

Meeting of:	Live Well Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, 08 July 2025
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Live Well Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis
Purpose of Report:	To update on work being undertaken to tackle poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.
Report Owner:	Tom Bowring – Director of Corporate Resources
Responsible Officer:	Tom Bowring – Director of Corporate Resources
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Due to the corporate nature of this report, no specific Ward Member consultation has been undertaken.
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report provides 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. • This report illustrates 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. • This report highlights the work to tackle food insecurity by supporting projects that improve access to food, reduce loneliness and isolation through supporting the development of community spaces, and provide financial support to individuals through a number of schemes. • This report also provides details about the use of the cost-of-living reserve, which was established as part of the 2023-24 budget, demonstrating how the Council is matching the use of reserves with the Council’s core priorities. Shared Prosperity funding is also supporting a number of projects that will be helping to target poverty and address the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis. 	

Recommendations

1. That Committee consider the work being undertaken with regards to tackling poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.
2. That Committee notes the use of the cost-of-living reserve to support those in need.
3. That the Committee refers this report and any comments to Cabinet for their consideration.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. 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.
2. That Committee are aware of the use of the cost-of-living reserve to date.
3. To enable Cabinet to consider the comments of the Live Well Scrutiny Committee as part of its consideration of progress of work to tackle poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.

1. Background

- 1.0 The Council has set out how tackling poverty is a key driver for our work, reflected in the Public Services Board's Wellbeing Plan, Vale 2030 the Council's new Corporate Plan (there is a dedicated section relating to the state of poverty in the Vale and actions being taken to address it) and as part of the Financial Strategy. Tackling poverty was also identified as one of three key challenges in the Council's Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) 2024-25 together with organisational resilience and tackling climate change.
- 1.1 As part of the reporting of progress against the three challenges in the ADP 2024-25 in addition to quarterly performance monitoring, progress on Project Zero has been reported twice a year to Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet, and there are regular reports on issues relating to organisational resilience including HR and OD issues, risk management, asset management and financial monitoring reports. Work related to tackling poverty and the cost of living has also been reported twice a year to Scrutiny and Cabinet and it is proposed for this to continue.
- 1.2 A significant amount of work is taking place across the Council and in partnership to tackle poverty and alleviate the pressures felt by the current cost of living crisis. This report provides an overview of this work, highlighting the different workstreams and organisations involved across the period December 2024 – May 2025. This report also sets out performance against an agreed set of indicators for 2024-25.
- 1.3 As part of the 2023/24 budget, the Council established a cost-of-living reserve of £854K to fund work to alleviate the pressures of the cost-of-living crisis. Details of how this funding is utilised is included in the twice-yearly progress reports.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

Impacts of deprivation and the cost-of-living crisis in the Vale

- 2.1** Our data tells us that there are issues of poverty across the Vale of Glamorgan and that the cost-of-living is continuing to cause hardship, with persisting issues of affordability with regards to food, energy and housing. Three Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the Vale of Glamorgan are identified through the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019 as being in the top-10% most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Wales. A further seven LSOAs are included in the 10-20% most deprived LSOAs in Wales. All ten LSOAs are in Barry. There is a consistent correlation between these areas and higher proportions of people on lower incomes, who are in receipt of Universal Credit and in receipt of unemployment support. There is a recognition that these groups have been identified as most vulnerable to the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis and experiences of deprivation.
- 2.2** Since March 2022, there has been a consistent month-on-month increase in the total number of people in receipt of Universal Credit. While this is reflective of the UK government's strategy to move recipients from legacy benefits to Universal Credit, it also reflects a consistent growth in recipients. In February 2025, a total of 13,547 people were in receipt of Universal Credit in the Vale of Glamorgan, 8,726 of those in receipt of Universal Credit were Not in Employment, while 4,819 were In Employment. This represents 8.2% of the total number of people in employment in the Vale of Glamorgan. The cost-of-living crisis has been associated with sharp increases in the rates of inflation, driven by growing food and energy prices. Following its peak of 11.1% in October 2022, Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) slowed, and was 3.4% in May 2025. Some households experience higher effective rates of inflation as they must allocate a higher proportion of their household income to cover essentials.
- 2.3** In May 2025, the Trussell Trust published their end-of-year statistics for the number of emergency food parcels distributed by food banks in the Trussell Trust Community. In the Vale of Glamorgan during this period 1st April 2024 to 30th March 2025. 8,139 emergency food parcels were distributed, with 5,193 to adults and 2,946 to children. This figure represents a 6.4% fall in the year from the highest number distributed in a year of 8,662 in 2023/24. This fall is representative of the 9% fall in the number of parcels distributed across Wales in 2024/25. The [Trussell Trust's End of Year report for Wales](#) highlights reports from food banks that those in receipt of support are experiencing deepening and prolonged levels of hardship; stuck in a cycle of financial difficulty, and living in increasingly challenging situations which are putting immense pressure on people's mental health.

- 2.4** Vale 2030, the Council's new Corporate Plan has an increased emphasis on tackling poverty and inequalities in the Vale. The Plan has identified three key challenges, Poverty, the Climate and Nature Emergencies and Inequalities. As part of our work to deliver all the Objectives in this Plan we have included more actions that will seek to prevent and tackle poverty. Section 5 brings together these actions that cut across all of the Wellbeing Objectives to provide a holistic view of the Council's work. The actions aim to provide support across housing, employment, access to services and advice, food, families, social activities and transport.
- 2.5** Vale 2030 commits to increasing the supply of good quality, accessible and affordable housing, and delivering wrap around advice and support services to prevent homelessness and provide housing options. It aims to develop and improve links between schools, colleges, universities and business to ensure people have the right skills to access current and future employment opportunities. The Council will transform our services and how we work to better meet the needs of the community and to make the best use of our resources, including using digital technology more innovatively. There is a strong focus on supporting children and families living in poverty and help them to increase their income, access food and housing and escape poverty through wraparound support and advice services.

Key Activities

- 2.6** The following paragraphs detail a range of activities that are being taken forward as part of the Council's activities to tackle poverty and respond to the cost-of-living crisis. More detail about many of these activities and their impact is provided in Appendix A. This report covers the period December 2024 – May 2025 highlighting the recent progress and outcomes of the work identified.
- 2.7** Appendix B also details relevant performance measures within the Council's Performance Management Framework for 2024-25 and these measures have been included in the quarterly performance reports for the ADP 2024-25.

Welsh Benefits Charter

- 2.8** The Welsh Benefits Charter outlines the aims for the Welsh Benefits system. Welsh Benefits include Free School Meals, Council Tax reduction scheme, Schools Essentials Grant, and Education Maintenance Allowance. At present, these benefits are separate from each other, and people must make different claims to access the support. The Charter aims to make it easier for people in Wales to claim Welsh Benefits they are entitled to.
- 2.9** In regard to the Phase One of the Welsh Benefits Charter, the Vale of Glamorgan Council already have one application form to apply for both the School Essentials Grant along with Free School Meals. In addition, the main application for Housing Benefits and/or Council Tax Reduction also allows someone to apply for Free School Meals at the same time. The Benefits department have for a number of years used data shared from Universal Credit for an application for Council Tax Reduction and

also have a shortened one-page application for Council Tax Reduction if anyone needs to re-apply.

- 2.10** As an authority we have been working closely with other authorities in Wales and are sharing good practice. We are currently looking at some of the solutions other authorities offer and looking to see what technology is available to make the process easier for the person applying.
- 2.11** We are looking at ways to enhance the process we currently use, whilst taking into account the complexities of the different schemes, and the different application requirements for each one. The authority is committed to making any changes it can to make the process easier and more accessible for applying for the Benefits available for the citizens in our authority. Welsh Benefits Charter | GOV.WALES

Support with Employment

- 2.12** The Communities for Work+ (CFW+) scheme continues to provide specialist employment advisory and intensive mentoring to support people into employment. In February, a large Apprenticeship and Careers fair was organised in collaboration with CELT+, Youth Service, Regeneration Team, and Cardiff and Vale College. There were approximately 60 organisations invited to showcase their apprenticeships, employment opportunities, training and education provision, and provided a range of opportunities for all ages. Multiple training courses and information sessions have taken place, which has contributed to a number of referrals onto the programme. Working with Adult Learning Wales, a new introduction to teaching assistant course was launched in Barry. The Employer Liaison Officer has continued to support smaller-scale recruitment events alongside partners such as JCP and Careers Wales.
- 2.13** The CELT+ programme has been designed to provide full wrap around support for individuals within the Vale of Glamorgan, having provided work placements through QuickStart, and provision through the POD which offers a variety of support on housing, benefits and health and well-being. The QuickStart project released another six paid work placements within the council to young adults aged 18-24 within the Vale of Glamorgan.

