

## HOMES AND SAFE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2018.

Present: Councillor Mrs. C.A. Cave (Chairman); Councillor S.J. Griffiths (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Ms. A.M. Collins, B.T. Gray, Mrs. S.M. Hanks, M.J.G. Morgan, Mrs. M.R. Wilkinson and M.R. Wilson.

Also present: Councillors J.C. Bird, L. Burnett, Mrs. P. Drake, Dr. I.J. Johnson, K.P. Mahoney, R.A. Penrose, L.O. Rowlands and J.W. Thomas.

Mrs. G. Doyle, Mr. W. Hennessey, Mr. A. Raybould, Ms. H. Smith (Tenant Working Group Representatives) and Ms. D. Murphy (Cardiff and the Vale Citizens Advice).

### 398 ANNOUNCEMENT -

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman took the opportunity to welcome Mr. William Hennessey to the Committee in a non-voting observer capacity. The Chairman advised that Mr. Hennessey was a Tenant Working Group representative and that the Committee looked forward to working with Mr. Hennessey going forward.

### 399 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE -

These were received from Councillors B.E. Brooks and Ms. M. Wright.

### 400 MINUTES -

RECOMMENDED - T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2018 be approved as a correct record.

### 401 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST -

No declarations were received.

### 402 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME -HAYESWOOD ROAD, BARRY (REF) -

The Chairman acknowledged the significant public interest in the item to be discussed and requested that all parties present ensure that their representations were provided in a respectful and considerate manner and that all discussions be directed through the Chairman. The Chairman also advised that there had been two Call-In Requests received from Elected Members of the Vale of Glamorgan Council regarding the matter as well as six registered public speakers and five tabled written representations.

To accommodate the significant amount of representations on the matter, the Chairman advised that the order of proceedings would begin with an introduction to the report from the Head of Housing and Building Services followed by presentations of the Elected Member Call-In requests and subsequent responses. This would then be followed by the public speakers and any other Vale of Glamorgan Elected Member who was not a Member of the Committee with the item concluding with the Committee's debate. This structure was in line with Paragraph 10.1 of the Council's Scrutiny Public Participation Guide.

The matter was before the Committee following Cabinet's 7<sup>th</sup> recommendation, from its meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> September that the report be referred to the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

The Head of Housing and Building Services began his presentation of the Housing Development Programme - Hayeswood Road, Barry report that was considered by Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2018, by advising members of the seven recommendations raised by Cabinet as follows:

**(1) T H A T the findings of the site assessment (Appendix A) be endorsed and the site at Hayes Wood Road, Barry be confirmed as the preferred site to meet the longer term needs for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation identified in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA).**

**(2) T H A T approval be granted to submit a planning application for the site at Hayes Wood Road, Barry, as a detailed application for a permanent Gypsy and Traveller Site.**

**(3) T H A T approval be granted to the Head of Finance to finalise negotiations with Welsh Government for the acquisition of the site, having regard to the proposed use of the site, existing site constraints and any costs.**

**(4) T H A T delegated authority be given to the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services to agree the form of contract and transfer in respect of the land to be acquired from Welsh Government at the appropriate time and complete all necessary legal agreements relating to the purchase.**

**(5) T H A T approval be granted to tender the proposed scheme shown, for illustration purposes at Appendix B, subject to approval of planning permission and acquisition of the site.**

**(6) T H A T a further report be presented to Cabinet regarding award of contract, following the planning decision and, if applicable, the tender receipt.**

**(7) T H A T the report be referred to the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee for consideration.**

### **Reasons for decisions**

- (1) To confirm the preferred site to meet the longer term need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation identified in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA).**
- (2) To allow the progression of public consultation, formal planning application and, if applicable, procurement arrangements to enable works to commence at the Hayes Wood Road, Barry Site within the financial year.**
- (3) To allow the acquisition of the Site from Welsh Government, which has been deemed suitable in accordance with the Council's Gypsy and Traveller site identification process.**
- (4) To allow all required legal documentation to be entered into and for the acquisition of the site to be completed.**
- (5) To enable work at the Site to commence (subject to planning permission being obtained) in line with the Welsh Government's grant award requirements for Gypsy and Traveller sites.**
- (6) To comply with the Council's Contract Standing Orders, which require contracts with a value in excess of £300k to be agreed by Cabinet.**
- (7) To allow appropriate Scrutiny of the report.”**

The Officer advised that the need to provide a permanent site for the Gypsy and Traveller community had long been identified as a strategic priority for the Council as well as being a legal obligation to meet the Council's statutory duty. Opinion Research Services was commissioned in 2015 to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), which gave a robust assessment of the Council's current and future needs for Gypsy and Traveller provision in the Vale of Glamorgan and the information had been published on the Council's website that confirmed the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community to ensure the Council met its statutory obligations in the provision of these facilities.

The last assessment was reported to Cabinet in July 2017. The need identified in the GTAA comprised 2 individual gypsy and traveller families currently occupying tolerated sites in Twyn Yr Odyn and Llangan (resolved via the short term supply identified in the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) and 17 families currently occupying a site at Hayes Road in Sully and 1 additional pitch over the plan period, accounting for demographic change. The Officer added that the report in front of members focused on the unmet need for 20 pitches comprising the 17 families currently occupying a site at Hayes Road in Sully and 3 additional pitches over the plan period. The GTAA also confirmed there was no need to provide a transit site. Therefore, the Site at Hayeswood Road, Barry was intended to provide pitches for long term residency. To provide further context, the Officer added that a GTAA must be carried out at least every 5 years and the Council would need to undertake a new assessment in 2021 at the latest.

The Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan 2011 – 2026 (LDP) was formally adopted by the Vale of Glamorgan Council on the 28th June 2017 and the LDP Policy MG5 - Gypsy and Traveller Site made provision for a 2 pitch gypsy and traveller site at Llangan. This 2 pitch allocation made under Policy MG5 was intended to meet the short to medium term accommodation needs of gypsy and travellers identified within the GTAA however, the LDP Monitoring Framework required further identification of an appropriate site to accommodate the need identified in the GTAA up to 2026 and this would be fulfilled through the provision of the proposed site at Hayeswood Road.

The Officer advised that the Gypsy and Traveller Site Assessment 2018 document was attached at APPENDIX A to the report which set out the methodology for finding an appropriate site to meet the identified need, identified a selection of possible sites, outlined the site assessment undertaken and concluded that the preferred site was the site at Hayeswood Road, Barry.

With regards to any future land purchases, negotiations had commenced with Welsh Government in accordance with the National Assets Working Group (NAWG) Land Transfer Protocol – ‘A Best Practice Guide for the disposal, transfer, shared use and co-occupation of land and property assets between publicly funded bodies in Wales.’

