

No.

## HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2025.

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, R.E. Godfrey, S. Lloyd-Selby, J. Lynch-Wilson, J.M. Norman, and C. Stallard.

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

### 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.”

### APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor C.M. Cowpe.

### MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2025 be approved as a correct record.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

### AGE FRIENDLY VALE UPDATE (CX) –

The Operational Manager for Corporate Strategy and Insight advised that, following a period of consultation and engagement, the Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan were formally agreed and signed off by the Public Service Board (PSB) on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2024 and would be launched during January and February 2025.

No.

During the consultation period an Age Friendly Vale update was provided to the Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2024 outlining the work to date. At that meeting the Committee requested a further report on the agenda and the outcome of the consultation which was now presented.

A total of 135 surveys were completed, of these 27% (36) were paper surveys and (73%) 99 were completed online. Overall, 85% of people that responded to the survey either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the proposed actions were the right ones to focus on for 2025-2028.

In conclusion, the Officer advised that the consultation activity highlighted three priority areas for the Vale which were deemed critical to unlocking the success of many actions outlined in the Action Plan. These areas would require greater focus across organisations during 2025-2028:

- People have a sense of purpose, feel respected and are actively engaged in their communities;
- People are well informed about the support and opportunities available to them through a range of different types of communication;
- People have access to suitable forms of transport across the Vale.

Following the Officer's presentation of the report, Councillor Cave enquired whether there was any points that were a surprise to officers on their assessment of the results of the consultation and also queried what the percentage of the 135 responses was in comparison to the total aging population for the Vale. As a supplementary point, Councillor Cave highlighted the importance of overcoming loneliness in the older population and that part of tackling that issue was ensuring that the older population had efficient and reliable alternative transport that was fit for purpose, such as the Green Links service. Therefore, questioned how the strategy would sit in relation to the Green Links service and how the service would be monitored going forward.

In response, the Operational Manager for Corporate Strategy and Insight advised that officers were pleased with how well the consultation was supported and that the responses were assessed in partnership with those also received via the Council's Let's Talk Survey. Following the assessment of the Age Friendly consultation responses, the Executive Summary for the Strategy was tweaked, and the officers had identified lessons learned in relation to how the Council could best use resources to engage with its communities. 135 responses was a small number of the total older population in the Vale of Glamorgan and an exact percentage would be provided to the Committee following the meeting. The topic of transport was often an issue raised during discussions for persons in the 50+ category, however the specifics in delivering the Green Links service in the Vale of Glamorgan was under the responsibility of the Environment and Housing Directorate. Therefore, the officer offered to pass Councillor Cave's query onto the relevant Council team. In addition, Councillor Lloyd-Selby, in her capacity as the Chair of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee which led on transport matters, advised that the Green Links service was best considered under the remit of their Committee.

No.

Councillor Lloyd-Selby then went on to query what the next steps were in terms of addressing the three areas for greater focus, to which the officer advised that the Age Friendly Strategy sat under the PSB which operated an age friendly network that had representation from all public services. The Action Plan presented to Members set out a range of actions that would now be taken forward and monitored by the PSB. The Vale of Glamorgan Council had funding from Welsh Government for 2025/26 which would continue to fund the Age Friendly Officer within the Strategy and Insight Team to take the actions forward as agreed by the PSB.

The Vice-Chair then referred to paragraph 1.7 of the report which set out the findings from the 2021 census supported the findings of a growing older population in the Vale of Glamorgan between the years 2011 and 2021 and there had been an increase of 24.9% in people aged 65 and over in the area, this compared to an increase of 17.7% for the whole of Wales. The Councillor noted that this meant the Vale of Glamorgan was a popular area for retirement which meant a higher than national average increase in the number of persons 65 and older. Therefore, what was the Council doing to bring this to the attention of Welsh Government in terms of managing the Council's budget. In response, the Operational Manager for Corporate Strategy and Insight advised that the PSB was aware of the fact and had been keen to see the point as a priority within its Action Plan. The Corporate Policy and Insight Manager also added that Welsh Government were currently working on the 2023 population figures which would provide the Council with the most up to date population data and therefore would be able to see population changes / projections more accurately going forward. Therefore, information in relation to 2023 population figures would be circulated to Committee Members following the meeting.