Support for Families and Young People (Inc. Work with Schools)

- 2.14** The Youth Service undertakes significant work to support families and young people through various projects and schemes. These aim to deliver targeted support to different demographics. For instance, those with additional learning needs, as well as help to develop young people's skills in order to set them up for future employment. Financial support has also been an important part of support for young people with several schemes aiming to alleviate financial burdens of activities such as costs related to membership or resources for sports clubs, and Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

- 2.15** Work with schools has progressed with significant support for families and young people. Our schools continue to be at the forefront of work being undertaken in response to the difficulties that many people are experiencing. The Pencoedtre Cluster: A Thriving Community Project is a piece of work being undertaken within the Pencoedtre Learning Community and showcases an increasing focus on meeting the family in familiar spaces with schools being identified as effective community hubs. Family learning projects have been delivered by Cardiff and Vale College designed to allow families to learn together while on school site – improving cooking skills, digital competence, and wellbeing. Work continues to encourage families to take up immunisations with Cardiff and Vale University Health Board colleagues attending school café sessions to engage directly with families to share information.
- 2.16** The Council has also provided support to families through the School Essentials Grant and Free School Meals. The School Essentials Grant is available to assist families on a low income to buy school uniform, sports kit, uniform for enrichment activities, school bags, and stationery. There are currently 3,340 pupils in receipt of Free School Meals and 3,135 School Essential Grants a total of £413,400 have been awarded.
- 2.17** There has been a focused effort to provide period dignity products to young people across the Vale at no cost. There are now 25 dispenser units in place across the Vale, with many of our schools also receiving products and 70 community collection points. A home delivery service is established with increasing number of students registering. Period dignity workshops have also been offered to schools and professionals with 95% of schools recommending the workshops. 85% of users say this scheme has helped lower their cost of living.

Sports and Physical Activity Support

- 2.18** The Healthy Living Team has provided support to families to access no cost/low-cost play/sports at a time when many are impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. They have supported family engagement and promoted positive health and wellbeing, through providing localised opportunities directly in children's/families communities and creating a sense of belonging. Support has included taking away the barrier of travel and enabling children to participate in a safe, supported environment, utilising the Vale's natural environment, and developing leadership skills amongst young people.
- 2.19** During the period December 2024 - May 2025 in partnership with Oakfield Primary School, the Play Team offered low/no cost community play provision for families, as a means to engage with the community and offer support to set up sustainable community-led play provision in the future. Family play sessions were held on a weekly basis over a 7-week period after school at Oakfield Primary School. Fresh fruit, hot and cold drinks, warm soup and a bread roll was offered each week for all participants at no cost supported through Warm Spaces funding.

Housing Support & Council Tax Reduction

- 2.20** The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact households' ability to access and sustain tenancies in the Vale. Increasing private rents have meant more households joining the Council's Housing waiting list, which has risen to over 7,300 people. The Housing Income team continue to work closely with tenants to provide support and advice and the specialist Money Advisors within the team manage a growing caseload, offering budgeting advice, help with claiming benefits and income maximisation. The team also assist with grant and loan applications, as well as ensuring people are on the lowest tariffs for utilities.
- 2.21** Homelessness and housing challenges remain, and we have continued to work in partnership to support residents. Our Rapid Housing Homelessness Service successfully reduced our use of temporary accommodation for homeless households and no families have been accommodated in hotels. We extended our homelessness leasing scheme which is now part of Welsh Government's Leasing Scheme Wales, allowing us to formally launch this model of working in the Vale and secure funding. This will further increase access to vacant homes for supporting homeless households.
- 2.22** From December 2024 to May 2025, the Money Advice Team have issued 220 fuel vouchers and with the changes to the winter fuel support criteria and incoming benefit changes, expect this number to increase over the winter period. Money Advice has also been running a campaign for pension credits, and all council housing tenants have received an information leaflet about claiming pension credits.
- 2.23** The Money Advice Team continue to see high demand for the Welsh Government's Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) scheme which provides white goods and emergency cash. Money Advice helped council housing tenants access £2,273.00 in cash payments and £122,381.07 in white goods.
- 2.24** As of May 2025 there are 8,883 live claims for Council Tax Reduction totalling a spend of £12,892,514.55 for the current 2025/26 financial year. This compares to 8,968 in November 2024 as those who are migrating from Universal Credit that were not previously on a passported benefit (Income Support, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance, or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance) are losing an entitlement to Council Tax Reduction. This is because of the way that their income is now calculated, and it is giving rise to them having more income. There are 3,393 pension age claims and 5,490 working age claims.

Energy Costs

- 2.25** The Council is working in partnership with Cardiff Capital Region and the energy company E.ON to support households in poorly insulated homes through the Energy Company Obligation 4 (ECO4) scheme, making those households more energy efficient and helping lessen the impact of rising energy bills. As of May 2025, the Council has approved 109 ECO4 Flex applications via E.ON, an increase of 43 since

November 2024. These are mainly delivered by 3rd party installers working with E.ON. 59 of these have been approved and installed. Information on the Scheme in the Vale of Glamorgan is published on the Home Energy Efficiency webpage [Home Energy Efficiency \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

- 2.26** The Council continue to provide mortgages (Interest Free Owner-Occupier Loans) to eligible households to undertake essential works (replacing defective roofs, windows, heating systems etc) to make homes safe, warm and secure. These in turn support energy efficiency and lower household bills. 3 have been completed since December 2024. From April 2025, applications will be more selective due to limited remaining funding.

Public Services Board (PSB) Project: Your Place – Work to tackle inequities in deprived communities’ project

- 2.27** As part of this project a Senior Community Development Officer was recruited and is based in the Council’s Community Development Team. The officer has been in post since August 2023 and is working with the 3 areas of the Vale that were listed as being in the top 10 most deprived in Wales according to the 2019 WIMD report: Gibbonsdown 2, Buttrills 2 and Court 3. A comprehensive engagement plan has been created and a steering group made up of representatives of the PSB has been established.

- 2.28** Continuous work in line with the engagement plan has resulted in extensive and meaningful engagement with a wide range of partners and community members across diverse settings. To date, over 1,500 individuals have been engaged through outreach to community groups, Slimming World sessions, religious organisations, youth groups, veterans’ associations, local business leaders, local councillors, and professionals working within the health and employment sectors.

- 2.29** Following a funding extension through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), the project has been extended for an additional year, allowing for the development and implementation of a second-phase engagement plan. This new phase includes the launch of a dedicated webpage, a community-wide survey, a press release campaign, and more targeted engagement activities.

- 2.30** The work of the PSB Steering Group evolved significantly, transitioning from initial strategic planning into more targeted and participatory focus groups aligned with the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) domains, particularly employment and health. Following the establishment of the Steering Group and the development of an inclusive engagement plan, a series of facilitated workshops were conducted in February. These workshops brought together a diverse range of stakeholders—including local authorities, health professionals, educators, housing associations, and

community representatives—to collaboratively explore challenges and opportunities using community personas, WIMD data, and real-world case studies.

- 2.31** The project has played a pivotal role in strengthening inter-organisational relationships across a broad spectrum of sectors, including health, employment, education, housing, voluntary services, and local government. Through a series of structured workshops and the establishment of thematic subgroups, partners were able to engage in meaningful dialogue, share local intelligence, and co-produce practical, community-informed solutions. The next step is to develop detailed action plans relating to health and income, continue engagement and explore opportunities to work differently in these areas to address underlying causes of poverty.