The Officer also referred to the illustrative scheme layout attached at Appendix B to the report which was a design to meet the identified need of 18 pitches plus additional capacity of 2 further pitches. Further work relating to the site was ongoing, which would enable Housing and Building Services to finalise the scheme for submission of a full planning application and support the tender documentation to enable contractors to bid for the development work. As a secondary point, the Officer added that a public consultation would be required as part of the ‘pre-application consultation report’ (PAC) prior to a formal planning submission..

The report also set out that the current estimated build cost was £2.3 million and it was anticipated this would be mainly funded through Welsh Government grant. Procurement of the land was separate to the build cost costs, with the value being negotiated with Welsh Government, and would be met through funding identified in the Council’s Housing Revenue Account. Welsh Government was offering a capital funding stream specifically for the development of Gypsy and Traveller sites and the grant was capped at an upper limit of £150,000 per pitch as funding was only available until 2021 and required the scheme design to be delivered in line with funding criteria.

Committee was further advised that the proposed site would require a dedicated full time site manager to be available during normal office opening hours to ensure supervision of the site and that the cost of the post would be recovered through site fees. There would also be charges for running costs of the site office and communal area which would also be included within the site fees. The Officer added that prior to setting the site fees, a review of similar sites would be conducted to ensure the site fees reflected that of other similar sites and currently, local charges ranged from £69 to £80 per week for similar Gypsy and traveller sites. For clarification purposes,

the Officer stated that charges for Electricity and Water would be charged through a separate service charge.

Furthermore, the Head of Housing and Building Services advised that there had been some recent developments regarding the proposal and that on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2018 a meeting had taken place between Vale of Glamorgan Officers and Welsh Government to discuss the requirements surrounding the term 'New Traveller'. Vale of Glamorgan Officers also wished to gain clarification on points within the policy and were advised by Welsh Government during the meeting that the traveller community already located in the Sully area were classified as New Travellers. The Council's GTAA was deemed robust and endorsed by Welsh Government, however, the Policy, guidance and site delivery terms referred to 'traditional' site provision with little detail on 'New Travellers'.

Taking this point into consideration, the Officer advised that Welsh Government wished to continue liaising with the Council regarding its draft proposal and had made a formal offer to support the Council to engage with the existing Traveller community in Sully. From the work completed to date it was apparent that other local authorities were also having difficulties in translating the policy to meet the needs for New Travellers and the Cabinet report from 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2018 clearly demonstrated the difficulty that the Council had had in engaging with the current community in Sully.

In conclusion, the Officer advised that during the same meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2018 Welsh Government had formally offered to fund and provide additional support for an engagement exercise and that a future meeting had been arranged with the Traveller community in Sully to consider the needs of the New Traveller community alongside the Policy currently in place.

Following the Officer's presentation of the reference received by Cabinet and attached report and appendices, the Chairman invited Councillor K.P. Mahoney to present his Call-In request, a copy of which was included as part of the agenda papers.

Councillor Mahoney thanked the Committee for the opportunity to present and raised the following points in objection to the site proposal:

- The proposal being approved would result in major industrial contracts being postponed and he had been inundated by concerns from local employers who were currently responsible for 100's of employees. He had already had confirmation from one employer, who employed over 100 employees, that the business would consider moving out of the area if the proposal was approved. The effects on employability regarding the proposal should have already been taken into account at a much earlier stage in consideration.
- Approval of the proposal would be detrimental to local residents as the value of their homes, which were their biggest investment, would decrease and house sales in the near vicinity had already fallen through. It was unfair that a decision was to be made by 7 Cabinet Members, none of which resided within the near vicinity of the Hayeswood Road site.

- There was a significant lack of evidence to suggest that the Council needed to provide 20 pitches as part of the proposal and in recognising that the Council must complete a GTAA, as it was a statutory duty, there had been no engagement with the current Traveller community that were proposed to fill the said pitches. Therefore, how was the Council able to identify the exact number of pitches required. In a time of austerity, Elected Members were familiar with Heads of Services advising that service budgets were being decreased however, the proposal set out to purchase land which could be better used to provide 55 properties and bring funds into the Local Authority.
- The proposal followed that of one raised in 2013 and 2016 which were both unsuccessful and therefore an independent external enquiry of the Council's Planning Department was necessary to ensure that someone was held accountable.

Following the representations from Councillor K.P. Mahoney, the Chairman advised that Councillor N. Moore was unable to attend the meeting to present his Call-In request due to a prior, unavoidable engagement and therefore invited the Cabinet Member for Housing and Building Services to offer a response to the points raised by Councillor Mahoney as part of his Call-In request.

The Cabinet Member advised that, for the sake of clarity, he would address each of Councillor Mahoney's points in turn referring to the specific points raised within the Call-In document contained in the Agenda papers:

Call-in Reason for Request	Cabinet Member Response
Concerns for effects on local economy due to disquiet from businesses located in surrounding area.	The new site was identified to meet the needs of the Travellers already located on the existing Sully site which was in the near vicinity. To my knowledge I am personally unaware of any previous contact or issues raised by the business community in the area, or any specific issues raised by any Vale residents, including near neighbours.
Absence of any demonstrated desire from Traveller community to relocate to this area.	Whilst I acknowledge as was stated in the Cabinet report, the absence of frequent and detailed engagement with officers, there had been some discussions with the residents over the period. On 24 <sup>th</sup> November, 2016 officers met with six representatives from the Traveller group when the site identification process was discussed and the Travellers confirmed some general principals including that they wished to continue to reside together and that they be near to health care facilities and public transport to Cardiff. A follow up meeting was arranged for 5 <sup>th</sup> January, 2017 but this was subsequently

	cancelled by the Travellers as many were not available.
<p>Unfitness of Council's repeated GTAA's over quite some time in regards to repeated references to no dialogue or response from Travellers within the Vale received.</p>	<p>The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) that the Council undertook in 2013 and in 2016 followed the mandatory guidance issued by Welsh Government at that time. The 2016 assessment followed the up to date guidance issued in May 2015, including the engagement checklist. Both historical assessments were considered and approved by Welsh Government. The 2013 assessment was also scrutinised by the Planning Inspector as part of the Local Development Plan adoption process. This resulted in an existing tolerated site being identified as the preferred Gypsy and Traveller site. As Councillor Mahoney was aware, the tolerated encampment at Hayes Road, Sully was not included at that time, but the Inspector was given an assurance by the Council that a suitable site would be identified for those residents in the next few years.</p>
<p>Failure to revert to exhaustively researched list of sites already published twice by the Vale Planning Department identifying other more suitable sites with higher assessed suitability by the Planning Department's own criteria and research.</p>	<p>Selecting the preferred site was a complex process as the location needed to satisfy a range of specific criterion. The Hayeswood Road site was chosen as it met those requirements and also because it lay in close proximity to the current unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller site and the amenities of Barry. The search for a suitable site focussed on public owned land or known private areas that had been previously promoted for this use. Certain possibilities were dismissed for reasons related to the likelihood of flood risk, protections placed on particular environments and other legal or land issues. From the sites that were not eliminated at this stage, a short list was drawn up from which the preferred site at Hayeswood Road, Barry was selected. The site was previously identified for employment uses within the former Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which was superseded by the current Local Development Plan (LDP). The site</p>

	was allocated for housing in the LDP because employment uses had not been forthcoming during the lifetime of the Unitary Development Plan and the Vale's employment needs were met through other land allocations. At that point the site was considered suitable for residential use.
As far as I can find out the only recent report (Fordham) that has elicited a response from the Traveller community in recent years resulted in preference for a site on the A48. Why is this report being ignored in preference of a site that no one has asked for.	The Fordham research and report was produced in 2008 and was therefore out of date. It was completed in line with different Welsh Government guidance, relevant at that time, and did not include the Travellers at Sully.

