

## LIVE WELL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2026.

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

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

Present: Councillor A.M. Collins (Chair); Councillors G. Bruce, I.R. Buckley, C.A. Cave, 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 C.P. Franks, G. John (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Wellbeing), Dr. I.J. Johnson, S.D. Perkes (Cabinet Member for Public Sector Housing and Tenant Engagement) and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health).

### 563 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”.

The Chair also took the opportunity to congratulate the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Head of Adult Services for being awarded an MBE within the King's 2026 New Year's Honours List. It was a much-deserved honour and testament to their lifelong and unwavering commitment to improving adult social care services in the Vale and beyond.

The Chair also invited the Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer to provide a verbal reminder on the Council's Cabinet Call-In and Scrutiny Request for Consideration processes available to Committee Members. The Officer advised that the criteria for both processes were set out within Section 7 of the Council's Constitution and that Members were encouraged to seek advice from Democratic Services Officers as necessary. The relevant forms to engage with said processes were also readily available to Elected Members via the 'Scrutiny Hub' section of MemberNet.

### 564 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillors B. Loveluck-Edwards (Vice-Chair) and B. Dodd.

### 565 MINUTES –

**RECOMMENDED – T H A T** the minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2025 be approved as a correct record.

## 566 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

## 567 LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT – YEAR 13 PERFORMANCE REPORT (CX) –

Legacy Leisure, the Council's Leisure Management contractor, was required to produce an annual report detailing performance, service improvements and any operating issues. The report was presented to the Live Well Scrutiny Committee to allow Committee to assess the performance of the Leisure Management Contract during the period 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2025.

The Operational Manager for Healthy Living and Performance was joined by representatives of Legacy Leisure to present the report which highlighted a number of successes over the past year including a significant increase in usage compared to last year, the refurbishment of key facilities within Vale Leisure Centres as well as the continued implementation of the new Active Communities Strategy.

Following the Officer's introduction of the report, Committee Members raised comments and questions in relation to the following topics:

1. How quickly were repair works undertaken?
2. In relation to utility costs, were there any ideas in the pipeline to make further reductions?
3. In relation to the School Swimming Scheme, how were the Leisure Centres paid for the scheme and was the Council's education department charged?
4. Were there any identified barriers for activities provided for older persons in the daytime?
5. Could you explain the Legacy Leisure initiatives running alongside the UHB National Exercise Referral Scheme?
6. Why was the pool in Penarth Leisure Centre cold last week?
7. Were there any tailored incentives available for veterans?
8. Noting the 2% decrease in the uptake for swimming lessons for young children in the Vale, due to the lack of experienced and qualified instructors, and the 5-6% decrease across Wales as a whole, was that situation likely to improve?
9. Noting the social value increase within Penarth and Barry, why were there such differences between the Barry (7%) and Penarth (32%) areas?
10. Would users receive any refund in membership due to the poor condition of changing rooms in Cowbridge Leisure Centre?
11. In relation to the social value data presented within the report, how was the data calculated and were there set targets going forward?

In response, the Officers present provided the following points of advice:

1. Smaller repairs due to general usage would be the responsibility of Legacy Leisure to implement however, in relation to larger improvement works, attempts were made to provide works as quickly as possible to minimise disruption, depending on the complexity and size of the works being undertaken. For example, the toilets in Barry Leisure Centre were recently closed for a short period of time to support the installation of new gym facilities within the previous contact call centre location.
2. Considerable energy efficiency works had already taken place across all Vale of Glamorgan Leisure Centres such as the installation of solar panels, LED lighting and/or more efficient boilers. The Council had recently been awarded £100,000k by Sports Wales to look at new building management systems, which was hoped would make further utility cost savings in the future. Leisure Centres were unavoidably high energy users because of the various pieces of equipment and pool management in constant use. However, there had been a 6 - 8% reduction through energy efficient measures in the Year 12 report previously presented. There was not as much of a decrease seen for Year 13, but Leisure Centres had seen additional electrical costs during Year 13. The Council had recently been successful in obtaining a £37,500k grant to undertake an energy audit that Legacy Leisure would be working on during 2026. It was hoped that this audit would give the Council a shopping list of further efficiency measures to explore.
3. In relation to school swimming, Parkwood/Legacy Leisure offered a competitive package and the majority of schools in the Vale took this up and utilised their most local pool. Each school in the Vale received an allocation in its budget each year to provide swimming lessons to its pupils. 36 out of 44 schools within the Vale of Glamorgan were currently using the Vale Leisure Centre pools available and paying a nominal fee for the scheme however, the biggest cost in relation to engaging with the scheme for schools was around transporting children to and from. Schools were mainly interested in morning sessions which helped with acquiring transport.
4. The 50+ demographic covered a huge range of different generations with different requirements from facilities. The introduction of an Active Communities Manager post at Legacy Leisure, that the Council helped to introduce, had helped to bring in service users and different activities. Such as 50s Badminton, Pickle Ball, Walking Football and general coffee and cake mornings.
5. The nurse program was very well blended in to Leisure Centre provision and received a very heavy amount of referrals with limited resources. So, Legacy Leisure had tried to support the programme by adding referral pathways into the main leisure programme much quicker. Also, Legacy Leisure had introduced the 'Good Boost' programme in partnership with the NHS which Penarth Leisure Centre had become a flagship centre for in the UK.
6. There had been difficulties over the festive period with boilers and air handling unit due to cold weather conditions and there was a lack of engineers available to respond. Therefore, service users were offered the use of Cardiff facilities for free as an alternative. However, the pool had now been returned to a comfortable 29 degree temperature.
7. Legacy Leisure already provided a free membership for 423 active military personnel, who were able to access all services. In relation to veterans, individuals were able to access a free swim initiative, subsidised by Welsh

- government, through the production of a veteran military ID. Legacy Leisure were in contact with the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Veteran Advice/Armed Forces Liaison Officer and hoped to set up a meeting in the near future to discuss further support for veterans and their families. This was not likely to be on a cost free basis but at a concession.
8. Officers recognised that swimming skills for young children in the Vale of Glamorgan was very important in light of the area being a heavily coastal area. It was acknowledged that the take up of swimming lessons currently was not as good as hoped but a lot of energy had been placed around improving the management of the scheme, as well as the introduction and training of 19 new swim instructors. However, such introductions would take time to embed and therefore it was hoped that the next performance management report would demonstrate an improvement.
  9. The report demonstrated that the social value that Leisure Centre provision provided to the Vale of Glamorgan area was a return of £5.6m saving on impacts to the local health board, lowering crime figures, and increasing the well-being of the Vale of Glamorgan population. Therefore, the social value provided by Leisure Centres demonstrated incredible value for money. The significant roofing works undertaken at Penarth Leisure Centre had had an impact on the uptake for the Centre, and therefore social value figures, however, it was expected that the new gym recently installed in Barry Leisure Centre would demonstrate an increase in social value for the Barry area in the next iteration of the report. The new gym had already established itself as a central socialising space for service users. Being able to make capital investments within the Leisure Centres had made a huge difference however there were ongoing challenges due to the age of the Leisure Centre buildings, but Legacy Leisure would continue to invest in that area as the advantages were obvious.
  10. The difference in social value figures between Barry and Penarth Leisure Centres demonstrated the importance of investing in Leisure Centres. Penarth's figures had increased greater as the roof works the previous year had impacted on attendances and, therefore, social value outcomes. With Penarth returning to full a fully operational centre the high percentage increase was expected by delivering a quality product were able to attract more users across all types of demographic. For example, since the significant works undertaken at Llantwit Major Leisure Centre the Centre had seen a 12% increase in membership. Funds had recently been made available by the Vale of Glamorgan Cabinet to undertake improvement works at Cowbridge Leisure Centre throughout 2026. The Council was now in the position to start planning and going to tender in order to implement said works. Updates in relation to these works would be provided to all Elected Members.
  11. The social value data was calculated independently by a company called For Global who were working with De Montfort University to develop an algorithm to calculate the social value figure that was now an industry standard. Legacy Leisure staff would welcome one-to-one meetings with Elected Members to go through the statistical data in more detail if required. Legacy Leisure did not have a set target increase however the aim was to ensure that the social value figure continued to increase, and, in the current contract year (Year 14) this was the case since July 2025.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the performance of the Legacy Leisure Contract for Year 13 be commended.
- (2) T H A T a Year 14 performance report for the Leisure Management Contract be presented to Scrutiny Committee in January 2027.
- (3) T H A T an interim update on performance data for the contract be presented to Scrutiny Committee Members, via the For Information reporting process, in June 2026.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To note the performance of the contractor during Year 13.
- (2&3) To keep Scrutiny informed of progress on the Leisure Management Contract.