Tackling Food Insecurity

- 2.32** There are several food support services now operating across the Vale which have been supported where possible through the use of different funding streams. Details on what these locations offer can be found through both the [Councils](#) and [Food Vales](#) website. The Food Vale Project Officer has continued to host the Vale Food Insecurity Working Group – with seven more 6 weekly meetings taking place across the year. There is a combined total of 20 participants from food support projects across the county.
- 2.33** Rural food support services have continued to provide a much-needed service through the two food pantries managed by GVS in Llantwit Major and St Athan, and the Fresh Food Farmacy, previously called the Wick Food Hub, which was established in December 2023. The Food Farmacy continues to provide fresh, local food on a ‘pay what you feel’ model to residents on a biweekly basis alongside a friendly warm space providing an opportunity for residents to connect over free refreshments in the Wick Sports Pavillion. The space offers the opportunity for residents of all ages to come together helping to tackle challenges of social isolation, food insecurity, and access to food in the rural location. Lessons learnt are being shared between the rural projects to maximise future impact and shape future phases.
- 2.34** Work to achieve the Silver Sustainable Food Places Status continues, building on momentum from the Vale of Glamorgan becoming the second place in Wales to achieve Bronze in June 2022. Part of this work includes the development of the Vale Food Strategy 2025 - 2030 which will be the first ever food strategy for the Vale of Glamorgan. A draft Vale Food Strategy has been developed by Food Vale based upon extensive consultation with partners including local community members and growers. The five-year strategy has been co-designed to reflect the Vale of Glamorgan’s unique opportunities, challenges, communities and economy and outlines 3 Good Food Goals for the Vale, alongside 9 desired outcomes. The draft strategy highlights 30 actions over the period that will help achieve the outcomes and goals. The Strategy will support work on the wider agendas including Vale 2030,

Project Zero and Good Food and Movement and create a shared vision to which all partners will be focused on, helping to drive change and momentum in this area. The strategy is now in the final stages of sign off by the Food Vale Steering Group.

- 2.35** Welsh Government have continued to provide funding to be used to tackle food insecurity and support the sustainable food partnership, Food Vale. Work is ongoing to explore opportunities to maximise the impact of the 2025/26 Emergency Food Aid grant funding provided, totalling £53,550.

Warm Hubs Welsh Government funding

- 2.36** In 2022-23 the Council developed the Warm Welcome Scheme in response to the rising cost of living, that supported a network of Warm Spaces across the Vale. Welsh Government provided a Warm Hubs grant scheme in 2022-23 that was administered by the Council to establish many of these spaces. These spaces provide a free to access location often providing activities, information, and advice as well as a chance to socialise. A dedicated Council webpage was developed to provide residents with an interactive map and directory of warm spaces.
- 2.37** The Council has continued to support a number of warm spaces through the cost-of-living community support grants scheme (23/24 & 24/25) drawn from the cost-of-living reserve. This funding has allowed a number of warm spaces to remain operational and support the establishment of several new spaces.
- 2.38** The Welsh Government announced a further £52,189 Warm Hubs grant funding for 2024-25 which was allocated to the Council to distribute to support warm spaces over the winter period. The Council distributed the funding through a Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS) led community small grants scheme which promoted and administered by GVS supported several community warm spaces. GVS also received funding to support a warm space provision at their CF61 centre and St. Pauls Community Centre. This totalled £26,094. In addition, £26,095 was provided to the Libraries and Cultural Services team to support and enhance warm space provision at Council and Community libraries as well as other cultural venues.
- 2.39** A further £52,027 Welsh Government Warm Hubs grant funding has been allocated to the Council for 2025-26. Initial discussions are taking place to identify the most effective use of the funding with an aim to ensure venues receive funding in advance of the winter period to allow recipients ample time to plan.

Tackling Loneliness and Isolation

- 2.40** The Age Friendly Vale team have continued to work with the Vale 50+ Strategy Forum, colleagues across the Council and partners to deliver a range of activities and events

integrating social elements to directly target loneliness and isolation. Free Age Friendly events and refreshments have enabled older people to attend without financial worry, supporting those at risk of isolation. The Forum's gatherings have enhanced partner engagement with older people by bringing information and support directly into communities and fostering collaboration among various partners. Recent events have been supported by many partners including the Older Peoples Commissioner for Wales, Age Connects, Age Cymru, COPA, Dewis Cymru, Citizens Advice as well as PSB's partners.

- 2.41** The Golden Pass Scheme has helped older residents stay active, build confidence, and reconnect socially, supporting healthier ageing and preventing decline. There are currently 238 individuals in the Golden Pass programme and 29 community providers delivering activities with many more involved in the promotion of the programme. The Healthy Living Officer has been working closely with unpaid carers, housing tenants, visually impaired residents and residents to increase awareness around the importance of physical activity.
- 2.42** Across the Libraries and Cultural Services, a diverse range of events, activities, and safe and warm spaces were delivered to support our communities. When planning these sessions, through reflecting on existing programmes and, crucially, the feedback from our visitors. It became clear that there was an opportunity to provide targeted support for families, older adults, and individuals experiencing challenges related to mental health, physical wellbeing, and social isolation. To ensure meaningful engagement, each activity was designed to align with at least two of the Five Ways to Wellbeing: Connect, Learn, Give, Take Notice, and Be Active. This framework ensured that every session offered more than just a warm environment—it created lasting impact and supported personal wellbeing.
- 2.43** Warm Space Hubs were established or enhanced in every library, with provision continuing to this day. These hubs offered free hot and cold refreshments and the chance to connect with others in a welcoming environment. Our core libraries hosted these sessions several days per week, with some offering daily provision. Community libraries delivered regular drop-in sessions throughout each week.
- 2.44** In addition to library provision, Penarth Pier Pavilion and Art Central Gallery hosted cultural and creative activities that were inclusive and accessible. The team also worked with partner organisations to deliver a programme that complemented the Warm Spaces offer, enriching the experience for visitors. Examples of activities delivered included: board games, cinema screenings, live music rehearsals, arts and crafts workshops, puppet shows, drumming workshops, storytelling workshops, knitting clubs, scribble and chat, animal encounters, and cultural event access.

Cost of Living Support Webpages

- 2.45** The cost-of-living support webpages on the Council’s website signpost to a variety of support. These webpages are updated regularly with the most recent information. [Cost of Living Support \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support)
- 2.46** During the period December 2024- May 2025, the cost-of-living webpages have received 7,608 views by 4,230 people, which represents a decrease from the previous reporting period. Of the total views, the Grants and Benefits page received the highest views at 3,054 and Help with Household Energy Bills the second highest at 1,647 views.
- 2.47** The webpages are currently undergoing a review to ensure that the most relevant information is provided with officers across the council being contacted to review the support offered. There is also an effort to review the accessibility of the pages by considering a user journey, with the aim of engaging with residents to understand their experiences when using the Councils cost of living webpages.

Volunteer Rewards - Value in the Vale

- 2.48** Value in the Vale (VIV) has secured volunteer rewards through partnerships with local businesses and organisations that reward volunteers for their time and has provided support during the rising cost of living. Volunteers have also been given the opportunity to gift their rewards to others who may be more in need. Further information can be accessed on the dedicated web pages, [Volunteer Rewards | Value in the Vale](#).

Funding Overview

Shared Prosperity Funding

- 2.49** Shared Prosperity Funding (SPF) is supporting a number of projects that will also be helping to target poverty and address the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis. Just under £4m has been committed to Communities and Place projects across the Vale of Glamorgan. Additional funding has been allocated to the People and Skills theme and many projects are supporting the cost-of-living agenda. Examples of projects being supported through SPF include: Vale of Glamorgan Public Services Board Your Place (Tackling Deprivation) Programme, Ty Iolo Bike Club (Barry Bike Club), CAT Support Officer, Community Growing: An Environmental & agricultural heritage project, Career Development Apprentice, Make My Money Work, Bike Hire- Penarth & Barry, Start-up bursary grants and supporting officer, CELT+, Play Friendly Communities, Digital Community Schools- Schools & Communities Booking System, Greenlinks Community Transport, Makerspace, Essential Skills for Parents, GVS- Third Sector Small Grants Scheme, Caru Cymru, Youth Bus, Strong Communities Grant Fund.
- 2.50** The funding has supported these projects to expand through increased engagement leading to improved outcomes for individuals. Volunteer

opportunities have increased as a result of funding and several Third Sector organisations have received grant funding in 2024/25 which has supported anti-poverty and well-being initiatives.

Cost of Living Reserve

2.51 As part of ensuring an effective response to the cost-of-living challenge detailed in the ADP 2023-24, a cost-of-living reserve was established. The total reserve as of April 2023 was £854,000 and the table below sets out how the funding has been utilised to date. The current balance on this reserve is £123,878.