On conclusion of the Cabinet Member's response, the Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for his input and wished to address the matters contained within the Call-In request received from Councillor N. Moore. The Chairman advised that she had accepted Councillor Moore's Call-In request as she felt the points contained therein, that related to process were valid and recognised that the recommendations from the Cabinet report on 17<sup>th</sup> September could have been made clearer.

Recommendation (7) from the Cabinet report specified that the report be referred to the Scrutiny Committee which meant that a decision on the matter had not yet been made. However, if this fact was unclear to both Councillor Moore and the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee it may also be unclear to members of the public. Therefore, regarding this point, the Chairman suggested that, in future, Cabinet make it abundantly clear, when referring items to Scrutiny, what is expected of the relevant Scrutiny Committee.

At this point in proceedings the Chairman advised that the Committee would hear from six members of the public who had registered to speak at the meeting and began by inviting Mr. Leigh to take a seat at the Committee table.

Mr. Leigh raised the following points in objection to the site proposal as follows:

- The proposed site was only 5 to 10 metres from the nearest residential property;
- Paragraph 11 of the report, provided to the Cabinet on the 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2018 referred, to the Council complying with best practice however, there was no evidence of what the best practice was;
- Paragraphs 21, 28 and 29 of the same report related to the design proposal meeting security proposals set out by the Welsh Government to ensure the reduction of crime. If this is the case, and there will be an increase in crime to prevent, why is the proposal going ahead and is a single site manager adequate;
- The width of the proposed site was approximately 70 metres and therefore would leave no room for manoeuvre;



- Residents living close to the proposed site were extremely frightened by the idea of the proposal;
- It was extremely concerning to hear the Local Authority's statement that there was no evidence to suggest that the proposal would have an effect on the level of crime in the area;
- If the proposal was successful then it would devalue the homes of the residents living in the close vicinity;
- The Travellers currently residing in Sully do not wish to move on to the proposed site as they themselves are scared of Gypsies;
- The Cabinet had been misled regarding this proposal.

At this point, the Chairman asked the Committee if they had any points of clarification for Mr. Leigh, to which, the Committee advised that it did not. Subsequently, the Chairman invited Mr. Kosaner to make his representations which were as follows:

- On behalf of a consortium comprising 24 individual businesses operating from Atlantic Trading Estate in Barry;
- Lichfield's clients had grave concerns over the proposal;
- Their concerns had also been provided to the Committee as supplementary information number two..
- Questions had been raised on the robustness of the proposal and the conclusions reached within it;
- It had been made clear that the proposal was required however, the selection process for the correct site demonstrated no engagement with the relevant customer;
- The GTAA conducted in 2017 did engage with the Traveller community at Sully but the results of that engagement did not match the current proposal under consideration;
- Inconsistent weight had been given to other possible sites;
- Neither the GTAA or consideration of need had been robust therefore, it raised the question of who the proposal was to benefit;
- There was evidence to suggest that business productivity had been interrupted and the proposal could start an irreversible decline in investment.

With no points of clarification from the Committee the Chairman invited Mr. Ismail to provide his representations which were:

- As the manager for a business opposite the proposed site that involves 43 industrial sized units I would like to make representations;
- Not only did the Council have a duty of care to the New Traveller community, it also had a duty of care to its employers;
- 30% of the industrial units had already been sold and therefore bring in significant levels of business into the area;
- 51 plausible sites were assessed therefore there was a healthy amount of alternatives to be considered.

With the Chairman's permission, a Member asked Mr. Ismail a point of clarification regarding his statement of 30% of the industrial units already being sold and asked if

his point raised was to demonstrate that the businesses operating from the units would leave the location. Mr. Ismail advised that yes, the proposal would encourage businesses to move out of the area.

With no further points of clarification from the Committee, the Chairman invited Mr. Rees to take a seat at the table to provide his representations:

- As a business owner on the Docks for 40 years I make representations in objection to the proposal;
- To operate my business there were up to 50 large goods vehicles, each day, travelling in and out of the near vicinity to the proposed site and this would be a dangerous environment for Traveller residents on the proposed site;
- I employ 120 people and would need to consider moving my business if the proposal was approved;
- If the business was not able to relocate then it would be forced to close and therefore employees would lose their jobs;
- As a member of the public and a business owner near to the proposed site I implore the Cabinet to refuse the proposal urgently.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Rees for his representations which was a point echoed by a Member who also wished to add that not all Elected Members of the Vale of Glamorgan were in agreement for the proposal.

The Chairman invited Mr. Ken Jones to provide his representations to the Committee which were:

- It was imperative that the Local Authority identify the needs of the Traveller community however, to date, the Local Authority had not done this;
- The Local Authority must liaise with the community that was directly impacted by the proposal and this had not been achieved;
- Face to face contact was required when engaging with the Traveller community but the Local Authority had not achieved this;.
- If as stated by the Local Authority it had made over 30 attempts to engage with the Traveller community at Sully, how was the Local Authority qualified to know that 17 Traveller families were residing in the Sully area;
- The proposed site was historically in a flood zone;
- The Traveller individuals currently residing at the large site in Llangan were unwilling to move from the site whereas, the individuals residing at Wenvoe required a new home. Therefore, why had the Local Authority not offered a proposal that identified the current need and/or already established sites.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Jones for his representations and invited the final public speaker, Mr. Harry, to provide his representations:

- Many residents living in close proximity to the proposed site were suffering from ill health and/or were classed as vulnerable;
- Traveller communities could cause major disruption to the areas where they were residing;

- The proposal was not just about satisfying Welsh Government it was also about the lives of the local people;
- Many of the people that would be disrupted and upset by this proposal were elderly people that had fought for our country;
- Basic Human Rights principles, for the residents residing near to the proposed site; had not been adhered to when developing the proposal;
- There was evidence to suggest that the existing Traveller community in Sully wished to relocate to a site off the A48;
- If the proposal was successful then residents living close to the proposed site would wish to move out of the vicinity urgently.

The Chairman thanked all six public speakers for the representations provided and thanked the members of the public present in the gallery for the respect and consideration shown.

Moving the item on, the Chairman advised that there were several Vale of Glamorgan Councillors who were not a member of the Scrutiny Committee who had requested her permission to speak at the meeting and invited Councillor R.A. Penrose to speak on the matter.

