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## LIVE WELL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2025.

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

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

Present: Councillor A.M. Collins (Chair); Councillor B. Loveluck-Edwards (Vice-Chair); Councillors G. Bruce, I.R. Buckley, S.M. Hanks, W.A. Hennessy, S. Lloyd-Selby, J. Lynch-Wilson, M.J.G. Morgan and N.C. Thomas.

Also Present: O. Carroll (Cardiff and Vale Citizens Advice); Councillors R.M. Birch (Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language), G. John (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Wellbeing), S.D. Perkes (Cabinet Member for Public Sector Housing and Tenant Engagement) and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health).

### 146 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”.

### 147 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor C.A. Cave.

### 148 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2025 be approved as a correct record.

### 149 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Councillor Lloyd-Selby declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No. 4 – Annual Review of Commissioned Services to Adults with a Care and Support Need, as the Councillor had relatives in receipt of social care packages. Councillor Lloyd-Selby had dispensation to speak and vote and therefore remained in the meeting for the item.

Councillor Lloyd-Selby declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No. 5 – Work to Tackle Poverty and the Current Cost of Living Crisis, in that the Councillor was a

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Trustee of the Vale Food Bank. Councillor Lloyd-Selby had dispensation to speak and vote and therefore remained in the meeting for the item.

#### 150 ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMMISSIONED SERVICES TO ADULTS WITH A CARE AND SUPPORT NEED (DSS) –

The Operational Manager for Commissioning and Finance presented the report, the purpose of which was to outline the activity undertaken regarding commissioned services for adults with care and support needs by the Resource Management and Safeguarding Division during 2024/25. The report also included the commissioning priorities for the wider Directorate 2025/26. Detailed background context and key issues for consideration were set out in sections 1 and 2 of the covering report.

Following the Chair's request for any comments and or questions on the item, Members of the Committee raised the following questions:

- What were the timescales and methods of service user engagement for the internal provision review currently being undertaken in relation to residential care homes in the Vale?
- What were the main reasons for some care homes in the Vale of Glamorgan charging the higher cost weekly fee?
- What percentage of care homes in the Vale of Glamorgan charged the standard contract rate?
- What were the challenges being experienced around the registration requirements with Social Care Wales in relation to recruitment of care staff?
- What is the average wait time now for an individual in hospital waiting for a care home placement?
- In relation to 'Direct payments,' a way for people to arrange their own care and support to improve choice, control and independence, was there any way to increase service user understanding of the financial information that they needed to supply to avoid any scam concerns?
- Did the Council have figures in relation to younger people presenting with dementia?
- When was the next Population Needs Assessment due?
- Referring to paragraph 1.19 of the covering report, and the Council's Escalating Concerns Protocol or contract management arrangements, were there any current providers of concern in the Vale of Glamorgan?
- Will the outcomes of the Your Choice policy relaunch/restart, planned for September 2025, be reported to the Committee?

In response to Committee questions, the Operational Manager for Commissioning and Finance, with support from the Head of Resource Management and Safeguarding, advised that:

- The internal provision review was very much in the project initiation stage with documentation recently completed and the first workshop with health board colleagues, internal staff and representatives from the private sector scheduled to take place on the 31<sup>st</sup> July. The Council was keen to engage

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with key stakeholders. One of the work streams would be to look at the Council's four internal care homes and the provision and changing needs of the population but there was also a wider aspiration to look at accommodation needs for adults with care home provision across the Vale of Glamorgan area. Therefore, the Council would also be including colleagues from the private sector within the project. In terms of specific timescales, and having regard to other neighbouring Local Authority examples, the potential for new care home provision could take a significant number of years however, year one of the review would be focused on undertaking an options appraisal of the market. After which, officers would be in a position to set put some key milestones for the project.

- In relation to the reasons for some of the higher costs, these related to the residential care home marketing itself as providing luxury facilities, such as a hairdressing salon and gym, for residents to purchase services and/or due to the care home offering a specialist services to support residents with a range of complex needs such as high level nursing or social care needs that was provided on site.
- In relation to the Member question around percentages, the Council had four internal care homes that operated at its standard contract rates and three external care homes that operated at its standard contract rates. Those homes were just within the Council's older people's services. So those did not include the Council's learning disability provisions, supported living. Some of the more specialist services were delivered in three to four person bed homes as opposed to a large 100 bed care home for older people. The 43 care homes stated included residents who required support with mental health, learning disabilities, older people and dementia.
- There previously was not a requirement for unregistered workers to register with Social Care Wales. However, the introduction of such meant that individuals were required to undertake extra training requirements, expectations and another process for them to go through. It was an extra barrier for staff when the same staff could earn similar levels of pay in other sectors like hospitality or retail where they did not have additional requirements of registration. The Vale of Glamorgan Council had helped to alleviate some of the registration challenges by delivering a training programme to support both external and internal providers in relation to training new staff, but it remained an additional challenge for the Council.
- The average waiting time for home care was around 3 days. Sometimes this could take a little bit longer, especially on a Friday afternoon, where care agencies would want to make sure they had all of the information and prescriptions for people so that they could continue caring for them over the weekend. The wait could depend on individual support needs, but care homes were very quick to go into the hospital to start assessments with families. So, if there was a wait, it was part of the assessment process as opposed to waiting indefinitely without any confirmation.
- In relation to financial assessments, the Council's financial assessment team did make contact and sent out information in the post and in advance of assessment conversations taking place. The team would always offer a telephone conversation, but they also offered a home visiting service whereby