Year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Opening Balance	854	370.5	124
Funding Utilised			
Budget Contribution Free School Meals (FSM)	-200	-200	0
Additional Contribution Citizens Advice	0	-30	0 (-30k)
Additional support in the school summer holidays to those in receipt of FSM	-221	0	0
Support for community projects	-25	-16.5	0
Food Bank Contribution	-3.5	0	0
Discretionary Housing Payment	-34	0	0
Closing Balance	370.5	124	124

2.52 Funding has been awarded from this reserve to Citizens Advice in recognition of the increase in the volume and complexity of the work that is being handled for Vale residents. A contribution of £30k was agreed for 2024-25 in addition to their annual grant of £157,335 from the Council. A further £30k has been awarded to Citizens Advice for 2025/26 to support their work and discussions are taking place between the team at Citizens Advice and a number of officers from across the Council to explore further opportunities for joint working.

2.53 In 2024/25 we paid out £210,603 in DHP. We paid a total of 237 awards. The majority of DHP applications this year are a result of the awards of Housing benefit or Universal Credit Housing costs being less than the rent charged. An additional, £50k from the reserve was allocated to Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) in 2024/25 however this was not required. Although we had a lot of requests for help with paying off rent arrears there were some cases, we were unable to assist with as they had previously had Housing Benefit or housing costs paid via Universal Credit but not used it to pay rent or they were not in receipt of these benefits and therefore unable to have any assistance from DHP. The budget for 2025/26 from DWP is £194,041. There is also

£23,000 that the Council has made available. There has been no increase in the Local Housing Allowance Rates for 2025/26 which will mean we may get an increase in applications if their rent increases for private rented sector tenants as there will not be a change to their Housing Benefit or Universal Credit housing costs. We are seeing an increase in customers asking for help with moving costs due to customers trying to move to more affordable properties due to rents being so high. As of the end of May 2025, the Council has paid out £27,071 and committed to a further £20,782.77. This is 52 awards, and we have 58 applications waiting to be looked at.

- 2.54** In 2024/25, £25k was ringfenced to fund community projects, £16,469 was distributed to community projects with the remaining £8,531 retained in the reserve to support further work.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** The activities outlined in this report will assist the Council in contributing to the national Well-being Goals and the Council's own Well-being Objectives as detailed in Vale 2030. The work being undertaken also embeds the five ways of working through involvement and collaboration to develop ways forward, to ensure a longer term thinking and more sustainable approach to how we work and with a more integrated programme of activity. In terms of prevention as the work develops officers will be keen to explore the opportunities for a more preventative approach and how the knowledge and experience of other sectors can assist, particularly with work around cost of living and climate change.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** There are opportunities to make close links between work on cost of living and also work on climate change, for example on reducing energy use and work around food security. We also know that those living in our most deprived communities are often most impacted by the effects of climate change. We will continue to align activities where possible through the Council and the PSB.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** Vale 2030 is a key tenet of the Council's Financial Strategy.
- 5.2** This report outlines a range of different funding streams contributing to the Council's response to the cost-of-living crisis and work to tackle poverty, including an overview of the use of the cost-of-living reserve established in April 2023.

Employment

5.3 There are no employment implications as a direct result of this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

5.4 There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report, however the work detailed in this report aligns with the Council's socio-economic duty and contributes to work to address economic inequity.

5.5 Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as required on particular schemes.

6. Background Papers

[Cost of Living Support \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) Cabinet Report December 2022

[Cost of Living Reserve Report \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) Cabinet 18th October 2023

[Strengthening Communities and Tackling Poverty \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee 18th October 2023

[Reshaping Programme: Strengthening Communities - A Response to Audit Wales Reports on Tackling Poverty and Third Sector Working](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) – Cabinet 19th September 2024

[Work to Tackle Poverty and COL Crisis \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) – Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee 8th January 2025

[Vale 2030](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) – The Vale of Glamorgan Corporate Plan 2025-2030.

The reporting period is December 2024 – May 2025 and all information is relevant to this period. Where a project is stated as ‘New’, it has started within this period. If a project existed prior to this period, the most up to date information on the projects progress is provided.

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Appendix A – Detailed Project Information

The reporting period is December 2024 - May 2025 and all information is relevant to this period. Where a project is stated as ‘New’, it has started within this period. If a project existed prior to this period, the most up to date information on the project’s progress is provided.

Support with Employment

Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Communities for Work+ (CFW+)	Communities for Work Plus provides specialist employment advisory and intensive mentoring to support people into employment.	Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship & Careers Fair (February): In February, a large Apprenticeship and Careers fair was organised in collaboration with CELT+, Youth Service, Regeneration Team, and Cardiff and Vale College. There were approximately 60 organisations invited to showcase their apprenticeships, employment opportunities, training and education provision, and provided a range of opportunities for all ages. Over 1000 people attended this event, which was the most successful careers event held within the Vale in recent years. Collaborating with other departments and partners, supported with the success of this event, and planning for next year has already began. • Ongoing Courses: Multiple training courses and information sessions have taken place, which has contributed to the number of referrals onto the programme. In collaboration with Adult Community Learning, there have been weekly digital skills workshops, which have been very popular, and participants have felt supported in developing their digital skills. “Get Into” courses have also continued, with a Get Into, Security, Marketing and also providing support to participants in gaining their forklift licence to move into roles such as warehouse operatives. <p>Working with Adult Learning Wales, a new introduction to teaching assistant course was launched in Barry. Participants are due to finish this course in April, further courses such as paediatric first aid, autism awareness and ADHD awareness will also be offered to develop the participants further. Participants</p>	CFW+ is an existing programme of work established in 2016, however, the most recent updates to the programme are outlined here.

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			<p>are also linked with the ELO to secure placements and employment opportunities within the sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach: Outreach across the Vale remains positive. The reduced days in The Gathering Place has worked and the day that mentors are there are more productive. Work has also continued with the Entitled Persons on East Camp, although this is likely to come to an end by the end of April. <p>Outreach continues in Llantwit, where mentors are meeting participants on a regular basis at the library, as well as monthly drop in at the CF61 support network. Mentors also met some Ukrainian families in Llantwit following their move into the new development, this was positive with some enrolling for support. Outreach also continues across Penarth and Barry in multiple locations to reach individuals requiring the support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller Recruitment Events and Employer Support: Our Employer Liaison Officer has continued to support smaller-scale recruitment events alongside partners such as JCP and Careers Wales, which have a good footfall and provide additional support for individuals. Information sessions have been held alongside internal LA departments to support them with their workforce needs, these are set to continue, with a dedicated Vale of Glamorgan Council recruitment event being held at the Pod in May. A very successful session was also held with Morrisons, which saw a high number of individuals attend. Mentors then supported individuals with their applications and interviews to gain the roles available. Service Consultations: In January, a consultation was held alongside other provisions within the directorate to review service delivery, identify gaps, and implement any necessary improvements. Some key points that came from this consultation included, those that had interacted with the service had a positive experience with the service and appreciated the face-to-face interactions with participants. Highlights also included the absence of waiting 	
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			lists, quick response times, and streamlined referral processes, making it ideal for other services to refer into the programme.	
CELT+	The CELT+ programme has been designed to provide full wrap around support for individuals within the Vale of Glamorgan.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The QuickStart project released another six paid work placements within the Vale council to young adults aged 18-24 within the Vale of Glamorgan. All six positions were filled, and young people have commenced the positions, and are receiving further training to support their development • The POD which opened in November 2023 provides the opportunity for individuals to drop in for a variety of support. The Pod advisors have engaged with 244 individuals in Q4. The support has varied from help with CVs, referrals to employment support and assisting to set up benefit claims. The advisors have also directed to more specialist providers, such as Mind, GPs, Housing and Social Services. • The POD holds weekly Youth Career Preparation sessions and the same for 25+ cohort in partnership with ACL with a focus on getting to know the workplace, employer expectations and understanding working hours and payslips. In February we held “Get into Security” and “Get into Forklift”. The sessions gave an insight into the sector from local companies and committed attendees were funded to complete these licences and supported into employment. • The POD holds weekly drop-in CV sessions and continues to hold a weekly food bank. The Pod carries on hosting various partners such as, Citizens Advice, Scope and CFW for specialist’s support. The Autism lead of Cardiff and Vale also holds fortnightly drop ins, which is proving popular. Various courses have been held at the Pod being advertised via social media, posters, flyers and partners bringing in new referrals to the services as well as benefiting individuals already engaging with the programme. The Pod advisors also attend outreach venues to offer Pop Up Pod services. They have a regular presence in Penarth, The Gathering Place in St Athans and are part of the monthly more than food hub at Llantwit Major. To compliment being a digital hub, a weekly digital drop-in session supported by adult community learning, is being run and SIM cards are available to hand out to individuals that do not have internet at home. 	CELT+ established in June 2023, however, the POD opened in November 2023. The most recent updates to the programme are outlined here.