Councillor Penrose thanked the Committee for affording him the opportunity to speak at the meeting and advised that he wished to represent the concerns and opinions of the residents of Sully, Hayes Road, Barry, Hayes Point and numerous business companies located at Atlantic Trading Estate, Barry with reference to the Vale of Glamorgan Council's proposal for a permanent Gypsy/Traveller site located at Hayeswood Road, Barry.

The Councillor began by advising that many of the points he wished to raise had already been raised eloquently by the members of the public however, there were a few further points to raise from the viewpoint of the various types of stakeholders the proposal would affect. For the residents of Hayes Road, Barry their homes backed on to the proposed Gypsy/Traveller site and the residents, who in the main had invested their life savings into purchasing said properties, had serious concerns that the value of their properties would be reduced, even to the point where the properties may not sell in the future. The residents also had major concerns about anti-social behaviour and an increase in noise emissions from the proposed site, as well as losing what was now a grassed recreational area.

Owners and tenants of flats at Hayes Point also had major concerns over their property values, antisocial behaviour and security and had recently been approached by the management company for the development for financial contribution for increased security and improved fencing for the development, in the light of the proposal.

For business companies located at Atlantic Trading Estate there were concerns about the future value of business investment, the security of business sites, the affect the proposed site could have on their businesses by reduced customer footfall, and the perception and status of their companies. Feelings from the business companies were very strong with some companies stating that they would not make

future investment and would consider a closure of their site with relocation to another area or even just closing down their companies altogether.

Numerous residents of Sully had for the past 7 years tolerated an unauthorised illegal Travellers camp, despite a ruling by the Welsh Government's Local Development Plan Planning Inspector ruling in November 2016 that the site was not suitable for residential occupancy as a Gypsy/Traveller site. Sully residents felt disappointed that the Council had only moved the proposed location from between Beechwood College and Ty Hafan Hospice to a site a few hundred yards down Hayes Road to the position on Hayeswood Road, Barry, which was only 30 yards outside of Sully.

The Councillor shared his view that the proposed site was completely unacceptable to the aforementioned stakeholders but also to the Local Authority as a whole. In conclusion, the Councillor added that although he appreciated the pressure that the Council was under to comply with Government legislation to provide a permanent Gypsy/Traveller site in the Vale of Glamorgan the proposed site was the wrong location and he would be asking Cabinet to reconsider the site choice based on the facts and public opinion. Consequently, because of the strength of feelings from stakeholders the Councillor advised that he was predisposed to vote against the proposal and if the Council was to proceed with the proposal, then the Council would be doing it at the expense of its existing residents and a large number of very loyal companies who had financially invested in the Vale of Glamorgan. This provided the Vale of Glamorgan with much needed jobs and the Council was at risk of not considering the wellbeing of its existing residents and sacrificing the opportunity for future regeneration and investment into the area.

As a final point, the Councillor advised that he had requested that the comments and recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee meeting be considered by Cabinet urgently on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2018.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Penrose for his representations and kindly asked if Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson would take a seat to provide his representations.

Councillor Dr. Johnson thanked the Committee for the opportunity to provide representations and began by making a plea to the Democratic Services Department for urgent attention being given to the audio equipment available at meetings as the repeated faults were not acceptable.

The Councillor expressed his grave concerns at how the Council had compiled the proposal overall and that it had failed to successfully engage with the existing Traveller community in Sully. He advised that this fact alone was enough to reject the proposal. The Councillor highlighted that the Housing Development Programme - Hayeswood Road, Barry report had been considered by Cabinet and therefore made available to members of the press and public before adequate engagement had been made with the Traveller community. This was unacceptable as the necessary frank discussions should have taken place before the report was published.

The Councillor also shared his fears that the Local Authority was putting itself in a difficult pre-judging position and was disappointed that the current position felt like the Local Authority was following the LDP rather than the best interests of the public. As an aside point, the Councillor added that the proposal under consideration did not seem to reflect the ethos of the Council's Planning Committee.

The currently adopted Local Development Plan recommended that 55 houses be developed on the Hayeswood Road site and that historically this suggestion seemed to be the favoured use for the site also known as 'The Bendricks'. The councillor raised the question whether the facts were being manipulated to benefit the situation rather than the other way round.

As a final point, the Councillor expressed his interest in developing regional arrangements for the GTAA in the future and that without the proper consultation and/or engagement with the Traveller community, recommendation (1) from the Cabinet report on 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2018 was fundamentally wrong and implored the Committee to recommend that the report be referred back to Cabinet for complete reconsideration.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Dr. Johnson for his representations and invited Councillor Burnett to provide her representations to the Committee.

Councillor Burnett also began her representations by thanking the Committee for the opportunity and shared that she was perplexed when first reading the report given her knowledge of the matter up to December 2016. Also, that some of the sites considered were also unfamiliar to her from the 2016 proposal.

The Councillor stated that it was important to note that the site referred to in earlier representations, regarding the A48, was for a transitional site and not permanent and was deemed not necessary at that time. With regards to concerns of the proposed site not being valid due to flood risks, this was not accurate as it only related to the entrance to the site and to a minimal risk of a flood once every 200 years.

It was important to note that the Council was looking at the needs of a particular section of the Vale of Glamorgan's population and that one size does clearly not fit all. Successful previous engagement with the Traveller community identified that the Travellers wished to be self-sufficient and as a Welsh Council we were proud to be be forward thinking.

The Councillor also shared her concerns that the Local Authority could end up with a site that did not meet anyone's needs and/or was wanted. The Councillor welcomed further discussions between the Local Authority, Welsh Government and the current Traveller community at Sully and suggested that the Council needed to go back and look at the basic needs of the Traveller community and marry those needs with the needs of the Vale of Glamorgan as a whole.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Burnett for her representations and invited the final Elected Member to make their representations, Councillor Mrs. P. Drake.

Councillor Drake advised that she was an Elected Member for the Ward concerned and that she was totally shocked to learn that the site was being considered. The 'Bendricks' area was a unique part of Barry and that she implored the Committee to send the proposal back to Cabinet for refusal.

Having received all representations, the Chairman opened the debate to the Committee Members.

A Member expressed her disappointment in the lack of engagement with the current Traveller community in Sully and was unclear on how the Cabinet expected the Scrutiny Committee to accept a proposal without the engagement having taken place. Therefore, the Member recommended that the report be referred back to Cabinet and that a more thorough engagement exercise be undertaken before progressing the proposal any further. The Chairman seconded the Motion.

A Member echoed his colleagues concerns over the lack of relevant engagement and shared his opinion that, given the significant amount of public interest in the report, the Scrutiny meeting should have been held at a different venue and made an official request to the Scrutiny Chairman that if the matter was to be presented to Scrutiny again, that an alternative venue be used.

The Member also stated that the report recommendations suggested that the decision had already been made by the Council's Cabinet and he strongly disagreed with all of the seven Cabinet recommendations.