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an officer would turn up with their ID badge and physical paperwork, because the Council recognised that some service users preferred to see, touch and feel the process they were going through. The financial conversation was never an easy one and it would come with lots of questions that people often were not sure what level of information to present. So that was why the Council offered a home visiting service alongside to provide additional reassurance.

- Officers did not have the dementia figures to hand at the time of the meeting but the data would be available. The number of young persons with Dementia may not be high but they were really important for the people who were affected by the condition at an early age. Some of the Council's traditional older person's homes, would not be in a position to provide peers with similar life experiences and similar interests. So, it was a recognised challenge for the Council.
- The last Population Needs Assessment was published in April 2022 and was expected to renew every 5 years. Therefore, the next assessment supported by the Cardiff and the Vale Regional Partnership Board was expected in 2027.
- There were a number of providers that would come to the Council's attention through its joint quality monitoring arrangement where the Council would triangulate information across its health services, Local Authority services, and advocacy services. Sometimes conversations would escalate to a visit or a wider conversation with a provider and sometimes they were triggered by Care Inspector Wales where they had been out and done an inspection and were notifying the Council of their concerns. Of the providers that the Council had supported over the last year, there had been one learning disability provider that had gone into escalating concerns, been supported through the Council's process and then come out of escalating concerns four months later, where the Council had monitored and supported significant improvements in that provision, resulting in a change in management and then a reinspection. There had been one domiciliary care agency that supported children and young people that the Council had also supported through the process and the Council currently had one care home that was within the process that it was supporting through improvements in their area, in partnership with CIW and the health board.
- Members would be invited to join officers in the re-launch of the Your Choice outcome based domiciliary care scheme at the appropriate time, where officers would be sharing case studies, positive outcomes and there would be citizens and providers there to share their experiences as part of the ongoing roll out. The Council had 22 providers as part of the framework at the current time. So, the temporary pause of Your Choice was to work with the 22 providers to understand how outcomes were being delivered.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

**RECOMMENDED –**

(1) T H A T the following aspects of the report be noted:

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- the ongoing challenges and demand for commissioned social care services,
- the changing population of the Vale of Glamorgan and the associated increase in demand for care services,
- the availability of commissioned services for Vale of Glamorgan residents and the associated increase in expenditure, and
- the sustained improved timeliness of providing home care to residents.

(2) T H A T a further Annual Review of Commissioned Services for Adults with a Care and Support Need report be received by the Committee on a biannual basis via the Scrutiny For Information Reporting mechanism.

(3) T H A T the Committee receives a report on the outcome of the Vale of Glamorgan Care Home Provision Review.

### Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the contents of the report to provide Members with an opportunity to exercise oversight of the key statutory function and of the following factors:

- the demographic changes in the Vale of Glamorgan, the relevant social care legislation, and the impact for commissioning care,
- the budget implications of providing more care and at a higher cost and the response of the Council in meeting this increase, and
- the changed and sustained position with respect to the availability of home care for Vale of Glamorgan residents.

(2) The Committee continues to receive related data for its information beginning in the Autumn of 2025.

(3) To ensure that Committee is sighted on the review findings, at the appropriate time, in line with the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

### 151 WORK TO TACKLE POVERTY AND THE CURRENT COST OF LIVING CRISIS (DCR) –

The report provided an update on work being undertaken across the Council and working in partnership to tackle poverty, and to respond to the cost-of-living crisis across the period December 2024 – May 2025.

The report illustrated the breadth of work undertaken to support people into employment, help families and young people through financial and wellbeing support including various sports opportunities as well as the developing work within schools to use them as community hubs.

It highlighted the work to tackle food insecurity by supporting projects that improved access to food, reduce loneliness and isolation through supporting the development

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of community spaces, and provided financial support to individuals through a number of schemes.

The report also provided details about the use of the cost-of-living reserve, which was established as part of the 2023-24 budget, demonstrating how the Council was matching the use of reserves with the Council's core priorities. Shared Prosperity funding was also supporting a number of projects that would be helping to target poverty and address the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis.