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none">The POD advisors are continuing to engage with the new refugees that have been relocated within the Vale on a temporary basis at the MOD St Athan Camp. The advisors provided several sessions along with an interpreter to develop a CV for the participants and identify any training needs or career plans. These sessions will be coming to an end when the final entitled to families or moved on to permanent residence.	
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Support for Families and Young People (inc. Work with Schools)				
Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Vale Youth Service -Joint pilot with Vale People First (VPF)	To deliver an inclusive youth provision for those with additional learning needs with an aim to transition to wider services.	Youth Service Youth Support Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The club runs once a week on Wednesday evening, the club runs during term time only. A total of 28 individuals have engaged with the provision, with a total of 326 contacts in the last six months. 48 accreditation certificates were given out to Hub Club members for achieving different learning, this included three different Agored Cymru Units, as well as Entry 1 PSE qualification certificates in addition for one of the courses. The club has enabled young people to build new friendship groups whilst engaging in a free youth provision, with appropriately trained staff to meet their needs and to build their resilience and aim to transition to other open access clubs available. All members of the group continue to work on nationally recognised qualifications via an Agored Cymru Unit accreditation that contributes to their own skills development 	Existing
Youth Service providing support to third sector groups and partners	To provide financial support for wider youth support services in supporting young people in the community and via different services	Youth Service Youth Support Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support with costs related to membership or resources that help ensure young people can continue engaging in these activities. Funding was given to 5 organisations including Llantwit Major Archers, Glamorgan Artistic Skaters, Colcot boxing Club, Eagles Gym and Red Dragons Netball Club, and Motion Control Dance. The funding equated to around an additional 200 sessions throughout 2024/25. In total 176 individuals have benefited from the sessions, resulting in over 7,000 contacts made. 	New – some funded in March 2025. However, data is used to show impacts across the financial year 2024/25 from this programme of work

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Youth Service provision of DofE Bronze and Silver	To provide financial support to young people undertaking DofE	Youth Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Youth Service has continued to work in the Gibbonsdown/Colcot area of Barry to deliver the DofE Award. • There have been financial barriers identified that have been supported through the work of the Service. Alongside working with DofE Wales to explore barrier funding for those most in need, the Service has reduced everyone’s participant fee by £35 to support and ensure accessibility for all to this accredited programme, all young people are on route to achieve their DofE awards across the year. • DofE Wales grant was received in order to support resource costs for young people in need, where we have new equipment and no storage, older resources have been passed to Pencoedtre school for their own DofE group to help with need. • The Service has delivered successful Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award programming that directly supports wellbeing outcomes for young people across the region. The Bronze level engagement has reached 35 participants through 21 structured sessions, resulting in 172 meaningful contacts. • Silver level provision has engaged 23 young people across 10 dedicated sessions, generating 94 participant contacts. • A total of 22 Bronze completed their award, and 3 Silver DofE Awards were achieved. A further 28 Bronze and 21 Silver currently working towards their Awards. 	Existing
Sharing the Youth Service area of the YMCA Hub in Barry	Allow groups (local partners) to lower their running costs by providing free usage to this area.	Youth Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides more effective usage of this resource as well as ensuring that young people are not adversely affected by increased activity charges due to having to pay for provision overheads. • This is now embedded as an ongoing practice within the Youth Service. 	Existing
Co-Delivered Radio project in partnership with Bro Radio	Deliver accredited learning for young people wishing to use Radio	Youth Service Youth Support Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bro Radio partnership project has demonstrated sustained engagement across two distinct areas of the Vale of Glamorgan, making significant contributions to youth wellbeing objectives. • The initiative has successfully engaged 28 young participants through 30 structured sessions, generating 187 meaningful contacts. 	Existing

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 young people completed an Agored Cymru Unit in Preparing to present radio broadcasting with an additional 7 on track to complete before July 2025. 	
Pencoedtre Cluster: A Thriving Community Project	To tackle the inequalities and inequities across our most deprived communities through a Community Focused Schools and Local Authority Partnership approach	Schools, Youth Service, Community Focussed Schools budget.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family learning projects delivered by CAVC designed to allow families to learn together while on school site – cooking, digital competence, wellbeing etc. • Immune Patrol Pilot undertaken by Oakfield Primary School in collaboration with Cardiff & Vale Health Board. • Pilot parenting programme at Oakfield Primary School aimed at parents with learners on the neuro-development pathway. • Get Cooking sessions continue to be held in the community, delivered by Flying Start and plans to start a Get Cooking programme in Holton Primary School have been agreed for January 2025 (awaiting completion of the community kitchen). • On-going English courses for speakers of other languages (ESOL) held at Holton Primary School. • Work continues to encourage families to take up immunisations with Cardiff and Vale University Health Board colleagues attending school café session to engage directly with families to share information and dispel myths. This is allowing families to feel more confident in the information on this topic. • Nasal Flu Vaccinations will be held at all Flying Start childcare settings to encourage take up for the 2–3-year-old age range. This is being led by Cardiff and Vale Immunisations team supported by the Flying Start team. • ‘Come Cook with Us’ at Holton. School led programme by FEO where parents attend school and take part in cooking skills sessions – led by volunteers/FEO. 	Existing

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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Citizen’s Advice sessions run in multiple schools across cluster. Parents & community members able to drop in and take part in sessions.	
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HEALTHY LIVING TEAM (SPORTS & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DEVELOPMENT, PLAY DEVELOPMENT, EXERCISE REFERRAL)

Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Free Sports equipment	Enable people to loan equipment for free.	Sport Wales funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library Sports Equipment Loan Bags (free) - Bags organised by Sports Development Team then managed by individual libraries. Different bags targeting different ages e.g. pre-school, children and young people, adults, some sports specific bags such as basketball to support residents to play on the free multi-use games areas and tennis bags which can be used on the Vale’s community tennis courts. • Sports Equipment Loan Bags based at Food Hubs/Pods/in location where entitled persons (Ukraine/Afghan) can access (free) - Sports Development Team Bags which can be loaned for free for a period of time. • Loan out sports equipment for free to community clubs and groups, schools and other partners who would benefit 	Existing
Play Team – Family Play Sessions	To work in partnership with Oakfield Primary School to offer low/no cost community play provision for their families, as a means to engage with the community and offer support to set up sustainable community-led play provision in the future.	Warm Spaces Welsh Government Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project was delivered as a partnership between the Vale Play Team (part of the Healthy Living Team) and Oakfield Primary School. Family play sessions were held on a weekly basis over a 7-week period after school at Oakfield Primary School. • These sessions were an opportunity to bring families together within the school environment, to engage in unstructured child-led activities including Junk Modelling, Loose Parts Play, Craft Activities, Cardboard Cities, Exploratory Play and Indoor Games. • One of the staff members took on the role of “Play Team Chef” preparing fresh fruit, hot and cold drinks, warm soup and a bread roll each week for all participants to access – ensuring families had access to healthy warm food and snacks in a warm and welcoming environment. • The majority of families are attending week on week, and new families joining in each week. Many families had not engaged with after school sessions before and gained confidence to come back each week. Another outcome was the positive engagement from parents and carers with their own children, having a dedicated time to stop and play was hugely beneficial to families. The sessions had a positive impact on the wellbeing of families - parents and carers in particular, 	New