As a supplementary point, the Member questioned whether the consideration of the item caused a conflict of interest for Members of the Scrutiny Committee that were also Members of the Council's Planning Committee.

A Member echoed her colleagues point regarding dual membership and advised that she was indeed a Member of the Planning Committee herself. The Member added that it was unclear why the Cabinet had been seen to make a decision and then send it onto the Scrutiny Committee. It was important to recognise that the Council needed to identify and provide a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site but the site must be right one. In conclusion, the Member wished to raise two questions of the report which were:

- How long would it take the Council to acquire a signature allowing the Council to purchase the land?
- Is there a Covenant involved with the site in question?

The Member concluded by stating that she wished the Council to have purchased the land before a proposal was considered.

A Member advised that, as the Chairman for the Council's Planning Committee, he had received advice with regards to speaking and voting on the matter in hand from the Monitoring Officer and advised the Committee that if the proposal was taken forward and a planning application was subsequently brought to Planning Committee then the planning decision would be considered on its planning merits and any material considerations relevant to the application rather than on a proposal basis.

Accordingly, he was permitted to be party to the discussion and decisions at both Meetings given the nature of the discussion and decisions are separate and distinct.

At this point in proceedings, the Chairman wished to reiterate that a final decision had not been made by Cabinet on this matter and that the Scrutiny Committee had been asked to have a debate and consider the report with a reference made back to Cabinet.

A Tenant Working Group Representative sought clarification on how the Council was to categorise the individuals eventually using the proposed site. The Head of Housing and Building Services advised that the proposed site was designed to meet the needs of the Traveller community at Sully and that there was no requirement placed on the Council to assess the needs of individuals that were not resident in the Vale of Glamorgan area. The different categories of individuals was specified within the Regional Assessments Guidelines provided by Welsh Government and in relation to the robustness of the GTAA conducted in 2013 and 2016, these were conducted by Opinion Research Services who were experts in Gypsy and Traveller Engagement exercises and worked in partnership with Welsh Government. As a supplementary point, the Officer wished to add that the number of individuals in a Gypsy and/or Traveller family could fluctuate at any given time and therefore the number of families at the current Sully location may have been more or less than the 17 families estimated. Council officers had visited the current Sully site several times and had done a caravan count which at that time had been 17. It was also important to note that Welsh Government guidance stated that a proposal may only be adjusted if there is a significant change in the numbers of families' resident over a five year period.

The Chairman advised that a petition had been received by the Committee however, as per the Council's Constitution, this would be formally accepted at a meeting of the Full Council. As a supplementary point, a Member wished to raise a request of the Democratic Services Department for clarification on whether the Council was within its rights to call a Special Full Council meeting to ensure the matter be heard sooner than the next scheduled Full Council meeting in December.

A Member drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 14 of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Assessment document attached at Appendix A to the report that referred to the various attempts to engage with the Traveller community in Sully and raised the question of why had the Council not managed to engage despite having the opportunity to do so over a number of years.

As a secondary point, the Member also wished to address paragraph 15 of the document and asked for further clarification on the meaning of the term 'amenity block'.

The Member raised a third point referring to bullet point 6 of paragraph 20 of the Assessment document that stated that suitable nearby or on-site safe play areas were required and asked what this involved.

In conclusion, the Member referred to page 7, paragraph 39 which stated that the proposed site was significantly larger than the approximate hectares required to

accommodate the identified need and asked why a site larger than required was considered.

The Head of Planning and Regeneration advised the Committee that Officers had met with the Traveller community in Sully in 2016 and that views collated at that time were inconsistent. Future meetings were arranged but unfortunately did not take place. Officers attended the existing Sully site to conduct welfare assessments but unfortunately the Traveller community were unwilling to engage at those times. This had led to a very difficult situation for the Council as the Council had to provide a suitable permanent Gypsy/Traveller site but were unable to engage with the Traveller community. Therefore, although not preferred, the Council needed to make progress to remain in line with Welsh Government legislation.

In response to the Member's second query, the Head of Housing and Building Services advised that the Welsh Government Circular 005/2018 Planning for Gypsy, Traveller and Show People Sites (June 2018) stated that any proposal must provide access to utilities including water, waste water disposal and waste collection services. Therefore the amenity blocks had been incorporated into the design to afford individuals a space that could be adapted to meet their individual and basic needs such as washing and toileting.

With regards to a play area, the Welsh Government Guidance does not specify what could be included on the site itself, just that the proposal must include an onsite safe play area.

The Officer also advised that the Welsh Government Guidance only stated a minimum size for a proposed site and not a maximum size and that any impact to the local settled community would be mitigated through appropriate site design, layout and management.

Having heard the Officer's response, a Member wished to raise a supplementary question regarding the size of the site and asked that if the proposal was to take place on a site larger than required would it be possible for the site to be expanded upon at a later date. In response, the Officer advised that at this point in the proposal process it would not be appropriate to discuss that level of detail.

The Head of Housing and Building Services wished to address the previous points raised by a Member regarding the Council purchasing the land and confirmed that the proposed site would not be purchased before planning permission was obtained and that no attempt to purchase the land would be made until Cabinet approval had also been obtained. It was also important to note that the site selection process was conducted under Welsh Government Grant conditions in order for the Council to successfully apply and receive grant funding. Recently, Welsh Government had offered further advice suggesting that the guidelines could be changed and specifically interpreted for the needs of 'New Travellers'.

A Member wished to thank the members of the public who had provided their written and verbal representations to the Committee which was echoed by the Chairman who added that she was pleased to see so many members of the public in attendance.



In conclusion, the Chairman stated that based on the representations received by all parties at the meeting it was clear that a referral from Cabinet to the Scrutiny Committee was valid and a worthwhile exercise.

#### RECOMMENDED -

- (1) T H A T the report be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration of the proposals contained within the report in light of the comments made above and that a more meaningful engagement exercise be undertaken with the Traveller Community.
- (2) T H A T in the future, when dealing with matters of such public interest, larger venues be explored.

#### Reasons for decisions

- (1) To ensure that a more robust proposal is presented to Scrutiny that takes into account the needs of the current Traveller community.
- (2) That suitable venues can be considered for such matters as appropriate, to accommodate larger numbers of attendees to observe the debate.

#### 403 REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL, TO 31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST, 2018 (DEH) -

The Finance Support Manager presented the report to bring to the attention of the Scrutiny Committee the position in respect of Revenue and Capital expenditure for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2018 regarding those revenue and capital budgets, which fell under the Committee's remit.

The Officer began by advising that on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2018, Council approved the Revenue, Capital and Housing Revenue Account budgets for 2018/19 and the report presented to the Committee was provided to the Committee on a regular basis.