Following the Chair's request for any comments and or questions on the item, Councillor Buckley noted the concerning amount of working people resident in the Vale of Glamorgan who were also receiving universal credit as highlighted within the report. The Councillor also commended the Council for signposting individuals to other aspects of support available to them once contact had been made, as exemplified in paragraph 2.9 of the report. Finally, the Councillor commended the rural food support services that not only provided food for individuals but also encouraged community spirit and friendships.

Councillor Lloyd-Selby then thanked officers for a helpful report and stated that it was pleasing to see the work that the Council had done in response to the Welsh Benefit Charter. The Councillor then posed a question and suggestion as follows:

- The report included information that in the recent survey only 10.7% of respondents felt that the Council was doing enough to support people through the cost of living crisis. Was there any narrative attached to that data? For example, were people asked to suggest things that the Council could do to do more to support people?
- Appendix B to the report included a lot of really useful data in terms of various questions and percentages but, because there was no comparative data, it was really difficult for Councillors and for members of the public to see whether or not the situation was improving i.e. whether progress was being made, whether things were standing still, or whether things were becoming more challenging. Could the next 2026 iteration of the report include comparative data with the 2025 version to better understand the impact that the work was having?

Councillor Lynch-Wilson then echoed the comments of Councillor Buckley in that the way that people viewed poverty was changing. It was therefore important that the report demonstrated the shift in attitude and that it was not necessarily people out of work who were struggling. The Councillor therefore commended the Council for engaging with members of the public who were struggling to support them with seeking help.

In response to Member questions, the Director of Corporate Resources advised that the data provided within Appendix B of the report was data introduced against the 2025 performance measures. Therefore, it would remain within the Council's wider performance framework and Councillors would be able to observe trends going forward. The Council had also introduced, as part of Vale 2030, a series of other indicators that were more indicative of some of the socio economic picture within the Vale of Glamorgan. It was therefore hoped that the report before Members would sit

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alongside the Corporate Plan Monitoring Reports. The Director was pleased to receive comments in relation to the Council's contribution towards meeting the Welsh Benefits Charter and provided an example in the form of working with Citizens Advice. A number of residents were contacting both the Council and Citizens Advice on the same matter, so the Council was currently working with Citizens Advice on how to best join processes so that individuals need only report once. Officers were happy to take away Councillor Lloyd-Selby's suggestion to look at what the narrative of data was. The Councillor's suggestion was timely given that the Council was currently finalising questions for running the 'Life in the Vale' survey again in the autumn.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the following aspects of the report be noted:
  - the work being undertaken with regards to tackling poverty and the cost-of-living crisis, and
  - the use of the cost-of-living reserve to support those in need.
- (2) T H A T the report be referred to Cabinet.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the content of the report to ensure Committee is aware of the work being undertaken with regards to tackling poverty and the cost-of-living crisis, which has been identified as a key challenge in Vale 2030, as well as the use of the cost-of-living reserve to date.
- (2) For Cabinet to consider the report as part of its consideration of progress of work to tackle poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.

152 TASK AND FINISH REVIEW ACTIVITY (DCR) –

The Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer advised that the report before Members sought the Committee's approval of the single Task and Finish Topic suggestion as set out at paragraph 2.2 of the report. In addition, the Committee was requested to confirm and agree the size and membership of the Task and Review Group.

Once the review topic and membership had been agreed, Democratic Services would prepare a schedule of meetings, with it being envisioned for a review to be completed within 12 weeks. This would exclude the summer recess.

It was planned that the first meeting of the Task and Finish Review Group would include appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair. The first meeting would also include consideration of a full Scope of how the review will be completed. The Group would also be asked to consider the most appropriate time for it to meet and any expert

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witnesses that it would like to call to provide evidence, guidance and to answer queries.

At the conclusion of the review, a subsequent report and recommendations would be fed back to the relevant Cabinet Member(s), home Scrutiny Committee(s) and Cabinet for consideration.

Following the Chair's call for volunteers to join the working group, the Committee subsequently

**RECOMMENDED –**

(1) T H A T the commencement of the Task and Finish Review as follows be agreed:

Equal Opportunities and Accessibility in the Sports and Leisure Sector for Underrepresented Groups.

Including a focus on disabled persons and female service user participation levels to help mitigate inactivity and poor health in both young and mature service users. As well as looking at both informal or organised sport to help reduce sedentary lifestyles and increase social participation, that in turn can reduce feelings of anxiety and loneliness.

(2) T H A T the size, composition and membership of the Task and Finish Review Group be as follows:

1.	Councillor Collins	Plaid Cymru
2.	Councillor Hanks	Llantwit First Independents
3.	Councillor Bruce	Welsh Conservative
4.	Councillor Hennessy	Welsh Conservative
5.	Councillor Loveluck-Edwards	Welsh Labour
6.	Councillor N. Thomas	Welsh Labour

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the contents of the report to agree the Task and Finish Review Group topic for the Live Well Scrutiny Committee.

(2) To proceed with next steps for the agreed Task and Finish Review.