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			said how great it was to engage in activities and improve their mental health and wellbeing.	
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Housing Support				
Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Housing support	To provide housing and additional housing support through the Money Advice Team.	Council Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing private rents have meant more households joining the Council’s Housing waiting list, which has risen to over 7,300 people. Council housing rent arrears remain high with 1,292 Council housing tenants in arrears and average debts of £624. This does represent an increase of tenants in arrears from December 2024 to May 2025, however, a key issue is the migration of people onto Universal Credit from legacy benefits which due to timing issues distorts the data and has shown some accounts in arrears when they are in fact up to date. As such this decrease does not represent an improvement in the picture and those in genuine arrears remain high. The Housing Income team continue to work closely with tenants to provide support and advice and the specialist Money Advisors within the team manage a growing caseload, offering budgeting advice, help with claiming benefits and income maximisation. The team also assist with grant and loan applications, as well as ensuring people are on the lowest tariffs for utilities. From December 2024 to May 2025, the Money Advice Team helped Council Housing tenants maximise their income through various measures resulting in £213,091.38 being saved by tenants. In the same period 220 fuel vouchers were issued from the Money Advice Team via the Fuel Bank Foundation from December 2024 to May 2025 with a total value of £8,798.00. With the changes to the winter fuel support criteria, and incoming benefit changes we expect this number to increase over the winter period. The Money Advice Team continue to see high demand for the Welsh Governments DAF scheme which provides white goods and emergency cash. Money Advice helped tenants access £2,273.00 in cash payments and £122,381.07 in white goods. 	Existing

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money Advice has been running a campaign for pension credits, and all Council Housing Tenants had a leaflet about claiming pension credits with the quarterly rent accounts when these were issued. This will be on going work with our aging population within the Vale. In the Welsh census in 2021 the Vale saw an increase of 24.9% in people aged over 65. • Homelessness and housing challenges remain, and we have continued to work in partnership to support residents. Our Rapid Housing Homelessness Service successfully reduced our use of temporary accommodation for homeless households and no families have been accommodated in hotels. We extended our homelessness leasing scheme which is now part of Welsh Government’s Leasing Scheme Wales, allowing us to formally launch this model of working in the Vale and secure funding. This will further increase access to vacant homes for supporting homeless households. 	
The Energy Company Obligation 4 (ECO4)	To support households in poorly insulated homes, making those households more energy efficient and helping lessen the impact of rising energy bills.	UK Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to raise awareness of the ECO4 Flex scheme through council website, social media, in person events, Town and Community Councils and other routes. As of May 2025, the Council has approved 109 ECO4 Flex applications via E.ON, an increase of 43 since November 2024. These are mainly delivered by 3rd party installers working with E.ON. 59 of these have been approved and installed. • In addition to ECO4 Flex, the council is working with NEST and the Energy Savings Trust to offer relevant assistance. The council have recently signposted to Warm Wales who provide all residents across Wales with free advice. • The Council continue to provide mortgages (Interest Free Owner-Occupier Loans) to eligible households to undertake essential works (replacing defective roofs, windows, heating systems etc) to make homes safe, warm and secure. These in turn support energy efficiency and lower household bills. 3 have been completed since December 2024. From April 2025, applications will be more selective due to limited remaining funding. 	Existing

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PSB Project – Work to tackle inequities in deprived communities’ project				
Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Public Services Board (PSB) work to tackle inequities in deprived communities project	To reduce the inequity between our most and least deprived communities’ partners are working together in a new approach to understand the inequities in outcomes for those living in 3 LSOAs in Gibbonsdown, Court and Buttrills, and to use this insight to develop and deliver services in different ways.	Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project was successfully awarded £100k of Shared Prosperity funding split over 2023/24 and 2024/25 to undertake this work. Continuous work in line with the engagement plan has resulted in extensive and meaningful engagement with a wide range of partners and community members across diverse settings. To date, over 1,500 individuals have been engaged through outreach to community groups, Slimming World sessions, religious organisations, youth groups, veterans’ associations, local business leaders, local councillors, and professionals working within the health and employment sectors. This broad engagement has enabled the project to gather rich, place-based insights and build strong, trust-based relationships across the community. Following a funding extension through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), the project has been extended for an additional year, allowing for the development and implementation of a second-phase engagement plan. This new phase includes the launch of a dedicated webpage, a community-wide survey, a press release campaign, and more targeted engagement activities. While maintaining and nurturing the relationships already established, the second phase places a sharper focus on specific community categories and thematic areas identified by the Steering Group. This targeted approach is beginning to deepen understanding of the persistent challenges faced by residents and to inform the development of more responsive, evidence-led solutions with our co-partners and has seen us engage with over 100 participants around focussed topics this year. The work of the PSB Steering Group evolved significantly, transitioning from initial strategic planning into more targeted and participatory focus groups aligned with the Welsh Index of 	Existing

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			<p>Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) domains, particularly employment and health. Following the establishment of the Steering Group and the development of an inclusive engagement plan, a series of facilitated workshops were conducted in February. These workshops brought together a diverse range of stakeholders—including local authorities, health professionals, educators, housing associations, and community representatives—to collaboratively explore challenges and opportunities using community personas, WIMD data, and real-world case studies. The sessions fostered strong cross-sector relationships and generated actionable ideas such as improving recruitment accessibility, expanding after-school and outreach services, and enhancing communication tools. These insights were synthesised into strategic action plans outlining both short- and long-term goals, identifying key stakeholders, and proposing pilot initiatives. To take this work forward, three subgroups were formed within each domain—health and employment—tasked with refining and advancing the identified workstreams. These subgroups developed detailed action plans that aligned with the specific needs of the community, ensuring that the momentum generated through the workshops translate into practical, community-driven change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has played a pivotal role in strengthening inter-organisational relationships across a broad spectrum of sectors, including health, employment, education, housing, voluntary services, and local government. Through a series of structured workshops and the establishment of thematic subgroups, partners were able to engage in meaningful dialogue, share local intelligence, and co-produce practical, community-informed solutions. This collaborative model not only enhanced mutual understanding and trust among stakeholders but also facilitated the exchange of best practices and the development of a shared evidence base. The inclusive and participatory nature of the process has laid the groundwork for a more integrated approach to service delivery, one that is responsive to the specific needs of local communities. Furthermore, this way of working has begun to inform and shape future strategic planning, embedding a culture of co-design and continuous learning. It has also contributed to increased autonomy among Public Services Board (PSB) partners, enabling them to take greater ownership of workstreams, lead implementation efforts, and drive forward change in a manner that is both locally tailored and collectively supported. 	
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Food Insecurity				
Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Food Vale Partnership	To support access to healthy food through activities such as cooking courses	Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Food Vale Project Officer has continued to host the Vale Food Insecurity Working Group – with seven more 6 weekly meetings taking place across the year. A combined total of 20 participants from food support projects across the county. Work to achieve the Silver Sustainable Food Places Status continues, building on momentum from the Vale of Glamorgan becoming the second place in Wales to achieve Bronze in June 2022. Part of this work includes the development of the Vale Food Strategy 2025 - 2030 which will be the first ever food strategy for the Vale of Glamorgan. A draft Vale Food Strategy has been developed by Food Vale based upon extensive consultation with partners including local community members and growers. The five-year strategy has been co-designed to reflect the Vale of Glamorgan’s unique opportunities, challenges, communities and economy and outlines 3 Good Food Goals for the Vale, alongside 9 desired outcomes. The draft strategy highlights 30 actions over the period that will help achieve the outcomes and goals. The Strategy will support work on the wider agendas including Vale 2030, Project Zero and Good Food and Movement and create a shared vision to which all partners will be focused on, helping to drive change and momentum in this area. The strategy is now in the final stages of sign off by the Food Vale Steering Group. Over 40 individual conversations have been held and 22 survey responses (15 community, 7 business) as part of the engagement to inform the Community Kitchen Feasibility Study. Building on the findings from this, a toolkit has been produced which will guide community groups through a best-practice process of setting up a community kitchen. 	Existing

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Vale is working with partners in Vale of Glamorgan Council to design and administer two small grant schemes available to community groups and organisations across the Vale. One of these will focus on supporting work around Protected Characteristics, as part of our ongoing efforts to address Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in our work. The other will focus on providing support to community-led food initiatives in the Vale. • A mixture of capital and revenue funding (£12,000 total) has been made available to support growers participating in the Welsh Veg in Schools scheme. The scheme, coordinated by Food Sense Wales, aims to get locally grown, organic produce into school meals. Three growers and ten local schools are participating in the 2025 delivery. Conversations are also underway to potentially provide extra funding for growers to deliver workshops in participating schools. • Welsh Government have continued to provide funding to be used to tackle food insecurity and support the sustainable food partnership, Food Vale. Work in ongoing to explore opportunities to maximise the impact of the 2025/26 Emergency Food Aid grant funding provided, totalling £53,550. 	
Rural food insecurity (inc. Llantwit Food Project)	Exploring methods to better understand and tackle food access and food insecurity in more rural locations.	National lottery People and Places community fund Welsh Government – Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several rural food support services have continued to provide a much-needed service through the two food pantries managed by GVS in Llantwit Major and St Athan, and the Fresh Food Farmacy, previously called the Wick Food Hub, which established in December 2023. The Food Farmacy continues to provide fresh, locally food on a ‘pay what you feel’ model to residents on a biweekly basis alongside a friendly warm space providing an opportunity for residents to connect over free refreshments in the Wick Sports Pavillion. The space offers the opportunity for residents of all ages to come together helping to tackle challenges of social isolation, food insecurity, and access to food in the rural location. Lessons learnt are being shared between the rural projects to maximise future impact and shape future phases. • Since its launch in January 2024 GVS’ St Athan Pantry, has seen customers being supported to access affordable food at its biweekly sessions. The impact of this action and wider Project elements are regularly reviewed to monitor impact and identify areas for improvement. Following review over the winter the Pantry has been carefully remodelled for the next 	Existing programme of work, with new additions.