568 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES ANNUAL PLACEMENT REVIEW (DSS) –

The report outlined the actions taken within Children and Young People Services during 2024/25 regarding placement provision for Children Looked After (CLA), the priority actions for 2025/26 and progress against those actions.

Both the Head of Children and Young People Services and Operational Manager for Eliminate and Radical Reform were present to introduce the report which highlighted that, where children and young people could not be supported to remain within their immediate families and needed to become looked after, the Council sought to provide a range of suitable placements.

Formal kinship fostering arrangements would be explored as the preferred alternative arrangement where it was necessary for the Local Authority to share parental responsibility or intervene in managing risk and protecting children.

Where a child's needs could not be adequately met through kinship arrangements, the majority would have their needs met best in a substitute family, preferably with in-house foster carers and, if not, with Independent Fostering Agency carers wherever possible living within the Vale of Glamorgan.

Residential care placements would be made only where the complexity and challenge of a child or young person's needs meant they were unable to live within a family setting or where a young person was subject to a Court Ordered Secure / Remand.

Officers also advised that an analysis of the financial position, the demand for placements and spending patterns was attached at Appendix 1 to the report demonstrated the volatility of the placement budget and the significant impact individual children's needs could have on overall expenditure.

Key influences included the increasing complexity of children's needs, the Welsh Government "When I am Ready" policy which extended the time children could remain in foster placements beyond the age of 18, the use of remand placements where Local Authorities had become responsible for the costs of looking after children who were not allowed to live at home while they were the subject of criminal proceedings; the increased complexity following the COVID-19 pandemic, and cost of living crisis; the UK Government's National Transfer Scheme for unaccompanied asylum seeking children, and the Welsh Government's Eliminate agenda.

With the exception of the increase in placement commitments, the Children and Young People Services Division had made good progress in delivering the actions in the current Corporate Strategy. Appendix 1 of the report highlighted the considerable activity undertaken to date in response to the challenges associated with children's placements, the workstreams for 2025 and progress thus far.

Following the Officer's presentation of the report, both the Chair and Vice-Chair thanked officers for a very concise and detailed report. The Vice-Chair noted how the statistical data set out within the report indicated an increase in Looked After Children (LAC) across the region, and not just within the Vale of Glamorgan, which could be attributed to the after effects of the national pandemic. They also noted how pleasing it was to see details in relation to the ongoing development of local residential provision, with it forecast that the placement costs for said homes would be less than purchasing from the independent sector, thus bringing costs down for the Council.

With no further comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

#### RECOMMENDED \_

- (1) T H A T the contents of both the covering and appended report (Appendix 1) be acknowledged.
- (2) T H A T a further Annual Placement Review report be presented to Scrutiny Committee in January 2027.

#### Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To provide Members with an opportunity to exercise oversight of the key statutory function.
- (2) To ensure Members are aware of any changes on an annual basis.