It was anticipated that the Committee would outturn within target for the current financial year as shown in the table below:

	Revenue Budget	Probable Outturn	Variance (+ ) Favourable (-) Adverse
	£000	£000	£000
Public Sector Housing (HRA)	(21)	(21)	0
Council Fund Housing	1,383	1,383	0
Private Housing	11,003	11,003	0

Regulatory Services	2,239	2,239	0
Youth Offending Service	728	728	0
TOTAL	15,332	15,332	0

With regards to Public Sector Housing (HRA), the budget was expected to outturn on target and any underspends in year would be offset by additional contributions to Capital Expenditure thus reducing the reliance on Unsupported Borrowing.

For Private Housing, the income from Disabled Facility Grants (DFG) fees was behind profile at this point in the year and the reason for this was currently being investigated, however, it was anticipated that the service would outturn within budget by year end. The Officer added that the initial savings target for the year relating to the Reshaping Tranche 3 Establishment Review had been re-apportioned across the Resources directorate and a savings target of £4k had been transferred to Private Housing from Regeneration and had been included in the aforementioned table.

The Officer referred to the Regulatory Services budget and that the allocation of £2.239m represented the Vale of Glamorgan's budget for its share of the Shared Regulatory Service (SRS). A separate set of accounts was maintained for the SRS and periodically reported to the Shared Regulatory Service Joint Committee. At this stage in the year it was anticipated that the SRS would outturn on target.

The Officer addressed the Savings Targets for 2018/19 and advised that, as part of the Final Revenue Budget Proposals for 2018/19, a savings target of £6.298m was set for the Authority. Attached at Appendix 1 to the Report was a statement detailing all savings targets related to the Committee and it was anticipated that savings related to the Committee would be achieved within the financial year.

Appendix 2 of the Officer's report detailed the financial progress on the Capital Programme as at 31st August 2018 and the Officer advised that there were no amendments to report.

Still on the matter of Appendix 2, a Member asked for an update on the Housing Regeneration Area item which was labelled as complete but also indicated further works. The Head of Housing and Building Services advised that the particular item fell under the remit of the Operational Manager for Regeneration who was not in attendance therefore; he would request an update be provided to the Committee Members as soon as possible following the meeting.

A Member asked for an update regarding the building works being undertaken at the Holm View Site and the Buttrills Estate in Barry, to which, the Head of Housing and Building Services advised that contractors were due to be onsite at Holm View very shortly and the delay on works starting had been due to a highways matters which had recently been resolved. With regards to the Buttrills Estate, scaffolding had recently been removed and therefore the works would be continuing onto the second

phase. The Officer also wished to add that following a recent site visit he was pleased to report that the area had significantly improved aesthetically and residents were providing very positive feedback about the works undertaken to date. Therefore, it was good to see that recent investment was starting to bear fruit.

A Member asked for clarification on the first column of the Appendix 2 table which was labelled 'profile to date.' The Finance Support Manager advised that the figures held within the profile to date column were the planned spend at 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2018 with the neighbouring column, 'Actual Spend' being the confirmed expenditure as at the same date. In consideration of the Officer's advice, the Member queried the figures regarding the Disabled Facilities Grant in that the profile to date figure was higher than the actual spend to date and queried if the Council was serving the public correctly regarding this grant if expenditure was not being achieved. The Finance Support Manager advised that, as set out in paragraph 6 of the covering report, the reason for the underspend was currently being investigated by Officers.

RECOMMENDED - T H A T the position with regard to the 2018/19 Revenue and Capital Monitoring be noted.

#### Reason for recommendation

That the Scrutiny Committee remains aware of the position with regards to the 2018/19 Revenue and Capital budgets.

#### 404 QUARTER 1 (2018-19) PERFORMANCE REPORT: AN INCLUSIVE AND SAFE VALE (DEH) -

The Head of Housing and Building Services presented the report to advise the Committee of the performance results for Quarter 1, 1<sup>st</sup> April - 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2018 for the Corporate Plan Wellbeing Outcome 1: 'An Inclusive and Safe Vale' as in line with the remit for the Committee.

The Officer began by advising that an overall Green RAG status had been attributed to Wellbeing Outcome 1 which reflected the good progress made towards achieving improved outcomes for residents and the Council's customers during the Quarter.

At Quarter 1, 93% (56) of the 60 Corporate Plan actions attributed to this Well-being Outcome were on track to be delivered giving an overall Green performance status for actions. There was however a need to progress 4 actions which had been attributed a Red status which were: PD/A015, PD/A022, HS/A060 and CS/A021.

Of the 34 performance measures aligned to the Well-being outcome, only 8 measures could be allocated a RAG status as the majority were annual measures which would be reported at Quarter 4. In relation to the 8 measures where a RAG status was applicable, 6 of the 8 (75%) met or exceeded target (green status) and 2 (25%) measures missed target by 10% (amber status).

The Officer addressed the objectives for the Committee and advised that in relation to the objective 'reducing poverty and social exclusion', 90% (18) of actions were on

track for delivery and 2 had missed target and these related to delivery of the Digital Inclusion Strategy (PD/A015, PD/A022). The Officer went on to advise that 95% (38) of actions were attributed a green performance status in relation to the objective 'providing decent homes and safe communities' reflecting the excellent progress made at Quarter 1. However, there was a need to progress 2 actions that were attributed a red status that related to the Council's housing building programme (HS/A060) and working in partnership to prevent and tackle incidents of antisocial behaviour (CS/A021).

The 2 Performance Indicators (PIs) relating to the objective 'reducing poverty and social exclusion', were both attributed a green performance status and of the 6 PIs aligned to 'providing decent homes and safe communities' 4 were attributed a green status and 2 an amber status. The amber measures related to tenant satisfaction with WHQS works undertaken in 2017/18 (CPM/011) which was slightly below target, although better than the same period last year, and the average time taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant which had been longer due to tenants not using the Council's grant agency service (CPM/027).

In conclusion, the Officer drew the Committee's attention to the progress report attached at Appendix A to the report which included a performance snapshot, achievements to date and future challenges for the service areas under the remit of the Committee.

At this point, the Chairman invited the Operational Manager for Customer Relations to provide the Committee with an update regarding Service Plan Actions PD/A015 and PD/A022 that were currently labelled as Red under Objective 1: Reducing Poverty and Social Inclusion.

The Officer began by offering an apology for the delay in providing the Committee with a report regarding Digital Inclusion as included on the Committee's Forward Work Programme, however, advised that he would be in a position to do this at the next Committee meeting. The officer advised that the two Service Plan Actions he wished to address were:

1. Extend our Customer Contact Centre - Contact One Vale (C1V) service to include Shared Regulatory Service enquiries from Cardiff residents; and
2. Promote on-line services, digital skills training and opportunities to access digital services and monitor usage to inform future developments.

The Officer advised that the ethos of the Contact One Vale Centre was that every caller had a great experience when trying to access services from the very first point of contact. This had been challenged recently due to a high turnaround of staff throughout 2018. However, as the Operational Manager he now had approval to employ and train new staff in Shared Regulatory Service handling which would continue to support the average call time being less than 60 seconds and the rate of missed calls being less than 5%.

