

No.

## HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2024.

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

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

Present: Councillor J.E. Charles (Chair); Councillor N.C. Thomas (Vice-Chair); Councillors G.M. Ball, I.R. Buckley, C.A. Cave, A.M. Collins, S. Lloyd-Selby, J. Lynch-Wilson, J.M. Norman, and C. Stallard.

Also present: L. Burnett (Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources), C.P. Franks, G. John (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport, and Wellbeing), Dr I.J. Johnson and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health).

### ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer 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”.

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillors C.M. Cowpe and R.E. Godfrey.

### MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2024 be approved as a correct record.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Councillor S. Lloyd-Selby declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No. 7 – Telecare Services Update – in that they had multiple family members in receipt of Telecare Support. Councillor Lloyd-Selby had a dispensation from the Standards Committee to speak only on matters relating to Telecare Packages at Vale of Glamorgan Council meetings and the Councillor remained in the meeting for the duration of the item.

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DRAFT VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2024-30  
(REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2024, as contained within the agenda, was presented by the Director of Social Services.

Through a series of supporting PowerPoint slides, the Director advised that the new Corporate Plan 2025-30:

- Articulated how the Council was delivering its duties under the Well-being of Future Generations Act,
- Set out 5 new Well-being Objectives,
- Demonstrated how the Council was responding to the findings of the Let's Talk Residents' Survey and other consultation,
- Provided a framework for the Council's planning over the next five years – how it would change, improve, deliver,
- Set out what residents and partners could expect,
- Detailed some of the key challenges,
- Highlighted some cross-cutting themes,
- Included a statement about working together, and
- Brought together actions relating to poverty.

Therefore, the Council would be audited, scrutinised, and judged against the commitments in the proposed Plan.

The Director apprised the Committee on the five new well-being objectives that fifty different actions and outcomes would be categorised against over the five Council Directorates:

1. Creating Great Places to Live, Work and Visit;
2. Respecting and Celebrating the Environment;
3. Giving Everyone a Good start in Life;
4. Supporting and Protecting Those who Need Us;
5. Being the Best Council We Can Be.

The Director then drew the Committee's attention to a series of example actions specific to the remit of the Committee as follows:

Ob1 - Make sure there are affordable and accessible ways for people to participate in leisure, play, sport, cultural and heritage activities.	Support our children looked after by bringing together services and investing in local accommodation to enable them to remain within the area.
Ob 3 – Enhance services that support children to stay with their families.	Promote community models of care enabling people to receive the care they need at home.

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Ob 4 – Improve access to good quality and timely advice, support and services to parents, carers, and families.	Ensure robust safeguarding services are in place to protect those who are most vulnerable – young and old.
Develop more accessible and joined up health and social care services that prioritise early interventions and work with the Third Sector.	Strengthen our work with carers, including young carers, to ensure that they have the necessary information, advice, and support and that their needs and those they care for are met.

In conclusion, the Director advised the Committee of the proposed publication timetable for the draft Plan to ensure that the Plan was agreed and published by 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2025, as well as the related eight week consultation programme, for which the Committee was a formal consultee and concluded on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2024.

Following the Director’s presentation of the reference, Councillor Collins raised comments on behalf of Councillor Cowpe on concerns in relation to the draft Plan as a whole, on the lack of clarity and detail on how stated ambitions would be delivered. An example being point 5 on page 30 of the draft Plan that included the statement “to enhance services that support children to stay with their families”. Therefore, Councillor Cowpe was interested to know which services this statement related to exactly and how said enhancements would be achieved practically. In response, the Director of Social Services acknowledged Councillor Cowpe’s wish to see further detail and clarity on the aspirations set out within the Plan as well as how the aspirations would be delivered, and noted that, alongside the draft Plan as presented, the Council would also have relevant Service Plans in place that would be available for Committee’s consideration as standard and provide more specific detail.