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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

		Partnership Grant	<p>phase of this work. Following review to ensure maximum impact and reflect on lessons learnt in the initial year of running, the St Athan Food Hub has moved location. Relaunching at the new, more central location alongside elements such as the clothes bank the first session in May saw 28 customers supported, an increase on numbers at the previous location, with this number expected to grow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other elements of the Llantwit Food Project remain active including the CF61 Monthly Community Drop In. The Drop In, which acts as the advice hub to complement the other aspects that take place at the CF61 Community Centre on the third Thursday of every month. The Drop In welcomes various organisations to provide free advice and support on topics including benefits and entitlements, employment opportunities, CV development, volunteering, childcare support, physical health and wellbeing, debt management, refugee support and electoral registration. The Drop In has supported over 90 people over the 6-month period of December 2024 – May 2025 with approaches being made by new organisations keen to join to provide face to face support. • To enhance local cooking and nutrition skills a Get Cooking Course has been provided from the CF61 Community Centre between March – May as part of the wider Food Project work. The free practical and accredited course allowed attendees to enhance their knowledge, build community connections and receive an accreditation. Many of the attendees first language was Ukrainian, through the help of a translator this course has helped relationships and connections between community members and the community centre to flourish. 	
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Work to tackle poverty and the current cost of living crisis

Tackling Loneliness and Isolation				
Programme of work	Aims of work	Funding source	Outcomes/Impacts	New or Existing Project(s)
Age Friendly	To deliver a range of activities and events integrating social elements to directly target loneliness and isolation.	Welsh Government - Age Friendly Communities grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a combined membership of almost 400 members, the Age Friendly Vale Network and Vale 50+ Strategy Forum have helped stakeholders including community groups and older people stay informed, feel connected, and have a voice in local matters leading to more inclusive decision-making and stronger community resilience. • By using multi-channel communication, both digital and non-digital, older people can stay informed and included, regardless of internet access. Tools such as letters and local radio help reach individuals directly in their homes, reducing isolation and ensuring equal access to opportunities and support available in the Vale. • Over 1,600 interactions were recorded this year, including participation in Age Friendly and 50+ Strategy Forum events and engagement with the Age Friendly Vale Strategy and Action Plan, highlighted by 136 survey responses. This involvement shows that older people are not only engaging with the age friendly movement but also actively shaping consultations and contributing to events, leading to more responsive, inclusive, and community informed services. • The Forum’s gatherings have enhanced partner engagement with older people by bringing information and support directly into communities and fostering collaboration among various partners. The events have also amplified the voices of older residents, enabling them to engage directly with decision makers and influence policy. Recent events have been supported by many partners including the Older Peoples Commissioner for Wales, Age Connects, Age Cymru, COPA, Dewis Cymru, Citizens Advice as well as PSB’s partners. • Free Age Friendly events and refreshments have enabled older people to attend without financial worry, supporting those at risk of isolation. 	Existing

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Golden Pass Scheme has helped older residents stay active, build confidence, and reconnect socially, supporting healthier ageing and preventing decline. There are currently 238 individuals in the Golden Pass programme and 29 community providers delivering activities with many more involved in the promotion of the programme. The Healthy Living Officer has been working closely with unpaid carers, housing tenants, visually impaired residents and residents to increase awareness around the importance of physical activity. 	
Libraries and Cultural Services	To deliver a diverse range of events, activities, and safe and warm spaces to support our communities.	Welsh Government Warm Spaces Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across the Libraries and Cultural Services, a diverse range of events, activities, and safe and warm spaces were delivered to support our communities. When planning these sessions, through reflecting on existing programmes and, crucially, the feedback from our visitors. It became clear that there was an opportunity to provide targeted support for families, older adults, and individuals experiencing challenges related to mental health, physical wellbeing, and social isolation. To ensure meaningful engagement, each activity was designed to align with at least two of the Five Ways to Wellbeing: Connect, Learn, Give, Take Notice, and Be Active. This framework ensured that every session offered more than just a warm environment—it created lasting impact and supported personal wellbeing. Warm Space Hubs were established or enhanced in every library, with provision continuing to this day. These hubs offered free hot and cold refreshments and the chance to connect with others in a welcoming environment. Our core libraries hosted these sessions several days per week, with some offering daily provision. Community libraries delivered regular drop-in sessions throughout each week. In addition to library provision, Penarth Pier Pavilion and Art Central Gallery hosted cultural and creative activities that were inclusive and accessible. The team also worked with partner organisations to deliver a programme that complemented the Warm Spaces offer, enriching the experience for visitors. Examples of activities delivered included: 	

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		<p>Board Games: Available both as bookable events and in drop-in formats, these sessions featured a range of classic and modern games, such as Scrabble, Cluedo, and Blokus, encouraging intergenerational connection and casual social interaction.</p> <p>Cinema Screenings: Penarth Pier Pavilion offered Warm Space cinema tickets to individuals accessing support at other venues. Screenings included Inside Out 2, Piece by Piece, and Wicked, ensuring cultural experiences were accessible to those who may otherwise miss out.</p> <p>Live Music Rehearsals: Open rehearsal sessions at the Pavilion invited visitors to enjoy live performances in a relaxed setting, using music as a tool for connection and cultural enrichment.</p> <p>Arts and Crafts Workshops: Over 40 creative sessions took place, including lantern making, knitting clubs, macramé, colouring, cyanotype photomaking, watercolour painting, bath bomb making, card craft, and poetry. These workshops supported creativity, skill-building, and social interaction.</p> <p>Puppet Shows: Libraries hosted family-friendly puppet shows that provided joyful, shared experiences and supported early social development for children.</p> <p>Drumming Workshops: These culturally enriching sessions focused on African drumming and encouraged teamwork, rhythm, and connection through group music-making.</p> <p>Storytelling Workshops: Led by a local author who performed dramatised readings of their books, these sessions fostered literacy, imagination, and calm engagement.</p> <p>Knitting Clubs: The grant allowed us to expand this popular weekly session, which provides a space for social connection, skill-sharing, and ongoing friendship.</p> <p>Scribble and Chat: These writing-focused groups brought together individuals interested in poetry and creative writing, using words to express emotions, aspirations, and build community.</p> <p>Animal Encounters: Family-friendly educational sessions gave children and adults the chance to learn about animals such as armadillos in an engaging, hands-on environment.</p>	
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			Cultural Event Access: Warm Space attendees were offered free or subsidised access to a variety of cultural performances and activities, ensuring inclusive participation in the cultural life of the area.	
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Council Measures Relating to Cost of Living/Poverty 2024-25				
Ref	Measure	Annual/ Quarterly	Service	2024-25 Q4 Data
Council Support				
CPM/215	Percentage of residents agreeing that the council is doing enough to support residents through the cost of living crisis.	A	SAG Data from Let's Talk Survey 2023 COL	10.7%
Education and Training				
CPM/023	Percentage of Young people leaving year 13 who are not in education, employment or training.	A	Standards & Provision	2.3%
CPM/024	Percentage of Year 11 leavers known not to be in education, training or employment (NEET).	A	Standards & Provision	2.5%
CPM/037	Percentage of Young people leaving Year 12 who are not in education, employment or training.	A	Standards & Provision	0.47%
CPM/043 (Amended)	Percentage of adults on community learning courses achieving nationally recognised awards/qualifications.	A	Strategy Community Learning & Resources (Replaces previous wording of - Percentage success rate on accredited courses for priority learners.)	96.9%
Advice				