It was also important to note that the Quarter 2 Monitoring Report would show significant improvement with regards to Digital Inclusion and it was imperative to ensure the Council had good telephone support to increase customer confidence in using online services.

The Officer went on to apprise the Committee of key projects currently underway within his remit of responsibility which were:

- Developing web forms to ensure that when a customer made a request there was no delay in the request being forwarded to the relevant officer. The software to create and implement such forms had been purchased (building 10 key integrated forms initially) and would be implemented in November 2018;
- A refuse collection notification service had been launched as a reminder tool for local residents. To date, over 4000 customers had signed up to the service in the first month;
- The process for bulky item collections had been updated and was due to be launch on 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2018. This would ensure that the customer contact and online form services were updated with the main change to the service being that customers would be able to book a single collection for multiple items with a single fee. An email would also then be sent to the customer once the items were collected and/or notification be given if the item(s) were unable to be collected for any given reason;
- A notification service for customers if their refuse bins had not been collected on their normal collection schedule which was beneficial to keep customers informed of any delays and the reasons why;
- A rebranding and refocusing of the public website to make services more accessible using mobile devices; and
- A continuation of the 'Get the Vale Online' partnership whereby the Council was able to provide online training at its libraries to encourage customers to engage digitally. A recent example of related activities was the loan of tablets from the libraries, for residents 55 years of age or older, that contained pre-loaded apps for them to gain confidence and improve on their digital skills during 'Get Online' week.

A Member thanked the Officers for each of their presentations on the report and stated that he was glad to see improvements in online services and congratulated the Council on a quick response time to a recent query that he made direct to the C1V, however, was surprised to see that a relief crew attended the site who were unfortunately unfamiliar with the area.

The Committee Members raised the following queries with regards to the progress report contained at Appendix A:

Member Query	Officer Response
With regards to HS/A027 (page 19) and the reference to green spaces, will the Council be working towards giving local residents more control over improvements?	The Head of Housing & Building Services advised that grass maintenance fell under the responsibility of Neighbourhood Services and due to contract issues there had been a delay in maintenance resulting in difficulties in weed control. The Officer also wished to highlight that 3.2 million pounds had been recently invested in the Buttrills area for internal and external works

	which were now complete and that funds were still available for investment in other areas going forward.
Regarding FIT/A003 (page 23), will Elected Members be provided with training regarding the Welfare Reform changes?	In the absence of the relevant officer, it was agreed that the Committee be provided with a written response following the meeting.
With regards to RP/A005 (page 30), why has the service action regarding private loan products been labelled as green with only a 25% completion rate?	In the absence of the relevant officer, it was agreed that the Committee be provided with a written response following the meeting.
Regarding RP/A053 (page 37), has the report been presented to Cabinet as intimated and how does the Council identify a renewal area?	In the absence of the relevant officer, it was agreed that the Committee be provided with a written response following the meeting.

A Member wished to add that road and pavement resurfacing was also a very important aspect to consider with regards to public safety as well as restocking the salt bins for inclement weather and asked if it was at all possible to stop individuals accessing the Council's salt bins. The Head of Housing and Building Services advised that the Council did have a gritting policy and a salt bin strategy already in place however, the maintenance of roads and pavements was considered under the Capital Budget for a different Committee. Assessments were undertaken on a regular basis for both roads and pavements that were subsequently categorised by the level of works required. However, these works were heavily dependent on the Council's resources. With regards to the Council's salt bins, the Officer advised that as the bins needed to be readily available to Council staff it was difficult to secure them and avoid, as the Member quite rightly highlighted, children playing in them and/or adults using the salt on private properties. On a final point, the salt was replenished as soon as the Council was notified that the supply was low but it was a very limited resource.

A Member referred to Appendix 4 of the progress report and in particular to the 'complete percentages' showing as zero for the two Red Service Plan actions around Digital Inclusion and queried how a zero percentage could be reached when examples of works had been presented by the Operational Manager at the meeting. The Member also wished to highlight that the commentary for the items was identical to that in the last performance report and therefore queried if the percentage needed to be changed to reflect a more accurate depiction of the work undertaken to date.

The Operational Manager for Customer Relations advised that the 0% figures for the Red Service Plan actions regarding Digital Inclusion were labelled so due to no progress having been made since the beginning of the target quarter. In light of the Officer's advice, the Member suggested that that in order to ensure Members were given accurate information regarding the Service Plan actions that either the percentage complete column needed to reflect a more accurate figure and/or the

commentary column needed to be much more comprehensive to explain the points that the Officer had just made verbally to the Committee.

A Member wished to raise a point regarding the Vale of Glamorgan App in that it was not currently possible to report dead animals using the App but it was possible to do so using the Vale of Glamorgan's website and asked whether this could be rectified so all services were available via both methods. The Operational Manager for Customer Relations advised that with the new form software recently purchased the update would be possible and he would take the point on board for adding to the Vale App as soon as possible.

The Vice-Chairman wished to congratulate officers on the second achievement as set out on page 6 of the progress report relating to 320 (37%) of the 862 dwellings that had been granted planning permission having been classed as affordable housing and therefore exceeding the Council's target of 30%. The Head of Housing and Building Services thanked the Committee for the praise and was pleased to report that there had been some excellent achievements in the last 18 months.

#### RECOMMENDED -

(1) T H A T the performance results and progress towards achieving key outcomes in line with the Corporate Plan Wellbeing Outcome 1: An Inclusive and Safe Vale be noted.

(2) T H A T the performance results and remedial actions to be taken to address areas of underperformance and to tackle the key challenges identified be noted.

#### Reasons for recommendations

(1) To ensure the Council clearly demonstrates the progress being made towards achieving its Corporate Plan Well-being Outcomes aimed at making a positive difference to the lives of Vale of Glamorgan citizens.

(2) To ensure the Council was 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.

#### 405 CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY (HOUSING) - SIX MONTHLY MONITORING REPORT (DEH) -

The Head of Housing and Building Services presented the report to update the Committee on progress implementing the Customer Service Strategy for Housing.

The Officer advised that the original Customer Service Strategy was informed by the results of the large-scale tenant satisfaction survey, performance data from the Council's Contact Centre (C1V) and a review of best practice and input from the

Tenant Working Groups. The key priorities of the Strategy were designed to drive improvements in several key areas of customer service and were:

- Embedding a customer first culture within the Housing Team;
- Expanding the range of personalised services available to tenants;
- Developing the ways customers could access housing services; and
- Improving the quality of customer services provided to tenants and increasing the range of customer feedback in order to drive service improvements.

The Officer was pleased to report that there had been significant progress with implementation and the majority of the actions within the strategy were either completed or on target to be completed by the target date. However, there were a small number of actions which were either not due yet or were falling behind and therefore labelled as Red:

- Consult with local residents to identify key issues and future estate priorities;
- Complete action plans for larger estates;
- Improve quality of information held on the housing pages of the external website; and
- Promote use of customer portal via tenant's newsletter.