Councillor Lloyd-Selby then welcomed the revised approach to developing the Corporate Plan as well as the increased levels of engagement and stated their hope that residents of the Vale of Glamorgan would engage as part of the consultation programme. In response to a subsequent question raised by the Councillor in relation to whether the draft Plan reflected efforts to engage young carers as well as families in receipt of Social Care services during the programme of consultation, the Director of Social Services advised that they would raise the Councillor’s query with the Director of Corporate Resources who was responsible for compiling the Plan.

Councillor Cave then stated that the draft Plan was very broad as well as wordy but said very little on how the stated aspirations would be achieved. Documents such as the Plan needed to be relevant to the reader and the Councillor was disappointed with the levels of engagement that had taken place with residents in the more rural areas of the Vale of Glamorgan. As such, in relation to future consultation exercises, the Councillor suggested that the Council consider consulting with all residents in the Vale, including those living in the more rural areas, and that any supporting documents be made easy to read as well as set out the relevance to the individuals being engaged with very clearly.

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The Vice-Chair of the Committee commended the draft Plan as presented and advised that they were pleased to have had the opportunity to attend a recent engagement event in relation to the draft Plan and recognised that, by its very nature, the Plan was an overarching document. Therefore, further detail would naturally come to light at a later date through the relevant Service and Team Plans. The Vice-Chair acknowledged Councillor Cave's point that residents in the more rural areas of the Vale of Glamorgan would be more difficult to engage with and acknowledged the need to group consultation to balance against resources available. An online survey was also available to all residents as well as in person consultation events. As a secondary point, the Vice-Chair noted that the Corporate Plan was being drafted in a time of austerity and was therefore required to take into account statutory spending as well as other non-statutory spending, for which the Social Services budget was responsible for a large proportion of the Council's statutory spending.

In conclusion, the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport, and Wellbeing advised that a Corporate Plan engagement event was due to take place in the CF61 Community Space in the Llantwit Major area and wished to extend an invitation to all Elected Members. The Cabinet Member also noted that the draft Plan would be provided to all Town and Community Council Clerks who would have the opportunity to share with relevant Community Councillors.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

#### RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T both the reference and appended Cabinet report be noted.
- (2) T H A T the following comments be shared with the Director of Corporate Resources:
  - The ambitions set out throughout the draft Corporate Plan were admirable but further clarity and detail was required on how said ambitions would be delivered. An example being point 5 on page 30 which stated an ambition to work with the community and Council partners to “Enhance services that support children to stay with their families,” raising questions of which services exactly and how enhancements would be achieved practically.
  - Consideration be given as to whether the draft Corporate Plan reflects efforts to engage young carers as well as families in receipt of social care services during the programme of consultation.
  - In relation to future consultation exercises, the Council considers consulting with all residents in the Vale, including those living in the more rural areas, and that any supporting documents be easy to read and set out the relevance to the individuals being engaged with.

#### Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To ensure that Committee had the opportunity to consider the draft Vale of Glamorgan Council Corporate Plan 2025-30 and provide feedback as part of the

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programme of consultation.

(2) To inform revisions to the Corporate Plan, prior to Cabinet considering a final draft in due course.

### SOCIAL CARE RECORDS SYSTEM (REF) –

The Director of Social Services presented the reference from Cabinet of 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2024 to ensure that Committee Members were kept up to date with the progress being made to implement a replacement social care system and the implications of the procurement exercise.

As of January 2026, the existing Care Director system (WCCIS) would become end of life. It was therefore an essential requirement that all social care users and services be migrated from WCCIS to new technology within stringent timescales. A new social care system was expected to be able to support the activity of the directorate into the future and a procurement process had been conducted in collaboration with partner Authorities as outlined in paragraph 1.3 of the report.

Funding of £2.67m had been allocated by Welsh Government from the Digital Priorities Investment Fund for 2024/ 2025 and was currently awaiting allocation to regions by Digital Health Care Wales. This funding would be used for business as usual i.e. for the Cwm Taff Morgannwg cluster this would enable the existing level of support to organisations via the Cwm Taff Morgannwg Regional Team who were hosted by Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council. For the Vale of Glamorgan Council, it would enable the continued support of the current system and preparation for migration to the new system.

