised in response to the national pandemic;
- Commissioning costs were a headline pressure and a greater understanding on system pressures would be learnt going forward;

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- With regards to the increase in children looked after, the Head of Children's Services noted that the increase followed a successful reduction period at the end of March. The numbers have risen from 259 to 274. The rate of admission has been higher than the numbers exiting care and there have been a large number of emergency admissions. This activity is monitored and reported to Corporate Parenting Panel;
- The Head of Children's Services also noted the pressure on the service across key areas of activity, including levels of demand at the front door, numbers of children on the child protection register and looked after, placement demand and finding, and the increased number of care proceedings being issued. The extent of this demand has not been predictable and relates to both numbers and complexity.
- As an example of increases in demand, there has been a 33% increase in referrals between April and September this year compared to last and that increase rose further to 62% following the return of children to school. The average increase compared to last year between September and November averages 45%.

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Initial Revenue Budget Proposals for 2021/22 be noted.

Reason for recommendation

In order that Cabinet can consider the comments of Scrutiny Committees and other consultees before making a final proposal on the budget.

251 INITIAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME PROPOSALS 2021/22 TO 2025/26 (DSS) -

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

The Operational Manager for Accountancy advised that there had been a number of changes approved by Cabinet since the final budget proposals for 2020/21 to 2024/25 that were approved in February 2020. The changes including capital sums carried forward had been attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

A list of capital bids received, under the remit of the Committee, was included at Appendix 2 the report totalling £940k.

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Initial Capital Programme Proposals for 2021/22 to 2025/26 be noted.

Reason for recommendation

In order to gain the view of the Scrutiny Committee.