In response to the aforementioned red actions the Head of Housing and Building Services provided the following advice to the Committee:

The Tenant Portal was due to 'go live' from the 26th October 2018, and would give tenants access to several services via the Council's web site, including the ability to make payments, check a rent account balance, update household details and report issues. This was the first phase of services to go digital and it was planned to expand upon these in the future so that tenants were able to 'bid' for homes and report repairs online. The Officer highlighted that increasing the number of tenants using online services would help deliver efficiencies, improve customer service and ease pressure on the C1V contact centre.

Progress had been made developing estate action plans. The plans were designed to identify key issues which were relevant to each area, for example: environmental concerns, isolation/ loneliness, crime/ anti-social behaviour, employment and access to services. With the agreement of the local residents, each plan would be tailored to local needs, which would be individual to each area, and drive improvements in both customer service and residents' quality of life.

As referred to at an earlier point in the meeting, work had been undertaken to improve the customer contact experience including the development of a 'knowledge base' used by call handlers in the Council's Contact Centre so they were able to use more detailed information to resolve more Housing calls at the first point of contact. In addition, agents were able to access the Housing's back office IT systems in order to confirm rent balances, payment details etc. resulting in fewer calls needing to be transferred and less service requests for call backs being raised.

Changes had also been made to the website to ensure that up to date contact details were available as well as topical information about fire safety, the abolition of Right to Buy, etc. Tenants were also able to access the customer portal and therefore their own personal data via the web site. The Officer added that, in future, the website



would be developed further to include additional information and make it easier for tenants to access information and services.

Finally, progress had also been made embedding a 'customer first' culture within the staff team. Team members themselves had developed a team aim and a suite of 'values' they would demonstrate when dealing with customers. A significant number of team members had also taken part in the 'aspiring leaders' programme which had equipped them with a range of tools and techniques to help make them more effective and better able to assist customers.

A Member drew the Committee's attention to Objective 4 of the Strategy 'Improving the quality of customer services provided to tenants' and queried the level of customer service training for all current staff as the content of the Strategy referred to C1V staff only. The Operational Manager for Public Housing Services advised that housing staff were in the process of developing core team values and that they had also received Customer Service training. However, managers would be willing to offer refresher training if required. The Member thanked the Officer for the update regarding his query, however, suggested that if such training had already taken place then this should be a point that was continually monitored and therefore included within the Operational Plan. As a supplementary point, the Member highlighted that Objective 4.1 could be easily amended to demonstrate a more realistic account of staff training undertaken to date.

The Head of Housing and Building Services wished to add that previous staff training exercises had been designed around tenant involvement which was extremely successful and allowed an additional opportunity for staff to engage with tenants and it would be beneficial to re-run that style of training event in the future.

**RECOMMENDED - T H A T** the six monthly monitoring report in relation to the Customer Service Strategy for Housing be noted.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure that high standards of customer service are provided consistently to Council tenants and customers who contact the housing team and the actions identified in the Strategy are progressed.

**406 2<sup>ND</sup> QUARTER SCRUTINY DECISION TRACKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND UPDATED WORK PROGRAMME SCHEDULE 2018/19 (MD) -**

The Democratic Services Officer presented the report to advise Members of progress in relation to the historical recommendations of the Committee and to confirm the Committee's updated Work Programme schedule for 2018/19.

The Officer drew the Committee's attention to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter - July to September 2018 document attached at Appendix A, the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter - April to June 2018 document attached at Appendix B, the municipal year 2017-18 document attached at

Appendix C and the proposed Work Programme schedule for 2018/19 attached at Appendix D.

The Officer highlighted that Appendices A - C set out the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee and Members were requested to review progress against each recommendation, to assess whether further action be required, ensure the required action was undertaken and to confirm which recommendations were to be agreed as completed. Members were also requested to confirm approval of the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme schedule with it being noted that the schedule was a proposed list of items for consideration and may be subject to change depending on prevailing circumstances.

A Member referred to Appendix A and the recent reports that the Committee had requested to be added to the Committee's Forward Work Programme regarding vacant properties and social enterprise and requested that these items be labelled as ongoing until the reports were itemised within the calendar table on the Forward Work Programme document. The Democratic Services Officer advised that, historically, once a report had been added to the Work Programme then it was deemed as completed as it would be continually monitored until it was presented to the Committee and any changes to this would be setting precedence. In response, the Member added that it was not currently possible for Members to ascertain the timeframe for a report being provided to the Committee unless it was itemised within the calendar table part of the Work Programme. Therefore, to ensure that members could identify when a report was likely to be expected a report be deemed 'ongoing' in tracking documents until assigned to a future meeting date on the Forward Work Programme document.

#### RECOMMENDED -

(1) T H A T the views of the Committee on the status of the actions listed in Appendices A - C to the report taking into account the comments of the Committee as above be approved.

<b>11 July 2018</b>	
<b>Min. No. 144 – Families First 2017-18 Annual Update (DSS) – Recommended</b>	
(3) That further update reports be received by the Committee on an annual basis.	Added to work programme schedule.
<b>Min. No. 145 – 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Scrutiny Decision Tracking of Recommendations and Updated Work Programme Schedule 2018/19 (MD) – Recommended</b>	
(2) That the Forward Work Programme attached at Appendix C be approved and uploaded to the Council's website.	Forward work programme uploaded to the Council's website.
<b>12 September 2018</b>	
<b>Min. No. 276 – Scrutiny Committees' Draft Annual Report May 207 to April 2018 (MD) – Recommended</b>	
That the contents of the draft Annual Report for the period May 2017 to April 2018, subject to any further minor amendments being agreed in	Presented to Full Council meeting on 26 <sup>th</sup> September, 2018.

consultation with the Chairman, be approved and that the report be submitted to Full Council in September 2018.	
<b>11 October 2017</b>	
<b>Min. No. 374 – Accommodation Solutions Project – Longmeadow Court, Cowbridge (DEH) – Recommended</b>	
(2) That the Director of Social Services be invited to a future Committee to provide an update on the demand for sheltered housing schemes within the Vale of Glamorgan.	Reference from the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee regarding Older Persons' Housing and Accommodation Including with Care and Care Ready provided to Committee on 12 <sup>th</sup> September, 2018. Committee's comments pending referral to Cabinet (See Appendix A of Agenda Item No. 4 from 12 <sup>th</sup> September, 2018 meeting) (Min. No. refers)

(2) T H A T the updated Forward Work Programme schedule attached at Appendix D be approved and uploaded to the Council's website.

(3) T H A T for future scheduling of the Committee's Forward Work Programme and recommendation tracking that the following reports be labelled as ongoing:  
 Vacant Properties within the Private Sector (12 Sept 18: Min No 277)  
 Social Enterprise (12 Sept 18: Min No 278)

Reasons for recommendations

(1&3) To maintain effective tracking of the Committee's recommendations.

(2) For information.