In conclusion, the Director advised that Officers were not yet in a position to answer any queries in relation to the successful supplier or next stages of the process however, this information would be provided to Committee Members as soon as practicable following the meeting.

Following the Director's presentation of the reference, Councillor Lloyd-Selby began debate by asking for clarity timescales as to when the existing system would cease, given that the report presented referred to January 2026 and an earlier report had also mentioned 2025. As a supplementary point, the Councillor also noted that a business case had been developed for presentation to Welsh Government and that the cost of the service itself was known but what was not yet known was how much financial support Welsh Government would be providing to the Vale of Glamorgan Council and queried with officers when the Vale of Glamorgan Council confirmed cost would likely be known. In response, the Director confirmed that the end-of-life product date for the system was January 2026. The Council was aware of how much the new system would cost to purchase and as well as the per user cost, however it was not yet possible to confirm the costs in relation to exiting the previous system as well as efforts to migrate between systems. In addition, the Head of Resource Management and Safeguarding advised that the Council was aware of the associated licence costs but the migration of data and the employment of relevant ICT officer roles to undertake the migration works were yet to be confirmed but

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approximate costs had been provided to the Welsh Local Government Association as part of the business case development. Therefore, given the tight timescales, it was necessary to employ the necessary ICT officers in the interim whilst awaiting confirmation from Welsh Government.

To which, the Director of Social Services confirmed Councillor Lloyd-Selby's understanding that any relevant interim costs pending a response from Welsh Government would need to be signed off by the Vale of Glamorgan Cabinet and that the use of reserves had already been agreed by Cabinet with the understanding of the matter being a corporate risk.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

**RECOMMENDED – T H A T** both the reference and appended urgent Cabinet report be noted.

#### Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of both the reference and appended Cabinet report to ensure that Committee Members were kept up to date with the progress being made to implement a replacement Social Care Records System and the implications of the procurement exercise.

#### **ANNUAL REPORTS FOR SPORTS DEVELOPMENT, PLAY DEVELOPMENT, 60+ ACTIVE LEISURE SCHEME AND NATIONAL EXERCISE REFERRAL SCHEME (DEH) –**

The report detailed the work carried out by the Council's Sports and Play Development Teams and National Exercise Referral Team for the period April 2023 – March 2024, which had positively impacted on the health and wellbeing of Vale of Glamorgan residents.

The Operational Manager for Healthy Living and Performance advised that the report highlighted many of the successful initiatives undertaken during the past year to support the least active residents in the Vale to become more active and to support the community to play. These included assistance to clubs, schools and community organisations, a Play Streets pilot, community play sessions, delivery of the leadership and education projects, and targeted projects such as the National Exercise Referral Scheme, the 60+ Golden Pass project, Energise YOUTH and disability inclusion initiatives.

Committee Members were provided with a short video in advance of the meeting which included feedback from various service users who had benefitted from the aforementioned schemes as well as the following documents appended to the report:

- Appendix A – Vale of Glamorgan Sport & Physical Activity Plan 2023 – 2024 Report;
- Appendix B – Vale Exercise Referral Scheme overview report;

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- Appendix C – Vale of Glamorgan 60+ Active Leisure Scheme 2023 – 2024 Annual Report;
- Appendix D – Vale Play Team Annual Review.

Following the Officer's presentation of the report, the Chair of the Committee advised in their capacity as a member of Llantwit Major Leisure Centre, that they were delighted to receive invitations for free events as well as general information keeping them up to date on activities at the Centre. The Chair passed on their sincere thanks to all the relevant members of staff who were providing an important service for residents of the Vale.

Councillor Cave also congratulated officers on a well written report and was pleased to see that the report had been based on personal case studies as well as honest feedback from officers.

The Vice-Chair of the Committee echoed the comments raised in relation to the efforts of the relevant officers and suggested that both the report and video previously shared with the Committee be referred to Cabinet to highlight the exemplary work being undertaken.