In addition, the Operational Manager for Accountancy added that the way Welsh Government allocated its funding in respect of older people was a key line within the Council's response on the budget consultation provided to Welsh Government given the increasing number of older people with increasing complexity needs in the Vale of Glamorgan. There were issues in the Welsh Government formula, which was a crude method of allocation, where there was a mismatch between budgetary issues and the formula but it was understood that that was a theme that Welsh Government were intending to pick up in future years as part of their rolling review of funding allocation.

The Chair then referred to the fact that there were two recommendations proposed within the report, however, in relation to the second recommendation, suggested that the recommendation be withdrawn considering that the work of the PSB was reported to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee and that all Elected Members would receive a copy of the relevant agenda papers.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

**RECOMMENDED – T H A T** the work to develop an Age Friendly Vale and the associated Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2028 be noted.

No.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the content of the report to enable Members to consider the work to develop an Age Friendly Vale and present the Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2028.

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

The reference from Cabinet of 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2025 as contained within the agenda was presented by the Operational Manager for Accountancy. The purpose of which was to set out the Council's proposals for consultation of its Initial Budget 2025/26 and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2025/26 to 2029/30. There would be a four-week consultation period on the proposals, and they would also be considered by the Council's Scrutiny Committees with Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee tasked with reporting back to Cabinet.

The Council, in common with Councils across both Wales and England, was experiencing significant financial pressures across social care – both Children's and Adults, School finances, especially Additional Learning Needs (ALN), as well as pay awards and Home to School Transport. The new Westminster Government had recognised these pressures and there was a favourable UK Budget at the end of October 2024 followed by a similarly favourable Settlement of 3.3% on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2024. However, the additional resources, whilst appreciated, fell well short of what was needed to sustain essential local services. The Settlement skewed resources in favour of Schools and Social Care and was also underpinned by a notional increase of 10.4% increase in Council Tax, for the Vale of Glamorgan which amounted to an assumed increase in Council Tax revenues of £10.896m.

The Council had underlying pressures of £39.905m. In order to bring forward a balanced budget for consultation a comprehensive review was undertaken in October which fed into the MTFP Refresh report to Cabinet on 28<sup>th</sup> November. Work had continued on reviewing these cost pressures and at the time of the meeting they had been managed down to £29.074m. The Council was mindful that those pressures not accommodated in the budget did not come forward as overspend in the new financial year and hence the necessary rigour of the exercise undertaken. Those pressures taken forward were summarised in detail in Appendix A(i) and a full analysis setting out those it had not been possible to accommodate in Appendix A(ii).

With no comments or questions raised, the Committee subsequently

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

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of both the Cabinet reference and appended report on the Council's Initial Budget 2025/26 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2025/26 to

No.

2029/30 Proposals for Consultation with residents, other stakeholders, and the Council's Scrutiny Committees.

#### DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME PROPOSALS 2025/26 TO 2029/30 (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2025 as contained within the agenda was presented by the Operational Manager for Accountancy. The report set out the current 5-year Capital Programme for the period 2025/26 to 2029/30 and the short-listed Capital Bids that had been submitted for the period in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for review by Cabinet and referred to the Committee for consultation.

The Council was facing significant pressures in relation to price inflation and the cost-of-living crisis which had seen increases in the costs of materials and labour. This had had an impact on the current schemes within the Capital Programme and also the funding available to fund new schemes within the Capital Programme. The total value of capital schemes over the next 5 years was £399.7m. This included £15.6m for the Band B Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, £85.5m for Education pipeline schemes and £228.8m for the Housing Improvement Programme.

Capital bids that were proposed to be funded within the remit of the Committee were set out in paragraph 2.25 of the report.

Following the Officer's presentation of the report, the Chair shared the Committee's thanks and gratitude to Finance officers for producing comprehensive reports.

The Vice-Chair echoed the comments of the Chair and noted that the vast majority of spending within the remit of the Committee was in relation to statutory services and therefore the Council had very little choice in how to allocate the funding. Councillor Lloyd-Selby also commended the Council for still investing within the Capital Programme despite the current financial pressures, still prioritising the most vulnerable citizens of the Vale of Glamorgan. It was testament to the quality and detail of the finance reports that meant that few questions had been raised.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

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

#### Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of both the Cabinet reference and appended report on the Council's Draft Capital Programme Proposals for 2025/26 to 2029/30 submitted to the Committee as part of the consultation process.