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CPM/267	Numbers accessing the Money Advice Team for support.	A	Housing & Building Services	1927
Housing				
CPM/046	Number of tenancies maintained six months after receiving Money Advice.	A	Housing & Building Services	446
CPM/266	Percentage of tenants in rent arrears	A	Housing & Building Services	36.70
CPM/304	Number of additional affordable housing units delivered during the year per 10,000 households.	A	Housing & Building Services	46.3
CPM/096	Percentage of all households where a positive prevention action succeeded in preventing/relieving homelessness.	A	Housing & Building Services	25
PAM/012	Percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless.	A	Housing & Building Services	42.9%
CPM/189	Number of households in temporary accommodation, by type of accommodation: - Private sector accommodation - Public sector accommodation - Hostels and women's refuges - Bed and breakfast - Homeless at home	Q	Housing & Building Services	B&B - 19 Private sector – 74 Public sector - 66 Hostel - 21 homeless at home - 105 Refuge - 16 Other HSG funded hostels - 85

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CPM/190	Number of households in temporary accommodation which are families with children.	Q	Housing & Building Services	45
CPM/199	The number of private rented properties where energy efficiency has been improved through direct action from Shared Regulatory Services.	A	Shared Regulatory Services	93
Business/Economy and Employment				
CPM/053	Average vacancy rate in the Vale's main town centres.	A	Sustainable Development	15.00
CPM/133	Number of local businesses advised in relation to funding, business planning and new start-ups.	A	Regeneration	40
CPM/135	Number of community led organisations that are financially supported.	A	Regeneration	43
CPM/144	Number of businesses financially supported	A	Regeneration	20
CPM/154	Number of jobs created and safeguarded through the Councils SPF programme	A	Regeneration	10
CPM/165	Percentage of C4W+ people engaged against target	A	ALN & Wellbeing	100% (actual figure exceeded target)
Health				

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CPM/299	Percentage of residents describing their physical health as being fairly or very good.	A	Neighbourhood Services & Transport SAG will provide data from Let's talk survey 2023	67.3%
CPM/276	Percentage of residents describing their mental health as being fairly or very good.	A	SAG will provide data from Let's talk survey 2023	70.3%
Transport				
CPM/068	Percentage of adults 60+ who have a concessionary bus pass.	A	Neighbourhood Services & Transport	72.65%
New 2024	Percentage of residents who use the following public or active travel options in the Vale of Glamorgan: a) Public transport b) Walking routes c) Cycling routes f) Community transport	A	Neighbourhood Services & Transport SAG will provide data from Let's talk survey 2023	Public transport – 58.4 Walking routes – 68.7 Cycling routes – 18.3 Community transport – 3.2

Council Measures Relating to Cost of Living/Poverty 2025-26

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Ref	Measure Description	Reporting Frequency	Directorate or Corporate Plan Indicator	Directorate
CPM/234	Percentage of residents agreeing that the Council is doing enough to provide services and support for older people.	2 Yearly	DPPI	Corporate Resources
CPM/249	Percentage of residents agreeing that the council is doing enough to support residents through the cost of living crisis.	2 Yearly	DPPI	Corporate Resources
New PI 2025/26	Percentage of residents who agree that they are easily able to access local facilities and services.	2 Yearly	DPPI	Corporate Resources
CPM/275	Percentage of people in the most deprived areas of the Vale who think the Council is doing enough to support people to gain skills and employment.	2 Yearly	DPPI	Corporate Resources
	Percentage of people who think the Council is doing enough to support people to gain skills and employment.	Quarterly	DPPI	Corporate Resources
New PI 2025/26	Average time taken to process new benefit claims for council tax and housing benefit.	Quarterly	DPPI	Corporate Resources
New PI 2025/26	Average time taken to process changes of circumstances for council tax and housing benefit.	2 Yearly	DPPI	Corporate Resources
CPM/262 (a)	Percentage of residents who use the following public or active travel options in the Vale of Glamorgan: a) Public Transport b) Walking Routes	2 Yearly	DPPI	Environment & Housing

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	c) Cycling Routes d) Community Transport			
CPM/262 (d)	CPM/262/ Corporate Plan Measure: Percentage of residents who use the following public or active travel options in the Vale of Glamorgan: a) Public Transport b) Walking Routes c) Cycling Routes d) Community Transport	Annual	DPPI	Environment & Housing
CPM/304 (PAM/036)	Number of additional affordable housing units delivered during the year per 10,000 households	Annual	CPPI	Environment & Housing
CPM/322 (PAM/012)	Percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless.	Annual	DPPI	Environment & Housing
CPM/096	Percentage of all households where a positive prevention action succeeded in preventing/relieving homelessness.	Annual	DPPI	Environment & Housing
CPM/189	Number of all households in temporary accommodation, by type of accommodation: - Private sector accommodation - Public sector accommodation - Hostels and women's refuges - Bed and breakfast - Homeless at home	Annual	CPPI	Environment & Housing
New PI 2025/26	Number of residents provided with Housing Related Support to aid independent living.	Annual	CPPI	Environment & Housing

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New PI 2025/26	Number of housing units delivered through the Council house building programme.	2 Yearly	DPPI	Environment & Housing
CPM/299	Percentage of residents who describe their physical health as very or fairly good.	2 Yearly	DPPI	Environment & Housing
CPM/248	Percentage of residents who describe their mental health as very or fairly good.	Annual	DPPI	Environment & Housing
CPM/024	Percentage of Year 11 leavers known not to be in education, training or employment (NEET).	Annual	CPPI	Learning & Skills
CPM/037	Percentage of Young people leaving Year 12 who are not in education, employment or training.	Annual	DPPI	Learning & Skills
CPM/023	Percentage of Young people leaving year 13 who are not in education, employment or training.	Annual	DPPI	Learning & Skills
CPM/034	Percentage of pupils in local authority care (CLA) in any LA maintained school, in year 11 who leave compulsory education, training or work-based learning without an approved external qualification.	Annual	DPPI	Learning & Skills
CPM/035	Percentage of pupils from global majority in any LA maintained school, in year 11 who leave compulsory education, training or work-based learning without an approved external qualification.	Annual	DPPI	Learning & Skills
CPM/257 (a)	Percentage of schools that have: a) signed a pledge to become a school of sanctuary and b) achieved school of sanctuary status.	Annual	DPPI	Learning & Skills

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CPM/257 (b)	Percentage of schools that have: a) signed a pledge to become a school of sanctuary and b) achieved school of sanctuary status.	Quarterly	DPPI	Learning & Skills
New PI 2025/26	Number of apprentices created per £1M invested into Sustainable Communities for Learning programmes.	Annual	DPPI	Learning & Skills
CPM/053	Average and individual vacancy rates in the Vale's main town centres: (a) Barry (b) Penarth (c) Llantwit Major (d) Cowbridge	Annual	CPPI	Place
CPM/133	Number of local Businesses advised in relation to funding, business planning and new start-ups.	Annual	DPPI	Place
CPM/144	Number of Businesses financially supported.	Annual	DPPI	Place
CPM/143	Number of community led organisations advised.	Annual	DPPI	Place
CPM/135	Number of community organisations financially supported	Annual	DPPI	Place
New PI 2025/26	Percentage increase in the Economic impact of tourism.	Annual	DPPI	Place
CPM/305	Number of additional dwellings created as a result of bringing empty properties back into use.	Annual	DPPI	Place
CPM/089	% of additional affordable housing units granted planning permission during the year as a percentage of all additional housing units granted planning permission during the year.	2 Yearly	DPPI	Place
CPM/234	Percentage of residents agreeing that the Council is doing enough to provide services and support for older people.	2 Yearly	DPPI	Social Services

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CPM/229 (CPM/215)	Percentage of residents agreeing that the Council is doing enough to provide services and support for children and young people.	2 Yearly	DPPI	Social Services
CPM/277	Percentage of residents aged 65+ concerned about services and support for older people.	2 Yearly	DPPI	Social Services