In conclusion, the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport, and Wellbeing offered their thanks to Members of the Committee for their comments and stated how delighted they were to be able to work with such a good team.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the good practice being undertaken by the Sports and Play Development, Exercise Referral, and the 60+ Active Leisure Scheme Teams be noted.
- (2) T H A T a further Annual Report on the activities of the Council's Sports and Play Development, Exercise Referral, and the 60+ Active Leisure Scheme Teams be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee in 2025.
- (3) T H A T both the report and supporting video be referred to Cabinet for its information.

#### Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the report on the work of the Sports Development, National Exercise Referral, and 60+ Active Leisure Teams.
- (2) To keep the Committee informed of the work of the Council's Sports and Play Development, Exercise Referral, and the 60+ Active Leisure Scheme Teams.
- (3) To highlight the exemplary work of the related teams.

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## TELECARE SERVICES UPDATE (DSS) –

The Operational Manager for Adult Locality Services advised that Telecare continued to be an integral element of the Care and Support Services available to people across the Vale of Glamorgan. Telecare enabled people to live independently at home for as long as possible by offering reassurance and support to family carers; by providing valuable information relating to the health and wellbeing of citizens to professionals and family; and by providing early / timely access to emergency support.

The Telecare Service continued to roll out a largescale transformation programme to improve its base technology and prepare the service for the Telecommunications switchover from analogue to Digital signalling.

The Officer apprised the Committee on the following significant changes that had been made in the past 12 months:

- The long-standing Telecare Team leader retired leaving a vacant position;
- A new Telecare Team Manager position had been created and recruited to. The new manager, Rachel Protheroe, started on 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2024;
- A mini review of the Team Leader position was taking place in light of the new Team Manager appointment and the emerging demands of the service to inform future recruitment of this critical role;
- The re-brand and restructured charging framework had been embedded as detailed in the appendix to the report;
- A further programme of change was planned that would improve the service further to include increasing the range and scope of Vale Telecare to consider opportunities across housing tenure, telehealth, and geographical boundaries.

Following the Officer's presentation of the report, Councillor Lloyd-Selby commended the incredibly creative working relationship that had been established between the Vale of Glamorgan Council and St. Johns Ambulance that had proven to be life changing for many users.

In relation to the rebrand and restructured charging framework, Councillor Lloyd-Selby queried their understanding on the impact of the proposed charging changes in relation to individuals who were already in receipt of a social care package, and had gone through the process of a financial assessment that determined that they pay the £100 charge and therefore queried whether said individuals would be required to pay an additional £8.32. In reply, the Officer confirmed that the Councillor's understanding was correct in relation to the Gold Package which would then be taken into account as part of the individual's means test assessment for their social care.

Councillor Lloyd-Selby noted that the increase was a charge of £8.32 per week which was a concern given that many older persons may be struggling financially and therefore could result in an individual not taking up telecare services that were greatly needed. Therefore, questioned how the change would be managed and in particular in the scenario where an individual had already been receiving a telecare service but was no longer in a position to afford the service.



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In response, the Officer advised that every individual receiving the Gold Package telecare support would be asked to undertake an annual review and therefore charging changes would not come into place over night but rather on a case-by-case basis. If through discussions the additional cost was deemed affordable for the individual, then the individual would be charged. If it was deemed unaffordable for the individual and/or potentially detrimental to their wellbeing, then this would be picked up as part of the review process.

Councillor Lloyd-Selby added that they welcomed the charging change but did not wish it to adversely affect current or new service users and therefore suggested that the next edition of the Annual Telecare Services Update Report include information on the impact of the proposed charging changes, including Gold customers being charged an additional flat fee of £8.32 for telecare, which would provide an additional funding stream for the service. This would help to assess whether the more simplified package and charging system had resulted in more or less individuals engaging with the telecare service and, in the context of any decline in the number of service users, whether this was as a result of financial hardship.

Councillor Lloyd-Selby then referred to paragraph 2.3 of the report which stated that, in relation to closing hard-wired schemes, the five Vale sheltered housing schemes required further work with Vale Housing to develop a solution to the ageing technology and the impending telecommunications digital switchover. Therefore, asked officers for the relevant timescales for the switchover to ensure that all residents who were already receiving telecare support would not lose out. In reply, the Officer advised that the matter referred to the communal areas and the kit available in those specific areas for which the Council did not yet have a solution. The Telecare Services Team would be meeting with the Vale of Glamorgan Housing Team in the near future to establish an affordable and communal solution.

Councillor Buckley then requested further clarification in relation to the 11% of individuals required to go to hospital following a fall response and whether this was as a result of injury or precautionary led. In reply, the Operational Manager advised that the percentage was made via a mix of instances but in the main, precautionary rather than injury. The St. Johns staff would undertake an observation of any individual who they had attended following a fall and, if they had any concerns at all, taking into account medication the individual may be taking, then they would seek an ambulance to transfer the individual to hospital. Individuals would also be provided with follow up support via the integrated falls service.

Councillor Cave echoed the comments raised by Councillor Lloyd-Selby in relation to affordability and noted that many pensioners were on a fixed budget and therefore an increase of £8.32 per week could be seen as considerable. Therefore, the Council needed to be careful that it did not put additional financial burdens on older persons and monitor the impact of this carefully, especially in the context of the winter fuel allowance also being removed recently from the same individuals, for which the full impact was not yet known.

In conclusion, the Vice-Chair of the Committee noted that any scrutiny in relation to the removal of the winter fuel allowance would fall under the remit of the Homes and

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Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee and the Chair agreed to discuss the matter further at the next agenda conference for the Committee.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the work undertaken to date as well as future developments of the Telecare Service be noted.
- (2) T H A T the developments of the Telecare Service, as detailed within section two of the report, be endorsed.
- (3) T H A T the next edition of the annual Telecare Services Update report presented to the Committee include information on the impact of the proposed charging changes including GOLD customers being charged a flat fee of £8.32 for telecare, which would provide an additional funding stream for the service.

#### Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the report on the challenges, opportunities, and strategic direction of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Telecare service.
- (2) To ensure Committee Members have the opportunity to consider and comment on the direction and actions being taken to develop the service.
- (3) To assess whether the more simplified package and charging system had resulted in more or less individuals engaging with the Telecare Service and, in the context of any decline in the number of service users, whether this was as a result of financial hardship.

#### VALE, VALLEYS, AND CARDIFF ADOPTION COLLABORATIVE ANNUAL REPORT 2023 – 2024 (DSS) –

The Vale, Valleys, and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) was one of five regional Collaboratives which formed part of the National Adoption Service (NAS). It 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 was presented by the Vale of Glamorgan Regional Adoption Manager and covered the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2024. It incorporated the reporting requirements set out in the Collaborative Agreement underpinning the Collaborative and the requirement to review the service every six months as set out in regulation.

The Officer added that the report provided information in respect of the governance and scrutiny of the regional arrangements at a local level, staff changes and areas for development as well as key performance information relating to the placement of

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children for adoption, recruitment and assessment of adopters and the provision of adoption support services, details of which were set out within Section two of the report.

The report also highlighted some of the key challenges and future priorities for the Collaborative in terms of managing the impact upon service delivery within the context of a decreasing budget.

Therefore, the appendices to the report provided data in respect of key performance measures in respect of Family Finding activity, Marketing, Adopter Recruitment, Adoption support and the Adoption Panel. This information was broken down by Local Authority.

Following the Officer's presentation of the report, both the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee passed on the Committee's thanks for an informative and comprehensive report.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

#### RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the work of the Collaborative undertaken to date, as set out in the appended Vale, Valleys, and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative Annual Report 2023 – 2024, be noted.

(2) T H A T Committee continues to receive annual reports in line with the requirements of the Collaborative Agreement which underpins the Collaborative.

#### Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the contents of the report to provide Scrutiny Committee with the Annual Report and enable Committee to exercise scrutiny of the key statutory function.

(2) To ensure that Committee maintained close scrutiny of the regional service on a regular basis.